

# Preface

Climate change is no longer an environmental issue but an issue of resource allocation. Therefore, it is a topic not for environment ministries but for finance ministries and their international institutions.

– Senior official of Nordic finance ministry, February 2009

Economic institutions addressing climate issues. This is not the most common topic in the climate politics literature, although its importance has been steadily growing over the past couple of decades. Yet, it is a topic which I have been watching from the sidelines since 2007, when I started working at the Danish Ministry of Finance. My job was in the division for international political cooperation. I was part of the team preparing the ill-fated 2009 Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (COP15) in Copenhagen. My work was not restricted to the COP preparations but covered all sorts of international climate issues of interest to a finance ministry, from the EU Emissions Trading System over climate finance to fossil fuel subsidies, the latter explicitly not being a topic for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. The emphasis was less on saving expenditure (which nonetheless was an important objective too) but rather on promoting what was seen as economically rational solutions to climate change. Notably, my work also covered interaction with other economic institutions, both finance ministries in other countries and international economic institutions including the Group of 20 (G20), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It was at a meeting arranged by the Danish Ministry of Finance that a colleague from another Nordic country made the statement quoted at the beginning. The experience of being a finance ministry official ignited my interest in how economic institutions address climate issues as economic issues. Whereas the role of finance ministries has been covered elsewhere (Skovgaard, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017a, 2017b), in this book the focus is on the role of international economic institutions. Here, the economisation of climate issues is

‘purer’ in the sense of not being tangled up with fiscal concerns, party politics, special interests and other factors salient in domestic politics.

My desire to approach climate politics from an academic angle led me to leave the Ministry of Finance for the Department of Political Science of Lund University in 2011. Here, I drew on the experiences in my research, especially the project ‘International Economic Institutions and Domestic Actors in the Climate Regime Complex – the Cases of Climate Financing and Fossil Fuel Subsidies’ (EconClim). The project lasted from 2013 to 2018 and was jointly funded by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet), the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond) and the Swedish Research Council Formas (Forskningsrådet Formas). It allowed me to approach the theme of economic institutions and actors addressing climate issues from an academic angle. After the EconClim project was completed, final parts of the work on this book were undertaken in the context of the project ‘Pathways to Breaking the Fossil Fuel Lock-In’, funded by the Swedish Energy Agency.

While the book is indebted to only one main source of funding (the EconClim project), it is indebted to a vast group of people. Without them this book would not have been possible. I have had the invaluable benefit of working with a greatly inspiring and supportive group of people at the Department of Political Science, both within the Environmental Politics Research Group and outside of it. I am greatly indebted to Karin Bäckstrand (now at the University of Stockholm), who in the first place helped me get a postdoc at the Department, then helped me with the EconClim application and has continued to serve as an example. Among the current members of the Research Group, Fari Zelli deserves special recognition and thanks for contributing from start to end, from providing suggestions to the project proposal to commenting on book chapters in their near-final stage and for being a great colleague. Åsa Knaggård has been a continuous source of inspiration through numerous theoretical discussions and through commenting on book chapters. Roger Hildingsson has also been the source of inspiring discussions, especially regarding the relationship between economic and environmental objectives and policymaking. I would also like to thank my former colleague Annica Kronsell (now at the University of Gothenburg) for taking time to explain exactly why writing a monograph would be worth it. Also within the Environmental Politics Research Group, Johannes Stripple, Tobias Nielsen, Jacob Hasselbalch, Mark Cooper and Ina Möller have provided great academic inspiration and company.

Beyond those working on environmental politics, my research has also benefitted greatly from the fresh eyes of people such as Magdalena Bexell and Jens Bartelson, who have helped me understand how the research could be relevant to people from other parts of political science. I have also benefitted from having two highly

supportive heads of department, first Tomas Bergström, who at an early stage alerted me to the call from the three funders and continued to be extremely helpful. At the later stages of the process of writing this book, his successor Björn Badersten has provided crucial support for the final efforts and for my career in general. I am also very thankful to the administrative staff of the Department, especially Stefan Alenius, Kristina Gröndahl Nilsson and Åsa Hansson, for being highly organised in a world of academic chaos, and for being patient when my lack of organisation became too evident.

