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# **The Emergence of Environmental Stewardship as a Primary Institution of Global International Society**

Robert Falkner and Barry Buzan

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## **Abstract**

This paper develops an English School (ES) framework for analysing the emergence of new primary institutions in global international society (GIS), and applies this to the case of environmental stewardship. The paper traces the impact that global environmentalism has had on the normative order of GIS, examines the creation of secondary institutions around this norm and identifies the ways in which these developments have become embedded in the constitution and behaviour of states. It assesses the ways in which environmental stewardship has interacted with the other primary institutions that compose GIS, changing some of the understandings and practices associated with them. The conclusions argue that environmental stewardship is likely to be a durable institution of GIS, and that it might be a harbinger of a more functional turn in its priorities.

## **Key Words**

English School, environmental stewardship, environmentalism, global international society, pluralism, primary institutions, secondary institutions, solidarism, world society.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This paper develops an English School (ES) framework for investigating the impact that global environmentalism has had on the normative/constitutional order of global international society (GIS). The study of long-term and deep-seated norm change is one of the hallmarks of the ES tradition (Buzan, 2004, 2014; Clark, 2007; Holsti, 2004; Mayall, 1990; Reus-Smit, 1999; Wheeler, 2000). Curiously, however, despite spawning a burgeoning literature in International Relations (IR) (Stevig, 2014), the rise of global environmental politics has not yet sparked comparable interest among ES scholars in understanding how a loose set of environmental ideas originating in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came to redefine international legitimacy and the moral purpose of the state in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. We seek to correct this by applying ES theory to the field of global environmental politics and analysing *environmental stewardship* as a deep normative development in GIS, comparable to, and interacting with, the emergence and evolution of other primary institutions. For the ES, environmental stewardship offers a live contemporary case study of normative development and contestation in GIS to set alongside other more recent additions to the international constitutional order (nationalism, the market, human rights). It provides insights into the roles that both states and non-state actors (world society) play in bringing out normative change, and the interplay within GIS between primary and secondary institutions. It also adds to the insights gained from studying nationalism, human rights and the market, about how the emergence of a new primary institution has repercussions for other institutions within the constitutional structure of GIS.

We show how environmental stewardship evolved from a few scattered normative initiatives in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, through being a largely Western concern during much of the 20<sup>th</sup>, to becoming a globally accepted primary institution of GIS during the 21<sup>st</sup>. Over this period, global environmentalism gradually evolved into a distinctive set of global values that transcended their diverse local and national origins. World society actors turned

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2017 Annual Convention of the International Studies Association. The authors thank the participants of the ISA panel as well as the journal's anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

environmentalism into a transnational movement and pushed for its insertion into the normative order of international society. However, it was a state-centric process of norm adoption and consolidation that morphed world society environmentalism into a primary institution of GIS. As expected in transnationalist and some ES literatures, world society actors thus played the key role as norm entrepreneurs, but state agency and leadership by great powers made it possible for environmentalism to change the criteria for international legitimacy in GIS. The strengthening of the environmental norm can be seen in the creation of a vast network of international environmental regimes and in state-level behavioural and constitutive changes. In this sense, secondary institutions serve as manifestations of the scope and strength of the underlying primary institution. At the same time, the limitations of, and struggles over, the regulatory power of secondary institutions also provide a measure of the depth of international norm change. While global environmentalism implies a strong solidarist development in global governance, environmental stewardship has made only limited progress on the path from a pluralist logic of international co-existence to a solidarist logic of cooperation. It has been successfully globalised, in part because it follows a universally accepted 'common fate' logic rather than a more exclusive Western liberal agenda, but its ability to transform the moral purpose of the state and GIS has been limited by continuing tensions with other primary institutions, most notably the market and national sovereignty.

The next section reviews the ES literature on environmental stewardship and develops an analytical framework for studying the emergence of new primary institutions. Section 3 traces the emergence of environmental stewardship as a norm of GIS, focusing on the interplay between states and non-state actors. Section 4 looks at the rise of environmental regimes and intergovernmental organizations (*secondary institutions* in ES terminology) as not only embodiments of this norm, and frameworks for rules and practices, but also as forums within which this norm is reproduced, developed and contested. Section 5 focuses on how states have embedded environmental stewardship into their structures, behaviours and identities. Section 6 looks at the interplay between environmental stewardship and other established primary institutions of GIS (sovereignty,

territoriality, great power management, market) as well as possibly emergent yet contested institutions (democracy, human rights). The conclusions consider the standing and strength/weakness of environmental stewardship as an institution of GIS, and how it stands in the ES's pluralist-solidarist debates.

### **The English School, global environmentalism and institutional change: an analytical framework**

The English School offers a distinctive perspective on global environmental politics that treats environmental protection not just as one of many international policy fields, but also as a site of deeper normative development in the society of states. ES theory shares with constructivism (Bernstein, 2001) and discourse analysis (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2006) a concern about how ideas such as environmental stewardship become norms that impact on the legitimacy of international order. Unlike neo-liberal institutionalism, the ES gives environmentalism a deeper, more structural, normative status. This section sets out an ES framework for identifying the emergence of a new primary institution. Subsequent sections apply this to the history of environmental stewardship in GIS.

While the ES played only a marginal role in the development of early IR scholarship on environmental issues (Stavis, 2014), its distinctive approach to the relationship between states and non-state actors, the purpose and legitimacy of sovereign statehood, and international institutional development in environmental politics, has come into sharper focus more recently. Early on, Bull (1977: 293-5) argued that a greater global environmental consciousness at the level of world society might best be constructed through initial measures of cooperation by states. Jackson (1996) both established the concept of environmental stewardship, and made the case that it was being addressed through the society of states. Like Bull, he was keen to counter the cosmopolitan arguments that the transnational character of environmental issues condemned the pluralist states-system to being part of the problem. Reus-Smit (1996) pushed further with the idea of a green moral purpose of the state. Linklater (Linklater, 2011; Linklater and Suganami, 2006: 218-9,

269) saw an emerging duty to prevent global environmental damage as part of cosmopolitan harm conventions. Hurrell, while noting the legitimacy crisis that sovereign states faced when confronted with global environmental change (1994), emphasised the role of states as part of both the problem and the solution, and charted the way in which environmental issues have pushed forward non-state actors in the process of global governance (2007: 216-36). Falkner (2012), Palmujoki (2013) and Buzan (2014) all suggest that there has been significant development of state-centric solidarism on this issue, where states themselves move away from a pluralist logic of coexistence towards a more solidarist logic of cooperation to deal with shared threats.

