

Climate Change in Social Sciences

Athens, 20 and 21 January 2012

National Hellenic Research Foundation and
International Commission for the History of Meteorology

Research Seminar, Project Hephaestus
(FP7, Capacities, RegPot 2008-1)

Climate Change in Social Sciences reviews the state of play in the interdisciplinary studies of climate change. The meeting will address where we stand today, what we have learned so far and, especially, what are the implications of social, cultural and historical approaches to this issues in the years to come.

PROGRAM

FRIDAY, 20 January

9:00 Registration, coffee

9:30 Welcome address – George VLAHAKIS (NHRF, Athens), and Costas SCORDOULIS (University of Athens)

9:45 Introductory remarks – Vladimir JANKOVIĆ (ICHM and Manchester)

10:00 – 11:30 Session 1 Chair Vladimir Janković

Hans von STORCH (Helmholtz Zentrum Geesthacht), **The Advent of Societal Relevance of Climate Science**

Georgina ENDFIELD (University of Nottingham), **Exploring Cultural Spaces of Climate**

George VLAHAKIS (NHRF, Athens), **Climate and National Identity: Some Reasons why Climate Had to Remain Unchanged**

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 14:15 Keynote Address

Mike HULME (University of East Anglia), Climate Change as Synecdoche

14:30 – 16:00 Session 2 Chair George Vlahakis

Samuel RANDALLS (University College London), **Climate Change and ‘The Good Life’**

Chris METHMANN (University of Hamburg), **Climate Mainstreaming and Postpolitical Populism**

Marianne RYGHAUG (NTNU, Trondheim), **Creating Engagement in a Complex World: Lessons Learned from Science Communication, Public Understanding of Science and Media Analyses of Climatic Change**

16:00 – 16:30 coffee break

16:30 – 18:00 Session 3 Chair Samuel Randalls

Panagiotis T. NASTOS (University of Athens), **Climate Variability and Impacts in Greece**

Matthias HEYMANN (Aarhus University), **Cultures of Prediction: Towards an Understanding of the Hegemony of Climate Models**

Mikaela SUNDBERG (Stockholm University), **Some Reflections on the Structural Dynamics of Climate Modeling**

17:30- 18:00 Break

18:15 – 19:00 Special Lecture

Kostas GAVROGLU (University of Athens), **The Stars, the Rains, the Earthquakes and the State in Greece in the Late Nineteenth Century**

19:30 Dinner

SATURDAY, 21 January

9:00 – 9:30 coffee

9:30 – 11:30 Session 4 Chair Hans von Storch

James FLEMING (Colby College), **Gaining It, Losing It, and Regaining It: Lessons from the History of Climate Change Science and Climate Control**

Eva LÖVBRAND (Linköping University), **Making Climate Change Governable: Carbon Accounting as Rationality and Practice**

Andrew BOWMAN (University of Manchester), **Green Capitalism: Opportunity, Obstacle, or Chimera?**

Vladimir JANKOVIĆ (University of Manchester), **Urban Climate Change – Risks and Opportunities**

11:30 – 12:00 coffee

12:00 – 13:00 Student Rapporteurs and Discussion

Tomas Moe Skjølvold (Norwegian Institute of Science and Technology, Trondheim) Session 1 Report

Mathias Friman (Linköping University), Session 2 Report

Martin Mahony (University of East Anglia) Session 3 Report

David Hirst (University of Manchester), Session 4 Report

13:00 lunch

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ABSTRACTS

Andrew BOWMAN (University of Manchester), '**Green Capitalism: Opportunity, Obstacle, or Chimera?**'

andrew.bowman@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

With climate change as a problem arising from mass-production industrial societies, solutions proffered to climate change have always revolved around questions of how to rework our political economy: from ecological modernism, to steady-state economics to the recent green Keynesianism. I will survey the different theoretical schools relating to the greening of the economy, and attempt to convey how dominant economic conceptualisations of climate change have shaped our present possibilities for action.

