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The Role of International Environmental Norms in Promoting the Global Environmental Movement in the Post-Cold War Period

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ABSTRACT

Environmental norm has been formally used since 1970s. However, during the Cold War, the norm has not been given any special attention by the international public. After the Cold War, environmental issues have been noticeable, due to the dreadful environmental damage in many countries, that seems to be a bigger threat compared to the nuclear threat during the Cold War. Furthermore, the developing of many national and international organizations and movements that care for the environment has been a political phenomenon that should be taken into account. This article analyzes how the international environment norm has influenced the development of environmentally based organizations and movements around the world after the Cold War. The existence of the international environment norm has significantly influenced the development of those environmentally based organizations and movements.

Key words: international environment norm, environmental movement, environmental regime, UNO.

Environmental preservation has been becoming one of the international norms for a long time. However, this norm was not significant during the Cold War period due to the great conflict between two major powers, the US and the USSR. After the Cold War ended, there was an important shift to environmental concern in international politics. This was evident in the emergence of an integrated approach to environmental concerns and a large number of global environmental movements. This essay aims to examine how the international environmental norm promotes the global environmental movement in the post-Cold War era.

Based on the study of international norms and global social movements, this essay argues that the international environmental norm has a significant impact in promoting a global environmental movement through international regimes. The international environmental norm is the key to legitimizing and supporting both the emergence and contribution of the global environmental movement within the international system. Global environmental movements were able to use the international norm to advance their cause.

Following this introduction, part two discusses the definition and the characteristics of international norms. This is followed by an exploration of the emergence, the spread and state’s responses towards the environmental norm during the Cold War era in part three. Part four discusses the way the environmental norm promotes the global environmental movement in the post-Cold War period. The essay is closed with a brief conclusion.

Definition and Characteristic of International Norms

The role of norms in politics has been a significant area of study for international relations scholars. This began when scholars of transnational relations in the 1970s gave attention to transnational actors who were sometimes influenced by norms and ideas (Finnemore et al., 1998: 887). At the same time, norms and normative discourse challenged scholars due to the difficulties of measurement in term of the appropriateness. The norms and discourse tended to be positioned beyond the methodological approach when studying the subject.
In examining the dynamic of international relations, constructivist theorists believe that the international structure is determined by the international distribution of ideas because it is able to shape the world structure, order, and stability (Finnemore et al., 1998: 894). According to Finnemore et al. (1998: 894), a norm as form of ideas was a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity. This means that norms involve standards of “appropriate” or “proper” behaviour both from the inter-subjective and the evaluative dimensions. As a result, norms produce social order and stability by limiting the range of choice and constraining actions of actors.

In explaining the origin of international norms, Finnemore et al. (1998: 887), stated that normative and ideational concerns have always been a consistent thread running through the life of international organisations. In other words, international or regional norms set a standard for the appropriate behaviour for states through a certain international or regional body. Similarly, Risse et al. (1999: 8) argue that international law and international organisations are still the primary vehicles for stating community norms and for collective legitimation.

Furthermore, Krasner (in Connelly & Smith, 2003: 231) argue that international organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs) have been becoming fundamental actors or “regimes” in creating the conditions where “the implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors” converge. NGOs have emerged in response to environmental problem. Finnemore et al. (1998: 897) defined as norm promoters or norm entrepreneur those who call attention to issues or even “create” issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them. At the international level, norm promoters need some kind of organisational platform to conduct norm socialization (Finnemore et al., 1998: 899).

Socialization is a process by which principled ideas held by individuals become norms in the sense of collective understandings about appropriate behaviour, by changing their identities, interests, and behaviour (Risse et al, 1999: 11). Risse et al. (1999: 11) explain that socialization occur both in a domestic and an international society among peer groups and social groups. Socialization of an international norm is the crucial process through which a state becomes a member of the international society. Therefore, the concept of socialization may be useful in understanding how the international society transmits its norms to its members. This is because a state’s political identity emerges not in isolation but in relation to other groups of states and international non-state actors.

Finnemore et al., (1998: 895) argue that there is a three-stage process of norm socialization, known as the norm life cycle; norm emergence, norm cascade, and norm internalization. The first stage, norm emergence, is a persuasion by norm entrepreneurs, as they attempt to convince a critical mass of states (norm leaders) to embrace a new norm. The second stage, norm cascade, is characterized by a dynamic of imitation as the norm leaders attempt to socialize other states to become norm followers. This stage is facilitated by a combination of pressure for conformity, desire to develop legitimation, and the will of state leaders to enhance their self-esteem. Finally, norm internalization occurs when a norm acquires a taken-for-granted quality and is no longer a matter of broad public debate.

