Multi-stakeholder Initiative for Sustainable Development:

An English School Perspective

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Abstrak

Kolaborasi perusahaan multinasional, organisasi masyarakat sipil dan pemerintah sangat penting untuk melaksanakan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Munculnya inisiatif multi-stakeholder dianggap sebagai solusi untuk membawa pelaku yang berbeda bekerja sama dalam melindungi lingkungan dan pengelolaan pembangunan. Namun, kritikus berpendapat bahwa MSIs mengalami kekurangan akuntabilitas, legitimasi dan efektivitas. Penelitian ini akan menggunakan English School Theory (EST) untuk mengatasi perdebatan dengan menggunakan studi kasus tahun 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) atau konferensi Johannesburg. Pertanyaan penelitian ini adalah bagaimana memahami MSIs untuk pembangunan berkelanjutan menggunakan EST. Artikel ini menggunakan kerangka kerja konseptual untuk mengevaluasi legitimasi, efektivitas dan akuntabilitas MSIs untuk pembangunan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci : *korporasi multinasional, multi-stakeholder initiative*

Abstract

Collaboration of multinational corporation, civil society organizations and governments is critical in implementing sustainable development. Emergence of multi-stakeholder initiatives is considered as a solution to bring different actors work together in protecting environment and managing development. However, the critics argue that MSIs are lack of accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness. This research will use English School Theory (EST) to address this debate with the case study of 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) or Johannesburg conference. The research question is on how to understand MSIs for sustainable development using EST. This article advances a conceptual framework for evaluating the legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability of MSIs for sustainable development.

Keywords : *multinational corporation, multi-stakeholder initiative*

Introduction

Soon after UN declared Laguna San Ignacio in Mexico as a world heritage site, Mexican government and Mitsubishi Corporation announced plans to use 62.000 acres of Laguna for a massive salt plan. This decisions came as a surprise. In 1994, Mitsubishi submitted its first application to the Mexican Environment Ministry to build the Laguna San Ignacio salt plant. It was rejected by the Environment

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Ministry as "incompatible with the conservation objectives" of the El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve, which was created by the Mexican government in 1988 as the largest protected natural area in Latin America(Russell 2010).

The $100-million facility would have been the largest salt plant in the world, covering 62,000 acres of the reserve – about three times the size of the District of Columbia (Preston 1999). Government of Mexico's revised decision provoked resistance from civil society organizations. National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) lead a coalition comprising environmentalists, fishermen, scientists and consumers to block the deal because the project will harm the entire ecosystem in the Laguna. Laguna is the last pristine breeding ground of the California Gray Whale and home to numerous other endangered plant and animal species. In 2000, Mexico and Mitsubishi agreed to halt the plan.

This case confirms that civil society organizations is an important actor in international environmental politics. Inability of the states-system to offer a long-term response to the rising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases did not only bring about a crisis in confidence for climate change diplomacy. It also prompted many scholars of international relations to look beyond state for more effective forms of global climate governance (Backstrand and Kronsell 2015, 43).

In the past ten years, a fast-growing array of multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) was created as a 'means of filling "governance gaps" where existing legislation and/or enforcement were not enough to prevent corruption, environmental degradation or human rights abuses (Peters, et al. 2009, 84). Broadly speaking, MSIs can be circumscribed as 'collective initiatives between governments, MNCs and NGOs. Examples such as the EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives) and World Commission on Dams (WCD). At their high water mark, MSIs represent an alternative environmental governance model and a possible platform for building democratic accountability in places where traditional democratic institutions and process are weak.

This research will use English School Theory (EST) to investigate the diverse ways by which non-state or sub-state actors and networks such as environmental non-govenmental organizations (NGOs), multi-national corporations (MNCs) and city networks contribute to rule-setting and public steering. There have been many

books and journals article highlighting increasingly importance of EST in security and international political economy studies. English School theorists has rarely had much explicit to say regarding the implications of environmental degradation for IR.

By drawing attention to the rise of hybrid, non-hierarchical and network-like modes of governing in Johannesburg Conference, this work will develop EST framework of thinking on climate politics and governance and environment agenda in general. Johannesburg Conference is the first environmental summit on sustainable development that adopt MSIs. This research question is how to understand multi-stakeholder initiatives for sustainable development using English School Theory in the case of Johannesburg Conference?

