

Book Review: EU Climate Policy: Industry, Policy Interaction and External Environment by Elin Lerum Boasson and Jørgen Wettestad

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*This book offers structured, comparative case studies of the development of four central EU climate policies: emissions trading systems, renewables, carbon capture and storage, and energy policy for buildings, examining the intriguing similarities and differences in how these have taken shape. Combining sociological and political science theories in a novel way, **Elin Lerum Boasson** and **Jørgen Wettestad** explore the history of EU climate policy. This book primarily functions as an academic text applying theoretical frameworks and tools to the case studies of EU climate policies, writes **Susannah Fisher**.*



EU Climate Policy: Industry, Policy Interaction and External Environment. Elin Lerum Boasson and Jørgen Wettestad. Ashgate. January 2013.

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This book, *EU Climate Policy: Industry, Policy Interaction and External Environment*, examines EU climate policy-making in four key areas: emissions trading schemes, renewables, carbon capture and storage, and energy policy for buildings. Drawing on qualitative research it seeks to address the questions of how and why certain policies have taken shape in the ways they have, and attempts to draw out “accounts never told before”. The book looks at three angles in particular to understand EU climate policy development – these are the role of industry, how policies interact and the role of the external environment. The book applies three theoretical approaches to European integration – liberal inter-governmentalism, new institutionalism and multi-level governance – and seeks to apply these to understand the paths between the three angles the book focuses on and the actual policy outcomes.

The emergence of the European Trading Scheme (ETS) after long internal debate in the EU is one of the main case studies. The authors describe how after the failed efforts in the 1990s on carbon taxes and generally weak commitment to a common climate policy this development of the ETS as a flagship project was ‘revolutionary’.

Until 1997 the EU had opposed flexible climate policy instruments. However, in 1998 it started to develop an internal system for trading and a Directive in 2003 set out the main rules. After some challenges in the early stages due to too many allowances and a low carbon price, the system was revised and the streamlined ETS was finally adopted in 2009. The revised system has a centralised character of a “single European market” and was the approach being championed by the European Commission even for the earlier system.

The authors apply their framework and conclude that industry and policy interactions were of minimal importance in the adoption of this policy whilst the external environment acted as a useful stimulus for EU officials who acted as policy entrepreneurs to secure the development. The EU officials conducted a sustained campaign to first set up the system and then to revise it along the lines they had originally proposed, the authors describe this as “tortoise entrepreneurship”.

Another case study is the emergence of the Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) EU policy. CCS was a relative newcomer to EU climate policy which had initially focused on carbon pricing, energy efficiency and renewable energy but by 2008 CCS was a central part of the EU climate response. In comparison to other climate policy approaches, the response to CCS is highly centralised and consists of technological development with a focus on engineering.

The



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interest in CCS was low in the EU up until 2005 and it encountered significant resistance from the environmental NGO community. Gradually a small lobbying community built up around CCS supported by a greater focus on this approach at the international level. The author's assessment is that industry was not a huge lobbying force in the emergence of CCS policy but influenced the character of the legislation. CCS was linked to the ETS which helped explain why it emerged as so centralised, and highlighted the importance of policy interaction in this context. The external environment created the window of opportunity for CCS to gain traction and legitimacy in the EU.

Similar to the ETS example, the authors highlight the role that policy entrepreneurs played in the establishment of the policy. In this case the entrepreneurs were industry staff and MEPs who networked around the issue and created a feeling of urgency. This is contrasted to the slower entrepreneurship used over time by EU officials in the development of the ETS.

The book concludes by refocusing on the main question posed "*How can we best explain the development of EU climate policy*" and aims to draw out the specific mechanisms by which policy outcomes have been achieved. The primary mechanism identified and also the main finding of the book is the importance of policy entrepreneurs in different contexts both pushing EU policies along and shaping their character.

The book is primarily an academic text applying theoretical frameworks and tools to the case studies of EU climate policies. In this sense, it speaks more to academic debates than to those keen to understand specific areas of EU climate policy. This book is a much needed contribution to the field of climate policymaking but doesn't fully live up to its initial promise. The plethora of frameworks, analytical ideas and structure applied to each case study and their cross-comparison can be bewildering at times, and the text can also be somewhat inaccessible.

The theoretical framework using the key drivers of industry, policy interaction and external environment is interesting but

some elements of the policy development are sidelined in this approach. As more research is undertaken elsewhere on the political economy of climate planning, it seems that this more open and more explicitly political analysis may yield some insightful additions to inform climate policymaking in many contexts and could support this analysis on the EU.

Susannah Fisher is a Researcher in the Climate Change Group at the [International Institute for Environment and Development](#). Previously she was a post-doctoral researcher at the [Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment](#), LSE, and the [Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy \(CCCEP\)](#). Susannah completed a PhD at the geography department at the University of Cambridge on the politics and governance of climate change in India. Susannah has also worked in a range of organisations, including in the charity sector, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, and a public sector consultancy. [Read reviews by Susannah](#).