

Chapter 6

A Transformative Post-developmental state?

State Institutions as Change-makers in the Anthropocene

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1. Introduction

From its very beginning in the early 1970s, the environmental critique of ‘development’ understood as modernization, industrialization and economic growth, was accompanied by a critique of the state as a modernizing actor (Eckersley 2005). The main driver of protection of natural resources and sustainable livelihoods, was rather expected to be social movements that could conduct social action ‘from below’ (Holifield, Chackraborty, and Walker 2018), while transnational advocacy networks, rather than modern states were trusted with scaling up action. In studies of how to coordinate environmental actions, the state was replaced by ‘governance’ as the central analytical category, including a focus on non-state actors, networks, and loose alliances (Duit, Feindt, and Meadowcroft 2016, de Castro, Hogenboom, and Baud 2015).

However, it is increasingly evident that large scale collective action is needed to meet the challenges of simultaneously mitigating climate change and protect natural resources while also providing adequate livelihoods for the world’s population. An urgent question is thus: What actors and institutions should be responsible for a transformation capable of responding to this triple crisis? Can we envisage a new form of state capable of doing that?

This chapter explores the question of what role the modern state can play in a transition towards sustainability. It first briefly outlines what is meant by the ‘modern state’ based on Weberian and Marxist (including Gramscian) state theory. The second section discusses the approach that brought state theory most explicitly into dialogue with development theory, namely the theory of the ‘developmental state’. The following section discusses different contributions that have taken on the challenge of making state’s instruments of sustainable transitions, including perspectives on ‘green developmental states’ and ‘democratic green states’. I argue that these are both based on a questionable idea of ‘decoupling’ of the development model from its environmental and climate impact. Moreover, they fail to take

into account the special challenges of post-colonial states. In the last section I ask whether it is possible to imagine post-development transformative state for the Anthropocene that is relevant for the Global South. This section draws on recent literature that seek to theorize the role of the state in a process of degrowth, but argue that it fails to account for urgent issues of legitimacy and security. To account for that, I argue that such a state could emerge as the protector of the population against the most devastating consequences of climate change and the nature crisis, while seeking to combine strategies of degrowth and exploiting potential for growth in sectors that may contribute to a sustainable transformation. This requires new forms of alliance building and construction of both domestic and international legitimacy. This last part draws on recent developments in Chile – a deeply divided middle-income country, that is profoundly affected by climate change and the loss of biodiversity, and is faced with the possibility of a deep transformation of the state.

2. The ‘modern state’

The most influential definition of the state is probably Max Weber’s notion of it as the organization with a monopoly of legitimate violence (Weber 1978). This was notably his view of a modern state – not applying to any state form in history. Weber’s argument places emphasis on territorial control through centralization of power, and has given rise to what is often called the ‘bellicist theory of state building’ proposing that the modern state is a product of war. Warfare required the mobilization of forces, technological upgrading and the establishment of extractive capacity (Tilly 1990, Mann 1993). While originally state founding groups held many similarities with any violent organization (Tilly 1985), over time states enhanced their legitimacy as extraction of resources was paralleled by not only by the ability to protect its citizens, but also by the expansion of capacity for service provision. Through this reciprocal relationship, states emerged as the permanent institutional core of political authority, upon which specific regimes were built. While states differed broadly in terms of division of power and degree of state capacity, Weber argued that the development of a meritocratic bureaucracy was a superior way in which to both enhance efficiency and create a platform of robust legitimacy (Weber 1971).

Marxist state theory links the development of modern states to the evolution of capitalism, rather than legitimate territorial control. It holds that modern states have emerged to support capitalism by preparing and disciplining labor, extracting resources for building necessary infrastructure, and regulating capitalist transactions. Although there could be a functional separation between the capitalist classes and state elites, there is a mutual dependence, since

the capitalist classes need the state to perform a set of functions, while the state elites depend on the maintenance of a level of economic activity, to be able to provide protection and services that ensure their legitimacy (Block 1977). Variation in states' function and capacity has thus often been explained not only by its territorial control and success in centralizing power, but also the kind of economic activity it is presiding over (Kurtz and Schrank 2012, Saylor 2012, Soifer 2013). Recent changes in the state are for example explained by the fact that capital partly has become "denationalized" and "deterritorialized", and the state has thus shifted in form but not purpose (Moncayo C 2012, Robinson 2010, Bull 2019).

