



Call for papers

International Workshop
Theorizing Transnational Business Governance Interactions:
Design, Structures, Mechanisms and Impacts

York University, Toronto, Canada

May 16-17, 2016

Hosted by Osgoode Hall Law School and Schulich School of Business

Organizers

Stepan Wood (Osgoode), Burkard Eberlein (Schulich), Kenneth W Abbott (Arizona State University), Julia Black (LSE), Errol Meidinger (SUNY Buffalo), and Rebecca Schmidt (TBGI Postdoctoral Fellow at SUNY Buffalo and York University).

The TBGI research agenda

As transnational efforts to regulate business proliferate across a wide range of economic sectors and issue areas, governance actors, institutions and systems interact with each other in diverse ways from cooperation to competition, convergence to conflict, and coordination to chaos. These transnational business governance interactions (TBGI) have important but incompletely understood implications for the legitimacy, capacity, effectiveness and impacts of transnational governance. To understand the conditions, drivers, forms, mechanisms, pathways, impacts and spatio-temporal dynamics of these interactions, and how they might be steered to enhance sustainability and empower structurally weaker interests in global governance, is the goal of a burgeoning interdisciplinary research agenda.

We have proposed a framework within which to conduct this research ([Eberlein et al, 2014](#)). The TBGI analytical framework disaggregates the process of transnational governance into six components—agenda setting, norm development, implementation, monitoring, enforcement, and review—and articulates six analytical questions that allow researchers to probe key features of interaction at each point in the governance process: who or what interacts, what drives or shapes interaction, what are the mechanisms and pathways of interaction, what is the character or form of interaction, what are the effects of interaction, and how does interaction change over time? The TBGI framework enables researchers to identify knowledge gaps, prioritize research efforts, generate rich empirical descriptions,

compare results, and develop theoretical insights. It accommodates a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches.

A rich body of interdisciplinary empirical research on this subject is emerging, but more attention to theory is needed. No single theory can accommodate all dimensions of the phenomenon. Rather, we advocate development of a portfolio of middle-range theoretical tools that address particular features of TBGI ([Wood et al, 2015](#)). Such a portfolio should, in our view, accommodate the multiplicity of interacting entities and scales of interaction, the co-evolution of social agency and structure, the multiple components of regulatory governance, the intermediate role of interactions as both influence and outcome, the diverse modes of interaction, the mechanisms and pathways of interaction, and the spatio-temporal dynamics of interaction. Even though a given theoretical approach may only seek to explain part of the phenomenon, it should take into account these seven features and justify its focus within and among them. There are many possible targets for middle-range theorization, including market and industry structures; cognitive framings; concrete interaction mechanisms such as modeling, conditional rule referencing and supply chain coordination; regulatory ratchets; indicators of regulatory capacity; meso-level processes like meta-regulation and orchestration; and cross-scalar strategies like forum-shifting and norm entrepreneurship.

The workshop

The goal of the workshop is to advance empirical and theoretical understanding of how governance interactions matter in terms of their impacts on regulatory capacity, outcomes, social welfare, environmental quality and sustainable development, and how they can be orchestrated to empower structurally weaker interests and ratchet up social and environmental business performance.

We invite papers that offer empirically-grounded theoretical accounts of one or more of the following questions:

- 1. How do structural conditions, interaction mechanisms/pathways, and governance capacity and outcomes relate to one another, and how do these relations change over time?**
- 2. How can transnational governance interactions be designed or influenced to ratchet up standards in pursuit of public goods such as justice and sustainability, or to empower structurally weaker interests and counterhegemonic agendas in governance contests; and what roles do state, interstate, business and civil society actors and institutions play in these processes?**
- 3. Why do transnational governance interactions emerge, multiply and persist in some issue areas or sectors while they dwindle, collapse or fail to emerge in others; and how do institutional multiplicity and frequency or intensity of interaction relate to governance capacity and outcomes?**

We encourage participants to explore these questions in one or more empirical contexts and from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. We welcome papers that address governance

interactions affecting domains beyond business and involving a wider range of state, interstate and hybrid state/non-state actors and institutions. We do not expect you to conduct original empirical research just for this workshop (though you are welcome to do so). We invite you to write about what you already know, but in a new way by engaging explicitly with the above questions and with the TBGI research agenda, with a view toward enhancing the common stock of theoretical understanding.