English School Theory

The significance of non-state actors and environmental issues is hotly debated in International Relation theories. Classic IR thinkers rarely looked at environmental issues and non-state actors in their theory-making process meanwhile new generation of IR thinkers started to build IR theories suitable to explain the role of non-state actors and environmental issues in world politics.

English School Theory (EST) is one of IR grand theory widely acknowledged by its contribution in security and international political economy studies. EST is also involved in a debate whether states must be ambitious to achieve the sustainability of the Earth and whether civil society organizations can be considered as entities with full rights as states have.

English School Theory, pioneered by Martin Wight, Hedley Bull and Barry Buzan, answered this debate by splitting up IR into three division. Wight (1992), for example, provide three conceptions on IR, which are realism, rationalism, and revolutionism. Realism offers pessimistic worldviews and revolutions represented radical movement toward idealist normative goals. Rationalism is the middle ground between realism and revolutionism emphasizing the role of law and wisdom in IR.

Bull (1966) provided three basic conceptions of IR, which are international system, international society and world society. International system refers to power politics among states, and puts the structure and process of international anarchy at the center of its analysis. International society is about the institutionalization of

shared interest and identity amongst states, and puts the creation and maintenance of shared norms, rules and institutions at the center of IRtheory.Worldssocietytakesindividuals,non-stateorganisationsandultimatelythe global population a saw hole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements, and puts transcendence of the states-system at the centre of IR theory

Furthermore, Buzan (2004) argues that there are six spectrum of international society; asocial, power political, coexistence, cooperative, convergence, confederative. Each of this spectrum has its own assumptions on environment and non-state actors. Asocial, power political and coexistence considered that sovereignty and international order as the ultimate goal of international society meanwhile cooperative, convergence and confederative are very active in promoting new issues and actors in IR such as environment and non-state actors.

This research would like to see the relevance of EST in the case of global environmental agenda. Falk (1971, 98) claimed that states system is a barrier for solving environmental problems. He said, "meeting environmental threats will require global unity and global planning, to which the division of manind into sovereign states is a standing obstacle. In essence, the threats of all outgrowth of a mismanaged environment is an inevitable result of a defective set of political institution".

Bull disagree with the idea that sovereignty of states and common pursuit of stewardship are conflictual. States can also be champion of climate change if peoples of nations can agree together that environment is number one priority. Bull (1977, 283) concedes that "if all men [sic] were as willing to co-operate in the pursuit of common goals as the crew of a spaceship, these threats to the human environment would be easier to meet than they are. In relation to the human environment, it has to be recognised that human conflict has sources that are deeper than any particular form of universal political order"

This paper also agreed with Bull's analysis that contemporary order of international relation is compatible with environmental protectionism. The problem is on how to find some related concepts capable of bridging international order with environmentalism. MSIs and SD are two important concept representing international society theory that will be used to build EST's understanding on the

environment. These concepts will be umbrella concept for different issues and actors. The relationship between different concepts will be the output of this research.

Over the past few years, SD has emerged as the latest development catchphrase. A wide range of nongovernmental as well as governmental organizations have embraced it as the paradigm of development. This paper argues that it is essentially contested concept which means that such concepts represent a general agreement in the abstract, but they generate endless and irresolvable disagreements about what they might mean in practice.

They provide concepts that can float free of concrete referents, to be filled with meaning by their users. In the struggles for interpretive power that characterize the negotiation of the language of policy, contested concept shelter multiple agendas, providing room for maneuver and space for contestation. Contested concept, however, also contain the risk, to mask political interests, and underlying ideologies and leave much of what is actually done in their name unquestioned.

The discussion of SD started when the United Nations commissioned a group of 22 people from developed and developing countries to identify long-term environmental strategies for the international community. This World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), better known as the Brundtland Commission, submitted their report, entitled "Our common future", to the UN in 1987. In the report, SD is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, 43). Sooner this broad definition is used, elaborated and promoted by powerful states and international organizations such UNEP, World Bank and IMF. They define SD as development tool maintaining and enhancing the quality of human life – social, economic and environmental – while living within the carrying capacity of supporting eco-system."

