

**Engaging the State and the Society in the Third World
From Public/Private Partnerships to
Transcalar Policy Coalitions**

Daniel Compagnon

Professor at Sciences Po Bordeaux

Researcher at SPIRIT (UMR 5116 CNRS)

d.compagnon@sciencespobordeaux.fr

Paper presented at the 2007 Amsterdam Conference
on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change
“Earth System Governance: Theories and Strategies for Sustainability”

Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

24-26 May 2007

1- Introduction

There has been a growing number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in the last three decades of the 20th century, and a marked tendency to include in these regimes some binding rules increasingly difficult to implement, especially in Third World states. Even Western countries have found these commitments to MEAs more and more demanding, and were tempted either to opt out (such as the USA and Australia in the climate change regime), or to reassess the depth of their commitments, re-interpreting them as guidelines and direction rather than binding rules. Such was the fate of the Agenda 21 during the last World Summit in Johannesburg (WSSD) in 2002. State defect (in the South) or state retreat (in the West) provided the ideological background for a highly advertised, greater participation of “non-state actors” in both the negotiations and the implementation of MEAs. It was obvious at the WSSD in particular that both the UN Secretariat and the great powers were happy to deflect criticisms on their past record, and transfer their responsibilities to these non-state actors, if only to avoid a complete summit failure (Andonova & Levy 2003: 21-22). Therefore, non-state actors were encouraged to fill the vacuum in the guise of the hastily forged category of “Type II partnerships”.

“Non-state actors” should be understood here as encompassing business-related actors (private actors proper) and non governmental organisations (NGOs). Logically it should also include sub-national public authorities such as autonomous provinces and big cities, which are non-governmental from a traditional International Relations theoretical perspective. Private actors’ involvement in public governance is noticeable in the areas of climate change, biodiversity conservation, water and health provision, and forest management regimes among others. There is a growing literature from various social sciences sub-disciplines analysing, (i) interactions between private actors that produce new institutional arrangements sometimes referred to as “private governance”, (ii) interactions between private and public actors towards regime implementation, which increasingly blur the boundary between the private and the public spheres. This phenomenon has generated a series of interesting debates and questions such as the following:

- Are there unethical or utilitarian motives behind the involvement of business actors in global environmental governance? Is this a new form of “greenwash” for transnational corporations (TNCs)?
- Will the participation of private actors produce a new form of political governance unseen before, or will it merely amount to a straightforward privatisation of public policy? Is this risk more pronounced in the international arena - where no World government exists - than in national policy making?
- Will private actors’ participation improve environmental regimes’ effectiveness? Are they likely to solve the implementation deadlock in global environmental governance, especially in Third World countries?

However, there is a need to look beyond the “new forms of governance” and “privatisation” somehow de-contextualised debates. To properly assess the potential contribution of these private actors to environmental governance in the South, we need to look at the nature of public/private partnerships (PPP) and confront them to the political realities on the ground. Defining characters of political systems will impact on the collaborative effort, its institutional forms and its effectiveness. Some of these partnerships

amount to mere corporate public relations and others are finely disguised traditional cooperation projects, but there are also some new forms of coalitions between various actors (including segments of state bureaucracies, NGOs and private firms) that may play an informal, though decisive, role in tackling complex issues and overcoming traditional obstacles to policy implementation in Third World countries. These particular partnerships are in essence political, and they are more likely to produce an outcome when they are built across the political scale from the local to the global. Hence they constitute a kind of transcalar advocacy coalition, which could eventually solidify into transcalar policy networks.

In our view, global environmental governance is multi-scalar and there is a need to integrate the local and the global into a common analytical framework. Scale as a noun refers to “levels at which a phenomena occur in the dimensions of space and time”, and as a verb suggests that “the dynamics of the systems that differ from each other in terms of spatial or temporal scales are nonetheless sufficiently similar so that we can scale up and down in seeking to understand how they work” (Young, 2002: 26). Although less common in Political Science and International Relations (IR), the concept of scale is supported by a significant body of literature in Political Geography focusing on this “nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size, such as the local, regional, national, and global” (Delaney and Leitner, 1997:93). Although these spaces are not pre-determined but socially (politically) constructed, in practice their boundaries often follow jurisdictional lines defined in the course of history (Meadowcroft 2002). The public authority deciding over a specific issue does not operate necessarily at the scale deemed to be the most appropriate (Ibid.). This dilemma has been noticed by the literature on international environmental regimes, but scholars of public policy and governance tend to focus on levels of authority – hence the concept of multilevel governance particularly in use for EU governance (McCormick, 2001) – rather than on scales. However, the notion of transcalar governance is becoming popular in globalization studies (Scholte, 2005:186-187).

The next section of this paper will sum up the debate on the participation of private actors to environmental governance, then we will move to a preliminary assessment of the WSSD partnerships and other partnerships involving the Southern countries. This will bring us to the analysis of Third World states’ characteristics, a perspective often neglected by authors writing on global governance. Then it will be possible to return to the prerequisites of successful intervention by non-state actors, especially business corporations, and identify some positive examples of transcalar coalitions. In this process we attempt to re-conceptualise the contribution of non-state actors to policy implementation in the Southern countries.

