210102-1 M4:
The Politics of Knowledge in Global Environmental Negotiations

Univ. Prof. Dr. Alice Vadrot

When: Tuesdays, 13:15-14:45 **Start:** 11 March 2025
Where: Hörsaal 1 (H1), NIG 2. Floor
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Office hour: after agreement

SYLLABUS

AIMS, CONTENTS AND METHOD

This seminar introduces Master students to the basic features of the politics of knowledge in global environmental negotiations and the empirical study thereof. Starting from the premise that we need to broaden the conceptualisation of the actors, sites and processes constitutive of international environmental agreements and law, the course will provide 1) knowledge about the theoretical foundations of global environmental negotiations, 2) empirical examples and cases related to the politics of knowledge within global environmental negotiations from the areas of climate change, biodiversity, and ocean protection, and 3) a methodological toolbox allowing researchers to empirically study environmental negotiations and the role of science and knowledge within those political spaces.

- In the first part of the course, students will be familiarised with the field of *global environmental politics (GEP)*, its main objectives, theories and concepts. You will learn why studying GEP from the perspective of the negotiation sites where new agreements are made matters and how you can use those sites to understand the set of actors, sites and processes constituting "global environmental agreement-making" (Hughes, Vadrot et al., 2021, Hughes and Vadrot, 2023) and the politics of knowledge in global environmental negotiations (Haas 1992, Vadrot 2014, Borie and Hulme 2015, Hughes and Vadrot 2019, Kohler 2019, De Pryck and Hulme 2022, Tessnow-von Wysocki and Vadrot 2024, Langlet and Vadrot 2024).
- The second part of the course will introduce different cases illustrating the politics of knowledge in the context of global environmental negotiations within the following areas: climate change (IPCC), biodiversity (IPBES), ocean protection and allow students to familiarize themselves with what global environmental agreement-making and the politics of knowledge means in practice. A range of key conceptual approaches (epistemic communities, boundary organizations, science-policy interfaces, weighted concept, epistemic selectivity) will be introduced and applied to different cases of contemporary global environmental agreement-making.
- In the third part of the course, students will be familiarised with key methods and tools to study the politics of knowledge in global environmental agreement-making, including participant observation, ethnography , field note taking, interviews, text analysis and social-network analysis. On this basis students will develop their own research approach and learn how to apply different sets of methods to the empirical study of global environmental negotiations.

The course targets Master students interested in the various themes of global environmental politics and the empirical study thereof. While it may be advantageous if you have some knowledge of global environmental negotiations and agreement-making, the course is still conceptualized in a way that permits all students to participate.

EXAM ASSESSMENT AND PERMITTED MATERIALS

- On-site participation (you are allowed to miss max. two sessions)
- Reading background literature before each session
- Participation in group work during the session
- Active participation in group discussions
- 2 written exams & 1 term paper
    - Exam 1: 01.04.2025: 10 multiple choice questions, 2 open questions (25%)

- ❖ Exam 2: 06.05.2025: 10 multiple choice questions, 2 open questions (25%)
- ❖ Term paper: developing your own project and research question (50%)

- ➢ 89-100 Points: Very good (1)
- ➢ 76-88 Points: Good (2)
- ➢ 63-75 Points: Satisfactory (3)
- ➢ 50-62 Points: Sufficient (4)
- ➢ 0-49 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

STRUCTURE, TOPICS, AND TIMELINE

Part I: MEAs and global environmental negotiations

1. 11.03.2025: Introduction
2. 18.03.2025: Studying MEAs from *outcome* to *process: The IEA Database*
3. 25.03.2025: Studying MEAs: From outcome to process: The MARIPOLDATA*base*
4. 01.04.2025: *Exam 1*

Part II: The politics of knowledge in global environmental negotiations

5. 08.04.2025: (Beyond) Epistemic communities
6. 29.04.2025: Struggle, contestation and symbolic power
7. 06.05.2025: *Exam 2*
8. 13.05.2025: Case selection
9. 20.05.2025: Developing and working with Analytical Frameworks