Georgina ENDFIELD (University of Nottingham), '**Exploring Cultural Spaces of Climate.**'

georgina.endfield@nottingham.ac.uk

With the growing importance of global climate change at the political level, climate and its cultural significance have become de-coupled and popular conceptualisations and discourses of climate, and its manifestations through local weather, have been replaced by increasingly global and scientific meta-narratives. There is thus a need to reintroduce geographical particularity, to reconnect cultural values to debates about climate change and to recognise that climate "means different things to different people in different contexts, places and networks" (Hulme, 2009: 325). In this paper I draw on experience of running an AHRC network on the theme of 'Cultural spaces of climate' with a view to tracing advances in research across the arts and humanities, sciences and social sciences that attempts to reconnect climate and culture.

James Rodger FLEMING (Colby College) '**Gaining It, Losing It, and Regaining It: Lessons from the History of Climate Change Science and Climate Control.**'

jfleming@colby.edu

Climate change discourse is not, and perhaps never was, "owned" by the climatological science community. In the wake of the "Climategate" email hacking scandal, the less-than-stellar outcome of the Copenhagen convention of 2009, the InterAcademy review of the IPCC, and the upcoming Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), it is fruitful to examine this discourse in the light of history. Twenty-five years of the recent past is too short of a time period for serious historical analysis; it is also too short for serious climatic analysis. Nevertheless, the historical study of how climate scientists *gained* scientific insight and forged a number of climate "consensi," how they *lost* control of the grand narratives of their field, and how they reformulated and in some cases *regained* their forward momentum may help illuminate the current situation and the path forward (if any) toward a coherent perspective on climate affairs.

Matthias HEYMANN (Aarhus University), **'Cultures of Prediction: Towards an understanding of the hegemony of climate models.'**

matthias.heyman@ivs.au.dk

In this paper I would like to give some reflections about the hegemonic role of climate models for the understanding of climate and climate change. Climate modelling represents a scientific culture of its own, which raises many historical questions and demands more research for a more comprehensive understanding.

Mike HULME (University of East Anglia), **'Climate Change as Synecdoche.'**

m.hulme@uea.ac.uk

In this talk I explore how the meaning of climate change has altered since the early 1980s, when I was first engaged in PhD research into climatic [sic] change. To do this I wish to explore the related linguistic concepts of metonymy and synecdoche. A synecdoche is a replaceive figure of speech in which a part stands for a whole or an individual stands for a class (or vice versa). I suggest that climate change now possesses cultural meanings in which it stands for, *inter alia*, the risk society thesis of modernity, environmental ideology and the loss of natural nature. This is reflected in changing nomenclatures (from greenhouse effect to global warming to climate change), in the deep penetration of 'climate change' into all forms of cultural representations (book, film, art, theatre, humour) and in the battle to secure ownership of the 'correct' scientific reading of climate change and the associated authoritative capital which victory here endows. Understanding climate change today demands the mobilisation of all forms of human knowledge, imagination and narrative.

Vladimir JANKOVIC (University of Manchester), **'Urban Climate Change – Risks and Opportunities**

Vladimir.jankovic@manchester.ac.uk

Cities are increasingly reacting to the projected scenarios of climate change but not all of them are doing it the same way or at the same pace. Where some worry about sea-level rise and flooding, other focus on heat, pollution and street canyon effects. The level of engagement and available resources are often as much a function of the perceived risks as they are of the ambition in environmental and cultural leadership. What are the gains of these initiatives and how do they relate to municipal governance and international positioning?

Eva LÖVBRAND (Linköping University), **'Making Climate Change Governable: Carbon Accounting as Rationality and Practice.'**

eva.lovbrand@liu.se

How is climate governance accomplished in practical terms? This question has informed my recent efforts to apply Foucauldian analytics of government to the study of climate governance. In this paper I exemplify the analytical purchase of this approach by studying to the accounting practices that have turned the carbon economy into a governable domain, and the forms of knowledge that these practices give rise to, and depend upon. In essence I seek to illustrate that there are intrinsic links between ways of knowing a phenomenon, on the one hand, and ways of acting as to transform it, on the other.

