

ogy and society as mutually constituted as evinced in the introduction and conclusion. So the field still waits on a path-breaking volume combining international relations theory, security studies, and information technology. *International Relations and Security in the Digital Age* is a promise unfulfilled. A systematic testing of the fascinating propositions in the conclusion would be most welcome, but the volume does not take up its own challenge.

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## Comparative Environmental Politics: Beyond an Enclave Approach

*Greening Brazil: Environmental Activism in State and Society*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 283 pages. ISBN 9780822340317, \$23.95 paperback. Kathryn Hochstetler and Margaret E. Keck. 2007.

*Environmental Justice in Latin America: Problems, Promise, and Practice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 336 pages. ISBN 9780262533003, \$27.00 paperback. David V. Carruthers (Ed.). 2008.

*The Enclave Economy: Foreign Investment and Sustainable Development in Mexico's Silicon Valley*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 214 pages. ISBN 9780262572422, \$22.00 paperback. Kevin P. Gallagher and Lyuba Zarsky. 2007.

As environmental issues have become a mainstay of social science research over the past two decades, there has arisen a rich research literature on the domestic politics of environmental protection in diverse societies around the globe (for a review, see Steinberg and VanDeveer, forthcoming). Whether issuing from economics, political science, sociology, urban studies, or other fields, contributions to the emerging field of comparative environmental politics hold in common two premises. First, to understand the fate of the planet and its inhabitants requires that we move beyond the facile holism of “saving planet Earth” and grapple with the complexities of domestic politics. Second, research advances in this area require that we take advantage of the wide stock of experiences around the globe—making explicit cross-national comparisons, and drawing on and contributing to broader research literatures with help from concepts and tools that travel well across borders.

To date, research in comparative environmental politics has been considerably more successful at documenting domestic experiences than it has been at advancing

a cumulative research agenda that can produce original insights into those experiences. A perennial challenge facing researchers in this field is how to avoid the creation of topical and geographical enclaves (to borrow from the title of Gallagher and Zarsky's book). Progress in this field will require that a study of air pollution in Taiwan is in conversation with research on conservation in Cameroon and that both are firmly tied to one or more research traditions within the broader social sciences.

Although this vision is appealing when stated in general terms, in practice it can be quite challenging to accomplish. Indeed, debates regarding the proper way to make comparisons across cases lie at the heart of ongoing methodological discussions in the social sciences such as the relative merits of statistical and historical reasoning and the role of case studies in theory building (Brady and Collier, 2004). This challenge is compounded for policy-oriented scholars undertaking what Theda Skocpol terms "doubly engaged" social science—research that aims to simultaneously advance theory and contribute to social betterment.

The three books reviewed here share a substantive focus on environmental politics and development in Latin America. Yet each grapples with the challenge of comparative research in a very different way, offering an opportunity to assess their strengths and weaknesses and to gain insights into the broader challenge of building a cumulative understanding of environmental politics that is place based but not insular, that looks within yet speaks beyond national borders.

In *Greening Brazil*, Kathryn Hochstetler and Margaret Keck bring together their considerable expertise on Brazilian environmental politics in what will no doubt stand for some time as the authoritative book on the subject. While paying close attention to transnational relations, this accessible and well-written book seeks to move beyond the vantage point offered by analyses of Brazil's role in international negotiations or by media portrayals of international efforts to protect the Amazon, "to tell the part of the story of Brazilian environmental politics that the transnationalized narrative omits" (p. 7). Readers familiar with *Activists beyond Borders*, which Keck coauthored with Kathryn Sikkink and which is perhaps the best-known book on transnational environmentalism, will recognize the significance of this stance. "Without a broader understanding of Brazilian politics more generally—the impact of democratization, federalism, and the high levels of informality that challenge the implementation institutional policies—it is impossible to understand environmental politics" (p. x).

