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Introduction

The emergence of the international environmental agenda in the 1970s represents a distinctive change in the normative basis of international relations. Until the 1960s, most states treated environmental problems exclusively as part of domestic politics. By the time of the first UN environment conference in 1972, international society had come to accept a responsibility for the global environment (Falkner 2012). Subsequent decades saw the creation of several international environmental institutions and the adoption of hundreds of multilateral environmental agreements (see Corry and Stevenson, Chapter 1 in this volume). In many ways, the rise of global environmental politics represents a distinctly progressive moment in the normative development of international society – a move away from the pluralist origins of the Westphalian system and towards a more solidarist international society. Yet, despite the remarkable success in advancing the agenda of global environmental sustainability, we have witnessed in recent years a series of setbacks that call into question this progressive narrative. International efforts to halt global warming, in particular, have shown the inadequacy of the current approach. Judging by recent assessments of the state of the global environment (UNEP 2012), it would appear that the march towards solidarism in global environmental politics has ground to a halt.

In this chapter, I investigate international society's response to global environmental problems, focusing on the case of climate change. Building on insights from the English School of International Relations, this chapter explores how the arrival of global environmentalism has produced a normative shift in contemporary international society, away from its pluralist roots and towards a solidarist future built on common purpose, shared values and international rules, but also how this shift has been challenged more recently by several counter-trends. By engaging English School theory, this chapter seeks to connect the study of global environmental politics with wider International Relations (IR) debates about normative and institutional change. Although the English School's first generation (Wight, Butterfield, and to some extent Bull) largely ignored the emergence of the international environmental agenda, a new generation of English School theorists (Hurrell, Jackson, Buzan) has recognized the significance of environmental protection as a separate international policy domain and site of progressive change. Contemporary English School theory provides an important vantage point from which to analyze the transformations that the rise of global environmentalism has sparked, the traces it has left in the evolution of the international order, and the barriers that persist in international society to a more successful greening of international relations.

The analysis proceeds in three steps. The next section introduces the English School as a distinctive IR tradition, focusing on its approach to studying long-term international change and the idea of normative progress. The English School is divided on the possibility of such progress, as is evident in the debate between pluralists and solidarists. The third section examines the nature of international climate politics through the lens of the pluralist-solidarist debate and shows the extent to which the

United Nations (UN) climate regime has been committed to a solidarist vision of international environmental regulation. The fourth section then considers more recent trends that suggest a weakening of the classic solidarist ambition behind the climate regime. The current situation is ambiguous, if not paradoxical: on the one hand, pluralist institutions of great power management and national sovereignty are increasingly shaping the contours of climate negotiations, suggesting a waning of state-centric solidarism and a strengthening of pluralism. On the other hand, the crisis that has engulfed state-centric solidarism has also led to the emergence of a different solidarist trend, one built around world society and the growth of transnational governance mechanisms.

The English School, global environmentalism and progressive change in international society

The English School, once considered to be a case for closure (Jones 1981), has made a remarkable comeback in international relations. Having been 'reconvened' in the late 1990s (Buzan 1999), it now counts a growing number of scholars among its members. They make up a diverse field with wide-ranging theoretical and empirical inclinations but share a common interest in the social dimensions of international relations, and specifically the rules, norms and practices that govern the interactions between states. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer more than a brief review of its main theoretical tenets.[1] Instead, I shall focus here on the core conceptual ideas that underpin the English School's approach to studying long-term change in international society and how this can be applied to the study of the transformative potential of global environmentalism.

The English School: key concepts and debates

The English School started out as a small group of scholars that met from 1959 onwards under the auspices of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics. Its early members came from different disciplinary backgrounds – history, philosophy, theology and international relations – and also included practitioners of diplomacy (Dunne 1998). They all subscribed to a broadly defined sociological perspective on international relations, focused on the core concept of international society. By nurturing a conception of international relations as a social construction with its own rules and norms, the English School stood in marked contrast to the more mechanistic idea of an international system that North American IR approaches work with. It would therefore be wrong to portray the former as merely a British version of American realism, despite important conceptual and thematic overlaps (e.g. focus on security, balance of power, and great power management). Instead, the English School is better seen as a *via media* between the then dominant approaches of realism and liberalism, (Buzan 2014, 5-7) characterized by an ontological and epistemological stance that is

much closer to social constructivism than any of the rationalist approaches that have dominated the discipline in North America (Dunne 1995).

Two features make the English School a distinctive approach to studying international order and change: first, its historical focus, which conceives of international society as being historically situated and subject to change; and second, its embrace of an avowedly normative perspective, which provides a basis for evaluating international change.