2- Private actors in environmental governance

There is a growing literature on the role of non-state/private actors during the negotiation and the implementation phases of MEAs (Newell 2000, Levy & Newell 2005), or the provision of functional equivalents to international cooperation in areas where the latter is lacking or deficient (Pattberg 2007). This includes private actors’ interaction with each other as well as their interaction with states and other non-state actors. Therefore, to review it systematically is beyond the limited scope of this paper. We will only attempt to synthesise some of the main findings, and assess to what extent this approach is relevant in the case of Third World countries, the importance of which for the future global environmental governance should not be underestimated - if only because “together they have the potential to accelerate environmental degradation” (Miller, 1998: 177). However, the literature on private regimes has focused on OECD countries, and largely ignored the Southern

stakeholders, both in terms of their contribution to rule-making and in terms of the impact of these regimes on the South itself (Dingwerth 2005b).

It is useful to distinguish clearly between traditional cooperation between business actors (such as cartels and other corporate alliances) and proper “private governance” defined as:

“where the interactions among private actors, or between private actors on the one hand and civil society and state actors on the other, give rise to institutional arrangements that structure and direct actors’ behaviour in an issue-specific area. These structuring effects resemble the “public” governing functions of states and intergovernmental institutions” (Falkner 2003 : 72-72). Private governance “goes beyond common forms of private cooperation because it involves not only adjustments of behaviour toward mutual goals but also shared norms, principles, and roles” (Pattberg 2005: 606).

It takes the form of various corporate social responsibility (CSR) schemes, private norm-making and various types of PPP in a good number of sectors from water to energy, including food security and climate change (Pattberg 2005). This hybrid governance also arises from business’ participation in multistakeholder dialogues such as the World Commission on Dams (Dingwerth 2005a).

Although the growing influence of private actors may signal a decline of the state in a globalised world and a shift to non-state governance, Falkner rightly points out that pure forms of private regimes are rather rare, and that in most cases what we see emerging are “mixed” or “hybrid” regimes:

“Hybrid private-public governance emerges out of the interactions of private actors, either with the involvement of states or with the later adoption, or codification, by states and/or intergovernmental organizations. States are not the driving force behind the creation of such governance systems, but lend them strength through official recognition or incorporation into international law ... The new agenda in global governance is defined by an intricate private-public nexus in which private and public authorities work hand-in-hand to redefine the parameters of global policy-making” (Falkner 2003: 76, 84).

The ISO 14000 series is a case in point, being negotiated mainly by business representatives¹ and then endorsed by several governments and international organisations such as the WTO.

This underscores the importance of the state as a core variable when analysing the contemporary governance system, and the need to differentiate between the states according to their capacities and power in the international system. In this respect, there is a North-South inequality in the setting and implementation of private and mixed regimes as Clapp demonstrated for ISO 14000 series (Clapp 1998). Developing countries’ interests are marginalized, and they lack the manpower and resources to counter corporate influence in this process. In many ways it reflects their actual position in the global division of labour, and for many African countries, their limited contribution to the global GDP and trade. This is not very different, however, from what can be observed in intergovernmental negotiations or in the relations between Western and Southern NGOs. Private and semi-private regimes do not necessarily disenfranchise the South more than other forms of global governance.

What is less often noted though is the potential impact of standardised private self-regulation on the policy standards in Southern countries: because transnational corporations operating in the South have a financial incentive to use the same standards across the world (both to seek

¹ Although not a NGO in the traditional sense of the word, the International Organisation for Standardisation founded in 1946 is a hybrid organisation, the national delegations of which are drawn from private sector bodies working on standardisation at national level (Mattli & Büthe 2003).

some economies of scale and to boost their image) there is no systematic “race to the bottom” in terms of environmental standards or obvious “pollution havens” (Garcia-Johnson 2000, Neumayer 2001). Foreign direct investment (FDI) sometimes influence local standards positively and trade often serves to disseminate improved environmental norms from importing countries in the West towards exporting countries in the South (Prakash & Potoski 2006).² Thus, FDI and international trade might provide more efficient channels of policy transfer than traditional intergovernmental regimes. Multistakeholder partnerships are part of these new forms of governance meant to address the deficits of intergovernmental politics by integrating into a common policy network NGOs, businesses and state bureaucracies (Reinicke 1998, Streck 2004). As Dingwerth puts it, “whether or not non-state governance schemes are well equipped to address the deficits of more traditional intergovernmental approaches, and allow for a more balanced way of global decision-making is an empirically open question” (Dingwerth 2005b: 4).

