<u>Is Global Governance still working nowadays?</u>

During the last sessions of "Challenges of Globalization" class, the topic of Global Governance came into discussion a couple of times and some of the ideas that were exposed were very interesting for further debate. Generally, there are some opinions stating that Global Governance is something unnecessary and difficult or even impossible to reach nowadays, and others think that as time passes by, global governance becomes more important, more essential, and probably, the multiple international phenomenon that global governance has to deal with are increasingly becoming more complex and difficult to address and that's why we need such a mechanism.

For this paper, I would like to address this topic and write about if Global Governance has been working during the last five years approximately.

Since there could be confusion on what's "Global Governance", it should be known that there's not a global and stablished definition for this concept. But through wrapping up some of the most used definitions it could be said that global governance is the sum of all systems of rule such as public and private institutions, and even individuals, which collectively, identify, understand and tackle international issues which couldn't be managed with the exclusive use of states.[1] The actions taken to resolve these problems can both be, formal and informal. For example, a formal action would be the elaboration of a treaty or agreement which has to be signed and binding for all the parties involved in a dispute and an informal action could be establishing a dialog between the parties involved in a given dispute or problem. So for us, individuals, global governance is mostly used to contribute to our understanding of how the world works and what we might do to change that. Anyways, we also have to keep in mind that global governance is a dynamic interactive process, so its definition or meaning might slightly vary throughout the years; it is an adaptive term because nowadays the meaning of global governance is not the same as the one used fifty years ago. That means that as time goes by, we might want to review its meaning and adapt it to the new circumstances that globalization might drive the society into.

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[1] "Our Global Neighborhood – Chapter 1, a new world", *Report of the Commission on Global Governance*. http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/global-neighbourhood/chap1.htm

Throughout the past few years, we have been constantly in contact with the global governance phenomenon and also in contact with the problems it has to deal with. According to the international relations British scholar, Susan Strange, the three main problems that are global and with which we have to coexist are the following ones: environmental problems, international financial crises and growing inequalities, mostly between the North-South relations.

For the past five years, the most commented topics of international nature have probably been, environmental issues, mainly related to climate change, the raise of terrorism which is linked to international security and as a third topic, the rise of populism has been of great importance specially in European countries. The perception that these three have been the most notorious topics, can be caused by the fact that the media has done a large and intense coverage on these topics. These issues are considered to be under the frame of global governance, because they affect and are affected by different actors, from individuals to private actors such as multinational companies.

Regarding environment, this is a topic which is being treated since many decades, and it is also one of the most developed areas in global politics because of the big amount of agreements that have been signed, today there are more than 200 multilateral agreements signed over this concrete topic.[2] After knowing these two quick facts, the first thing that should appear in our mind is, that topics such as climate change, don't have the improvement that should have. We have to take into consideration that climate change is one of the most treated issues in the history of global politics.

This has happened because global governance on environmental issues is fragmented due to the large number of institutions that are playing a role in environmental governance. On the one hand we can find something positive, which is that there exist many actors that are committed to the improvement of the environment, actors that move from individuals who are environmental activists to government or even companies which are implementing eco-friendly policies in a daily basis. But on the other hand, we find the negative part of this big amount of diverse actors looking towards a better environment, which causes the difficulty to arrive to a global consensus. It can be said that the more people involved when making a decision, the harder it is to reach a conclusion in which every party feels comfortable. In environment, despite the fact that many agreements have

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[2] HELD, D. "The Diffusion of Authority" (2014).

been reached, its global situation has not gotten any better, maybe there are consensus on gas emissions levels, but the effects of climate change are still going on, and maybe for each agreement reached, there are two new challenges appearing. So in this case, quality should be better than quantity. Agreements which are really effective are urgently required, even if they are only very few ones.

Moving into the topic of global security, we can find one of the most relevant actors which is the United Nations Security Council, in here despite there are many countries participating, we find the veto power, so there's also a concentration of power among the five permanent members (The United States, China, Russia, France and The United Kingdom). As it happened with environment, in security issues there have also been may agreements reached, but there are still many conflicts going on, both at the international and national level. So again, we are facing the ineffectiveness of many of these treaties. Nowadays one of the most important threats that the world is facing is the raise of international terrorism. It is important to know that terrorism itself is not a new threat, but nowadays there are new kinds of terrorism that require coordination at the global level and the engagement of the different actors participating in the international arena. In this case it is difficult to find a solution to eradicate this problem or to find strategies to mitigate it.[3] On the one hand we can find one of the most well-known actors within this scope, which are terrorist groups. Terrorist groups are hard to tackle because they are not just located in one unique place, they are spread all over the world and that's why it is so difficult to find a solution and face these terrorist groups who are threatening the worldwide population. On the other hand we can find some other actors that challenge global security, and those are cyber terrorists or actors whose objective is to pursue hacking activities against, normally, governments and their personnel and also multinational companies and their employees. Again, those are actors that are difficult to face since they don't have a specific location and normally they have more cyber knowledge than many governments and other actors that might suffer from the activities of those groups, a very common example to illustrate this group is the well-known 'Anonymous'.

To conclude with the topic of international security and one of the biggest challenges that is faces, which is terrorism, we should ask ourselves if global governance patterns really

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effective, or security related challenges should be tackled from a more national perspective?

The last topic to cover is the rise of populism, especially in Europe. Many argue that the rise of populism has its roots in factors such as the economic consequences of the Great Recession, the opposition to mass immigration and the reduction of national power before international bodies such as the European Union or even The United Nations.[4] I think that immigration is one of the key drivers of populism. Immigration raises cultural and security concerns together with the fear of economic difficulties for the national populations. The sector of the population that felt unattended by their local governments and felt threatened by the waves of immigration, shifted towards those political powers considered as "populist", in order to protect themselves against the consequences of the European liberal democracy. The main challenge that populism is not comfortable with is the idea that nowadays governance embraces diversity and recognizes interest interdependence between nations and peoples, meaning that there is a need to cooperate and work with one another. Global governance has to do with plurality and diversity, whereas populism is not very happy about those two concepts.[5]

In the European case, we can observe how a form of 'global governance' at a more regional level, such as the European Union, is being challenged by a wave of Euroscepticism driven by some European populist parties, gaining power yearly. A clear example that the European governance is failing is the Brexit, where we can find the British population demanding its government to leave the EU.

Taking into consideration the current rise of populism and populist parties in both national governments and within the European Parliament, are we facing the weakening of global governance at a smaller scale? I think that the answer is quite clear, and that global governance is losing its power little by little.

To conclude, despite being the most highlighted topics of the past years, it is still difficult to implement governing policies that work successfully over them, because nowadays inside the global political agenda, there are many actors playing a role and giving their

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[4] GALSTON, W. "The Rise of European populism and the collapse of the center-left", *Brookings.* (2018). https://brook.gs/2oVrMBf
[5] STOKER, G. "When Governance meets Populism: An Emerging Crisis?" (2017). http://www.ippapublicpolicy.org/file/paper/593f76c91c772.pdf

opinions and positions over a certain topic, so to arrive to a global consensus about them is something which is highly difficult. In global governance, sovereignty is something complicated to achieve and even more difficult to implement, as a consequence of the actors' diversity. Since many agreements and other outcomes coming from global governance, are not being effective or powerful enough, we should take into consideration if the division of power within global governance is correct or not, a reconsideration should be made on who should hold the power inside global governance in order to make it work better than it has been working until now.