

**Climate Change, Energy, and Sustainability in the Pacific Region: Knowledge, Policies, and Transfers (1970s–Present)**

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This interdisciplinary conference explored the current and historical attitudes towards climate change and environmental degradation among policymakers and other stakeholders in various countries around the Pacific Rim, as well as the interactions between their current and past climate, energy, and environmental policies. The organizers highlighted a striking imbalance between the severe social, environmental, and political effects of climate change and the scholarly and public attention given to the issue in the region. Furthermore, they argued for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of climate change-related issues that includes social scientists and researchers from the humanities.

In the first panel, BEATRICE DIPPEL (Bonn) provided an overview of her research project on the use of climate change-related narratives in the public and political discourse in Singapore. Dippel argued for a critical analysis of the social and political factors that influence the production and media representation of local expert knowledge on climate change-related topics. YOONHEE JUNG (Singapore) gave an insight into the role of urban planning in Singapore, and the mitigation of heat concentration in the central city areas. She explained that urban heat islands in the city center, such as the Central Business District in southern Singapore,

have severe negative impacts on the well-being of urban citizens and the environment. REBECCA HOGUE (Cambridge, Mass.) highlighted the obstacles for indigenous environmental and cultural activists in organizing a unified approach to climate change. Hogue explained that Pacific island activists link the influence of „petrol culture“ in local societies and the effects of climate change and the Anthropocene with imperialism – a view only marginally represented in current research on climate change.

In his keynote address, GREGORY CUSHMAN (Kansas) presented a critical view on the Anthropocene. He stated that the historical and cultural influences on the colonial landscape of the Pacific Ocean signify the beginning of several „Anthropocenes“ and opposed views that concentrate on geophysical markers for the period. Cushman further emphasized the historical connections between the extinction of the native fauna and the human-induced absence of landscapes in the Pacific region, particularly due to the devastating effects of nuclear bomb tests.

In the second keynote address, MIRANDA SCHREURS (Munich) provided an overview of energy transition policies in East Asia with a focus on China. Schreurs emphasized that since the entry of China into the global market in the 1980s, global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rose dramatically. Today, emissions from China, however, are stabilizing. Schreurs also predicted cooperation between the United States and China on climate issues and stressed the importance of China's relations with her neighbors in the Pacific.

In panel two, CHEN XIANG (Hong Kong) discussed the role of China's central environmental inspection teams (CEITs) in the enforcement of environmental regulation on the regional and local level. She explained the role of inspection teams and their unprecedented sanctioning powers by focusing on the deployment of CEITs in Hebei Province, which heavily relied on the establishment of local tip-off hotlines for environmental violations and field inspections. Against the background of the Belt-and-Road-Initiative (BRI), AGNIESZKA NITZAMAKOWSKA (Warsaw) presented her first findings from her comparative analysis of re-

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sponses in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Japan about soft power aspects of China's environmental strategies. Comparing the opinions expressed in official governmental declarations and the public discourse, she identified voices in opposition, and in favor of environmental cooperation with China in each of the three countries.

In panel three, BENJAMIN BEUERLE (Moscow) started with insights into renewable energies and coal in the Russian Far East. Beuerle highlighted the tensions between Russia's expansionist coal strategy on the one hand and the Paris Agreement as well as the decarbonization pledges by major Asian-Pacific neighboring countries on the other hand. At the same time, he pointed out the huge potential of the Russian Far East to become an export-oriented front-runner in the production of various sorts of renewable energy in cooperation with Chinese, South-Korean and Japanese companies. Focusing on the winding road of policymaking in the U.S., SARAH BERINGER (Washington D.C.) examined the partnership on climate action and clean energy between California and China. While the onset of this partnership dated back to the Obama era, it was challenged by dwindling support under the Trump presidency. Even so, California and China were still able to continue expanding this partnership through a transregional approach. For her analysis, Beringer used three variables Barry Rabe identifies as decisive for state engagement in a „bottom-up“ political system, and added the category of knowledge exchange. ANNA KUTELEVA (Moscow) discussed Canada's discursive politics on energy and their relationship to Canada's policy on China. By analyzing texts produced by media outlets and politicians, she showed how Chinese investments are changing Canada's perceptions of its resources and energy security. Ultimately, contradictions between the economic interests framed through neoliberal policies and democratic and ecological values complicated the Harper government's policy regarding China's investment in the energy sector.