With regard to the first aspect, the study of the historical origins and evolution of contemporary international society from Europe's Westphalian order to its expansion on a global scale has always been at the heart of the English School project (Bull and Watson 1984). It gave rise to an investigation into how the Westphalian states system established distinctive institutions (sovereignty, war, diplomacy, balance of power, international law, great power management), how colonialism and other forms of political and economic expansion led to the globalization of these institutions and how the process of decolonization integrated developing countries into an essentially Western international society (Buzan 2014: Chapter 5). By identifying different types of international societies within their specific historical and cultural context, and by examining their change over time, the English School opened up a perspective on contemporary international society that focused scholarly attention on the malleable nature of its foundational institutions and on the tensions that exist within its constitutional and normative order.

The English School's second feature, its distinctive normative orientation, was originally centred on the practice of diplomacy but is now more widely employed to examine the legitimacy of international order or specific institutional features. In what became known as the debate between pluralists and solidarists, English School scholars discussed the right balance between the need to establish international order and maintain stability, on the one hand, and the desire to promote global justice and bring about international change, on the other. Armed with a historicist understanding of international relations, they examined particular instances of normative change that (at least partially) challenge the existing order, be it the rise of nationalism (Mayall 1990) or human rights (Vincent 1986). English School theorists are far from united in their assessment of the consequences of such normative change: solidarists embrace cosmopolitan values and welcome the historical forces that are pushing international society towards promoting universal norms. In contrast, pluralists express concern about the threat that norm-driven change poses to the stability of international society; they defend a sovereignty-based international order, pointing to the profound diversity of values and cultures that divides humankind. In other words, solidarists consider order to be unsustainable if the yearning for global justice is ignored, while pluralists are willing to sacrifice the pursuit of universal values if that is what the maintenance of international order demands.

Two caveats are worth mentioning. First, it would be misleading to portray the pluralism-solidarism debate as being about two opposing camps that offer mutually exclusive conceptions of international society. Instead, the English School invites an

analysis of the tensions between these two versions of international order, for 'world order is and always has been both pluralist and solidarist' (de Almeida 2006: 68). Second, the pluralism-solidarism debate is about both empirical and normative questions. At an empirical/analytical level, it is concerned with identifying the spectrum of possible states of affairs along which individual international societies can be found. In the case of environmental politics, for example, we can conceptualise the creation of ever more international environmental agreements and institutions as a move towards a 'thicker' level of institutional development in international society, while considering the degree to which pluralist elements of international order continue to shape this international policy domain. At a normative level, the debate functions as a framework for working out where on the spectrum between thin and thick institutionalisation international society ought to be. For example, in environmental politics we find calls for the strengthening of central international authority to advance a global agenda of environmental protection alongside arguments for a more de-centralised and bottom-up approach that acknowledges and protects existing differences in how individual societies value and pursue environmental protection.

Because the English School keeps both empirical and normative dimensions engaged in its theoretical and historical enquiries, it offers a more 'holistic perspective on international relations' (Buzan 2014, 86). Applied to the environmental policy domain, an English School perspective would ask how global environmentalism relates to cosmopolitan versus national values; whether the protection of the global environment necessarily involves a move towards a 'thicker' international society or whether it can be achieved within a 'thin' set of international institutions; and whether the growth in international environmental governance in itself represents a solidarist development in international society or can be explained with reference to a pluralist logic of limited cooperation. English School scholars are likely to be found on both sides of this debate, with some identifying the rise of global environmentalism as a solidarist moment in history (Jackson 2000) and others interpreting it as being it consistent with pluralist international society (Buzan 2004) or considering the persistence of sovereignty-based international order as the precondition for successful environmental protection (Bull 1977).

In investigating the state of normative development in international society, the English School focuses on deeper institutional change at the level of the constitutional order of international relations. Its key conceptual innovation is the notion of *primary* institutions (Buzan 2004, 161-204). In contrast to *secondary* institutions, which are equivalent to the purposefully designed institutions as studied by regime theorists, primary institutions comprise organically evolved social practices that are constitutive of both international society and its actors, i.e. states. Primary institutions are more fundamental than deliberately created secondary institutions; they tend to last longer, even though they too can change, decline and even decay. Change at the level of primary institutions is thus a good measure of profound change of the foundations of international society (Holsti 2004, Buzan 2004). Analysts will still want to examine change in secondary institutions as indicators of deeper normative change, but the two

levels should not be conflated. Secondary institutions are derivative of primary institutions, representing not just the interests of the states that have created them but also embodying the underlying norms that make up international society's constitutional order.

