WORKING PAPER

KFG The
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APPROPRIATING THE ENVIRONMENT

How the European Institutions Received the
Novel Idea of the Environment and Made it Their
Own

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No. 31 | September 2011

Freie Universität Berlin

KFG Working Paper Series

Edited by the *Kolleg-Forschergruppe* "The Transformative Power of Europe"

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Freie Universität Berlin

Kolleg-Forschergruppe

"The Transformative Power of Europe:

The European Union and the Diffusion of Ideas"

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APPROPRIATING THE ENVIRONMENT

HOW THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS RECEIVED THE NOVEL IDEA OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MADE IT THEIR OWN

Jan-Henrik Meyer

Abstract

Environmental policy has become an important area of European Union (EU) policy making, even though it had not originally been foreseen in the Treaty of Rome. Its emergence in the early 1970s can be understood as a result of a transfer of the novel policy idea of the environment to the European level. This paper thus inquires into the emergence of a European environmental policy from a diffusion of ideas perspective. Rather than focusing on multi-level policy making it seeks to trace the diffusion of environmental ideas from the level of international organizations to the European Communities (EC) in the early 1970s. It analyzes how and why these new concepts were taken up by the European Communities and adapted to the specific institutional framework of the EC. Starting with a brief introduction into the historical context, the paper first explores the origins of the notion of the environment as a political concept emerging in the context of international organizations at the time. Secondly, an analysis of the first Environmental Action Programme of 1973 will be used to show how the EC conceptualized the environment, including the definition of problems and potential remedies. Thirdly, the origins of these ideas will be traced back to international models, from the UNESCO conference "Man and the Biosphere" in 1968 onwards. In a final step, the paper tries to explain the diffusion and reception of ideas. It examines how these ideas were received by the EC, which actors were involved in this process, and which mechanisms of diffusion played a role. The goal is thus to make a contribution to the debate about the transnational diffusion of ideas.

The Author

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1.   Introduction[1]

Why did an environmental policy emerge at the level of the European Communities (EC) in the early 1970s? It remains a puzzle why this novel policy which addressed the negative consequences of economic growth was established within a regional organization intended to foster further economic development. It cannot simply be explained by studying national preferences pursued by the member state governments along the lines of the traditional state-centric approach to EU history (Kaiser 2006). Even a more comprehensive supranational analysis (Rasmussen 2009) which integrates the role of the European institutions such as the European Commission (Scichilone 2009), the Court of Justice (Koppen 2002) and the European Parliament (EP) (Meyer 2011) only accounts for part of the story. Also, it is not sufficient to explain the creation of environmental policy simply as a result of neo-functional spill-over from the Common Market (Niemann/ Schmitter 2009). While new national environmental regulations did indeed arouse concern among member states and within the Commission about new obstacles to trade in the Common Market, there was no necessity to introduce a full-fledged supranational environmental policy. A notification and consultation procedure along the lines of the model drawn up by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (European Commission 1971b), harmonization on an ad-hoc basis or even mutual recognition would have been sufficient.

Why an EC European environmental policy emerged at the time and why it included those goals and principles that have remained essentially unchanged until the present, requires the study of the relevant policy ideas and their diffusion and reception by political actors. This is particularly pertinent in the case of EC environmental policy in the early 1970s, for two reasons: First, the notion of the environment as an area of policy making was new. From the late 1960s onwards the term "environment" came to describe a coherent area of problems – comprising pollution, the conservation of nature and resources – which required a science-based assessment and urgently called for a comprehensive political solution (Engels 2010: 124f). Secondly, the concept of the environment did not originate from the EC nor did it emerge from within its member states. This programmatic idea was first defined in the discourse of experts and scientists meeting in the context of international organizations in the course of the 1960s. Influenced by ecological models stressing the connectedness of all living organisms they had begun to define these problems as global and interrelated (Hünemörder 2004: 146f, 155; McCormick 1995: 55-57). While of course a number of these experts hailed from the EC member states, member states (notably Germany) quickly followed the example of the United States (US) (Müller 1986: 88, 2009: 81), where the environment had first been defined as a policy area by the Nixon administration with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the establishment of the influential Environmental Protection Agency in 1970, which combined the control of "air, water, pesticides, solid waste and radiation hazards" (Johnson 1973: 86; Rome 2003: 551; Vickery 2004: 116).

Among the international organizations in Europe, the EC was a rather late arrival to environmental policy. Thus the EC was able to draw on existing environmental ideas from the international level. Given the novelty of the issue, EC decision-makers were very open for policy ideas from outside. When drawing up their first proposals, the Commission prominently included an overview of the activities of other international organizations (European Commission 1971a: Annex C).

In recent years, diffusion and Europeanization research has focused on the EU's export of environmental policy ideas and models (Tews 2002). However, in the early days of the EC environmental policy, the European institutions were actually importers of policy ideas. This provides an excellent case for studying the process of the reception of ideas. Historians have long emphasized that the transfer of ideas was not a linear give-and-take relationship but a complex and selective enterprise (Espagne/Werner 1987; Werner/Zimmermann 2006), in which the recipients played a very active role. In recent years, this aspect has increasingly been recognized by political science observers (Börzel 2010). Approaching the issue from such a perspective, I do not assume to find wholesale takeovers. Rather, I am interested in finding out which aspects were taken over from which sources (and which were not taken up), and how they were integrated into the framework of the new policy. Starting from these assumptions, this paper inquires into how ideas about the environment as a policy were diffused to, adopted by and adapted to the EC.

The analysis will proceed in five steps, tracing the path of diffusion. First, a contextual chapter will provide an overview of the origins of the new concept, largely based on the recent literature in environmental history, addressing the question: How and where did the idea of the environment as a policy emerge in international politics by the early 1970s? Secondly, I will consider which ideas were actually adopted into the EC Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of 1973. This document codified the core ideas and principles of EC environmental policy and has been the main point of reference until the Single European Act of 1987, when the environment officially became an EC policy. Thirdly, I will inquire into the models the EC drew on at the international level. I will focus on declarations and legislation from UNESCO, the US, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the UN between 1968 and 1972. These were selected not least because international conferences and US legislation were focal points for the discussions of these ideas in Europe (Hünemörder 2005: 128-131; Johnson 1973: 110-115; Poujade 1975: 231-233). It was here that they were placed on the agenda of publics and policy-makers alike. Fourthly, I will trace how and why these ideas were received and integrated. I will analyze the role of the different institutions as access routes for ideas. I assume that recipients are decisive in choosing which ideas to take up, but also regarding the embedding – and reshaping – of ideas into the new context (Werner/Zimmermann 2006: 38). Drawing on the literature on mechanisms of diffusion, I will try to draw some tentative conclusions as to why this specific set of policy ideas was adopted by the EC.

Before embarking on the analysis itself, I will provide a brief introduction into the analytical concepts subsequently used. First, social scientists have proposed various mechanisms of diffusion to explain the transfer and reception of ideas. Secondly, I will explain how the notion of the environment can be analyzed as a programmatic idea in order to distinguish, compare and trace relevant aspects.

2.   Conceptual Clarifications

2.1   Mechanisms of Diffusion

Social science theorizing offers a number of mechanisms which can be used to explain the diffusion of ideas. These mechanisms can be systematically mapped in various ways (e.g. Fink 2010). The subsequent overview (see Table 1) essentially draws on the taxonomy suggested by Börzel and Risse (2009: 9-12). It suits the analysis of the diffusion of environmental ideas to the EC well, since it highlights the respective roles and logics of action of both senders and recipients of ideas.

