



CHAPTER 7

Driving the Eco-social Turn: Governance and Politics

May Day demonstration in Hamburg, Germany in favour of social rights for all and an inclusive, solidarity-based city.

Transformative change at the national level must be complemented by similar change processes at regional and global levels. But major imbalances—or policy incoherence—are evident in global governance regimes. These tend to facilitate trade, finance and private investment, and subordinate or challenge goals related to social and environmental protection and decent work. Achieving greater policy coherence in global governance is not simply about improved coordination: it is fundamentally a political process. Within that process the voice and influence of less powerful stakeholders, vulnerable groups and poorer developing countries need to be enhanced. Responses to the call in the 2030 Agenda for a global partnership must go beyond current approaches to public-private partnerships and participation. Social innovations associated with networking, transnational activism and multistakeholder regulation of business that allow civil society organizations and groups to organize, mobilize and participate to greater effect are important in this regard.

Chapter 7 addresses implementation of SDGs



1. Introduction

International development guidelines and frameworks often espouse lofty principles and goals but fail to pay sufficient attention to means of implementation related to governance, that is, the many ways individuals and organizations, public and private, manage their common affairs.¹ Yet setting collective rules and choosing specific policy options for implementation entail different distributions of costs and benefits, respond to different interests and goals, and have different repercussions for the natural environment. Governance processes are political in nature, not least because the capacity of individuals and groups to make their own choices and influence decision making depends on existing structures and relations of power.

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has partially broken this mould by emphasizing partnership, cooperation, participation and accountability, and by identifying key institutions and stakeholders that must work together. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda calls for collaboration across international, regional, national and local levels. It recognizes the need for national policy space, common but differentiated responsibility, as well as the importance of democratizing international financial institutions by giving greater voice and influence to developing country governments. Even if the other means of implementation mentioned in the 2030 Agenda were fit for purpose, such as financing (see chapter 6), capacity building and technology transfer, could such aspects of governance really deliver the promise of transformative change?

A recurring theme throughout this report is that policy “turns”, be they the more integrative “eco-social” turn or those related specifically to social policy (chapter 2), care (chapter 3), social and solidarity economy (chapter 4) and environmental

sustainability (chapter 5), can remain at the level of discourse or be stripped of their transformative potential. They can be bolted onto business-as-usual—for example, macroeconomic policy, international trade and investment regimes, labour market and fiscal policies associated with patterns of economic liberalization that exacerbate vulnerability, inequalities and unsustainable development. Governance reforms associated with partnerships and participation run similar risks. While governments and international organizations frequently express a strong commitment to these approaches, when applied in practice, they can neglect and even reinforce existing power imbalances. Similarly, “policy space”—the right of national governments to chart a development path consistent with national priorities and realities—is often heavily constrained rather than enabled by external forces.

This chapter considers certain governance and political conditions that are required for the 2030 Agenda to be transformative and foster pathways conducive to inclusive and sustainable development. Divided into two main sections, it first addresses the coherence of the 2030 Agenda in terms of internal consistency and explores potential synergies and trade-offs between the different dimensions of sustainable development in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as in relation to other governance structures, such as international agendas in the areas of trade, finance, migration and climate. It then examines the partnership and participation challenge, addressing in particular, the risks and opportunities related to public-private partnerships (PPPs), ways and means of enhancing the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in development and change, and empowering vulnerable groups not only economically but also politically. This discussion highlights the potentially constructive role of social innovations associated with networking and transnational activism around global justice issues, as well as multistakeholder regulation of transnational corporations and global value chains. The conclusion sums up potential avenues and needed reforms in governance and politics for realizing the transformational vision of the 2030 Agenda.

The chapter demonstrates that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will benefit from improved national and international governance and inclusive political processes. This requires:

- identifying and addressing trade-offs and imbalances in development objectives and regulatory regimes to improve the horizontal and vertical coherence of the 2030 Agenda;
- adjusting the normative hierarchy in international governance from one where an economic rationale dominates to one that prioritizes social and ecological objectives;
- designing and implementing eco-social policies, including sustainable economic policies that are conducive to employment creation and decent work; investment incentives that reward environmentally and socially sustainable activities; social policies that combine social and environmental goals; and environmental norms that rectify social and climate injustices;
- elaborating national and international regulatory regimes that hold transnational corporations and financial institutions accountable so that they respect human rights, obey national tax laws and avoid environmental harm;
- developing strong institutional capacity to manage and evaluate PPPs, and create partnerships with communities and civil society; and
- facilitating the political empowerment and activism of civil society at the national level and transnationally, and providing real options for participation beyond “having a seat at the table”.

2. Multi-Level Governance and the Coherence Challenge

Whether the 2030 Agenda is transformative will depend largely on the coherence of the governance processes it entails (figure 7.1). Indeed, “lack of integration across sectors in terms of strategies, policies and implementation has long been perceived as one of the main pitfalls of previous approaches to sustainable development”.² However, coherence in itself does not ensure a transformative agenda, as elements may cohere under an overtly market-centred framework that may be highly contradictory from the perspective of social and sustainable development.³ To be transformative, the 2030 Agenda must be coherently articulated around normative objectives associated with inclusive and sustainable development, as well as equality and human rights.

Previous chapters have noted numerous instances of policy incoherence, when effective policy implementation has been undermined by not only ineffective coordination but also blind spots on the policy agenda and contradictory policies that pull in different directions from the perspective of inclusion, rights and sustainability. Policy incoherence at the national level has been reinforced by standard setting, regulations and conditionality associated with international policy and institutions. Often global governance associated with growth, trade, finance and aid fails to support and align with national efforts to bring about required fundamental changes in economic and social systems. This has been particularly evident in relation to the social costs of structural adjustment programmes,⁴ access to cheaper medicines⁵ and tax avoidance (chapters 2 and 6). The question of policy incoherence associated with global governance must be addressed for transformative outcomes, but it frequently remains off the policy radar.

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The governance and political challenges related to transformative change in general, and the implementation of SDGs specifically, need to consider coherence in two dimensions. The first is horizontal coherence between the dimensions of sustainable development—that is, the ways in which social, environmental and economic policies and practices interact and are prioritized in decision-making processes. Horizontal coherence also relates to how different SDGs are combined, integrated and balanced in particular instances, situations and contexts by different actors operating on the same level of governance (local, national, regional or global). The second is the degree of vertical coherence across different levels of governance. It addresses issues of coherence between internationally agreed goals and national contexts, and determines the appropriate level of governance for dealing with specific issues by applying the principle of subsidiarity (see box 7.4). Horizontal and vertical coherence intertwine in practice, and governments that must establish sustainable development policies at the national level face the challenge of integrating

multiple policy domains while adapting to different international regimes (box 7.1.).

The current international system, however, shows neither horizontal coherence at the global level, where no integrative approach of sustainable development can yet be observed, nor vertical coherence in the way the various levels governance are articulated. Establishing an institutional architecture that is both vertically and horizontally coherent is one key governance challenge of sustainable development.

