

## LECTURE #2

6 January 2011

Copyright: Ronald B. Mitchell, 2011

- I. Introduction
  - A. Syllabus and Website
  - B. Questions on ASSIGNMENT #1 on plagiarism and reading assignment packet?
  - C. Final paper - building toward that throughout the term
  - D. My overview piece gives a sense of the field as a whole and questions that motivate research in the area.
- II. Show *Quest for Symphony* – a 16-minute film on global environmental governance based on interviews with leading policy figures. The movie has been called the “white paper on global environmental governance in images” and provides a good introduction to some of the core policy dilemmas and current debates. Available at: <http://www.environmentalgovernance.org/multimedia/>
- III. Three types of claims (with thanks to DG Webster, Dartmouth College, 2009)
  - A. Normative claims: claims about how the world SHOULD be
  - B. Descriptive claims: claims about how the world IS
  - C. Analytic/causal claims: claims about what things cause what other things to happen in the world
    1. May not be true but must be stated as if they were true
  - D. Uncertainty: most positive claims come with some level of uncertainty surrounding them
    1. Science seeks to reduce but cannot eliminate this uncertainty
- IV. International Environmental Issues - The Problem
  - A. Last class: laid out a bunch of different problems but are they all the same? What questions would we want to know about them?
    1. Which ones are easier and harder to fix?
    2. What solutions are appropriate to each?
    3. Other questions?
  - B. Whether we can expect to find an international solution to an environmental problem depends on several characteristics of the environmental problem. International environmental problems do not all look alike.
  - C. Structure vs. agency in international environmental politics
    1. Structural factors impose constraints – intentions do not always produce outcomes
    2. Agency still matters
    3. Standard argument between free will and determinism
  - D. Why are environmental problems more common at international level than at domestic level?
    1. Demand side of equation
      - a) Different types of demands on resources
      - b) Different amounts of demands on resources
    2. Supply side of equation
      - a) Ability to supply rules is more challenging
        - (1) Relative vs. absolute gains concerns
      - b) Ability to supply enforcement is more challenging
- V. Types of problems
  - A. What are differences in the POLITICAL shape of problems?
  - B. Alternative model of problem structures -- overview of power (capability) and interests (incentives) to redress any environmental problem are influenced in large part by structure of the problem being faced.
    1. Deadlock - nobody thinks there is a problem worth doing something about
    2. Coordination - everybody thinks there is a problem and, so long as rules can be agreed to, everyone willing to contribute but it can be a problem to identify rules acceptable to all parties
    3. Collaboration - Tragedy of the Commons: excess demand by beneficiaries: everybody thinks there is a problem, everyone contributes to causing it, but everybody wants problem to be fixed without contributing to the remedy themselves
      - a) Overfishing of sea-urchins off Oregon coast to supply Japanese "umi" market
      - b) Nature of problem: behavior by which future supply is assured is same as behavior by which derive benefits: amount of umi collected today influences both current AND future benefits. Conflict between divers short term and long term interests. Classic prisoners' dilemma (PD) or tragedy of the commons problem
      - c) Incentives

