

***Multiplication of Global Governance Authority:
Contestation, In/formalization, and Constellations***

*Max Planck Research Group "The Multiplication of Authorities in Global Governance Institutions",
Janne Mende, Ruji Auethavornpipat, Gordon Friedrichs, Marie Lohrum, Fumie Nakamura,
Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law*

The complex landscape of global governance is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by a proliferation of actors and institutions that transcend traditional interstate boundaries. Accordingly, globalization processes, complex interdependencies, and the emergence of international (poly)crises have led to a multiplication of the forms, scopes and manifestations of authority in global governance. The conventional notion of public authority, primarily wielded by nation states, is being supplemented by a diverse array of governance authorities stemming from a spectrum of actors, including private entities such as businesses and non-governmental organizations, hybrid actors like cities, and international and regional organizations. What sets this contemporary global landscape apart is its inherent dynamism and fluidity, with governance structures continually adapting to meet evolving challenges and create (or undermine) opportunities for agency.

Scholars of international relations, global governance, international law and adjacent fields have long studied the steadily evolving and shifting landscape of global governance authority. This *call for papers* builds on that scholarship to further capture transformative developments challenging the conventional understanding of public authority as solely emanating from states. When non-state actors assume (semi-)public roles, they also take on various forms of authority, with far-reaching implications for intergovernmental organizations, society, states, and other global governance actors.

Against this background, we want to bring scholars together for a systematic investigation of governance authority across different actors, governance levels, policy fields and regime types. Specifically, we want to investigate the forms of authority that various state and non-state actors yield in contemporary global governance architectures, advancing our understanding of the interplay between actors, the challenges of hierarchy, negotiation, contestation and institutionalization, and the evolving forms of authority in global governance.

To ensure that differing conceptual and empirical perspectives can be encompassed, compared and integrated, we operationalize the concept of authority by studying its interrelated components of power, legitimacy and public interests. Broadly, we understand governance authority as the (discursive, material, social, political, structural, hard or soft) power to participate in global governance and/or to affect matters of public interest. It is or strives to be legitimate via its contribution to public interests, be it in the form of general problem-solving or particular common goods such as climate protection, or else embedded in fundamental norms such as human rights. We use these three components as a common framework of analysis, leaving room for competing approaches that assign differing roles or scopes to each component.

On this basis, we invite papers that study authority by applying one (or more) of three lenses: contestation, in/formalization, and constellations of authority.

Contestation of authority: The ubiquity of contestation in international politics gives rise to challenges to the legitimacy, power and scope of both consolidated and diffuse forms of authority. Contestation may revolve around issues of representation, accountability, and decision-making processes, and interacts with processes of politicization and fragmentation. Moreover, the dynamic and fluid nature of global governance means that contestation is not confined to a single static state of affairs but is an ongoing process, reflecting the evolving interests and priorities of diverse stakeholders, as well as power dynamics, normative struggles, and challenges to the existing order(s). We aim to understand the role of contestation in constructing or weakening (certain aspects of) authority and how this relates to certain focal points/windows of opportunity, including but not limited to crises.

In/formalization of authority: In a world marked by a proliferation of actors and diverse constellations of authority, international institutions are an essential mechanism for managing and formalizing (or undermining) the roles of governance actors. Formalization in the form of institutionalization involves the establishment of rules, norms, and procedures that guide interactions among states, non-state actors, and intergovernmental organizations. Institutionalization enables the delegation of authority and decision-making processes, and makes the interplay between private, public, and hybrid actors more stable and predictable. Moreover, institutions can be seen as nodes in the network of global governance, influencing power relations and shaping compliance with established rules. At the same time, we are also witnessing reversed processes leading to an informalization of authority. Remarkably, this does not necessarily involve a weakening, but can also strengthen authority, including (but not limited to) its liquid, epistemic, moral and personal forms. We therefore aim to capture the full range of how formalization and informalization processes affect authority, and vice versa.

Constellations of authority: As authority is relational and context-dependent, we invite papers studying the actors involved in or affected by authority relations. Who are the subjects and objects of authority, who are the audiences, and who is deemed as irrelevant (and thereby excluded from global politics)? How does authority relate to the general public or to objects of authority that are not actors, such as processes? Moreover, the proliferation of governance actors, ranging from states to non-state and inter-state entities, transcends the classic distinction between public and private actors. We are interested in innovative concepts of authority that account for the multiplicity of public, private and other roles, which do not, however, simply abandon the distinction of a public and a private sphere as such, but transform that distinction. Moreover, the transfer of norms, practices, and policies among actors results in shifts in the constellations of authority, impacting the way actors exercise power and cooperate on global issues. The spread of governance modes, rules, and best practices across borders can be both a source of cooperation and competition. Through the lens of constellations, we aim to analyze how (and which) forms of governance authority are adopted, adapted or resisted by different actors, and how these changes influence global governance dynamics.

Overall, we invite contributors to discuss authority studying different actors, governance levels, policy fields and regime types in global politics by

- a) focusing on one (or more) of the components of governance authority (power, legitimacy, common good/public interest) and*
- b) applying one (or more) of the three lenses (contestation, in/formalization, constellations).*

We are interested in a wide range of conceptual, empirical, and methodological perspectives to address the guiding question: Which roles do power, legitimacy, or public interests play for the contestation, in/formalization, or constellations of authority in global governance?

Based on the three lenses of contestation, in/formalization, and constellations of authority, and governance authority's central components of power, legitimacy and its connection to common goods/public interests, we aim to create a conceptual pattern of governance authority that traces the distinctions as well as the overlaps between different forms of authority, the actors yielding authority, and the respective institutional contexts. This conceptual pattern is to consider multiple forms of public authority, private authority, and a third space that goes beyond a dichotomous public-private distinction.

Timeline

We kindly ask you to send a working title of your paper and a 250-word abstract to maggi-rg@mpil.de by **Sunday, December 17th, 2023**. Notifications of selection will be sent out in January 2024.

Selected papers will be part of a special issue or an edited volume with an internationally renowned press, to be published in 2025.

In order to make sure that the selected papers resonate well with the overall project as well as with each other, we will discuss early drafts (so as to leave enough room for alignment) at an authors' workshop at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg, taking place on **July 11th-12th, 2024**.

Editing team

Max Planck Research Group "The Multiplication of Authorities in Global Governance Institutions",
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Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg.

Further information:

<https://www.mpil.de/en/pub/research/projects/research-groups/the-multiplication-of-authorit.cfm>

Contact: maggi-rg@mpil.de