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Policy integration can improve horizontal coherence

The Preamble of the 2030 Agenda states that “[t]he 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets... are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental”.⁶ But notions such as “integration” of and “balance” between the three pillars of sustainable development need to be made more specific. First, action related to any one dimension will impact others. And choosing a specific policy option for implementation also entails a different distribution of costs and benefits and responds to different interests and goals. Decision making is about comparing alternatives that have different repercussions in terms of economic, social and environmental consequences for different stakeholders and groups.⁷

Box 7.1. The coherence challenge

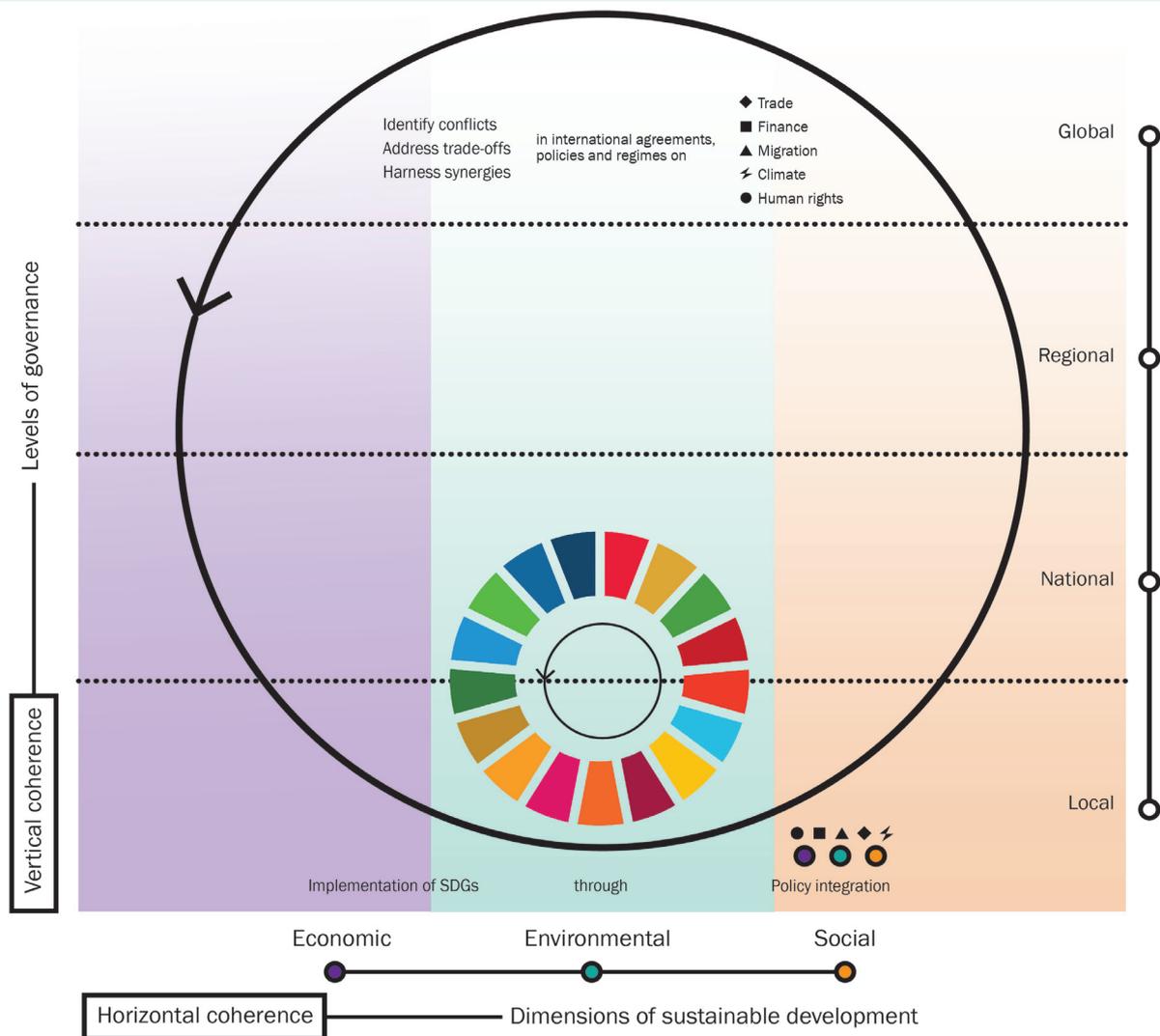
Being the result of a complex negotiation and consultation process, the 2030 Agenda does not reflect a coherent systemic strategy for linking the different goals and targets across the key dimensions of the Agenda.^a Yet most goals are interlinked, numerous targets contribute to several goals, and there are important trade-offs among some goals and targets.^b Many targets can be achieved by being tackled jointly in an integrated way. For example, progress on ending poverty (SDG 1) cannot be achieved without progress on the food security target under SDG 2, macroeconomic policies related to targets on full and productive employment and decent work under SDG 8, the reduction of inequality under SDG 10 and enhancing resilience to climate change under SDG 13. Success in these will lead to better health and well-being, thus contributing to the achievement of SDG 3.^c Goals may also conflict with each other, often partially. The promotion of sustainable industrialization (SDG 9), while factoring in eco-efficiency and promoting clean energy (SDG 7), might reveal tensions and trade-offs with the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem (SDGs 14 et 15) if industrial systems cannot be rid of their reliance upon energy derived from fossil fuels.

Policy coherence is partly about better coordination in the design and implementation of interventions across different policy fields. But more fundamentally, it is about ensuring that progress in one domain is not undermined by impacts emanating from another. Macroeconomic policies and technological or efficiency gains, for example, must not contradict welfare and sustainability objectives. Similarly, environmental protection goals must be balanced with social development considerations. A danger of reducing the notion of policy coherence to that of coordination is that different goals may become more coherent under an overtly market-centred framework that may be highly contradictory from the perspective of social and sustainable development.^d

Coherence, synergies, tensions and trade-offs may result from the interactions between different governance processes, which can be positive or negative in terms of transformative change. There may also be a mismatch between the goals and targets established at the global level, and the agenda as interpreted at the national level. The compatibility of the 2030 Agenda with its broader institutional environment, including international regimes governing trade, finance, migration and climate, as well as important agendas such as the G20, must therefore be assessed as well. Various types of coherence can thus be considered:^e sectoral coherence, or coherence from one policy sector to another; governance coherence, from one set of interventions to another; multi-level coherence, from global/international agreements to national and local policy; implementation coherence, from policy objective through instrument design to practice; and transnational coherence, from one jurisdiction to another.^f

Notes: ^a Le Blanc 2015. ^b ICSU and ISSC 2015. ^c ICSU and ISSC 2015. ^d Cook et al. 2012, Mejido et al. 2010. ^e ICSU 2016; Nilsson et al. 2016. ^f OECD 2015.

Figure 7.1. Achieving policy coherence in the 2030 Agenda



Second, the assertion that economic, social and environmental policies can and should be balanced and integrated requires identifying the tensions between them. Although the possibility of triple-win situations cannot be denied, most concrete actions involve tensions and potential conflicts between the different objectives of economic growth, social equity and environmental protection. For example, preservationist approaches to conservation have promoted the creation of protected areas for wildlife, often at the expense of local populations,⁸ whereas growth-oriented policies have not only had a high environmental cost but also often failed to generate decent work.⁹ Not setting a priority, or giving equal weight to these different goals, is itself a normative statement. Tensions and dilemmas inevitably exist. And as discussed below, they need to be made explicit and resolved politically.

But how are complex and cross-cutting issues being dealt with in national and global governance? How do decision makers concerned with sustainable development integrate various and potentially conflicting policy goals? The following sections present examples of how such complex decision making has been made at the national and local levels, before elaborating several challenges at the global level.

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Policy integration at the national level

For many countries, strategies for sustainability that give priority to social and/or environmental objectives have played second fiddle to crafting pro-growth and market-centred policies. And even where integrated sustainable development policy frameworks have been adopted, tensions persist.

Rwanda, for example, has positioned green economy approaches as a priority for economic transformation, and environment and climate change as a cross-cutting issue in the national Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (2013–2018). It has also developed an additional resilience strategy in order to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change impacts, for example, through irrigation infrastructure and adopting an agroforestry approach for the sustainable provision of biomass. It remains to be seen, however, whether and how this strategy will be designed synergistically with reform in land, trade, finance and fiscal policies.

In the 2013–2018 National Development Plan in Mexico, environmental sustainability is no longer a stand-alone strategic pillar but has, to some extent, been mainstreamed into the plan. Since 2012, Mexico has a General Law on Climate Change to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50 percent by 2050, compared to 2000 levels. Yet the plan contains contradictions, given the ongoing carbon-based growth model and plans to promote further the exploration of fossil fuel resources, including shale oil.

