

# Book Reviews

Hadden, Jennifer. 2015. *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Power of Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

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The 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen was marked by an unprecedented level of contentious action by civil society activists. Conference organizers consequently increased restrictions on all civil society participation. This frustrated activists who favored working within the UN process to influence global climate policy. Jennifer Hadden's *Networks in Contention* examines the internal politics of the transnational climate change network, both before and during the Copenhagen conference, to understand why Copenhagen was so contentious, why some organizations adopted contention and others did not, and how changes in the network and members' tactics influenced climate politics. The book contributes to the ample literature on transnational activist networks by opening the proverbial "black box" of the transnational climate change network and revealing its internal struggles, divisions, and decision-making processes.

Hadden's central argument is that the structure of transnational networks (i.e., the relations among network members) influences the way the networks perform, and therefore their ability to influence policy. When it comes to explaining organizational decisions, she argues that "network ties can be more important than [organizational] attributes" (p. 87). Such ties can even mediate the incentives produced by political opportunity structures. This observation does not mean that political opportunity structures and organizational attributes are irrelevant. Hadden credits changing political opportunities with the dramatic increase in the number and diversity of civil society groups working on climate change at the 2009 Copenhagen conference. Particularly important was the addition of organizations from the global justice movement, which had a long history with contentious action. Hadden's main focus, however, is on how these changes affected the structure of the transnational climate change network and the implications for civil society organizations' ability to influence global climate policy.

One might expect the additional resources and expertise brought by new civil society participants to translate into increased influence. Hadden skillfully uses social network analysis to explain why the increase in network size nevertheless *decreased* the climate change network's overall connectivity, and thus members' ability to impact climate change policy. The cliques that formed rarely

communicated with one another and preferred different strategies and tactics. They therefore had difficulty coordinating collective action and often worked at cross-purposes, undermining the network's ability to influence policy. Hadden demonstrates that the relations among civil society activists matter as much as their numbers.

By Copenhagen, the transnational climate change network was divided into two parts that were weakly connected. One centered on mainstream environmental NGOs, who framed climate change as a scientific problem and favored working within the UN climate negotiations to secure the best deal politically possible. The second part included organizations that framed climate change as a justice issue, preferred no deal to an unjust deal, and favored more contentious forms of action to push for fundamental change in climate policy.

The participation of radical organizations from the global justice movement partially explains the dramatic increase in contentious action at Copenhagen. Yet, many of the civil society organizations at Copenhagen had rarely used contentious action in the past. Hadden is particularly interested in why some of these organizations chose contentious forms of action while others did not. She combines social network analysis with statistical and qualitative analysis to show that organizations' tactical choices are partially explained by their network ties. Organizations were more likely to adopt contentious action when they had strong ties to organizations that had used such tactics in the past. Similarly, organizations within cliques centered on mainstream NGOs were less likely to choose such tactics. Hadden concludes that networks lead to a harmonization of strategies and tactics among network members. Networks structure the information and resources available to actors and serve as channels through which social influence spreads across actors.

The book's weakest part is its discussion of how civil society activism has influenced global climate politics. For example, the observation that increased protest activity produced more restrictions on civil society is hardly surprising, and it is not clear what the general lesson is. A second identified impact is the introduction of a justice frame into discussions of climate change. Activists' ability to influence an issue's framing is well documented in the social movement literature. An exploration of why the justice frame beat out alternative frames would have strengthened the book. Nevertheless, the book provides further evidence that social influence is a real force in environmental politics.

Drawing heavily on participant observation, the book provides an interesting, inside look into how civil society organizations make decisions at UN climate change negotiations. For students of environmental politics, the story of the split between mainstream and more radical organizations, and the merging of environmental and justice movements, will not be surprising. It is a familiar story that mirrors the evolution of US environmentalism over time. Rather, the book's main contribution is to demonstrate the power of using social network analysis (and a multimethods approach generally) to better analyze transnational politics. Hadden's skillful use of multiple methodologies (social network

analysis, quantitative historical analysis, statistical analysis, content analysis, qualitative interviewing, and participant observation) is truly impressive. The book provides an excellent example of how multiple methods can be used to tackle different pieces of a research design. It also makes a convincing argument for not treating transnational activist networks as monolithic, but rather analyzing how changes in network structures influence organizational choices and networks' ability to influence policy.

Goldin, Ian, ed. 2014. *Is the Planet Full?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Scholars have for centuries had the hubris to ask whether their generation would be the one to witness Earth finally crumbling under the weight of humanity's excesses. One of the most famous, of course, was the Rev. Thomas Malthus, who in 1798 was horrified that population growth might outpace the planet's ability to provide food for the less than one billion people alive at the time (Malthus 1888). In *The Population Bomb*, Paul Ehrlich (1968) echoed those same fears while living among a global population of 3.5 billion. Today, with population more than double that of Ehrlich's time, Ian Goldin and a group of Oxford colleagues have revisited the question: *Is the Planet Full?*

Rather than depicting a purely Malthusian vision, the volume's contributors ask whether more people might bring benefits to the planet as the number of minds to create potential solutions to the world's problems grows—the cornucopian vision of population growth often proselytized by neoclassical economists. The book's title is somewhat misleading, since what the contributors ask at heart is whether the upside of population growth outweighs the downside.

A focus on the “upside of down”—what good could result from a large population—is a welcome change from the doomsday literature that predominates in environmental studies. However, the chapter authors do not shy away from pointing out dangerous inefficiencies in resource distribution, including food and water, nor in pointing out the inconsistencies between free market ideology that professes to raise the standard of living, but in practice leads to the excesses and waste of modern consumption. Ian Johnson's chapter assessing the lessons of *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al. 1971) for the contemporary world, for example, encourages the reader to think about the limits of economic theory and its emphasis on using measures of GDP growth to indicate improvements in quality of life. Likewise, H. Charles J. Godfray's chapter on feeding the global population highlights the environmental harm caused by increasingly resource-intensive diets in countries with growing GDP and thus increased quality of life.