	PADM	padm_12189	B	Dispatch: June 3, 2015	Journal: PADM	
	Journal Name	Manuscript No.		Author Received:	No of pages: 16	TS: Sarath

doi: 10.1111/padm.12189

RETHINKING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: FROM GLOBAL GOVERNANCE TO TRANSNATIONAL NEOPLURALISM

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Originally focused on seeking policy solutions through international cooperation, transnational administration, and global governance, the study of global environmental policy has become increasingly diverse and fragmented. Complex, crosscutting variables ranging from a wider constellation of non-state actors to diverse critical perspectives, along with a focus on narrower sub-fields and the changing nature of environmental challenges themselves, have left the field in a state of flux. A broader, more process-oriented explanatory framework is needed. Institutional, global governance and civil society approaches, as well as middle-range concepts such as policy networks, are insufficient, while critical analyses, although a step in the right direction, are overly deterministic. Transnational neopluralism, which focuses on struggles for power and influence among material interest groups, social movements, and political actors in diverse issue-areas, provides a more robust framework for developing a more insightful research agenda and more constructive policy-making strategies in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The study of global environmental policy (GEP) has evolved significantly over recent decades. Environmental challenges have grown and debates about environmental policy have moved to a much more prominent place in global politics generally, while the structure of global policy-making is being challenged too. However, analysis of GEP has not kept pace. It has become mired in paradigmatic assumptions that are less effective both in explaining the empirical pathways that policy processes and outcomes have taken and, as a result, in pursuing normative policy goals. Global governance approaches in particular are flawed, while attempts to move away from that paradigm are partial and fragmented. In this article we argue that the underlying structure of constraints and opportunities in the international system, as understood through the prism of transnational neopluralism, continues to stymie attempts at developing effective global policy and transnational administration in the environmental issue-area.

Transnational neopluralism focuses not on the more institutional or managerial dimensions of public policy such as global governance, neoinstitutionalism or policy network analysis, but rather on the dynamic interaction – the ongoing conflict, competition, manipulation and jockeying for influence – of specific sets of actors in key policy-making processes. The neopluralist approach not only analyses uneven and shifting power relationships among interest groups and ‘value groups’ (Key 1953) but also brings in regularized relationships between those groups and state and intergovernmental actors in diverse, structurally differentiated issue-areas. Rather than seeing institutional structure as the main independent variable, neopluralist analysis looks at the political processes that characterize diverse issue-areas and the key actors that interact within them – their objectives, resources, strategies and tactics, both explicit and implicit. Lasswell called this ‘politics:

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1 who gets what, when, how' (Lasswell 1936). Variables include conflicts, competition, spe-
2 cial interest pressure and coalition-building (and breakdown) among non-state actors and
3 politicians and bureaucrats, involving resource deployment, influence and pressure, and
4 ultimately the capacity of these actors to manipulate, shape or control policy outcomes.
5 By focusing on key sets of actors in quasi-regularized interactive relationships, neoplural-
6 ism and, in this case, transnational neopluralism, identifies what works and what doesn't
7 and who wins and loses, or 'who governs' (Dahl 1961), in the real world of politics and
8 policy-making.

9 In identifying these actors, Charles Lindblom, who coined the term 'neopluralism' along
10 with Robert Dahl, referred in particular to 'the privileged position of business' (Lindblom
11 1977). However, business interests can be organized in different ways. Although many
12 businesses are organized hierarchically, others are often fragmented, not just among differ-
13 ently organized sectors (Williamson 1975) but also between oligopolistic firms, especially
14 in a globalizing world. These tensions have been seen in, for example, the 'growing rift
15 between consumer businesses that support' Obama Administration policies on climate
16 change 'and industrial groups that are vehemently opposed' (*Financial Times*, 3 December
17 2014). Furthermore, particular business interests have multifaceted ongoing interactions
18 with other interest groups, value groups and governmental actors. There is no 'ideal collec-
19 tive capitalist' or autonomous institutional superstructure to impose effective centripetal
20 control, especially at transnational or global levels. Policy-making is a fluid process, not
21 stable or fixed (Bentley 1908). Although 'governance' has sometimes been defined as more
22 fluid than 'government', (Rosenau and Czempel 1992), it has generally been applied by
23 both scholars and policy actors in a more institutional way, in GEP in particular.

24 In the past, neopluralism has mainly been applied to domestic policy-making, but we
25 broaden it to the transnational level (Cerny 2010). Neopluralism is of course not the same
26 as traditional pluralism. The latter prioritizes the quasi-democratic interaction of diverse
27 and relatively fractionalized groups in a kind of positive-sum or Pareto-optimal political
28 marketplace, as in the 'group theory' developed by David Truman (1951). Neopluralism,
29 in contrast, focuses on the scramble for control of policy outcomes among competing – and
30 colluding – hierarchies, elites and Foucauldian 'circuits of power' (Foucault 1980). It is
31 more a mixture of plural elitism, meso- or micro-corporatism and conflict theory, including
32 parts of a relatively disaggregated state (Slaughter 2004), especially the 'depleted state' of
33 the neoliberal era (Lodge 2013). These dynamics have been dramatically accelerated and
34 deepened by globalization processes, which have enmeshed national-level political sys-
35 tems in turbulent, multiscalar webs of 'fragemegration' in recent decades (Rosenau 2000).