3- Partnerships in the Southern countries

The WSSD in Johannesburg promoted the Type II multistakeholder partnerships involving both NGOs and business partners alongside with public authorities and tasked these voluntary, transnational policy networks to implement Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and other related MEAs. Subsequently more than 300 partnerships have been duly registered under the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). There are meant to bridge the functional gap between intergovernmental regimes, increasingly seen as ineffective, and the grassroots’ level, in order to address sustainable development issues. Yet it was never stated clearly how these transnational policy networks were to succeed in filling the implementation gap when more institutionalised regimes had failed. There was also some more narrow-minded politics involved in this turn: representatives from the Third World, with support from the UN Secretariat, succeeded in Johannesburg to drag the shapeless concept of sustainable development in the direction the developing nations’ economic and social concerns especially through the amalgamation of Agenda 21 and MDGs. Safe water, energy supply, poverty alleviation and food security became primary targets in the Plan of Implementation. In the wake of this shift and the refusal of Western powers to commit more public finances to meet these targets, Type II partnerships became the magic formula for raising more (private) money and producing short term results on the ground, unlike what had happened (or not happened) between Rio and Johannesburg.

Multistakeholder partnerships are alleged to have decisive advantages in knowledge dissemination and social learning, in “setting non-binding norms” - as opposed to MEAs -, building management capacities, and in “closing the ‘participation gap’ in global politics” (Andonova & Levy 2003: 20, 25), therefore contributing to a democratisation of global environmental governance (Bäckstrand 2006). However they generated also a lot of criticisms from the onset (Bruno 2002), which we will briefly sum up - although the purpose of this paper is not to produce a thorough assessment of these partnerships.³ First of all the partners

² Unlike governments, under WTO regulations firms can impose process standards such as ISO 14001 on their suppliers because the voluntary ISO standards have been recognized as international standards under the WTO system, and as being consistent with the Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.

³ There have been several quantitative studies of UNCSD partnerships (Andonova & Levy 2003; Ivanova 2003, Hale & Mauzerall 2004) with mainly consistent findings. A more ambitious project is the UNCSD partnerships data base currently under way at IVM, Free University Amsterdam (see Frank Biermann, Man-san Chan, Ayçem Mert, and Philipp Pattberg 2007).

are not equal in resources, hence in power, although the partnership ideology claims it creates a balanced, horizontal relationship. Only 6% of the partnerships reviewed in one recent study were really multi-stakeholder, i.e. involving all the categories of stakeholders, including local communicators (Andonova & Levy 2003: 23). There are usually skeleton governance and accountability mechanisms – as least as far as information is available - providing limited transparency.

Partnerships are just endorsed by the UNCSA when following broad and weak guidelines, and they are not properly vetted or evaluated. Even in the first few years after the WSSD the CSD failed to put in place strong procedural rules to establish and monitor partnerships. Therefore, a good many of them are thinly disguised classical aid projects that will not benefit the poorest but, rather, will fit some state or corporate interests – for instance creating a local market for TNCs providing water supply services. Many of them are not even new projects. For instance, most of the UNCSA registered partnerships involving the Japanese government quite obviously betray some hasty re-packaging of traditional bilateral aid programmes (see UNCSA database).⁴ Another case in point is the Nile Basin Initiative reclassified as a Type II partnership although it began in the late 1990s. There are some WSSD partnerships that hardly fit in any definition of sustainable development. For example, one of partnerships operating in Africa is led by Eskom, the South African electricity utility and aims at connecting the countries' power networks in Southern Africa to facilitate "sub-continental electricity trading". Type II partnerships may also "greenwash" TNCs targeted by advocacy NGOs' campaigns by diverting public attention from their standard practises that damage the environment – the oil industry a case in point.

Up to now "partnerships have failed to bring a substantial amount of new, multi-sectoral resources to sustainable development activities" (Hale & Mauzerall 2004: 235), and especially private funding. A majority of the UNCSA partnerships are still looking for additional funds many years after their announcement. In most cases the leading partner is from the North (either a governmental agency or an international NGO), and in few instances only a private corporation: 2% only, and businesses are partners in less than 20% of total partnerships, accounting for less than 1% of total funding (Hale & Mauzerall 2004: 230-31). This reflects rather than challenge the existing power imbalance in the international system. Although a limited number of cases of TNCs' involvement were highly publicised the private sector has not been very supportive.⁵ Some of the WSSD partnerships are mere "ghost" projects with no reported activity since their announcement. These trends are largely the product of a top-down approach, not significantly departing from traditional aid practices, and of a supply-side, donor-driven process (Andonova & Levy 2003: 23, 26).

Consequently partnerships "do not necessarily match the priorities set out in the multilateral process" (Hale & Mauzerall 2004: 234), and cannot serve as substitutes to a proper implementation of MEAs. Most partnerships do not directly contribute to a more sustainable environmental management according to another study.⁶ Although one may argue

⁴ To be fair this observation might be true also for many OECD countries, including France.

⁵ Under the auspices of the Business Action for Sustainable Development, 95 industry-led partnership initiatives were announced in the lead up to the WSSD, but they opted not to register with the UNCSA.

