

## New Trends in International Climate and Environmental Advocacy

Organizers: NINA HALL and METTE EILSTRUP SANGIOVANNI

FRIDAY, MAY 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The workshop will take place on zoom:

<https://jh.zoom.us/j/98624477751?pwd=UTQ0R2t3azBCdkNHVTZ5aGRuTEVCQT09>

Meeting ID: 986 2447 7751

Password: 147588

Jointly organized by Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe and European University Institute

- 9:15 Welcome and introduction to the seminar – **Nina Hall, Mette Eilstrup Sangiovanni**
- 9:30 **What's New in Transnational Climate and Environmental Activism -New Actors and New Tactics? Part 1**  
*Who are the new actors in climate advocacy? What new strategies and tactics are developing in environmental activism? And how effective are they? How is COVID-19 affecting the climate movement?*  
Discussion leaders: **Jennifer Allan, Nina Hall, Sahar Priano, Eleni Diamantopoulou**  
Chair: **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni**
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:30 **What's New in Transnational Climate and Environmental Activism -New Actors and New Tactics? Part 2**  
*Who are the new actors in climate advocacy? What new strategies and tactics are developing in environmental activism? And how effective are they? How is COVID-19 affecting the climate movement?*  
Discussion leaders: **Dana Fisher, Mathieu Blondeel, Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni**  
Chair: **Nina Hall**
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch Break
- 14.00 **Climate Litigation - What Works? Where and Why?**  
Discussion leaders: **Kim Bouwer & Joanna Setzer, Miriam Saage-Maas, Cesar Rodriguez Garavito, Sadhbh O Neill**  
Chair: **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni**
- 15:30 Coffee break
- 16.00 **How to Build a More Inclusive Environmental Movement? (Issues of Class, Race, and Geography)**  
*How, if at all, has the climate movement integrated analysis of colonisation and capitalism as root causes of the climate crisis? How has it centred voices from the Global South and indigenous peoples in the global north?*  
Discussion leaders: **Asad Rehman, Natasha Josette, Karen Bell**  
Chair: **Nina Hall**
- 17.30 - 17.45 **Closing of Workshop**

**SAIS Europe**

The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

via Andretta 3 (già via Belmeloro 11) • 40126 Bologna, Italy • Tel. +39 051 2917811 • Fax +39 051 228505 • [www.sais-jhu.edu/europe](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/europe)

# New Trends in International Climate and Environmental Advocacy

FRIDAY, MAY 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## OVERARCHING WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

*What new strategies and tactics are emerging in transnational climate and environmental advocacy? What has caused these changes? And how effective are these new strategies and tactics?*

## Workshop Theme

In the past few years there has been a large upsurge in climate and environmental advocacy around the world. Extinction Rebellion have taken to the streets of London, blocking bridges, and gluing themselves to the parliamentary chambers in Westminster while MPs debated Brexit. Greta Thunberg, initially a lone Swedish student, has mobilised millions of students and adults around the world to demonstrate for climate action under the slogan #FridaysforFutures.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the Gilets Jaunes in France took to the streets to protest against an increase in fuel taxes, a policy French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron intended to address climate change.<sup>2</sup> Across the globe we have seen the return of direct action and civil disobedience alongside digital-based activism. New types of NGOs have emerged focused on harnessing new technologies such as drones, radar and satellite to monitor environmental degradation and devise technology-based solutions.<sup>3</sup>

These developments are taking place within a changing political context. We have seen the rise of far-right political parties and movements, many of whom question whether climate change and environmental degradation are really a problem (such as Marine Le Pen in France, and the *Alternativ für Deutschland* in Germany). These far-right parties are capturing votes from mainstream centre-right and centre-left political parties. Countering this trend however, is the recent increase in support for Green parties in Europe, seen in the 2019 European election results. How does environmental and climate advocacy operate in this changing and increasingly polarized political context? And when can it have a lasting effect?

In our previous research we have identified three additional developments which change the context of advocacy (Hall, Schmitz, and Dedmon 2019; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2019; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Bondaroff 2014). First, new technologies, from social media to satellite and drones, have allowed activists to develop new tactics and strategies. Second, there has been a rapid growth in international environmental law and as a result environmental activists are increasingly looking to the courts and litigation. Third, there has been an overall growth in the number of environmental advocacy organizations and movements operating globally, which has population level effects—for example by leading to increasing competition but also by increasing possibilities for cooperation. In this workshop we seek to investigate further how the context, and strategies of climate advocacy are changing. This is important given the recent growth, and arguable success of movements such as FridaysforFuture and Extinction Rebellion.

