

Guest editorial

Transnational environmental governance: new findings and emerging research agendas

Over the past two decades academics and policy analysts have sought to understand the impacts and implications of the emergence of global environmental issues on political and policy-making systems. In the 1980s and especially the 1990s attention focused on the growing array of international institutions and arenas through which these issues, from ozone depletion to climate change and deforestation to desertification, were being articulated, managed, and contested. Their scientific and political framing in global terms gave rise to a new literature focused on the machinations of ‘international regimes’, encompassing both the politics of interstate negotiation and the influence that various private and civil society actors bring to bear on this state of affairs (eg, Young, 1997). Similar principles were applied at the level of the European Union (EU), which in some senses was also—at least initially—viewed as both a microcosm of the interstate system but also a model of what the world might be able to achieve in the international arena should the right marriage of self-interest, political will, and institutional capacity be bought to bear (eg, Grant et al, 2000; McCormick, 2001).

By the late 1990s, however, this primarily state-focused account of global environmental politics began to give way as a new set of analysts moved in armed with more governance-focused frameworks. They sought to explain governing activities involving a very much more expanded universe of actors. Taking their cue from political science studies and from the ‘governance turn’ more generally in the social sciences [for a comprehensive overview see Levi-Faur (2012)], they began to examine the multiple actors, from across the public and private divide, that were engaged in governing environmental issues. While some have focused on how private and civil society actors were able to shape the nature and direction of international regimes, others have considered the ways in which such actors have become ‘governors’ in the environmental domain in their own right, beneath, around, and alongside interstate regime frameworks. As Hannerz (1996) has very aptly put it: “in the transnational arena, the actors may now be individuals, groups, movements, business enterprises, and in no small part it is this diversity of organisations that we need to consider” (page 6), when reflecting on the nature of governing in an increasingly differentiated and multipolar world.

A critical facet of this growing interest in global environmental governance (and governance more generally) has thus been an active reengagement with the *transnational* as a distinct and researchable sphere of politics. This sphere has already been extensively discussed in the pages of this journal [a small sample would include, for example, Adger et al (2003), Gibbs and Jonas (2001), Gouldson and Bebbington (2007), Gupta (2010), Gustavsson et al (2009), Jordan (1999; 2008), and Moss (2009)]. In brief, scholars concerned with the transnational arena seek to understand the ways in which institutions, forms of cooperation, and new political spaces are emerging which cut across traditional jurisdictional boundaries set by national borders. Interestingly, much of this work has focused on the internal policy-making activities within the EU, as power shifted from the previously dominant governors—namely, the member states—to an array of nonstate EU institutions including the European Commission and the European Parliament (Jordan, 1999; Jordan and Adelle, 2012). Indeed, nowadays, the EU is regarded as a system of multilevel, multiactor environmental governance par excellence (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006; Rayner and Jordan, 2013). Although the EU was state created, it is now the site of a great deal of transnational governance, although states arguably remain the dominant actors.

This theme issue provides an opportunity to reflect upon the state of this debate both within and, more importantly, outside of the EU, examine the empirical evidence concerning the significance of transnational environmental governance, assess its implications for our understanding of global environmental politics and governance more generally, as well as debate emerging agendas in this vibrant and exciting area of multidisciplinary research. In this introductory editorial we show that the reopening of the boundaries of the state, which has accompanied the growing engagement with concepts and analyses of governance, has led to an examination of the ways in which environmental governance is being conducted through transboundary networks, coalitions, and actors. Drawing on early debates within the field concerning the nature and role of transnational relations (Keohane and Nye, 1972), transnational scientific (or epistemic) communities, advocacy coalitions, and lobby groups have, over the past two decades, come to be recognised as critical in shaping the positions of nation-states and the development of international agreements in the environmental domain (Betsill and Corell, 2008; Falkner, 2003; Hoffmann, 2011; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Levy and Newell, 2005; Newell, 2000). If transnational networks were previously thought to be central in influencing global environmental politics, the papers assembled in this theme issue demonstrate the myriad ways in which these private actors, together with public actors, are involved in the process of directly governing environmental affairs (see also Andonova et al, 2009; Bulkeley and Newell, 2010; Cashore et al, 2004; Jagers and Striiple, 2003; Pattberg and Striiple, 2008).