⁶ "The majority of the partnerships do not provide direct environmental benefits. 28% of partnerships considered themselves to provide clear, direct environmental benefits... The figure of 28% producing clear, direct environmental benefits seems to be an overestimate. From the description of the partnerships available in the UNCSA database, it would seem that in several cases a more appropriate response in line with the intention of the question would have been 'one step upstream' – it likely that of the 32 partnerships only three or four had direct environmental impact with the rest facilitating impact further down the line" (OECD 2006: 24).

that these deficiencies are only implementation hiccups and there is still room for improvement (Hale & Mauzerall 2004), it is astonishing that the partnership literature largely ignores an crucial point in the whole debate: the political context of partnership implementation, i.e. the political system in the Southern countries. Yet when the Indonesian government is involved in a record 53 UNCSO partnerships this should raise some questions given the country's past governance performance. For example, given the nature of state/society relations and the distance in many Third World countries between political elites and local communities, it is doubtful that some greater participation of the latter is foreseeable in the short term. There is indeed a huge discrepancy between the multistakeholder partnerships rhetoric emphasising greater participation of traditionally marginalised groups and the actual management of the projects on the ground.⁷ Changing for the better will require more than gestures of goodwill from the Western partners, it demands a better understanding by all of public governance and of political dynamics in the South.

4- State features in the Third World

The study of international environmental regimes is grounded in the theory of International Relations and focuses on regimes' formation, policy formulation, compliance measures, and the (in)effectiveness of such regimes (Young 1997, 1999 ; Vogler 2000). Yet, the root causes of ineffective implementation lay at national or sub-national levels, especially in the Third World. Astonishingly, this crucial dimension is neglected in the literature – with few exceptions such as the case-study on MEA implementation in Cameroon (Blaikie and Simo 1998). Yet a better understanding of structural obstacles to environmental agreements' enforcement in the South is of primary importance if the current trend of environmental degradation is to be slowed down at the global level (UNEP 2002). Most African states are parties to many MEAs and there is a certain amount of formal compliance displayed at government level, such as the transposition of the ratified agreements in the national legislation. However, the lack of effective and sustained action on the ground is related to a wide range of factors, including the characteristics of the African post-colonial state. In practice “an increasing number of individual nation-states are no longer able to provide localised order and an adequate degree of environmental management within their own borders” (Hurrell 1995: 147). This is particularly true in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Although both International Public law and IR theory are based on the fiction that all sovereign nation states are equal in rights and prerogatives in the international arena, most of the states created in the wake of the decolonisation process are deprived of the major criteria of effective statehood. They do not fit the Westphalian, ideal-typical model of the fully functional nation-state. They have been described as “quasi states” by some IR scholars looking at their limited capacity of autonomous action in the international system (Jackson 1990). Since they do not enjoy the attributes of “positive” sovereignty (power resources, full control over their territory), they tend to rely only on “negative” sovereignty, i.e. the paraphernalia of international recognition, ritualistic diplomacy, and external symbolic as well as material resources (Clapham 1996). Being part of many MEAs then becomes a means to obtain more consideration from the international society and extract more finances from multilateral and bilateral sources, without much bearing on actual domestic policies.

⁷ See Kerebel 2007: 335-373. Participation is used to legitimise top-down projects and guarantee smooth implementation. However, there are slight differences between the four cases studied by the author in this respect.

Third World states were also defined by political sociologists as “weak states” (Migdal 1988) – more recently “fragile states”- when focusing on their internal administrative capacities.⁸ Some of these states such as Liberia or Somalia have been properly labelled “failed” or “shadow” states (Reno 1998), and more recently Thomas Risse proposed the new category of “limited statehood” to integrate these external (quasi) and internal (weak) dimensions of the Third World state :

“countries whose governments are only partially, if at all, in control of the legitimate means of force, those inside the country as well those which could be employed beyond its borders. Moreover, they are either not in the position, or only partially so, to implement political decisions of the central government and to enforce the law. In other words: areas of limited statehood lack full "effective authority" over their territory, a minimal characteristic of modern statehood.” (Risse 2005: 64).

According to Risse, this large category encompasses a large spectrum of dysfunctional political systems on a continuum of areas of limited statehood with Brazil and Mexico on the one end, and Somalia and Sudan on the other. In some cases (e.g. Mexico, Brazil, South Africa), there is an internal divide between parts of the country where the state is almost as effective as many Western governments, and provinces or districts where statehood is very limited in terms of the state apparatus’ physical presence on the ground as well as its administrative effectiveness.

Despite a number of success stories – in Latin America mostly - the 1990s global trend of Third World’s transition towards democracy failed to consolidate during the subsequent decade, especially in Africa where two-thirds of LDCs can be found. We still find a majority of neo-authoritarian regimes, sometimes ‘personal rules’ (Jackson & Rosberg 1982), relying on clientelistic neo-patrimonial systems of governance (Médard 1982, 1991, Clapham 1985), where a weak institutionalisation of the state and the personal appropriation of office allow a discretionary and widely corrupt enforcement of the law and the state policies. There is little accountability – towards either the people or the foreign donors - from state bureaucracies and the central government. There is a constant flow of new environmental laws and regulations, but they are seldom and randomly enforced by understaffed, underfinanced state agencies. National or provincial “Big Men” (patrimonial barons) often violate national legislation. Contempt for the rule of law, in the extreme, ends up disrupting sustainable management (see the case of Zimbabwe since 2000).

The state is often perceived as illegitimate if not oppressive by large sections of the population, and failing repeatedly to deliver the minimum provision of public goods (including security). Central government policies – e.g. in sustainable management of natural resources - are resisted by the people against a historical background of abuses and distrust.⁹ In this context, neither regionalisation nor decentralisation, though a popular option with both donor agencies and environmental experts (Ribot 2002), are very promising. Weak states are also prone to conflicts over resources and/or conflict impacting on the environment such as was the case in DRC, Liberia and so on. Powerful transnational networks benefiting from the illegal exploitation of natural resources, sometimes linked to global mafias, and locally

⁸ Of course, this is not a value judgement and it implies no prejudice against the people of the South and their cultural traditions. These characteristics of the contemporary Third World states are rooted in their past, in particular the long-term impact, often underestimated, of colonialism (Davis 2001, Mamdani 1996).

⁹ For example, in most African countries, local communities think of national parks and other protected areas as being a legacy of European colonialism and Western green imperialism (Anderson and Grove, 1987; Duffy, 2000:141-172). Repressive anti-poaching policies often targeted the poorest rural dwellers (Gibson 1999). In early 2007, there was a publicised incident in Cameroon where national parks guards were accused of rare brutality against Pygmies they accused of poaching...

connected to corrupt key officials, subvert the state's conservation policies in Madagascar and Indonesia for example (Duffy 2005, EIA/Telapak 2005). Although there are indeed some significant variations from one Third World country to another, it is hard to imagine running a policy-oriented PPP successively in such a chaotic socio-political context.

5- Transcalar coalitions as a strategy for policy change

UNCSD partnerships were tasked to “compensate for weak institutions or institutional deficits across levels of governance” (Andonova & Levy 2003: 20). There are seen as the epitome of a nascent “post-sovereign” governance (Karkkainen 2004). Yet they are not equipped to overcome the policy implementation difficulties arising from public governance's characteristics in most Third World countries, especially in LDCs. Although some partnerships attempt to address these problems through “capacity building” and the transfer of institutional models, their governance structures tend to mirror LDC's deficient patterns. This might explain in part why more institutionally developed, middle-income economies in the Third World are more attractive for Northern partners, thus more often involved in partnership than the poorest countries.¹⁰

“The countries that most embraced the partnership movement were not the ones that needed it the most, but rather the ones that had already acquired an advanced capacity for international engagement. Haiti and Somalia, for example, are not participating in any of the 231 partnerships, whereas Thailand and the Philippines are in 20 each” (Andonova & Levy 2003: 28).

Fragile states are more often involved though when an international organisation leads the partnership.

Therefore, the claim that UNCSD partnerships will provide donor agencies and international organisations with an alternative (safer) channel to deliver assistance to the most in need, reinvent their role and overcome a history of policy failure appears rather unwarranted. Very much like the bilateral or multilateral technical assistance programmes before, most of UNCSD partnerships will become either irrelevant or highly corrupt – sometimes both. In many ways they carry all the political ambiguities of the UN system at large. More importantly the features of Southern political systems rehearsed in the previous section are so pervasive and resilient that they are likely to undermine this new brand of development programmes.

In spite of these UNCSD partnerships' shortcomings the idea of private sector's involvement in environmental policy-making and policy-implementation remains valid. A pragmatic cooperation between various partners, including corporations, NGOs and donor agencies on a policy reform agenda in the South is more necessary than ever, and this section looks at justification and methodology for building such coalitions. One needs to recognise first the need to “bring the state back in” once again, not only as one among numerous stakeholders, but as a crucial management level in a globalised system of governance. This is of utmost importance in the Southern countries where powerful Northern actors such as development agencies, international NGOs and TNCs are tempted to “do away” with inept politicians and inefficient, corrupt national bureaucracies. The ideology of sustainable development multistakeholder partnerships fits in such a strategy: the partnership discourse

¹⁰ For example, and according to the UNCSD database, out of 330 registered partnerships in early 2007, 27 involved the Chinese government, 26 the Brazilian government, 21 the Indian government, but only 8 partnerships implicated the government of Burkina Faso, one of poorest country in the World.

emphasises non-hierarchical cooperation between equally legitimate partners, and tend to de-politicise policy implementation.

Yet partnerships will not deliver the goods without a more realistic assessment of the politics in the South. For example, there is a large literature that stresses the political dimension of conservation – in both international negotiations and localised implementation schemes - in various Third World countries (Mofson 1997, Agrawal & Gibson 2001), the involvement of “political” businessmen in the tourist industry in and around protected areas (Duffy 2000, Raftopoulos & Compagnon 2003), and “big men” sponsoring poaching (Gibson 1999). Sectors like energy provision or drinking water supply are also deeply penetrated by corruption and clientelism, especially but not exclusively in South. We could not find in the literature on partnerships a convincing argument to support the claim that they can be more effective to coerce state bureaucracies into action and follow “good governance” standards. For instance what kind of partnerships will overcome established patterns of illicit logging and timber trading (Dauvergne 2001, EIA/Telapak 2005)? It will be as difficult to make local partners accountable in existing UNCSA partnerships as much as it has been the case in the past with more traditional forms of development assistance – quite often with the complicity of donor countries for geopolitical reasons.

