

Environmentalist policy-making between compromise and confrontation: Different understandings in the Dutch context in the 1970s

“Layers and Connections of the Political”
International APH conference 2020-2021
14-25 June 2021

Author: Kristian Mennen
Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Abstract

Comparative literature about governance in the field of nature conservation and environmental politics usually emphasises the ‘neocorporatist’ characteristics of policy-making in the Netherlands. Its historical backgrounds before the emergence of a ‘modern environmental consciousness’ are, however, more than merely a ‘pre-history’ of these institutional arrangements.

This paper focusses on the different understandings of “how to do environmental politics” among conservationist and environmentalist civil society organisations in the Netherlands, and on the complex interplay of the two main approaches in the 1970s. “Traditional” nature conservation societies relied on consultations, negotiations in expert committees, compromises and informal deals with other interest groups, political actors, and the civil service. Although this approach had been quite successful on a policy-making level, leading conservationists welcomed the growing public attention for environmental issues as additional leverage in their negotiations. The emergence of a new type of environmental groups, following international trends, challenged this model in the 1970s. They adopted a more radical rhetoric and started to mobilise public opinion for their goals, but were also happy to use the pre-existing structures and patterns of governance to exert influence at a political level.

Author information

Dr Kristian Mennen is a postdoctoral researcher in the chair group of Political History at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. He defended his PhD dissertation about political culture in Germany and the Netherlands around 1930 at the Universities of Münster and Nijmegen in 2013. His current project, subsidised by the European Commission as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship, deals with the political aspects of nature conservation in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in the time period 1930-1960.

Contact Information

k.mennen@let.ru.nl

Monday, 21 June - Session 10 - **10,30-12,00 CET (Webex)** - Panel – *Environmental Policies as a Multi-Layered Discursive Phenomenon*

Luiss
School of Government

Via di Villa Emiliani, 14
00197 Roma
T +39 06 85225052
sog@luiss.it