

Sustainable governance and socially responsible corporations

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Corporations are global players insofar as they develop transnational networks of production and distribution and implement strategies that have far reaching implications for the quality of the ecosystem and the quality of life of the people of the world. In order to become global citizens corporations must take very seriously the environmental problem, behave in a socially responsible way and cooperate effectively in the pursuit of goals of sustainable development.

Globalization raises the question of global governance and the environmental question illustrates very well the need and the difficulties of global governance. The thesis I want to argue is that, in order to cope effectively with the questions of the environment and sustainable development, the notion of governance should replace that of government, and that this governance should be poliarchic, mixed actor, multipolar and multi-layered if it wants to be effective, and democratic, if it wants to be accepted. It should involve several actors both governmental and non governmental of the global civil society and should take place at different levels of government (global, supra-national and sub-national), although the national level remains central in policy implementation. It should incorporate some features of the main models of global governance (i.e. liberal internationalism, radical democracy, cosmopolitan democracy, multilevel governance), without neglecting some insights of neo-realist paradigm. And it can just be defined *sustainable governance*, in the sense that it provides both a viable and an effective way to deal with the key issues of sustainable development. I define *sustainable governance* as a method/mechanism for dealing with a broad range of problems and conflicts in which actors regularly arrive at mutually satisfactory and binding decisions by negotiating with each other and cooperating in the implementation of these decisions. It includes the definition and implementation of rules as well as the establishment of formal and informal institutions and regimes for regulating collective activities and exercising power within a given domain (local, national, regional, global).