

Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing when We Need It Most

By Thomas Hale, David Held, Kevin Young

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The issues that increasingly dominate the 21st century cannot be solved by any single country acting alone, no matter how powerful. To manage the global economy, prevent runaway environmental destruction, reign in nuclear proliferation, or confront other global challenges, we must cooperate. But at the same time, our tools for global policymaking - chiefly state-to-state negotiations over treaties and international institutions - have broken down.

The result is gridlock, which manifests across areas via a number of common mechanisms. The rise of new powers representing a more diverse array of interests makes agreement more difficult. The problems themselves have also grown harder as global policy issues penetrate ever more deeply into core domestic concerns. Existing institutions, created for a different world, also lock-in pathological decision-making procedures and render the field ever more complex. All of these processes - in part a function of previous, successful efforts at cooperation - have led global cooperation to fail us even as we need it most.

Ranging over the main areas of global concern, from security to the global economy and the environment, this book examines these mechanisms of gridlock and pathways beyond them. It is written in a highly accessible way, making it relevant not only to students of politics and international relations but also to a wider general readership.

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Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing when We Need It Most By Thomas Hale, David Held, Kevin Young Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1067085 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Polity
- Published on: 2013-08-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.10" h x 1.13" w x 6.05" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 368 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"A must-read for those thinking about a better global governance."
Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the World Trade Organization

"Their book is convincing, well written, and sobering."
Perspectives on Politics

"International institutions are less and less able to solve global problems even as we need them more and more. Gridlock offers a lucid and concise set of explanations for the dysfunction we observe across the security, economic, and environmental arenas. Best of all, by identifying systemic patterns of failure and the underlying causes, the authors are able to put forward a useful set of practical solutions. A great read for policymakers and experts."
Anne-Marie Slaughter, Princeton University

"There is no shortage of books that make the case for global cooperation; this one explains why we are not getting it. Ranging over international security, the global economy, and the environment, this excellent and sensible book elucidates why our global commons is becoming increasingly unmanageable, as a result in part of the very success of the post-war international system."
Dani Rodrik, Harvard University

"An eye-opening and encouraging book. Not only does it present an analysis of why global cooperation is failing, but it also offers pathways out of gridlock."
Ulrich Beck, University of Munich

"In *Gridlock,* Thomas Hale, David Held, and Kevin Young offer an ambitious and sweeping treatment of contemporary global issues that combines sociology, political economy, and international relations."
Peter M. Haas, University of Massachusetts Amherst

"It is an accessible, pleasant read thanks to its eloquent prose and remarkable storytelling."
Global Policy

About the Author
Thomas Hale is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford.

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Kevin Young is assistant professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

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