- (1) Conflict between same actors' short and long term interests. Have incentives to cut back but these are overridden by incentives to cheat.
  - (2) Divers collectively have incentives to fix problem even if don't have such incentives individually
  - (3) Reproductive rate of sea urchins will influence (compare to discount rate)
  - d) Capacity
    - (1) No diver individually has capacity to fix problem but do have capacity collectively
    - (2) Each diver has power to influence interests of other divers and help feel costs. Divers can observe and sanction each other for defecting
  - e) Overall, those who cause problem (and hence have capacity to fix problem) also have incentives (though perhaps inadequate ones) to fix it. Actors with capacity to fix problem have some "endogenous" incentives to do so.
  - 4. Upstream/downstream problems: Inadequate supply by non-beneficiaries: one actor indifferent about problem itself, only cares about whether it has to contribute or not - upstream states receives no benefits from "solving the problem"
    - a) Nature of problem: Whalers driving whale stocks to extinction. Behavior by which future supply is assured is in inherent and irreconcilable conflict with behavior by which benefits are derived. Inherent conflict between whalers and whale-lovers interests.
    - b) Incentives
      - (1) Conflict between one actors' short term interests and actors' short term interests.
      - (2) Whalers have no reason to preserve whales. Killing all whales may be in both their short-term interest AND long-term interest.
      - (3) Inherent value conflict of whalers and whale-lovers. Actors goals are incompatible.
    - c) Capability
      - (1) Whale-lovers can only create incentives for whalers to stop action by separate, independent economic or political pressure, but not through use of resource itself.
    - d) Outcome is likely to depend strictly on power distribution. Institutions and informational education can't make a difference.
    - e) Overall, those who benefit from problems resolution can fix it only by influencing others. Those with capacity to fix problem have no "endogenous" incentives to do so.
  - 5. Different type of Tragedy of the Commons: Inadequate supply by beneficiaries: Air pollution by automobiles and power generation;
    - a) Nature of problem: behavior by which future supply is assured is separate from behavior by which benefits are derived. But those who benefit are also ones supplying.
    - b) Incentives
      - (1) Incentives depend on a clear linkage between current behavior and future benefits.
      - (2) Conflict between same actors' short and long term interests. This may be different actors if time lag is long enough. Intergenerational effects.
      - (3) Pollution problems usually are "byproduct" problems so those engaged in them may be willing to change behavior if alternative means of achieving goals are not too expensive
    - c) Capacity
      - (1) Size of problem may be larger than ability to remedy.
      - (2) Patterns of behavior may be very hard to change or may not have other options.
    - d) Overall, those who cause problem have incentives (though perhaps inadequate ones) to fix it, but may lack the capacity to do so. Actors with incentives to fix problem may have no "endogenous" capacity to do so.
  - C. Also variation in
    - 1. Transparency of behaviors
    - 2. Capacities to engage in them.
    - 3. Values
    - 4. Power
  - D. General conclusion: Different structures of problems (and even different ways of organizing our thinking about problem structure) have different implications for the incentives actors have to remedy the problem and the capacities they have to remedy the problem.
- VI. Types of solutions: Solving international environmental problems

- A. Imagine that scientists claim that we need to cut total greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by the year 2050 if we are going to solve the climate change problem
    - 1. Broad or deep first?
      - a) First broad then deep: negotiate a series of agreements in which all countries participate and in which each agreement represents the greatest reduction possible that essentially all (let's say 95%) countries will agree to.
      - b) First deep then broad: negotiate a series of agreements between the most aggressive countries and have them agree to the maximum they will accept, perhaps some of them agreeing to cut emissions by 50% in the next 5 years and then have other countries join them
    - 2. International rules, national governments, local governments, NGOs, MNCs, partnerships?
    - 3. Stringent rules with lots of noncompliance or high compliance with meaningless rules? E.g., 50% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> (which is needed) or 5% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> which may be achievable
    - 4. Address all sources of problems or those you can manipulate easily? E.g., CO<sub>2</sub> which is only part of problem or also Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>)? Power production or also transportation sector?
    - 5. Mechanisms of behavior change: Sticks, carrots, locks, opportunities, labels, sermons?
  - B. Questions regarding which of these different options we choose to follow
    - 1. Does it matter which we choose? Is it likely that both paths will get us to the desired endpoint at the same time? Probably not
    - 2. Which one is likely to get us there faster? Why? What is your theory of the political process by which one or the other moves more quickly?
    - 3. How could we know which set of theories is correct? What process might we use to determine which was the better path to take?
  - C. Effects and effectiveness – what impact a treaty has and the "success" of a treaty at solving the problem which led to its creation. This is central concept to class. Need to understand this very carefully before end of term. Think carefully about this for next class.
  - D. Need to watch for perverse outcomes
    - 1. Whaling Olympics when efforts to control killing of whales actually led to increase in number of whaling boats at work trying to kill whales.
    - 2. Rent control makes housing dry up and so poor have fewer places to live, not more
    - 3. Strategic Bombing Survey after the war showed that bombing intended to destroy the enemy's capacity for industrial production increased it, due to reactive resistance and rally round the flag
- VII. Class summary
- A. Different types of problems face different difficulty of resolving because:
    - 1. Will depend on incentives and capacity
    - 2. Incentives and capacity to resolve problem will depend on structure of problem