However, the completion of the “life cycle” is not an inevitable process. It depends on the actors involved, motives, and mechanism of influence (Finnemore et al., 1998: 895). Consequently, many emergent norms fail to reach the further stages. Internalized or cascading norms may eventually become the prevailing standard of appropriateness against which norms emerge and compete for support.

Regarding the global environmental movement, Lipschultz et al. (1996:1) determine it as a trans-national system of rules, principles, norms, and practise oriented around a very large number of often dissimilar actors, focused on environmental protection, sustainability, and governance. Charnovits (in O’Brien et al., 2000: 12) includes NGOs under the umbrella term of the global environmental movement. The environmental movement or NGOs are mainly motivated by shared ethical ideas or values aiming to achieve social transformation by shaping the way vast numbers of people live their lives. NGOs do not gain authority through governmental support per se (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 30). As a result, environmental movements are often unwilling to compromise, and are deliberately completely independent from government agencies (Rucht, 1995: 79). The power of activism lies in popular mobilization to influence the holders of capital and economic power making them anti-systemic (O’Brien et al., 2000: 12).

Similarly, Jamison et al. (in Rawcliffe, 1998: 36) determine a movement as a plurality of organizations and groups engaged in strategic action in a political field, competing and bargaining with their counterparts from the established political
culture as well as each other. Lipschutz (in O’Brien et al., 2000: 111) also argues that an environmental movement organization (EMO) holds an alternative development paradigm, which is different from the conventional socio-economic paradigm and it challenges the conventional political system.

Furthermore, Keck & Sikkink (1998: 12) explain that a global movement appears most likely to emerge around several issues. First, channels between domestic groups and their governments are blocked, or where such channels are ineffective for resolving a conflict. This situation stimulates domestic NGO to bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their state from outside. Second, activist or “political entrepreneurs” believe that networking will further their mission and campaign, and actively promote their goals. They believe that transnational networking will further their organization’s missions, by sharing information, attaining greater visibility, gaining access to wider publics, and multiplying channels of institutional access. Third, conferences and other forms of international contact create arenas for forming and strengthening networks.

In pursuing their objectives, environmental global movements or NGOs may invoke professional norms as well as values (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 121). In other words, the norm prompts justifications for environmental NGOs’ action. It leaves an extensive trail of communication among NGOs’ members because the norm embodies a quality of “oughtness” and shared moral assessment (Fennimore et al., 1998: 892). Cortell & Davis (2000: 69) also argue that when a norm is salient in a particular social discourse, its invocation by relevant actors legitimates a particular behaviour or action, creating a prima-facie obligation, then questioning or delegitimizing alternative choices.

When advocating a minority position at the domestic level, the environmental movement as “norm entrepreneur” uses the international norm to strengthen their position in domestic debate (Finnemore et al., 1998: 893). The proponent of the international norm will invoke it to justify institutional, policy change or to delegitimize the preferences of domestic actors. At the international level, global environment movements also use the environmental norm as a justification to increase their leverage in environmental issues by involving an international lobbying or establishing more transnational networks (Doherty, 2002: 39). This is because the power of a movement lies in the multiple channels of access to the international arena through a structured interaction in term of transnational networks in endorsing a certain norm (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 1). Thus, environmental actors use the power of their information, ideas, and strategies to alter the information and value contacts within which states make policies, especially to overcome the lack of traditional powerful resources (Keck et al 1998: 16).

International Environmental Norm: Its Emergence, Spread, and The State’s Response

For the first time, the international environmental norm appeared at the United Nation Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), which is also known as the Stockholm Conference, in 1972 (Liffin, 1993: 108). According to Conca & Dabelko (1998: 19) it was the first broadly international effort to evaluate and discuss the environment in systematic, comprehensive terms, and it helped established the trajectory of future efforts. The scope of UNCHE encompassed a complex array of diplomatic initiatives and debates; attempts at transnational building; and global movement for social change that unfolded during the next two decades. The environmental norm continued to develop afterwards, as demonstrated by the World Commission on Environment and Development Report (Brundtland Commission) in 1987 and at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992.