Part III: Present your case and research question

10. 03.06.2025: Presentations
11. 10.06.2025: Presentations
12. 17.06.2025: Presentations
13. 24.06.2025: Presentations

CONTENT OF AND LITERATURE FOR EACH SESSION

Part I: MEAs and global environmental negotiations

Session 2- 18.03.2025: Studying MEAs from outcome to process: The IEA Database

Summary

This session explores global environmental politics from the perspective of the IEA database, i.e. the outcome of global environmental negotiations. Initiated in 2002, the International Environmental Agreements Data Base (IEADB) catalogs the texts, memberships, and design features of over 3,000

multilateral and bilateral environmental agreements. Using IEADB data, we create a comprehensive review of the evolution of international environmental law, including how the number, subjects, and state memberships in IEAs have changed over time. By providing IEA texts, the IEADB helps scholars identify and systematically code IEA design features. We review scholarship derived from the IEADB on international environmental governance, including insights into IEA membership, formation, and design as well as the deeper structure of international environmental law. We note the IEADB's value as a teaching tool to promote undergraduate and graduate teaching and research. The IEADB's structure and content opens up both broad research realms and specific research questions, and facilitates the ability of scholars to use the IEADB to answer those questions of greatest interest to them.

Literature

- Mitchell, R. B., Andonova, L. B., Axelrod, M. et al. (2020). What We Know (and Could Know) About International Environmental Agreements. Global Environmental Politics 20, 103–121.

Preparation

- Please carefully read the paper
- Please check out the IEA Database: Home | International Environmental Agreements (IEA) Database Project
- Please answer the following question based on the database:
  - What is the content of the IEA database?
  - What does the database offer?
  - What are the advantages/disadvantages of the database?

Session 3- 25.03.2025: Studying MEAs: From outcome to process: The MARIPOLDATA*base*

Summary

Global environmental meetings provide a locale for understanding how multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) become words on paper that shape international practices and norms. These meetings are central sites of global environmental agreement-making because they provide diverse actors with a negotiation space and process for the development of treaty text. This session introduces students to the MARIPOLDATA*base*, which in contrast to the IEA Database, focuses not on the outcome, but on the processes of global environmental negotiations. Starting in 2018, the MARIPOLDATA*base* has systematically cataloged observations covering the entire Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations until their conclusion in June 2023. By providing primary data on the whole negotiation process, the MARIPOLDATA*base* supports empirical, scholarly work on diverse aspects of international marine biodiversity politics. By facilitating the use of primary negotiation data, the MARIPOLDATA*base* structure and content support both broad research areas and specific research questions. Vadrot et al. (2024) propose a methodological shift in the study of global environmental negotiations echoing recent attempts to elevate the ethical standards, data quality, political stakes, and critical reflection on the future of global environmental meetings and their role in global environmental politics (GEP) research.

Literature

- Hughes, H., & Vadrot, A. B. M. (2023). Introduction: A Broadened Understanding of Global Environmental Negotiations. In Conducting Research on Global Environmental Agreement-Making. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Vadrot, A.B.M., Langlet, A., Dunshirn, P. Fellinger, S. Ruiz-Rodríguez, S.C., Tessnow-von Wysocki, I. (2024). Zooming In on Agreement-Making: Tracing the BBNJ Negotiations with the MARIPOLDATAbase. Global Environmental Politics 2024; 24 (4): 152–178.

Further readings

- Hughes, H., Vadrot, A.B.M., Allan, J. I., Bach, T., Bansard, J. S., Chasek, P., … Yamineva, Y. (2021). Global environmental agreement-making: Upping the methodological and ethical stakes of studying negotiations. Earth System Governance, 10, 100121. doi: 10.1016/j.esg.2021.100121.
- Bach, T., & Martin, B. (2023). Negotiations: Navigating global environmental conferences. In H. Hughes & A. B. M. Vadrot (Eds.), Conducting research on global environmental agreement-making (pp. 93-120). Cambridge University Press.
- Brunnée, J. (2002). COPing with Consent: Law-making under Multilateral Environmental Agreements. *Leiden Journal of International Law, 15*(1), 1–52.
- Klein, R., Harris, K., Bakhtaoui, I. et al. (2021). Building Climate Diplomacy Back Better: Imagining the UNFCCC Meetings of Tomorrow. Stockholm Environment Institute.

