Global Governance: Insights from POLFREE

A presentation to the WRF session ‘Political Solutions for Resource Efficiency’

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AIMS OF POLFREE

• Understand the web of constraints and barriers to Resource Efficiency (RE) in Europe
• Create a vision for a resource-efficient Europe
• Identify policy mixes to move towards a resource-efficient economy
• Model scenarios for European resource efficiency in different contexts of global resource governance
Introduction

• Policy for resource efficiency in Europe needs to recognise:
  – Europe’s reliance on imports for some commodities
  – The prevalence of global supply chains
  – The complexity of the existing architecture of global resource governance

• Work in POLFREE:
  – Described the existing global resource governance architecture
  – Assessed existing and proposed governance institutions and mechanisms on the basis of legitimacy and feasibility
  – Made conclusions and recommendations for Europe

• This presentation:
  – Pulls out the main points of relevance to the WRF discussion
  – Acknowledgements to Michelle O’Keeffe
Global governance architecture

**TOP DOWN ACTORS**
- National governments
- International institutions

**TOP DOWN MECHANISMS**
- Treaties
- Non binding "agreements"
- Initiatives

**BOTTOM UP ACTORS**
- NGOs/Community groups/Academic
- Individuals
- Companies

**BOTTOM UP MECHANISMS**
- Allocation of capital
- Corporate accountability
- Corporate social responsibility
- Transparency
- Certification

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Bretton Woods
- World Bank Group, IMF

UN Institutions, Programmes & Specialised Agencies
- Food & Agriculture Organisation, International Atomic Energy Agency
- International Maritime Organisation, UN CSD(outgoing), UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFF, UNIDO, World Meteorological Organisation

Other institutions
Multilateral Environmental Agreements
e.g. the Basel Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification, UNFCCC...

Other resource related law
UNCLOS, Antarctic Treaties

Human rights
Right to water, adequate food, the highest attainable standard of health, adequate housing and not to be subject to forced evictions

Trade law
(also Kimberley Process)

Agenda 21
Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals

Un Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights

Scientific: International Resource Panel, IPCC, Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Enabling: REDD, 10YFP on Sustainable Consumption and Production

Business-focused: Global Compact, Principles for Responsible Investment

Green Economy: UNEP GE Initiative, Global Green Growth Initiative

Sub-national bodies: Resource Efficient Cities
Certification
- Fair trade, Forestry Stewardship, Global Reporting Initiative, Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance, International Cyanide Management Code, Marine Stewardship, Roundtable on Responsible Palm Oil

Non binding "agreements"

Initiatives

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Corporate accountability

Corporate social responsibility

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TOP DOWN MECHANISMS

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Proposals

Coalitions of the powerful
A World or UN Environmental Organisation
An expanded UNEP
An Environmental Court of Justice
International Resource Management Agency

International institutions

Sustainable Development Goals

Non binding “agreements”

TOP DOWN MECHANISMS

Treaties

International Convention on Resources
Sustainable Commodity Agreements
Other resource related treaties: International Phosphorus Agreement, Global Subsidies Initiative, Extraction tax harmonisation

BOTTOM UP ACTORS

Individuals

NGOs/Community groups

Allocation of capital

Corporate social responsibility

Better accounting of natural capital; corporate stewardship
Facilitating global extended producer responsibility through international covenants

Certification

Transparency

Grant Agreement no. 308371

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Governance Futures: feeding into the POLFREE scenarios

- 4 governance futures were developed to address the issue of legitimacy and feasibility of different governance institutions and mechanisms in 2050
- Used as the basis for developing the scenarios
- Takes the issue of feasibility out of the consideration of different pathways
Governance futures

- Multilateralism
  - Cooperation high
  - Europe's influence high
  - Uni- and Bilateral
  - Cooperation low

- Coalitions
  - Europe's influence low
  - Strong Cooperation
  - Strong Europe
  - Strong Civil Society

Paul Ekins Resource Governance presentation
PRESENTATION TO WORLD RESOURCES FORUM, OCTOBER 2015
Grant Agreement no. 308371
## Assessing legitimacy

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*Controversial
**But US still not a Party

### Issues

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Assessing feasibility

Governmental participation essential
Favours WTO, Expanded UNEP/UNEO, SDGs, existing commons institutions

Weak tradition essential
Moderate participation only
Tradition likely to be weak
Reject major institutions and processes: WTO, UNEP/UNEO, SDGs
Potential for strong regional groupings

Potential for adoption of EU approaches in other regions

Rejection of participation and tradition
Characterised by information sharing and framework development
Reframing of governance approaches
An inability to govern the commons
Conclusions

- Resource efficiency and resource use sustainability can and should be tackled at an international scale
- No clear and targeted governance structure for resources has emerged as yet

- **Attitudes**
  - The current mood is one of skepticism of multi-lateral processes, but SDGs, COP21?
  - Multilateral processes can stimulate many informal areas of governance

- **Mechanisms and Institutions with potential resource use sustainability roles**
  - Opportunities to address resource use sustainability in international trade exist through, for example, extended Sustainable Commodity Agreements (relation with WTO?)
  - The coalitions of the powerful do not conform to academic understandings of good governance but may emerge through *real politik*
  - Voluntary bottom-up measures have great potential to “road test” more formal arrangements
  - Business-focused initiatives have potential but are criticised for a lack of ambition and accountability, and have major problems with public trust (viz. VW)
  - Transparency is essential, as are monitoring and verification
  - Funding is also key to regime success, in trust and capacity building, and effective implementation

- **Gaps**
  - Few of the governance approaches address socio-economic issues of resource use
  - There is some integration of demand reduction into the discussion of global resource management, but little consideration of the implications for resource-dependent countries
Thank you
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