As a result, the environmental norm is stated explicitly in treaties, resolutions, declarations, rules, and standards established by international organizations (Bernstein, 2000: 467), such as the Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution; the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol on the Ozone Layer; the Basel Convention on Hazardous Wastes; the Nordic Environmental Protection Convention; the London Convention on Marine Pollution; and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Jackson, 1996: 175). These illustrate that the environmental norm has become one of the significant international norms, which Jackson (1996: 175) terms “a greening atmosphere” in international society, both in diplomatic and legal spheres. The increasing number of international conferences from the 1970s, and the emergence of international environmental treaties in the 1980s and 1990s have helped domestic actors interested in similar environmental issues (Reinmann, 2003: 6).
In other words, the United Nations (UN) as the pre-eminent international organization has been playing the dominant role in promoting the environmental norm and establishing it as an international regime. There are two reasons why the UN is the dominant body promoting the environmental norm. First, the UN has been taking environmental concerns as one of its duties since there was very little consciousness among states about environmental problems after World War II (Soroos, 1999: 27). Although there were some environmental organizations, such as International Commission for the Rhine-Danube Rivers, the International Meteorological Organization, and the International Joint Commission, states were hardly committed to the environmental issue. At that time, most states concentrated on economic and political development regarding the Post-World War II situation. There was no sense in which states prioritised environmental degradation. For the UN, environmental issues were a significantly broader mission, compared to its predecessor, the League of Nations. However, the environmental issues were never mentioned in the UN Charter. Second, the major conflict between the US and the USSR during the Cold War made the UN the inevitable actor in promoting the environmental issue due to global environmental problems. After struggling with national recovery following the World War II, states were focused on the Cold War. Hence, most states had concentrated on the competition between East and West blocks, especially in military terms.

The massive environmental degradation throughout the years encouraged the UN to promote the environmental norm by conducting the first international environmental conference in Stockholm 1972, the UN Conference on Human Environment (UNCHE). At this conference, the UN showed a dominant role in managing conflict and solving collective action regarding international environmental problems (Hurrel, 1995: 133). This conference was based on an assumption that environmental degradation cannot be confined within state boundaries but spills over them, such as the radioactive contamination from nuclear weapons, the widespread of toxic within the ecosystem, the damage of forest and aquatic life from acid deposition.

Consequently, environment problems are not only problems for each nation, because they cannot be resolved by isolated actions of individual nation. Wight argues (in Hurrel, 1995: 130) that environmentalism is not only concerned with the ideas of the “good life” but also with the best means to ensure human survival, by overcoming the critical distinction between domestic and international politics. Thus, environmentalism encourages states to recognize that the destruction of the environment is not only dysfunctional or unwise, but also morally wrong (Jackson, 1996: 174).

Furthermore, Goddin (1999: 437) explains that the normative structures of the environmental issues encompass shared rights, shared duties, and shared responsibilities. Shared rights occur when all states posse strictly similar rights to utilize the environment. Shared duties aim to restrain any violations from an autonomous nation towards the rights of some other nations. The similar duties aim at preserving the environment of every nation. Shared responsibility is being responsible together with various others for producing certain outcomes regarding environmental preservation. For instance, bringing pressure upon nations that failed to follow the norm and making receipt of foreign aid or loans conditional upon effective policies to protect the environment within the recipient nations.

In other words, the environmental issue has become one of the global issues. Hurrel (1995: 130-31) explains that there are three reasons why the environment as an issue has globalized. Firstly, humanity is facing a range of global environmental problems that affect everyone and they can be effectively managed only on the basis of cooperation among states of the world. Secondly, the degree of many originally regional and local environmental problems threatens broader international repercussion, such as inter and intra state conflict. Thirdly, the complex relationship between the generation of environmental problems and the working of the effectively globalized world economy creates a new issue, which called globalization.

However, the environmental issue has not automatically united all actors within the movement. It is driven by many factors, thus, there is no distinctive character of environmental norm (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 121). Political structure, culture, and policy style, determine whether a state accepts the environmental norm or not. For instance, the federal system offers a greater opportunity for environmental groups to access political elites at different levels and to respond to local differences in environmental conditions, rather than a centralized government. This means certain nations have a more consensual approach to policy making, because the policy process is relatively open to environmental pressure groups.