Preparation

Read the literature with the following questions in mind.

(1) Why do global environmental negotiations matter?
(2) How did they change over time?
(3) What are key actors and how did they change over time?
(4) What comes into focus if you study negotiations with participant observation?
(5) What is the content of the MARIPOLDATA*base*
(6) What is the role of knowledge in multilateral negotiations?

List of term you should know and be able to define during the session:

- ✓ COP
- ✓ COP21
- ✓ UNFCCC
- ✓ IPCC
- ✓ GC
- ✓ SBI
- ✓ SBSTTA
- ✓ SBSTA
- ✓ CBD
- ✓ CITES
- ✓ UNDP
- ✓ SDG
- ✓ IGO
- ✓ BASIC

- ✓ LDC
- ✓ SCF
- ✓ RINGO
- ✓ GAP
- ✓ COP26
- ✓ CBD
- ✓ UNFCCC

Session 4: 01.04.2025- *Exam 1*

10 multiple choice questions, 2 open questions

Will be based on literature to read for the sessions on 18.03.2025 and 25.03.2025

Part II: The politics of knowledge in global environmental negotiations

Session 5- 08.04.2025: (Beyond) Epistemic communities

Summary

This session introduces students to the challenges of science advice in global environmental politics, including the concept of epistemic communities (Haas 1992) and its limitations. There is a general consensus regarding the significance of science in the realm of policy-making; however, differing perspectives persist regarding the mechanisms, timing, and conditions under which science impacts policy. Consequently, there is ongoing debate about the optimal organization of the relationship between science and policy. Some scholars assert that science can only exert a meaningful influence on policy when it operates independently of political considerations. Conversely, others argue that effective influence is contingent upon a close integration of science with the political process from the outset. Lidskog and Sundquist show that "In the discipline of international relations (IR), some researchers contend that a higher degree of autonomy in science from policy enhances its potential to effect change. They maintain that the integration of science and policy should occur only after a consensus has been established among scientific experts, thereby facilitating the concept of "speaking truth to power".

Literature

- Haas, P. M. (1992). Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination. Int Org, 46, 35. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300001442
- Lidskog, R. and Sundqvist, G. (2015). When Does Science Matter? International Relations Meets Science and Technology Studies. Global Environmental Politics 15(1): 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1162/GLEP_a_00269
- Kohler, P. M. (2020). Science Advice and Global Environmental Governance: Expert Institutions and the Implementation of International Environmental Treaties. Anthem Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvq4bzt8 (Introduction)

Further readings

- Andresen, S. (2014). The role of scientific expertise in multilateral environmental agreements: Influence and effectiveness. In E. Hey, H. Raulus, K. Arts, & M. Ambrus (Eds.), The role of 'experts' in international and European decision-making processes: Advisors, decision makers or irrelevant actors? (pp. 105–125). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139871365.008
- Haas, P. M. (2004). When Does Power Listen to Truth? A Constructivist Approach to the Policy Process. Journal of European Public Policy11: 569–592.
- Castells, N., & Ravetz, J. (2001). Science and policy in international environmental agreements: Lessons from the European experience on transboundary air pollution. International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics, 1, 405–425. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1013322222903
- Chasek, P. S. (2019). Linking scientific knowledge and multilateral environmental governance. In M. J. Peterson & M. J. Peterson (Eds.), Contesting global environmental knowledge, norms, and governance (1st ed., pp. 17–32). Routledge

Preparation

Read the literature with the following questions in mind.