What Marxist and Weberian state theory have in common is a consideration of states as essentially relational (Jessop 1990, 2008). Although states depend on the extraction of resources from its citizens to different extents depending on the availability of other resources (natural resource rents, foreign loans, aid etc.), they all rest on a degree of a reciprocal relationship to its citizens. This relationship depends on economic growth: to enable the state to provide protection from outside and internal threats; to enable it to provide services and to pay for the administrative apparatus needed for these functions. Both democratic and authoritarian states face this growth predicament, but they will experience different consequences if the states do not fulfill its functions: In democratic states, the government in turn will lose power, but the legitimacy of the very state is only affected over time, depending on how the economic crisis is managed. In authoritarian states, consequences of lack of economic growth depend on how it affects various state-supporting elites, as the relationship to the masses may be managed through violence and repression (Bueno de Mezquita).

Gramscian state theory differs from the two above particularly as it rejects the sharp distinction between the state and civil society. In a Gramscian version, states consist not only on materiality but also ideas. Different ideas are linked to different social classes, and the hegemony of the state is based on the acceptance of a specific set of ideas held by groups of civil society. An important implication of Gramscian state theory is that change is envisaged partly as a result of changing ideas (war of position), not only through physical action.

The necessity to procure economic growth can be considered the first state predicament. The second is that of security, which is particularly emphasized by Weberian state theory. In many ways, this is a mirror image of realist international relations theory arguing that the world is an anarchy. Any states that do not defend itself or consciously build alliances to enhance its security, risks being overtaken by larger powers. This accentuates the need for growth in order

to finance defense. The upshot of this double predicament is that the state is required to coordinate and foster growth as a means of both internal and external survival. This may lie the ground for increased legitimacy and state capacity, in turn facilitating the coordination of further growth. In the following, I will discuss how state legitimacy and capacity have been related to growth-based development models, before looking beyond growth-based models.

3. The development state and the last industrial challengers of the 20th century

At a point when the belief in market-solutions and the rejection of state-led development was at its peak in the late 1980s, students of the so called East Asian Miracle economies launched a controversial argument: Against the neo-liberal argument that the role of the state should be reduced to “getting the prices right”, the developmental state literature argued that the success rested on the emergence of a state configuration wherein a capable and autonomous bureaucracy was able to steer industrial elites towards investment in high-growth, high productivity sectors. A broad literature emerged on the economic policies pursued by the states (Amsden 2001, Wade 1990, Stubbs 2009), the type of states behind those policies, and their relationship to societal groups, particularly industrial elites (Johnson 1982, Evans 1995, 1998, Weiss and Hobson 1995, Weiss 1998), as well as on the historical and international background for the emergence of states with the ability and desire to pursue developmental policies (Kohli 1999, Woo-Cumings 1998, Cumings 1984).

The “developmental state” concept was subsequently detached from the East Asian experience and defined in general terms as a state that: “...establishes as its principle of legitimacy its ability to promote and sustain development, understanding by development the combination of steady high rates of economic growth and structural change in the production system, both domestically and in its relationship to the international economy” (Castells 1992), 56. It combines a Weberian state or its equivalent, with relations of collaboration and reciprocity between public and private sectors based on a political consensus of the pursuit of economic welfare and development (Schneider 2015). The role of an elite bureaucracy or specialized agencies were particularly emphasized.

After the turn of the millennium, developmental state policies got increasingly popular among developing countries. However, as institutional means to confront current challenges, they have major weaknesses. First, they are not easily replicable. The emergence of the professional, meritocratic and autonomous states presupposes that resistance from competing centers of authority to the state has been overcome. In most countries, competing elites continue to challenge central authority, whether it was clan leaders or local strongmen (Migdal 1998, Boone 2012), drug lords or competing business elites influencing the state not to enforce laws and implement policy (Amengual and Dargent 2020, O'Donnell 1993, Bull 2014). Moreover, the geopolitical backdrop of the successful East Asian

developmental states was US' attempts to strengthen stability and establish hegemony in Asia. The US did so through supporting prosperity and even particular domestic state agencies in the different countries (Fine, 2013; Johnson, 1995; Pempel, 1999; Nordhaug, 1998; Nordhaug, 2005). This helped the states in overcoming the security predicament described above, and it allowed them to focus inwards.