Furthermore, Lipschultz & Mayer (1996: 29) explain that political economic issues also
influence a state’s policy regarding environmental protection. For developed countries, it is shown that the environment has been largely subordinate to economic concerns in order to fulfil basic industrial requirements. Resources are important for production. In contrast, less-developed countries are often dominated by governments that have fragile institutions and lack legitimacy (Lipschultz & Mayer, 1996: 30). The weakness of developing countries has been recognized generally as involving the lack of “capacity”, an inability to intervene effectively in various areas of socio-economic life.

The lack of consensus during the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm showed that it was difficult to establish a similar vision among countries in dealing with the environment and development. For example, there was disagreement among developed countries over ecologically responsible development models and contributing $100 million to the Environmental Fund and other development assistance to the Third World (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 124). The US voted against a resolution that environmental protection not be allowed to pose a threat to the Third World development because the resolution “introduced developmental issues are irrelevant to the main purpose of the conference, which was to focus world attention on the global problems of the human environment” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 124). In contrast, Sweden’s delegation agreed that the redistribution of global resources was not just a moral imperative but also a realistic response to the obvious limits to growth. The Third World countries seemed unified on substance. They believed that poverty was the great polluter and development was the solution. Thus, environmental awareness could arise if people within those countries had an improved standard of living. Some Third World countries, such as China and Brazil, accused the industrialised North of using environmental arguments to try to keep developing countries subordinated.

Despite the disagreement among states, the Stockholm Conference reached a consensus, known as sustainable development. Sustainable development was comprised of both specific policy measures, such as environmental impact assessment, as well as a more ideational goal of respecting the natural environment. There are several states which have responded enthusiastically while others have not. The different responses among states show that the environmental norm is still debatable. This is due to a number of factors (Hurrel, 1995: 134-37). First, regimes and international institution are coming to form new centres of authority that challenge the authority of national governments. Therefore, states are constrained by a set of international principles, rules, norms, and institution. In fact, each state has its own policy based on their national interests. Second, the international organization does not gain the environmental norms solely from the individual strength, but from the extent to which it ties states into a continuing and institutionalized process of negotiation. This means that some states have been influenced by environmental norm entrepreneurs, such as environmental NGOs, while some others have not.

To overcome the potential conflict among states and to implement agreement over this issue, the United Nations established the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). According to Litfin (1993: 106), the UNEP formation represented a norm institutionalization within international society through a process by which “soft law” becomes “hard law”. The UNEP has become adept at guiding nations through the process of establishing a framework convention that recognizes the existence of environmental problems and facilitates information sharing, subsequently adding actual control measures.

The role of the UN in environmental norm socialization was shown when the UNEP promoted the formulation for ozone negotiations, a significant effort for countries to institutionalize ozone protection. This is because the UNEP promoted an environmental norm towards states through a negotiation process which reflected the norm life-cycle.

Hence, the UN has been playing a dominant role in building international awareness about the environmental issues by facilitating environmental forums and agreements, especially since UNCHE. As a result UNCHE is believed to be the watershed of environmental concerns within international politics.

The Acceptance of States Towards Environmental Norm: A Path to Promote Environmental Global Movement in Post-Cold War Era

After the demise of the Cold War, environmental issues became crucial. The end of the Cold War has opened the space for development of a new understanding of security beyond traditional military interpretations. The political salience of environmental issues has
increased enormously over the last two decades as the result of accelerating rates of environmental degradation, improved scientific knowledge, and heightened popular awareness (Hurrel, 1993: 130). It is significantly different from the 1970s to 1980s, when the focus of the international community was primarily on international security concerns generated by the Cold War (Connelly & Smith, 2003: 237). This is because most states identified themselves in the frame of the East-West blocks competition, thus, it was difficult to gain the consensus regarding the environmental problems. Although environmental issues gained ground as a new discourse in the 1960s by environmental movements, at that time the concentration of environmental activists were primarily focused on the war issue, especially the Vietnam War (De Steiguer, 1995: 26).

In the post-Cold War era, the new comprehensive concept of security emerged, including the environmental issue. Today, many states believe that the existing institutions may still be inadequate to forestall future ecological crisis. It needs another actor to work together with the existing actors in promoting the environmental norm. As Mustofa Tolba (in McCormick, 1999: 52), the former executive director of UNEP, stated:

The commitment (by government) to set up ministries and to enter into international agreement has not always led to an equal commitment of action. Environment ministries exist, but their role in national decision-making is frequently marginal. Agreements have been entered into freely, but the will to enforce them has often been lacking.

