

"Postnormal Science" as a guiding tool of embedding climate science in the public discourse

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The present paper is a call to cultural sciences for helping climate science to establish a sustainable practice of policy advice concerning man-made climate change.

As a climate scientists engaged in communication with stakeholders and the media, mostly in Germany, the author has noticed a notable discrepancy between scientific knowledge about climate change, and the understanding in the public at large, specifically as fostered by the media and some publicly visible climate scientists. In this essay, this discrepancy is analysed to some extent and framed as the presence of two competing types of knowledge, namely a body of knowledge named "scientific construct" and another body of knowledge named "cultural construct" of man-made climate change. The relationship and the dynamics of these two knowledge claims are not well researched. In order to understand the dynamical interaction of the different knowledge claims significant efforts from cultural sciences are needed.

Using the concept of Postnormal Science, the Institute of Coastal Research has developed a strategy to address the needs and potential of stakeholder interaction in the field of climate change.