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BOOK REVIEWS

Governance and complexity in water management, edited by Hans Bressers and Kris Lulofs, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2010, 224 pp., ISBN 978-1848449558

This book engages with an oft-neglected but vitally important topic – water management. Water is a critical resource whose security of supply underpins the stability of industrial production, agriculture and even power generation. A serious treatment of the issues involved in water management is long overdue and this *Governance and Complexity in Water Management* is a welcome contribution to the subject. The book itself is structured in three parts. The first part deals with theory, the second presents a number of fascinating case studies and the third part attempts to offer some advice for practitioners and policymakers based on theory. This review will focus on the first two parts of the text as these are the most substantial.

The presentation of theory explores contextual interaction theory (CIT) and demonstrates the relevance of the concept of 'boundary-spanning'. These issues form the heart of the book's approach and offer a way into the subject in a manner that will engage academics whilst remaining accessible to practitioners and professionals. It would have been interesting to see how the CIT framework compared to the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework (see Ostrom *et al*. 1994, Ostrom 1999). The utility of IAD framework for analyzing the management of resource in complex systems is supported by a considerable volume of empirical evidence. Given the strength of the empirical cases presented in *Governance and Complexity in Water Management*, a comparative theoretical approach would have added considerable heft to the book and allowed a greater contribution to theory. A somewhat minor oversight is that there is little discussion of the economics of water management and the book would have been greatly improved if there was more discussion of economic issues. It is understandable – given the vast economics literature on the subject – why the authors would feel that there is little to add to this debate. However, some discussion of economics would increase the depth of the argument and would allow for a greater contribution to theory.

The second half of the theoretical foundations of the book discusses the concept of boundary-spanning. This discussion seeks to develop a cognitive understanding of boundary-spanning that explains how boundary-spanners act. This approach has considerable potential but remains under-developed and there is an unfortunate tendency to echo to the conclusions of established scholarship. For example, it was Brown (1966) who originally proposed that boundary-spanners filter information to prevent information overload. The treatment of boundary-spanning is also lacking a substantive exploration of networks and the role of networked governance. This is something of a missed opportunity as developing an explicit understanding of the relationship between the cognitive understandings of individuals and their behavior within governance networks would have made a valuable contribution to the literature.

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The second part of the book engages with a number of fascinating case studies. The case studies tackle a range of interesting examples but suffer from a distinct bias towards water management in the Netherlands. Whilst this is perhaps understandable given that the background of the various contributors, it would have improved the text immensely if a wider range of cases were considered. This would also have strengthened the claim that CIT makes to wider utility. However, it should be noted that most readers will be able to apply to CIT framework themselves and in this respect the case studies are useful illustrations of the theory in its applied form. Overall, *Governance and Complexity in Water Management* is a simulating read and a text that deserves to find itself on the bookshelves of water management professionals.

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Mobilizing science: movements, participation, and the remaking of knowledge, by Sabrina McCormick, Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press, 2009, 212 pp., ISBN 978-0-19-538589-2

Mobilizing Science addresses 'democratizing science movements' (DSMs), represented by two case studies whose selection is justified according to the 'most different systems' model: the anti-dam movement in Brazil and the movement to identify environmental causes of breast cancer in the United States. The author asks how citizens, in collaboration with scientists, have created DSMs, and under what conditions they are successful or not. While her two-case study approach cannot provide a full answer to this question, there is much it can do, and does: McCormick shows similar patterns in very different settings, develops typologies of citizen–scientist collaboration, and identifies different varieties of movement co-optation. According to the author, 'participatory research and deliberative democracy often cannot be separated from each other. Ineffectiveness in one realm causes ineffectiveness in the other. At the same time, effectiveness in one does not necessarily lead to effectiveness in the other' (p. 127).

The book grew out of a seven-year study of the US environmental breast cancer movement. McCormick then investigated whether a movement to democratize science could take place in a developing country, where activists had few resources and little education, and science and participatory democracy are both less institutionalized. Based on her evidence, the answer is yes. Both movements built new forms of citizen/expert collaboration, changed discursive and policymaking norms, and won significant outcomes. McCormick addresses their limitations in her analysis of co-optation.

