



Scientific Integrity and Political Conflict: Are they Compatible?

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Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung
European Stakeholder Conference
"How Independent can Science be?"
20 November 2012
Berlin, Germany



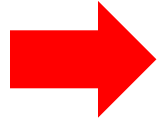
Conclusions

Scientific Integrity and Political Conflict: Are they Compatible?

Answer: Yes, but . . .

1. We maintain integrity through engagement, not distance
2. Ultimately, the expert community must exercise leadership to ensure integrity

Overview



- **Institutions matter**
- **Institutionalization is no guarantee of success or protection from politics**
- **Ultimately, we must take care of the integrity of our work**



Case of “Hurricane” Sandy



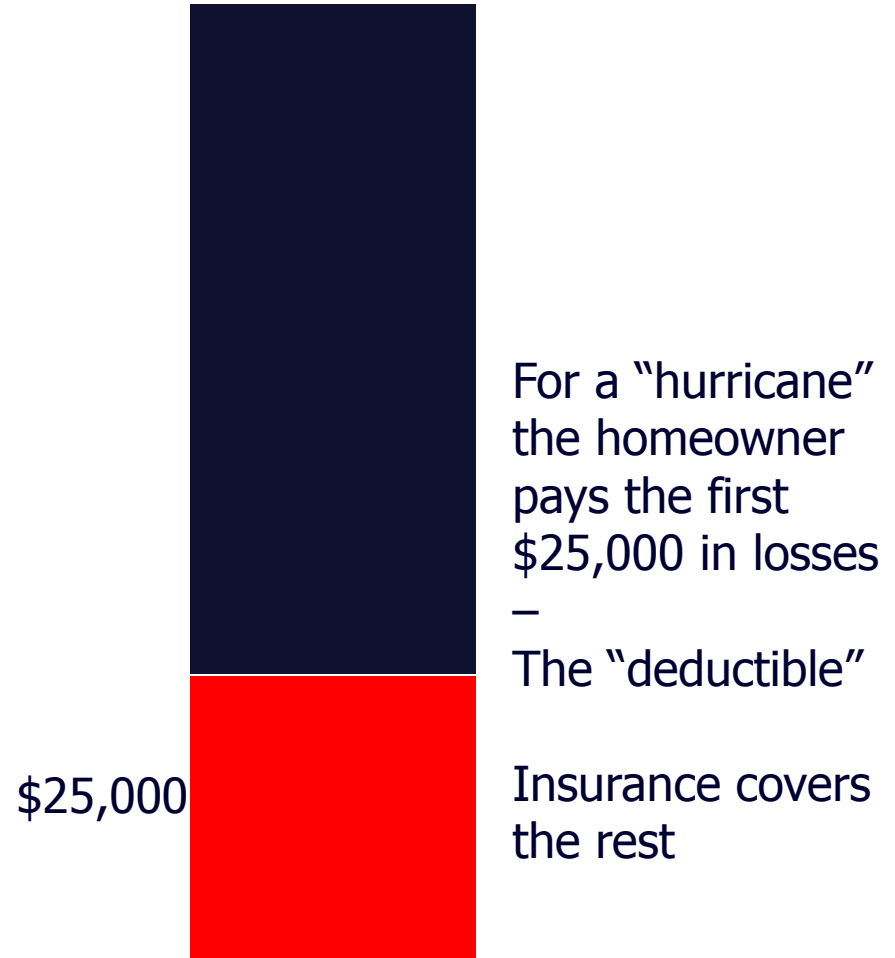
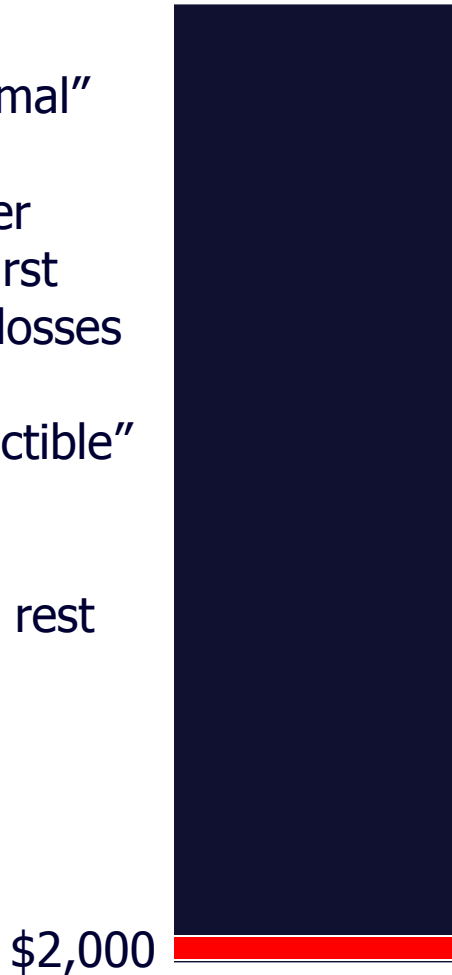
\$20-50 billion in total damage



