

Who participates in global environmental governance? Partial answers from international relations theory

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Abstract. An important current of research in international environmental affairs deals with the roles of non-state actors in international environmental governance. For many, the growing influence of non-state actors is a welcome trend because these actors, especially non-governmental organizations, facilitate environmental negotiations between states and perform key information-gathering, dissemination, advocacy, and appraisal functions that states are either unwilling or unable to do. For the student of international relations (IR), examining the roles and responsibilities of non-state actors in global environmental affairs is a departure from the ordinary concern of that field – namely, the study of interstate behavior. But for the study of global environmental problems, particularly those problems that are simultaneously global and local, the investigator must map the influence of an even broader assemblage of actors. Little is known about how local level institutions or ordinary citizens fit into global environmental policy processes. Understanding what motivates public demands for global environmental quality is an especially important research task, especially for those pervasive environmental problems like global climate change and complex exhortations like sustainable development that require the attention and acquiescence of ordinary citizens.

Introduction

Among students of international environmental affairs, there is an emerging consensus that global environmental governance is the purview not only of the nation-state (hereinafter, state) but also of the non-state. A variety of non-sovereign actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), market-oriented actors (e.g., transnational corporations), and knowledge-based communities participate in global environmental problem-solving institutions (McKormick, 1999; Kauffman, 1997; Schreurs, 1997; Litfin, 1993). If, in fact, non-state actors are influential players in international environmental affairs, it is an agreeable development because some of the most formidable global environmental problems like global climate change are perpetrated by highly decentralized actors, and most national governments hesitate to adopt policies that challenge the preferences and habits of these actors. Sustainable development advocates contend that national governments, by themselves, are incapable of overcoming deeply entrenched cultural and psychological barriers to sustainability (Milbrath, 1991). Those who doubt the sanctioning powers of national governments urge that sustainability will succeed only if a variety of non-state actors are enlisted as policy shapers and advocates (Milbrath, 1996). Moreover, champions of

sustainable development are skeptical about the long-term survival of liberal capitalism; they prescribe self-restraint and good environmental stewardship as more durable, more sensible alternatives to high consumption/high throughput lifestyles that many societies practice or aspire to practice (Maser, 1997). Some suggest that only relatively small polities are able to foster socially and environmentally satisfying modes of existence for their members (Schumacher, 1973). Since the local setting is the key staging ground for sustainable development, it seems logical for policy analysts to inquire about the forms, functions, and performance of local level policy institutions that, in aggregate, promote global environmental protection and human welfare.

In fact, among experts in international environmental affairs, there has been relatively little discourse about the role of local institutions in global environmental protection. According to a report by one prominent group of international relations experts (Young, 1997b), a more complete understanding of the forms and functions of local institutions in global environmental politics is essential, because the effectiveness of international environmental policy depends on the compatibility of bottom-up *and* top-down institutional arrangements. The 1990s saw a flowering of scholarship on the environmental policy competencies of IGOs and NGOs and the frequent finding that other actors besides states are key shapers of regional and global environmental institutions. However, a great many of the non-state actors that are the foci of these studies – especially IGOs – operate in top-down, macro-scale settings. Understanding of the policy functions of IGOs and internationally prominent NGOs greatly outpaces knowledge of local institutional contexts for global environmental problem-solving (Hawkins, 1993: pp. 240–242). Global-scale environmental problems like global climate change and population growth originate from choices made by millions of families and individuals. Reorienting intellectual resources to study local institutions is in order, since ordinary citizens determine the success or failure of global policy prescriptions for problems like climate change and overpopulation.

The first part of this essay reports on a crisis in contemporary international studies: namely, the clash between the traditional or state-centered paradigm and the insurgent or multi-stakeholder paradigm of world politics. The latter part of this section focuses on the intellectual contributions of the insurgents, and in particular, those authors who propose that non-state actors are vital participants in global environmental governance. Most research on non-state actors in global environmental affairs deals with organizations and individuals that operate in international rather than subnational or local settings. This is a less-than-ideal problem orientation for addressing problems that are simultaneously global and local, like global climate change. The multi-stakeholder view also tends to take for granted the ‘non’ in ‘non-state’; some insurgents fail to consider the statist origins of intergovernmental organizations and states’ prevailing interests and influence over these organizations. Part two of this essay argues that when ordinary citizens and local organizations move to the center of the analysis, new policy insights become apparent; this is true even

among oft-researched topics such as the problem of borrowing from the stratospheric ozone regime to redress global climate change. The requirements for effective grassroots promotion of global environmental policies are contemplated in part three. In this section, I consider the advantages of liberating the motivational symbols trapped in the rhetoric of sustainable development. The fourth and final section examines the doctrinal basis for local management of pervasive, macro-scale environmental problems. Compelling examples of these management schemes exist but their diffusion and widescale adoption are stymied by the general public's indifference to global environmental imperatives.

Participants in international environmental affairs

'Is international relations a policy science?' ask James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff, Jr. in their frequently cited survey of contending theories of international relations (1981: p. 19). Responding to their own question, they write,

A policy science is a form of theory. But it is not 'pure theory,' which aims solely at understanding. A policy science aims at action. The policy scientist wishes to understand in order to improve the ability to choose wisely (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981: p. 19).

The authors do not find either for or against the proposition that international relations (IR) is a policy science, though they speak to the field's normative intentions and the premium it places on practicable knowledge. Were, indeed, international relations a policy science, then students seeking to clarify and resolve international problems might be well-served plumbing relevant international relations literatures and other bases of IR knowledge. IR theory should improve understanding and guide policies to solve international environmental problems, too. States, according to most IR theorists are the most important actors in international affairs (Goldstein, 1994: p. 6; Russett and Starr, 1996: p. 50), and international environmental problems affect state interests. Hence, IR should accommodate the study and elucidation of international environmental problems.

International environmental problems take many forms and are manifested within and across a variety of natural and human-constructed scales and time frames. Among these problems, global environmental dilemmas receive special attention from students of international politics. Problems like global climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion feature prominently in the environmental affairs discourse because these problems pose probabilistic, lasting negative consequences for millions and even billions of persons, both now and in the future. In the case of climate change, public interest in the problem is strong because of concerns about the costs for abating emissions as well as adapting to the consequences of climate change itself.

A key challenge for IR experts is to improve understanding of policy problems

that at once reach into and below the policy affairs of states. Environmental problems that are simultaneously global and local are unlikely to be effectively redressed if policy remedies are the sole provenance of states (Auer, 2000). Regarding climate change, Brunner and Klein (1999: 149) note that officials operating at national and international levels

...do not have the capacity for rational and effective intervention at the operational level ... private policies and policy processes are too numerous and diverse to be understood in the operational detail necessary for rational intervention from a comprehensive, top down perspective.

