

# State and market in agriculture – France and Germany in the interwar period

**Preface:** The aim of this paper is twofold. Based on first steps in a PhD project at the European University Institute (Florence), it will firstly give an analytical focus and methodological considerations about how to show the mediation of business activities in agriculture through international organisations in the interwar period. Central aspect of these considerations coming from political history will be a “Green Internationalism,” its impact on the national level and thus its formative character for international economic relations.

Secondly, the paper raises questions, which can be related to other topics of the EBHA-conference 2007 like *The emergence of standards* (Session I, E.), *Transnational Business Networks* (Session II, E.), and *Corporate Governance* (Session III, F.) underlining the multiplicity of functions of international organisations. As the paper focuses on the method, it will not treat a comparative examination of the agricultural policy in France and Germany itself as the title suggests.

## Introduction

Agriculture is probably one of the most regulated economic sectors. Production and sale are affected by some state-policy through a complex mix of programs.<sup>1</sup> The advanced interventionism in the agricultural sector of the European Union is not a construction of its first period of existence. The concept and expertise have a long European tradition, which leads back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where industrialisation and globalisation heavily affected the vicissitude on the agrarian sector. This secular structural change, a “disagrarisation”, pushed the importance of agricultural production in the marginalisation of national economic.<sup>2</sup> The industrialisation, also in terms of an industrialised agricultural production, strongly called into question the concept of rural society. Besides this process, globalization challenged the concept of the nation state with its national market: “one sees the world as a sole economic unit and the dependences of the nation states and the national farmers appear to be more and more clearly.”<sup>3</sup>

Even though, agriculture claimed and took on a special position in overall social processes. This special position was expressed in a first wave of agricultural protection before the First World War,<sup>4</sup> followed by a second one in the interwar period.<sup>5</sup> In 1925/26, France and Germany started to establish

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<sup>1</sup> For instance EU-subventions for agriculture: 51,587 Mrd. € within a general EU-budget of 120,874 Mrd. € (= 42,7%). See European Union, Financial Report 2005, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Union, 2006, p. 11. Additionally we find a 20% customs duty on imports and bounties on export. See Kluge (2005), p. 64. See also Libecap (1998), p. 181 for the U.S. market.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the social importance of the population working in agriculture decreased in terms of their influence on the processes which cover all aspects of social provision. This went along with the curiosity of “urbanisation.” Severe changes in agricultural production caused by new technical innovations provoked an “agricultural revolution” by mechanisation, fertilisers, information systems, management skills etc. See Paarlberg and Paarlberg (2000); Puhle (1975), p. 11; Mooser (2000), p. 24; Wiese (1993).

<sup>3</sup> « On conçoit alors le monde comme une seule unité économique et l’interdépendance des nations et des agriculteurs nationales apparaît plus nettement. » Houillier (1935), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> See Aldenhoff-Hübinger (2002), p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Especially in the time of the Great Depression. See Tracy (1989), p. 117ff. „Der kurzen Blütezeit [für die Landwirtschaft] während des Ersten Weltkrieges folgte rasch eine Zeit tiefster Depression.“ Gargas (1927), p. 41.

a protectionist trade policy by reintroducing the tariffs which were suppressed in First World War.<sup>6</sup> From 1929 onwards, the Great Depression and the global agricultural crisis<sup>7</sup> provoked a „bellum omnium contra omnes“<sup>8</sup> in terms of trade policy. This nearly global situation of “trade war” constitutes the historical starting point for this paper. Tariff policy has not to be considered as a product of specific constellations in domestic policy, but rather has to be interpreted in the context of international influences.<sup>9</sup> The exclusive focus on the nation-state would be „reductionism at its highest rate.“ The analysis of international organisations and their relationship to national policy targets to soften this reductionism. The policy-concepts worked out in international organisations – influenced by the national side, and again re- and retroacting on it – constituted on the field of agricultural policy a direct connection between sovereign nation-states, between which no institutionalised and regularised bindings existed. This “Green Internationalism” can be seen as a response to the global challenges to agriculture, which had to be faced commonly by the nation-states, because it affected the nation-states commonly.

This paper consists of two parts. In a first section, thoughts about globalisation and internationalisation and a “Green Internationalism” are presented, together with methodological reflections on how to show the impact of international organisations on the national level. Here, a combination of comparison together with a transfer analysis seems to be appropriate, including the overall background of a transnational perspective. The second part of the paper will give a case study in point of the transfer of ideas developed in international organisations and adapted on the national level. It will deal with the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA) in Rome, which was a consulting organ of the League of Nations (LON) and which is often neglected in historiography. The example is taken from an also neglected branch of the agricultural sector: poultry economy. The final remarks will give an outlook on some further aspects of “Internationalism” in the interwar period.

## 1 The “Green Internationalism”

### 1.1 Globalisation and internationalism

Globalisation shapes the macro-processes of the modern world.<sup>10</sup> Even though the economic integration of worldwide markets is commonly perceived as a new phenomenon, it is in fact rooted in

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<sup>6</sup> See Tracy (1989), p. 149, 163f. Even though, the system of customs and tariffs was not higher than in 1913. Thus, the agrarian policy in both countries before the breakout of the Great Depression can cautiously be considered as based on the dominant concept of „laissez-faire.“ See Lewis (1949), p. 214. See also Federico (2005), p. 192, 312, footnote 22.

<sup>7</sup> The global crisis in agriculture will not be specified. See instead for instance Baade (1952), p. 25ff. In any case, this crisis was a total one: firstly, the state had to intervene. Secondly, not only the economic facet of agriculture was struck. The whole agricultural sector with its social and cultural aspects was strongly affected. See for instance Paxton (1997), Puhle (1975), p. 81ff; Haushofer (1958), p. 187. The French economy even started to deinvest in the thirties. See James (1988), p. 23. The overproduction in agriculture, which caused a decrease in relative prices for agricultural products, is often interpreted as the main reason for the World Depression. See for instance Aldcroft (1977), pp. 223-231; Haushofer (1958), p. 176. Liepmann und Stenning estimated, that the tariffs on agricultural products in 1931 were twice as high as in 1927. See Liepmann and Stenning (1938). Lewis estimated, that the average tariff rate in Europe was raised from 26% in 1927 to 65% in 1931. See Lewis (1949), p. 214.

<sup>8</sup> Gargas (1927), p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Czempiel (1989), S. 363.

<sup>10</sup> See Osterhammel and Petersson (2006), p. 9.

the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Two waves of global integration processes can be identified: the first one beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century collapsed with the outbreak of the First World War. The second wave began after World War II and continues today.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the interwar period can be characterised as a low tide of global economic integration.<sup>13</sup> In the 1920s, a massive overproduction of agricultural goods led to the breakdown of worldwide agricultural markets.<sup>14</sup> Unlike the international cross-linking trade relations at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which worked as a growth engine, the growth in global trade in the interwar period dragged behind the growth of production. Following the general crises of exchange, finances and currencies as well as a sharp increase in protectionism, the international trade structures collapsed in 1929.<sup>15</sup>

This global crisis could only be faced by an international „concerted action“. The high degree of integration pertaining to a globalised economy forced the emergence of another process: internationalism.<sup>16</sup> The concept of internationalism can be interpreted as a „social analogy“ to the global interconnectedness of economic relations.<sup>17</sup> Globalisation constituted the sufficient condition for the process of internationalisation without it being the necessary condition.<sup>18</sup> This connectivity evidently appears in the interwar period, which meant an end of globalisation but at the same time an ongoing international effort in co-operations.

The political control over the process of globalisation became an issue in national policy. The concept of the nation-state remained dominant, even though its economic determinants (inter)acted in a global dimension. The nation-state provided the most efficient way of dealing with the central political challenges in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as it was the only recipient and executor of transnational concepts. Regarding the influence of international institutions in this context, one could speak of a “partial

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<sup>11</sup> See for instance O'Rourke (1999), Baldwin and Martin (1999), Borchardt (2001), Bordo and al (2003), Hertner (2002), James (2001), Krugman (1996), O'Rourke and al. (1996), O'Rourke and Williamson (1997), O'Rourke (2002), Osterhammel and Petersson (2006), Spree (2003), Tilly (1999), Williamson (1996).

<sup>12</sup> See Torp (2005), p. 14, 27ff.