The major strength of the book is its descriptive narrative of the evolution of social activism and state institutions. Focusing on the period from the 1960s onward, chapters include coverage of early efforts to build state institutions under Brazil's military regime, when the country's environmental agency had a mere three employees and emphasized politically neutral scientific expertise, through the period of democratization in the 1980s and into the present day, when environmental agency personnel count in the thousands and the technocratic orientation of the earlier era has been ill equipped to deal with left-inspired citizens movements demanding greater transparency and participation. This historical overview is complemented with chapters providing a more holistic look at conservation in Amazonia and efforts to address pollution in São Paulo.

As a theoretical undertaking, the book flirts with, but never fully engages or advances a broader understanding of environmental politics beyond Brazil's

borders. Indeed, the authors seem to have some ambiguity concerning the use of theory. They state that the book is merely descriptive, rather than theoretical, yet identify with the tradition of grounded theory. The book is rich in empirical detail, but darts in and out of concepts like state–society relations, challenges of democratic participation, interagency bargaining, transnational relations, social movement tactics and philosophies, and challenges of implementation in societies where the rule of law is only partial at best. This ambiguity concerning the role of theory reappears in the concluding chapter, where the authors promise to leverage greater insights into dynamics of institutional stability and change, but then veer away from the topic. The result is a work that is very informative in its portrayal of Brazil's experience but is something of a missed opportunity with respect to building a cumulative understanding of environmental politics. If we apply the comparative litmus test—what might scholars or practitioners learn from this book that would help them to understand other parts of the world?—the answer is unclear.

Given the absence of any comparable treatment of the subject, it may be that strategically the authors made the right choice in emphasizing a wide-ranging descriptive narrative rather than a more tightly focused analysis. (By comparison, Douglas McAdams's path-breaking work on social movement theory was able to draw on innumerable previous written histories of the U.S. civil rights movement.) Both authors have published more theoretically oriented research elsewhere. Future research with a more theoretical bent will certainly have a lot of authoritative empirical material to work with, thanks to this treasure trove of a book.

David Carruthers's edited volume, *Environmental Justice in Latin America*, takes a different approach to comparative environmental politics, with the use of case studies from numerous countries organized around a central theme—environmental justice—that can help us to understand these otherwise disparate events as local manifestations of a common phenomenon.

Carruthers's previous work on environmental policy in post-authoritarian Chile is an outstanding example of empirically grounded, theoretically oriented work, so he is no stranger to the challenge of using theory to leverage explanatory power within and across borders. In a very astute introductory chapter, Carruthers explains that the goal of the book is that of "Taking questions that have arisen in one geographic or social context (in this case the environmental justice discourse of the United States) and seeing what insights they might reveal elsewhere . . ." (p. 4). Through a dozen case studies written by researchers hailing from diverse disciplines (including geography, urban studies, and political science), environmental justice is explored "both as a banner of popular mobilization and as a set of principles for analysis, interpretation, and policy" (p. 2).

Together with *Greening Brazil*, this book adds to an already substantial body of evidence against the deeply mistaken notion that developing countries are too preoccupied with poverty alleviation and economic development to care concerning environmental issues. In Latin America, "environmental concerns are deeply woven into the fabric of Latin American popular mobilization for social justice and equity. Environmentalism in Latin America generally begins with a stronger social justice component than its counterpart in the United States . . ." (p. 7) and has intersected with a wide range of concerns pressed by women's movements, independent labor movements, academic activism, indigenous organizations, farm

worker demands, human rights struggles, liberation theology, and movements for global economic justice. The cases documented in this book range from local protests against polluting facilities in Mexico and Puerto Rico, to national uprisings such as Bolivia's "water wars" and broader social movement concerns surrounding the social and environmental impacts of neoliberal economic policies.