The environmental breast cancer movement arose in the San Francisco Bay Area, Massachusetts, and Long Island, New York, all areas with far higher than average rates of breast cancer. Activists' had to reframe a biomedical model of individual risk factors to an environmental model of population-level factors, specifically environmental endocrine disruptors. The book is a sobering reminder of the frequent complicity of corporations, the state and science. Such an august publication as the *New England Journal of Medicine* published research and *ad hominem* attacks by a scientist funded by chemical companies. Conflicts of interest are rife: Occidental Petroleum dumped 248 chemicals into Love Canal, triggering a path-breaking lawsuit over toxic chemical-induced illness. Yet Occidental's chairman, Armand Hhammer, chaired the Board of Directors of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), which funds most cancer research. NCI, The American Cancer Society, The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and the Avon Foundation largely adhere to the individualist biomedical model of cancer causation. Pharmaceutical companies, the biggest spenders in cancer research, profit not from prevention, but from treatment and cure. The Environmental Protection Agency is utterly inadequate to test the 85,000 chemicals registered for commercial use.

Yet breast cancer activists won more than $180 million in funding to research environmental factors, which generated methodologically innovative science that identified new variables. They used new methods, such as collecting samples of air and dust from homes and stores to examine for endocrine-disrupting and carcinogenic chemicals (p. 115), the first step toward rigorously studying them. Lay activists also improved the way GIS mapping was used to map cancer incidence, noting that the county level was too large to capture environmental differences within counties. Lay involvement did not ignore the scientific method, but rather challenged unwarranted assumptions and improved its application.

The Brazilian anti-dam movement arose in the early 1980s, according to the author, the only fully national movement of its kind. Brazilian dams have displaced over one million people. Many were never resettled or have descended into greater poverty, while the profits from dam construction often go to foreign corporations and increase Brazil's national debt. What has been considered a renewable source of energy produces a surprising number of negative outcomes: cost overruns, less energy than expected, uprooted populations and destroyed livelihoods and cultures. Ecological costs include destruction of fish and animal habitats, generation of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide and production of standing water that breeds mosquitoes and malaria. Since Brazil shifted from military to democratic rule, movement leaders have taken government positions, and the movement became fully national and joined the transnational anti-dam movement. Over 20 years of expert/layperson collaborative work has altered government policy, set precedents, and won legitimacy and financial support from the Brazilian state and international non-government organizations.

Both movements struggle with inadequate state regulation; state collaboration with corporations; biased or incomplete science; and the hegemony of one model (national development, individual biomedical causes of cancer) over the movement's challenging model (sustainability and social justice, environmental causes of cancer).

McCormick specifies four different forms of scientist–citizen collaboration: researcher-educators of citizens; researcher activists, within the movements themselves; bottom-up citizen/science alliances, which produce new knowledge to counter official knowledge; and collaborative forums. However, without more developed narratives to illustrate the differences among these, the distinctions remain somewhat abstract.

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The author's cases show that democratizing science is a 'double-edged sword' because while it can create real change, it can also be used to create the mere appearance of change, through co-optation. Movements that engage with science and technology always risk being drawn into the maws of state power through official venues of participation that they do not control, such as public hearings or citizen review boards. McCormick argues that the inability to democratize knowledge production is often not caused by outright refusal, but a 'more nuanced and complex process through which DSMs' interests are partially incorporated'. McCormick's cases allow her a closer look at the mechanisms of co-optation.

An example of *discursive co-optation* is when researchers in the Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project, a body whose existence was a victory for the movement, shifted the definition of 'environmental causes' from systemic human-made environmental toxins to individual lifestyle factors that are not genetic, like smoking, alcohol consumption and diet. The biomedical paradigm remained intact.

