

own. Hence, the elaborate institutional architecture surrounding the granting of patents⁶⁶—and the associated system for collecting fees for the use of patented inventions—can credibly be seen as a global system for tax collection.⁶⁷

Oh, My!

In saying that the rudiments of world government are already with us, the aim of this chapter has been to reassure, to dissipate fear of the unknown. But the effect might of course be just the opposite. "If what we thought were innocuous features of the status quo are actually precursors to world government," some might say, "then maybe they are not that innocuous after all!" But why should we worry that that is where it all will lead? The path dynamics in view are reassuring rather than worrying. It is not as if weaker forms of international cooperation would make things worse in ways that only stronger forms of world government would then be able to make better. Instead, the presumptive path would be one of success building on success: the more experience we have of ever-stronger forms of global cooperation, the more clearly we can see its benefits and the more comfortable we become with its further ramifications.

Assuming those really are the path dynamics in view—assuming it really is purely a matter of confidence building, where the confidence is well warranted—I simply cannot see anything troubling in them. If a weakly federated form of global governance would lead to more strongly centralized forms of world government through that route and only that route, then we would surely have nothing to fear from such a development.

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