Preface

This book reflects my attempt to reach beyond the horizons of existing environmental governance, using the current institutions of governance as the point of departure. I have long been inspired by critical theory, and in this project I have sought to enlist, and provide a distinctly green inflection to, critical theory's method of immanent critique.

In placing the state at the center of the analysis, my argument is in some respects unashamedly revisionist given the current shift of academic political focus toward governance without government and the antistatist posture of many radical environmentalists. However, as green parties come in from the periphery and tilt toward the center of political power (e.g., there are encouraging signs in New Zealand and Australia that greens are on the rise), it seems timely to ask how the state might be rescued or perhaps reinvented as a site of democratic public power. Despite the huge transformations wrought by globalization, states still remain gatekeepers of the global order, which seems to me all the more reason to develop a fresh, practical vision of the "good state." In this book I explore what it might take to produce a distinctly green democratic state as an alternative to the classical liberal state, the indiscriminate growth dependent welfare state, and the increasingly ascendant neoliberal competition state. This task also entails asking what kind of state or states might facilitate both more active and effective ecological citizenship and more enlightened environmental governance, both domestically and globally. At a minimum a good state would uphold the rule of law and the separation of powers, be free of corruption, and uphold those civil and political rights that are essential to the practice of ecological citizenship. But what else should a green state be? What other

purposes and roles should it embody and perform? Those few political scientists who addressed this question in the aftermath of the limits-to-growth debate in the early 1970s came up with an eco-authoritarian state. Yet the idea of the state presiding over strict resource and energy rationing, and wide-ranging strictures on consumption, production, population, and technology, seemed anathema to everyone, including many environmentalists. What, then, might a green democratic alternative look like and to what extent, if any, would it differ from the liberal democratic state in terms of its role, rationale, and functions? And what are the prospects of green democratic states emerging in the current, rather inhospitable, global context? In tackling these and related questions, I have drawn on a wide range of disciplines and subdisciplines in the humanities and social sciences, ranging from political theory and sociology to international relations and global political economy, including their budding green offshoots.

This book was written over the past seven years during a transition in my own research focus from the cozy and secluded fold of green political theory to the much more sprawling and complex field of global politics. In making this transition, I am indebted to many colleagues and friends who, by their shining example rather than deliberate effort on their part, drew me into a range of challenging and stimulating intellectual debates that bear upon the future of environmental governance. I wish to single out, in particular, Chris Reus-Smit and Paul James. Chris I heartily thank for introducing me to the constructivist dimension of critical theory, and for his enthusiasm and wholehearted support in my academic journey. Paul I likewise thank for prompting me to think about the "nation" side of the "nation-state" equation, and for his general encouragement in my writing projects. And thanks to both Chris and Paul for serving as critical sounding boards and readers during the production of this manuscript.

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