The operational level for effective policy intervention, the authors propose, is at local and household levels where emissions are generated.

If, by themselves, interstate policy institutions are incapable of remedying environmental problems that are simultaneously global and local, then how might IR theory advance understanding of and solutions to these problems when the most important actors in IR theory are states? In fact, while the state-centered paradigm in IR remains ascendant, advocacy for the instrumentality of subnational and non-state actors in international affairs is increasingly prominent in the IR discourse. For the study of international environmental problems, IR experts find non-state actors, in particular, making meaningful contributions to the policy process (Princen and Finger, 1994; Wapner, 1996). The next section explores the origins of and major findings from experts who document major contributions of non-state actors in international environmental affairs. Versus the conventional realist and neorealist IR literatures, this new literature reveals a more nuanced understanding of who participates in international environmental policymaking. Non-state actors are particularly prominent and effective in the intelligence, promotional, prescription, and appraisal phases of the policy process. But the literature on non-state actors also proves wanting for clarifying and improving policies to redress environmental problems that are simultaneously global and local.

Non-state actors in international environmental affairs

The same impetuses that give rise to the study of non-state actors in international environmental affairs also motivate interest in non-state actors in IR, generally. For the past two decades, IR experts have deliberated on the 'state of the state' in world affairs. To provide ample opportunity for scholarly debate, the International Studies Association convened 30 separate panel sessions at its 1998 annual convention on the future of the state in international relations, with session titles like, 'Do Borders Matter?'; 'The Westphalian System: Origins and Limits'; and 'Spaces of International Relations: Rethinking Authority and Agency.' For many who question the inviolability of the state-centered model, key inspirations include the search for and confirmation of values other than

power and self-interest in intergovernmental affairs. The state-centered view, shaped by the realist canon of Thucydides, Hobbes, Machiavelli and Morgenthau, contends that absence of rule-making authority or 'anarchy' in the international realm forces states to act on their own behalf. The most effective actors in this international state of nature are states, and power is states' main interest (end) and instrument (means) for self-preservation.

Idealism and functionalism are the main alternatives to the realist world view of international relations. The traditional or Wilsonian idealist alternative to realism posits that peace and harmony are the key values at stake in international affairs and that conflict in the international realm is more often a function of misperceived interests than a struggle for survival (Clemens, 1998: p. 16). Peace is secured by intergovernmental actors, for example, the United Nations. Functionalism shares with idealism an emphasis on peace and welfare outcomes. But functionalists posit that versus the 'high politics' of national security, the less politicized 'low politics' of economics and social welfare are more promising issue-areas for advancing peaceful ends. Instead of addressing territorial and military issues head-on (the idealist approach), functionalism contends that good will and good habits accrued in the realm of low politics can spill over into the arena of high politics (Haas, 1964: p. 48). Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), especially those with prescriptive functions (for example, the International Civil Aviation Organization or the Universal Postal Union) are essential actors in the functionalist paradigm. In sum, differences between realism and its competitors are most salient in the key values at stake in each world view. But in all three models, states or state-derived institutions loom large, especially as instruments of rule-making. States dominate all manner of policymaking in the realist frame of reference. Intergovernmental organizations – creatures of states – are the primary promulgators of rights and obligations in the idealist and functionalist frameworks.

Recent research on non-state actors as participants in international environmental affairs generally does not challenge the proposition that states and interstate organizations are the principal international environmental rule-makers. Observers document the instrumental roles of non-state actors in various policy functions, in particular, in knowledge-building, policy promotion, and policy assessment (Princen and Finger, 1994; Wapner, 1996). Some have found nongovernmental organizations and coalitions of politically-motivated experts officiating over policy prescription, implementation and enforcement, for example, in the Great Lakes Water Quality regime (Manno, 1994: p. 105); the international ban on African elephant ivory (Princen, 1994b: pp. 141–142) and in multi-stakeholder deliberations at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Finger, 1994: p. 208). However, these authors acknowledge that while NGOs and scientists participate in formulating, promulgating and enforcing rules, states remain the predominant actors in these policy arenas.

The supremacy of state and state-derived institutions in international environmental rule-making is amply illustrated by research on international environ-

mental regimes. Regime theorists – also known as neoinstitutionalists – accept the core realist contention that absence of order, or anarchy, is the structural cause of the struggle for power among states. But in regime theory, cooperative rule-making and rule-abiding structures replace sovereign self-interest as means for regulating anarchy. According to Krasner's classic definition (1983: p. 1) regimes are:

...principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area.

This formulation has stimulated a lengthy debate about the genesis of regimes and their durability, with overtones of the chicken-versus-egg conundrum. Borrowing from Keohane, Stokke writes (1997: p. 31):

In particular, controversy has surrounded the question of 'whether regimes are to be identified on the basis of *explicit rules and procedures*, or on the basis of *observed behavior*, from which rules, norms, principles and procedures can be inferred.' (Keohane's emphasis).

This debate is academic to the extent that problem-solving institutions are both founded by and begetting of norms, rules, and decision-making procedures. Nevertheless, the central challenge posed by regime skeptics – that regimes are epiphenomenon and reflect the existing distribution of power among states (Strange, 1983; Grieco, 1990) – continues to provoke regime advocates, as evidenced by recent refutations of the skeptical view. Notably, advocates maintain that regimes endure even as the underlying power structures change. For instance, the Bretton Woods institutions persevere despite inconstant support from their chief architect and early proponent, the United States (Stokke, 1997: p. 32).

For students of international environmental affairs, more vexing than the debate about the physical or conceptual realness and robustness of regimes is the regime advocates' tendency to credit *states* with regime formation. Non-state actors are major players, too – creating, assembling and disseminating knowledge, and lobbying for regional and global environmental protection (Litfin, 1993; Hawkins, 1993). The list of non-state regime instigators is lengthy and includes environmental organizations like the World Wildlife Fund; political movements like the European Greens; and 'epistemic communities' of experts and professionals whose members share similar causal frameworks and are like-minded politically (Litfin, 1993: p. 98; p. 101; Haas, 1992: p. 3; Raustiala, 1997a: pp. 56–58). Many experts point to the key awareness-raising and consensus-building functions of intergovernmental organizations in environmental regimes, like the United Nations Environment Programme and World Meteorological Organization (Litfin, 1993; Peterson, 1997; Breitmeier, 1997). Notwithstanding the important functions performed by IGOs in environmental public affairs, it is important to recognize the normative implications

of IGOs' original and on-going political debt to the states that create them. The discovery that IGOs are instrumental in regime formation is unremarkable since these organizations are founded by states, are maintained by state largesse, and are charged with advancing missions determined by their sovereign members. Comparable arguments crop-up with the non-state designation attributed to green parties and other political movements. As of December, 1999, the Swedish Greens (*Miljöpartiet de gröna*) occupied 16 seats in Sweden's 349-seat parliament. For the purposes of distinguishing between the international political influence of state and non-state actors, is it meaningful to impute different value orientations to Swedish Greens who are inside versus outside the formal political and administrative structures of the Swedish state?

