

Summary of Marguerite A. Peeters' doctoral dissertation

The emergence of global governance as a political revolution New political paradigms and the shift to postmodern politics (1945-1996)

This doctoral dissertation demonstrates that between 1945 and 1996 the United Nations - an international organization that had, in 1948, declared universal human rights as grounded in human nature - transformed itself into the practical hub of a global state/non-state partnership system endowed with a platform that politically and ideologically profoundly differed from both the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It exposes how a relatively small number of individuals, experts and non-governmental organizations in a privileged collaborative relation with the UN Secretariat have historically led the transformative process. It connects this process to the emergence of global governance. It highlights the advent of global governance's two-faceted revolutionary character: on the one hand, the novel global political platform is constituted by political paradigms not only absent from the UN's foundational documents but transgressing the spirit of these documents; on the other, global governance's global-to-local partnerships politics violates the juridically-established international nature of an organization supposed to be governed by sovereign governments.

This thesis found that the revolution occurred mainly through the UN's conference process and in the human rights, environmental, population, women and social development domains. The first wave of major UN conferences occurred in the shade of the Cold War (1968-1985) when major powers were busy containing the threat of a nuclear war, the second in the immediate post-Cold War moment when humanity was in need of a vision for the 21st century (1990-1996). The author selectively tracks the two conference waves in search of how they integrated agendas and terminology discordant with the UN's foundational documents. She identifies how globalist non-state actors incrementally linked their special interests to international cooperation, uninterruptedly weaving a completely novel and systemic synthesis constituted by interdependent new paradigms. She analytically relates the new agendas to the Western cultural revolution that has, since the 1960s, propelled large segments of the Western world into a postmodern or New Left counter-culture. The thesis found that global governance's paradigms were conceptually forged and developed in this particular ideological breeding ground and were themselves liquid and ambivalent.

The author observed how the participation of a few influence-wielding and ideologically-driven non-state actors in the Cold War conferences led, during the second wave conferences, to the outbreak of the revolution: to the intergovernmental adoption of partnership with non-state actors as a ruling principle for 21st century international cooperation, thereby birthing global governance. The new politics – to which the 1992 Earth Summit gave the name of a *new global partnership* (between states, non-state actors and “the people”) *for sustainable development* (as a holistic agenda including ideologically divisive components) – efficiently used what Joseph Nye was the first to call *soft power* to subdue and coopt UN member states. The global partnership came along with a set of political mechanisms through which impressive amounts of power were transferred from sovereign governments to a global elite, and through which the novel vision managed to impose itself down to the local level from global governance's UN epicenter.

The global governance revolution happened *within* and *through* the UN institution. It took place in the name of the Charter, in the name of the UDHR, in the name of democracy. It did not usher in a global government but in an unhealthy coexistence of the new system with international cooperation as established by the UN Charter. This thesis examines the consequences of coexistence. It finds that it has been neither neutral nor innocuous, but dangerously transformative. Global governance posited itself as

transcending international cooperation. It has had a weakening and destabilizing effect on the sovereignty of peoples and governments, on democracy and its foundational values, on modernity's fundamental political tenets, on the international order and its recognition of the anthropological vision underpinning the UDHR - of universal truths about human nature. The author calls global governance a *regime* in virtue of its effective capacity to deliver its norms and policies and to reorganize interrelations between political actors.

This thesis is divided into three parts. Using a historical approach, the first part (in two chapters) addresses the seminal and gestational phases of the global governance revolutionary process. In search for the seeds and signs of early development of the revolutionary transformation this thesis addresses, part one examines the drafting of the UN Charter, the first wave UN conferences and a series of independent reports and commissions that had a defining impact on the conceptualization of global governance as content and as process. Part two (in three chapters) exposes the full break-out of the global governance revolution in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Berlin wall and the constitution of global governance *as content*. After setting the stage for this outbreak and stating the role played by the end of ideology and end of history proclamations at this particular time in history, it examines the position of strength in which the non-state visionaries of nascent global governance found themselves in 1989. It provides specific examples showcasing how the second wave conferences crystallized the vision that these non-state actors had prepared during the Cold War into an intergovernmentally-endorsed "global consensus" on a framework for 21st century international cooperation. Part two ends by analyzing how, at the end of the Cold War, the revolution hijacked humanity's universal aspirations as defined in the UDHR, in particular its desire to correct modernity's abuses in the anthropological, social and environmental domains. Part three (in three chapters) then analyzes the constitution of global governance *as process*. It exposes the historical development of the new partnerships' politics during the second wave conferences, analyzes the conferences' rationale for partnerships, the identity of actors they coopted in the global partnership, the *roles* they assigned each of them, and how they reorganized the interrelations among political actors. It then investigates the extent to which global governance's soft politics endowed itself with hard power to effectively rule over international institutions and sovereign governments and distort their respective mandates. Finally the thesis observes how the revolution, surfing on the post-Cold War pro-democracy wave, transferred democratic values and principles to a juridically-inexistent "global level" and blended democracy and the new partnerships politics.

This thesis' primary sources are the official UN reports of the main conferences, the UN Charter, the UDHR and a few other major documents of juridical or historical weight, and the reports of the independent commissions which had a direct impact on the development of global governance as content and as process. The UN conferences' reports embody what was proclaimed to be an intergovernmental consensus on the new paradigms coined by the agents of global governance: the body of texts that reflect global governance's core content.

It being impossible to relate in detail every episode, every agent, every new paradigm, every effect of the global governance revolution, the author's ambition has been to highlight the remarkable strategic thread that has connected defining moments along this process, the cooptation that has prevailed among its few leading agents and the establishment of the main conceptual pillars of global governance's cohesive framework. This thesis will hopefully help overcome the fuzziness of global governance narratives by manifesting global governance in its concrete, identifiable reality, in its political platform and political mechanisms which have, in often ignored proportions, governed us since the 1996 end of the post-Cold War conference process.