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Global governance in the context of global challenges

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Abstract

International community is facing multiple challenges of global nature. Because of supranational nature, many of occurring trends go beyond the scope and competences of individual states. This implies the necessity of coordinating actions that would allow for effective management of these challenges. The concept of global governance constitutes an attempt at searching for adequate global solutions.The objective of the paper is to discuss the essence of global governance concept approached as a network of relationships between various actors without hierarchical structure, the aim of which should be regulation of common matters through public and private institutions. This concept may not be analysed in isolation from the context of dynamic changes associated with globalisation processes that accelerated global governance. The second part of the paper presents the global context in a concise way. The last part is the analysis of conceptualisation of global governance, and it presents the most important issues that form the greatest barriers for effective global governance. Fragmentation and proliferation of institutions and actors, lack of legitimation and also complexity and uncertainty of contemporary global architecture are indicated among these problems.
The paper assumes the following thesis: The idea of global governance has been developing very dynamically since its emergence in 1980s; however it still does not constitute a coherent concept that would be an effective instrument for management of global problems.

Keywords: Governance, global governance, architecture of global governance, globalisation, global challenges

1. Introduction

Intensifying globalisation processes have been gradually changing global order in recent years while affecting administrative, economic, political, ecological, technological and cultural spheres. Transformations observed nowadays determine the directions of development of contemporary global economy but also the character of future generations. Majority of challenges faced by the contemporary world have a supranational dimension that goes beyond unilateral solutions. The concept of global governance constitutes an attempt at searching for adequate global solutions.

The debate concerning global governance takes place at the same time on the grounds of theoretical scientific research and in the context of practical solutions. In 1987 in the report *Our Common Future* prepared by World Commission on Environment and Development, the

definition of sustainable development[1], which is universally adopted nowadays, was formulated. It was indicating the necessity of global implementation of globally accepted strategies of operation in this sphere. More formal origins of the idea for creation of global governance are associated with the publication of the report of the Commission on Global Governance entitled *Our Global Neighbourhood* in 1995. In the report that was quite intensely criticised by supporters of the principle of state independence, strong interdependence of nations and economies, and the need to enhance actions and institutional solutions within global governance was indicated. Since 1990s the notion of global governance has rapidly become a successful keyword in both political and scientific debates.

The objective of the paper is to discuss the essence of global governance concept. The first part of the paper shows the concept and definitions of global governance. The second part presents the global context in a concise way. The last part contains the analysis of conceptualisation of global governance, and it presents the most important issues that create the greatest barriers impeding effective global governance.

The paper assumes the following thesis: The idea of global governance has been developing very dynamically since its emergence in 1980s; however it still does not constitute a coherent concept that would be an effective instrument for management of global problems.

2. Global governance: some preliminary considerations

The concept of global governance is one of those ideas that raised general interest both on political ground and in academic discussions. Since 1990s global conferences and meetings of Heads of States have been more and more frequently organised on an international scale. They became the proof of qualitative evolution in international politics. The importance of nation state and intergovernmental actions is changing. Entities, other than governments are occurring on international arena. Their economic and political significance is growing. Transnational corporations, international civil society or non-governmental organisations of dispersed, most often non-lucrative goals, are becoming active actors of the global arena.

The publication of James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel, *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* of 1992, became the basis for theoretical discussions concerning global governance even though the very notion of global governance did not appear there. Rosenau and Czempiel (1992, p. 4) distinguished the notions of "government" and "governance" while explaining that the category of "government" concerns the government actions based on legislation and state monopoly on violence, and the category of "governance" refers to forms of control of processes. Their scope is very extensive, from informal agreements to formal institutions that have the instruments of restraint and the possibility of forced implementation of undertaken decisions at their disposal. The notion of "governance" is a broader notion and „embraces governmental institutions, but it also subsumes informal, non-governmental mechanisms whereby those persons and organizations within its purview move ahead, satisfy their needs, and fulfill their wants". The shift from "government" to "governance" was the symptom of changes associated with post-war consolidation of neoliberal democracy (Rosenau, Czempiel, 1992).

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[1] The sustainable development can be understood as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987).