Costa Rica presents a relatively successful example of integrated development in which the state has played a fundamental role in market and social incorporation by promoting productive (often public) employment and universal social policies.¹⁰ Significant advances related to forest protection and renewable energy were noted in chapter 5. Costa Rica is one of the countries that took advantage of market-based instruments for environmental protection established at the global level, such as carbon trading and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). This helped establish a strong ecotourism sector, partly financed with external funds. Nevertheless, the country has recently experienced faster growth of inequality than any other Latin American country, given unequal outcomes of economic development and lower per capita social spending (chapter 5). These developments may undermine the eco-social

turn in the country, unless renewed efforts are undertaken to maintain its universal social policy approach.

As discussed in previous chapters, other countries have innovated in ways to address social and environmental sustainability goals through integrated approaches. The Brazilian programme Bolsa Verde or the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India mobilize synergies between education, work, and environmental protection and rehabilitation (chapter 2). The discussion of care (chapter 3) showed how efforts to break the cycle of poor access to water and sanitation, resulting in both time poverty and poor health of women and children, require integrated policies that combine nutrition, health, education and housing components.

Policy integration at the local level

This report emphasizes the need for integrated eco-social policies that can simultaneously achieve economic, social and environmental goals. It also points to the importance of combining policy measures and comprehensive strategies—known as institutional complementarity (chapter 2)—rather than segregated approaches in sectoral or disciplinary silos. Integrated policy design and implementation is often more feasible at the local level, where the different aspects of sustainable development are more tangible than at national and global levels. Cities' needs and potential are specifically recognized in SDG 11. In cities, the social and environmental repercussions of economic development are more direct and visible. Similarly, the impact of policy measures that are implemented locally are also more visible, which facilitates monitoring and adjustment processes (box 7.2.).

As illustrated in box 7.2, the following factors have contributed to the ability of municipal authorities to craft an integrated urban policy:

- strong commitment by local authorities;
- relative autonomy in political and economic decision making;
- healthy finances and sound fiscal policies;
- planning processes and integrative policy approaches that systematically address multiple goals and trade-offs; and
- involvement and active participation of stakeholders, including citizens, civil society organizations and economic actors.

At the international level, cities engage in innovative networks that act as important drivers of sustainable development and climate change response. Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), Local Agenda 21, Global Social Economy Forum or World Cities Network, for example, allow municipal actors to share information, on experiences and best practices, as well as to coordinate political initiatives at higher levels of governance. At the same time, urban planning also offers important insights for integrated approaches and policy coherence at other levels.

Vertical coherence requires multi-level governance reforms

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda will take place at the country level. But national policy spaces are deeply interconnected with and shaped by international and global contexts. National policies affect other countries and their policy space through cross-border effects related, for example, to migration or trade. Moreover, global challenges

Box 7.2. Urban governance as an example of an integrative approach

Faced with rapid urbanization and increasing environmental and social pressures, cities have been at the forefront of sustainable development and championed innovations toward sustainability. In the context of unemployment, pressures on public services and infrastructure, and urban environmental degradation, in particular, air pollution, lack of green spaces and poor quality drinking water, municipalities must come up with pragmatic solutions. In order to connect policy domains such as social inclusion, jobs, housing, waste management, transport and energy use, cities have promoted innovative and transformative approaches, often through specific forms of social and solidarity economy, such as urban community agriculture or cooperative housing schemes (see also chapter 4).

Innovative approaches related to energy, transport and waste are indicated in the following examples.

The quarter of *Vauban* in the German city of Freiburg im Breisgau today hosts around 5,000 residents in energy-efficient housing that has reduced primary energy use by 79 percent compared to conventional construction.^a The community was involved from the beginning of the planning process through homeowner cooperatives. Urban planning, green economic development, environmental protection research and scientific expertise have been developed in a balanced and integrated way. The goal of diversifying the social composition of the community, however, has not been achieved, partly because of the high prices of houses, affordable only for higher income groups.^b

Bristol in the United Kingdom has implemented a long-term commitment to improving the urban environment and reducing the city's contribution to climate change since 2000. It has developed a programme involving investment plans for transport and energy. Substantial investments in transport improvements, energy efficiency and renewable energy that aim to develop a low-carbon, job-generating industry, combined with a pro-cyclists policy, have led to significant achievements: a 16 percent reduction in domestic energy use and a 25 percent improvement in energy efficiency in housing in a 10-year period.^c

Ljubljana in Slovenia has developed a comprehensive set of policies to improve urban mobility as well as a Zero Waste Strategy. This strategy was explicitly inspired by the principles of circular economy that aim at "closing the loop" of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use.^d

Porto Alegre in Brazil is well known for having introduced innovative participatory budgeting processes, a type of participatory democracy in which ordinary people decide how to allocate the municipal budget,^e while *Curitiba* is known as an ecological city with an exemplary public transport system and waste recycling programme.^f

In *Seoul*, Republic of Korea, the municipal government has looked to SSE as a means for social cohesion and inclusion.^g It has established a social enterprise development centre that acts as a systematic support system for cooperatives and social enterprises and as an incubator of young social entrepreneurs. Seoul supports "sharing economy" activities, partly via public procurement. Public policy supporting SSE goes hand in hand with active municipal involvement promoting environmentally sensitive development in the capital (chapter 4).^h

Notes: ^a Coates 2013. ^b Bächtold 2013. ^c <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/winning-cities/2015-bristol/index.html>, accessed in June 2016. ^d <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/winning-cities/2016-ljubljana/index.html>, accessed in June 2016. ^e Santos 1998. ^f Rabinovitch and Leitman 2014. ^g For another Asian country see Thailand Sustainable Development Foundation 2015, which contains many examples of initiatives and SSEs. ^h Lee and Kim 2013.

transcend political borders and require governance modalities that may challenge state sovereignty. Indeed, global rules and international cooperation, or the lack thereof, may facilitate or constrain government action at the national level. Interactions are characterized by different kinds of horizontal and vertical incoherence.

In a global governance context often characterized by a lack of coherence, this section explores how countries can reconcile domestic policies with the global nature of the 2030 Agenda.

Incoherence among international governance systems

Deficiencies in global governance, not least those discussed below related to trade, finance, migration and climate, undermine both policy coherence and policy space. Such deficiencies need to be identified, reviewed and corrected.

The need for stable and predictable international trade flows has led to the strongest and most complete institutional framework in global governance: the international trade and investment regime, comprising a number of legally binding agreements under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as myriad bilateral, plurilateral and regional trade and/or investment agreements. Contrasting with the legally binding nature of trade agreements negotiated within the WTO framework, multilateral environmental agreements, such as international conventions on climate change and biodiversity, rely on voluntary commitment by national governments in the absence of a supranational enforcement authority. This confers on environmental governance a lower normative status than trade rules, as illustrated in February 2016 when the WTO Dispute Settlement Body ruled against India's programme to create home-grown solar energy. It rejected the argument that it would help the country meet its climate commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Instead, the programme was accused of distorting trade by giving preference to local products.¹¹ This ruling challenges India's efforts to implement its climate policy and reach its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (chapter 5). More fundamentally, it shows how policy innovation that aims to give priority to social and environmental considerations, as described in chapter 5, can be compromised when economic ones are given priority.