We can thus begin to understand the growth of global environmentalism within international society as operating at different but closely related levels. On the one hand, the idea of global environmental protection, or environmental stewardship, has gained ground and has increasingly come to be defined as a core responsibility for states and international society. In this sense, environmental responsibility has emerged as a primary institution, though debate continues on the extent to which it has established itself among other, and often competing, primary institutions such as the market or national sovereignty (Falkner 2012). On the other hand, international society has created a growing number of multilateral environmental agreements that cover an ever greater range of ecological issues, from species extinction to ozone layer depletion, toxic waste trade and genetically modified organisms. These regimes make up the secondary institutions of the global environmental policy domain. They reflect the underlying commitment that international society has made to the protection of the global environment. Developments at the level of environmental regimes may be taken as a measure of how strongly embedded the primary institution of environmental responsibility is. Thus, the growing number of treaties and treaty ratifications may be seen as an indication of the strengthening and globalization of the underlying primary institution of environmental responsibility, while concerns about weak implementation and growing fragmentation of environmental rules may indicate certain tensions between the environmental responsibility norm and other, more firmly established, primary institutions (sovereignty, market). In either case, distinguishing primary and secondary institutions, and using the former as benchmarks of international social change, helps us to gain greater purchase on the nature of international order and how it is evolving.

An English School perspective on global environmentalism

How should we interpret the rise of global environmentalism and its consequences for international society through an English School lens? Apart from Hedley Bull, who devoted a brief passage in *The Anarchical Society* to environmental issues (1977, 293-95), the first generation of English School theorists largely ignored the rise of global environmentalism. But a second generation of English School scholars have started to recognize the significance of the environmental agenda as a potential site of normative development in international relations. Hurrell has developed the most sustained interest in global environmentalism as a transformative force in international relations. Following on from Bull, he reiterates the central role of states in organizing a global response to the environmental crisis but identifies a solidarist trend in the emergence of an ever more complex web of global environmental governance (Hurrell 2007, chapter 9). Coming from a more constructivist perspective, Reus-Smit's work on the

changing normative constitution of international society led him to proclaim the emergence of a green moral purpose of the state in the late 20th century, though he warned that the results of this 'ideological reevaluation … remain unclear' (1996, 119). Jackson is far less equivocal in his assertion that the society of states has come to accept a general responsibility for environmental protection, with state representatives assuming the role of 'chief trustees or stewards of the planet' (2000, 176). Buzan takes up Jackson's argument and identifies environmental stewardship as an emerging element of the deeper normative structure of international society, which 'probably now registers as a master institution' (Buzan 2004, 233).

What is the underlying logic that drives the growth in global environmental politics? For Jackson (2000), and to some extent also for Hurrell (2007), environmentalism is a distinctive area for solidarist development in international society. For one, the environmental movement, which has played a critical role in elevating environmental issues to matters of international diplomacy (McCormick 1989), espouses a normative agenda of global political change that is rooted in universalist green values. Environmentalism may come in different shades of green, but underlying it is a universally framed environmental ethics that expands humanity's normative horizon beyond anthropocentric interests. In this sense, environmentalism goes beyond the human rights-based solidarism in English School thinking to include the planet's health as a concern. In its more radical form, environmentalism pushes beyond anthropocentric norms and demands that humans adopt an eco-centric perspective, by recognizing the rights of the non-human environment. Second, the global environmental movement has emerged as a separate force behind the solidarist transformation, playing a key role in mobilizing for a global collective response to environmental crises. Environmental NGOs lobby states to engage in global collective action, constantly demanding a much a deeper level of international cooperation and even convergence between states than would normally be expected in a pluralist international society. And third, the activity of nonstate actors, both as lobbyists and as partners in the creation of global environmental governance, points to an extension of the global web of environmental rules beyond the narrow confines of state-centric international relations. Global environmental protection thus becomes the laboratory for a solidarist move that builds global governance involving a multitude of actors, from states to NGOs and businesses and from international organizations to regional bodies, municipalities and cities. It thus points to the possibility of moving beyond the state-centric international society and towards a global polity built on world society (Buzan 2004: Chapter 4).

Pluralists are generally skeptical of the solidarist vision behind global environmentalism. They point to the many weaknesses of international environmental regimes, which frequently lack ambition and cannot be enforced. And they remind us of the persistence of value pluralism even in a policy field that abounds with universalist green rhetoric. Societies hold different views on the extent to which environmental protection should be prioritized, particularly if it clashes with the economic growth imperative, and profound differences also exist with regard to the instruments that

should be used to address ecological problems. States may share a common interest in a healthy planet, but differences in power and ideologies prevent international society from a deeper form of environmental cooperation. Buzan sums up pluralist skepticism when he states that 'environmentalism still represent[s] the aspirational more than the empirical side of solidarism' (2004, 150).

