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**Symbiosis - School of Political Studies
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policy notes

CAN DEMOCRACY SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT?



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PEOPLE POWER FOR CLIMATE ACTION

By Michael Bloss, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament
December 2020

Why should democracies be better at climate action?

- » *democratic governments* have **incentives to protect the environment** as environmental degradation and climate breakdown are **issues affecting the many**.
- » *democracies* allow for **public interest litigation** - an increasingly used tool for climate action.
- » *non-democratic governments* have **incentives to exploit nature for short-term power gains**.

Empirical studies

- ✓ Studies show **links between democracy and environmental outcomes**, e.g.
 - air pollution
 - climate mitigation commitments
 - broader environmental indices (EPI – Environmental Performance Index)
- ✓ Other factors such as effectiveness of government, corruption levels and income levels also have effects.

EU citizens want climate action...



Source: European Commission

... and so does the European Parliament

- ✓ The EP voted **in favour of a climate law** much stronger than the Commission's initial proposal
 - GHG emissions reduction of 60% by 2030 (instead of 55%)
 - carbon budget
 - European Climate Change Council providing scientific expert advice
 - phase-out of subsidies for fossil fuels
 - improved access to courts for citizens to sue governments over inadequate action

Mutual reinforcement

- »» The **poorest and most marginalized** are often most impacted by climate change and the fiercest defenders of nature – **listening to their voices protects both the climate and democracy.**
- »» **democratization and decarbonization** of our economy go **hand in hand**: e.g. decentralized renewable energy systems
- »» **democratic decision-making** can secure better buy-in for difficult decisions

Our work on environmental democracy

- ✓ The **Aarhus Convention (Europe/Central Asia)** enshrines rights to access to information, participation and access to justice in environmental matters.
- ✓ We are working to strengthen this on the European level **through the climate law and the revision of the Aarhus Regulation.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

By Petros Kokkalis, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
December 2020

Climate crisis

- ✓ **Climate change is happening**
- ✓ **Disastrous impact on human health, natural environment, ecosystems and economy**
- ✓ **The Paris Agreement**

“Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 C above pre industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 C above pre industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change”

- ✓ **Ten years to save the planet**
- ✓ **Reduce emissions by 7.6% annually from 2020 to 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5 C (IPCC, 2019)**
- ✓ **Temperatures have already increased by 1.1 C**
- ✓ **Business as usual would lead to a 3.2 C increase**
- ✓ **Step up efforts in the EU and globally**

»»» **November 2019:** the European Parliament declares climate and environmental emergency in Europe and globally

»»» **December 2019:** the European Green Deal

»»» **Climate Neutrality by 2050** - the green transition

A fair transition

- ✓ **The transition to a climate neutral economy will entail challenges for everyone**
- ✓ **Certain members of society, regions and sectors will suffer more**
- ✓ **Leave no one behind ensure a just transition**
- ✓ **In the EU: Just Transition Mechanism**

Public Participation

»»» Public acceptability **can enable or inhibit the implementation of policies and measures** to tackle climate change

»»» Public participation is required **to guarantee the just transition** to climate neutrality

»»» **Participate - understand - raise awareness - change individual behaviour - share**

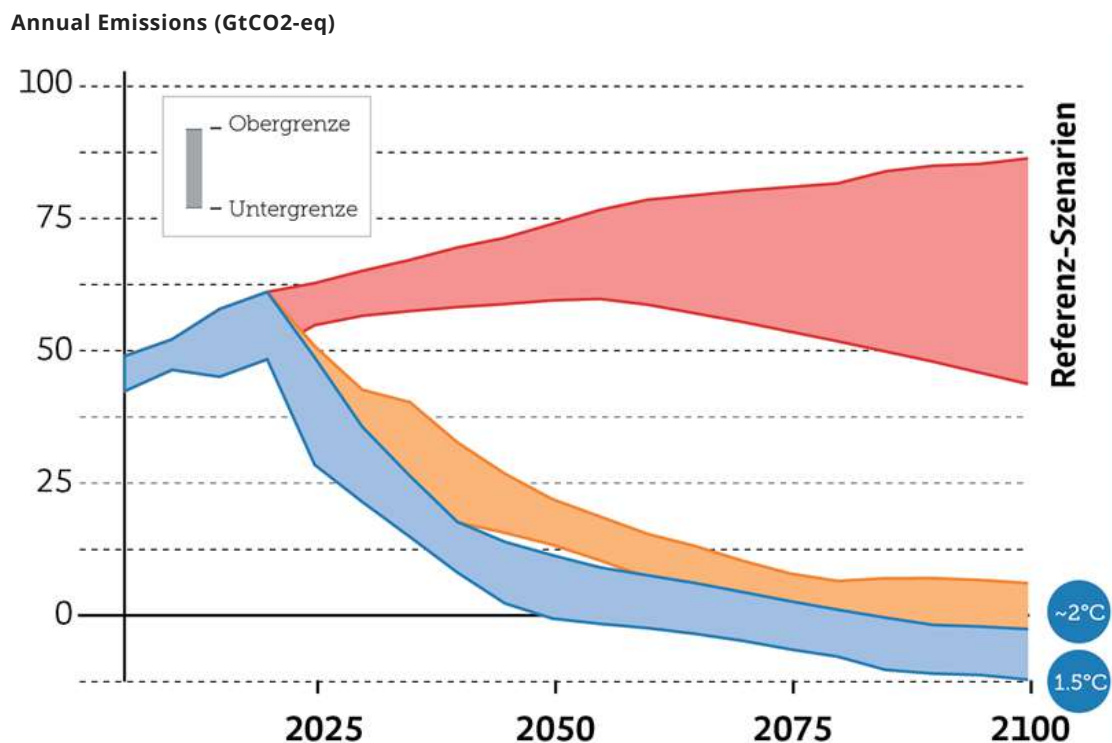
- ✓ **Participatory budgeting**
- ✓ **Citizens science**
- ✓ **Constructive dialogue**
- »»» **increased community acceptance and support for climate measures**
- ✓ **European Climate Pact**

ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY

By Michael Jakob Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC), Berlin
December 2020

1. Motivation

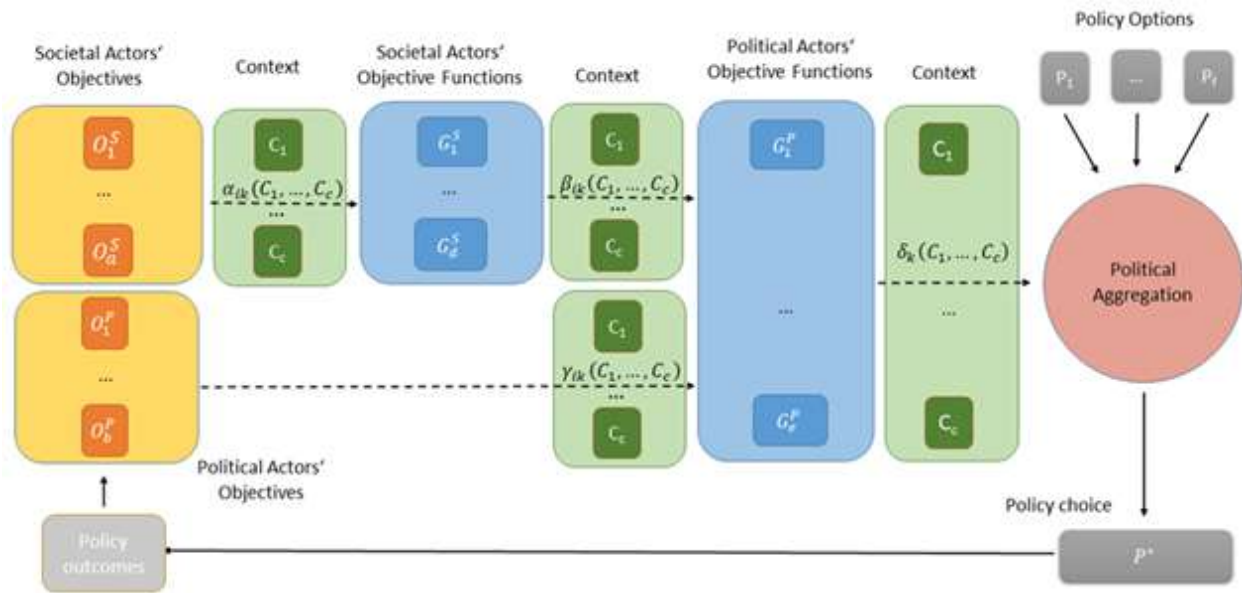
- ✓ Paris Agreement requires rapid emission reductions
- ✓ Spread of 'net-zero' targets
- ✓ Need *policies* for a transition to a low-carbon economy
- ✓ Examples: carbon pricing, subsidies for R&D, efficiency standards...



