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Introduction

Stability and Politicization in Climate Governance

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The early 2020s have been defined by endemic political instability, raising profound questions for the pursuit of climate policy. In many countries, seemingly stable climate policy regimes have been challenged by the rise of right-wing populism and various "backlash" movements, as in Sweden and the UK (Paterson et al. 2023; Patterson 2023). Meanwhile, in Hungary, Poland, and multiple states and provinces in the United States and Canada, climate obstruction remains a considerable threat to climate action. The geopolitical crisis provoked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, coming quickly on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic, has generated novel pressures on climate policy due to myriad supply chain shocks, especially regarding natural gas, and the return of high inflation in many countries. This crisis has both empowered fossil fuel industries to seek support for increases in other sources of supply and created incentives to shift more rapidly toward renewables and electrification. Widening US–China conflict and competition continues to generate obstacles to global climate cooperation and incentives for trade as well as investment conflicts over green energy transitions. Chronic economic stagnation and widening economic inequality across many western countries, intensified by renewed inflation and economic (especially food and energy) insecurity, have fueled populist surges and resentments, framing climate action as unaffordable and elitist.

Although the last decade has seen many increasingly ambitious global, national, and subnational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction pledges – created around annual United Nations climate conferences, through European Union policymaking, and by myriad national governments and public and private transnational and subnational actors – a host of analyses continue to demonstrate that far too little in the way of emissions reductions has been achieved, and aggregate global emissions continue to rise (Anderson et al. 2020; Pörtner et al. 2022; Stoddard et al. 2021). This manifest failure of global and national political institutions to substantially and rapidly reduce emissions – most especially from high emitting

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countries, polities, and economic sectors – has added increasing fear, urgency, and rage to contemporary climate advocates, social movements, and critics of capitalism (Buzogány and Scherhaufer 2023; Malm 2021; de Moor 2023). Any previous ideas or expectations we may once have had that serious climate change policymaking by governments and states would result from greater scientific certainty about the causes of global climate change as well as increased public awareness and the visibility of climate change impacts can now be set aside. While much of this volume focuses on *mitigation* of climate change, the need for *adaptation* to its impacts grows more urgent – and expensive – by the day. Mitigation and adaptation are often championed by overlapping but distinct communities within global negotiations, and indeed, many scholars focus their research attentions on one or the other, but these two priorities are intricately and increasingly interconnected. As the need for greater adaptation efforts increases, so the requirement grows for already pledged funding from Global North countries to be shared as promised, yet current efforts remain woefully inadequate. As a result, inadequate and unfulfilled promises of support have escalated the urgency and anger surrounding the climate policy process.

These recent, multidirectional destabilizing dynamics have intensified an ongoing tension in climate policy and politics that we examine in this volume – namely, the antagonism between the pursuit of policy *stability* and the necessity of *(re) politicizing* climate change and its associated actors and institutions (Paterson et al. 2022).[1] What we call "stability" has long been a core goal among both policymakers and many academics studying climate policy. This pursuit of stability aims to create a policy regime that can secure long-term decarbonization as a response to climate change, in particular by insulating many core elements of the policy regime from the political competition that may undermine it. Just as Ulysses bound himself to his ship's mast, the goal of climate policy, as Levin et al. (2012: 123) put it, is to "constrain our future selves." But at the same time, many other commentators, analysts, and social movement activists (and the occasional politician) recognize that to achieve decarbonization it is essential to challenge the power of incumbent fossil fuel industries and their allies in political life. That is, we need more contestation, not less, and the pursuit of a stable policy environment may simply mean that the fossil fuel industry's power is never adequately undermined and is perhaps even strengthened.

