

# Not Prepared for the Crystal Ball: A Reflection on Global Governance, Leadership and Time<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Contemporary global governance is dependent on factors that are beyond the reach of nation-states. Many global issues these governments face have a time span that is now multi-generational. Issues such as climate change, population growth, technological change and radioactive waste storage are high on this expanding list. Much of the focus of leaders however is on “the now.” This paper argues that contemporary states and their leaderships use inadequately developed strategies, processes and policy instruments to address longer-term issues and change. Why? In general terms, the existing time perspectives of leaders worldwide and their accelerating societies reflect underlying differences in their ideas on, and their cultural perspectives regarding time. Moreover, and specifically, the offices of three government leaders, the President of the United States of America, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Secretary-General of the United Nations demonstrate individual idiosyncrasies that short circuit and challenge the capacity to critically analyze questions of the longer term and of deeper temporal depth. Lastly, international governmental leaders today face a changing timescape including issues such as the compression of time and complex crises, and the nature of leadership, all of which compound the challenge of planning for time deeper into the future.

## Introduction

Contemporary global governance is dependent on factors that are beyond the reach of many contemporary nation-states. Many global issues these governments face have a time span that is now multi-generational. Issues such as climate change, population growth, technological change and radioactive waste storage are high on this expanding list. Much of the focus of leaders however is on “the now.” National electoral cycles, the twenty-four hour news cycle in the United States and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Syria illustrate how addicted contemporary governments are to “the now.” As humanity’s awareness of the now increases and consequently the crises that are critical to address “now,” the ability to deal with larger longer scale questions is yet undeveloped. This paper argues that contemporary states and their leaderships use inadequately developed strategies, processes and policy instruments to address longer-term issues and change. Why? In general terms, the existing time perspectives of leaders worldwide and their accelerating societies reflect underlying differences in their ideas on, and their cultural perspectives regarding time. This in turn challenges their abilities to look at longer-term questions. Moreover, and specifically, the offices of three government leaders, the President of the United States of America, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Secretary-General of the United Nations demonstrate individual idiosyncrasies that short circuit and challenge the capacity to critically analyze questions of the longer term and of deeper temporal depth. Lastly, international governmental leaders today face a changing timescape including issues such as the compression of time and complex crises, and

the nature of leadership, all of which compound the challenge of planning for time deeper into the future. Assessing the temporal dimension of global governance and making changes to better future time decision-making is crucial to further efforts to address many of today's and particularly tomorrow's international issues.

## No Time like the Present for a Literature Review

Prior to addressing is the exact question of the leaders in global governance it is important to look at the issue of time itself and the literature on this topic. This review will define some terms, as well as do a broad overview of the literature on time and politics. It will then look specifically at some of the gaps in the literature.

### Definitions

The question of time is one that historians are continually contemplating. There is a backward glance – what happened in those times anyways? And how do we write about it in a way that is truthful to the past reality (Evans 2000)? So do Organization Studies scholars – how does a business best use time to its best advantage? What is the most efficient work technique? The original Time and Motion studies of Frederick Winslow Taylor set the stage for this in the early twentieth century and the discussion has been ongoing ever since (Groover 2007, Weisbord 2004). Additionally, political scientists have looked at the question of time and international relations theory (Hom 2013). So, in this sense there has been much thinking about time in academia. Here the focus is largely on *future time* – the time to come. Bluedorn's work stands out in this regard and will be examined in the next section. Several terms arise from his scholarship that are cogent for a discussion of global governance, leadership and time. Some of the most important are covered here, others in the literature review. Temporal depth is defined by Bluedorn as “*the temporal distances into the past and the future that individuals and collectivities typically consider when contemplating events that have happened, may have happened, or may happen*” (Bluedorn 2002, 114). How far forward or back do we look when contemplating time?

Another term that is important is Skowronek's *political time*. This term is addressed in depth later in the paper – suffice it to say here, paraphrasing Skowronek, that it is “medium through which presidents [or political leaders generally] claim their political authority and construct a narrative, locate themselves inside recent political events and address political expectations” (Skowronek 2008, 18.). The last salient definition to examine at this point is again from Bluedorn. *Entrainment* “is about rhythmic phenomena and the possibility that their rhythms may converge (Bluedorn 2002, 147). *Long-term issues* are issues that may be ongoing in the present, but they may also be issues that require leaders and governments to look deeper into the future (i.e. Bluedorn's deeper temporal depth) and think about possible scenarios and how government can prepare for these contingencies.

These definitions then set the stage for the broader literature review (with more definitions) and the rest of the paper.

