



## Environmental Politics

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### Environmental politics: the age of climate change

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detailed analysis of a major ETR for Europe, projected out to 2020. Noteworthy, chapter 12 presents evidence about the evolution in Europe of the fast-growing group of activities that is collectively called the Environmental Industry, and its contribution to the European economy, especially that of Germany. In conclusion, Ekins and Speck strongly argue that ETR could result in long-term economic as well as environmental benefits and that there is a clear case for future ETR in Europe, and even more importantly, ETR can indirectly stimulate green innovation and environmental industries (p. 349).

The major claim of this collection is that ETR is a policy for green growth – environmentally sustainable economic growth in Europe and elsewhere, which can help to bring about the low-carbon transition (pp. 356, 360). Generally speaking, this argument – to foster a better balance between economic and environmental benefits – is very much correct and convincingly demonstrated by the evidence presented by this book. But, seen in a broader perspective, two points at least need to be added. First, there are very different understandings of, or policy envisions for, ‘green growth’ between the West countries and the developing countries. Needless to say, both the growth-environment debate sparked off in the early 1970s and the ‘green growth’ discourse that emerged quite recently are initiated and dominated by the industrialised countries. That implies we can not expect a globally consistent rhythm of ‘green growth’ seeking (p. 309), as the current worldwide dispute over the EU carbon tax for airlines also shows.

Second, there are still lots of obstacles confronting Europe to achieve green growth, even a light green one. On the one hand, as Ekins and Speck have recognised (p. 358), absolutely decoupling economic growth and environmental impacts is almost unimaginable, including for EU member states. In this sense, the EU and its member states have to at least to some extent think of ‘de-growth’ rather than ‘green growth’. On the other hand, to be a greener economy, the EU needs some specific social and political conditions at national, European and/or global levels. Therefore, the global promise of ETR in Europe (p. 350), or the European version of green growth (p. 234), should be treated cautiously.

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**Environmental politics: the age of climate change**, 3rd edition, edited by Robert Garner, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, xiii + 201 pp., index, £24.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780230228603

The literature on environmental politics in international and domestic agendas has expanded in recent decades, generating a rich academic debate.

In *Environmental Politics: The Age of Climate Change*, Robert Garner offers a significant contribution to the challenging task of understanding the relationship between environmental politics, climate change and the various ideological environmental perspectives. The fact that the textbook is in its third edition indicates how useful the book has been to students and scholars.

The book focuses particularly on the environmental *reformist* perspective and the extent to which it affects different actors in the environmental policymaking process. This book attempts to examine the different interests and values involved in the international environmental system through a comparative analysis between *affluent Western liberal democracies* and *non-affluent non-liberal regimes*. In practice, however, in several parts, the British case is often overrepresented in the text and comparative analysis does not expand to many other cases. Again, in his discussion of the EU, the focus tends to be on British and German perspectives, with little discussion of the role of supranational actors (e.g. the European Commission or the European Court of Justice).

The book can be divided roughly into four sections. In the two first chapters Garner introduces readers to the scope of environmental politics by outlining the impact of environmental degradation, the political aspects of environmentalism and the main anthropogenic influences on the natural environment. The author explores several reasons for the evolution of the environment on the political agenda, dealing both with *value-based* (i.e. post-materialism and inter-generational perceptions) and *structured-based* explanations (i.e. middle-class professions).

The following three chapters focus on the *reformist* and *radical* approaches of environmentalism and attempt to explore their constituent elements. Chapter 3 highlights an economic-ethical perspective drawing on ecological modernisation, eco-centrism, anthropocentrism and limits to growth theory. In chapter 4, the author examines the ecological aspects of political theory and raises two questions: a) whether Green political theory adds up to a new way of understanding political theory and b) whether ecology can fit in different social or political arrangements (pp. 68–69). Chapter 5 deals with the issue of social justice in environmental issues and focuses on the relationship between anthropocentric and eco-centric theories of inter- and intra-generational justice.

The third section of the book turns the reader's attention to the international dimension of environmental politics and how various actors interact in the international environment and climate governance system. There is a specific interest in mechanisms, bargaining tools and intervening factors that affect the establishment of international environmental agreements. Garner provides an overview of the ways in which different international relations theories attempt to understand and explain the character of international environmental agreements by analysing the factors and the problems that influence the establishment of such agreements.

The final chapters offer an analysis of domestic environmental policy-making, the challenges environmental integration faces in relation to the economy and the policy tools that are used. Garner also attempts to examine the impact of the environmental movement – mainly in Britain – focusing on the role of domestic political systems and the reasons for the low impact of the environmental movement. In the concluding chapter, Garner summarises the key aspects of the book by focusing on the role of environmentalism, civil society and green agencies in environmental politics.

This third edition of *Environmental Politics: The Age of Climate Change* provides an up-to-date summary of aspects of current debates in environmental politics and offers a useful textbook for students and scholars interested in environmentalism and its various theoretical and political perspectives. This is an easy to read text introducing and outlining the main aspects of the complex and multilevel nature of environmental politics.

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**Reframing the problem of climate change: from zero sum game to win-win solutions**, edited by Carlo C. Jaeger, Klaus Hasselmann, Gerd Leipold, Diana Mangalagu and J. David Tabara, Abingdon and New York, Earthscan from Routledge, 2012, xiv + 252 pp., €37.99, ISBN 9781849714488

Reframing the problem of climate change? The very first sentence of the book explains what is meant by this: ‘We have a crisis. We don’t mean the danger that human modifications of the earth’s atmosphere will modify the earth’s climate with grave consequences for people and the planet. Rather we see as the crisis the inadequacy of society’s response to the threat’ (p. 1). Society’s response – that is what we normally call climate policy. No doubt, climate policy has largely failed. Put short, the authors think this failure to be the result of a mindset that treats climate change as a zero sum game. ‘We are behaving as if it were a game with winners and losers, in which one actor’s gain is dependent on the losses of other actors’ (p. 2). How to change such a mindset? The authors want to identify the causes and ways to overcome the current difficulties that have been blocking progress in climate policy. Basically, they attribute the present deadlock to a lack of understanding of the opportunities offered by the transformation of the present fossil-based economy to a green economy, based on renewable energy and sustainable consumption.

Seventeen authors with a wide range of academic backgrounds provide interesting information and new insights into many constructive approaches pursued to overcome the widespread misperception of the sustainability