



Book reviews

Governance for the Environment, New Perspectives, Magali A. Delmas, Oran R. Young (Eds.), 2009, Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 0521743001, 300 pp

Delmas and Young present in their edited book the key issues of environmental governance that will guide research on governance for sustainability in the coming years, focusing on governance mechanisms (or instruments). The book is very well written and clearly structured. The reader to clearly understand the concepts set forth in this book does neither need to be knowledgeable about Young's previous work on international environmental regimes and governance nor to be an expert in environmental management. This however, does not imply that the contributions of the edited book are not rigorous or insightful. On the contrary, every chapter contributes from different theoretical angles with insights and key points to the main argument of the introductory chapter of Delmas and Young that governance for sustainable development does not ask for panaceas; but for multiple mechanisms or "hybrid systems" that respond to the increasing demand of good governance of socio-ecological systems.

The book delivers what it promises: the idea and rationale of employing or designing multiple environmental governance mechanisms to steer towards sustainability. Properly, the book is suggested to be used as a course book for graduate students in environmental management and policy programs given its extensive and comprehensive analysis. This book will aid students (and researchers) to understand how environmental governance is 'constructed' through the lens of different approaches (economics, political science, institutional theory, management theory) and by different empirical material.

More specifically, Chapter 1 (authored by Young) presents an analysis of the demand, supply, premises and operation of governance for socio-ecological systems towards sustainability. It positions demand for governance not only as a response to emergent complex social problems (see p. 15–16), but also as the social process to ameliorate social undesirable or unexpected behaviors in the context of changing conditions. Young remains critical to the benefits and failures of governance without however claiming that governance is not required. Five governance mechanisms are explored both theoretically and empirically with explanations of their pros and cons. The mechanisms are: (a) governance by government, (b) governance by intergovernmental agreement, (c) private governance, (d) governance by civil society, and (e) hybrid mechanisms. The effectiveness of the governance mechanisms discussed is examined taking into consideration their objective (as problem solving mechanisms), their performance (good governance), the context conditions (macro-level consequences) and their unforeseen impacts (governance failures).

Chapter 2 (authored by Lyon) presents an analysis of environmental governance rationale and mechanisms from the standpoint of an economist. Fundamental concepts of environmental policy and environmental economics are explained by presenting the ideas and assumptions that underlie them, while remaining critical and

objective at the same time. Remaining consistent throughout his arguments, Lyon proposes topics for further research that relate to the role of actors such as environmental NGOs, corporations that are socially responsible on the effectiveness of the discussed governance mechanisms.

Chapter 3 (authored by Lemos and Agrawal) explores environmental governance in the context of political science. More specifically, environmental governance is defined as "the use of institutionalized power to shape environmental processes and outcomes" (p. 71) adding to the definition provided in the introductory part of the book. In this chapter, stimuli of hybrid forms of environmental governance are discussed taking a meta-level perspective of environmental systems. Implicitly from the analysis, hybrid mechanisms appear as sufficiently responsive mechanisms, capable to cope with the complexity that globalization, decentralization and liberalized markets set in place. Despite this implicit outcome, limitations of hybrid mechanisms are also presented, including: (a) the comparative performance of hybrid mechanisms towards actor-centered mechanisms (p. 80–81), (b) the public versus private aspects of governance (p. 82–83), and (c) power diversity and its role in effective operation of hybrid mechanisms (p. 84–85).

Chapter 4 (authored by King and Toffel) presents potential benefits and weaknesses of self-regulatory institutions from the perspective of management literature. Self-regulation is the response of actors to shortcomings of governmental actions (p. 100) and to be proactive in taking action after crises or accidents like the Exxon Valdez accident that "encouraged the development by the petroleum industry of the Valdez principles" (p. 103). The most intriguing part of Chapter 4 is the discussion of reasons that induces firms to participate in self-regulatory institutions (p. 105–109) and their empirical exploration (p. 109–112).

Chapter 5 (authored by Haufler) adopts an actor-focused perspective in analyzing global environmental governance. Initially, actors are classified as public or private actors. The critique on the incompleteness of such a model however allows for an in depth discussion about the different roles and responsibilities corporate actors, civil society actors and NGOs employ in global environmental governance. The most interesting part of this chapter concerns the analysis of the characteristics of NGOs (p. 130–135). More specifically, Haufler refers to the organizational forms, the strategies they commonly employ, their role and power exercise and how all those characteristics are set in interplay with other actors for global environmental governance.

Chapter 6 (authored by Khanna and Brouhle) presents the characteristics and contributions of voluntary environmental initiatives to environmental governance, focusing on possible patterns of outcomes of their involvement. The analysis concludes that "evidence of the effectiveness of voluntary environmental initiatives is mixed" (p. 181) and elaborates on pros and cons of the examined cases. Particularly, the ISO 14000 related cases show that credibility and monitoring of the members of the "green club" influenced positively their incentives to remain actively involved and committed in improving environmental performance.

Chapter 7 (authored by Auld, Balboa, Bernstein and Cashore) focuses on “certification systems that attempt to reward environmentally responsible business practices through positive recognition and market incentives” (p. 183). Cases of forest protection, coffee production at international level and the tropical ornament fish trade are used to explain the different mechanisms and characteristics of certifications as non-state market-driven governance systems (p. 192–213).

