

# Critical Perspectives on the Crisis of Global Governance

Reimagining the Future

Edited by

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# 1

## Reimagining the Future: Some Critical Reflections

*Stephen Gill*

This introduction reflects on some of the principal theoretical perspectives on global governance in relation to the critical purpose of this book: to analyse global governance as it is, and as it ought to be, at a crucial historical conjuncture. This is followed with a brief outline of two dimensions of the current organic crisis of global governance. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the contributions.

### **Global governance as it is and as it ought to be**

It is important to note at the outset that the purpose of this volume is not to offer a single perspective or voice on these questions; rather it provides a continuum of perspectives encompassing not only varieties of critical theory but also what I call ‘critical problem-solving’. The latter is exemplified by the contributions on aspects of the global political economy that analyse in detail key technical and legal aspects of global economic governance, world trade and investment.

With this caveat in mind, first, then, what do we mean by global governance *as it is*? By this, contributors to this book largely refer to the dominant projects of rule associated with the post-Cold War world order and the main governance mechanisms that seek to stabilize, modify, extend and legitimate the ruling institutions of the global *status quo*, such as NATO, the IMF, the World Bank, the US, the European Union (EU), the G8 or the G20 groupings of economically powerful nations. In this sense global governance today involves devising durable methods, mechanisms and institutions – including the use of organized violence – to help sustain an unequal international order that is premised on the primacy of capital, the world market and US geopolitical power as the key governing forces of world politics.

This is also what the World Bank and the IMF refer to in more normative terms as 'good governance'. The latter is often associated with efforts to entrench global 'best practices' and it promotes a concept of limited government, self-regulation of business and finance, and pro-market reforms, locked in by the new constitutionalism (discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 by Claire Cutler and Scott Sinclair). It is backed by the systematic use of military power and related geopolitical practices, often justified or camouflaged by the expediency of forms of international law applied in arbitrary and unequal ways, e.g., the Non-Proliferation Treaty (see Chapter 2, by Richard Falk). Also involved are practices of diplomacy, intelligence and surveillance and covert mechanisms of intervention – as Wikileaks revealed on a daily basis when it released batches of US Embassy cables.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent revelations that emerged in 2013 and 2014 provided by the former CIA and NSA employee Edward Snowden suggest that the US has been actively seeking to develop what I earlier called a 'global panopticon' (Gill 1995b): technologies of power premised upon the dystopian vision of placing everyone and everything under ongoing and constant surveillance – or at least everything that moves through the Internet and other interconnected transactional and electronic communications mechanisms.<sup>2</sup>

However, judged on its recent record, one must conclude that global governance as it really is, has neither stabilized nor legitimated the

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<sup>1</sup> A classified directive sent to US diplomats by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in July 2009 sought 'forensic technical details' about private and public 'communications systems used by top UN officials, including passwords and personal encryption keys' as well as 'credit card numbers, email addresses, phone, fax and pager numbers ... even frequent-flyer account numbers. It also called for the gathering of 'biographic and biometric information on UN Security Council permanent representatives ... the secret "national human intelligence collection directive" was sent to US missions at the UN in New York, Vienna and Rome; [in all it was sent to] 33 embassies and consulates, including those in London, Paris and Moscow'. See R. Booth and J. Berger, 'US diplomats spied on UN leadership', see: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/28/us-embassy-cables-spying-un> Accessed 9 April 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The NSA has developed its Digital Network Intelligence (DNI) system to allow for comprehensive trawling of Internet activities. In 2010, the *Washington Post* reported that each day DNI collected and stored '1.7bn emails, phone calls and other type of communications.' Cited in Glenn Greenwald 'XKeyscore: NSA tool collects "Nearly everything a user does on the Internet".' <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/31/nsa-top-secret-program-online-data> Accessed 31 July 2013. The UK's GCHQ, which operates in tandem with the NSA, has similar capabilities.

existing order. Indeed it may actually be undermining the social well being of a majority of people, on a planet characterized by increasing health, food and energy crises linked to wider crises of accumulation, exploitation of human beings and nature, dispossession of livelihoods and the commons, amid widespread ecological destruction (Gill 2012a; see also Chapter 9 in this volume). These developments combine in a situation that I have elsewhere described as one of global organic crisis, a point that I discuss in the following text.

Indeed, the crisis of neoliberal capitalism has placed this perspective of global governance *as it is* under growing scrutiny as deepening inequality has come to occupy a growing centrality in political discourse and debate, including the agendas of the plutocrats and public and private élites who meet annually at the World Economic Forum to network and develop strategies. Indeed Barack Obama invited to the White House the author of what astonishingly became a best-selling book, *Capital in the 21st Century*, by the French economist Thomas Piketty (2014). This book shows how deepening inequality has been historically related to the most severe crises of accumulation in the history of capitalism. (The problem of inequality and its relationship to political and economic discourse is the subject of Chapter 3 by Janine Brodie).

Thus a second set of more critical perspectives brings ethics and justice, as well as power, political economy, and questions concerning the legitimate rule of law to the centre of its analysis. It asks, global governance of what, for whose benefit and why?

Indeed critical perspectives on global governance put the questions of power and the issue of the making of the future at the centre of analysis and ask questions about the potential for the emergence of alternatives or *what ought to be*. Such perspectives need to take into account what Upendra Baxi calls, in Chapter 8, the new ‘materialities of power’ associated with scientific and technological revolutions which have transformed capacities for communication, production, destruction and social reproduction.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless there are grounds for being cautiously optimistic concerning future developments, not only as a result of many of the failures of global governance as it is, but also because of new developments in

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<sup>3</sup> *Social reproduction* refers to institutions and frameworks, mentalities and justifications associated with the ways in which any society produces, consumes and reproduces. Feminists note that it involves crucial gender dimensions that concern biological reproduction, the reproduction of the labour force, household divisions of labour and caring institutions for education, health and welfare.

global politics that have been linked to the self-actualization of peoples and new forms of insurgent reason and associated imaginaries of the politically possible – imaginaries that were previously thought to be impossible.<sup>4</sup> As Richard Falk notes in Chapter 2 this allows us to rethink the idea that history – and the horizons of the future – is made and remade by collective action. Thus a critical perspective on global governance involves not only the demystification of the power relations between dominant and subordinated forces but also assessment of the potential for changes in those relations, and collective consideration of how more socially just and sustainable mechanisms of governance – both local and global – can be actualized.

