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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Environmental Protection in the Global Twentieth Century: International Organizations, Networks and Diffusion of Ideas and Policies. Tanja Börzel / Thomas Risse, Research College (Kolleg-Forschergruppe, KFG) "The Transformative Power of Europe" ; Wolfram Kaiser, University of Portsmouth; and Jan-Henrik Meyer, Aarhus University, 25.10.2012-27.10.2012.

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Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (March, 2013)

Environmental Protection in the Global Twentieth Century: International Organizations, Networks and Diffusion of Ideas and Policies

The long rays of the yellow autumn sun shining on the red leaves of the Free University Berlin's Dahlem Campus provided a local touch of nature for an international conference devoted to the protection of the environment on a global scale. Sixteen researchers from eleven different countries from Europe and overseas gathered from 25 to 27 October 2012 at the Free University's Silberlaube conference centre to discuss "Environmental Protection in the Global Twentieth Century: International Organizations, Networks and Diffusion of Ideas and Policies". The conference was hosted and sponsored by the Research College "The Transformative Power of Europe" (jointly directed by Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse) at Free University's Otto Suhr Institute for Political Science, and organized by Wolfram Kaiser (Portsmouth) and Jan-Henrik Meyer (Aarhus).

Scholars of International Relations and environmental history tend to agree that international organizations (IOs) played a crucial role in defining and diffusing ideas about the environment. Notably, IOs were central forums for negotiating and placing environmental protection on the international political agenda. It is widely assumed that 1972 – the year of the first UN conference on the human environment in Stockholm and of the publication of the Club of Rome report "Limits to Growth" – marked the starting point of international environmental politics. Taking a long-term perspective across the entire twentieth-century, the conference set out to reconsider this received wisdom. Paper givers approached IOs from two perspectives: first, which role did IOs play as *norm entrepreneurs*, selecting, defining, diffusing and translating ideas about the environment in the course of the twentieth century? Secondly, which *structural conditions* facilitated – and at times inhibited – the diffusion or transfer of policy ideas? It can safely be assumed that the embedding of IOs in national and transnational networks crucially mattered in this respect.

The contributions addressed these core issues in six panels in roughly chronological order. In a first panel PATRICK KUPPER (Zurich) traced the origins of environmental internationalism to Paul Sarasin, a Swiss scientist and networker, advocating "World Nature Protection" ("Weltnaturschutz"). Sarasin managed to gather an international group of scientists in Berne in November 1913 for what could have been the start of a first international NGO, but the outbreak of World War I thwarted his ambitions. Sarasin's ideas were however not forgotten. As ANNA-KATHARINA WÖBSE (Geneva) explained in her paper on the League of Nations, during the interwar years other activists picked up these ideas and took them to the new organization. While the League of Nations failed to fulfill the hopes of the activists, the way the first global IO defined nature – frequently in terms of economic resources – continued to frame discussions well into the post-World War II United Nations. IRIS BOROWY's (Paris) paper similarly traced the diffusion and transfer of central concepts and ideas across IOs. She argued that it was a network of actors – notably particularly active and influential individuals – who transmitted and translated environmental ideas from the OECD Environment Committee in the early 1970s to the Brundtland Commission in the 1980s. The latter sought to overcome

the apparent contradictions between developmental and environmental goals, advocating the notion of "sustainable development".

Focussing on a variety of different actors, the second panel covered a number of issues that only became part of the environmental agenda in the early 1970s. While ENORA JAVAUDIN (Paris) studied how scientists turned nuclear technology into an environmental issue from the 1950s until the early 1970s, WOLFRAM KAISER (Portsmouth) rather explored the conditions for preventing the transfer of ideas and change. In the relevant committees of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC, the predecessor of the present-day OECD) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), heavy industry representatives made sure that air pollution in their sector was exclusively treated as a technological issue in the 1950s and 1960s, to avoid the imposition of tighter rules and new capital costs. RAF DE BONT (Maastricht) outlined the research agenda of the new project "Nature's diplomats" at Maastricht University, which focuses on the role of experts in environmental IOs in the 20th century.