Perhaps the enigma of the state lurking behind (or within) the so-called non-state explains why state actors remain ascendant in the mainstream international environmental relations paradigm. Even leading exponents of the multi-stakeholder view of international environmental affairs hesitate to declare the eclipse of the state by the non-state (Wapner, 1997: pp. 66–67; p. 80; Economy and Schreurs, 1997: p. 3; Litfin, 1993: p. 94). Indeed, to the extent that epistemic communities and non-state actors improve the policymaking deliberations of states, non-state actors reinforce the power of states and the legitimacy of a world order dominated by national governments (Raustiala, 1997b).

Traditionally, students of realist IR theory are encouraged to observe the behavior of non-state actors to the extent that these actors create, diminish, or alter the distribution of power in world affairs. Neorealism, a reformulation of classical realism, suspends the realist assumption that states' thirst for power is an end in itself; instead the quest for power is driven by states' insecurity in an uncertain world. Functionalism and neoinstitutionalism offer more complex conceptions of who participates in international affairs, and their proponents contend that there is more to international cooperation than the brokering of state interests and the constructive channeling of state power. However, all of these paradigms lure their proponents into debating who or what secures state interests and which trends – for example, regional economic integration, the accreting power of transnational corporations, the deteriorating global environment – pose challenges to state supremacy. Even if one accepts *prima facie* arguments about states' need for power in an insecure world, it does not follow that non-state actors are similarly obsessed with power. Nor must the study of non-state actors in international environmental affairs lead to an accounting of how these actors abet state interests or the effectiveness of states as international actors.

Forswearing the field's nagging concern with how non-state actors affect state actors' interests promises to widen the scope of scholarship on who participates in global environmental affairs. The current fashion for documenting the accomplishments of elite NGOs and IGOs is sustained, in part, by IR scholars' compulsion to explain policy processes and outcomes among bargaining states. Interest in the values, resources, and influence of non-elite environmental movements is likely to grow as the central research question changes

from 'how is power affected at the international level' to 'how is power affected at the operative level where resource users' actions affect local and global environmental quality.'

Environmental regimes and global civil society

In 1995, Dartmouth University's Institute on International Environmental Governance in the Twenty-first Century convened a conference to assess the current state of knowledge of innovative approaches to governance in world affairs, with particular attention to international regimes for natural resource management and environmental protection – arenas where international regimes have 'had the greatest impact' (Young, 1997a: p. 2). In addition to identifying defining characteristics of regimes, participants considered whether regimes are successful in resolving the problems that motivate the creation of regimes in the first place and whether some problems are better suited than others to treatment through regimes (Young, 1997b: p. 275). Regime effectiveness, the participants determined:

...will often be a function of the compatibility of top-down arrangements reflected in the content of international regimes themselves and bottom-up arrangements reflected in features of the societal setting... . This issue of links between regimes and society thus will be particularly pertinent in cases such as climate change because the problem to be solved involves behavior that reaches all the way down to the actions of individual users of motor vehicles or home appliances (Young, 1997b: pp. 288–289).

Hence, regime efficacy depends in large part on the behavior of actors and institutions that are not members of the classically conceived regime of state actors and/or elite non-state actors. Contexts where regime outcomes are especially dependent on bottom-up policy institutions include 'large scale processes occurring all over the world' that are rooted in 'the actions of individuals' and include problems like human overpopulation; fossil fuel combustion and climate change; and overexploitation of natural resources (Young, 1997b: p. 288; pp. 291–292). These pervasive, large-scale problems are 'appropriate targets for the articulation of general international norms or broad principles of international law' but do not lend themselves to 'issue-specific regimes designed to deal with more circumscribed problems' (Young, 1997b: pp. 291–292). This self-assessment reveals regime theory's limitations for the study of pervasive problems that are embedded in the value demands and habits of ordinary citizens – problems that are less amenable to the neoinstitutionalist's issue-specific approach. This diagnosis is affirmed by other contributors to the Dartmouth conference proceedings; for example, Stokke (1997: p. 55; p. 59) urges regime analysts to overcome their reluctance to examine domestic and subnational institutions that affect regime formation and effectiveness.

In part to redress the shortcomings of regime theory, some students of international environmental affairs have developed a more catholic understanding of who and what influences and is influenced by international environmental politics. This emerging field of study deals with 'global civil society' defined as 'that domain that exists above the individual and below the state but also across state boundaries, where people voluntarily organize themselves to pursue various aims' (Wapner, 1997: p. 66). Global civil society actors include a wide array of mostly private and voluntary organizations and institutions, including churches, professional clubs, and community-based organizations. The domain in which they reside is different from the 'international society' occupied by states, though as Young points out (1997b: p. 283), regimes may form to address problems residing in either international society *or* global civil society. The defining architectural features of global civil society are the networks formed by global civil society actors. These networks are created to advance the value demands of network constituents. Over time, one might expect these networks to proliferate, assisted by global information media and the many millions of daily transactions that occur in the global marketplace (Wapner, 1997: p. 66). While churches, clubs, and local organizations are examples of prospective civil society actors, in international environmental affairs, elite organizations, particularly national and international NGOs are prominent actors (Stairs and Taylor, 1992; Princen 1994a: p. 48).

Among proponents of the global civil society paradigm, contributors to Princen's and Finger's (1994) *Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and the Global* offer the clearest and most compelling account of global environmental governance as a multi-level, multi-actor process, and one that bridges local, national, and supranational environmental and policy contexts. Princen et al. state (1994: p. 221),

...global solutions require local approaches when global environmental crisis results from both the aggregation of local resource decisions and from the impact of the global political economy on local communities. Moreover, to the extent that local approaches approximate the conditions for sustainable economies, global solutions must necessarily be based locally.

Princen and the other contributors to *Environmental NGOs in World Politics* urge that environmental NGOs are uniquely equipped to mobilize local institutions to address global environmental problems. Versus state actors, environmental NGOs' comparative advantages include their singular attention to environmental issues¹; lack of territorial and sovereign allegiances; and their transparency (i.e., their ability and willingness to expose environmental wrongdoing by states and market-oriented actors) (Princen, 1994a). In noting the different specializations and strengths of different NGOs – for example, that scientific NGOs tend to perform knowledge-building functions, while animal rights-oriented NGOs tend to focus on political and consciousness-raising activities – Princen et al. (1994: p. 221) identify the intelligence and promotion functions of these institutions, respectively.

However, while contributors to *Environmental NGOs in World Politics* examine environmental problems with international political contexts, the biophysical contexts addressed are mostly local or regional in scope, for example, Great Lakes water quality or environmental protection of the Antarctic region; or the problem context is confined to a single species, for example, African elephants. Global scale environmental problems with highly decentralized source contexts, like global climate change and overpopulation are alluded to (see, e.g., Princen et al., 1994: p. 218), but not thoroughly examined. Hence, it is unclear whether the knowledge-building and promotional outcomes that NGOs so effectively nurtured in the Great Lakes, Antarctic, and African contexts can be reproduced for problems with household-level origins but worldwide impacts, like climate change. While not addressing this problem head-on, Princen et al. warn that NGOs' transnational influence will be minimal if these institutions focus exclusively on scientific problems or solely on advocacy and awareness-building. They write (1994: p. 223),

A critical feature of NGO intervention is thus to link the essential knowledge base (scientific and earth-centered) to the world of politics, to translate biophysical needs into choices a wide range of actors can make at many levels of decision making. If NGOs do not make these linkages and translations, they may still operate effectively as lobbying or green parties...but they are not likely to arrest those processes that have local and global elements and are multi-level and multi-actor...

Favorable outcomes, the authors suggest, requires NGOs to transcend functional specialization, and to affect the behavior of 'a wide range of actors' and not just states.

Other students of global civil society contend that while NGOs and other non-state actors are increasingly politically savvy and are insinuating themselves in global environmental problem-solving institutions, these entities are less successful than states in reaching into and influencing the lives of ordinary citizens, and that global civil society is unlikely to replace the state system as the main source of global environmental governance (Wapner, 1997: p. 80; pp. 66–67). This assessment is critically important in light of the aforementioned finding of regime theorists that interstate regimes are inadequate to the task of solving pervasive, large-scale problems like global climate change and are relatively ineffective at promoting lifestyle-altering world views like sustainable development. To restate the dilemma: according to the global civil society paradigm, interstate regimes are more important than non-state actor networks in influencing ordinary citizens. Paradoxically, regime theorists contend that interstate regimes do not effectively manage pervasive problems that ordinary citizens perpetrate, like global climate change. This conundrum reflects, in part, a deficiency in knowledge of the forces motivating local-level demands for global environmental quality. Young (1997b) correctly notes that more attention must be paid to connections between top-down and bottom-up policy arrange-

ments bearing on international environmental problems. This important course of study should be preceded by an exploration of how the preferences, values, and actions of actors in micro-scale settings affect global environmental phenomena. By IR experts' own assessment (as affirmed by attendees of the Dartmouth conference), knowledge of the origins and performance of bottom-up institutions for global environmental protection lags behind knowledge of the forms and functions of top-down counterparts.

Learning by comparing: The ozone and climate change cases

In what ways might a bottom-up perspective on demands for global environmental quality change our understanding of global environmental policy processes? Insights are gained by reexamining one of the most intensely investigated topics in international environmental affairs: the practicality of borrowing from the stratospheric ozone regime to manage the problem of global climate change.

The 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is extolled as among the most successful international environmental regimes (Soroos, 1998: p. 18; Greene, 1998: p. 89) and as a prospective model for dealing with other, global environmental problems like global warming. In recent years, optimism about the transferability of the Montreal Protocol regime to other global environmental contexts, in particular, the climate change problem, has ebbed. Key problems in adapting the ozone regime to the climate change context include the relatively greater variety and sheer numbers of actors perpetrating the climate change problem; the relatively large economic investments required to substantially abate greenhouse gas emissions; the vastly more complex problem of structuring side payments to secure the cooperation of laggard states in the climate change context; the lack of widely available and affordable substitutes for fossil fuels; scientific uncertainty about how fast climate change is occurring, the magnitude of the climate change phenomenon, and regional effects of climate change; and relatively greater uncertainty about the identity of 'winners' and 'losers' in the climate change case (Alberty and VanDeveer, 1996; Sandler, 1992: pp. 19-20). These differences are at once real and lasting, borne-out by nearly a decade of inconclusive interstate negotiations on managing greenhouse gas emissions and the persistence of wide disagreement among politicians about the application of prospective treaty rules to developing countries.

But there is a striking similarity between the ozone and climate change cases that is not automatically detected from a top-down perspective: in both instances, elites select policy remedies whose implementation does not require broad-based public participation. In the ozone case, DuPont (E.I.) de Nemours & Company's development of effective, affordable substitutes for CFCs effectively removed citizens from making choices about environmental quality. Policy implementation was invisible to ordinary citizens in part because DuPont's inventiveness

preempted the need for public sacrifice. From the perspective of the analyst who deems efficiency and utility as primary measures of policy success, this is an ideal outcome. The argument follows that the policy instruments chosen in the ozone case, which imposed no significant hardship on ordinary citizens, can not be reproduced in the climate change context.

Yet, not unlike the ozone case, signatories to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change and elites at the national level, including President Clinton, proposed implementation strategies that did not encourage ordinary people to substantially modify their behavior. To help industrialized countries to comply with binding targets for emissions reduction, the Kyoto Protocol called for an emissions permit trading system and the institution of a 'Clean Development Mechanism.' The latter encourages industrialized countries to invest in clean technology projects in developing countries, with the investor sharing credits from reduced emissions (Eizenstat, 1998: p. 121). In 1998, to advance the objectives of the unratified Kyoto Protocol, the Clinton Administration pledged to provide tax incentives and subsidies to industries and public utilities that adopted energy efficient and low emission production processes. These remedies were to be implemented outside the day-to-day decision-making frame of reference of ordinary citizens. The proposed tax break involved resource transfers between state organs and private industries. Proposed governmental subsidies for research and development involved mostly state-to-state or state-to-private sector transactions. The President's tax breaks and subsidy proposal transmitted only a muted message to citizens about public policy trade-offs because the proposed transfer was relatively small (\$6.3 billion out of a 1.7 trillion FY 1999 budget); they occurred during a period when competition over scarce federal resources were attenuated by a federal budget surplus; and most importantly, these policies did not motivate citizens to alter their high levels of material consumption and throughput – problems at the heart of the global climate change dilemma.² Indeed, the Kyoto Protocol's key policy instrument, the tradable emissions scheme, may undermine efforts to reform unsustainable habits. Michael Sandel argues (1997: p. A19) that the tradable pollution fee system and the conventional alternative, the punitive pollution fine system, have very different normative properties:

If a company or a country is fined for spewing excessive pollutants into the air, the community conveys its judgment that the polluter has done something wrong. A fee, on the other hand, makes pollution just another cost of doing business, like wages, benefits, and rent.

