Preface

Informal institutions are essential elements of the politics of China and Russia. As our previous studies had shown that such institutions also play a significant role in policy implementation, we decided to compare the two countries, to see how similar or different they are in this respect. As all three of us have been working on climate change and energy policy related topics for most of our careers, the focus on policies that have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) was a natural one: this was also supported by our already-established networks in China and in Russia.

Informal institutions in China and Russia are a fascinating area for study because they reflect cultural thought-patterns in the context of each country's political and bureaucratic systems. There is much to learn about what is deemed desirable, acceptable, practical and important in each culture, which naturally differs significantly from what we tend to consider natural in our own Nordic cultures. Although it is never possible to understand the rationalities of another culture fully, we would claim that one can get a good idea by speaking with people who have first-hand experience. However, as informal institutions and their utilization also have their socially less acceptable sides, not everyone involved is willing to discuss them – as we found.

With this volume, we seek to contribute to solving the global climate crisis by generating new awareness of what is being done in China and Russia that could lead to reduced GHG emissions, and discussing how this may influence the international climate commitments of these countries. Equally important are the hypotheses we offer concerning the role of informal institutions in policy implementation processes more generally in these countries. By viewing the selected cases from a broader perspective, we hope to facilitate and support further study of the politics of China and Russia. Further research is needed to analyse how widely our hypotheses may apply while they are largely supported by previous research on these countries.

The authors of this book are social scientists from three different disciplinary backgrounds: Anna Korppoo (environmental politics, energy policy and Russian studies), Iselin Stensdal (China studies, political science) and Marius Korsnes (science and technology studies). Considerable effort has been spent trying to align the research design with our diverging backgrounds. We cannot guarantee that all ontological, epistemological and methodological differences

have been erased, but this diversity in perspective is something we consider a strength rather than a weakness.

China and Russia are major emitters of GHGs globally. Their contributions to worldwide efforts to limit the harmful impact of human societies on the climate system of the Earth, our only home, are crucial. China is globally the largest emitter of GHGs; however, even though Russia's own emissions are significantly lower than those of China, Russia is involved in the emissions of other countries as a major exporter of fossil fuels.

Anna Korppoo led the research project 'Capacity to govern climate mitigation in China and Russia' at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI) in Lysaker, Norway, and is the chief author of the book. She drafted all the non-case chapters, excluding the part on China in Chapter 2 and several individual paragraphs inserted in the chapters by the other co-authors. She also authored all the Russia case chapters. *Iselin Stensdal* has worked as a PhD candidate to the project at the FNI, conducting her independent doctoral work under this project. In particular, she contributed Chapter 4 on the Shanghai ETS case study. *Marius Korsnes* has worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. He was not involved in the research project from the beginning but has been a very fruitful addition to the team, in particular by contributing Chapter 5 on solar PV in China. Throughout, our writing process has involved ongoing discussion and commenting on the text, which is acknowledged by including all three contributors as authors of all the non-case chapters. Such co-authoring was especially important as the lead author, Korppoo, is an expert on Russia but not on China; the China-related analyses are thus largely the work of Korsnes and Stensdal.

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On a more personal note, we would like to acknowledge the support supplied by our families during this project – a period also marked by the arrival of three babies: two in Anna’s family and one in Iselin’s. Anna wishes to thank Ella, Damian, Mum and Juan for support and understanding during this work, which extended over many major life-transitions. Iselin wishes to thank her husband Diar for continued support and encouragement during the many field visits (on some of which he accompanied her) and through the PhD process. Marius would like to thank Silvia Coutinho for her support and encouragement, as well as excellent company during the 2018 three-month stay at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

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