Table 1: Mechanisms of Diffusion; Relation between Sender and Recipient

Social Mechanism	Main Logic of Action	Role of Sender	Role of Recipient
Coercion through Force or Legal Instruments	Instrumental Rationality	*Dominance* of Sender	*Weakness:* Submission Obedience Formal, superficial acceptance (and possibly) tacit resistance
Manipulation of Utility Calculations	Instrumental Rationality	*Dominance of Sender*: Use of selective incentives: rewards and punishments	*Weakness:* Adaptation, shift in preferences, adaptive learning
Socialization	Logic of Appropriateness	*Slight dominance* of Sender sender's prestige: accepted as model	*Active Appropriation* of ideas considered normatively superior
Persuasion	Communicative Rationality	*Balanced Relation:* sender has to provide new convincing arguments	*Balanced Relation:* Recipient may accept argument or not
Emulation	Instrumental Rationality; Logic of Appropriateness	*Passive Role of Sender:* model of effective practice; normative model	*Recipient's Initiative:* Learning: lesson drawing Mimicry: superficial imitation

Source: drawing on Börzel/Risse 2009: 9.

Five mechanisms have been distinguished, which vary with regard to the expected strength of the influence, as well as the three underlying logics of social action, i.e. (1) rational-choice-style instrumental rationality, (2) normative rationality/logic of appropriateness and (3) Habermasian communicative rationality, which relies on changing hearts and minds through discourse and the force of the better argument (Risse 2000: 1). The first two mechanisms, namely, coercion and manipulation of utility calculations are based

on an imbalance of power between the sender and the recipient of ideas and on the logic of instrumental rationality. Coercion implies that the sender can impose his or her ideas on the recipient by force or law, thus coercing him or her into obedience or submission. Whether coercion is a very effective mode of the transfer of ideas or rather leads to superficial take-over depends largely on the stake the subjects have in the new ideas. In this sense, the sender's manipulation of the recipient's utility calculations – providing or establishing incentives – might be more effective in the long run. There is the assumption that by responding to rewards and (the threat of) punishments, the recipient is encouraged to adapt to the new situation by adopting the new ideas. The third mechanism of socialization is based on the logic of appropriateness. While senders promote their own model as the authoritative and normatively superior template, recipients are encouraged to take over the new norms in order to gain social acceptance. The fourth mechanism persuasion is based on communicative rationality. Senders promote their ideas by giving good and convincing reasons. Recipients are won over by the force of the better argument. Both socialization and persuasion are facilitated by networks. Normative pressures and continuous intellectual exchange have been observed to lead to collective mindsets converging around shared ideas within networks, e.g. in epistemic communities (Haas 1992). Equally conducive to the adoption of ideas from outside are situations of uncertainty on the part of the recipient. Recipients are willing to take over ideas from those norm-setters, central and prestigious members of the club that the recipient wants to be part of (Checkel 2005: 813). Finally, the mechanism of emulation does not require an active and forceful promotion of ideas on the part of the sender. Recipients are acting on their own through lesson-drawing, i.e. by observing and taking over policies that seem to work effectively – along the lines of instrumental rationality – or through mimicry, simply superficially imitating, in order to be accepted by the relevant peers along the lines of the logic of appropriateness. In the discussion below, the role of these ideal-typical mechanisms will be explored in order to explain the reception of environmental ideas.

2.2   How to Analyze Environmental Ideas?

How can environmental ideas be analyzed? In the early 1970s, apart from the term "environment" itself, various new terms and concepts (such as biosphere or ecosystem) were introduced in the emerging discourse on the matter. These concepts have been used to describe and define, discuss and prescribe the problems to be subjected to environmental policy. In order to make sense of the multitude of contemporary terms, it is useful to follow Vivien Schmidt in defining the environment as a "programmatic idea" (which may encompass different terms). Schmidt (2008: 306) suggests distinguishing between (1) the definition of its scope, (2) the problems it addressed and (3) the possible (kinds of) solutions, including the instruments to be used. First, as Dryzek (2005: 17f) has highlighted, a definition of the scope of these ideas may be based on three different criteria: assumptions about the geographical extension of the problem (on a continuum between global and local), about the relative importance of man and nature (Is environmentalism about conserving wild animals or human health or survival?), about natural laws and logics (such as the paradigmatic notion of the ecological balance, which has increasingly come under criticism in recent years (e.g. Reichholf 2009: 199)). Secondly, the problems included (as deviations from what is assumed to be the norm) are at the heart of the definition of the programmatic idea. We may ask: Which problems are highlighted? What are the reasons for the problems and who is to blame? Thirdly, the solutions suggested

by the contemporaries indicate to what extent the programmatic idea of the environment is in fact a political idea calling for political action. Questions to be raised are for instance: Which degree of political intervention seems appropriate and what kind of measures are called for? Will technology and better management be sufficient? Which assumptions about "agents and their motives" (Dryzek 2005: 17f) are implied (regarding education, command and control, economic incentives)? Applying this grid of analytical distinctions (see Table 2), I will be able to systematically juxtapose and compare the different versions of the programmatic idea of the environment in the documents at hand, trying to trace diffusion and selective appropriation.

Table 2: The Programmatic Idea of the Environment: an Analytical Framework

Conceptions of the environment	Subquestions		
(1) Definition of its Scope	a) Geographical Scope – between Global and Local	b) Relative Importance of Man and Nature	c) Assumptions about Natural Laws and Logics
(2) Perception of Problems	a) Which Problems? (Deviation from which Norms)	b) Reasons for the Problems?	c) Who is responsible or to blame?
(3) Suggestions regarding Solutions	a) Degree of Political Intervention	b) Role of Technology and Management	c) Assumptions about Agents and their Motives

## 3.	Where Did Ideas about the Environment Come from?

Concern about what we call the environment today is not entirely new. From the late 19th century onwards, in Western Europe and the USA, the negative side effects of industrialization raised citizens' concerns. Complaints about what was described in moral terms as "pollution" (mainly of water) or in legal terms as "nuisances" like smoke and noise were not uncommon and occasionally led to administrative regulations. Health issues were central in this respect (Rome 1996: 11-15). The destruction of scenic spots or hunting grounds by industry or dam-building, or bird-hunting aroused hearts and minds of those mainly bourgeois conservationists who were mainly motivated by anti-modern, romantic and aesthetic ideals, but frequently also by the moral concern about the unrestrained exploitation of natural resources (Ditt 1996: 1).

Nevertheless, in the face of these older notions of nature protection and conservation, the rise of environmentalism at the end of the 1960s marks a fundamentally new departure. First, the concept of the environment provided a generic term for what had previously been treated as distinctly separate problems. Thus, the term reorganized the perception of problems and facilitated a comprehensive approach to issues as diverse as nuclear power, industrial and household waste, air and water pollution, land use and urban sprawl, resource use as well as nature or animal protection. Secondly, not only did the term encompass a wide range of problems being part of a single whole, it also suggested that these problems were global in scope.

Thirdly, the notion of the environment was a political concept. The collective concern for the environment was to be subjected to public policy and to political – rather than administrative – decision-making. The rise of the environmental movement reinforced this claim. Fourthly, as opposed to the aesthetic concerns of the conservation movement, science was considered to be the benchmark by which to judge and solve environmental problems (Engels 2010: 124f). Ecological ideas, which had gained prominence in the post-war period, were central in the way the environment was conceptualized (Worster 1994: 350-372). Ecology described the entire planet as a cohesive, integrated ecosystem, the "biosphere", characterized by cycles of nutrients and the mutual dependency of organisms in complex symbioses. The fundamental assumption was that in the long run there was a natural balance between all its parts. From an ecological perspective, human intervention in the environment threatened to upset this balance, which might – sooner or later – even put human survival at stake. The metaphor of "spaceship earth", which gained prominence in the context of the first lunar landing in 1969, suggested that there was no escape from the blue planet (Cosgrove 1994: 289f; Höhler 2008; Johnson 1973: 89). Thus, finally, ecological ideas contributed to the sense of urgency that characterized environmentalism (Worster 1994: 353).