36 Of course, national-level political systems have in recent centuries developed a high
37 degree of structural and institutional coherence and multifunctionality that is historically
38 unique, compared with earlier agricultural, feudal and imperial societies. Combined
39 with the Second Industrial Revolution and the competition between national economies
40 that this involved, this 'methodological nationalism' has led to a focus in public policy
41 studies on institutionalized domestic political systems, leading to an entrenched 'levels
42 of analysis distinction' between the domestic and the international (Hollis and Smith
43 1990). Today, however, globalization approaches increasingly focus on diverse, com-
44 plex transnational linkages, above, below and cutting across states. This shifting shape
45 from the 'inter'-national to the global includes not only economic integration – markets,
46 international production chains, multinational corporations, financial markets and the
47 like, as well as technological change, especially the information and communications
48 technology revolution – but also the socio-cultural 'global village' (McLuhan 1964),

1 'space-time compression', migration and multiculturalism and ideological convergence
 2 around neoliberalism – not to mention 'transgovernmental networks' of state and inter-
 3 governmental actors, leading to the disaggregation of politics in a globalizing world
 4 (Slaughter 2004).

5 However, none of these processes has been imposed from above, through a coher-
 6 ent 'global governance' or 'metagovernance' superstructure (see Sørensen and Torfing
 7 2009) or even the crystallization of coherent policy networks. As Martin Smith notes,
 8 policy network approaches are most applicable in the context of embedding private
 9 interest coalitions in relatively 'closed' policy-making systems and tend to become amor-
 10 phous and unsystematic in more fluid and multiscalar structural contexts (interview,
 11 14 January 2015). In contrast, the main challenges to politics and policy-making today
 12 are characterized by 'complex interdependence' (Keohane and Nye 1977). This is not
 13 merely a multi-level or multilayered phenomenon but a 'multi-nodal' one. Differentiated
 14 policy-making nodes are emerging that decentralize and fragment governance, character-
 15 ized by 'competing institutions with overlapping jurisdictions' (Cerny 2009), with actors
 16 shifting foci and resources across uneven spaces. This process includes not merely the
 17 'privatization of governance' (Lake 1996), but also highly variable policy 'landscapes',
 18 from the 'flat' to the 'rugged', that create complex constraints and opportunities (Root
 19 2013).

20 The transnational neopluralist framework is thus particularly applicable to environ-
 21 mental policy-making, especially given the cross-border and 'glocal' challenges of envi-
 22 ronmental degradation itself. Multi-level challenges, from local pollution, deforestation
 23 and even tourism (Kütting 2010a) to global climate change, have led to 'the fragmentation
 24 of global governance architectures' (Biermann *et al.* 2009) or indicate 'why global gover-
 25 nance is failing' (Goldin 2013). The fluid politics of complex interdependence throws the
 26 process back to the kind of conflict, competition, coalition-building, special interest poli-
 27 ticking, organizational gridlock and coalition failure that is at the heart of neopluralism.
 28 We will assess three main approaches to environmental policy-making: global governance;
 29 global civil society; and critical approaches. We argue that all three either underestimate
 30 the obstacles to policy effectiveness, or/and recognize these obstacles but do not offer a
 31 way out of the dilemma.

32 As a result, not only are their normative policy prescriptions ineffective for confronting
 33 today's and tomorrow's environmental challenges, but the behaviours of public officials
 34 faced with environmental challenges in the institutional context of a depleted state make
 35 what Rhodes calls the 'craft' of public administration (Rhodes 2014) marginal, ineffec-
 36 tive and even counterproductive, reproducing and failing to manage the power structures
 37 and struggles of a globalizing world especially with regard to GEP. Only when the prior-
 38 ities of key actors, including mass publics, oligopolistic firms and/or key politicians and
 39 bureaucrats, are transformed by the perception of impending crisis – or indeed by real
 40 crises – and channelled into coherent action will policy-making processes reach a tipping
 41 point and begin to address environmental challenges effectively.

43 INSTITUTIONALISM AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

44 International cooperation has been and still is widely considered to be the most
 45 appropriate and effective method for addressing environmental problems of a trans-
 46 boundary nature (Biermann *et al.* 2012; Kanie *et al.* 2013; Trudeau *et al.* 2013). Most late
 47 twentieth-century writings took as given that interstate cooperation was the necessary
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1 starting point for effective international action. The first wave of this literature focused
2 on international regimes – established by states but developing their own spheres of
3 bureaucratic quasi-independence (Ruggie 1993). The concept of the regime is gener-
4 ally associated with Ruggie’s seminal article (1975), as refined by Krasner (1983) and
5 Keohane (1984). These authors assumed the pre-existence of international anarchy, and
6 therefore the need for an overarching intergovernmental regulatory system to deal with
7 transboundary problems. The growing GEP literature was consequently grounded in
8 ‘neoliberal institutionalist’ thought (Keohane 1984). (This usage of the term ‘neoliberal’ is
9 analogous to ‘liberal internationalism’ and is therefore fundamentally in tension with its
10 meaning in political economy, where neoliberalism indicates free markets, deregulation,
11 and pro-market economic policy.)

12 Although Ruggie’s original regime theory also talked about overarching international
13 regimes like ‘embedded liberalism’, the concept of the regime was generally limited to
14 more specific issue-areas, such as monetary policy, trade policy or development aid.
15 However, global environmental policy has become an increasing focus, as awareness has
16 developed of rapidly growing environmental challenges that national governments were
17 prevented from confronting because of the opposition of key sectional domestic interest
18 groups and a lack of voter concern. The number of international environmental agree-
19 ments and voluntary arrangements today is well in the hundreds and covers regional and
20 global issues ranging from traditional legal tools such as the United Nations Framework
21 Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to transnational arrangements such as the
22 Forest Stewardship Council (Young *et al.* 1992; Haas *et al.* 1993; Kanie *et al.* 2013).