Reliance on voluntary commitments confers on environmental governance a lower normative status than trade rules

Environmental governance provides examples of how environmental, social and trade dimensions can be integrated in practice, although outcomes are often not positive in all dimensions. The Convention on Biological Diversity attempts to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources, an objective the Nagoya Protocol provides the legal framework for.¹² In climate governance, the flexibility mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol (carbon trading, joint implementation and the CDM) provide an institutional architecture for environmental protection that is highly compatible with patterns of market-led growth that tend to favour large corporations, which can elude their responsibility for cutting CO₂ emissions.¹³ Indeed, national commitments to reduce emissions covered only 14 percent of world emissions in the 2008–2012 period.¹⁴ The Paris Agreement, which covers almost 99 percent of global emissions and includes a five-year review mechanism, potentially marks a turning point for global cooperation (chapter 5). However, no global entity has the authority and coercive power to oversee enforcement. Instead, it is hoped that voluntary commitments by national governments will be sufficient to meet the goals. Carbon markets and trading, while not explicitly mentioned in the Paris Agreement, are likely to continue to play a central role¹⁵ whereas concerns about the exclusionary nature of market creation, the instability of speculative carbon finance and mounting power asymmetries remain high.¹⁶

Proponents of free trade and market forces assert that they provide the most efficient allocation of resources for society. At the global level, however, economic factors such as capital and labour are governed in very different ways. The 2008 financial crisis revealed the pitfalls of excessive deregulation of financial markets. International capital flows are now subject to stronger regulation under Basel III, a global voluntary regulatory framework that promotes safer banking and financial practices.¹⁷ International capital flows remain, nonetheless, poorly regulated, leaving ample room for tax avoidance and evasion, which deprive national governments and economies of vast amounts of resources that might otherwise

be used for development (chapter 6). Furthermore, investment agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TIIP) could even hollow out policy autonomy by subordinating national decisions to investor interests.

Migration governance is characterized by a fragmented international system, where the regulation of migrant labour is mostly designed by host countries. In sharp contrast with the governance of financial markets, labour regulation involves hard regulation, especially with regard to unskilled workers.¹⁸ Yet, by lowering international asymmetries in productive capacity and income distribution, migration could become a tool for addressing international inequalities, a key objective of the eco-social turn. Progress in addressing the fragmented set of rules governing migration will require substantive engagement at the national, regional and global levels.¹⁹

Asymmetric global governance calls for changes in the normative hierarchy

Current international governance is far from a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The normative framework subordinates environmental and social considerations to economic imperatives (box 7.3). Different dimensions of sustainable development are regulated separately. The large multilateral system lacks effective mechanisms to promote cross-sectoral coherence and manage trade-offs. Moreover, it is fragmented and mainly composed of specialized agencies whose relative strength in crafting and enforcing international rules differs greatly. Different worldviews or ideological perspectives, as well as institutional cultures and forms of “expert” knowledge, shape policy design and implementation in different agencies. Which agencies are in the driving seat of global governance reform, therefore, makes a difference. Such variations have been noted in the case of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, on the one hand, and various UN agencies, on the other hand. Indeed, the rise of the poverty reduction and sustainable development agendas associated with the MDGs and SDGs can be partly understood in terms of a reconfiguration of power relations between these two sets of agencies, which saw UN values and approaches reasserting themselves following the failures of the structural adjustment era of the 1980s and 1990s (chapter 1).²⁰ International cooperation

in multilateral settings remains the most promising approach for paving the way to a universal, inclusive and integrated system of global governance, without which the 2030 Agenda will not become a reality.

If changing the international system of economic governance is a long-term endeavour, what can national actors do to craft an integrated approach to sustainable development in the meantime? Apart from committing to and supporting multilateralism, countries can enhance their national policy space through various means, which have proved effective in policy areas such as health.²¹ These measures

Box 7.3. A shift in the normative hierarchy

Sustainable development implies a shift in the normative hierarchy of economic decision making, moving away from viewing social and environmental issues as the consequences of economic policy choices to conditioning economic choices on sustainable and just social and ecological outcomes. Embedding the economy in society and respecting ecological boundaries characterizes the eco-social turn.

Framing economic development so that it benefits people while respecting ecological boundaries was the normative cornerstone of eco-development in the 1970s.^a This eco-social rationale is found in the central values and principles of the alter-globalization, de-growth and post-growth movements,^b and describes the economic rationale of SSE that puts social objectives over profit (chapter 4). Arguably this rationale is also at the centre of the 2030 Agenda’s ambition to encourage people-centred and planet-sensitive development, where economic activities are subordinated to social and ecological considerations and imperatives.^c This is the normative prerequisite of transformative change toward sustainable development.

Notes: ^a Riddel 1981. ^b van Griethuysen 2010, 2012; ^c van Griethuysen 2010; Koehler 2016.

International cooperation in multilateral settings remains the most promising approach for paving the way to a universal, inclusive and integrated system of global governance, without which the 2030 Agenda will not become a reality

include ex-ante discussion about potential trade-offs and synergies between different policy areas, and close collaboration between different ministries and administrative units to design integrated strategies; knowing about and strategically using available policy space in existing international agreements such as trade and investment agreements; creating new policy space through the incorporation of social and environmental clauses into treaties and agreements; using influence at the global level to reform global governance regimes; and collaborating with civil society and other social actors to draw on and benefit from their knowledge and resources. The regional level is a crucial and intermediary step in the elaboration of global governance. This was recognized in the negotiation process of the 2030 Agenda, and will be critical in its monitoring phase. However, the shift in the normative hierarchy toward choices that condition economic decisions on sustainable outcomes may face particular resistance at the regional level, since the integration of most regional entities (MERCOSUR; ASEAN; ECOWAS; EU) is based on an economic rationale.

3. Social Innovations for Transformative Change

Ensuring the coherence of national agendas with global goals of sustainable development requires, in the absence of a supranational authority, the coordination of national actions through international cooperation. The 2030 Agenda explicitly addresses this dimension in SDG 17, which aims to revitalize a global partnership for sustainable development. Non-state actors, in particular civil society organizations and the private sector, are identified as key actors through various forms of partnership and participation. Under what conditions can non-state actors play an effective role as agents of transformative change? The contemporary history of PPPs and NGO interventions in development and participation suggests that such innovations have often failed to realize their potential.

Since the turn of the millennium—in particular since the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002—PPPs have emerged as a key mechanism for the provision of essential services and economic infrastructure. However, they have frequently failed

Box 7.4. From local to global: The subsidiarity principle

Local communities have long managed the resources they share along the lines of what scholars refer to as “common pool resources management”.^a Under this arrangement, community members share rights, obligations and duties regarding the use of resources; means are balanced with ends (in contrast to growth-oriented development); and costs and benefits are assessed in social or collective, rather than private, terms.^b Cooperation and negotiation are key to coping with the complexity of resource management. This approach to managing resources can provide valuable insights for the governance of sustainable development at other levels.

Local regimes alone cannot guarantee the sustainable use of resources such as lakes, forests, oceans and air. Their management is also defined at national, regional or even global levels. The subsidiarity principle states that (i) governance issues ought to be addressed at the lowest level capable of addressing them, and (ii) issues that are not adequately dealt with at the lowest level must be addressed at a higher level, through cooperation of concerned stakeholders. Applying the subsidiarity principle gives rise to a system where multiple levels of governance are required for the sustainable management of resources. Such “multilevel” governance can be combined with “polycentric” governance (where multiple independent actors mutually order their relationships with one another under a general system of rules). The implication is that governance of complex, modern societies requires extensive institutional diversity.^c

However, implementing the subsidiarity principle is not without political challenges. Attempts to establish governance structures at higher levels, as well as decentralization processes, often experience problems of limited administrative and financial capacity, elite capture, policy fragmentation and regional disparities. And power and other social asymmetries can easily shift from one level of governance to another.^d

Notes: ^a Ostrom 1990; Ostrom and Schlager 1996.

^b Ostrom and Schlager 1996. ^c Araral and Hartley 2013.