This is not to suggest that pluralists cannot envisage some form of inter-governmental cooperation on environmental problems. As Buzan reminds us, 'elements of environmentalism can develop, and have done so, within the pluralist logic of coexistence' (2004, 150). Indeed, where environmental degradation poses a serious threat to the survival of sovereign states, we should expect them to attempt to solve the underlying problem through some form of international cooperation, even if this is far from the solidarist vision of collective green action. In this context, one can point to various transboundary forms of pollution, which have led to limited developments in international law that seek to strengthen the harm prevention principle (Elliott 2006), or the international regime to avert the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer, which posed a serious threat to human health especially in countries close to the Arctic and Antarctic circles (Parson 2003). Both the regulation of transboundary air pollution and restrictions on ozone-depleting substances required only a minimal level of intervention into domestic policy domains and were compatible with a fairly strict stance on protecting national sovereignty and non-intervention.

As we have seen, the English School provides a macro-perspective on the rise of global environmentalism that allows us to work out its broader significance for the development of international society's normative structure. The following section examines the international politics of climate change in order to shed further light on how solidarist and pluralist logics shape global environmental politics in this critically important area. This is not simply about deciding whether solidarism *or* pluralism best captures the reality of international climate politics: solidarism and pluralism are best thought of as two qualities of international society that are both at work at the same time, often in tension with each other, sometimes working in tandem.

Pluralism versus solidarism in international climate politics

This section engages the pluralist-solidarist debate in an analysis of long-term trends in the international politics of climate change. It first explores the nature of the climate change problem, asking whether it can be solved within the confines of a pluralist international society, or whether it requires a more solidarist response. In other words, is a logic of co-existence sufficient to organize effective collective action at the international level, or is a deeper level of international cooperation, based on a thicker set of international rules and institutions, needed to halt global warming? The analysis then turns to the existing international climate regime and asks where it can be found on the spectrum between pluralist and solidarist international society. Over twenty years of negotiations have resulted in a governance system that is built around an international treaty-system and an ever-larger array of regulatory instruments and

institutions, but does this dramatic increase in international institution-building amount to a shift towards solidarist cooperation?

The international climate response: co-existence or cooperation?

To say that manmade climate change is a 'problem' that requires an internationally coordinated response hardly does justice to the severity of the challenge. Based on current predictions of future greenhouse gas emissions and the additional global warming that they are likely to produce over the course of this century, scientists warn of devastating and irreversible impacts on human societies. Expected changes in global temperatures, ocean chemistry, sea levels, weather patterns and agricultural patterns all combine to make climate change '*the* global challenge of modern times' (Hoffmann 2013, 3). While it is clear that the world needs to halt, and then greatly reduce, the currently rising emission levels, we are far from having developed a good understanding of how to mitigate climate change. Reducing greenhouse gases will require unprecedented changes to the way societies and economies are organized. To achieve the needed industrial transformation in a relatively short timescale requires concerted efforts by nearly all major emitters. Climate change has therefore emerged as one of the most intractable collective action problems in international relations. Uncertainty about long-term trends, divergent interests and endemic free riding incentives all combine to make climate change a particularly complex global problem.

Could the pluralist logic of co-existence on its own compel states to take the required action on climate change? English School authors have traditionally viewed international environmental cooperation as a form of solidarist cooperation based on shared values and interests (Bull 1977, 70). In contrast, Buzan (2004) has argued more recently that some form of international environmental cooperation should be expected even in a pluralist context, particularly if core state interests are at stake and if effective measures are available. As was the case with the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer, leading industrialised countries can come together to avert an environmental crisis that poses a direct threat to the health of their citizens. Climate change is increasingly seen as such a threat, both to large numbers of vulnerable people and states. Furthermore, climate change may pose a threat to international security where it acts as a threat multiplier in failing or failed states (Gemenne et al. 2014). It is telling in this context that military organizations in the United States and other Western powers have already devoted considerable efforts to studying the security implications of climate change. Unlike many environmental problems, therefore, climate change could be viewed as an existential threat to the core interests of the society of states, potentially giving rise to a coordinated response based on the logic of co-existence.

Whether or not climate change poses an immediate and urgent security risk for most states remains contested, however, and in fact some of the most powerful states face only comparatively weak security threats from a warming climate. It is therefore far from clear whether a pluralist solution would come about through collective action by the great powers. Furthermore, mitigating climate change is likely to be expensive

and, unlike in the case of ozone layer protection, no easy technological solutions are available. Again, it is fair to conclude that the high costs of taking action, combined with uneven levels of security threats, will reduce the likelihood that a predominantly pluralist logic of coordinating national policies to avert dangerous global warming will suffice. Some great powers may simply choose to adapt to a warming climate rather than invest in mitigation measures. Of course, if a dramatic increase in the severity of climate change or some catastrophic event triggered by global warming were to happen, then that might jolt the major powers into collective action. Alternatively, a dramatic worsening of the situation might produce a different reaction. Rather than seek to cooperate with others, which could prove time-consuming and costly, the most powerful states might respond by taking unilateral measures, for example by deploying geo-engineering technologies. This option would raise the question, apart from its feasibility, of how to govern the use of such unilateral interventions on a global atmospheric scale (Bodansky 2013).