The PPP have been sold as a ready-to-use technical kit aimed at producing fast results on the ground, but we need to acknowledge that policy implementation is about politics, i.e. power as much as financial means, arm-twisting as much as knowledge, consistency as much as politically correct consensus. We are not talking about regime change here, and not only because it is hazardous and unproductive (see the current mess in Iraq), we are aiming at a new type of environmental conditionality, specific steps negotiated with the local partners but closely monitored, with precise benchmarks and potential sanctions. The weaknesses of most MEAs are among others, the absence of sanctions to enforce policy decisions, the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms and the fact that intergovernmental politics dominate the policy-making, allowing scientific findings to be ignored or skewed to fit the governments’ conflicting agendas. When parties to MEAs are put to task to fulfil their international commitments they often invoke the state sovereignty principle, the great hypocrisy of the international system (Krasner 1999). For example, in the case of the oil pipeline built between Southern Chad and the Cameroon coast, partly financed by a World Bank loan, Chad’s government predictably reneged in 2006 on its former commitment to allot part of the oil revenue for sustainable development. President Deby easily got away with it because he enjoyed the support of both France and the United States in his military confrontation with Sudan. But even when “high politics” do not interfere, making environmental conditionality work through traditional diplomatic means is problematic.

This is precisely why transcalar coalitions of various actors including corporations, NGOs, donor agencies and local communities are needed. To tackle a specific problem like deforestation, they work across the spatial and social divide to create consensus on some common policy objectives and then to enforce a sustainable management strategy. By doing so they constrain national politicians’ capacity of action from the top and from the bottom at the same time: when a local environmental NGO, forest dwellers, international NGOs and the World Bank join efforts, using both sticks and carrots, a Southern country’s government cannot convincingly claim that it fell victim of an imperialist plot! For example Cameroon’s small NGO the Centre pour l’Environnement et le Développement (CED), part of the international Friends of the Earth network, has combined the support of Western donors, the World Bank, international NGOs (including Greenpeace and the Forests Monitor) and the

local tax collection administration – a segment of the national state – to force Cameroon’s government and the logging companies to effectively implement the 1994 law on forest management.¹¹ In comparison the Congo Basin Forest Initiative, a UNCS D partnership since 2002, with South Africa as a godfather and the involvement as lead partners of the USA first, and France after February 2005, typically reflects a top-down approach and has had predictably little impact on the ground: an improved legislation that is poorly enforced.¹² Weak institutions, personalised rulership and corruption once again come out of NGO reports as the major causes of failure.

This internal/external concerted pressure can contribute to strengthen the initially weak local civil society – especially in the context of neo-authoritarian regimes -, expose the corrupt behaviour of many politicians and civil servants, hence in the end contribute to a better institutionalisation of environmental governance in the South. When a government is led to implement its own legislation more effectively and fight corrupt, illegal dealings, some segments of the state bureaucracies regain confidence in their own mission. Therefore, whereas a technocratic, ostensibly politically neutral, vision of multistakeholder partnerships tends to by-pass the national state (thus ignoring the capacity to harm of political actors nested at this level of governance), a more tactical approach of transcalar multiple-actor policy coalitions will in the end strengthen the state’s capacities. Although private corporations must remain committed, the big advocacy NGOs and their local allies have a central role to play in forging these coalitions, since their political discourse link up local action with the global regimes’ agendas.

Conclusion

Existing UNCS D or CDM partnerships, especially those that are primarily clever business ventures for TNCs, or recycled bilateral or multilateral aid programmes, will not, in the end, deliver a more participatory environmental governance, let alone global democracy as some scholars would like us to think (Bäckstrand 2006). Nor will they fill the implementation gap in most MEAs, especially when Southern countries are concerned, because they fail to address properly governance problems as national and sub-national level. However, the multistakeholder partnership discourse, as construed in the international arena over the last 10 years, and especially in the wake of the WSSD, can be useful inasmuch it legitimises the intervention of an array of non-state actors in a given country’s internal affairs to promote a sustainable development transition.