## Literature Review

Different political and geographical theories come to this discussion as it relates to contemporary governance. The issue of time has been an ongoing question throughout known human “time” (Christian 2004, Greenhouse 1996, Hawking 2011, Kern 2003, 2009, Whitrow 1989). Time-keeping has also been a preoccupation of experts, states and governments for the greater part of the twentieth century and has had an impact on contemporary notions of global governance (Ogle 2015). In more contemporary era as a question of time and global governance has become quite significant; some, such as Fukuyama would argue that we are in end-times and “post-history” is upon us (Fukuyama 2006). Equally, Rosa argues that technology has resettled in the elimination of space as a variable in human interactions – thus time takes on a much more accentuated focus. (Rosa 2013). Further, the focus on time is also in part due to the increasing speed that humans use to get from one place to the other around the world (Humes 2016). The question of time has been put in terms of history but also in terms of geography and how we conceptualize the state – Agathangelou and Killian speak of “*de-fatalizing*” and in disrupting the contemporary chains of causality (Agathangelou and Killian 2016).<sup>3</sup> In a recent discussion, Ngai-Ling Sum, looks at the question of rescaling temporal spaces (Sum 2008). Her view is that depending on whereabouts one is in the planet, there is a rescaling of time – time is faster in bigger metropolitan spaces. She also argues for a multi-temporal approach (Sum 2008). Novoa, in his discussion of time calls for an absolute re-conceptualization of time (Novoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003). He argues that there are new nonlinear ways in which we think about the world and they are not dependent on time being in one location or in one space (Novoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003). In a business context, as well, there is also the implication that understanding of timescales is also being revisited and new approaches to time are appearing (Bluedorn and Ferris 2004). One example of this type of research and the awareness that things are changing as its globalization is preceded is the discussion by Harvey and Novicevic (Harvey and Novicevic 2001). In their view, managers of corporations around the world should develop a different sense of time to respond adequately to the changing international environment. Their model captures several dimensions; *time frame, tempo, temporality, (a) synchronization, sequence, emerging pauses/gaps and simultaneity* (Harvey and Novicevic 2001).

Bluedorn talks about time in several papers (Bluedorn 2002, Bluedorn and Ferris 2004, Bluedorn and Standifer 2006, Bluedorn, Kaufman, and Lane 1992). He speaks of *polychronicity*. With this term, he is discussing the different ways in which societies measure time and the ways in which societies structure their activities (Bluedorn 2002). Bluedorn and Baofu also talk about the cultural impact of time in the ongoing evolution in terms of ways time is measured (Baofu 2006, Bluedorn 2002). One need only look at the difference between Newtonian and Einsteinian time. In the contemporary world there is no absolute time (Bluedorn 2002). Bluedorn also notes the time is socially constructed gives the example of United States government budgeting (Bluedorn 2002). Braudel, as a historian, takes this to a different level, looking at time and civilizations (Braudel 1995). Hammond brings time back to the individual, we actively create our perception of time in her view – it is a nuanced re-sampling of the reality we find ourselves in – independent from time which does not speed up or slow down (Hammond 2012).

Gregory Benford, in his work, points some of the problems that need to be assessed in what he describes as “deep time” (Benford 1999). Some of the discussions are obvious; one has been centered on disposal of radioactive waste (Benford 1999). Benford argues that governments must think that edifices that protect humans from radioactive waste must be constructed with deep time in mind and must communicate the danger in ways that go beyond the language of the

times, cultural symbolism and the times of a particular state or government. At present, no government possesses the capacity to be able to steward this type of edifice over a long period of time or more importantly prepare these structures for a time when they no longer exist (Benford 1999).

Benford is also skeptical as to whether governments can adequately grapple any of the longer-term problems that are out there. In his view, only science and religion last over time. All other human enterprises quickly fade to dust (Benford 1999). On another occasion, Benford notes the view of the West regarding time. “Englishmen were fish swimming in this sea of the past. For them it was a palpable presence, a living extension, commenting on events like a half-heard stage whisper. Americans regarded the past as a parenthesis within the running sentences of the present, an aside, something out of the flow” (Benford 1992).

Others have also discussed the longer term in terms of time. Paul Pierson cites the approach of the 1980’s Reagan administration on time (Pierson 2004). David Stockman budget director under Reagan with was quoted as saying he had no interest in wasting “a lot of political capital some on other guys problems in 2010” (Pierson 2004). Pierson goes on to say that some institutions can look at the broader time horizon because of their structure. Pierson notes the contribution of institutions in this regard. He also does not see that existing institutions will adequately address the longer periods of time. The institutional design is simply not there. Still other scholars have discussed the abilities of leaders to make use of past time. In their significant work on the subject Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May’s *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* discusses how leaders have looked to history for clues on how to run the present (Neustadt and May). While many of these authors have focused on the issue of time and the increasing way in which time is seen to be “speeding up,” the now is expanding, there is less discussion in the literature of how this links to leadership and global governance. This is what this paper will address.