Far from all of the academic work that has gone into this book has taken place at Lund University. I have had the great pleasure of two visiting fellowships. First, in the autumn of 2013 I stayed at the Institute for Environmental Studies at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, where I benefitted from the hospitality, academic guidance and new perspectives of people like Philipp Pattberg, Dave Huitema and Oscar Widerberg. I am grateful to Frank Biermann for hosting me at the Institute and for giving me sage advice that has proven highly useful over the years. The spring of 2014 was spent at the Climate and Development Lab at Brown University, which provided me all sorts of inspiration for research and teaching. Again, I am grateful to Timmons Roberts for hosting me and for being a source of continuous collaboration and inspiration, including when it comes to commenting on chapters for this book. At Brown, I was fortunate to share an office with fellow newcomer Guy Edwards and could benefit from his company and that of the other members of the Lab. Since even academic life is not just about the time spent in offices, libraries and conference rooms, the experience of living in Amsterdam and Providence and of interacting with the people I met there is something that is reflected not only in this book but also in my memory.

Beyond those two stays, the research that has gone into this book has also benefitted from conferences, workshops and chats over coffee, beer or Skype. I cannot thank each and every individual who has been helpful or motivating in this respect. However, the highly useful comments of people like Sebastian Oberthür, Thijs Van de Graaf, Mark Buntaine and Matthew Paterson deserve special mentioning.

While this book has only one name on the cover, collaborating with others has been crucial in shaping the thinking that went into it. Without these people, this book would probably not have come into being and would definitely have looked very different. When it comes to climate finance, I have benefitted greatly from collaborating particularly with Jonathan Pickering, Carola Klöck (née Betzold), Timmons Roberts (again), Jackie Gallant and Lauri Peterson on output including a workshop, special issue and articles. Regarding fossil fuel subsidies, I have benefitted greatly from collaborating with Harro van Asselt on a workshop, edited

volume and articles and book chapters. Harro has also been a continuous source of inspiration, theoretically, conceptually and empirically with regard to fossil fuel subsidies and in terms of how to work with others in a pleasant, respectful and well-organised way. He also commented on the fossil fuel section of this book. I have also had the pleasure of working with a range of highly skilled research assistants in the context of this research, including Moa Forstop, Jasmiini Pykkänen, Jana Canavan, Klara Fredriksson and Lise Lerche Paulsen. Benni Yusriza also deserves thanks for taking part in my collection of Indonesian data. Besides those already mentioned, I would also like to thank Romain Weikmans and Matthias Kranke for providing highly insightful feedback on chapters in this book.

Conducting research based on elite interviews among international institutions and diverse countries is not an easy task. Essentially such interviews involve asking highly busy people to give up a slice of their time to help you with your research, and for this I am extremely thankful. Most of them preferred to remain anonymous. However, people such as Shruti Sharma, Ivetta Gerasimchuk and Lucky Lontoh of the International Institute for Sustainable Development have been greatly supportive in helping me locate such people and provide me with background for my research.

When it comes to the later stages of working on this book, Matt Lloyd and Sarah Lambert at Cambridge University Press have been great in guiding me through the intricacies of writing and publishing a monograph. Louise Ratford has been highly helpful in turning my manuscript into an acceptable level of English.

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this book to two very special people. The first is my wife Liv, who has been highly supportive of this endeavour even at times when it took up large shares of my time, and has provided invaluable feedback, not least in the initial stages of developing economisation as a concept. Without her love, support and intellectual rigour, this book would not have been possible. The second is our daughter Franka, who was born in Amsterdam when I was a guest researcher there. The consequences (or lack thereof) of the dynamics described in this book will play out in her lifetime.

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