The "hurricane deductible"

A \$100,000 loss

For a "normal" storm the homeowner pays the first \$2,000 in losses –
The "deductible"
Insurance covers the rest



For a "hurricane" the homeowner pays the first \$25,000 in losses –
The "deductible"
Insurance covers the rest

From a "hurricane" to a "post-tropical" storm



One hour before landfall the US National Hurricane Center defined Sandy as a "post-tropical storm"

A \$20 billion++ decision!!

Science in decision making

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Insurers will have to pay out billions of dollars more after Sandy is downgraded from hurricane to post-tropical cyclone

- Insurance companies are contesting the decision to change Sandy's status
- Some jurisdictions have already said hurricane deductions are invalid

By RIK SHARMA

PUBLISHED: 07:38 EST, 9 November 2012 | UPDATED: 08:42 EST, 9 November 2012

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Insurers could be hit for billions of dollars more than expected after superstorm Sandy was labelled a post-tropical cyclone rather than a hurricane.

Lowering the classification means the insurance providers have to pay more of the costs towards rebuilding the parts of New York and New Jersey which were damaged.

Had Sandy been given hurricane status homeowners would have needed to contribute more towards

Science as politics



Christie Administration Takes Action to Protect Storm-Impacted New Jersey Homeowners from Higher Insurance Deductibles

Friday, November 2, 2012 • Tags: Executive Orders

1. In light of the National Weather Service's categorization of Sandy as a post-tropical storm, it shall be a violation of [N.J.A.C. 11:2-42.7](#) for any insurer to apply a mandatory or optional hurricane deductible to the payment of claims for property damage attributable to Sandy.

A Senator gets involved . . .



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Schumer urges weather agency to keep Sandy labeled a tropical storm