## What Time is it? Different Conceptions of Time and Leadership

### Global Leaders, Governance and Time: If It’s Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium<sup>4</sup>

Clearly time is a complication as to whether a leader is at a conference in Brussels or a bilateral meeting in Buenos Aires. Today the world of leaders and government officials crosses multiple time zones every time they make a foray into global governance. This is common practice. As Rosa notes, this type of issue is ever present and can be an indication of *collective temporal practices* in the case where everyone is on board and doing the same thing (Rosa 2013). Global governance is a contentious question because, in part, not everyone is on board (Van Seters, de Gaay Fortman, and de Ruijter 2003). Some go as far as arguing that this notion of global governance is collapsing because leaders and societies can’t master a multitude of challenges. This includes time and questions “like what time is it?” and “how do ‘we’ approach time?” abound (Saul 2005, Falk 2008, Macdonald 2015). Rosa also argues that political institutions generally have ceased to be the pacesetters in society (Rosa 2013). Further, he states that if political institutions seek to reprise this role, then they must either become “motorized parliaments” or make conscious moves to slow down the pace of their political entity (Rosa 2013). Rosa additionally contends, further complicating the situation, that contemporary societies are undergoing a process of social *desynchronization* making political consensus more difficult and dividing parts of society along

temporal lines, some communities in society move at a much faster pace, while others move at a much slower pace. The contrast between a hyper-connected core of a city and an Amish or Mennonite farming community is one example of this (Rosa 2013).

On the global scale the issues of temporal dissonance and being out of synchronization with the neighboring community are simply magnified. The drama of global governance and temporal practices has not been well covered in this regard. Barnett looks at this in terms of power (Barnett, Duvall, and Smith 2005). In particular, Gruber examines the compression of time in terms of cooperation and international diplomacy (Gruber 2005). Kütting looks at time in terms of international relations theory and perhaps her approach is the most significant. She recognizes very quickly that temporally society has changed and no longer are human activities much to humanity's detriment, covered simply by daylight, night cycles (Kütting 2001). When the activities of most international leaders are observed today, they are like most executives, harried, not enough time to deal with the crises that are breaking out simultaneously and address the needs of their ever-expanding bureaucracies. Simultaneity rules as Kütting points out (Kütting 2001). The trend in recent years in this direction has been increasing in speed and Kütting notes this as well; time-space compression is accelerating in her view (Kütting 2001).

Others critique global governance and the West in terms of time arguing that the Western view of time is linear. Patomäki argues that the West has always had a linear notion of time. He also asserts the history of the world has for a long time been the history of the West (Patomäki 2005). This has specific implications for leaders in the West. Further to this, he states that there needs to be a view of time that is open to many different paths towards the future. This model would also encompass both negative and positive outcomes for humanity and in his words, sees a; "*gradual unfolding of progress*" (Patomäki 2005). Patomäki additionally speaks to global governance and global futures in arguing that there needs to be a much greater reflection on humanity's place in the biosphere. He rightly states in concluding his 2011 article; "Everything hinges upon the future" (Patomäki 2011: 351).

## World Leaders, Cultural Perspectives and Time

This section will examine the temporal perspectives of several world leaders and the challenges associated with their offices with regard to looking at longer-term issues. The literature about the global governance skirts the perceptions that specific cultural inheritances have bequeathed to these leaders in terms of their views of time. Some have called for the problem to be addressed under the rubric of the democratization of global governance (Patomäki 2005). Ferguson talks about counterfactuals and time. The presence or absence of various leaders and their backgrounds form part of this discussion as it leads to counterfactual histories (Ferguson 1997).

