Pioneers and Convergence in National Environmental Policy: Concepts, Causes, and Conditions

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The workshop addresses two related phenomena of national environmental policy developments which – at first sight - seem to contradict each other: pioneering and convergence. On the one hand, empirical data suggest that regulatory patterns in national environmental policy making converge. On the other hand, there are national initiatives in environmental policy making which regularly deviate from the overall trend. In view of these developments, the workshop pursues two central objectives: First, we ask for sources and conditions of each of these phenomena. In a second step, we focus on the linkages between them in order to bridge the concepts. The central questions addressed by the workshop are:

1. To what extent and in which direction can we empirically observe a convergence of national policies? If yes, in which areas and for which patterns of policy is convergence more or less pronounced?
2. What are the major driving forces of environmental policy convergence and how do they interact?
3. What is the relationship between the degree and level of cross-national policy convergence and first-mover behaviour of individual countries?
4. Under which conditions can we expect first-mover behaviour?
   - What kind of comparative advantages (economic, institutional, ideational) are expected?
   - Which national actors are perceived to benefit from these advantages?
   - Does the occurrence of the respective comparative advantages depend on the following of other countries (meaning the diffusion of the pioneer policy)?
   - What are the conditions necessary to gain these comparative advantages?

The workshop convenors highly appreciate theoretical and empirical contributions from scholars of comparative policy analysis, international relation theories and political economy.

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