<sup>13</sup> This corresponds with the argument made by Harold James, that the Great Depression meant the end of globalisation. Between the two World Wars, the process of globalisation was not only slowed down, but even inverted. See James (2001), p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> « La politique des hauts prix soutenue par de puissants organismes privés ou par l'action des gouvernements, les recommandations des experts à la Conférence économique internationale de 1927 et à la Conférence du blé de la même année, tout contribuait à donner au producteur l'illusion d'une production inférieure aux besoins mondiaux : et ainsi est née la surproduction. » Houillier (1935), p. 102. One key factor for global trade in agricultural products was the advanced capacities of transports (shipping, railroad). See for instance Rogowski (1989), p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> See for a general overview James (2001). See also Schulz (2006), p. 840. In 1935, only one third of the value of world trade of 1929 was bought and sold. See Foreman-Peck (1995), p. 200.

<sup>16</sup> Analogically to the first wave of globalisation, a first wave of internationalism occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, represented by some non-governmental movements: Red Cross (1863), International Telegraph Union (1865), Universal Postal Union (1874), Meter Convention (1875), Inter-Parliamentary Union (1889). Therefore, until the outbreak of the First World War, a “dense transnational network” had been established. See Herren (1994), S. 1.

<sup>17</sup> See ders., p. 1. Concerning a “Green Internationalism” as a response to globalisation, Houillier wrote in 1935: « La crise devait avoir deux conséquences opposées: en premier lieu une tendance qui alla ... vers la coopération internationale ; ensuite l'établissement dans chaque pays d'un ensemble de mesures protectrices. » Houillier (1935), p. 104.

<sup>18</sup> Abstractly formulated, economic globalisation can be defined as a long-lasting historical, neither teleologically determined nor irreversible process, distinguished by a global dimension of economic activities and networks, a growing intensity of flows of goods, services and capital transcending national borders and lastly a increasing international interdependence of economic transactions. See Torp (2005), S. 13f. As the phenomenon of globalisation will be topic in other panels of this conference, I do not want to go into further details concerning a definition or explanation of globalisation.

transnationality.”<sup>19</sup> The nation-state went on to exist as principal actor and we do not find institutionalised transnational decision-making units able to influence national policy or even with the potential to compete with the conceptual political hegemony of the nation-state.<sup>20</sup> This is why national archives are the main sources of material concerning the influences of internationalism in national policy.

The uncontrolled forces of economic globalisation seemed to provoke the establishment of international movements to restrain them. Driven by purely economic considerations, the establishment of co-operations between nation-states aimed to ensure the access of every single nation to the global market by international conventions, and at the same time, to technically adjust any innovations to world market.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the governmental economic internationalism was born out of a strategic calculation against the background of growing economic competition between the nation-states.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the notion of governmental internationalism in a pluralistic world of nation-states bears a national, almost nationalistic connotation: national progress was attained not only by *competition* but also by *co-operation*.<sup>23</sup>

The *Begriffsgeschichte* defines internationalism as an “assignment of national interests to across-the-states social, economic and cultural movements and organisations.”<sup>24</sup> This definition shows an important connectivity: the national *reaction* to the challenges brought on by globalisation was at the same time an *action* towards overcoming the own definition and frame of reference. Therefore, a fundamental ambivalence of internationalism lies in the enormous economic growth and cross-border trade relations on the one hand and on the other hand the simultaneous development of formal and informal systems which sought to canalise and regulate this transnational process. The overall presence of the nation-state provoked a political antagonism between national interests and international visions.

How does one define „Green Internationalism“ in the interwar period? Which partitions can be distinguished, not only on the organisational but also on the topical level? To answer these questions, we focus on the formal aspects of international contacts in terms of economic coordination rather than political confraternities based on common ideological beliefs. In fact, the reactions to the challenges of the global market conceptually take centre stage within the internationalism found in in the agricultural sector. As this paper will partly treat the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA), its concept of “Green Internationalism” can be found as presented in one of its most wellknown publications: *Les Questions agricoles au point de vue international*.<sup>25</sup> The construction of the idea of

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<sup>19</sup> See Kaelble, Kirsch and Schmidt-Gernig (2002), p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Therein lies the paradox of transnational studies: on the one hand they show, that transnational relations are able to overcome national borders. On the other hand, they sustain and construct new borders at the same time. See Clavin (2005), p. 431. Alder und Haas argue for ‚artificial boundaries‘ between international and national policy, See Adler and Haas (1996), p. 367. Against this point of view, Alan Milward shows, that the European integration had strengthened the nation-state and that transnational communities tended to support state-power rather than weaken it. See Milward (1992). Therefore, transnationality and globalisation may turn out to be two complementary concepts.

<sup>21</sup> In particular, international norms and standards had to be followed to make the world market accessible. See Herren (1994), S. 41.

<sup>22</sup> See Geyer and Paulmann (2001), S. 21.

<sup>23</sup> See Herren ders., S. 125.

<sup>24</sup> Friedemann (1982), S. 367f.

<sup>25</sup> Vgl. Institut International d'Agriculture (1927). This script was intended to be a memorandum preparing the economic conference in 1927 organised by the League of Nations. See Houillier (1935), p. 27. A further example of a definitional frame for a « Green Internationalism » is a newspaper article in the *German Agricultural Press*

a “Green Internationalism” is apparent in its introductory remarks. In the view of the international actors in the IIA, the consequences of the World War, the industrialisation and the different levels of agricultural production across the globe were the biggest problems of the agricultural market of 1927.<sup>26</sup> The central role of agriculture in the reconstruction of the world economy made this sector essential for the welfare of even the industrialised economies:

« ... le rétablissement de l’agriculture est le problème essentiel même pour l’avenir de l’industrie. Et cela non seulement en vue des matières premières et des denrées alimentaires que l’agriculture fournit à l’industrie et aux personnes qui y sont employées, mais aussi parce que les agriculteurs constituent la grande majorité des consommateurs des produits de l’industrie dans le monde. ... Voilà pourquoi il n’y a rien de plus intéressant que l’étude des moyens propres à augmenter la production agricole. »<sup>27</sup>

The augmentation of the agricultural production – qualitatively and quantitatively – may be considered as the main goal of the international efforts of agricultural co-operation. In the IIA, four aspects of “Green Internationalism” were seen:

- 1) The importance of statistical documentation in order to facilitate international co-operation was emphasised by the authors. One had to be able to measure the quantitative status of the problems concerning production and consumption so as to find possible solutions.<sup>28</sup>
- 2) Technical questions should be internationally solved, because technical factors had probably the most important impact on the agricultural production. There was a long list which had to be treated: a central observatory for weather forecasts (*Commission internationale de météorologie agricole*); science of soil (fertiliser, cultivation, mineralogy, geology etc.); agricultural machinery; botany (plant breeding, phytosanitary methods); control of epidemics; and forestry. Especially the production of wheat was given priority and can be considered as the most politicised agricultural product in the interwar period.
- 3) The analysis of economic factors was another central field of international efforts. The necessary capital in terms of agricultural credits or land credits with a reasonable interest rate or in the form of insurance like crop hail insurances should be constructed in an international framework. Finding common concepts in agricultural policy (tariff systems, subventions etc.) was also part of internationalist endeavours. Here, international associations had to assist in the development of an international exchange between the different national agrarian milieus. The IIA regarded itself as the central contact point.<sup>29</sup>

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from February 23th, 1924, written by Prof. Ernst Laur. See Gargas (1927), pp. 36ff. But also the Hungarian economist Elemér Hantos defined the “Green Internationalism” similar to the conception of the IIA. See Hantos (1930). P. 50f.

<sup>26</sup> « Les nécessités du moment, la demande à tout prix de certains produits, quelquefois même le manque d’ouvriers et de cheptel, d’engrais chimiques etc., ont compromis dans presque tous les pays la restauration de la fertilité du sol, par l’altération de la rotation régulière ou par manque de restauration par les fertilisants. Ces mêmes raisons, ainsi que la restriction dans les capitaux disponibles, ont produit une dégradation dans bien des installations de drainage, d’irrigation et en général dans les travaux d’assainissement et d’amélioration du sol... C’est ainsi que dans la période qui suivit à la guerre, l’agriculture s’est trouvée en face de problèmes d’une gravité très grande. » Institut International d’Agriculture (1927), p.6.

<sup>27</sup> ders., p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> ders., p. 8f.

<sup>29</sup> « L’Institut International d’Agriculture a compris pour sa part qu’il peut jouer là un rôle des plus importants pour la marche du progrès agricole, soit comme organe de documentation, soit comme centre de coopération intellectuelle, en aidant et en provoquant même les ententes entre les hommes de science et les praticiens des

4) In addition social factors like rural education were issues of the “Green Internationalism.”<sup>30</sup>

For the interwar period, the presented developments and conceptual classifications of globalisation and internationalism and their relation to the concept of the nation-state raise the following question. Which concrete results were achieved by “Green Internationalism” despite the significant influence of the nation-state?<sup>31</sup> In order to answer this question, an analysis of the different subjects of “Green Internationalism” seems to be appropriate.

