Introduction

On Governmentality and Climate Change

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Introduction

Climate change is everywhere. … The idea that humans are altering the physical climate of the planet through their collective actions, an idea captured in the simple linguistic compound 'climate change', is an idea as ubiquitous and powerful in today's social discourses as are the ideas of democracy, terrorism, or nationalism.

Mike Hulme 2009: 322

What are we to make of the apparent ubiquity of climate change? From faith-based movements to celebrities, the halls of the United Nations (UN) to advertising hoardings, climate change appears to be written through the contemporary social world. What started as a matter of scientific enquiry in the nineteenth century, and became a battleground for intergovernmental negotiations in the late 1980s, has now become a part of people's everyday lives and livelihoods. As Hulme (2009) argues, the idea of climate change has become as powerful as the issue itself. Gerson (2012), for example, writing in *The Washington Post* and commenting on the 2012 U.S. presidential campaign, noted that a theory about the role of carbon dioxide in shaping climate patterns has now joined abortion and gay marriage as a culture war controversy. Against this seemingly unending encounter with climate change, however, there is also a sense that its meaning has been lost. With familiarity comes a sense of the taken for granted, and what climate change might mean – socially, politically, culturally, economically – fades into the background. In this book, we seek to recover and renew our understanding of climate change as a matter for the social sciences. Drawing together twenty scholars from across five disciplines, we seek to interrogate the social meaning and implications of climate change through a sustained engagement with critical political and social theory.

Over the past two decades, the growing social scientific interest in climate change has been dominated by forms of enquiry in which concepts and constructs of the social and political world were largely taken as given. At stake in this body of

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work was charting the social, political and economic effects of climate change as a complement to the dominant scientific understanding of the issue. More recently, a burgeoning area of scholarship has sought to articulate key social scientific problematics – surrounding, for example, the nature of power, agency, the state, market, individual responsibility and so on – with the climate change phenomenon. Such approaches are 'critical' in their disposition in that they seek to probe and deconstruct the assumed building blocks of the social world, not only to bring new forms of meaning to the climate change issue, but also as a means to advance social science theorization itself. As we set out later in this chapter, one particular body of work that has attracted attention in this regard is the scholarship on Foucault's notion of governmentality, which is now increasingly widely applied in the climate change domain. In this chapter, by way of an introduction to this volume, we chart the emergence of these approaches and consider why and how they offer new illumination for understanding climate change. At the same time, we argue that engaging with climate change provides new challenges for critical social science theory that at once raise questions of scale, of nature and of materiality.

Climate Change, Politics and the Social Sciences

Since climate change emerged as a public concern, the social science community has largely focussed its analytical attention on two of the policy 'puzzles' posed by this complex issue. The first, and arguably dominant, set of concerns has been with the emergence, workings and challenges of international climate policy. In this field, traditionally dominated by the discipline of international relations, the focus of attention has been on the interaction between nation-states and the international institutions created to address climate change (Sprinz and Luterbacher 2001; Aldy and Stavins 2007). In contrast, a second set of concerns with which social science disciplines has engaged has included the attitudes and behaviours of individuals. Here, the puzzle is why, given apparent public concern, exhortations to individuals to reduce energy consumption and 'save the planet' have largely failed (Gardner and Stern 1996; Nilsson, Von Borgstede and Biel 2004). Across the disciplines of psychology, economics and sociology, the research community has sought to engage with how and why individual behaviour can change and the barriers that are encountered. In this body of work, marked by diversity in its interest in markets, education, regulations, voting patterns and so on as the means through which preferences are expressed, the predominant focus of study is on the individual agent and the ways climate change has come to enter into decision-making (Stern 2000; Senecah 2004; Shove 2010).

It has been through these two predominant approaches that the social science of climate change has come to be understood broadly either as a matter of international politics or as concerning individual preferences. These particular concerns have served to polarize social scientific enquiry according to alternative scales of action

(international or personal), and into disciplinary areas. Here, we take our point of departure from the standpoint of climate change as an international concern and consider what this has meant for our understanding of the issue, before examining the ways this approach has been challenged and extended. The emergence of perspectives drawn from critical political and social science has, we suggest, begun to disrupt this division, leading to a rethinking of the nature and practices of climate governance on one hand, and to questions of agency on the other.

Climate Politics and the International

The discipline of International Relations started to consider the climate issue precisely at the moment when the climate issue entered the realm of international politics. There is a consensus in the literature that this happened in 1988, when the 'Toronto Conference', the first international conference that included government officials, industry representatives, scientists and environmentalists, took place (Mintzer and Leonard 1994; Paterson 1996; Elliott 1998). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established in the same year to provide assessments of the results of climate change science to policy makers. Miller argues that IPCC's endorsement of a systemic view of the climate – the earth's climate imagined as a global system – was conducive to engaging international organizations and states (2004: 51). Emerging in this period of climate politics, as national governments came together and scientific advice was expected to provide 'truth' for 'power', climate change became regarded as a transboundary scientific problem that required an international solution.

At the root of this conceptualization is a notion of the international as comprised through the interaction of territorially demarcated entities. As Walker (1993) has persuasively argued, the territorial organization of world politics creates two types of spaces – within boundaries (the domestic) and between boundaries (the international). The political within these spaces is understood to be very different. The domestic connotes a realm of politics ordered by the authoritative allocation of value within a society, democracy and legitimate authority structures. The international, on the other hand, is marked by the absence of overarching authority, of competition and rivalry between states. Framed in these terms through the discipline of International Relations, the question of 'governing the climate' thus became a question of how to overcome the fundamental structures of world politics. For example, Barrett writes about the clash between a 'world of one atmosphere and a world of two hundred or so countries' (2005: 286), while Schneider, Rosencranz and Niles suggest that the 'planetary condition necessitates a planetary response' (2002: XIV) and Sprintz and Luterbacher argue in the introductory chapter to their edited volume 'International Relations and Global Climate Change' that the critical issues of climate politics concern states' cooperative problems, free-riding and the ineffectiveness of retaliation threats for making states comply with an emission reduction treaty (2001: 13).

Initially, most social science research efforts within this field focussed on how to address this challenge of the international nature of climate change, and particularly on the emergence of the international climate regime and the questions of science policy, political economy and justice that it raised. For example, Breitmeier (1996) drew attention to the role of international organizations (UNEP, WMO, UN General Assembly) during the creation of the climate regime; while on the other hand, Paterson (1996) showed how the deliberations of the UN's climate convention can display the conceptual weaknesses of both neorealism and neoliberalism. Debates on ethics and justice, particularly distributive justice, for example how to allocate the costs of preventing climate change and coping with the consequences of climate change, as well as what a fair bargaining process and a just allocation of emissions of GHG would be, were also critical during this period (Toth 1999; Ikeme 2003; Rosa and Munasinghe 2003; Tonn 2003). This focus on the nation-state as the unit of political analysis has also permeated beyond these particular concerns with international negotiations, so that within the context of national economies and sovereign citizenship, research has primarily focussed on the extent and nature of national policy responses. The work of authors such as O'Riordan and Jäger (1996), Helm (2005) and Compston and Bailey (2008) has, over the past two decades, provided case studies on how governments in various countries have developed climate change policies and the particular merits of different policy instruments. These include voluntary agreements to taxes, emission trading systems and legal standards in meeting national and international commitments.

More recently, while the scholarship on international climate politics has continued to focus on the development of international co-operation, with arguments on 'Architectures for Agreement' (Aldy and Stavins 2007) and the extent to which such architectures are 'fragmenting' (Biermann et al. 2009), there has been a growing interest in the relationship between climate change, security and violence. Thomas Shelling, in his epilogue at the end of 'Architectures for Agreement', considers NATO as a possible organizational form for governing the climate. NATO, as Shelling puts it, has demonstrated 'outstanding success on a huge scale with "commitments" unenforceable, related to actions rather than consequences' (2007: 349). Within academia, a growing body of recent work has analysed how climate change can affect traditional concerns such as national security and armed conflicts. The result has been a variety of predictions. While some have claimed that warming increases the risk of civil war in Africa, other scholars point out the lack of evidence for this claim (Burke et al. 2009; Buhaug 2010). Some studies suggest that political instability will follow when subsistence farmers are forced to leave their livelihoods because of drought, flooding and famine (Busby 2008). Others foresee a series of 'regional hotspots' around the globe, such as possible water shortages in densely populated areas of Central Asia and drought in the Sahel that might, for example, aggravate the conflict in Darfur (German Advisory Council on Global Change 2008). Melting of the ice caps at the

poles opens up new shipping routes and increases ease of access to prospective oil, coal and gas deposits, potentially exacerbating interstate conflicts (Lee 2009). Other scenarios foresee that 'climate wars' might even include a nuclear war between India and Pakistan over water shortages after the Himalayan glaciers have disappeared (Dyer 2008).

