



Climate and Energy Decision Making

Sponsored Seminar

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Presenting on:

Vinaigrette or Oil and Vinegar? Comparing public rationales for justice trade-offs in mitigation and adaptation climate policy dilemmas

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3 PM

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Seminar Abstract: The ideal relationship between climate change adaptation and mitigation policy has been long debated. Are they substitutes for each other, in which case the policy task is to find the optimal trade-off between the two, or can they be integrated to take advantage of win-win overlaps? Instead of proposing how these policies should relate to one another from an abstract policy perspective, this study examines public rationales about justice and burden-sharing trade-offs in each case. Using think-aloud protocols and a structured elicitation approach with members of the lay public, this study provides evidence that the two types of climate policy trigger different sets of arguments about justice. When asked about mitigation burden-sharing, participants overwhelmingly depending on arguments about causality. In contrast, in discussions of adaptation participants emphasized ideas of need and ability, and used social and spatial distance to modify the allocation of responsibility. Two considerations emerge from these findings.

Speaker Bio: Sonja is a post-doctoral researcher working on climate change policy. She is currently based in Cambridge at the Department of Economics but also holds a Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions post-doctoral fellowship shared between Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. Her most recent work examines the Western Climate Initiative greenhouse gas cap and trade system, but previously she looked at justice issues in climate policy generally, including public perceptions of justice in climate policy contexts. Her broader academic and professional background stems from work on public communication for sustainability, and local sustainable development in Canada and internationally.

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