## 1.2 The subject of “Green Internationalism”: international institutions and their transnational milieu (civil society, networks)

Given the developments which started in the end of the 19th century, international organisations can be considered as historically new basic determinants of transfrontier processes in policy development with the participation of governmental and non-governmental actors.<sup>32</sup> Their functional attributes can be seen in their facilitating central coordination as well as the bunching together of collective activities through a concrete and stable organisational structure in concert with an administrative apparatus. Looking at the governmental international institutions in the interwar period and comparing them with their non-governmental forerunners at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Houillier detected in the mid thirties a “tendency towards obligation” concerning their influence on national policies.<sup>33</sup> With this in mind, one could even provocatively ask, if international institutions in the interwar period (like the League of Nations or the IIA) were direct forerunners of the supranational institution “European Union” or if they started to informally carry out supranational competences.<sup>34</sup>

In any case, the augmentation of efficiency concerning common efforts was due to the enhanced ability of the governmental international institutions to influence agreements, environments and interests of single nation-states.<sup>35</sup> Thereby, international institutions were able to act in three categories as an apparatus of political agenda setting. Firstly, they were a simple instrument of state-diplomacy,<sup>36</sup> by which intergovernmental agreements and treaties were concluded. Secondly, international institutions served as a “conference-diplomatic” permanent institution or an arena for

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différents pays, soit enfin comme organe que les Gouvernements ont créé pour appeler leur attention sur les possibilités de coopération pratique dans le domaine de l’agriculture. » ders., p. 7f.

<sup>30</sup> See ders., p. 9ff.

<sup>31</sup> See Geyer and Paulmann (2001), p. 20, 23.

<sup>32</sup> See Rittberger and Zangl (2003), p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Houillier called this institutional evolution in agriculture a “tendance vers la permanence” beginning with the first agricultural congresses at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The foundation of the IIA in 1905 denoted for him a „tendance vers l’obligation.“ See Houillier (1935), S. 19. For a general overview of the functions and the impact of international organisations in the 20th century see Groom (1990), Hill (1946), Luard (1966), Northedge (1986), Walters (1952).

<sup>34</sup> The lawyer L’Eplattenier formulated these circumstances in 1961 as follows: “The first international organisation in the field of agriculture, the International Commission of Agriculture founded in 1891, was part of the international non-governmental organisations. Fourteen years later, the International Institute of Agriculture was brought into being. This institute was an international governmental organisations. After the Second World War, plans for a supranational organisation were discussed. Even though these plan were not realised neither in the frame of the world agricultural economy nor in the European frame, this form of organisation doubtlessly constitutes the next possible step in the development of international co-operation in agriculture.” See L’Eplattenier (1961), S. 1f. See also the case study in chapter 3.1.

<sup>35</sup> Vgl. Abbott and Snidal (2001), S. 10ff. Furthermore, institutional independence ensured a certain degree of autonomy in well defined borders/limits.

<sup>36</sup> For the phenomenon of the instrumentalisation of transnational relations within conventional foreign policy in the interwar period see Herren and Zala (2002).

intergovernmental negotiations. Thirdly, an international institution could operate as an autonomous corporative actor, detached from the definition fixed by its member-states and with its own identity and internal dynamics.<sup>37</sup> This is why an international organisation should not be seen as a simple continuance of interstate diplomacy realised by other instruments. Within this framework, institutionalised interdependences of decisions between states were concentrated, by which common and also controversially discussed problems became accessibly for the national level of decision making.

Two main units can be identified which were bodies of the internationalism inside the international institutions: Corporatism and “epistemic communities.”

National association representatives were actors in governmental international organisations, because they possessed the necessary expertise as well as a sufficient backing on the national level including networks in order to communicate national interests on the international level. Associations tried to directly influence national policy on the international level by participating in discussions and decision-making. Putnam states, that “domestic groups pursue their interest by pressuring the government to adopt favourable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups”. On the international level, “national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments.”<sup>38</sup> Thus, the exertion of influence by pressure groups took place at the international level directly. Hence, international movements should not be exclusively interpreted in opposition to national interests. The standard conclusion about international organisations being weak institutions, which were not able to penetrate national power politics, seems to be precipitate as actors in national power politics found it worthwhile to operate on the international level.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, Green Internationalism can be seen as a part of national agrarian lobbyism.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the different national corporatist groups acted surprisingly homogenously and consequently formed transnationally constituted, cross-boarder pressure groups with the ability to force their respective governments to diplomatic activity.<sup>41</sup> This feature made them ports of transfer. Concepts – even if they could not gain the governmental approbation by ratification – found loop holes using corporations which belonged to the reach of perception for the national policy. This process verifies the central role played by international

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<sup>37</sup> See Rittberger and Zangl (2003), p. 23ff. Concerning an own identity the question should be asked especially for international organisations without the institutionalised authority to issue directives on the national level, whether a „visionary life of its own“ was possible at all - independent of national influence. Whether international organisations should be seen as autonomous actors in world policy or merely as instruments of the nation-states and thus at best as an accompaniment of intergovernmental relations, is a controversial issue. See Clavin (2005), S. 425. Patricia Clavin and Jan Wessels show, that the role of international organisations such as the League of Nations ought not to be underestimated in the development of intra-European relations. See Clavin and Wessels (2005).

<sup>38</sup> Putnam states, that “domestic groups pursue their interest by pressuring the government to adopt favourable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups”. On the international level, “national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments.” See Putnam (1988), p. 434.

<sup>39</sup> See Geyer and Paulmann (2001), p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> See ders., p. 14. In times of state interventionism, the “economisation of policy” was influenced and sustained by pressure groups. See Osterhammel and Petersson (2006), p. 69f.

<sup>41</sup> See Herren (1994), p. 5. Pressure groups in the interwar period can be seen as a kind of transnational partial public. The different national interest groups converged and acted in the framework of international cartells or discussion circles for an European customs union. See Fetzer (2002), p. 356, 365.

organisations.<sup>42</sup> They acted as an instrument of regulation and control in economic processes of globalisation, because they were able to bridge tensions between national interests and transnational markets and to arbitrate among them respectively.

The nation-states were not only represented by members of pressure groups or official governmental representatives on international meetings. Experts were also sent to conferences or in organisations to perform competently and to achieve a bargaining position at the best possible rate.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, networks of experts appeared on the international level in the interwar period, of a similarly homogenous character as that of the pressure groups, though often in political contradiction to them. This can be exemplified by the strict free trade policy advocated by the bulk of internationally acting experts.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the continuing consolidation of the transnational network of experts in the period of the Great Depression and thus in times of nationalism and sharp protectionism shows, that the expert circles tried to hold the fort against agrarian corporatist interests and their protectionist demands.<sup>45</sup>

The analysis of networks poses problems because of their characteristics. A network presumes a certain degree of perdurability and institutional corroboration, and even then it is an indeed flexible but not a very stable form of social organisation.<sup>46</sup> Hence, a network is not a fixed entity but rather varies with the number of members and in the intensity of interchange. In consequence, analysing these communities, a structural approach has to be replaced by a “flows” approach focusing on the transnational level.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the historical description of networks is not only about the formation of networks, but also about how they were maintained and how they evolved.<sup>48</sup> The dynamic interaction between inter-governmental and transnational activities is the key to understanding the mechanisms, by which the ideas of experts were adopted by the political authorities, which finally ruled the arbitrament on the national level. To interpret these mechanisms, the concept of “epistemic communities” as a „network of knowledge-based experts” can be a useful tool.<sup>49</sup> These networks served as instruments for states to identify the “state interest”, to propose specific policy measures and

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<sup>42</sup> Madeleine Herren interprets the political goal of cross-boarder interconnectedness on the governmental level before the First World War as a „present-day oriented external alternative strategy.“ The common diplomacy had to be amended by a governmental strategy of internationalisation. Thus, the analysis of the development of governmental organisations constitutes an important basis and indicator for the change in the international system. See Herren (1994), p. 1ff, 40f.

<sup>43</sup> The dilemma of the national foreign policy was found in the necessity to be forced to recruit experts outside of the political administration and in parallel not to loose control over the external aspects. See Herren (2001), p. 123. Haas observes, that the control of knowledge and information forms an important dimension of power. See Haas (1996), p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> For instance the well-known economists at the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisations like Gottfried Haberler, J.B. Condliffe, Folke Hilgerdt, Per Jacobssen, Ragnar Nurske, Vladimir Woytinski, Bertil Ohlin, Jacques Polak, Jan Tinbergen, Louis Rasminsky.

<sup>45</sup> Matthias Schulz shows, that experts made a point for binding agreements for national policy on the international level as a key element of international policy. This supranationality was considered as a way to face the growing influence of protectionist lobbying. See Schulz (2006), p. 849f.

