

# Book Reviews

Kauffman, Craig M. 2017. *Grassroots Global Governance: Local Watershed Management Experiments and the Evolution of Sustainable Development*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

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Craig M. Kauffman's *Grassroots Global Governance* is an exceptionally good book, and an excellent example of the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical value to be gained in "global" environmental politics research by taking local and national contexts and dynamics – indeed comparative politics – seriously.

The book emerges from a coherent, complex, and nuanced comparative and international research agenda, grounded equally in detailed local fieldwork and multiple streams of global environmental politics scholarship. In equal measure, it contributes to and benefits from a growing body of environmental politics work on Ecuador, in Latin America, and across the developing world, as well as much research on global governance. The book's goals, structure, methods, and theoretical and conceptual content are quite ambitious, earning it a place among the best books in the growing subfield of comparative environmental politics (e.g., by Pamela Martin, Paul Steinberg, Tammy L. Lewis, and Kathryn Hochtstetler).

Kauffman did extensive fieldwork over many years, and the book demonstrates the value of doing so. It is exactly this pairing of place-based, national, and regional expertise common in comparative politics and regional studies with the theories and concepts from international relations and research on transboundary politics that yields some of the richest research. As a result, *Grassroots Global Governance* combines several streams of theoretical and conceptual international relations and comparative politics research, including research on networks and network-based organizations, mobilization, public sector and civil society capacity building, stakeholder participation, knowledge construction and framing, and policy and organizational experimentation. These streams are well integrated in Kauffman's theory of grassroots global governance. Likewise, they are well demonstrated in his empirical research, which finds contestation between the local and global, and institutional and agent-centered outcomes around water management, public and civil society institutions, and various groups of actors.

Likewise, Kauffman's book seamlessly accounts for interacting global governance structures that accumulate in environmental cases. To achieve this

he uses an innovative approach called “nodal” governance theory to show how ideas and resources transfer through a network. Kauffman demonstrates how the interaction of stakeholders can lead to a learning process that affects the dynamic and interactive process of normative and institutional development at both local and international levels. This approach illustrates how socio-economic problems unfold in developing societies. Global governance structures around complex issues like poverty, human health, deforestation, and climate change are all more holistically understood and actions to address these problems are better specified through the resulting research.

The work is persuasive in its examination of the diffusion of ideas and practices from global to local over time; the local adaptations of global norms, ideas, and practices; and the subsequent altering and reshaping of the global via engagement with local agents and social institutions. By tracing these important interactions, Kauffman shows some of the ways that Ecuadorian civil society and local communities are able to shape—or indigenize—global governance ideas and institutions, rather than just being passive recipients of them.

While this book provides powerful examples of grassroots actors agency, Kauffman’s framework should be applied to other important cases to see when and how it is replicated. As we have seen in the literature on grassroots movements for some time (Brysk 1996), such movements may have a variety of case-by-case characteristics that make it difficult to generalize to other issue areas. For instance, grassroots movements are easily hijacked by egocentric or weak leadership. They may also fall prey to the classic collective action problem (Olson 1965), which sometimes make them less successful at maintaining the necessary momentum to reach a truly consequential tipping point. Most importantly, as Kauffman points out, grassroots movements are characteristically reflective of local ideas and identities, and many translations of languages and practices go into building such processes at the grassroots level. Subsequently, in local populations where large parts of society have been historically held back and degraded, we may not find an exact parallel to the indigenous communities of Ecuador.

Despite this, perhaps the most important implication of Kauffman’s work is that the endless either/or debates around top-down versus bottom-up politics are quite stale in comparison to this work’s more dynamic, nuanced, and empirically informed theorizing of ongoing and dynamic relationships between interconnected locally and globally framed actors and institutions. This study can and should be replicated in other countries and across other environmental and non-environmental areas of politics and policymaking.

Kauffman also demonstrates that political science—and social science research more broadly—has much to teach some of the often technocratic and closed environmental management literatures. Integrated water management research and practice is certainly one of these rather insulated communities, and it would benefit greatly from paying close attention to Kauffman’s theorizing and empirical research. In short, research such as this serves to expand our

theoretical and empirical understanding of critically important, complex issues in environmental politics, but it also serves to improve the lives of critical stakeholders who have largely been excluded from the equation for some time.

## References

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Cramton, Peter, David J.C. MacKay, Axel Ockenfels, and Steven Stoft, eds. 2017. *Global Carbon Pricing: The Path to Climate Cooperation*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.