Again, the EU constituted an early and important site for work on transnational environmental governance. Analysts examined how, for example, institutions such as the European Commission and even the European Court of Justice have become more and more heavily involved in governing transnationally (Jordan and Adelle, 2012). It emerged that they do so directly via the EU's formal involvement in international trade and environmental regimes, but also indirectly via the EU's bilateral trading and nontrading relationships with the rest of the world (Delreux, 2012; Vogler and Bretherton, 2005). Alongside such studies of the roles of international institutions, of particular importance have been analyses of the emergence of so-called 'private regimes' (Pattberg, 2007; Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen, 2007), such as those connected to the development of standards and certification of forestry and fishery practices, and public-private partnerships, also sometimes referred to as 'global policy networks' or 'type-II' partnerships (Glasbergen et al, 2007). However, as recent efforts at providing typologies of this phenomenon attest (Andonova et al, 2009; Bäckstrand, 2008; Cashore et al, 2004; Hoffmann, 2011; Pattberg, 2007), the variety and multiplicity of transnational environmental governance goes beyond these two types and can be difficult to capture in terms of the authority and agency of particular actors. For example, why, how, and with what implications do state and nonstate actors participate in different forms of transnational governance? To what extent does 'governing' of this type take place in the transnational domain, and how might we begin to evaluate its impacts and effects? Scholars of the EU have already done a great deal of research that addresses some of these issues, but, as the papers in this theme issue explore, there remains a lot more to do not least because the EU is such a *sui generis* system of transnational governance.

However, despite the renewed interest in transnational environmental politics and governance, to date there has been relatively limited analysis that has brought together insights from across different environmental issue areas to consider the nature and implications of transnational governance for the field of environmental social science as a whole. In this theme issue we seek to contribute to this important task, drawing together papers that focus on the governance of climate change, forestry, water, and transport issues. In doing so our intention is to bring into conversation researchers from different theoretical and disciplinary

traditions, who have a range of empirical foci, to consider what their collective insight can bring to this emerging area of environmental politics and governance.

Before proceeding any further, it is therefore worthwhile to introduce briefly the six papers in this theme issue, all of which were first presented at the Transnational Governance workshop held at Durham University in 2010. The first, by Abbott (2012), seeks to make sense of the increasingly complex, fragmented, and decentralised climate change regime. There have, he claims, been many case-study-type analyses of particular elements of what he terms the transnational regime complex, but precious few attempts to offer a holistic picture. Abbott helpfully audits the diverse array of transnational institutions, standards, financing arrangements, and policy programmes by drawing on regime complex theory and polycentric governance theory, and on that basis examines the scope for finding a balance between more or less hierarchical steering. In the second paper Bulkeley and her coauthors (2012) also seek to adopt a more holistic picture of climate governance by presenting a uniquely comprehensive empirical analysis of sixty transnational governance initiatives. They employ this database to explore a number of important questions to do with who really steers (public or private actors?) when governance becomes more transnational, the functions that individual governors seek to perform, and the various ways in which they seek to ensure their continuing legitimacy.

In the third paper Pattberg (2012) explores how an array of nonstate actors including investors, NGOs, and financial entrepreneurs have sought to develop and employ the governance technique of carbon disclosure to present climate change as a business risk in order to push states and nonstate actors in a more sustainable direction. In the fourth paper Beisheim and Campe (2012) develop these themes in a slightly different context: water governance. Drawing on regime theory, they analyse three transnational public–private water partnerships: the UN-led Global Water Partnership founded in 1996; the Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor partnership founded by a UK water company; and the Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation, which was originally started by the World Bank in 1998. In the following paper Fagan (2012) analyses the EU's role in extending the reach of its 'hard' environmental governance system to systems of more limited and contested statehood—namely, the states of the former Yugoslavia. In doing so he shows how state-led steering through the instrument of regulation (namely, the EU Directive on environmental impact assessment) has combined and conflicted with the use of the financial 'carrot' of funding disbursed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a 'transition bank' owned by sixty-three states and two intergovernmental bodies—the EU and the European Investment Bank. In the sixth and final paper Lövbrand and Stripple (2012) explore how the relationship between public and private governance is being continually redefined as climate change policy emerges in and around the international climate regime. Drawing on a case study of the social practices around the act of offsetting, they demonstrate that, rather than the state completely retreating from global climate governance, its role is changing from one of hierarchical steering to market-led shaping.