<sup>46</sup> See Osterhammel and Petersson (2006), p. 21; Castells (2000).

<sup>47</sup> See Osterhammel (2001), p. 475. Castells (1996), p. 376ff; Haas (1996), p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> See Clavin (2005), p. 438.

<sup>49</sup> This concept originates from the social sciences and was mainly developed by Haas. The members of an epistemic community are characterised by four common features: 1. a common normative and principled credo. 2. This credo bases on informality. Thus, an epistemic community is a collective of conviction, not of constraints. 3. Common concepts of significance and period of validity. 4. A common project of policy. See Haas (1996), p. 2f, 33.



to identify especially important issues and points worthy of discussion.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the origin of eventual conversion and coordination in different national policy measures can be found in the epistemic communities. They capture the channels, through which ideas circulated from societies to governments and from one country to another.<sup>51</sup> This development especially challenged the nation-state, because a confrontation of different cultural models of interpretation caused by the transfer and linkages was created somewhere between globality and locality.<sup>52</sup>

Looking at international organisations, insights can be indicated in the tension between transnational policy and national foreign policy, in the role of international functionaries, national lobbies, networks in the civil society<sup>53</sup> as well as interactions with governments and among themselves. To what extent this transnational milieu was able to become a primary structure of economic and political life in the interwar period? What was its importance for the integration of national economies?<sup>54</sup> Looking at the ideas and concepts designed, discussed and adopted in international organisations by corporatistic associations, other coalitions in civil society or networks of experts, the following questions must be raised: Were these ideas socially conditioned or did social forms determine the selection of ideas implemented? How were ideas diffused? Why were some ideas successful and others not? What was the life cycle of an idea?<sup>55</sup>

The transfer of ideas cannot be understood through a static model. “Failed” ideas were not buried in oblivion, but solely displaced and served as a future reference point, being later reinterpreted, reapplied and possibly even implemented.<sup>56</sup>

## **2 Detecting the influence of international organisations: transfer analysis and comparison**

### **2.1 The transnational perspective of international co-operation in agriculture**

The civil societal corporations and networks effectuated a “transnationalisation” of the international response to the challenges of globalisation. These answers were not searched for on a horizontal and thus purely intergovernmental basis. Finding solutions in international organisations brought the

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<sup>50</sup> Adler und Haas identify four levels of analysis concerning the influence of epistemic communities on the process of policy making: policy innovation, diffusion, selection, and persistence of the ideas discussed. See Adler and Haas ders., p. 373ff.

<sup>51</sup> Vgl. Haas ders., p. 2ff, 15, 27. „If decision makers are unfamiliar with the technical aspects of the specific problem, how do they define state interests and develop viable solutions?” Haas (1996), p. 1. Fuchs and Schulz can show, that these networks evolved on an almost worldwide scale for the first time in the interwar period, with the League of Nations composing the centre. The networks acted as focal points for a transnational public, in which normative beliefs were articulated influencing in turn international policy and the process of globalisation. See Fuchs and Schulz (2006), p. 838f. See also Schulz (2004).

<sup>52</sup> See Kaelble, Kirsch and Schmidt-Gernig (2002), p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Civil society is a corporative self-organisation somewhere between the state, the market and privacy. See Kocka (2004).

<sup>54</sup> See Bryant (1995), Kahler (1995).

<sup>55</sup> Haas (1996), p. 27; Clavin (2005), p. 428. The domestic structure of the nation-state was decisive in terms of the amount and possibility of how transnational communities were able to influence national policy. See Risse-Kappen (1994).

<sup>56</sup> See Adler and Haas (1996), p. 372. Thus, the ideas have to be seen in the frame of concrete historical debates, where they were used as a strategic instrument and as such were constantly reinterpreted. See Paulmann (1998), p. 675.

vertical influence of institutions of higher order into the national entity.<sup>57</sup> Doing so, systematic governance and framing of international processes were institutionalised through internationalism, counteracting the disentanglement caused by globalisation. In contrast to the markets, the political space remained largely limited by national borders. The coordination of national policy and transnational markets was initially enabled by the creation of international organisations acting as arenas of communication and providing regulation and control.<sup>58</sup>

Transnational history displays a dimension of historical reality in view of the political and cultural construction of a nation-state, which cannot be understood by looking at the national perspective alone.<sup>59</sup> Due to a growing globalisation of everyday life, the transnational perspective has established itself in the attempt to overcome the national paradigm, which was associated with a conceptualisation of nation-states and their societies as independent and self-enclosed entities. The notion “transnational” generally means „all those interactions between individuals, groups, organisations and states...which acted cross-nationally and simultaneously built up archetypes of structures exceeding the nation-state.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, transnationality finds itself in conflict with nationality, because interests and objections were communicated on both sides with a different horizon.<sup>61</sup> Even so, the nation-state served as point of reference and thus remained the constitutive concept. Transnational phenomena provoked the constitution of a nation-state in the sense that alternating and dynamic processes of construction between the national and the transnational sphere defined the context in which the nation-state had to navigate.<sup>62</sup>

## 2.2 Transfer analysis and comparison

In order to measure the impact of international organisations, transfer analysis seems to be one helpful aspect of a methodological mix allowing the exploration of changes on the national level, caused by propagations of policy-concepts developed in international organisations. By doing so, the effectiveness of agricultural internationalism can be uncovered. In that way, global influences made out of the nation-state a “global state.”<sup>63</sup> Specifically, for the European agriculture, these worldwide economic realities called for similar politico-economic reactions, realised either by a national single or by a common act. The analysis of connections in this field contributes to the identification of clearly limitable transfers, assignments and copying ideas. Additionally, similar phenomena can be emphasised, whose appearance has to be located in similar motives, but which were dissimilarly interpreted in the specific national contexts.<sup>64</sup> Here, conditions, forms and degrees of transfer can be considered as adequate analytical categories. Thus, we can determine the significance of the

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<sup>57</sup> Osterhammel (2001), p. 472.

<sup>58</sup> See Schulz (2006), p. 841.

<sup>59</sup> See Hong (2006), p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Kaelble, Kirsch and Schmidt-Gernig (2002), p. 9. Consequently, the “entanglement of history” can be identified. See Conrad (2004), p. 4. Besides the “eclectic approach” of an “entanglement of histories,” Conrad speaks of “metissage or hybridity to the juxtaposition of neat national cases and clear borders.”

<sup>61</sup> See Kaelble, Kirsch and Schmidt-Gernig (2002), p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> See Patel (2004), p. 632f.

<sup>63</sup> See Hong (2006), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> See Petruszewicz (2004), p. 155. The implementation on the national level was not a simple act of a true to original copy of alien ideas and concepts. It was rather a “process of productive adoption”. See Paulmann (1998), p. 674. See further on the transfer of ideas and „cultural procedures of adoption and learning between neighbouring European nation-cultures” Osterhammel (2001), p. 477. For the transfer of culture see for instance Espagne and Werner (1988) ; Espagne and Werner (1985).

transgovernmental and transnational channels through which political alliances were built up and information transferred between officials, international secretaries and non-governmental organisations.<sup>65</sup>

The method of transfer analysis is based on Michael Espagnes concept of cultural transfer. However, in order to apply this method here, an assumption expanding the frame set by Espagne has to be made. The intercultural transfer does not deal with the transfer *of* culture, but the transfer *between* cultures.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, one has to deal with a “culture of internationalism,” inherent to the inner life of international institutions. This means, that actors in international organisations and in their networks created an own notional basis in discussions and through personal contacts, disconnected from their national origin. Following this scheme, different assessed priorities in separation from national policy can be identified, e.g., the principal of free trade in opposition to national protectionist conceptions. The whole climate of international co-operation with open minded colleagues was completely different from the everyday life in national policy and stimulated an almost individual culture of international organisations.<sup>67</sup>

Transfer analysis can be an interesting tool for political history, “upgraded” by the transnational perspective. But it should be able to “identify and document groups and institutions of transfer. It has to be possible to combine specific processes of transfers with assignable needs, interests ... as well as to analyse their consequences. Only in that case, a transfer can be *explained*: why it happened and why it assumed shape in a particular way and not another one.”<sup>68</sup> However, the story is not exhaustively told by only looking at the pure transfer. The way in which the object under study changed within the process of transfer – adapting new aspects, losing old parts – shows, that reciprocal influences were no one-way street from the donor to the recipient, but rather a traffic circle, reproducing transfers and thus inverting influences.<sup>69</sup>

To be able to show the influence of a transfer, one has to compare:<sup>70</sup> the situation of the analysed object in its old state and its new context, the social origin of the actors in each nation, and finally the quality of adaptation in each country. Consequently, transfer analysis and comparison are not mutually

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<sup>65</sup> See Kirsch (2002), p. 182f; Haas (1996), p. 32.