The tradable fee system commodifies pollution, removing the stigma from environmentally unfriendly acts and neutralizing a powerful appeal to conscience (the wrongness of pollution-prone behavior). Markets for pollution may achieve pollution reduction goals more efficiently than community-based agreements to stanch pollution, but as Sandel contends, the latter are more effective in promoting communitarian values and a 'spirit of shared sacrifice' The tradable

permit system offers no stimulus to communities to deal with policy trade-offs, instead assigning these duties to other social actors (i.e., the state and entrepreneurs), while transforming a social bad into a tradable (and hence valuable) bad. The Clean Development Mechanism for transferring technologies to developing countries is similarly unsatisfactory from the communitarian perspective. First, the transactions occur at a level of associational life too far removed from ordinary citizens' frame of reference. Second, as with the tradable emissions scheme, the Clean Development Mechanism allows industries in industrialized countries to buy their way out of reducing pollution at home (Gelbspan, 1998: p. 26). Like the tradable pollution permit, the pollution credit of the Clean Development Mechanism is morally ambiguous, transforming something merely bad into a tradable bad.

Hence notwithstanding the oft-mentioned differences between the stratospheric ozone and global climate change contexts, recent policy prescriptions for both problems demand direct participation from market-oriented and public sector actors, but only indirect participation from ordinary citizens. Policy implementation is confined to a relatively small set of actors, insulating ordinary citizens from the costs of participating but also weakening the policies' exhortative appeal. These attributes might not manifest themselves when the problem orientation is macro-scale and centered on national and transnational institutions. From the top-down perspective, the value demands and interests of local actors, including automobile owners and myriad other decentralized generators of greenhouse gases, are not part of the equation.

Agitating local interest in global environmental problems

At least at a rhetorical level, state and elite non-state actors have called for a more diverse, more participatory constitutive assembly to tackle environmental problems like climate change and unsustainable resource consumption. Earth Summit delegates made clear that successful implementation of *Agenda 21* was 'first and foremost the responsibility of governments' (United Nations, 1992a: chap. 1.3). But elsewhere in *Agenda 21*, rule-making by local authorities and local communities is summoned and 'involvement of individuals' is emphasized, especially in the chapter on decision-making (United Nations, 1992a: chap. 8.4.f; 8.5.g; 8.5.h; 8.11; 8.21.d). Several passages in the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* declare that 'people,' 'citizens' and 'local communities' are vital to the realization of sustainable development (United Nations, 1992b: preamble; principles 5; 10; 21). Scale issues and demands for community-based democratic processes feature prominently in the sustainable development discourse (see, e.g., Conca, 1996: p. 27 *passim*). Small scale polities are the preferred setting for sustainable development because consensus is too difficult and expensive to achieve in large scale polities (Alperovitz, 1996: p. 62; Maser, 1997: p. 96). *Sustainable America: a New Consensus*, the manifesto of the United States President's Council on Sustainable Development, urges that the

local community is the elemental staging ground for sustainable development (President's Council on Sustainable Development, 1996).

The logic that sustainable development succeeds only when local actors are key players throughout the policy process is averred in recent declarations by bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. For example, in an effort to make its environmental policies more consistent with key propositions of *Our Common Future* (a sustainability tract authored by the World Commission on Environment and Development) and *Agenda 21*, the World Bank has declared 'Ten Principles of New Environmentalism' for Bank lending. Principle seven calls for 'involving citizens thoroughly' – a necessary element because 'local citizens are often better able than government officials to identify the priorities for action' and 'the motivation and commitment of communities are often what sees an environmental project through completion' (Steer, 1996: p. 6). By empowering citizens to participate and take control of environmental projects from the earliest stages, the Bank fends off critics who claim that direct participation in Bank projects is mostly staged, is limited to project implementation, and is solicitous mostly of elite, international NGOs (Nelson, 1995). The World Bank has not undertaken a comprehensive appraisal of its ability to satisfy participatory goals in sustainable development projects. Such an appraisal must measure the breadth of participation and account for the results of participation. Similar measures must be included in project evaluations performed for the United States Agency for International Development, an agency that identifies sustainable development as 'the cornerstone of its development assistance efforts' (U.S. Congress, 1994: p. 171).

Well-executed audits of the entire portfolio of World Bank and USAID projects might reveal the breadth and depth of these agencies' commitments to sustainability while rooting-out activities that are unsustainable. But these appraisals will not offer broad-based assessments of sustainable development by local governments, community-based organizations, neighborhoods, families, or individuals. Indeed, among IR experts, there is already considerably more interest in appraising donor agencies' sustainable development projects than in appraising the sustainability efforts of individuals and organizations that are primary producers and consumers of natural resources. According to critics of the predominant top-down approach to policy appraisal, disappointing measures of progress in the post-Earth Summit era are a consequence of official prescriptions for sustainable development that serve elite interests before planetary needs.

Some advocates urge that nothing short of political and psychological revolution are necessary to save the planet. Decentralized decision-making, local control over economic resources, repudiation of the economic growth imperative, and a return to frugality are central to the revolutionaries' contention (Alperovitz, 1996; Viederman, 1996). For others, sustainable development requires a new kind of cognition and moral code to replace the dominant world view (Milbrath, 1996). An important insight of the global environmental politics literature is that elite-sanctioned guidance for sustainable development is not revolutionary

in scope, but rather, tends to reinforce the dominant influential roles of elites themselves. Referring to *Our Common Future*, Conca (1993: p. 311) writes:

The report articulates an international division of labor between sovereign states and international organizations that legitimizes and extends the primacy of the state system. . . . *Our Common Future* is a text on sustainable development – but sovereignty, modernity, and capitalism form a subtext, from the report's opening call for a 'Copernican' revolution in perspective to its concluding recommendations for institutional adaptation.

Critics assail *Our Common Future* and other mainstream operational statements on sustainable development for their positivist premises and their inattention to the 'deep, socio-political changes' required for sustainable development (Lélé, 1991: p. 613). Stimulating demand for sustainable development, some argue, requires a radical reinvention of social values and institutions for obtaining value outcomes. Milbrath (1996), for example, contends that sustainable development requires the emergence of a 'new environmental paradigm' (NEP) to replace the 'dominant social paradigm' (DSP). The latter espouses economic growth, high consumption and throughput, and immediate gratification while the environmental alternative emphasizes economic development without growth and renounces conspicuous consumption. If Milbrath is correct, his insight serves as a warning to students of IR who are courageous enough to adopt a bottom-up perspective: those students will find, paradoxically, that there is little demand from the bottom-up for sustainable development or for policies that solve environmental problems like climate change and overpopulation – problems that are simultaneously local and global.

