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Environment

***Global Commons, Domestic Decisions: The Comparative Politics of Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 320 pages. ISBN 9780262514316, \$25.00 paper. Kathryn Harrison and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom (Eds.). 2010.**

Does the world really need another climate change book? There is certainly no shortage of recent publications across a large number of disciplines, following a tremendous increase over the past decade. If all this scholarly work actually influenced decision making, there would be much more comprehensive national and international climate change policy, as the vast majority of publications stress the seriousness of the situation and support more mitigation and adaptation action. There are, however, surprisingly few comprehensive comparative studies of societal responses to climate change. In this respect, *Global Commons, Domestic Decisions: The Comparative Politics of Climate Change*, edited by Kathryn Harrison and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom, offers an important contribution with its comparative politics focus, highlighting many analytical and empirical issues of much interest to a broad readership.

A major strength of the book is that it applies a common analytical framework across the empirical case-study chapters examining responses to climate change in six major countries—Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States—and the European Union. The analytical framework explores the roles of three broad domestic factors defined from the perspective of the policy maker: self-interest, ideas, and political institutions. Regarding specific aspects of domestic politics, the book focuses on two issues: the possible ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the stringency of national climate change abatement policies. This focus fits very well with the analytical framework. As noted by the editors: “The decision regarding whether or not to ratify international agreements and to adopt national policies to mitigate climate change are in the end domestic political decisions, taken in the context of homegrown interests, national discourses, and domestic political institutions” (p. 2).

The analytical framework’s three domestic factors are presented and elaborated on in the introductory chapter, as the editors also link domestic policy making with international climate change politics and influences. The book’s selected cases allow

for fruitful comparison across policy leaders and laggards. The chapter authors do a good job in following a common structure and addressing the analytical issues raised in the introduction. They also demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of their empirical cases: Kate Crowley (Australia); Kathryn Harrison (Canada and the United States); Gørild Heggelund, Steinar Andresen, and Inga Fritzen Buan (China); Laura A. Henry and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom (Russia); and Miranda A. Schreurs and Yves Tiberghien (the European Union and Japan). In the concluding chapter, the editors summarize the main comparative findings both within and across empirical cases.

The editors take the analytical framework and formulate hypotheses for each of the three domestic factors. There is not enough review space to go into great detail on all hypotheses and arguments, but one institution-related discussion I found particularly interesting concerns electoral systems. The editors, drawing from arguments and insights from several of the empirical chapters, argue that proportional systems “permit environmental concern among a minority of voters to have a greater effect on politicians’ decisions” compared with first-past-the-post systems, influencing the way in which climate change is addressed on political agendas (p. 272). Regarding other institutional factors, the chapters examine how horizontal and vertical concentration or diffusion of decision-making authority in federal and multilevel governance systems may both facilitate and hinder policy expansions.

In the discussion about self-interest, the editors and authors elaborate on several issues including estimated marginal cost of emission reductions; approval of key political actors and public opinion, recognizing that they play very different roles in countries such as the United States, Russia, and China; and the activity and strength of interest groups lobbying for and against climate change policy. On ideas, the chapters distinguish between scientific knowledge and normative principles. While there was widespread scientific agreement about human-induced climate change, the political debate around the science in the selected cases differed markedly, influencing policy debates. Chapters also demonstrate how forces against treaty ratification and policy making can be overcome by normative commitments by high-level political leaders, but that may not be enough to achieve sustained domestic policy implementation.

Overall, this is a convincing and well-written book. Held together by an analytical framework, the empirical chapters work well together, especially for an edited volume. The book, or individual chapters, can easily be included on syllabi for climate change classes as well as more general comparative and national (environmental) politics classes. A small criticism is that some of the discussion is based on emissions data from 2000 and 2005, despite the fact that it was published in August 2010. The main analysis continues up to around 2008, leaving out many more recent political developments, even if some specific events from 2009 and 2010 are mentioned. Nevertheless, the book is rich in valuable empirical information. It offers a helpful analytical framework for continued theory development and study of factors shaping responses to climate change and other issues across countries and political systems.

