

## BOOK REVIEWS

*International Environmental Law, Policy, and Ethics*, by Alexander Gillespie  
Oxford University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2014, 224 pp, £60 hb, ISBN 9780198713456

In the second edition of *International Environmental Law, Policy, and Ethics*, Alexander Gillespie stakes out a much-needed moral approach to the study of international environmental law and policy. The book outlines and critiques essential ethical bases, theories and motivations ‘for dealing with environmental problems of an international magnitude’ (p. 1), and studies how these are reflected in international instruments and reports concerning the environment.

As was the case with the first edition, Gillespie divides his analysis into two fundamental categories – anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric motivations for environmental protection. The bulk of the book is dominated by analysis and critique of anthropocentric approaches and their application in international law and policy. The gist of the argument is that both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric motivations for addressing environmental concerns provide, separately, an inadequate basis for comprehensive protection.

To start, Chapter 2 explores the origins of the anthropocentric worldview, tracing its foundation to antiquity’s rationalists, including Plato, and arguments concerning the division between rational mankind and nature. From here, he shows how false dichotomies between man and nature were further rationalized by successive generations of scholars. For instance, medieval scholars denied ‘intrinsic value outside of humanity’ (p. 6). Enlightenment scholars associated human progress with man’s control over or alteration of imperfect nature. Marxists ascribed value to nature only in relation to the labour that could be applied to it to extract value.

The core of the book (Chapters 3 to 10) outlines both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric motivations which have found some traction in the environmental protection movement and in the international environmental law and policy world. Gillespie focuses initially on six anthropocentric motivations (Chapters 2 to 8): self-interest, economics, religion, aesthetics, culture, and intergenerational justice. In relation to each, he explores its content as it is relevant to environmental protection. Regarding self-interest, he argues that this motivation for environmental protection is essentially based on the recognition that the environment also sustains human life and well-being. In terms of economics, he argues that preservation is premised on the idea that the environment has economic value for humans, which ought to be sustained. Religious motivations, on the other hand, are founded in ideas of the virtue of human stewardship over the environment and concern for God’s creation. Aesthetic justifications usually highlight nature’s capacity to induce human pleasure and delight, while cultural justifications emphasize nature’s links with human cultural pursuits. He finally explores motivations to protect the environment in light of an

understanding that human actions today should not be detrimental for future generations.

Each chapter outlines in some detail how each motivation has come to be reflected in international instruments and policy. The author evidences his expansive and impressive knowledge in this area. The chapters culminate in critical perspectives that detail the shortcomings of the separate motivations and their adoption in international environmental law and policy. In relation to most, the author finds that the majority of anthropocentric perspectives emphasize utilitarian or instrumental values; however, many aspects of the natural world do not possess these values, thus leaving them exposed to exploitation or destruction. Worse, the values ascribed under each perspective are far from universally interpreted or accepted: what is economically, culturally, or spiritually relevant to some may not be to others – a challenge in trying to reach international agreement on protecting the environment. In fact, many economic, cultural, or spiritual perspectives ostensibly authorize practices that work against environmental interests.

For these and other reasons, Gillespie turns his attention to non-anthropocentric motivations for environmental protection (Chapters 9 and 10). He argues that these perspectives usually highlight the intrinsic value of the environment. He shows that non-anthropocentric moral consideration is particularly prevalent in efforts to recognize that animals and, in fact, all separate entities ‘subject of a life’ have ‘an inherent value equal to humans’ (p. 126). Recognizing that neither humans nor other living entities exist in isolation but live within an ‘ecological context’, Gillespie further explores the moral underpinnings of a growing concern for ecosystems protection, visible most notably in efforts to protect biological diversity and prevent species extinction.

The author again details expansively how non-anthropocentric motivations for environmental protection have emerged in international instruments and policy. He uses a critical lens to explore the ramifications of the ‘intrinsic value’ perspective, which, he argues, provides little guidance for how to act (p. 130). Equally, the ecosystems approach is easily critiqued for its suggestion that ecosystems are ‘squarely at the service of humanity, where the whole is managed for us’ (p. 149), which makes this perspective difficult to distinguish from anthropocentric approaches, especially the self-interest approach. One question is whether the economically difficult and still missing international protection of habitat at the service of all species, and with the explicit aim of preventing species extinction, would suffer from the same difficulty.

Given the shortcomings of each motivation explored in the book, Gillespie ultimately concludes that a pure approach, which premises environmental protection on a single motivation, is counter-productive. He argues that ‘[s]ome work best in some settings, some in others. Sometimes more than one can be used’ (p. 150). At least some of the documentary material quoted by Gillespie evidences that this is already being applied in practice. Although the author is aware that it ‘is no longer sufficient to try to understand environmental problems of an international dimension in terms of philosophical paradigms’ and ‘that it is necessary to work directly towards

solving the problems' (p. 3) in practice, the book could have done more to elaborate how this might be achieved and to explain how the book could contribute to such efforts.

*International Environmental Law, Policy, and Ethics* uses an interesting analytical framework. It looks at developments in international environmental law and policy from the perspective of what motivates environmental action. It will be valuable to those interested in the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of environmental law and the effectiveness of their utilization to achieve environmental preservation.

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*Transnational Climate Change Governance*, by Harriet Bulkeley, Liliana B. Andonova, Michele M. Betsill, Daniel Compagnon, Thomas Hale, Matthew J. Hoffmann, Peter Newell, Matthew Paterson, Charles Roger, Stacy D. VanDeveer  
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It is rare to see a monograph – except, perhaps, an edited collection – with more than three or so authors. *Transnational Climate Change Governance* more than triples that number, to ten. This in itself is an astounding achievement of logistics and academic compromise for a stable of this many scholars. However, this book has much more to offer. The text represents the first comprehensive analysis that ties together the world's continuing concerns and debates about the three major areas of climate change, transnationalism, and governance. It eschews any disciplinary tunnel vision or singular theoretical perspective. Two major contributions of this book, then, are to break down the analytical compartments that usually divide the areas of climate change, transnationalism, and governance, and to revoke privileged positions of theoretical perspective.

Just as importantly, this book persuasively shows the importance of an understanding of transnational governance for climate policy, politics, and law. While some may relegate the study of transnational governance to the normative and political periphery, the authors here demonstrate its significant real-world environmental and economic impacts. They are able to use the cross-sectoral density of the field of climate change to show a variety of forms of transnational governance, the authority it exercises, and the resources it commands.

The basis for this volume is an international and interdisciplinary research network on climate change, initiated by Harriet Bulkeley. One of the group's key outputs has been an extensive worldwide database of 60 key climate initiative case