<sup>66</sup> See Paulmann (1998), p. 678.

<sup>67</sup> In this context, Madelein Herren locates “civil societal networks in a grey area of trans- and internationality”, meaning not clearly identifiable national belongings. See Herren (2004), p. 61. Patricia Clavin and Jan Wessels show, that national representatives in the League of Nations tended to give international interests priority over those of their respective nation-states. See Clavin and Wessels (2005) p. 467. Hartmut Kaelble, Martin Kirsch and Alexander Schmidt-Gernig discuss the possibility, that “transnational processes of interchange...transcend the national power of integration. See Kaelble, Kirsch and Schmidt-Gernig (2002), p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Osterhammel (2001), p. 477.

<sup>69</sup> See also Haupt (2004), p. 31; Cohen and O’Connor (2004), p. XII; Conrad and Osterhammel (2004), p. 14; Saunier (2006), p. 119.

<sup>70</sup> One has to clearly distinguish between the method of transfer analysis and comparison. The transfer does not necessarily inquire differences and similarities between the units of comparison, but any interdependencies between them. This is why Michel Espagne criticises the comparative method as being a relict of structural history and objects to its purely national perspective. The concept of the nation-state is not questioned by using this methods, it is rather confirmed. The juxtaposition of contemporaneous phenomena in two countries does not regard any possible interference. In contrast, the method of transfer analysis concentrates on the connections between two entities and traces historical transactions beyond national borders in order to understand reciprocal influences. See Espagne (1994), p. 112, Haupt and Kocka (1996), p. 10, Haupt (2004), p. 31f. Furthermore, the transfer is *per definitionem* a dynamic process, comprising adaptations of values, norms, images, languages and thoughts wandering from one society to the other. Consequently, transfer analysis is naturally diachronic. In contrast, many comparisons are searching for parallelisms and differences in one moment. The comparison is often synchronic, lacking the basic element of history: time. See Kaelble (2003), p. 475ff.

exclusive methods of analysis when writing multinational history. Rather, both methods complement one another.<sup>71</sup> This concept is able to perform in two ways: on the one hand, one can show, at which definite time a specific idea found its way in national legislation. On the other hand – and perhaps more importantly – one will be able to judge the intensity of the national adoption and to which extent the national legislation was geared to the transnational model. The comparison serves as a “binder,” links together and must be consistent with the findings of the transfer analysis.<sup>72</sup> Using comparison, one can systematically analyse multiple historical phenomena in order to detect similarities and differences. Further, this enables an authentic description, explanation, and far-reaching conclusion concerning historical acts, experiences, processes, and structures.<sup>73</sup> To master this tool, a few methodological specifications<sup>74</sup> have to be made, which will be treated in the following in the specific context of the agricultural sector in the interwar period in France and Germany.

**1. Whom to compare with?** Three considerations justify the choice of France and Germany for this study. Firstly, the epochal importance of both nations for the European continent underlines the need to identify similarities, possibly caused by international activity, and to search for sources of differences. Not only retrospectively but also perceived by contemporaries in the interwar period, both nations can be considered as core-nations of Europe.<sup>75</sup> Having become “hereditary enemies”<sup>76</sup> after the First World War and thus given their difficult political, economic and emotional relation, it is particularly interesting to see, if common concepts and a willingness to implement these concepts on the national level can be detected. As a consequence, this would not only mean an attenuation of the inadequate and simplifying image of the “abhorred neighbour.” Additionally, one could attest a special “force” to international organisation, unifying both adversaries to a common approach. The period after the Second World War is central for the choice of both nations. Against the background of three big wars in 75 years, the point of departure for a “European recommencement” could not face an ideal constellation. Thus, the French-German co-operation can be characterised as an important parameter for the European process of (re)construction. Agriculture was one factor of this French-German rapprochement. Even before the EEC-treaty, the bilateral co-operation ended up in common ideas like the “pool vert” or “L’Europe verte.”<sup>77</sup> But also in the context of the EEC from 1957, the agricultural sector depicted a constitutive component. Furthermore, both countries can be considered as core-nations for the institutionalisation of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the 1960ies. To sum up, a continuity of a quasi commonly started path exceeding the incidents of Second World War and disemboing in the postwar European integration will be outlined in what follows.

<sup>71</sup> See Haupt (2004), p. 33; Miller (2004), p. 115, 126. According to Harmut Kaelble, *histoire croisée* and the concept of the combination of comparison and transfer analysis are not far of each other. See Kaelble (2005), p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> See also Eisenberg (2003), p. 416.

<sup>73</sup> See Haupt and Kocka (1996), p. 9. There is a huge amount of literature treating the historiographical method of comparison. For a selection see Kaelble (2003), p. 472, footnote 2.

<sup>74</sup> See Haupt and Kocka (1996), p. 24f.

<sup>75</sup> See for instance Pillavachi (1927).

<sup>76</sup> See Kaelble (1991).

<sup>77</sup> The agrarian milieu was the initiator of the co-operation starting in June 1950, not the national governments. See for the „Pool vert“ and „Europa verte“ Noël (1995). The United Kingdom always took a stand against a „Green Pool“. See Milward (1992), p. 306. Additionally, the idea of free trade predominating the English tariff policy in contradiction to the continental-European states, the majority of which were protectionists, is one reason, why England will not be a self-contained unit of comparison. See for the idea of free trade in England Kindleberger (1978); Pollard (1981); Borchardt (1981); Bairoch (1989); Rogowski (1989).

Secondly, some purely economic considerations justify the comparison between France and Germany. Both countries started the First World War with a *formally* identical instrument of agricultural tariff policy, in spite of different political, economic and demographic framework requirements.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, both countries were member of the continental-European “club of importers” concerning agricultural products.<sup>79</sup>

The third reason is the socio-demographic feature incorporating an aspect from the political economy. Despite different tempi in population growth, both nations had a comparable percentage of people working in the agricultural sector in the period under study. Here, the importance of the agricultural sector is not assessed according to its share in the produced gross domestic product. It is the political weight of the population depending economically from agriculture and thus its influence on political decisions constituting the focus of analysis on the “behaviour of the rural voter.” Closely connected to this, the necessity of legitimation for both political systems was considerably high. Indeed, the young German republic had to face a more difficult domestic challenge than the French Third Republic, having politically survived the First World War. But even in France, the reconstruction after the World War produced a hard examination for the political system.<sup>80</sup> That shows the importance of the voters coming from the agricultural sector, especially because both countries had the universal and equal suffrage.

2. **How to compare?** The reactions to the globally caused economic challenges for the agricultural sector will be compared. The central aspect will be the analysis of the conditions for the emergence of a certain agricultural policy. Both the parallel appearance of a tariff political instrument and common, analogous or different solutions for the global threat for European agriculture come under study.

3. **Which units of comparison?** Trade and tariff policy is designed on the national level. Thus the French and German “nation-states” are compared. Even though studies of transfer expound the problems of the unit “nation,”<sup>81</sup> it remains the essential recipient of the transfer process. Further units of comparison could be the procedure of transfer itself, its carriers like association representatives, independent experts, and governmental representatives as well as the path of transfer, especially the administrative points of decision, the character and intensity of the implementation of common concepts.

4. **Which temporal frame?** The temporal frame of comparison is initially defined by the position of Germany in the international constellation of powers. As a result of the central role played by the League of Nations in the interwar period, the period of analysis starts with the German accession to the League of Nations. The end is correspondingly marked by the German exit (unless they were thrown out?) from this international institution after seven years. This does not mean, that the starting signal goes off on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1926 and the race is over on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1933, when Germany reportedly cut its connections to the international community. In order to

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<sup>78</sup> This fact could mean two different trends in the interwar period, which have to be shown. Either, the “common tariff political basis” constituted the starting point for a “synchronous” development of continuative procedures in the respective national agricultural policy. Or one can detect a disintegration by means of divergences, finished not until (what do you mean? In the period preceding?) the Second World War. Vgl. Aldenhoff-Hübinger (2002), p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> Vgl. Federico (2005), p. 192. Federico identifies Germany, France and Italy as the most important European importers.

<sup>80</sup> See for instance Paxton (1997).

<sup>81</sup> See Kaelble (2003), p. 474.

highlight continuities beyond both dates, trends have to be extrapolated and conditions have to be pointed out. For this reason the time frame of the analysis 1926-1933 blurs to a temporal horizon, which fills the whole interwar period, of course with the main focus on the late 20s and early 30s. The war - and thus planned economy especially affecting the agricultural sector as the central strategic branch of economy - deprives any comparison concerning policy and transfer of its fundamentals.