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***Greenhouse Governance: Addressing Climate Change in America.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. 382 pages. ISBN 978-0-8157-0331-0, \$34.95 paper. Barry Rabe, editor. 2010.**

In a 2010 exposé in *The New Yorker*, Ryan Lizza told the story of the Senate's failure to pass a climate change bill in 2010 as a tale of personal politics between Senators John Kerry, Joe Lieberman, and Lindsey Graham, failed backroom deals with special interests, and strategic blunders by the White House. *Greenhouse Governance: Addressing Climate Change in America* places these political battles in a much broader context, with particular emphasis on the ways in which the climate change issue is situated in long-standing debates about intergovernmental relations that characterize American federalism. From this perspective, recent events in the Senate can be read as yet another failure to resolve fundamental political debates about who should govern climate change and how.

In *Greenhouse Governance*, Barry Rabe and his contributors take the reader through the tumultuous first 2 years of the Obama administration and efforts to forge a long-awaited U.S. federal climate policy. They first met in December 2008, a time of great optimism, "to reflect on some of the most serious challenges to developing a coherent set of policies in order to reverse the long-standing trend of growth in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, to avoid causing economic harm through the implementation of climate policies, and to re-engage the United States effectively in future international deliberations" (p. 6). Of particular import, President Obama and the incoming Congress did not have to start with a clean slate. Rather, they could build on many actions already taken at the state level. The most significant challenges would be forging agreement on intergovernmental responsibility sharing between the state and federal levels, enhancing the capacity of federal institutions to engage with climate change, and re-engaging with the international community. By the end of the book, the reader has a clear idea of how daunting these challenges are, and perhaps, a better appreciation for why a comprehensive U.S. federal climate policy remains an elusive goal.

The book is organized into four sections. Part I, "Framing the Issue of Climate Governance," includes four chapters that introduce the reader to the particularities of American federalism. Following an introductory chapter by Barry Rabe, Christopher Borick examines American public opinion on climate change from a variety of perspectives drawing on 2008 and 2009 survey data that was commissioned for the book project. Martha Derthick outlines a "compensatory federalism" model, while Paul Posner explores the challenge of scaling state level policies to the federal level. Part II consists of five chapters, four of which focus on different market and regulatory approaches, including cap-and-trade (Leigh Raymond); carbon taxes (Rabe); fuel economy standards for automobiles (Pietro S. Nivola); and renewable portfolio standards, portfolio tax credits, and feed-in tariffs in the electricity sector (Ian Rowlands). Each of these chapters places policy developments in a historical context covering developments at both the state and federal levels and analyzes related intergovernmental opportunities and challenges. Mark Landy's chapter offers the only focused discussion of the broader issues related to adaptation measures. In Part III, the discussion shifts to the question of whether federal institutions are up to the challenge of climate change (apparently not). Chapters

cover the courts (Kirsten H. Engel), Congress (Rabe), and the Environmental Protection Agency (Rosenbaum). In the final section, Stacy VanDeveer and Henrik Selin look outward in two chapters that explore opportunities for the United States to re-engage with the international community through the multilateral treaty regime, ad hoc multilateral fora, North American institutions, and transatlantic relations. Taking a multilevel governance approach, they repeatedly highlight the ways in which U.S. subnational actors (states and cities) are embedded in global networks, which are becoming an important site of climate governance.

This volume holds together extremely well by clearly situating climate policy in the context of U.S. federalism and intergovernmental relations. Individual chapters are empirically and conceptually rich, providing an excellent introduction to particular aspects of the climate governance challenge as well as in-depth analysis of the political dynamics, particularly the relations between state and federal levels of decision making. While the focus is on American climate policy, most of the chapters make comparisons with developments in other industrialized countries so that the reader has a good understanding of how different governments approach similar challenges. Impressively, the book is up-to-date at the time of publication, having incorporated the flurry of developments during the Spring/Summer of 2010.

One weakness is the lack of reflection on the possibility that there is more to climate governance in America than the actions of state and federal governments. In particular, there is very little discussion of local or private governance initiatives, despite growing recognition that this is where much of the climate governance “action” occurs (Bulkeley & Newell, 2010; Hoffmann, 2011; Selin & VanDeveer, 2009). Not surprisingly, VanDeveer and Selin include some discussion of the local and private spheres in their multilevel governance perspective, but in much less detail than their other recent work. Clearly, it would be unfair to expect comprehensive treatment of local and private initiatives in a volume focused on state–federal relations, but Rabe’s concluding chapter falls flat when he calls for establishing a viable emissions registry and putting a price on carbon without any mention of initiatives like the Climate Registry or the voluntary carbon market. At the very least, this is a missed opportunity to open a discussion on how these alternative forms of climate governance might provide opportunities to overcome some of the governance challenges identified throughout the book.

