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Reviews

Sprawl and politics: the inside story of smart growth in Maryland by J W Frece; State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 2009, 204 pages, $60.00 cloth, $18.95 paper, ISBN 9780791474112, 9780791474129

In 1997 Maryland passed the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Act. According to the Maryland Department of Planning, this legislation aims to "support existing communities", preserve "valuable natural resources", "save taxpayers from the high cost of building infrastructure", and "provide Marylanders with a high quality of life" (http://www.mdp.state.md.us/ourwork/MDP50YEARS. shtml). Democratic Governor Parris Glendening, who was instrumental in designing, initiating, and promoting the program, introduced the smart growth law. It was the central thrust of his administration.

From the origination of this program Maryland became a national leader in the smart growth movement. Over its more than ten-year history the program has won numerous awards and accolades. It has initiated a large body of research focused mostly on determining the efficacy of the program, particularly the effectiveness of the Priority Funding Area (PFA) component of the legislation. Maryland's smart growth law requires county and municipal governments to identify PFAs both within and adjacent to already existing communities within their jurisdictions. The state targets spending for public infrastructure such as public sewers, water, schools, and housing to these designated growth areas. Maryland's PFA program does not force local jurisdictions to restrict development, but if they decide to develop outside these areas any required infrastructure would have to be financed by the local government or private developers. The incentive-based nature of Maryland's program generated and continues to generate tremendous interest from politicians, policy makers, and planners in various states in the US. Rather than playing the heavy hand and restricting growth, states have sought out ways to entice development to specific, designated areas.

John Frece's book *Sprawl and Politics* is the first thorough examination of the political history of the smart growth program in Maryland, and it is an important book for anyone interested in understanding the politics behind urban growth management. *Sprawl and Politics* is less about whether or not Maryland's smart growth law works as much as it is about how it came to be. Frece's 'inside' description of the political strategies employed by Governor Glendening and other key policy makers is made possible by his direct involvement in the evolution of the program. He was part of Glendening's administration during the prelude and after Maryland's smart growth law was passed. He headed the Governor's press office at the time and also, at one point, acted as director of the Office of Smart Growth housed in the Governor's office. Throughout the book Frece recalls key meetings, discussions, and events that took place during the build up to and aftermath of the legislation. He expresses his biased support of the goals of Maryland's smart growth law and, despite this lack of partiality, his account offers unique insights into land-use policy making at the state level.

In *Sprawl and Politics* Frece describes early efforts by the Maryland government to control urban growth in the state. These early efforts failed to come to fruition, in large part because of political opposition from local governments concerned that the state was attempting to usurp their control over land use. The interplay between state interest in curbing sprawl and local sovereignty over land-use decision making is at the heart of growth management. Frece demonstrates how Governor Glendening understood this well; Maryland's smart growth program was deliberately structured so as to temper local government opposition. By offering funding for infrastructure development within PFAs, local governments were encouraged rather than mandated to target growth to certain areas within their jurisdictional boundaries. As Frece notes, Glendening was "not interested in stripping away the power of local officials" (page 47), and he treaded ever so carefully when promoting the smart growth program of the state to local governments.

Frece describes how the smart growth law moved through Maryland's legislative process. The PFA component of the smart growth program was the most contentious part of the legislative package. It rested in Maryland's House Environmental Matters Committee for several days, held up by the committee chairman, who was opposed to the program, and the House

Speaker, who had political aspirations to challenging Governor Glendening. Time was of the essence as the legislative session was about to end. Governor Glendening threatened that there would be no supplemental budget introduced unless his smart growth legislation reached the House floor for debate. This would have meant that the various earmarks and pet projects that legislative leaders had promised to their constituents might never come to fruition. Political tensions ran high, but eventually the Environmental Matters Committee caved and introduced the smart growth legislation, which passed less than two weeks later. Frece demonstrates the importance of political power in the policy-making process, and his vivid description of the political wrangling that occurred with passage of Maryland's smart growth law is the most exciting and insightful part of *Sprawl and Politics*.

At the end of the book Frece describes a number of political lessons learned from Maryland's smart growth program. He offers twenty in total but many are repetitive in that they focus in one way or another on 'marketing' a state level smart growth program either to voters, other branches of government, internally, or to future generations. There is a lack of scholarly analysis in these renderings, and, therefore, this chapter of the book is probably a little less useful to an academic audience. However, I do think other aspects of *Sprawl and Politics* make it an extremely useful supplemental book for a graduate-level or undergraduate-level course in state and local government or land-use planning. Political science, public policy, and planning faculty and students interested in urban growth management issues and intergovernmental relations would benefit greatly from reading this book. It is a short, concise, and interesting read, offering a unique inside glimpse into the politics around managing growth in Maryland.

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Chinese economic development and the environment by S Managi, S Kaneko; Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, Glos, 2009, 332 pages, £79.95 cloth (US $140.00) ISBN 9781848445505

Chinese Economic Development and the Environment by Shunsuke Managi and Shinji Kaneko is an empirical examination of the relationship between economic growth and environmental degradation in contemporary China. One would think that the parameters of such a study are self-evident: we have a solid understanding of what constitutes 'economic development' and what constitutes 'the environment'. But the authors show that unpacking these two terms, let alone studying them with precision, is an exceedingly difficult task.

After outlining some of China's key environmental challenges (desertification, air and water pollution, unchecked urban growth), the authors briefly address some of the political and institutional barriers to effective environmental protection. These barriers include the incomplete monitoring and enforcement of pollution standards, insufficient capital and technology for pollution abatement, and the weak institutional authority of environmental enforcement agencies at all levels of government.

In most of the chapters, the authors use a variety of innovative econometric modeling tools to examine the relationship between economic growth (measured in various ways) and environmental quality (also measured in various ways). This analysis is set amidst a complex policy picture over the past several decades as laws and policies governing environmental protection have been in a state of flux. The book is a very complex read; while some of its contents will be useful for readers interested in general questions of policy and management, readers with extensive backgrounds in econometrics will certainly glean the most from it. (Admittedly, this reviewer has no such background.) Another challenge, which the authors readily acknowledge, is that most of their data are from provincial-level sources compiled and published during the 1990s and 2000s in databases such as the China Statistical Yearbook and the China Environmental Statistical Yearbook. In this regard, the authors confront a problem common to all researchers who work in China: the reliability of these data are suspect, but they are often the best we can get our hands on.

Some of the most interesting conclusions in the book relate to an empirical testing of the Environmental Kusnets Curve (EKC), which posits that environmental problems such as pollution tend to increase during the initial stages of economic development, when resources are mobilized for industrialization, then decrease over time as a result of technological innovation,

increased environmental regulation, and the externalization of pollution sources to other countries or regions. The result is an upside-down U-shaped curve with 'economic growth' on the *x*-axis and some measure of 'environmental degradation' on the *y*-axis. With their date the authors contradict the EKC hypothesis; as the Chinese economy posted high rates of growth throughout the 1990s, observed levels of wastewater and waste gas continued to rise at alarming rates. The authors conclude that "environmental management in China is deteriorating", and that "environmental productivity decreased over the 1999 – 2003 period" (page 91).

Significantly, and somewhat dispiritingly, the study also finds little evidence for the efficacy of the pollution levy system, a pay-to-pollute fee system which serves the cornerstone of China's pollution control efforts. The pollution levy system was designed to force industrial firms to acknowledge environmental costs in their operating budgets. Firms pay a discharge fee to local environmental protection bureaus, which in turn remit a portion back to the firm to invest in cleaner technologies. Managi and Kaneko find, however, that in many cases it is cheaper for polluting firms to simply pay the levy rather than invest in environmental mitigation technologies.

There are a few bright spots in the book that call for optimism. In the iron and steel industry, for example, energy efficiency has improved since the 1990s, primarily due to large capital investment in cleaner technologies. Similarly, energy-related CO_2 emissions have leveled off due to improvements in production output per unit of energy input in that sector. These findings provide some basis for the hope that things can get better. The question is: how?

The authors' answer to this question, which this reviewer finds quite troubling, is that "technological change is the key to solving the problem of increasing emissions" (page 305). There are echoes here of ecological modernization theory, which suggests that ecology and economy (which, after all, come from the common Greek root word *oikos*, meaning 'home') can be maximized together and that technological innovation is the key to the whole process. But this line of thinking fails to acknowledge several facts about China's environmental crisis: (1) industrial firms lack endogenous incentives to make these changes, a fact that is reflected in the authors' own models; (2) firms continue to externalize environmental costs onto less powerful social actors and the environment; and (3) economic globalization makes it 'rational' for foreign corporations to locate their dirtiest production facilities in China. All of these problems hinge not simply on technological innovation but on wise policy implementation.

Overall, the book represents a considerable effort to shed light on China's environmental crisis and its relationship to the rapid economic growth of the country. It is empirically driven, methodologically innovative, and well worth reading.

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Turning down the heat: the politics of climate policy in affluent democracies edited by H Compston, I Bailey; Macmillan, London, 2008, 320 pages, £65.00 cloth, £20.99 paper, ISBN 9780230202047, 9780230202054

John Maynard Keynes once famously wrote, "In the long run, we're all dead." But in the meantime, among other things, it seems a good idea to attend to the pressing policy challenges associated with our carbon-based energy systems and human contributions to climate change.

Turning Down the Heat—coedited by Professors Hugh Compston and Ian Bailey—steps in to take on a key part of this task (as the subtitle for the book also indicates) as the contributors investigate how to catalyze more substantive and sustained climate policy actions in wealthy democracies. Through landscape-setting (chapters 1 – 3 and 14) and rigorous and detailed case studies Greece, Germany, Australia, Canada, France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union (chapters 4 – 13), this edited volume provides an assessment of how context dependent combinations of strategies might be harnessed to "enable governments to implement more effective climate policies" (page 285).

All too often these sorts of ponderings surface through anecdotal exhortations via mass media or are heard in hallway banter at UN Conference of Parties meetings. However, this volume intervenes in a timely fashion to advance both academic interrogations of policy analysis as well as practical appraisals of how to methodically enhance the spectrum of possibility for more progressive and cooperative climate policy action.

A particular strength of the volume is that each chapter effectively examines how politics shape climate policies at various scales (mainly covering regional, national, and subnational levels).

Also laudable is the fact that, although associated questions of scientific certainty/uncertainty regarding various dimensions of understanding of the changing climate are important contributing factors to these considerations, the contributions deliberately and consistently place a critical gaze on "the kinds of politics required to mitigate and adapt to disruptive climate change, and the political strategies needed to deliver these policy changes" (page 45).

At the outset the contributors acknowledge their convergence of agreement that prosperous democracies must lead the way toward 'controlling climate change' and 'turning down the heat'. As such, this makes for an outstanding resource for scholars, academic researchers, practititioners, and erudite members of the public who are interested in learning about the dynamics and contours of complex policy measures (eg chapter 4, the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme), and the political and cultural inputs that shape the relative successes and failures of past policy tools [eg chapter 5, reasons behind the failure of the US BTU (British Thermal Unit) tax proposed by President Bill Clinton].

That said, although I found the core chapters 4 – 13 to be fascinating, the explanatory power derived from many of these cases for larger challenges of climate politics was somewhat tenuous in places. For instance, I take the point that "the Swedish example has shown that it is possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining strong economic growth" (page 180), yet the mix of political economy, cultural history, and physical geography tend to make it more an anomaly than a guide. Moreover, with the stated intention of addressing these intertwined issues of climate politics and policy in 'affluent democracies', it was a drawback that analyses of Italy, Japan, and Russia could not have been included as case studies. As such, readers may need more convincing that the lessons of Greek energy *zugzwang* (chapter 10) are instructive for more broad and ongoing international climate negotiations. As a result, the lessons derived from some of the cases portrayed more of a mosaic than an integrated set of seven political strategies for strengthening climate policy across rich democracies (as posited on page 268).

Furthermore, the treatment of historically informed influences shaping and being shaped by the heterogeneous 'public' community—from carbon-based industry interests to nongovernmental organizations—could have been more prominent throughout the cases presented (for examples see Liverman, 2008, Moser, 2009). Although 'the influence of climate sceptics' was presented as one of "six major obstacles to implementing more radical climate policies" (page 264), individual chapters tended to underplay informal spaces where non-nation-state actors often make more formal climate policy and politics meaningful in the citizens' daily lives. These appeared to be missed opportunities.

Overall, the coeditors and chapter authors have ambitiously offered critical ways forward for the difficult challenges of climate politics and policy in the 21st century. Compston and Bailey conclude, "what is certain is that the 'old' politics of climate policy has a limited shelf life" (page 285). However, readers may question just how 'radical' the purported reframing is in *Turning Down the Heat*. Nonetheless, I strongly recommend the volume as it provides an insightful set of templates and cases for reconsidering climate policy processes and products, particularly at a critical juncture in post-Kyoto climate politics. In my view, this edited book is clearly additional value to ongoing and pressing analyses of the politics of climate policy negotiations in affluent democracies.

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Books received

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