As an analytic construct, environmental justice is not a specific theory but a family of interpretive frameworks for exploring politics at the intersection of social equity and environmental quality. The book successfully demonstrates that the concept travels well across borders, and the introductory chapter does a nice job of exploring points of similarity and difference with its original usage in the United States. To be useful, however, a theoretical approach must not only carry potential relevance for a wide range of societies, but must offer original insights beyond what one can learn by merely reading the news. Does environmental justice provide us with something new for understanding the world, and how might we reach such a determination? A partial list of criteria might include the following:

- Does the analytic framework bring to the foreground empirical patterns and social realities that we would have otherwise missed?
- Does it facilitate comparisons across countries and cases, creating novel categories that help us to see connections among seemingly disparate events?
- Does it offer new causal models?
- Does it encourage us to think about old problems in new ways, perhaps prompting us to redefine questions or to revisit assumptions?
- Does it relate new issues to historical trends and long-standing research questions, inviting consideration of continuities and disruptions?

Judged by these criteria, *Environmental Justice in Latin America* is a partial success. Several of the chapters make no attempt to connect to theory (indeed, some make little or no mention of environmental justice), so here I will focus on those that do. One chapter that stands out is Wendy Wolford's analysis of the political economy of agricultural development in the Brazilian *cerrado*, an enormous stretch of land rich in biodiversity and facing intensive agricultural development. Wolford asks why the area is dominated by large-scale agriculture at the expense of smaller producers. She finds that "*Cerrado* farmers, newspaper journalists, policymakers, and academics argue that large-scale agricultural production is the natural response—indeed, the only response—to the 'natural' characteristics of the *cerrado*'s environment . . . This naturalization of large-scale production works to erase deliberate political work done at the national and international level to promote and support large scale, modern producers" (p. 216). Wolford's carefully documented analysis, which draws on a rural political economy tradition often identified with Piers Blaikie, shows that small-scale production is equally viable in this ecosystem and that large agribusiness came to dominate through domestic policies and international development strategies that ignored popular demands for land distribution and favored highly capitalized producers.

Several of the chapters broach potentially fruitful theoretical approaches at the outset but do not develop or apply them systematically enough to lend novel insights

into the cases they describe. This is true, for example, of Juanita Sundberg's emphasis on the role of racism in land use decisions and Stefanie Wickstrom's reference to competing interpretive frameworks for understanding water distribution. Space limitations may have played a role here, as the chapters are quite short, offering little room to develop a framework, describe a case and its social context, and meld the theoretical and empirical through a convincing methodological approach.

At the opposite extreme, some of the most theoretically cohesive contributions—notably those inspired by Marxist analytic frameworks embraced by populist movements of the Left—hew so closely to the party line that they oversimplify important aspects of the empirical realities they describe. Here it is worth recalling Carruthers's distinction between environmental justice as a banner used by social movements and an analytic category deployed by social scientists. The popular refrain runs as follows: Foreign capital (read multinational corporations) and its allies in international institutions have conspired with national elites to implement neoliberal economic policies against popular will, resulting in worsening social conditions and environmental degradation. Popular movements have responded in kind, pushing for greater democracy and decentralization, and revalorization of traditional non-market institutions such as common property.

The reality in Latin America and the developing world is considerably more complex (and always has been—see, for example, Evans, 1995), and here is where analysts would do well to establish some freedom to roam from the interpretive stories of the movements they portray. In Perreault's overview of Bolivian protests against privatization of water and exports of natural gas, the author overlooks important aspects of the case that do not fit within a Marxist interpretive framework. For example, the indigenous Aymara of the Bolivian highlands, who played an important role in protests against privatization of natural resources, do not oppose private markets *per se*—quite the contrary, they dominate and benefit from the thriving market activity of La Paz. Nor are the victims of short-sighted neoliberal policies accurately portrayed as stalwarts of democracy. Unions, peasants, the urban poor, and indigenous peoples in Bolivia and elsewhere have frequently sided with authoritarian rulers and against democracy. Finally, and perhaps most conspicuously, efforts to counterpose neoliberalism and decentralization miss the fact that proponents of freer markets have been at the forefront of the push for decentralization, both internationally and within Bolivia (where the export-market-oriented Santa Cruz region has led the charge).