It is fair to conclude, therefore, that a logic of co-existence is unlikely to generate a comprehensive and timely collective response to global warming. Faced with a slowly rising threat of climate change that affects countries differently around the world, international society would need to develop an international response based on a higher degree of normative convergence around the objective of global climate protection. Viewed through an English School lens, climate change thus represents a global collective action problem that requires a solidarist development in international society. There are several reasons for why an unusually high degree of international cooperation is needed to tackle the climate change problem: it is partly a reflection of the complexity of the mitigation task, which involves de-carbonising the global economy, including entire energy systems, supply chains and urban infrastructure. Climate mitigation also produces severe distributional conflicts, which makes cooperation more difficult to achieve unless leading emitters share a normative commitment to global climate stabilization. And to counter the inevitable free-riding incentives that are multilateral forms of climate cooperation create, strong international institutions are needed to make mitigation commitments stick and create trust among the major emitters. Furthermore, as it is unlikely that states alone have sufficient steering power to bring about a global green transformation on the scale required to halt global warming, a wide range of nonstate actors will need to be involved in the global collective response, again pointing towards a more solidarist framework of global climate governance.

The solidarist ambition of the UNFCCC regime

The English School concept of solidarism is a label that captures a profound change in international relations along four dimensions:

> 'the move to institutions and expansion of global rule-making; changes in the making,
> development, and justification of international law; the increasing emphasis placed on

the enforcement of international norms and rules; and a changed understanding of the state and of state sovereignty' (Hurrell 2007: 58).

Global environmental politics can be said to have made big strides in a solidarist direction. It has led to the comprehensive institutionalization of international environmental policy; it has resulted in a deepening of international environmental law and its expansion to cover ever more issues of global concern; it has sparked greater interest in mechanisms to promote compliance with international environmental rules; and it has contributed to a rebalancing between the state's sovereign rights and global responsibilities, prompted not least by shifts in domestic societal values and a growth in transnational networks that increasingly circumvent or complement the state's authority. Such solidarist ambition has also been a strong current in the international politics of climate change from its origins in the 1980s. Scientists, campaigners and diplomats have routinely appealed to states' responsibility towards the global environment, urging leaders to agree legally binding international agreements that would mandate greenhouse gas emission cuts. They have argued for the creation of strong international institutions, including for the distribution of climate aid to support mitigation and adaptation policies worldwide. And they have urged international society to base climate action on strong notions of international equity and burden-sharing.

The timing of the emergence of the international climate change agenda helped to reinforce a broader solidarist agenda. The end of the Cold War opened up the possibility for considerable normative expansion in international society. It also gave rise to a more expansive approach to global rule-making, focused on the United Nations but also involving nonstate actors such as NGOs and scientific organisations in novel governance approaches. UNFCCC negotiations also coincided with a dramatic increase in attention to global environmental problems, culminating in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. The threat of global warming seemed to confirm the findings of the influential Brundtland Report, which concluded that environmental trends exist "that threaten to radically alter the planet, that threaten the lives of many species upon it, including the human species" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 2). In terms of both its ambition and potential scope, climate protection was thus a prime example of the 'new world order' ambition that characterised international relations after the end of the Cold War.

Many of the UNFCCC's core elements confirmed the solidarist ambition behind international climate politics in the early 1990s. At the heart of the climate regime is a multilateral process of agreeing international rules for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. From the beginning, the UNFCCC negotiations followed a strictly multilateral model, with consensus-based decision-making and a bargaining process that gave weaker nations more 'voice' than was common in other multilateral regimes. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, the regime's chief decision-making body, meets every year for a two-week session, and additional negotiation sessions are held in between COPs with increasing frequency. Over the years, the negotiations have

attracted growing numbers of observers, with separate forums for nonstate actors now being convened alongside the intergovernmental COP. Despite complaints by some observers about lack of transparency and access, the climate negotiations are a far cry from the exclusive nature of traditional diplomacy. Thousands of climate scientists, legal experts, diplomats and campaigners now routinely gather for annual negotiations, making the UNFCCC one of the largest and most accessible forums for debating and deciding global policy.

The UNFCCC's early emphasis on developing legal agreements and instruments that regulate greenhouse gas emissions also marks it out as a predominantly solidarist regime. Following the model of the successful ozone negotiations, the climate process was designed to agree a succession of legally binding protocols that add regulatory specificity and clout to the framework convention's climate protection norm. All nations were meant to be bound by legally enshrined obligations, with industrialised countries carrying the main mitigation burden. And further international institution-building was needed to support the implementation of the legal obligations. The Clean Development Mechanism led to the development of an elaborate international bureaucracy that assesses and approves proposals for investment in emission-reducing projects, while the global system for emissions trading required the creation of a system of international property rights in emissions (so-called emission permits) that can be traded in specially designed international markets.

