



## **Exeter – Fudan Global Thought Network**

### **Citizens' Climate Assemblies: From Local to Global**

**Online Workshop, 30 November 2021**

**10.00-11.30am UK time/18.00-19.30 Beijing Time**

**Speakers:** Dr Alice Moseley, Dr Fionnguala Sherry-Brennan and Dr Xuan Qin

**Discussants:** Dr Lise Herman and Dr Catherine Owen

This 90-minute online workshop showcases emerging research into two instances of online public deliberation on questions of how to respond to the climate emergency: the [Devon Climate Assembly](#) and the [Global Climate Assembly](#). The talks will address the role of citizens' assemblies in shaping climate policy, questions of scale in creating online deliberative mechanisms, and the use of citizens' assemblies in creating cross-cultural dialogue on climate issues.

The workshop will be of great relevance to those interested in environmental politics and in deliberative governance more broadly. All welcome!

Access to the Zoom meeting can be obtained from Catherine Owen – please send an e-mail to [C.A.M.Owen@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:C.A.M.Owen@exeter.ac.uk)

**Dr Alice Moseley and Dr Fionnguala Sherry-Brennan, University of Exeter**

The majority of local authorities across the UK as well as the UK national parliament and devolved governments have, over the past two years, made official declarations of a climate and environmental emergency. Legislation was introduced in 2019 committing the UK to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050. Public engagement is seen as crucial to achieving this target, and there has been increasing interest in and use of citizen's assemblies, citizen's juries and other deliberative mechanisms to involve the public in discussions about how public authorities should respond to the climate emergency and meet their net zero targets.

In this seminar we discuss the case of the Devon Climate Assembly, which took place in a large and predominantly rural County in Southwest England. The Climate Assembly was held over two months in June and July 2021, comprising 11 meetings – a total of 25 hours of learning, dialogue and deliberation - with the aim of informing the Devon --Carbon Plan, which will set out how Devon can achieve net-zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. The assembly involved 70 randomly chosen citizens who were broadly representative of Devon's wider population, and

was held online, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The research team are currently evaluating the process and stakeholder perceptions of it, and in this seminar we will share early findings from interviews and surveys conducted with assembly members and those who commissioned and steered the process. The research seeks to increase understanding about the role that citizen's assemblies can play in local climate policymaking, and the challenges and opportunities presented by public deliberation in an online setting.

### **Dr Xuan Qin, Fudan University**

The Global Assembly is a deliberative innovation that aims to bring citizens into discussions of the problem of climate change, as well as to create a new bottom-up global governance infrastructure. It consists of weekly assemblies and discussions from October to December 2021, amongst 100 participants from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The participants are chosen by lottery to represent the global population and get into direct conversation with one another using live translation. What is more interesting is that the core project team and the participants are connected through 100 local communities, which can scale up the conversations. Dr Xuan Qin joined the project in July 2021 to facilitate organization in the China cluster, including the recruitment, translation, experimentation and so on. Dr Qin is particularly interested in how the design of the project integrates both "global" and "local" dimensions in order to solve the problem of scale in deliberative mechanisms. She will be conducting research with participants during the event and her presentation in this workshop will discuss her initial findings and impressions.

## **PARTICIPANT BIOS**

**Alice Moseley** is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Exeter, UK. Prior to her appointment at Exeter, she lectured at the University of Southampton. Her research interests are in three main areas: (i) behavioural public policy and public administration; (ii) citizen involvement in public policy especially deliberative public engagement (iii) various other aspects of civic and political engagement (eg electoral participation, political participation of under-represented groups). Her most recent research has been published in *Policy and Politics*, *Journal of European Public Policy* and *Politics and Governance*.

**Fionnguala Sherry-Brennan** is a Research Fellow in the School of Geography at the University of Exeter. Her research interests include public understanding of, and engagement with, renewable energy technologies in urban and rural environments. She has a special interest in the emerging hydrogen economy, historical development of the UK's national electricity grid infrastructure and rural electrification in Wales, the influence of devolution on renewable energy developments, and the potential for shared ownership of renewable energy in the UK. Her work has been published in *Energy Policy*, *Energy Research and Social Science*, and the *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*.

**Xuan Qin** is a lecturer and research fellow in the Institute for Advanced Study in Social Sciences in Fudan University. She received her B.A. from Beijing Normal University, her M.A. from Peking University and her Ph.D. from Nanyang Technological University. Her research covers deliberative democracy, grass-root governance and democratic theory. Her book, *Reinforcing Authoritarianism through Democracy*, was published by Palgrave Pivot in 2021. Her articles are found in journals including *International Political Science Review*, *The China Quarterly*, *Chinese Political Science Review*, and *Japanese Journal of Political Science*.

**Catherine Owen** is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Exeter, UK. Previously she was British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow also at Exeter. Her research interests include participatory governance in authoritarian contexts. Prior to her appointments at Exeter, Catherine lectured in the Department of History and Civilization at Shaanxi Normal University, Xi'an, China. Catherine has held Visiting Fellowships at the European University at St Petersburg, Fudan University Shanghai, the St Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, and the Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki. Her most recent research has been published in *The China Quarterly*, *Review of International Studies*, and *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*.

**Lise Esther Herman** is Lecturer in Politics at the University of Exeter. Her research bridges the fields of comparative politics, party studies and normative democratic theory, with a primary focus on the theory and practice of democratic partisanship. She is specifically interested in the role of partisan agency in the contemporary crises facing representative democracy. This includes the rise of the populist radical right in established democracies and processes of democratic backsliding in newly established democracies--with a particular focus on Hungarian politics. Recently she has taken an interest in how individual participation in deliberative experiments shapes civic practices and attitudes towards democracy. Her research has been published in the *American Political Science Review*, the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *Representation* and the *European Political Science Review*.