

BOOK REVIEWS

Smart methods for environmental externalities: urban planning, environmental health and hygiene in the Netherlands, by Gert de Roo, Jelger Visser and Christian Zuidema, Farnham, Surrey, Ashgate, 2012, 232 pp., £65.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4094-2544-1

Smart Methods for Environmental Externalities Urban Planning, Environmental Health and Hygiene in the Netherlands is presented to the reader under three themes. The first theme focuses on the context and conditions for environmental externalities. The second theme focuses on the methods and tools utilised in the process. The final theme focuses on reflections of the methods and further observations. From a reader's point of view, the book has two main aims: firstly to discuss different methods of environmental externalities and secondly to compare each method within two model frameworks. This book relates to smart methods including innovative initiatives. The book is based on spatial methods related to health and hygiene (MILO) which builds practical experiences from applying methods to real-world situations.

The text outlines the history of environmental externalities development in the Netherlands. The first methods developed in the 1980s were based on a top-down approach focusing on a standard rather than the local environment. Since the 1990s methods have evolved based on local conditions utilising more of a communicative and decentralised approach. The book also reviews what policy documents in the Netherlands have a major impact on environmental externalities method development. The sequence of events related to Dutch environmental policy is discussed, namely beginning, integration, area orientation approach and finally a decentralisation approach. Policies of interest include the Dutch Policy Fourth national environmental policy (NEPP-4) and the 1983 environmental policy integration plan (PIN). Others include the ROM (spatial planning and environment) policy and integrated environmental zoning which were pilot projects-based action plans, for area-specific environmental policy.

The highlight of the book for me was the description of two models which were utilised to develop a comparative framework for each of the environmental externalities methods. After describing the fundamentals of the models, the author focuses on positioning 16 methods for environmental externalities within the models. The variables of the 'De Roo model' consists of centralised governance, participative interaction, central generic, area specific, single fixed goals and multiple composite goals. Variances of both policy and methods can be situated within the model.

The second model utilised by the authors to develop a comparative framework is based on the 'IBO model', IBO is an acronym for 'analysis instrument for policy development'. The IBO model was initially developed to resolve environmental spatial conflicts. The core of the IBO model is a cake design consisting of three concentric rings

that can be cut into wedges. The outer ring represents decentralised governance, the inner ring represents centralised governance and the middle circle relates to intermediate governance. The five different wedges in the cake represent different forms of government. The different forms of government are categorised as intention, integration, pattern of interaction, differentiation and conformance. Within each form of government there are different extremes of the spectrum. One side of the spectrum is based on a set of standards and is very structured and considerable centralised. The environmental zone approaching decentralised is the other extreme of the spectrum.

The two extremes of the spectrum are related to the VNG green book and the LOGO method. One extreme is based on standards and the other extreme is a technical and communication-orientated approach. The desired outcome is the same for both the VNG green book and LOGO method.

The authors outline the principles of each method, namely zoning methods, checklist methods, quality profile methods, zip methods, decision-making methods, information methods, quality perspectives and area-specific methods.

The zoning methods were the first developed and were used to identify problems between environmentally sensitive and environmentally harmful activities. Other methods described include the checklist methods involving variances between quantity and quality. The quality profile method works on the principle that the environment is a factor weighted against other factors. The next category of methods is known as the zip methods which are based on the fact that there are several ways to improve the quality of the living environment. The zip methods are known as a guidance document which has the scope to supplement other methods such as health screening effects.

Decision-making information methods are used to process information 'inputs' in order to obtain a certain result 'outputs'. An example of such a method is the production of an atlas. Insight methods do not fit anywhere within the framework. Quality perspectives and area-specific solutions methods are also discussed. Information methods are based on the principle that showing is 'knowing'.

One critical evaluation of all the method descriptors and real-world examples is the black and white graphical presentations of the methods. The reader would have better understanding of the methods if coloured maps and graphs were displayed in the book.

Other methods not classified within the models include, the Environmental maximisation method 'EMME', the ROMBO method and the Bubble method. The 'EMME' method creates themes relevant to sustainable spatial development. Themes such as, flora, fauna, landscape and soil, water traffic energy household waste are utilised. The 'EMME' method could be considered the starting point for design.

Overall one can say methods can be applied to straightforward situations and to more complex situations. Initial methods developed were known as environmental assessment methods and can be described as testing methods. With regard to the most recent methods developed, the government participates as one of the actors or takes on a facilitating role. With regard to recent methods there is indirect governance or self-governance rather than direct governance.

Another critical evaluation of the book is the English language can be very drawn out in certain areas of the book. Overall, the book is a very interesting read, portraying some very modern, creative and innovative approaches to spatial planning evaluation. The book is an important resource to inform potential users about their own situation. The book

can serve as a tool for environmental spatial conflicts. This book can be used by policy-makers, spatial developers, government officials and academic lecturers for course development and as a research resource.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00750778.2013.856536>

Innovations in sustainable consumption: new economics, socio-technical transitions and social practices, edited by Maurie J. Cohen, Halina Szejnwalk Brown and Philip J. Vergrat, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 289 pp., €85 (hbk), ISBN 978-1-78100-125-7

The task of realising a transition to a more sustainable future represents one of the most pressing issues of our time. Addressing the increasingly challenging mix of economic, social, environmental and political issues at all scales necessitates new ways of thinking about and conceptualising change. It also requires innovative ways of integrating mutually complementary disciplinary perspectives and approaches, which is what this timely and pioneering book seeks to do. In bringing together leading international scholars from a diversity of fields including geography, sociology, science and technology studies, environmental policy, ecological economics and philosophy, this edited collection captures some of the most ground-breaking thinking on sustainable consumption today.

Despite the recent proliferation of innovative perspectives for understanding societal change and sustainable consumption, there has to date been little exploration of the linkages between them. This volume seeks to address this lacuna. The editors and contributors bring together original work from three promising areas of scholarship – new economics, socio-technical transitions and social practices – with the aim of providing opportunity for cross-fertilisation, the forging of intellectual bridges and ‘the development of a shared discourse’ (p. 3) among them. The central thesis, articulated in the introductory chapter, is the observation that while each perspective offers valuable insights into our understanding of the dynamics of sustainable consumption, it only does so partially; no sole perspective can exclusively offer the required level of explanatory power. Considered in unison, however, they have the potential to contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrated policy. Thus, a key aim of this volume is to ‘explore more explicitly the capabilities of an interdisciplinary approach’ (p. 3) to framing pathways towards a more sustainable future.

This 12-chapter reader is organised into three key sections that correspond to the areas of scholarship outlined earlier, namely new economics, socio-technical transitions and social practices. Each section comprises several papers that provide an overview of state-of-the-art research in the respective fields and together offer important insights into dynamic aspects of interconnected processes of change.

Contributors in part one draw together concepts from ecological macro-economics and environmental political economy to explore different theoretical and policy-related questions concerning development in an ecologically constrained world. Here the dynamic interlinks between growing environmental stresses, economic turbulence and