When one considers global governance and leadership, it is not simply the leader's office that is important – rather it is these cultural backgrounds, education, and pre-dispositions towards time and issues of temporal depth that are critical. Presidential obsession with time goes back to Thomas Jefferson in the United States (McCrosen 2013). Additionally, the collective leadership of the international community must be looked at (Mosey 2009, Laszlo and Seidel 2006). There are different ways in which this leadership can be characterized. There must also be a recognition that the "international leadership" comes to their collective responsibility with very different sets of abilities – some, such as Murphy and Gray suggest, potentially challenge the historic leader-

ship of the West (Gray and Murphy 2015, Christensen 2014). Some, like the President of United States, sit astride vast webs of information and can be shuttled around the world at a moment's notice in what George Stephanopoulos described as the "rarefied" world of Air Force One (Gibbs and Duffy 2012, Stephanopoulos 2008). Others, such as the leaders of small developing states have information that is of a much more local and specific nature (Beyer et al. 2006). Their abilities are very useful in their context, but in the broader world pageant, they may have less experience and fewer resources (Vital 2006). In this context, we can look at three offices, (one powerful, one smaller, and one strictly global) the President of the United States of America, the Prime Minister of Canada, and the Secretary General of the United Nations.

## United States and Presidential Time

The United States President is an interesting leader to examine regarding his or her time perspective as the US President sets much of the agenda for world affairs in contemporary times and should have all the tools to address longer term issues. America, while no longer the unipolar hegemon, as authors have noted, still sits astride world affairs (Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2004). In contemporary times, American presidents have engaged in major ideological conflicts over long periods of time with Cold war opponents, starred down massive budget deficits, and unleashed the war on terror (Meacham 2015, Bush 2011, Fischer 2000, Chollet 2016, Edwards 2008). Certainly, the schedules of leaders such as the United States President and others at a similar level, the Presidents of China and Russia, afford a view into the top echelon of international leadership. The US Presidents' time perspective and ability to address the longer term and is impacted by what Skowronek describes as "political time." As Silbey, reviewing him, summarizes; "Political time, the place each incumbent occupies within a recurring pulse of political activity that occupies our entire history. All presidents, are always simultaneously order shattering (as they attempt to make their own imprint on history), order affirming (since they cannot stray too far from existing truths of the constitutional order), and order creating (since they bring new resources into play to accomplish their tasks)" (Silbey 1994).<sup>5</sup>

Skowronek also makes the differentiation between "political time" and "secular time." He goes further:

Political time is the medium through which presidents claim received commitments of ideology and interest and claim authority to intervene in their development. Political time has a narrative structure: Presidents bid for authority by reckoning with the work of their predecessors, locating their rise to power within the recent course of political events, and addressing the political expectations that attend their intervention in these affairs (Skowronek 2008: 18).<sup>6</sup>

Silbey brings up an interesting point that is highly connected to the passage of time, the now and the longer term. He notes that US Presidents cannot "stray too far from the existing truths of the constitutional order." The "constitutional order" locks in the aforementioned domestic temporal landmarks of each president's administration. Be they mid-term elections, State of the Union addresses, general elections, holidays, annual multi-lateral events, and ultimately two-term limits, the American president's term is bound by a variety of temporal landmarks.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, as an individual, the US President is often focused in to thinking in the next six weeks, the next six months, the next four years. While Peetz and Wilson do not cover politics, much of her discussion is apropos to this reality (Peetz and Wilson 2013).

The President, be it the incoming President-elect Donald Trump or Barak Obama or Ronald Reagan have had their capacity to look at longer term issues impacted by these temporal landmarks. Barak Obama, in particular, in January 2017 as this article is being written, feels the tug of time, in terms of his remaining days as President, his legacy, and the temporal landmark of the end of his term (Radwanski 2017). Donald Trump's world will also particularly reflect temporal limiting, not only from the US Constitution, but also as technology expands "the now" and it is a world that is that much faster than the world of Ronald Reagan, for example (Haass 2017). As Haass notes, the center is not holding and the guiding political institutions created in the aftermath of World War Two are no longer sufficient (Haass 2017).

Skowronek additionally speaks to the capacity of the office-holders to look at enduring issues and "the times." He asks rhetorical questions and this speaks to the problematic nature of time and leadership:

But what if this system does not present each incumbent with the same test? What if the political demands on incumbents change in significant ways even within the same historical period? What if the leadership capacities of the office vary widely from one administration to the next? Much of what we take to be evidence of character and strategic acumen might actually be an expression of changing relationships between the presidency and the political system, and if this is the case, the workings of this system might be more deeply implicated in leadership failure and its fallout than we are wont to admit (Skowronek 2008).