The engagement of International Relations with climate change has therefore enabled both cooperative and violent imaginaries when it comes to the politics of a warming world. In both imaginaries, however, the state remains the central unit of analysis and conceptualized as a coherent, autonomous and purposeful entity wielding certain basic forms of power (Bulkeley 2005). As Weber reminds us, disciplines and the theories they construct are themselves a site of cultural practice. International relations, as discipline and practice, is a 'place where stories that make sense of our world are spun, where signifying practices about international politics take place, where meanings about international life are produced, reproduced, and exchanged' (2005: 182). The 'imagining of the state' (Conca 2003) as at the heart of the political response to climate change has served to advance our understanding of the international dynamics of climate change, and also to reproduce the powerful metaphors that have guided our understanding of environmental politics as beset by the tragedy of the commons, north-south divides and the rightful sites of political authority.

Reimagining Global Climate Politics

Alongside this continuing interest in the international dimensions of climate politics, the past decade has witnessed the development of a new imagination of the spaces of international politics through the broad concept of global governance. Conca argues that many scholars of international relations have 'equated the idea of governance with an authoritative inscription of norms that impose constraints on state behaviour' (2005: 195) and have therefore not paid attention to how institutions and governance emerge at the intersection of several influences such as law, advocacy, expert networks, market relations and stakeholder bargaining processes. By drawing attention to the rise of hybrid, nonhierarchical and network-like modes of governing on the global stage, the concept of global governance has enabled an engagement with the multiple ways authority for climate governance is being created and sustained. In so doing, this work has challenged both the centrality of the state and the distinction and separation between domestic and international realms that has underpinned the traditional conceptualization of (climate) politics (Bulkeley 2005; Barnett and Sikkink 2008; Jönsson 2010).

Central to the emergence and development of work in the field of global climate governance has been a concern with the fragmentation of authority and the multiplication of the range of actors involved in agenda-setting, policy development and implementation (see Lövbrand and Stripple, this volume). Early contributions in this field focussed on the ways nonstate actors were influencing the state through the

development of expertise, financial power and moral authority (Rowlands 1995; Arts 1998; Corell and Betsill 2001). As the climate change issue itself began to metamorphose, scholarship began to look beyond the regime and the specifics of national responses to illuminate the manifold ways climate change is becoming an issue and agenda across multiple levels of government and in different political sites (conferences, camps) and for a range of nonstate actors, from churches and celebrities, to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and corporations (Stripple and Pattberg 2010). After a decade of climate governance research, the academic community has been able to demonstrate the critical roles played by a range of actors in shaping the landscape of international politics, and has begun to demonstrate the ways this politics plays out over a multilevel governance landscape (Carpenter 2001; Kolk and Levy 2001; Lund 2012). Central to this perspective is the recognition of new forms of agency in the international arena and, for some at least, the argument that this heralds a shift in authority from the state to the nonstate, or private, realm (Green 2008; Pattberg and Stripple 2008).

This move towards a global governance perspective on the politics of climate change has involved not only a reengagement with questions of agency, but also a reimagination of its spatial orderings that moves beyond the international/national dichotomy. In its place has emerged a more nuanced sense of spatial hierarchy, where multiple sites of climate politics nest within one another and where it is possible for actors, issues and authority to 'jump' scales (so that urban climate politics bypasses the nation-state, for example) (Bulkeley 2005). For the most part, however, the bounded notions of political space and its territoriality remain taken for granted. For example, there have been extensive discussions of the interplay between different levels of political authority, while many interpretations of multilevel governance have focussed on a set of vertical interactions between more or less territorially bound entities, such as local authorities, regional governments, nation-states and international institutions. There are, however, alternatives recognized within this emerging field. Notable has been the growth of interest in forms of transnational governance, where the borders of the political are not territorially constituted but rather are constituted through new forms of institutional architecture and networks of actors that cut across national boundaries and the divisions between public and private authority. There is also a growing interest in 'governance experiments' (Hoffmann 2011) that seek to fill the policy void around climate change and operate across political boundaries at multiple levels, such as intermunicipal co-operation, social networks and public-private partnerships. For example, Ruggie articulates the 'new global public domain' as existing 'in transnational non-territorial spatial formations and … anchored in norms and expectations as well as institutional networks and circuits within, across and beyond states' (2004: 519). Here, 'socially constructed practices of political authority … may be exercised nonterritorially or in scattered pockets connected by flows across space-spanning networks' (Agnew 2005: 441).