23 Much early regime analysis focused on what factors facilitated the institutionalization
24 of regimes, generally concerning the particular environmental challenge at hand and the
25 membership of the regime itself. The key author was Oran Young (Young 1992 and 1994;
26 cf. Susskind 1993 and Wettestad 1994). This analysis was operationalized through the use
27 of case studies (Rittberger 1993; Mitchell 1994). This institutionalist approach was comple-
28 mented by attempts to study the effectiveness of regimes. Young emphasizes the signif-
29 icance of institutions in shaping individual and collective behaviour at the international
30 level. For him, an institution is ‘effective to the extent that its operation impels actors to
31 behave differently than they would if the institution did not exist or if some other institu-
32 tional arrangement were put in its place’ (Young 1992, p. 161). For example, the Convention
33 on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution was seen as an effective regime because
34 it led to regulatory changes, although the problem of acid rain has not been effectively
35 resolved.

36 Toward the late 1990s, the focus on regimes tended to be supplanted by the related
37 discourse of global governance. Although this approach puts less emphasis on formally
38 established, authoritative organizations and includes other actors, informal structures
39 and networks, it is nevertheless still focused on how the interstate system might become
40 more institutionalized to deal with transboundary issues. It is still about top-down
41 policy-making rather than complex interdependence. While much recent literature has
42 been successful in introducing new policy mechanisms and incorporating a multi-actor
43 approach (Young *et al.* 2008; Andonova 2010; Biermann and Pattberg 2012; Selin 2012),
44 it has not addressed the question of power and hierarchy in a genuinely critical way,
45 skirting the question of who rules.

46 The recognition of a more traditional pluralist world of actors was co-opted into
47 mainstream governance approaches. Transnational environmental movements and
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1 NGOs, as well as transnational corporations (TNCs), were seen as systemically rele-
 2 vant actors in global environmental politics (Princen and Finger 1994; Wapner 1996;
 3 Keck and Sikkink 1998). With this came the recognition of more complex webs of
 4 interdependence and a richer diversity of actors involved in policy-making (Lipschutz
 5 and Mayer 1996; Paterson *et al.* 2003). However, at the core of the global governance
 6 approach is still the assertion that the best way to pursue wider normative goals is
 7 further institutionalization. This can be observed with all the major global institutions
 8 and their current processes, be it climate change, biodiversity or desertification, among
 9 others.

10 Ford, for example, argues that business is often regarded as the leader in research for the
 11 future, having a long-range global vision, developing new concepts of corporate respon-
 12 sibility, as with the Business Council on Sustainable Development (BCSD). Furthermore,
 13 the United Nations Commission for Global Governance (UNCGG) in its report *Our Global*
 14 *Neighborhood*, claims we are entering a new era of democratization, economic transfor-
 15 mation, multilateralism, and collective responsibility (Ford 2010). However, Ford argues,
 16 despite the growing involvement of a wide range of actors, key decision-making institu-
 17 tions remain intergovernmental in nature. Juridically, the claim to state sovereignty retains
 18 its primacy (Paterson 2001) and the political framework of the liberal global political econ-
 19 omy has not fundamentally changed despite the apparent undermining of state power *per*
 20 *se* (Lipschutz 2004). Critics claim global governance is merely a strategy of 'global cap-
 21 italist hegemony' (Ford 2010), but the construction of new regimes and institutions has
 22 nevertheless remained at the core of GEP.

23 A crucial reason for this shortcoming is complexity. Environmental policy-making is
 24 intricately connected to trade, economic, agricultural, fisheries, industry, financial and
 25 other policy sectors, and usually takes a back seat in the face of economic challenges. Eco-
 26 nomic actors are usually able to bypass or manipulate policy-making processes, putting
 27 environmental action lower in the list of policy priorities. This exists not only at the
 28 level of policy design but also of policy implementation; it is not limited to GEP but can
 29 also be found in other sectors such as finance. Furthermore, actors have to combine and
 30 coordinate policy-making at various endogenous and exogenous levels. Thus studying
 31 environmental governance, however many actors are included, gives a very incomplete
 32 and distorted picture.

33 Applying the concept of governance bumps up against at least three sorts of limita-
 34 tions. In the first place, in terms of agenda-setting and policy formulation, policy *inputs*
 35 lack coherence. Expectations of concerted action, whether by interest groups, social move-
 36 ments and NGOs or state and intergovernmental actors, are simply not fulfilled. Pol-
 37 icy negotiations limp along with space created for behind-the-scenes lobbying and reg-
 38 ulatory arbitrage. Second, institutions themselves are fragmented; actors focus predom-
 39 inantly on inter- and intra-institutional games. So-called *withinputs* are concerned with
 40 endogenous institutional and managerial (in)stability, coherence and hierarchical issues,
 41 rather than with substantive policy challenges. Third, *outputs* are suboptimal, leading to
 42 lowest-common-denominator, often highly compromised outcomes. Watered-down, inef-
 43 fective agreements are presented as successes, while implementation and enforcement
 44 are left until further compromises, while interest group actors regroup and marshal their
 45 forces for the next round. This can be seen in the recent UNFCCC negotiations. Global-
 46 ization itself has had a 'corrosive impact' on environmental policy-making (as well as
 47 other issue-areas), while '[t]he idea of governing the world is becoming yesterday's dream'
 48 (Mazower 2014, pp. 423, 427).

1 TRANSNATIONAL VALUE GROUPS?

2 In this context, the concept of 'civil society' – value groups and social movements – is often
 3 said to fill in the gap between material interest groups and the state. However, caught
 4 between bureaucratic state and intergovernmental apparatuses and the neoliberal charac-
 5 ter of the economic framework (in the political economy sense), along with the privileged
 6 position of material interests, civil society itself is squeezed and co-opted. A substantial
 7 part of the governance literature has addressed the increasing relevance of transnational
 8 actors and identified this area as a source of environmental improvement, but this has led
 9 in turn to a growing tension between seeing the new groups as representing a growing
 10 global consciousness that would lead to policy convergence on the one hand, and seeing
 11 these actors as involved in ongoing competition and collusion with each other, pursu-
 12 ing competing special interests and political projects while entrenching their networks of
 13 socio-economic dominance, on the other.