Jackson (2000: 177) separates environmental stewardship from human rights cosmopolitanism by attributing to it a distinct logic of 'custodial responsibility for the planet'. This raises an issue familiar from debates about environmental security as to whether the referent object is the environment itself, or the capacity of the environment to sustain existing and desired levels of human civilization (Buzan, Wæver and deWilde, 1998: 75-6). If the environment itself is the referent object, then Jackson is correct. But if the environment is a means to the sustainability of human life and civilization, that opens a link between environmental stewardship and human rights, in which the right to a liveable environment is constructed as a human right. This has important implications for how environmentalism relates to other primary institutions of GIS.

ES authors have thus come to converge around the notion that the internationalisation of environmentalism represents a significant normative development in GIS. What remains unspecified, however, is the depth of the 'greening' of GIS and its significance for other elements of the international normative order. We address this research gap by using the ES's distinctions between primary and secondary institutions, and interstate and world society, to clarify exactly how far towards being a global primary institution environmental stewardship has come.

The distinction between primary and secondary institutions is foreshadowed in Bull's work (1977: 53-7), and is implicit in Keohane's (1988: 285) distinction between 'fundamental practices' and international regimes.

Buzan (2014: 16-17), draws together ES thinking to define primary institutions as:

...deep and relatively durable social practices in the sense of being evolved more than designed. These practices must not only be shared amongst the members of international society, but also be seen amongst them as legitimate behaviour. Primary institutions are thus about the shared identity of the members of international society. They are constitutive of both states and international society in that they define not only the basic character of states but also their patterns of legitimate behaviour in relation to each other, and the criteria for membership of international society.

By contrast, secondary institutions are deliberately created institutions, whether regimes or intergovernmental organizations, which usually serve the purpose of regulating inter-state and sometimes also corporate relations in a specific issue-area (e.g. World Trade Organization; nuclear non-proliferation regime). A key function of secondary institutions is to reflect and reproduce the primary institutions that make up the international normative structure.<sup>2</sup> They both socialize states into the norms and practices of international society, and are sites of political contestation and conflict. Secondary institutions thus play important roles in the embedding, reproduction, development and sometime decay, of the primary institutions of GIS (Navari, 2016).

Most IR scholarship on environmental issues has focused on secondary rather than primary institutions, in particular the creation and effectiveness of particular environmental regimes (Mitchell, 2003), questions of regime interplay (Oberthür and Gehring, 2006) and the coherence of what in many cases appears to be a fragmented cluster of institutions (Biermann et al., 2009). This analytical primacy of the regime perspective has obscured the question of environmentalism's entrenchment in the normative structure of GIS and the consequences this has had for other primary institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> See Spandler (2015) on the links between the ES approach to institutions and that in the institutionalist and constructivist literatures.

While secondary institutions are comparatively easy to identify, it is much harder to establish a set of criteria for entry into the ranks of primary institutions (Buzan, 2004: 161-204). There are justified objections that the ES's empirical approach to identifying primary institutions lacks rigour and is open to selection bias (Finnemore, 2001; Wilson, 2012). Functional logics offer ways of classifying primary institutions but cannot specify a definitive set, which leaves definition plus empirical observation as the best approach so far available. Primary institutions are therefore in the same boat as sectors in IR (Buzan, Wæver and deWilde, 1998) and function systems in Sociology (Stichweh, 2013: 58). In other words, there can be no fixed set of primary institutions (or sectors, or function systems) because they are emergent from the complex processes of human societies, which are endlessly inventive about the social forms and structures that they generate. Environmental stewardship thus emerged as a new social purpose within GIS in response to the destructive potential of the modern industrial system.

The historical process tracing of primary institutions has been applied most thoroughly by Mayall (1990) and Holsti (2004). Holsti (2004: 18-24) offers explicit criteria for identifying primary institutions:

... institutions are the context within which the games of international politics are played. They represent patterned (typical) actions and interactions for states, the norms, rules and principles that guide (or fail to guide) them, and the major ideas and beliefs of a historical era.... International institutions contain the essential rules of coexistence between states and societies.... Institutions are the permissive contexts for many social transactions (Holsti, 2004: 18).

The ES has for long used 'the great society of humankind' as a general moral referent by which to judge the degree and kind of order provided by the society of states (Buzan, 2004). More recently, Wheeler (2000); Clark (2007) and Pella (2013) have opened the door to ES thinking about world society as a more specific universe of non-state actors and movements that lobby interstate society in pursuit of normative claims ranging from anti-slavery, through human rights, to environmental stewardship. Buzan (2018) builds on



this work by proposing a distinction between two components of world society: *normative world society*, whose primary institution is collective identity, ranging from humankind as a whole to a wide variety of subglobal human identity groupings; and *political world society*, whose primary institution is advocacy, and comprises all the non-state social structures visible within humankind as a whole that have both significantly autonomous actor quality, and the capacity and interest to try to influence the normative structure of interstate society. Normative (*interhuman*) world society provides the ideational resources with which political (*transnational*) world society engages interstate society, and it can do this either on the basis of humankind as a whole, or subsets of humankind. Environmental stewardship is promoted by a whole range of advocacy non-state organizations that lobby interstate society to improve environmental protection in the name of humankind as a whole. When world society is viewed in this way, the ES framing can link smoothly to insights from the constructivist literature such as Keck and Sikkink (1998) on how 'transnational advocacy networks' reshape the normative environment of world politics, and Acharya (2009) on how 'constitutive localization' filters global normative pressures and adapts them to local circumstances and dispositions.

Our framework combines Holsti's points with the ES's distinctions between primary and secondary institutions, and interstate and world society. We identify two main criteria for determining whether environmental stewardship has become a primary institution. First, we expect to find a clearly defined value or principle applicable across international society (whether global or regional). We examine this in section 3 by tracing the emergence of the environmental idea, the interplay of this norm between interstate and world society, and the specific form that it has taken on as it moved centre-stage in international diplomacy. Second, we expect to observe a significant degree of social consolidation of environmentalism as a norm of GIS. There are two principal mechanisms through which this can happen: the creation of secondary institutions reflecting the underlying environmental norm (section 4); and observable and significant patterns of behaviour by states in accordance with the core norm (section 5). This framework could be used to track the success and progress, or failure or decay, of any primary institution.

Whether, when and how environmental stewardship became a primary institution is our test case for this claim.

