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Dave's April 5th Reaction

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Mason, "Representing Transnational Environmental Interests"

Mason discusses the intricacies of transnational ENGOs and the WTO. The main narrative that ENGOs have worked to wedge in on is the Doha declaration which was to placate the turmoil after Seattle. Through this, transnational NGOs were able to gain WTO engagement through a variety of means including derestriction of documents, symposia, briefings, and access to ministerial conferences. They need access to CTE briefings, where the power lies to influence Southern states. The key is to get environmental issues in a comprehensive trade package that provides for regulatory groups outside of the nation states that the WTO relies on for current regulation.

Alger, "The Emerging Roles of NGOs in the UN System"

Alger takes us through the history of NGOs involvement with the UN and lays out the official framework that they work through. Article 71 is the formal definition of NGOs consultative status, and despite attempts to change this, it has met with enough challenges that relationships that have grown beyond are informal. The presidents of the Security Council at one point met to further include NGOs. The author then gives us a summary of the 93 NGO related UN offices, NGOs relations to the World Bank and the WTO, and how NGO conferences have shot out from UN conferences. In concluding Alger suggests that NGOs have a healthy growth with the UN, especially at a time where the UN faces financial constraints. Could NGOs (and he suggests businesses), in fact, fill the vacuum of budget restrained UN duties do certain or all functions as well or better than the UN? NGOs probably lack the integrative capacity, but it is an interesting question. What exactly are CTE briefings? Who determines which NGOs participate with the WTO? How is that determined?

Raustiala, "States, NGOs, and International Environmental Institutions"

Raustiala tries to "describe, explain, and interpret the new roles of NGOs..." (737). He gives us a framework by which to explain the growth and variance of NGOs and proposes that instead of competing with the state for power, environmental NGOs actually provide some relief. NGOs provide policy research, monitor commitments, facilitate negotiations and ratifications and act as conduits for the government to its constituents. His caveat is that the role of NGOs and their efficiency in future policy is unclear, but they may get out of control and beyond state power. Currently, though they still are within state grasp. How much of the NGO phenomenon does this framework explain? How much is left out?

Betsill and Corell, "NGO Influence in International Environment"

Betsill and Corell propose a fascinating method to measure the effectivity of NGOs on international environmental negotiations. They discern that power is capability of influencing someone, but influence is actually doing it. In this case they define influence as, "when one actor intentionally transmits information to another that alters the latter's actions from what would have occurred without that information." They contend that you have to build a logic chain in order to properly assess the influence an NGO has. They give methodologies for doing this. Process tracing asks if information has been transmitted by the NGO, if negotiators have received it, and have the actors' change in behavior been consistent with that information. Furthermore they discuss counterfactual analysis which pulls different causal pieces out of the chain to see if they affect the outcome. If it is likely they do, then it is probably causal. There are other pieces to the framework offered in their triangulation model, besides these two methodologies. They are collecting different data types from different data sources. My questions are: can this framework be applied to other ENGO fields?

Are there other performance measurement frameworks out there that are as clear and effectual? What are the flaws of this framework?