How did this novel idea of the environment requiring urgent political action make it to the political agenda by the end of the 1960s – both at the level of international organizations and national governments? Environmental history research has highlighted that the concept of the environment germinated in the 1960s among experts and diplomats dealing with issues of pollution and conservation in the context of international organizations – such as the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN), the CoE, the UN or the OECD. International organizations were instrumental in the gathering of (comparative) data, transnational exchange of information and interpretations and contributed to researchers' taking a global perspective (Hünemörder 2003, 2004: 126-141; Küppers et al. 1978: 118, 122). The International Biological Programme (IBP), for instance, was very effective in socializing and/or persuading a transnational community of researchers into ecological thinking, even if originally the technocratic goal had been to increase the biological productivity of the planet (Worster 1994: 372f). The UNESCO conference "Man and the Biosphere" in Paris 1968 lobbied for replacing the IBP with a new research agenda on "Man and the Biosphere" and tried to raise public concern for the issue (Batisse 1971: 2).

The public debate about environmental problems had changed rapidly by the end of the 1960s. Internationally bestselling books such as Rachel Carson's (1962) "Silent Spring" raised awareness for the problematic consequences of indiscriminate use of pesticides (Thomas 2009). Publications like Paul Ehrlich's (1968) much discussed "Population Bomb" or Garrett Hardin's (1968) rational choice based analysis warning against a seemingly inescapable "Tragedy of the Commons" (for a critical view Feeny et al. 1990) revived Malthusian ideas about the consequences of unfettered population growth (Worster 1994: 353f). This debate peaked in 1972 with the publication of the report of the Club of Rome on the "Limits to Growth" (Meadows et al. 1972). The study provided unprecedented computer-calculated data that suggested that exponential population growth and use of resources would exhaust the resources available on the planet in the near future, thus aggravating a sense of alarm (Freytag 2006; Sandbach 1978b). Media reporting about environmental issues increased in many countries at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s, for instance in the US and the UK (Brookes et al. 1976: 249; Sandbach 1978a: 100). Environmental disasters, such as the oil spill caused by the super-tanker Torrey Canyon off the coast of Southern England in 1967 and the blowout of an oil platform near Santa Barbara in 1969 were internationally mediatized via television for the first time.

They provided compelling images of dying birds that contributed to a growing sense of environmental crisis also among (sections of) the general public (Johnson 1973: 82-85). These images also resonated with the everyday experience of growing pollution that could be felt in the developed world after three decades of unprecedented growth and technological development (Kupper 2003: 326-328; McCormick 1995: 68-70).

The UN conference on the human environment, held in Stockholm in June 1972, marked the international breakthrough of the idea of the environment as an area of policy. In the run-up to the conference from 1970, onwards national governments produced reports on the environmental situation in their respective countries. In their entirety, these reports made the scope and scale of the environmental problem globally visible for the first time. Moreover, the involvement of government officials meeting internationally with fellow officials working on similar issues in the preparation of the conference created ample opportunities for socialization, persuasion and the formation of epistemic communities (Haas 1990), encouraging national governments to set up their own environmental policies. The participation of a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and journalists additionally created the sort of publicity that reinforced the position of the new agenda in public discourse (Hünemörder 2004: 244-255, 277f; Thompson Feraru 1974).

In the establishment of environmental policy in the EC and its member states, the United States played an important role as a model and international agenda setter. Citizen protest on environmental issues was relatively strong already in the 1960s (Rome 2003), even before Earth Day (22 April 1970), an event observed from across the Atlantic with great interest (Johnson 1973: 85; Lietzmann 1970; McCormick 1995: 78; Rome 2010). The Nixon administration acted as a policy entrepreneur, taking rapid and forceful action in 1969. It established the "National Environmental Policy Act" – requiring annual reporting on the state of the environment and set up a "Council on Environmental Quality" and subsequently the powerful Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (Küppers et al. 1978: 111; Vickery 2004: 116).

As it was introduced by the Western superpower and notionally the most advanced country in the Western World, the new US environmental policy was keenly observed by the relevant European policy makers. Although his account was rife with Gaullist anti-American clichés, even the first French minister of the environment Robert Poujade spoke with great admiration about what he found during his first information visit to Washington – "le Mecque de l'environnement", i.e. "the Mecca of the environment" – in 1972 (Poujade 1975: 231-233).

In the early 1970s the Nixon administration sought to actively export environmental policy to its NATO partners using its strength within the Western alliance and its ability to manipulate utility calculations. The US administration pushed for setting up a Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS) within NATO. NATO members were encouraged to engage in environmental research, share their knowledge and use it as a basis for science-based political decision-making. The Nixon administration defined the environment as an area relevant for security, which allowed it to push for NATO as the relevant forum rather than other international organizations, in which its influence was more limited. The initially reluctant European partners suspected the American administration of wanting to divert attention from the disastrous developments of the Vietnam War (Hünemörder 2004: 141-146; Lietzmann 1971). Eventually, the European partners were won over by the positive incentive of engaging in research relevant for industry and by the

shadow of US power indispensable for West European security. A British official in 1971 put it politely: "[W]e go along with [...] CCMS only for political reasons – as do other European countries" (quoted after Hamblin 2010: 59; similarly Schulz 2010: 316f). However, due to the European partners' reluctance, NATO's CCMS remained essentially limited to research. The US neither imposed the wholesale takeover of US environmental policy on NATO's member states nor were they able to establish environmental security as the guiding concept (Schulz 2010: 316f). The example thus also demonstrates the relative strength and resilience of the receiving end, even in a situation of vast imbalances of power.

Whether US export of environmental ideas or the voluntary import of concepts by conveniently drawing on the US model mattered most – as Müller (2009: 81) observed with respect to German environmental legislation – requires further research, in particular with respect to the relevant mechanisms. In any case, at least partially drawing on the US example, a number of EC member states and accession countries – such as Germany, France or the United Kingdom (Bess 2003: 83f; Maier 2008: 9; McCormick 1991: 16f; Uekötter 2003: 485) – developed environmental policy initiatives or even set up ministries of the environment in 1970/71. It was in this context that the EC established an environmental policy, starting with the First Environmental Action Programme of 1973.

4. Which Ideas Were Adopted? The Environmental Action Programme of 1973

The EAP of November 1973 (Council of the European Communities 1973a) is key to understanding the subsequent environmental policy of the EC/EU. It codified the concept of the environment and defined the main lines of policy-making. Since there was no treaty base that legitimated the making of environmental policy, the EAP became the most important point of reference for subsequent legislation. Thus the principles and goals outlined in the EAP played a key role in European environmental policy which was arguably shaped subsequently by certain path-dependencies.[2] Many of the central principles established in the early 1970s have continued to be at the core of environmental policy, even after the inclusion of environmental policy into the treaties in the Single European Act in 1987 and the introduction of "new" instruments at the turn of the millennium (Jordan et al. 2003). Even the bureaucratic instrument of multi-annual action programs is still in use.