### 3 Designing the “Green Internationalism”: The International Institute of Agriculture

One branch of „Green Internationalism” was the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA) in Rome.<sup>82</sup> Based on the prehistory of the international congresses of agriculture in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>83</sup> the foundation of the IIA in 1905 was a « tendance vers l’obligation. »<sup>84</sup> in terms of the international influence on national policy. This organisation was the first multi-governmental answer to globalisation. „C’est donc une *institution d’Etat*.”<sup>85</sup>

Looking at its article of agreement, the self defined function of the IIA can be interpreted as the governmental institutionalisation of “Green Internationalism.”<sup>86</sup> The most important conferences and conventions under the responsibility of the IIA were the international conferences and conventions for the protection of plants (1914 and 1929), the international convention against locusts (1920), various studies concerning an international agricultural credit (together with a draft for a convention regarding a short term credit system), the international wheat conferences (1927 and 1931), the wheat convention (1931), the international convention about the marking of eggs (1931), and the international convention about the nomination and standardisation of the methods of analysis for wine (1934).

A direct interinstitutional co-operation with the League of Nations was not effected until 1932. Already three weeks after the signing of the treaties of Versailles, David Lubin, the initiator of the foundation of the IIA, proposed to turn the IIA into a consulting organ for the LON.<sup>87</sup> However, it was only after the World Economic Conference in 1927, that the two organisations started to establish a closer co-operation.<sup>88</sup> In July 1928, a provisional agreement between the IIA and the LON relating to further collaboration was signed. In the fall of 1932, the IIA officially and definitively became a “consultative organ of the League of Nations in agricultural questions.”<sup>89</sup>

The International Institute of Agriculture was represented in the *Comité permanent économique* of this conference. Its decisive role in formulating possible solutions for the anticipated agricultural crisis made the economic conference a pivotal event, after which the League of Nations became aware of the importance of agriculture. After 1927, the League of Nations increasingly dealt with the

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<sup>82</sup> See for the history of the IIA Hobson (1931); Houillier (1935); L'Eplattenier (1961); Tosi (1991).

<sup>83</sup> See Gargas (1927), p. 16; Aldenhoff-Hübinger (2002), p. 47ff.

<sup>84</sup> See Houillier (1935), p. 19.

<sup>85</sup> See ders., p. 26.

<sup>86</sup> See Article of agreement of the International Institute of Agriculture, Rome, June 7<sup>th</sup> 1905, Article 9. Reprinted in L'Eplattenier (1961), p. 50. For „Green Internationalism“ see chapter 1.

<sup>87</sup> See Houillier (1935), p. 27.

<sup>88</sup> At this conference, the vice-president of the IIA at that time, Louis-Dop, signalled the willingness to co-operate with the experts of the LON on agricultural questions. See Actes de la Conférence Economique Internationale tenue à Genève de 4 au 23 mai 1927, Volume 2, p. 212 (Publications de la Société des Nations, II, Questions Economiques et Financières, 1927 II. 52 II.). Quoted from L'Eplattenier (1961), p. 53, footnote 24.

<sup>89</sup> Vgl. Hobson (1931), p. 343, Appendix IX. Memorandum of Agreement between the League of Nations and the International Insitute of Agriculture.

agricultural crisis and in 1932, the International Institute of Agriculture became officially an „*organe consultatif de la S.D.N. en matière agricole*.“<sup>90</sup>

The IIA proved itself as a place of international co-operation and rapprochement beyond national borders. Having been a forum for the discussion of scientific, but also political questions, it served as a gathering place for existing initiatives, which gained new quality in Rome, because they were centrally organised and institutionalised. This international rapprochement worked through co-operation between epistemic communities and national governments. Hence, the innovative aspect of the Institute consisted of its institutional ability to work out broad documentation concerning specific topics, to formulate new and international standards and – by doing so – to norm a moral concept, which should be globally implemented.

### **3.1 The effectiveness of „Green Internationalism“ on the national level: international standards as one aspect**

« L'expérience, dans des dernières années, a amplement démontré que les réglementations internationales apportent dans les échanges mondiaux des garanties précieuses à la fois pour l'exportateur et l'importateur et qu'elles constituent un *élément d'importance capitale pour les progrès de la production en général*. »<sup>91</sup>

Standards in agriculture were usually used to facilitate exports.<sup>92</sup> In 1932, standards in agriculture seemed to deal with several different aspects: information about the product, saving of time, lowering the risk for sales, saving costs of package and storage, facilitating the financing of production (easy credits), promotion for the product, and – as one important criterion of standardisation – quality.<sup>93</sup> The standardisation of eggs aimed at similar effects. The poultry economy became one of the most important branches of the European agricultural sector.<sup>94</sup> This branch had three main particularities, which differ from the general facts in agriculture and which justified the introduction of standards:<sup>95</sup> Firstly, the production time was much lower. Secondly, one was able to produce all year long. Thirdly, the demand for eggs was elastic, thus exceedingly dependant on the business cycle.

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<sup>90</sup> See Houillier (1935), p. 27.

<sup>91</sup> Sous-Commission du Marquage des œufs, Réunion du samedi 24 novembre 1934, in : Institut International du Froid, Commission du marquage des oeufs, Novembre 1934, Extrait des Procès-verbaux des séances du Comité Exécutif et de la Conférence Générale, IXe session, Paris 1934, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> A standard assured an adjustment of national products to the demands on the world market. Thus, it improved the competitiveness of these products. See Herren (1994), p. 41; Bienert (1939), p. 65. In contrast to the standardisation in agriculture, standards in industry are used to facilitate the production. Thus, it is a one-time cost(?). Standards in agriculture are introduced after the production, which implies recurring costs.

<sup>93</sup> See Weber (1932), p. 233f. The Hungarian economist Elemér Hantos claimed the standardisation of the European agricultural production. In his opinion, this was the only way to be able to face the overseas concurrence. See Hantos (1930), p. 50f.

<sup>94</sup> For instance in Germany, the value of poultry economy exceeded the value of the highly politicised product wheat. See Bienert (1939), p. 5; Walter (1932), p. 9ff. The main buyers on the international eggmarket were England and Germany (70% of all exports). Further importers were , Spain, Austria, Switzerland, France and Italy. The European exporters were the Danubian states, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium. The main exporter was China, followed by the United States of America, Egypt and Morocco. See Rubens (1932), p. 2ff Gross (1933), p. 48ff; Walter (1932), p. 16; Houillier (1935), p. 194.

<sup>95</sup> See Bienert (1939), p. 5, 64.

In 1929, England introduced a mark of origin for imported eggs. This was a measure to protect the domestic production of fresh eggs.<sup>96</sup> The step provoked further reactions on the European continent. The eggs imported to England were different in quality: eggs from European exporters were fresher – because they were produced closer to the market – than eggs from China for instance. Therefore, Belgium and the Netherlands as exporting countries also introduced a mark of origin, mainly not to be abused by Chinese exporters as a provider of a European mark of origin. China imported eggs to Belgium in order to get the Belgium egg-mark, before the Chinese eggs were “exported” to England. This “mark-theft” firstly affected their own sales and secondly gave the impression to the English consumer, that European eggs were not fresher than eggs from Asia. Suddenly, the egg-market was a jungle of European marks of origin with different language, type size, and denomination of quality, which made it difficult for the producers to smoothly sell their product.<sup>97</sup>

### 3.1.1 The *Convention pour le marquage des oeufs dans le commerce international* (1931)

Thus, an international regulation seemed to be necessary. After some preparing activities,<sup>98</sup> a conference was held from December 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, 1931, in Brussels, which resulted in the signing of the „*Convention pour le marquage des oeufs dans le commerce international*.“<sup>99</sup>

In his inaugural address to the first plenary meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup> 1931, the Belgian minister of agriculture van Dievoet referred to the aim of the conference, which was a unification of marks, not a reduction of protectionism:

« Il faut prévenir un malentendu, la convention n’a nullement pour l’objet d’amener les pays à décréter le marquage des œufs préalable à l’importation sur leur territoire. C’est là une question qu’il convient de laisser à la libre appréciation de chaque Gouvernement. Vos projets visent seulement les Gouvernements qui ont imposé ou qui se proposent d’imposer le marquage obligatoire des œufs préalablement à l’importation. A ceux-là seuls, vous demandez un engagement, non pas quant au principe même de la mesure, mais simplement quant à ses modalités d’application.»<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> See Teichmann (1955), p. 619ff.