### **Liberal, Realist and Cosmopolitan perspectives**

With these issues in mind we might note, that within the field of International Relations, notions of ‘global governance’ have been principally associated with Liberalism and Functionalism, and its associated ideologies of progress. Some of this work is premised upon what I call ‘imperial common sense’ on the part of leading American theorists who see it as self-evident that the principal practical and theoretical task is to help to extend US power and dominance of world politics and global governance (Gill 2012b, Chapter 9 in this collection).

Within this broad context, Liberal perspectives have come to highlight contemporary transformations in world order and the crosscutting complexities of a more interdependent set of governance arrangements than is suggested by the Realist image of a world of states.<sup>5</sup> Here the principal concern has been how laws, norms, rules, principles and institutions could foster peaceful relations between states and facilitate cooperative action across various issue-areas (for an excellent overview, see Murphy 1994). Such ideas have served as an important corrective

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<sup>4</sup> *Insurgent reason* is an epistemological form concerned with theorizing and helping to mobilize the constituent power and self-actualizing potentials of subordinated classes or peoples, so that they become increasingly effective politically. This may involve either violent or peaceful strategies to promote progressive change.

<sup>5</sup> When the term International Relations is capitalized in this chapter it refers to the field of study or academic discipline. Liberal perspectives just referred to include: those on international organizations and private diplomacy (Ridgeway 1938), functionalist and regional integration studies (Deutsch 1957, Mitrany 1966, 1976, Haas 1964), transnational relations (Keohane and Nye 1974), regime theory (Ruggie 1982, Krasner 1983) and globalization (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992).

to approaches that have tended to view the state as the principal actor and sole intermediary between international and domestic spheres of governance.

By contrast, for Realists, and particularly the Neorealists, the basic ontological assumption is that we live in an anarchic, self-help system of potentially antagonistic states, with no single overarching governing authority. Thus from this perspective the problem of governance has been limited to the maintenance of a balance of power to manage the international system where states pursue relative gains (Viner 1948, Gilpin 1971, Mastanduno 1998). This is why some suggest that a Realist theory of global governance may be a 'contradiction in terms' (Gilpin 2002: 237).

Another strand of Neorealist thought is associated with the so-called Theory of Hegemonic Stability. This theory holds that stable, cooperative and relatively peaceful international governance systems are dependent on the material preponderance of a single state which has the capacity to provide 'public goods' such as the openness of global markets and legal regimes enforcing security of contract and private property rights. This perspective also reflects worries that US relative decline would lead to a collapse in the liberal international economic order perhaps by triggering growing mercantilist rivalries and international conflicts (Kindleberger 1973, Krasner 1976, Gilpin 1981).

However, other scholars, synthesizing elements of Neorealism with a reformulated Liberalism, note that some states do cooperate or create international institutions where their interests coincide, and these may even continue 'after hegemony' (Keohane 1984, Grieco 1990: 233–4). This is because of the imperatives of collective governance caused by the condition of 'complex interdependence' (Keohane and Nye 1977). Thus, it was postulated, under conditions of increasing economic, political and social interdependence, the probability and utility of military confrontation by states may decrease relative to the mutual and material benefits of cooperation.<sup>6</sup> This perspective indicated an ontological shift: an incipient transformation of the inter-state system into a more

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<sup>6</sup> The Realist concept of *hegemony* used by Keohane equates hegemony with dominance. By contrast the Gramscian concept combines coercion and consent, force and persuasion whereby the principal ideas, institutions and material potentials of the governing ruling elements are legitimized, mobilized and extended. Hegemony involves leadership and differs from supremacy. In relations of supremacy coercion rather than consent comes to the fore. Keohane's concept is closer to my notion of supremacy (see Gill 2008 for discussion).

complex global order. Later scholars therefore also highlighted how the concept of 'global governance' reflected a *paradigm shift* within Liberal and Neorealist thinking away from the problem of anarchy and towards the problem of how to manage an increasingly integrated global society (Schmidt 2002).<sup>7</sup>

Some of this paradigm shift was anticipated by Hedley Bull's (1977) work on the 'anarchical society' that described an ever denser network of rules and institutions developed by major powers to regulate their relations. These mechanisms of collective action were creating a society of states with mutual global interests and interconnections.

Nevertheless, with the end of the Cold War, many leading Neorealist scholars continued to predict the collapse of the collective institutions of capitalist cooperation and the fragmentation of the global political economy (Mearsheimer 1990, 1994–5, Gilpin 2000). Their pronouncements, as with those concerning the reported death of Mark Twain, seem in retrospect to have been comprehensively premature.

Indeed, one of the most notable developments since the end of the Cold War has been the radical redefinition of both political and civil society along neoliberal lines. This is reflected not only in the dramatic transformation of former communist nations into capitalist states in a neoliberal direction but also in broader patterns of globalization, as well as the extension of mechanisms that attempt to stabilize these transformations (e.g. associated with 'new constitutionalism', as discussed in Chapters 5–7).

