

GOVERNING CLIMATE CHANGE BEYOND THE NATION STATE

Dr Harriet Bulkeley, Durham University

The 2008 Linacre Lectures:
"Climate governance beyond
the nation state: how business,
the arts, and cities are
responding to climate change"

Wk 1: "A new politics? Governing
climate change beyond the state"
Dr Harriet Bulkeley, Durham
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the changing landscape of climate
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Wk 7: "Managing our civilisation's
greatest challenge: the roles
of governments, private sector,
academics and individuals."
Prof Sir David King, Director,
Smith School of Enterprise and the
Environment

Recent Publications by
Dr Harriet Bulkeley

Betsill, M. & Bulkeley, H. Looking
back and thinking ahead: a decade of
cities and climate change research.
Local Environment. 2008;12:447-
456.

Bulkeley, H., Watson, M. & Hudson,
R. Modes of governing municipal
waste. *Environment and Planning A*.
2007;39:2733-2753.

Bulkeley, H. & Moser, S.C.
Responding to climate change:
governance and social action beyond
kyoto. *Global Environmental Politics*.
2007;7:1-10.

Harriet Bulkeley opened up the 2008 Linacre Lectures by asking whether a 'new politics' has emerged in the arena of climate change. She approached this question by giving an historical overview of climate change since the 1990s and drawing on Albert Weale's (1992) discussion of the emergence of 'a new politics of pollution'. Weale (1992) identifies three dimensions of the 'new politics': (1) new scales of the problem; (2) new forms of interactions between members of the policy community; and (3) new intellectual and ideological conceptions of the policy problem.

Harriet argued that a new politics has emerged through a reframing of the spatial scale of (global) environmental politics and a re-conceptualisation of the roles of different actors in the governance of climate change. This new politics is questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions about the whereabouts of power and authority in relation to global environmental issues.

In the early 1990s climate change was framed as an inter-national issue and was subsequently addressed through approaches which sought to establish and assess international co-operation, the so-called 'regime' approach. Here, the state is considered sovereign and exclusive, and different scales of political organisation are layered like Russian dolls so that policy is 'cascaded' from the international to the local level. While some analysts recognised the role of non-state actors in shaping the climate change agenda, the focus remained on the role such actors had in shaping international institutions and the positions of nation-states. In summary, while the climate change politics of the mid-1990s bore two of the critical signs of the new politics Weale had suggested were coming of age in the environmental domain – the recognition of the new scale of the problems to be addressed and new forms of interaction between members of the policy communities - fundamentally these new

dimensions of environmental politics were being interpreted through a rather old and well-worn political map.

Harriet argued that the more recent debates on governance have started to open up the intellectual and ideological concepts of how governing takes place and where it is located. First, the debate on governance provides the conceptual space to interrogate how such actors might be involved in governing beyond the formal structures of government. Second, it opens up the potential to move beyond a 'cascade' model of the sites and spaces of global environmental politics. Importantly, this re-conceptualisation of the spatial and scalar dynamics of policy has started to raise questions about where 'properly political' responses to climate change might be found. No longer confined to the inter-national sphere, the potential arises for a politics of climate change to take alternative territorial and non-territorial forms, disrupting the assumed connections between power, authority, territory and sovereignty.

Drawing on the case of the role of cities in climate change governance, Harriet highlighted the new dynamics of governance and the multiple sites in which the politics of climate change is emerging. However, she argued that cities are not governing instead of the nation-state, but beyond it. Recognizing the critical role of the nation-state does not mean that we return full-circle to approaches in which the state is the only relevant actor. Instead, Harriet concluded by arguing for an approach which questions the nature and practices of the state, and acknowledges the multiple means through which climate governance is being achieved. In looking for the whereabouts of climate politics we have to look beyond the state – to the markets, behavioural change, corporate social responsibility - where critical decisions around ethics and policy choices are being made.