(1) What is the role of science in multilateral negotiations?
(2) What are "epistemic communities"?
(3) Why do we need to go beyond the "epistemic community" model?
(4) What does STS offer?
(5) What kind of scientific advisory bodies do exist?

Session 6- 29.04.2025: Struggle, contestation and weighted concept

Summary

This session will introduce students to the motions of struggle and symbolic power, contestation and symbolic power in relation to knowledge and science in global environmental negotiations. The debate over science and knowledge in global environmental negotiations bears the deep mark of long-standing global imbalances and recent calls to shift environmental values and epistemology. For instance, research has pointed to the unequal distribution of authority and power among actors, and the effect this has on their ability to shape multilateral environmental agreements and global assessment bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). National delegation sizes vary and not all government representatives can rely on experts during the conference. Yet scientific, technical, and legal knowledge are important elements because they increase the authority of an actor to determine the content of treaty text. Reference to this knowledge is particularly relevant for marginalized actors and representatives of the Global South who tend to use multilateral spaces to contest the world order and, increasingly, make their own knowledge claims, e.g. by demanding that traditional knowledge should be recognized as legitimate knowledge source at the international scale.

Literature

- Hughes, H. (2015). Bourdieu and the IPCC's Symbolic Power. Global Environmental Politics15 (4): 85–104. https://doi.org/10.1162/GLEP_a_00323
- Hughes, Vadrot, A. B. M. /2019) Weighting the World: IPBES and the Struggle over Biocultural Diversity. Global Environmental Politics 2019; 19 (2): 14–37. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00503
- Tessnow-von Wysocki, I., Vadrot, A.B.M. (2024). Pathways of scientific input into intergovernmental negotiations: a new agreement on marine biodiversity. Int Environ Agreements 24, 325–348 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-024-09642-0

Further readings

- Vadrot, Alice B.M. (2020). Multilateralism as a 'site' of struggle over environmental knowledge: the North-South divide. Critical Policy Studies 14(2): 233-245. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19460171.2020.1768131
- Petersen, M.J. (2019). Introduction: Contestation in international environmental governance, In: Petersen, M.J. (Ed.). Contesting Global Environmental Knowledge, Norms and Governance, New York: Routledge.
- Borie, M., and M. Hulme. (2015). Framing Global Biodiversity: IPBES between Mother Earth and Ecosystem Services. Environmental Science and Policy 54: 487–496.
- Vadrot, A.B.M. 2014. The Politics of Knowledge and Global Biodiversity. London: Routledge.
- Litfin, K.1994. Ozone Discourse: Science and Politics in Global Environmental Cooperation—New Directions in World Politics. New York: Columbia University Press.

Preparation

Read the literature with the following questions in mind:

(1) What is the IPCC?
(2) How can Bourdieu help you understand the IPCC?
(3) What is IPBES and how does it work?
(4) What is the struggle over biocultural diversity about?
(5) What are pathways of scientific input?

Session 7- 06.05.2025: Exam 2

10 multiple choice questions, 2 open questions

Will be based on literature to read for the sessions on 08.04.2025 and 29.04.2025

Session 8- 13.05.2025: Case selection

Preparation

Please identify cases you are interested in for group work/term paper/presentations, e.g.,:

- Global assessment bodies: IPCC, IPBES, IPOS, SPP on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention
- Scientific advisory bodies of MEAs (see IEA database): e.g., CBD SBSTTA

Please reflect research focus, interest and conceptual approach:

- Epistemic communities
- Struggle, contestation, symbolic power
- Pathways of scientific input in negotiations

Session 9- 20.05.2025: Individual work

- Literature search
- State of the Art
- Research gaps
- Research questions
- Databases
- ENB reports: https://enb.iisd.org/

Part III: Present your case and research question

Develop your own project and present it to the group

PLEASE NOTE: This will be individual work, although you can use the class on 13.5. and 20.5. to exchange your ideas with colleagues!