Adopted from Edenhofer and Jakob (2017)

Political Economy of Energy and Climate Policy

- ✓ **Political economy:** Who gets what, why, and how?
- ✓ Policies are implemented that best meet the **objectives of those actors that have the greatest influence** on their formulation

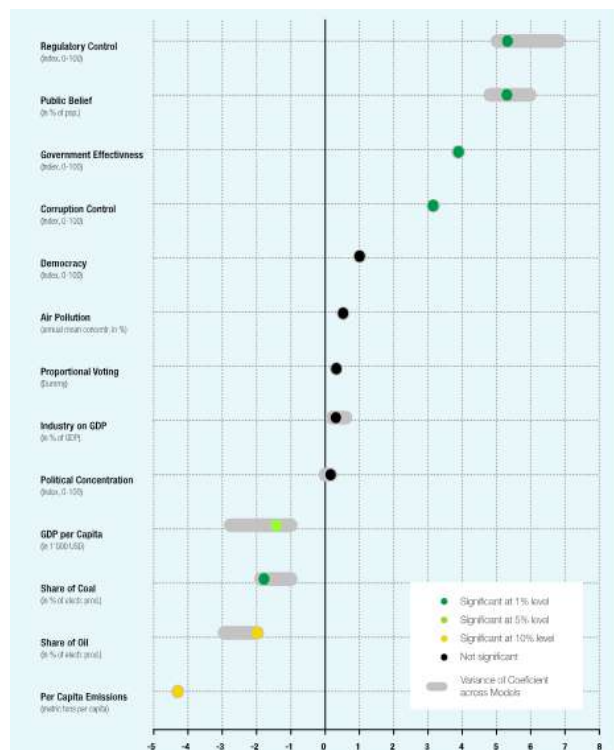


Jakob et al (2020)

Determinants of Climate Measures

Support for climate policy crucially depends on:

- ✓ **Public support** for climate change mitigation
- ✓ Governance to **reign in vested interests:**
Quality of regulation, control of corruption...



Levi, Flachsland & Jakob (2020)

2. Public Support for Climate Policy

Do Policy Makers Care About Climate?

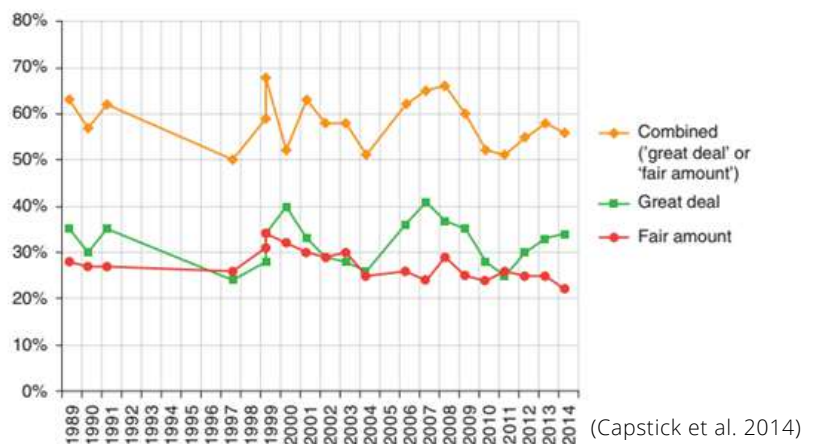
If climate **policy attracts voters**, the issue will likely be picked up by policy makers:

- ✓ Joe Biden's climate plan
- ✓ Markus Söder's green turn (and possible candidate to become Germany's chancellor)

Public Attitudes

US 1989-2014: about **50-70% of population concerned** about climate change

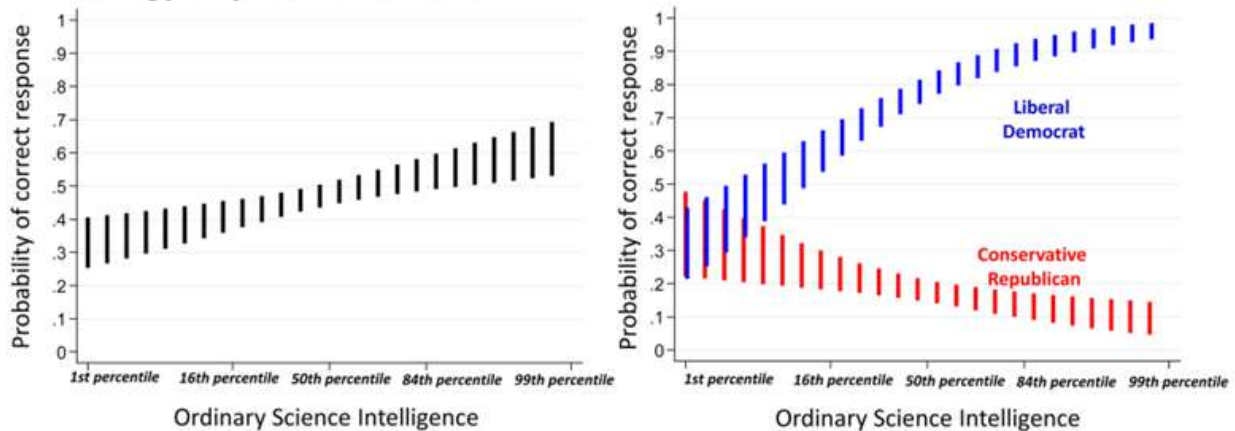
FFF is a global movement that has had **massive influence** on the public discussion and policy making