This volume critically engages competing assumptions, strategies, and arguments underpinning stability "versus" conflict as a means of securing effective climate action. Both of these schools of thought enjoy many advocates within academia, while the stability argument is prevalent in the policy world, and the

[1] Parts of this introductory chapter draw heavily on Paterson et al. (2022).

politicization argument is more common among climate movement activists. However, as many of the contributions to this volume show, in practice, what exists is a more complex interplay between the two as climate policy develops in various contexts across the world. Moreover, in practice, each stance, as sketched in the second paragraph of this chapter, has in practice several important variations. Nevertheless, the dynamic between these two apparently contradictory imperatives in responding adequately to climate change shapes both empirically what we see happening in states, local governments, businesses, and movement campaigns and normatively how we think we should be continuing to imagine and advocate for more effective responses to the climate crisis.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, we describe in more detail what we mean by stability. We explain the assumptions underpinning arguments for stability and then introduce four forms of stability that contributors to this volume employ. In the second section, we develop a threefold conceptualization of politics and use this to develop our account of re/politicization, similarly introducing four forms of re/politicization identified across the chapters in the book. Finally, we provide a thematic narrative of the arc of the chapters that follow.

1.1 Stability

Many policymakers proclaim a desire to create long-term climate policy stability. For instance, former European Union Commission officials Delbeke and Vis (2015: 2) argue that in designing climate policy, we need "to make sure that the policy context … remains as stable as possible." This perspective is embedded in many economists' discourses, most notably in arguments for the necessity of stable expectations about rising carbon prices and depoliticized mechanisms for ensuring that the control of such prices is outside the vagaries of politicians' intervention (Blyth et al. 2007; Bryant 2016; Jevnaker and Wettestad 2017), and thus means that for investors and other businesses, climate policy appears as a "credible commitment" (see Mildenberger and Lockwood, Chapter 13, this volume). Central bank independence is often taken as the paradigmatic case of this sort of policy stability (Stephens and Sokol, Chapter 7, this volume). At its strongest, the urge for policy stability can hold anti-political and anti-democratic impulses – as in James Lovelock's claim that "it may be time to put democracy on hold for a while" (in Willis 2020: 1).

But there is also an academic literature focused on "policy stability" that is only loosely connected to this immediate concern of policymakers. This literature proposes that institutions should be designed to ensure that governments embed climate policy across decision-making processes, seeking to "lock in" both those policies and institutions and to generate lock-in processes favoring low- or zero-carbon

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transformations. Such institutions seek to achieve this by, for example, establishing legal requirements for governments to achieve specific emissions reductions and new parastatal institutions that seek to monitor government policy. A paradigmatic example of "depoliticized" climate policy institutionalization in pursuit of climate policy stability is the UK's prescription in legislation of carbon budgets, the integration of climate policy at the cabinet level, and an expert-dominated and influential Climate Change Committee (Kuzemko 2016; Lockwood 2013; Willis 2020, see also Mildenberger and Lockwood, Chapter 13, and Torney, Chapter 12, this volume).

We see two principal sets of literature where this argument for policy stability is expressed. The first, developed among public policy analysts, focuses on detailed analysis of policy and institutional developments regarding climate change. This literature seeks to identify means by which policy design can automatically generate long-term effects that evade future backtracking, or at least create policy feedback mechanisms that hinder such backtracking progressively (Jordan and Moore 2020; Roberts et al. 2018; Rosenbloom et al. 2019). This research often stems from contexts of instability, such as following major crises, or where governance can be turbulent. Steinberg (2012), citing March and Olsen (2008), notes that a definitional value of a policy institution is its relative permanence.

A second set of literatures frames climate change as a "super-wicked problem," with conceptual foundations, such as path dependence, lock-in, and tipping points, originating in complex systems theory (Levin et al. 2012; Rietig and Laing 2017). Here, the concern for stability connects to the temporal dynamics of climate as a policy problem, in which political dynamics discount the future (Levin et al. 2012). The challenge is thus to "constrain our future selves" so that future politicians' instincts to discount the future cannot be expressed, thus generating a set of path dependencies toward low-carbon transition (see also Bernstein and Hoffmann, Chapter 16, this volume). Calls for climate change to be addressed through more "self-binding" legislation often build on other areas, such as monetary policy (Knaggård and Pihl 2015), while others seek to understand how to establish such forms of low-carbon path dependencies (Bernstein and Hoffmann 2018; Millar et al. 2020; Rosenbloom et al. 2019).[2]