14 The term '*global civil society*' is generally used to include groupings such as so-called
 15 'nongovernmental organizations' (NGOs), social movements and more ostensibly 'respon-
 16 sible' business actors. Writers such as Lipschutz (1992) interpret it as a parallel sphere
 17 which aims to construct new political spaces, while writers from a more neoinstitution-
 18 alist perspective see civil society actors predominantly as participants or stakeholders in
 19 institutional processes (Viktor *et al.*, 1998; Steinberg 2001; Andonova 2010). In both cases,
 20 therefore, analyses focus primarily on their roles as institutional actors, co-opted into
 21 global governance processes. Civil society is seen as making governance processes more
 22 civil, more transparent and ultimately – sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly – more
 23 quasi-democratic. However, these approaches suffer from excessively normative assump-
 24 tions. Not only do they see civil society actors as stakeholders concerned primarily with
 25 solving environmental problems, but such actors would also have a positive effect on
 26 environmental policy-making and not prioritize material or short-term socio-political
 27 objectives.

28 These assumptions are overly sanguine, particularly with regard to the ability of such
 29 groups to build and maintain their internal hierarchical organizations, attract political
 30 and economic resources, engage in regular, often competitive, interactions with each
 31 other and build ongoing relationships with political and bureaucratic actors. Any hier-
 32 archical organization involves ongoing endogenous and exogenous power relationships
 33 which prioritize organizational stability and influence in complex bargaining situa-
 34 tions – 'who says organization says oligarchy' (Michels 1959). This process involves
 35 not only co-optation into institutionalized governance processes, but also the increased
 36 privatization of environmental governance itself (Falkner 2003; Biermann and Ding-
 37 worth 2004). This leads to both standard policy capture, where the institution comes to
 38 operate at the behest of its ostensible clients, and reverse policy capture, where groups
 39 become part of the process itself, subordinate to its endogenous dynamics, hindering
 40 reform and effective policy-making. It is a delusion that co-opting these groups into
 41 fragmented and ineffective policy processes will somehow democratize those processes
 42 or make them more coherent and efficient. Usually the result will be just the opposite,
 43 as influence-peddling and special interests take priority, as critics of traditional pluralist
 44 theory – elite theorists, class theorists, neopluralists, etc. – have emphasized in the past.
 45 Indeed, semi-authoritarian responses are just as likely as democratizing ones, if not more
 46 so, as they can often permit state technocratic actors greater control over institutional
 47 processes and policy outcomes (Stone 2008).



1 STUMBLING BEYOND GOVERNANCE? CRITICAL APPROACHES AND THE 2 INCREASED DIVERSITY OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY-MAKING

3 In contrast to the approaches described above, some writers on global environmental
4 politics have increasingly found that a critique of capital accumulation more generally
5 provides a powerful tool for analysing the friction between environment and economy
6 (Saurin 1995; Chew 2008; Kütting 2010b). Neo-Gramscianism in particular has proved use-
7 ful for understanding state–firm relations in fields such as forestry, biodiversity or climate
8 change (Humphreys 1995; Levy and Newell 2005; Paterson 2007), and global political ecol-
9 ogy is equally used to analyse the economy–environment nexus (Newell and Paterson,
10 2010; Newell, 2011; Holmes, 2011). As Vogler puts it, ‘market-based globalization is the
11 driver of degradation and states (acting as the agents of capital) are regarded as part of the
12 problem rather than, as in mainstream work, the solution’ (Vogler 2005). Environmental
13 problems therefore cannot be resolved through governance-type collective actions, since
14 these do not touch upon the underlying operation of prevailing political-economic pro-
15 cesses – and, indeed, they tend to reinforce those processes.

16 This critique of the ‘neoliberal institutionalist’ emphasis on interstate and/or traditional
17 pluralist forms of cooperation is not exclusive to writers subscribing to Marxist thought.
18 Other radical scholarship also argues that the roots of the environmental problem cannot
19 be tackled by the development of international or global norms in a neoliberal market
20 economy. These critical approaches, along with Marxist, post-Marxist and neo-Marxist
21 analyses, actually see attempts at global governance-type policy-making as *obstructing*
22 effective environmental policy solutions. They further institutionally embed not merely
23 capitalism as a mode of production but also a range of other underlying structures of
24 unequal power and control in both domestic and global politics – structures which directly
25 or indirectly depend upon environmental degradation for maintaining their power and
26 control as well as their profitability, such as fossil fuel producers.

27 At the same time, the environmental issue-area itself has evolved considerably. While
28 until not long ago attempts at regulating the causes of environmental problems focused on
29 getting states to agree to certain specific targets, broader issues such as rapidly evolving
30 climate change now dominate the process, and the interaction between these and nar-
31 rower, more specific problems are often ill-defined and contentious. Not only do we now
32 see a wider range of policy options, including market-inspired tools such as cap and trade,
33 or greater consideration of ways to involve non-state actors in finding solutions to prob-
34 lems, but observers and actors alike must also take into account new perspectives on how
35 to conceptualize *global* environmental problems in the first place and to locate them in
36 terms of values. These studies include the environmental or ecological justice literature
37 (Dobson 1998; Hampson and Reppy 2007), feminist critiques (Bretherton 1998) and polit-
38 ical ecologists (studying the social relations of ecological problems), all dealing with the
39 impact of environmental degradation and global production on particular social groups
40 (Peet and Watts 1996; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997). Writers such as Laferrière and Stoett
41 (1999) have imported ideas from radical green thought. Conca, in his study on water, high-
42 lights the concept of territoriality (Conca 2005). Jacques (2006) introduces the concept of
43 ocean space, redefining concepts of territory and space away from established notions of
44 boundaries.