Debating transnational environmental governance: four emerging themes

Having established the growing significance of transnational environmental governance and introduced the papers in this theme issue, in the rest of this editorial we consider some of the critical themes that have yet to be fully explored in the transnational governance literature, drawing on and further exploring the insights offered by the authors of the six papers. We show how the six papers illuminate these themes and, together, help to chart a common agenda in this important and dynamic area of environmental social science research.

Transnationalism in general or transnational governance in particular?

The reengagement of the academic community with the notion of transnational governance occurred during a period in which there were a number of parallel debates taking place about what might broadly be termed ‘globalisation’. Interest thus focused on the ways in which economic flows—including trade but also such things as finance, tourism, and knowledge—have become both more rapid and diffuse following the emergence of ‘post-Fordist’ forms of economic production and the politics of neoliberalism. At the same time other political movements—such as the development and growth of the EU following the end of the Cold War, the rising powers of the newly industrialising countries—have also served to recast the map of international relations, arguably driving new transboundary forms of exchange and alliance. International institutions concerned with trade, finance, and environmental affairs have both proliferated and, some would argue, become more prominent during this period. The EU is arguably both a symptom and a cause of these trends.

Such was the flux apparent by the mid-1990s that several scholars began to focus on the implications of these new forms of boundary crossing for the nation-state. Risse-Kappen (1996), for example, drew on empirical developments in the EU following the passage of the Single European Act to further instantiate earlier points he had made about the changing extent and importance of transnational relations in world politics. Writing in the mid-1990s, Agnew and Corbridge (1995) argued that the previous twenty years had witnessed a profound change in the “ways in which space is produced and used” (page 95) so that

“both territorial states and non-state actors now operate in a world in which state boundaries have become more culturally and economically permeable to decisions and flows emanating from networks of power not captured by singularly territorial representations of space” (page 95).

Taken together, commentators suggested that the effect of these shifts in economy, politics, and the production of space were leading to a ‘hollowing out’ of the nation-state (Jessop, 1994; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999; Pierre and Peters, 2000), as its functions were redistributed ‘upwards’ to international institutions, ‘downwards’ to regional and local tiers of authority, and ‘outwards’ to a range of nonstate actors. Indeed, regular interactions across national borders conducted by actors that are *not* acting on behalf of a national government appear to be ubiquitous, not least in the EU.

In this context, defining precisely which forms of transnational relations constitute governance—and whether governing ‘transnationally’ represents a particular departure from, or is rather the rearticulation of state-dominated governance as usual in relation to, these broader structural changes—is a very moot point (see Lemos and Agrawal, 2006). There are, however, some signs that ‘the transnational’ is not a uniform or equally distributed condition. Within the global environmental domain with which this theme issue is most centrally concerned it seems as though the development of transnational forms of governance has been clustered in and around particular issues and areas. In part, no doubt, this is a function of the concerns of the research community and the ways in which particular issues have risen to prominence, but it may also suggest some intriguing questions as to when and how transnational forms of governance emerge. Some of the initial cases focused on the private regulation of industries in globally traded products, such as forestry and fishing (Dingwerth, 2008; Pattberg, 2007; Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen, 2007). Another has focused on transboundary concerns, where environmental resources or risks are shared across national borders (eg, Cots et al, 2009; Milman and Scott, 2010). A further, more recent cluster of work has focused on the emergence of transnational initiatives in the climate change arena, as evidenced in several of the papers in this theme issue. A key question is whether there is something distinctive about these and other environmental issues that invites and even encourages transnational responses,

