Legitimacy dilemmas in global governance
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World Rule: Accountability, Legitimacy, and the Design of Global Governance. By Jonathan GS Koppell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 359 pp, $36 paperback (ISBN-13: 978-0-226-45099-5).

When contemporary scholars address the challenges facing global governance, the central question is typically the capacity of post-World War II multilateral institutions to adapt to changes in the global environment, whether a shifting distribution of power (Zakaria 2008), the emergence of global networks (Slaughter 2004), or growing expectations of democratic legitimacy (Keohane and Nye 2000). In *World Rule,* Jonathan Koppell addresses each of these conditions—his particular emphasis is on legitimacy—but with less concern for what's new than for the age-old tension between legitimacy and authority. *World Rule* contributes an encyclopedic survey and systematic analysis of the legitimacy-authority tension global governance organizations (GGOs) face, leaving no stone unturned in its quest. (Spoiler alert: Koppell's conclusion is that the tension can be mitigated, but not resolved.)

World Rule is about the structural dilemmas of institutional design. The central dilemma is that GGOs' sensitivity to leading powers' interests can make them less effective in providing global collective goods, and vice versa—or, in Koppell's terms, GGOs face a tradeoff between *responsiveness* (to the preferences of key constituents) and *responsibility* (to their formal mandates and informal norms). While prevailing IR theories tend to make assumptions about the predominance of one over the other—realists (Drezner 2007) and to a lesser extent liberal institutionalists (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2004) assume

GGOs emphasize responsiveness, while constructivists (Barnett and Finnemore 2004) assume they emphasize responsibility—Koppell problematizes these assumptions, aiming to explore and explain variation in which type of legitimacy GGOs favor.

The first two chapters of *World Rule* set up the analysis by tracing the contours of GGOs' legitimacy dilemma. Koppell seeks to disentangle distinct notions of legitimacy, beginning with Weberian concepts of legitimacy and authority and then explaining how GGOs—which necessarily have limited authority due to states' jealous defense of their sovereignty—are at pains to satisfy their constituents' competing demands for democratic accountability and effectiveness (sometimes known as input and output legitimacy). In the remainder of the book, Koppell explores variation and discerns patterns in a sample of 25 GGOs in terms of their responsibility or responsiveness orientation. He systematically deconstructs the various GGO mechanisms for representation and administration, rulemaking, adherence, and interest group participation, and through the use of cluster analysis identifies patterns between these design mechanisms and several "core characteristics," including sector, rule type, membership, funding, and technicality. (The specific results are too numerous and variegated to report in a short review.) In the conclusion, he aggregates the preceding analyses to identify three overarching GGO models—classical, cartel, and symbiotic—whose attributes reflect different choices regarding the responsibility-responsiveness tradeoff.

Among the key contributions of the book is Koppell's startlingly exhaustive examination of literatures related to his subject. *World Rule* addresses not only the extensive international institutions literature, ranging from "public" interstate regimes (e.g., the World Trade Organization) to private ones (i.e., NGO- and/or firm-led regimes like

the Forest Stewardship Council), but also a variety of scholarship in IR theory, comparative politics, organization theory, economics, sociology, and political philosophy to identify related concepts and theories. Indeed, even the empirical sections of the book are devoted more to assembling received knowledge from these literatures than to a standard large-N or case study analysis. Although this approach keeps *World Rule* at a high level of abstraction and perhaps wanting for empirical richness, the book makes an important integrative contribution by demonstrating that, despite the growing complexity of global governance in terms of the actors involved and structures created, a clear set of conceptual tools can be drawn from a variety of social science disciplines to impose order on this complexity.

Although Koppell explains the rationale of his case selection in chapter 3, to this reader the universe of cases to which his analysis applies was not entirely clear. On the one hand, the absence in his study of major multilateral institutions such as the United Nations Security Council or General Assembly, IMF, World Bank, European Union, NATO, or Group of 20 suggests a somewhat limited applicability of his model. On the other hand, given the breadth of the literature he is drawing on, Koppell seems to be addressing the legitimacy dilemmas of *all* governing systems—calling to mind an intended generality reminiscent of Hirschman's *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* (1970). For Koppell, GGOs appear to be one subset of a large universe of governance systems, a subset defined primarily by GGOs' limited capacity for coercion, lack of "taken for grantedness," and weak sense of community among their constituents (pp. 67-70). As such, *World Rule* implicitly critiques the standard if outdated IR distinction between the ordering principles of national versus international political systems (i.e., hierarchy versus anarchy), which is arguably a cardinal virtue of the book, but

there remains some question about whether the defining weakness of GGOs that he acknowledges militates against their comparison to other types of governance systems.

More generally, the reader learns early on what Koppell is *not* trying to do: he is not seeking to provide a parsimonious theory of why international institutions take the form they do. Rather, the book endeavors to integrate literatures that must speak to one another if we are to have proper theories of comparative global governance, and to articulate the concepts needed to classify legitimacy-authority tradeoffs across governance systems. *World Rule* engages in the difficult conceptual and taxonomical work of imposing structure on our understanding of the complex fields of global governance. In doing so, it swims against the tide of microfoundation-oriented rational choice work, and indeed the behavioral revolution more generally—it is something of a throwback to the early postwar era of scholarship on international organization emphasizing comprehensive description and classification of institutional functions and administration as potentially incipient elements of world government (see Rochester 1986).

Thus the reader is tempted to ask: does Koppell foresee in the near future a shift from global governance to world government (or "rule")? Probably not, though the prodigious scope of literature consulted and the discussion in the conclusion about the increasing "publicness" of GGOs—and thus the growing salience of their legitimacy dilemmas—suggest a proposed unification of "governance studies." Whether or one is convinced (as was this reader, to a large extent) of the wisdom of such a project, Koppell's book must be credited for its exhaustive work in developing an integrative framework to understand the complex legitimacy tradeoffs inherent in the design of global governance.

References

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