By the mid-2000s what was emerging was a perspective that encompassed a more complex set of multilayered governance arrangements involving sub-national and supranational regulatory frameworks and a multiplicity of state and non-state actors including social movements, NGOs, civil society networks, transnational corporations, private business associations, capital markets and so on. Central here is the assessment that globalization challenges the state as the principal locus of political authority and that global governance can be used to interrogate the limits and possibilities for increasing the accountability and legitimacy of international rule.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This paradigm shift also comprised work that suggested a partial relocation of governing authority from the 'national' to the 'global' (Rosenau 1995) and from the 'public' to the 'private' (Strange 1996, Cutler et al. 1999, Biersteker and Hall 2002, Cutler 2003, Van Harten 2005, Bull and McNeill 2007, Zimmerman 2008, Hansen and Dorte 2008, Cutler 2012, Marx 2012, Green 2014).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Bakker 2001b, Slaughter 2004, Grant and Keohane 2005, Hurd 2007, Cadman 2011, Falk et al. 2012. See also on the prospects for democratizing global politics: Held 1995, Aksu and Camillieri 2002, Held and McGrew 2002,

Indeed, theorists of cosmopolitanism such as Daniele Archibugi, David Held, Mary Kaldor and Jan Aart Scholte have also used the concept of 'global governance' to criticize both the ways in which the world market and the collective governance of the G8 or G20 are effectively undemocratic and have largely excluded the forces of 'global civil society' from effective participation. However in this literature there is a tendency to treat 'global civil society' as autonomous from the state and economy, and thus in abstraction from fundamental power relations associated with global capitalism (Pasha and Blaney 1998). Indeed one needs to avoid the tendency to romanticize the forces of global civil society and to bear in mind that it also includes business associations, corporations, media, political parties, criminal networks, terrorist organizations and other non-governmental organizations, and as such is a terrain of complex struggles and interactions.

A more radical and critical concept of global governance can therefore be understood as involving not only an ontological shift in world politics but also a normative dimension: a critical evaluation of existing governing epistemologies and ruling arrangements in light of the exigencies of global problems and the strategic development or prescription of progressive alternatives. It is to this third set of more critical perspectives that we now turn.

### **Critical intellectual perspectives**

Many if not most critical thinkers have argued that global governance arrangements ignore the fact that not all states are equal and that, indeed, there is a hierarchy of states and set of chains of dominance and subordination in which some states may have lost more political authority than others. From this perspective, key questions related to governance of what and for whom are drowned out by the Neoliberal, Neorealist and technocratic discourses that dominate what Baxi, in Chapter 8, calls 'global governance talk'. The prevailing discourses of global governance are therefore viewed as having a top-down perspective that elides fundamental questions of power and authority in ways that may privilege specific issues at the expense of structural problems of poverty, injustice and exploitation (Barnett and Duvall 2005, Soederberg 2006, Barnett and Sikkink 2008, Gill 2013). From the perspective of some of these authors 'global governance' may simply reflect the outlook and interests of the most powerful states.

Most historical materialist perspectives tend to conceptualize global governance in a similar manner insofar as they are associated with questions of state formation and capital accumulation and the degree to which contradictions can be managed collectively as opposed to unilaterally by a (set of) dominant imperialist power(s). These theories of 'ultra-imperialist unity' on the one hand (Hardt and Negri 2001, Robinson 2004) and 'inter-imperialist rivalry' (Callinicos 2009) on the other, hark back to the early 20th century Marxist debates between Kautsky and Lenin. Indeed there are strong affinities between these theories and the Neorealist Theory of Hegemonic Stability: for both world order is seen as being constituted by a preponderance of power on the part of a dominant state or group of such states. Here the *problématique* of global governance involves how capitalist globalization creates the necessity for ever more closely coordinated and globally integrated forms of governance at the same time as contradictions generate social disintegration and centrifugal political pressures.

Others in the critical camp – which involves some of the contributors to this volume – have taken the *problématique* of global governance further. They base their perspectives on the assumption that any definition of global governance needs to be premised upon the changing ontology of world order in a period of global transformation, allied to a critical epistemology that is applied not only to analyse global governance but also to identify strategic alternatives open to progressive social and political forces. Global governance is therefore understood as involving the relations of rulers and ruled and the way that this is mediated through the complex interplay of international organizations, states and social and political forces from both below and above. In this context international organizations may be identified as both a set of hegemonic mechanisms as well as institutional frameworks for contesting and modifying the principal institutions of world order. This latter perspective was pioneered in the critical research program Multilateralism and United Nations System (1991–97) led by Robert W Cox, involving two of the contributors to this volume (Stephen Gill and Isabella Bakker). It involved over 150 participants from all continents who came together to outline some of the limits, contradictions and prospects for transformation in the UN system at the turn of the new millennium.<sup>9</sup> From this perspective, then 'global governance' is more

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Cox 1997, Gill 2013; the latter is the second edition of a work first published in 1997 and reissued by Palgrave Macmillan as an International Political Economy Classic.

than an analytical category but simultaneously an epistemological and strategic political project – one that is also contested by the forces of global political and civil society described earlier.

## The organic crisis of global governance

So what is the broader context for these considerations? What, in other words, constitutes our current global predicament? In effect global governance now confronts a very broad range of not only economic but also political and cultural shifts and intensifying inequalities, as well as multiplying challenges to health and the integrity of the biosphere.

It may therefore be hypothesized that the world has reached a critical juncture or turning point associated with intensifying organic crisis. By organic crisis I mean that the world faces a situation of simultaneous, multiple, intersecting and deep structural crises all of which challenge the proposition that global governance can continue to develop along its current trajectories. There is an impasse or crisis in global governance that needs to be overcome – the question is how. And, furthermore we need to ask the question: crises for whom? Social, economic, health and ecological crises are experienced unequally and unevenly. They have hierarchical effects that are racialized and gendered as well as structured along lines of social class and caste, but ultimately they tend to hit the weakest, poorest and most vulnerable members of society the hardest, and the majority of the poorest tend to be women (see Chapter 7 by Isabella Bakker).

Together these multiple crises all raise fundamental questions about the legitimacy and ethical content of current forms of global leadership and the social and political forces that they purport to represent and defend. They involve questions of justice, democracy, energy use, ecology and sustainability; issues over the use of military power, organized violence and the legitimate use of force, as well as the deployment of states of emergency, all add to the questions that need to be raised.

As I have noted (Gill 2012a), world order and global governance are shaped by many of the social forces associated with, and the contradictions related to the US military, economic, financial and ecological footprint – an imperial system that also encompasses many of the affluent regions of the world in ways that are predicated upon the maintenance and potentially the extension of fossil-fuel intensive ‘market civilization’.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Market civilization* refers to the individualized, consumerist and energy-intensive social order prevailing in the affluent regions of 21st-century

In that context what might be termed the self-evidence or ‘common sense’ of global governance of our societies by market forces and the dominance and leadership of world order by the US and its principal allies – is being challenged by at least some subordinated classes or peoples.<sup>11</sup> This is not least because prevailing structures of power and knowledge are for many a violent denial of social justice, human rights and dignity, and as such, the globalization of power is dialectically related to the globalization of resistance (Gill 2008). It is also connected to the reimagining of governance at both local and global levels.

Some of the new forces just mentioned have sought not only to reconstruct the realities of their existence but also to create new forms of culture and pedagogy, and to develop new conceptions of sustainability associated with the use of renewable resources based on agro-ecological concepts of local provisioning and production. They oppose and seek to replace governance mechanisms that are subordinated to provisioning for food security via the expansion of the world market. Indeed the world market for food is controlled by a small number of giant agribusiness corporations who pursue energy-intensive and industrial forms of agricultural production and distribution. This includes the growing and massive use of pesticides, in particular the use of long-lasting neurotoxins (e.g. neonicotinoids). These chemical insecticides are poisoning creatures that are essential to the cycles of food production, from bees to earthworms; thereby undermining long-term prospects for public health, and food security (see Chapter 9).

### **Ecological myopia of global governance<sup>12</sup>**

Leading scientists now believe that human activity has irrevocably altered our planet and we have entered a new geological age – such that our planet no longer functions in the way that it once did. Some

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capitalism. Its perspective on the world is materialistic, short-term and ecologically myopic (see Gill 1995a).

<sup>11</sup> For Gramsci (1971) *common sense* is the set of generally held assumptions and beliefs that form an uncritical conception of the world, partly absorbed from everyday influences such as religion and folklore. At the same time Gramsci noted it also has elements of ‘good sense’ (i.e. what is usually called common sense in English). As is suggested in the final chapter of this collection, radical intellectuals must not only challenge such ‘primitive’ common sense but also develop and extend the elements of *good sense* in their transformative praxis.

<sup>12</sup> Recent works on ecology and environmental governance include Dauvergne 2010, Jessop 2010, Rask and Worthington 2013, Weston and Bollier 2013, Green 2014.

put the origins of this transformation to around 1800 when the human population hit 1 billion and carbon dioxide started to rise significantly due to the burning of fossil fuels in the Industrial Revolution. Others have dated its origins to the post-World War II nuclear era which began in 1945, a historical turning point which some scientists are referring to as the 'great acceleration'.<sup>13</sup> I would argue that at the heart of that *great acceleration* is the emergence, extension and institutionalization of the historical structures that constitute a global capitalist market civilization. Associated with the rapidly increasing turnover time of capital and the commodification and exploitation of human beings and nature, since 1945 the world has witnessed both a massive increase in production and consumption coupled with global cultural revolution associated with market-based possessive individualism and, as a result, an exponential increase in the use of global resources. We should also note that 1945 was the end of World War II, symbolized by the dropping of two US atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, underlining how military factors contribute to the ecological problem.

Nobel laureate chemist Paul Crutzen has called this new era the *Anthropocene Age* – the so-called human age. The term designates how human activity has made a dramatic impact on many of the planet's ecosystems. His argument is that prior to 1945, and indeed over the last 11,700 years – during the so-called *Holocene Era* – climate remained remarkably stable.<sup>14</sup> However, since 1945 the human population has more than doubled to an astounding 6.9 billion and the global economy has increased tenfold.

These developments coincide with the widening and deepening of global consumer culture. The value of world merchandise exports in 2010 exceeded US\$16 trillion (up from \$6 trillion in 2000), an amount that was already more than 100 times higher than in 1948 (Dauvergne 2010; see also Ehrenfeld 2005).

Because the environmental and social problems inherent in this pattern of development are interrelated, any attempt to treat them as separate entities is unlikely to succeed.

Indeed, it is becoming clear that many global life support systems are now endangered. For example, Will Steffen and colleagues (Rockström et al. 2009) at the Australian National University identified nine 'life support systems' essential for human life on earth. Two of those

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.anthropocene.info/en/anthropocene/the-great-acceleration/the-great-acceleration>. Accessed 29 June 2014

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13335683>. Accessed 6 August 2012.

systems – climate and the nitrogen cycle – are now in danger of failing and a third – biodiversity – is in meltdown. Species extinction is currently running 100–1000 times faster than background levels and is set to further increase as the 21st century progresses. Steffen and his colleagues argue that this may constitute one of the six biggest extinctions in the history of the planet. Despite well-funded attempts by climate skeptics (and large energy corporations) to deny what has become an overwhelming scientific consensus, pronounced global warming could be irreversible. One very large problem for addressing this in the future is posed by the power bloc formed by a set of large and interrelated vested interests of the state-owned and private energy corporations who wish to continue to profit from the world's over-dependence on fossil fuels and maintain the *status quo* with their investments, production and distribution strategies. As Tim Di Muzio (2012) points out the 'most optimistic scenario' of the International Energy Agency is for 18.6% of global energy to be developed from alternative (renewable) sources by 2030. It would require extra annual investment of \$350–500 billion (only an average of \$140 billion was invested in 2004–09). Meanwhile, oil and gas companies were projected to see \$798 billion of new investment in 2010 alone. Thus while pollution has been the dominant environmental concern since the 1970s, it is now only a part of a looming ecological disaster.<sup>15</sup> Of course the IEA scenario assumes politics as normal, an assumption that seems increasingly unlikely to hold.

Indeed as both Di Muzio and Robert Albritton's important book, *Let Them Eat Junk: How Capitalism Creates Hunger and Obesity* (2009) underline, the ecological problem is also compounded by not only geopolitics (the gigantic US military footprint is partly devoted to ensuring supplies of fossil fuels to underpin its activities as well as US lifestyles) it is also driven by fundamental aspects of political economy. Thus, the maximization of short-term profits (and time horizons) amidst intense competition, a basic characteristic of capitalism, has been 'exacerbated by the petrochemical revolution, which made profits depend increasingly on the speeding up of the rate at which commodities were

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<sup>15</sup> 'In new estimates released today, WHO reports that in 2012 around 7 million people died - one in eight of total global deaths – as a result of air pollution exposure. This finding more than doubles previous estimates and confirms that air pollution is now the world's largest single environmental health risk. Reducing air pollution could save millions of lives'. *7 million premature deaths annually linked to air pollution*. News Release, Geneva: World Health Organization, 25 March 2014. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/air-pollution/en/> Accessed 27 June 2014.

produced' (Albritton 2009: 147). Albritton shows how this characteristic configures much of the world's food systems that have become greatly dependent on petroleum and industrial inputs; breaking this unsustainable relationship is increasingly necessary.

Of these ecological challenges, perhaps the greatest threat to humanity is climate change, as carbon dioxide emissions continue to increase. It involves a set of complex problems and biophysical interconnections, particularly strong in the oceans, which, as they warm, absorb less CO<sub>2</sub>, further contributing to warming as well as depletion of plankton and fish stocks. For example, climate change has a major effect on grain crops (wheat, rice and corn) posing deep questions concerning global food supplies of staples. It also involves an increase in extreme weather events such as droughts, flooding and heat waves. We should also note that fertile agricultural land can be degraded in various ways: concrete paving, by dumping toxic waste, as a result of changing weather patterns, by drought and drying up water sources and by soil compaction and salination. The processes are linked, 'Chemicalization of the land creates dead land which ultimately contributes to deadened oceans' (Albritton 2009: 156).

Indeed, how this situation is severely compounded by failures of political leadership is partly reflected in 2009–13 climate change negotiations. The world's leaders have taken a giant step backwards (towards voluntary controls over emissions) at precisely the moment when the catastrophic trends associated with global warming are intensifying. The problem has a long lineage. For example, it was the first President George Bush who made the famous statement in 1992 'our lifestyle is not negotiable' when he refused to attend the United Nations Rio summit on the environment. What he was referring to is the unsustainable, exploitative, fossil-fuel based, energy-intensive, wasteful, yet consumerist, and ecologically myopic lifestyles that are practiced in the United States, and that have been increasingly emulated elsewhere, e.g. in China. President Obama's negotiators, still reflecting the very same US interests and lifestyles, managed at the summits in Copenhagen in 2009 and in Cancun in 2010 to forge a 'consensus' that commitments to reduced carbon emissions targets should be entirely voluntary, rather than binding and constitutionally enforceable on a global scale.<sup>16</sup> By contrast the Kyoto protocol that expired in 2012, (the US signed but

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<sup>16</sup> The US has however sought to put in place a national strategy to reduce pollution and carbon emissions. In 2014, President Obama unveiled new Environmental Protection Agency rules designed to cut carbon pollution from particularly coal-fired power plants by 30% from 2005 levels by the year 2030.

never ratified) at least had some binding mechanisms despite its over-reliance on market-based solutions.

### **Business as usual? Global economic governance**

Turning to global economic governance, we should recognize that capitalist development is punctuated by crises of accumulation of apparently increasing severity. As Saskia Sassen argues in Chapter 4, financially driven crises are structurally endemic to neoliberal capitalism. And in order for those crises to be managed by dominant forms of global governance requires that de-politicization of the ‘economy’ be maintained, or put differently the economic and political are kept formally separate under neoliberal governance or what I have called the ‘new constitutionalism’ to allow for business as usual (Gill and Cutler 2014).

This facilitates the removal of democracy and democratic accountability from economic policy by insulating the ‘commanding heights’ of macroeconomic (fiscal and monetary) policy from popular or even parliamentary contestation, e.g. by balanced budget laws and ‘independent’ central banks (the same is largely true of trade and broader economic cooperation arrangements which are typically conducted in secret with little or no democratic scrutiny). This effectively removes strategic economic policy and crisis management from almost any political contestation by popular democratic forces.

What this means is that what is ultimately a profoundly political process – e.g. massive socialization of the losses of giant corporations following the 2008 financial meltdown – is represented as a purely technical exercise to be conducted by as it were a council of Platonic Elders. While central banks are independent of governments (and insulated from the influence of broader political forces), their governors are largely drawn from private financial interests – not from trade unions or the multitudes of very able progressive political economists. Thus the European Commission and European Central Bank, coupled with representatives of private financial interests, have effectively shaped responses to the European banking and sovereign debt crises since 2008, but not without protest.

Thus in 2008–14 many G20 and OECD governments applied policies of fiscal austerity to pay for the massive bailouts and to satisfy the bond markets. They downloaded the payment onto the backs of unprotected

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See Suzanne Goldenberg, ‘Obama unveils historic rules to reduce coal pollution by 30%’. *The Guardian*, 2 June 2014.

and poorly represented working people by making cuts in public sector wages and jobs, in social benefits and health expenditures and by further privatizing public services, assets and lands. Indeed, one can consider the resulting transfer of public revenues into private hands as a quintessential example of dispossession of the social commons on a massive scale.