Therefore, the UN established a wider environmental regime by involving more environmental organizations, which expresses a broadening of spatial and temporal horizon through the United Nation Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) 1992 in Rio, Brazil. Although the UNCHE also involved the environmental NGOs (Colas, 2002: 153), it was to a lesser degree than in the UNCED. The demise of the Cold War encouraged states to recognize the existence of NGOs, including environmental groups (Weiss & Gordenker, 1996: 24). With the breakdown of the Cold War ideological and social orthodoxy, the reluctance of state actors to interact with NGOs evaporated.

Consequently, the UNCED brings legitimation of environmental issues as a part of high politics. For environmental movements or NGOs, it means they are no longer distinctive in their recognition of environmental issues as states view them as more serious and with wider social and economic implications than in the past (Doherty 2002: 39).

However, there are other factors that make NGOs the inevitable leading actors in environmental concern within international politics (O’Brien et al., 2000: 114). Firstly, the existence of extensive networks linking environmental and other groups. Transnational NGO networks are important in the development of pressure group politics at the national and the global level of decision making. Campaigns at both the local and international levels benefit from the creation of coalitions and alliances to pursue specific goals. Global environmental movements are crucial as monitors. Hence, NGOs help to change the policies of states and international organizations because they are able to mobilize people to affect domestic and international politics.

Secondly, the source of the influence of global environmental movements lies in their scientific knowledge and expertise. Those capacities could help those NGOs to focus on the root of a problem, and can foster community solutions to common problems because they bring advanced knowledge to bear on environmental issues. Thus, NGOs are adapting more quickly to local aspirations than governmental structures.

Thirdly, the global environmental movement has a good relationship with the media due to an extensive network of contact. The media is accustomed to publicizing information and disgracing governments and international organizations. The media is an outlet for the publication of research findings, and it is also used to attract attention and publicize a particular issue through reporting on high profile mass rallies and protests.

Acquiring these capacities, environmental NGOs are able to respond and represent hope for positive attitude change toward some environmental issues when the state does not respond. According to Wapner (1998: 104), environment movements could exert political influence in world politics by pressuring or influencing states and creating a form of ‘world civic politic’ in which state behaviour becomes less central to collective choice. In this case, when the global environmental movements face a domestic barrier, they utilized the international norms to gain legitimacy and bolster their position vis-à-vis the state by exposing it to international criticism and comparison (Reinmann, 2003: 6). Moreover, in relation to the UN, NGOs are able to mobilize
popular support, publicize the UN activities, provide expertise to the secretariat and member states, and monitor the implementation of the UN conventions. Those illustrate that NGOs have been particularly active at building global civil society around UN world conferences (O’Brien et al., 2000: 16).

According to Rawcliffe (1998: 185), the increasing number of environment participant movement after the Earth Summit in 1992 demonstrated the importance of civil society, since it showed that governments alone couldn’t address the environmental crisis. It also suggests that transnational activism is increasingly facilitated by the globalization of information technology, greater international mobility, and indeed increased familiarity with the globally dominant norms and values (Colas, 2003: 141). Similarly, Reinmann (2003: 4) explains, the emergence of global environmental movements in the 1990s were part of the larger growth and spread of environmental activism that both responded to, and strategically used, international partners, international organizations, and international norms.

The growing acceptance of the global environmental movement is not only shown by the increasing number of its members but also shown by the increasing participation of major environmental groups at international conferences (Doherty, 2002: 39). For instance, total membership of ten organizations, such as Greenpeace International and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) significantly grew in 1990, compared to 1985 (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 128). Meanwhile, increasing participation within international conferences occurred when many global environmental movements such as Greenpeace International, the WWF, Friends of the Earth International, Oxfam, World Resource Institute (WRI), and the Third World Network, participated in the serial meetings of the UNCED. Most of the environmental groups were active in lobbying national governments, and also active at major conferences, including the preparatory negotiations, by gaining a status as official observers (Connelly & Smith, 2003: 234).

This meant that most states accept the active participation of the environmental NGOs within the international system. For example, Greenpeace International, Environment and Development Action in the Third World, and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) were represented among the 120 individuals making up the working parties of the Preparatory Commission Session (Conca, 1996: 111). Moreover, some NGOs representatives were included in 15 state’s delegations as members (Doherty, 1994: 207). Finally, several NGOs provided all delegations in the UNCED with background documents and information used in the drafting of Agenda 21. Agenda 21 was the major outcome of UNCED, an 800-page program designed to form a basis for international action toward the development and realization of green diplomacy. It has four sections: a social and economic dimension; conservation and management of resources development; strengthening the role of major social groups; and means of implementation (Connelly & Smith, 2003: 240).