By Zack Colman - 11/11/12 04:23 PM ET

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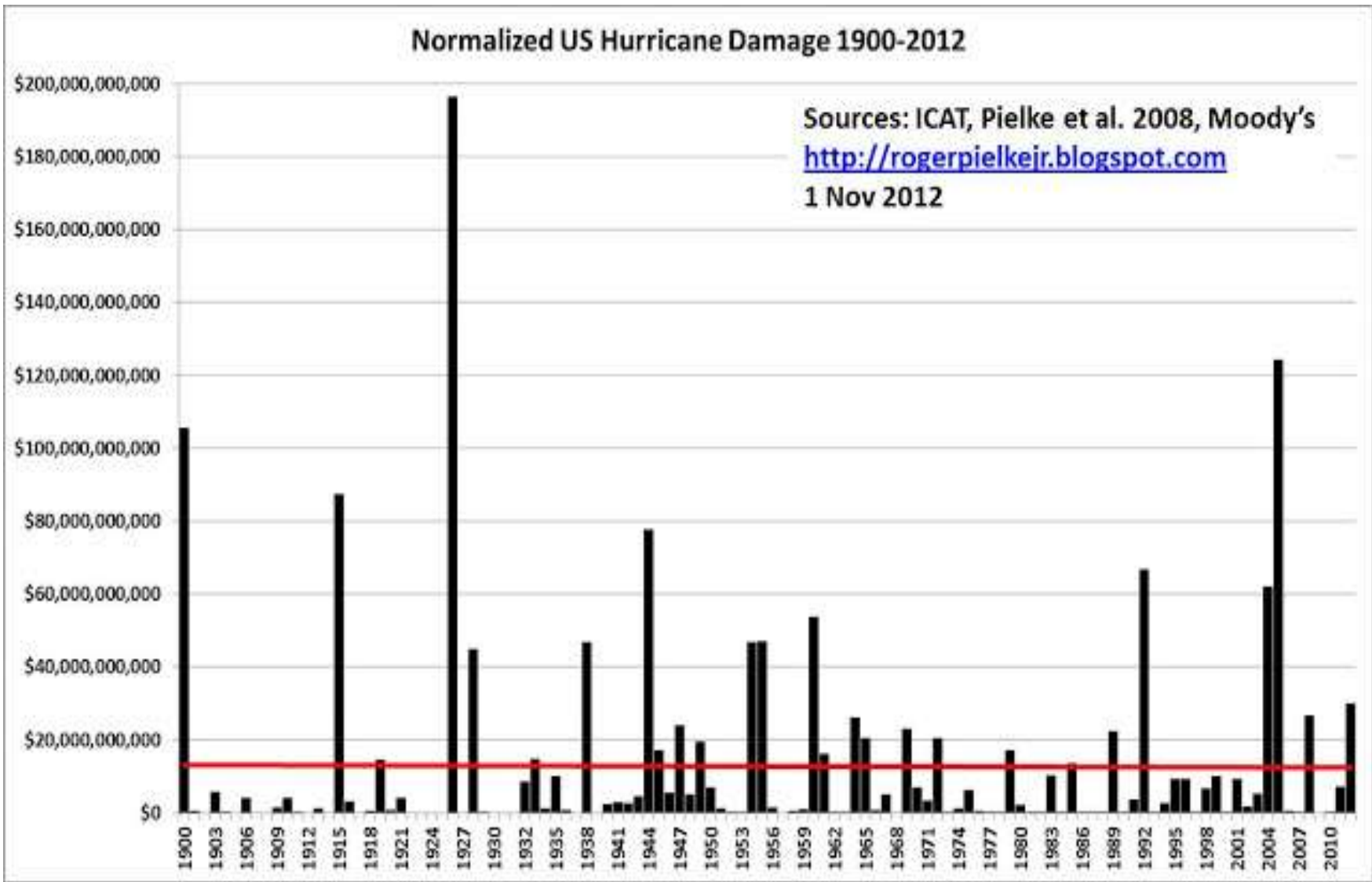
Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) is urging the federal weather agency to avoid labeling Superstorm Sandy a hurricane because doing so would raise insurance deductibles.

Schumer sent a letter Sunday to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and insurance companies warning that classifying



PHOTO: BILL CLARK

Will Sandy be included in NOAA/NHC hurricane damage?




Examples of best practices

- **Conflict of interest guidelines**
- **Rigorous handling of uncertainties**
- **Explicit engagement of alternative views**
- **Formal elicitation of decision makers**
- **Complete data and method transparency**
- **Public engagement**
- **Explicit consideration of policy options**
- **Research on science for policy and policy for science**
- **Decision process evaluation and design**



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Red River Floods 1997 - Beware "messages"



Mayor of E. Grand Forks: "I want one number"



All politicians have interests



**Anders Fogh Rasmussen
Prime Minister of Denmark
March 2009
Science meeting in advance of
Copenhagen Climate Conference**

“But understand me correctly; at the end of the day, here in Copenhagen, we have as politicians to make the final decision... I need your assistance to push this process in the right direction, and in that respect, I need fixed targets and certain figures, and not too many considerations on uncertainty and risk and things like that.”

The seductive appeal of the “message”

"That [next IPCC] report is going to scare the wits out of everyone. I'm confident those scientific findings will create new political momentum."

Yvo de Boer
Former head, UN FCCC
7 November 2012



ipcc
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON
climate change



Predistortion? US Rep. Bill Foster (D-IA)



Foster said that scientists should expect that the information that they bring to the political process, such as through testimony before congressional committees, will inevitably be "distorted" in the political process.