Preparation:

- Start formulating research ideas/questions
- Reading, reading reading!!!
- Systematic literature search with key words: scopus, web of science, google scholar
- Search through relevant Handbooks
  - https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Global-Environmental-Politics/Harris/p/book/9780367692414?srsltid=AfmBOooKC0sEYfHODStcSfjlpbodmnXo1XJFro90OHp-DSOn4Rxvvkh_
  - https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/handbook-of-global-environmental-politics-second-edition-9781849809405.html?srsltid=AfmBOoqp_k15PC2XMuVNIyHgs4umwpEoHrxaWosjICLpDX-YNT33UjGT
  - https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-25910-4
- Search in relevant Journals, e.g., :
  - **Global Environmental Politics**: https://direct.mit.edu/glep
  - **Environmental Politics** | Taylor & Francis Online
  - **Earth System Governance** | Journal | ScienceDirect.com by Elsevier
  - **Global Environmental Change.** https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/global-environmental-change
    - **International Affairs** | Oxford Academic
- → **"map"** the different lines of existing work relevant to your question

- **Start preparing your presentation:**
  - Power Point **presentation with max. 5 slides**
  - Presentation will be **Individual** with the aim to **pitch your research idea**
  - Each presentation will take **max. 7 min.** with **7. min. Q&A** and discussion

Session 10- 03.06.2025: Presentations (6 presentations à 7min +7 min. Discussion)

Name	Title/Topic

Session 11- 10.06.2025: Presentations (6 presentations à 7min +7 min. Discussion)

Name	Title/Topic

Session 12- 17.06.2025: Presentations (6 presentations à 7min +7 min. Discussion)

Name	Title/Topic

Session 13- 24.06.2025: Presentations (6 presentations à 7min +7 min. Discussion)

Name	Title/Topic

Guidelines for Writing Research / Master Thesis Exposé

- Please use a common typeface like Arial (sans serif) or Times New Roman (serif).
- The font size is 11 pt, the line spacing is 1½.
- Please pay attention to insert subheadings to guide the reader through the text.
- Each page of the main text must have the student's name and the page number in the header

- The research exposé should comprise
    - **Cover page**
        - Tentative title and subtitle
        - Full Name
        - Student identification number
        - Name of lecturer
        - Name of course and course number
    - **Abstract**
        - Max. 250 words
        - Very short version of the exposé's main argument
            - include the context your work addresses
            - how your work relates to it,
            - your research question and arguments
            - what your work contributes to the existing state of the art,
            - [what methods you use and why, and possibly conclude how your results might enhance the understanding of the debates sketched in the intro sentences.
    - **Main text:**
        - Lengths: between 3000-5000 words (8-10 pages) without references!
        - Structure:
            - **1. Introduction** (1 page, 500 words)
            - 2. **State of the Art** (2-3 pages, 1000-1500 words)
                - position your question in relation to existing research in this area.
                - thorough literature review: "map" the different lines of existing work relevant to your question.
                    - show your knowledge of the main debates relevant to your question,
                    - show that you are able to develop a position to these debates and
                    - show that you can develop this position to lead the reader to what you are going to do in your research
                - (The theoretical pieces may but need not be the ones you will use yourself to frame the question. There is room in 4.1 to explain your theoretical framing.)
            - 3. **Research question** (0,5 page, 200-300 words)
                - a main question which then is broken down into sub-questions.
                - explain why it is relevant to ask precisely this question in this form.
            - 4. **How to do your research** (3-4 pages, 2000-3000 words)
                - 4.1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework (1-2 pages, ~1500)
                - 4.2 Research field, data and methods of data collection (1- 2 pages, ~1500)

- 5. **References/Bibliography** (1 page)
    - Mention only the key literature and not everything you have looked at or read.
    - Show that you recognize the central pieces of literature and that you can distinguish them from less central ones.
    - Be careful about presenting the bibliography in a consistent way. Choose one style!

Literature List

Bach, T., & Martin, B. (2023). Negotiations: Navigating global environmental conferences. In H. Hughes & A. B. M. Vadrot (Eds.), *Conducting research on global environmental agreement-making* (pp. 93-120). Cambridge University Press.