The first EAP of 1973 spells out the principles and objectives of the new EC environmental policy. Even if an explicit definition of the term environment is absent, it is made more or less clear that the object of the policy is the "natural environment" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part I, Title I). However, the scope of the notion of the environment was apparently quite contentious in the early 1970s, as the preparatory documents produced by the Commission demonstrate. In the First Communication of 22 July 1971, the Commission proposed what they presented as a "generally accepted definition" of the environment: [It comprised] "all the elements which, interacting in complex fashion, shape the world in which

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2   I am addressing the question of possible path dependent developments in European environmental policy until the 1990s in my Marie Curie Reintegration Grant Project „Transnational Networks in European Environmental Policy – Path Dependent or Learning" (2010-13).

we live and move and have our being" (European Commission 1971a: 1). This definition was informed by ecological ideas and a global approach.

Apparently, this definition proved less "generally accepted" than anticipated. In the Second Communication of 24 March 1972 the Commission provided a new definition that was much broader in scope. It additionally included social and cultural concerns. The Commission suggested measures in three areas:

> "in the physical environment, reduction in pollution and nuisances, urban and rural planning, the establishment of transport and communications systems, etc.; - in the social environment, the improvement of welfare systems, income, job, security working conditions, housing, education, etc.; - in the cultural environment, the preservation of urban and rural sites of interest and beauty spots, the improvement of teaching and information, cultural and leisure facilities" (European Commission 1972: 10f).

Of course, socio-economic improvement had always been a central EC concern laid down in the treaties (Steiner 2009). Such a broader notion of the environment also implied substantial potential for extending EC competences (Pohl 2005: 175). Furthermore, cultural and aesthetic concerns were important issues in some member states such as France (Rudolf 2005: 364) and formed a constitutive element of the older conservation agenda represented for instance by NGOs such as Italia Nostra (e.g. Koppen/Markham 2008: 264f). However, in the eventual EAP, the EC moved back to what was becoming the new international consensus and restricted its definition to the "natural environment" only.

Nevertheless, socio-economic concerns played a central role in the first EAP. For legal reasons, since the new policy had to be established within the confines of the scope of the Treaty of Rome, the Heads of State and Government meeting in Paris in October 1972 declared that environmental policy conformed to the original intent of the Treaty of Rome. In particular, they referred to the Treaty goals of the "constant improvement of the living and working conditions" and "the harmonious development of their economies" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Introduction). However, they diligently redefined these objectives in line with the contemporary international debate on the environment. In particular, they made use of the notion of the "quality of life", which was a central concept at the Stockholm conference in the summer of 1972. The term suggested the goal of qualitative improvements of living conditions, complementing the quantitative indicator of the standard of living (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Introduction).

The "objectives of Community environmental policy" spelled out in the EAP give evidence of the scope of the programmatic idea of the environment: On the one hand, the concept is global and informed by ecological terminology. The Community committed to international cooperation with states and international organizations. The document invoked ecological concerns about the "protection of the biosphere" (as a global entity) and maintaining the "ecological balance" and emphasized the need to prevent the exploitation of resources and nature. On the other hand, in line with the fundamental objective to improve the "setting and the quality of life" material human benefits remained central. This was presented as a contribution to "progress" conventionally understood as equivalent to economic growth. The goal of the policy was thus to "reconcile expansion with the increasingly imperative need to preserve the natural

environment" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Title I). Such a conceptualization had very little in common with the contemporary concern about the "limits to growth" (Meadows et al. 1972) or with a policy of restraining resource use, advocated e.g. by Commissioner Mansholt (Mansholt 1972; Pohl 2005: 174). More concretely, the environmental problems to be addressed were the following: "pollution and nuisances", "working conditions and the settings of life", the "exploitation of resources and of nature", "environmental aspects in town planning and land use" and the general concern about "damage to the ecological balance" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Title I).

The EAP established eleven "principles of a Community environmental policy" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Title II) as solutions to the environmental problem. For analytical reasons I suggest to regroup these principles into five types of solutions: (1) better, more rational management, (2) research and technological development, (3) education, (4) international cooperation and (5) EC action.

The bureaucratic ideal of rational management was at the core of the EC's approach to avoid environmental damage, notably in the guise of the first three of the eleven policy principles: The goal of the prevention principle was to pre-empt pollution right from the start. Great hopes were placed on technological fixes so as to avoid hampering economic and social progress. The principle of "early integration of environmental concerns" essentially introduced the idea of the environmental impact assessment as a device of foresight in bureaucratic decision-making. The principle of avoiding the exploitation of resources and nature was informed by the concern about maintaining the ecological balance. Natural resources were understood to be limited, so was nature's capacity to absorb pollution. Thus, rational management, rather than careless destruction, was deemed necessary. The "polluter pays principle" was to provide an economic disincentive to the polluter, essentially an early market-based instrument of regulation (Jordan et al. 2003). Given the number of exceptions spelt out, however, neither the rapid nor the comprehensive application of this principle seemed likely.

Scientific research and technological progress were to be placed in the service of fighting pollution. Research in these areas was to be encouraged. Given the supranational institutions' ambition to strengthen research cooperation, this seemed a suitable area for EC action. Furthermore, citizen education about the environment was declared to be of primary importance, based on the expectation that raising awareness would strengthen citizens' responsibility for future generations. This was one of the few moral arguments – among many utilitarian ones.

International cooperation was highlighted as essential in addressing the environmental problem that was considered to be global in scope. The document explicitly referred to the results of the Stockholm conference: the prevention of cross-border pollution, the concern of the developing countries that environmental measures could hamper their economic growth, for instance by limiting access to European markets. Moreover, global cooperation in scientific research and environmental policy was to be encouraged, based on the assumption that there existed "both world ecological correlations and the interdependence of the economies of the world" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Title II). The use of the contemporary concept of "interdependence", which was essentially the 1970s equivalent to what we call globalization today (Moravcsik 2009: 258), suggests that both ecologically and economically the world was considered interlinked at a global scale.

The principles relating to EC measures reflected member state concerns about the distribution of competences among the European institutions. Responding to German government demands, environmental action was to be taken at the "most appropriate level". This rule was intended to limit the shift of national and state prerogatives to the EC. Interestingly enough, the new environmental policy thus introduced what amounts to a subsidiarity principle avant la lettre (Carpentier 1999: 293f). Similarly, the objectives of "harmonization" and "coordination" of national policies – "with a view to ensuring the smooth functioning of the single market" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Title II) – refer to the standard contemporary tools of EC policy making before the introduction of the principle of mutual recognition in the 1980s (Young 2010: 110-112).

Concrete measures were to be taken extended in three areas: "1. Action to reduce and prevent pollution and nuisances, 2. Action to improve the environment and the settings of life, and 3. Community action or, where applicable, common action by the Member States in international organizations dealing with the environment" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Title III). In practice, the reduction of pollution and nuisances was to be based on the introduction and standardization of scientific criteria concerning water, air and noise. The definition of "quality objectives" was to serve as a basis for decisions, and the subsequent monitoring and surveillance through "networks". Here, reference was also made to the "world monitoring system" envisaged by the UN. Various examples of concrete action were spelled out, e.g. regarding polluting products, the Rhine as an area of shared interest and concerning the implementation of a common research program. Some of these priority areas were selected as action was already underway at the international level.

In short, the programmatic idea of the environment spelled out in the EAP included and combined various concepts from the debates at the international level. However, these ideas were integrated into and adapted to the specific framework of an economic community which continued to define progress essentially in terms of economic growth. Where did the EC borrow these ideas about the environment from?