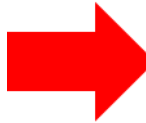
He then raised what he called "a difficult ethical question" -- if a scientist knows that their message will be distorted in the political process, to what degree should s/he *predistort* their message in hopes that what comes out the other end is a closer approximation to reality?

Case of L'Aquila Earthquake "Prediction"

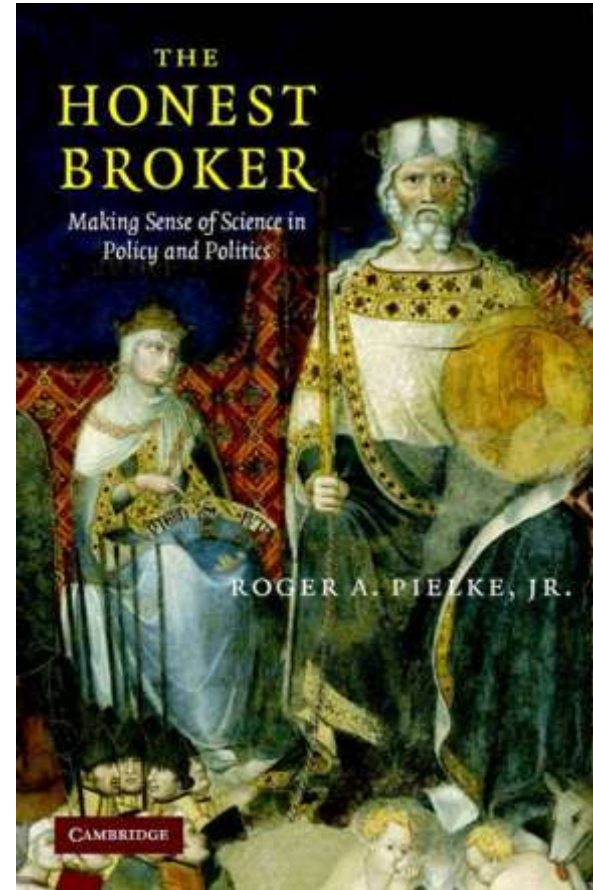


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Clarifying choice for effective action



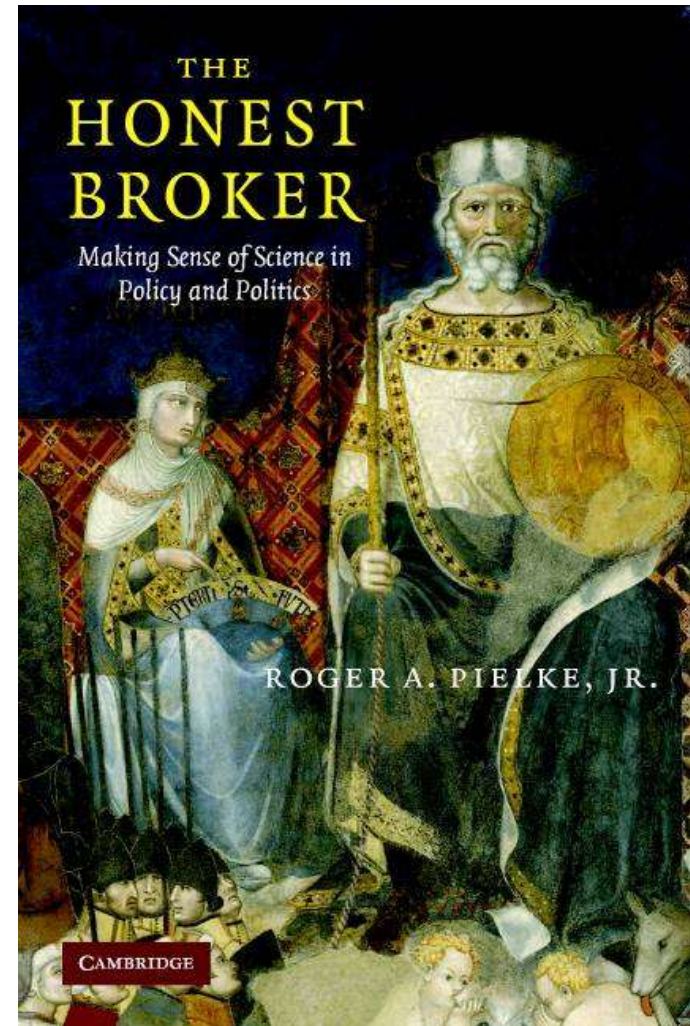
An Analogy: Where should we have dinner?



