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# **COP21 AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE DOXA: TOWARD COMPLEX GOVERNANCE**

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# ARGUMENT

- ⌘ **THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS HAS BECOME SCHYZOPHRENIC. THERE IS A DISCONNECT BETWEEN, ON THE ONE HAND, A DISCOURSE THAT REFLECTS A QUESTIONABLE DOXA, AND ON THE OTHER HAND (I) TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND (II) AN ACTUAL NEGOTIATION PROCESS THAT INDICATES THAT PROGRESS FOLLOWS OTHER DYNAMICS.**
- ⌘ **ALTHOUGH COP21 NEVERTHELESS LEGITIMIZES A NEW & MORE PROMISING PROCESS, THE MODEL NEEDS TO BE PUSHED TO ITS LOGICAL IMPLICATIONS THAT CALL FOR THINKING ABOUT THE CONTOURS, STRENGTHS, AND WEAKNESSES OF A DECENTRALIZED MODEL OF COMPLEX GOVERNANCE.**

# OUTLINE

## **1. PROLOGUE: LEARNING FROM COP21**

### **1.1. THE OUTCOME**

### **1.2. THE LESSONS**

### **1.3. THE ADVENT OF A NEW MODEL**

## **2. CC GOVERNANCE BEYOND COP21**

### **2.1. THE COSMOPOLITAN ATTRACTOR**

### **2.2. IMPLICATIONS OF THE EVOLUTION OF IR**

### **2.3. QUESTIONING THE DOXA**

### **2.4. THE CONTOURS OF COMPLEX GOVERNANCE**

# THE OUTCOME

**Main features negotiated beforehand, esp. between US & China: : INDC, Review principle, global outcome target**

**Key initial issues :**

**Differentiation: PCDR saved at the cost of the universality of commitments;**

**Scope :  $<2^{\circ} \Rightarrow 1,5^{\circ}$**

**Financing ; 100b\$ in the Decision; unilateral announcements**

**Date of 1st review**

# THE OUTCOME

**An agreement binding with respect to process (e.g. transparency), not contents (INDC)**

## **New aspects:**

- forests included (REDD+)**
- CC as a human rights issue (in Preamble)**
- Losses & Damages: part of the agreement and dissociated from Adaptation => legitimized**

## **Items pending:**

- Ensure transparency of mitigation policies**
- Technology transfer**
- Financing details and implementation**

# **AMONG THE LESSONS**

**Importance of previous bilateral agreements and prep meetings: framed the deal**

**Enhanced commitments from civil society (sub-state actors, firms,): proliferation of initiatives**



# **AMONG THE LESSONS**

**«multilateralism works»; really and at what cost?**

- Because of previous agreements**
- Two notions of trust**
- Pb = obligation to be inclusive & linkage politics**
- Too heavy a process**
- Still, UN-level talks are useful**

# **1.3. THE ADVENT OF A NEW MODEL**

- **Bottom up process & national foundations (INDCs)**
- **Bilateral agreements & power concerts (G20)**
- **Voluntary codes of conduct & private governance**
- **Widening number of countries having to mitigate emissions => Doing away with the dichotomy of the Kyoto Protocol (Annex 1 vs Non-Annex 1)**
- **Ratcheting up of contributions**
- **New role for the UN forum**



**2.**

**CLIMATE CHANGE  
GOVERNANCE  
BEYOND COP21**

## **2.1. THE COSMOPOLITAN ATTRACTOR**

- ⌘ A dominant discourse based on (i) solutions that call for centralizing authority and (ii) the neglect of the new dynamics of international relations.**
- ⌘ Rather than a re-examination of the Montreal Protocol model, the more complex features of the climate issue encouraged actors to seek an ever more centralized solution: a global treaty, with binding norms, targets and timetables, that would address both mitigation and (marginally) adaptation.**

## **2.2. Implications of the evolution of international relations**

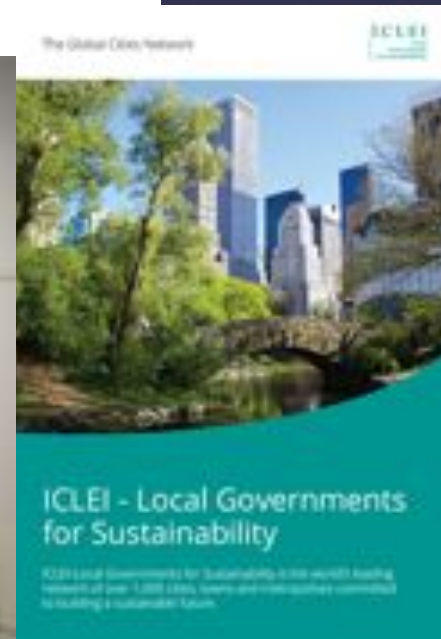
- & Multiple actors claiming legitimacy and forming networks**
- & Globalization politics and linkages contributing to the non linear behavior of the system; governance as an emergent property**
- & Climate change as a laboratory of emerging forms of governance (private governance, regions, networks, multi-level governance...)**

