

Do we have time for democracy? Climate action and the problem of time in the Anthropocene

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ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

The urgency of climate change has brought democracy to a critical juncture. Existing democratic systems struggle to address the pressing time frames required for effective climate action. This article explores a fundamental shift in temporal orientation caused by climate change. Democracy's linear and progressive image of time clashes with the expanding scales of temporality, encompassing both planetary and microscopic processes. More specifically, the article examines the theoretical links between democracy, climate change, and time in the Anthropocene through empirical engagements with the climate politics associated with deliberative assemblies, community organizing, and activist movements. The core argument is that within these democratic innovations, new future-oriented responses to the crises are beginning to emerge. These innovations experiment with extending democracy's temporal image beyond its conventional boundaries, paving the way for a multi-trajectory democratic politics. The article concludes by discussing the tensions and potential consequences of these democratic practices, ultimately arguing in favor of a multiple and layered understanding of democratic time that extends beyond distinctly human temporalities. © The Author(s) 2024.