



Earth System (Modelling) Science: Epistemology and Politics, from the 1970s to the Trump era

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“Epistemology is Politics”, stated physicist and philosopher Heinz von Foerster in 1950. He highlighted the inevitable interactions between a representation of science (and its values) and a politics of science. So if, in other terms, politics performs epistemology, how can we revisit the history of Earth System Modelling, or more generally of Earth System Science, from the 1970s to the present era? In my presentation, I will suggest a few crucial steps and striking correlations between the evolution of the scientific domain and the evolution of the global geopolitical field. Examples include the authority of models, the cartography or hierarchy of disciplines, scientific and expertise institutions, interactions between local and global, between what has been termed a ‘climatisation’ of the world and climate globalization, and between reductionist and holistic conceptions of our planet. Without assigning strict causality, these examples illustrate the links between epistemology, scientific values and politics.