45 Fuchs and Lorek (2002) and Dauvergne (2008) stress the importance of consumption,
46 or the social practice of consuming and the role of the individual as consumer as well as
47 citizen. For example, the concept of sustainable consumption, as explained by Fuchs and
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1 Boll (2010), shows that including society and how individuals behave both as political and
2 economic animals brings vital new dimensions to the field. Its significance had been over-
3 looked until the early 2000s with Princen and colleagues' *Confronting Consumption* (Princen
4 *et al* 2002). The same goes for ideas of justice and equity (Roberts and Parks 2007). The
5 rights and interests of a wider range of communities and groups are seen to have to be
6 respected and catered for at local, regional, national and global levels in order to develop
7 legitimate and viable solutions to environmental problems, particularly climate change.
8 The centrality of unequal economic relations for the environment has made an indeli-
9 ble mark on the discourse (Walker, 2012; Death, 2014; Klein 2014). However, while these
10 approaches offer important and relevant contributions, there is an imbalance between
11 their focus on norms and values and the real-world processes of global environmental
12 policy-making.

13 These imbalances tie in with a wider literature on unequal capabilities and perceived
14 power. In general, the liberal and neoliberal institutionalist literature, including global
15 governance, is relatively optimistic on the question of whether weaker actors can assert
16 their rights and interests, and views systemic indicators for inequality in a less prominent
17 light. Critical writers, whose main research focus tends to be aligned with environmental
18 justice or structural issues, tend to be much more pessimistic, as in the consumption
19 and the justice literatures. For example, there is a substantial and growing literature that
20 addresses global warming/climate change in these contexts rather than in governance
21 terms, arguing that the forces both enabling and preventing effective action are deeply
22 embedded in neoliberal capitalism and the assumption of the necessity of economic
23 growth.

24 There are two competing schools of economic thought on the environment and its rela-
25 tionship with global economic integration (Clapp 2010; Clapp and Dauvergne, 2011). The
26 economic mainstream sees economic growth as a potentially positive development for the
27 environment. Based on an assumption of economic rationality, markets ought to be ideal
28 tools for adjusting environmental problems through market instruments such as emissions
29 trading, cap and trade, etc. Ecological economists on the other hand assume that with a
30 finite resource base on the planet, economic growth cannot be physically and biologically
31 sustainable and therefore cannot lead to lasting environmental improvement (Daly and
32 Farly 2003; Carmin and Agyeman 2011). Ecological economists argue in contrast that the
33 concept of the market itself is at the root of the problem. Some critics have also raised ques-
34 tions about the environmental impact of inequality (Martinez Alier 2002). However, it is
35 generally uncontested that overconsumption in rich industrialized countries has increased
36 resource use globally and led to ever higher levels of waste and environmental degrada-
37 tion. Likewise, overdependence on local resources in the form of a subsistence economy
38 has also led to high levels of environmental degradation in many parts of the developing
39 world, and the connections between these trends have become a primary concern for the
40 study of global environmental policy (Okereke 2008).

41 The increased diversity of the GEP literature therefore means that we know more about
42 the causes and effects of social and economic patterns that cause environmental degrada-
43 tion and about the formal and informal institutions that have been created to deal with
44 this degradation. However, these studies translate poorly into analyses of today's transna-
45 tional policy processes. Furthermore, the connections between different strands of this
46 growing specialized knowledge are often limited. Research projects have ranged from the
47 micro to the macro and covered a variety of approaches, concepts and ideological angles,
48 from the study of particular cases to the impact of and on particular groups of actors, and

1 have highlighted different styles of governance. However, given the intricacies of the inter-
2 action among public and private actors, institutions and networks that try to deal with
3 environmental degradation, attempts to systematically integrate wider explanatory and
4 analytical factors lag behind. The literature has made great strides away from a perspec-
5 tive where the institutional management of an environmental problem alone was the issue
6 for more 'enlightened' approaches that emphasize legitimacy, inclusiveness and equity; at
7 the same time, however, this sort of methodological and analytical diversity has muddied
8 the waters in terms of both explanation and prescription.

9 The concept of 'limits' demonstrates this diversity of problem definition (Meadows *et al.*
10 1972; Daly 1996; Redclift 1987, 1992; Homer-Dixon 1991, 1999; Merchant 1992). The funda-
11 mental question of whether the finite nature of many of the world's resources needs to be
12 overcome by cutting back on their usage or transcended through technological progress is
13 deeply divisive, and there is little constructive critical engagement between those who see
14 technological change as offering limitless opportunities and those who see the excessive
15 use of finite resources (including air, water, atmosphere, etc.) as the root cause of environ-
16 mental problems and regard technological solutions as a mere 'band aid'. The neoliberal
17 economic order treats the natural environment as if there were an unlimited supply of
18 natural resources and so, with the right kind of technological innovation and economic
19 pricing tools, environmental problems will be overcome. Critical writers, on the other
20 hand, focus on the structural problems of modern socio-economic and political systems
21 and address issues of power and inequity.

22 Transnational neopluralism, in contrast, offers a fundamental way out of this binary
23 divide by examining the micro- and meso-level policy processes that characterize the
24 dynamic links between politically overoptimistic proposals intended to confront growing
25 environmental challenges (however necessary in the long run), the fragmented struc-
26 ture of global governance architectures themselves and suboptimal policy outcomes.
27 Only by focusing on these processes can the underlying problems and limits of global
28 environmental policy be analysed, and realistic, effective policy paths be identified.