4. The “green developmental state” or environmental authoritarianism

Proponents of the ‘green developmental state’ consider the challenge of sustainability as two-fold. First, ‘green development’ requires the creation and mass commodification of new green technologies. Second, it must be capable of destruction of powerful fossil-fuel incumbencies (Thurbon et al. 2021). Developmental states with their institutional capacity and autonomy from particular social forces appear as particularly capable of taking on this challenge. And indeed, Asian developmental states have used the same tools to push for the greening of their economies and implement environmental policies as they used to do to pursue rapid growth (Han 2017).

Some have labeled this a “developmental environmentalism”, (Thurbon et al. 2021), referring to an idea that economic and environmental goals are essentially complementary. The primary purpose of economic activity building and strengthening of the nation. The state’s primary economic goals are increasing manufacturing capacity, technological autonomy and export competitiveness, and the appropriate role of the state in advancing those goals is strategic interventionism (Kim and Thurbon 2015).

Examples of such developmental environmentalism abound. In South-Korea, the state has built on its ability to direct networks of large companies to make them invest in renewable technologies, and is now actively promoting fossil-fuel phase-out under their net-zero emissions pledges (Kim and Thurbon 2015) (Kalinowski 2015). In Taiwan, the institutions associated with the developmental states have not only been instrumental in investing in the ‘green transition’; developmentalist instruments applied in the high growth period have been brought back in order to facilitate a rapid “green transition” (Chien 2020). As argued by Bowles: ‘the societal developmental state was needed to confront the political power of landed interests and the nascent power of labour to lead an industrial transition; now the developmental state is needed to confront the political power of carbon interests. That is, a developmental state is needed which is capable of disciplining some elements of capital and promoting others while forging the societal coalitions necessary to change the foundation of the economy.’ (Bowles 2020) .

However, the ‘green developmental state’ has two features that complicate its role in a green transition. The first is that it is based on a rational, scientific, and managerial approach and a vision of nature as an object to be controlled and managed by technocrats under centralized bureaucracies. In the same way that the ‘developmental state’ never questioned the basic structures of the capitalist mode of production or industrialism more generally, the green developmental state seeks to ensure the survival of capitalism based on mass consumption, through dealing with environmental risks. It may allow for a transition to a less carbonized economy, but not one that simultaneously handles the crises of nature loss, biodiversity, pollution and resource depletion.

The second feature is an affinity with authoritarianism. The East Asian developmental states were mostly authoritarian and many notoriously repressed civil society (Leftwich 1995, Deyo 1987). The discussion about whether authoritarianism was a condition for the success of developmental states, or simply an additional feature, has been revived in the discussion of green developmental states. This has of course been most vehemently emphasized related to China and its form of ecological modernization, resting on an authoritarian state (Chen and Lees 2016). However, as developmental states’ green policies. This is summarized by Gilley also other ‘green developmental states’ shows features of ‘environmental authoritarianism’: a public policy model that concentrates authority in a few executive agencies manned by capable and uncorrupt elites seeking to improve environmental outcomes (Gilley 2012). It combines a ‘decrease in individual liberty’ that prevents individuals from engaging in unsustainable behavior and compels them to obey more sustainable policies, and a policy process that is dominated by a relatively autonomous central state, affording little or no role for social actors or their representatives (Beeson 2010). This weakness is sought remedied by a different literature on green institutions, the one started off by Robyn Eckersley’s *The Green state*.

5. From environmental states to green states

Robyn Eckersley envisions the emergence of an ecological democratic state whose regulatory ideals and democratic procedures are informed mainly by concerns for sustainability. She adopts a constructivist approach to the so called ‘growth predicament’, arguing that the historical contingency of GDP growth as an overriding policy priority of states – is far from inevitable. Rather, it reflects particular historical, social and ideological circumstances (Eckersley 2014). In the same way as the bourgeoisie served as the vanguard for the creation of the liberal democratic state in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and the labor movement was at the forefront of the social forces that created the social democratic state in

the 20th century, she envisages the environmental movement and a broader green movement to be the harbingers of the democratic ecological state.

