

## ELM303 Unit6 Global Politics

To understand world politics is to look at the world as a complex "game" where the players are not just people, but **States, International Organizations, and Global Forces**. At its heart, world politics is about the distribution of power, the pursuit of interests, and the struggle to create order in a world without a single "global government."

### 1. The Core Players (Actors)

- **Sovereign States:** The primary actors. A state has a defined territory, a permanent population, and a government. In world politics, states are often viewed as "rational actors" seeking to survive and prosper.
- **Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs):** Groups like the **United Nations (UN)**, the **World Bank**, or the **Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)**. They provide a forum for states to cooperate, though they often lack the power to force states to act.
- **Non-State Actors:** This includes powerful Multi-National Corporations (MNCs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like the Red Cross, and even influential social movements.

### 2. The Major "Lenses" (Theories)

Political scientists use different "lenses" to explain why countries behave the way they do.

#### Realism (Power and Security)

Realists believe that the international system is "anarchic" (there is no higher authority). Therefore, states must look out for themselves.

- **Core Idea:** Politics is a struggle for power. States prioritize military strength and national security above all else.
- **View on Cooperation:** It is difficult and only happens when it benefits a powerful state.

#### Liberalism (Cooperation and Institutions)

Liberals are more optimistic. They believe that states can and do cooperate through trade and international law.

- **Core Idea:** International organizations and global trade make war too "expensive" and cooperation more profitable.
- **View on Cooperation:** Global peace is possible through shared rules and democratic values.

#### Constructivism (Ideas and Identity)

Constructivists argue that world politics is shaped by shared beliefs, identities, and history.

- **Core Idea:** How a country behaves depends on how it sees itself. (e.g., A "Post-Colonial" nation will view global trade differently than a "Superpower").

### 3. Key Concepts in Global Dynamics

#### Sovereignty

The principle that a state has total authority over its own territory and that other states should not interfere. This is the foundation of the modern world, yet it is constantly challenged by issues like human rights and global climate policy.

#### The Balance of Power

The idea that national security is enhanced when military capability is distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate all others. When the balance shifts (e.g., the rise of a new global power), the risk of conflict increases.

#### Hegemony

When one state is so powerful that it can dominate the international system and set the "rules of the game." Historically, this has shifted from the British Empire to the United States, and now toward a "Multipolar" world with the rise of China.

### 4. Modern Challenges

World politics today is defined by several "transnational" issues that no single state can solve alone:

- **Globalization:** The increasing integration of economies and cultures, which creates wealth but also increases inequality.
- **Climate Change:** A "tragedy of the commons" where states must choose between their own short-term economic growth and long-term global survival.
- **Digital Sovereignty:** The battle for control over the internet, data, and artificial intelligence.
- **Regionalism:** The trend of nearby countries forming "blocs" (like the Pacific Islands Forum) to protect their collective interests against larger global powers.

#### Why it Matters

For a leader or researcher, understanding world politics provides the "**Big Picture.**" It explains why national policies—like the **1-6-6 school restructure** or **STEM initiatives**—are often influenced by international aid, global education standards, and regional development goals.

## The 21 Century World Order (Balance of Power)

The 21st-century world order is often described as "**Multipolarity without Multilateralism.**" Unlike the rigid bipolarity of the Cold War or the unipolar "American moment" that followed it, the current era is defined by a fragmented distribution of power where multiple players exert influence, but shared global rules are increasingly ignored.

Joseph Nye's describe this situation as a "3D Chessboard" which remains a popular framework for visualizing this complexity:

1. **Top Level (Military):** Still largely **unipolar**, with the U.S. maintaining the most significant global reach.
2. **Middle Level (Economic):** Strictly **multipolar**, with China, the EU, India, and the U.S. acting as major poles.
3. **Bottom Level (Transnational):** **Diffused power**, where non-state actors (tech giants, NGOs, and social movements) shape reality outside of government control.

### 1. The Rise of "Competitive Multipolarity"

Today we observe that the global system has moved away from universal institutions like the UN and WTO, which are increasingly paralyzed by vetoes and trade disputes. Instead, countries are turning to "**Minilateralism**"—smaller, more flexible groups based on specific interests.

- **The "Variable Geometry" of Alliances:** Countries no longer "pick a side" permanently. For example, India partners with the U.S. on defense through the **QUAD**, but works with China and Russia through **BRICS** and the **SCO** (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation).
- **The "Countries in Between":** Middle powers like Indonesia, Türkiye, the UAE, and Canada are asserting "strategic autonomy." They focus on being **transactional**—making deals with whichever superpower offers the best terms for a specific project.