5. Which International Models Did the EC Draw on?

When it prepared its "First Communication […] on the Community's policy on the environment" in 1971, the European Commission pointed to the activities of various international organizations in the area of the environment, such as the UN and its subsidiary organizations like the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), UNESCO or the World Health Organization (WHO), to NATO's CCMS, as well as to the engagement of regional organitations such as OECD and the Council of Europe (CoE) in this emergent new area (European Commission 1971a: Annex C).

Since it is impossible to cover all international organizations active in the field of the environment at the time, or even all those mentioned in EC documents, I selected the main UN and regional international organizations with a general scope as well as the relevant US legislation, which gave evidence of innovative

legislative practice outside of the EC.[3] Clearly, environmental ideas were controversially discussed also within these organizations. However, in order to get to the core of the respective international organization's conceptualization of the environment, I limited my empirical sample to the final documents of the most influential environmental conferences held by these organizations.

The UNESCO conference "Man and the Biosphere" in 1968 was the first event to place the environment on the international political agenda. It introduced the global ecological concept of the biosphere and called for political action. The American "National Environmental Policy Act" of 1969 was an early piece of environmental legislation and an international point of reference. The conference of the Council of Europe's European Conservation Year in 1970 in Strasbourg raised substantial attention to the emergent issue in Europe (Johnson 1973: 110-115). Finally, as the biggest and most publicly visible event, the UN conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 was included. Moreover, the UN conference immediately preceded the decision by the EC summit of Paris of 1972 to establish an environmental policy and to call in the relevant ministers for a meeting in Bonn on 31 October 1972 to set out its key principles. While Commission initiatives had been under way since 1971, the UN conference clearly acted as a catalyst for actually establishing an EC environmental policy.

5.1   UNESCO – Man and the Biosphere 1968

Coining the concept of the biosphere – defined as a self-contained and bounded "spaceship earth" (Höhler 2008; UNESCO 1970: 185) – the UNESCO conference "Man and the Biosphere" was the first international event taking a comprehensive, global approach towards the environment. Previously, conferences had been limited to specific sectoral problems such as air pollution (Hünemörder 2004: 139). Unlike subsequent events, "[t]he Intergovernmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use and Conservation of Resources of the Biosphere" – as it was officially called – was still dominated by scientific experts, rather than government officials. More than 300 participants from 60 countries gathered in Paris (Polunin 1969: 187) to discuss and popularize the concept of the biosphere. The conference report defined the term. The biosphere described a system of all living beings and those materials shaped by or involved in biological processes, for instance in the soil or in water. The biosphere was understood to consist of various ecosystems. In its natural state, it was assumed to be a balanced system. Normally, the biosphere was flexible enough a system to re-establish its "natural equilibrium" if disturbed by man or nature. However, the authors of the conference report warned that "the plasticity of the biosphere [was] limited". Population growth and societal change intervening into the biosphere threatened to endanger its balance. Consequently, they called for better management as the solution to this problem: "a rationalization of use of the resources of the biosphere on a world-wide scale is imperative, if satisfactory living conditions of future generations are to be guaranteed"(UNESCO 1970: 194). The central admonition issued by the conference was that humanity was upsetting the ecological order of the planet – conceived as a natural equilibrium. Human survival, human well-being and human health seemed thus endangered.

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3   As a defense association, NATO was not covered, even though it presented an important route for the projection of American ideas and influence.

The recommendations of the conference provided concrete examples of problems affecting the fragile balance, including an early warning against climate change. Pollution by chemicals and radioactive materials, the "altering of the carbon dioxide balance of the atmosphere", the "deterioration of terrestrial and aquatic environments, changes of water balance, loss of plant and animal species" threatened the balance of the biosphere. Even if the authors did not attribute any blame to any concrete actor, they noted that these were side-effects of a more welcome development, namely "the improvement of the human condition" (UNESCO 1970: 210). The "rapid growth of urbanization, industrialization and population" were explicitly mentioned as causes (UNESCO 1970: 204).

The conference title uses the more traditional concept of conservation that dates back to the late 19th century. This referred to the conservation of nature and natural resources, including both renewable and non-renewable ones (Chester 2009: 336; Stoll 2007: 9). However, the new term "environment" was also used, e.g. in the title of a section on "Deterioration of the environment". However, while the concept of the biosphere provided a more positive reference point – an equilibrium, ideal state of nature, even if a fragile one - the term environment was apparently more closely associated with destruction and pollution (UNESCO 1970: 204, 210).

The conference report warned against the potential irreversibility of damages to the biosphere, and pointed to the "increasingly perilous" situation and the global scale of the problem. A number of solutions were suggested: Apart from better and more rational management, technology was expected to solve the problem. Frequently the report argued, the appropriate technology was already available and simply needed to be employed. Where this was not the case, research and development would have to be undertaken to find solutions. The solutions indicated were however not limited to technology and technocracy. The report explicitly called for political intervention. The experts stated that it was necessary to overcome legal and administrative problems and to reconsider the general priority given to economic development. Something had to be done about the lack of public understanding and the frequent absence of government involvement (UNESCO 1970: 204). Scientists' recommendations were thus not limited to scientific concerns. Of course, they demanded a major international research program to enhance the knowledge about ecosystems, human ecology and the rational use of resources. Believing in the power of enlightenment, they called for enhancing environmental education. In what was an unusual move for scientists at the time, the conference report appealed to member states, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to take action (UNESCO 1970: 210-228). The conference supported the idea of an UN conference to be held in 1972 and discussed the problems of the ecological impact of development assistance – with a view to preventing environmental damages right from the start (UNESCO 1970: 230-233).

Thus, while promoting the specific notion of the biosphere, the UNESCO conference provided an important boost to the politicization of the emerging environmental agenda. It clearly spelled out core tenets of environmentalism for the first time: a sense of urgency, a scientific understanding of the problems, an awareness of their global scope and the plea for political solutions (Engels 2010: 124f). Whether directly or indirectly, the EC drew on various concepts first raised at the UNESCO conference: the notion and concept of the biosphere, the perception of the urgency and the global nature of the issue – and thus the need for international cooperation - the concept of the rational use of resources, the idea that environmental measures required a scientific base, and the call for an educational program.

5.2   US – National Environmental Policy Act 1969

The US National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 promoted not only the concept but also the term environment (and environmental policy), which was subsequently translated into various languages. The neologism seemed usefully metaphorical and appropriate to describe the new policy (e.g. Menke-Glückert 1997: 157; Schulz 2006: 3, fn. 6). The term environment was not explicitly defined in the act, but was used interchangeably with "natural environment". However, by interpreting its usage, we can gain insights into what the concept is meant to imply. "Man" was frequently juxtaposed to "nature" or "his environment". At the same time, the explicit goal of the law was to ensure that both existed in "productive harmony". Accordingly, the explicit aim of the act was to prevent "damage to the environment and biosphere". Such an almost interchangeable usage of both terms suggests the success of the agenda set by the biosphere conference. Clearly, the environment was conceptualized in ecological terms, as the "interrelationship of all components of the natural environment". While at the biosphere conference the term environment was still associated with pollution, in the Environmental Policy Act the meaning of both terms seem to be merging. Also the concept of the environment seems increasingly understood to be of global scope (National Environmental Policy Act 1970: Sec.2, Sec.101a). In the course of the 1970s, the apparently more intuitive notion of the environment slowly crowded out the more abstract scientific notion of the biosphere. In the Environmental Policy Act – as well as subsequently in the EAP – both terms came to be used almost interchangeably.

