

210105 VO M4: SpezialVO International Politics and Development (2022W)**International Biodiversity Politics: Institutions, Actors, Power Relations**

When: Fridays, 9:45-11:15/13.00

Where: Hörsaal II NIG Erdgeschoß

Start: 7 October 2022

Contact: alice.vadrot@univie.ac.at

Office hour: after agreement

AIMS, CONTENTS AND METHOD

This lecture introduces Master students to the basic features of international biodiversity politics, with a specific focus on the institutions, actors, and power relations that have shaped global environmental agreement-making related to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Compared to climate change, the loss of biological diversity is less visible and popular in global environmental politics. However, for the last decade, the study of international biodiversity politics has received new impetus, inter alia because of 1) the increased recognition that biodiversity and climate change must be tackled together, 2) the establishment of new international institutions, and 3) explicit conflicts over the conceptual and political frameworks that should guide international biodiversity politics. Another important factor – and this is one focus of the lecture – is the role economic reasoning and epistemic selectivity have played in reconfiguring biodiversity conservation as a relevant parameter for economic development and human well-being; a development increasingly contested by Indigenous People and local communities, many state actors of the global South, non-state actors, activists, and scientists advocating for new concepts, including “Pachamama”, “Buen Vivir”, and “Nature’s contribution to people” (NCPs) (Stevenson et al., 2021, Vadrot, 2014, 2020; Brand and Vadrot 2013; Borie and Hulme 2015). In this vein, biodiversity politics is increasingly characterized by the struggle over the kinds of values attributed to nature, the forms of knowledge suitable to understand the drivers and causes of biodiversity loss, and the appropriate regulatory frameworks for the equal distribution of the costs and benefits related to biodiversity loss and conservation (Escobar, 1998; Brand and Vadrot, 2013).

Starting from the premise that international biodiversity politics is an increasingly important and contested field of global environmental politics this lecture aims:

- 1) to introduce students to key actors, institutions, and power relations constituting the field of international biodiversity politics,
- 2) to familiarize students with historical, institutional, and epistemic developments in the field of international biodiversity politics, illustrating how power relations have shaped
 - the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),
 - the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and
 - ongoing negotiations on a new Treaty to protect marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ),
- 3) to critically discuss recent developments in international biodiversity politics including negotiations on the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), transformative change, and struggle over digital sequence information and access and benefit sharing to (marine) genetic resources.

The course targets Master students interested in the various themes of international biodiversity politics, and global environmental politics more broadly. The course combines theory and practice and is therefore interesting for students that wish to increase their knowledge and skills on how to study the sites, actors, and processes of global environmental agreement-making (Hughes et al., 2021, Vadrot, 2020).

STRUCTURE, TOPICS, AND TIMELINE

- 07.10.2022 (09.45-11.15): Introduction

Part 1: Problem structure, institutions, and actors

- 14.10.2022 (09.45-11.15): What is biodiversity and why is it political?
- 21.10.2022 (09.45-11.15): Who governs biodiversity at the international scale and how?
- 04.11.2022 (09.45-11.15): What do we know about biodiversity? A natural science perspective

Part 2: Three sites of international biodiversity politics: unpacking power relations

- 25.11.2022 (09.45-11.15): Site 1-The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- 16.12.2022 (09.45-13.00): Site 2-The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- 13.01.2023 (09.45-13.00): Site 3-Marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)

Exam: 24.01.2023 (09.45-11.15)

EXAM ASSESSMENT AND PERMITTED MATERIALS

24.01.2023 (09.45-11.15) Hörsaal 50 Hauptgebäude, 2.Stock, Stiege 8

Written exam composed of

- 10 multiple choice questions (20 points in total), including questions on the definitions of terms, clarifications of principles and comprehension questions
- 2 open questions (20 points each, 40 points in total)
- 1 opinion question/Essay (40 points).

100 to 90 Points: Very good (1)

89 to 80 Points: Good (2)

79 to 70 Points: Satisfactory (3)

69 to 60 Points: Sufficient (4)

>60 Points: Poor (5)

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Knowledge about the content of all lectures
- Familiarity with key principles, concepts and terminology
- Knowledge about the content of the background literature

EXAMINATION TOPICS

The examination will be based on:

- The contents given in all lectures: PowerPoints of the class and literature is available on Moodle
- Obligatory readings of the class (references marked with *)

!!! THIS LECTURE USES MOODLE. ALL MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE !!!

CONTENT OF AND LITERATURE FOR EACH SESSION (*mandatory and relevant for exam)

LECTURE 1: 07.10.2022 (09.45-11.15)

Introduction

The first Lecture will introduce students to the course's aims, contents, and methods. We will start by reflecting on the concept and definition of biodiversity, how it is represented, what it means to different people, and why the notion of biodiversity itself is political. As Arturo Escobar once said: "Although "biodiversity" has concrete biophysical referents, it must be seen as a discursive invention of recent origin. This discourse fosters a complex network of actors, from international organizations and northern NGOs to scientists, prospectors, and local communities and social movements. This network comprises sites with diverging biocultural perspectives and political stakes" (Escobar, 1998, p. 53). This critical understanding of biodiversity will run through the whole Lecture, which will familiarize students with the historical, institutional, and epistemic developments in the field of international biodiversity politics, illustrating how power relations have shaped international institutions tackling biodiversity at the international scale. One key international institution is the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), signed by 192 countries in 1992 during the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro (see Lecture on the 25th of November). I will argue that the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of the CBD have played an essential role in determining the meaning and practice of international biodiversity politics in multilateral negotiations, which I conceptualize as global environmental agreement-making. Global environmental agreement-making is defined as "the multiple actors, sites and processes through which environmental agreements are made, and the new sets and arrangements of actors, sites and processes that are created by any specific agreement, which have the potential to reinforce or reorient the global political order" (Hughes et al. 2021, p. 2). By applying this perspective to three sites: the CBD, the IPBES, and the BBNJ process, students will get the possibility to develop new knowledge on key international institutions and how they have shaped international biodiversity politics and knowledge production. The first session will close by familiarising students with the schedule, minimum requirements, assessment criteria, and examination topics.

Literature

*Escobar, A. 1998. *Whose Knowledge, Whose nature? Biodiversity, Conservation, and the Political Ecology of Social Movements*. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 5 (1), 53-82.

*Hughes, H. Vadrot, A.B.M., Allan, J.I. et al. 2021. *Global environmental agreement-making: Upping the methodological and ethical stakes of studying negotiations*. *Earth System Governance* 10: 100121

Part 1: Problem structure, institutions, and actors

LECTURE 2: 14.10.2022 (09.45-11.15)

What is biodiversity and why is it political?

The term 'biodiversity' has a scientific and political dimension, and it is indeed through the coining of the term in the 1980ies that 'biodiversity' emerged as a policy problem to be addressed in international politics and through multilateral environmental agreement-making. This lecture has two primary purposes: Firstly, explaining why biodiversity emerged as a concept and policy problem on the international scale, and secondly showing why biodiversity is inherently political. In the first part, we will trace the emergence of 'biodiversity' both as a scientific concept and a policy problem from 1986, when the term was coined during the National Forum on BioDiversity' held in Washington D.C., to the establishment of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992. We will start by unpacking the problem structure of 'biodiversity loss' and questioning why and how it has become an issue on the international agenda. Students will get insights into the book "Biodiversity" edited by Edward E.O. Wilson, an ecologist who played an essential role in framing biodiversity as an object of research and a policy problem. Wilson holds that there is a rise in interest in biodiversity due to two more or less independent

developments: 1) the availability of a sufficient amount of data on species extinction, deforestation, and tropical biology, and 2) an awareness of the interrelation between the conservation of biological diversity and economic development. Wilson's book is insofar important because it anticipates the development of markets for biodiversity products (e.g., pharmaceuticals, new foods, petroleum substitutes, fibers) and industries emerging from untapped reservoirs of the tropics that are likely to contribute to the destruction of natural habitat (Wilson 1988, p. vi).

Literature

*Vadrot, Alice B.M. 2018. Endangered species, biodiversity and the politics of conservation. In Kütting and Herman (eds.) *Global Environmental Politics. Concepts, Theories and Case Studies*, edited by London & New York: Routledge, 198-226.

*Keune, et al. 2022. Defining Nature, In: Visseren-Hamakers, I.J. and Kok, M.T.J. (eds.) *Transforming Biodiversity Governance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 25-42.

*Wilson, E.O. 1988. *The Current State of Biological Diversity*. In: Wilson (ed) *Biodiversity*, Washington: National Academy Press, 3-18.

Takacs, D., 1996. *The Idea of Biodiversity: Philosophies of Paradise*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

LECTURE 3: 21.10.2022 (09.45-11.15)

Who governs biodiversity at the international level and how?

Given the broad scope and problem structure of international biodiversity politics discussed in Lecture 2, several institutions and processes emerged that constitute the field of international biodiversity politics today. Lecture 3 has two aims: firstly, to introduce students to the landscape of the most relevant international institutions and secondly, to show how the rise of a new 'biodiversity regime' was interpreted and studied from different research perspectives. In the first part students will be introduced to the six biodiversity-related conventions, or Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, habitats, and species: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (see Lecture 5), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). By familiarizing students with these international institutions, the session seeks to enable them to situate biodiversity politics within the broader field of global environmental politics. The second part of the lecture will problematize different understandings of the emerging 'biodiversity regime' in the 1990ies (regime overlap, regime complexity, critical state theory). The lecture will use examples to illustrate how conflicts between states, including the stakes of different actor groups (farmers, scientists, local communities, indigenous people, NGOs), have shaped the problem structure and institutionalization of biodiversity politics on an international scale.

Literature

*Miller Smallwood, J. et al. 2022. *Global Biodiversity Governance: What Needs to Be Transformed?* In: Visseren-Hamakers, I.J. and Kok, M.T.J. (eds.) *Transforming Biodiversity Governance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 43-66.

*Rosendal, K.G. 2020. Biodiversity Regime. In: A. Orsini, and Jean-Frederic Morin (eds), *Essential Concepts of Global Environmental Governance*. Routledge, 2020, 20-23.

Brand, U. and Görg, C. 2003. The state and the regulation of biodiversity: International biopolitics and the case of Mexico. *Geoforum*, 34 (2), 221-233.

Raustiala, K., and Victor, D. 2004. The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources. *International Organization*, 58(2), 277-309. doi:10.1017/S0020818304582036

Rosendal, K. 2001. Impacts of Overlapping International Regimes: The Case of Biodiversity. *Global Governance*, 7 (1), 95-117.

- <https://www.cbd.int/>
- <https://cites.org/eng>
- <https://www.cms.int/>
- <https://www.ramsar.org/>
- <https://www.un.org/bbnj/>
- <https://ipbes.net/>

LECTURE 4: 04.11.2022 (09.45-11.15)

What do we know about biodiversity? A natural science perspective

Natural science research and ecology have significantly contributed to increase our knowledge on the drivers and causes of biodiversity loss. Furthermore, more and more researchers become active agents in biodiversity politics and conservation seeking to increase the relevance and application of biodiversity science and the need for political action. However, compared to climate change, the “biodiversity research community” is much more diverse and composed of a bundle of different disciplines from taxonomy to modelling and scenario building. For this lecture, we will welcome Prof. Franz Essl, a biodiversity scientists and member of the board of the Austrian Biodiversity Council (ÖBDR), who will introduce you to the basic features of biodiversity science, recent developments (e.g. scenarios, bending the curve etc.), and his involvement in policy-making and conservation practice. Prof. Franz Essl currently works at the Division of Conservation Biology, Vegetation Biology, and Landscape Ecology at the University Vienna and one of the most cited scientists worldwide.

Literature

*IPBES 2019. Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem *Services*. S. Díaz, J. Settele, E. S. Brondizio, H. T. Ngo, M. Guèze, J. Agard, A. Arneth, P. Balvanera, K. A. Brauman, S. H. M. Butchart, K. M. A. Chan, L. A. Garibaldi, K. Ichii, J. Liu, S. M. Subramanian, G. F. Midgley, P. Miloslavich, Z. Molnár, D. Obura, A. Pfaff, S. Polasky, A. Purvis, J. Razzaque, B. Reyers, R. Roy Chowdhury, Y. J. Shin, I. J. Visseren-Hamakers, K. J. Willis, and C. N. Zayas (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 56 pages.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3553579>

*Wilson, E.O. 1988. *The Current State of Biological Diversity*. In: Wilson (ed) *Biodiversity*, Washington: National Academy Press, 21-27.