We explored this tension in an earlier article (Paterson et al. 2022). As we developed the concept in this book, in dialogue with our various contributors, it became increasingly clear, however, that the meaning of stability in climate politics is,

[2] There is a literature that takes the logic of complex systems in a different direction, toward experimentation in climate governance (Bulkeley and Castán Broto 2013; Hoffmann 2011), where the logic in systems terms is that since no one knows a priori what combinations of emergent effects might generate tipping points toward low-carbon trajectories, climate policymakers should actively seek experimental initiatives.

Table 1.1 *The four forms of stability identified in this volume*

Form of stability	**Appearance in the volume**
Stability as the status quo	*Stability that perpetuates the structures and patterns that are already present*. This form of stability underpins more chapters than any other usage. For example, Tobin et al. (Chapter 4, this volume) explore how the status quo for Muslim climate actors in the UK is one of entrenched Islamophobia.
Stability as engineering lock-in	*Stability that depoliticizes via engineering solutions, without regard to politicization, and that builds on what came before*. This form of stability – manifesting through climate policy analysis that explicitly argues for such approaches and the assumptions of many policymakers who seek it – is an important background for the volume as a whole.
Stability as policy lock-in	*Stability that depoliticizes, as in the above, but via explicitly political means, and so with greater awareness of such dynamics as coalition building, policy feedbacks, and so on*. For example, Mildenberger and Lockwood (Chapter 13, this volume) analyze the pursuit of this form of stability in four countries.
Stability as long-term emissions reduction pathways	*Stability in the unwavering reduction of emissions, rather than a strategy for doing so*. While this form is an outcome, not a school of thought, and rarely appears explicitly in the book, it represents an important assumption as to the aspirations of those who pursue the other three forms of stability.

well, a little unstable. Across the volume, we encounter four principal forms of stability in climate politics, as outlined in Table 1.1.

As we develop these forms of stability, it becomes increasingly clear that a binary opposition between "stability" and "politicization" is overly simplistic. While stability as in *locked-in policy design* or *as engineering lock-in* can be seen as being depoliticized, and are often intended as such by their proponents, the other variants are not necessarily depoliticized; and even with those two, the picture becomes more complex. We will also see that there are complicated dynamics between these different senses of stability. For example, *stability as policy lock-in* is often promoted as a means of achieving engineering lock-in, or more simply as a means of generating smooth long-term emissions pathways. Yet the policy designs that result in reality may just as readily represent *capture* by fossil fuel interests, and thus end up as *stability as the status quo*, or at least in what Bernstein and Hoffmann (Chapter 16, this volume) call "improvement": a transition away from the original high-carbon situation but which locks in still inadequate responses. In other contexts, pursuing *stability as long-term emissions reduction pathways* (e.g., via a carbon budget regime) in the end entails what Paterson (Chapter 6, this volume) calls "scope expansion," introducing new

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sources of emissions or sinks into the policy and political debate which then risk destabilizing the policy regime because of the way those new sources generate political conflict.

1.2 Re/politicization

Despite the potential benefits of stability, its antagonists propose that there are significant dangers in prioritizing the pursuit of climate policy stability. The normative priority of stability entails climate policy that avoids conflicts. A common critique of prioritizing policy stability is that it is either naïve about or designed to avoid conflict with entrenched interests who gain from the perpetuation of the status quo. Existing policy regimes have been highly stable in the way they have failed to decarbonize societies in any sustained way precisely *because* existing stable policy regimes entrench fossil fuel interests and power. The argument by academics in favor of "policy stability" to promote decarbonization can therefore readily be co-opted by the policymakers whose pursuit of policy stability – or quite simply, other ends – is deeper than their commitment to decarbonization. For these analysts, "the proof is in the pudding" as three decades of climate policymaking have failed to bend the global GHG emissions curve and barely two dozen countries have seen sustained emissions declines, with most of these quite modest indeed (Lamb et al. 2021; Stoddard et al. 2021).

