

Mapping Climate Change Policy in New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme

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In 2008, New Zealand became the first nation in the world to pass a comprehensive emissions trading scheme (ETS) as a policy instrument for Kyoto Protocol compliance. While carbon trading schemes had been in operation on the national and supra-national level within the EU and on state and local levels within the US and Japan, New Zealand's ETS was the first to include emissions from agriculture and forestry. This was especially compelling as New Zealand's primary source of greenhouse gas emissions were agricultural, being the only nation in the OECD with this distinct emissions profile. This made New Zealand a developed country with the emissions profile of a developing one. What was also especially compelling about New Zealand's ETS was that the impetus for it was spearheaded by a Labor Party Government – a party not traditionally associated with environmental causes.

In my research, I wanted to determine how climate change was operationalized as a problem within New Zealand society, and in turn, how the emissions trading scheme was chosen as a means to address climate change. I interviewed 80 organizational representatives within New Zealand to determine from what sources they garnered scientific expertise about climate change. From these interviews, I used computer software to construct a communication network to visually depict how scientific information on climate change was disseminated within New Zealand civil society. I also interviewed the actors to determine who they worked with on passing the ETS into law. Using the same software, I was able to graphically depict the relationships among actors involved in drafting and implementing New Zealand's Kyoto compliance mechanism.

Upon analysis, while the IPCC and its constituent organizations were the sources of the vast majority of information on climate change to New Zealand actors, it was government ministries, specifically the Ministry for the Environment, was responsible for relaying information from the IPCC to other branches of the government, the business community, and NGOs. This is in sharp contrast to the US, where no government agency acted as a primary relay for scientific knowledge on climate change, and instead information was relayed from a variety of sources, and often conflicting, rather than a single narrative from the IPCC as within the New Zealand case.

In examining the advocacy coalition that formed around passing the ETS, it appears that the Labor Party was able to spearhead the coalition because of close ties with the Green Party, its largest coalition partner, and a number of organizations within the business community, that were tightly bound to the Labor Party after the Labor Government's successful negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement with China. The unique role the Labor party had in bridging the Green party and the business community in

drafting and implementing the ETS emphasizes the importance of bridging actors in action network structure and function.

PRESENTATIONS

Vaughter, P.C. Comparing climate change policy networks: an international research program in twenty countries. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN USA, February 2012

Vaughter, P.C. Advocacy networks around biodiversity and climate change issues within New Zealand. Society of Conservation Biology, Auckland, New Zealand. December 2011.

Vaughter, P.C. Comparing national responses to climate change: networks of debate and contention. University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia. September 2011.

PUBLICATIONS SUBMITTED

Vaughter, P. & Burrdige, S. (2011). A hot mess: Climate change issue definition (or the lack thereof) in the American press. Submitted to *Climatic Change*.

Vaughter, P. (2011). Can the Kiwi ETS fly? Advocacy coalitions as reported by the New Zealand press around carbon legislation. Submitted to *Climatic Change*.

Future Projects

This research was the backbone for my dissertation research, which I plan on defending to my graduate committee on August 28, 2012. Chapters IV and V (attached) are the direct result of my research within the field in New Zealand.

I am currently working with Dr. Lila Singh from the University of Brisbane in implementing a similar investigation on the dissemination of IPCC science within Australia coupled with an investigation of how the Australian Labour government was able to implement a carbon tax as a Kyoto compliance mechanism.

I am also beginning a post-doctorate with Dr. Marcia McKenzie at the University of Saskatchewan on how information on climate change is being relayed to students within the Canadian public school system.