

Preface

Why are some countries more willing and able than others to engage in climate change mitigation? This book compiles the insights of experts in comparative politics and international relations to analyse the policy trajectories of seven key actors in the international climate negotiations: Brazil, China, the European Union, India, Japan, Russia and the United States. All these actors are among the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters, together accounting for nearly 70 per cent of total world emissions. Moreover, to varying degrees they all speak on behalf of larger groups in the global climate change negotiations. Combining these two observations, we may consider each of these actors, with Japan and Russia as likely exceptions, capable of blocking or at least delaying a truly effective global mitigation agreement – some by their own weight, others with the support of 'their' group. The good news is that any agreement signed and ratified by all seven will almost certainly be accepted by an overwhelming majority of other states. Overall, the outcome of the United Nations climate change negotiations critically depends on the willingness and ability of our sample of actors to contribute to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

We proceed as follows. First, we develop an analytical framework designed to map and explain similarities and differences in domestic policies as well as in the roles these actors play in the global climate change negotiations. Second, the authors perform in-depth case studies analysing the climate policy trajectories of the seven key actors. Third, a comparative analysis of the main drivers and barriers that shape climate and energy policy is undertaken and discussed in the context of megatrends like population growth, affluence and technology development. The contributing authors are participants in a common research project – Strategic Challenges in International Climate and Energy Policy (CICEP) – that joins the forces of CICERO (the Center for Climate and Environmental Research – Oslo), the Fridtjof Nansen Institute and the University of Oslo as a Centre for Environment-Friendly Energy Research (FME) to study crucial questions related to international climate collaboration. The authors are leading experts on climate policy development in the seven key actors and on international climate agreements, and the book

provides updated knowledge as well as theoretical perspectives that should be of interest to the international research community studying global environmental politics and international climate negotiations, to students of environmental politics, to practitioners in the energy sector, and for policy-makers involved in climate and energy policy decision processes.

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