Overall, *Greenhouse Governance: Addressing Climate Change in America* is a valuable addition to the growing body of literature focused on climate change governance. It would be an excellent choice for an undergraduate course in U.S. environmental politics or a climate policy course with a detailed study of climate politics in different national settings. It is a must-read for anyone interested in advancing climate policy in the United States.

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***Transportation in a Climate Constrained World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 340 pages. ISBN 978-0-262-51234-3, \$28.00 paper. Andreas Schafer, John B. Heywood, Henry D. Jacoby, and Ian A. Waitz. 2009.**

The contributions of passenger transportation to greenhouse gas emissions are among the largest of any source, but are arguably the most complicated to mitigate. Especially in North America, where unhindered mobility and vehicle comfort are synonymous with personal freedom, the suggestion of public policy changes that incorporate environmental externalities into automobile user costs bring accusations of social engineering. At the same time, however, most industrialized nations have reached a common acceptance that civil law should protect the environment—especially our air, rivers, and lakes—against the impacts of highway expansion.

As vehicle kilometers traveled increases and highway capacity lags behind, automobile commuters grumble and time and resources are wasted. Still, their mitigating actions are generally not to make fewer trips or change modes of travel, but rather to seek out greater creature comforts within the automobile. This is the desultory nature of the everyday commuter. He or she may acknowledge the negative environmental and economic impacts of their travel, but continue to make mode and vehicle choices that appear not to be in their short-term financial interests, let alone the long-term interests of our environments or communities.

The decisions of vehicle manufacturers, including those of passenger airplanes, also have substantial impacts on air quality. Mobile emissions from manufactured products and stationary emissions from manufacturing itself must both be accounted for if impacts are to be understood and measured. To that end, regulation of fuel efficiency and emissions-related technologies enjoy substantial popular support; however, do our current approaches to assigning responsibility for passenger travel-generated environmental degradation serve us well toward reigning in climate change? If not, which age-old approach to polluters is more effective: the carrot or the stick? As a more contemporary notion, is it preferable to simply produce a discrete number of carrots and sticks for all participants in the fuel-vehicle-user life cycle and let the market determine who gets which ones?

These questions drive the cross-disciplinary *Transportation in a Climate-Constrained World*. The work is mostly devoid of judgment about the reasons an individual may choose to cross lines of longitude as well as latitude to reach a sunny vacation destination. Similarly, it remains silent on the moral implications of producing 5-m-long sport utility vehicles to sell to medium-sized urban families. Refreshingly, however, it provides a data-driven window into economic and geographic drivers behind the trends toward greater kilometers traveled per capita and more powerful (and often larger) vehicles purchased. It also calls our attention to the contributions of passenger travel in the developing world to global warming.

To the authors' credit, they respect the real dangers that such growth in passenger travel threatens, but they do not leave the reader despondent. Instead, they synthesize a wealth of information about all primary technical contributors to cumulative passenger travel-related emissions and describe a number of plausible

impact scenarios for the not-so-distant future. To be sure, the 20–30-year horizon on which the book focuses does not account for the lifetime of damage we will endure for the transoceanic flights and vacation road trips made today.

This short horizon is practical, though, given that elected officials sometimes limit their views of the future to when the next generation will fill their shoes. Still, the engineers and planners who work for these policy makers are a more natural audience for much of the book. They will likely benefit more from the lengthy linear descriptions of the assumptions behind each emissions scenario. The content does not make light reading, but it is sure to introduce most environmental or transportation professionals to a substantial new set of basic principles behind the operation of automobiles and planes, their development, and the fuels that propel them.

It is this “well-to-wheel” (or “well-to-wing”) treatment of passenger travel impacts on air quality that make these scenarios and their contributing tables and figures so valuable to both the policy maker and the scientist. They instill confidence in the book’s concluding chapters, where the authors project the relative benefits of corrective policy actions. For example, expanded fuel efficiency regulations, adjustments to taxes and user fees, and caps on quantity of future emissions are all compared. The modular organization of the text also allows readers to benefit from this research, while choosing the level of detail on supporting data and methodology with which he/she is most comfortable or interested.

Still, anyone wishing to get beyond the evening news hype of the latest new vehicle engine technology, or the print ad extolling the latest approach to processing heretofore malignant fuel sources, owes it to themselves to delve into the book a bit below the surface. No magic bullet is revealed by *Transportation in a Climate-Constrained World*, but it does provide a rational foundation for debate on government transportation-environmental policy in an increasingly polarized worldwide political climate.