^d Jachtenfuchs and Krisch 2016.

to deliver on their promise with regard to both resource mobilization via the private sector and inclusive development. PPPs often share costs, risks and benefits very unevenly and can reinforce existing power asymmetries.²²

In previous decades, the role of NGOs in development was seen as another magic bullet. Their activities, however, were often concentrated in service delivery to an extent that involved a trade-off with advocacy for social change. And dependency on government funding frequently undermined their autonomy.²³

Calls for people's "participation" in policy or project design and implementation have a much longer history. For over 60 years, United Nations programmes have recognized the role of effective participation in project success.²⁴ In the late 1970s, UNRISD defined participation as the organized efforts of the hitherto excluded to gain control of resources and regulatory institutions that affect their lives.²⁵ Too often, however, participation in practice amounts to simply consulting selected stakeholders and can be "cosmetic".²⁶ While hitherto excluded groups that gain a seat at the table may have greater voice, they often fail to become players who can effectively gain control and shape decision-making processes that affect their lives.

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This section examines forms of partnership and participation that address these limitations. It looks, in particular, at a variety of social innovations that have gained traction in recent years, allowing civil society organizations and groups to organize, mobilize and participate to greater effect. These include alternative forms of partnership, networking, transnational activism and multistakeholder standard setting. Forging an effective global partnership for change will depend to a significant degree on these new modes of collaboration and participation.

The notion of partnerships needs to be more encompassing

Both the 2030 Agenda, and more explicitly the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, recognize the role of the private sector in the development process.

However, privileging the private sector's financial and managerial capacity is problematic because there are several gaps and weaknesses in national and international regulatory regimes for holding corporations accountable for actual or potential harm and for effective remedy.

Research on PPPs has confirmed that "[w]here private sector partners are not bound to the public sector by...close political relationships, risk transfer and affordability are likely to become issues that may very well jeopardize the viability of the project in the long term".²⁷ Moreover, by favouring particular SDGs, such as those related to infrastructure and economic growth, recourse to PPPs can negatively impact states' capacities to implement an integrated agenda for sustainable development and develop policy frameworks that help achieve other goals.²⁸ Effective measures are needed to overcome the risks inherent in PPPs and recourse to private finance. This requires not only harnessing PPPs for the SDGs and ensuring companies comply with corporate accountability standards, but also (i) that companies respect developing country demands for greater flexibility under WTO rules and their efforts to promote efficient domestic forms of enterprise and trade; and (ii) that the governance arrangements associated with PPPs effectively empower weaker stakeholders and counteract conventional forms of corporate influence and lobbying.²⁹

It is necessary that countries have in place the institutional capacity to create, manage and evaluate PPPs. A key role for the public sector in this regard is to:³⁰

- correctly identify and select projects where PPPs would be viable;
- negotiate contracts to ensure an appropriate distribution of risks, costs and benefits among partners;
- establish a comprehensive and transparent fiscal accounting and reporting standard for PPPs; and
- establish legal, regulatory and monitoring frameworks that ensure appropriate pricing and quality of service.

In the same vein, recourse to private finance, including through partnerships, must be adequately framed by social and environmental legislation to ensure that private wealth creation contributes to social welfare while enhancing environmental conditions. While capitalization and financial

Harnessing PPPs for the SDGs requires that governance arrangements effectively empower weaker stakeholders and counteract conventional forms of corporate influence and lobbying

practices must be regulated, standards for responsible private, public and institutional investments must be elaborated and effectively implemented. Public and institutional investors should not only take into account short-term, monetary gains but also longer term social and ecological criteria. The growth of ethical banking and investment as well as forms of solidarity finance (chapter 4) point to the growing awareness among investors and citizens that prioritizing monetary profit is socially, economically and environmentally problematic. But this shift in personal values needs a collective counterpart if social inclusion and ecological resilience are to be realized.

Whereas the discourse on PPPs highlights attributes related to the sharing of costs, benefits and risks, in practice significant imbalances in power relations may exist within partnerships that skew distribution in favour of or against particular partners and other stakeholders. Box 7.5 considers ways to address power issues in partnerships in the case of education.

These issues require fundamental institutional changes and normative shifts that will inevitably face opposition from vested interests, systemic forces and bureaucratic and hierarchical resistance from within institutions. Obstacles to an eco-social turn are pervasive in a system that has been moulded over time to fit the economic imperatives of competitiveness and growth.³¹ Power asymmetries, in particular, may obstruct reforms conducive to transformative change.

More attention needs to be paid to public-community partnerships

Various chapters in this report point to the need to multiply the type of mutually beneficial partnerships between state actors, communities and citizens that exist in numerous localities. Yet such arrangements often take a back seat in discussions on partnerships, and where they are recognized, they are often under-

resourced. Governments can help by increasing support and overseas development assistance (ODA) for these partnerships.

Various types of public-community partnerships have underpinned advances in social insurance in sub-Saharan Africa (chapter 2), care provision in Costa Rica and Quebec (chapters 3 and 4), socially inclusive green economy initiatives (chapter 5) and green urban governance (box 7.2). Partnership between community-based organizations, government agencies and private sector actors has become a major means of extending social protection—for example, health insurance—to populations in rural areas in many developing countries, as illustrated by the case of Rwanda (chapter 2).

Many such initiatives relate to SSE (chapter 4). Given the structural constraints that prevent the corporate economy from internalizing environmental costs and decoupling growth and emissions in absolute terms, and the fact that SSE lends itself to developing sectors of the economy that are key for inclusive and sustainable development, it needs to be brought far more centrally into the 2030 Agenda as a means of implementing the SDGs.³²

Networking can be harnessed for transformative change

Organizations and movements for social and environmental justice are coalescing in networks that promote forms of collective action often conducive to both resource mobilization and policy influence. Those defending and advocating for land rights or food sovereignty—for example, the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra (MST/ Landless Workers' Movement) in Brazil, Ekta Parishad in India and Via Campesina internationally—as well as other movements for fair trade, rainforest protection and climate justice—are coming together in ways that can facilitate learning, contestation and bargaining. Indeed, such networked activism was instrumental in ensuring that the green economy agenda that informed the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development broke out of the confines of a market-centred and sectoral approach.³³

Networking marks a major departure from the role of NGOs going it alone via service delivery or advocacy. The rise of networks has been a response to not

Box 7.5. Partnerships and power: The case of education

As recently as the 2016 World Economic Forum, the discourse on partnerships assumes that they are conducive to equalizing power inequalities.^a This virtue may exist only on paper. The example of global partnership networks in education illustrates how a partnership may (or may not) insulate itself from external power and how informal power relations inside the partnerships may (or may not) reflect formal commitments to more egalitarian partnership practices.

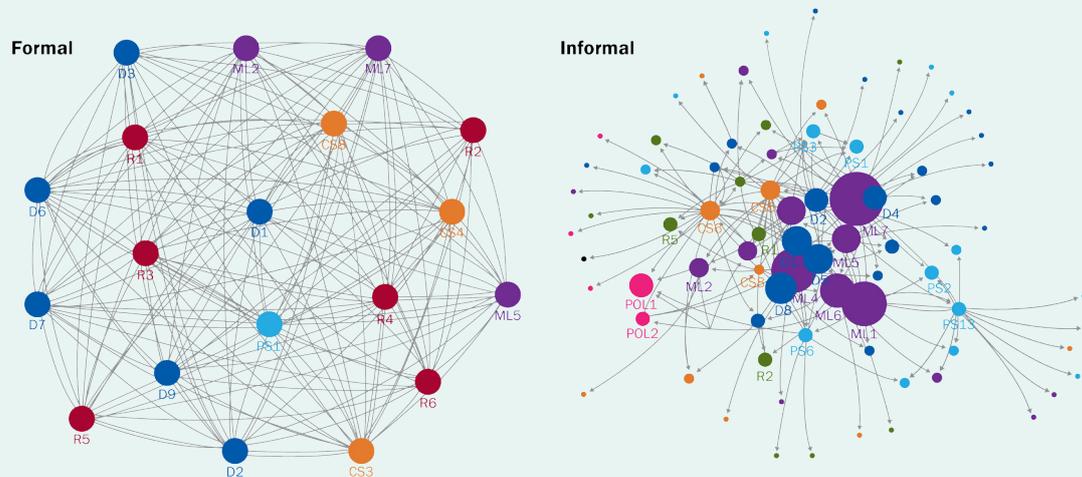
Insulating a partnership from more powerful actors can be conducive to transformative outcomes.