In fact, the differences between Milbrath's dominant social paradigm and the new environmental paradigm are stark, and the defining features of the DSP are sufficiently pejorative (Milbrath, 1996: pp. 279–280) one might expect few DSP adherents. Indeed, surveys indicate that only around 20 percent of adults express views consistent with an orthodox set of DSP values and beliefs (Milbrath, 1996: p. 278). It seems equally likely that attributes of an environmentally-friendly, socially-conscious world view are already present in society. 'Propaganda,' Lasswell and Kaplan write (1965: p. 114) 'cannot operate to alter the power structure except in directions to which the participants in the power process are already predisposed.' Hence, an essential task for new environmental paradigm advocates (or sustainable development advocates) is reinforcing familiar, popular symbols that are consistent with the environmental world view, including protecting children's health from environmental hazards, improving outdoor recreational opportunities, combating indoor air pollution, and so on. Promoting core environmental values embodied in concepts like sustainable development are more important than obtaining consensus on what, precisely *is* sustainable development.³ Criticisms of the conceptual and practical ambiguities of sustainable development are numerous (Alperovitz, 1996; Ophuls, 1996; Lélé, 1991; Lohmann, 1990). However, imprecise or incom-

plete prescriptions like *Our Common Future* are the preferred substrate of the skillful advocate. Lasswell and Kaplan urge (1965: p. 112) that symbols need not have fixed or definite meaning in order to be understood or to excite interest:

...much of the effectiveness of propaganda rests on its susceptibility to varying interpretations, a characteristic often deliberately sought for by the propagandist, so as to make a simultaneous appeal to heterogeneous predispositions.

The successful policy promoter is aware of and crafts policy according to the predispositions and personalities of the intended audience. Lasswell (1932) proposes that public demand for policies is agitated by effective appeals to the audience's impulses (id), reason (ego), and conscience (superego). Using this triple appeal principle, one might evaluate recent organized and ad hoc efforts to promote sustainable development.

Consider, for example, public efforts to persuade communities, businesses, families, and individuals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's climate change initiatives like the Energy Star and Green Lights programs promote the practical side of pollution prevention and energy efficiency. This emphasis on cost-savings is an appeal to reason or the ego division of personality. For programs like Energy Star whose beneficiaries are market-oriented actors, the promotional emphasis on thrift is appropriate. In the early 1990s, energy efficiency or 'demand side management' rebate programs sponsored by many electric utilities used similar promotional tactics. The appeal to reason inspired homeowners to adopt energy efficient appliances like compact fluorescent lamps and energy-efficient refrigerators. However, at the household level, there is evidence that gains from energy efficient retrofits have been nullified by greater overall household energy consumption (McKibben, 1998: p. 77). The cost-savings appeal is partly undermined by the relatively cheap price of energy. During most of the 1990s, with the exception of the 1990-1991 Gulf War and most months in 1999, prices of gasoline, oil, natural gas, and electricity rose less steeply than the rate of inflation. The appeal to reason reached an inspirational nadir in 1998 as gasoline prices dipped below one dollar per gallon in many parts of the United States.

Around the same time, however, news media and environmentalists reminded consumers of the odiousness of 'gas guzzling.' Vehicles with poor gas mileage, especially, sport utility vehicles, minivans, and pick-up trucks were front and center in these appeals to conscience – the psychoanalytic analog of the superego.⁴ Additional motivational energy is stimulated by appeals to impulse, the behavioral equivalent of the id. Sustainable development, in its generic form, is intangible to the id. Where lead poisoning and radioactive fallout are immediately evocative and frightful, the sustainable development whole is isolated from its emotive parts. To be sensible to the id, it must be

unpacked. Graphic revelations about public health catastrophes in Love Canal, New York; Times Beach, Missouri; or Woburn, Massachusetts stir public passion, galvanize demands for reform, and motivate local-level action more effectively than do the geographically unbounded, intertemporal risks that are the mainstay of the sustainable development paradigmist.

Scaled-down contexts for global environmental policy

The sustainable development critic Sharachachandra Lélé contends (1991: p. 618) that broad social acceptance of sustainable development depends on better articulation of the concept, itself. I maintain that more important still is for policy promoters to identify symbols and portent in the sustainable development concept that speak to the human psyche. Lasswell's triple appeal principle (appealing to the targeted audience's impulses, reason, and conscience) is serviceable to that end. However, realizing sustainable development and dealing with environmental problems that are simultaneously global and local requires more than mapping the promotional requirements for policy success. Students of global environmental affairs must master other facets of the policy process, with special attention to the problem of scale. Consider, for example, the state of knowledge of global climate change policymaking institutions. Much of that knowledge is derived from observing the bargaining behavior of international actors and institutions. Less well understood is whether and to what extent diplomats exert influence over the ultimate users of natural resources. Brunner queries whether ordinary citizens accept any responsibility for climate change and contends that:

...the climate change regime cannot realize its ultimate objective without persuading or coercing people around the world to comply with policies that help mitigate climate change or adapt to climate impacts (1999: pp. 7–8).

Rather than waiting for the international community of states to develop a comprehensive prescription to deal with climate change (and to enforce that policy against challengers), it is sensible to learn from and diffuse promising national and subnational policies and interventions, including, for example, the U.S. Department of Energy's successful Climate Challenge program (Brunner and Klein, 1999).

Reportage on the frustrations of international deliberations governing climate change outpaces news on the Climate Challenge program or other Climate Change Action Plan initiatives of the Clinton Administration. Observers are destined to feel disappointed as long as attention is trained on the limited accomplishments of environmental diplomats. The slow progress of U.N.-sponsored negotiations led one prominent critic to argue that the most pressing policy problem is not the relative underinvestment in or impoverished authority of the United Nations to advance sustainable development, but rather, over-

reliance on intergovernmental institutions to broker decisions that are more appropriately handled at national, local, and neighborhood levels of organization (Sandbrook, 1997). Outside of the deadlocked chamber of the United Nations, Sandbrook notes (1997: p. 646), participatory, locally-constituted problem-solving institutions are implementing portions of the United Nation's sustainable development blueprint, *Agenda 21*. Some observers contend that the accomplishments of these local institutions are confined largely to organizational and planning functions (Soroos, 1998: p. 10). However, there is persuasive evidence that locals perform a variety of decision functions in sustainable development projects. To illustrate:

- Rule-making and enforcement by local water committees were integral to successful water supply projects in eight villages in Kerala, India. Freely elected, water committees (with some seats reserved for women, a government health official, and a locally elected official) were established in four villages. These locally-constituted committees identified sites for installation of water standpipes, sponsored health awareness campaigns, and performed other functions. In four other villages (Project II villages) water supply projects were designed and implemented by the state water authority without community participation. At the outset, the eight villages had similar baseline socioeconomic conditions. Two years after installing community standpipes and other clean water infrastructure, Project I villagers enjoyed higher quality water, exhibited greater awareness of household hygienic uses of water, were more apt to maintain and operate community water infrastructure, and expressed higher overall satisfaction with project outcomes (Manikutty, 1997).
- Local women managed policy resources in a sustainable development project in the Philippines. In the early 1980s, an extension worker funded by Save the World, an international NGO, was dispatched to Guimaras Island, Philippines to encourage local women to participate in a development project of the women's choosing. Local women requested assistance in improving the quality and marketability of handicrafts made from the leaves of the *pandanus* tree. Save the World sponsored advisers to improve the workmanship of the handicrafts and to oversee a marketing study. But local women organized themselves to implement a business plan, created membership rules for a women's handicraft guild, and managed a savings fund for members. Household incomes rose in the early 1990s as handicraft sales increased. The lucrative market for handicrafts inspired local men to set aside planting space for *pandanus* in coconut plantations, giving men a stake in the activity while improving the ecological stability of the coconut groves (Fellizar, 1994: pp. 211–212).
- In her study of communal property management in three mountainous villages in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan, McKean (1992) documents how sustainable use of marginal communal lands has been secured by long-enduring and well-enforced property rights regimes. In the fourteenth

century, various contenders to the imperial throne and their allies fought for control of Japan's largest island, Honshu (the home of Yamanashi Prefecture). To protect common lands and water resources from rival warlords and other intruders, villagers developed codes of communal ownership to unregulated common lands and water. Permutations of this communal property rights system persevered through the Tokugawa period into modern times. More than 2.5 million hectares of land remained communal property in Japan as of the late 1980s (McKean, 1992: p. 65). Through the early decades of the twentieth century, rights of access to communal lands were assigned not to individuals, but to households. Large households enjoyed no advantage (indeed, were at a disadvantage) vis-à-vis small households. This incentive may partly explain low population growth rates in Japanese mountain villages in the 18th and 19th centuries (McKean, 1992: p. 75). Villagers hired 'detectives' to patrol common lands and to enforce rules governing tree harvesting, fodder collection, and rice and vegetable cultivation. Detectives were empowered to make arrests. Villagers collected fines and confiscated illegally harvested crops from deviants. Development and enforcement of rules were prerogatives of villagers and were not regulated by actors from outside the villages.

- Young families, retirees, among others, formed an ecologically-based community in Ithaca, New York called EcoVillage. Community members planned the village from ground-up, identifying and purchasing a building site, and helping erect neighbors' homes and a common, multi-use meeting space for villagers. Members also determined policies and programs for neighborhood security, child care, automobile parking, and other neighborhood functions. A prospective developer had proposed building on 90 percent of the 176-acre site where EcoVillage now stands, leaving the remaining 10 percent as open space. EcoVillage members opted for the reverse, building on 10 percent and keeping 90 percent for woodland, meadow, and a community farm (Vizard, 1997: p. 1; James, 1997: p. D4).

In at least three of these cases, effective local institutions are not numbered solely by local actors. The Indian Kerala Water project was supported by the state water authority and a Dutch/Danish aid consortium. Save the World provided technical assistance to women in the Guimaras Island, Philippines case. To a much smaller extent, outsiders made substantive inputs in the EcoVillage case. The Center for Religion, Ethics, and Social Policy, a consortium of non-profit organizations that is loosely affiliated with Cornell University, served as a sounding board and dispensed moral support to EcoVillagers (private communication, Liz Walker, November 15, 1999). Outside influences were largely absent in the development of communal property systems in rural Japan. The Kerala, Guimaras Island, and EcoVillage cases intimate the presence of a 'global civil society' of values, ideas, knowledge, and material resources diffused from state or non-state actors to local institutions. The fact that

locally-based sustainable development is abetted by a web of outside actors does not diminish the real accomplishments of these local institutions. Rather it evidences the functioning of complex policy institutions numbered by actors at multiple levels who are joined in a common task of advancing human dignity.

For analysts accustomed to the top-down perspective, the multiscale perspective adopted here distinguishes the contributions of micro-scale actors and institutions, in particular. In the Kerala and Guimaras Island projects, outsiders are project catalysts. But in both cases, as in the EcoVillage case, project success depends on end users taking charge of policy goals and resources. Translating sustainable development into priorities that are meaningful to locals proves key to project success, too. Sustainable development is tangible to stakeholders in the Guimaras Island case because the program makes an effective appeal to reason, i.e., improving the quality and marketability of handicrafts. In EcoVillage, members indulge their consciences by developing an ecological alternative to more resource-intensive neighborhoods in Ithaca, New York. Villagers in Kerala assuage their fears about poor sanitation and scarce drinking water by taking charge of planning and upkeep of public water systems. In these cases, the symbolic contents of the different programs are meaningful to stakeholders, and end users decide how intellectual, skill-based and material resources – some of them provided by non-local civil society actors – are deployed. International norms and/or the preferences of nationally-based actors and institutions are influential in the Kerala and Guimaras Island cases. But the staging area is local, and this is the appropriate testing ground for experiments in sustainable development, where the direct users of natural resources are the final arbiters of environmental quality.

Institutional actors in the Yamanashi Prefecture case are all local actors – an aspect of the social process that deviates from the other cases. Japanese villagers devised stinging rules and developed and administered sanctions against deviants without guidance or oversight from actors outside of the villages. The Yamanashi Prefecture case is more than an interesting curiosity for students of comparative and international environmental affairs. It illustrates local actors' capacity to self-organize and manage common pool resources, and to do so without coercion or other incentives from outside the community.⁵ Common pool resources exist at the global level as well, including the electromagnetic spectrum; the stratospheric ozone layer; and global biodiversity. An important but mostly unexplored question is whether local institutions for managing CPRs, such as the arrangements adopted in Yamanashi Prefecture, can be scaled-up to regulate global CPRs (Young, 1994; Ostrom et al., 1999). Common sense dictates that scaling up is not easy. Problem contexts tend to be more complex at the global versus the local scale. There are more actors, more points of view, and more value conflicts at the global level (Ostrom et al., 1999). Also, public willingness to address global environmental problems tends to be low. In the cases described above, remedying the respective problem at hand – scarce water in Kerala; deprived wealth and skill values in Guimaras Island; high throughput lifestyles in New York; and threats to wealth and well-being in Yamanashi

Prefecture – were unanimous aspirations among members of the community and mobilizing community members to take action was relatively easily accomplished. Comparable, self-organized institutions are unlikely to emerge to manage problems like climate change, overpopulation, and loss of global biodiversity. The negative consequences of these problems may be too subtle to detect at the local level, especially in the short-term. Even if local actors are aware of these problems, they may be reluctant to pay to remediate them, especially if these problems are generated by millions of other actors. Information from and advocacy by external actors may be necessary to provoke policy change at the local level, and effective instigators from the outside might include NGOs and other non-state actors. IR experts can make an important contribution by clarifying how and under what conditions non-state actors, with or without consent from state actors, are effective at raising public awareness and public demands for local/global environmental quality. This is a different research query from one which currently casts a spell over the field, namely, locating and measuring the influence of non-state actors in an international system dominated by states.

