

Foreword

A publication on climate governance and federal systems is an important, welcome, and timely contribution to understanding in this policy area of federative governance. This book's relevance is enormous when one considers the gravity of the challenge that lies ahead and the role that federated systems play in addressing it. After all, a number of the world's largest emitters are either federations (e.g., the United States, India) or have adopted forms of decentralised governance. A number of other federations, such as Australia and Canada, have very high per capita emissions. Comparative global research helps us understand some of the ways in which federal or decentralised systems help or hinder efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Federal and federal-type systems are distinctive in that their various and varied constituent units provide policymaking opportunities that may not be present in unitary systems. This book explores that dimension of decision-making and policy choices that its fourteen case studies have undertaken in their efforts to address the challenge of climate change. We hope that the experiences and findings presented in this publication will support progress in advancing policy options in this vital area.

Federal and federal-type systems of governance are integral to global efforts to address the climate crisis around the world. These efforts depend on policy leadership, innovation, and implementation and involve major energy and infrastructure changes that are often difficult and politically contentious.

The relevance of federalism and decentralisation to climate governance has gained increased recognition with the adoption of the Paris Agreement, which expressly acknowledges the role the different orders of government have to play in contributing to the realisation of climate mitigation and adaptation objectives.

The constituent units – states, provinces, cantons, *Länder* – not only often have responsibility for many of the policy and governance domains where climate change mitigation and adaptation can be best achieved, but they also provide an opportunity for a range of approaches and measures to be trialled. Their initiatives

can build on what is done by central government, but also fill in gaps in national policymaking, as central governments may not be as well equipped to address and implement climate change policy within these systems.

In federal and decentralised countries, the formulation of national policies on climate change is a complex process where intergovernmental co-operation is required. At times, constituent units drive policy action in climate governance within those powers they are allocated. In addressing climate policy, constituent units have powers and policy levers that they can and do employ. Here, as often occurs also in other policy areas in multi-level systems, tensions and co-ordination challenges between the levels of government exist.

It was at the intersection of these considerations and dynamics that the Forum of Federations undertook this research initiative, an initiative that provides a combined global perspective and country case studies. The research aimed to provide insights into policy options, approaches, and mechanisms used by governments, collating the story of climate governance in federal and federal-type systems. It is an opportunity to learn from one another, which is the core of the Forum's mandate.

More specifically, this research initiative was formed to address some fundamental questions: What is the potential of federal and decentralised systems in addressing climate change? Are federated systems well suited to grappling with the complexity and uncertainty of climate change by providing policymakers with opportunities to develop solutions tailored to different scales and circumstances, experiment with innovative policy measures, and engender policy learning and convergence over time? Or conversely, are there regulatory overlaps and co-ordination deficits inherent in many federated states which may hinder the pursuit of effective climate action? What policy options do the different governments of federal systems pursue within their respective powers and institutions? What policy actions can these actors take to address the complex political and policy issues of climate change? What co-ordination institutions are important to the success of climate change governance? Are there policy insights and successes that can be adopted and applied?

At the programme's inception in 2018, the Forum discussed this initiative with the Government of Quebec, who responded enthusiastically. It was very much their encouragement and support that has enabled this project to proceed and to succeed. Since the programme's launch in 2019 with our partner the Université du Québec à Montréal, the Government of Quebec has provided generous organisational and financial support.

The Forum and partners assembled leading academic experts and practitioners from thirteen federal and decentralised countries – Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Spain,

Switzerland, and the United States – along with the European Union (EU) to produce this major comparative analysis on the dynamics within climate change governance and federal systems.

A significant part of the project was the international authors' conference and the Canadian roundtable discussion, which the Forum and its partners, the Université du Québec à Montréal and the Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes, hosted in Montreal. At this event, over thirty-five renowned experts and practitioners, including provincial and federal policymakers, participated in the two days of discussions.

At the international conference, guided by the project editorial team and the Forum staff, experts presented their country case studies and the preliminary findings of their research, addressing core questions to help shape the project template guiding all authors with a set of common questions to address in detailing the dynamics involved.

The Canadian roundtable examined the state of play in Canadian climate policy governance, highlighting some of the ongoing policy puzzles facing actors across the country and its constituent units. Participants addressed the interplay of climate change policy issues, ranging from provincial government prioritisation and co-operation to challenges and conflicts within the Canadian federal system in addressing climate change. The closing session addressed those mechanisms that the federal government and the provinces employed in dealing with those inherent co-ordination challenges and conflicts.

Following the conference in Montreal, the project editorial team and the experts worked together over two-and-a-half years in producing the individual country chapters as well as the Introduction and comparative Conclusion chapters – a process made more challenging by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In sum, it is our hope that this volume will provide practitioners and researchers with comparative policy insights into the relationship between climate governance and federalism. Supporting a deeper appreciation of policy- and decision-making that has made an impact on the quest to address climate change, the volume's research is a guide to people who are interested in learning about the federal dynamic of climate governance.

Finally, it was our aim and sincere hope that the perspectives gathered through this volume will provide an impetus for continued theoretical and applied work on climate change policy within these and other federal and decentralised systems.

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