P03 / Climate Change and the Future of Democracy I

Topic : POLICY DISCOURSE AND CRITICAL POLICY RESEARCH

Chair : Rosana Boullosa (University of Brasilia/Brazil and Enap/Brazil)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Climate change raises massive challenges not only to environmental policy and law but also to the democratic process in which such policy and law are enacted and implemented. These challenges can be divided into several groups in two dimensions. One dimension is a spatial unit of political community: we can distinguish between national, regional, and global levels. The other concerns types of climate policy, the most relevant one among which is a distinction between mitigation and adaptation. These two dimensions help us to understand and assess the burgeoning literature on democracy in the context of climate change. In the past three decades, many authors have emphasized the significance of citizens' deliberation on this problem and participation in their society's political processes in attempting to reduce various forms of environmental degradation including climate change. One feature of these authors' approach is thus to largely focus on the national level of democratic decision making. Yet climate change is obviously a global problem in that no one on the globe can circumvent its adverse impacts, and so we should not dismiss global or regional level of decision making. Another feature of the current literature is to concentrate on mitigation, reflecting the mitigation-oriented tendency of conventional climate policies. Despite numerous efforts of mitigation made by international community and some societies therein, however, greenhouse gas emissions have been so far steadily increasing rather than declining. Also, it is very uncertain, to say the least, whether the emissions will be effectively reduced in the near future. Therefore, we need to consider not merely mitigation policy but also adaptation policy. Still other problem with the existing literature is that researchers have paid scant attention to the question of how citizens' collective deliberation and decision can deal with the long-term character of climate change. Given the undeniable fact that it is difficult, if not impossible, for many of us to seriously concern about the wellbeing of remote future generations who will come into existence long after we die, it is an immense challenge to design democratic processes in which citizens, their representatives, and experts could adequately address temporally far-reaching environmental problems such as climate change.

Keeping these gaps in the literature in mind, this panel aims to address two groups of research questions. First, what shape would democratic processes catering to the need for effective mitigation make, given predictable long-term impacts of climate change? What role could citizens and experts play in such processes? How would global, regional, and national levels of democracy interface with one another? Second, if the current attempts of mitigation did not successfully stabilize the earth temperature, what political process could we design to adapt to dangerous climate change? Would we have a new, innovative, and active form of democracy? Or, would we be forced to compromise democracy for the sake of human survival and security?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Climate change raises massive challenges not only to environmental policy and law but also to the democratic process in which such policy and law are enacted and implemented. In the past three decades, there has been the burgeoning literature on prospects and promises of democracy in the context of climate change. Many authors have emphasized the significance of citizens' deliberation and participation in their society's political processes in attempting to mitigate climate change. One feature of these authors' approach is to largely focus on the national level of democratic decision making. Yet climate change is obviously a global problem, and so we should not dismiss global or regional level of decision making. Another feature is to concentrate on mitigation, reflecting the mitigation-oriented tendency of conventional climate policies. However, greenhouse gas emissions have been so far steadily increasing, and it is very uncertain whether the emissions will be effectively reduced in the near future. Therefore, we need to consider not merely mitigation but also adaptation. Still other problem is that researchers have paid scant attention to the question of how citizens' deliberation can deal with the long-term character of climate change. Given that it is considerably difficult for many of us to seriously concern about the wellbeing of remote future generations, it is a challenge to design democratic processes in which citizens, their representatives, and experts could adequately address the temporal far-reachingness of climate change.

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First, what shape would democratic processes catering to the need for effective mitigation make, given predictable long-term impacts of climate change? What role could citizens and experts play in such processes? How would global, regional, and national levels of decision making interface with one another? Second, if the current attempts of mitigation did not successfully stabilize the earth’s temperature, how could we design political processes to adapt to dangerous climate change? Would we have a new, innovative, and active form of democracy? Or, would we be forced to compromise democracy for the sake of human survival and security?

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Session 1

Thursday, June 27th 08:00 to 10:00 (MB 2.265)

Discussants

Doug Torgerson (Trent University, Canada)

Piyapong Boossabong (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

What Challenge to Democracy Will Climate Change Present?

Makoto Usami (Kyoto University)

Democratic Authority and Climate Change

Hirohide Takikawa (Rikkyo University)

Food and democracy in a warming world: a framework for critical policy analysis of the climate-food-democracy nexus

Julia Dennis (Humboldt University Berlin)

Peter Feindt (Wageningen University and Research Centre)

Frank Fischer (Humboldt University in Berlin)