

Contribution to the 11th Annual IAS-STS Conference "Critical Issues in Science and Technology Studies"

Special Session "Knowledge Brokerage as participatory interaction processes linking research, policy and civil society"

Title: Dealing with Plurality? A reflection on practices of strategic knowledge production at the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Author / Speaker: EM Kunseler^{1,2}

Affiliations:

¹ PhD candidate at Institute for Environmental Studies, VU University, Amsterdam

² Policy researcher at PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, PO Box 30314, 2500 GH, The Hague, e-mail: eva.kunseler@pbl.nl

Keywords: knowledge production, scenario studies, scientific policy-advising, science-policy interface

Abstract: Driven by the urge to secure the credibility of their policy advice, scientific policy-advising bodies need to accommodate a plurality of different types of knowledge, values and interests in order to address complex society-environment interdependencies. How do policy advisers actually deal with plurality in practice and what difficulties and challenges do they encounter? In this presentation, I will use the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) as a case for exploring how a scientific policy-advising body accommodates a plurality of perspectives to inform evidence-based policy making on complex sustainability issues. The PBL is the Dutch national institute for strategic policy analysis in the fields of environment, nature and spatial planning. The type of knowledge produced by the PBL to inform evidence-based policy making on complex sustainability issues is principally of strategic nature. A systematic reflection on practices of strategic knowledge production at the PBL offers insight into the reflexivity of design, process and outcomes in response to various challenges encountered by PBL researchers in their attempts to accommodate a plurality of perspectives. Moreover, I aim to discuss conditions that may have influenced the degree of reflexivity, such as the policy closeness – affinity of a project to policy processes - or the role perception of PBL researchers. With this presentation, I hope to contribute to an improved understanding of the dynamic processes of policy advising to inform evidence-based policy making on complex sustainability issues.