30 CONCLUSIONS: TRANSNATIONAL NEOPLURALISM AND GLOBAL 31 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY-MAKING

32 While some environmental problems seem to have become less urgent at face value (ozone,
33 acid rain), other challenges have become significantly bigger – climate change, biodiver-
34 sity loss, desertification – and the connections between them more obvious. For example,
35 2014 is now recognized as the warmest year on record (*New York Times*, 16 January 2015).
36 Environmental problems are now global and inextricably intertwined, but global gov-
37 ernance institutions tend to have only limited effects because the political compromises
38 inherent in negotiations generally mean that proposed solutions tend not to be ecologically
39 effective, as critics of the UNFCCC process argue. Where institutions have been success-
40 ful, this has been because of a fortuitous constellation of events or conditions – especially
41 the pragmatic conjunctural alignment of key political and bureaucratic actors and inter-
42 est groups. While more diverse, equitable, just, inclusive, representative, etc. governance
43 institutions would be extremely desirable from a legitimacy point of view, it would be
44 even more desirable to achieve more effective policies. However, shared burdens do not
45 equal a better environmental record (Dobson 2003). Hardly any institutions have achieved
46 what is necessary for environmental improvement. This has been acknowledged in the
47 literature both from a neo-Marxist perspective, such as Brand's exposition on the green
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1 economy (2012), and from a realist perspective, such as Homer-Dixon's environmental
2 security framework (1999).

3 Transnational neopluralism contributes to this debate in two ways. The first is explana-
4 tory. The analytical focus needs to shift from concern with institutions to an understanding
5 of real-world political processes, especially transnational ones. Transnational processes are
6 not merely processes that extend across borders. They involve multiscalar, multi-nodal
7 interactions that form quasi-regularized patterns that mediate and filter inputs and turn
8 them into both positive and negative outputs – between the domestic and the international
9 and across a wider range of economic, social, cultural, technological and political linkages
10 from the local to the global. The second is normative. Although political compromises are
11 ideally conceivable, they are extremely unlikely to offer feasible solutions. The lack of rep-
12 resentation of a virtual, supra-political 'actor' – a sort of metagovernance of 'nature' or
13 the 'planet' – is perhaps the biggest challenge. Achieving environmental effectiveness in
14 a world of competing and conflicting interests requires a multi-nodal approach rooted in
15 complex interdependence.

16 Furthermore, having more actors often actually undermines effective policy solutions.
17 It is telling that one of the few cases of effective TNNP in action is the case of ozone
18 depletion, where a small group of scientific, business and regulatory actors managed to
19 overcome entrenched interests through corporate innovation at a crucial point in time. In
20 most cases actors and groups have not only competing priorities endogenously (the usual
21 politicking among factions and personalities) but also exogenous competitive tensions (the
22 need to mobilize both material and human resources) – along with unequal distribution of
23 resources and knowledge, the trap of policy capture, the challenges of coalition-building
24 (and coalition breakdown) and their embedding in complex Foucauldian circuits of power
25 undermine effective policy-making.

26 The incommensurability of values between a social system based on accumulation of
27 wealth, economic efficiency and unlimited growth is incompatible with a complex ecosys-
28 tem. Martinez Alier (2002), in particular, argues that the economic system is organized as
29 if it was not located within these specific ecological constraints. Attempts to incorporate
30 business into finding solutions, for example through such approaches as corporate social
31 responsibility or the United Nations Global Compact, can indeed be a red herring, provid-
32 ing superficial legitimacy for corporations to manipulate or avoid concrete action behind
33 the scenes (Clapp and Fuchs, 2009). At the same time, ostensibly business-friendly poli-
34 cies, especially cap and trade, have so far been ineffective, caught between the Scylla of
35 domestic opposition and the Charybdis of transnational circumvention, not to mention
36 the dysfunctionality of European regional policy processes and implementation.

37 The bottom line for corporations is, after all, profitability, and in a world where environ-
38 mentally friendly policies constrain or undermine profitability, from the coal industry to
39 airlines to livestock farming, resistance will be strong and politically effective – especially
40 where political coalitions can be formed with popular groups that also feel threat-
41 ened, such as workers and distributors in those industries and the entrenched regional
42 economies that have historically developed around them. The attack in the United States
43 on the so-called 'War on Coal' is a particularly prominent example today, bringing together
44 a wide range of groups and voters across the political spectrum in coal-dependent states
45 like Kentucky. Progress will require new forms of coalition-building involving industrial
46 processes and sectors that can be profitable through, for example, the production of
47 renewables, limits to more direct threats from pollution, weather crises, water shortages,
48 rising sea levels and the like. These will be crucial if we are to focus on policies that might

1 be economically available, technologically achievable, ecologically effective and – most
2 important of all – politically viable.

3 There will need to be a ‘tipping point’ at which the profitability of environmentally
4 friendly industries and the coalitions formed around them surpasses that of entrenched
5 interests representing previous industrial revolutions if environmental policy, whether
6 at the local or the global level, is to be successful in a world of transnational neoplural-
7 ism (O’Riordan and Lenton 2013). While one potential tipping point might be seen to be
8 the German U-turn on nuclear energy and the ensuing commitment to large-scale renew-
9 able energy investment, that policy has required strong national political leadership and,
10 indeed, the provision of compensation for domestic industrial interests; it will only be
11 effective if such policies diffuse transnationally in the future, which is highly problematic.

