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Reconfiguring environmental governance: Towards a politics of scales and networks

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Abstract

This paper seeks to develop an alternative account of the geographies of environmental governance to those current conceptions which tend to take space and scale for granted as pre-given, contained, natural entities. Through an engagement with the debates on the politics of scale, the argument is made that a new spatial grammar of environmental governance must be sensitive to both the politics of scale and the politics of networks. Rather than considering scalar and non-scalar interpretations of spatiality as necessarily opposite, the paper argues that through a more careful deployment of concepts of hierarchy and territory common ground between scalar and network geographies can be forged, and can inform our understanding of environmental governance. In making this argument, the paper provides an overview of contemporary configurations of global environmental governance, and seeks to illustrate by reference to one transnational municipal network, the Cities for Climate Protection programme, how governing the

environment involves both political processes of scaling and rescaling the objects and agents of governance, as well as attempts to create new, networked, arenas of governance. The paper concludes that recognition of new spatial grammars is necessary for understanding emerging hybrid forms of environmental governance and their political and ecological implications.



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Keywords

Environmental governance; Politics of scale; Networks; Spatial grammar; Global environmental politics; Climate change

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