Perreault's chapter is at its best when it explores some of the contradictions within this popular movement, such as its marginalization of the Guaraní indigenous peoples. The broader point for comparative research is the one raised by Sartori (1970) in his seminal article on concept formation: As we stretch our theoretical concepts to encompass a greater variety of experiences, “. . . our fundamental problem is how to make extensional gains (by climbing the abstraction ladder) without having to suffer unnecessary losses in precision and empirical testability” (p. 1041). There is a balance to be struck between theory and empirical reality, and while there is no simple formula for achieving this balance, the best comparative work does so.

Gallagher and Zarsky's *The Enclave Economy* is exemplary in this regard. The book is deceptively small, and seemingly narrow in its empirical focus, examining

the impact of foreign investment on economic development and environmental quality in Guadalajara, Mexico. But do not be fooled: This book is a major accomplishment, packed with insights for scholars and policy makers alike.

The authors choose a tightly focused question, examining whether foreign direct investment (FDI) has fulfilled its promise in Mexico of promoting economic growth, the development of competitive domestic industries, and improvements in environmental quality. Throughout the entire book, the authors make use of their considerable command of the relevant literatures in economic development and industrial policy and repeatedly illuminate the Mexican case with insights from the experiences of East Asia, where export-oriented growth has produced stunning economic growth and prosperity. The arguments are exquisitely well documented, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, the latter including roughly 100 interviews with key actors in Mexico. In its clarity of exposition, the book also serves as a primer on fundamental concepts that are often used in popular discourse but rarely described with clarity, such as economic globalization, FDI, *maquiladora*, and the evolution of industrial organization toward global production networks.

Tracing the impact of market liberalization in Mexico, which began in the late 1980s and accelerated under Salinas, the authors find that there is no doubt that FDI and exports have increased substantially as a result, in the process creating 637,000 new manufacturing jobs between 1994 and 2002. The fundamental question, which the book explores with particular reference to Mexico's nascent information technology (IT) industry in Guadalajara, is whether FDI has generated positive spillover effects promoting the development of Mexican industry and improvements in environmental quality, both of which were promised by the architects of the country's economic reforms.

The authors conclude that FDI has not had the intended effect and has in fact destroyed Mexico's IT industry—a precarious situation for sustainable job creation, given the footloose nature of multinational industries, which may relocate elsewhere when economic conditions shift to favor other parts of the world.

The authors conclude that institutional differences account for much of Mexico's divergence from the experience of East Asia, where domestic industries have grown in the presence of FDI. Asian countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, China, India and to a lesser extent Malaysia, implemented a series of policies to carefully control the type of FDI and to nurture the growth of domestic industries. In contrast, Mexico adopted a *laissez-faire* approach and put in place policies that actually worked against domestic investment in domestic firms. Combined with the circumstances of China's lower labor costs and significant barriers to entry into the global IT industry, Mexico's strategy is deemed unsustainable from an economic standpoint. For other countries looking to grow through FDI, the authors recommend strategic industrial policy and suggest focusing on a less mature industry than IT.

The most innovative aspect of this study is its attempt to synthesize questions of industrial sustainability (construed as long-term growth in jobs fueled by the development of domestic economic capacities) and environmental sustainability. The one significant drawback of the book is that the environmental analysis receives considerably less attention and often seems tacked on to an in-depth analysis of industrial policy. If the book does not quite reach its aspirations, it nonetheless provides a solid foundation for further work in this area and serves as a model for comparative

environmental research. As part of that future research agenda, it would be useful to know *why* Mexico, and Latin American countries generally, have not implemented industrial policy on the scale of East Asia. This in turn will require a more explicit emphasis on the political processes leading to differential policy outcomes.

Gallagher and Zarsky's conclusions offer an irresistible analogy for the future of comparative environmental politics. As with FDI, positive spillovers from one study to another do not occur automatically but require the creation of explicit linkages. The alternative is the formation of enclaves of scholarship and limited growth of the field as a whole. All three of these books merit high marks for their descriptive richness and originality, and can serve as useful material for classroom discussions on environmental politics. The third demonstrates how empirically grounded, theoretically focused work can provide the linkages needed for a more cumulative research endeavor.

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