

## **Pathologies of Climate Governance**

International Relations, National Politics  
and Human Nature

Earth's climate is in crisis. Climate governance has failed. This book diagnoses climate governance as if it were a sick patient, uncovering the fundamental factors causing the worsening climate crisis. It distills decades of global climate negotiations to reveal the features of international relations that are impeding climate action, and it identifies political obstacles to climate governance across a variety of countries in the Americas, Asia and Europe. The psychosocial aspects of climate change are explored to show how human nature, overconsumption and global capitalism conspire to stymie climate action. Remedies are suggested for how to overcome hurdles to effective climate governance internationally and nationally, with ideas provided for individuals to help them align their own interests with those of the global environment. Covering all of the major recent events in climate politics and governance, this is an accessible book for concerned readers who want to understand the climate crisis.

PAUL G. HARRIS has written or edited 25 books on global environmental and climate change politics, policy and ethics, including: *What's Wrong with Climate Politics and How to Fix It* (Polity Press, 2013), the *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics* (Routledge, 2014), *Global Ethics and Climate Change* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016) and *Climate Change and Ocean Governance* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). He is the Chair Professor of Global and Environmental Studies at the Education University of Hong Kong and a Senior Research Fellow in the Earth System Governance global research alliance.

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and Human Nature

PAUL G. HARRIS



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## Acknowledgements

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Climate change and climate governance are moving targets for scholars. New research, new events and new interpretations of them are being reported every day. As such, it has to be acknowledged that any book about climate change can give readers only a snapshot of what has been happening and what is known about it. To keep up with changing events, and to give readers – especially students and their instructors – additional information, a companion website has been created to supplement this book. The website includes updates to topics covered in each chapter, a bibliography listing almost 1,000 sources, discussion questions, PowerPoint slides and links to websites and other resources. Readers can access the website here: <https://paulgharris.net/pathologies-of-climate-governance/>.

I have benefited from information and ideas found in a wide range of literary sources, including books, scholarly journal articles, official reports from governments and international organizations, expert research assessments, analyses from nongovernmental organizations, and newspaper articles, among others. I have tried to provide a rich list of references to these sources. Readers who wish to dig more deeply into the topics that are discussed here will find Internet (i.e., World Wide Web) hyperlinks in the list of references that provide direct access to the sources, when available, or additional bibliographic information. Readers who are studying or doing research on climate governance may also find the more detailed bibliography on the companion website to be particularly useful. As hyperlinks to sources change, the online bibliography will be updated accordingly. Readers are encouraged to notify me via the website if they find that hyperlinks are not functioning.

The roots of this book can be found in many of my previous books (Harris, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2019a, 2019b), book chapters

and journal articles (see [www.paulgharris.net/articles](http://www.paulgharris.net/articles)), as well as the literature cited therein. In particular, this book builds on a number of ideas that I shared in some detail in *What's Wrong with Climate Politics and How to Fix It* (2013, Polity). Much as in that book, in this one I identify major structural, political and psychosocial causes of the climate crisis and propose some solutions to them. Chapter 8 of this book distills several chapters of that one, and some of the prescriptions for climate governance in Chapter 9 here resemble proposals that were made there. I have tried to integrate much of the feedback that I received on *What's Wrong with Climate Politics and How to Fix It* from scholars, reviewers, students, activists and other readers. I am indebted to all of them for sharing their comments with me.

I gratefully acknowledge permission to reproduce several figures. Figure 2.1, “Fossil CO<sub>2</sub> emissions,” is a black-and-white reproduction of figures from Friedlingstein *et al.* (2019: 1806) under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License. Figure 2.2, “Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> at Mauna Loa Observatory,” is reproduced with permission of the NOAA Global Monitoring Division. Figure 7.1, “World total population,” is reproduced with permission of Creative Commons license CC BY 3.0 IGO. Figure 7.2, “Percentage of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by world population,” and Figure 7.3, “Lifestyle consumption emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita,” are black-and-white reproductions of illustrations in Gore (2015: 4), used with the permission of Oxfam, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2JY, UK, [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk). (Oxfam does not necessarily endorse any text that accompanies the figures.)

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## Acknowledgements

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Finally, my gratitude goes to people around the world who have selflessly devoted themselves to finding and implementing more effective and just methods for governing climate change. It is to them that this book is dedicated.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

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AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa group
C&C	contraction and convergence
CBDR	common but differentiated responsibility
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCS	carbon capture and storage
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CDR	carbon dioxide removal
CO <sub>2</sub>	carbon dioxide
COP	Conference of the Parties (of the UNFCCC)
EGD	European Green Deal
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (United States)
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
EU	European Union
G7	Group of Seven economically advanced economies
G20	Group of 20 governments, central banks and the European Union
G-77	Group of 77 developing states
GDP	gross domestic product
GDR	greenhouse development rights
GHG	greenhouse gas
GND	Green New Deal (United States)
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GPI	Genuine Progress Indicator
GtC	gigaton of carbon
HDI	Human Development Index
HFC	hydrofluorocarbon
HPI	Happy Planet Index
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IEA	International Energy Agency
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development

IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDC	Least Developed Country group (in UNFCCC negotiations); least-developed country
METI	Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry (Japan)
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration (United States)
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions (to the Paris Agreement)
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission (China)
NET	negative-emissions technology
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (United States)
NRDC	Natural Resources Defense Council
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (United Nations)
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
ppm	parts per million
R&D	research and development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
SIDS	Small Island Developing States group (in UNFCCC negotiations); small-island developing states
SUV	sport utility vehicle
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
USGCRP	United States Global Change Research Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature