

Abstract:

Can contemporary democratic governments tackle climate crisis? Some argue that democracy has to be a central part of a strategy to deal with climate change. Others argue that experience shows it not to be up to the challenge in the time from available—that it will require a stronger hand, even a form of eco-authoritarianism. While this presentation supports the case for environmental democracy, it argues that establishing and maintaining democratic practices will be difficult during the global climate turmoil ahead, especially in the face of states of emergency. Without ignoring the global dimensions of the crisis, this presentation puts forward an alternative path found in the theory and practices of participatory environmental governance embodied in growing global eco-local movements. These vibrant social-ecological projects not only speak to the crisis ahead, but are already established and thriving on the ground, including eco-communes, ecovillages, eco-neighbourhoods and local transition initiatives. With the help of these ideas and projects, the task is to influence environmental political theory in ways that can be of assistance to those who will face climate crisis in its full magnitude.

Bio:

Frank Fischer is research scholar at Humboldt University of Berlin and research fellow at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam. Until 2015, he was Distinguished Professor of Politics and Global Affairs at Rutgers University in the USA. He has published numerous books, a. o. *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice* (with H. Gottweis), *Democracy and Expertise, Citizens, Experts and the Environment*, *Democracy and Expertise*, and most recently *Climate Crisis and the Democratic Prospect: Participatory Governance in Sustainable Communities*. He is also one of the editors of the *Critical Policy Studies* journal. In addition, he has received various awards, including the Harold Lasswell and Aaron Wildavsky Awards for contributions to the field of public policy studies.