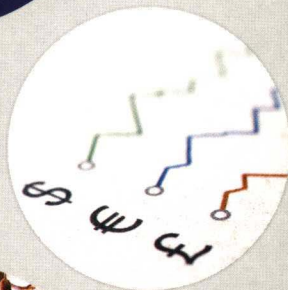
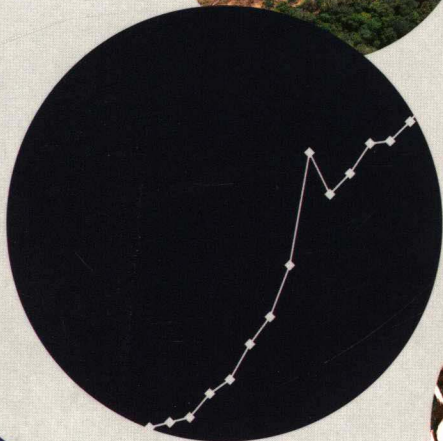


STATE AND ENVIRONMENT

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

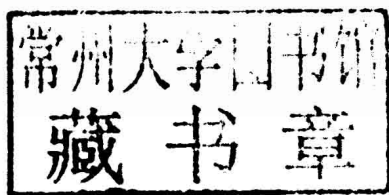


edited by **Andreas Duit**

State and Environment

The Comparative Study of Environmental Governance

Edited by Andreas Duit



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State and Environment

American and Comparative Environmental Policy

Sheldon Kamieniecki and Michael E. Kraft, series editors

Series Foreword

The study of comparative environmental politics and policy has come a long way from its beginnings in the 1970s. At the dawn of the modern environmental movement, scholars took up the fascinating question of why nations approached environmental problems in sometimes strikingly different ways. What difference does it make, for example, if political systems are open and encourage citizen participation in policymaking processes or, instead, rely heavily on government administrators and technical experts? Does provision for greater access to the political process by organized groups, both environmental and business groups, affect the kinds of environmental policy choices that are made? Do nations that rely on consensual policymaking processes produce different kinds of policies than those that are more adversarial, and are those policies more likely to achieve their objectives? Does variation in institutional structures and the centralization of policymaking help explain the level of success in environmental policymaking across nations? Does the nature and structure of party systems, including the presence of a green party, influence environmental politics and policymaking? The answers to such questions may shape practical political strategies as well as help to build knowledge of how the characteristics of political systems affect policymaking processes and policy outcomes.

As the world struggles to address monumental environmental challenges of the twenty-first century, such as climate change, these kinds of inquiries should have great value to both academics and practitioners. Potentially, there is much to be learned from countries that are able to reduce pollution and conserve natural resources in a cost-effective manner. At the same time, past failures in pollution control and natural resource conservation by countries can provide guidance as to what policy approaches should be avoided in the future.

Despite the apparent value, however, the comparative nation approach to the study of environmental politics and policy was not very common in the 1970s and 1980s, when comparative studies largely focused on single nations rather than offer a systematic comparison of actions across nations. Quite often such single-nation studies appeared in edited volumes that brought together a diversity of analyses focusing on disparate issues in both developed and developing nations without, however, any systematic comparison of the patterns of, for example, agenda setting, policy adoption, policy implementation, or policy change.

Until recently, what has been missing in this literature is genuine comparison of national actions that is well grounded in theory and rigorous empirical analysis linked to the broader study of comparative politics. In 2012, a book in this series, Paul Steinberg and Stacy VanDeveer's *Comparative Environmental Politics: Theory, Practice, and Prospects*, sought to advance just this kind of comparative analysis of environmental politics, and, as a consequence, it received considerable praise from the academic community. In this volume, Andreas Duit and his colleagues seek to advance further the comparative study of environmental governance.

They begin by acknowledging that global environmental change today may well threaten citizen well-being in ways that few thought possible in earlier decades, and that environmental policy and management are now core responsibilities in most developed nations, even if they all are not yet sufficiently strong to address the problems effectively. Hence, they analyze how nations to date have dealt with some fundamental issues of environmental governance and what kinds of changes we might expect in future years.

The contributors to this volume rely on a variety of theoretical and analytical perspectives drawn from the field of comparative politics, and they make use of a wide selection of methodologies and data sources and types as they explore the role of the state in environmental governance. In particular, the authors examine patterns of environmental performance across nations, governance and citizenship, natural resource management, policy diffusion and change, and the role of the state in managing complex and unpredictable ecosystems as the world's nations chart an uncertain path toward sustainable development. All of the contributors are alert to the limited value of descriptive case studies, and, consequently, they seek to draw from the analytic power of the comparative method to illuminate better what nations have done to respond to environmental problems, why they chose the policies and actions they did, what impact those

governmental actions have had to date, and what the implications are for future environmental governance and the role of the state.