In essence such a Green state has high levels of state environmental capacity and intervention, and is able to integrate economic, social welfare and environmental welfare policies (Christoff 2005). Eckersley argues against the inevitability that the social structures of international anarchy (political realists), global capitalism (Marxists) and the exigencies of the liberal democratic state (liberalists) foreclose the transformation of states into agents of a broad sustainability transformation. There are three premises for this to emerge: The first is the rise of ‘environmental multilateralism’, including environmental treaties and international environmental standards that modify the structures of international anarchy. The second is the emergence of sustainable development and “ecological modernization” as competitive strategies of corporations *and* states that make the exigency of capitalism less ecologically destructive. The third is the emergence of environmental advocacy within civil society and of new democratic discursive designs within the administrative state, that makes the exigency of liberal democracy more compatible with real sustainability. This includes for example community “right to know” legislation, third-party litigation rights, environmental and technology impact assessment, and statutory policy advisory committees.

At the core of the argument is state legitimacy. state legitimacy, Eckersley argues, in the past ‘was acquired by the provision of military and domestic security and the regulation and enforcement of contracts. Nowadays that legitimacy is primarily acquired by appeal to democracy, typically representative democracy of the liberal democratic variety.’ The Green state, moves beyond this and can be conceived of as a “post-liberal state” with four core dimensions: it is a system of regulation, an administrative apparatus, a corpus of ideas and expert knowledge, and a site of contestation and decision-making (Duidt, Feindt and Meadowcroft 2016, p. 7.).

However, while there is increasing documentation of the existence of actual ‘environmental states’ both in Europe, the US and the ‘global south’ (Dryzek 2003, Sommerer and Lim 2016), there is much less agreement whether the existing environmental states actually have the potential of being transformative. “Environmental states” may be defined as to include the existence of environmental institutions and laws that make the management of environmental problems irreducible element of what governments actually do (Duit, Feindt, and Meadowcroft 2016).

The existing ‘environmental states’ however, have mainly enabled new forms of ‘green growth’ or ‘ecological modernization’. There is much less evidence as to the extent to which the state is able to engender a real socio-environmental transformation. The ‘environmental states’ appear to have primarily succeeded in shielding their citizens from environmental harm (for example as in local pollution), but have had much less success in minimizing their negative impact on the earth system, and in particular on the breaching of crucial planetary boundaries of climate and biodiversity (Hausknost and Hammond 2020). here appears to be a limit, or ‘glass ceiling’ to what the modern state can do (Hausknost 2020).

At the basis of the discussion is whether it is possible to actually overcome the ‘state imperatives’ sketched above. The political economy of the state will dramatically change if growth is reduced as much as is necessary to achieve a real sustainable transformation, and this will necessarily impact on the state’s fiscal role. One proposal to move away from the growth predicament is to critically look at the practices of money creation and the viability of existing debt-relations (Bailey 2020).

A much less debated issue is the relevance of the ‘green state’ literature for the ‘global south’. While there are pioneers among the ‘green states’ in the Global South (Sommerer and Lim 2016), most research is based on cases from Europe, Australia and the United states. Moreover, the ‘green state literature’ does not problematize the particular predicaments of post-colonial states, including deep divisions between elites and the broad population, low levels of integration of populations within a polity, and the frequent existence of elites that compete with the state for authority in vast swaths of the territory (O'Donnell 1993). To the contrary, Eckersley explicitly presupposes that the state has resolved basic issues of territorial control when she argues that state legitimacy no longer hinges on the provision of basic domestic security, but rather on liberal democracy. This ignores that in many countries in the Global South, basic security and regulatory functions are not in place. In the following I will discuss how the ‘green state’ literature can be enriched by examples from the global south.