However, there are critics regarding this concept and the definition. The first critic is frustration or irritation, usually expressed from a policy-technocratic standpoint. SD is never properly defined, it is protested; everybody seems to think it means something different (Jacobs 1999, 22). How can the term be adopted as a

policy objective unless its meaning is clarified and agreed upon. The lack of clarity of the definitions allows anything to be claimed as "sustainable" or as "promoting sustainable development". For example, does SD allow economic growth or not? At present the vagueness of the definitions, it is argued, allows business and development interests and their government supporters to claim they are in favour of sustainable development when they actually are the perpetrators of unsustainability.

The second form of resistance is outright rejection. Not all environmentalists have endorsed the concept of sustainable development. Politically, its most outspoken opposition comes from those we might call 'ultra-greens'. For them, the fuzziness of its meaning is integral to its purpose. Sustainable development is a smokescreen put up by business and development interest to obscure conflicts between ecological integrity and economic growth, and between the interests of the rich North and poor South.

The third form of resistance comes from those we might call cultural critics. The argument here is the discourse of sustainable development represents an inappropriate response to the 'environmental problematique'. Despite good intentions, its inability to understand or reflect recent cultural changes in industrial societies leaves its programme liable to failure. Richardson (1997, 50) argues that Bruntdland concept of sustainability is a manifestation of Western development paradigm and profligate Western lifestyle as a model for industrializing world. Ecological sustainability was not seen as primary in the policy-making process, but rather as only one of a number factors. In essence, the industrial worldview was accepted albeit in the language of biocentricity.

Lele (1991) concluded that sustainable development is in real danger of becoming a cliché, a fashionable phrase that everyone pays homage to but nobody cares to define. Better articulation of the terms, concepts, analytical methods and policy-making principles is necessary if SD is to avoid either being dismissed as another development fad or co-opted by forces opposed to changes in the status quo.

This research believed that SD is still relevant to be used in the environmental discourse. The strength of the concept of SD stems from the choice of an apparently simple definition of fundamental objectives – meeting current needs

and sustainability requirements - from which can be derived a range of operational objectives that cut across most previous intellectual and political boundaries. SD is a powerful tool for consensus:

SD has three bases, scientific realities, consensus on ethical principles, and consideration of long-term self-interest. There is a broad consensus that pursuing policies that imperil the welfare of future generations is unfair. Most would agree that consigning a large share of the world's population to deprivation and poverty is also unfair. Pragmatic self-interest reinforces that belief. Poverty underlies the deterioration of resources and the population growth in much of the world and affects everyone.

The current state of scientific knowledge about natural and social phenomena and their interactions leads inexorably to the conclusion that anyone driven by either long-term self-interest, or concern for poverty, or concern for intergenerational equity should be willing to support the operational objectives of SD.

Assuming that concern for intergenerational equity coincides with broad environmental concerns, and adding concern for local participation to the list, this formulation of SD has, in theory, the potential for building a very broad and powerful consensus.

This paper argues that specific environmental standards is really needed to resolve the conflict between environmental sustainability and economic sustainability. It is also important to know the costs of attaining the specified environmental standards and identify thethe time scale to achieve the standard. Multi-stakeholder initiatives is an attempt to address this challenge.

Multi-stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs)

Since the 1980s, there has been a considerable shift in thinking regarding how to improve the social and environmental performance of transnational corporations. There is an increasing number of NGOs opted for collaboration as opposed to confrontation. The combination of this two phenomena involves the emergence of so-called "multi-stakeholder initiatives" where non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multilateral and other organizations encourage companies to participate in schemes that set social and environmental standards, monitor compliance, promote

social and environmental reporting and auditing, certify good practice, and encourage stakeholder dialogue and "social learning", pushing companies, states and non-governmental organizations beyond narrow self-interest based bargaining (Moog, Spicer and Bohm 2015, 473). MSIs have been branded as a new form of global governance with the potential to bridge multilateral norms and local action by drawing on a diverse number of actors in civil society, government and business.

MSIs is an innovative, voluntary approaches to new standard setting and therefore, the imperative for getting the appropriate stakeholders committed to a process of dialogue and joint problem-solving. This is using 'regulation-by-information' approach where the basic paradigm for global regulatory processes is the promulgation of performance standards, codes of practice, and other aspirational models based on compiled comparative information (Slaughter 2003, 1063).