or whether the responses adopt the same form as they do in other issues areas. Andonova et al (2009) suggest that the growth of transnational forms of governance in the climate change domain can be readily explained by the uniquely complex and multifaceted nature of the mitigation–adaptation challenge (see also Rayner and Jordan, 2012). On the one hand, their complex nature has continually frustrated interstate agreement. On the other hand, it has provided plenty of scope for multiple forms of intervention, involving dense webs of state and nonstate actors that have become concerned to engage with particular subissues. Think of the opportunities created through the international regime in the form of carbon markets and the clean development mechanism, for example, or the uneven responses across nation-states which have made it possible for some to seek alternative coalitions through which to mobilise particular responses to the issue. For Hoffmann (2011) the emergence of ‘climate governance experiments’, including but not limited to those that occur in the transnational domain, represents both the growing fragmentation of global authority coupled with the dissatisfaction with the progress of the international regime such that different actors are being motivated by many different things, ranging from deep moral concerns about nonhuman species through to the potential for direct financial rewards. In the case of climate change the presence of some form of market—itself partly stimulated by interstate agreements such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol—and the ways in which this opens up the constituency of those with an interest in the governing of an environmental issues may be a core factor that is, for example, less prominent in other environmental domains, such as water and transport, where there is less evidence of transnational responses.

Until now, the dominance of single case studies has limited the scope for making broader generalisations in the field of transnational environmental governance research. Here, the papers by Abbott (2012) and by Bulkeley et al (2012) offer some important new insights into the empirical distribution of transnational governance in the climate realm. By looking across climate policy, they begin to offer a greater sense of the whole. Bulkeley et al, for example, show that most of the initiatives are relatively new (ie, after 2005), and that while involving actors in the Global South, they are mostly driven by actors from the North. They tend to be mitigation focused and are mostly concerned with information sharing and capacity building than setting mandatory rules. The need for larger-‘*n*’ studies of development in and across different issue areas is also noted in the Beisheim and Campe (2012) and Pattberg (2012) papers, but what should such studies focus on? Obviously, one priority is, as noted by Abbott (2012) and Bulkeley et al (2012), to offer a more dynamic perspective on the underlying triggers and drivers of transnational environmental governance. A more diachronic perspective would also help to extend the ‘snapshots’ offered by Abbott and Bulkeley et al. For example, society-led governance can be a rather perilous affair; many bottom-up initiatives spring up, but not all endure, and many quietly ‘sink’ through lack of funding (Benson et al, 2013). Bulkeley et al (2012) do note that many of the initiatives in their database lacked formal organisational structures and for others that their very survival is tied to the ongoing survival of the international climate regime.

Transnational environmental governance in practice

A second and related set of debates concern just what it means to govern transnationally. While conventional definitions focus on the combination of particular actors involved, as discussed above, they leave relatively unexplored what ‘governing’ actually amounts to in practice. To address this challenge, Andonova et al (2009) examine different definitions of governance, arguing that the main approaches regard governing as concerned with ‘public’ affairs, as involving some form of direction or intention (often referred to as steering), and is recognised as authoritative. Working from these principles, they suggest that in essence

transnational governance “occurs when networks operating in the transnational sphere authoritatively steer constituents towards public goals” (page 56).

As noted above, much of the governance literature has ploughed this furrow in seeking to understand how different actors, and especially states, employ the main modes of governance (namely, markets, networks, and hierarchies) to ‘steer’ constituents. Through an analysis of the series of cases of transnational governance, Andonova et al identify

“three functional categories ... [through] which networks steer members towards particular public purposes: information-sharing; capacity-building and implementation; and rule-setting” (page 63).

While there is relatively wide agreement that these are likely to be the main means through which transnational environmental governance is pursued, there is considerable debate as to the precise extent to which such knowledge about these functions can be ‘carried over’ from what is known about governing in nation-states or federal-state-like entities such as the EU. Our point is here is that these issues are often elided and that drawing them apart will, we believe, reveal some new and important lines of inquiry.

Turning first of all to the modes or instruments of steering, it is the absence of ‘hard’ regulation within the transnational domain that is seen to produce a ‘weak’ form of environmental governance and as such does not merit “serious theoretical consideration” (Ruggie, 2004, page 500). Such an interpretation—with its focus on formal rules and institutions—misses much of what passes for environmental governance, including the establishment of norms, codes, and rules, and the ways in which, as discussed above, these are achieved through extended and dispersed forms of the state. In this sense, what is a more acute challenge is to consider the ways in which the forms of transnational governance that are emerging in the environmental domain, and the specific functions which they undertake, are regarded as *authoritative*. Steering is not a sufficient condition for governance in the absence of authority, for governing involves “bringing together a marriage of power and legitimacy to establish, operationalize, apply, enforce, interpret, or vitiate the [network’s] behavioral rules” (Conca, 2005, page 190; see also Andonova et al, 2009).

