

Abstract/ Call for Papers

Knowing governance

The making of governance knowledge and the transformation of politics

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Silke Beckl

**The IPCC as “eye of power”–
Accounting global governance by extended peer review?**

This paper asks what forms of *agency* the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) as the “eye of power” (Ashley) performs in the architecture of global climate governance. The agency of scientific experts in hybrid forms of governance are insufficiently understood, in particular when it comes to their impacts and broader implications for our understanding of democratic legitimacy and accountability.

Public trust and the IPCC’s credibility eroded dramatically after November 2009 with the events that became known as ‘climategate’. These events reveal the challenges involved in generating authoritative, policy-relevant knowledge and their paradoxical relevance for global climate governance.

Section I explains why boundary organizations situated at the interface between science, politics and the “public” internalize the dilemma of legitimation of public decisions (Habermas 1963; Ezrahi 1990) and demonstrates how the IPCC has tried to reconcile democratic values with the need for expert decision making.

Section II examines what form of *agency* the IPCC performs in global climate governance. The paper focuses on the heuristic function that the IPCC comes to play in global governance by defining what problem really is, by attributing causes, by assessing impacts and by anticipating and evaluating political response options. The particular challenge for expert bodies such as the IPCC is not only to find common approaches to analysing global change, but also to develop appropriate procedures for designing and evaluating global governance. The IPCC inevitably functions as a site for defining “agency”, thus setting the stage for determining the spectrum of political available options respective boundary conditions and appropriate forms of governance (“world building” – Edwards).

Section III analyses the *paradoxical relevance* of IPCC’s expertise for global governance. Since being accepted as a neutral and ‘authoritative source’ of expertise, the IPCC has become victim of its own ‘success’, in that, paradoxically, its assessments have come to be politicized. As soon as concerned stakeholders perceived the political relevance of its findings, they began to attack and to discredit the IPCC. In this manner, scientific controversies over

¹ Department of Environmental Politics
Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ
Permoserstraße 15 / 04318 Leipzig / Germany
Phone: **49 (0)341 235-1733 (Fax: 2825)
E-mail: silke.beck@ufz.de

scientific evidence become a proxy for political battles on whether and how to react in climate change.

The need for mechanism to warrant accountability nowadays is more critical than ever, not least because climate scientists are now highly exposed to public scrutiny and criticism. Section III discusses how the IPCC tries to rebuild public trust into the credibility of climate science. Although intergovernmental in name and exercising a remarkable amount of 'delegated' authority, the IPCC is subject to none of the legal political requirements that constrain, but also legitimate, national expert committees. Addressing this deficit requires to take into account notions of delegation and democratic representation into the very heart of expert debates, as Jasanoff puts it. The final session also asks how heightened demand for public accountability mirrors the structural problems inherent in the existing system of global climate governance. It also examines how IPCC procedures like extended review procedures that provide a forum for anticipating and evaluating the performance and procedures of public policies can be seen as novel mechanism through which accountability of global climate governance is defined and (re)negotiated.