The UNFCCC regime is also based on strong equity norms that apportion the greatest burden for climate mitigation to the most advanced industrialised countries. The framework convention's principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR), which is also anchored in the Rio Declaration of the 1992 UNCED, came to be interpreted as providing for a strict distinction between developed and developing countries in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, with the latter being exempted from any legally binding emission reductions. By basing the mitigation burden on the historical responsibility of industrialised countries, the climate regime adopted a strong climate justice principle with considerable distributional consequences, which would later be contested by the United States and other industrialised countries (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012).

A crisis of solidarism? International climate politics between great power politics and transnationalism

While the scale of solidarist ambition in the climate regime is indeed striking, it is far from clear how much of this ambition has been realized. This section analyses recent trends in international climate politics that cast light on the ongoing tensions between solidarist and pluralist logics of international cooperation. Three developments, in particular, signal a fundamental and potentially lasting shift in the nature of global climate governance: first, the repeated failure to negotiate a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol has revealed both the limitations of the current multilateral approach

and the ability of the great powers to scale back the regime's original solidarist ambition. Second, some of the largest emitters, which also happen to be the most powerful states in international society, have forced through a change in the regulatory approach, replacing top-down regulations *a la* Kyoto with the Paris Agreement's new bottom-up approach based on voluntary pledges. And third, the apparent failure of the inter-governmental regime to rein in rising greenhouse gas emissions has created space for other actors to step in and create new forms of climate governance, pointing to an enhanced role of nonstate actors and more complex and hybrid forms of authority in global climate politics. Intriguingly, therefore, just as the state-centric solidarist vision of the UNFCCC has been called into question, a new cosmopolitan solidarism based on greater involvement of world society is emerging as a potentially more radical alternative in the form of transnational climate governance.

The crisis of multilateralism: a case for great power management?

The UNFCCC's strong version of multilateralism was originally seen as one of the regime's main strengths. This is no longer the case. Failure to agree strong and legally binding emission reduction targets has led to growing criticism of the UNFCCC's burdensome and slow procedures. Basing decisions on the consensus principle and allowing every state a say in the crafting of mitigation policies may have ensured a high degree of procedural legitimacy for the regime, but this has come at high costs in terms of ineffective bargaining and political inertia.

The experience of the 2009 Copenhagen conference, in particular, was a watershed event in this regard. Parties had spent two years preparing for the conference, which was meant to adopt a new treaty, and negotiators from over 190 countries spent a further two weeks in Copenhagen going over a heavily bracketed text without resolving the underlying differences. It took a small group of powerful heads of government to break the impasse and draft a compromise agreement in the final hours of the conference. The resulting document, the Copenhagen Accord, was not based on the official negotiation text, leading to protests among developing countries who objected to being presented with what amounted to a great power *fait accompli*. In the end, the conference merely 'noted' the text, although the subsequent COP later adopted it as part of the Cancun agreements in 2010 (Falkner et al. 2010). Copenhagen had laid bare the inefficiencies of a strict multilateral approach and for the first time introduced a different negotiating process in which the great powers play a leading role in hammering out the core deal that forms the basis for a broader multilateral agreement. It was thus at Copenhagen that the pluralist institution of great power management emerged as a potential alternative to, or modification of, climate multilateralism.

The debate about alternative forums for negotiating climate change goes back well before the Copenhagen conference. Existing institutions such as the G-8 and G-20 have provided a platform for high-level political dialogue on climate change, and new forums (Asia-Pacific Partnership; Major Economies Forum) were created by the US alongside the UNFCCC to promote minilateral cooperation on energy efficiency and low-

carbon technology transfer. There is now a burgeoning debate on the benefits of minilateral climate clubs, which are either seen as providing a more effective means for agreeing mitigation policies among a select group of climate powers or as offering a better framework for enforcing such agreements (Falkner 2016a). As recent bilateral agreements between the US and China have shown, the main players in the climate negotiations increasingly seek to discuss cooperation on mitigation strategies outside the multilateral framework. As climate change has gained in political salience, the great powers have increasingly relied on traditional channels for communication and negotiation among them.

The intensification of great-power dialogue reflects in part growing dissatisfaction with climate multilateralism. However, we are still far from a situation where minilateralism and great power management could replace the multilateral process. The UNFCCC's legitimacy remains high particularly among developing countries and environmental campaign groups, and even if minilateral climate clubs were to emerge in the future it is just as likely that they would want to work with the multilateral regime and the services it provides (e.g. emission reporting and accounting systems) than seek to replace it. None of the existing minilateral initiatives has gained sufficient support among negotiators and campaigners to make it a viable alternative to the core regime (Hjerpe and Nasiritousi 2015).