6. A transformative post-developmental state?

At the core of post-colonial thinking about the state is a recognition that not all states are born through the same processes. There is a profound difference between states that were created as a result of colonialization or opposition to it, and those that grew out of wars, alliance building and gradual extension of the authority of a specific center, as the Weberian and bellicist theory of the state suggests. In the colonies, the modern state is an imposition,

established essentially to benefit the colonial power. However, the circumstances under which this happened and the extent to which the states have subsequently established territorial control and legitimacy varies. Indeed, part of the lessons from the developmental state literature was that the form of colonialism experienced in the ‘Asian Tigres’ had encouraged the establishment of a strong state apparatus that subsequently benefited the countries in generating growth (Kohli 1999). However, in many cases there is a significant continuity in state elites and state structures that are geared towards catering to narrow, often local, elite-interests or foreign interests (Centeno and López-Alves 2001, Migdal 1998).

The first overall perspective on development that sought to capture the consequences of colonial institutions and economic relations was different versions of dependency theory – in many aspects a forerunner to post-colonial thought. At the core of its argument was that a ‘comprador state’ led by a small elite, foreclosed the development of national capitalism and the evolution of a domestic bourgeoisie. It tied the former colonies to exploitative patterns of global trade, that would lead to a dynamic process of ‘underdevelopment’ and production of ever deeper poverty (Bull and Bøås 2012, Evans 1979). The export of natural resources was always a central element in that relationship of exploitation (Alimonda 2011), and thus, across many countries, the state-bearing national elites have been associated with resource extractivism and export-agriculture, for example oil-exploitation (Coronil 1997), coffee (Paige 1998) or mining (Paredes 2013). The control over key natural resources, allowed elites to construct states without the establishment of bureaucratic capacity and accountability mechanisms that tended to result from the need to extract income from taxation (Moore 1998). While dependency theory doubted the ability of the existing states to end underdevelopment, it saw a renewed state, based on control by the ruling classes or a class compromise as a potential instrument of emancipation.

While building on dependency theory, post-colonial thinking differs from it by rejecting the modern state as an instrument for emancipation of people and nature. However, most social movements and academics that work to de-colonialize societies, place demands on states and seek to transform state-society relations, rather than to abolish the state (Machado and Zibechi 2017). Among the proposals is the establishment of a different idea of citizenship and establishment of plural structures of authority in a given territory that respect different cultures and forms of life, transforming the state, but not abandoning it (Radcliffe 2012).

The start of this has to be a discussion of what a transformative state would do. It is increasingly accepted that a key task would be to end the growth predicament of current

global capitalism. The requirement of constant growth has led to an exponential growth in material extraction from the Global South that show no signs to abate.¹ It is impossible to confront the climate crisis and the nature crisis at the same time, without reimagining progress beyond GDP growth. The idea that global economic growth can continue decoupled from an exponential growth in natural resource use and depletion is largely debunked, at least if decoupling is not accompanied by sufficiency-oriented strategies, that is the direct downscaling of economic production in many sectors and parallel reduction of consumption, and strict enforcement of absolute reduction targets (Haberl et al. 2020). As argued by Hickel, this requires a broad transformation of global capitalism, and probable hard limits by capping resource and energy use (Hickel 2020).

However, as has recently been recognized in the ‘degrowth’ literature, the proposal lacks a theory of the state (d’Alisa and Kalis 2019, Akbulut 2019). There is a presupposition of the existence of institutions with the legitimacy and capacity to introduce new taxes, prohibitions and caps required for a transformation. It is also clear that many of the measures proposed to move the world away from a growth-addiction need to be implemented by the states in the global north, and through international cooperation. However, it must be coupled with action taken by states in the global south that are able to bring populations together around common goals. In order to retain high levels of legitimacy those policies must involve *both* improved living conditions for the majority *and* reduced material footprints. Can the ‘developmental state’ literature help us imagine such a state?

To do so would imply to reimagine the ‘sense of purpose for the state’, from being to foster growth as a means to promote national security and prestige (Thurbon et al. 2021), to a vision more aligned with climate mitigation and adaptation as well as reduction of nature loss. One could imagine a state whose sense of purpose is to promote national prestige through environmental leadership, and domestic leadership through protecting the citizens from environmental hazards and providing a good life.