In addition, we are interested in using the ES's distinction between pluralism and solidarism to understand the depth and the direction of environmentalism's normative impact on GIS. The pluralism/solidarism debate defines the ES's two main normative positions about what 'ought' to happen in international relations. It is centred on the question of how to balance the competing demands for advancing international order versus international justice, with order tending to privilege states, and justice tending to privilege more cosmopolitan, world society, approaches (Bain, 2014; Buzan, 2014; Linklater and Suganami, 2006: 59-68). Most of the ES debate has focused on the issue of human rights (Buzan, 2014: 83-4), but the pluralist/solidarist distinction can also be used to investigate the wider state of normative development in GIS. In this view, pluralism and solidarism denote two distinctive interaction logics in international relations and identify two states of what 'is', rather than 'ought'. Primary institutions can be categorised as belonging to either a pluralist logic of coexistence (e.g. war, balance of power, great power management) or a solidarist logic of cooperation, or even convergence, around shared values (e.g. human rights, market, development) (Buzan, 2004). Using this perspective, we can detect changes in the nature of primary institutions from a pluralist to a solidarist logic or vice versa. Viewed in this way, the empirical study of environmental stewardship can yield insights into an ongoing shift towards solidarist approaches, be they state-centric forms of institutionalized cooperation, or transnational/cosmopolitan solidarism based on collective identity, cosmopolitan values and transnational forms of governance, or mixtures of these (Buzan, 2004: 114-20; Hurrell, 2007: 224-28). Alternatively, we may find that global environmentalism is restricted to a more limited pluralist logic of securing the survival of societies and coexistence of states against the backdrop of existential ecological threats (Buzan, 2004: 233).

This ES analytical framework opens up an important perspective on the spatial reach of normative change. Even though the past two centuries have been a story of the continuous expansion of international society (Bull and Watson, 1984), for most of its history, Westphalian international society was

less than global in reach, and it is only since decolonization after the Second World War that the society of states can be said to have become universal (Reus-Smit and Dunne, 2017: 18). Even so, this GIS coexists with regional and subglobal international societies, and persisting differences in political and cultural values will continue to drive such regional differentiation (Acharya, 2009; Buzan, 2014, 180; Buzan and Schouenborg, 2018). At the level of primary institutions, we find that some are universally accepted and constitutive of GIS (sovereignty, nationalism, diplomacy), while others (human rights, democracy) are only valid in a sub-global or regional context. Normative development in international society thus proceeds not simply along the spectrum of pluralist coexistence to solidarist cooperation but also at different spatial scales. This historicization and spatialization of international society in ES theory becomes an important starting point for investigating the degree to which newly emerging norms such as environmentalism have become globalized or remain rooted either in a regional international society (e.g. Europe), or a wider but still subglobal one (e.g. the West).

### **The Emergence of Environmental Stewardship as a Norm of International Society**

The emergence of environmental stewardship as a coherent set of purposive ideas and beliefs within GIS is a story involving both the interplay of interstate and world society, and the spread of a norm from local to global scale. Global environmentalism has its roots in late 19<sup>th</sup> century efforts by a small number of environmentalists, scientists and politicians to deal with the transboundary dimensions of nature conservation (Boardman, 1981: 26-30; Tyrell, 2015). Environmentalism itself is an amalgam of a wide range of ideas about the relationship between humans and their natural environment. Most of these originate from the beginning of the industrial revolution, though some can be traced back much further. They include Judeo-Christian ideas about nature as God's creation that humans are commanded to exercise stewardship over (Kiser, 2003); organicist and animist thinking that challenges dominant anthropocentric worldviews (Nash, 1989: 20); and Romantic writings that

express a new environmental sensibility and defend nature's intrinsic value and beauty against the ravages of industrialism (Nash, 2001: 49-50). Widespread deforestation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to more utilitarian concerns about the economic costs of environmental degradation, while advances in the scientific study of nature brought out the interdependence of regional and global ecological systems (Worster, 1994: 265-8, 198-201). Thus, while the anti-modern reaction to industrialism was a central motif in early 19<sup>th</sup> century environmentalism – and continues to resonate today - the rise of ecology as a science, and growing concerns over the economic cost of environmental degradation, helped to put environmentalism on a more rationalist, modern, footing.

Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these strands of environmental thinking gave rise to the conservation movement in North America and Europe. The first conservation groups (e.g. Sierra Club; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) were rooted in different national contexts, and it took some time for them to develop a global collective identity built around a cosmopolitan environmental solidarism. By the turn of the century, the conservation movement had created the first transnational networks, with environmental ideas and policies being debated at international scientific conferences and naturalist writings attracting a global readership. The conservation movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century thus laid the foundation for a transnational network of non-state actors with the desire and capacity to engage the society of states in a project of international normative change. But to be successful internationally, environmentalists first had to establish nature conservation as a national policy in key countries. Only then could such policies be exported to other countries and to the international level. The conservation movement scored its first political success when the United States created a series of natural parks, starting with Yellowstone National Park in 1872, a policy later transferred to Europe, and eventually becoming the basis for protected areas policies around the world (Kupper, 2009). Environmentalism originated in world society, but its global spread depended on states as vehicles of policy change and international diffusion.

On at least three occasions during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, environmentalists tried in vain to establish environmental responsibility on the

international agenda. Theodore Roosevelt provided American conservationists with the first opportunity to make nature protection a national and international policy priority. After convening the North American Conservation Conference in 1909, Roosevelt won agreement from leading European states to host a world conservation congress later that year. The conference was cancelled, however, when Roosevelt was succeeded in the White House by Taft, who shared none of his predecessor's conservationist ideals (Tyrell, 2015: chapter 11). At around the same time, European scientists and conservationists lobbied their governments to convene an international environmental conference. The Swiss government eventually took up the idea and hosted 17 countries at a conference in Berne in 1913, which agreed to create a Consultative Commission for the International Protection of Nature. The outbreak of World War I prevented the Commission, the first-ever international environmental body, from taking up its work (Wöbse, 2012: 49-53). Environmentalists renewed their efforts after the war and lobbied for the League of Nations to be given an environmental mandate (Wöbse, 2012: 136-142). Yet again, these efforts ran into the ground. Despite the growing recognition that environmental degradation did not stop at national borders, leading states continued to view environmental problems as a domestic matter. Even in the aftermath of World War II, GIS did not accept a general responsibility for the global environment. The newly founded United Nations (UN) was not given an explicit mandate to deal with global environmental problems. Only UNESCO took on a limited role promoting scientific information exchange on environmental matters (Wöbse, 2012: 273-78).

The turning point in the struggle to internationalise environmentalism came only when the 'environmental revolution' (Nicholson, 1972) of the 1960s/70s transformed environmentalism from an elite concern into a mass movement. While earlier conservationist ideas appealed mainly to a narrow social and political elite (McCormick, 1989: 47), the dramatic expansion of economic prosperity after 1945 created the material conditions for a broader shift in societal perceptions of nature (McNeill, 2000: 336-7). Greater awareness of the environmental costs of industrial growth, combined with newly emerging post-material values, formed the basis for a grassroots-based

movement driven by a fear for human survival itself. When an estimated 20 million US citizens attended the events marking the first Earth Day on 22 April 1970, politicians across the political spectrum realised that environmentalism had become electorally significant (Shabecoff, 1993: chapter 5). It was this change in societal perceptions in advanced economies that provided political world society with the leverage it needed to get states to accept environmental stewardship as a solidarist international norm.