Political support for climate policy is a matter of **political identity** - clearly divided across party lines

Support for policy specific instruments depends on **worldviews** (Cherry et al. 2017)

There is "solid evidence" of recent global warming due "mostly" to "human activity such as burning fossil fuels." [agree, disagree]

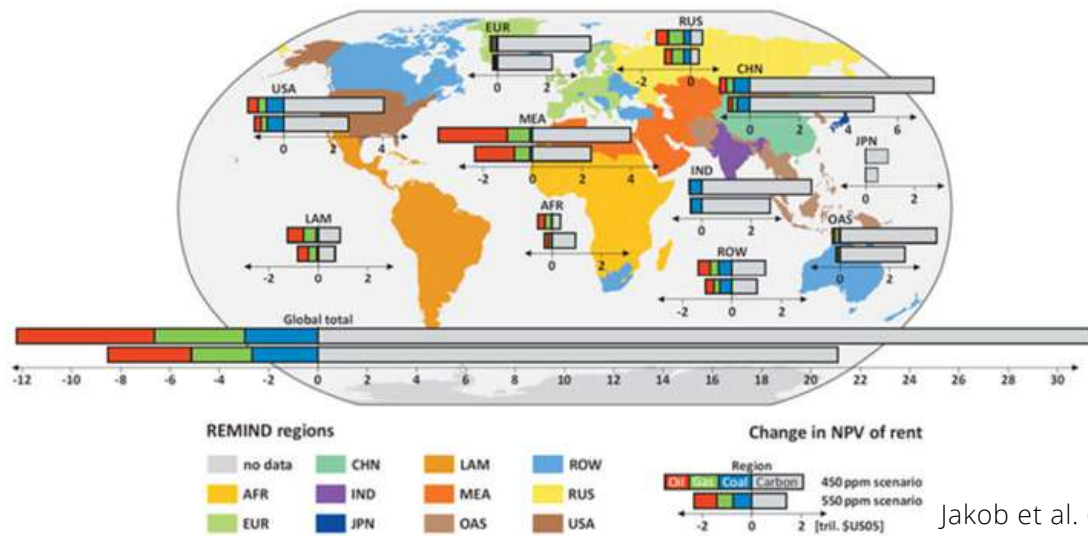


Kahan (2015)

3. Resistance of Special Interests

Stranded Assets

- ✓ Ambitious climate policy would **reduce fossil wealth** by about US\$ 10 trn
- ✓ **Losses concentrated** on few actors
- ✓ Owners of fossil fuels hence aim to weaken climate policy (**Olson's asymmetry**)



Special Interests

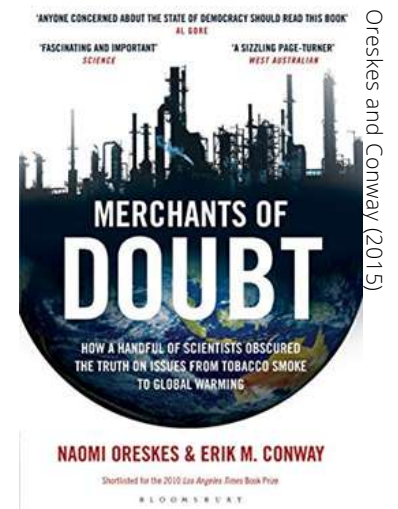
- ✓ **Lobbying**, e.g. campaign contributions, provision of information, public relations
- ✓ **Bribery** to either influence legislation or enforcement; revolving doors etc.
- ✓ **Casting doubt** on scientific findings

Dealing with Vested Interests

Create winners: e.g. policy sequencing, build up green industries

Compensate losers: offer support to those who most severely affected by climate policy:

- Owners of fossil resources and power plants
- Workers
- Regions
- Certain consumer groups (e.g. commuters)



4. Can democracy save the environment?

Lessons for Democracy

- **Liberal democracy:** Compromise between different values, world views, etc. This is necessarily a slow process
- Are **authoritarian regimes more efficient?** Perhaps in the short term, but could suffer from lack of (social and technological) invention in the long term
- Even if authoritarian regimes were more efficient, would it be desirable to live in an **'eco-dictatorship'**?
- **Active deliberative democracy** to deal with environmental issues: support from citizens + institutions that limit the influence of special interests

CAN DEMOCRACY SAVE THE CLIMATE? THE CASE OF CLIMATE LEGISLATION

By Dimitris Ibrahim, Climate & Energy Policy Officer, WWF Greece
December 2020

Climate neutrality in Europe

- ✓ Paris Agreement target: “well below 2oC, pursue efforts to reach 1.5oC”
- ✓ IPCC: 1.5 C = net zero emissions by 2050
- ✓ Overwhelming majority (92%) of EU citizens consider climate change a major threat and support measures to tackle it
- ✓ EP & EU Council endorsed climate neutrality target in 2019

European countries opt for climate laws

Existing: UK | Denmark | Finland | France | Ireland | Sweden | Netherlands | Germany | Austria | Bulgaria | Malta | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Switzerland

Expected: Spain | Latvia | Croatia | Luxembourg | Slovenia

EU Climate law under preparation

*Following the Paris Agreement **increasingly more European countries** choose climate framework laws to develop a robust governance system that sets the direction of travel for the transition to climate neutrality.*

Why a climate law?

