

Paper Proposal for the Forum on

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The making of governance knowledge and the transformation of politics

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Studying Co-production on a micro-level:

The case of the Founding Assembly of the Forest Stewardship Council

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-Abstract-

Although the paper is rooted in the discipline of International Relations the theoretical and methodological tools for the analysis are interdisciplinary in nature. After having introduced insights from the co-production literature (Jasanoff 2004) to IR the paper presents a micro-analysis of the founding assembly of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) that took place in Toronto in 1993.

The founding assembly is situated within the emergence of a discourse on new forms of governance. In the 1980s, environmentalist NGOs intensively lobbied to set the multifaceted topic deforestation on the international agenda. Boycotts and accusations against the wood industry dominated the scenery. In the light of unsuccessful attempts by states to agree on international binding rules some NGOs and economical actors started a dialogue on the issue of sustainable forestry. In the search for new mechanisms beyond the state to regulate the destruction of forests transnational certification occurred as an option that would allow to integrate all stakeholder. The founding assembly of the FSC appears as a discursive epistemic space in which a multitude of social actors produces governing knowledge, and performatively create innovation in governance. The paper seeks to shed light on the following set of questions: *How is knowledge brought into the process? How do dispersed actors communicate their sector specific knowledge? How do they resolve conflicting truth claims? How do they put this knowledge into political practice? What are the mechanisms by which consensus is achieved? How does knowledge and power intersect?* More over, the paper probes if the notion of 'epistemic things' (Rheinberger 1997) that has been illuminating for the sciences could also be transferred to political spaces such as the founding assembly of the FSC.

The data for the analysis consists of 16 hours of audiotapes that have been transcribed and coded according to Charmaz notion of constructivist grounded theory. On more methodological grounds the paper takes advantage of the literature on critical discourse analysis (CDA, WODAK 2009), and the discourse analysis of sociology of knowledge (Keller 2008).