

ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS by Timothy Doyle and Douglas McEachern. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

Environmental issues have been the subject of policy discourse since the early seventies. However, only in the last decade has this policy discourse itself been subject to extensive research. The view of environmental issues as socially constructed has not yet filtered down to many of the textbooks geared for introductory courses. *Environment and Politics* is one of the Routledge Introductions to Environment series. The intention of this series is to introduce new issues and perspectives to undergraduate students, who may not have yet the disciplinary background for more advanced texts. The book's stated purpose to serve as an "introduction to the comparative study of environmental politics" (p. 6) is thus both timely and needed.

The book, appropriately, begins with a very brief presentation of central concepts for those without a political science background. Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the meaning of politics and how politics relate to the environment. Then it briefly reviews the relations between political regimes and environmental politics, thus extending the realm of discussion beyond western democracies, and the different definitions of what 'power' is, how it is applied and how it relates to the policy process.

Then, in Chapter 2, the authors attempt to introduce the relations between policies and world views. The authors' point of departure is that all but very few initiatives were shaped by a response to vigorous environmental politics generated by radical environmental movements (p. 36). Hence, they devote seventeen and a half of the chapter's twenty three pages to radical environmental movements. In essence, they argue that these movements are the only true driving force in environmental politics, and that all other types of policies (such as use of economic instruments or attempts to promote sustainable development initiatives) are essentially shams. Yet, this argument is not substantiated by evidence or analysis. Rather it is presented as an article of faith based on opinionated interpretations by the authors of different policy efforts.

As the authors state in their introduction, policy is not a document, or a single strategy, but a political process. Actually, numerous processes can be used to affect environmental change, in which many actors take part. The remaining chapters in the book, Chapters 3 to 8, present accounts of the different types of actors and processes that affect environmental decision making. These are organized around the main actors and arenas. In doing so, the authors present an exceptionally wide variety of arenas, more than are acknowledged in most other texts I am familiar with.

In accordance with the general thrust of the book, Chapter 3 is devoted to a wide ranging presentation of environmental movements as social movements. This is followed by a presentation of their more formal and visible component, the green non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in Chapter 4. In these chapters, which can be viewed as the core of the book, a great effort is undertaken to describe the diversity of these movements and organizations, something that entails substantial attention to the typology of these bodies.

Chapter 5, according to its title, discusses the relations between political parties and the environment. In reality it focuses on the question whether green bodies should reject or embrace electoral politics, which is not the same as what the title implies. As part of this discussion the authors introduce the potential effects of green bodies on existing parties, and the emergence of green parties. Yet, they do not expose the changes in party politics in a way suitable for those who do not follow them or have not studied these changes elsewhere.

Chapter 6 looks at the inter-relations between business, politics and the environment. This interaction is undoubtedly at the forefront of current research. Yet, the perspective taken by the authors is again limited to a somewhat naive presentation of the possibilities for business to take a greener perspective. It does little to address the question raised at the end of the chapter: under which circumstances and conditions, and to what extent would business change its behavior? Moreover, the chapter refers to the business community essentially as a single entity, without differentiating between businesses.

The last two chapters are devoted to the introduction of environmental concerns into administrative decision making (Chapter 7) and the ability to address international environmental issues (Chapter 8). These two relatively short chapters could have been seen as two facets of the same problem: how to institutionalize environmental awareness and turn it into action. Indeed Chapter 7 does refer to international issues. However, the question is not posed as such and the chapters are not tied together. In Chapter 7 the theories on institutions and bureaucracy are introduced, followed by a brief discussion of economic instruments. Then, in Chapter 8 several well-publicized efforts to address a few global issues are presented in so brief a form that it does not allow for sufficient discussion of any of them. None of these expositions presents the complexities of the politics associated with the case discussed, or is set within a conceptual framework.

In summary, this book does not meet its stated objectives. Despite its laudable wide ranging coverage and seemingly comprehensive structure this book discusses the topics and issues it raises from a narrow perspective, that of radical environmentalism. Hence, it cannot be recommended as a basic introductory text, at least not for teachers who would like to expose their students to alternative views and then allow them to form their own world views. It can serve, at best, as a supplementary text. Perhaps the best use of this book within a course would be as a basis for discussing environmental movements and NGOs (Chapters 3 and 4), and for exposing how environmentalists may view some of the other issues (party politics, for example). It is also doubtful whether this book can serve as a basis for comparative work, as it does not provide a systemic base for such work. However, *Environment and Politics* does provide a slightly wider perspective on the diversity of circumstances and conditions within which environmental politics are set than some other basic texts do. This is perhaps its most worthwhile contribution.

Eran Feitelson

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem