

Review: State and Environment: The Comparative Study of Environmental Governance

Andreas Duit, Editor

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Duit, Andreas (Ed.). *State and Environment: The Comparative Study of Environmental Governance*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 2014. 363 pp., illus. ISBN 9780262027120. US \$ 35.00, paperbound.

The United States is deep into its latest presidential election cycle and despite all the debates and media appearances by the candidates, there has been scant mention of the environment. This speaks to how candidates attract voters which in turn speaks to environmental governance, which is the subject of the book at hand. It is a collection of papers initially presented at “Mapping the Politics of Ecology,” a workshop held in Stockholm in 2010; all of the authors are associated with universities from around the globe.

The book is organized into three parts. Those new to the concept of “environmental governance” will find a well-structured overview of the topic in the introduction. Thereafter, a thematic grouping emerges. Part I, “Understanding Environmental Performance,” includes a fine review article on comparing environmental performance. The second paper examines environmental politics in 24 OECD countries, the third paper describes three worlds of environmental politics—liberal, corporatist, and social-democratic, and the last paper examines how wind-power development has evolved in Germany and the United States.

Part II, “Environmental Governance and Citizenship from a Comparative Perspective” includes three papers that critically examine 1) cross-national patterns of policy change, 2) European states and their role in governing sustainable development, and 3) the role citizens and consumers can play as agents of their own environmental state.

Part III, “Natural Resource Management in a Comparative Perspective” includes three core papers and a conclusion to the entire volume. This part provides the most “real-world” application of the concepts of environmental governance by examining governance of forest resources in Latin America (some of the most endangered forests on the planet); regulation of African fishery resources (heavily overfished and ecologically stressed); and the impact that stakeholder participation has on 143 biosphere reserves in five countries.

In the conclusion to the book the author asks if there is an emerging Eco state. Ultimately the success or failure of environmental governance is based on the relationship between society and nature, which is a relationship forged eons ago. However, the author argues for the “state” as a critical entity to include in future environmental studies of a comparative nature.

On the balance, this is an intriguing volume and a good read. The most compelling feature of the book is Part III which examines practical applications of environmental governance within three real-world situations. The book should be of interest to those with a passion for environmental management and the future that holds. Although university based faculty offer sound research and cogent arguments perhaps another volume in the series could include the perspective of government officials, consultants, and others involved or interested in environmental governance.

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