The global education funding partnership studied has sought to move away from practices of “donorship” to implementing development aid principles of national ownership and inclusive partnership. Through three rounds of reform, the partnership has become progressively less insulated from developing country partners and more insulated from donor states. Hitherto, the Steering Committee had been heavily comprised of donor representatives. The Board structure then changed to include equal donor and recipient country partners alongside civil society, multilateral organizations and a private sector foundation. However, donors inside recipient countries were still considered the primary interlocutors with the global Secretariat and Board. Following criticism of this practice, reforms are under way to prioritize effective recipient country participation.

The relative power of partners can vary significantly.

The concrete interactions of partners reveal their relative power within a partnership governance structure. In this case, partners are *formally* organized into non-hierarchical relational structures that reflect the stated partnership goals of inclusiveness, equity and shared goals. At the same time, partners organize themselves into *informal* relational structures that indicate with whom they choose to initiate, maintain or sever ties. Network mapping and metrics can be used to analyse, visualize and compare formal and informal structures (figure 7.2a and b).^b

Figure 7.2. Comparison of (a) formal and (b) informal partnership relationships



Key: D Donor countries; R Recipients (in Formal), R Researchers (in Informal); ML Multilateral agencies, CS Civil society; PS Private sector/ Foundations; POL Politicians

In this particular case, the structuring of informal relationships indicates that rather than being power-neutral, a hierarchy exists in this partnership in which certain actors are more central than others. These practices contrast with what are generally assumed to be legitimate and appropriate partnership practices.

Notes: ^a WEF 2016. ^b Faul 2015. Source: Faul 2016.

Like public-private partnerships, power relations within networks may be asymmetrical, not least between Northern and Southern partners

only the end of the “golden era” when NGOs could access large amounts of development funding,³⁴ but also the growing interdependence and complexity of issues.³⁵ This response has, of course, been enabled by the innovations in communications technology. The advantages of networks are manifold,³⁶ and they include:

- multiplying strength through the exchange and pooling of resources;
- facilitating knowledge exchange, learning and innovative solutions;
- helping to build a shared collective identity among participants beyond conventional movement sectors;
- enhancing the political legitimacy of groups;
- bringing new issues onto the political agenda and transforming the terms and nature of policy debates; and
- building the capacity of groups to influence the policy process by engaging with multiple institutions and levels of governance.

However, networks for transformative change confront major obstacles in realizing their objectives. These relate not only to resource constraints but also disparate understandings of causes of injustice and necessary solutions, as well as restricted opportunities to engage with political structures where policy change happens. Like public-private partnerships, power relations within networks may be asymmetrical, not least between Northern and Southern partners. Lack of planning for change and evaluation of advocacy work are common traits.³⁷ While campaigns can quickly mobilize large numbers of actors, they can also be short-lived, dissipating either when fatigue sets in or some gains have been achieved. This occurred, for example, with the Make Poverty History campaign: once partial gains related to increased aid and debt cancellation were announced at the 2005 G8 Gleneagles Summit, advocacy quickly dissipated even though government responses varied widely and several commitments proved extremely fragile.³⁸

The challenge of forging common understandings, frameworks and methodologies—key elements of

effective advocacy noted above—is often undermined by ideological divisions and differences regarding tactics. This was apparent in the case of the Jubilee debt campaign and the tax justice movement.³⁹ Some movements or campaigns led by Northern groups have failed to connect effectively with movements in the Global South. Such a situation affected, for example, the climate justice movement that mobilized around the time of the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, which failed to produce meaningful results.⁴⁰ The experience of Via Campesina and the global fair trade movement suggest that global justice movements not only need to connect the Global North and Global South, but may actually be more effective when built from the bottom up through movements that are rooted in the struggles of local communities and which connect their struggles both analytically and organizationally with broader issues and constituencies.⁴¹

Political empowerment benefits from broad-based alliances

From the above discussion it is clear that multiple tensions and dilemmas are present in any process of transformative change, in part due to conflicting interests of the actors or stakeholders involved. Such tensions need to be identified and addressed politically, through processes that favour participation, transparency and accountability, particularly if the decision-making process is not to be skewed toward elite interests.

While international development institutions and frameworks now generally acknowledge the need for participation, as applied in practice, it is often reduced to mere consultation with selected stakeholders whose worldviews and proposals for change are considered “reasonable”. But if the less

Tensions need to be identified and addressed politically, through processes that favour participation, transparency and accountability, particularly if decision making is not to be skewed toward elite interests

powerful are to gain voice and influence, they must have recourse to a broad portfolio of action. This includes diverse forms of contestation and claims making such as protest, advocacy, lobbying, watchdog monitoring, naming and shaming, critical research, dialogue, bargaining and negotiation.⁴² Moreover, it involves reconnecting the policy process with not only selected civil society experts and NGOs, but also social movements and coalitions of actors concerned with global justice issues such as those mentioned above.

A variety of social innovations characterize contemporary activism and advocacy for transformative change. In addition to networking, important in this regard are transnational activism and multi-level “glocal” movements that connect global and local levels and Northern and Southern actors. So too are multistakeholder initiatives, often led by non-state actors, that set standards and procedures to enhance corporate accountability.

Previous chapters have discussed the political dynamics of particular instances of transformative change at the national level. The various “turns” (social, care, eco-social) highlighted in this report, plus new modes of economic activity that are people-centred and planet-sensitive (as in SSE), have been propelled by contestation and claims making associated with active citizenship and collective action. This has also extended to domestic resource mobilization, which is characterized by processes of contestation and bargaining (chapter 6).

As regards the social turn, various forms of contestation and mobilization, political representation of marginalized groups and advocacy by intermediary organizations played a key role. So too did institutional reforms, including legal codification, that facilitated engagement with the state at both local and national levels. In Brazil, the scaling up and amalgamation via Bolsa Familia of cash transfer programmes under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (which commenced under his predecessor, Fernando Henrique Cardoso), partly resulted from the interrelations between Lula’s Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT/Workers Party), social Catholic mobilization against hunger, and the formation and advocacy of networks such as Citizenship Action Against Hunger and Misery and for Life.⁴³ In India, pressure by an alliance of social movements and the Left Front, which formed part of a coalition government with the India National

Congress Party, was instrumental in creating the rural employment guarantee programme, MGNREGA.⁴⁴ Similar alliances underpinned the “care turn”. As discussed in chapter 3, advocacy work by the broad-based Gender and Family Network in Uruguay, which resonated with the ruling party, the Frente Amplio, elevated care to a political issue and a government priority. Similarly, in Costa Rica, the establishment of the Care Network as a legally mandated government programme in 2014 was the product of several years of advocacy by social movements and NGOs and dialogue with political leaders and government institutions. Such advocacy found favour with the government of Laura Chinchilla that had prioritized children’s care and development in its 2010–2014 policy agenda.⁴⁵

The analysis of transformative policies in the care sector (chapter 3) emphasized the importance of building coalitions and alliances, not only among civil society actors but also with political parties. Additional insights are provided by other studies of policy change related to gender issues. Research on China, India and Indonesia suggests that gender-status policy issues such as violence against women have been able to gain more policy traction than class-based issues, such as the conditions and rights of domestic workers. Yet in both cases they encounter resistance from those in power and authority as they challenge patriarchal norms and intra-household and gender relations.⁴⁶ In the case of violence against women, it was somewhat easier to:

- build more cohesive networks of women’s organizations that overcame differences of class, caste, ethnicity and religion;
- gain support from state actors such as feminist bureaucrats (“femocrats”) or women’s parliamentary caucuses, or specific ministries or judicial institutions; and
- construct alliances with other constituencies interfacing with public opinion, such as the media and religious leaders, or providing technical and scientific support, such as lawyers and scholars.