Chris METHMANN (University of Hamburg), '**Climate Mainstreaming and Postpolitical Populism.**'

chris.methmann@uni-hamburg.de

Global climate politics, most notably the Copenhagen summit, seem to display a paradox. Never before has the public attention to global warming been greater, with science, media and politics depicting it as a major threat for the entire planet. At the same time, the results of climate politics are less than poor. It is suggested that these two phenomena are inherently linked through a particular discursive set-up. The mainstreaming of climate change follows a postpolitical populist logic and so results in the depoliticisation of climate politics through a carbon governmentality.

Panagiotis T. NASTOS (University of Athens), '**Climate Variability and Impacts in Greece.**'

nastos@geol.uoa.gr

The quantification of current climate and its future trends in Greece, being located in a climatic vulnerable region of the Eastern Mediterranean, is very important for stake holders in mitigating the environmental, social and economic impacts on the region's lucrative sectors.

Samuel RANDALLS (University College London), '**Climate Change and 'The Good Life.'**'

s.randalls@ucl.ac.uk

Many climate change scholars have recently commented on the diversity of discursive representations of climate change. Drawing on case studies of political-economic thought and climate change education, I suggest that at the heart of these debates are disputes about how to frame, mobilize and live 'the good life' i.e. what the good outcome or goal to be sought is. In other words, what climate change is *really* about. The paper thus explores how social scientists have contributed to these fields and what we can learn for future social science and policy.

Marianne RYGHAUG (Norwegian Institute of Science and Technology, Trondheim), '**Creating Engagement in a Complex World: Lessons**

Learned from Science Communication, Public Understanding of Science and Media Analyses of Climatic Change.'

marianne.ryghaug@ntnu.no

The presentation will focus on what we can learn from previous experiences of consensus formation processes in the area of climate science when they are performed 'in the public eye' (i.e. climate gate), media representations of climatic change and public sense making and appropriation of the climate change problem.

Hans von STORCH (Helmholtz Zentrum Geesthacht), **'The Advent of Societal Relevance of Climate Science.'**

hvonstorch@web.de

During the years 1975-2100, climate science changed fundamentally. From a mostly ivory-tower, curiosity driven science arose a demand-driven activity closely related to policy design and implementation (post-normal conditions). After the events in late 2009, the field is in a crisis, but a new reflexivity seems to set in.

Mikaela SUNDBERG (University of Stockholm), **'Some Reflections on the Structural Dynamics of Climate Modeling.'**

mikaela.sundberg@sociology.su.se

Climate modeling dominates climate science in several different ways. What are the structural implications of the dominance of climate modeling for the organization of scientific work? This presentation discusses how scientists have become dependent on the output of models, how the craftwork of modeling-related science have changed, and as a result, the blending of models and data, have become even more profound.

George VLAHAKIS (NHRF), **'Climate and National Identity: Some Reasons why Climate Had to Remain Unchanged'**

gvlahakis@yahoo.com

During the late nineteenth century the discussion of the stability of the climate was strongly connected with the issue of national identity and the formation of national states. In today's age of globalization we discuss the climate change and consider it important to understand the 'hidden' connections between climate and social-political environment.

Special presentation:

Kostas GAVROGLU (University of Athens), **'The Stars, the Rains, the Earthquakes and the State in Greece in the Late Nineteenth Century'**

This is an attempt to trace the beginnings of the various Institutes (astronomical, meteorological, seismological) of National Observatory as precursors of the trends to establish modern structures of the Greek State in late 19th century. It is the period when the University of Athens played a particularly prominent social role, providing services that later on were provided by independent state Institutions. The National Observatory is a case study where a number of issues concerning the history of the University of Athens, the work of the newly established institutes and the modernisation policies for the State, could be examined.