12 Institutional proposals still abound. For example, one widely debated proposal is to
13 establish a dedicated international environmental organization (Esty 2009). Nevertheless,
14 it would be vulnerable to disputes between member governments (it is unlikely to be set
15 up other than by member states), the clash and/or collusion of neopluralist interests and
16 political forces with competing economic objectives. An innovative article in *Science* pro-
17 poses closing regulatory gaps, according more importance to particular institutions and
18 placing a stronger emphasis on planetary concerns in economic governance (Biermann
19 *et al.* 2012), but the exact level and viability of the policy solutions is similarly flawed. The
20 authors aim to make ‘realistic’ suggestions that can be taken up by policy-makers and
21 implemented, but such proposals would require considerable political will and effective
22 multi-nodal bargaining and power-wielding, and would be unlikely to lead to ecologi-
23 cal effectiveness. In contrast, Klein argues that neoliberal institutional approaches (in both
24 senses of the term) merely entrench special interests, and that only a combination of pop-
25 ular movements and the strengthening of a hierarchical, post-neoliberal state will lead to
26 significant policy effectiveness (Klein 2014).

27 It has become clear that linkages between normative goals, policy prescriptions and
28 the practices of neopluralist politics are not easily constructed. The constellation of com-
29 peting actors with different material and normative interests, spread across the different
30 levels of the international political system from the local to the state to the regional and the
31 global, will require refocusing research on the emergence and consolidation of crosscut-
32 ting linkages and tensions among them. The core of this project, therefore – for academics,
33 scientists and policy-makers alike – will have to involve a new, explicit research agenda,
34 formulating politically realistic and operationalizable policies, implementing them across
35 diverse levels and developing feedback mechanisms to ensure that those policies are not
36 sidetracked, evaded or allowed to degenerate as environmental and political conditions
37 develop.

38 This has not yet started happening, although scholars in a range of fields, from domes-
39 tic interest group politics to comparative political economy, International Relations and
40 other areas, are at least becoming more aware of the challenges to traditional paradigms.
41 Transnational neopluralism offers a bridge between these fields for both more effective
42 explanations and, hopefully, normative prescriptions. The emerging emphasis on the
43 intensity of material throughput in the global economy in the field of green economy
44 in both literature and the policies of actors such as the World Bank and OECD could
45 be an example of such a normative prescription. In particular, public policy and admin-
46 istration scholars looking for a bridge between domestic politics, where neopluralism
47 has been one competing approach among others to explaining and understanding public
48 policy-making since the late 1970s, may find transnational neopluralism to be a significant

1 advance in confronting the challenges not only of global environmental policy but also of
2 other fields, such as financial regulation.

3 Applying TNNP to global environmental policy-making processes going forward, sev-
4 eral potential scenarios suggest themselves. First is that the only effective policy-making
5 processes in the environmental issue-area will still be state-centric. Whatever coalitions
6 can be built will have to start at national level and then spread incrementally (and
7 unevenly) through a process of *de facto* convergence and policy transfer/diffusion (Evans
8 2005) through policy networks that link structure and agency (Marsh and Smith 2000),
9 perhaps underpinned by more bottom-up social movements (Klein 2014). Second, forms
10 of global governance may consolidate over time through 'synergistic' or 'cooperative
11 fragmentation' (Biermann *et al.* 2009), where *de facto* convergence develops among global
12 governance institutions and processes. Third is what Biermann *et al.* call 'conflictive
13 fragmentation' at the level of global governance architectures, where different institutions
14 compete and conflict in their policy approaches and links with special interests, along with
15 the continued capacity of socially and economically privileged circuits of power to shape
16 outcomes through economic clout, lobbying, coalitions with various other groups (includ-
17 ing populist groups such as the Tea Party in the United States: see Frank 2004), continuing
18 to block change. Fourth would be the co-optation of crucial, privileged business groups.
19 The recent Risky Business Project, promoted by Michael Bloomberg and Henry M. Paul-
20 son, Jr., is an example of this kind of thinking (Risky Business 2014). At the time of writing,
21 a new business coalition seems to be arising around the challenge of water scarcity (Clark
22 2014). However, it is unclear whether this would be transferable to other parts of the
23 environmental issue-area, especially given that oligopolistic fossil fuel corporations are
24 said to be increasingly focusing on finding new hydrocarbon resources and abandoning
25 diversification into renewables (Porritt 2015). A final scenario would, of course, involve
26 a global environmental crisis stemming from climate change, leading to the emergence of
27 domestic and transnational coalitions to confront the damage – a global tipping point.

28 However, the key to both explaining global environmental politics and policy-making
29 and developing effective policy prescriptions is not the consolidation of global governance
30 and neoinstitutionalist structures, the development of superficially attractive policy for-
31 mulae by elite networks (including epistemic communities), the impact of civil society
32 *per se* or a focus on the structures of capitalism. Rather, it is to be found in ever-evolving
33 power struggles, including the exercise of influence by material interest groups, the abil-
34 ity of value groups, whether supporting or opposing effective environmental policies, to
35 shape key debates, and the capacity of ever-evolving transgovernmental networks to con-
36 trol policy-making processes in a world of increasing complex interdependence – and, of
37 course, the interaction of the three. Only then will it be possible to begin to transcend
38 the failure of 'yesterday's dream' (Mazower 2012) and to confront growing environmental
39 challenges with practical policies.

