

Climate Politics in a Radical Age

Sustainability transformations in light of backlash, populism, oligarchy, and authoritarianism

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Project description

Sustainability politics is caught in a radical age. On all sides of the political spectrum, protests are hardening, social movements are emerging, and sustainability transitions are under pressure. In response to sustainability transitions, we are witnessing a new wave of populism, nativism, and environmental backsliding. In some places, even bastions of democracy, authoritarian forces now threaten to gain political control. The resistance to change is palpable. So deeply entrenched are our unsustainable aspirations that any attempt to question them is widely received as a threat to people's freedom. This backlash is at the heart of this research, through the idea of 'captured futures', the idea that the 21st century is caught in the dreams and aspirations of the 20th century. How can we think about climate politics in this radical age? How does it relate to authoritarian forces? How can we make sustainable and lasting policy in an age of polarization and radicality?

In this research project, we will investigate how shared images of the future come about and how we can employ futuring to build a better world. Key questions will be:

- Why is this era so radical? What are the underlying drivers? How can we address this radical age?
- What are key populist and media developments that lead to this radical age? What is the risk of ecofascist discourses? What will be the role of political violence?
- What are research gaps and promising avenues for further research? What are good case studies to determine how to address climate politics in this radical age?

In this project, we will be diving into the 'climate politics in a radical age', aiming to build a basis for a larger research proposal about the intersection between authoritarian forces, populism, and climate politics in contemporary society. We are looking for a student assistant who would help with literature research, identifying case studies, and creating an overview of predominant theories on this topic.

Job requirements

For this assistantship, we will look for someone who cares deeply about the on-going climate crisis, especially in light of cultural and political backlash, who wants to help us understand where this backlash comes from, and how to respond to it. As such, we would look to someone with an interest in doing desk research identifying and classifying literature, trace historical developments, and overview the literature on *backlash*, *populism*, and *authoritarianism*. You will be guided in what to search for and where to look.