

For my next trick I'll need a volunteer: The role of ENGOs in integrating environmental concerns in the European biofuel policy through the European Parliament

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Abstract

The horizontal integration of environmental concerns in other policy areas has become one of the leading motives in the EU's climate and environmental policies. Due to the greenhouse gas intensity and high energy consumption of the transport sector, the horizontal integration of environmental concerns in this sector is crucial. However, the obstacles and opportunities to integrating environmental concerns in transport and energy policy have so far received little attention from the field of political science. This thesis makes a contribution to filling this gap in the scientific literature through a case-study of the problem of indirect land use change (ILUC) in the biofuel policy, as it is a problem where the environmental, energy and transport policies come together. At the outset of the EU's biofuel policy in 2003, there was enthusiasm regarding the possibilities of biofuels to contribute to the EU's climate objectives by making transport more sustainable. However, the problem of ILUC cast doubts over the value of biofuels as a way to integrate environmental concerns in the European transport sector. This thesis asks why and how the problem of ILUC entered the European agenda. This is researched through a detailed document analysis, complemented by a number of interviews. We contend that Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOs) used their beneficial access to the European Parliament to put ILUC on the European agenda. Based on the Advocacy Coalition Framework and theories of the use of scientific evidence in policy making, we distinguish different strategies that were used by the ENGOs to influence the European Parliament. To establish the causal relation between these strategies of the stakeholders and the behaviour of the European Parliament, we use the methodology of process tracing. The results of this research show that ENGOs indeed played an important role in convincing the European Parliament to make an amendment on ILUC. It shows that one of the drivers behind the Parliament's policy was indeed the scientific evidence supplied by ENGOs, but suggests that a hidden driver also came

into play. Finally, we sketch out some repercussions of the ILUC-dossier for the agenda-setting power of the European Parliament.