The problem definition spelled out in the act is very similar to that of the biosphere conference in the preceding year. Man's impact on the environment was to blame. The degradation of the environment was perceived as a consequence of population growth, urbanization, industrial expansion, resource exploitation and new technologies. Against this backdrop the goal was to maintain and restore "environmental quality" as well as "overall welfare" and "development of man" (National Environmental Policy Act 1970: Sec.101a). This implied reconciling two potentially conflicting but apparently equally important goals, namely re-establishing the ecological balance, as well as moving forward on the progressive path of economic development.

In some respects, the act remained committed to the older conservation agenda – notably the protection of national monuments for patriotic and aesthetic reasons. Apart from "safe, healthful, productive", the ideal "surroundings", these should equally be "esthetically and culturally pleasing". Accordingly, "historic, cultural" as well as "natural aspects" of "national heritage" were included (National Environmental Policy Act 1970: Sec.101b (102),(104)). Even if they were originally inserted in the Second Communication of the Commission (1972: 10f), these aspects eventually did not become part of the European EAP.

The Act spelled out a number of concrete measures. Some of these measures reflected the international goals set out by the biosphere conference. They were subsequently also taken up in the EAP. This included the call for research on ecological systems and resources, for establishing a scientific basis for management, planning and decision making, for international cooperation, and for a careful use of resources. Other measures, such as the proposal of recycling as well as the introduction of an environmental impact assessment for legislation and government action were essentially new (National Environmental Policy Act 1970: Sec.101, 102). These ideas were actually taken up in the EAP, too.

5.3   Council of Europe – European Conservation Year 1970

In the course of the Council of Europe's European Conservation Year, a "conference européenne sur la conservation de la nature" was held in Strasbourg, 9-12 February 1970. A British initiative had been the trigger for the Council of Europe to declare 1970 the European Conservation Year. Since 1963, British Conservationists had been holding conferences on the theme of "[t]he Countryside in 1970". Thus the main subject areas of the Strasbourg event, namely urbanization, industrialization, agriculture and forestry and leisure/tourism were informed by the agenda of landscape planning, which played an important role in the postwar decades in various European countries (Engels 2006: 130-152; Hünemörder 2004: 31f; Sheail 2002: 27-45). Some 330 participants from 17 member states of the Council of Europe as well as from ten other countries attended the Strasbourg conference, including European royalty, politicians and officials, national and international experts, scientists, representatives of industry and non-governmental organizations (Schulz 2006: 10-12). As indicated above, the European Commission participated as an observer (Council of Europe 1970a). The event received large-scale media attention. More than 160 journalists reported from Strasbourg (Schulz 2006: 12f).

Even though the older term "conservation" was the guiding concept, its content was increasingly reinterpreted in the light of the new environmental agenda. The concrete experience of pollution and the degradation of the environment, the lack of a rational use of resources, excessive land use, soil erosion, water and air pollution, declining wildlife and the problem of waste were highlighted. While the term biosphere was absent, the report linked these observations to ecological thinking and interpreted the problems as disturbing the ecological equilibrium (Council of Europe 1970b: 2).

Ecological ideas also informed the measures proposed to solve the problems: True to the technocratic tradition of landscape planning (Körner 2005), and well in line with the solutions suggested by the UNESCO and the US document, the conference advocated the rational use of resources and land use planning. Even more explicitly than in the UNESCO and US documents, the scientific consideration of ecological concerns was singled out as the guiding principle for planning. Economic perspectives were not to be ignored: The actual cost of non-conservation should be taken into account, and compared to the cost of conservation, in order to demonstrate the economic benefits of conservation. Just as in the US legislation, recycling is presented as an example of the careful use of resources (Council of Europe 1970b: 2).

The Council of Europe encouraged the national governments to adopt measures such as anti-pollution policies immediately, as well as more long term strategies of environmental management. Old conservation ideas and aesthetic concerns persisted – just as in the US. The conference advocated the prevention of in-aesthetic new industrial developments and the maintenance of substantial protected areas around national parks and monuments. Reiterating UNESCO's advice, the conference called on governments to sponsor scientific research and environmental education. However, conservation was not solely an issue for governments. Non-governmental organizations, industrialists and individuals were also to get involved and to take responsibility for the environment (Council of Europe 1970b: 4f).

As an European organization, the Council of Europe also promoted European level action, namely the coordination of measures by international organizations in Europe, the adoption of international norms for

European industry (e.g. for pesticides) and the harmonization of environmental legislation. Furthermore, the conference proposed the establishment of a European authority for the environment and an anti-pollution fund. It was exactly in these areas, that the EC became active (Council of Europe 1970b: 3).

5.4   The UN Conference on the Human Environment 1972

As indicated above, the UN conference on the human environment marked the breakthrough of the notion of the environment as a policy. It provided the forum to definitely establish the environment as an important issue of policy making. The final document provides insights about the conceptualization of the environment advocated by the conference.

The environment was defined both as the natural environment and the one created and shaped by man. In a bit of a Promethean spirit, the power of man to transform his environment was celebrated – his ability to bring about "development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life" (United Nations 1972a: 3). At the same time, man was responsible for the consequences of his actions. If his power was heedlessly applied, man was able to do "incalculable harm to human beings and the human environment" (United Nations 1972a: 3).The environmental problem caused by this negligence or wrongdoing comprised pollution of water, air, earth and creatures, an unbalancing of the "ecological balance of the biosphere", "destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources", and problems "in the living and working environment" endangering human health (Nations 1972a: 3).

The vision of the conference was hence not to stall development but to achieve "environmental quality" through "fuller knowledge and wiser action". Development was in fact deemed "essential for ensuring a favourable living and working environment for man and for creating conditions on earth that are necessary for the improvement of the quality of life"(United Nations 1972a: 4). This last aspect found its way into the EC EAP, which referred to the need to guide "development in accordance with quality requirements" in order to improve "working conditions and the settings of life" (Council of the European Communities 1973a: Part 1, Title I).

Environmental problems in developing countries were similarly considered a result of the lack of development that needed to be tackled by investment and technology. Unlike in the UNESCO document, no explicit reference was made to assessing in advance the environmental impact of development measures. The UN declaration explicitly stated that environmental policies were not to adversely affect developing countries' opportunities to grow. This aspect was also highlighted in the EAP, as was the prohibition of causing environmental damage across borders. Again, the UN conference called for scientific management, scientific research and education, issues that could be traced back to the UNESCO conference (United Nations 1972a: 4f).

The UN document apparently influenced a large number of issues emphasized in the European EAP – such as international responsibility, but also the affirmative approach to economic development. Nevertheless, many of the more general considerations, namely the need for rational management, research and education, had already been on the agenda since the UNESCO conference.

5.5   Summary: Which Ideas were Included?

When trying to trace the origins of the core concepts informing the EAP with respect to (1) their definition and scope, (2) the problem areas highlighted and (3) the solutions suggested, it is most striking that there was general agreement with regard to the problems and solutions. At first sight, there also seemed to be great overlap in the generally shared ecological conception of the environment as a biosphere. However, the varying definitions clearly suggest different priorities that scientists and policy makers attributed to environmental and economic goals.

The conception of the environment in the EAP drew on ecological notions implied in the term biosphere that dated back to the UNESCO conference. The term environment that was central to the EAP had been promoted by US usage and subsequently by the UN conference. In 1970, the Council of Europe still remained committed to the older term conservation. The EC clearly opted for the more innovative term. The EAP emphasized that the goal of environmental protection had to be reconciled with the need for economic growth and social concerns. These concerns were reflected in the notions of "quality of life" and "development", both of which were central notions at the UN conference. Similarly, the US legislation had already emphasized that "man and nature" were to "exist in productive harmony", and pointed to social and economic needs of "present and future generations" (National Environmental Policy Act 1970: Sec. 101a).

