

policy-making in the EU starting from the First Action Programme (1973–76) which “defined the basic principles of community environmental policy” and through the Fifth Action Programme (1996–7.) The chapter details each programme’s successes and failures, and comes to this conclusion. The EU will have to be more proactive in effecting policy, overriding its tendency to allow market forces to determine policy.

As mentioned above, this book includes some case examples of the difficulties of implementing environmental policy. A case-in-point (no pun intended) is Pridham and Konstadakopulos’ essay, ‘Sustainable development in Mediterranean Europe? Interactions between European, national and sub-national levels’. The authors firstly attribute the southern European countries’ slowness to adopting reforms to their late entrance into the EC. But this superficial excuse is quickly surpassed by other, larger problems. The low priority of the environment is certainly a large cause for slowness to act.

The value of this chapter is partly in its treatment of sub-national authorities. While a large degree of regionalism frequently causes slowness at the national level, the authors cite positive examples of regionalism. They write the Autonomous Region of Madrid was the first region in Spain to adopt the concept of sustainable development and begin feasibility studies. The authors conclude by saying that more pressure from the EU is integral to forcing through policy change at the national levels.

This book is a valuable read for academics and professionals alike. While many chapters have some overlap, it just serves to reinforce the importance of basic documents and conferences. Not unrealistically optimistic or harshly pessimistic, *Politics of Sustainable Development* is a fair look at the growing relevance of the environment in economic planning.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES: CONNECTING THEORY, PRACTICE, AND POSSIBILITIES by William A. Galston and Karen J. Baehler. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1995.

The literature about rural development in the U.S.A. is characterized, according to the authors, by two main features: fragmentation and isolation. The book by Galston and Baehler is offered as a first step to overcome these problems by assembling the best of individual research contributions and placing them in a comprehensive theoretical, historical and geographical context. For that purpose, the book is divided into two parts. The first section is designed as a theoretical, conceptual and historical framework, opening with an introductory chapter on rural America in the 1990s. Subsequent chapters deal with different aspects of development: as a conceptual framework, as an economic process, and as a political strategy. The second part of the book presents a survey of both research and practice in key sectors of rural

America, with chapters on natural resources, manufacturing, the service sector, tourism, the elderly, high technology, and telecommunications.

Galston and Baehler define rural life by three fundamental characteristics: (1) a relation to nature; (2) a relation to other human beings, in contrast to the image of urban life as anonymous; (3) a relation to history, as rural communities have a more enduring time link with a certain place, in contrast to "urban life as transitory, migratory, and utterly lacking in shared memories".

The stability and integrity of many rural communities is being eroded by a number of factors. Since the onset of the Industrial Revolution, markets tend to act as a solvent on established social relations, as noted by social theorists. Markets bring about change and require mobility. Market forces induce an increase in productivity, through competition and technological innovation, thereby lowering the number of people required to produce commodities or goods typical for rural areas. Moreover, American culture, grown out of a history of immigrants and a yearning for unhindered freedom, does not give priority to place. This inherent conflict is captured by Stegner (1992) in a moving letter to his late mother, quoted by Galston and Baehler: "You believed in all the beauties and strengths and human associations of place; my father believed only in movement".

The core of the problem, as stated by the authors, is how rural communities rooted in place can remain sustainable when market forces render them impotent. They emphasize that "for many Americans, including a large number of rural Americans, the self-willed cosmopolitan bricolage celebrated by contemporary post-modernists simply will not do". The book discusses in a rather detailed way the difficulties and options for rural development and growth, both in terms of sectors and strategies. Development is not treated as an end in itself but as a means to exist in places that are not only chosen but cherished.

Many lessons can be learned, also by less developed countries, from the rural problems of the United States, a superpower with a formidable economy. Rural America experienced considerable difficulties during the 1980s, largely as a result of vast changes in the national and international economy. Strong national growth in the U.S.A. since 1982 did little to improve the rural economy. Out-migration from rural areas reached almost 500,000 per year by the mid-1980s. The smallest towns were hardest hit, as the population decreased in 72 percent of settlements with less than 2,500 inhabitants. By 1995 only 21 percent of the population lived in rural areas, which provided 18 percent of all the jobs and generated 14 percent of GNP.

Agricultural productivity continues to increase, resulting in decreasing agricultural employment. Less than 10 percent of the rural population live on farms. Also other types of employment related to primary products and raw materials, typical for rural areas, are progressively declining. Families, neighborhoods, and communities are the unintended victims of the market's 'creative destruction'. Besides the market, the government is also held responsible for rural marginalization. Neither the market forces nor the public sector did promote rural development in the 1980s. Concerning

the role of government, Anne O. Krueger (1990) is approvingly quoted by the authors: "One of the lessons of experience with development is that governments are not omniscient, selfless, social guardians... One must ask why economists were ever comfortable with the simultaneous beliefs that individuals in the private sector act in their self-interest and that individuals in the public sector are motivated by a Benthamite vision of social justice".

The concept of *embeddedness* is put forward, meaning that future prospects for rural America cannot be developed in isolation from national and global trends. Various options and strategies are discussed and evaluated. The authors conclude that, due to the structural and irreversible economic decline of job opportunities in typical rural sectors such as agriculture and natural resources, other economic sectors need to be cultivated to enable rural development. The improvement of telecommunications in rural areas by the public and private sector is important for development in general terms, as it may help to reduce key rural disadvantages as isolation and distance.

Many economic activities in manufacturing, services and high technology clearly favor metropolitan environments for distinct reasons. The most promising economic sectors for rural development are tourists and the retiring elderly, both of whom are looking for qualities of beauty, tranquillity and security that can be offered by facilities in rural environments. Both sectors are labor intensive and offer new job opportunities. Tourism has immense potential for creating a climate of entrepreneurship in a community or region, while providing also jobs for the less educated. Possible disadvantages of tourism development for the local communities include a rise in the local cost of living and seasonality. Both tourism and the retiring elderly qualify as basic industries because, like trade, they bring new dollars from outside into the local economy.

Finally, regional development is considered very important in rural development, enabling small towns and communities to cooperate in order to compensate for the lack of critical mass in population density. State and federal government can bring about incentives for such regional development and cooperation. But instead of top-down bureaucratic mechanisms emphasis must be placed, according to the authors, on entrepreneurial mechanisms that can serve grass roots needs in rural economies. 'Political jurisdictions must assess the ways in which partly conflicting goals such as growth, equity, continuity, sustainability, and participation are to be ranked and balanced. Clearly "development is far more than simply an economic process".

REFERENCES

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