In MSIs, the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) have become legitimate at the negotiation table in the making and implementing of governance regimes. In other words, civil society organizations are not merely consulted, but all parties can take an active and engaged role in shaping the process and outcomes through bargaining and argumentative (that is, non-manipulative) persuasion.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Kimberly Process, and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) are just a few examples of major MSIs. Through comprehensive deliberative processes, involving a broad set of stakeholders from governments, private sector, and civil society, MSIs form and adopt new norms, which they seek to make part of the global agenda, and implement on the ground. Koechlin and Calland (2009, 91), have identified five functions of MSIs: 1) dialogue/forum, 2) institution building, 3) rule setting, 4) rule implementation and 5) rule monitoring.

MSIs was initially coined in the follow-up process to the Rio Conference in 1955 with regard to addressing environmental issues. However, in the past decade, such collective initiatives across sectors have been increasingly used in other areas, such as human rights regimes (for example UK-US Voluntary Standard on Security and Human Rights) or accountability and transparency initiative (for example EITI). MSIs are regarded as alternative to government regulation for solving complex

problems, in recognition of (a) the global and interconnected nature of new problems, (b) the slow and winding pace and often inappropriate instruments of global negotiation processes, and (c) the interdependencies between the various stakeholders and their actions.

Proponents argue that MSIs, spanning the public–private domain, capture the essence of 'governance from below', counter the participation gap and effectively address the implementation gap in global environmental politics. MSIs have emerged partly as a response to the limits of multilateralism, where intergovernmental diplomacy alone cannot grapple with the pressing problems and complex dimensions of sustainable development.

Legitimacy, Accountability and Effectiveness

Normatively, global governance can be conceived as the process of creating a legitimate political order and rule compliance in the absence of supranational authority or world government. Three generic models for why actors obey rules have been posited, namely coercion, self-interest and legitimacy. The realist premise is that actors obey norms because of fear of punishment while the liberal institutionalist account assumes that rule compliance stems from pure self-interest of the actor, two predominant explanations. This article develops the third interpretation of an important source of rule compliance, namely legitimacy.

Legitimacy is the source of power for MSIs, enabling some policies or practices while proscribing others. In terms of community, legitimacy always rests on shared acceptance of rules and rule by affected communities and on justificatory norms recognized by relevant community.

However, defining who is a member of a relevant community, on what basis community identification must rest, and to what degree shared norms of appropriateness must be present to achieve legitimacy are all subjects of the debate. MSIs throw traditional notions of sovereign state diplomacy and consent as a source of legitimacy.

In traditional domestic politics, legitimacy requires democracy because it is the central principle in contemporary politics that justifies authority. However, there is little indication on the horizon of truly democratic institutions at regional and

global level even when the highly institutionalized European Union continues to struggle with a democratic deficit(Bernstein 2005, 145). Cosmopolitan proposals for participatory mechanisms including referendums and elected representative institutions such People's Assemblies or Global Parliament that can hold global regulatory institutions accountable or ensure the protection of local autonomy and individual rights, appear even less likely outside the European context. Hierarchical and electoral accountability to enhance legitimacy are difficult in a global system of rule without coherent *demos*, an electorate, mechanism of representation of parliament (Backstrand 2006, 295).

This research argues that MSIs can achieve a high standard of stakeholder democracy through equal weight voting mechanism. For example, the Forest Stewardship Council, which certifies forest products, created environmental, social, and economic decision-making chambers, each with equal voting weight, to ensure business interests would not dominate decision-making(Bernstein 2005, 161). Decision-making in MSIs is frequently designed to force different stakeholder groups to engage and deliberate, and many develop specific standards at the local level with community involvement rather than through top-down processes.

In the absence of electoral and representative legislative processes, processes that systematically involve stakeholders' range of voices and perspectives create 'ownership' of outcomes and can draw upon principles protecting the vulnerable. Since the 1992 Rio summit, MSIs has been launched to make multilateralism more inclusive and responsive to marginalized groups (such as women and indigenous people), and as a remedy to the 'participation gap' and disenfranchisement in global environmental governance (Backstrand 2006, 294). Multilateral financial institutions, which have come under fierce criticism for suffering from a democratic deficit, have responded by establishing consultative arrangements with civil society.

The assumption underpinning the 'governance from below' paradigm is pretty straightforward: more participation by affected groups will generate more effective collective problem solving. In other words, diverse stakeholder will increase legitimacy through deliberative mechanisms for enhancing stakeholder consultation. Consequently, in the context of global problem solving the call for increased representation and participation has primarily an instrumental value. This has been

most pronounced in the gender/sustainable development agenda, where paradoxically women are seen as victims of environmental destruction as well as the key to solving the environmental crisis.