As noted in a recent work (Gill and Solty 2013) what is going on in Europe resembles the typical forms of surplus extraction via prioritization of debt servicing that has characterized Third World public finances for much of the past three decades – a process with harrowing consequences for human development. In this sense, neoliberal crisis management may be integral to neoliberal governance but in so doing actually compounds the fundamental organic crises of livelihood and social reproduction that afflict a majority of the world's population, e.g. in health, food, energy and ecology. And as has been noted earlier, in this context of crisis, poor women tend to be hardest hit, not least because of their central role in social reproduction.

The climate change and economic examples reflect the fact that the future of key aspects of life on the planet rests on the altar of capitalist market fundamentalism and its governing structures and processes.

Not surprisingly, there have been riots, demonstrations and strikes opposing such policies and the combination of social and ecological crisis and austerity they engender. They also oppose the combination of authoritarianism and capitalism in many parts of the world, which has resulted in mass impoverishment, mass unemployment and challenges to the basic means of livelihood because of the land grabs and dispossession of common resources outlined by Saskia Sassen in Chapter 4, partly as a result of 'stabilization' measures demanded by the G8, IMF and World Bank.

Indeed, in typically Orwellian fashion what the IMF calls 'stabilisation' in poorer countries, requires them to repay foreign debts (where the interest accrued is already several times greater than the original principal that was borrowed) thus forcing them to reduce social and environmental expenditures (foreign debts. Thus 'stabilisation' actually involves the destabilisation of livelihoods, exacerbating ecological problems in large parts of the world.

My final point in this section is linked to the structural crisis of the existing neoliberal economic growth models. Not only are those models premised upon energy-intensive forms of production and distribution (e.g. requiring long-distance transportation of goods, as well as monocultures of agricultural production), but also they assume ever increasing levels of consumption. It is important to remember that the

Keynesian model of development was itself premised upon mass production and mass consumption and originated in post-1945 responses to the depression of the 1930s – it therefore was the prevailing growth model at the time of the onset of the ‘great acceleration’. Keynes was himself a liberal, seeking to preserve capitalism by identifying mechanisms to deal with its instabilities. Similarly, many of those currently critical of the neoliberal orthodoxy, such as leading economists Paul Krugman (2012) and Robert Reich (2012a, b) tend to largely follow the traditional Keynesian perspective, criticising the austerity measures that have been implemented in many countries as compounding what economists call the fallacy of composition – that is if all countries simultaneously deflate and impose austerity measures, collectively it will worsen their predicament causing an economic depression (for detail see Chapter 3 by Janine Brodie). So their policy solution is to redistribute income and increase expenditures on infrastructure allowing for consumption to be revived and a ‘stable’ growth pattern to be restored. However the problem with this perspective is that it is narrowly couched in conventional macroeconomic terms. It ignores the underlying contradictory logic of the existing growth model which is premised upon the extension of market civilization and runaway consumption, which the ecological evidence shows is clearly unsustainable. What are needed are perspectives that integrate ecological limits, as well as tackling the immense waste and mal-distribution of resources in current growth models (disposing of toxic wastes counts as positive economic growth in conventional GDP accounting). While it is not the place in this short introductory chapter to discuss these issues in detail, clearly the dominant epistemologies associated with economic planning and macroeconomic policy, are hardly adequate to the reimagining of a sustainable future that could rest on key public investments as the linchpin of a new and sustainable growth strategy (see Chapter 7 by Isabella Bakker).

What all this points to is several things. First, the term ‘economic crisis’ cannot begin to capture the scale and the depth of what is at issue in terms of the future of global governance. And second, the attempts by a narrow grouping of private and public elites pressing for renewed neoliberal market-based solutions as the normalized governmentality of global governance are not only misguided, they increasingly will be facing political challenges, not least because of the deepening and structural nature of the organic crisis. I therefore think we can now discern potential transformations in global

politics, and some of the subsequent chapters highlight different dimensions of such potentialities. Of course, as Janine Brodie argues in Chapter 3, some of the movements and political responses might lead to reaction, while others may point towards to new forms of democracy, social solidarity and social justice.

## Overview of the contributions

So our contributors engage with some of these issues today. In addressing these issues they show how critical perspectives are crucial to the analysis of the constitution and relations of power and governance – in the emerging world order of the early 21st century.

Richard Falk's Chapter 2 analyses geopolitical aspects of the present period of turmoil and contradiction, with its unjust and unsustainable structures of inequality, hierarchy and exploitation. At the same time he sees the present era as a period of great excitement and hope for the future because of the way in which normative, ethical or 'soft' power has become increasingly ascendant as a modality of change. This is despite increased reliance on the part of dominant powers, notably the United States, on 'hard', military or coercive power.

Reflecting on the renewed growth of the self-actualization of peoples, Falk argues for new modes of 'horizoning' to help reshape global governance in line with broadly shared ethical values as reflected in the radical promise of the United Nations Charter. One way to do this is to reimagine our 'horizons of necessity' with respect for ecological limits, human dignity, democracy and equality, as well as to press for a rule of law that applies to all equally, and not just a law of the powerful to provide them with impunity and the right to punish others.

Falk notes that the academic discipline of International Relations, dominated by Realism, is complicit in mechanisms of domination as well as being unable to go beyond the blinkered 'horizons of feasibility' which anticipate the future as a piecemeal incremental continuation of the past or existing patterns governance (except for global restructuring as a result of major wars). This incrementalism, which along with an Orientalist epistemology on the part of Western leaders, underpins the power relations and representations of the *status quo* that are presented as *if* they are both normal and rational. This denies 'the likely intrusion of the unexpected': the discipline of International Relations was surprised by the end of the Cold War, the dismantling of apartheid in

South Africa, the 9/11 attacks, the 2008 financial meltdown, the birth of the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, Falk cites the influential book *The Black Swan* as reflecting how human history has involved 'essentially a narrative of the unexpected, the random and the implausible'.