One of the major purposes of the volume is to help advance a comparative approach to the study of environmental politics by demonstrating the analytical utility of the comparative method when applied to empirical investigations of environmental issues. The contributors are convinced that careful empirical studies of environmental politics will provide the kinds of reliable evidence that citizens and policymakers need to devise workable solutions to the myriad environmental challenges they face. We agree. Too often environmental policy decisions are affected by political ideology, partisan agendas, and narrow and short-sighted interpretations of both national and global needs. We should do much better, and the kinds of study exemplified in this collection highlight the value of comparative political analysis for clear thinking about the role of citizens and civil society, political institutions, policy analysis, policymaking and implementation processes, and governmental management.

The book illustrates well our purpose in the MIT Press series in American and Comparative Environmental Policy. We encourage work that examines a broad range of environmental policy issues. We are particularly interested in volumes that incorporate interdisciplinary research and focus on the linkages between public policy and environmental problems and issues both within the United States and in cross-national settings. We welcome contributions that analyze the policy dimensions of relationships between humans and the environment from either a theoretical or empirical perspective.

At a time when present environmental policies are increasingly seen as controversial and new, alternative approaches are being implemented widely, we especially encourage studies that assess policy successes and failures, evaluate new institutional arrangements and policy tools, and clarify new directions for environmental politics and policy. The books in this series are written for a wide audience that includes academics, policymakers, environmental scientists and professionals, business and labor leaders, environmental activists, and students concerned with environmental issues. We hope they contribute to public understanding of environmental problems, issues, and policies of concern today and also suggest promising actions for the future.

Sheldon Kamieniecki, University of California, Santa Cruz

Michael Kraft, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

American and Comparative Environmental Policy Series Editors

Preface

This book grew out of a conviction that the study of environmental politics has much to gain from rediscovering two central features in general political science: the state and the comparative method. In scholarship on environmental issues in recent years, the role of the state in addressing environmental problems has been overshadowed by a focus on small-scale natural resource management, green norms and behavior among citizens, and international environmental treaties and regimes. In fact, one could argue that with few exceptions, students and practitioners of environmental policy and politics have looked everywhere *but* to the state in search of solutions for looming environmental disasters.

The studies collected in this volume all illustrate the continued and pivotal role that the state can play in contemporary environmental dilemmas. As many commentators have pointed out before, solutions that the state offers to environmental problems are often incomplete, insufficient, and biased toward continued economic growth rather than long-term sustainability. Nevertheless, there are two reasons why the state deserves a spot in the analytical limelight. The first is that over the last four decades, most states in industrialized countries have developed extensive administrative and regulatory responses to environmental problems. Policies to protect the environment have been issued, and administrative structures for environmental policy implementation, monitoring, and knowledge generation have been erected. The driving forces behind this regulatory expansion, as well as cross-country variations, remain poorly understood and require more scholarly attention.

The second reason why this development is analytically relevant is that although this process has been slow, gradual, marked by setbacks, and far from sufficient in halting environmental degradation, it is also the most comprehensive response issued to environmental problems by society writ large, dwarfing the environmental efforts of markets, international

organizations, and individuals in both scope and impact. As such, this process of regulatory and organizational growth in the environmental area is an important object of study for the purpose of assessing society's ability to address environmental problems.

Analyzing issues and hypotheses in political science by systematically comparing the differences and similarities among countries lies at the heart of a discipline in which true experimental designs can be applied only to a limited extent. The comparative method in political science rests on the idea that cross-national variations can be exploited to investigate the causes and effects of a wide range of political phenomena. Perhaps as a consequence of the simultaneous appearance of environmental problems in most industrialized countries in the 1960s, the comparative method has a long history in the study of environmental governance. By building on this tradition and adding a systematic comparative approach, this volume not only hopes to advance research on environmental matters, but also to enhance our knowledge of more general questions regarding the limits and possibilities of human governance in overcoming large-scale problems.

Acknowledgments

The papers collected in this volume were first presented and discussed at the workshop “Mapping the Politics of Ecology,” held in Stockholm on June 28–29, 2010. This workshop was generously funded by the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research (Mistra) as part of the Mapping the Politics of Ecology (MAPLE) project hosted by the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University. The editor would also like to thank Sweden’s National Science Council for a grant funding the work with the volume subsequent to the workshop.

The editor and the authors also wish to express their gratitude to American and Comparative Environmental Policy series editors Sheldon Kamieniecki and Michael E. Kraft for support and constructive comments. We are also grateful to Clay Morgan at MIT Press for his helpfulness and encouragement throughout the publication process. Finally, the criticism and comments offered by three anonymous reviewers were greatly appreciated and were very helpful in improving the volume.