Therefore, the UNCED encourages the environmental NGOs to work together internationally on issues of environment and development. Although environmental NGOs had already started working together successfully around single issues before UNCED, the agenda of the Earth Summit required a more integrated approach among them in formulating a strategy for preserving the environment (Dodds, 2001:203). Post-UNCED, environmental NGOs have helped create, or strategically used, international norms to promote policy changes at the domestic level in a variety of situations (Reinmann, 2003: 6). Utilizing the environmental norm, NGOs play a most valuable role in enforcing compliance with treaties and conventions among states. It is possible for the global environmental movement or NGOs to hold states accountable for environmental policies by referring to international standards and appealing to international norms.

Consequently, in some cases the involvement of global environmental NGOs challenges the hegemony of state politics. This is because NGOs establish a non-territorially based focus of political identity. It creates new forms of political organization, particularly in areas where the order of state government has broken down, and embodied in the idea of global moral community (Ruggie in Hurrel, 1995: 146). For example by distributing information and knowledge based on the research of scientists, economists, and legal experts, the global environmental movement attempt to affect government decision-making process. The Kyoto Protocol 1997 explains the role of environmental NGOs in pressuring states to comply with the international norm (Nikkei Weekly, June 24, 2002).

The opposition of the US, Canada, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand, known as JUSCANZ, towards the Kyoto Protocol stimulated some
environmental NGOs to conduct a pressure action. The Kyoto Protocol is a part of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which requires the industrialized nations to reduce their collective emission of greenhouse gases by an average of 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels in the period of 2008-12. Most of states were reluctant to ratify the Kyoto Protocol mostly because of national economic interests (Connelly & Smith, 2003: 253). Fortunately, after the involvement of national and international NGOs, most of the opponent states, except the US, agreed to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. The environmental NGOs’ efforts were varied, including rallying public opinion, implementing local government measures based on regional concerns, releasing the latest information on a regular basis independent of governments during international conferences on global warming. The most important was when environmental NGOs conducted a conference in Bonn in 2001 regarding this issue in order to put significant pressures on governments and built relationships based on trust between NGOs and governments.

By using the environmental norm, the environmental movement also joined a hybrid of protest coalitions in opposing the dominance of neo-liberal principles in international economic institutions. Liberalist economics appeared to threaten environmental regulations, and entrench the power of Western corporations (Doherty, 2002: 39). In the post-UNCED era, the discourse of environmentalism is evolving in the direction of crosscutting themes. The ecosystem focused on air, water, and species is giving way to a social-system focused on international trade, global finance, sovereignty, development, and other key processes and institutions. According to O’Brien et al. (2000: 167), most environment associations are directing their lobbying towards global economic institutions such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This is illustrated by several international environmental NGOs, such as Friends of the Earth, WRI, and WWF pursuing an eco-friendly change towards the IMF. Also, some environmental NGOs in Britain set up a Bretton Woods Project in 1995 to conduct further work on reform of the IMF and the World Bank (O’Brien et al., 2000: 170).

To sum up, it has been shown that international norms and international organizations played an important role in aiding the emergence of the global environment movement in the post-Cold War era.

Conclusion

Unlike other international norms, the environmental norm is predominantly pursued by the UN as the norm entrepreneur. This means that the establishment of an environmental regime was formed by pressure from “above” rather than from “below”, or from the environmental movement or NGOs. However, it does not mean that the global environmental NGOs do not contribute in shaping norm institutionalization. The contribution of NGOs is seen after the demise of the Cold War, when the decline in military security issues enabled a focus on the environment. Compared with the political context of the post-Cold War period, the atmosphere during the Cold War was difficult to promote both environmental norm and environmental NGOs because besides the military orientation among states, the norm on sustainable development were just starting to find their way within the international system.

Therefore, the nexus between the environmental norm and global environmental movements within the international system is best understood as two-stage process. The first stage is the socialization of an environmental norm among states, followed by the socialization process of the environmental NGOs as an inevitable actor within international system. This illustrates an important focus of study is that of a multicentric world. This phenomenon has emerged through the contribution of non-state actors within the realm of ordinary international practise alongside the state-centric system. These actors may coexist and will continue to play their roles in supporting international norms in complex ways.

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