Betsill, M., & Nasiritousi, N. (2023). Frameworks: Developing and working with analytical frameworks. In H. Hughes & A. B. M. Vadrot (Eds.), *Conducting research on global environmental agreement-making* (pp. 43-57). Cambridge University Press.

Borie, M., and M. Hulme. (2015). Framing Global Biodiversity: IPBES between Mother Earth and Ecosystem Services. Environmental Science and Policy 54: 487–496.

Brunnée, J. (2002). COPing with consent: Law-making under multilateral environmental agreements. *Leiden Journal of International Law, 15*(1), 1–52.

Castells, N., & Ravetz, J. (2001). Science and policy in international environmental agreements: Lessons from the European experience on transboundary air pollution. International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics, 1, 405–425. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1013322222903

Chasek, P. S. (2001). *Earth negotiations: Analyzing thirty years of environmental diplomacy*. United Nations University Press.

Chasek, P. S. (2019). Linking scientific knowledge and multilateral environmental governance. In M. J. Peterson & M. J. Peterson (Eds.), Contesting global environmental knowledge, norms, and governance (1st ed., pp. 17–32). Routledge

Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B. M. (2013). Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts. *Political Analysis, 21*(3), 267–297.

Haas, P. M. (1992). Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination. Int Org, 46, 35. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300001442

Haas, P. M. (2004). When Does Power Listen to Truth? A Constructivist Approach to the Policy Process. Journal of European Public Policy11: 569–592.

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Hjerpe, M., & Linnér, B.-O. (2010). Functions of COP side-events in climate-change governance. *Climate Policy, 10*(2), 167–180.

Kohler, P. M. (2020). Science Advice and Global Environmental Governance: Expert Institutions and the Implementation of International Environmental Treaties. Anthem Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvq4bzt8

Mitchell, R. B., Andonova, L. B., Axelrod, M., et al. (2020). What we know (and could know) about international environmental agreements. *Global Environmental Politics, 20*, 103–121.

Lidskog, R. and Sundqvist, G. (2015). When Does Science Matter? International Relations Meets Science and Technology Studies. Global Environmental Politics 15(1): 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1162/GLEP_a_00269

Litfin, K.1994. Ozone Discourse: Science and Politics in Global Environmental Cooperation—New Directions in World Politics. New York: Columbia University Press.

Petersen, M.J. (2019) (Ed.). Contesting Global Environmental Knowledge, Norms and Governance, New York: Routledge.

Schroeder, H., & Lovell, H. (2012). The role of non-nation-state actors and side events in the international climate negotiations. *Climate Policy, 12*(1), 23–37.

Tessnow-von Wysocki, I., Vadrot, A.B.M. (2024). Pathways of scientific input into intergovernmental negotiations: a new agreement on marine biodiversity. Int Environ Agreements 24, 325–348 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-024-09642-0

Timmermans, S., & Tavory, I. (2012). Theory construction in qualitative research: From grounded theory to abductive analysis. *Sociological Theory, 30*(3), 167–186.

Vadrot, A.B.M., Langlet, A., Dunshirn, P. Fellinger, S. Ruiz-Rodríguez, S.C., Tessnow-von Wysocki, I. (2024). Zooming In on Agreement-Making: Tracing the BBNJ Negotiations with the MARIPOLDATAbase. Global Environmental Politics 2024; 24 (4): 152–178. doi:

Vadrot, A. B. M. (2020). Multilateralism as a 'site' of struggle over environmental knowledge: the North-South divide. Critical Policy Studies, 14(2), 233–245. doi: 10.1080/19460171.2020.1768131

Vadrot, A. B. M., Hughes, H. (2023). Starting: Practical and ethical considerations. In H. Hughes & A. B. M. Vadrot (Eds.), *Conducting research on global environmental agreement-making* (pp. 25-42). Cambridge University Press.

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.

Vadrot, A.B.M. 2014. The Politics of Knowledge and Global Biodiversity. London: Routledge.