Part 2: Three sites of international biodiversity politics: unpacking power relations

LECTURE 5: 25.11.2022 (09.45-11.15)

Site 1- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The CBD is often viewed as the most important site for international biodiversity politics. The convention was signed at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993. The CBD has three main objectives, 1) conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources (Art. 1 of the CBD; www.cbd.int/intro). After a short overview of the development of the CBD (1992-2022), its text and protocols (Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing), structure, and objectives, the lecture will discuss recent research on the CBD as a site of conflict

and struggle. Next, students will get insights into how scholars have used the Conferences of the Parties (COP) of the CBD to study the sites, actors, processes, and power relations shaping international biodiversity politics using the following examples: tensions in the development of CBD targets, the making of the Nagoya Protocol, indigenous demands for justice, indigenous agency, and green grabbing narratives. Finally, we will discuss recent developments, including the preparations for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the struggle over including Digital Sequence Information as an item under the CBD.

Literature

*CBD 1992. Text of the Convention (<https://www.cbd.int/convention/text/>)

*CBD 2001. *Introduction: The Operation of the Convention on Biological Diversity*. Handbook of the Convention on Biological Diversity, London & New York: Routledge, xvii-xxvi.

*Marion Suiseeya, K.L. 2014. *Negotiating the Nagoya Protocol: Indigenous Demands for Justice*. Global Environmental Politics 2014, 14 (3), 102–124.

Corson, C. and Iain MacDonald, K. 2012. *Enclosing the global commons: the convention on biological diversity and green grabbing*. Journal of Peasant Studies, 39 (2), 263-283.

LePrestre, P. 2002. *Governing Global Biodiversity. The Evolution and Implementation of the Convention on Biological*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Reimerson, E. 2013. *Between nature and culture: exploring space for indigenous agency in the Convention on Biological Diversity*. Environmental Politics, 22 (6), 992-1009.

Reynolds, J.L. 2020. *Governing New Biotechnologies for Biodiversity Conservation: Gene Drives, International Law, and Emerging Politics*. Global Environmental Politics 2020, 20 (3), 28–48.

LECTURE 6: 16.12.2022 (09.45-13.00)

Site 2- The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Lecture 6 will introduce students to the second site of international biodiversity politics: the so-called 'IPCC for Biodiversity', an intergovernmental knowledge body for biodiversity. In the first part of the lecture, students will get an overview of the early history of IPBES and the epistemic choices that occurred early on in its establishment and assessment work. In comparison to the IPCC, established in 1988, IPBES was established relatively late and two decades after the establishment of the CBD. Next, students will be introduced to the functioning of IPBES as an assessment body and learn how the production of assessments and the so-called "Summaries for Policymakers" work in practice. Finally, we will critically reflect on the conceptual framework of IPBES, which tries to combine the 'ecosystem services' approach with concepts such as 'Buen Vivir' and 'Pachamama'. This conceptual shift, which implies that different knowledge forms, including local, traditional, and indigenous knowledge, are considered equal to science, has increased scholarly interest in IPBES as a site of global environmental agreement-making and knowledge production. Finally, I will demonstrate how scholars have studied IPBES and illustrate why it is vital to understand the struggle over what constitutes legitimate biodiversity knowledge as an inherent part of international biodiversity politics. In the second part of the lecture, Prof. Ulrich Brand (Department of Political Science, University of Vienna) will reflect on his biodiversity related research and how it relates to recent developments. This part will be organised as a dialogue between two generations of biodiversity politics researchers and provides an opportunity for students to learn more about the development of the field and its historical embeddedness.

Literature

*Hughes, H. and Vadrot, A.B.M. 2019. *Weighting the World: IPBES and the Struggle over Biocultural Diversity*. Global Environmental Politics, 19 (2), 14–37.

*Montana, J. 2016. *How IPBES works: The functions, structures and processes of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, in C-EENRG Working Papers, no. 2, 10 May 2016.

*Vadrot, A.B.M. 2020. Building authority and relevance in the early history of IPBES. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 113, 14-20.

Brand, U. and Vadrot, A.B.M. 2013. *Epistemic selectivities towards the valorization of nature in the Nagoya Protocol and the making of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)*. *LEAD – Law, Environment and Development Journal*, 9 (2), 202-222.

Díaz, S. et al. 2015. *The IPBES Conceptual Framework- connecting nature and people*. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 14, 1–16.