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The editors of *Global Carbon Pricing* argue that only “a reciprocal, common climate commitment” (p. xiii) will overcome the failure of the Paris Agreement’s “pledge-and-review” approach and make the global climate goal attainable. They suggest that we need to change the game and focus on global carbon pricing to facilitate cooperation. Climate change is a classic tragedy of the commons, where self-interested actors are unwilling to cooperate because they believe others will also fail to cooperate. The editors are confident that a reciprocal common commitment can be agreed if a global carbon price is established, and that under the resulting cooperation “national self-interests will realign with the public good” (p. xiii).

Global carbon pricing has been widely debated in scholarly work on global environmental governance, and this book adds to a chorus of economists promoting market-based approaches to solve environmental problems. What is novel is that global carbon pricing, as framed here, will foster common, not individual, commitments in climate negotiations. Countries agree upon a global price and levy charges against the use of fossil fuels however they see fit, as long as the national average reaches the global price. Revenues generated are kept in each country, and a portion of charges levied are collected in a common pot to be distributed to less developed countries to offset the cost of mitigation and adaptation measures.

The book draws on and contributes to the literature on climate policy and climate economics. The twelve essays are divided into two sections: first, the gap between what is needed to mitigate climate change and what individual countries are currently willing to do is introduced, along with the concept of climate cooperation. The second section begins with an explanation of global carbon pricing and how it builds trust and reciprocity, is flexible enough to cost less, and fosters cooperation and reciprocal commitment). Often, carbon pricing is

justified by pointing to flaws in the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement, such as the lack of penalties or sanctions. The final chapters focus on the importance of setting minimum carbon prices and deal with issues of climate justice and fairness. The final chapter further explains why the current “pledge-and-review” approach is doomed to fail.

Determining a global carbon price, and attaining a common commitment to one, are lofty ambitions, which some authors openly acknowledge as limitations of this alternate model. Of concern, however, are some missing (and familiar) issues. The question of whether carbon pricing as a major mitigation instrument can be compatible (and politically feasible) with common but differentiated responsibilities, especially in less developed countries, is not sufficiently addressed. The establishment of a “Green Fund formula” designed “to please all of those whose support is needed” (p. 235) is not adequately explained in terms of how it would work in practice; would it finance offsetting programs, similar to REDD+, or would it focus on investing in hard or soft technologies for, say, carbon removal? How much would each country contribute and who would regulate the process? Where along the value chain would costs be considered?

Although some authors are confident that economic incentives will overcome the free-rider problem because countries will “take charge of their climate commitments rather than engage in carbon freeriding” (p. 213), explaining how the failure to attain legally binding commitments in previous agreements will be solved at the negotiating table for carbon pricing (and who will be present) is overlooked. The book does an excellent job of criticizing Kyoto (and Paris), instead of, for instance, explaining how a “universal price signal to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels” (p. 97) will be stronger than existing schemes, or how the authors will deal with contradictory policies such as fossil fuel subsidies.

For readers not well versed in ongoing debates about global environmental governance and climate economics, some chapters are difficult to follow. In a volume that characterizes the failure of climate negotiations as overlooking “everything we know about human cooperation” (p. xi), wider perspectives are notably missing. For instance, critical literatures on the commodification of nature, common pool resource management, the technopolitics of relying on market-based approaches to deal with climate change, and sociological or anthropological perspectives on their operation could have helped strengthen the “I will if you will” approach supported by the editors. These could, perhaps, have addressed some of the weaknesses, like the feasibility of technological fixes to address the social drivers of climate change and a lack of discussion of the inherent power inequalities in negotiating a global carbon price.

On the one hand, the book is likely to be worthwhile to those looking for market-based alternatives to the existing global environmental governance regime, and it offers an interesting proposition and preview of what a global carbon pricing scheme might look like. On the other hand, simultaneously

fostering cooperation and commitment through a market-based approach seems too easy a fix to overcome the global governance issues in dealing with climate change experienced in the last quarter century.

Skjærseth, Jon Birger, Per Ove Eikeland, Lars H. Gulbrandsen, and Torbjørg Jevnaker. 2016. *Linking EU Climate and Energy Policies—Decision-making, Implementation and Reform*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

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An ambitious climate and energy policy (known colloquially as 20-20-20) was set unanimously by EU leaders in 2007/2008 and enacted into law in 2009. The four authors of this book are committed to exploring the causes and consequences of what they see as “a combined climate and energy policy package that departed significantly from the status quo” (p. 25). The inadequacy in traditional theories of EU integration, policymaking, and implementation to explain this outcome is obvious. The authors therefore opted to include negotiation theory on issue linkage to develop an integrated framework for analysis. Perhaps the most noteworthy strength of this book is causes and effects of process and outcome of the EU climate and energy policy package comparatively.

According to negotiation theory, EU climate policy would “reflect the position of the least ambitious actor when unanimity is required” (p. 3). This outcome, however, was not reflected in reality. The inconsistency prompted Skjærseth et al. to propose three compelling answers—with the help of an issue-linkage perspective—to explain how this was possible: combining different issues into a package; compensating “losers” by adding issues such as side payments; and creating synergies by which policies for climate objectives could also reduce air pollution and create new green jobs. What’s more, they distinguish between functional and political linkages to reveal how the EU has been able to adopt increasingly ambitious climate policies by linking energy issues and policies. Political linkage is defined by whether climate and energy policies are initiated, recommended, and adopted concurrently by the same set of policymakers.

The researchers apply two complementary approaches to explain why and how such policies developed in the first place: Liberal Intergovernmentalism (LI) and Multi-Level Governance (MLG). From an LI perspective, the initiation and adoption of climate and energy policies would be expected to “reflect the interests, preferences and actions of the member states and their intergovernmental bargaining” (p. 3). MLG is the dispersion of authority across multiple levels of political governance. Over the last several decades, authority has moved away from traditional national governments in Europe not just to the supranational level within the EU, but also to subnational levels (e.g., regional assemblies

and local authorities). The latter approach may “explain the initiation and adoption of EU climate and energy policies as a result of complex bargaining at multiple governance levels that include EU institutions, non-state actors and member state governments” (p. 4). The authors explore two main approaches to explain variation in implementation. The first centers on degree of “fit” between EU requirements and the national status quo; the second focuses on the relationship between EU and domestic politics. The reform phase of policies can also be analyzed from the abovementioned explanatory perspectives.

The authors selected four countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Poland) to ensure the richness and deepness of empirical analysis. These countries are confronted with a range of different challenges and opportunities with respect to decarbonizing their economies because of their significant variation in energy mix and import dependency. The analysis focuses on the directive reforming the EU emissions trading system (EU ETS), the Effort-Sharing Decision (ESD), the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), and the Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Directive. The authors examine two climate policies for the transport sector—the car emissions regulation and the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD)—for a subset of countries.

The authors extracted empirically testable propositions from various theoretical perspectives and examined them with a combination of methodological techniques (including pattern-matching, process tracing and explanation-building). They collected qualitative data from multiple sources, including energy statistics, official papers, secondary literature, and semistructured interviews.

*Linking EU Climate and Energy Policies* should be read by all who are interested in climate and energy policy and governance. There are some limitations to the study, as its authors acknowledge: it is widely accepted that transforming energy systems will always be “a matter of incremental change” (p. 7); therefore, assessing future implementation is difficult.

Shortcomings aside, this volume contributes in several ways to the field of international and comparative climate politics. It illustrates the arduousness of pursuing climate and environmental objectives continuously, as is evident from how the implementation experiences of the EU package have affected national positions on new long-term policies. The authors simultaneously embed climate and energy policy in an intricate European political context, noting that “variation in domestic politics has proved more potent in explaining variation in implementation than ‘fit’ and adaptation pressure” (p. 235). They remind us that the current status of new 2030 EU targets and policies “indicates that they are not likely to trigger any fundamental transformation of the energy system by 2030” (p. 236).

This ambitious project, in effect, covers a nuanced set of public policy implications. In initiation and negotiation, “the package managed to combine policies that underscored the opportunities for synergies rather than trade-offs: all the objectives could be realized” (p. 247). Moreover, the authors of this book found it useful to differentiate between conditions that promote package solutions

and package trouble. In terms of policy implementation and reform, an intriguing observation is “how difference in access to domestic decision making for renewable energy interests between Poland and Germany have contributed to produce different ambitions and support systems for renewables in electricity production” (p. 248). Last but not least, the policy cycle approach used throughout the book demonstrates how issue-linkages and policy packages may have different effects on different phases that may help or hamper subsequent policy progress.