Janine Brodie addresses the theme of inequality from the vantage point of its political and social aspects and how particularly income inequality has now become central to debates about the future of global governance in wake of the 2008 financial meltdown and the subsequent Great Recession. Her chapter underlines how not only questions concerning social and economic efficiency are related to issues of governance, but also how they contain different ethical and moral programmes of reform. Brodie also notes how there may be links between growing inequality and financial and economic performance as well as continuing instability and crisis. The roots of the present global crisis can be traced back to the origins of neoliberalism in the 1970s, and how it has deepened and extended through crises of different scales and depths, allowing for attempts to entrench market-enabling liberal regulation of capital and labour, validating the possessive individual risk taker, and the private sector as job creator, which are prioritized in public policy. However the 'inescapable paradox of individualization' under neoliberalism is that it is a collective condition, and everyone or more precisely almost everyone (not the less than 1% that benefits from neoliberal individualization) is in the same boat. Counter-movements are associated with a variety of political forces from left to reactionary right but they all focus upon the increasingly stark division between a small global plutocracy and the increasingly precarious and insecure conditions of existence for a very large and growing majority of the world population. Various political solutions seem to be emerging, as she puts it 'some progressive, some regressive, and some pathological'. Ultimately, for these movements, at issue is the following *political* question: 'whether an ethos of unconstrained greed or social responsibility will inform the future of global governance.'

Saskia Sassen's contribution follows the theme of inequality and addresses some of the structural characteristics of actually existing capitalism that lie behind many of the issues raised by Janine Brodie, in particular those associated with expanding the operational space

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<sup>17</sup> The dominant frameworks of International Relations have almost completely ignored the nature and consequences of the global crisis of accumulation since 2008 and its repercussions for world order.

for capitalist accumulation. The present phase is marked by 'predatory dynamics', including 'explicitly criminal forms' of accumulation rather than progress or development. Indeed today's neoliberal capitalism is characterized by displacement of the previous Keynesian economic logic that 'valued people as workers and consumers'. The neoliberal era involves the 'expulsion of people and the destruction of traditional capitalisms to feed the needs of high finance and the needs for natural resources'. Thus over the past 20 years or so increasing numbers of people have been 'expelled' from the economy in many parts of the world producing a 'brutal sorting of winners and losers'. As she notes: 'the natural resources of much of Africa and good parts of Latin America count more than the people on those lands count as consumers and as workers'.

Chapters 5 and 6 by Claire Cutler and Scott Sinclair both address how key aspects of global political economy and ecology have been subjected to the governance and disciplines of *new constitutionalism*, in ways that constrain democratic accountability and that seek to foreclose important future development alternatives. New constitutionalism involves a combination of governing practices (or governmentalities) to maximize the power of market forces in constituting society while simultaneously minimizing democratic accountability and public interest regulation of the political economy. These include: (1) macroeconomic policies and institutional arrangements such as independent central banks and balanced budget laws and, (2) new trade and investment laws, treaties and regulations, mechanisms, the latter of which are the principal foci of these two chapters. Such mechanisms serve to both protect and extend the investment and other rights of private corporations in ways that help constitute an emerging global market civilization. As binding laws and mechanisms, new constitutional disciplines are designed to lock in neoliberal policies and frameworks of governance to regulate the economy, society and ecology.

With respect to the debates concerning the significance of new constitutionalism for global governance, Claire Cutler focuses on questions of democracy and the nature of the rule of law. Scott Sinclair tends to focus more on the implications of new constitutionalism for the provision of public services and the mechanisms that contribute to the socialization of risk for the majority of the population (as opposed to bailouts for the wealthy) and the broader social reproduction of societies.

Both Cutler and Sinclair therefore provide us with a very clear and precise focus on key legal and regulatory aspects of global economic governance and how – albeit unevenly and across different jurisdictions

and sectors of the world economy – new constitutionalism has been consolidated, at least until the global economic meltdown began in 2008. At that point its precepts lost the aura of self-evidence as governments scrambled to deal with the crisis. As Sinclair points out in his chapter ‘the key rules and precepts of the investment and services regime were largely ignored during the 2008 financial crisis.’ Bailouts of financial institutions, enormous subsidies to automakers and a variety of stimulus measures with local content requirements all ‘violated the spirit, if not the letter, of trade agreements’. This illustrates the *contingency* rather than the necessity or permanence of *new constitutional disciplines and legal obligations*, particularly when capitalism as a system is threatened and how the necessity of responding to emerging crises in energy, climate, health and food security (all elements of the global organic crisis) will require extraordinary levels of state intervention and regulation. In other words the deepening crisis may in many respects serve to entrench further the mechanisms of *disciplinary neoliberalism*, whilst in others it may open up new spaces for contestation and for reimagining more equitable, socially just and sustainable forms of global economic governance, rather than forms that are dominated by the accumulation of profit and the logic of exchange value.<sup>18</sup>

Following on from these arguments, Isabella Bakker’s Chapter 7 addresses the question of global economic governance following the crisis that began in 2008 from a feminist political economy perspective to show how disciplinary neoliberalism maintains a ‘strategic silence’ that marginalizes the work and subjectivity of the vast majority of women so that their concerns are excluded from both national and global economic governance. A deafening strategic silence in dominant forms of economics is maintained by means of epistemological closure: economic problems are approached by means of an abstract economism that fails to recognize *all* of the work of women and men, both paid and unpaid, in not only the formal but also the so-called informal and household sectors. This epistemological framing of the economy marginalizes

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<sup>18</sup> A variety of concepts of *neoliberalism* are used throughout this book, and the precise meaning varies according to the emphasis given by the authors. I use the term disciplinary neoliberalism (Gill 1995a) to refer to the neoliberal politico-economic structures and processes associated with the project of capital to expand the scope and increase the power of market-based actors, structures and forces so that governments and other economic agents are disciplined and increasingly governed by market mechanisms. Disciplinary neoliberalism involves an uneven and variegated process that can operate across a range of scales and transfer mechanisms from local to global (Brenner et al. 2010).

key elements of provisioning associated with health, education, welfare and the socialization of risk, indeed the very institutions and practices of social reproduction upon which power and production in the formal economy are built.