- Enhances **robustness and cohesion** of climate policy under a new legislative framework
- Integrates **climate in all policy sectors** and encourages cooperation
- Strong signal of **political will** for long term actions to citizens and investors
- Builds **basis for future climate litigation** efforts

Important elements of effective climate legislation

- ✓ **Evidence based legislation**
- ✓ **Cross party collaboration & broad political support**
- ✓ **Robust governance system**
- ✓ **Public support through active citizen engagement**

Democracy in climate legislation

- ✓ **Evidence based legislation**
- ✓ **Cross party collaboration & broad political support**
- ✓ **Robust governance system**
- ✓ **Public support through active citizen engagement**

Science as

- Advisor
- Monitoring
- Facilitating dialogue

Citizen participation in climate law

EU Governance Regulation

- ✓ Promote and actively support **public consultation** (art.10)
- ✓ Establish **multi-level** climate and energy dialogues (art.11)

Some climate laws establish **dedicated bodies** or **platforms** to further institutionalise stakeholder engagement.

Further action needed to enhance **transparency** and promote **public engagement** and **multi-level participation**.

The case study of Ireland

Irish Citizen Assembly

- » Convened around **a number of policy areas** including climate
- » **Goal:** Ensure climate action is a central pillar of Ireland's policy-making through new governance structure and carbon tax
- » Assembly's resolution paved the way for the country's **"landmark" climate action plan** and **net-zero target**, both announced in 2019

A Citizens' Assembly brings citizens together to discuss and consider important legal and policy issues facing Ireland. The Assembly then makes recommendations and reports back to the Oireachtas.

The case study of France

French Citizens' Convention for Ecological Transition

- » Established in April 2019 in **response to "yellow vest" protests**
- » Charged with making specific legislative proposals towards the goal of **"reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, in a spirit of social justice"**

A climate law proposal in Greece

- » An initiative led by **WWF Greece** in collaboration with **Vouliwatch**
- » A **bottom up, participatory process** to develop a climate law proposal
 - ✓ Science based
 - ✓ Consultation in two phases
 - ✓ Multi level dialogues with different stakeholders
- » **Overall aim** to strengthen national climate policy through social buy in view of COP26

ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY IS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

By Carla García Zendejas, Director, People, Land & Resources, Center for International Environmental Law
December 2020

Since 1989 Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) has used the **power of law** to protect the environment, promote human rights, and ensure a just and sustainable society.



CIEL seeks a world where the law reflects the interconnection between humans and the environment, respects the limits of the planet, protects the dignity and equality of each person, and encourages all of earth's inhabitants to live in balance with each other.

Today we recognize that the greatest threat to human rights is climate change itself. As the climate crisis worsens, so do the threats to the **realization of human rights**.

Environmental Democracy...

Is based on the idea that **land and natural resource decisions must adequately and equitably address citizens' interests**.

At its core, environmental democracy involves three mutually reinforcing rights that operate best in combination: the ability for people to **freely access information** on environmental quality and problems, to **participate meaningfully in decision-making**, and to seek **enforcement of environmental laws or compensation for damages**.



CAN DEMOCRACY SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT?



SYMBIOSIS

International Law and Practice

- ✓ Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- ✓ Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination 1965
- ✓ Int'l Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966
- ✓ Int'l Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights 1966
- ✓ Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979
- ✓ Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- ✓ ILO Convention 169, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 1989

Access Rights are at the heart of Environmental Democracy

1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the...
Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

Principle 10 seeks to ensure that every person has **access to information**, can **participate** in the decision-making process and has **access to justice** in environmental matters with the aim of safeguarding the right to a healthy and sustainable environment for present and future generations.

➤➤➤ Aarhus Convention 1998

➤➤➤ Escazú Agreement** 2018

Colombia



Comité para la Defensa del Agua y el Páramo de Santurbán

Chile



Coordinadora Ciudadana No Alto Maipo y Ecosistemas

Environmental Defenders**



<https://rightsinddevelopment.org/uncalculatedrisks/>



- We must ensure **full and effective access to information and participation of civil society** in the planning of any future climate action.
- **Taking a rights-based approach** leads to more effective climate action because it incorporates the voices and knowledge of indigenous peoples, women, youth, and local communities, ensures their full and effective participation, and considers how best to avoid negative environmental and social impacts.