### 2. Geo-economics and "Sovereign Resilience"

For decades, globalization was driven by *efficiency* (cheapest labor, fastest shipping). Today, it is driven by **security**.

- **Friend-shoring and De-risking:** Nations are moving supply chains for critical minerals, semiconductors, and energy away from rivals and into "friendly" nations.
- **The Weaponization of Interdependence:** Because economies are so connected, trade is now used as a tool of war. Sanctions, export bans, and "tech blockades" are common instruments of statecraft.

### 3. Technology as the New Frontier of Power

In the 21st century, the nation with the most advanced **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **semiconductor** capabilities likely holds the most geopolitical leverage.

- **Sovereign AI:** Governments are racing to build their own "patriotic tech" stacks to avoid relying on foreign algorithms or data centers.
- **The Digital Iron Curtain:** There is a growing divide between Western-led digital standards (focused on privacy and risk) and models that prioritize state control and rapid deployment.

#### 4. The Shift to the Indo-Pacific

The "center of gravity" for world politics has officially shifted from the North Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific.

- **The Maritime "Chokepoints":** Control over the South China Sea and the Bashi Channel is now as strategically important as the Fulda Gap was during the Cold War.
- **Regional Values:** As Western dominance plateaus, governance models from Asia and the Global South—which often emphasize stability and development over liberal democratic expansion—are gaining more influence.

#### A World of "Permanent Rupture"

Leaders at the 2026 Davos summit noted that we are not in a "transition" to a new order, but rather a state of **permanent rupture**. The old rules no longer protect small and middle powers but forcing them to build their own internal resilience.

#### Key Trends to Watch:

- **Fragmentation:** More regional blocs, fewer global agreements.
- **Techno-Nationalism:** Protecting "home-grown" tech as a matter of national survival.
- **Climate Diplomacy:** Cooperation on the environment remains the only area where superpowers still *must* talk, despite their rivalries.

Understanding this global "big picture" will help clarify why national policies (like the push for STEM education or local resource processing) have become so urgent in our country today.

# Global Governance

Global governance is the collective effort by sovereign states, international organizations, and non-state actors to manage world affairs in the absence of a central "global government." Currently the landscape of global governance is undergoing a significant "Geopolitical Reset," as identified at the World Governments Summit in Dubai recently. The system is shifting from a reliance on universal, Western-led rules to a fragmented model where **regionalism** and **technological sovereignty** take center stage.

## 1. The Core Pillars of Global Governance

Global governance operates through four main mechanisms:

- **International Law:** Treaties and conventions (like **UNCLOS** for the seas or the **Paris Agreement** for climate) that establish binding rules for states.
- **Multilateral Institutions:** Organizations like the **United Nations (UN)**, **IMF**, and **WHO** that facilitate negotiation and standard-setting.
- **Soft Law:** Non-binding guidelines and norms, such as the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, which influence behavior through peer pressure and moral authority.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborative efforts involving multinational corporations and NGOs (like the Gates Foundation) to tackle specific issues like global health or digital literacy.

## 2. Key Challenges in 2026

The effectiveness of global governance is currently being tested by several "disruptors":

- **Democratic Backsliding:** With a majority of the world's population now living in "electoral autocracies," the shared normative values that once underpinned global institutions are being contested.
- **The Return of Hard Power:** National security and economic nationalism (e.g., the U.S. and EU taking direct equity stakes in chipmakers) are overriding market-led governance.
- **Paralysis of the UN System:** Systemic rivalry between the U.S. and China has led to frequent deadlocks in the Security Council, prompting countries to look for alternatives.
- **Technology as Sovereignty:** AI, semiconductors, and digital infrastructure have become "sovereign priorities." Governments are increasingly regulating these areas to prevent foreign influence, creating a "Digital Iron Curtain."

## 3. The Shift to "Minilateralism" and Regionalism

Because global consensus is harder to reach, the world order is moving toward smaller, issue-based groups:

- **BRICS+ Expansion:** The inclusion of new members (such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE) has positioned BRICS as a major alternative to the G7, focusing on the interests of the "Global South."
- **Pacific Regionalism:** For nations like **Papua New Guinea**, organizations like the **Pacific Islands Forum** and the **Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)** are becoming

more critical. These "regional public goods" allow smaller states to bargain more effectively with major donors and address climate change on their own terms.

- **Transactional Partnerships:** Countries are increasingly practicing "**Multi-alignment**," where they partner with the U.S. on security but with China on infrastructure (the **Belt and Road Initiative**).

