



A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy

(Global Environmental Accord: Strategies for Sustainability and Institutional Innovation)

By J. Timmons Roberts, Bradley Parks

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The global debate over who should take action to address climate change is extremely precarious, as diametrically opposed perceptions of climate justice threaten the prospects for any long-term agreement. Poor nations fear limits on their efforts to grow economically and meet the needs of their own people, while powerful industrial nations, including the United States, refuse to curtail their own excesses unless developing countries make similar sacrifices. Meanwhile, although industrialized countries are responsible for 60 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, developing countries suffer the "worst and first" effects of climate-related disasters, including droughts, floods, and storms, because of their geographical locations. In *A Climate of Injustice*, J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley Parks analyze the role that inequality between rich and poor nations plays in the negotiation of global climate agreements.

Roberts and Parks argue that global inequality dampens cooperative efforts by reinforcing the "structuralist" worldviews and causal beliefs of many poor nations, eroding conditions of generalized trust, and promoting particularistic notions of "fair" solutions. They develop new measures of climate-related inequality, analyzing fatality and homelessness rates from hydrometeorological disasters, patterns of "emissions inequality," and participation in international environmental regimes. Until we recognize that reaching a North-South global climate pact requires addressing larger issues of inequality and striking a global bargain on environment and development, Roberts and Parks argue, the current policy gridlock will remain unresolved.



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Editorial Review

Review

In their superb contribution to scholarly and political debates about the future of international efforts to cope with climate change, J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley C. Parks offer a carefully developed, richly documented, and convincingly supported account of the origins, dynamics, and implications of the current North-South impasse.

This book is a significant contribution, both in addressing questions of justice in the climate change debate and in providing new perspectives on the prospects for successful negotiation.

(Dale Jamieson, Professor of Environmental Studies and Philosophy, New York University)

Roberts and Parks have written an outstanding book that highlights the deep structures of inequality and mistrust that pervade every aspect of the climate regime. It will be essential reading for anyone who wants to understand why the South is increasingly reluctant to join up with the post-Kyoto process.

(Clark A. Miller, Consortium for Science, Policy & Outcomes, Arizona State University, and editor of *Changing the Atmosphere: Expert Knowledge and Environmental Governance*)

This is a remarkable book. In applying a wide variety of disciplinary approaches—empirical and theoretical, qualitative and quantitative—the authors provide a thorough and truly global understanding of the structural inequalities and injustice that come with contemporary climate politics and disasters. A rich, sophisticated, and balanced study that moves beyond structural explanations and opens horizons for change.

(Arthur P. J. Mol, Wageningen University, The Netherlands)

About the Author

J. Timmons Roberts is James Martin 21st Century Professor at the Environmental Change Institute, Oxford University, UK, and Professor of Sociology at the College of William and Mary, US.

Bradley C. Parks is a Development Policy Officer in the Department of Policy and International Relations at the Millennium Challenge Corporation in Washington, DC, and Senior Researcher at The Center for International Policy Research at the College of William and Mary.

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