

# Post-Paris: Pledge and Review and Politics Research

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# My Perspective: Interests, Incentives, Research

- Individuals and states act on the basis of their perceptions of their own self-interest, but these interests – and incentives – are shaped by institutions.
- Our job as political analysts: first of all, is to *understand* the politics of climate policy.
- When we understand the politics, we can try to help get institutional incentives right to improve policies and strategies. Understanding is critical to better political strategies and better policies.

# Theory and interpretation, then research questions

- The next fifteen minutes: my interpretation of the Paris Accords in the context of theories of international cooperation.
- The second half of the talk: suggestions for political science research on climate change politics.

# Self-interested cooperation can occur

- Contrary to some comments yesterday, there is a much-cited political science literature on global and local cooperation, going back more than 30 years:
  - Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (1984)
  - Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (1984)
  - Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons* (1990)
  - Keohane and Ostrom, *Local Commons and Global Interdependence* (1995)

# Lessons from this literature: key conditions for cooperation:

- Cooperation comes from discord, not harmony.
- Key actors need to want to achieve results that can only be achieved through cooperation;
- Practices of reciprocity must be institutionalized;
- Institutions must enable credible commitment;
- There must be considerable transparency;
- Repeated play is needed over a long period of time.

# Pledge & review: discretion and vagueness

- Discretion for national governments: good politics, uncertain outcomes.
- Vagueness:
  - Article 4: no binding commitment to implement;
  - Article 14: just stocktaking on implementation;
  - Article 13: Only an injunction to the COP to decide on transparency in the future.

# This is how cooperation happens!

- In the real (political) world, the alternative to discretion and vagueness was no action at all.
- The Paris Agreement elevates vagueness to an art form but this was a stroke of political genius because it made agreement possible.
- Governments could gain reputation by pledging.

# Reputation asymmetries and “organized hypocrisy”

- Before Paris, there were only reputational gains from pledging action – no costs due to the vagueness of commitments.
- Now there are costs. So there is a disconnect between promises and expected results.
- As Stephen Krasner has argued, much of world politics is “organized hypocrisy.” Don’t get outraged but don’t get fooled!

# Incentives, Incentives, Incentives

- If governments are to act on the Paris Accords, they need incentives to do so. Exhortations will not work and domestic politics will be crucial. Four incentives need to be harnessed:
  - Achieve domestic purposes:
  - Respond to domestic constituencies;
  - Get benefits through reciprocity;
  - Enhance reputation.

# Post-Paris Politics as a “Two-Level Game”

- Think of a bargaining game at two levels: inter-state and within states. Outcomes have to be in the “win-set” at both levels.
- At the inter-state level, simplify the game to three sets of actors:
  - OECD countries that are committed to action;
  - BRICs;
  - Poor developing countries.

# Actors' Interests:

- Many countries in all three sets have leaders who genuinely want to respond effectively to climate change.
- But all governments want to:
  - Reduce their own costs relative to benefits;
  - Maintain policy flexibility and autonomy.

# Possible Deals:

- OECD-BRICs: BRICs will demand concessions on OECD emissions levels, technical assistance, and financial aid.
- OECD-poor developing countries: OECD only needs poor countries not *flagrantly* to violate agreed emissions limits.
- The OECD-BRICs deal is harder but both deals seem feasible.

# Will feasible deals help with climate change? Not so clear.

- High-level bargaining equilibrium: substantial emissions reductions by BRIC countries, and some by small poor countries, with compensating financial transfers.
- Low-level bargaining equilibrium: “We pretend to cut emissions and you pretend to pay us.” This is a major danger.

## Part II: Research topics on *political action*. NOT:

- Efficient policy (the economists' orientation);
- Hypothetical effects of different policies;
- Criticizing national or international policies on normative grounds;
- Articulating a normative-philosophical view of ethical climate policy.
- Instead, I want to encourage work that describes and seeks to explain *political action*.

# Premise: strategies for change require better understanding of politics

- No apologies for fundamental research.
- Don't rush prematurely to policy analysis.
- Look for *anomalies*: puzzling phenomena that we don't understand well.
- Example: What accounts for the climate agenda's almost exclusive emphasis on emissions? (Stefan Aykut's paper)

# Political analysis and global politics

- What strategies are employed by states and coalitions and under what conditions?
- What conditions affect how cooperative or uncooperative are states' bargaining tactics?
- What accounts for secretariat behavior?  
(Helge Jorgens)
- What accounts for increased regime complexity, including the creation of new international institutions? (Zelli-Asselt-Moller)

# Understanding the comparative politics of climate change policy

- National policies vary on many dimensions such as ambition, comprehensiveness, distributional incidence, institutionalization. How should we explain this variation?
- The NDCs provide a remarkable data source.
- So, how do the NDCs vary and why? *Test theories of comparative politics against NDC variation.* Material interests, political culture, path-dependent institutions, etc.

# The comparative sensitivity of climate policy

- How is the *sensitivity* of climate policy to shocks (positive or negative) affected by:
  - Interest groups;
  - Public attitudes;
  - Government structures;
  - Global interdependence.
- Expectation: Sensitivity to climate shocks will be different in different countries. Comparative analysis will be needed.

# Two level games: the INDC process and state policy

- What are the effects of the INDC *process* on national policies?
- Review and naming and shaming?
- Diffusion – imitation and competition?
- Use by pluralistic interests?
- Signals to markets?
- Possible openings for new state strategies – INDCs as ways to justify new policies at home?

# Private authority and orchestration

- What is the impact of “private authority?”  
(Jessica Green)
- Can we expect self-organization  
 (“polycentricity,” in Lin Ostrom’s phrase)?  
 Under what conditions? (Presentation by  
 Marcel Dorsch)

# Legitimacy and Effectiveness

- To what degree, and under what conditions, are the procedural legitimacy of climate institutions and their effectiveness mutually supportive or in conflict with one another, generating tradeoffs? That is, *what is the impact of procedural legitimacy on effectiveness?*

# Understanding the organizational ecology of climate policy

- Organizational ecology: focus on *populations* as the unit of analysis, not the individual organization.
- How have the populations of different types of climate-related organizations changed?
- Rise of private regulatory networks and public-private partnerships; relative stagnation in the number of IGOs. How should we try to explain this? (Abbott-Green-Keohane, *International Organization*, spring 2016.)

# What do we need to understand to understand the politics of climate?

- *Interests, Strategies, and Institutions*
- *How Reciprocity and Reputation work*
- *The comparative politics of climate policy, including comparative sensitivity.*
- *The two-level bargaining game and effects.*
- *Private authority and orchestration.*
- *The organizational ecology of climate policy.*
- ***THIS IS A BIG AGENDA, WORTH WORKING ON!***