

## Going Green

### The Environment in Politics and Practice

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In a year that has seen the release of the first part of the fourth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, the continued popularity of Al Gore's global warming film *An Inconvenient Truth* and counter-claims splashed across televisions in the shape of *The Great Global Warming Swindle*, it cannot be denied that the environment has taken a place at the forefront of political debates worldwide. Whether internationally – as in the series of concerts planned for July raising awareness of climate change – or domestically as an issue in national elections in Australia, France, Iceland and Ireland, the world has truly arrived at a time where the environment is no longer the backdrop to political affairs but rather a political object in its own right.

The environment, both within the literature and in the broader community, has become mainstream and the stereotype of the long haired, Birkenstock-wearing university drop-out is no longer the face of environmentalism, if it ever truly was. Today scientists, policy makers, lobby groups, non-governmental organisations and networked individuals are discussing, debating and establishing new practices in order to address a new reality where natural resources have become more than elements of national power and transnational environmental concerns are now writ large on the front pages of local newspapers. The international has become local and – with the power of a globalised media and online communities involving millions – the local has become stunningly international.

As claims and counter-claims are exchanged across classrooms, parliaments and even the floor of the United Nations General Assembly, a need for focussed political research on matters environmental has emerged. While the scientific journals will continue to reserve their editions for research in the physical sciences, social scientific journals like *Politikon* are opening their pages to the increasing weight of research focussing on the politics of the environment. While issues such as the Kyoto Protocol, the International Whaling Commission and energy politics in the Middle East and Eurasia provoke a wide response, the literature is considerably more extensive and diverse than discussion of such high-profile matters alone. It is to highlight this diversity that in this issue of *Politikon* we present a pair of papers that exemplify the intersection of the environment and the political process in two very different contexts.

Mathieu Petithomme's article *Why Do Green Parties Emerge?* destroys the myth that all environmentalist political parties are the same. Using a comparative approach which contrasts the experience of the British Green Party and the German Die Grünen party, Petithomme is able to demonstrate the importance of institutional and strategic factors as opposed to the common notion of which privileges post-materialist factors as all decisive.

Petithomme's article offers a new perspective on a conventional wisdom, a common feature of papers at the forefront of the discipline and one which distinguishes his discussion considerably.

Mariya Genina's paper offers not an assessment of groups pursuing a change in policy but, instead, an assessment of a new environmental policy in Central Asia. In *The Development of a New Water Code in the Republic of Kazakhstan* Genina outlines not only the reasons for the implementation of the 2003 Water Code but also the success that the new code has had in alleviating the problems it was designed to solve. Genina's evaluation of the success of the new Water Code is not overwhelmingly positive and she identifies three areas in which the Water Code program could be improved. Genina remains positive about Water Code prospects but warns that, as with all environmental matters, the political will of the government must exist for changes to result.

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In addition to Petithomme and Genina's papers, this issue of *Politikon* also presents three other articles testament to the breadth of the discipline of political science.

Andrea Charron's *Expanding the UN's Collective Security System: Do the Responsibility to Protect and the Duty to Prevent Conform to its Ideal Elements?* considers a key question in post-Cold War international politics. The seeming contradiction between the emerging norms of the 'Responsibility to Protect' and the 'Duty to Prevent' in interstate relations and the existing state obligations and rights under the UN Charter are explored by Charron who finds that only the employment of both emerging norms has implications not only for the UN but, potentially, for global peace and security.

Solidea Formichelli's *Support for European Membership in the new Candidate Countries*, meanwhile, offers a detailed assessment of support for two new European Union members (Romania and Bulgaria) and one candidate country (Turkey). Considering a range of data and tracking a number of variables, Formichelli is able to conclude that a person's support for membership in the EU can be tied to economic factors far more concretely than to factors related to national identity or cultural background. This paper, then, provides a basis for further research, particularly as the EU seeks to celebrate its common historical memory in 2007, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome.

Finally, Corina Murafa's *The International System: Unipolarity on the Brink* presents a timely re-examination of a theory of international relations that has ignited the field since its presentation by Kenneth Waltz in his 1979 work, *Theory of International Politics*. Murafa's consideration, critique and reconstruction of Waltz's neorealism as an 'amended neorealism' is imaginative. Further, though, it allows Murafa to argue convincingly that the period of post-Cold War unipolarity is finished and – in its place – a rather "imprecise multipolarity" has emerged, one that Murafa concludes will emerge as a classical multipolar system in short order.