40 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

41 This article was submitted for a symposium on Global Policy and Transnational Admin-
42 istration in *Public Administration*, guest-edited by Diane Stone and Stella Ladi. An earlier
43 version of this article was presented at the annual convention of the International Studies
44 Association, Toronto, 26–29 March 2014. We are extremely grateful to Diane Stone, Stella
45 Ladi, Martin Lodge, Martin Smith, Jonathan Davies and the three reviewers for their
46 helpful comments on earlier drafts.
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37 cited; or delete from the reference list.
- 38 **AQ21.** Reference "McFarland (2004)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it
39 should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
- 40 **AQ22.** Reference "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005)" is not cited in the text.
41 Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
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- AQ23.** Reference "O'Neill (2009)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
- AQ24.** Reference "Pattberg (2006)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
- AQ25.** Reference "Pearce & Barbier (2001)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
- AQ26.** Reference "Pearce et al. (1989)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
- AQ27.** Reference "Wettstad (1995)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
- AQ28.** Reference "Young (1997)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
- AQ29.** Reference "Young et al. (1994)" is not cited in the text. Please indicate where it should be cited; or delete from the reference list.
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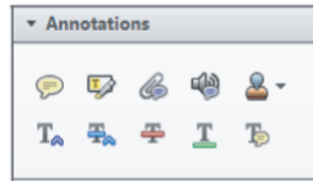
USING e-ANNOTATION TOOLS FOR ELECTRONIC PROOF CORRECTION

Required software to e-Annotate PDFs: Adobe Acrobat Professional or Adobe Reader (version 7.0 or above). (Note that this document uses screenshots from Adobe Reader X)
 The latest version of Acrobat Reader can be downloaded for free at: <http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/>

Once you have Acrobat Reader open on your computer, click on the Comment tab at the right of the toolbar:



This will open up a panel down the right side of the document. The majority of tools you will use for annotating your proof will be in the Annotations section, pictured opposite. We've picked out some of these tools below:



1. Replace (Ins) Tool – for replacing text.

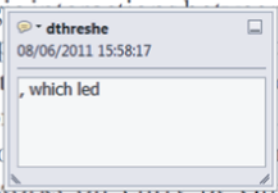


Strikes a line through text and opens up a text box where replacement text can be entered.

How to use it

- Highlight a word or sentence.
- Click on the Replace (Ins) icon in the Annotations section.
- Type the replacement text into the blue box that appears.

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2. Strikethrough (Del) Tool – for deleting text.



Strikes a red line through text that is to be deleted.

How to use it

- Highlight a word or sentence.
- Click on the Strikethrough (Del) icon in the Annotations section.

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3. Add note to text Tool – for highlighting a section to be changed to bold or italic.



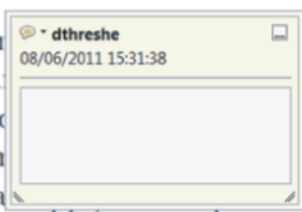
Highlights text in yellow and opens up a text box where comments can be entered.

How to use it

- Highlight the relevant section of text.
- Click on the Add note to text icon in the Annotations section.
- Type instruction on what should be changed regarding the text into the yellow box that appears.

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4. Add sticky note Tool – for making notes at specific points in the text.

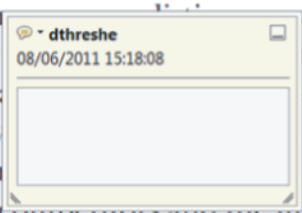


Marks a point in the proof where a comment needs to be highlighted.

How to use it

- Click on the Add sticky note icon in the Annotations section.
- Click at the point in the proof where the comment should be inserted.
- Type the comment into the yellow box that appears.

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USING e-ANNOTATION TOOLS FOR ELECTRONIC PROOF CORRECTION

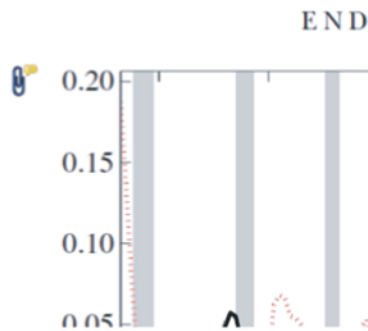
5. **Attach File Tool** – for inserting large amounts of text or replacement figures.



Inserts an icon linking to the attached file in the appropriate place in the text.

How to use it

- Click on the **Attach File** icon in the Annotations section.
- Click on the proof to where you'd like the attached file to be linked.
- Select the file to be attached from your computer or network.
- Select the colour and type of icon that will appear in the proof. Click OK.



6. **Add stamp Tool** – for approving a proof if no corrections are required.



Inserts a selected stamp onto an appropriate place in the proof.

How to use it

- Click on the **Add stamp** icon in the Annotations section.
- Select the stamp you want to use. (The **Approved** stamp is usually available directly in the menu that appears).
- Click on the proof where you'd like the stamp to appear. (Where a proof is to be approved as it is, this would normally be on the first page).

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▼ Drawing Markups

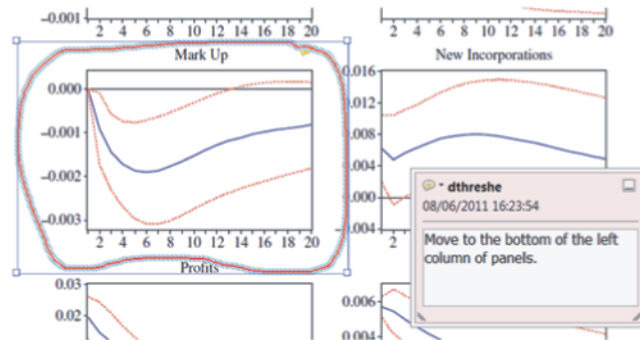


7. **Drawing Markups Tools** – for drawing shapes, lines and freeform annotations on proofs and commenting on these marks.

Allows shapes, lines and freeform annotations to be drawn on proofs and for comment to be made on these marks..

How to use it

- Click on one of the shapes in the **Drawing Markups** section.
- Click on the proof at the relevant point and draw the selected shape with the cursor.
- To add a comment to the drawn shape, move the cursor over the shape until an arrowhead appears.
- Double click on the shape and type any text in the red box that appears.



For further information on how to annotate proofs, click on the **Help** menu to reveal a list of further options:

