

## ECOPOLITICS PODCAST: Additional Pedagogical Resources (Episode 6)

### Episode 6: Great Power Politics and the Environment

*Overview: Dr. Yixian Sun (University of Bath), and Dr. Matthew Paterson (University of Manchester), explain how the world's most powerful countries - from Great Powers in the G7 to emerging powers in the BRICS - shape ecopolitical outcomes on the global stage.*

#### Key Takeaways

- “The first question we have to ask is what are... national interests? [Then,] how does climate change or other environmental problems ... affect those national interests?” (Dr. Paterson, 00:00-00:20).
- Notwithstanding a UN system that seeks to give all states equal say, international environmental negotiations are invariably influenced by the economic, institutional or discursive power of specific states like the U.S. or China. Sometimes this can lead to consensus; sometimes it stymies it.
- National interests of the state are neither monolithic nor stagnant. National policies are shaped by different political, cultural, social, and economic interests that are championed by different actors within the state, including specific arms of governments, private businesses, advocacy groups, and citizens, among others.
- There is a clear relationship between international governance of the environment and the interests of transnational businesses that contribute to both domestic and global economic activity.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Who do you think are the most significant state actors shaping global climate governance today? Would climate governance be hopeless without the world’s most powerful countries at the table?
2. What do you think is the role of emerging economies in shaping global climate policy? What should their role be? What about “middle powers” (like Canada)?
3. What difference do you think the broader relationships between specific states make to shaping global climate action?

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### Learn more about our Guests

#### Dr. Yixian Sun

- <https://researchportal.bath.ac.uk/en/persons/yixian-sun>

#### *Select articles, books and videos*

- Fesenfeld, Lukas P, **Yixian Sun**, Michael Wicki, and Thomas Bernauer. “The Role and Limits of Strategic Framing for Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Policy.” *Global Environmental Change* 68 (2021).
- van der Ven, Hamish, **Yixian Sun**, and Benjamin Cashore. “Sustainable Commodity Governance and the Global South.” *Ecological Economics* 186 (2021).
- van der Ven, Hamish, and **Yixian Sun**. “Varieties of Crises: Comparing the Politics of COVID-19 and Climate Change.” *Global Environmental Politics* 21, no. 1 (2021): 13–22.

#### Dr. Matthew Paterson

- [https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/researchers/matthew-paterson\(88b5a559-e8ac-476e-b380-533a0fb16ff7\).html](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/researchers/matthew-paterson(88b5a559-e8ac-476e-b380-533a0fb16ff7).html)

#### *Select articles, books and videos*

- **Paterson, Matthew**. “Climate Change and International Political Economy: Between Collapse and Transformation.” *Review of International Political Economy : RIPE* 28, no. 2 (2020): 394–405.
- MacNeil, Robert, and **Matthew Paterson**. “Trump, US Climate Politics, and the Evolving Pattern of Global Climate Governance.” *Global Change, Peace & Security* 32, no. 1 (2020): 1–18.
- Mangat, Rupinder, Simon Dalby, and **Matthew Paterson**. “Divestment Discourse: War, Justice, Morality and Money.” *Environmental Politics* 27, no. 2 (2018): 187–208.

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### Explore resources mentioned in this episode

- Helm, Dieter. *Net Zero: How We Stop Causing Climate Change*. London, UK: Harper Collins. 2020.
- Learn more about the Global Clock Climate Coalition  
<https://co2coalition.org/2020/09/23/new-york-climate-clock-highlights-decades-of-pre-mature-prophecies-of-global-warming-doomsday/>
- Learn more about the Belt and Road Initiative  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>
- Learn more about the strategic planning of Shell  
<https://www.shell.com/energy-and-innovation/the-energy-future/scenarios.html>
- Learn more about Norway's Electric Vehicle (EV) sales  
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/electric-cars-record-market-share-norway-2020/>
- Learn more about the Earth Negotiations Bulletin <https://enb.iisd.org/>

### Learn more about International Relations and issues related to Ecopolitics

- Katz-Rosene, Ryan. "From Narrative of Promise to Rhetoric of Sustainability of Oil Sands." *Environmental Communication*. 11 (3): 401-14. 2017.
- Baylis, John, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Eighth edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Stevenson, Hayley. 2017. *Global Environmental Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Selby, Jan. 2019. "The Trump Presidency, Climate Change, and the Prospect of a Disorderly Energy Transition." *Review of International Studies* 45 (3): 471–90.