Alongside this normative/strategic critique, it is an empirical mistake to assume that climate policy can be addressed "outside politics." Politics – when understood as conflicts of interest and power, and the ongoing necessity of collective decision-making – is simply intrinsic to social life. Thus, the pursuit of stability produces a second sort of danger: The avoidance of political conflicts can itself bite back. This threat is demonstrated most obviously by the persistence of climate denial (Brulle 2018; Jacques 2023; Supran and Oreskes 2017) in numerous – often fossil fuel-funded – contexts, including in details of rulemaking, standard-setting, and regulatory design, which offer innumerable opportunities for powerful interests to resist and limit the very changes policies are designed to make (Stokes 2020). Another manifestation of this "backlash" (Patterson 2023) is that of popular resistance to climate policy, such as opposition to the development of carbon pricing in many neoliberal states (MacNeil 2016), or what occurs once carbon pricing is initiated, as in the case of the French *gilets jaunes* (Gaborit and Grémion 2019), or once policies have previously been "successfully" introduced, as in the more recent populist turns in UK and Swedish climate politics (Paterson, Wilshire, and Tobin 2024; Vihma, Reischl, and Andersen 2021).

Stability in the sense of locked-in policy design on its own cannot be a guarantee of the rapid and profound transformations we need. The literature on politicization

revives a longer history of analysis of corporate actors in climate politics (Jordan and Moore 2020; Levy and Newell 2005; Meckling 2011; Newell and Paterson 1998), as well as work on climate denial emphasizing the role of corporations (Brulle 2018; Supran and Oreskes 2017). Periodically, climate scientists and NGO activists discuss how corporations have undermined climate policy (Leggett 1999; Mann 2021). These arguments are connected to a broader set of what might be called "left populist" arguments among climate justice writers and activists, exemplified by Klein (2014) and McKibben (2012). McKibben frames the fossil fuel industry as the "enemy," allying with arguments that note how there are "[j]ust 100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions" (Riley 2017). Allan (2021) shows that a growing coalition of "radical challengers" espousing anti-capitalist and anti-establishment views are increasingly strongly criticizing the United Nations' climate governance system, the "traditional" state-based and environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) structuring it, and the pro-market policy instruments they promulgate. These left populist campaigns have targeted variously oil pipelines, fracking, and divestment to contest corporate power but also opened up political debate by promoting strategies centered on the idea of a Green New Deal.

Eco-Marxist analyses often, although not always, underpin these repoliticization efforts. Malm's meticulous (2015) demonstration of how industrialization was driven by capitalist logics of control over labor and inter-capitalist competition, rather than explanations around coal being more efficient, or similar economistic rationales, has become a classic such analysis. In doing so, he and others have connected populist anti-corporate arguments to systemic understandings about the character of capitalist development. Further, Mouffe (2005) pitches the argument in general, but it resonates particularly for climate politics given the depth of social transformations required and the deep incumbent interests threatened by such changes (Paterson 2020). Recent related arguments have been advanced as critiques of most of the literature on global governance, thus appreciating the value of politicizing global governance institutions (Acharya 2018; Zurn 2018). Related work can also politicize governance practices, priorities, and discourses – and their ideological bases – at the same time, as Maechler and Boisvert (2024) do in their critique of the hegemonic "valuation-centrism" on contemporary nature and biodiversity governance initiatives.

As economic, environmental, and climate change inequalities worsen from the global to local scale, attention to justice and injustice in the discourses and governance practices of contemporary climate change politics and research has also increased. Research focused on various scales of climate justice politics and research has also grown substantially (Flavell 2024; Newell et al. 2021; Shi et al. 2016; Sowers, VanDeveer, and Weinthal 2023; Tobin et al. 2024; Zimm et al.

2024). Such work aligns with the view that existing injustices necessitate politicization in research, scholarship, policy, and governance practice. In other words, if racism, gender biases, neoliberalism, and/or colonialism are "institutionalized" in past and present governance practices and discourses – as such literatures tend to either assume (ideologically) or demonstrate (empirically) – then demands for and attempts at change are either inherently or likely to be framed as political (see Christophers 2024; Paterson 2024).

Underpinning these different uses of the term "politicization" (and indeed, "stability") is a more basic question of what we mean by "politics." Politics is famously an "essentially contested concept" (Gallie 1956), meaning both that it is impossible to arrive at a definition that all can agree on, but also that the choices of usage are themselves political in their implications. In this context, we think it useful to think of politics as three interacting dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 1.1 (for details, see Paterson 2021). First, politics is a particular type of site or arena: one where authoritative collective decisions are made, entailing particular types of processes – more or less deliberative or democratic – to generate these decisions. This understanding is often but not necessarily reduced to the state as the principal site of politics. Second, politics is about the question of power in social life – how it is generated, distributed, exercised, and legitimized. Third, politics is intrinsically conflictual: Societies of any complexity entail deeply structured inequalities of power and wealth, as well as competing visions and values, in ways that mean that arriving at collective authoritative decisions is rarely consensual, or at least conflicts will be recurrent.

Given this threefold understanding of politics, depoliticization – as sought by those pursuing stability as policy lock-in or as engineering lock-in, most notably – can be understood as a process whereby actors seek to take a phenomenon (climate action) out of formal political arenas (i.e. ones with some semblance of open deliberative decision-making, although not necessarily democratic) into ones without that quality (technocratic, etc.). They do so normally as a strategy of power, where

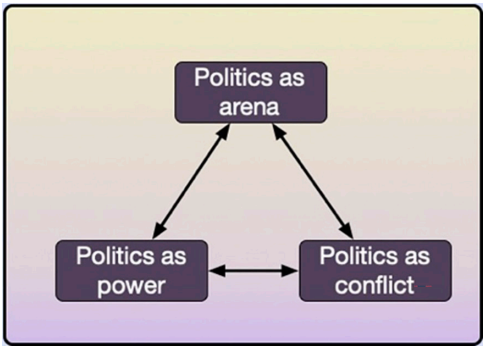

Figure 1.1 Three dimensions of politics (Paterson 2021).

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powerful actors seek to insulate themselves from accountability – as we see in many of our chapters (i.e. VanDeveer, Chapter 5; Haufler, Chapter 8; Stephens and Sokol, Chapter 7; Paterson, Chapter 6). But occasionally depoliticization has other dimensions, for example where marginalized groups may seek to depoliticize their climate interventions to avoid the potential of making themselves vulnerable via their activism (see Tobin et al., Chapter 4, this volume).

Hence, repoliticization is largely the reverse process to that of depoliticization – that is, seeking to bring processes back into explicitly political arenas in order to open up and contextualize existing power relations, thus making conflicts of power and interests explicit. Depoliticization is "orthogonal" to stability – stability is often but not always depoliticizing, and there is a subtle set of relations shaping the interactions between the two concepts.

Again, as with stability, it became clear as we explored politicization with our contributors that there are multiple forms of the strategy, including myriad implications of the prefixes de- and re- before any politicization. Existing

Table 1.2 *The four forms of politicization identified in this volume*

Form of politicization	**Appearance within the volume**
Politicization as broader sociopolitical change	*Politicization that disrupts the* status quo, *beyond direct impacts on climate change*. For example, Méndez (Chapter 3, this volume) examines coalitions of actors in California that pursue justice across myriad areas.
Politicization as partisan competition	*Politicization that elicits competition, be it polarizing politicization (pro- and anti-climate policy), or politicization of performance (regarding who has the better climate policy)*. At the national level, we see these dynamics at play across four countries in the chapter by Mildenberger and Lockwood (Chapter 13, this volume); at the sectoral level it manifests in those by VanDeveer (Chapter 5), by Paterson (Chapter 6), and by Haufler (Chapter 8); while at the global level, Allan (Chapter 14), and Nahm (Chapter 15) both examine geopolitical competition.
Politicization as discourse	*Politicization that functions as a discursive tool, be it a process that brings its object into political debate, a strategy of actors to seek to do so, or as a means of shifting attention onto rhetoric rather than activity*. For example, Allan (Chapter 14) notes rhetorical efforts to repoliticize issues within global climate negotiations.
Politicization as scholarly praxis	*Politicization that arises through scholarly interventions*. For example, several chapters function in this manner, most explicitly Tobin et al.'s (Chapter 4) efforts to lessen the invisibilization of Muslim communities in policymaking and within academic literature.

scholarship has varied in its focus between politicization and *re*politicization. The main advantage of the prefix re- is that repoliticization emphasizes that it is an iterative and relational dynamic between re- and de-. The logic of this distinction is that there is no such thing as simply politicization, since this dynamic is always ongoing, and there is no fictional moment "before politics." In this volume, we are agnostic about the usage of politicization and repoliticization. In much of the literature, politicization and repoliticization are treated as being the same thing, and so we look to our contributing authors to decide which term is most apt for their chapter.

Table 1.2 introduces the four forms of politicization we have identified in this book.

1.3 The Volume's Structure: From Movement Activism to Global Politics

This book is divided into five parts. We start by focusing on *social movement activism*. Civil society and non-state action has long been a realm of climate action because of the establishment of fossil fuel interests within state infrastructure, necessitating climate movements to find their voices "outside" government. Movements are often key actors in seeking to politicize climate action, by contesting the power of incumbent actors that seek to block such action, and thus in our sense of pursuit of broader sociopolitical change, and relatively rarely in the sense of immediate partisan competition among political parties. Tosun and Debus (Chapter 2) thus focus on perhaps the most visible global forms of such movement action in recent years: the Fridays for Future school strikes movement. They show that this activism has opened up new conflicts in German climate policy and forced the German government to shift to make various aspects of its climate strategy more ambitious. Méndez (Chapter 3) shifts the focus to climate justice movements, focused on California, and the way that individuals and organizations are dynamically co-constituting what climate justice means through ongoing conflict and collaboration. In contrast perhaps, Tobin and coauthors (Chapter 4) show how in some contexts – such as their case of Muslim climate actors in the UK – movements may wish to see politicization in order to disrupt the status quo but are in a vulnerable position for securing these changes due to Islamophobia and hence look beyond protests to secure politicization, and prioritize wider sociopolitical justice that is interwoven with climate justice.

In Part II, we turn our focus to a frequent target of movement attempts to politicize climate change: key industries in the global economy. Hence, we explore the *political economy dimensions of climate change* central to many arguments for repoliticization. We thus focus variously on the dynamics of coal phaseouts across the world (VanDeveer, Chapter 5) and the contentious politics and iterated

politicization they engender, the politics of land ownership and peat moor management in the UK (Paterson, Chapter 6), the recent involvement in climate politics by central banks (Stephens and Sokol, Chapter 7), and the usage of voluntary climate initiatives within insurance industry as a means of pursuing depoliticization (Haufler, Chapter 8). In most of these chapters, we see that stability instead ends up entrenching the status quo because of prevailing power relations. But we also see some of the contradictions of stability-oriented climate policy as it unfolds, as in Paterson's argument that climate policy brought new objects – peat moors – into view that carried with them preexisting political relations and conflicts. Yet these political economy dimensions, and the sorts of pressure movements can bring to bear, vary across countries.

