

Spring Campus, April 9-13, 2018

Workshop: “Climate Change Policy and Social Networks”, April 10-11, 2018

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Abstract:

In recent years, climate change has attracted considerable political attention and has thus become one of the most prominent issues regarding sustainability. By looking at the relations between actors [and/or concepts], social network analysis offers important insights into this crucial policy field. It enables new analyses about climate change policy-making, including examinations of the most important actors and debates. In this workshop, participants from different disciplines will discuss the most current debates around social networks in climate change policy. Researchers from two strands of network analysis will present their work. The first strand of research uses social network analysis (SNA) as a methodology to identify policy networks and the influence different actors have within these networks. These studies focus on the network variables, such as the amount of ties and an actor’s relative centrality within a given social network. The second strand of research examines social phenomena by investigating the existence and design of social networks. Research questions focus on the relationship between social ties and participation in environmental movements. They further explore different kinds of social networks (face-to-face networks and digital social network networks (e.g. Twitter)) in mobilizing for climate action.

Against this backdrop, the workshop will bring together leading scholars in the field of sustainability, climate change and the analysis of social networks. It will showcase and discuss different types of networks both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective. Participants will discuss the effects, relevance, potential and weaknesses of social networks and the role they play for climate change movements and policy discourse, and policy formation. Finally, we seek to facilitate both cross-sectoral and transatlantic discussion, to explore options for further research and, ultimately, to trigger new collaborative initiatives based on advanced network knowledge concerning sustainable development.