GOVERNABLE AIR:
Studies on the Science and Politics of Air Pollution in Europe

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ABSTRACT

How are associations between the scientific and the political articulated into the activity of international environmental government? This is the focal point of discussion and empirical observation in this dissertation. How is it possible to analyse such associations as an effect of articulation rather than a tectonic clash between pre-constituted social realms? How can one identify moments of association and describe their quality without resorting to some absolute frame of reference?

Drawing on poststructuralist discourse theory and actor-network theory, the general purpose is to move the analysis of the association between the scientific and the political in the direction of the event rather than explaining any such association by imposing the *deus ex machina* of social structures supposedly given by default. The case in point for empirical consideration is the process of rendering air pollution governable in Europe, i.e. the work under the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) and the activities of the European Commission in the Clean Air for Europe (CAFE) programme under Directorate-General Environment.

With the concept of "navigational concerns" the dissertation recognizes specific acts as important events for the determination of direction and position with regard to some entity, along the traditional axis of science versus politics but also, which is more important, along the axis of science's detachment and attachment with regard to the art of international environmental government. What comes into view is a government arrangement that is irreducible to a single designation and therefore, it is argued, the sociology of international environmental regimes ought to be re-equipped: the open-ended structure of the sign, rather than the state, ought to be the basic unit of sociological analysis.

The empirical portion of the dissertation is centred on four studies. The first traces the emergence, stabilization, and institutionalization of a discourse of transboundary air pollution. It demonstrates how sulphur dioxide became a matter of national security and how, in the midst of the Cold War, meteorology and air chemistry, alongside military and economic activities, became important technologies of government, i.e. in making air pollution an object amenable to control. The second study demonstrates the *boundary work* performed around a concept, "critical loads", which entered the discourse on air pollution during the 1980s, and a technology, the integrated assessment model called RAINS. Through these elements, associations of science and politics have been articulated into the art of government. The third study probes the relationship between the European Commission and the World Health Organization. As a complement to the analysis of boundary work, it tracks the association of science and politics as a discontinuous, irreducible movement rather than an interface with clashes of tectonic, geological magnitude. For this purpose a qualitative sensor is developed for identifying moments where the social landscape cannot be reduced to a cultural map, moments with a so-called *gestalt shift* quality where the figuration of the government arrangement seems to shift character in the blink of an eye. Focusing on the contingency of political and scientific representations and the local enactment of international law and science, the final study demonstrates how the figure of the urban traveller is constituted as governable in the art of environmental government.

Keywords: air pollution; environmental government; science and politics; sociology of expertise

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