

Final Progress Report
Sustainability Science Program, Harvard University
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Name: Jon Marco Church

Research Fields:
international relations, environmental politics, area studies

Degree program, institution and expected graduation date:
Ph.D., Political Science, University of Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, December 2010 (expected)

Faculty host at Harvard:
Prof. Calestous Juma, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

SSP-related research activity:

Title:
Exploring Environmental Regionalism and Comparing the Alpine and Andean Cases

Abstract: A number of regional mountain agreements are currently being negotiated. The 1991 Alpine Convention is often presented as the only model of international framework for a mountain range and the 2003 Carpathian Convention follows roughly the same model. However, there is at least one alternative model that is frequently ignored by scholars and practitioners alike: the 1969 Andean Community. First, this paper questions environmental regionalism, presenting it as an ideology and putting it under critical and historical perspective. Then, it compares the cases of both the Alpine Convention and the Andean Community. This paper suggests that the Andean Community may be a concurrent model for mountain agreements, especially in developing countries and conflict zones such as the Balkans, the Caucasus, or the Himalayas. These cases also contribute to a better understanding of environmental regionalism.

Problem, methods, literature:
What is an environmental region? How do actors mobilize around it? A broad survey of the politics, geography, and ecology literature was the basis of a systematic questioning of environmental regionalism. An in-depth review of personal experience with the Alpine Convention (2006-2009) was coupled with several interviews on the Andean Community in Lima, Peru (March 2010). I also participated in a training course on GIS for use in further research.

Data, areas:
A database on regional environmental agreements was compiled on the basis of existing information and expert knowledge. This research focused on Europe and Latin America.

Recommendations:
The two main recommendations that emerge from this paper are to take seriously the political dimension of environmental regionalism and to consider the Andean Community as a potential model for mountain agreements, especially in developing countries and conflict zones such as the Balkans, the Caucasus, or the Himalayas.

Product:
This paper will be submitted for publication as a CID Working Paper. Part of it will be translated into French and adapted as a chapter of my thesis. If possible, this paper will also be expanded into a book on environmental regionalism.

Other activities:

Over the past year, I provided occasional support to the activities of the Italian Ministry for the Environment in the following domains: Alpine Convention (Permanent Committee, UNESCO World Heritage Working Group, Ecological Network Platform, State-Regions Council) and CSD (Side Event on Sustainable Transport in Mountain Regions, with FAO / Mountain Partnership). Moreover, I joined the BABEL group of the PACTE lab of the French CNRS, working on the construction of shared notions of sustainable development, and I participated in the works of Harvard University's Working Group on Sustainable Cities and of the Regional Environmental Governance Observatory in Geneva, Switzerland. During the fellowship year, the book *Sustainable Development and Trans-boundary Co-Operation in Mountain Regions* was published, featuring a chapter on "Participation in the Alpine Convention", co-authored with Sabaheta Ramcilovic. My article on "Argentine-Chilean Relations in the Shadow of the Debt Crisis" was also reviewed and accepted for publication by the *Bulletin of Latin American Research*.

Citation list:

Church, Jon Marco. "The Tension Between the Process of Capitalization and Decentralization in two Alpine Cities: Turin and Bolzano." *Environnement Urbain / Urban Environment* (forthcoming)

This paper reflects on the case of two Alpine cities: Turin, which is presented as a modern city, and Bolzano, with its postmodern autonomy and multiculturalism. Examples from Turin capital of a nation state and host of the 2006 Winter Olympics, as well as from Bolzano seat of the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and 2009 Alpine City of the Year are presented. These cities exemplify the tension between two movements: on the one hand, the process of capitalization; on the other, that of decentralization. This leads to a problematization of the sustainability of this tension, first, reflecting on modern and postmodern territoriality and, then, questioning the sustainability of developments in the field of energy, transport, tourism, and agriculture. This contribution suggests that, rebus sic stantibus, the tension between these movements seems more sustainable than the prevalence of capitalization over decentralization or vice versa.

<http://www.vrm.ca/cyber-revues.asp>

Church, Jon Marco. "The Ideology of Environmental Regionalism under the Test of the Alpine Convention, with comparative reflections from the Andes." Paper to be presented at the *Regional Environmental Governance* workshop: Geneva, 2010.