<sup>97</sup> Henry (Louvain, Paris 1932), p. 2ff; Institut International d’Agriculture, Rapport sur les travaux de la conférence préparatoire d’experts en vue de la conférence diplomatique internationale pour le marquage des œufs dans le commerce international, Rome, 11-13 Mai 1931, Annexe B : Proposition de M. Albert Henry, délégué de la Belgique, du Congo Belge et du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, concernant le commerce international des œufs et le marquage des œufs, p. 10; Walter (1932), p. 91; Houillier (1935), S. 194.

<sup>98</sup> *Congès mondial d’Aviculture* (July 22<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 1930), *Conférence préparatoire d’experts* (May 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> 1931). See Houillier (1935), p. 194 ; Institut International d’Agriculture, Rapport sur les travaux de la conférence préparatoire d’experts en vue de la conférence diplomatique internationale pour le marquage des œufs dans le commerce international, Rome, 11-13 Mai 1931.

<sup>99</sup> 19 nations were participating in the conference, 13 signed the convention, in 2 states, the convention was speedily ratified. See ders., p. 194. The convention still exists and was chronologically signed by Switzerland (1932), Bulgaria (1932), Italy (1933), Belgium (1934), the Netherlands (1935), Spain (1936), Greece (1951), Argentina (1952), Egypt (1952), and Brasil (1954) . See [http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/topics/intla/intrea/dbstv/data60/e\\_19310060.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/topics/intla/intrea/dbstv/data60/e_19310060.html).

<sup>100</sup> See Institut International d’Agriculture, Actes de la Conférence diplomatique internationale pour le marquage des œufs, (Bruxelles, 7-10 Décembre 1931), Rome, p. 72.



The German delegates at the conference were Dr. Alex Walter, *Ministerialrat* in the *Reichsministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft* together with Gerhard Lichter, *Oberregierungsrat* in the *Reichsministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft*.<sup>101</sup> As it will be shown later, both of them were decisively participating in the elaboration of the German law for the standardisation of eggs in March 1932.<sup>102</sup> As Walter explained at the conference, the German government wanted to wait for the results of the international conference before designing the law for the standardisation of eggs. This law was meant to control the import of eggs and the persons in charge wished to learn from the international discussion, “how to develop such a regulation.”<sup>103</sup> At the end, the convention provided one international synonym for each exporting country. Furthermore, two different colours of mark should be used concerning the period of production and the quality:

« Les Etats contractants qui, en vue d'établir une distinction entre les œufs importés, désirent prescrire l'emploi de couleurs différentes, s'engagent à n'imposer à cette fin que les obligations suivantes :

a) œufs frais : emploi de la couleur noire pendant la période du 15 mars au 31 août et de la couleur rouge pendant la période du 1<sup>er</sup> septembre au 14 mars.

b) œufs conservés ; emploi de la couleur noire pendant toute l'année. »<sup>104</sup>

No agreement could be achieved concerning a special mark for the indication of the quality of eggs (fresh or conserved).<sup>105</sup>

The convention limited the formalities used by the importing countries. At the same time, the mark indicated the origin of the product and the quality by using different colours for the period of production combined with the quality of the product. As per Houillier, the main merit of the convention lay in the simplification and standardisation of the marks used for the export.<sup>106</sup>

### 3.1.2 The German egg market and the *Eierverordnung* from March 17th 1932

The German egg market was relatively stable until 1929. With the beginning of the Great Depression and the general decrease in purchasing power, the price of eggs was put under pressure. It fell from 11 Pfennig apiece (1929) over 9,4 Pfennig (1930) to 7,2 Pfennig (1931) and 5,9 Pfennig (1932).<sup>107</sup> This decline in the price of eggs as a product with an elastic demand was faced with the so called

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<sup>101</sup> See Institut International d'Agriculture, Actes de la Conférence diplomatique internationale pour le marquage des œufs, (Bruxelles, 7-10 Décembre 1931), Rome, p. 65.

<sup>102</sup> See Walter (1932), p. 3.

<sup>103</sup> See Institut International d'Agriculture, Actes de la Conférence diplomatique internationale pour le marquage des œufs, (Bruxelles, 7-10 Décembre 1931), Rome, p. 77ff. Citation on p. 79.

<sup>104</sup> Article 2 of the convention, reprinted in Henry (Louvain, Paris 1932), p. 9.


<sup>105</sup> See ders. p. 12.

<sup>106</sup> See Houillier (1935), p. 194f.

<sup>107</sup> The situation of the egg-producers was aggravated by the policy of animal feed. The increase in the tariffs of cereals provoked higher prices for feed grain. The costs for animal feed averaged two-thirds of the total costs for the production of eggs. See Teichmann (1955), p. 619.

„Eierverordnung“ (egg-decree).<sup>108</sup> This decree was – similar to the measures in UK in 1929 – designed to protect the German domestic production of eggs and to increase their prices. The *Verordnung über Handelsklassen für Hühnereier und über die Kennzeichnung von Hühnereiern (Eierverordnung) vom 17. März 1932* directed the trade classes by law for eggs, the mark of eggs, quality marks (fresh, conserved, refrigerated etc.), and clauses of punishment and protection. The first point of the decree, which can be directly related to the international convention – although it was never actually ratified by Germany – is the fact, that the trade classes by law only consisted of fresh eggs. Refrigerated or conserved eggs were excluded.<sup>109</sup> Conserved eggs were also stepmotherly treated at the international conference, because clear differentiations of quality within the group of conserved eggs could not be reduced to a common denominator. In contradiction to the international convention, Germany introduced a different mark between refrigerated and differently conserved eggs.<sup>110</sup>

Figure 1

	Kühlhauseier	Sterilisierte Eier	Auf andere Weise haltbar gemachte Eier
Deutschland . . . . .	a) auf den Eiern  b) auf der Verpackung: Kühlhauseier		a) konserviert b) konservierte Eier
Belgien . . . . .			
Estland . . . . .			
Finnland . . . . .			
Frankreich . . . . .			
Griechenland . . . . .			
Italien . . . . .			
Spanien . . . . .			
Niederlande . . . . .	a) auf den Eiern: koelhuis b) auf der Verpackung: koelhuseieren	gesteriliseerd gesteriliseerde eieren	geconserveerd geconserveerde eieren

Source: Walter (1932), p. 99.

The second, apparent analogy with the international convention can be found in article 6 and 14-16 of the German decree. Article 6 directs the mark of fresh eggs with different colours, which is more or less a copy of the international convention.<sup>111</sup> Article 14-16 defines the mark of eggs in a cold storage

<sup>108</sup> Verordnung über Handelsklassen für Hühnereier und über die Kennzeichnung von Hühnereiern vom 17. März 1932, in: RGBI. I, p. 146. Teichmann casually mentions in 1955, that the concept of mark of eggs was developed by „agrarian politicians and scientists abroad.“ ders., p. 620.

<sup>109</sup> See artikel 3 der *Verordnung über Handelsklassen für Hühnereier und über die Kennzeichnung von Hühnereiern (Eierverordnung) vom 17. März 1932*.

<sup>110</sup> See figure 1. This was mainly due to the fact, that inside the group of conserved eggs, the quality of refrigerated eggs was the best. Additionally, the cooling industry lobbied heavily for this differentiation of marks. Furthermore, Walter and Lichter negotiated for an early broadening of the convention. See Walter (1932), p. 78. Institut International du Froid, Comité exécutif et Conférence générale, VIII<sup>e</sup> session, Commission préparatoire d’experts (Décembre 1932), Extrait des Procès-verbaux des séances, Marquage des œufs.

<sup>111</sup> „Die Kennzeichnung muß, wenn sie in der Zeit vom 15. März bis 31. August vorgenommen wird, in schwarzer, wenn sie in der Zeit vom 1. September bis 14. März vorgenommen wird, in roter, unabwischbarer, kochechter, nicht gesundheitsschädlicher Farbe in deutlich lesbarem Aufdruck erfolgen.“ Artikel 6, (2)

house and eggs conserved in a different manner, which had to be marked in black colour the whole year long. Also this standard is identical to the international convention.<sup>112</sup> Walter and Lichter, who imported this idea of marking eggs to Germany, explained the sense of giving different colours for different production periods to different qualities as follows:

“In times of an eggs-glut, a part of the production is stored in cold storage houses or is conserved in another way in order to sell them in winter, when the offer of eggs is curt... Indeed, the double colouring means a fortified protection against dishonest manipulation. For the time of eggs-glut, when on which way ever conserved eggs are not on the market, the fresh eggs are stamped in black colour. In times of eggs-shortage, fresh eggs are stamped in red colour. The trade certainly knows then, that black stamped eggs in that period never can be fresh, that these eggs must originate from a period of eggs-glut.”<sup>113</sup>

The *Eierverordnung* provoked a distinct increase of the sales volume of German eggs on the German egg market.<sup>114</sup> Its adoption contributed to an international system of standards, which on the one hand eased the European trade of eggs,<sup>115</sup> on the other hand this arrangement installed an informal European system of protectionism, mainly against the products from the United States and China.

