

Energy and Climate Governance as Translation

Nichole Dusyk

Local governments have proven themselves to be critical advocates and initiators of climate policy. But turning policy intentions into successful publicly-supported solutions is a complex problem. This paper contributes to on-going discussions of enacting local climate governance by applying STS theory to the problem. In particular, it uses the concept of “translation” (Callon, 1986) to describe the process whereby local governments are able to successfully enact policy change. Drawing on the example of one community in British Columbia Canada, it describes how a locally-managed process of translation led to both the success of climate and energy initiatives and to the creation of a culture of sustainability. The case illustrates the critical importance of translating local interests but also how the process of translation simultaneously constructs local interests and sensibilities. This double movement can be interpreted as an opportunity to initiate the sought after but often elusive ‘social’ change. The success of this community is contrasted with top-down policy approaches that attempt to implement climate change agendas. The argument is that rather than setting out to *implement* policies and best practices, it may be more productive to attempt to *localize* concepts, knowledge, and technologies by way of an explicit, locally-managed process of translation.