An elusive warden of global capitalism

The OECD between prosperity and crisis, 1961-1985

ESSHC, Glasgow, Friday April 13, 2012

co-organizers Matthieu Leimgruber (University of Geneva) Matthias Schmelzer (European University Viadrina, Frankfurt-Oder)

Signing of the initial OECD convention
Quai d'Orsay, Paris, 14 Dec 1960

source: www.oecd.org
The OECD elusiveness seen from the inside…

«Dialogue of deaf persons at the Committee on Invisible [Transactions] at the Château de la Muette [Castle of the Mute]… Here is the formula used when [OECD] reunions end up without tangible results»

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the postwar context

Key period of change and turbulence for industrial societies!

«the long 1970s» (Maier)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>«the long 1970s» (Maier)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R. Marjolin &amp; R. Sergent (FRA)</td>
<td>18 European</td>
<td>20 Euro-Atlantic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31 global</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorkil Kristensen (DK) 1961-1969</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emile Van Lennep (NL) 1969-1984</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-François Paye (FRA) 1984-1995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. J. Johnston (CAN) 1996-2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Gurria (MEX) 2006-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Postwar division of Europe: early European integration (EEC vs. EFTA)
- First oil crisis, end of Bretton Woods: economic recession
- Crisis of Keynesianism and neo-liberal ascendancy: crisis of industrial societies
- Internationalization of Keynesianism and industrial growth
- Global extension of capitalism, recurring crises

OECD share of World GDP (%)

- 53.2
- 58.5
- 50.5
What is the profile/purpose of the OECD?

«economic NATO», i.e. «Holy Alliance» of capitalist economies
  > strategic rallying point for the West

expertise workshop, «talking shop», global think tank
  > monitoring, consensus building function

How did these roles evolve over time?
  > focus on the «long 1970s»

How did the OECD contribute to the mutations of contemporary economics?
  > focus on OECD expert staff

These sessions
- highlight the history of a neglected, international organization
- explore the mutations of industrialized societies during the «incubation period» of globalization
- constitute a first step for a larger collaborative research effort
The emerging research field on the OECD


Trondal, J., et al., 2010, *Unpacking International Organisations. The Dynamics of Compound Bureaucracies* (Manchester University Press, Manchester)


**ESSHC 2012** + a series of ongoing PhDs based on archival research

**Aug 2012** a 4-year research project on the OECD at the University of Geneva

contact: matthieu.leimgruber@unige.ch
Panel I  8:30-10:30 AM

Chair/intro  Matthieu Leimgruber (Geneva)

A ’Temple of Growth’ in Crisis? The Production of Economic and Environmental Policy Norms Within the OECD during the 1970s
Matthias Schmelzer (Frankfurt-Oder/Berlin)

The OECD and the "Crisis" of Keynesianism: the McCracken Report, 1975-1980
Vincent Gayon (Paris-Dauphine, EUI Firenze)

Floriane Galeazzi (Rouen)

Panel II  11:00 AM-13:00 PM

Chair:  Matthias Schmelzer (Frankfurt-Oder/Berlin)
Discussant:  Richard Woodward (Hull)

Matthieu Leimgruber (Geneva)

First Come, First Served? The Struggle for a Code of Conduct for Multinational Enterprises and OECD Guidelines during the 1970s
Thomas Hajduk (Frankfurt-Oder/Berlin)

Wrap up discussion: new directions for OECD research?

sample of issues to be addressed
(I)  dynamics of OECD development (e.g. periodization, key junctures)
(II)  role and functioning of the OECD
(III)  OECD interactions with other actors/institutions
    (e.g. national bureaucracies, IOs, NGOs, organized business/labor interests, etc.)