This state would have to rest on a strong ‘elite bureaucracy’ of highly skilled personnel with an ‘esprit du corps’ and a shared vision of the goals of a transition towards sustainability. There is significant evidence of the emergence of such groups, not only in states that generally have competent and uncorrupt bureaucracies, but also elsewhere. Research from Latin America, for example, shows such environmental elite bureaucracies to have emerged in states that overall score very differently in terms of state capacity (Bull and Aguilar-Støen 2015). Such bureaucracies to have sufficient connections to societal actors to be able to extract necessary information to formulate feasible policies, yet at the

¹ This is well illustrated in materialflows.net

same time sufficient autonomy, not to be limited and hindered by special interests, as formulated in Peter Evan's concept 'embedded autonomy' (Evans 1995). Translated to policies for a green transformation, this would mean, for example, keeping close dialogue with existing businesses in order to understand where the potential and competence for shifting investments to more sustainable sectors are, while not shedding away from limiting profitable activities against the will of other existing companies.

This points to a well-documented broader democratic problem: That in deeply unequal societies, elites that benefit from the current model have disproportionate political influence both in bringing governments to power and in influencing policy making and policy implementation (North and Clark 2018, Amsden, Di Caprio, and Robinson 2012). However, the developmental state literature showed that resistance from entrenched elites is not impossible to overcome if the state is able to make visible benefits for the economy as a whole. However, this is a tough endeavor given that it is likely that in most countries, some of the elites that are set to loose most, are precisely those that have been the main supporters of the present state, as for example in the countries dependent on mining and oil (Hogenboom 2015).

A less discussed democratic problem stems from the cases where income from extractive sectors is used directly to distribute to the poor. This occurred for example in Venezuela and Ecuador, where leftist governments used income from oil extraction to build state capacity and distribute directly to the poor (Rosales 2013, Andrade 2015), in what has been labeled a 'neo-extractivist' model cementing the consensus about the desirability of commodity extraction and exports (Svampa 2013).

Recent processes in Chile may provide some guidance as to how, in spite of all this, a transformation may occur, as well as causes of concern. After the return of democracy in 1989, Chile experienced significant **economic** growth as well as poverty reduction. As a result it is often referred to as a model for other Latin American countries (Ahumada 2019). This, however, has occurred in parallel with a deepening of inequality (Rodríguez Weber 2019), and environmental problems. These range from the pollution of waters and soil from intensive fish-farming, industrial agriculture and mining, to loss of biodiversity, deforestation and droughts. The environmental issue that most directly concerns the majority of Chileans is the

severe water-scarcity,² resulting from a combination of climate-change, intensive water use for mining and export-agriculture and unsustainable management.

After two prior broad uprisings (2006 and 2013), a rebellion of dimensions hitherto not seen in democratic Chile started in October 2019. The main overall demands of the protesters were the end to the neo-liberal development model that had produced deep inequality and environmental devastation. After weeks of both violent uproar and large scale, pacific protests, an agreement was reached by political parties and movements to start a process to rewrite the constitution of 1989. This was written during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, and gives strong rights to private property but provides weak social and environmental rights. More than 80% of the Chileans voted for this initiative in a referendum, and chose an assembly with 50/50 men and women, special indigenous seats and wide representation by independents, indicating the desire to create a real change. In the midst of the constitutional process (may 2021-june 2022), former protest- and student leader, Gabriel Boric, won the presidential elections as a representative of a broad left-wing coalition. He promised a transformation of Chile towards a more egalitarian and just, more diverse in terms of gender and ethnicity, and importantly, towards a more sustainable Chile. As a means of forging such a transformation, he envisioned a new 'inclusive' state, built on a broad coalition of forces.³ Key focuses was the energy transition, the fight against biodiversity loss and the water-crisis.⁴ At the same time, he confirmed Chile's association with a Western dominated global security system, by strongly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and confirmed the need to continue selective growth, through strategic governmental interventions. He also sought to re-establish Chilean international leadership on environmental issues, initially by reverting his predecessor's rejection of ratification of the important Latin American agreement on public participation in environmental decision-making (the Escazú Agreement).⁵

In his effort, Boric could build on a state with significant capacity for intervention – also in environmental issues – but which historically mainly has acted as a facilitator for private capital, rather than as a key coordinator of development in a broad sense (Clark 2018, Kurtz

² For a survey of attitudes amongst Chileans on environmental urgencies, see:

<https://www.greenpeace.org/chile/noticia/issues/bosques/encuesta-urgencias-ambientales-para-chile-2022-rechazo-a-dominga-y-escasez-de-agua-deben-ser-las-prioridades-del-proximo-gobierno-segun-los-chilenos/>

³ <https://radio.uchile.cl/2021/11/10/gabriel-boric-queremos-construir-un-estado-que-acoja-no-un-estado-que-abandone/>; <https://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2022/03/11/los-horizontes-del-presidente-gabriel-boric-entre-la-epica-de-un-nuevo-relato-politico-y-la-dura-realidad/>

⁴ <https://boricpresidente.cl/propuestas/crisis-climatica/>

⁵ <https://www.emol.com/noticias/Nacional/2022/04/20/1058496/boric-escazu-retomar-liderazgo-pinera.html>

2001). With the significant public awareness of environmental issues and climate change, primarily due to the widespread water-crisis and frequent climate related forest fires, his coalition could also construct the role of the state around a need to protect people against further climate and environment-related catastrophes. Constructing such a narrative has been an important part of his coalitions' campaign. It has also been a main focus of the constitutional process, that seeks, for example, to handle the negative environmental impact of lithium extraction – an important mineral for production of batteries needed for the global renewable transition, by allowing the state a more important role.

The reforms in Chile could be an example of a process to give a new social purpose to a state apparatus that harbors significant capacity to transform the economy and societies. It is based, not as in the evolution of the 20th century welfare state – on a coalition between labor, capital and the state – but on a coalition between on the one hand broad social movements representing environmental groups, feminist groups, indigenous groups, and many others, and on the other, business groups and the state. So far the approach appear to be based on a form of “selective modernization” of improving analytical capacity and institutional mechanisms for policy implementation in sectors strategic to a green transformation.

The challenges of the experiment abound: The constitutional process have met many obstacles, including the people's decreasing appetite for broad changes with uncertain outcomes. Chileans' overall lack of trust in political parties and the government, gives little space to the state to provide leadership and be the spearhead of a real transformation. Chile also has entrenched elites that may seek to retain the old model. The indigenous group Mapuche in southern Chile, is equally unwilling to compromise on their demands after years of conflict and oppression. Moreover, although the critique against the existing development model is widespread, the consumerism upon which it is based has become deeply embedded in Chilean culture. In spite of this, if the broad coalition headed by Gabriel Boric is able to unite a significant part of the Chilean people around a new vision, it can provide one example of a transformative state for the Anthropocene.

7. Conclusion

The last decades have seen a rich literature on the institutional conditions for a transition into an industrial, high growth society. An important part of this was based on the so called East Asian Miracle states that challenged the Wests industrial domination as well as dominant neo-liberal theory of development during the last decades of the 21st century. This chapter has

reviewed the literature on the institutional underpinning of a state able to lead a transformation towards sustainability in the Anthropocene, rejecting the goals of high growth and industrialization, but embracing a vision of reduction of the use of natural resources. While the literature on this referring to the Global North is rich, there is much less literature that simultaneously considers the challenges of post-colonial states and the common challenges to the north and the south of simultaneously facing up to the climate and nature crisis, while rejecting authoritarianism. Based on experiences mainly from Latin America, I argue that taking on such a challenge requires at least three elements: First, the development of a new 'sense of purpose' for the state as a protector of the population against the threats of climate change and natural resource depletion. This could entail the establishment of a state image as an international environmental leader, mirrored in a domestic state identity as a protector of nature as well as the welfare of human and non-human beings. Second, it requires the development of a new form of coalition. This cannot be a traditional tripartite coalition between labor, capital and the state, such as the one that supported the evolution of welfare states in the mid-20th century, but must involve broad social and environmental movements as well as business and the state. Third, it must rest on the development of an environmental and economic bureaucracy with both internal cohesion and technical capacity, and sufficient contacts with social and economic actors to be able to adopt knowledge and provide leadership. If efficient, this can provide a new economic path that seeks less resource incentive growth, including also degrowth in certain sectors.

There are numerous financial, political and international challenges against such a process in most contexts. However, the example of Chile shows that although difficult, it is not impossible to both shift the direction of a 'developmental state' and keep some important elements of it.

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