

## Radical transparency in global environmental governance

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**Abstract:** I will discuss transparency as a new frontier in global environmental governance. Of what does this new frontier consist? I situate a transparency turn partly in the rise of the 'audit society', the 'tyranny of metrics' and the privileging of measurement in neoliberal forms of global environmental governance; and partly in the push to make global environmental governance more accountable. I then consider the advent of *radical* transparency, which relies on novel digital technologies to generate ever greater quantities of real-time information about carbon emissions, resource use, or deforestation. Taken together, I consider how the push for ever more transparency about the behaviors and performance of key actors, and about underlying environmental quality, shapes the nature and effectiveness of global environmental governance. Does transparency help to transcend political conflicts and rationalize and improve decision-making, as often assumed; or is it also a site of politics and normative contestation? What diverse ends are served by the push for ever more transparency? Are we, perhaps, missing the forest for the trees, if we focus on being transparent rather than taking action? Or is transparency indeed transformative?