To maximize fruitful comparison and dialogue, your paper should (a) answer one or more of our questions, above; (b) provide empirical information about transnational governance interactions in your chosen context; (c) articulate your theoretical contribution and how it responds to the criteria for theory-building set out in Wood et al, 2015; and (d) indicate how you situate your paper in relation to the TBGI analytical framework set out in Eberlein et al, 2014.

You need not address all of these elements in your paper proposal, however. The key items to cover in the proposal are your field of enquiry, its importance, and which of our question(s) you plan to address. Proposals should include a title, your name and contact information, and an abstract of around 250 words.

Workshop format and location

The workshop will take place over two days and will feature paper presentations by 20-25 established and emerging scholars including graduate students who have conducted case studies using the TBGI analytical framework. The workshop will be thoroughly interdisciplinary, with participants expected from business, law, political science, sociology, and other disciplines. Papers will be presented in thematic panels, with academics and prominent transnational business governance practitioners acting as commentators. We will also set aside time for plenary or roundtable discussion aimed at synthesizing the knowledge gained and further developing the TBGI research agenda.

Osgoode Hall Law School is an internationally recognized leader in business law, social justice, international and transnational law. The Schulich School of Business is consistently at or near the top of world rankings for research and teaching in corporate social responsibility and sustainable business. York is Canada's third-largest university and is a leader in interdisciplinary research and education.

Toronto is at the centre of a vibrant, multicultural region of around 6 million inhabitants boasting world-class universities, arts, culture, food and entertainment, along with spectacular natural features such as Niagara Falls. The workshop will be held at a time when the spring bloom is at its height and the weather is typically sunny and warm. The month of May is characterized by rapidly rising daily high temperatures that average between 16 and 22C. Night-time lows average between 10 and 15C. There are 14-15 hours of daylight each day. There are on average 11 rainy days in May.

Funding

The workshop is funded by a Partnership Development Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by York University. Participants' reasonable travel and accommodation expenses will be covered, along with meals during the workshop.

Workshop publications

We plan to post the workshop papers in Osgoode Hall Law School's TBGI working paper subseries on SSRN and to pursue publication of a selection of the papers in a high quality peer-reviewed outlet.

Timeline

Paper proposals are due no later than Monday, November 14, 2015.

Papers will be selected for inclusion on a rolling basis as proposals are received. Decisions on proposals will be communicated to authors by the end of November, 2015.

Papers are due no later than May 1, 2016.

The workshop will be held Monday-Tuesday, May 16-17, 2016, with an optional pre-workshop welcome dinner on Sunday, May 15.

Revised papers are due no later than July 1, 2016, to be reviewed and edited by the co-organizers in July and August. Revised papers will be posted in the TBGI SSRN subseries upon receipt.

The target date for submission to a publisher for review is the end of August, 2016, with publication targeted for spring, 2017.

How to submit a paper proposal

Please submit your paper proposal via email to Stepan Wood, swood@osgoode.yorku.ca, with the subject line TBGI Toronto Workshop Paper Proposal, no later than Monday, November 14, 2015.

References

Burkard Eberlein, Kenneth W Abbott, Julia Black, Errol Meidinger and Stepan Wood, "Transnational Business Governance Interactions: Conceptualization and Framework for Analysis" (2014) 8:1 Regulation & Governance 1-21, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/rego.12030/abstract>, also available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2347166>.

Stepan Wood, Kenneth W Abbott, Julia Black, Burkard Eberlein & Errol Meidinger, "The Interactive Dynamics of Transnational Business Governance: A Challenge for Transnational Legal Theory" (forthcoming 2015) 6:2 *Transnational Legal Theory*, draft available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2660840>.