

Cass, Loren R. 2006. *The Failures of American and European Climate Policy: International Norms, Domestic Politics, and Unachievable Commitments*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Reviewed by Alexander Ochs

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Climate change has been one of the most contentious issues in the transatlantic relationship. The persistent divide escalated when President Bush abandoned the Kyoto Protocol in early 2001. Since then, the EU has emerged as the most fervent leader of this UN-sponsored treaty while the United States has remained the only major developed country, aside from Australia, to oppose it. Why is that? In light of their many similarities, the sources of the rift between Americans and Europeans are puzzling.

With *The Failures of American and European Climate Policy*, Loren Cass provides the most extensive and well-researched comparative study of United States and European Union atmospheric protection to date. In addition to the EU itself, he focuses on Germany and the United Kingdom, its two most-outspoken members on this issue. The book is precisely and eloquently written. It is a valuable contribution to existing literature on the domestic adoption (or rejection) of international norms. Above all, the book is destined to become essential reading for students of these four political actors, all of which will remain crucial for confronting this century's most pressing global challenge.

The main part of the book is subdivided into five chronologically ordered chapters that document two decades of climate change regime-building, from the issue's rise to the forefront of the environmental agenda in 1985 to the entry-into-force of the Kyoto Protocol in 2005. Each of the chapters analyzes the country-specific relationships between climate policy and energy, transportation, taxation, and foreign policies. The introductory and concluding chapters outline and appraise, respectively, the theoretical framework with which Cass attempts to address the questions at hand: to what extent did the debates over emerging international norms—here defined as collective expectations about proper behavior—influence state interests and behavior? Can this discrepancy in “norm salience” explain the variance of national political outcomes?

To resolve these puzzles, Cass concentrates on two normative debates crucial in both the international and national realms: first, who should take primary responsibility for global greenhouse gas emissions; and second, which principles should guide the reduction in these emissions? In his elaboration, Cass is aware of the difference between sheer rhetoric and real action. Accordingly, he includes both criteria in his design of a salience scale to measure the affirmation of a norm over time. Its eight development stages describe a continuum from “irrelevance” to “taken for granted.”

The empirical investigation of the four actors reveals few surprises for ex-

perts in the field, but will be highly informative for anyone newly interested in the chronicles of climate negotiations. It shows the US administration's continuous struggle with climate change norms while these increasingly win acceptance internationally. From the early beginnings of the climate debates, the United States repudiated national responsibility for emissions and argued instead that reductions should be achieved wherever and by whatever means they were most cost-effective. Supported by the developing countries and environmental NGOs, however, most European states endorsed the norms that developed countries were obliged to a) take the lead in reductions, and b) achieve these reductions mainly at home. The flexibility mechanisms of the Kyoto protocol (emissions trading, joint implementation, and clean development mechanism) were long seen with great suspicion by the EU and it "took a revolutionary change such as the American repudiation of Kyoto to permit the EU to alter its position" (p. 227).

While Germany established itself as an early leader in international climate policy, the United Kingdom initially paid tribute to its special relationship to the United States and tried to serve as a bridge between both entities. Faced with the opposition of powerful organized interests, however, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany all encountered great difficulty in achieving rigorous domestic reform of their emission-intense economic sectors, despite studies on both sides of the Atlantic showing that deep cuts were possible at limited or no costs to society at large. Accordingly, the largest emission reductions were the result of the privatization of the electricity-generating industry in the UK and the shutdown of inefficient Eastern German industry after the country's reunification. Cass does not elaborate on why, however, such "cheap" reform has not occurred in the extremely energy-inefficient United States. The remaining transatlantic variance in both rhetoric and action can be attributed to a wide selection of factors, including the importance of initial framing (while the EU has early recognized climate change as an important threat, the United States has always seen climate *policy* as a potential threat to its economy), the existence of a mostly apathetic US public, and the greater congruence between the international climate norms and domestic political norms in Europe. Other factors, like the political party affiliation of a given government and the international persuasion seem to play a less important role.

Impenitently positivist in methodology, Cass presents a model for the salience of international norms that tries to find the middle ground between liberal and constructivist approaches. In his view, actors "strategically use norms to pursue both ideational and material interests" (p. 6). He follows earlier studies in the field that have repudiated utilitarian unitary-actor approaches as convincing models for the climate policies of states. The observed transatlantic differences on climate change *despite* a presumable interest congruence (e.g. by means of corresponding cost-benefit analyses) point to other important factors than simplified national power or wealth considerations. Instead, governments play two-level games. While Cass does not treat the state as a black-boxed *homo*

economicus at large, domestic material interests do most often prevail, however, in his argumentation. He might stop one step too soon. If it is true that organized special interests have a significant influence on decision-making, we might want to know how this influence is exerted and why it is not restricted in the name of social welfare. A wide range of factors, only scarcely covered by Cass but potentially more important, includes election campaign finance, lobbying, privately funded research, and the role of the media. Likewise, political culture, as well as specific historic and geographic experiences, are under explored (apart from the alleged prominence of the precautionary principle in German politics, an argument rebutted by other authors). The consultation of additional theoretical literature in International Relations and foreign policy analysis, as well as comparative transatlantic climate studies, might have been enlightening.

Climate policy, with its multiple horizontal and vertical entanglements has long proven to be a highly complex issue for both political practice and scholarship. Cass is to be congratulated for being the first to produce a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the climate policies of Europe and the United States. More than anything, he shows how little Americans and Europeans have attempted to seriously understand each others' positions and constraints. This book can be of great help to overcome this deficiency. After all, neither side will be able to solve the problem alone.

Flannery, Tim. 2006. *The Weather Makers: The History and Future Impact of Climate Change*. Melbourne, Australia: Text Publishing.

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Tim Flannery is a kind of scientific superstar in his home country of Australia. He has challenged Prime Minister John Howard's opposition to robust action to limit the pollution that causes climate change, an opposition to doing anything about the problem that has been exceeded only by that of his close ally in the United States, President George W. Bush. Anyone interested in this book might do well to begin by exploring Flannery's own website, part advertisement for the book and part useful resource for teachers who want to use it in the classroom. Flannery's celebrity extends even outside Australia. Indeed, even British Prime Minister Tony Blair and ethicist Peter Singer have endorsed the book, with the latter calling it "the book the world has been waiting for—and needed—for decades" (p. iii).

While the high level praise may be an overstatement for those who have read other, less aggressively marketed, books on climate change, and despite the potential for Flannery's celebrity to be off-putting for serious scholars and teachers of global environmental politics, this book is a valuable resource that deserves to be read. Its strength is in roughly the first half where Flannery describes Earth's ancient climate system and the "aerial ocean" that regulated cli-