

Bio-politics of Climate Change Governance- The Australian Narrative

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

- AGO: Australian Greenhouse Office
- AAU: Assigned Amount Unit (AAU) is a tradable 'Kyoto unit' representing an allowance to emit greenhouse gases comprising one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent calculated using their global warming potential. Assigned Amount Units are issued up to the level of initial "assigned amount" of an Annex 1 Party to the Kyoto Protocol
- ABARE: Australian Bureau of Agricultural Economics
- AJ: Activities Implemented Jointly: Voluntary Pilot Phase of the flexible mechanisms that allowed industrialized countries (Annex 1 Parties) to implement projects in other countries that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases or enhance their removal through sinks.
- CDM: Clean Development Mechanism: Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol establishes a mechanism whose role is to assist non- industrialized countries (non-Annex 1 Parties) in achieving sustainable development and to assist industrialized countries (Annex 1 Parties) with their quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments.
- CER: Certified Emission Reduction: a permit issued by CDM administrators equal to one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent, calculated using global warming potentials from 1995 IPCC Second Assessment Report
- COP: Conference of the Parties- highest level meeting of signatory parties (nation-states) to the Kyoto Protocol
- CPRS: Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme [The Australian Emissions Trading Scheme]
- ESD: Ecologically Sustainable Development
- ERU: a tradable 'Kyoto unit' representing an allowance to emit one metric tonne of greenhouse gases absorbed by a removal or carbon sink activity in an Annex I country
- EEA: Economic and Energy Analysis Pvt Ltd
- GWP: Global Warming Potential
- GWA: George Wilkenfield Associates Pvt Ltd
- IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- Kyoto Units: Each flexible mechanism of the Kyoto protocol has units intended to represent one metric tonne of CO₂ equivalent. Jurisdiction vary on their allowance of Kyoto Units for compliance with domestic climate legislation. A CER is the Kyoto Unit for Clean Development Mechanism.
- LULUCF: Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry
- NGRS: National Greenhouse Reduction Strategy
- NCAS: National Carbon Accounting System [Australian]
- QELRO: Quantified Emission Limitation or Reduction Objective, expressed as a percentage in relation a base year, denotes the average level of emissions that an Annex 1 Party could emit on an annual basis during a given commitment period
- REDD: Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation: international financing mechanisms to offset industrial emissions by sponsoring an array of governmental techniques to prevent deforestation of a certain area of land.
- SLATS: State-wide Landcover and Trees Survey [Queensland]

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (signed 1992, entered into force 1994) establishes the commitment by signatory countries to avoid dangerous interference with the climate system

Abstract

The central research question of this dissertation is how can a bio-political and historico-materialistic framework help define the specific features of climate crisis and its governance? Through a theoretical assemblage of Foucault's governmentality supplemented with Marxist conception of primitive accumulation, the main objective of this thesis is to trace a genealogy of climate change governance in Australia in order to unravel different modalities and configurations of relationship between climate and capital creating socio-ecological links in neoliberal environmental governance.

Within the broader context of international negotiations on climate governance this thesis focuses on the terrain and specificities of climate governance in Australia between 1990-2008, as a trajectory that connects the discourses of sustainable development from 1990's to green economy concepts popularized during the course of 2000. The trajectory and policy terrain illustrates a continuing chapter in the history of neoliberalism as progressively hegemonic governmental rationality, creating new modes of regulation in converting nature from enacting limits to economic process to a fundamental element of market valorization.

This thesis propose to understand climate policies as regime of power practices organized through problematization, rationalities, programmes and technologies of government. The concept of governmentality helps to explore the social and political logic of such practices as routinized, normalized, sedimented, contested and defended practices of a regime. The merit of a Marxist conception of primitive accumulation helps in the analysis of neo-liberalization of nature that facilitates the expansion of capitalist accumulation through the capture, valuation, monetization and pricing of climate.