The core problems highlighted across all documents were pollution and excessive resource use. The EC also included living and working conditions as important areas already emphasized by the UN conference and foreshadowed by health concerns in the US legislation. The question of land use, which had been a central concern during the European Conservation Year, was equally included. Species and wildlife protection, emphasized by UNESCO and the Council of Europe were not prominently mentioned, even if subsequently in the course of the 1970s nature and specifically bird protection actually became an important area of EC environmental policy making (Meyer 2010c). Similarly, the EAP did not take on board the older aesthetic and cultural concerns that had informed the US and the Council of Europe, although these had been discussed in EC circles and still been prominently mentioned in the Commission's Second Communication of March 1972.

In terms of the remedies, the EC imported what had become the standard toolbox since 1968: management, research, education and international cooperation. Following the idea promoted already by the Council of Europe, the EC also advocated the introduction of European norms and standards. In this context, the EC was able to draw on its own institutional practices and principles like harmonization. It also promoted a number of innovations that did not directly emerge from the documents discussed above: the prevention principle – which might have been informed by the US idea of impact assessment – was effectively included in the EAP calling for "early integration of environmental concerns" e.g. in development policy. The "polluter pays principle" had first been introduced by the Council of Europe in 1968. The CoE's Declaration on Air Pollution Control had called on European legislators to respect this principle when drawing up legislation (Council of Europe 1969; Radkau 2011: 126).

Apparently the EAP reflects a broad international consensus that had developed by 1972, including the need to balance socio-economic and environmental concerns emphasized by the UN conference, the introduction of a more modern terminology (preferring environment to conservation) and a scientific (rather than aesthetic) definition of what needed to be protected. The following table provides an overview of the core ideas among the international models and the EC EAP:

Table 3: Reception of Environmental Ideas

	UNESCO 1968	**US 1969**	**Council of Europe 1970**	**UN 1972**	**Environmental Action Programme 1973**
Concept and Definition	Biosphere: ecological balance, global scope	Environment: ≈ biosphere Environmental quality Environmental Policy	Conservation: Ecological balance	Environmental Quality: ≈ biosphere Development & Quality of Life	Environment Policy: Improving Setting & Quality of Life: Expansion / Development & Environment: ecological balance & biosphere
Problems	Deterioration: Pollution Species [side effects of improvements] Exploitation of resources	Pollution Health / keep environment productive Resource use Aesthetic, cultural	Pollution Wildlife Exploitation of Resources Aesthetic Land use	Pollution Living/working conditions Exploitation of Resources Soil erosion	Nuisances & Pollution Living/working conditions Exploitation of Resources Land use
Solutions	Rational resource use Research Education	Science-based management Impact assessment Research	Management Research Education	Management Research Education	1. Management: Prevention, avoid resource exploitation, early integration of env. concerns, polluter pays 2. Research & Technology 3. Education

Having traced the reception and adaption of environmental ideas from the international level to the EC, the final section will seek to explore the role of the different EC institutions in the reception of environmental ideas and will try to explain why these ideas were integrated into the EAP.

6.   How and Why Did the EC Receive and Appropriate Environmental Ideas?

When trying to explain why this specific set of environmental ideas was received and integrated into the EAP, it is useful to first consider the role of the different EC institutions in this process. Essentially environmental ideas entered via the three main institutions: via the Council of Ministers as the representative of the member states; via the European Commission, which was in the privileged position to formally propose Community legislation; and via the European Parliament, which – along with the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) – was only a consultative body at the time. The relative chance of successfully making it to the political agenda (Meyer 2012; Princen 2009) differed greatly between these routes. While the Council was the indispensable decision-maker, the crucial power of the Commission lay in its capacity to shape the agenda by defining the contents of proposals. EP influence was severely circumscribed, however, it sought to raise attention to issues it deemed relevant by producing reports on its own initiative, by drawing up resolutions and by posing parliamentary questions (Meyer 2011).

Even though the EC was not a purely intergovernmental organization, the member states remained powerful agenda setters. The introduction of regular intergovernmental summits from 1969 onwards and the subsequent invention of the European Council in 1974, were actually intended to place the governments back in the driver's seat (e.g. Meyer 2010a: 105-107). Member states brought in environmental ideas from their own national agendas, from within their administrations or from national and increasingly transnational public debates. These ideas were inserted into the EC process through the informal consultation the Commission routinely undertook when preparing policies or via the Council of Ministers (including its working groups and COREPER). It was at the highest political level, at the intergovernmental summit of 19 and 20 October 1972 that the member states signaled the desirability of a European environmental policy. Meeting in Bonn on 31 October 1972 for the first time, the ministers responsible for the environment discussed the ground rules and goals of the new environmental policy.

Different mechanisms were at work which facilitated the diffusion of programmatic ideas via the Council and the member state governments. The existence of national environmental policies in a growing number of EC member states changed utility calculations in all member states, since national rules potentially acted as barriers to trade. Thus establishing common environmental rules – ideally most similar to those already existing at home or those most widely in use elsewhere – was a rational goal for national policy makers and more generally for the Commission as the "guardian of the Treaty". Interestingly enough, national regulations in conjunction with the Common Market thus functioned as a way to exert power over other member states, by shifting utility calculations. This had not been intended, but was a spillover from the Common Market. As a consequence, it made international environmental ideas more attractive so that they could form the basis for common norms in the Common Market.

Apart from these shifts in national policy makers' calculation of interests, socialization surely played a role. Meeting regularly to discuss the new concerns, officials and politicians seem to have been socialized into what amounted to an emerging epistemic community. Since the early 1970s, the same group of national officials in charge of environmental issues came together in regular working groups within the Council framework; as early as 1970 on issues of research on pollution (European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technological Research 1970). Subsequently they also dealt with the Commission proposals

on concrete environmental measures, the proposals for an action program and in order to prepare the Community position for the Stockholm Conference.

Many of the same officials who acted as national experts in the run-up to the Stockholm conference, meeting regularly in the UN as well as the EC context, also helped preparing the EC EAP. This way, they acted as agents of diffusion. For instance, all of the three negotiators from the German Ministry of the Interior who represented the Federal Republic in the Council negotiations on the EAP in July 1973, namely, Minister Genscher, Staatssekretär Hartkopf, and Ministerialdirektor Berg, had attended the Stockholm conference in 1972. The situation similarly holds for the delegations of other member states such as Ireland (Council of the European Communities 1973b; United Nations 1972b).

Within the European Commission key Commissioners played a crucial role in agenda setting in early environmental policy. Activist Commissioners like Altiero Spinelli and Sicco Mansholt were personally committed to the environmental cause (Scichilone 2008: 54-65, 2009: 340). In the case of Mansholt, socialization through membership in the Club of Rome played a role. Commission officials had a rational institutional interest in expanding the scope of EC policy making, not least in order to advance their own careers. Moreover, pursuing what at the time not only looked like a popular concern but also like one that seemed in the institution's best interest. Evidence from interviews with former officials shows that this is how they came to perceive it at the time (Bussière 2004).[4]

Socialization effects clearly contributed to the perception of the environment being an important issue, not least since it was the same few officials in charge of the environment who represented the Commission at international and European meetings, e.g. in the ECE or the CoE's conference during the European Conservation Year 1970 (Council of Europe 1970a), or at the UN conference in Stockholm (United Nations 1972b). We can assume that socialization was particularly strong in the very open situation when the Commission essentially started from scratch with the proposals for an EAP. Initially ignorant or sceptical economists came to believe in the relevance of the environment in the course of his work (Bussière 2004).[5] Whether persuasion through rational discourse or simple socialization along the lines of the logic of appropriateness was most important will be difficult to disentangle empirically.