Contexts of formal democracy or democratic transition often facilitate progressive politics. The same study of gender reform in India and Indonesia points out that such regimes provided spaces for women’s groups organizing and mobilizing, as well as entry points into the policy process. It cautions, however, that they are also open to conservative and regressive counter-currents.⁴⁷

National activism needs to be complemented with transnational advocacy

The earlier discussion on policy coherence made clear that policy reform for transformative change at the national level can only go so far. What also needs to change are policies at the transnational level, as well as in Europe and North America where so much of the decision making on policies related to trade, foreign direct investment, finance, migration and aid is made.

How does activism impact policy change in these settings? In some respects the same mechanisms identified in national settings apply:

- a framing of the issues that resonates with larger constituencies;
- building coalitions and alliances;
- crafting strategic entry points into the policy process; and
- developing technical competencies to engage with policy and other decision makers.

For example, gains achieved in changing the discourse and policies related to women's well-being and rights within the United Nations system (including the World Bank) depended very much on forging broad-based alliances, not only among women's organizations and networks but also with women's machineries within such organizations. The analysis of international policy change related to the incorporation of gender concerns into macroeconomic policy, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and human rights and violence against women suggests that discursive struggle is a key prerequisite: "if knowledge is power, then changing the terrain of discourse is the first but very important step" in the politics of change.⁴⁸

But transnational activism has also developed new modes of organizing and mobilizing that differ somewhat from agency at the national level. Key in this respect are transnational activist networks, three key novelties of which are: (i) they provide an organizational structure that is global; (ii) they have demonstrated political maturity in the framing of issues and proposals; and (iii) they have developed strategic-political skills in both challenging and changing policy at both national and international levels.⁴⁹

Transnational networks associated with global justice movements have emerged as crucial political actors, having influenced international policy changes related, for example, to debt, food, finance, corporate accountability, the environment, women's rights, and human rights more generally.⁵⁰ A study of how global justice activism affected policy and governance in France, Italy and the United Kingdom revealed four main types of policy and institutional reform or responses from governments and corporations: new legislation; disruption of neoliberal reform; increased financing; and normative standards (box 7.6).

The corporate accountability movement and multistakeholder regulation can fill governance gaps

An important arena where non-state actors are taking a lead in regulatory and policy reform relates to standard setting that aims to promote corporate social (and environmental) responsibility, as well as aspects of corporate governance associated with transparency, accountability and anti-corruption. NGOs and trade unions are playing a key role in the design or governance structures of numerous multistakeholder initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, various Roundtables or Stewardship Councils promoting sustainable commodity production and trade (for example, palm oil, soy, forestry and fisheries), the Global Reporting Initiative and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.⁵¹

In contexts where certain multilateral organizations, governments and trade unions have seen their regulatory authority decline, multistakeholder initiatives have gone some way toward filling governance gaps that have arisen under globalization and the expansion of global value chains.⁵² Their regulatory outcomes, however, are often quite weak, notably when first established. But the standards and procedures they promote tend to be ratcheted up through time. The analysis of this process of ratcheting up indicates that dual tactics of confrontation and collaboration, or so-called insider and outsider strategies, are often important in processes of policy reform.⁵³ As regards insider collaboration, what is crucial is not simply a seat at the table but the relative power of civil society stakeholders in the governance structures of standard-setting bodies. In the case,

for example, of the international body overseeing fair trade standards, Fairtrade International, small producers were able to get a better deal when their organizations gained a stronger voice and vote in the decision-making process.⁵⁴ In many cases, some combination of insider collaboration and outsider pressures—associated with protest, naming and shaming, and watchdog activism—was evident in ratcheting up.⁵⁵ The empirical reality of participation

Box 7.6. Shaping policy through global justice activism in Europe

A study of how global justice activism affected policy and governance related to issues of debt relief for poorer nations, overseas aid, international trade, international taxation and corporate accountability in France, Italy and the United Kingdom revealed four main types of policy and institutional reform or responses from governments and corporations. These included:

New legislation related to

- the International Airline Ticket Tax initiated by the French government to raise additional development finance;
- companies in the United Kingdom having to report on social, environmental and governance aspects; and
- in Italy, debt cancellation for poorer countries.

Disrupting neoliberal reform: In general, civil society activism slowed the pace of neoliberal reform and, more specifically, contributed to the collapse of government negotiations on investment and trade liberalization in the case of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and the 2003 WTO summit in Cancun, Mexico.

Increased financing for development: Several governments participating in the 2005 G8 Gleneagles summit committed to enhanced debt relief, re-committed to the UN target of 0.7 percent of GDP for ODA, reversing the declining trend. Civil society pressures for corporate accountability resulted in increased corporate funding for social and environmental responsibility initiatives.

Normative (environmental, social and governance) standards in policy related to trade, investment and global value chains. These included initiatives to protect children's and labour rights in countries trading with Europe, and the decision of the United Kingdom Export Credit Guarantee Agency to deny support for the Sakhalin Island oil and gas project in Russia.

Source: Utting et al. 2012.

The empirical reality of participation and policy change casts considerable doubt on the discourse of some mainstream institutions that suggest that stakeholder collaboration obviates the need for “street” politics or confrontational tactics, which are often dismissed as ideological, naïve or passé

and policy change, then, casts considerable doubt on the discourse of some mainstream institutions that suggest that stakeholder collaboration obviates the need for “street” politics or confrontational tactics, which are often dismissed as ideological, naïve or passé.⁵⁶

The analysis of the politics of policy change cautions against the assumption that a seat at the table, whether for those representing disadvantaged groups or government representatives of poorer countries, can actually influence decision-making processes. This concern relates also to the 2030 Agenda. For example, the “theory of change” on macroeconomic policy in the Agenda seems to rely on “voice and participation of developing countries...in international economic decision making, norm-setting and global economic governance”.⁵⁷ But it does not specify mechanisms, let alone question the assumption of equal power between countries at the negotiating table.⁵⁸ Even when relatively powerful emerging economies such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa and others gain a seat at the table, as occurred in the case of the G20, their capacity to craft a better deal for the global South has been limited.

4. Concluding Remarks

The 2030 Agenda is both the product of a historical process and an innovative attempt to address today's most challenging issues. Taken together, the SDGs define a new paradigm for development, with ecological sustainability, human well-being, inclusive economy and “leaving no one behind” at the centre. While acknowledging the need for differentiated national responses, such objectives are universal and should apply to all countries.

There are, however, major tensions between the normative elements of the 2030 Agenda and the concrete constraints that national governments face in an international context driven by the imperatives of economic growth and competitiveness. Policy makers may have agreed on what needs to be done, but interests, ideology, blind spots, disciplinary bias, institutional resistance and structural impediments get in the way when it comes to designing and implementing policies that work for sustainable development.⁵⁹

The recognition that the only durable development is global sustainable development reinforces the importance of enhancing coherence across economic, environmental and social governance structures at the global, regional, national and local levels.⁶⁰ Trying to solve the symptoms of the social, economic and environmental crises without addressing their root causes has little chance of inducing the required transformation of global development toward a socially inclusive, equitable and sustainable path (chapter 1). While the transition to sustainable development will require a long-term and multi-path process, it is imperative to:

- identify and address the tensions and potential synergies between the different domains of international governance, with special attention directed to cases where economic rules negatively impact social equity and ecological sustainability;
- correct the imbalances in both the normative and legal/regulatory hierarchy in international governance regimes associated, for example, with trade, finance, migration and climate change; and
- elaborate national, regional and international legal regimes for holding transnational and other corporations accountable for their role in world development, including in human rights abuse, ecological degradation and other activities such as tax avoidance and evasion.

