

## Climate Science in Society

Hans von Storch

The competition of scientifically and media-culturally constructed knowledge is discussed. These two (groups of) constructions are described in terms of examples, with special emphasis on extreme events. Because of the unavoidably high uncertainty of future climate related developments, and many and significant stakes for decision makers and policymakers, natural scientists find themselves in a post-normal situation of conflicting normative pressures. Among these pressures is the need, or opportunity, to communicate via media with the public and policymakers. Most natural scientists are unprepared for such a task and have significant difficulties not only to understand the role of media – and thus to properly interact with media – but also to define their role as a societal advisor (*honest broker* as opposed to *stealth advocate*).

Generally, climate scientists have little understanding for social and cultural dynamics. Not surprisingly, they find it difficult to deal with the challenges of post-normality, and almost always adhere to the *linear model* of science-policy interaction. Thus, climate scientists need help to understand the dynamics of media. Society and natural scientists need a new, or renewed, agreement about the role of natural scientists as public actors – which may take its point of departure in concepts such as Merton's and Pielke's. For such improvements being successful, support by cultural scientists is urgently needed.

### Related publication

von Storch, H., A. Bunde and N. Stehr, 2011: The Physical Sciences and Climate Politics. In J.S. Dyzek, D. Schlosberg, and R. B. Norgaard (eds): *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*. Oxford University Press. Oxford UK. (in press)

von Storch, H., 2009: Climate Research and Policy Advice: Scientific and Cultural Constructions of Knowledge. *Env. Science Pol.* 12, 741-747 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2009.04.008>