

Research Statement: Economic Ideas, Discourse, and Climate Policy

My current research focuses on the role of economic discourse in shaping climate policy in the United States. Situated at the intersection of public policy, political economy, and social theory, my work examines how competing economic paradigms, particularly orthodox and heterodox traditions, influence the framing of climate crises, the articulation of solutions, and the boundaries of what is considered feasible within democratic governance through their theoretical assumptions.

The global climate emergency has generated unprecedented calls for state action, yet climate policy remains constrained by economic narratives that prioritize market efficiency, fiscal discipline, and cost-benefit logic. These assumptions, rooted in mainstream and neoclassical economic thought, have become embedded in the institutions and discourse of U.S. environmental policy since the late 20th century, shaping the rise of market-based mechanisms such as cap-and-trade, carbon pricing, and green finance. At the same time, heterodox traditions, including post-Keynesianism, ecological economics, feminist economics, and eco-socialist thought, offer alternative imaginaries grounded in public purpose, democratic planning, and economic democracy.

Drawing from the argumentative turn in policy analysis, critical discourse analysis, and discursive institutionalism, my dissertation seeks to investigate how economic ideas function as both frames and constraints within climate policy debates.

Thus my central research interest examines **how economic ideas and their discourse coalitions shape the design, promotion, and contestation of climate policies in the United States.**

To address this question, I plan to integrate qualitative discourse analysis of public texts (e.g., legislative proposals, media coverage, advocacy documents) with a historical examination of economic paradigms in U.S. environmental policy. I further plan to explore the use of computational text analysis, such as BERT-based models and Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), to identify patterns and shifts in climate-economic discourse over time.

I pay particular attention to how heterodox economic ideas challenge the orthodox narratives that limit the political imagination of climate action. My research seeks to illuminate the material-semiotic processes through which assumptions about money, debt, value, and state capacity contribute to the construction of climate policy agendas.

This work contributes to a growing body of scholarship that recognizes climate change not only as a biophysical and technological challenge, but also as a struggle over meaning, narrative, and political economy.