The beginning of publishing activity of *Global Governance* journal in 1995 gave rise to extensive discussion concerning global governance. In the first edition of the journal Rosenau (1995, p. 13) proposed a very broad definition of the term approached as „systems of rule at all levels of human activity from the family to the international organization in which the pursuit of goals through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions".

Barnett and Duvall noticed that not even a decade was enough to change global governance from almost totally unknown notion to one of the leading slogans "in the practice and study of international affairs" (2005, p. 1). However over two decades of discussions have not brought a consensus in the sphere of definition, and an explicit and coherent definition has not been formulated yet. Finkelstein (1995, p. 367-368) emphasised the ambiguity of the notion of "global governance". He associated the first ambiguity with the expression of "global" that was wrongly identified with the notions of "international", "interstate", "intergovernmental" or "transnational". "Global" refers both to the dynamics of changes in relationships between the states in global space, and to understanding of the very dynamics of these changes. Ambiguity also refers to the notion of "global governance" therefore it is used "because we don't really know what to call what is going on".

Dingwerth and Pattberg (2006) noticed that even though some flexibility in application of the notion of global governance is theoretically desirable and empirically unavoidable, the chaos with respect to definition and conceptualisation of this notion can be an obstacle for formation of a coherent theory of global governance. The concept of global governance can be approached as a phenomenon that refers to managing global problems but it can also be perceived as a project the goal of which is the growth of (liberal) world order. It is emphasised that to avoid chaos, differentiation between the concept of global governance as a set of observable phenomena, and the concept of global governance as a political program is necessary (Dingwerth, Pattberg, 2006). Ba and Hoffman (2005) approach global governance as a worldview that refers to a new analytical approach.

According to Finkelstein (1995, p. 369) global governance is "governing, without sovereign authority, relationships that transcend national frontiers. Global governance is doing internationally what governments do at home". Ruggie (2014, p. 5) defines the term as „governance, at whatever level of social organization it occurs, refers to this system of authoritative norms, rules, institutions, and practices by means of which any collectivity, from the local to the global, manages its common affairs". Governance is a dynamic network of constantly changing relationships between various actors that includes non-hierarchical structures, and also dispersed and polycentric power centres (Rosenau, Czempiel, 1992).

3. Why does the global governance matter?

Nowadays many changes that are observed in economic, political, social, ecological or cultural spheres have the nature of global megatrends. This global nature refers to mutual relationships between particular processes but also to consequences of these phenomena. These changes affect individuals and societies and they shape their future, but at the same time they affect the whole humankind while going beyond national borders and continents.

The demographic factors have become a crucial determinant of global security. Due to serious diversity in population growth, population density, age structure or the level of available resources between particular economies, projecting demographic changes on international level

or on the level of continent is not possible. However demographic problems in this or another dimension concern the whole world. The world population reached one billion in 1800, and the population of the world is expected to increase from 6.5 billion in 2005 to 9.1 billion in 2050 (medium variant) (Bongaarts, 2009). Rapidly growing world population accelerates negative trends not only in demographic but also economic, social or ecological dimension. The world population growth rate has fallen from its peak of 2 percent per year in the late 1960s to 1.2 per cent today (DESA, 2005, p. 5). As a result of increased longevity, declining fertility and the ageing of "baby boom" generations, population ageing is taking place in every country in the World (Bloom, Canning, Fink, 2010; Bloom, Boersch-Supan, McGee, Seike, 2011). However population ageing generates many challenges the results of which have social as well as economic dimension with reference to economic growth, the sector of public finances, social security systems or the well-being of the elderly (Bongaarts, 2004; Bloom, Boersch-Supan, McGee, Seike, 2011). The wave of mass migrations[2] and very high mobility of contemporary societies also affect demographic changes in global approach. World migrations have been in the last decade one of the most urgent problems but also the worst managed one (DESA, 2016; Martin, 2016; Royuela, Castells-Quintana, 2014. Demographic explosion generates accelerated urbanisation that increases the pressure on the environment and its resources. It is estimated that the world's urban population reaching 2.3 billion people in 2005 will have grown to 5 billion persons by 2030. Urbanisation, particularly sustainable urbanisation is becoming an enormous challenge to contemporary societies (Glaeser, 2013). Rapidly growing number of megacities and conurbations is one of the characteristic forms of spatial organisation of contemporary societies. This form constitutes a huge threat and source of potential ecological and social disasters.