What we are witnessing, therefore, is not a full-scale replacement of the UNFCCC process with a minilateral alternative but a rebalancing between the solidarist and pluralist logics of climate cooperation. Great powers are increasingly unencumbered by the conventions of multilateralism, seeking out opportunities for bilateral and plurilateral side-deals, even though they feel compelled to continue to work within the multilateral framework.

The Kyoto Protocol: state solidarism in decline

One of the main consequences of the return of great power diplomacy in climate politics has been a shift in the international regulatory approach away from the international law-based model of the Kyoto Protocol and towards a more flexible and voluntary approach. The United States has long argued against top-down and legally binding emission reductions targets. But while the other major emitters have until recently advocated Kyoto Protocol-style regulations, this is no longer the case. Several major powers that had ratified the Kyoto Protocol are no longer willing to be bound by it in its second commitment period (Canada, Russia, Japan). And while the European Union and most developing countries continued to advocate legally binding targets, the negotiations on the Paris Agreement saw a big shift towards a bottom-up approach (Falkner 2016b). The traditional solidarist solution of tying the main emitters into a legally defined system of obligations is no longer at the heart of the emerging mitigation regime.

It should be noted, of course, that the UNFCCC always combined top-down and bottom-up regulatory elements: Article 4.1 expected all parties to develop national

policies in a bottom-up fashion while Article 4.2 expected developed countries to reduce emissions according to a specific deadline, an aim that was later legally enshrined in the Kyoto Protocol (Bodansky 2011). But it was the Kyoto Protocol, with its internationally agreed emission reduction targets, that embodied the solidarist ambition behind the climate regime. National targets were to be negotiated multilaterally and established in a treaty framework, rather than chosen according to domestic policy priorities. In this sense, the climate regime followed very closely the example of the Vienna Convention on ozone layer depletion, which led to the legally binding CFC emission reductions scheme in the Montreal Protocol. By creating international legal obligations for mitigation, international society would gradually and collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Enforcement of the Kyoto Protocol was never a realistic scenario, but the emphasis on legal obligations signaled that collective responsibility and common purpose informed the international response to global warming.

In the new regulatory approach of the Paris Agreement, national pledges reflect domestic willingness to act rather than international obligations. The parties to the agreement have committed to submitting national pledges, so-called 'Nationally Determined Contributions' (NDCs), that can then be added up to establish the collective effort, allowing negotiators to establish the gap that exists between existing mitigation policies and the effort needed to keep global warming to the below 2^0C. This is not to suggest that what is happening is a complete hollowing out of the solidarist nature of the existing regime. Several international institutions that were created under the auspices of the UNFCCC will continue to play an important role: the Green Climate Fund, which is to distribute a large part of the international climate finance promised by donor countries; a new technology mechanism, which will facilitate greater technology transfer and diffusion; and the framework for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), which is intended to support the protection of forests in developing countries. But it is clear that the outcome of the Paris COP in 2015 signals a retrenchment of solidarist ambition and a re-assertion of a pluralist logic of de-centralised coordination that protects national sovereignty.

New forms of climate governance and the rise of transnational solidarism

Partly in response to the weakening of state-centric solidarism as the dominant response to climate change, a different global approach has emerged in recent years that is based on greater involvement of nonstate actors and reliance on private or hybrid sources of global authority. So-called private environmental governance has been on the rise since at least the 1990s (Falkner 2003), and from the early 2000s onwards, more and more private and public-private initiatives have sprung up that focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation. As the sense of dissatisfaction with the contributions of the intergovernmental regime has grown, so have new transnational actors sought to experiment with novel approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Hoffmann 2011). There now exists a lively field of transnational climate governance with a multitude of actors (municipalities, cities,

corporations, NGOs) advancing new governance solutions at local, regional and transnational levels (Bulkeley et al. 2014). Whether these new initiatives will be effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions – and can therefore be seen as a viable alternative to state-centric climate governance – remains to be seen. But it is becoming clear that the growing interest among nonstate actors in taking action on their own, or in partnership with state authorities, suggests at least the beginning of a profound shift in the international politics of climate change.

The emerging field of transnational climate governance is characterized by considerable diversity, overlap and fragmentation. A myriad of actors have created initiatives that seek to disseminate information, coordinate voluntary efforts of emission reductions, set regulatory standards, or create certification schemes to promote low-carbon technologies or products. They include, to name but a few, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project), Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP), Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and various carbon off-set or accounting schemes. Some of these initiatives are created and maintained by a single type of actors (e.g. NGOs or business) or by alliances of different types of actors, also including state authorities. In some cases, transnational initiatives respond to intergovernmental developments or seek to assist with the implementation of internationally agreed objectives. In other cases, they aim to fill governance gaps left by international organisations or states, thereby enlarging the field of global governance.