Closing remarks

Who participates in global environmental governance? In two senses, international relations theory provides partial answers. First, it offers insights that are incomplete, hemmed-in by an enduring allegiance to a state-centered paradigm of international affairs. Moreover, it is preoccupied with the zero-sum analytics of whether and to what extent state power is diminished or enhanced by particular environmental problems and by the actions of non-state actors and institutions. International relations theory is partial in another sense: it is partial, or biased toward problem contexts where state participation in international environmental governance is obvious and essential. A persistent problem for IR theory is that for global environmental problems that are generated in micro-scale settings, the decisions of interstate actors have little direct bearing on the environmental behavior of local actors. Hence, particularly for environmental problems that are simultaneously global and local, the state-centered view offers few insights as to the constitutive, organizational, and human resource requirements for effective policy. Moreover, the literatures purporting the effectiveness of non-state actors in international environmental affairs focus mostly on the accomplishments of IGOs and elite NGOs and in contexts that are geographically-bounded or are resource-specific. There is considerably less evidence of the effectiveness of networks of non-state actors whose participants include locally- *and* globally-based actors, and who manage environmental problems that are simultaneously local and global.

In *The Public Dimension of Foreign Policy*, David Newsom argues that foreign affairs experts' theoretical and empirical insights are increasingly irrelevant or inaccessible to policymakers (1996: p. 138). Among other problems, he observes,

much scholarship on foreign policy excludes analyses of the interplay of international and domestic political agendas, and in a self-critical moment, notes that '...an understanding of the non-official actors discussed elsewhere in this book seems lacking' (1996: p. 130). Some international environmental relations experts are heeding Newsom's plea for introspection by contemplating the scholar's and policy analyst's roles in shaping preferences for and knowledge of global environmental policymaking. For students of international environmental affairs, self-reflection is timely as policymaking and media elites report on the uneven progress of interstate efforts to manage global environmental dilemmas like climate change and unsustainable resource consumption. Preliminary self-assessments by IR experts offer guidance for a new research agenda, and one that resonates with policy scientists.

In answering the question of what makes environmental regimes effective, participants in the Dartmouth Conference on International Governance in the Twenty-first Century concluded that more attention must be directed 'to identifying the particular combinations of forces in specific cases' that render regimes effective. Instead of determining generic rules and conventions from large data sets, regime analysts were urged to construct persuasive general arguments about regimes from the experiences of actors in individual cases (Young, 1997b: p. 290). Second, participants noted the importance of practical knowledge gained from applying successful regime experiences to other problem contexts, i.e., using effective regimes for demonstration purposes. Third, the importance of examining both bottom-up *and* top-down contexts was emphasized – a departure from the dominant top-down mode of inquiry. Briefly, the call for case-oriented, diagnostic research methods is consistent with the policy sciences' demands for contextually-rich policy analysis. Influencing policymaking in one context by diffusing the experiences and lessons learned from other cases or contexts is the practice of prototyping. And with the institution of simultaneous bottom-up and top-down inquiry, there is greater probability that the perspectives and interests of multiple stakeholders are documented and respected in the policymaking process.

The payoffs from this intellectual reorientation are considerable for both international relations experts and society at large. For the experts, attention to multi-scale policy processes and practical knowledge is revitalizing a field once restricted to a states-only perspective on international governance. Also, experts' growing interest in the activities of non-state actors abets elite non-state actors, in particular. The latter insist that their contributions to international environmental governance are substantial. Today, experts document the important accomplishments of international NGOs and other non-state actors. What remains to be seen is whether IR experts' new found interest in multi-scale perspectives and case-oriented knowledge will encompass the study of local level actors and institutions – a seeming imperative for environmental problems that are simultaneously global and local.

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Notes

1. Some mainstream environmental NGOs have deliberated policy problems that are not strictly environmental in scope. To illustrate, in the spring of 1998, members of the Sierra Club, a U.S.-based NGO, debated the merits of limiting legal immigration to the United States. While the debate had an environmental dimension – some members suggested that America’s natural resource base could not accommodate new, large influxes of immigrants – members understood that other values besides environmental well-being were at stake. That spring, members voted on whether the club should urge U.S. lawmakers to limit legal immigration flows. Of those casting votes, 60 percent rejected the pro-limit initiative (Pope, 1998: p. 14).
2. In the spring of 1999, the Clinton Administration took steps to make climate change policy more tangible to average Americans. President Clinton proposed a tax credit to consumers who purchased fuel-efficient cars, homes, appliances, rooftop solar systems, and other energy efficient products. In addition, the administration proposed a ‘Clean Air Partnership Fund’ to support, among other activities, local governments’ efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in communities and neighborhoods (White House, 1999b).
3. Sharachandra Lélé argues otherwise. He warns (1991: p. 614): ‘There is a very real danger of the term becoming a meaningless cliché, unless a concerted effort is made to add precision and content to the discussion...’ However, he concedes that sustainable development is a complex concept that means different things to different people. Successful promotion of sustainable development demands skill and selectivity, Lélé contends. ‘It is therefore vital to identify those aspects of sustainability that do actually cater to such diverse interests...’ (1991: p. 615).
4. In 1999, the Clinton Administration proposed a new set of federal rules governing tailpipe emissions that, with Congressional approval, end special treatment for sport utility vehicles and other light trucks. The one-page ‘White House Statement’ contains paragraphs with the subheadings, ‘Cleaner Skies and Healthier Air’ and ‘Flexible and Cost-Effective’ – appeals to impulse and reason, respectively (White House, 1999a).
5. For other examples of local, self-organized institutions for environmental management, see, e.g., Pérez and Barten, 1999; Ostrom, 1990; Netting, 1981.

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