The modern environmental movement was also explicitly global in orientation. Unlike their conservationist predecessors, the new environmental organisations of the 1960s/70s were set up to operate transnationally, either as fundraising organisations (e.g. World Wildlife Fund, 1961) or global campaign networks (e.g. Friends of the Earth, 1969; Greenpeace, 1971) (Wapner, 1996). The globalisation of environmentalism also reflected the growing scientific and public awareness of planetary ecological interdependencies. While the beginning of planetary surveillance can be traced back to the system of telegraph and undersea cables established by the British Empire (Buzan and Lawson, 2015: 82), twentieth century science made critical advances (e.g. satellites; space travel) that underlined the growing perception of a shrinking planet imperilled by modern technology. By the early 1970s, the environmental movement as part of political world society had successfully established the notion that humanity's collective identity and interest in self-preservation demanded collective political action by states to stem the tide of environmental degradation.

The first time that this global environmental consciousness came to be reflected in the normative structure of GIS was at the Stockholm UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in 1972, the key constitutional moment in the greening of GIS. The Stockholm Declaration, agreed by 113 countries, is the first international declaration to give expression to the environmental stewardship norm: 'The protection and improvement of the human environment is [...] the duty of all Governments' (Preamble). In a nod to the conservation movement, the Declaration speaks of 'a special responsibility to safeguard and wisely manage the heritage of wildlife and its habitat' (Principle 4). While this appears to make the non-human environment a referent object of environmental stewardship, the

remainder of the Stockholm Declaration is predominantly framed in the anthropocentric context that defined the modern environmental movement: humans have a right 'to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being' (Principle 1; see also Principles 2 and 3). The Stockholm Declaration also establishes specific responsibilities that concern state behaviour: preventing the pollution of the seas (Principle 7), integrating environmental considerations into development planning (Principle 13), preventing transnational environmental harm (Principle 21), and cooperating to develop international law on environmental liability and compensation (Principle 22) (United Nations: 3-5).

The emerging primary institution of environmental stewardship was not framed in isolation, however, and the Stockholm Declaration did not endorse the radical break with past state practice that some environmentalists had called for. Cosmopolitan solidarist notions of 'Spaceship Earth' and 'common heritage of humanity' had informed calls for a radical reorganization of the international order (e.g. Falk, 1971), and they were also influential in the preparatory meetings for the Stockholm conference (Ward and Dubos, 1972). By the time environmentalist ideas entered the realm of international diplomacy, however, it became clear that the majority of states had no intention of ceding regulatory authority to a new international environmental body representing the planetary interest. The Stockholm Declaration balances environmental duties with an unambiguous reassertion of the principles of national sovereignty and development (Principles 21 and 24). To become a viable new norm in international relations, environmental stewardship could not go against the normative grain of the established interstate order.

Despite these concessions, the new international environmental agenda of the 1970s was not met with global approval. Having boycotted the Stockholm Conference, most countries of the Soviet bloc ignored environmental concerns and took a backseat role in subsequent international negotiations. The biggest source of contention, and resistance, came from developing countries that considered the norm of environmental stewardship to be a neo-colonial plot that threatened the institution of development by adding costs that would prevent poorer countries from fully developing their

economies. The rival third world discourse focused on poverty and international justice, in contrast to the North's focus on pollution prevention and population control (Hironaka, 2014: 38-9). Even though the UNCHE preparatory meetings had tried to bridge the differences between developed and developing countries (Bernstein, 2001; 32-42), deep North-South divisions plagued the 1972 summit and complicated subsequent efforts to implement its agenda.

It was not until the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio that developing country concerns moved centre stage in the international environmental agenda and environmental stewardship shed its Western origins to become global in scale. In the run-up to UNCED, the Brundtland Commission had elevated the notion of sustainable development to the status of a guiding principle in interpreting environmental stewardship (Bernstein, 2001: 58-69). Several key outcomes of the conference reinforced this shift towards a more explicit balancing of environment and development: the re-assertion in the Rio Declaration (Principle 2) of states' sovereign right to exploit their natural resources and determine their environmental policies; and the strengthened emphasis on 'common but differentiated responsibilities', both in the Rio Declaration (Principle 7) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, Article 3.1). Differentiation in responsibilities did not alter states' fundamental commitment to environmental stewardship as such, but affected the way they were expected to contribute to collective environmental efforts. Nearly all international environmental regimes created after 1992 included provisions for international environmental aid, as a means of both achieving environmental goals and assisting sustainable development in the Global South. Cosmopolitan environmental solidarism was now more firmly embedded in a larger state-centric solidarist structure that sought to balance environmental stewardship with national sovereignty, development, and inter-state justice. In the absence of an imminent ecological crisis, the greening of international society was forced into what Spandler (2015) calls a path-dependent form of incremental normative change.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, environmental stewardship had become clearly identifiable as an emerging primary institution of international society.



As was evident at UNCED, nearly all states had by then accepted the need to participate and develop the multilateral institutional infrastructure to discharge their duties as environmentally responsible members of GIS, even if environmental norms were still honoured more in the breach than the observance. But despite the near-universal acceptance of environmental stewardship, differences persisted with regard to how environmental principles were interpreted, and how they resonated domestically. The environmental stewardship norm had successfully transcended both its cosmopolitan and Western origins, and the earlier North-versus-South political dynamics, to become global in scale, encompassing the normative demands of both developed and developing countries. In this sense, the rise of global environmentalism is part of the story of the emergence of a *global* international society after the era of decolonisation.

The emergence of the solidarist primary institution of environmental stewardship provides a striking example of progressive normative development in interstate society that originated in world society. International society is a porous entity that not only derives its core norms from an internal logic of system maintenance but also adopts and institutionalises norms that norm entrepreneurs in political world society have created and promoted (Clark, 2007). UNCHE was one of those points of negotiation between world society and interstate society that have reshaped the principles of international legitimacy. It provided a window of opportunity for environmentalists, operating in global civil society and within governments, to insert environmental stewardship into the normative fabric of GIS. However, the process of environmental norm transfer was not a straightforward process. By raising ecological awareness and making the environment a politically salient issue in domestic politics, the environmental movement prepared the ideational ground, but it was the agency of powerful states that ensured environmentalism's emergence and strengthening within the constitutional order of GIS. The expansion of the state's domestic responsibility for the environment, first in the United States and other leading industrialised economies, played a critical role in making the norm transfer a success. State power and agency – initially by the United States and later by European countries (DeSombre, 2000; Kelemen and Vogel, 2010) – played a decisive

role in establishing environmental stewardship as a primary institution. Environmental stewardship thus belongs in the group of primary institutions of GIS, along with human equality, the market, and nationalism, that would not have come into being without both world society actors and states promoting them. In the process, the cosmopolitan solidarist vision was channelled into a state-centric solidarist form of global environmentalism.

