

Call for Papers

Non-state actors in European integration 1950-1992:

From polity-building to transnational politics and policy-making?

Conference at the University of Aarhus, Department of History and Area Studies

19 – 21 May 2011

This conference seeks to bring together for the first time the current state of empirical research on the role non-state actors played in European integration until the Maastricht Treaty. As such it aims to make a major contribution to the ongoing reform of the historiography of European integration.

The present-day European Union (EU) is a key site for political interest representation. Non-state actors including, for example, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), business associations, labour unions, and foundations alongside transnational party organisations – have all set up shop in Brussels to influence the policy-making process. While at the national level, lobbying is frequently viewed with suspicion, the Commission has argued in its White Paper of 2001 that the representatives of a ‘European Civil Society’ could form a crucial link between the EU’s institutions and citizens, contributing to strengthening the democratic legitimacy of supranational ‘governance’.

Very little is known about how we got to what we find today, however. Conventionally, the dramatic rise in the number of non-state actors in EC/EU policy-making is seen as a response to the Single Market Programme. Historical research to date has not been able to provide more sophisticated insights or a longer term view. Historians of European integration so far have largely overlooked the role of non-state actors altogether. Diplomatic historians, who have dominated the field for a long time, mostly focused on the ‘default’ question of national governments’ policies ‘towards Europe’.

The limited research undertaken so far has analysed the role non-state actors such as Christian democratic party networks played in polity-building. Recent research focusing on the 1960s and 1970s has highlighted the role of non-state actors in the development of European policy-making after the setting up of the supranational institutional system, and their contribution to political contestation, however. Furthermore, non-state actors appear to have been important mediators of policy ideas to the EC – both from the international and the national levels. By bringing together research on non-state actors covering different kinds of actors and different periods, we will be able to address a number of questions regarding continuity and change concerning their role such as:

- Can we observe a (continuously) growing role of non-state actors in European integration? Were there setbacks and periods of deeper engagement, and why?
- Did the role of non-state actors in European integration change over time – from polity-building to policy-making and contentious politics?
- Can we observe change in the role of non-state actors as transnational mediators of (policy) ideas?

In order to answer these and other questions we invite proposals for papers by researchers on different kinds of non-state actors who were engaged in European polity-building and policy-making. All paper-givers would be expected to address a number of key questions including in particular:

1. Which role did the respective non-state actor play
 - a. in polity-building (or opposition to it), and/or
 - b. policy-making (or its obstruction) and/or
 - c. politics and political contention (or acquiescence)?
2. Which role did the respective non-state actor play in the transnational mediation of ideas
 - a. from the international level to the EC
 - b. from the domestic level to the EC
 - c. from the EC level to the domestic or international level?

3. Why did non-state actors become active at the European level? Were they ‘pulled in’ or did they themselves ‘push’ towards aggregating and defending their ideas and interests at the European level?
4. Which methods did non-state actors use to make their cause heard at the EC/EU? Which role did transnational cooperation or networks and setting up a European level organisation (i.e. Europeanisation) play in this context?
5. How successful were the non-state actors in advancing their cause? What were the reasons for their success or failure? What are the normative implications of these findings, if any?

All papers must be based on fresh empirical evidence such as archival sources, interviews etc. throughout. The abstract should briefly specify the thematic and temporal focus and the research basis. If interested in giving a paper, please send the proposed title and the abstract (250 words max.) to both organisers at jhmeyer@gmx.de; wolfram.kaiser@online.de by **15 September 2010**. The organisers will cover accommodation and reasonable transport costs for researchers whose papers are accepted for the conference.

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