While authority to govern is usually equated with the forms of legitimate (democratic) rule associated with the nation-state, this is not an exclusive relation (Bulkeley, 2012; Jagers and Stripple, 2003; Rosenau, 2002). Indeed, for some it is precisely this recognition that “political authority is not necessarily predicated on and defined by strict and fixed territorial boundaries” (Agnew, 2005, page 441) that has led to the renewed engagement with the transnational as a sphere of political authority. For example, Pattberg (2005) describes “novel governance arrangements” transcending “state-centred, territorial-based forms of politics, thereby establishing new spaces of transnational organisation” (page 1). Similarly, the ‘new global public domain’ is defined by Ruggie (2004) as “an increasingly institutionalised transnational arena of discourse, contestation, and action concerning the production of global public goods, involving private as well as public actors” (page 504). This domain “‘exists’ in transnational non-territorial spatial formations and is anchored in norms and expectations as well as institutional networks and circuits within, across and beyond states” (page 519). In both cases the authors focus on the ways and means through which “socially constructed practices of political authority ... may be exercised nonterritorially or in scattered pockets connected by flows across space-spanning networks” (Agnew, 2005, page 441). However, and despite this concerted focus on ‘authority’ beyond the state, there have been few attempts to examine what being authoritative means in a transnational sense (Bulkeley, 2012). The Abbott (2012) and Bulkeley et al (2012) papers strongly suggest that the authority of transnational environmental governance has many sources, very few of them hierarchical.

Future research in this arena will need not only to examine how and why transnational actions become regarded as authoritative, and the concomitant politics of legitimacy that accompany this, but also to consider what such a phenomenon means for our conceptualisation of the building blocks of political science. Here, we suggest, it might be necessary to revisit just what constitutes the public and the private, state and nonstate, and authority and legitimacy, when the territorial moorings to which so many of these concepts are attached are reconfigured. Pattberg (2012) claims that the legitimacy of nonstate actors is “questionable”, and flags it as an issue deserving further research in the transnational domain. Bulkeley et al (2012) have the most to say about legitimacy. They explore the grounds upon which the sixty transnational governance initiatives in their database claimed legitimacy. Not surprisingly, most of these were epistemic in nature, rather than democratic.

Another way in which actors claim legitimacy is by showing that they produce effects that are important for society (so-called ‘output legitimacy’) (Scharpf, 1999). Here, we move to the vexed question of effectiveness. In the international regime literature the debate on effectiveness has run and run since the late 1980s and shows no sign of ending any time soon [for a review see Young (2011)]. Yet while it is important that a lack of evidence of the *impact* of transnational governance is not mistaken for its *absence*—for transnational governance can experience the same kinds of ‘governance failure’ that have been encountered in these and other spheres of governance activity—the thorny issue of precisely *how* to account for its effects remains. Most often, debates on the effectiveness of transnational environmental governance have focused on concrete measures of success, such as reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the conservation of species, or a growing share of the market for fair-trade products.

At least some transnational initiatives have sought to provide some forms of self-assessment. The Cities for Climate Protection programme, for example, has sought to establish a standard greenhouse gas emissions protocol in order to collect data across different urban contexts of the reductions that have been achieved through its programmes. While such forms of self-monitoring and self-verification remain problematic—in terms of baselines, data availability, reporting, and so on—they already, as Bulkeley et al (2012) point out, form a part of the assessment of transnational initiatives. The question of how their effectiveness might be better assessed remains, however. Both Abbott (2012) and Bulkeley et al concede that effectiveness will be difficult to measure, but some of the other papers indicate the kinds of questions that research now needs to engage with. First of all, in what dimensions can effectiveness be measured? Beisheim and Campe (2012) suggest that we can think in terms of output, outcome, and impact, with the difficulty of measurement increasing as analysts move from the first of these to the last. Pattberg (2012) builds on this three-fold distinction by implying that ‘governance by disclosure’ initiatives have changed business perceptions (ie, outcomes—manufacturing climate change into a business risk) but, much like state-led regulation and policy, have been relatively ineffective at reducing emissions (ie, impacts).

Second, it is important to be clear about what the effectiveness of transnational governance is to be judged against (ie, effective compared with what?). As noted above, the debate about the effectiveness of international regimes is far from closed. Yet, surprisingly little is also known about the performance of the other obvious referent—national policy and governance arrangements (Hilden, 2011; Huitema et al, 2011; Mickwitz, 2012). Third, analysts should perhaps also consider the underlying purpose for doing effectiveness assessments. Is it to engage in rational policy design (ie, find the interventions that generate the greatest emissions reduction), or is it to secure other things such as legitimacy? Bulkeley et al (2012) reveal that increasing levels of membership has been an important means through which transnational governance arrangements have sought to overcome their

weak democratic legitimacy. In Europe, for example, the Commission has tried to address widespread concerns about the ‘democratic deficit’ in the EU by arguing that while often appearing remote and opaque, European integration processes have nonetheless generated important policy outputs—directives, laws, and regulations—that European citizens feel passionately about (Jordan and Adelle, 2012). The EU’s experiences may offer some salutary lessons about how transnational governance can continue to focus on ‘output legitimacy’ at the expense of greater ‘input legitimacy’ (Rayner and Jordan, 2013). Here, we move towards a very different type of effectiveness analysis: one that takes into account the broader structural condition of transnationalism, the changing nature of state authority and practice, and the multiplicity of the ways in which governing is practised. For some it moves beyond what some consider to be simplistic and reductive measures of impacts and engages with the ways in which transnational governance is implicated within the broader political economies of environmental governance.

Transnational environmental governance: moving beyond the state?

The starting point for many discussions of governance is, of course, the state. For Pierre and Peters (2000, page 12) it provides the best “benchmark” against which to measure and debate changes in governing. It is worth recalling that it was a core component of Risse-Kappen’s (1995) definition of transnational governance—that is, a situation when “at least one actor is a nonstate agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an international organization” (page 3). Those focusing at national-level activities asked whether the shift to governance meant a new style of governing ‘without government’ (Rhodes, 1996) [for a different perspective see Borzel and Risse (2010)]. One challenge for this approach is that the state is not and has never been static. In fact, in the 1970s and 1980s the main analytical challenge was perceived to be how best to bring the state ‘back in’ to political analysis [for a summary see Krasner (1984)]. Since then, things have turned full circle, so much so that debate is much more concerned with how best to bring the state (qua government) back into the debate about governance (see, for example, Pierre and Peters, 2005).

In a sense, therefore, public policy has always been concerned with the fluctuating nature of “the private management of public business” (Richardson, 2000, page 1012). Within the literature on transnational governance, scholars are still trying to get to grips with these dynamics and, by implication, the full implications of Risse-Kappen’s definition, most notably the seemingly paradoxical engagement of ostensibly ‘private’ actors in the governing of public affairs. To this end, significant attention has, as noted above, been paid to the emergence of ‘private’ regimes and ‘hybrid’ networks, such as the those established at the 2002 UN Summit on Sustainable Development. For the majority of those in this field, and more broadly within studies of public policy, the boundaries between the state and the nonstate remain empirically determined—that is, it is the actors involved who are regarded as defining the extent to which (transnational) governance is a private or a public affair.

There is a further challenge to such an approach which requires further debate and discussion: while the literature on governance has, as noted above, waxed and waned on the extent to which the state needs to be bought back in, the nature of the state itself has sometimes not come under as little critical scrutiny in the governance literature as is warranted. In essence, the state is regarded as an actor or institution rather than, for example, a field of power or ‘effect’ (Painter, 2006). Where attention is focused on the growing role of nonstate actors in forms of transnational environmental governance, this in turn means that questions of their “critical independence” (Barry and Eckersley, 2005, page 3) from the state are rarely invoked (Eckersley, 2004; Okereke et al, 2009). In contrast, analyses of environmental governance that have placed the state and state projects at their heart have drawn attention to the ways in which the contemporary state can be considered in a distributed or extended

sense to work through the agency of critical actors, including the private sector and civil society, in order to achieve its ends (Bulkeley and Schroeder, 2011; Ekers and Loftus, 2008; Newell and Paterson, 2010; Okereke et al, 2009). For some this is a matter of the creation and maintenance of a hegemonic order, while for others, as Sending and Neumann (2006) explain, the rise of nonstate actors is “not an instance of transfer of power from the state to non-state actors” but rather “an expression of a change in governmentality” (page 658).

In both cases, governing *beyond* the state is not a matter of governing *without* the state, but may instead represent new (in our case, transnational) means through which states seek to achieve their effects. The point that the state remains a critical force is well established in the more state-centred governance literature, as well as in international relations (Krasner, 1988). Pierre and Peters (2000) maintained that “although governance relates to changing relationships between state and society and a growing reliance on less coercive policy instruments, the state is still the centre of considerable political power” (page 12). The state is, to quote one influential commentator on governance, “still very much alive” (Kooiman, 2003, page 13). And not just the central organs of the state: Abbott’s (2012) paper reveals how subnational government is involved in transnational climate governance ‘to a remarkable level’. The conceptual challenge remains how to move beyond the zero-sum terms in which such debates are usually conducted to recognise that transnational governance may provide new insights into how the state could be conceived.

Such approaches in turn require us to ask what steering capacity does the state have and how does it manifest itself? If governing is all about steering society as part of goal-directed activity, then the state can be said to play a vital role in all four of its constituent elements—that is: selecting goals and setting priorities; reconciling conflicting interests and coordinating amongst policy priorities; ensuring implementation; and ensuring societal feedback and political legitimisation (Peters and Pierre, 2004, pages 215–216). Researchers could now examine how these state–society relationships vary across these four aspects in the ‘new’ realm of transnational environmental politics. In terms of selecting goals, political scientists have shown how the state uses its ‘shadow of hierarchy’ (Héritier and Rhodes, 2011) to actively steer the activities of nonstate actors, who in turn employ private regimes to delay the imposition of or otherwise weaken state regulation (Jordan et al, 2005). With respect to implementation, many of the more networked forms of governance that are becoming more popular in the EU (the so-called open method of coordination, for example) are crucially reliant upon informational and implementing capacities supplied by states (Schout et al, 2010). The paper by Fagan (2012) demonstrates how the ‘tutelage’ of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, principally expressed through the ‘carrot’ of funding, has been a critical factor in allowing the EU to work its environmental policy ‘magic’ in areas of relatively limited statehood such as the Western Balkans. Lövbrand and Stripple (2012) indicate how state action is apparent in seemingly private realms of climate governance such as offsetting. Through ‘regimes of calculation’, they claim that the private realm has become the object and the subject of new state action.

To summarise, the state and society appear far more interconnected than some of the early literature on governance originally seemed to imply. And this raises some interesting issues that have still not been fully thought through. Firstly, the lower the effectiveness of government, the more governance starts to appear attractive to other actors, but whose own effectiveness (and legitimacy) is crucially dependent on the presence of the state (Borzel, 2010). At the same time such accounts have focused primarily on structural changes to the state beyond the environmental arena. There are fewer accounts that ask how environmental issues may themselves provide the grounds through which these boundaries are contested and come to be constituted, or of the ways in which the configuration of the ‘ecological state’

(Barry and Eckersley, 2005) may in turn reshape forms of state practice in other issue areas (Bulkeley and Schroeder, 2011; Newell and Paterson, 2010).

Secondly, precisely what is the relationship between transnational governance and international forms of governance dominated by states? This question is explicitly raised—but not answered—in the papers by Abbott (2012), Bulkeley et al (2012), and Pattberg (2012). In a sense, all three remind us that the well-known state-led processes of international environmental governance are alive and well in relation to many of the more trade-related issues such the production and distribution of ozone-depleting chemicals or those that bear more directly upon particular regions such as acidification. Even in the climate area—where progress has been far slower—transnational governance seems to thrive in the “shadow of the climate change regime” (Bulkeley et al, 2012). Future research might fruitfully investigate the cross-policy and cross-scale differences in governing. For example, is transnational governance more likely to thrive when international and state governance is deadlocked? In some circumstances—US climate policy, for example—it seems to have emerged most vibrantly in the “shadow of state failure” (Abbott, 2012), which suggests that state steering may be far less active and instrumental than some parts of the governance literature have hitherto assumed. In general, the relationships between state-led ‘policy innovation’ (however defined) (Benson and Jordan, 2011; Jordan et al, 2012) at the national level and wider systems of transnational governance deserve further scrutiny.

Finally, what happens in the messy “middle ground” (Hoffmann, 2011, page 78) between the international and transnational governance worlds, particularly in an area such as climate change where both are prevalent? One possibility is that actors essentially ‘self-organise’ themselves by adopting a mutually beneficial division of labour. Another possibility [explicitly raised by Abbott (2012) in his paper] is that the various actors engage in a more destructive game of ‘forum shopping’ for resources and influence—one which may eventually lead to just the kind of ‘race to the bottom’ that currently bedevils the international climate regime. In order to avoid such an outcome, Abbott discusses the need for ‘orchestration’ by international bodies such as United Nations Environment Programme. Orchestration is very similar to what Jessop (2003) refers to as ‘metagovernance’ or the governance of governance. While it seems eminently sensible, the EU literature has demonstrated just how difficult a balancing act metagoverning can be even in a relatively mature and hence stable governance system (Jordan and Schout, 2006).

For what and for whom is transnational environmental governance for?

A final set of debates which the papers start to address concerns matters of a more existential nature. There has always been a strong—if not entirely explicit—normative dimension to the work on governance (Jordan, 2008). ‘Good governance’ and ‘governance for sustainability’ provide two well-known examples of how the normative and the positive have become intertwined in the environmental realm (Adger and Jordan, 2009; Biermann, 2007). At the heart of this debate is the question of why *transnational* environmental governance is being sought in the first place. Is it because it is in some senses ‘better’ than international policy, or simply because it is not international policy?

For some it is the failure of international institutions that provides not only the motive but also the opportunity to work through more transnational channels. In the case of climate change, the authors of the Hartwell Paper argue that “the crash of 2009 presents an immense opportunity to set climate policy free to fly at last” (Prins et al, 2010, page 5). Keohane and Victor (2011) believe that the failure to construct an international climate regime “risk[s] diverting political and economic resources from narrower regulatory institutions focused on particular climate change problems” (page 8): “it is preferable to work for a loosely linked but effective regime complex for climate change” (page 20). Here, as in other writing on

this subject (World Bank, 2010, page 322), one finds a clear normative commitment to work through the transnational sphere as a means to make up for the deficiencies of international governance.

However, as noted above and by Keohane and Victor (2011, page 16), we should not necessarily assume that transnational environmental governance is a panacea. International regimes do, after all, have some powerful advantages when compared with the more dispersed forms of governance, which can be inefficient, slow, and riddled with veto points (Jordan and Lenschow, 2008; Schout and Jordan, 2005) and, as importantly, tend to be opaque and hence more likely to be viewed as illegitimate. It was for at least some of these reasons that states engaged in international environmental diplomacy in the first place. And they go a long way towards explaining why the member states of the EU pooled their sovereignty by moving from essentially uncoordinated national-level responses to a more multilevelled or transnational system of governance. For some, transnational environmental governance provides exactly the vehicle through which those actors with responsibility and capability to act, particularly those in the private sector, can be bought into the frame of environmental governance directly. Here, transnational environmental governance is seen as a means through which account can be given for environmental harm and the potential for reparation can be realised, whether this is through voluntary means or through soft forms of standard setting and disclosure. Critics of transnational environmental governance do wonder how the myriad of different parts can ever make up a coherent whole (Hare et al, 2010); others are much more sanguine (Hoffmann, 2011). Wherever one sits in this debate, there is, as noted by Bulkeley et al (2012), an understandable concern that a sudden dash for transnational environmental governance may serve both to undermine existing regimes *and* to enable those who do not wish to be held to account for their role in addressing environmental problems to be let off the hook. As so often in the debate about governing, it's the "mix that matters"—bearing in mind that some modes of governing "mix like oil and water" (Rhodes, 1997, page 53).

Unpicking both the normative commitments that underpin academic engagement with transnational environmental governance, as well as interrogating who in practice 'gets what, where, when, and how' from such initiatives [this being the very essence of Lasswell's (1936) original approach to policy analysis], will, we feel, provide very fertile territory for the future development of this very promising research field.

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