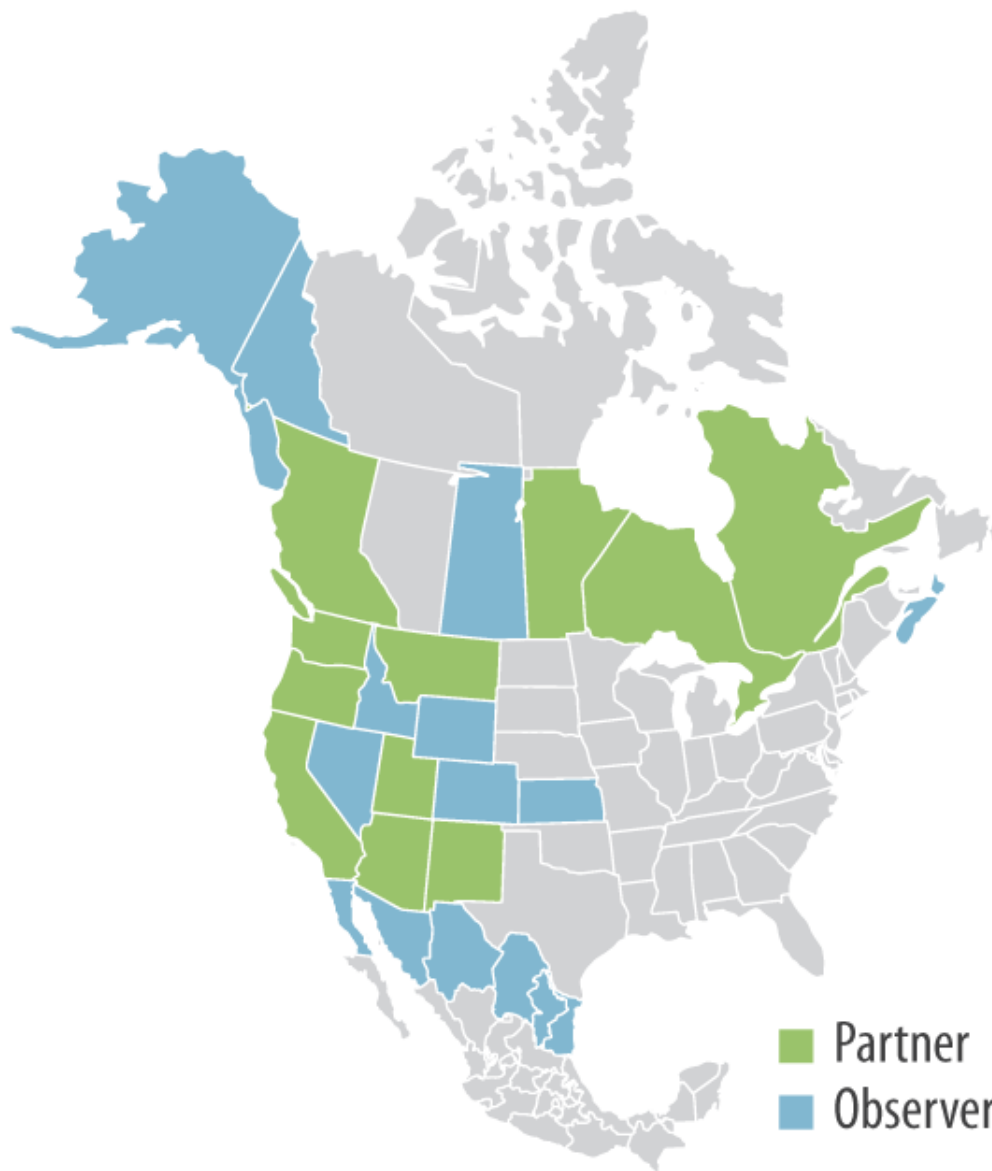
# The Regime « Complex » for Climate Change





# ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability





Partner  
Observer

Western Climate Initiative



## 2.2. Implications of the evolution of international relations (ctd)

& ...

& **Globalization politics and linkages contributing to the non linear behavior of the system; governance as an emergent property?**

& ...

## 2.2. Implications of the evolution of international relations (ctd)

& ...

& ...