MSIs are considered as a mechanism for taming, even democratizing the power of transnational corporations. Scholars have taken a keen interest, noting that corporate involvement in MSIs goes beyond traditional CSR efforts, as participation in MSIs often means that corporations willingly agree to be bound by more stringent standards that are legally required in the countries they operate. Corporate interests are carefully balanced by voices from other social interests (labor, local communities, and environmental movement). Thus MSIs may have a legitimacy advantage among the full range of relevant communities over the business-dominated International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Effectiveness refers to the degree of cooperation between governments, CSOs and MNCs in MSIs. There will be rules and procedures in MSIs and mostly we count the indicator of effectiveness based on the implementation of rules and procedures. We are usually used quantitative goals of poverty eradication, access to freshwater biodiversity protection. This kind of indicator is hard to assess since the implementation of sustainable development goals is a long-term process.

This article argues that goals should not be formulated as measurable targets and timetables. Instead the process of communication and deliberation are the key indicator of effectiveness. Communication and deliberation can encourage a non-hierarchical steering mode enabling actors to change voluntarily their perceptions of the situation and even their preferences through reasoned consensus.

Johannesburg Conference

This research brought 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) as the case study. WSSD is the main follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. This is the first environment conferences to have a formally structured official input from a wide range of major groups of stakeholders identified at Rio rather than relying upon the unofficial 'side events'(Seyfang and Jordan 2009, 21).

There was two track of diplomacy held in WSSD. Track I refers to negotiation between states and Track II refers to non-state actors related to sustainable development. Johannesburg Declaration and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) were the result of Track I. There are more than 200 public-private partnership (amounting $235 million) was announced in conjunction with WSSD as the Track II(Backstrand 2006, 296).

These partnership initiatives are a significant departure from Earth Summit, where the emphasis has been on accords among nation states. Illustrative examples include a partnership for cleaner fuels and vehicles announced at the Summit that will involve the U.N., national governments, NGOs, and the business sector and a European Union "Water for Life" initiative that will harness diverse partners to help provide clean water and adequate sanitation in Africa and Central Asia. The second argument is that there are diverse set of actors in WSSD. Developed and developing countries, intergovernmental organizations and transnational corporation joined proactively in WSSD.

Over 8,000 civil society participants were officially accredited to the Summit. An estimated 20,000 people representing landless peoples marched from one of Johannesburg's poorest areas to the convention center (French 2015).

According to Business Action for Sustainable Development, an estimated 1,000 business representatives participated in the Summit, 120 of them CEOs, Board Chairman, or those of similar rank. In comparison, there were 100 world leaders in attendance (*Ibid).*

The mix of actors in WSSD and partnership indicated the comprehensiveness of the meeting. As we have discussed before, there is a problem of democratic deficit where states and corporations are dominantly deciding the public policies. The involvement of CSOs hopefully will fix the deficit. The presence of local peasants, trade union, small NGOs, low-income countries will bring more arguments and supervision toward the negotiation in track I.

Despite the fear of conflict between rich – poor countries, southern and northern CSOs, Johannesburg Summit produced legitimate and accountable decisions. Of course we can ask about the accountability of the CSOs and the probability of greenwashing within the Johannesburg Partnership. The message from

Johannesburg is very clear. If corporation, governments and CSOs believed that they are interdepend and trust each other, effective solution can be produced.

The 2002 World Summit on Johannesburg Partnership networks represents the coalition of the willing and become effective collaborative endeavors between governments, business and civil society. While it did not invent these concepts, it did much to promote the idea then emerging environmental governance should not be limited to inter-state agreements. Stakeholders ought to be engaged, not only by informing inter-governmental decisions, but also through collaborative ventures, especially focusing on the implementation of sustainable development.

Conclusion

In the past ten years, a fast-growing array of multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) was created as a 'means of filling "governance gaps" where existing legislation and/or enforcement were not enough to prevent corruption, environmental degradation or human rights abuses. However, the role of MSIs in contemporary global environmental discourse raises larger questions of the legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability of networked governance structures. By using English School Theory, this article advances a conceptual framework for evaluating the legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability of MSIs for sustainable development (figure 1).

