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Book Review: World Bank Group Interactions with Environmentalists: Changing International Organization Identities by Susan Park

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certification entails. What exactly, for example, does a company need to do to create a more effective environmental management system? But this is perhaps the topic for another volume—this one is highly effective as a treatment of environmental certification, and as a starting point for the study of the phenomenon.

Park, Susan. 2010. *World Bank Group Interactions with Environmentalists: Changing International Organisation Identities*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Reviewed by David Downie
Fairfield University

In one of many great scenes in the classic movie, *A Lion in Winter*, Katherine Hepburn, as *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, surveys her threatening sons and remarks, “Dear, dear. Whatever shall we do with Mother?” Advocates of sustainable development have often felt the same way about the World Bank.

The Bank possesses a mother lode of economic resources, formal mandates, and practical relationships that can help initiate or finance large scale projects that could facilitate sustainable development—from sustainable energy to water conservation to climate adaptation. As Susan Park writes in this fascinating and extremely well-researched volume, the World Bank has the proven ability to provide “cheap loans to developing countries where private financing will not, and can mobilize and co-finance loans and projects with the private sector, thus providing a life-line to credit poor states. Equally importantly, it provides technical experience and acts a ‘knowledge broker’ to developing countries” (p. 1). The Bank is not a resource to ignore. It is also not an institution likely to go away, even if one wants it to. Despite calls from intelligent critics on both the right and left that the Bank does more harm than good and should be eliminated (and similar calls from the sometimes not so merry bands of anti-capitalist and anarchist protesters that accompany certain meetings), the actual prospects for eliminating the World Bank were always unrealistic, and remain that way today.

At the same time, the impacts of particular World Bank projects and its often unquestioning support for the more suspect aspects of industrialization, resource extraction, and globalization have proven, to say the least, far less sensitive and nurturing than one would want from an ideal parent. “Since the early 1980s, environmental groups have documented numerous cases where the World Bank . . . contributed to the environmental devastation and community dislocation through its development projects.” Wielding “significant material and ideational power” the Bank “advocated neoliberal economic policies through its research; structural adjustment programmes and projects; investments and guarantees” that supported outmoded models of unsustainable economic development (p. 1).

Thus, the conundrum, “whatever shall we do with the World Bank?” The

answer for many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and Bank member states was reform. These efforts to “Green the Bank” have yielded mixed results over the last 25 years. Many critics saw the initial attempts as little more than green-washing or at least ineffective. Park cites a host of scholarly literature that documents how NGOs and transnational environmental advocacy networks (TEANs) have pushed for change, how key Bank member states advocated and created new policies and oversight mechanisms, and the results these efforts have achieved.

If the Bank has changed, how much has it changed, how deeply, and through what mechanisms? Despite extensive scholarly attention, these remain important empirical and theoretical questions whose answers possess real practical significance for international environmental policy. *World Bank Group Interactions with Environmentalists* deepens and expands key research streams that study the Bank.

The volume examines, in meticulous detail, how the World Bank group responded to the efforts of TEANs to get the institution to accept and utilize sustainable development and environmental norms. Empirically, the book breaks new ground by examining such change not just in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA)—the entities that most people think of as the “World Bank”—but also in the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector investor and venture project financier, and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), the risk insurer. These important parts of the World Bank group have received relatively little empirical study despite their significant growth in size and importance over the last 25 years, growth that mirrored the expansion of private investment in developing countries to a size that far exceeds multilateral (including World Bank) or bilateral government lending. This empirical focus alone makes the book an important addition to the literature.

The book extends our theoretical understanding by building a constructivist account of change in the World Bank group. Park places TEANs at the center of the story of the Bank’s environmental shift and uses this empirical story to advance a broader argument regarding the processes that lead to change within international organizations. Park details how specific norms and operations within the World Bank group changed over time through Bank’s interactions with TEANs that espoused and promoted the new international norm of sustainable development. This socialization process changed the Bank. In turn, the international organization then helped to spread the new norm. “IOs can and do internalize norms and ideas from non-state actors” and then “spread them to (developing) states” (p. 5).

In making this argument, Park challenges explanations of World Bank, and, more broadly international organization, change that focus on solely on principal-agent, neo-liberal institutional, or traditional NGO centered discussions. It remains to be seen how broadly one can generalize the World Bank story or whether this approach leaves far less room for agent-structure accounts or adds important new layers of understanding. However, there is no question

that *World Bank Group Interactions with Environmentalists* is an interesting and important book that deserves attention from scholars and policymakers interested in the World Bank, sustainable development, and theories of international organizations.

Vasi, Ion Bogdan. 2011. *Winds of Change: The Environmental Movement and the Global Development of the Wind Energy Industry*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Michael M. Gunter, Jr.
Rollins College

Ion Vasi's *Winds of Change* stands out in at least two respects among an increasingly diverse array of works concerning climate change. It is a welcome addition to the literature for its concentration on the wind industry as a viable alternative to the fossil fuels that provide 90 percent of world energy consumption today. Even more importantly, it painstakingly explains how this wind industry developed unevenly across the globe over the last four decades, outlining the crucial role environmental movements played in the social construction of climate change as an environmental problem.

Vasi asserts that his work's most important theoretical contribution is to "bring social movements into the study of market formation and industry growth" (p. 191). Indeed, emphasis on technological innovation or the role of markets dominates earlier works on development of the wind industry. Those that focus on technological innovation argue global growth is explained by decreasing costs traced to improvements in technology, and that cross-national variation stems from contrasting technological approaches. Analyses that concentrate on market forces contend the adoption of specific energy policies and supply of wind turbine components, as well as deregulation of electric utilities, shape wind energy price and, thus, market penetration.

Yet such approaches tell only part of the story. Innovations may fail to diffuse widely not because they are poorly developed, but simply because they are *perceived* as undesirable. His discussion of "blue-blooded" NIMBY opposition to the Cape Wind project off Nantucket over the last decade is a case in point. Inversely, "fruit and nut" Californians welcoming an immature and unreliable wind industry to their state in the early 1980s further supports this argument. Something else, then, must be shaping these perceptions.

Similarly, market forces themselves cannot explain the differentiation between feed-in tariff successes in Germany and Denmark and limited initiatives in France and Sweden. Again, something else is at work. Vasi asserts that social movements are this missing link, and identifies three key pathways that environmental activists exploit to influence the wind industry. Activists may interact with government policymakers, energy sector actors such as those running utilities, and the general public. Influencing international agreements (such as Kyoto) is a fourth potential pathway, but this approach receives scant attention in his work.