& **Climate change as a laboratory of emerging forms of governance (private governance, regions, networks, multi-level governance...)**

## **2.3. QUESTIONING THE COSMOPOLITAN DOXA (4)**

**Do global problems always require global solutions?**

- Global vs worldwide pbs**
- All or nothing + higher risk of failure**
- Not all but all significant actors are needed**
- yet: assumption that we need a universal agreement**

# **Do stronger treaties lead to better international environmental policies?**

- **Compliance  $\neq$  effectiveness**
- **Non compliance is not refusal to comply (ignorance or lack of capacity)**
- **May lower the probability of an agreement & reduce the future cooperation**
- **A weak treaty can be valuable; what is important:**

# **Does strong, concerted, and effective international environmental policy require powerful int'l institutions?**

- WEO = a solution in search of a problem**
- Not a politically viable option given differences in the definition of the pb, the appropriate fairness principles, and the best instruments to be used.**
- This solution often responds to fragmentation:  
But :**
  - (i) often reflects lack of national coordination**
  - (ii) from a complex perspective, fragmentation may be a positive feature of the system**

# **Is the state becoming less important ?**

- i) environmental politics has historically been a politics of the local; The State has a strong role to play, even when dealing with the management of common-pool resources which relies on the State to enforce certain rules (idem).**
- ii) international progress often starts at the national level (China); => «regulatory politics» or unilateral acts.**
- (iii) importance of a hegemon;**
- (iv) Power concerts**



## **2.4. TOWARDS COMPLEX GOVERNANCE**

**multiple actors, at a variety of spatial scales, engage in complex interactions according to non-linear and networked patterns**

### **Features:**

- Interconnected multiple agents giving rise to networks**
- Nonlinearity and feedback loops**
- Self-organization and hierarchy**
- Emergence (syst property not deducible from unit behavior)**

# PROPERTIES OF COMPLEX SYSTEMS

- ⌘ **Unstable equilibria, phase state, attractor, edge of chaos**
- ⌘ **Connectivity, diversity**
- ⌘ **Network causality, interrelatedness**
- ⌘ **Uncertainty and unintended consequences, vulnerability, risk**
- ⌘ **Robustness, resilience and adaptation**
- ⌘ **Thresholds, tipping points , abrupt change**
- ⌘ **Path dependence**
- ⌘ **Self-organized criticality**

## *Old questions about complication*

How to Eliminate redundancy

Centralize as a guarantee of success

Reduce fragmentation

The key to progress is the conclusion of a global and binding agreement

The consequences of policy change are well-known

Face the future with a new UN –level string of international commitments

## *New questions about complexity*

- Is redundancy productive or not?
- How could we better take advantage of a de facto decentralized climate system?
- What are the advantages of fragmentation and how can we use a network composed of loose coupling and tighter coupling parts?
- Is really the conclusion of a global and binding agreement (a global regime?) the path to a better attractor?
- Everything else never remains constant; What are the systemic consequences of a move away from fossil fuels?
- How can we prepare climate governance to uncertainty, unpredictability, and catastrophes?

# **CONCLUSION: THE RISKS OF SUCCESS**

- ⌘ As long as negotiations rely on a model that ignores the unique structure of the climate problem, fails to acknowledge the evolution of the current system, rests on a questionable doxa , and attempts to reign in rather than take advantage of the features of the international system, it is doomed to fall short of what is needed for societies to transition smoothly into a post-carbon era.**
- ⌘ Avoiding the risks of a new pyrrhic victory**

# Elements of a Working Governance Model

- ❧ **Managing interconnections**
- ❧ **Governing across scales**
- ❧ **Building hybrid networks**
- ❧ **Developing mission-oriented institutions**
  - ❧ **MEA governance systems**
- ❧ **Integrating regime complexes**
- ❧ **Redefining participation**
- ❧ **Co-construction of science & policy**
- ❧ **Regulating private governance**
- ❧ **Strengthening regional governance**



**What are the obstacles to the emergence of this paradigm in IR and how could they be overcome?**

***Theoretical usefulness* — Are complex systems to be approached as models, theories, or simple conceptualizations? Separate definition (characteristics of a complex system) from properties (how does it behave). Which specific new facts and hypotheses can this approach generate? To what extent is it particularly suited to address IR? How does its explanatory power compare with other theories? What are its relationships with other models? For example, are complex systems in opposition to power concerts?**

***The operationalization of the concept* — Should a complex systems perspective be applied to the whole international system or be limited to specific issue-areas? Does complex systems thinking facilitate a policy-oriented agenda? How can we reconcile what takes places at different levels of governance, and how can we foster synergies (coordination and convergence) among them? Are standard computational approaches feasible? What would an ABM look like?**