Although this workshop is dedicated to changes in the transnational environmental and environmental advocacy, similar trends can be observed in other sectors including the humanitarian sector where new technologies and increased 'juridification' offer new strategies.<sup>4</sup> The workshop will, where possible, reflect on whether changes in the environmental advocacy sector are driving or following changes in other advocacy sectors (e.g. human rights, disarmament, gender equality, gay rights, humanitarian etc). Finally, we do not assume that 'digitalisation' or juridification will always be beneficial for environmental advocacy - we are interested in when and how these new strategies are successful, and also will explore the tensions inherent in these organizations' strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> Greta Thunberg and 16 other young petitioners are also taking a case to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on climate change and future generations. See here: <https://theconversation.com/with-15-other-children-greta-thunberg-has-filed-a-un-complaint-against-5-countries-heres-what-itll-achieve-124090>

<sup>2</sup> Although less reported in the international media was the fact that many Gilet Jaunes did indeed support climate action, and joined later climate protests

<sup>3</sup> A new type of environmental NGO is emerging focused on exploiting remote sensing technologies such as GPS, Geographic Information Systems, drones, and other forms of remote sensing technology to facilitate more effective monitoring and enforcement of environmental regulations. Examples include Soar Ocean, ShadowView, and SkyTruth.

<sup>4</sup> See here for example: Kristin Bergtora Sandvik and Dennis Dijkzeul, 'New Directions in Humanitarian Governance: Technology, Juridification and Criminalization' *Global Policy*, 05 November 2019. Available at <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/05/11/2019/new-directions-humanitarian-governance-technology-juridification-and>

## Format and Specific Questions

The workshop will be divided into four sessions, focused on the questions below. Participants will be asked to prepare a concept paper addressing at least one of the questions below (rather than present a formal paper).

1. *Who are the new actors in climate advocacy? What are the new organizational forms? And why are we seeing these new actors mobilised on climate change and the environment?*
  - How do NGOs respond, and relate to the new environmental social movements? And how do the new environmental social movements relate to the professionalised NGO sector?
  - What new alliances and partnerships are we seeing across sectors (e.g. with unions, businesses, policy-makers)?
  - To what extent are mainstream NGOs moving to the left and/or becoming more radical on climate change?
2. *What new strategies and tactics are developing in environmental activism? Why, and how effective are they?*
  - What tactics have emerged as a result of new technologies and digital platforms and/or of a changing political context?
  - Has the growth in international environmental law led to the development of new litigation strategies?
  - And/or are older, more radical strategies becoming more popular: e.g. civil disobedience, and direct action?
3. *What are the limitations and tensions within climate and environmental advocacy today?*
  - How does race, imperialism and privilege feature in the climate movement? To what extent are new climate movements tackling 'decolonization'?
  - Is "greening capitalism" a genuine solution?
  - How has the rise of populism and nationalism shaped environmental advocacy's strategies and effectiveness? And how do climate and environmental advocacy organizations and movements position themselves vis-a-vis populism, and/or the far right?
4. *When and how does climate and environmental advocacy lead to long-term, institutionalised change to ensure de-carbonisation of major economies?*
  - When and how are climate and environmental advocacy able to win-over the 'mainstream' and/or convince climate sceptics?
  - Are campaigns that focus on more technical areas, (e.g. Antarctic marine reserves) more likely to be successful than campaigns where there's more salience/media coverage/political attention (e.g. climate change)?
  - How do organizations move from mass protests or on-line activism to build sustained pressure for political change?
  - Has the increasing success of Green political parties across Europe, especially in the 2019 European elections, enhanced advocacy organizations' strategies and tactics? (i.e. r/ship between political parties and advocacy movements)

## Bibliography

- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette. 2019. "Competition and Strategic Differentiation among Transnational Advocacy Groups." *Journal of Interest Groups and Advocacy* 8 (3): 376–406.
- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette, and Teale N. Phelps Bondaroff. 2014. "From Advocacy to Confrontation: Direct Enforcement by Environmental NGOs." *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (2): 348–61.
- Hall, Nina, Hans Peter Schmitz, and J. Michael Dedmon. 2019. "Transnational Advocacy and NGOs in the Digital Era: New Forms of Networked Power." *International Studies Quarterly*, forthcoming.
- Hall, Nina, Hans Peter Schmitz and Michael Dedmon, '[Fridays for Future, How Young Climate Strikers are teaching NGOs a lesson](#)', *SAIS Perspectives*, November 12 2019.