Contents

Series Foreword vii

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xiii

1 Introduction: The Comparative Study of Environmental Governance 1

Andreas Duit

I Understanding Environmental Performance 25

2 Comparing Environmental Performance 27

James Meadowcroft

3 Explaining Environmental Policy Adoption: A Comparative Analysis of Policy Developments in Twenty-Four OECD Countries 53

Christoph Knill, Susumu Shikano, and Jale Tosun

4 The Three Worlds of Environmental Politics 81

Detlef Jahn

5 Wind-Power Development in Germany and the United States: Structural Factors, Multiple-Stream Convergence, and Turning Points 111

Roger Karapin

II Environmental Governance and Citizenship from a Comparative Perspective 147

6 Early Bird or Copycat, Leader or Laggard? A Comparison of Cross-National Patterns of Environmental Policy Change 149

Thomas Sommerer

7	The Role of the State in the Governance of Sustainable Development: Subnational Practices in European States	179
	Susan Baker and Katarina Eckerberg	
8	Sustainable Citizenship: The Role of Citizens and Consumers as Agents of the Environmental State	203
	Michele Micheletti, Dietlind Stolle, and Daniel Berlin	
III	Natural Resource Management in a Comparative Perspective	237
9	Decentralization and Deforestation: Comparing Local Forest Governance Regimes in Latin America	239
	Krister Andersson, Tom Evans, Clark C. Gibson, and Glenn Wright	
10	Enforcement and Compliance in African Fisheries: The Dynamic Interaction between Ruler and Ruled	265
	Martin Sjöstedt	
11	Causes and Consequences of Stakeholder Participation in Natural Resource Management: Evidence from 143 Biosphere Reserves in Fifty-Five Countries	293
	Andreas Duit and Ola Hall	
12	Conclusion: An Emerging Ecostate?	321
	Andreas Duit	
	Appendix to Chapter 8	343
	List of Contributors	349
	Index	353

Introduction: The Comparative Study of Environmental Governance

Andreas Duit

Global environmental change is threatening prosperity and well-being in developed and developing countries alike, and environmental management is now considered a core area of state responsibility in most countries. Indeed, many states now devote substantial proportions of their public spending to environmental monitoring, protection, and restoration, and many have developed considerable administrative, institutional, regulatory, and legislative capacities in the environmental area. In spite of this expansion of regulatory capacity, society's efforts are far from sufficient for reversing, or even just slowing, the ongoing processes of environmental degradation. It is generally recognized that mitigating the ecological crisis must entail a reorganization of the social and political world on par with the previous great transformations, such as the emergence of the nation state system, the market economy, liberal democracy, or the welfare state.

Reflecting the ongoing transformative process of the nature-society relationship is the emergence in the 1960s and 1970s of subdisciplines in social science focusing on environmental issues. In contemporary political science, the study of environmental politics, natural resource management, and environmental policy is a well-established part of the discipline, complete with subfields ranging from international to local political scales, and from large-N cross-sectional studies to green political theory. As a result, significant progress has been made in the understanding of environmental governance. In particular, advances have been achieved in the areas receiving most attention in recent years—that is to say, research focused on subnational and supranational scales in which scholars have analyzed patterns of institution building, policymaking, and regime formation in international arenas (Meyer et al. 1997; Young 1999; Bäckstrand 2008; Paterson 2009), or questions of local or regional policymaking and the role of institutions and stakeholder participation

in resource management (Ostrom 1990; Agrawal and Gibson 2001; Ostrom 2005).

In the meantime, however, environmental governance on the meso level connecting macro and micro levels—the state—has been largely overlooked by social science. As Barry and Eckersley point out, this neglect of the state is, at least in part, linked to its contested role in green political thinking (Barry and Eckersley 2005). The state has been criticized on several accounts, most of them well known to students of and actors in environmental politics. The first point of critique has to do with the perceived inadequacy of the state as a type of political organization for dealing with problems on a global scale (Biermann and Dingwerth 2004). Most processes of environmental degradation are paradigmatic examples of truly globalized problems that individual states are thought to lack both the ability and the incentive to address, which has spurred both researchers and environmentalists to turn to the global arena in search for solutions to the environmental crisis. A second criticism focuses on the linkages between capitalism and electoral democracies. As the familiar argument goes, representative democracies, due to electoral pressures, will tend to promote economic growth, tax revenues, or employment opportunities whenever these conflict with environmental protection. Thus, we can only expect the state to supply a basic level of environmental regulation compatible with sustained economic growth (Buttel 2004). In a similar vein, the liberal democratic state has also been criticized for not allowing civic society and social movement representatives access to environmental decision- and policy-making processes, thereby restricting the representation of nature, as well as those groups in society which depend the most on their natural environment for their livelihood (Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008). In addition, a heavily “scientized” political discourse within the framework of liberal democracy tends to marginalize views and standpoints not compatible with paradigms of sustained growth or technocratic forms of reasoning (Bäckstrand 2004). Another argument against the state is that liberal democracy has a strong tendency to prefer short-term over long-term gains, especially when long-term gains imply some sort of short-term reduction of well-being (Underdal 2010). Finally, critics have argued that the state’s foremost tool—public administration—is, due to its reliance on control-and-command management templates and an hierarchical and expert-dominated organization, inadequate for managing complex and unpredictable ecosystems (Holling and Meffe 1996) as well as for responding to the demands of citizens and stakeholders (Durant et al. 2004).

