

Call for Papers:

Environmental Science & Policy Special Issue:

Citizens' Assemblies in Climate Governance: An Analysis of Barriers and Enablers for Change

Guest Editors: Stephen Elstub (Newcastle University) and Oliver Escobar (Edinburgh University)

Overview of Special Issue

This special issue examines the extent mini-publics can make a valuable contribution to reflexive environmental governance and help societies address the climate emergency. It focuses on the recent new wave of citizens' assemblies on climate action (*climate assemblies*) populated through sortition and developed to embody principles and practices of deliberative democracy that are being rolled out across Europe and beyond ([KNOCA](#)). With the rapid spread of this approach to public engagement on climate governance, practice has developed well in advance of the research. This special issue will help address that gap by advancing understanding of what changes occur, if any, when citizens' assemblies are developed for climate governance. This will enable systemic understanding and establish under what conditions climate assemblies can meaningfully contribute to reflexive environmental governance—i.e., governance with capacity for sustained appraisal and change based on collective action in the face of evolving and uncertain conditions (Dryzek and Pickering 2019).

The special issue starts from the premise that more research on climate assemblies, and the barriers and enablers to change in climate governance, is required to move beyond the study of a few cases that has characterised this debate to date. To achieve this there is a need for more conceptual, comparative, and systemic research, and a need to take a broader, more holistic view of what 'change' in climate governance via climate assemblies can mean to include changes to climate policy, climate debate, climate awareness, climate salience, climate knowledge, and climate concern, within and outside of the forum.

The special issue brings new insights to the environmental science and policy interface that is the core focus of *Environmental Science & Policy*. This science-policy interface is often distorted by factors such as party politics, old and new media contexts, political polarization, fragmented public sphere, culture wars, etc (Bruelle 2014; Farrell 2019; Wamsler et al. 2020; Coan et al. 2021). Climate Assemblies seek to disrupt that interface by creating new types of participatory spaces in the public sphere where the science-policy interface is mediated by citizens supported to work through issues via evidence-informed deliberation. Many, therefore, argue that Climate Assemblies enable members of the public to consider scientific evidence on climate change and action, under good conditions and further present an opportunity for the assembly members to combine and interpret this scientific evidence with their own shared values, that can also be generated through the assembly process (Willis et al. 2022). In this special issue we are interested in how Climate Assemblies combine science with public values and whether Climate Assemblies and the science/ value combination that they produce can influence other parts of the political system e.g., public, media, parliament, industry, civil society, and government. In doing so, climate assemblies may have the potential to challenge and reshape governance systems. This collection therefore considers whether bringing citizens to play this role in the science-policy interface helps reconfigure how other actors operate and, in doing so, whether they can mobilise knowledge and values for effective action on environmental crises.

Call for Papers

We are interested in receiving submissions that focus on climate assemblies (or related processes, e.g., mini-publics like juries, panels, consensus conferences) that meet one or more of these three criteria:

- Taking place in supranational governance (e.g. EU) or transnational contexts (e.g. regions encompassing several countries)
- Organised by indigenous peoples or taking place in contexts where indigenous representation, values, and knowledge are crucial
- Organised in informal (i.e. non-institutional) contexts or as part of agonistic social movements

The collection is methodologically pluralist, and we welcome papers based on quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Papers that include case studies, comparative, or experimental research are all eligible. We also welcome theoretical contributions focused on the themes outlined above. Inter and multi disciplinary papers are particularly desirable.

If you are interested in contributing to this special issue, please submit a paper title and 300 word abstract with a brief author(s) bio, by the 15th January 2024, to the special issue Managing Editor: Stephen Elstub, Newcastle University, stephen.elstub@ncl.ac.uk

Decisions on submissions will be communicated to authors by the 22nd January 2024. The deadline for submission of complete papers drafts to the special issue editors will be the 1st March 2024 for a period of review and revision before formal submission to *Environmental Science & Policy* for external and blind peer review on the 1st June 2024.

References

- Brulle, R.J. (2014) 'Institutionalizing delay: foundation funding and the creation of U.S. climate change counter-movement organizations', *Climatic Change*, 122, 681–694. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-013-1018-7>
- Coan, T. G., Boussalis, C., Cook, J., & Nanko, M. O. (2021) 'Computer-assisted detection and classification of misinformation about climate change', *Scientific Reports*, 11(22320).
- Dryzek, J. S. & Pickering, J. (2019) *The politics of the Anthropocene*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198809616.001.0001>
- Farrell, J. (2019) 'The growth of climate change misinformation in US philanthropy: evidence from natural language processing', *Environmental Research Letters*, 14, 034013. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aaf939>
- Wamsler, C., Schöpke, N., Fraude, C., Stasiak, D., Bruhn, T., Lawrence, M., Schroeder, H., Mundaca, L., (2020) 'Enabling new mindsets and transformative skills for negotiating and activating climate action: Lessons from UNFCCC conferences of the parties', *Environmental Science Policy*, 112, 227–235 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2020.06.005>
- Willis R, Curato N, Smith G. (2022) 'Deliberative Democracy and the Climate Crisis', *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.759>