# PARTICIPANTS



**JENNIFER ALLAN**

Lecturer in International Relations, School of Law and Politics, Cardiff University, UK

Personal professional website:

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/people/view/1422735-allan-jennifer>



**ELENI DIAMANTOPOULOU**

Energy Markets Litigation Lead, ClientEarth, UK

Personal professional website:

<https://www.clientearth.org/people/diamantopoulou-eleni/>



**GIOVANNA ALVAREZ-NEGRETTI**

Executive Director, OPEN, Spain

Personal professional website:

<https://the-open.net/about-us>



**METTE EILSTRUP SANGIOVANNI**

Senior University Lecturer in International Relations and a Fellow, Sidney Sussex College, UK

Personal professional website:

[https://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/Staff\\_and\\_Students/dr-mette-eilstrup-sangiovanni](https://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/Staff_and_Students/dr-mette-eilstrup-sangiovanni)



**KAREN BELL**

Senior Lecturer, Geography and Environment, University of the West of England, UK

Personal professional website:

<https://people.uwe.ac.uk/Person/KarenBell>



**COURTNEY FIELDMAN**

Advisor, Mission 2020

Personal professional website:

<https://mission2020.global/>



**KIM BOUWER**

Lecturer, Law School, University of Exeter, UK

Personal professional website:

<https://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/law/staff/bouwer/>



**DANA FISHER**

Professor of Sociology and Director of the Program for Society and the Environment, University of Maryland, US

Personal professional website:

[www.drfisher.umd.edu](http://www.drfisher.umd.edu)



**MATHIEU BLONDEEL**

Post-doctoral Researcher, Ghent University, Belgium

Personal professional website:

<https://www.ugent.be/ps/politiekewetenschappen/giis/en/team/postdoc/mathieublondel.htm>



**LORNA GOLD**

Laudato Sí Project Coordinator, Trócaire, the Irish Catholic Agency for International Development, Ireland

Personal professional website:

<https://lornagold.com/biography/>

**CALLUM GRIEVE**

Campaigns Director, Mission 2020

Personal professional website:

<https://mission2020.global/>

**NINA HALL**

Assistant Professor of International Relations, Johns Hopkins University SAIS

Europe, Italy

Personal professional website:

<https://www.bjpr.eu/scholarprofile.cfm/profid=375/Nina-Hall>

**ANDREW HIGHAM**

CEO, Mission 2020

Personal professional website:

<https://mission2020.global/>

<https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/people/andrew-higham>

**HANNAH HUGHES**

Lecturer in International Relations,

School of Law and Politics, Cardiff University, UK

Personal professional website:

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/people/view/330670-hughes-hannah>

**REBECCA JOHN**

Research Assistant for Nina Hall, and Alumnae Johns Hopkins University SAIS

**NATASHA JOSETTE**

Lead Digital Community Organiser, Momentum; Member of Labour for a Green New Deal

Personal professional website:

<https://peoplesmomentum.com/>

**ANA KANTZELIS**

Advisor, Mission 2020

[akantzelis@mission2020.global](mailto:akantzelis@mission2020.global)

Personal professional website:

<https://mission2020.global/>

**SADHBH O NEILL**

PhD Candidate, University College Dublin, Ireland

Personal professional website:

<https://www.globus.uio.no/about/team/partners/ucd-dublin/people/oneill/>

**SAHAR PRIANO**

Masters Student, University of Bologna, Italy

Personal professional website:

<https://it.linkedin.com/in/sahar-priano-94422a120>

**ASAD REHMAN**

Executive Director, War on Want, UK

Personal professional website:

<https://waronwant.org/media/war-want-announces-new-executive-director>

**CHLOE REVILL**

Strategy, Mission 2020 and Co-Founder, Change in Nature, UK

Personal professional website:

<https://mission2020.global/>

<http://www.changeinnature.org/who>

**CESAR RODRIGUEZ-GARAVITO**

Visiting Professor of Clinical Law, School of Law, New York University, US

Personal professional website:

<https://its.law.nyu.edu/facultyprofiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=profile.overview&personid=34599>

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**MIRIAM SAAGE-MAAS**

Vice Legal Director and Program Director Business and Human Rights,  
European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, Germany

Personal professional website:

<https://www.echr.eu/en/person/miriam-saage-maass/>



**HARRO VAN ASSELT**

Professor of Climate Law, University of Eastern Finland  
Personal professional website:

<https://www3.uef.fi/fi/web/cceel/harro-van-asselt>



**JOANNA SETZER**

Assistant Professorial Research Fellow, Grantham Research Institute on  
Climate Change and the Environment, The London School of Economics and  
Political Science, UK

Personal professional website:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/profile/joana-setzer/>



**HELEN YANACOPULOS**

Professor, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Canada  
Personal professional website:

<https://epp.ok.ubc.ca/about/contact/helen-yanacopulos/>



**MORITZ SOMMER**

Researcher, German Center for Integration and Migration Research and  
Researcher, Institute for Social Movement Studies, Germany

Personal professional website:

<https://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/en/soziologie/arbeitsbereiche/europa/msommer/index.html>