Bringing the State Back into Environmental Governance

In light of this fairly long list of complaints lodged at the state, why should it be brought back into studies of environmental governance? A first answer is that although most of these critiques of the state are well founded to some extent, it would nevertheless be unwise to rule it out as an important object of study just because it is not a reliable source of much-needed solutions to environmental problems. In fact, achieving a deepened understanding of how and under which circumstances the state fails and succeeds when addressing different types of environmental problems can be considered a key research objective, with potentially far-ranging implications for environmental policymaking in practical settings. A second answer is that for the foreseeable future, the state will continue to play a key role in structuring society's relationship to nature. Although the focus of environmental politics is gradually shifting from the national to the international policy arena, the state remains both a primary site for and an important actor in environmental governance. As Barry and Eckersley (2005) and Steinberg and VanDeveer (2012) argue, states are still deeply involved in managing or mismanaging natural resources and in reducing or increasing emissions of harmful substances into air, water, and soils. A powerful illustration of the state's growing involvement in environmental problem solving can be found in recent studies on regulatory expansion in the environmental policy area (Tews et al. 2003; Holzinger et al. 2008), and it is clearly the case that the role of the state in combating environmental degradation has undergone a steady and rapid expansion during the last four decades (Meadowcroft 2012). In addition, it is states that engage in, and therefore can choose to cooperate with or defect from, international environmental treaties (Weiss and Jacobson 2000). States, moreover, play an important role in stimulating or repressing environmentally beneficial behavior among their citizens (John et al. 2011), as well as influence the mobilization of green social movements (Dryzek et al. 2003; Dalton 2005).

From a variety of theoretical perspectives, and drawing on a wide selection of data types, methodologies, and study formats, all the contributions to this volume explore the role of the state in environmental governance. Among the collected chapters, a broad distinction can be made between two types of approaches, reflecting the state's dual role as actor and arena for environmental governance. State-centric studies consist of investigations of the state as an agent in relation to environmental matters, and they generally employ some sort of measure of state behavior or policy

outcomes as a dependent variable. State-centric studies are typically interested in understanding some aspect of public government (e.g., policies, institutions, or bureaucratic organizations) in relation to environmental matters. The literature on environmental performance is a good example of state-centric type of studies in which the aim is to explain differences in the ability of the central public environmental administration to address environmental problems. (See the chapters in this book by Detlef Jahn; Roger Karapin; Christoph Knill, Susumu Shikano, and Jale Tosun; Susan Baker and Katarina Eckerberg; and Thomas Sommerer for examples of state-centric studies.) Non-state-centric studies, on the other hand, seek to understand some facet of environmental governance by introducing the behavior or the characteristics of the state as an independent variable for understanding things such as citizens' environmental behavior (see the chapter by Michele Micheletti, Dietlind Stolle, and Daniel Berlin in this volume) and environmental policymaking and resource management on the local level (see the chapters by Krister Andersson et al., Martin Sjöstedt; and Andreas Duit and Ola Hall in this volume).

Environmental Governance in a Comparative Perspective

In addition to a shared focus on the role of the state in environmental governance, both state-centric and non-state-centric studies collected in this book employ a distinctly comparative approach to the study of environmental governance. In this sense, they are building on a well-established tradition within studies of environmental politics and policy. Early classics in the field (e.g., Enloe 1975; Lundqvist 1980) often had a pronounced comparative outlook when trying to understand how the political system was responding to environmental problems, and the regular appearance of similar studies (e.g., Jänicke and Weidner 1997; Desai 1998; Hanf and Jansen 1998; Desai 2002; Weidner and Jänicke 2002; Jordan et al. 2003; Rootes 2003) during the last two decades indicate that comparative environmental studies has remained a vital genre. However, many of these earlier studies took the form of collections of descriptive case studies of single countries guided by a common framework. As such, they have provided an important first mapping of environmental politics and policy in a comparative perspective, but their design format does not fully harness the analytic power of the comparative method of systematic comparison.

This volume hopes to contribute to a growing body of scholarly work that seeks to analyze patterns of how different societies are responding