### **The Creation of Secondary Institutions Around the Norm of Environmental Stewardship**

In this section, we focus on the growth in secondary institutions – treaties and organizations deliberately created to deal with specific environmental problems. As noted, secondary institutions reflect and reproduce primary institutions; socialize states into the norms and practices of international society; and are forums for political contestation and conflict. As such, they are critical indicators of normative development in GIS.

The 1972 Stockholm Conference, was not only critical in the emergence of environmental norms, but also in the creation of environmental secondary institutions. The few international treaties that had been created before 1972 dealt with a limited range of transboundary environmental problems (e.g. 1902 Convention for the Protection of Birds Useful to Agriculture; 1911 North Pacific Fur Seal Convention) (Boardman, 1981: 26-9). None of these treaties constituted a systematic attempt at creating global environmental policy, and no international body was created to oversee global environmental protection. By contrast, after Stockholm GIS set out to create an increasingly dense web of global environmental organizations (UN Environment Programme; UN Commission on Sustainable Development; Global Environment Facility) and treaties, with over 500 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) having been negotiated to date.<sup>3</sup> The emergence of this institutional architecture for global environmental protection represents one of the fastest and most comprehensive expansions of state-centric solidarism in international policy-making.

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<sup>3</sup> The International Environmental Agreements Database lists 530 multilateral agreements for the period from 1800 to 2016: <http://iea.uoregon.edu>.

A measure of the growing recognition for the environmental stewardship norm can be found in secondary institutions' expanding coverage of environmental issues, from early efforts to internationalize conservation policies (e.g. 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species – CITES) and limit specific forms of environmental harm (1972 London Convention on Dumping at Sea) to treaties with a regional and increasingly global focus on protecting entire ecosystems (1985 Vienna Convention on ozone layer depletion; 1992 UNFCCC; 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity). GIS also succeeded in drawing a growing number of countries into secondary institutions. Most environmental treaties of the pre-Stockholm era and in the 1970s were negotiated by only a small number of countries, mostly from the OECD. From the 1980s, however, more and more developing countries started to engage in multilateral environmental processes, pushing towards near-universal participation. Whereas only 24 countries attended the first UNEP workshop on ozone layer depletion in 1982, 43 countries negotiated the 1985 Vienna Convention, and over 60 countries, half from the developing world, the 1987 Montreal Protocol (Benedick, 1991: 42, 44 and 74). Many more developing countries were engaged in the UNFCCC preparatory meetings and the treaty was signed by 154 countries in 1992.

International environmental policy has also witnessed an unusually high degree of participation by scientists, environmental campaigners and corporate actors, as providers of policy-relevant knowledge, norm entrepreneurs and lobbyists (Betsill and Correll, 2008; Falkner, 2008; Haas, 1995). This reflects both a strengthening of the role that organized advocacy plays as a 'legitimate expression of public opinion' (Buzan, 2018) and a functional need to involve a wide range of societal actors at multiple levels (Zürn, 2004: 268). As a consequence, intergovernmental environmental processes tend to be more porous and accessible than most other such processes (e.g. trade, finance, security). The growing enmeshment of state and nonstate actors has had a complex effect on the growth of solidarist environmental governance. On the one hand, environmental campaigning by NGOs has become a major demand factor behind the supply of state-centric international regulation. In this sense, world society engagement in environmental multilateralism has legitimated the state's and international

society's role as a provider of environmental governance. In short, it has boosted state-centric environmental solidarism. On the other hand, persistent weaknesses in national and international environmental policy have led many campaigners to question and challenge the ecological effectiveness and legitimacy of state-centric solutions. Increasingly, world society actors have pushed for global solutions based on political, social and economic processes that transcend state-centric policy-making (Wapner, 1996). In this sense, the global environmental movement has become part of a bigger transnational effort to expand environmental governance beyond the narrow confines of interstate society (Hurrell, 2007: 227-8), weaving state and nonstate actors into complex transnational networks that pursue a more cosmopolitan solidarist agenda.

Secondary institutions reflect important characteristics of underlying primary institutions, and the normative influence of the environmental stewardship norm on MEAs can be seen in a number of ways. For one, post-1972 environmental treaties have followed an increasingly anthropocentric notion of environmentalism: speaking in a cosmopolitan solidarist way on behalf of humankind as a whole by prioritising a clean environment, and balancing nature protection with economic development and growth. Some environmental treaties of the 1970s still expressed a narrowly defined conservationist agenda (CITES, 1973; Convention on Migratory Species, 1979), but the majority of environmental regimes created thereafter emphasized the need to protect ecosystems mainly because of the value they hold to human society and human health (e.g. ozone regime; climate change regime). Especially since the adoption of sustainable development as a central guiding principle at UNCED, developing countries successfully pushed for environmental protection to be connected with wider developmental agendas. The resulting dominance of anthropocentric understandings of nature has served to marginalise the more radical strands of the environmental movement on the diplomatic stage (Ford, 2003).

Environmental secondary institutions also reflect states' pluralist insistence that international environmental regulation should not infringe on their sovereign rights. GIS has largely steered clear of environmentalists' demands to strengthen international regulatory authority, and MEAs mostly

leave the implementation of international agreements and reporting on domestic policies to the sovereign authority of member states (Bodansky, 2010: chapter 10). On the whole, MEAs rely on facilitative, non-punitive, compliance mechanisms, offering assistance to those countries that are non-compliant with international obligations (Faure and Lefevre, 2010). Unlike the WTO system, environmental treaties do not have a centralized dispute settlement mechanism that can issue legally binding rulings with the possibility of sanctioning noncompliant states.

As the equity dimension in the primary institution of environmental stewardship gained in importance between Stockholm and Rio, it reflected the still spatially uneven distribution of the environmental stewardship norm. MEAs created in the 1980s and 1990s began to include increasingly strong forms of differentiation between developed and developing countries, when it comes to the responsibilities, rights and duties of parties and the use of international aid mechanisms. For example, the 1987 Montreal Protocol and the 1989 Basel Convention gave developing countries a grace period to meet key treaty obligations and provided them with financial and technological assistance. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol went further by establishing a more radical interpretation of the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities', exempting developing countries altogether from the requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Rajamani, 2012: 611).