This research finds that the language of MSIs provides the conceptual space to interrogate how actors such as international organizations, global social movements, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), transnational scientific networks, business organizations and multinational corporation are involved in the governance of sustainable development 'beyond' the international regime and the formal structures of government.

This research argues that multi-stakeholder initiatives is an attempt to address the problem of multiple definition of SD. Specific environmental standards is really needed to resolve the conflict between environmental sustainability and economic sustainability. The debate is further continued on the question of accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness of MSIs. This research argues that high level of effectiveness and legitimacy in terms of broad representation of interest groups and

reputation of MSIs can compensate for low level accountability in terms of direct vote from people.

The core debate of this issue whether non-state actors are legitimate actors in International Political Economy is well captured within the theoretical development of EST.(Bull 1977, 82), the founder of EST, stated:

> "There is, indeed, no lack of self-appointed spokesmen of the common good of •the spaceship earth' or •this endangered planet'. But the views of these private individuals, whatever merit they may have, are not the outcome of any political process of the assertion and reconciliation of interests. In the sense that they are not authenticated by such a political process, the views of these individuals provide even less of an authoritative guide to the common good of mankind than do the views of the spokesmen of sovereign states, even unrepresentative or tyrannical ones, which at least have claims to speak for some part of mankind larger than themselves. Nor do the spokesmen of non-governmental groups (such as bodies of experts on arms control, economic development or environmental matters) possess authority of this kind; they may speak with authority on their particular subject, but to define the interests of mankind is to lay claim to a kind of authority that can only be conferred by a political process."

Barry Buzan launched his book "English School Theory" and negated Barry Buzan by opening wider the definition of international society, central theory of EST. He found that EST has to be reformed to be able to analyze the complexity within International Political Economy. He said:

> This way of thinking supposes (rightly) that history has moved on, and that the sources of international order have evolved substantially since Bull was observing the international system. It also supposes (perhaps more arguably)that Bull'scommitment to the order problematique would have opened his eyes to this if he were looking at the twenty-first-century world. In this perspective, international society is represented not just by states, but by 'Davos-culture'comprising both the dominant structure of ordering ideas, and all of the providers of order within that framework, whether states, IGOs or INGOs" (Buzan 2004, 96)

The demonstrated growth of MSIs is not interpreted as a sign that states and their agencies are marginalized within the realm of climate governance. Although MSIs have emerged in response to the regulatory deficit permeating the sustainable

development, they operate in the shadow of hierarchy as states and international organizations are delegating rule setting or implementation functions to non-state actors. In other words, governing beyond the state does not necessarily entail governing without the state.

What we are witnessing, from Johannes Conference, is instead a redefinition of the scope and scale of state activity. In contemporary climate governance the state does not govern in isolation but works in close interplay with actors purporting to represent affected communities and interests. Non-state actors operating across different political scales and traditionally discrete policy sectors share responsibility with the state for defining problems and implementing legitimate solutions to climate change.

These transnational spheres of authority are not separate from, or alternative to, state-based power but are inextricably bound up with it. This decentred conception of the states departs from the hierarchical outlook of regime theory. While it gives support to the notion of the state as a social actors whose interests and activities are constituted in close interplay with the non-state actors and groups, the boundaries of the decentered partnering state appear much more "dynamic, porous, fragile and malleable"(Backstrand and Kronsell 2015, 45).

Such non-state advocacy does, however, not challenge the proposition that states are the principal international environmental rule-makers, neither does it mark a decisive break with underlying assumptions about international cooperation.

The world is in a process of a fundamental transition from a system of highly autonomous states to one where states are increasingly enmeshed in a complex web of political, social and economic relationships. After the collapse of the Cold War, the globalization of economies, the advent of social movements and the growth of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, global governance scholars have suggested that the locus of power and politics has changed in favor of supra-national and subnational actors.

From this analytical horizon the state-centrism appears incomplete as it takes into account only the international arena of interstate negotiations, public policies and those non-state actors that try to influence international agreements.

Current developments in global climate governance are signs of the gradual institutionalization of transnational public sphere in world politics, where the establishment of norms and rules and their subsequent implementation are only to a limited extent the result of public agency in formal sense, but often the outcome of agency beyond the state. Although states never relinquished their sole authority to make decisions, these innovations can be read as an opportunity for "stakeholder democracy" that moves beyond mere participation to "collaboration" and truer "deliberation" among states, business and civil society.

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