

BOOK REVIEWS

The Political Economy of Sustainable Development: Policy Instruments and Market Mechanisms, by Timothy Cadman, Lauren Eastwood, Federico Lopez-Casero Michaelis, Tek Narayan Maraseni, Jamie Pittock & Tapan Sarker
Edward Elgar, 2015, 272 pp, £80 hb. ISBN 9781783474837

If one were only to study the contents page of this monograph, it would appear rather limited, offering no more than a promising systematic analysis of a range of sustainable development instruments. Yet, this first impression is deceptive. The contents page does not divulge the book's hidden gem – that is, its empirical basis and analysis of new and important data. Cadman and his co-authors have collected and employed data collected from over 100 surveys and 35 in-depth interviews of sustainable development experts, to bring another dimension to their comprehensive analysis of instruments employed to promote sustainable development.¹

The surveys employed by the authors focus on a Quality of Governance criteria framework (based on principles, criteria, and indicators explained below),² which allows respondents to comment generally or on specific instruments. The interviews, meanwhile, are more in-depth and provide insight into how these instruments are perceived. The Quality of Governance analysis is based on two principles (meaningful participation, and productive deliberation) and four criteria (interest representation, organizational responsibility, decision making, and implementation), each of which have either two or three indicators. These indicators include, but are not limited to inclusiveness, transparency, and behavioural change (p. 13).³ This framework is used to attribute scores to each of the instruments in order to provide a further point of analysis and an opportunity for external commentary to be brought into the book.

Structurally, the book and the chapters are consistent throughout, which allows for easy reading, even if this starts to feel rather mechanical towards the end. Chapters have been designed to include instruments from the same field (climate change, deforestation and biodiversity), allowing readers to focus specifically on areas of interest. Each chapter starts with a historical development of the instrument; general criticisms and a commentary; a discussion of sources and means of delivery of finance; an insight into North–South and state–non-state relations; Quality of Governance; followed by an analysis and conclusions section. The sections are clearly separated with sub-headings; allowing for an easy navigation through each chapter,

¹ The book studies the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM); REDD+; the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC); the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC); Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT); Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES); and the Biodiversity Offset Mechanism (BOM).

² E.M. Lammerts van Beuren & E.M. Blom, *Hierarchical Framework for the Formulation of Sustainable Forest Management Standards* (The Tropenbos Foundation, 1997), pp. 5–9.

³ The 11 indicators are: inclusiveness, equality, resources, accountability, transparency, democracy, agreement, dispute settlement, behavioural change, problem solving, and durability.

as well as breaking down dense and, at times, complex material into more manageable chunks.

The instruments to promote sustainable development discussed in this book are tools that generally provide direct or indirect financial drivers (such as direct payments or a certification process) to facilitate the shift towards more sustainable behaviour. This review focuses on the example of the set of policies known as ‘Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest stocks in developing countries’ (REDD+).⁴ This instrument builds upon a previous instrument (REDD), which financially rewarded countries that were able to achieve a reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to include wider considerations, such as the sustainable management of forests. Chapter 1 offers an accessible overview of the REDD+ scheme, from a chronology of its development from RED (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation), to an explanation of its practical functioning, and an overview of general criticisms and strengths of the scheme based on the authors’ empirical research and the literature. For example, the authors raise concerns about the ability of REDD+ to address ecosystem benefits (such as the potential for damage to other aspects of biodiversity and the disenfranchisement of the local communities, often indigenous people) (p. 40). The next section, ‘Sources and Means of Delivery of Finance’, addresses the incentivising of supply chains and overcoming market failures. It is in the following sections that the most valuable analysis is contained.⁵ An interesting treatment of the fragmentation of the South, its history and the problems between developed and developing countries forms the backdrop for the presentation of the findings of the authors’ empirical research and analysis of Quality of Governance. The survey data is presented in two tables, dividing results by North–South and by sector (scores have been attributed to REDD+ using the principles, criteria and indicators listed above). This allows readers to quickly see that the Southern hemisphere considered REDD+ more favourably than did the North; and that the government sector gave it the highest score out of all sectors (including economic, environment, academic, and social). Overall, under the Quality of Governance framework, REDD+ achieved a high pass under the scheme. In their analysis of REDD+, using the Quality of Governance framework, the authors effectively criticize this instrument’s ability to achieve pro-poor growth as well as the need to empower the local community. The arguments resonate with their empirical findings. In addition, these arguments, and indeed the analysis of all the instruments in the book, strike to the core of the criticisms fronted more generally to all the instruments. The insight provided to readers (for instance, an understanding of the sheer differences observed between developed and developing countries) is greatly enriched by the survey commentary, which offers far more analytical depth than literature alone.

⁴ Further basic information on the scheme can be found online at the UN-REDD Programme, available at: <http://www.un-redd.org/aboutredd>.

⁵ These sections are entitled ‘North/South Relations and State and Non-State Actors’ (p. 47), ‘Quality of Governance’ (p. 52), and ‘Analysis and Conclusions’ (p. 58).

Following the substantive chapters on instruments, the book concludes with two chapters of interest: a comparative analysis chapter, and a recommendations chapter. The comparative analysis takes all the scores from all the instruments and compares them. Following this, the authors identify five overarching themes that emanate from their research: (i) the increase in the role of business; (ii) an unproven economic case for the conservation of the environment; (iii) the importance of the green economy; (iv) criticism of the green economy; and (v) the changing North–South dynamics. The themes provide a sound starting point for the analysis of sustainable development as a whole. In their recommendations chapter, the authors put forward six of their own ideas for change. These recommendations,⁶ drawing very heavily on interview data, are both general and specific, and logical and persuasive.

Overall, the amount of interview data reproduced within the book is slightly disappointing. This is especially the case in the substantive instrument chapters, as it is only later in the book that the interviews are used extensively. Accepting the limitations of interview data in that data may not have been available in as much detail for all chapters, it would have added to the depth of the book to see more quotes throughout. While the repetitive pattern of the chapter design, at times, creates an impression of ‘going through the motions’, this book adds rich and original insights into a considerable number of sustainable development instruments. The conclusions drawn from the analyses in the book are compelling and well reasoned. If readers can get past the rigid structure of the book, then it makes for an interesting addition to the bookshelf of anyone who is interested in sustainable development.

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Transnational Environmental Law, 5:2 (2016), pp. 451–455 © 2016 Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S2047102516000273

The Fragmentation of Global Climate Governance: Consequences and Management of Regime Interactions, by Harro van Asselt
Edward Elgar, 2014, 360 pp, £90 hb. ISBN 9781782544975

A number of studies have explored the important interactions between international climate change-related rules and other international norms (particularly trade and human rights). What has been missing is a treatment of the interplay of the climate

⁶ The 6 recommendations can be summarized as follows: (1) governments need to engage more with business; (2) government environment agencies should support but not lead; (3) government economic agencies should be supported to lead; (4) new financial mechanisms to fund sustainable development should continue to be developed, drawing on earlier lessons; (5) a need to identify and support leadership from countries/sectors; and (6) a need to ensure national- and international-level interaction between governments.