



Putting the Pieces Together:

Sustainable Industry,
Environment Protection,
and the Power of Federal Government
in the USA and Australia.

Michael Howes

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Abstract

This thesis explores the subject of how effective a national government environment protection institution can be in making industry sustainable. A number of methods are used to explore this topic, including comparative case studies, discourse analysis, and the triangulation of sources. These techniques are located within a new theoretical framework of trans-structuralism that is generated by hybridising insights from institutional constructivists such as Ernst Haas, the post-structuralism of Michel Foucault and critical theorists such as John Dryzek. This trans-structural approach is used to derive a new method for assessing the effectiveness of state institutions in terms of their capacity to redirect resource flows through business and society. The main focus of the empirical research is a comparative analysis of the regulatory activities, programs and policies administered by the US Environmental Protection Agency, the former Commonwealth Environment Protection Agency and the National Environment Protection Council in Australia. The concept of sustainability is itself problematic so an analysis of the sustainable development policy-making process in both countries, its links to industry, and its relation to these regulatory institutions is included. The final part of the thesis combines the case study findings with trans-structural theory and method to construct a strategy for more effective environmental intervention. It is argued that a major restructuring of state and business institutions will be necessary if industry is to become sustainable.