# The political economy of climate policy: a systematic map of the literature

## Protocol for a review

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**Abstract**

Background. The implementation and ambition of climate policy depends on a broad array of social, economic and political factors, collectively known as the ‘political economy’. But despite increasing attention on the political economy of climate policy, there have been few attempts at consolidation. Synthesis is hindered by deep disciplinary and ontological divides, a diversity in methods and epistemologies, and a lack of clear boundaries in the scope of relevant drivers and conditions. The purpose of this review is to characterise the literature in terms of the topics, methods and theories that inform political economic analysis on climate policy. This will serve as an entry point to: (1) exposing the scope of ‘political economy’ in definitional terms; (2) identifying common themes that can bridge disciplinary divides in the field; and (3) exploring opportunities for consolidating empirical work, as well as topics that warrant further primary research.

Methods. We engage stakeholders and study review articles to establish key thematic areas of political economy research, each with associated lists of keywords. 4 initial themes have been identified: interests, institutions, ideas – and literature that self-identifies as political economy research. Articles that are framed under these themes and apply them in the context of climate policy (captured by a broad set of relevant keywords) are included in the systematic map. We exclude studies on non-energy sector policies (e.g. land use), studies on climate adaptation and studies on international climate policy (e.g. UNFCCC processes). We will issue a call for evidence, in particular to obtain book chapters, which are prevalent in the field. Studies will not be critically appraised. We will classify documents by topic, method, location (if case-study based) and whether or not they include theoretical content. We will use computational methods to extract topics and locations; in combination with scientometric methods, these will also allow us to identify epistemic communities, research clusters and gaps. The review will follow the ROSES Systematic Map protocol.

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| **Political economy themes** | **Keywords** | AND | **Climate policy themes** | **Keywords** |
| **Generic**  *What literature self-identifies as ‘political economy’ analysis?* | (“Political econom\*”) | **Generic** | ("decarboni\*ation" OR low carbon OR (( "energy" OR "carbon" OR "CO2" OR "GHG" OR "greenhouse gas" OR "climat\*" OR "emissions") NEAR/3 mitigation) OR (( "energy" OR "carbon" OR "CO2" OR "GHG" OR "greenhouse gas") NEAR/3 ("reduc\*" OR "polic\*" OR "governance"))) |
| **Interests**  *Which political constituencies influence climate policy and how?* | ("Coalitions" OR "corporations" OR "political part\*" OR "vested interest\*" OR "constituencies" OR "voters" OR "Lobbying" OR "bargaining" OR "voting" OR "rent-seeking" OR "political conflict" OR "political capture" OR "corporate power" OR “acceptability” OR "litigation") | **Fossil fuels** | ((coal OR oil OR gas OR “fossil fuel”) AND “climat\*”) |
| **Institutions**  *How do institutions, their rules and organisational forms, shape climate policy?* | (“institution\*”) | **Carbon pricing** | ((“carbon” OR “CO2” OR “GHG”) NEAR/3 (“tax” OR “market” OR “price”)) |
| **Ideas**  *What discourses, cultural norms and ideologies influence the adoption of climate policy?* | ("Discourse\*" OR "norms" OR "ideolog\*" OR "legitimac\*" OR "Neoliberalism" OR "governmentality" OR "liberalism" OR "populism") | **Energy transitions & renewables** | (("energy" NEAR/3 ("transition\*" OR "solar" OR "wind" OR "renewable")) OR "solar PV" OR "wind power") |

Table 1: Political economy themes and keywords. Rows are combined with an ‘OR’ operator.

**Exclusions**

- Studies on international climate policy and associated procedures (UNFCCC, COP negotiations etc.)

- Studies on climate adaptation, disaster recovery and impacts (i.e. contra climate mitigation)

- Studies on non-energy sector mitigation (land use, land-use change and forestry)

- Studies captured by the Web of Science keywords only

**Review papers**

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| Paper | Domain | Explanatory factors/themes |
| Roberts, C. et al. The politics of accelerating low-carbon transitions: Towards a new research agenda. Energy Res. Soc. Sci. 44, 304–311 (2018). | Energy transitions | * Coalitions: when actors combine their political agency to initiate or frustrate reform (*interests*) * Feedbacks/stability: policy as an ongoing process, with opportunities to strengthen and lock-in positive or negative feedbacks (*processes*) * Context dependence: technological capabilities, natural resource endowments, industrial specialisations, political norms, institutions, and the cultural legitimacy of different technologies – all potentially shaping the policy space (*ideas and institutions)* |
| Gough, I. Welfare states and environmental states: a comparative analysis. Env. Polit. 25, 24–47 (2016). | Environment and climate policy |  |
| Lockwood, M., Kuzemko, C., Mitchell, C. & Hoggett, R. Historical institutionalism and the politics of sustainable energy transitions : A research agenda. (2016). doi:10.1177/0263774X16660561 |  |  |
| Helm, D. Government failure, rent-seeking, and capture: The design of climate change policy. Oxford Rev. Econ. Policy 26, 182–196 (2010). |  |  |
| O’Hara, P. A. Political economy of climate change, ecological destruction and uneven development. Ecol. Econ. 69, 223–234 (2009). |  |  |
| Vogt-Schilb, A. & Hallegatte, S. Climate policies and nationally determined contributions: reconciling the needed ambition with the political economy. Wiley Interdiscip. Rev. Energy Environ. e256, (2017). |  |  |