The socio-economic development and globalization increases the negative effects on the environment (Bochańczyk-Kupka, Pęciak, 2015; Stiglitz 2013). Pressure in the sphere of natural environment is one of the earliest and most frequently discussed global problems. Environmental upheavals including environment degradation and pollution, climate change, depletion of natural resources, growing pressure with reference to world water resources[3] and water scarcity present a profound threat to food security, risk of biodiversity decline and many other phenomena in natural environment of man. They pose larger and larger threat to the world eco-system and universal well-being, and they also represent a real threat to the future of human population. Disastrous consequences of environmental changes and also anthropogenic impact on the environment and societies over the planet's ecological capacity are apparent not only in the natural, but also in economic, political and social environment. In the aforementioned report *Our Common Future* it was accepted that the idea of sustainable development assumes that there is interdependence between economic development of societies and the environmental quality (Bochańczyk-Kupka, Pęciak, 2015). It was one of the first initiatives that showed the necessity of implementation of global sustainable development strategy. The awareness that the scope and

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[2] The number of international migrants worldwide has grown rapidly over the past fifteen years reaching 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000. Nowadays 76 million of international migrants live in Europe, 75 million in Asia, 54 million in Northern America (DESA, 2016, p. 6).

[3] The report: The 2030 Water Resources Group (2012, p.16) states that the gap between water supply and demand is projected to be of 40% in 2030. Global water crisis that is coming closer is extensively discussed in research conducted by scientific research centres, transnational organisations, governmental and non-governmental organisations (Cooley et al., 2014; The WRG, 2012).

complexity of challenges associated with the problem of natural environment goes beyond national and regional borders is growing. This implies relevance of implementation of global solutions (The WRG, 2012, p.16). However in the face of many problems in the global dimension, sustainable development strategy seems to be difficult to implement.

The shift in power and change of civilisation megatrend that is associated with the shift of world economic activity of developed West to the countries of Asia and Middle East might be the most important in economic dimension. The global balance of power has changed significantly; we observe the economic and political rise of developing countries like India, Brazil, Russia, and, particularly, China, and at the same time the slowing growth in mature developed markets. Over recent decades, the importance of emerging markets has been growing. They have become major players in the world economy but also in international trade (Hanson, 2012; Cox, 2012; Kappel, 2011; Subacchi, 2008). According to Cox (2012, p. 369) „the new truth of the early twenty-first century that the Western world we have known is fast losing its pre-eminence to be replaced by a new international system shaped either by the so-called BRICs". The crisis of 2008 showed weaknesses of mature economies even more explicitly, because they were the economies of the USA, Europe and Japan that experienced the results of collapse on financial markets most severely.

Globalisation process reflected in strengthening of relationships between individuals, but also between states, and also intensification of these relationships is not a zero-sum game in which you either win or lose. Consequences of this process are not explicitly positive or clearly negative. This brings various threats as well as chances for development for many economies (Radelet, 2016). Growing globalisation process strengthened by information and technological revolution is intensifying the problems on a global scale.

The most frequently mentioned global phenomenon include changing demography and problem of ageing population, urbanization, rising geographic mobility, climate change and environmental degradation, scarcity of resources, rise of chronic diseases, continued globalization, fast technology and innovation, rise of cyber dependency, growing middle class in emerging economies, growth of global income and social inequalities and increasing polarization of societies, growing importance of individual, increased importance of health and wellbeing, increased impact of consumer technology adoption and consumer service demands, entrepreneurship rising and failure to protect human rights. The very important issues are dynamically changing world-power landscape, shift in global economic power from West to East, change of the direction of capital flow – from developing emerging markets to mature economies, and from state capital to private corporations, growing problem of debt on a global scale, increase in organised crime, rise of international terrorism, or changing landscape of international governance with increasing national sentiment.