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CLIMATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Geoff Lye, Vice Chairman of SustainAbility

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Read more about Geoff Lye
at: www.sustainability.com

Blog: SustainAbility at the UN
Climate Change Conference 2007:
[www.sustainability.com/about/profile_](http://www.sustainability.com/about/profile_published.asp?id=10)
[published.asp?id=10](http://www.sustainability.com/about/profile_published.asp?id=10)

Article: How business can change
the world. (2006) [www.sustainability.](http://www.sustainability.com/insight/article.asp?id=494)
[com/insight/article.asp?id=494](http://www.sustainability.com/insight/article.asp?id=494)

The second Linacre Lecture was presented by Geoff Lye, Vice Chairman of SustainAbility and Visiting Teaching Fellow at the Environmental Change Institute. His talk focused on the changing nature of corporate accountability in relation to climate change, suggesting that management of the issue is rapidly moving beyond corporate responsibility and public relations responses and into mainstream business strategy. He demonstrated this using case studies and examples garnered from 20+ years in the consulting industry. Geoff centred his talk on four main points:

1) **Multinationals are under increasing pressure to shift from a business model rooted in compliance towards one rooted in accountability.** The traditional model where directors of business look at their performance in terms of responsibility purely measured against stipulated regulations within a legal framework is now moving towards one which takes into account both societal expectations and values, and the needs and expectations of the various stakeholders over and above the law. This represents a fundamental shift in terms of the lenses through which business needs to operate.

2) **Climate is finally being addressed as a mainstream strategic issue.** Having monitored this space in the corporate sector for over 10 years, Geoff described what he views as a dramatic shift in business engagement on climate change over the last 18-24 months. Progressive corporations are today acting unilaterally to lessen their own carbon footprints and are actively calling on regulators for urgent policy shifts to accelerate market demand for lower carbon products.

3) **Corporations are hugely powerful, and with that power there is an equivalent obligation and moral responsibility.** The world's top 100 companies had revenues of £10trillion in 2006,

with the top 50 representing 5% of world GDP. Six of the top ten corporations are oil companies. With global economic power of this magnitude, there are clear opportunities and responsibilities for these multinational corporations to develop powerful climate solutions; and many are. Regulation is likely, however, to lag behind market demands for low carbon products and services, which will put great value at risk for those corporations which decide to wait for regulation .

4) **The increasing focus of the oil majors on energy security is taking priority over climate security, reversing the positive commitments and achievements made by companies like BP and Shell over the last decade.** There is an implication that energy and climate are aligned, but this is not always the case: many solutions to energy security do not simultaneously deliver climate security. Although there are options which fulfil both goals (e.g. alternative energy and carbon capture and storage), oil companies are mainly pursuing those which do not - such as oil sands, the extraction of which is highly carbon intensive and has other significant negative environmental impacts.

Geoff concluded his lecture by arguing that to achieve true corporate environmental accountability, three main objectives need to be met: sustained stakeholder scrutiny, true alignment between energy and climate security and a visionary new breed of CEOs.

THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNING CLIMATE CHANGE

Professor Peter Newell, UEA and
ECI James Martin 21st Century School Fellow

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Recent Publications by
Professor Peter Newell

Rights, Resources and the Politics of
Accountability London: Zed Books,
Co-edited with Joanna Wheeler,
2006.

The Business of Global
Environmental Governance
Cambridge MA: MIT press Co-edited
with David Levy, 2005.

Edited special issue of Third
World Quarterly on 'Beyond CSR?
Business, Poverty and Social Justice'
Vol.28 No.4 2007.

The third Linacre lecture was given by Peter Newell, Professor of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia and James Martin 21st Century Research Fellow at the Environmental Change Institute. Peter's talk followed on the themes of earlier talks in the series by Harriet Bulkeley and Geoff Lye by emphasising the role of non-state actors in tackling climate change and in particular the shifting nature of business response to climate change. He examined the political role of business in the climate change governance regime by looking at: (1) the changing way that climate change is governed at different levels of political authority; (2) the role that business is playing in these emerging patterns of governance; and (3) the effect of business governance on our ability to deliver effective action on climate change.

Peter began by describing the way in which climate change has evolved from an international problem with an international response to a de-centralised one where multiple agents are active in the governance of climate change. This has led to a new wave of governance with private actors performing government like functions to tackle the issue, including: NGO-business partnerships, voluntary carbon standards, and voluntary commitments by business.

He suggested that these shifts in climate governance bring new challenges and questions: who is keeping count of the disaggregated commitments and actions; who verifies the progress being made; what standards exist; who takes part and who doesn't; and ultimately, is government avoiding their own responsibility to tackle climate change?

Moving into the second part of his talk Peter addressed the specific role of business in climate governance. The dynamic between corporate strategy and regulation is continually

evolving as companies adapt to new directives and at the same time drive new regulation. He described business as the main actor which will implement and finance the technologies, regulation, and investment required for a low carbon future. To achieve this Peter believes that business push to make their voice heard and they do this through a number of channels aimed at garnering power and influence.

These were classified by Peter in three ways:

- through **material power**: a role in employment and taxation; control over production processes and technology;
- **institutionally**: donations to political parties; access to government decision-making bodies;
- **discursively**: advertising and social networks; ownership and influence within the media.

Using this power business has been increasingly engaged with the issue of climate change, but Peter stressed that we cannot afford to leave it to business alone to deliver effective action. He believes that the markets cannot fully deal with the distributional issues and enforcement needed to tackle climate change and we cannot rely on them always having incentives to respond when many stand to lose from action on climate change.

To conclude, Peter proposed that business will continue to be a key actor in tackling climate change as no regime can succeed politically without the support of major corporate players. At the moment institutions are geared towards business friendly solutions but it remains to be seen whether current market 'winners' can also be at the forefront of tackling the root causes of the problem. He ended his talk by suggesting that private and market-based forms of governance need to be opened up to more democratic scrutiny to give a voice inside the political arena to all those most affected by climate change.

GOOD PLANETS ARE HARD TO FIND: A CULTURAL RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

David Buckland, Cape Farewell

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Read more about David Buckland and Cape Farewell at: www.capefarewell.com

Book: *Burning Ice - Art & Climate Change* (2006) Featuring contributions from Heather Ackroyd & Dan Harvey, David Buckland, Dr Valborg Byfield, Siobhan Davies, Gautier Deblonde, Antony Gormley, Sir David King, Charlie Kronick, Professor H J Schellnhuber and Rachel Whiteread.

DVD: *Art from a changing arctic* (BBC)

The penultimate Linacre Lecture by artist David Buckland gave a new perspective on the lecture series. David is founder of Cape Farewell, which brings artists, scientists and educators together to collectively raise awareness of climate change. Cape Farewell leads expeditions to the Arctic, which has become valued as both a place for artistic inspiration and for scientific enquiry. In his highly visual presentation David explained why he believes the approach of Cape Farewell to be unique and effective in communicating climate change as well as to furthering its scientific understanding. He demonstrated this claim through depicting expeditions to the Arctic in 2005/7 which highlights both the importance of the scientific research conducted onboard and the inspiration garnered by the artists, who have since displayed and televised their work around the world, reaching audiences in the millions.

David described how he confronts the artists with two pieces of information: firstly, that climate change is a very serious reality, and secondly, that the public are not yet engaging with it. He then asks the artists what they are going to do about climate change. He does not intend to tell them how, or even whether they should respond, but merely asks them to come up with new visions for conceptualizing climate change and new ways of understanding the world. The artists have delivered extraordinary results!

David explained that scientific research is one of their core activities, including both research on critical tipping points and outreach. Onboard, scientists from the National Oceanographic Centre take regular 8 hourly measurements to map the Norwegian Current and Gulf Stream. After 3 years of research, they have found that the Norwegian Current is significantly warmer today than it was 30 years ago. This volume of warmer water flowing northward is undoubtedly having significant consequences on the complex Arctic ice forming structures which could impact on global weather patterns.. The science team also monitored the amount of ice being lost

at the Northern Ice cap and Greenland mainland; 25% of the northern sea ice was lost during the summer of 2007. Both these events could become 'tipping points' of global significance.

Moving to art, David described the Arctic as a source of inspiration for the artists because it has become the frontline of climate change – it is changing rapidly and is increasingly vulnerable. He illustrated a number of artistic responses, each conveying their own insights and interpretations on issues such as ownership and rights, carbon offsetting, the notion of 'self', endangering species (human and other) and how to visualise carbon dioxide. The art was achieved through choreography, music, conceptual artworks, video projections, painting, architecture, conquering new land, prose, sculptures, and in one case even lawyers and politicians became part of the artistic process.

Climate change is a horrific problem to deal with. This is why it is so difficult for us to engage people and why David believes we have to seek new ways of thinking about it. Summarised by the words of Ian McEwan during the voyage, "To bear the weight of the future is both interesting and difficult, and runs probably counter to our nature. And so I was perhaps wondering if there is some way into this artistically...". This is the great experiment of the Cape Farewell project: throwing your best creative brains at the problem in the belief that something will come out of it.

David ended his lecture by suggesting that if you want to achieve change in a society, then historically the quickest way of achieving this is through cultural change, whether for the better or worse. To enable a cultural response, we first need to understand that there is something that requires protection, and, in the sentiment of Albert Einstein, "You cannot solve a problem with the same kind of thinking that has created the problem". Buckland's, and Cape Farewell's ambition is, through creative endeavor, to establish an new set of tools and ideas to address what is in reality a 'future truth'.