While the rapid growth in secondary institutions provides a measure of the growing salience of environmental stewardship as a primary institution, the evolution of environmental policy-making also suggests important limitations to the state-centric solidarist direction that the greening of GIS has taken. It has not been possible to create a more integrated and legalized system of global environmental governance, particularly when compared to the WTO trade system. The task of global environmental protection is distributed among a large number of institutions, many of which are only loosely connected to each other. UNEP, created in 1973 with the purpose of facilitating and coordinating environmental protection efforts across the UN, has only partially fulfilled this integrative role (Bauer, 2013). Institutional fragmentation may reflect the diverse nature of global environmental problems, but given the limited powers and financial resources that are at the

disposal of environmental bodies, institutional competition and conflict can act as a barrier to more effective environmental governance (Biermann et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the drive to strengthen global environmental governance by expanding multilateral rule-making has slowed down and is giving way to a creeping sense of 'treaty fatigue' (Bauer, 2013: 325). Enhancing global environmental protection through international legalization has proved to be futile, and with international support for multilateralism in decline, the push for reforming and strengthening international environmental organizations has failed to yield meaningful results (Bernstein, 2013). After the high-water mark of global environmentalism in the 1990s, there has also been growing contestation of key aspects of the global governance structure for environmental protection, not only by developing countries but also by developed countries that had previously championed the environmental stewardship norm. This is most clearly evident in the field of climate politics, where the United States challenged the Kyoto Protocol's interpretation of the equity norm of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (Hurrell and Sengupta, 2012). Although the US could not prevent the Kyoto Protocol from entering into force in 2005, its opposition to the uneven mitigation burden – in addition to the growing emissions profile of emerging economies – played a key role in the transition from Kyoto-style emissions rules to a de-centralized system of voluntary pledges in the 2015 Paris Agreement (Falkner, 2016). Just as the responsibility to act against global warming has been accepted by more and more states, contestation over the nature of the regulatory regime has limited the consolidation of the environmental stewardship norm into a strongly solidarist primary institution based on internationally agreed and legally binding environmental obligations. Paris signifies both the success in universalising environmental stewardship and the barriers to its strengthening and deepening within the normative structure of GIS.

### **Environmental Stewardship and State Behaviour/Identity**

As environmentalism strengthens as a global primary institution, we ought to see corresponding changes in GIS at different levels. At the state level, we

would expect to see states creating domestic environmental agencies, adopting environmental policies and integrating environmental objectives into other areas of policy-making ('mainstreaming'), in line with their recognition of a global environmental responsibility. These changes should manifest themselves first as *behavioural* change, which has already attracted considerable scholarly attention (Busch and Jörgens, 2005; Holzinger, Knill and Sommerer, 2008; Roberts, Parks and Vásquez, 2004). But to qualify as a primary institution, we would also expect environmentalism to have a *constitutive* effect on states, with consequences for states' identity, and mutually shared understanding of international legitimacy (Clark, 2005: 5). This dimension has received far less attention in the literature, though recent work on the rise of the 'green state' points in this direction (Eckersley, 2004; Meadowcroft, 2005). This section considers the extent to which the rise of global environmental stewardship can be traced in both behavioural and constitutive effects on states and interstate relations.

The Stockholm Conference's most discernible effect on state practices around the world can be found in the global spread of environmental policies and institutions, first among industrialised countries and later also in the developing world. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (created 1970) served as an early model for countries that sought to establish their own national environmental agencies. The increase in domestic environmental institutions after Stockholm is best understood as a policy diffusion process (Busch and Jörgens, 2005: 872-6), based on international harmonization and transnational communication (Holzinger, Knill and Sommerer, 2008), and with major international conferences and initiatives serving as important external stimuli (Haas, 2002). UNCED in 1992 produced a further push to embed environmental policies worldwide, while the EU's Fifth Environmental Action Plan of 1992 became an important reference point in the diffusion of environmental policy practices particularly to Central and Eastern European countries (Busch and Jörgens, 2005: 868-870). At the same time, the OECD and the World Bank provided blueprints for the global spread of environmental policy models, increasingly reaching into developing countries as well. By the time the UN General Assembly in 1997 called on all UN members to complete

the creation of sustainable development strategies,<sup>4</sup> 150 countries had already established national commissions or coordinating mechanisms to develop an integrated approach to sustainable development. National environmental policy had thus become a routine governmental responsibility by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with only the poorest countries lacking adequate administrative capacity.

The strengthening of the environmental stewardship norm can also be seen in states' growing engagement with an expanding international environmental agenda. States had little choice but to develop a dedicated diplomatic and legal infrastructure for participating in international environmental negotiations and translating international agreements into domestic law. Initially, only a small group of leading industrialised countries systematically pursued environmental diplomacy. By the 1990s, the commitment to address global environmental problems through multilateral negotiation and rule-making, had become rooted in both diplomatic practice and mutually shared understandings of legitimate membership in GIS.

The strength of the normative commitment to environmental multilateralism varies across countries and regions. While the European Union has established a constitutional commitment to developing international responses to environmental problems,<sup>5</sup> other major powers did so only implicitly. Furthermore, not all states that routinely participate in multilateral negotiations necessarily support the environmental objectives behind them, and some resist specific regulatory instruments or refuse to ratify multilaterally agreed treaties. Environmental multilateralism is, therefore, more a procedural than a substantive norm. It creates an expectation that states must participate in multilateral environmental processes if they wish to be considered as legitimate members of GIS. As the history of international environmental politics shows, virtually all states, including the most powerful ones, have found it difficult to extricate themselves from this procedural expectation, and

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<sup>4</sup> UNGA Resolution A/RES/S-19/2 Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, 28 June 1997, point 11, at:

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/spec/aress19-2.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Lisbon Treaty, Art. 21(1) and 21(2)(f).



no major power has as yet abandoned the commitment to negotiating environmental protection in multilateral settings.

The strength of the environmental multilateralism norm can be seen in the case of those major powers that are often considered to be laggards in key global environmental areas. Despite championing the global environmental agenda in the 1970s, the US has opposed the creation of several recent international environmental treaties, thereby ceding the mantle of leadership to the EU (Keleman and Vogel, 2010). But despite their failure to ratify important new multilateral environmental treaties, successive US administrations nevertheless continued to engage in the multilateral process. Even at the height of American unilateralism under President George W. Bush, the US never fully abandoned the UNFCCC process. Under the Obama administration, the US returned to the multilateral fold and became a key architect of the new bottom-up logic of the Paris Agreement (Falkner, 2016). The election of Trump, who has withdrawn the US from the Paris Agreement while promising to remain engaged in the climate negotiations, provides the toughest test yet for the climate regime. However, the strong international opprobrium that Trump has caused suggests that the environmental multilateralism norm has so far withstood America's unilateral challenge. The strength of domestic US support for the Paris climate accord shows that the domestic resonance of global environmentalism runs much deeper than the vagaries of federal climate policy (Bomberg, 2017).