Viewed from an English School perspective, the growth in transnational governance approaches gives rise to a different scenario in the evolution of international society. Whereas greater reliance on great power diplomacy and management and the decline of international law-based regulation indicate a weakening of state-centric solidarism, the growth of global governance rooted in world society suggests a shift towards a multi-centric, transnational, form of solidarism. What we are witnessing here is a complex process of bypassing and redefining state sovereignty by nonstate actors that are assuming greater global responsibility themselves.

The increasing significance of nonstate governance does not in itself signal a decline of state-centric governance. International society and world society are not trapped in some kind of zero-sum logic. They can augment and support each other, performing complementary functions and contributing to the growth of ever more complex, multi-layered global governance. Indeed, in the field of climate change, states and international organizations increasingly seek to steer and orchestrate transnational actors and networks (Hale and Roger 2014).

The rise in transnational climate initiatives thus points to a transformation in the solidarist project of building global climate governance. We are witnessing a shift from the statist version of solidarism, which focused on the creation of intergovernmental regulatory authority to bring about a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and towards a more hybrid model with greater involvement of other actors and a more decentralized form of steering social and economic actors. National sovereignty is not

so much being eroded as it is bypassed, supplemented and shared with other actors at sub-national and transnational levels.

Conclusions

The rise of global environmentalism in the twentieth century has led to a profound transformation of international society. As states have come to accept a responsibility to protect the global environment, they have successfully expanded international society's normative basis to include a concern for the health and survival of the natural environment. This development marks a distinctive solidarist moment in the evolution of international society. Just as in the case of the rise of human rights, the growth of the international environmental agenda has led to a dramatic increase in international institution-building and rule-making, the creation of a growing body of international environmental law, and a reinterpretation of what it means to be a sovereign state with territorial control over a nation's natural resources. In this sense, the rise of global environmentalism represents a progressive moment in the move from a pluralist Westphalian system towards a more solidarist international order.

As the empirical case study of climate politics has shown, however, the progressive narrative of environmental solidarism is not a straightforward one. Despite a deeply ambitious international treaty that set off a long-running process of international negotiation and institution-building, the multilateral climate regime has never managed to develop the depth of commitment and strength of institutional governance to rein in global greenhouse gas emissions. Well over two decades after the UNFCCC's adoption, the climate negotiations have failed to produce the internationally agreed and legally codified emission reduction targets that the original solidarist approach envisaged.

Viewed from an English School perspective, three trends can be identified that suggest a profound shift in the international politics of climate change. First, as the salience of the climate issue has increased, the great powers have increasingly sought to break out of the multilateral straightjacket of the UNFCCC and explored political compromises in bilateral and minilateral forums. Since the Copenhagen conference in 2009, the pluralist institutions of great power management has surfaced more clearly than ever before in climate politics, even though it is far from replacing the solidarist norm of multilateralism. The great powers remain committed to the UNFCCC process, even if they are not willing to let it play the kind of role that solidarists envisage. Second, while all great powers are conscious of their climate responsibility, most are unwilling to subject their mitigation policies to multilateral decision-making and are therefore seeking to change the existing regulatory approach from a top-down to a more bottom-up system of voluntary pledges. A pluralist logic of preserving national sovereignty and the diversity of national preferences has prevailed over solidarist efforts to arrive at common goals and internationally agreed policies that are enshrined in international law. And third, the looming crisis of state-centric solidarism in climate politics has mobilized nonstate actors to experiment with new forms of global climate

governance outside the intergovernmental realm. World society has become the site of a growing field of governance experimentation, leading to reconfigurations of political authority within and beyond national boundaries. The growing engagement of nonstate actors suggests a shift in the solidarist project away from its traditional state-centric orientation in favour of a more cosmopolitan direction, even if the multitude and diversity of transnational actors and initiatives is as yet far removed form the visions of a global polity based on world society.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the rise of global environmentalism offers a fruitful empirical field for the study of normative change in international relations. For English School scholars, it provides a test case to examine the ways in which pluralist and solidarist logics interact in given policy domains. At the same time, environmental scholars in International Relations can benefit from engagement with the English School, in that it offers a holistic theoretical framework for the study of deep-seated and long-term processes of international change. The English School has made a distinctive contribution to the study of progressive change in international relations, distinguishing between primary institutions that make up international society's constitutional order and secondary institutions that are purposefully built to regulate specific policy areas. If environmental responsibility has indeed emerged as a primary institution in international society, as a growing number of scholars has come to conclude, then future research should be directed to examine in more detail how this particular primary institution relates to, and often clashes with, more established institutions (multilateralism, sovereignty, great power management) and how tensions between conflicting primary institutions can be reduced. This would provide at least some insights into the conditions for making further progress in embedding environmental norms in international society.

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[1] Interested readers can consult a number of excellent reviews of the English School tradition (Buzan 2014; Linklater and Suganami 2006).