An Analogy: Where should we have dinner?

Four Perspectives on Answering this Question

- Pure scientist
- Science arbiter
- Issue advocate
- Honest broker of policy alternatives



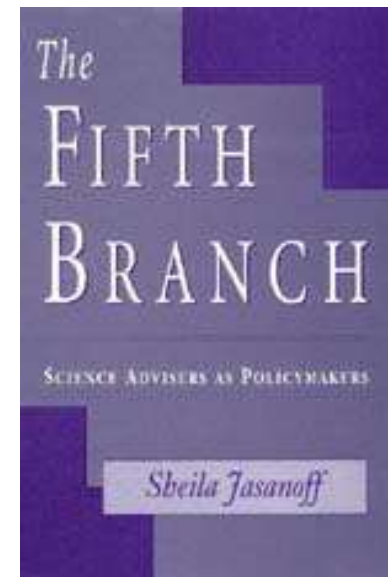
Science Arbiter



Reality Check – Science as a Political Arena

"The notion that scientific advisors can or do limit themselves to addressing purely scientific issues, in particular, seems fundamentally misconceived ... the advisory process seems increasingly important as a locus for negotiating scientific differences that have political weight."

Sheila Jasanoff 1990
The Fifth Branch:
Science Advisors as Policymakers



The Linear Model: Keeping Separate Science and Decision Making



Example – Drug Approval



Plan B – emergency contraception

December 2011 in the US . . . A “science” decision?



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Sebelius Overrules FDA on Allowing Teens Access to the Morning-After Pill