The capacity to look at long-term questions then remains at odds with the realities of each administration. Still, that said, there needs to be some thinking about the future and possible scenarios – some temporal perspective. Who are the long-term thinkers in America? In its original format, in the late 1940's, the National Security Council had a longer-term planning secretariat, which has never been used with the exception, as Rosati points out, of NSC-68, the doctrine to contain Communism (Rosati 1999). The long-term planning function was quickly abandoned as presidents moved to a much more ad hoc direction in terms of national security (Rosati 1999). Also, the reliance on the National Security Advisor became much more pronounced in the time since the initial creation of the National Security Council. During the War on Terror, National Security Council priorities look to the future in terms of military security under the Bush Administration (The United States, White House Office, and National Security Council 2002)

One of the organizations that has focused on longer-term issues and has a deeper time perspective is the Office of Net Assessment (ONA). Krepinevich and Watts examine this organization and one of its founders, "Yoda" – Andrew W. Marshall. Marshall, now in his mid-nineties was instrumental in putting this organization together so that it could study longer-term strategic issues that the United States might face (Krepinevich and Watts 2015). Another organization that is not nearly as organized as the ONA, but also has a role to play in the longer-term perspective is the informal but ultra-exclusive "presidents' club". This includes all the former living presidents of the United States. Gibbs and Duffy describe the relationships of former presidents to the current incumbent in their recent work (Gibbs and Duffy 2012). In some ways it is like having a series of mentors, but also peers who are jealous to guard their own reputations and legacies. (Gibbs and Duffy 2012).

Elsewhere, strategic direction of the United States and planning deeper into the temporal long term of twenty to thirty years into the future continues to be an oft critiqued problem of the US government as Franke, Dorff and the Strategic Studies institute have pointed out in their recent

work (Franke, Dorff, and Strategic Studies Institute 2013). Franke et al. are critical of strategic responses of the US government in terms of time and topics; today's modern global security environment of the post-September 11, 2001 (9/11) world and the financial meltdowns of 2008 is characterized by complexity, uncertainty, speed, and real-time interconnectivity in domains that require "Whole of Government" (WoG) responses. The dimensions of national security now include the global issues of economic security, environmental security, homeland security, pandemics, transnational terrorism, failing and failed states, rising states such as South Sudan (Franke, Dorff, and Strategic Studies Institute 2013). Here they characterize "Whole of Government" as the entire government of the United States, rather than individual agencies responding piecemeal to individual problems. This type of approach remains challenging for the government of the United States. It will continue to be so under the Trump Administration in 2017.

### Canadian Prime Minister and Parliamentary Time

The Canadian prime minister by contrast has a much narrower field of view and interest in terms of capacities to address longer-term issues and look deeper into the temporal depths. Maintenance of diverse national entity strung across a sparsely populated country in which fractious provinces often compete for primacy, is central to his/ her reality. Also significant is the ongoing possibility of national dissolution brought on by separatist groups in one region or other of the country. Internationally speaking the ambit of the Canadian prime minister is also much narrower. Prime Ministers are limited by lack of resources, military, financial and otherwise. Yet at the same time there a desire for recognition on the world stage. In the contemporary instance, projects such as the 1984-1985 Peace Initiative of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, and Paul Martin's L20 initiative drive Canadian prime ministers' internationalist agendas (Ibbitson 2005). Ad hoc contingencies may play out as Pierre Elliot Trudeau found in the 1980's with his Peace Initiative. He could not see that his discussions with G7 and other world leaders would lead to any long-term outcome such as the end of the Cold War. Arguably, this was the case however (Granatstein and Bothwell 1990). Also, at the same time, it is clear that a longer term thinking was essential to avoid a potentially disastrous and cataclysmic spiral down to a nuclear conflagration (Granatstein and Bothwell 1990).

In Canada, leaders' capacities to look long term and their place in "political time" à la Skowronek are arguably set by two processes/organizations. The Canada Act, 1982, Canada's constitution sets the broader framework for political time. The evolution of this document over time also speaks to the fact that it is a document in time – the living tree metaphor for the constitution continues (Jackson 2006). Intimately connected to the constitution is the federal government's "political clock," the Canadian parliament (Strangio, Hart, and Walter 2013, Laing and MaCaffrie 2013). Contemporary Canadian prime ministers such as Pierre Trudeau, Kim Campbell, Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau are constrained in their political temporal vision much as US Presidents are by the temporal landmarks of their political day, their political week and their political legislative agenda (Strangio, Hart, and Walter 2013, Laing and MaCaffrie 2013, Sykes 2013). Sykes looks at the added constraints on female prime ministers. In Canada's case, Kim Campbell was prime minister briefly in 1993 and the constraints on her political time in office were many (Sykes 2013).