Chapter 8 (authored by Delmas) is the concluding chapter of the edited book and elaborately presents issues for further research. The concluding remark of Delmas to the quest (proposed in the introductory part of the book) for multiple mechanisms or “hybrid systems” for good governance of socio-ecological systems, is that further research on the effectiveness of mixes of governance mechanisms is needed.

This book effectively presents a number of governance mechanisms that appear effective and promising for environmental governance towards sustainability, while shedding light on areas that require further research effort.

Niki Frantzeskaki

*Policy Analysis Section, Faculty of Technology, Policy and Management,
Delft University of Technology, Jaffalaan 5, 2628BX, Delft,
The Netherlands*

*E-mail addresses: N.Frantzeskaki@tbm.tudelft.nl,
frantzeskakh@yahoo.com.*

doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2010.04.008

Beyond developmentality: constructive inclusive freedom and sustainability, Debal Deb, Earthscan, London, ISBN: 978-1-84407-712-0, 583 pp.

Beyond Developmentality traces the history of development theory and policy and how it has impacted the lives of those in the developing world. Deb argues that throughout its history development has been myopically defined and boxed within the narrow confines of materialistic concepts. Economic development has been equated with economic growth, and well-being has been seen as equivalent to per capita income. Economic models assume that humans are narrowly rational optimizers and that the natural world exists solely to fuel human material consumption. The neoliberal doctrine of development has put societies on a social and environmentally destructive path. *Developmentality* documents how the neoliberal mentality evolved and points the way toward policies based on a realistic conception of humans as social animals operating within institutional and environmental systems.

This is a wide-ranging book covering almost every aspect of the development literature. The first half of the book is about the history, evolution and impacts of development. The first chapter traces the history of the development doctrine from its roots in the enlightenment to the expansion of Western hegemony through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Chapter Two unveils the myths and fallacies of neoclassical welfare economics, focusing in particular on its peculiar concept of human nature, its blind faith in technology, and the myth of salvation by property “pricing” the natural world. Chapters Three and Four provide a wealth of detail about how the development model was used to promote economic growth and unbridled consumption which led to environmental and social disruption.

Unlike most critiques of neoliberal theory and policy, the bulk of Deb’s book presents concrete alternatives to the standard development model. The second half of the manuscript explores the meaning of sustainability in the context of the debate between weak and strong

sustainability. Neoclassical environmental economists reduce this debate to the question of the degree of substitutability between natural and other forms of capital. But in economic models substitution is a short-run question, usually tested using only a few years’ data, having little or nothing to do with the long-run sustainability of human societies. According to Deb, the Brundtland report also presents a limited vision of sustainable development assuming that sustainability is consistent with ever increasing economic growth. Deb advocates the concept of strong sustainability where natural and other forms of capital are complements, not substitutes. Chapters Five and Six give a brief and somewhat dismissive account of past critiques of progress including the emergence of environmental ethics and alternative lifestyles. There are some misconceptions in these chapters including the dismissal of the sustainability of hunter-gather societies (societies that lasted 200,000 to 1.9 million years depending on what one calls human), and also the denial of gene-culture evolution, a concept well-established in contemporary biology. Chapter Seven discusses the potential for the emergence of a new political and social consciousness. Chapters Eight and Nine discuss environmental movements, participatory development, and inclusive decision making. Deb advocates a change in the development mentality from treating people as consumers to treating them as citizens striving for inclusive freedom. The last part of the book is a call to arms to grassroots social movements strengthened by indigenous local/traditional knowledge and insights. Good governance and strong democratic institutions can promote ‘ecosocialism’ among citizens. Discussion of some recent global initiative like the Millennium Ecosystem assessment and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity is missing.

The book is excellent but it could have been better if the author had carefully thought through some of the contractions and tensions apparent in the text. For example, Chapter Three dismisses concerns about over-population as being nothing more than a neo-Malthusian attack by the West on the world’s poor; but in other places the reality of the complex relationship between resources, population and sustainability is recognized. The other distracting theme—pervasive in the social sciences—is the denial of a biological component to human nature (for example the dismissal of “biophilia”). Biology has been and continues to be a source of inspiration to understand human behavior and institutional change. Deb’s reaction to destruction perpetuated by the West on the world’s poor is understandable, but Western imperialism is not unique, nor is it one dimensional. It’s too easy to brush off “otherness” as a purely Western notion. The characterization of the world as either “us” or “them” seems to be universal human nature—it is more complicated than Western racism and imperialism. Since complex societies came on the scene 6000 years ago or so, some groups have conquered others with varying degrees of success. The dominance of Western capitalism may be unique in its global scale but it’s not new. Ultimately, as Richard Norgaard points out in the preface, finding the right development path will depend on creating a new story, one with a realistic view of human beings as social animals within the biological world that has nurtured us for eons.

John Gowdy
Aneel Salman

*Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, USA
E-mail address: gowdyj@rpi.edu.*

7 April 2010

doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2010.04.009