## Concluding remarks

The case study provides a promising example. Firstly, one aspect of “Green Internationalism” was fully put into work: the national introduction of an international standard for an agricultural product. Governmental authorities also encroached upon the standardisations of other products, like wheat,<sup>116</sup> the standardisation of the methods of analysis for cheese and wine, and the attempt to consistently establish a stud book for cattle.<sup>117</sup>

Secondly, international concepts concerning a common trade policy – especially in the context of sugar and wheat – had to be worked out. What triggered the emergence of these plans was – like for the standardisation of eggs – the economic competition coming from other continents. Did this measure aim for an informal tariff union, as in the case of the market for eggs? The standard had a clearly protectionist intention, both for the European importers like Germany and the smaller European exporters like the initiator of the project Belgium.<sup>118</sup> Given this context, can the “almost epidemically appearing and on international agricultural congresses often propagated international movement of high prohibitive tariff” be part of the “Green Internationalism”, even if the prohibitive tariff is an “antipole to any internationality?”<sup>119</sup> Following this idea, was there a parallelism of

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*Verordnung über Handelsklassen für Hühnereier und über die Kennzeichnung von Hühnereiern (Eierverordnung) vom 17. März 1932.* For the international version see p. 19.

<sup>112</sup> See artikel 2 of the international convention, p. 19, footnote 104 in this paper.

<sup>113</sup> Walter (1932), p. 59.

<sup>114</sup> See Bienert (1939), p. 47ff. Rubens (1932), p. 51, 47ff ; Gross (1933), p. 144ff.

<sup>115</sup> Other European countries like Belgium and the Netherlands also introduced the international mark standard. See Walter (1932), S. 59.

<sup>116</sup> See for instance Jasny (1932).

<sup>117</sup> These are aspects which still have to be analysed by looking at the sources of the IIA in Rome.

<sup>118</sup> See Walter (1932), p. 47 ; Teichmann (1955), p. 620.

<sup>119</sup> See Gargas (1927), p. 17ff. Is the term of „territorialisation“ associating the process of globalisation formulated by Osterhammel and Petersson applicable for this period and not exclusively for the last decade

disbanding movements in trade policy? And can the changeover to bilateral trade agreements in the thirties be interpreted as a complement of the multilateral way, as a overcoming of deadlocked common concepts of trade?

In this context, one has to question the function of international institutions like the IIA. Whom did they serve legitimacy? How great was the possibility of an effective international co-operation against the background of national antagonisms? International organisations were definitively important for the worldwide integration, as Endres pointed out<sup>120</sup> But was an internationalism, based on national governments, which considered the validity of absolute sovereignty as a crucial point of national independence, able to have an integrative effect?<sup>121</sup> Did international organisations with “supranational tendencies” have an impact on some aspects of national life? The example of the egg-convention allows the careful conclusion that this may be so.

One conclusion can be drawn, even if international clauses could only be verified by national policy and even if the force of international organisations was limited in some fields to *agenda setting*, reports, pamphlets and resolutions: International organisations had a crucial role in development of an educative multilateralism, because they internationally broached the issue of some problems and initialised an international debate.<sup>122</sup>

Harold James interprets the appearance of bilateral trade agreements in the thirties as a decline in the influence exercised by interest groups in the twenties.<sup>123</sup> Yet, agrarian pressure groups loomed large in international organisations in the interwar period, especially in conferences treating sugar and wheat.<sup>124</sup> Hence, one has to ask, if national interest groups used international organisations as a stage in order to exert pressure on their respective governments. The international aspect of pressure groups strictly addressed to the formulation of national policies seems to be particularly interesting.<sup>125</sup> The idea, that civil societal currents, succeeding on the international level, represented basically the interest of the conservative milieu with an agrarian colouring, can be formulated on the basis of the evolutions in the interwar period shown by Charles Maier. His work shows, how – despite clear limits for a restoration after the First World War in Germany – the twenties were a successful decade for conservative efforts. These forces exacted larger social and political changes while representing at the same time a minority in society.<sup>126</sup> Is this new “corporatism”<sup>127</sup>, referred to by Hans-Jürgen Puhle as

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before the First World War as it was intended by the authors? See Osterhammel and Petersson (2006), p. 70; see also Borchartd (2001).

<sup>120</sup> „As we look over the thirty-year period [1919-1950] surveyed here, it is difficult not to be struck by the extent to which so much confidence is expressed in international economic integration actively involving international organisations *and* national governments.” Endres and A. (2002), p. 255. See also Hobson (1915),

<sup>121</sup> See Herren (2001), S. 126.

<sup>122</sup> See also Fuchs (2006), p. 899.

<sup>123</sup> See James (2001), p. 165.

<sup>124</sup> See for instance Andreas Hermes (Barmeyer (1971)) or Jules Gautier. The archives of the IIA showed this connectivity, which has to be a field of further research.

<sup>125</sup> This would inversely approve the conclusion, that the IIA – according to the accusation of the „red peasant-Internationale“ – worked predominantly along the interest of the large-scale landed property. See Gargas (1927), p. 53.

<sup>126</sup> „The decade after World War I was a decisive era in this regrouping of conservative forces.” Maier (1975), p. 14, weiterhin Introduction, p. 3-15.

<sup>127</sup> “For there was no simple restoration. While Europeans sought stability in the image of the prewar bourgeois society, they were creating new institutional arrangements and distributions of power. What began to evolve was a political economy call[ed] corporatist. This involved the displacement of power from elected representatives or a career bureaucracy to the major organized forces of European society and economy, sometimes bargaining directly among themselves, sometimes exerting influence through a weakened parliament, and occasionally

the „organised capitalism“<sup>128</sup>, applicable to international organisations considering the international level as one additional extra-parliamentary instrument of political exertion of influence?<sup>129</sup> This would mean that the primarily economic motives for international co-operation in the interwar period made room for political motives. The increasing politicisation of the international economic policy was geared to particular interests of socio-economic groups, which stood on the losing-side of the structural change caused by globalisation, especially farmers in Europe. The external economic component of this politicisation demonstrated the backslide into protectionism. This would make a transfer of ideas from the international to the national level plausible: both sides fought for the same camp.

But not only interest groups decisively influenced the international negotiations. The example of the eggconvention showed that concepts discussed in international organisations found their way to the national echelon, even without the organisation having a supranational competence. A “network of egg-experts” was enough to initialise and complete the transfer. More interesting in this context is the fact, that Germany never ratified the international eggconvention. The lack of this official act supports the thesis of an unofficial transfer, by which international organisations became important for economic procedures on the national level.<sup>130</sup>

For this reason, the fortitude of international organisation lay especially in the supply of an infrastructure, in which governmental representatives, experts and civil societal interest groups were able to congregate with the aim of organising common initiatives concerning a certain topic.<sup>131</sup> International organisations played a central role as instruments in the regulation and control of the economic processes of globalisation, because they were able to bypass tensions between national interests and transnational markets and to mediate between them respectively. The institutionalisation of „Green internationalism“ in the IIA or partly in the LON can consequently be interpreted as an „upgrading in modernisation,“ introducing after the First World War not only a component of civil society, but also a governmental alternative to the established classic diplomacy in international policy. All these problems have to be analysed under the main question of the impact of international institutions on national policy in the interwar period, using the method discussed in the first part of the paper. The focus of future work will be on the mechanisms of “Green Internationalism:”

- 1) Different types of international organisations, from governmental organisations to informal networks,
- 2) transfer of knowledge and concepts and
- 3) the relationship between concepts of internationalism and nationalism, often being characterised as antagonistic to the former, yet at the same time being closely connected.<sup>132</sup>

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seeking advantages through new executive authority. In each case corporatism meant the growth of private power and the twilight of sovereignty.” ders., p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> See Puhle (1975).

<sup>129</sup> See for the national characteristic of this train of thought Maier (1975), p. 10.

<sup>130</sup> See also Haas (1996), p. 31f.

<sup>131</sup> See Löhr (2006), p. 900; Haas (1996), p. 32ff. One major problem is the significance of the proof for the act of transfer. „The research techniques for demonstrating the impact of epistemic communities on the policymaking process are straightforward but painstaking. With respect to a specific community, they involve identifying community membership, determining the community members’ principled and causal beliefs, tracing their activities and demonstrating their influence on decision makers at various points in time, identifying alternative credible outcomes that were foreclosed as a result of their influence, and exploring alternative explanations for the actions of decision makers.” Haas (1996), p. 34.

<sup>132</sup> See Geyer and Paulmann (2001).

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