In addition to the Canadian political clock limiting the ability to look at longer-term issues, Canadian political temporal cultural perspective is historically of a Western origin, reflecting mostly Western views on past events. This has limited most Canadian leaders to a linear view of



history and the future. But, as John Ralston Saul has argued, Canada's political temporal culture also has origins in First Nations thought. Saul has examined many of Canadian perspectives and global views in this regard (Saul 1997, 2005). In *A Fair Country* and other works, he argues that Canada is a Métis nation, First Nations are returning to power, and that the triangulation of three different civilizational visions is a better representation of Canada's civilizational perspective (Saul 2009, Saul 2014). This has definite implications in the consideration of temporal perspective, international relations and global governance.

Stemming from this, while Canadian government agencies do not generally have a deep temporal perspective, there are two groups that do look at longer term issues in the Canadian context. They may ultimately drag the prime minister and the government into a longer-term view of time. These groups are those civil society groups working on environmental questions and Canada's First Nations. Focusing on First Nations groups; Bluedorn notes that Indigenous conceptions of time are centred around considering the impact of decisions and ideas on descendants seven generations into the future (Bluedorn 2002). Stanley illustrates clearly that government organizations in Canada, including the very temporally significant Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO), have yet to embrace First Nations knowledge in this regard (Stanley 2010, Durant and Johnson 2010). While acknowledging the philosophy of seven generations, Stanley argues, the NWMO transforms this knowledge to decontextualize it and take it away from its original First Nations' origin and intent (Stanley 2010). Elsewhere, Paul Huebener talks about multi-chronicity of Canadian society in his analysis of Canadian Literature – this perspective can be extended to cover governance as well (Huebener 2015). Looking forward, the language and policy processes that would allow Canadian leadership to look at longer-term issues and prepare for contingencies at a deeper temporal depth are not as well developed in the Canadian government, but there are increasingly important groups who give temporal depth consideration within Canadian society.

## Secretary-General, UN Headquarters and World Time

The UN Secretary-General (UNSG) however is critical in terms having the capacity to look at longer-term issues, as his/her dossier is only the entire world. Notwithstanding this, there has not been a lot of research on the capacity to look at longer term and future issues and the UNSG (Kille and Scully 2003, McMahan 2016). This section will briefly look at some of the constraints on the UNSG and then speak specifically to the issue of temporal perspective of the Secretary-General.

As UNSG, all the temporal perspectives of the world are yours to embrace and understand or to ignore. Your domestic audience is all domestic audiences. This is both liberating and imprisoning all at once. In this regard, it is useful to examine the source of the UNSG's power. Ramesh Thakur, in a brief paper on the subject, notes that the power base of the Secretary-General lies not with any national constituency, but derives from the United Nations Charter itself (Thakur 2004)<sup>6</sup>. Incumbents, Ban Ki Moon, and Kofi Annan have talked about their role. Their views were that it was similar to being a CEO and having the national states as the board of directors. Kofi Annan was also candid about the other side of his role. This is perhaps a clue to the schedule that he led; "How would you react if your board of directors – all 185 of them [that was the number in 1998] – micromanaged your business, gave you conflicting mandates and denied you the resource needed to do your job? What would you think of corporate governance that does not permit borrowing to offset this funding crisis? So if you think of me as a chief executive officer, remember that I am also equal parts juggler and mendicant (Bowles 2004, 130)." Annan also spoke of the uniqueness of the UNSG's role:

While the Charter of the United Nations describes the Secretary-General, in Article 97, ‘the chief administrative officer of the Organization’ it also empowers him, in Article 99, to ‘bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.’ This article is seldom formally invoked – I myself have never found it necessary to use it – but it gives the Secretary-General a political responsibility, which makes him clearly more than a mere administrator. From its very origins, therefore, the office has had this dual character. And in more recent times the Secretary-General has come to be viewed by almost everyone as the organization’s chief diplomatic and political agent (Chesterman and Annan 2007).

World leaders must give direction to nations they must have an effective team to carry out their visions, craft a narrative in political time, and they must be able to weather crises turned then and attempt to turn them into triumphs. At the same time, leaders must not become coldly driven by a schedule of events that has been said for them by their staffs. This is different than the United Nations as for the UNSG, he/she is both servant and holder of incredible power (Chesterman and Annan 2007). One example of a project with a longer-term temporal goal was the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs (now the Sustainable Development Goals with an end date of 2030). The original program looked at the near future in the sense that it covered the era between 2000 and 2015. While this is nowhere near the deep time focus that Benford talks about earlier, it is sufficiently forward looking to be significant. The other important point to this is that the Millennium Development Goals tried to address some of the longer term, incrementally developing problems that are key to human advancement.

Turning now to the issue of capacity to look at longer-term issues and prepare for different future contingencies, the temporal perspective of the UNSG is problematic from the beginning. Not only is the Secretary-General dealing with different time zones all over the world, he/she is also dealing with different perspectives on time inside leaderships AND some societies that are often monochronic (i.e. do one thing at a time) and some societies that are polychronic (i.e. do many things simultaneously and have a less defined sense of time). As former UN staffer Kara Alaimo notes, crafting one’s message in these different cultures is full of challenges (Alaimo 2016).

## **The Time Conundrum, Global Governance, and Leadership in the Present**

From the discussion above, it is clear that the time perspectives of the president of the United States, the Prime Minister Canada and the United Nations Secretary General are limited and that they have inadequate abilities to look at longer-term issues and contingencies. Contemporary international governmental leaders also face a changing timescape including issues such as the compression of time and complex crises, and the nature of leadership, all of which compound the challenge of planning for longer-term scenarios as part of global governance. This section will look for a moment at these questions.

### **Time Compression and Complex Crises**

Scheduling demands that time is planned down to the moment for most world leaders, and to give a nod to Neumann and Ruggie, the density and intensity of events taking place in every

moment of time is increasing (Neumann 2008, Ruggie 1993). Deep temporal gaze is not part of their day-to-day reality. The other certainty is that many people seek to gain the attention of leaders daily, and these leaders desire attention. Subsequently, a circle of mutual reinforcement develops which does not in the end connect the leaders to all the important background issues that they need to examine. Additionally, with more people, the possibilities to reshape agendas increase (Neumann 2008).

Yet, the focus on “the now” and the level of expectations placed upon leaders is clearly increasing (Rosa 2013). In his book, *The Ingenuity Gap*, Thomas Homer Dixon points out the compression of time in the wider sense. Homer Dixon argues that capitalism creates a kaleidoscope of wants and compresses time. This in turn runs the past, the present and the future together (Homer-Dixon 2000). So too, is the case in terms of world events. World leaders are expected to take on more, know more and do it all much quicker. The level of challenge that the leaders face is also increasing however. As Homer Dixon has noted, complexity requires more complex solutions, and this takes more of a leader’s time (Homer-Dixon 2000). A cycle then is being established such that leaders must inexorably be bogged down in seemingly insolvable highly complex crises.

As the pace of expectations relentlessly accelerates, the leader’s ability to address simultaneous crises diminishes. This ability to address crises is diminishing not only within nation-states but also in most other communities around the world. As Neumann notes as well, the most complex the hierarchy, the longer the reaction time (Neumann 2008). Global governance then, becomes, in a very real way, a race against time if we let it.

## Transactional or Transformational Leadership and Time

Leaders engage in transactional or bargaining leadership that also lessens their focus on the longer-term issues and the time horizon. Another way of looking at leaders is that leaders need to be able to address several different types of problems. In his discussion of leadership, James Burns speaks of transactional and transformational leadership (Burns 2003). Transactional leadership is the ability to give and take several things while pursuing an end goal. Transformational leadership requires that the leaders, in Burns’ view, replace or altering entire systems. This is a higher order change that new cultural norms and ways of doing things take the place of the old (Burns 2003). Other authors have spoken of this type ability to transcend the old ways of doing things. Safty, in particular, argues that transformational leadership is critical in terms of global governance as it invokes higher moral purpose to advance humanity and to do so that everyone leads a dignified life (Safty 2003).

Advancing humanity is a tall order and a project of decades, not days. Transactional leadership is not conducive to looking at this longer-term time horizon and the deeper temporal depth of this project. There is a certain link to reality between those involved in transactions; it is very much like a business deal. However, establishing a level of conflict is perhaps essential to whether leader does. Rather than simply looking at the existing scene, the transformational leader must recognize that the existing norms need to be tested (Burns 2003, Masciulli and Knight 2009). Should they found to be wanting, is it not the leader’s highest duty and the exemplar of “good leadership” to replace those norms with new norms (Masciulli and Knight 2009)? Embracing the type of conflict that might occur should leader, who is in many ways representative of the existing norms, attempt to transcend them, is extremely difficult. Taking on deeply held sets of

values, is something that many well-respected leaders are reticent to do (Burns 2003), but in the longer-term perspective it may be necessary to effect the changes necessary to successfully address longer-term questions. Masciulli and Knight discuss vision in this regard, but it is also the ability to transform and advance humanity over the longer time frame that is key (Masciulli and Knight 2009).

## Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the issue of time and world leaders' abilities to address longer-term issues of global governance. The capacity to address these questions is wanting. Part of this is because of leaders' heavy domestic commitments and attention to states' internal temporal landmarks and political time. There is also the necessity of paying attention to the electoral cycles. The lack of well funded dedicated administrative units to address longer term issues also inhibit leaders' abilities to look at longer-term questions. Much effort is spent, to focus particularly on the US case for the moment, and, to paraphrase Lincoln, on political time and the US president's construction of "where we are" as a polity and "whither we are tending." This type of approach is designed to authorize a certain course of political action in the heat of the moment, but does not identify and plan for longer-term issues (Skowronek 2008). The rhythms and demarcations of political time are thus very much expressions of the presidency itself, of a political imperative inherent in the office prompting each incumbent to attempt to control political time (!) and the terms in which the exercise of its powers will be understood.

With regard to the offices of the United States President, that of the Canadian Prime Minister and that of the United Nations Secretary-General, it is clear that the ability to plan and forecast in the longer-term is severely constricted in each of these organizations. Agencies such as the Office of Net Assessment and others have a limited scope and are sometimes not even heard in the "noise" of the present. Contemporary international governmental organizations also threaten to sink under the weight of their scheduling commitments in the current moment.

Leaders are also not sensitive to the longer-term issues of global governance because of the nature of modern leadership. Much of what constitutes leadership today is transactional in nature and is focused on "the now". Leaders are concerned about making deals with other powerful groups within society. They are less about trying to overhaul the entire world system of governance and advance humanity. They are also less willing to undertake the conflict that would result in a transformation of deeply held values widely practiced tradition. Making people change the way they do things on the broad level is one of the most difficult tests a leader will ever confront.

Lastly, and to conclude, developing the ability to look at longer-term issues is key to humanity's ultimate survival, advancement and effective engagement with difficult global issues. Preparing for different contingencies and scenarios allows for a more nuanced and prepared governments in the now and looking forward. As noted by several temporal theorists and others, there is a compression of time that is taking place. This is having all sorts of implications both positive and negative regarding global events. Assessing the longer-term temporal dimension of global issues is crucial to further efforts to tackle many of the issues of global governance.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper entitled “Leadership and Time: An Issue of Global Governance” was first presented on Wednesday March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 at the International Studies Association Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

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<sup>3</sup>Angelou and Killian discuss fatalism – de-fatalism is the inverse of the following statement; “Fatalism, on the attitudinal level, is an acceptance of a causative chain of happenings whereas determinism, which is similar to but different from fatalism, is an anticipation that encourages activity fatalistic acceptance implies passivity (Masaryk 1994:103). Thus, to the individual, fatalism conceives everything has an appointed outcome (Scott and Marshall 2009): it is a perceived lack of control over agentic abilities, an acceptance of an individual’s incapacity for purposefully active decision making as influenced by external structures” (see Agathangelou and Killian 2016: 262).

<sup>4</sup>Stuart, M. (1969). *If It’s Tuesday, This Must be Belgium*. Los Angeles: United Artists, National Broadcasting Company (1974)

<sup>5</sup>He goes on to describe the individual categories; “But when they fit one of four possible categories, each of which on these ordering activities: Reconstructive presidents (Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, FDR) replace the other party at a moment when attractiveness and legitimacy, are no longer fresh, widely accepted. Reconstructors disrupt the inherited landscape and argue that they intend to return the nation to its true path. Articulator presidents (Monroe, Polk, TR, LBJ) follow a member of their own regime into office with the purpose of further elaborating the still supported policy premises that they inherit. Disjunctive presidents (John Quincy Adams, Pierce, Hoover, Carter) assume office at the end of a regime’s cycle, when their own party’s fortunes and legitimacy have sagged. They have the most difficult task since they must find, but cannot, a way of operating effectively as ‘late regime affiliates’ (263) of a declining political order. Finally, pre-emptive presidents, the rarest types (and not discussed here although Eisenhower and Nixon are mentioned) replace the other time when the latter’s policies, reputation and legitimacy and widely supported” (Sibley, 1994).

<sup>6</sup>Skowronek too goes on – “To paraphrase Lincoln, political time is the president’s construction of ‘where we are’ as a polity and ‘whither we are tending,’ a construction designed to authorize a certain course of political action in the moment at hand. The rhythms and demarcations of political time are thus very much expressions of the presidency itself, of a political imperative inherent in the office prompting each incumbent to attempt to control the terms in which the exercise of its powers will be understood” (Skowronek, 2008).

<sup>7</sup>See James Reynold’s recent BBC article for a discussion of ‘who was the second longest serving president?’ and the fudging of time at the beginning and end of presidential terms. (See Reynolds 2017)