China, for example, has also felt the pull factor of the environmental multilateralism norm, increasingly engaging in the global environmental agenda despite the country's long-standing resistance to international environmental regulations that might impinge on its domestic policy autonomy. In part, that turn results from the rising priority of environmental stewardship in China's domestic politics. Internationally, the turning point came in 2006 when China overtook the US to become the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide. Ever since, world leaders have urged the country to make a stronger contribution to the global mitigation effort, with President Obama making an explicit link between China's great power status and

climate responsibility.<sup>6</sup> For China as well as for other emerging powers, the environmental stewardship norm thus creates both expectations of 'responsible behaviour' that they find increasingly hard to ignore, and also opportunities to align domestic priorities with global ones that are increasingly attractive to burnishing their international image (Zhang, 2016: 812, 814-5). For China, the fact that environmental stewardship is not a liberal norm, but one arising from shared fates, offers it the opportunity to offset some of the damage to its image done by its rejection of democracy and liberal human rights. Environmental stewardship links well to China's preference for a state-led developmental and survival view of human rights which it shares with many other illiberal states (Kozyrev, 2016: 812, 814-5).

It is important to note that the growing entrenchment of the environmental multilateralism norm is clearest in relation to its procedural core that all accept the obligation to participate. The substantive side of the norm is more complex. Despite the growing acknowledgement by all major powers of their special responsibilities in the climate field, some of the most powerful states have successfully contested the expectations that grew around the norm of 'common but differential responsibilities' as expressed in the Kyoto Protocol. The recent move in the climate regime to a more balanced and voluntary definition of responsibilities provides an example of both the strengthening of the general notion of great power responsibility for environmental protection and a weakening of the core regulatory regime (Hurrell and Sengupta, 2012). Even though the regulatory obligations have been softened for developed states, the substantive norm has been strengthened in the Paris Agreement in the sense that voluntary emission targets now apply to all (Falkner, 2016). Everyone now accepts that they have not only to participate in environmental negotiations, but also take responsibility for acting to mitigate environmental harm.

In sum, the widely observable greening of state practice in GIS supports our argument that environmental stewardship has emerged and strengthened as a primary institution of GIS. At the same time, it is clear we

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<sup>6</sup> Remarks by the President at U.N. Climate Change Summit, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 23 September 2014, at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/23/remarks-president-un-climate-change-summit>.

have not witnessed a deeper structural transformation of GIS's normative structure that comes close to what might be described as a transformation of the nation-state's core purpose and identity into a 'green state' (Eckersley, 2004). While the rise of environmentalism has opened up the possibility of the moral purpose of the state changing to include a wider range of objectives including environmental guardianship (Reus-Smit, 1996), we are still far from nation-states being reconstituted as 'local agents of the common good' (Bull, 1984) or guardians of the planet's ecological health. Environmentalism has entered the normative structure of international relations as a new primary institution but remains challenged by other, more established, primary institutions (sovereignty, development, market, great power management) and systemic pressures on states that make the greening of international legitimacy an incomplete process. The bigger ambitions of cosmopolitan environmental solidarists have been restrained by their translation into state-centric solidarism.

### **Environmental Stewardship and Other Primary Institutions**

We have argued that environmental stewardship has successfully emerged as a new primary institution of GIS. It has moved from being a concern mainly of Western civil society, and then Western states, to being a globally accepted solidarist institution in which a majority of states of all types acknowledge both the problem and their responsibility to act. While core regulatory regimes have softened away from mandatory targets, the acceptance of responsibility to act has widened, with the idea of 'common responsibilities' gaining ground over 'differentiated'. This evolution justifies placing environmental stewardship as a newly arrived, and still evolving, primary institution of GIS. For a value to qualify as a primary institution depends less on the depth with which it is held, and more on the extent to which there is a universally shared view of it. The question is whether the depth of the value will increase now that it is universally accepted.

This growing universal acceptance, even if still somewhat shallow, also differentiates environmental stewardship from other candidates for primary institution status. Democracy and human rights, seen by liberals as emerging

primary institutions of GIS, are in fact hotly contested among states, and so are better seen as subglobal institutions of Western international society, where they are widely, and often deeply, held. Given their entanglement with liberal ideology, this contested status seems likely to endure as the world divides between democracies and authoritarians. Environmental stewardship does not get caught up in this ideological division because it is not a liberal value. Its logic arises from a shared fate/threat that transcends liberal versus authoritarian concerns. This is not to say that environmental stewardship is uncontested. But the controversies around it are now more within states than between them.

Given the existential logic that underlies it, environmental stewardship has the potential to transform GIS by changing the core moral purpose of both states and GIS. An analogy might be the wholesale transformation created by the rise of sovereignty and territoriality that pushed European international society from mediaeval to modern form (Ruggie, 1983, 1993). Such a transformation clearly has not occurred, and does not seem to be in prospect. Instead, environmental stewardship is taking its place alongside, and in interaction with, the other primary institutions that define GIS. This makes it more comparable with nationalism, which as Mayall (1990; 2000: 62-3) notes, integrated with, and in some ways disrupted, the existing set of primary institutions, changing their meaning and the practices associated with them. The rise of the market in the 20<sup>th</sup> century also had this disruptive quality. What does environmental stewardship look like in this framing?

How environmental stewardship relates to other primary institutions depends on how it is formulated, and as noted in section 2, there are two views about this, one deeply ideological, the other strongly pragmatic. The ideological view is that it mainly concerns the protection of the non-human environment for its own sake, thereby expanding international society's moral landscape beyond the standard anthropocentric perspective into the natural world.<sup>7</sup> The pragmatic view is that it is mainly an anthropocentric solidarist value concerned with sustaining a liveable planet for humankind and therefore linkable to human rights/human security. In the ideological view, humankind

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<sup>7</sup> Arguably, this view would place environmental stewardship outside the pluralist/solidarist framing.

and the existing GIS are cast more as threats than as referent objects; in the pragmatic view, the essential referent object of environmental stewardship is human civilization. While the ideological view is certainly out there in the environmental movement (Scarce, 2016), it is mainly the pragmatic one that drives environmental stewardship within GIS.

