

Review: Learning to Manage Global Environmental Risks

By The Social Learning Group

Reviewed by Umar Karim Mirza

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The Social Learning Group. *Learning to Manage Global Environmental Risks*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001. 2 vols.

Vol. 1: *A Comparative History of Social Responses to Climate Change, Ozone Depletion, and Acid Rain*. 376 pp. ISBN 0-262-19444-9 (cloth); 0-262-69238-4 (paperback). US\$75.00 cloth; US\$30.00 paperback. Recycled alkaline paper.

Vol. 2: *A Functional Analysis of Social Responses to Climate Change, Ozone Depletion, and Acid Rain*. 226 pp. ISBN 0-262-19445-7 (cloth); 0-262-69239-2 (paperback) US\$60.00 cloth; US\$24.00 paperback. Recycled alkaline paper.

This two-volume book contains 22 chapters contributed by 37 scholars of the Social Learning Group. They include among others university teachers, scientists, researchers, doctoral students, and journalists. The scholars represent nine different nations from Europe and North America. Dr. Bert Bolin, former chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has written the foreword to this book.

Volume 1 comprises 14 chapters in all, divided into two parts. The first part provides an introduction to the volume and the historical overview of the problems of acid rain, ozone depletion, and climate change. The second part contains individual country studies and the role of coordinated regional or international efforts to combat these environmental problems. An appendix gives short an introduction for each contributing scholar while the volume ends with author and subject indices. The indices cover Volume 2 also.

There are eight chapters in Volume 2, again divided into two parts. Part One, consisting of seven chapters, signifies the importance of risk assessment and monitoring, and discusses the option assessment goal and strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation, and knowledge and action in the management of global environmental risks. The last chapter forms the second part and describes the conclusions drawn and the implications for the future. The first of the two appendices explains the research protocol of the project while the second one is a repeat of the Volume 1 appendix about contributing scholars. Author and subject indices are there to mark the end

of the volume and cover both the volumes.

This book certainly is an excellent inter-disciplinary venture presenting detailed analysis of policy change across the nations and through global institutions on three key environmental issues. The case histories from nine countries provide an insight on widely ranging point of views and willingness or otherwise to manage the growing environmental concerns. The significance of the role of regional efforts and international institutions has also been stressed since the environmental threats do not respect borders and often affect a large portion of the globe, if not the whole. Over the two volumes, the information has been organized in a logical manner.

Learning to Manage Global Environmental Risks should be required reading for a wide spectrum of professionals ranging from scientists to policy researchers, and from politicians to lawmakers. Students in the field of environmental policy and activism can use this as a reference book. Apart from that, this book possesses great value to anyone who wishes to be informed on how the idea of managing the global environmental risks has evolved over the time.

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