Part III thus focuses on key dimensions of *comparative climate policy*. We start with Hochstetler's chapter (Chapter 9), where the underlying political economies of Brazil and South Africa shape the patterns of stability and politicization that unfold in each. In Brazil, electricity is not dominated by fossil fuel interests, while there is fierce contestation over the question of deforestation. Resultantly, there is a relatively depoliticized climate strategy (including being supported by right-wing populists like Bolsonaro) focused on wind energy development. By contrast, in South Africa, with electricity publicly owned and dominated by coal interests, stability has meant the *status quo*, and pushing for renewable energy has been highly contentious. Sun, Shen, and Lewis (Chapter 10) focus on China, showing how, despite very strong incumbent fossil fuel actors, the state's coordinating authority has managed to generate policy to accelerate the uptake of renewables, without significant explicit politicization – a noteworthy finding considering that much of the existing literature focuses on democracies' climate strategies. Farstad, Hermansen, and Lahn (Chapter 11) focus on the Norwegian case – a classic "consensual" decision-making system, showing that even there a series of specific dynamics in the Norwegian economy and party system have led to such a depoliticized arrangement coming under significant pressure as climate policy has unfolded. Torney (Chapter 12) turns his attention more explicitly to the stability argument in relation to its common referent – overarching climate laws usually understood as aiming to "lock in" decarbonization – and shows the picture is somewhat more complicated, with many such laws reflecting political compromises but more importantly designing in a recognition of future political conflicts. Mildenberger and Lockwood (Chapter 13) similarly analyze classically "stability-oriented" climate strategies but focus more on how, in practice, cases reflect explicitly political bargains or party competition within each case.

Part IV responds to the reality that the literature on stability and politicization has mostly focused on national policymaking processes, by examining *global*

politics. The existing focus on states partly derives from the implicit argument within pieces favoring stability regarding the sovereign state being able to authoritatively impose consistent policy and strategy across time. But, of course, global political dynamics are both key to climate change and have no overall sovereign actor. Various chapters have already hinted at such international or transnational dynamics, notably VanDeveer (Chapter 5) on coal phaseout, Stephens and Sokol (Chapter 7) on central bank coordination, and Haufler (Chapter 8) on the global insurance industry. But in Part IV, we focus explicitly on what happens to the stability/politicization argument if we discuss it in global political contexts, with the attendant dynamics that underpin specifically global interactions. Allan (Chapter 14) focuses on the core of the international climate regime – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – and argues that we can think of this dynamic in terms of attempts to create long-lasting treaty designs, which have been periodically repoliticized for reasons of geopolitical strategy. Specifically, the Kyoto Protocol embedded a design for what were intended as durable institutions, but these institutions rapidly became repoliticized by the United States, which decided that the Kyoto design (despite its principal features having US origins) no longer served US geopolitical interests. Nahm (Chapter 15) switches attention to the question of global trade and industrial competition. He uses this sectoral case to show how the stability/politicization dynamic becomes complicated when we think between national and international spheres of political life. Nahm argues that states may promote renewable energy development as a means of building domestic coalitions of support for investment in manufacturing that in turn generate "policy feedback." However, this pursuit of domestic political stability risks triggering international repoliticization centered on the rules of the global trade regime, thus demonstrating the delicate interconnectedness of stability and politicization.

We begin the concluding Part V of the book with Bernstein and Hoffmann's (Chapter 16) reformulation of what they have elsewhere (Bernstein and Hoffmann 2019) called the "carbon trap." While the idea of the trap is couched in the theoretical language of complex systems that informs the stability approach in particular, Bernstein and Hoffmann extend this conceptualization here by considering politicization as integral to climate policy processes. They use this understanding to reformulate the model by showing how the processes of incumbent resistance, political compromise, and coalition building can result in what they call "improvement" – a situation where societies are shifted from high carbon but end up locking in technologies and investments that prevent full decarbonization. For example, fossil fuel interests may be able to capture the process to mean that hydrogen (from natural gas) and carbon capture and storage become regarded as "solutions." Finally, in the concluding chapter of

the book, VanDeveer, Tobin, and Paterson (Chapter 17) seek to synthesize the arguments made within the volume, drawing particular focus onto the *agents* behind the dynamics of stability and politicization, and calling for future avenues of research that build on this book's findings.

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