When considering issues of policy coherence and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we can no longer turn a blind eye to the elephant in the room, namely reliance on conventional patterns of economic growth. Limitless economic growth is compatible neither with the assimilative capacity of

When considering issues of policy coherence and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we can no longer turn a blind eye to the elephant in the room, namely reliance on conventional patterns of economic growth

local ecosystems nor global planetary boundaries. It rarely trickles down to the poorest and has been associated with growing inequalities. Technical solutions and innovations that aim to improve the efficiency of economic activities in terms of resource use are essential—they make possible a relative decoupling of economic growth from the use of natural resources. But this still implies more emissions and waste. Issues of so-called absolute decoupling⁶¹ and socially sustainable degrowth⁶² need to be addressed. These, however, must be made compatible with the legitimate aspirations of disadvantaged peoples and countries to be better off. This requires not only differentiated responses to economic growth but also deliberation on the determinants of the quality of life and, in particular, what constitutes legitimate economic needs, defined by whom and for whom. Social and solidarity economy (chapter 4) is relevant in this context, as it aims to link economic activities with their social and environmental utility beyond considerations of monetary profit. SSE reflects an economic rationale that prioritizes social (and environmental) objectives over economic ones.

This chapter has also addressed other possible contradictions related to the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the risks associated with excessive reliance on PPPs. The findings suggest that:

- governments must have significant institutional capacity to create, manage and evaluate PPPs; and
- the quest to forge a global partnership for development should be less fixated on PPPs and pay more attention to the potential of myriad public-community/civil society partnerships.

A blind spot in the 2030 Agenda relates to what is perhaps the most fundamental means of implementation of all, namely, how to transform the inequitable power relations that underpin unsustainable development. It cannot be assumed that partnerships and participation, as currently practised, will correct such inequities. While the principle of participation has been mainstreamed, interpretations of what participation means often render it a blunt tool for transformative change. For this reason, this and other chapters have called for a transformative shift away from cosmetic or ad hoc consultation with selected stakeholders, toward a human rights-based approach that values contestation, institutionalized dialogue, bargaining and negotiation.

Public policy and laws can facilitate active citizenship and effective participation. Freedom of information and expression as well as institutionalized spaces for participation and redress are key in this regard. It is crucial that governments lean toward such enabling measures rather than suppress advocacy and criminalize dissent.

As the global development community turns its attention to the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it is an opportune moment to launch a global debate regarding the governance and politics of transformative change. Within this debate, it is imperative that mainstream development actors step out of the comfort zone of business-as-usual; question their assumptions about growth, free trade and PPPs; and critically examine the power relations and dynamics that reproduce exclusionary and unsustainable patterns of development.

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By bringing together the social, economic and ecological dimensions of development, the 2030 Agenda seeks to lay the foundation for a new twenty-first century compact, one that overcomes the limitations of the mid-twentieth century arrangement that has guided development theory.

The earlier compact centred on a compromise, which took root particularly in the Global North. It involved an implicit bargain between the economic imperatives of growth and productivity, on the one hand, and the social imperatives of redistribution and social protection, on the other hand. The driving forces that led economic elites to accept this compromise were periodic systemic crises and the threat to economic stability posed by labour struggles. The working masses, for their part, accepted the imperatives of growth and productivity in the hope that they would one day be able to access decent work and the modern-day consumer lifestyle.

Apart from the fact that billions of people, particularly in developing countries, never gained such access, the conceptual underpinnings of this compromise no longer hold. The dual phenomena of so-called jobless growth and informalization have put paid to the side of the bargain that catered to working- and middle-class interests. Furthermore, it was an arrangement that ignored the environmental implications of both growth and modern consumption patterns. The contemporary development challenge is two-fold: to reconstitute the redistributive side of the twentieth century bargain and factor in a third, encompassing dimension, namely environmental sustainability. This, in turn, will challenge conventional patterns of growth and consumption and require vested interests to either adapt or be tamed by others.

Just as the twentieth century compromise took decades to unfold, we cannot predict what form the new deal and the new politics will take. What this report has tried to do, however, is identify a range of relevant innovations in ideas, policies, institutions and forms of social organization and mobilization. These are likely to constitute not only important elements in the new compromise but also key drivers of transformative change.

Endnotes

¹ According to the Commission on Global Governance, governance “is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest”. Commission on Global Governance 1995:2.

² Le Blanc 2015:1.

³ Cook et al. 2012, Mejido et al. 2010.

⁴ UNRISD 1995.

⁵ Roffe et al 2006.

⁶ UN 2015: 1.

⁷ Cook et al. 2012.

⁸ UNRISD 2002.

⁹ UNRISD 2010

¹⁰ Martínez Franzoni and Sánchez-Ancochea 2013.

¹¹ Beachy 2016.

¹² <https://www.cbd.int/abs/>, accessed on 28 June 2016.

¹³ Lohmann 2010; Spash 2010.

¹⁴ Stavins 2015.

¹⁵ Lake 2015.

¹⁶ Spash 2016.

¹⁷ Strengthening the resilience of banks and the global banking system is at the core of the reform programme elaborated under the auspices of the Bank for International Settlements. Referred to as “Basel III”, the programme imposes stricter capital requirements as a backstop to risk-based capital and to contain excessive leveraging (BCBS 2010). But a programme that aims at “a significant increase in the capitalisation of the banking sector” (Cecchetti 2010:1) raises questions about further concentration in the banking sector and the manipulation of safeguards by the biggest financial institutions.

¹⁸ CDP 2014.

¹⁹ On 19 September 2016, the UN General Assembly hosted a high-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants, with the aim of bringing countries together behind a more humane and coordinated approach. This shows the constructive role of multilateral organizations in laying the foundations of global governance.

²⁰ Ocampo 2006; Utting 2006.

²¹ Koivusalo et al. 2013.

²² Jomo et al. 2016; Adams and Martens 2015.

²³ Bebbington et al. 2008.

²⁴ UNRISD 2003.

²⁵ UNRISD 2003.

²⁶ Cornwall and Brock 2006.

²⁷ Jomo et al. 2016:14.

²⁸ Jomo et al. 2016:20.

²⁹ Zammit 2003; Utting and Zammit 2006; Gregoratti 2010.

³⁰ Jomo et al. 2016:16.

³¹ van Griethuysen 2010.

³² UNTFSSSE 2014.

³³ Cook et al. 2012.

³⁴ Agg 2006.

³⁵ Bendell and Ellersiek 2012.

³⁶ Bendell and Ellersiek 2012:68.

³⁷ Bendell and Ellersiek 2012.

³⁸ Oxfam International 2005.

³⁹ See Ellersiek et al. 2012; Brassett 2012; Saunders and Papadimitriou 2012; Contreras Osorio 2012.

⁴⁰ Bullard and Müller 2012.

⁴¹ Bullard and Müller 2012; Cook et al. 2012.

⁴² Reed et al. 2012.

⁴³ Prashad 2012; Guichard Freire 2013.

⁴⁴ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Prashad 2012; Chopra 2014.

⁴⁵ Guzmán 2014.

⁴⁶ Cagna and Rao 2016.

⁴⁷ Cagna and Rao 2016.

⁴⁸ Sen 2006.

⁴⁹ Marchetti and Pianta 2012.

⁵⁰ Marchetti and Pianta 2012.

⁵¹ Reed et al. 2012.

⁵² Haufler 2001; Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2003; Mayer and Gereffi 2010; Reinicke and Deng 2000; Scherer and Palazzo 2010.

⁵³ Utting 2015b.

⁵⁴ Bacon 2010.

⁵⁵ Utting 2012a, 2015b.

⁵⁶ Utting 2012b.

⁵⁷ UN 2015: para. 44, SDG target 10.6.

⁵⁸ Esquivel 2016.

⁵⁹ Utting 2015a.

⁶⁰ CDP 2014.

⁶¹ Jackson 2009.

⁶² Asara et al. 2015.

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