Clinton Bench

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***The Art and Craft of International Environmental Law*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 376 pages. ISBN 978-0-674-03543-0, \$39.95 hardcover. Daniel Bodansky. 2010.**

The Art and Craft of International Environmental Law is a comprehensive, insightful, and engaging guide to a complex field and the recipient of the 2011 Harold and Margaret Sprout Award. Drawing on more than two decades of experience as a government negotiator, consultant, and academic, Daniel Bodansky’s highly accessible work demonstrates a thoughtful synthesis of perspectives from international law and international relations that additionally benefits from sociological and historical perspectives. Indeed, in contrast to legalistic human rights law, he argues, international environmental law “is a fundamentally political process of balancing competing interests, which blurs the distinction between law and politics” (251).

Following chapter-length overviews of the history of international environmental law, different perspectives on environmental problem diagnosis, and the spectrum of possible responses to environmental problems, Bodansky turns to the central issue of norms. His discussion of the concept is one of the best to have appeared in recent years, combining theoretical insights with real-world examples and implications. He suggests that the line between the “logic of appropriateness” and the “logic of consequences” is blurred, as international actors may comply with norms *both* because of a belief in the ideals they embody and because it serves their best interest. He further argues that the difference between hard and soft law has been overemphasized because “the link between legal status and judicial application is comparatively weak” (101). Ultimately, Bodansky’s position is that while international actors take legal norms more seriously than nonlegal ones, the link between norms and behavior much depends on degree of precision, mandatory intent, and mode of implementation.

Bodansky then turns to the key protagonists and sources of influence in the development of international environmental law. He follows recent scholarship in noting the significant role played by treaty secretariats, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. The author confirms the continuous blurring of lines between public and private, international and domestic. While acknowledging the view of states as self-interested actors, he suggests that a more fine-grained approach must consider vertical and horizontal intra-state and state-society divisions.

The chapter on negotiating agreements includes a sophisticated discussion of ways in which an agreement’s strength, the extent to which it requires states to go beyond what they would do anyway, and stringency, the intensity of a commitment, can be adjusted to encourage states to participate in an agreement. Bodansky suggests how factors such as flexible commitments, differential standards, reservations, legal form, precision, opt-out clauses, duration, and international supervision and enforcement can be combined to maximize treaty uptake, both during negotiations and over time. Readers will find the chapter on customary norms and general principles similarly refined. He contends that the traditional litmus test for customary law—consistent state practice and a sense of legal obligation—has become inadequate or even irrelevant today and that norms or principles are better understood as attitudinal, rather than behavioral regularities. According to the author, they nevertheless serve as important evaluative standards for justifying action or criticizing others and therefore matter a great deal for indirectly guiding behavior.

Although a number of chapters cover familiar ground, the material benefits from the various angles Bodansky brings to bear on the subject. The chapters on implementation, compliance, and effectiveness also offer a sobering assessment. His analysis of international carrots and sticks suggests that “international compliance mechanisms are more successful in encouraging the average state than in coercing the truly bad one” (250). His examination of effectiveness reminds readers how difficult it is to ascertain the impact of international environmental law on actual environmental outcomes. Questioning the validity both of large-scale regression analysis and expert-based assessments, he favors more modest qualitative case studies. Although few of the many hundreds of bilateral and multilateral

environmental agreements have actually been studied, Bodansky cautiously concludes that environmental regimes do matter.

Very few shortcomings mar this volume. Using the policy-cum-law-making process as an analytical heuristic necessarily leads to repetitions because in the real world, the different stages of the process typically overlap. As a consequence, analyses of key actors, the role of strength and stringency, and the influence of norms and principles reappear in his treatments of agenda setting, negotiation, and implementation. More generally, the distinction between a logic of appropriateness and a logic of consequences perhaps does too much heavy lifting, serving as explanatory templates for why states sign—and ratify—international environmental agreements, why they comply with environmental norms, why they implement them, and how compliance and effectiveness is organized.

While *The Art and Craft of International Environmental Law* will likely become required readings for undergraduate and graduate students, this is much more than a textbook. A closer reading reveals that rare and skillfully executed combination of theory, illustration, and reflection, which results in a highly accessible book for audiences inside and outside academia.

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