The EP, still unelected at the time, and the ESC were active participants in the debate on the environmental policy proposals, writing reports and debating the issue. Particularly in the open situation of an emerging policy, their advice, their expertise and their outreach into society were appreciated and taken seriously by the Commission (Meyer 2011). MEPs were also important as mediators to the international level. Notably, they provided a link to the Council of Europe, whose premises in Strasbourg they shared. Various MEPs also served the Council of Europe's assembly. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that the first own initiative report of the EP on environmental issues in 1970 and 1971 that helped to place the environment on the EC agenda took up issues previously discussed in the Council of Europe – namely water and air pollution (European Parliament 1970, 1971). Exposure to the Council of Europe's agenda, through cooperation and

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4   Interview with Claus Stuffmann, former Head of Unit at the European Commission's Service for the Environment and Consumer Protection, Brussels, 10 June 2009.

5   Interview with Claus Stuffmann, 10 June 2009.

dual mandates, surely socialized and/or persuaded MEPs to believe in the importance of these issues. Other places for socialization of already interested MEPs were provided for instance in the framework of international parliamentary conferences on the environment. The first one of those took place in Bonn in 1971 (Hünemörder 2004: 250).

Environmental ideas arrived in the EC via a variety of routes. Member states often acted as indirect mediators from the international level, since their own legislation was based on international examples. The Commission for instance found the German governments' "very complete programme on the environment" to be "a particularly rich source of information and ideas" (European Commission 1972: 10). The German government in turn had borrowed heavily from the US example. Apart from state actors, the Commission consulted non-state actors (Kaiser/Meyer 2010; Meyer 2010b) across national levels, mainly experts, but also non-governmental organizations, such as labor unions, which also had their own transnational links (European Commission 1972: 6) and had been involved in international environmental conferences themselves (United Nations 1972b).

How can we explain the reception and adoption of this very specific set of ideas, using the mechanisms spelled out above? The wholesale take-over of ecologically informed environmental ideas to define the goal and objectives of an environmental policy, including the description of problems and solutions, cannot really be explained as a result of rational adaptive learning. Even if the Commission had tried to compile information about environmental policy programs from a very early stage onwards, due to the novelty of the policy it is unlikely that any hard data on the actual effectiveness of certain policy measures were available.[6]

The adoption of environmental ideas by the EC seems more likely a result of the socialization of EC and national officials during this boom of the environmental agenda, notably through personal exchange during information visits, in the context of international organizations or conferences or through personal involvement in groups or organizations such as in the case of Commissioner Mansholt's membership in the Club of Rome (Scichilone 2008: 54-65, 2009: 340). Further empirical research involving the reconstruction of these networks is needed in order to find out which specific networks emerged and which role they played at various decision-points. Mimicry might initially have played a role, too. By taking over the emerging standard set of ideas, not only the individual officials but also the EC as a whole was able to gain acceptance as a relevant player in the new field both vis-à-vis the member states and other international organizations. Talking the talk might have been a strategy to gain legitimacy in terms of the logic of appropriateness. Such a strategy was all the more important in the absence of a sound legal base and given the EC's identity as an economic community.

We can safely assume that a number of officials and policy makers were actually persuaded by the rationally compelling arguments from the environmental discourse. In the face of observable environmental damage, the ecological warning that nature had become unbalanced was particularly appealing to officials trained as economists. Resembling core tenets of economic theory, the equilibrium idea of the ecological balance

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6   To be sure, of course, certain measures of pollution control and resource management had long been in place in all member states for a long time (e.g. Uekötter 2009).

surely resonated with their mode of thinking. As we know from interviews, the qualitative objective of the quality of life – as a complement to the quantitative indicators of the standard of living – were equally persuasive to economists working in public administrations and for the Commission (Bussière 2004: 14, 16).[7] More generally, the contemporary belief in science and rational planning clearly facilitated the reception of ecological ideas and the appeal of management-based solutions.

When considering the objectives not included, similar logics apply. Traditional aesthetic and cultural concerns as well as the protection of wildlife did not really fit the new scientific and ecologically informed agenda. Rather, they stood for the emotional approach of the older conservationist and animal protection movement. Thus – from the perspective of the logic of appropriateness – not much was to be gained from including these concerns. In fact this could even lead to a potential loss of legitimacy. Furthermore, it seemed initially unwise to Commission officials to compete with the Council of Europe in these areas or reduplicate their efforts (Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss 1972). The appeal – and thus the rational usefulness - of these issues to mobilize public support for environmental policy was only realized much later when actual policy making started (Meyer 2010b: 95).

In addition to these mechanisms, also the specific institutional setup of the EC played a role in the selective appropriation of ideas. The strong focus on the need to balance environmental and economic goals, in particular, seems self-evident when considering the traditional self-conception of the EC as an economic community. Furthermore, given the substantial social and economic problems of development and economic restructuring in member states such as Italy and the UK, the reassertion of economic and social goals simply resulted from the need to find unanimous member state support.

7.   Conclusions

Rather than explaining the core concepts and policies as a product of multi-level policy making within the emerging European polity,[8] this paper has taken a diffusion of ideas perspective, focusing on the transfer of ideas from outside the EC, from external examples and international organizations. The rationale for this is that the environment was a policy idea novel to almost all the relevant players within the EC. This provides for an exemplary case of the diffusion of ideas, with the EC as the recipient.

Three conclusions can be drawn: First, it could clearly be demonstrated that the EAP is deeply informed by the contemporary international debate on the novel notion of the environment as a policy. Notably the emerging consensus defined at the UN conference in Stockholm is strongly reflected in the EAP. Here, the diffusion of ideas is most apparent, particularly when considering the varying definitions in earlier Commission proposals. The environment was defined in ecological terms, as the natural environment, however, as a concern that had to be balanced with economic necessities.

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7   Interview with Claus Stuffmann, former Head of Unit at the European Commission's Service for the Environment and Consumer Protection, Brussels, 10 June 2009.

8   The internal multi-level policy making that led to the EAP will be addressed elsewhere in my research project.

Secondly, the extent of the emerging consensus among international organizations – including the EC - regarding the environment is striking. As opposed to what I had initially expected, the extent of selective appropriation was relatively limited – and mostly occurred where institutional logics, such as European norms-setting, or the need for unanimous support applied. There may be two reasons for this: On the one hand, international organizations already provided consensual documents that lent themselves to being copied. Secondly, in the open situation when the new idea was not yet clearly defined, new actors became easily socialized into what seemed the most appropriate norm and/or persuaded into a new consensus, since initially a strong alternative view was missing. Thus, I assume that these two mechanisms – frequently acting in combination – were most relevant for the diffusion of ideas in this case.

Thirdly, these rather tentative findings require further backing through empirical research on the existence, the structure, the self-understanding of networks and actors within them, who acted as diffusers of environmental ideas. Even though it is difficult to disentangle empirically whether actors followed the logic of appropriateness or were truly persuaded, documents and interviews might provide further insights into these questions. The historical analysis of networks (Kaiser 2009; Kaiser et al. 2010) will surely benefit from including such issues, as will the study of the diffusion of ideas.

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