Majority of contemporary phenomena which are faced by poor and wealthy countries, go beyond administrative borders of states and continents. Absorption of unfavourable global effects demands combining and coordinating various activities conducted by various entities on various levels. Global nature of the phenomena needs integrated, global actions, and this generates the need to establish governance and rule-making on the global level. Solving problems existing on the world scale is not possible without close cooperation on transnational and global level (Barnett, Duvall, 2005). If mechanisms of sustainable increase in everybody's wealth do not occur, the planet will not be able to meet increasingly larger burden of population as well as ecological burden, and the world will drift towards violence and conflict (Severino, Ray, 2011).

4. Conceptualisation of global governance

Classical approach to governance is reduced to the question of power, i.e. who is in power? What institution or group of institutions are legitimate to use power? How is potential power abuse verified? How autonomy and freedom of an individual can be protected? (Barnett, Duvall, 2005, p. 2). In classical interpretation of power, the state is „the source, and the exclusive location, of legitimate, public authority" (Hall, Biersteker 2002, p. 3), whereas in the context of "global" it is necessary to understand multi-level structures of governance (Biermann, Pattberg, Asselt, Zelli, 2010; Coen, Pegram 2015).

International relationships after World War II were characterised by severe proliferation of global governance. Rapid development of international institutions was observed at the time (eg. the United Nations, the Bretton Woods system, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund). They controlled actions of states and other actors of social and economic life. These actions focussed on regulations in the sphere of international law, firstly in the area of human rights and environment while forming legal framework for relationships between the states. Therefore the first research in the area of the concept of global governance focussed mainly on international relations and formal mechanisms of multilateral public institutions. Weaknesses of these institutions have been apparent both in the presence of economic crises (East Asian Crisis in 1997 or global crisis in 2008) and during humanitarian, demographic or ecological crises.

Traditional way of shaping relationships in global space, reached an impasse firstly as a result of decline of Bretton Woods system that was stabilising international financial market, and then as a consequence of the end of the cold war that for many years had been quasi-balancing international relations between the West and the East. In the last decades of the 20th century the wave of neo-liberalism spread both to mature economies and to the countries that just entered the path of fast development. The Washington Consensus concerning privatisation, deregulation and commercial liberalisation has became the foundations for reforms conducted not only in post-socialist, but also in Asian, Latin American and Sub-Saharan countries. Globalisation process supported by neoliberal fundamentalism, weakened traditional method of ruling and managing, and also decreased the power of national governments, and capability of national institutions to manage effectively social and economic problems (Wapner, 1995; Gilpin, 2002). Regional institutions (eg. EU) and then supranational institutions with independent authority (eg. ICC, WTO, ILLO, WHO) started to occur gradually on global governance arena (Ruggie, 2004).

The process of democratisation and economic liberalisation, as well as growing technological transformation resulted in rapid growth of numerous, diversified and increasingly more influential civil society organisations and networks (Nelson, 2007).

The second generation of global governance research concerned the search for new forms of public and private global order that would constitute the response to cross-border challenges.

A growing number of new economic and political actors both in public and in private sector, who actively participate in global management, are changing the structure of global governance (Ruggie, 2004). Among new actors, not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and transnational corporations (TNCs) perform a

significant role, but growing importance of intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) cannot be neglected (Koenig-Archibugi, 2011; Weiss, Selye, Coolidge, 2013).

Globalisation process and rapid liberalisation of economies brought into arena multinational corporations the importance of which is growing not only on economic level[45]. A lot of TNCs have a real possibility, and also political and economic power to shape governance at national and international levels effectively, mainly through lobbying of laws and policies that serve the interests of these entities.

Special attention should be paid to the share of the sector of non-governmental organisations in global public policy. NGOs are recognized as the key third sector actors that constitute a counterbalance both to national governments and to business entities, including TNCs. There are estimated 10 million NGOs worldwide. NGOs shape conditions and affect concluded agreements and they actively operate on landscapes of development, human rights, world peace, environment, humanitarian action, rules of war, humanitarian emergencies, gender issues, economic development, demography, health policy, business regulation, and environmental protection and other areas of public action (Wapner, 1995, p. 312). NGOs put pressure on government in relation to shaping the state policy, co-create conditions of functioning of international system while strengthening or weakening interstate cooperation. Organisations that associate activists are not only pressure groups, but they are becoming an active political actor (Wapner, 1995, 312); they are not only stakeholders in governance but constitute a driving force while actively shaping international cooperation (Gemmill, Bamidele-Izu, 2002).