This body of work has undoubtedly had a profound effect in opening up how we understand the politics of climate change and in moving beyond an international orientation to examine the multiple scales through which this is being constituted. In so doing, this work has successfully drawn attention to the ways power, authority and governance are emerging in new sites and has begun to interrogate the consequences and implications. However, for the most part the core elements of the social and political world, such as agency, authority, the state and so on, have remained taken for granted. In this manner, while global governance may have added more complexity to our notion of the political, it has not challenged its fundamental orthodoxies. As a result, the research community has begun to question the extent to which the global governance approach can provide an adequate conceptual toolkit with which to explore the shifting ground of climate politics. For Sending and Neumann it is not so much that global governance literatures are inattentive to these concerns, but that 'their ontology and concomitant analytical tools are not equipped' (2006: 653) to deal with their conceptual implications such that they 'inadvertently perpetuate the very state-centric framework that they seek to transcend' (655). Building on this critique, Okereke, Bulkeley and Schroeder (2009: 72) suggest that current theorization of climate politics in global governance terms has reached a 'conceptual impasse'. To address this, they argue that conceptual development is particularly pressing in four areas – the understanding of power; the relationship between public and private authority; the dynamics between structure and agency and, finally, the rationalities and actual processes of governance (Okereke et al. 2009: 72). These issues, they suggest, require a more critical engagement with what constitutes the political realm, and the development of theoretical perspectives that offer alternative conceptualizations of power and agency. While some mainstream social scientists have started to address this challenge, notably in the recent works of Giddens (2009), this work has remained curiously tied to the dominant framing of climate change as an international problem, albeit cascaded down to other levels of social organization such as the state, community and individual. Giddens's starting assumption is that we 'do not have a developed analysis of the political innovations that have to be made' (2009: 4) to limit climate change, but his book unfortunately has little to say about what those innovations might look like. Rather, the analysis centres on the most economically developed capitalist states and a familiar set of policy measures, such as taxes, planning and international treaty-making under the auspices of the UN. While Giddens locates his analysis to rather few sites of action (e.g. intergovernmental conferences) and few sets of actors (national governments), Urry (2011) uses a broader sociological imagination to characterize how political power currently resides in a 'military-industrial carbon complex', but also how post-carbon systems innovate in pockets and alongside our existing society through politicization and transformation of certain practices, for example mobility and high-carbon living. Climate change is making inroads into mainstream social science and in so doing is itself opening up to a wider range of

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concerns and questions. Yet such contributions remain relatively few and far between, so that for the most part social science continues as if climate change was of limited interest or concern.

New Engagements with Critical Perspectives: Governmentality and Beyond

Against this backdrop, a new set of engagements between climate change and critical perspectives from the social sciences are now emerging that forms the focus of our attention in this volume. This move beyond the traditional concerns of international politics and global governance, on one hand, and the preferences of individuals, on the other, can be regarded as stemming from two main sources: first, seeking to address the limitations of the theoretical perspectives that have dominated the debate to date, climate change scholars have begun to engage a range of different social scientific theories; second, social scientists in disciplines beyond international relations and political science have begun to engage with the climate change issue, bringing alternative theorizations and disciplinary perspectives with them. These new engagements seek to deploy different ways of theorizing the social and the political that are fundamentally critical in their disposition – that is, that they start from a perspective that what constitutes the political or the social is not regarded as given, but as open to question. Through these new engagements, the field of climate change politics now encompasses perspectives and approaches drawn from international political sociology, actor-network theory (ANT), science and technology studies (STS), Foucauldian governmentality studies, critical theory, posthumanism, critical geopolitics, poststructural security studies, neo-Gramscian political economy and discursive approaches derived from Laclau-Mouffe, Lacan or Habermas. These strands of social scientific theorizing are increasingly invoked to answer the deceptively simple question of how to make political sense of climate change. What is starting to emerge across these diffuse perspectives is a problematization of the nature of the political with regard to climate change, through rethinking the nature of power, a renewed attention to the ways institutions are produced and maintained and a thorough engagement with the processes and practices around climate change and carbon – as a materiality and a social and cultural artefact.

Of particular importance to this emerging body of work has been the concept of governmentality, originally advanced by Foucault in the late 1970s but since adopted and adapted by a range of scholars. Conceived both as a particular modality of power with particular contemporary significance and as a perspective or analytical tool through which to view power in general, governmentality has offered scholars in the climate change community a means through which not only to develop a more critical understanding of the processes at work in governing climate change but also a means through which to connect the spaces of climate politics to more fundamental (and one

could argue mainstream) concerns with the workings of the contemporary state and political order. Here, we review the different ways governmentality perspectives are put to work in relation to climate change, and the connections and critiques that are emerging across the multiple strands of critical social theory. We pay particular attention to the ways governmentality, in tandem with other perspectives, can provide new insights into questions of rationality, power and politics, as a means through which we can start to reconstitute the notion of climate politics. We also consider the limitations of such perspectives and how an engagement with climate change may be able to advance conceptual understanding more broadly.