Instead of denying or downplaying this - admittedly sensitive - political dimension of public/private partnerships, we should on the contrary exploit all its potentialities in promoting policy reform in the South. Broad multistakeholder, transcalar coalitions might have the capacity to step over the stumbling block of the “negative sovereignty” principle, and to provide greater incentives for the implementation of environment friendly policies in areas of limited statehood. However, to complement this local focus much stronger efforts must be

¹¹ See the organisation’s web site: <http://www.cedcameroun.org/>

¹² See the report submitted by a coalition of NGOs to the Ministerial Conference on Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in Yaoundé in 2003 (CED &al. 2003). A Global Witness report published in January 2003 stated that 42 logging companies, out of 58 inspected, had exceeded their logging permit’ volumes of timber in 2002-2003, and breached Cameroon’s forest law. See also Greenpeace’s latest report on the situation in DRC: “In a context of corruption and poor governance in the DRC, the World Bank’s attempts to reform the forestry sector are currently failing to control the expansion of logging” (Greenpeace 2007). Perhaps advocacy NGOs should work more closely with the World Bank, to bolster its attempts at controlling deforestation in DRC, instead of putting that organisation on trial.

developed by international authorities to curb global trafficking – be it in natural products or toxic wastes.

More empirical research is still necessary to identify such emerging coalitions, and when they do crystallise (or do not), identify some social, economical, and political enabling factors to that effect. The global ecological crisis sets a pressing agenda requiring some new prospective thinking rather than a complacent acceptance of the dominant discourse on transnational public/private partnerships' alleged benefits.

References:

- Agrawal, Arun and Gibson, Clark C. eds. 2001. *Communities and the Environment: Ethnicity, Gender, and the State in Community-Based Conservation*. New Jersey, Rutgers University Press.
- Anderson, David, and Grove, Richard, eds. 1987. *Conservation in Africa : People, Policies and Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Andonova, Liliana B., and Levy, Marc A. 2003. Franchising Global Governance: Making Sense of the Johannesburg Type Two Partnerships. In Olav Schram Stokke and Øystein B. Thommessen, eds. *Yearbook of International Cooperation on Environment and Development 2003/04*. London: Earthscan Publications, 19-31.
- Bäckstrand, Karin. 2006. Democratizing Global Environmental Governance? Stakeholder Democracy after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, *European Journal of International Relations*, 12(4): 467–498.
- Biermann, Frank, Chan, Man-san, Mert, Ayçem, and Pattberg, Philipp. 2007. Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Does the Promise Hold? Paper presented at the 2007 Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 24-26 May 2007.
- Bruno, K. 2002. *Greenwash+10: The UN's global compact, corporate accountability and the Johannesburg Earth Summit*. San Francisco, CA: CorpWatch.
- Clapp, Jennifer. 1998. The Privatization of Global Environmental Governance: ISO 14000 and the Developing World. *Global Governance*, 4 (3): 295–316.
- Clapham, Christopher. 1985. *Third World Politics: An Introduction*. London: Croom Helm.
- Clapham, Christopher. 1996. *Africa and the International System : The Politics of State Survival*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, Mike. 2001. *Late Victorian Holocausts, El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*. London: Verso.
- Dauvergne, Peter. 2001. *Loggers and Degradation in the Asia-Pacific: Corporations and Environmental Management*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Delaney D. and Leitner H. 1997. The Political Construction of Scale, *Political Geography*, 16, 2, pp. 93-97.
- Dingwerth, Klaus. 2005a. The Democratic Legitimacy of Public-Private Rule Making: What Can We Learn from the World Commission on Dams ?, *Global Governance*, 11, 65–83.
- Dingwerth, Klaus. 2005b. Private Environmental Governance and the South. Paper presented at the 2005 Berlin Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change, Potsdam (Germany), 2-3 December 2005.
- Duffy, Rosaleen. 2000. *Killing for conservation: Wildlife Policy in Zimbabwe*, London: James Currey.
- Duffy, Rosaleen. 2005. Global Environmental Governance and the Challenge of Shadow States: The Impact of Illicit Sapphire Mining in Madagascar, *Development and Change*, 36 (5): 825–843.

