

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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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

increasing social inequality are exposed and the contours of an alternative 'new economics' paradigm for conceptualising macro-economic development are discussed. Together, the researchers convincingly show that policies for transition will require new ideas of social progress and a reorientation of fiscal and practical policies away from economic growth towards social and environmental goals, to emphasise, for example, more equitable distribution of employment and resources, quality of life and the distinction between environmentally benign and environmentally problematic growth. Throughout, different perspectives on the role of various actors in affecting change are emphasised. For example, Harris (chapter 2) and Stutz (chapter 4) stress the essential role of activist government policies while Ropke (chapter 3) extends this discussion to consider the position of the citizen-consumer in transformation processes.

Contributors in the second section of the volume map socio-technical transitions in the domains of mobility and energy to provide important insights into the multi-scalar dynamics of sustainability transitions. Case studies exploring systemic and dynamic properties of existing and emerging systems point to the co-evolution and interdependency of sociocultural and techno-material dimensions in societal transitions. Wants, needs, values and the meanings of normal practice are not static conditions but change together with technological and material developments. The task of bringing about coordinated shifts in both social and technical systems represents what Kemp and van Lente term the 'dual challenge of sustainability transitions' (chapter 6). In this context, Hielscher et al. (chapter 7) show that critical challenges influencing the success of community energy niches span structure and agency dimensions of transformation, while Hess (chapter 8), and later Stephen and McCauley (chapter 9), in their consideration of the dynamics of unsuccessful transitions, bring into relief the under-theorised concepts of power and space in socio-technical transitions.

Scholars exploring transition at the level of social practices further stress the dynamic interplay between structural and sociocultural dimensions to exemplify why deeper changes in values, practices and demand-side factors are integral elements of the transformative process. Drawing on theories of social practices as a framework for conceptualising the complexities of social dynamics in reproduction and change in everyday life, these distinguished authors make important contributions to ongoing debates in the field. Spaargaren (chapter 11) brings our attention to the neglected cultural dimension of social practices, while Kennedy et al. (chapter 12) address questions concerning operationalisation and measurement in their application of quantitative methods to the study of sustainable transportation. Finally, Halkier's (chapter 10) practice theory perspective on behaviour change campaigns makes an important contribution to ongoing questions concerning the conceptualisation of agency in practice-based approaches to consumption research.

Integrated themes running throughout the book link up various approaches to present a cohesive and unified collection. Conceptual discussion is grounded in empirically informed debates about the transition to real sustainability and consumption's place in the process. Common themes addressed include the dynamic relations between structure and agency, the political challenges of realising transformation and the need for long-term coordinated responses involving multiple actors across all scales. Detailed case studies inform and expand understandings of transition dynamics, bringing into relief the strength and limitations of conceptual frameworks. Where one perspective falls short in explanatory power another perspective can contribute. For example, while the new economic perspective offers a framework for understanding macro-economic development, it gives little consideration to the role of technology as a driver of human behaviour

and societal change, a dimension addressed by socio-technical transitions scholarship focusing on the co-evolution of technologies, societal institutions and culture.

Innovations in Sustainable Consumption represents an important contribution to questions concerning the nature of inter- and cross-disciplinarity in sustainability research. Throughout, authors place emphasis on understanding multiple and intersecting processes spanning everyday practices, socio-technical systems and the macro-economic and political economy of consumption. However, the challenges associated with such nascent debates are evident throughout the discussion; some contributions are more explicit than others in their consideration of the capabilities of an integrated approach. Nevertheless, within the context of the wider debates surrounding interdisciplinary work in sustainability research, this volume represents an important step along the way in laying the groundwork for further interdisciplinary rapport and the development of integrated policy approaches.

Perhaps one of the volume's greatest strengths is its orientation towards the applied implications of sustainable consumption scholarship. Identifying distinct domains in which innovation will be required, experts outline novel policies and pathways for economic and socio-technical transitions that are grounded in an appreciation of the complexities of everyday life as a context for human behaviour. Recognising the limitations of conventional policy approaches in bringing about desired changes, it is argued that, in order to facilitate a transition towards sustainability, transition policies must move beyond a fixation upon technological change to focus on fundamentally reconfiguring our social institutions, norms and lifestyles. In summary, this exceptional volume is an essential read for anyone who wants to know where sustainable consumption research is heading. In laying a broad platform for interdisciplinary debate and teaming with directions for policy, further exploration and research, it will be of particular benefit to students, educators, researchers and policy-makers working to understand and advance the study of sustainable consumption.

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Partitioned lives: The Irish borderlands, by Catherine Nash, Bryonie Reid and Brian Graham, Farnham, Surrey, Ashgate, 2013, 170 pp., £60 (hardback), ISBN 9781409466727

Entering as we do a decade of commemoration of political developments that were crucial in the making of Ireland's present, this book about the border and its landscapes is an exploration of approaches to the past and to reconciliation in a post-conflict Ireland. The legacies of the Troubles, particularly in the borderlands, have left bitter and contested memories of division and violence. As the authors say, the book's 'starting points were not scholarly theories and concepts of political boundaries', ... but 'interest in the ordinary and everyday life of the borderlands' (p. 143). *Partitioned lives* is very much in the mould of recent postcolonial studies in subverting the meta-narrative of the Irish border as a political divide to focus instead on everyday stories and experiences of people