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Panel :
**Political Economy Approaches to the Study of
Population Aging and Climate Change**

Political Economy Approaches to the Study of Population Aging and Climate Change

Overview:

This set of two conferences took place at l'Université de Montréal on **4 April 2025**, organized in collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship and the Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations.

Objectives:

The event aimed to shed light on the impact of demographic aging and climate change on the political and economic preferences of voters.

Moderation: Olivier Jacques (Université de Montréal)

Panelists: Tim Vlandas (University of Oxford)
Björn Bremer (Central European University, Vienna)

Key themes:

- Ageing capitalist democracies
- Policy preferences
- Wealth taxes
- Climate change policies

Opinions and messages:

- Tim Vlandas argues that demographic aging encourages governments to prioritize the political preferences of “grey voters”, particularly favoring low inflation over investments in education, family policies, and infrastructure, thereby compromising the sustainability of social protection systems.
- Björn Bremer shows that arguments linking carbon inequality to climate justice increase support for a wealth tax, particularly to finance climate policies. For example, the German population on average strongly supports this tax and prefers to finance public goods and redistributive measures rather than targeted subsidies.

Key points:

1. Ageing is positively correlated with mentions of economic orthodoxy and negatively correlated with mentions of pro-growth aims in party manifesto data.
2. Emissions of greenhouse gases are highly concentrated among the world's wealthiest 1%, essentially composed of the wealthiest 10% in Western democracies and China.

Perspectives:

For Tim Vlandas, aging may transform democracies into gerontonomias, characterized by democratically sustained economic stagnation, threatening democracy and capitalism. For Björn Bremer, a wealth tax and funds earmarked for green public investment could alleviate the climate policy trilemma that is the balance between environmental, economic, and political sustainability.

Written by Julien Robin, PhD candidate, Political science
Reviewed by [Johannes Müller Gomez, postdoctoral intern](#),
Maison des affaires publiques et internationales