A lot of these new non-states actors are associated within their activity with the phenomenon of globalisation (Hall, Biersteker 2002, p. 4), but generally speaking, the participation of non-state actors in public policy-making, particularly IGOs and NGOs improves the quality of public policies.

The third generation of global governance research is based on theoretical grounds of research programs in this area, but also on empirical studies concerning various actions and functioning of institutions which aim at resolving global challenges. Such an approach ought to include the dynamics of global shaping of policy and a broad system of institutions and governance mechanisms in particular areas of world policy.

Proliferation of institutions and actors on local, regional, national and supranational levels, both private and public, and also expansion of norms, regulations and discourses in global affairs have been observed in recent decades in the world politics. As a result of these changes, global system of management is becoming increasingly more presumed, and global governance architecture is more and more often referred to.

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[4] The basic statistics of international production for the Top 100 MNEs shows that the size and level of internationalization of the largest MNEs have significantly increased over the last two decades; the assets of the largest MNEs have grown from 41 per cent to about 61 per cent (foreign as % of total), and total employment have grown from 48 per cent to about 58 per cent (UNCTAD, 2016, p.142).

[5] According to Fortune Global 500 in 2015 the world's 500 largest companies generated 27.6 trillion USD in revenues and 1.5 trillion USD in profits and they employ 67 million people worldwide and are represented by 33 countries.

The global governance architecture describes the broader institutional complex in areas of international relations such as international security, finance, trade, and protection of the environment. The global governance architecture includes organizations, regimes, and other forms of principles, norms, regulations, and decision-making procedures (Biermann, Pattberg, Asselt, Zelli, 2010). This system is "a patchwork of international institutions that are different in their character (organizations, regimes, and implicit norms), their constituencies (public and private), their spatial scope (from bilateral to global), and their subject matter (from specific policy fields to universal concerns)" (Biermann, Pattberg, Asselt, Zelli, 2010, p. 16).

Creation of global architecture in response to growing problems is a necessity. However, the question is what global architecture should look like.

There are several suggestions. According to some opinions, the global governance architecture should constitute a totally integrated system of institutions that impose regulations by means of systemic and hierarchical principles. The importance of "single integrated legal agreement" as a global solution to a policy problem is emphasised within this solution (Keohane, Victor, 2011, p. 7). The global governance architecture can also constitute a highly fragmented group of institutions the core of which is not clearly identified, and between which weak relationships exist. There are the so-called regime complexes between such two solutions of global architecture (Keohane, Victor, 2011, p. 7). Other authors, while combining global governance solutions with specific challenges that international society face, notice the necessity to form a polycentric system. Ostrom (2012) claims that in the area of global environment governance, polycentric system would allow for implementation of gradual reduction of greenhouse gas emission, and at the same time it would be an impulse for international system to start activities.

Effective global governance cannot be discussed without effective international cooperation on various stages of the policy-making process (Koenig-Archibugi, 2011). Slaughter (2006, p. 32) believes that the mechanism based on the network of cooperation of international institutions and government networks that together would form a system of global governance can be the solution to global governance.

Some others, including Coen and Pegram (2015, p. 417), state that global governance does not work. More and more dynamic economic globalisation and also growing interdependence in cross-border and transnational activities makes it de facto impossible to create mechanisms of global management and global coordination that would effectively counteract negative global phenomena.

Some challenges that global governance faces are associated with specific area of activities like for example environment management. Some of these challenges are endemic and typical of the whole international system. Endemic problems for the whole global management include proliferation and fragmentation, lack of cooperation and coordination among international organizations, lack of implementation, enforcement and effectiveness, inefficient use of resources as well as non-state actors in a state-centric system (Najam, Papa, Taiyab, 2006, p. 29).

Fragmentation that affects both legal and institutional global governance architecture is one of the problems that are most often indicated (Ruggie, 2004). Fragmentation approached as a result of growing proliferation, specialisation and diversification of institutions, actors and decision-makers, as well as norms and regulations, implies the lack of coherence within global

governance. Fragmentation concerns not only traditional economic area in which private institutions operate, but also other areas from health, through financial sector to the areas associated with climate. However, complexity of the system and also activity and decisions of many entities may generate uncertainty (Coen, Pegram, 2015).

Despite the fact that the number of entities operating in global space, networks of governments, NGOs, transnational corporations and other entities is growing, they lack legitimacy and accountability (Slaughter, 2006; p. 32). Global governance searches for common international consensus in the form of cooperation on many management levels, but without strictly determined hierarchic structures in the process of decision-making and lack of strong legitimisation, the decision-making process may be ineffective.

Erosion of authority and limited capability of international institutions to solve cross-border social problems constitute an obstacle to proliferation of global governance.

Lack of transparency and asymmetries in access to various decision-making processes are often shown as the reason for lack of legitimation. Generally, the decision-making process is dominated by developed countries, which does not reflect current changes in economic powers in the world. Growing importance of the states of emerging markets, particularly China and other Asian countries, and their shares in the world economy does not find reflection in decision-making processes. Establishment of the Group of Twenty (G20) the significance of which has been growing since global financial crisis of 2008 was the response to this asymmetry. G20 includes some major developing countries and in a larger degree it reflects the distribution of economic power in the World. This is because the states represent about 85 per cent of global GDP, over 75 per cent of global trade and about 65 per cent of the world's population (Kirchner, 2016). At the same time, a considerable number of states remain outside decision-making system which arises doubts concerning representativeness, inclusiveness and accountability.

5. Conclusion

Global nature of occurring trends, economic, environmental and social problems, as well as dynamic changes constitute the core of contemporary life in microeconomic and macroeconomic dimension. Demographic trends, consumption model observed in highly developed societies, but also more and more often in dynamically developing economies of emerging markets, growing world polarisation and increasingly stronger social and economic disparities between the rich and the poor, the issue of climate and environmental changes and the anthropogenic impact on the environment and societies, international threats, and finally, consequences of economic power change and shift in world leadership from mature economies to dynamically developing countries remain beyond the control of national economies. These and many other expressions of dynamic changes in the world structure need undertaking actions beyond administrative borders of states and even beyond institutional intergovernmental solutions.

Traditional way of shaping relationships in global space does not constitute the response to growing problems. Dynamic changes in the world dimension resulted in the fact that the state, but also intergovernmental institutions lost the capability to shape top-down social and economic order, and non-state actors start to perform a greater role in this process.

Global governance approached as a network of relationships between various actors without hierarchical structure, the aim of which should be regulation of common matters through public and private institutions is more and more frequently indicated within postulates of

reconstruction of the world order. However, global governance is not a coherent concept. The problem does not only concern definition issues but mainly the possibility to implement this concept in practice. What should global institutional architecture look like? Are states or transnational organisations predestined to manage global phenomena? What should be the contribution of non-state actors in this management? How can equal access to decision-making process be ensured and equality of all entities on international arena be guaranteed? Are soft forms of cooperation that are a fundamental tool of global governance sufficient to implement tasks and goals on a global level? Or maybe institutions with strong decision-making legitimation should be established? The answers to these and other questions are still waiting to be answered.

The debate concerning global governance is really vibrant both on theoretical ground and on the ground of practical solutions. Nevertheless, global governance still does not constitute a coherent concept that would be an effective instrument of global problems management.

However, in the presence of the dynamics of processes and changes, and also in the face of threats both in the area of human rights, in social, economic, demographic and ecological dimension, the solution offered by global governance is an imperative. Well-being in a long term and humanity survival may be its goal. Establishment of global governance architecture that might enable to stop destructive activity of people in many areas seems to be a necessity and a difficult task at the same time. Global governance can be a guarantee that nation states and societies will undertake cooperation in most critical areas (economic, environmental, security and political), while solving problems together, with no violence, and providing protection of their common interests and values.

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