Making Climate Change Governmental

Paul R. Brass once wrote in the *Annual Review of Political Science* that 'Foucault Steals Political Science' (2000). By 'stealing' Brass had in mind the way Foucault has engaged with themes and concepts central for the discipline of political science (e.g. power, government and governance) while the discipline at large has 'departed markedly from serious engagement with those topics' (2000: 305). Brass had hoped to write an article on 'The Foucauldian Turn in Political Science', but because such a turn had yet to appear at the time of his writing, he instead settled on demonstrating the 'importance of Foucault's insights into the nature of power and governance for a discipline that calls itself political science' (2000: 305). Brass convincingly shows that a Foucauldian approach to power and government is not marginal, dealing with esoteric phenomena unimportant for the discipline at large, but that Foucault's work 'ought by now to have become a focal point for the resurrection of these topics and their restoration to centrality in the discipline' (2000: 305). While this volume is not about a resurrection and restoration of political science per se, the different chapters nevertheless provide ample illustrations of how new perspectives on the nature of power and government can be advanced in relation to a contemporary empirical phenomena. However, if we can identify and define Foucault-inspired analysis of the climate issue as a 'stream of thought', we may think of it as an overarching effort to redirect the analysis in new empirical directions and to ask a new set of questions.

Foucault first outlined his governmentality approach in a series of lectures at the Collège de France in the late 1970s, and a range of social scientists has since developed these ideas in multiple directions. As Joseph notes, Foucault did not apply the concept of governmentality in a systematic manner; instead he thought through his ideas during the lectures, offering very general definitions and applying the concept in different ways and in different contexts (2009: 53). As indicated by the semantic linking of the words *governing* and *mentality*, broadly speaking *governmentality* deals with how particular mentalities – ways of thinking and acting – are invested in the process of governing. While recovering an older usage of *government*, governmentalities

were understood 'in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing
human behaviour. Government of children, government of souls and consciences,
government of a household, of a state, or of oneself' (Foucault 1997: 82). Despite
Foucault's rather fragmented treatment of governmentality, this work, coupled with
other parts of Foucault's thinking, has led to the emergence of a vibrant field across
disciplines such as sociology, geography, anthropology, history, gender studies and
science and technology studies concerned with understanding the governing of human
conduct. Walters, reflecting on the past twenty years of governmentality studies, con-
ceives of governmentality as a 'cluster of concepts that can be used to enhance the
think-ability and criticize-ability of past and present forms of governance' (2012: 2).
It is a field of enquiry that problematizes the collective and often taken for granted
systems of thought that make governing strategies appear natural and given at cer-
tain times in history (Dean 1999: 16; MacKinnon 2000; Lemke 2002). Governance,
according to Walters, should hence not be understood as a set of institutions of ide-
ologies, but a practical activity that can be 'historicized and specified at the level
of the rationalities, programmes, techniques and subjectivities which underpin it
and give it form and effect' (2012: 3). Hence, it is doubtful whether it is meaning-
ful to speak of 'climate governance' in general but rather we should contextualize
and examine particular articulations, rationalities and programmes. As a conceptual
approach, governmentality is highly capable of registering even subtle shifts in these
programmes and techniques and, according to Walters, it is this sensitivity to the
'intricacies of contemporary governance and the nuances of political change' (2012:
3) that explains the very wide take-up of governmentality across social science and
the humanities.

Viewed in this manner, governmentality neither offers us a substantive theory
about the forces that shape climate policy and politics, nor does it assume a particu-
lar ontology of what constitutes climate policy. Instead, governmentality provides
an analytical toolbox that can advance new perspectives on the climate as a political
space, and enables us to grasp and highlight the existence of changing discursive pro-
ductions of a warming world and their effects in mitigating or adapting to that world.
How did, for example, tropical rainforests, carbon markets and climate refugees
become domains amenable to governmental intervention? What are the rationalities
and subjectivities by which a carbon-constrained world is ordered, categorized and
represented? In addressing these and other questions, the research community has
just begun to deploy a Foucauldian analytics of government to climate change. This
body of work does not yet constitute or consolidate a distinct analytical field, but it
has nevertheless provided a significant contribution to the debate on how we might
understand and reconsider climate politics. In the following, we identify three main
interrelated 'studies of governmentality' that, respectively, focus on (1) the climate
imagined as a historical and political object that is possible to govern; (2) advanced
liberal climate government; (3) subjectivity and the personal conduct of carbon.