

[CfA for a special Issue of «Contemporanea. Rivista di storia dell'800 e del '900» Inventing the Global Environment: Science, Business and Politics in the second half of the 20th Century](#)

Discussion published by Simone Neri Seneri on Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Type:

Call for Publications

Date:

February 9, 2023 to March 31, 2023

Subject Fields:

Contemporary History, Environmental History / Studies, History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, Intellectual History, World History / Studies

CALL FOR ARTICLES FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE OF «Contemporanea. Rivista di storia dell'800 e del '900»: *Inventing the Global Environment: Science, Business and Politics in the second half of the 20th Century*

This special journal issue analyzes scientists' role in shaping environmental policy in the second half of the 20th century. Following the end of the Second World War, many policy-makers conceived environmental protection and economic policy as separate policy domains. Over time, however, the awareness of ecological problems and their various effects has grown among policy-makers, scientists, and citizens, some of whom became environmental activists engaged in social action and resistance. The tension between protecting the environment and pursuing economic growth at a national level has come to be known as the environment-development nexus. It has primarily been perceived as an element of concern in developing countries. Environmental policy-making has long been informed, at least in part, by science. However, government leaders only acknowledged the interconnectedness of the two concepts after the 1992 UN Earth Summit. What was the part played by natural science in this process? While many historical studies deal with different aspects of environmental governance with a focus on nation-states, the role of scientists, particularly in international organizations, has been somewhat neglected.

Experts and their networks are at the center of several transnational histories of the 20th century. While the role of economists, sociologists and anthropologists has been thoroughly examined, hardly any mention is made of natural scientists even though, from the 1960s onwards, physicians, biologists, zoologists, ecologists and geologists (to name just a few) became increasingly involved as consultants in policy making, and especially in development planning. A significant body of literature has grown around the key event in the history of global environmentalism, namely the Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm 1972), and around the activities carried out by international organizations, including environmental NGOs that transformed the practices of major development lending institutions - primarily the World Bank and the United Nations. Bodies made out of scientists, however, are still understudied. This special issue aims to collect a robust set of articles focusing on how scientists became aware of the ecological consequences of development projects, with a consideration of the solutions they thought of to mitigate such effects. In addition, it wants to tackle

Citation: Simone Neri Seneri. *CfA for a special Issue of «Contemporanea. Rivista di storia dell'800 e del '900» Inventing the Global Environment: Science, Business and Politics in the second half of the 20th Century*. H-TransItalian Studies. 02-08-2023.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/7645/discussions/12333788/cfa-special-issue-%C2%ABcontemporanea-rivista-di-storia-dell%E2%80%9999800-e>

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how they were involved with or separate from the social movements that dealt with protecting the environment and their role in private business, academia, and national administration. From the 1960s onwards, controversies raged over how development policies should integrate environmental protection measures. But whose concern was this? How did scientists consulted by policy-makers enter this discussion? Did they organize forms of opposition, or were they bystanders who planned to cooperate with political decisions? What were the tools they adopted? How far were they involved in delegations dealing with environmental issues at the international level? Did scientists become activists, and how? What role did women scientists play?

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- The role scientists had in dealing with the environmental consequences of development projects.
 - The cooperation of science with politics at the national and international level, especially in developing countries.
 - The conflicting interests emerging from different groups and associations of scientists.
 - The connections between scientists and advocacy in international organizations and NGOs.
 - Scientists' engagement in activist movements.
 - The role of women activists and women scientists in environmental movements.
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- Scientists working for private business/companies.
 - The forms of local opposition to development projects.

The proposals (600 words maximum) accompanied by a brief CV should be sent by March 31st 2023 to the editor Elisabetta Vezzosi (vezzosi@units.it) along with a CC to the editorial secretary (contemporanea@mulino.it). Responses will be announced via e-mail by April 30th, 2023. The selected essays must be submitted in their final form by December 31st 2023. All manuscripts will be refereed through a peer-review process (double blind). Articles must be written in English and have a length comprised between 10,000 and 12,000 words inclusive of references. We expect the special issue to be published by July 2024.

About this journal: «Contemporanea» presents the results of original and innovative research carried out by Italian and international scholars on political, social and cultural issues of Italian, European and international history from the late XVIII century to the present. The journal publishes contributions in Italian and English and is indexed by: ISI Web of Science (Art & Humanities Citation Index), Scopus Bibliographic Database, Historical Abstracts, America: History and Life, *Articoli italiani di periodici accademici* (AIDA), Journal Seek, Essper, *Bibliografia storica nazionale*, *Catalogo italiano dei periodici* (ACNP), Google Scholar, Jstor.

For further information on “Contemporanea”, please see <https://www.mulino.it/riviste/issn/1127-3070>

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