Green Politics and Neo-Liberalism

Also by Dave Toke

GREEN ENERGY

THE LOW COST OF THE PLANET

Green Politics and Neo-Liberalism

Dave Toke

Lecturer in Green Politics

Department of Political Science

and International Studies

University of Birmingham

First published in Great Britain 2000 by

MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and London
Companies and representatives throughout the world

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-349-41545-8

ISBN 978-0-230-51415-7 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230514157

First published in the United States of America 2000 by

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, LLC,

Scholarly and Reference Division,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Toke, Dave.

Green politics and neo-liberalism / Dave Toke.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Environmental policy. 2. Rational choice theory. 3. Discourse analysis. I.
Title.

GE170 .T64 2000

363.7'05—dc21

00-042241

© Dave Toke 2000

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2000 978-0-333-77123-5

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
09	08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	00

To Benjamin and James

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Introduction	1
1 Discourse, Power and Environmental Policy	5
Foucault on power	9
Discursive transformation	11
The shifting self-interests of US CFC producers and consumers	15
De-centred power is not enough	17
Transport and power	20
Alternative energy and power	26
Truth and knowledge about US nuclear power	32
2 Rational Choice Theory and Environmental Policy	35
The fall of classic rational choice	36
RCT and 'soft' incentives	41
Ostrom's institutional RCT	44
Belief systems, norms and self-interest	47
RCT and new international environmental problems	51
3 Science, Politics and Environmentalists	58
In the shadow of the bomb	60
From the scientisation of politics to the politicisation of science	62
Scientists and environmental groups	64
Saving the whale	66
CFCs and ozone depletion	68
Beyond positivism	70
Blurred roles	72
4 Neo-liberalism and Green Politics	75
Public choice and market theory	76
The norms of public choice	78
Middle classes and material self-interest	81
Interpreting self-interest	82
Can green politics reinterpret self-interest?	85

5	Health and Materialism	92
	Inequalities, health and social malaise	94
	Stress health and work	98
	Status and the competitive society	102
	Competition and consumption	105
	The consequences of too much competition	106
	The new discourse of stress at work	108
6	The Politics of Performance	113
	Education, competition and performance	118
	Does increasing competition in education work?	120
	School league tables	123
	Co-operative solutions	126
7	A Green Alternative	129
	A culture of stress	129
	Holistic approaches to society	132
	Greens and socialism	134
	Gorz's green socialism – a path to paradise?	136
	The shape of future work	141
	Reforming work	144
	Paths to holism: eastern and western	147
	Paths to 'downshifting'	149
	Greens and urban regeneration ³	154
8	Truth, Technology and Progress	159
	Epistemology and ontology	161
	The notion of 'species realism'	162
	Human truths and environmental progress	166
	Postmodernism and environmental practice	168
	Technology and progress	173
	Technology and risk	176
	Three ages of control	180
9	Concluding Comments	184
	Discourse and truth	184
	Social green strategies	185
	Reconstituting self-interest	187
	Rational choice and self-interest	188
	Correcting foucault	189

<i>Notes</i>	191
<i>Bibliography</i>	193
<i>Index</i>	205

List of Tables

5.1	GDP and life expectancy in selected countries (1993)	93
6.1	Attitudes to performance pay among UK Inland Revenue staff	117

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to Dave Marsh in particular for providing me with a stimulating intellectual atmosphere and also plenty of ideas that have influenced this book. Matthew Paterson has been particularly useful in offering advice and comments. Members of the University of Birmingham's Department of Politics and International Affairs, such as Colin Hay and Peter Preston, have also been helpful and influential in various ways. Helpful comments have been received from others, including Robert Garner, Stuart McAnulla, Mike Davies, Horace Herring, Mike Cross and Dave Humphreys.

DAVE TOKE