

Back to the Future? New Multilateral Institutionalism and World Order

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Introduction:

What happens in the world?

Anti-globalization

Populism

Realpolitik

Only popular reaction?

polarization: elites and grassroots

polarization: among elites

“A Europe We Can Believe in”

(<https://thetrueeurope.eu>)

- Europe is our home;
- the nation-state is the hallmark of Europe;
- we do not back an imposed, enforced unity;
- we are losing our home;
- multiculturalism is unworkable;
- populism should be engaged;

.....

populism:

from ideas to policies:

- "**W**e-first" policy: global commons
- "**W**ithdrawal" policy: climate change
- "**W**all-defense" policy: immigration; trade

Back to the future?

The Mearsheimer prophet:

- 1990: when the Cold War was over
- long peace in Europe: the bipolar structure and balance of power
- back to the future: prone to violence and war without the balance of power in the bipolar structure

Simply: back to power politics which will constitute the future European order

Despite the rising populism and anti-globalization movements, a world order based on rule-based multilateralism will continue to develop and move forward.

But it will not be the same as we have had in the past three decades.

“New multilateral institutionalism”:

Representative (democracy)

Inclusive (interests and cultures)

Participatory (legitimacy)

I. Post-Cold War world order

1. Hegemonic institutionalism

A trinity:

power (US as the superpower)

sovereignty

multilateral institutions

2. Features:

1) hegemonic structure

one superpower together with several major powers

a conspicuous power gap between the only superpower and the rest

2) Economic globalization:

an open world economic system

high degree of interdependence

rise of developing economies (BRICS)

3) global platform for cooperation

global issues and problems

era of transnational threat

enlarged platform for cooperation

4) multilateralism as the pillar of the world order

decreased importance of naked power

increased importance of institutional power

2. Why such an order?

US hegemony is an important factor; but perhaps more importantly there have been several crucial consensuses without which such an order could be impossible.

Three important consensuses

1) Consensus on multilateralism

The growing value of multilateralism from the League of Nations to the United Nations.

2) Consensus on cooperation

- between the established and the emerging;
- among almost all actors

e.g.: the United States and China

3) Consensus on institutional governance

international institutions are demanded by international society in the era of globalization and transnational threat.

cf. demand vs. supply theories regarding international institutions—Keohane 1984

Summary:

- 1) All these consensuses are necessary for the world order that has existed since the end of the Cold War. Among them the most important and the one with lasting value is *multilateralism*.
- 2) Hegemonic power has played an important role for the post-Cold War multilateralism.

3) Multilateralism by definition negates hegemony, which may help multilateralism to start, but which will eventually be brought to an end by a genuine multilateralism.

4) This irreconcilable contradiction between multilateralism and hegemony calls for a new multilateralism to sustain an order in a multiplex world.

II. Problems of globalization

Global deficits:

An increased demand for global governance and an failure to effectively solve global threats.

1. Imbalance of power distribution

change in the distribution of capabilities:

West

BRICS

global governing power/institutional power:

failed to reflect this reality

imbalance of power, responsibility and
interest

2. Unevenness of economic growth

increased gap between rich and poor
countries

increased gap between the rich and poor
in a country

3. Deficits of global governance

six areas of global issues

climate change

nuclear proliferation

proliferation of biochemical weapons

civil violence

terrorism

economic and financial crises

GATT/WTO negotiations

Round	Name	Duration (months)	Time
1	...	6	04/1947-10/1947
2	...	6	04/1949-10/1949
3	...	7	09/1950-04/1951
4	...	4	01/1956-05/1956
5	...	22	09/1960-07/1962
6	Kennedy Round	37	05/1964-06/1967
7	Tokyo Round	67	09/1973-04/1979
8	Uruguay Round	90	09/1986-04/1994
9	Doha Round	192 (already)	11/2001-? (scheduled to complete in 2005)

In none of these areas, where global governance is in urgent need, have transnational threats been effectively dealt with.

Summary

The serious global governance deficits have resulted in:

- 1) the loss of confidence in multilateralism;
 - 2) the loosening of post-Cold War consensuses;
and
 - 3) the withdrawal to the shell of the nation-state.
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III. Populist realism as a reaction

Populist realism has risen as a reaction to global threats and governance failure and a retreat to the old-fashioned type of international relations.

Populist realism:

- self-nation
- national interest
- material power

1. Revival of power politics

Traditional understanding of power: hard

- material

- coercive

- conquering

reconceptualization of power: soft

-co-optive

-institutional

-persuasive

Populist realism:

a retreat to the traditional understanding of power and a revival of power politics in international relations

2. Return of state-centralism

- The state is the center, the ultimate collective self with exclusive self-interest.
- The state is struggling in a Hobbesian jungle or in an hostile international anarchy.
- The state is the expression of the national interest.

Reconceptualization

- The transnational threat as the “other”.
- No single state can deal with it single-handed.
- Social forces in the world play an important role.

A return to state-centralism:

- the state as the exclusively and ultimate authority
- ‘other’ states as the source of threat
- hard power as the most effective means to achieve interest

3. A resurgence of extreme nationalism

self nation as superior

other nations as hostile aliens

global commons as 'none of my business'

Summary

Populist realism has risen partially but significantly as a response to global governance failure. Power politics, state-centralism, and extreme nationalism have reemerged as powerful ideas and practical policies. In the foreseeable future, populist realism will be a strong counterforce to multilateral institutionalism.

IV. New Multilateral Institutionalism and World Order

Despite rising anti-globalization and populist realism, overall the world will move forward.

But a world order based on hegemonic institutionalism will decline.

The world will have an order based primarily on multilateral institutions as its main governing mechanisms.

Multilateral institutionalism: the most appropriate for global governance found so far.

Hegemony will decline and a '*new multilateral institutionalism*', with more inclusiveness and consultation, will be the legitimate foundation and the participatory practice of the future world order.

“New multilateral institutionalism”:

A multilateral institutionalism which takes institutions as the primary mechanism for global governance and which embraces pluralism, values partnership, and encourages participation.

pluralism

partnership

participation

The reality of the world:

an irreversible course of globalization

an increasing tendency toward multiplexity

a complex web of relatedness

Two approaches to world order:

new multilateral institutionalism

populist realism

The former represents the progressive force of human kind and international society, while the latter reflects the regressive force of war and conflict.

The former leads to the future, while the latter withdraws to the past.

Summary

Multilateral institutionalism has been the most appropriate approach to global governance and provides a most reliable foundation for the future world order. However, it will not be the same as we have witnessed in the past three decades. It is a new multilateral institutionalism which embraces pluralism, values partnership, and encourages participation. It will make a sustainable world order as hegemony declines.

Conclusion: Rebuilding of Consensus

1. The world will be moving forward to the future rather than 'back to the future'.
2. Moving forward requires joint efforts of all stakeholders to make multilateral institutions work for the solution of global problems and for good, effective governance.

3. Joint efforts require the rebuilding of consensus to support multilateralism and to engage in international cooperation for global governance.

Thank you.