There will be no limiting global warming to 1.5°C without:

- ✓ Education, information, and community approaches, including those that are informed by **indigenous knowledge and local knowledge, can accelerate the wide-scale behaviour changes** consistent with adapting to and limiting global warming to 1.5°C.
- ✓ Social justice and equity are core aspects of climate-resilient development pathways that aim to limit global warming to 1.5°C as they address challenges and inevitable trade-offs, widen opportunities, and **ensure that options, visions, and values are deliberated, between and within countries and communities, without making the poor and disadvantaged worse off** (high confidence).

Chile's Historic Referendum



On October 25, 2020 in the midst of pandemic more than 7.5 million Chilean citizens turned out to cast their vote in the referendum. **78% voted in favor of a new constitution.**

And 79% voted for the new constitution to be drafted by a specially elected body of 155 citizens - made up of half women and half men. This will be the **first joint body to draft a Constitution in the world.**

DEMOCRACY AND THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNING PROTECTED AREAS IN GREECE

By Spyros Psaroudas, General Coordinator of CALLISTO
December 2020

What is a protected area?

Protected areas are sites, which receive protection due to their recognized natural, ecological or cultural values.

According the definition of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature): *“Protected Area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.*

Why do we protect areas?

They act as **places of refuge for our biological resources**, in some cases even as last resorts for saving them from extinction.

They serve as **reservoirs of resources** and as **laboratories for science and research**, to establish baselines and to understand the behaviour of natural ecosystems.

They serve as **sources of inspiration** for what people and nature can really achieve by supporting and nurturing each other, in some cases by maintaining a separateness between them.

Recently, the **Covid-19 outbreak** reminded that *“the health of humans, animals and ecosystems are interconnected. Human incursions into natural areas for agriculture, logging, mining and other purposes, increased contact between human and wildlife. This enables the spread of diseases from animal populations to humans who have little or no resistance to them”*.

The importance of protected areas has been brought to the fore at the **threat of human-induced global warming**.

As the world faces environmental change at a speed and on a scale not previously experienced in human history, **these places provide us with some degree of stability and security**.

How should we protect areas?

IUCN defines four governance types:

-  **Type A. Governance by government:** Federal or national ministry/agency in charge; sub-national ministry or agency in charge (e.g. at regional, provincial, municipal level); government-delegated management (e.g. to NGO).
-  **Type B. Shared governance:** Trans-boundary governance (formal and informal arrangements between two or more countries); collaborative governance (through various ways in which diverse actors and institutions work together); joint governance (pluralist board or other multi-party governing body).
-  **Type C. Private governance:** Conserved areas established and run by individual landowners; non-profit organizations (e.g. NGOs, universities) and for-profit organizations (e.g. corporate landowners).
-  **Type D. Governance by Indigenous peoples and local communities:** Indigenous peoples' conserved areas and territories - established and run by Indigenous peoples; community conserved areas – established and run by local communities.

»»» The environment and its management depend directly on **local communities**.

»»» "**Think globally, act locally**", is a classic slogan of the environmental movement.

»»» Participatory processes in environmental management issues are now emerging as an **essential civil right and obligation of the state** under the European legislation:

✓ **Aarhus Convention:** Recognize the right of the citizen to information and to express an opinion on forthcoming plans, measures and programs concerning the environment.

✓ **Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information:** Set out the basic terms and conditions of, and practical arrangements for, its exercise.

✓ **Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy:** A special article is dedicated on the participation of the public.

Governance of Protected Areas in Greece

For many years, the Governance of Protected Areas was made by the Forestry Service. **PAs were dealt as Forest Parks**, even in cases where the protected value had nothing to do with a forested area (e.g. Sounio).

Namely, the only governance type applied in Greece in the 20th Century was the "Type A" according IUCN ("Governance by government").

Starting **from the end of 20th Century and the new environmental policies adopted by European Union**, Greece created new Protected Areas and Parks, such as the Zakynthos and N. Sporades Marine Parks.

The obligation of Greece to designate and manage efficiently Natura 2000 sites, made necessary to **revise the governance type for Protected Areas in Greece**, in force till then.

In the beginning of 21st century, the Governance structure for the Greek Network of protected areas was modernized: The Greek government chose a **"shared governance" type for the Management Bodies** that were established under the Law 3044 of 2002.

The new Management Bodies were established for the **protection and management of several types of protected areas**, besides forests (wetlands, marine parks, agricultural landscape, etc.).

Apart state authorities (Forestry Service and Ministries), local governments, social groups, cooperatives, professional chambers and environmental NGOs are represented in the **Boards of the Management Bodies**.