#### 4. Global Governance in Daily Practice (PNG Context)

For a school leader or administrator, global governance isn't just "high politics"—it dictates the resources available on the ground:

- **International Aid (ODA):** The shift in global priorities means aid is now often tied to **STEM** development, **GESI** (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion), and digital resilience.
- **The "TOGETHER" Program:** Large-scale initiatives by JICA, UNICEF, and the World Bank are direct outputs of global governance frameworks aimed at stabilizing education in developing regions.
- **Policy Borrowing:** National restructures (like the 1-6-6 model) are often informed by global "Best Practice" standards set by organizations like UNESCO.

#### Comparison: 20th Century vs. 21st Century Governance

Feature	20th Century Model	21st Century World Order
<b>Dominant Philosophy</b>	Universalism (One rule for all)	Fragmentation (Regional rules)
<b>Primary Goal</b>	Market Efficiency & Trade	Security & Resilience
<b>Key Player</b>	The Nation-State	Multi-aligned Blocs & Tech Giants
<b>Power Dynamics</b>	Unipolar (U.S.-led)	Multipolar (Competitive)

As global governance becomes more "issue-based," how do you see international standards impacting the administrative decisions you make at the school level?

### Globalisation and Education in PNG

Globalisation in the form of global governance impacts on our education by creating a dynamic relationship where international agendas directly shape provincial and local school practices. This process is often referred to as "**Policy Borrowing**," where global standards are adapted to fit the PNG context.

#### 1. The "Big Players" and Their Influence

Global governance in PNG education is driven by **Multilateral and Bilateral Partners**. These organizations do not just provide funding; they provide the "blueprints" for reform.

- **The World Bank & Global Partnership for Education (GPE):** Focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. They are instrumental in funding the **"TOGETHER" project**, which aims to stabilize curriculum delivery in remote areas.
- **JICA (Japan) & DFAT (Australia):** These partners focus heavily on **STEM education** and infrastructure. JICA has been a key driver behind the development of the national science and mathematics textbooks for the **Standards-Based Education (SBE)** system.
- **UNESCO:** Sets the global "normative" standards, such as the **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)**, which mandates "inclusive and equitable quality education" for all by 2030.

## 2. Key Global-to-Local Policy Shifts

The most significant reforms currently seen in PNG schools are direct responses to global governance trends:

### The 1-6-6 School Restructure

This shift (1 year of Prep, 6 years of Primary, 6 years of Secondary) aligns PNG with international schooling cycles. Global governance bodies encouraged this to:

- Increase the age of school leavers, making them more "employable" by global standards.
- Ensure a smoother transition into higher education and technical vocational training (TVET).

### Standards-Based Education (SBE)

Replacing the "Outcome-Based Education" (OBE) model was a move to return to measurable, globally recognized academic standards.

- **Assessment:** Global governance emphasizes **Data-Driven Accountability**. PNG is now more focused on standardized testing to rank performance against other Pacific and global nations.

### GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion)

This is a core requirement of modern international aid. Global governance frameworks require PNG schools to:

- Actively promote female leadership in schools.
- Implement "School Rules" that protect vulnerable groups.
- Ensure that curriculum materials are free from gender bias.

## 3. The Challenges of "Globalized" Education

While global governance brings much-needed resources, it creates specific tensions for PNG school leaders:

- **Contextual Mismatch:** Global policies often assume a level of digital connectivity and infrastructure that may not exist in remote PNG provinces.
- **Sovereignty vs. Dependency:** There is a constant balance between following donor-funded "best practices" and maintaining indigenous Melanesian values in the classroom.
- **The "Top-Down" Gap:** Policy is often made at the global/national level, but the **"Instructional Leadership"** required to implement it is left to head teachers who may lack the specific training to manage these high-level changes.

#### 4. The Governance Flow Simplified

Level	Role in Education
<b>Global</b>	Setting SDGs, providing ODA (Aid), and defining "Quality" standards.
<b>National (DoE)</b>	Translating global goals into the <b>National Education Plan</b> .
<b>Provincial</b>	Coordinating logistics and teacher appointments (navigating the <i>Wantok</i> system).
<b>School Level</b>	Implementing SBE, managing GESI, and acting as an <b>Instructional Leader</b> .

#### Reflection for School Leaders

As a school administrator, you act as the **"Global-Local Bridge."** Your task is to take these high-level governance goals (like STEM excellence or GESI standards) and make them work within the practical realities of your specific community and cultural landscape. One question that we may ask is - How has the shift toward "Standards-Based" assessment changed the way you monitor your teachers' performance in the school?