The dominance of this perspective and the policy practices that go with it are linked to the intensification of neoliberal patterns of exploitation of human beings and nature, and result in growth in the direct and structural power of capital. However these patterns of accumulation and governance form a material and political crisis for increasing proportions of the world's population as inequality deepens in the global political economy. In response, Bakker proposes a radical epistemological and policy perspective to integrate gender equity and social justice into global economic governance in order to help to transform prevailing ideas, institutions and power potentials in a 'three-dimensional analysis of social forces'.

Upendra Baxi's complex and wide-ranging chapter provides a sketch for a thought-provoking research agenda on the remaking of world order and global governance. It suggests, for example, new ways to think about a complex set of questions involving: new 'materialities' of power; ethical practices; and different forms of reason, law and legitimacy. He advocates an approach that prises open the spaces for critical enquiry. That space and engagement is, however, constrained by 'hyper-globalization', which Baxi, citing Pierre Bourdieu, defines as involving neoliberalism's 'global war against plurality and difference', or what Emmanuel Levinas once called 'the imperialism of the same'. So this chapter can be read as both a deconstruction of hyper-globalization and dominant power as well as a critical reflection on how we can reimagine the future of global governance.

The chapter proceeds by addressing 'progressive' perspectives on the governance of the existing order, pointing out their serious lacunae across three clusters of issues: (1) conceptual/analytical relating to defining global governance and governmentality; (2) practices of power and resistance (e.g. relating to organized violence; rule of law; engagement in and with human rights discourses) and, (3) those relating to knowledge and the production of new imaginaries of the politically possible, based on insurgent reason.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Governmentality* involves the unity of rationalities, practices and mentalities of rule associated with the tactics, techniques and mechanisms deployed to govern as well as the (utopian) ends or goals involved.

For example, Baxi notes that apparatuses of security are however linked to both government and global governance since they are entrenched through the institution of state sovereignty, helping to explain why ‘production of conventional and catastrophic weapons systems (and their stockpiling) remains subject to very few obligations under international law’. Projects of progressive global governance therefore need to find ways to ‘deconstruct this constitution of the violent global, even the obscenity of such lethal planetary sovereignty’, addressing the so-called revolution in military affairs (RMA) and other ‘materialities’ associated with use of organized violence and social control. Baxi notes how this links to the expansion of neoliberal capitalism such that what seems to be emerging is a new ‘global market civilization... [involving] ... the “post-human” ... in which sites of non-biological intelligence shape and transform practices of domination [and of] ... resistance’.<sup>20</sup>

Such questions are fully implicated in the dialectic between hegemonic global governance practices and various forms of *both progressive and regressive resistance* (struggle, rebellion, insurrection and revolution) and contestation. In particular, Baxi highlights concepts of insurgent reason and how these relate to the foundational and ongoing use of violence as mechanisms of political change and subsequently of constituted power.<sup>21</sup> The French, American and Soviet Revolutions and struggles against colonization cannot be understood outside ‘the question of justification of the project of “ethical” violence’. Also, as Marx noted, the *rule of law* cannot be understood outside the histories of the ‘*reigns of terror*’.<sup>22</sup> Critical perspectives on global governance must therefore address the prospects of justified and justifiable ethical violence, as well as that which cannot be justified: for example, contemporary global

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<sup>20</sup> We live in a world of Facebook, Google and NSA algorithms that are intended to collect, shape and instrumentalize our political views, perspectives on current affairs, commercial preferences and even our emotions. See Stuart Dredge, ‘How does Facebook decide what to show in my news feed? Controversial emotion study is a reminder that the social network’s filters are constantly at work in the background.’ *The Guardian*, 30 June 2014.

<sup>21</sup> *Constituted* power results from the processes whereby dominant forces, even where they may have acquired power by violence, can transform such power so that it that appears as rightful governing authority, consolidated in processes of governance, often codified through constitutions and laws.

<sup>22</sup> The *rule of law* is an essentially contested concept and there is no general consensus about its significance or meaning in legal discourse or in national or global politics. Nevertheless it involves any legal system’s formal and normative content, its key institutions and its prevailing practices of law.

security discourse and its silences and ambiguities concerning political assassinations and practices of rendition in the so-called *wars on terror*. Critical thinkers might therefore reflect on typologies of political violence and non-violent action and use them in their critique of 'humanitarian intervention' and 'hegemonic practices of regime change'.

Stephen Gill's Chapter 9 addresses what might be called a moment at the historical crossroads of world order. Gill initially recapitulates some of the characteristic patterns of thought and practice associated with dominant conceptions of global governance, particularly as they emanate from principal theorists in the United States, and then, in more detail sketches some of the epistemological and political issues and questions associated with emerging radical perspectives that are producing new imaginaries and practices of global governance. He associates some of these developments with new forms of political agency and praxis in the emergent figure of the 'postmodern Prince', understood as set of plural forces in movement that seek to reconstruct global politics and to reclaim the Commons for humankind as opposed to the private interests of capital. These new forms of public, political agency have arisen partly in response to the massive failures of global governance as it is, and they point the way forward to new conceptions, movements and forces in global politics that are reshaping the emerging world order.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the chapters in this collection will stimulate critical reflection on the deep crises of global governance, and on some of the ways in which global transformations may be latent in, or are emerging from, the current historical conjuncture. With this *problématique* in mind, we should perhaps read the chapters in light of Upendra Baxi's note of epistemological caution for critical studies of global governance: Baxi warns against approaches that either have explanations for everything or those that offer simplified mystifications. Indeed, the remaking of the horizons of global governance will be a collective, and imaginative epistemological and political process.