It would require another paper to work through in detail the impact of environmental stewardship on the whole institutional structure of GIS, but even at this early stage, the general shape of its impact is becoming clear. Environmental stewardship is a smooth fit with diplomacy, international law, human equality and human rights. With diplomacy, it has opened up a new agenda, underpinned the creation of new secondary institutions, and pushed states to create the necessary foreign policy tools to deal with this. With international law, it has opened up a new functional area for development. With human equality and human rights, the pragmatic reading of environmental stewardship provides an additional standard by which these can be measured. Although environmental stewardship has emerged separately from human rights, there are strong synergies between them. For some other primary institutions, the rise of environmental stewardship has so far had little consequence. This is true for nationalism, which might be, but so far has not been, threatened by the cosmopolitan quality of environmental stewardship that emphasizes that all human beings are sitting in the same boat. It is also true for balance of power, which is anyway currently at a relatively low ebb compared to its past role.

But for several other primary institutions, environmental stewardship has begun to have impacts, some of which could grow. Environmental stewardship, like the market, puts pressure even on what are arguably the two foundational institutions of GIS: sovereignty and territoriality. Strong interpretations of sovereignty and territoriality become problematic because both the market and environmental stewardship require a global system perspective and coordinated rules of the game that transcend borders. Environmental stewardship might eventually require deeper levels of solidarist cooperation and institution-building than mere policy coordination. States cannot defend impermeable borders or arbitrary rights to change the rules if they want to be part of a global market, and neither can they if they want to

pursue global environmental stewardship. Environmental stewardship also contains the same potential as human rights for bringing the important corollary of sovereignty and territoriality, the right of non-intervention, into question. Although still contested, the idea that gross violations of human rights can constitute a cause for intervention, might also become an issue with environmental stewardship. As the norm of responsibility for the environment strengthens, it becomes less difficult to imagine calls for intervention against states committing gross acts of environmental abuse.

Environmental stewardship also impacts on two other traditional institutions: war and great power management (GPM). In relation to war, it adds environmental harm to the array of constraints that have narrowed the legitimate uses and methods of war since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In relation to GPM, it has reinforced this institution by adding environmental stewardship to the agenda of responsible great power behaviour. At the same time, it is helping to change the meaning of GPM by pushing it to merge with global governance. As Cui and Buzan (2016) argue, the expansion of the international security agenda from traditional military concerns to the wider agenda of non-traditional security issues, has created increasing overlap between the agenda and the actors of GPM, and the agenda and actors of global governance. Environmental stewardship has strong roots in both global governance's engagement of civil society actors, and GPM's responsibility for environmental security.

The rise of environmental stewardship also impacts on two of the newer institutions, development and the market. In relation to development, it puts pressure on how this institution is understood. To the extent that development is simply defined as economic growth with a reasonably wide distribution of the benefits, it potentially falls into contradiction with environmental stewardship. To avoid this contradiction, 'development' has moved towards 'sustainable development' (Sachs, 2012). In relation to the market, environmental stewardship provides both a new set of opportunities, in terms of production, trade and aid aimed at providing environmentally sustainable goods and services; and new restraints that impose obligations on the market to reduce environmental harm.

Environmental stewardship thus has some of the disruptive qualities that attended the rise of nationalism and the market. Like them, it puts pressure on various other primary institutions, not in a zero-sum way, but in terms of changing the meanings and practices associated with them. The impact of environmental stewardship on development might come to be seen as a positive change in its own right. Environmental stewardship shares with the market a seeming cosmopolitanising tendency, which might be seen as threatening to not only nationalism, but to GIS as a whole. But both have proved amenable to state-centric solidarism, which strengthens GIS rather than undermining it. The difference between them is that environmental stewardship is rooted in shared fates, whereas the market is rooted in liberal ideology.

## **Conclusions**

We have shown that the ES-based analytical framework set out in section 2 can deliver a detailed assessment in both normative and institutional terms, of the rise of environmental stewardship as a new primary institution of GIS. This framework offers a more systematic approach to the empirical analysis of the normative structure of GIS. Our case study has shown that environmental stewardship has definitely 'arrived' as a solidarist primary institution. Its rise to being a consensual norm of GIS can be clearly tracked through the actions of both world and interstate society, as can the creation of supporting secondary institutions; the constitutive changes in member states, both organisational and normative; and the impact of the new norm on existing primary institutions.

Primary institutions are constitutive of both states and GIS. In these terms, environmental stewardship has had a noticeable, but not redefining, impact on the criteria for rightful membership of GIS. States feel considerable pressure to follow the procedural norm of environmental stewardship, but the norm is not (yet) strong enough to threaten any state with either expulsion from GIS or status demotion within the hierarchy of GIS. It has made a significant, and seemingly growing, impact on the basic character of states inasmuch as there is convergence on the idea that states have not only a

moral responsibility to manage the planetary environment, but also a practical one to take measures to implement that responsibility, and to equip themselves for participating in GIS to that end. It is a strong enough institution to have generated an observable two-way interaction between the normative development of environmentalism within states and within GIS.

As a case study, environmental stewardship adds to the arguments set out by Clark (2007) about the ways in which actors and ideas from world society can and do shape the normative agenda and structure of the society of states. Environmental stewardship is not just a new institution in its own right, but also one that is making significant changes to the understanding and practice of other primary institutions, so far most notably development and great power management.

In relation to Wendt's (1999) criteria for how any social structure is held in place - by coercion, by calculation or by belief –environmental stewardship looks like a fairly strong institution, mostly resting on belief. Like the market, part of its support is also calculation, but like nationalism it requires relatively little coercion. Since belief is most likely to provide durable foundations for an institution, environmental stewardship looks to be stable in itself, and also a general contribution to the strength of GIS.

The emergence of environmental stewardship can perhaps be seen as part of a wider shift in GIS away from the classical concerns of war, balance of power, and the ability (or not) of the great powers to order relations amongst themselves (Bull, 1977), towards an expanding agenda of shared fate issues such as weapons of mass destruction, transnational terrorism, cybersecurity, migration, and the management of the global economy (Cui and Buzan, 2016). GIS is becoming deeply pluralist in the sense of a wider distribution of wealth and power among states, more sources of legitimate cultural authority, and durable differences between democratic and authoritarian approaches to politics. That trend suggests a weakening of GIS as the dominance and leadership of the West declines, and its ability (and willingness) to support the myth of liberal universal values decreases. But pluralism is about coexistence, and the success of environmental stewardship suggests that the need to deal with shared fate issues could support a significant degree of functionally specific, and mainly state-centric, solidarism,



sufficient to override political and cultural differences. In the emerging world of decentred globalism, the rise of environmental stewardship is a sign that responsible great power behaviour along functional lines is possible when shared-fate concerns are strong enough to override the political fault lines of GIS, most obviously those between developed and developing countries and democratic and authoritarian states.

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