

## Green, Jessica F., Rethinking Private Authority : Agents and Entrepreneurs in Global Environmental Governance.

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(Book Review)

**Green, Jessica F., *Rethinking Private Authority: Agents and Entrepreneurs in Global Environmental Governance.***

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When looking at global environmental governance today, one will inevitably notice the rise of private actors. NGOs, firms, and the other private actors make an actively commitment to global environmental governance by advocating norms, supporting financial sources, providing technical knowledge as experts and so forth.

While many scholars of international relations often demonstrate a private actor's role and capacity drawing on empirical case studies, it is difficult to affirm that these studies provide us with a consistent and systemic framework to explain the forms and conditions under which private actors emerge. *Rethinking Private Authority* written by Jessica F. Green attempts to address this theoretical question.

This book, organized in six chapters, shows how the global environment regulates and how various non-state actors engage in global environmental governance. At the beginning of chapter 1, she defines "private authority" as a "situation in which non-state actors make rules or set standards that other relevant actors in world politics adopt" (p. 29). Then, Green distinguishes two different forms of private authority: "delegated authority" and "entrepreneurial authority." "Delegated authority" is derived from the state, that is to say, private authority is an agent of the state. On the contrary, "entrepreneurial authority" plays the role of *de facto* rule-maker in world politics without "conferring *de jure* rights to act on behalf of the governed" (p. 34).

In the latter part of chapter 1, she develops a causal theory on private authority in terms of supply and demand. According to Green, private authority can proffer benefits to reduce transaction costs, to enhance

credibility commitments, to gain first mover advantage, and to improve reputation. These potential benefits create the demand for private authority.

Furthermore, Green explains the emergence of two different forms of private authority in terms of the existence of focal institutions such as international organizations and the preferences of powerful state actors. This model predicts that delegated authority will emerge when there exists focal institutions where powerful states share preference, whereas entrepreneurial authority will emerge where, there is no (or simply weak) institution and where there no shared preferences among the state actors.

What enhances the value of this book is that not only does Green develop a theory on private authority but she also examines the trends of private authority based on quantitative data. In chapter 2, she probes how multinational environmental agreements have delegated authority to private actors in a century of history. Referring to a series of data, she concludes that delegated authority can be found in post-treaty phases like monitoring, however, it still remains a small part of international environmental law on the whole.

In chapter 3, she examines the historical trend of civil regulation created by entrepreneurial authority. Based on a data-set from the 1950s to the year of 2000, Green points out that unlike delegated authority, entrepreneurial authority shows signs of expanding. Moreover, she concludes that most of these regulations are "hard standards" concerning monitoring and verification, requiring third party-verification.

In chapters 4 and 5, taking up the case on climate change, she examines delegated authority and

entrepreneurial authority respectively. Chapter 4 addresses private actors in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) introduced by the Kyoto Protocol on climate change in 1997. The emergence of CDM can be explained the following factors: long standing experience in measuring carbon offset projects, agreement among powerful states, and the CDM Executive Board as a focal institution

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol, a kind of accounting standard on greenhouse gas emissions generated by individual firms, is discussed in chapter 5. According to Green, this case succeeded because of the weakness of focal institutions that stems from the discord among developed countries, and the legitimacy constituted by their expertise knowledge and the reputation of two NGOs, the World Resource Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (BCSD).

This book is a carefully persuasive addition to international relations theorizing on private authority as it related to global environmental governance. Particularly, it is important that Green does not say that private authority would supersede states in international environmental rule-making, unlike the predictions that advocates of the “retreat of state” assume. Rather, she emphasizes “multiple loci of authority” for environmental issues like climate change. Moreover, she successfully proposes a theory to expound upon interactions between public and private authority, considering the state as a “possible demander of private authority” (p. 39).

Green illuminates the conditions under which private authority emerge, however, there are several points underdeveloped that are necessary in order to fully understand private authority in the environmental arena.

First, I cast doubt on Green’s theory that a rule made by the delegated authority and entrepreneurial authority can be treated as the same type of “rule.” If we look closely at the characteristics of rules like enforcement, the emergence of a certain type of private authority can be explained by differences in environmental issues such as marine pollution, the necessity for more stringent monitoring, or utilization of climate change market-mechanism.

Second, I think that the relationship between potential delegated authority and likely entrepreneurial authority is not fully examined. Does “competition” between these two would-be authorities not occur in the process of constructing authority? Once a certain type of authority is established, will it never be challenged by another? Though these points are not the primary focus of this book, it is crucial to understand the political dynamics between states and private actors.

Her sophisticated analysis of how and when private authority will emerge, however, is one of the most important contributions in recent years not only to global environmental politics but international relations theory as well.

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