Two panels zoomed in on the Stockholm conference of 1972. LUIGI PICCIONI (Calabria/Rome) allowed the audience a glimpse behind the closed doors of the Vatican, and its surprisingly active involvement and networking in the context of the Stockholm conference. MICHAEL MANULAK (Oxford/Ottawa) and ROGER EARDLEY-PRYOR (Santa Barbara) both considered the role of developing countries led by Brazil at the UN conference, opposing a strong UN environmental organization and laying the groundwork for the subsequent "sustainable development" agenda. JAN-HENRIK MEYER (Aarhus) and FRANCESCO PETRINI (Padua) pointed to IO responses to the Stockholm conference: The European Communities started their own environmental policy, taking on board what seemed to be a popular new issue, while adapting the agenda to the legal and practical needs of an economic community, organized around a common market. OPEC's price rise in 1973 was informed by debates within OPEC about limited resources – and the need to protect them for the future, a finding that clearly contradicts the usual image of the OPEC as a cartel of revenue-maximizing oil producers.

As part of a panel on societal actors, STEPHEN MACEKURA (Charlottesville, VA) returned to the issue of sustainability, however, highlighting the role of NGOs in the crafting of the World Conservation Strategy. RENAUD BECOT (Paris) provided insights in the mutual transfer of ideas on the working environment between labour unions and the International Labour Organization. The final panel was devoted to post-1972 issues across the globe. ALLESSANDRO ANTONELLO (Canberra) explained how the scientific concept of the ecosystem became a shorthand reference for political actors designating the political and ecological space of Antarctica. DAVID HIRST (Manchester) pointed to the scientific networks and path dependencies in the creation of the International Panel on Climate Change. MICHEL DUPUY's (Paris) study about the late German Democratic Republic's vain attempts to conform to international conventions on air pollution provided an instructive case of the strength of IOs as norms entrepreneurs across the Iron Curtain.

In their concluding remarks, Wolfram Kaiser and Jan-Henrik Meyer emphasized that the conference was a pioneering enterprise in an emerging area of historical research. The goal was to try to bring together for the first time researchers working on this issue world-wide, laying the basis for future cooperation, and mapping the field. This field seems to be dominated for the moment by Western researchers working with (mostly) Western sources. De-centering Europe and the EU – one of the initial objectives of the conference – will eventually require moving beyond this state of research, activating scholars in other world regions like Asia and Latin America to discuss issues linking environmental protection, international organizations and the diffusion and transfer – including the selective appropriation and re-interpretation – of relevant environmental ideas, concepts and policy practices.

Conference Overview:

Session 1: Institutional Origins

Patrick Kupper (Zurich): Internationalizing Nature Protection: The First Wave

Anna-Katharina Wöbse (Geneva): Welcome to the Blue Planet: Framing the Global Environment in the League of Nations and the United Nations, 1920-1972

Iris Borowy (Paris): (Re-)Thinking Environment and Development: From the OECD Environment Committee to the Brundtland Commission

Session 2: Early Issues

Enora Javaudin (Paris): How did Nuclear Technology become a Global Environmental Issue? Scientists and the Rise, Evolution and Transformation of an International

Debate 1945-1972

Wolfram Kaiser (Portsmouth): From Health in the Workplace to Water and Air Pollution: IOs and Heavy Industry

Raf de Bont (Maastricht): Nature's Diplomats. Outline of a Research Plan

Session 3: Stockholm – A turning Point?

Michael Manulak (Oxford/Ottawa): The 1972 Stockholm Conference and the Design of the United Nations Environmental Programme

Luigi Piccioni (Rome): The Holy See and Ecology in the Shadow of the Stockholm Conference: between Movements and IOs

Roger W. Eardley-Pryor (Santa Barbara): Reclaiming Environment for Development: Brazil and the Roots of Sustainable Development at the 1972 UN Stockholm Conference

Session 4: Stockholm's Impact on International Organisations

Jan-Henrik Meyer (Aarhus): "Me, too! The Emergence of a European Environmental Policy and the Role of International Organizations"

Giuliano Garavini (Padova): OPEC's Environmentalism in the 1970s

Session 5: Societal Actors and IOs

Stephen Macekura (Charlottesville, VA): Towards a Discourse of Sustainability: The UN, NGOs, and the Crafting of the World Conservation Strategy

Renaud Bécot (Paris): The International Organization Influence's on the Shaping of an Environmental Labour Agenda. The Case of the French Trade-Unions, 1960-1990

Session 6: IOs Saving Sea, Air and Climate

Allessandro Antonello (Canberra): The Protection of the Southern Ocean Ecosystem, 1968-1980

Michel Dupuy (Paris): The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution: A Challenge for the GDR

David Hirst (Manchester): Push and Pull: the Science-Policy Interface and the Making of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

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Citation: Jan-Henrik Meyer. Review of , *Environmental Protection in the Global Twentieth Century: International Organizations, Networks and Diffusion of Ideas and Policies.* H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. March, 2013.

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