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THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE PROJECT

'Global governance' has become a key term in many academic and policy debates. While an Internet search conducted in 1997 revealed only 3418 references to 'global governance' and in January 2004 less than 90,000, in November 2009 the World Wide Web listed 1,1600,000 pages that mentioned the term. Global governance has become a rallying call for policy advocates who hail it as panacea for the evils of economic and ecological globalisation; a global menace for opponents who fear it as the universal hegemony of the many by the powerful few; and an analytical concept for new empirical phenomena of world politics that has given rise to much discussion among scholars. Yet despite a growing body of new literature, even the very meaning of the term 'global governance' remains disputed, and many of its elements are yet insufficiently understood.

To contribute to academic and policy debates on global governance is the aim of the Global Governance Project (GLOGOV.ORG). While we address the phenomenon of global governance in general, most of our research focuses on global environmental change and governance for sustainable development.

The Project is a joint research programme of twelve European research institutions to advance understanding of the new actors, institutions and mechanisms of global governance. The Project was created in 2001 with the endorsement of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP).

VU University Amsterdam, co-ordinator
Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM)

Freie Universität Berlin
Environmental Policy Research Centre

Science Po Bordeaux

Bremen University

Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Institute for European Studies

The Fridtjof Nansen Institute

Graduate Institute of International and
Development Studies

London School of Economics and Political Science

Lund University

Oldenburg University

Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

Wageningen University
Environmental Policy Group

Analytically, we define global governance—as opposed to traditional interstate relations—by three criteria, which we have also chosen to shape the research groups within the Project.

THE NEW ACTORS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

First, we see global governance as characterised by increasing participation of actors other than states, ranging from private actors such as multinational corporations and (networks of) scientists and environmentalists to intergovernmental bureaucracies ('multi-actor governance'). These new actors of global governance are the focus of our research group MANUS—Managers of Global Change. Work so far focused on the role of corporations and on the influence of international bureaucracies as actors in global environmental governance. Our research on international bureaucracies included a series of in-depth case studies, ranging from major agencies such as the World Bank or the International Maritime Organisation to smaller secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements. The work programme on international bureaucracies has recently been concluded with publication of its core findings in *Managers of Global Change: The Influence of International Environmental Bureaucracies* (MIT Press, 2009).

THE NEW MECHANISMS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Second, global governance is marked by new mechanisms of public-private and private-private co-operation along with the traditional system of legal treaties negotiated by states. This is the focus of our research group MECGLO—New Mechanisms of Global Governance. Here, we analyse why and how non-state actors engage in rule-making and implementation with little or no involvement of public actors, and how various types of transnational environmental rule-making differ in terms of their legitimacy. Our case studies include transnational organisations such as the Marine Stewardship Council or the Forest Stewardship Council, but also the plethora of public-private partnerships that emerged around and after the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

INCREASING SEGMENTATION OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Third, we define global governance through increasing segmentation of different layers and clusters of rule-making and rule-implementing, both vertically between supranational, international, national and subnational layers of authority and horizontally between different parallel rule-making systems maintained by different groups of actors. This stands at the centre of our research group MOSAIC—'Multiple Options, Solutions and Approaches: (Institutional) Interplay and Conflict'. Research focuses for instance on horizontal interplay at the intersection of trade and environment or on the influence of international actors and institutions on domestic environmental policy-making.

THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCES

To increase academic debate on global environmental governance, we initiated in 2001 in Berlin a European conference series on the human dimensions of global environmental change, which has evolved into a regular venue in this field.

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