Environmental regionalism is the idea that political dynamics should correspond to ecological areas. As this idea is put into action, environmental regionalism becomes an ideology, at least for the actors involved. One of the greatest contributions of Political Science is testing ideologies before or after they are put into practice. Does or would environmental regionalism deliver its promise of more just and sustainable societies and environments? If so, how does it affect the dynamics of nation states? Environmental regionalism is not a new phenomenon: rivers are arguably at the origin of international organization in the XIX century; around seas, arrangements have been developed since the 1970s; mountain ranges are seen as the latest addition to this field of environmental politics. So, these questions can be addressed looking at existing regional environmental agreements, be it rivers, seas or mountains.

Nevertheless, unlike water surfaces, mountain regions are integral part of the national territory, not a limit or an extension thereof. Assuming therefore that mountain regions represent a significant test for the capacity of environmental regionalism to affect political dynamics, a closer look is taken to the Alpine Convention. Created in the early 1990s, it is in fact the first mountain regional agreement. If it delivers its promises, it should be redefining territoriality in the Alpine area, making politics correspond more to the regional scale. In this paper, I argue that there is mixed evidence in this regard: if, on the one hand, the Alpine Convention does have a catalyzing effect at least for political initiatives at the Alpine scale, on the other, it functions as a typical intergovernmental process, struggling for political significance. For the first case, the most relevant example is the creation in the early 2000s by the EU of the Alpine Space Programme, whose objective is now explicitly that of territorial cohesion; in the second one, it probably is the definition of the perimeter of the convention, which is object of a complex process of negotiation also at the national and sub-national level.

Another possible approach to test environmental regionalism is to look at mountain areas where there is no

comparable arrangement, such as the Andean region. In this case, several initiatives are in place, but none is based on a legal instrument with a scope covering the whole mountain range. How is territoriality defined? Are political dynamics affected by the absence of such an instrument? In this part of the paper I argue that Andean territoriality is constantly redefined, for instance geopolitically and ethnically, and that mountains are a factor among many other elements in the ongoing processes. I also suggest that the situation in the Andes resembles that of the Alps in the 1980s, with several overlapping frameworks and initiatives, although fundamental differences exist. The joint reading of these examples contributes to a better understanding of the practice of environmental regionalism, which is far from ideal. However, when actors mobilize around an ecological area, political dynamics are somewhat affected and national territoriality is partly redefined, in its continuous process of re-production.

<http://www.reg-observatory.org/program.html>

Church, Jon Marco. "Environmental Regionalism: the challenge of the Alpine and Carpathian conventions." Paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the International Studies Association*. New Orleans, 2010. Recent literature as well as expertise shows that both global and regional processes would greatly benefit from improved interlinkage. This paper focuses on linking social science and environmental policymaking for the functioning, effective implementation of global agreements at the regional level, exploring in particular regional environmental agreements such as the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention. Climate science shows the urgency of ensuring effective implementation of global agreements such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Alpine Convention has just adopted an Action Plan on Climate Change. Are simple regional environmental agreements such as the Alpine and Carpathian conventions functioning as effective implementation mechanisms of complex global agreements? The European Union is certainly acting as such. However, the European Union is an international arrangement among nation-states, including several ecoregions, while the Alpine or Carpathian conventions include only one. Do single ecoregional agreements function any differently than more complex regional processes such as the European Union? How do the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions relate to European institutions? Since the 1970s political philosophers have defined concepts such as "biopolitics", "ecopolitics", or "ecopower". Some critical geographers have tried to apply them to the Alpine area. Does theoretical environmental uniformity produce practical political integration? This paper addresses these topics, including the analysis of the role of science experts in policymaking in the concrete cases of the Alpine and Carpathian conventions.

http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/4/1/6/0/8/p416086_index.html

Principal collaborators:

Here follows a list of main collaborators or contacts outside of Harvard University during my fellowship research:

- Dr. Yves Viltard, University of Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, France (supervisor)
- Prof. François Mancebo, CNRS/PACTE , Grenoble, France
- Dr. Jörg Balsiger, ETH Zurich, Switzerland
- Mr. Valerio Poscia, Italian Ministry for the Environment, Rome, Italy (intern)

Grants awarded:

Outside of the research allowance and a travel grant from my doctoral program, I received an invitation from the CNRS/PACTE to discuss an intervention by Prof. Ignacy Sachs at a conference on *The 2012 World Summit*, held in Grenoble on June 3, 2010.

Future position:

At the end of the fellowship year, I will return to my consultancy work on international relations for the Italian Ministry for the Environment and to my concurrent thesis on the Al-pine Convention at the University of Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne. Next year, I will continue to work from Boston and I am looking forward to further interacting with the Sustainability Science Program.