Issue Advocate



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Roger Pielke

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"Etwas klein" -



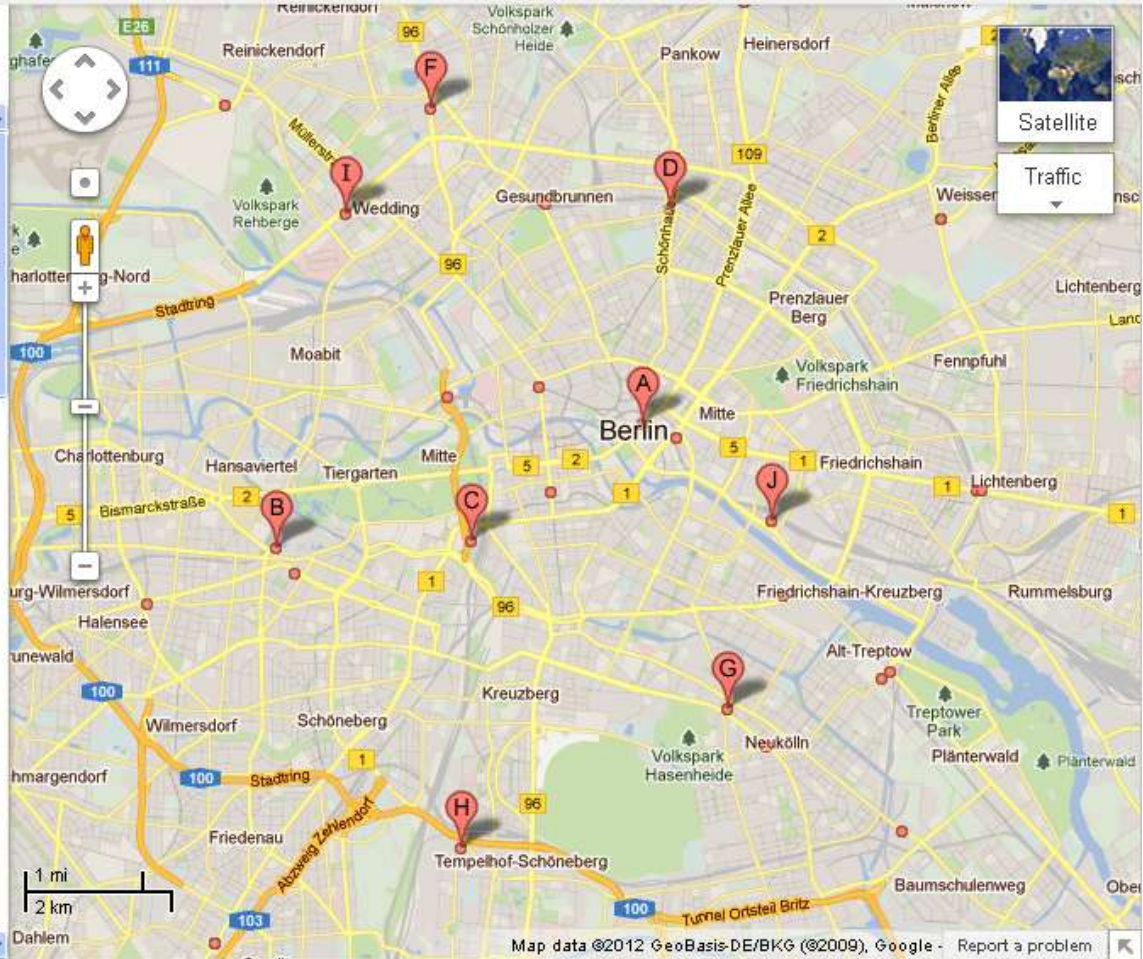
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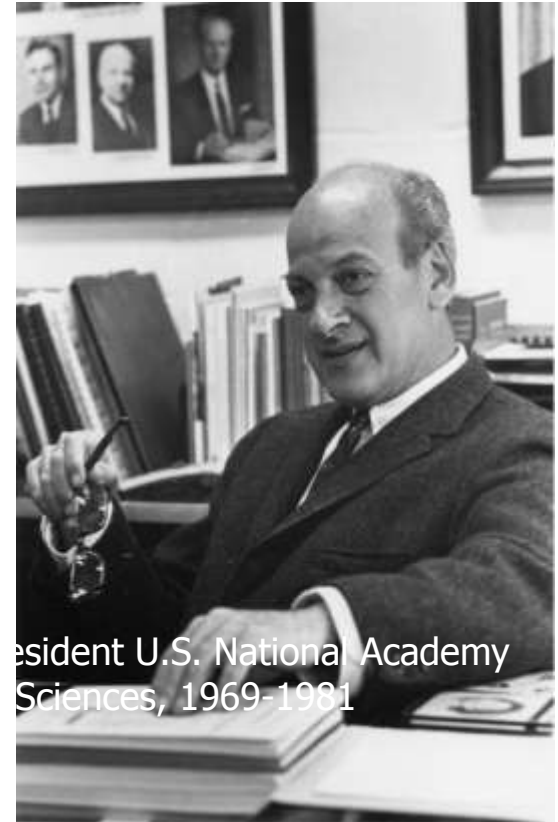
i'm lovin' it™

What is the problem? Legitimacy

“We have learned that the scientist-advocate, on either side of such a debate, is likely to be more advocate than scientist and this has unfavorably altered the public view of both the nature of the scientific endeavor and the personal attributes of scientists.”