Therefore, **for the first time in Greece, a “shared governance” system was applied** for more than 18 years of operation.

This way, Protected Areas became among other **“laboratories” of participatory processes** and decentralized governing schemes!

Collaboration of diverse stakeholders in the framework of a multi-party governing body is not an easy task, especially in countries like Greece where experience from shared governance models are rather rare.

Nevertheless, over time, **the benefits of this governance type became apparent**.

Benefits of the shared governance type in the Protected Areas*

-  The **knowledge and experience that the locals have** for the valuable characteristics of the area but also for the problems and the ways of their solution **are fully utilized**.
-  The **sustainability of protection and management measures is ensured** and the resources that may have been wasted due to their non-implementation are saved.
-  **Potential conflicts between stakeholders are minimized or avoided**, as the issues at stake have been identified and discussed from the outset.
-  **Continuity and consistency in the conservation efforts is ensured**, since the local community accepts and adopts a management strategy that does not change with the respective changes of persons in the local self-government.
-  The **contact and the relationship of mutual trust between “foreigners”** (e.g. the scientists or the Members of the Board of a Management Body) **and the locals are ensured**, as long as they jointly submit their knowledge, plan and implement.
-  The **“culture” of participatory processes is cultivated**.

* According the “Best Practice Guide on PA Management”, WWF Greece-YPEHODE, 2003

The new Law 4685/2020 “Modernization of environmental legislation”

➤➤➤ The Law 4685/2020 abolishes the Management Bodies and replaces them with “**Management Units**”, which will be the **local antennas of the “Agency of Natural Environment and Climate Change”** (ΟΦΥΠΕΚΑ), based in Athens.

➤➤➤ In the explanatory memorandum accompanying the text of the Law, the **main argument used** (without any documentation) was that *“the model of the Management Bodies ... in practice proved ineffective, as there was no coordination in the governance of these areas”*.

➤➤➤ There was **no explanation** as to why the staffing, strengthening and upgrading of the existing structures of the Ministry of Environment was not selected for coordination of the Management Bodies.

➤➤➤ In addition, **responsibilities that until recently had the Management Bodies**, such as the advisory power during the process of environmental licensing of projects and activities in their areas of responsibility, **were simply removed** from the Units that will replace the Management Bodies.

Is it “modern” the new system of governing Protected Areas in Greece?

➤➤➤ The Agency is governed by a **seven-member Board of Directors**.

➤➤➤ **Two of the members are “ex-officio”** the Head of the General Directorate of Environmental Policy of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and the President of the Committee “FYSI 2000” (Nature 2000).

➤➤➤ The most important is that **the decentralized and participatory character of the institution is seriously affected**: No participation of stakeholders is foreseen, neither in the local Management Units nor in the central administration of OFYΠΕΚΑ.

➤➤➤ The operation of “**Management Committees**”, envisaged by the law at the local level, does not compensate for the lost participatory character of the institution, as they are neither mandatory nor have any decisive competence.

Finally, the replacement of the Boards in the Management Bodies (in which the Chairman and members participated voluntarily) by paid directors and managers in the Management Units and the centralized administration of OFYPEKA, corresponds to **a business model** (similar to that in the private sector), which will favor attempts to establish private financial criteria in the management of Protected Areas and biodiversity (which should be treated as commons or public goods).

In any case, **the new system destabilizes and prescribes a deterioration of environmental protection** in all Protected Areas of the country, for an indefinite period of time.

Apparently, this is not a “design failure”. On the contrary, it seems that this is a planned deregulation of the management of the most sensitive and important areas of the country!

I personally believe that the new system of governing Protected Areas in Greece is not a “modern” one. It’s not an attempt to “coordinate” the management of Protected Areas of the country (as government officials falsely claim).

It represents an **effort to impose vertical-governmental and especially “Minister-centered” control**, in order to avoid “unpleasant surprises” and to stop environmental protection from being an ... “obstacle to development”!

“Management bodies is currently the only realistic and proven management scheme for the protected areas of Greece, which after 20 years of operation has undoubtedly contributed to the consolidation of the need to protect the Natura 2000 network”...

...“Moreover, they represent a participatory management model which has taken significant steps to ensure the consensus of local communities towards the achievement of broader national and international environmental objectives”.

9 October 2019, Joint Statement of 13 Environmental NGOs of Greece

Can Democracy Save the Environment?

✓ I do not know if Democracy is capable of saving the Environment in the world we live in.





✓ However, I do believe that democratic, decentralized and participatory schemes of governing Protected Areas have already proven to be the most effective ones!

ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY AT THE FOREFRONT





By George Sarelakos, Co-Founder, Aegean Rebreath
Vassilis Stamogiannis, Programme Manager, Aegean Rebreath
December 2020

Our environmental footprint

Environmental statistics

-  **Layers of permafrost** already thawing despite scientists' expectations (frozen for at least 70 years more) (University of Alaska Fairbanks)
-  **¾ of the land-based environment & 66% of the marine environment** significantly altered by human action (U.N.)
-  **1 million animal & plant species** threatened with extinction (U.N.)
-  **150 million tones of plastics** accumulated in the world oceans; 4.6-12.7 million tones added every year (E.C.)

Global response

-  **Policy framework has developed in a fragmented way**, different treaties and agreements addressing different environmental issues
-  **The lack of a complete binding framework** has huge implications on the effectiveness of environmental policies
-  We need to **focus more on environmental restoration rather than protection**
-  **The rise of global environmental movement** and individual responsibility are very important

Global funding: Outcomes?

- Governments spend approximately **USD 500 billion per year in support that is potentially harmful to biodiversity (OECD, 2019)**, i.e. five to six times more than total spending for biodiversity
- Scaling back expenditure that harm biodiversity, would reduce biodiversity finance needs by reducing pressure on biodiversity, even if finance flows harmful to biodiversity were not redirected towards the conservation of biodiversity
- We need to adopt measures to evaluate the effectiveness of biodiversity finance flows, and related policy instruments

Environment in the global agenda





Developed and developing world

- Over the next 30 years, most of the world's population growth will occur in the **urban areas of poor countries**
- Developing countries **depend heavily on natural resources** and face difficult policy choices
- There should be a **rationalization of global economy based on sustainable development**
- Developing countries, to continue developing in a sustainable way, will require **substantial support from developed countries and the international community**

Consumer markets vs citizen wellbeing





- According to U.N. estimates the global population is expected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050.
- In order to provide the natural resources for sustaining current lifestyle we would require the equivalent of almost three planets
- There are several studies indicating that **the over-consumption of a wealthy minority is fuelling the climate crisis**
- The **links between pollution and health are very strong but insufficiently appreciated** in the global health agenda

Need for a new approach: Environmental democracy

- 
Environmental democracy: meaningful participation by the public is critical to ensuring that land and natural resource decisions adequately and equitably address citizens' interests
- 
 Citizens have a **major role to play in promoting environmental policies and influencing** the behaviour of public authorities, business and consumers
- 
 We need to **empower people** to access information, participate in decision making and to seek justice
- 
 We **need to combat fake news and make extensive evidence** on climate change and environmental degradation available to the public in order to influence policy development

Citizens at the forefront

Aegean Rebreath: A successful social experiment

- 
 As divers and beach lovers, **degradation of marine environment** made us very concerned
- 
 We believe in **intergenerational justice** because future generations deserve to enjoy and benefit from abundant, healthy, 'breathing' seas
- 
 We believe in **environmental democracy** because our seas belong to all and we all have a role to play in preserving them
- 
 We believe in **civic responsibility** because there's no waiting for someone else to fix the problem. It's up to us

Building a network at national and local levels

Our **bottom-up methodology** is based on 4 main pillars of action:

1. We **reinforce the concept of environmental democracy** on a **local scale**
2. We **identify engaged local authorities, individuals, or groups** to help us map environmental problems and opportunities
3. We identify our **strongest community leaders** to support the establishment of Marine Litter Collection Stations which serve as hubs for enhancing civic engagement and developing good practices
4. We **share the findings of good practices at local level** with the aim of shaping a new national model for the protection of the marine environment

Engaging & aligning stakeholders: Replicating local success

- **Local authorities** have an important role to play in ensuring their interests are represented properly! However this is not always the case
- **By engaging in improving their surrounding environment**, local societies get to actually see the results of their actions and develop a sense of pride for their progress
Local authorities have an **increased interest on adopting & communicating good practices**.
- In this way, local actors are empowered to participate in decision making by influencing local and regional administration. **Local societies then get a better understanding** of how all those policies affect their territory
- By replicating good practices, **local societies draw national governments interest**

Engaging & aligning stakeholders: Harnessing industry & media

- Global climate change presents the **most pressing issues** for industry, government and civil society
- **Need to redefine current views** on corporate social responsibility. Building relationships between corporations and their multiple stakeholders, in order to apply consumer pressure toward social responsiveness (e.g. bans on single use plastics)
In Aegean Rebreath we see **CSR as an enhanced means to influence change**, not only
- by designing activities to be supported by private companies, but also by bringing knowledge back in their processes and thus pushing our supporters to switch to more sustainable practices
- **By consulting with international and national firms**, we encourage them to align their production and CSR programs with proper environmental practices

"In a few decades, the relationship between the environment, resources and conflict may seem almost as obvious as the connection we see today between human rights, democracy and peace"

Wangari Maathai

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