- EIA/Telapak. 2005. *The Last Frontier : Illegal Logging in Papua and China's Massive Timber Theft*. EIA/Telepak report, February 2005.
- Falkner, Robert. 2003. Private Environmental Governance and International Relations: Exploring the Links. *Global Environmental Politics*, 3 (2):72-87.
- Garcia-Johnson, Ronnie. 2000. *Exporting Environmentalism*. Cambridge (EU): MIT Press.
- CED & al. 2003. *Forest Management, Transparency, Governance and the Law. Case studies from the Congo Basin*. Report edited by CED (Cameroun) and the Rainforest Foundation, & Forests Monitor, UK, for the Ministerial Conference on Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) in Yaounde, 13-16 2003.
- Gibson, Clark C. 1999. *Politicians and Poachers: The Political Economy of Wildlife Policy in Africa*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Greenpeace International. 2007 (April 11). *Carving Up the Congo*. Downloaded from <http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/>
- Hale, Thomas N., and Mauzerall, Denise L. 2004. Thinking Globally and Acting Locally: Can the Johannesburg Partnerships Coordinate Action on Sustainable Development? *Journal of Environment & Development* 13 (3):220-239.
- Hurrell, Andrew. 1995. "A Crisis of Ecological Viability? Global Environmental Change and the Nation State", in John Dunn (ed.), *Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State?*, Oxford (UK), Cambridge (USA) : Blackwell, 146-165.
- Ivanova, M.H. 2003. Partnerships, International Organizations, and Global Environmental Governance. In J.M. Witte, C. Streck, and T. Benner. eds. *Progress or Peril? Partnerships and Networks in Global Environmental Governance in the Post-Johannesburg Era*. Washington, DC: Global Public Policy Institute. 9-36.
- Jackson, Robert H., and Rosberg, Carl. G. 1982. *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*. Berkeley, CA: California University Press.
- Jackson, Robert H. 1990. *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Josselin, Daphné and Wallace, William. eds. 2001. *Non-State Actors in World Politics*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
- Karkkainen, Bradley C. 2004. Post-Sovereign Environmental Governance, *Global Environmental Politics*, 4 (1): 72-96.
- Kerebel, Cécile. 2007. *Les partenariats multi-acteurs : entre discours et pratiques, quelle contribution au développement durable ? Quatre études de cas dans le secteur de l'énergie*. PhD dissertation in Political Science, Sciences Po Paris.
- Krasner, Stephen D. 1999. *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press.
- Levy David L., Newell Peter J. eds. 2005. *The Business of Global Environmental Governance*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. London: James Currey.
- Mattli, Walter, and Büthe, Tim. 2003. "Setting International Standards: Technological Rationality or Primacy of Power?" *World Politics*, 56 (1):1-42.
- McCormick, John. 2001. *Environmental Policy in the European Union*. New York : Palgrave.
- Médard, Jean-François. 1982. The Underdeveloped State in Tropical Africa: Political Clientelism or Neo-Patrimonialism? In Clapham, Christopher, ed., *Private Patronage and Public Power: Political Clientelism in the Modern State*, London: Francis Pinter Ltd. 125-172.
- Médard, Jean-François. 1991. L'Etat néo-patrimonial en Afrique noire. In Médard, Jean-François ed., *Etats d'Afrique Noire : Formations, mécanismes et crise*. Paris: Karthala.
- Meadowcroft, James. 2002. Politics and Scale: Some Implications for Environmental

- Governance, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 61 (2-4): 169-179.
- Migdal, Joel S. 1988. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Miller, Marian A.L. 1998. Sovereignty reconfigured, Environmental Regimes and Third World States, in Karen Liftin (ed.), *The Greening of Sovereignty in World Politics*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.173-192.
- Mofson, Phyllis. 1997. Zimbabwe and CITES: illustrating the reciprocal relationship between the state and the international regime, in Miranda A. Schreurs and Elisabeth Economy, *The Internationalization of Environmental Protection*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 162-187.
- Neumayer, Eric. 2001. Pollution Havens: An Analysis of Policy Options for Dealing With an Elusive Phenomenon. *Journal of Environment & Development*, 10 (2) : 147-177.
- Newell, Peter. 2000. *Climate for Change, Non-State Actors and the Global Politics of the Greenhouse*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- OECD, 12 September 2006. *Evaluating the Effectiveness and the Efficiency of partnerships, Workshop on Evaluating the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Partnerships*, Paris : OECD Environment Directorate, ENV/EPOC(2006)15.
- Pattberg, Philipp H. 2005. The Institutionalization of Private Governance: How Business and Non-profit Organizations Agree on Transnational Rules, *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 18 (4): 589–610.
- Pattberg, Philipp H. 2007. *Private Institutions and Global Governance: The New Politics of Environmental Sustainability*. Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
- Prakash, Aseem and Potoski, Matthew. 2006. Racing to the Bottom? Trade, Environmental Governance, and ISO 14001. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50 (2) : 350–364.
- Raftopoulos, Brian and Compagnon, Daniel. 2003. Indigenisation, the state bourgeoisie and neo-authoritarian politics. In Darnolf, Staffan and Laakso, Liisa, eds., *Zimbabwe's Twenty Years of Independence: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*, London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 15-33.
- Reno, William. 1998. *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Reinicke, Wolfgang H. 1998. *Global Public Policy: Governing without Government?* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Ribot, Jesse C. 2002. *Democratic Decentralization of Natural Resources: Institutionalizing Popular Participation*. Washington: World Resources Institute.
- Risse, Thomas. 2005. Two-Thirds of the World: Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood is a Global Problem. *Transnationale Politik (Transatlantic Edition)*, 6 (4 -Winter): 64-69.
- Scholte, Jan A. 2005 (2000). *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*. Houndmills, NY: Palgrave Macmillan
- UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme. 2002. *GEO-3. Global Environment Outlook*. Stevenage, UK: UNEP and Earthprint.
- UNCSD database: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>
- Vogler, John. 2000 (1995). *The Global Commons : A Regime Analysis*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Young, Oran R. ed. 1997. *Global Governance: Drawing Insights from the Environmental Experience*, Cambridge (EU) : MIT Press.
- Young, Oran R. ed. 1999. *The Effectiveness of International Environmental Regimes : Causal Connections and Behavioral Mechanisms*, Cambridge (EU): MIT Press.
- Young, Oran R. 2002. *The Institutional Dimensions of Environmental Change, Fit, Interplay, and Scale*, Cambridge, Mass : The MIT Press.