

Post-factuality, Post-truth and Denial: Is eco-politics losing its objective foundations?

IGN Research Seminar - with Frank Fischer, IASS Potsdam

Thursday, 31 January 2019

15:00 – 17:30, D5.3.033

In his talk, *Knowledge Politics and Post-Truth in U.S. Climate Change Denial: On the social construction of alternative facts*, Frank Fischer examines the politics of knowledge involved in climate change denial in the US. He makes the claim that climate change deniers are correct in that they recognize that research outcomes are not proof per se but always socially constructed. Fischer, a proponent of social constructivism and concerned environmentalist, underlines that a story is attached to all data and that this story may often be more important than the data themselves. In his talk, Fischer criticizes environmentalists for too much hiding behind numbers. Numbers are, of course, crucially important, but environmentalists need to better embed them in accounts of the social and political impacts climate change is likely to have. Fischer presents the current focus on fact checking as a political impasse. For him, the only way out of this impasse is the establishment of new, common discursive grounds that bridge the current gap between climate change deniers and environmentalists.

Frank Fischer's input will be followed by a short commentary by Margaret Haderer (IGN) titled *Moving beyond Climate Facts towards Climate Stories: Where is the public for the stories to be heard?*, and some questions by the discussant, Felix Butzlaff (IGN). IGN Research Seminars seek to facilitate and foster open and engaged discussions. Also in this event, great space will be given to the latter.

Frank Fischer is affiliate scholar at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam. Until 2015, he served as Distinguished Professor of Politics and Global Affairs at Rutgers University, New Jersey. He is one of the editors of the journal *Critical Policy Studies* and the author of many articles and awarded books, such as *Citizens, Experts and the Environment* (Duke University Press, 2000), *Democracy and Expertise: Reorienting Policy Inquiry* (Oxford University Press, 2009), and *Climate Crisis and the Democratic Prospect* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Margaret Haderer is a post-doctoral researcher at the IGN who works on the FWF-funded research project *Urban Experiments in Socio-Ecological Change*.

Felix Butzlaff is also a post-doctoral researcher at the IGN. His research focuses on democracy, participation, political parties and social movements.

Please register at: IGN@wu.ac.at