In panel four, OLGA ZALESSKAIA (Blagoveshchensk), focused on cross-border cooperation on ecology between Russia and

China. Starting at the end of the Cold War, the bilateral cooperation to develop natural resources in Russia's Far East also led to joint programs to monitor and address challenges to environmental security. Although several disasters expedited environmental protection policies, regulatory mechanisms are still not solving the severe problems the region continues to face. VIVIAN GIANG (Alberta) presented her research on Indigenous rights in the area of environmental and geothermal energy development in Canada. Canada is the only country in the Pacific Ring of Fire region that has not developed commercial-scale geothermal energy projects. Giang proposed any such development that contributes to a low carbon future should include the participation of Indigenous communities. SABRINA KIRSCHNER (Munich) presented the role of local scientists and institutions in addressing urban air pollution in Latin American countries along the Pacific coast. The development of institutions and projects showed that local scientists played a central role in the development of environmental research, policies, and institutions.

In panel five, RYAN JONES (Eugene) focused on conservation efforts of North Pacific salmon across Cold War borders and ideologies. Jones demonstrated that oceanic conditions, not direct human intervention, played the largest role in the growth of salmon populations, even though increasingly rapid human-induced climate change does have a significant impact on fish populations. SONJA GANSEFORTH (Tokyo) evaluated possible effects of the recently enacted Japanese fishery law, particularly its potentially detrimental effects on community-based resource management of coastal fisheries. While its proponents argue the bill will serve to revitalize and modernize domestic fisheries, Ganseforth questioned these seemingly advantageous effects and interpreted the reform as a recent turn toward a Blue Economy and yet another step toward the (neo)liberalization of the Japanese agri-food sector. KJELL ERICSON (Kyoto) presented a glocal history of pearl *yōshoku* („aquaculture“). By following the link between the Tennessee River and Japan's inland sea, he highlighted transpacific ecologies of the saltwater

pearl cultivation boom (1950–1970). Ericson concluded that Cold War ecologies and local developments had intertwined economic effects, thus entangling local authorities with superpower politics.

BAO MAOHONG's (Peking) keynote „Anthropocene and East Asia“ concentrated on three topics: A conceptual analysis of the Anthropocene in global environmental history, East Asia's place in the Anthropocene, and the role of the iron and steel industry in this history. He argued that East Asia had both positive and negative influences on the environment – economic growth, resource consumption, and pollution as well as effective national responses like reforestation. Bao concluded that East Asia has played a central role in the Anthropocene, negatively contributing to global warming and positively improving the global environment system.

In panel six, SVEN RUDOLPH (Kyoto) presented coordinated efforts to create a transpacific carbon market by sustainably linking greenhouse gas (GHG) cap-and-trade programs through existing domestic emissions trading schemes (ETS). In order to overcome barriers that hinder the sustainable linkage of these ETSs, concluded that linking ETS could not only play a major role in reaching the Paris Agreement goals, but also in further improving environmental effectiveness and climate justice. IGOR MAKAROV and ANNA SOKOLOVA (Moscow) showed how Russia's economic expansion in the Pacific region has been accompanied by increasing environmental problems that significantly stem from exporting carbon intensive goods. While a reduction of these exports is not in Russia's interest, there is a potential for more sustainable use of energy to produce these goods. VLADIMIR JANKOVIĆ (Manchester) delved into the benefits of climate-aware urban design to counter the worsening of living conditions in cities caused by rapid urbanization and climate change. Janković concluded that future urban-scale climatological planning should go beyond thermal risk management and take into account the political economy of urban growth, demographics, and changing values and needs.

Overall, the presentations in this conference shared a sense of tension between na-

tional economic and strategic interests and local or regional environmental repercussions, policies and production cycles. They showed that the societies around the Pacific Rim share histories connected by a common interest in the use of natural resources that depend on a permanent and often controversial negotiation of environmental, political, economic, and social interests that are partly informed by ecological and other scientific data. This conference contributed connected histories of a region of high importance for the chances to mitigate climate change to a bearable degree and highlighted the transfer, circulation, limitation, and strategic use of knowledge about climate change, energy production, and sustainability in the Pacific.

### Conference Overview:

#### *Introduction*

*Panel 1: Pacific Islands dealing with climate change and sustainability issues*

Beatrice Dippel (Bonn): „Narrating Science as a World-Making Activity: Sea Level Change in Singapore“

Yoonhee Jung (Singapore): „Planning's role in Urban Heat Island Mitigation in Singapore“

Rebecca Hogue (Cambridge Mass): „(Dis)unified approaches to Climate Change and Energy Relations in the Pacific Islands“

#### *Keynote I:*

Gregory Cushman (Kansas): „Anthropocenes: Colonial Landscapes in the Post-War Pacific“

#### *Keynote II:*

Miranda Schreurs (Munich): „Energy transitions and climate change in East Asia“

*Panel 2: China's environmental policies, transpacific cooperation and image*

Chen Xiang (Hong Kong): „Imperial Envoys: Central Inspection Teams and the Enforcement of Environmental Regulation in China“

Agnieszka Nitza-Makowska (Warsaw): „Environmental policies as soft power: Can environmental policies help Beijing 'win hearts and minds' in Asia's Pacific Rim?“

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*Panel 3: (Trans)Pacific Energy relations, climate and the environment*

Benjamin Beuerle (Moscow): „Renewable Energies and Coal in the Russian Far East: regional and transnational dimensions“

Sarah Beringer (Washington DC): „The California-China Clean Energy and Climate Change Partnership: Cooperation vs. Industrial Policy in the Clean Energy Sector“

Anna Kuteleva (Moscow): „Discursive Politics of Energy in Canada's China Policy“

*Panel 4: Local actors and (trans)pacific environmental designs*

Olga Zaleskaia (Blagoveshchensk): „Cooperation between Russia and China on environmental issues: problems and prospects“

Vivian Giang (Alberta): „Indigenous Rights, The Environment and Geothermal Energy Development in the Pacific Ring of Fire“

Sabrina Kirschner (Munich): „Addressing Urban Air Pollution in Latin American Pacific States: Local Scientists, the CEPIS in Lima and the REDPANAIRE“

*Panel 5: Trans-Pacific relations and cooperation in fisheries management*

Ryan Jones (Eugene): „Cooperation and Conservation across Empire and Ideology: North Pacific Salmon and Climate“

Sonja Ganseforth (Tokyo): „Transnational Renegotiation of Sustainability Discourses in Japanese Fisheries“

Kjell Ericson (Kyoto): „Marine Pearl Cultivation in Coastal Japan and Riparian Mussel Gathering in the US“

*Keynote III:*

Bao Maohong (Peking): „Anthropocene and East Asia“

*Panel 6: Ideas and projects for (trans)pacific climate change mitigation and adaption*

Sven Rudolph (Kyoto): „Toward a Trans-Pacific Carbon Market: Politically Feasible and Sustainable (ToPCaPS)“

Igor Makarov/ Anna Sokolova (Moscow): „Emissions reduction in countries exporting

energy-intensive goods: the case of Russia and potential cooperation in the Pacific Region“

Vladimir Jankovic (Manchester): „Making urban winds: *Kaze no michi* as a synergetic approach to governance of Tokyo's climate futures“

*Closing Remarks*

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