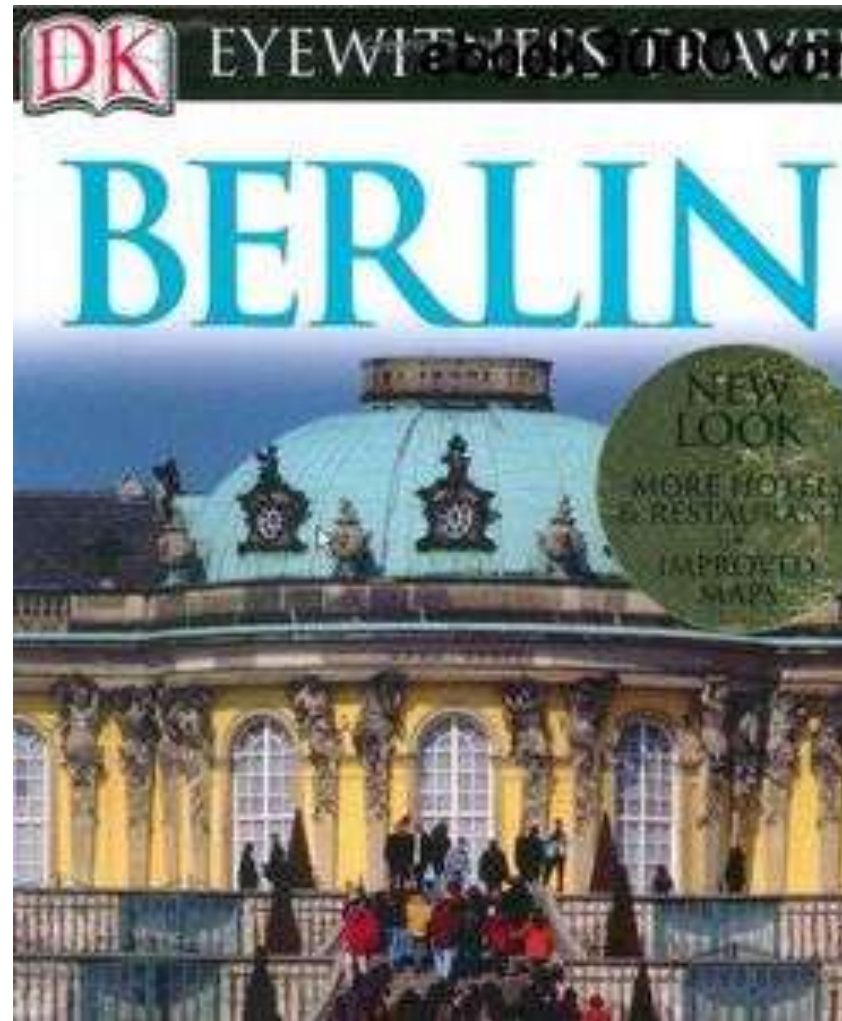
Philip Handler 1976

Handler, P., 1976. Science and hope in science: a resource for humankind. In: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Bicentennial Symposium, vol. 12.



President U.S. National Academy of Sciences, 1969-1981

Honest Broker of Policy Alternatives



Honest brokers of policy alternatives

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Overview

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- 2. Institutionalization is no guarantee of protection from politics or success**
- 3. Ultimately, we must take care of the integrity of our work**

Conclusions

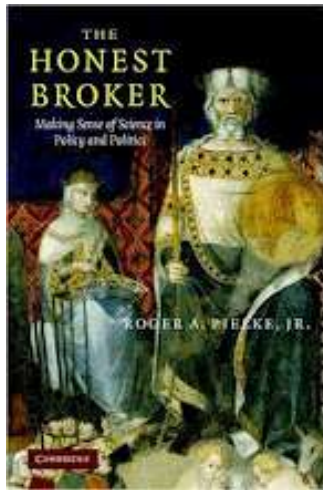
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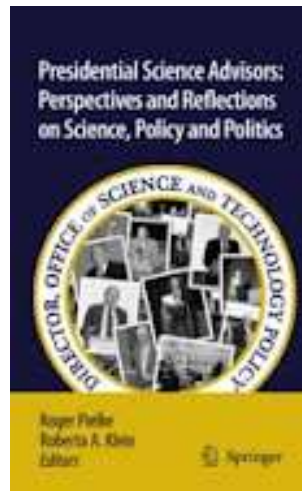
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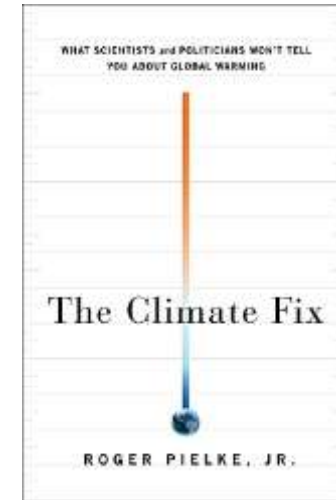
- pielke@colorado.edu
- Papers etc. can be downloaded from:
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- Weblog: <http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/>



2007



2010



2010