Vadrot, A.B.M. 2016. *The birth of a science-policy interface for biodiversity: The history of the IPBES*. In: Hrabanski, M. et al. (eds.) *The Intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem service (IPBES): Challenges, knowledge and actors*, London & New York: Routledge Earth Scan, 41-76.

Stevenson, H. et al. 2021. The Practical Fit of Concepts: Ecosystem Services and the Value of Nature. *Global Environmental Politics*, 21 (2), 3–22.

Vadrot, A.B.M. *The Politics of Knowledge and Global Biodiversity*. London and New York: Routledge.

LECTURE 7: 13.01.2023 (09.45-13.00)

Site 3- Marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)

Governments are currently negotiating a new legally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). The new agreement aims to close legal gaps in the CBD and UNCLOS related to marine biodiversity governance. It addresses four broad themes: marine genetic resources (MGRs); area-based management tools (ABMTs), including marine protected areas (MPAs); environmental impact assessments (EIAs); and capacity building and the transfer of marine technology (CB&TT). The BBNJ negotiations are the third site that this lecture will unpack to illustrate how power relations have shaped international biodiversity politics. The lecture introduces the BBNJ negotiations, its themes, actors and conflicts and zooms into one specific issue, namely the struggle over the consideration of BBNJ under the Common Heritage of Humankind principle (CHP). By using this case, we will discuss overlap between CBD and the BBNJ negotiations and identify broader themes that matter in contemporary international biodiversity politics and the study thereof. The second half of the lecture will be used to reflect the outcome of CBD COP 15, which takes place from 7 - 19 December 2022 in Montreal (Canada) and which aims to conclude negotiations on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Literature

*Vadrot, A. B.M. Langlet, A. Tessnow-von Wysocki, I. 2022. Who owns marine biodiversity? Contesting the world order through the 'common heritage of humankind' principle. *Environmental Politics* 31(2): 226-250.

*Campbell, L. et al. 2022. *Architecture and agency for equity in areas beyond national jurisdiction*. *Earth System Governance*, 13, 100144.

Tessnow-von Wysocki, I and Vadrot, A. B.M. 2020. *The Voice of Science on Marine Biodiversity Negotiations: A Systematic Literature Review*. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 7: 614282.

For an overview of all BBNJ related literature please see:

<https://www.maripoldata.eu/research/#literaturedatabase>

LITERATURE LIST

Brand, U. and Vadrot, A.B.M. 2013. *Epistemic selectivities towards the valorization of nature in the Nagoya Protocol and the making of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)*. *LEAD – Law, Environment and Development Journal*, 9 (2), 202-222.

Brand, U. and Görg, C. 2003. *The state and the regulation of biodiversity: International biopolitics and the case of Mexico*. *Geoforum*, 34 (2), 221-233.

- Campbell, L.M. et al. 2022. *Architecture and agency for equity in areas beyond national jurisdiction*. *Earth System Governance*, 13, 100144.
- Campbell, L.M., et al. 2014. *Studying Global Environmental Meetings to Understand Global Environmental Governance: Collaborative Event Ethnography at the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity*. *Global Environmental Politics* 2014; 14 (3): 1–20.
- CBD 1992. Text of the Convention (<https://www.cbd.int/convention/text/>)
- CBD 2001. Introduction: The Operation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. *Handbook of the Convention on Biological Diversity*, London & New York: Routledge, xvii-xxvi.
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- Escobar, A. 1998. *Whose Knowledge, Whose nature? Biodiversity, Conservation, and the Political Ecology of Social Movements*. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 5 (1), 53-82.
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- Hughes, H. and Vadrot, A.B.M. 2019. *Weighting the World: IPBES and the Struggle over Biocultural Diversity*. *Global Environmental Politics*, 19 (2), 14–37.
- IPBES 2019. Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. S. Díaz, J. Settele, E. S. Brondízio, H. T. Ngo, M. Guèze, J. Agard, A. Arneth, P. Balvanera, K. A. Brauman, S. H. M. Butchart, K. M. A. Chan, L. A. Garibaldi, K. Ichii, J. Liu, S. M. Subramanian, G. F. Midgley, P. Miloslavich, Z. Molnár, D. Obura, A. Pfaff, S. Polasky, A. Purvis, J. Razzaque, B. Reyers, R. Roy Chowdhury, Y. J. Shin, I. J. Visseren-Hamakers, K. J. Willis, and C. N. Zayas (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 56 pages.
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