Informal participation in decision-making refers to the lack of formal decision-making power offered to laypeople. They may testify at public hearings, but have no right to help write or review the environmental impact report. (Of course, even if they did, the state may not be bound by it; McCormick notes the 'weak and co-optable nature of state institutions' (p. 136) but does not formalize this theoretically into her notion of political opportunity.) Finally, *informal participation in research* (p. 139) is the lack of formal, binding public influence in setting research priorities. Although there was wide community participation in the Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project, laypeople were not involved in initial research design. While activists requested that chemicals in pesticides, plastics and cosmetics, be studied, scientists chose to study the older, now disused chemicals PCBs, DDT and chlordane, partly because they are easier to detect in blood and body fat.

Other examples in the same movement illustrate successful and powerful inclusion in setting research priorities. It would require a more fine-grained study than this one to begin to explain why some efforts fail and others succeed. McCormick concludes that her cases confirm the importance of political opportunities (here, meaning political pathways for participation in research) and the power of transnational economic interests that can co-opt the state. She identifies key predictors of success or failure as sympathetic experts (elite allies), open political institutions, and mass mobilization (p. 173). Yet the anti-dam movement under Lula in Brazil (and throughout the world) suggests that exogenous factors also play a role. In 2001, Brazil had an energy crisis, and President Lula campaigned on a platform of ameliorating it. In his first term he had to allay fears of inflation and economic instability, forcing him to restructure a newly-reformed energy model and get more energy from dam projects (p. 151).

Mobilizing Science has limitations of scope, writing and organization. ACT-UP's radical direct action tactics to obtain more funding for AIDS research would be an interesting comparison to the Brazilian anti-dam movement, which also used protest as well as discursive tactics. Such a comparison may have highlighted differences in resources and education as well as tactics – which McCormick does note. A bigger weakness is the author's choice to develop her argument abstractly, with narrative playing a relatively small role – short excerpts to illustrate general arguments, until the last chapters of the book. The concepts seem unduly repetitive, while fuller movement narratives earlier in the book would have provided ready illustrations. Indeed, closer analysis of more empirical episodes *within* each of the two movements would have supplied far more theoretical leverage. Nevertheless, the book is a provocative study that hopefully will inspire further work.

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Translating agency reform: rhetoric and culture in comparative perspective, by Amanda Smullen, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 256 pp., ISBN 978-0230580725

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The language of administrative reform is an important, yet insufficiently researched, feature of political argumentation. The many institutional reforms adopted across Western democracies have been investigated as expressions of neoliberal ideology or the shift from government to governance, however the language used to justify such reforms has not often been considered in terms of argumentation. Amanda Smullen's book adds to empirical studies of institutional reform by examining the language of reforms to public sector agencies. Agencies proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s, but then the pendulum swung against them as they became subject to criticism on the grounds that they were insufficiently accountable and produced coordination problems. This book compares the language of agency reform across different countries, asking whether reform language was uniform or varied in different national cultures. Thus, the book addresses an important issue in public management trends, particularly for ideas of policy learning and the internationalization of new public management reforms.

The first achievement of this book is to describe agency reform language *as* rhetoric. Rhetorical theory conceives of political language as oriented towards an audience which the speaker seeks to persuade. In this respect, the rhetorical approach places the relation between speaker (or writer) and audience at the center of the analysis. This adds a further dimension to discourse studies which have made important contributions towards understanding institutions, but which have tended to leave aside the rhetorical situation and the element of targeted persuasion. Including the concept of audience allows Smullen to present a differentiated perspective on persuasion through a stakeholder view of policymaking, and hence a conception of political communication which is strategic with regard to the objects of persuasion. The language of reform is an argumentation designed to succeed as an argument, to legitimate a decision or to persuade the audience of the necessity and efficacy of reform. In this respect, it is less important for the reformer that the proposed reforms are the best or most scientific option, than the practical goal that the argument succeeds in regard to its intended audience. Rhetoric is a way of investigating political language which is at once interpretive, insofar as it is subjective, but which also incorporates a concern for political strategy and realpolitik. Rhetoric is the mechanism by which power is legitimated, so it is essential to understand its intricate operations.

For readers new to rhetoric, the theory deployed here is not complex. The book does not seek to advance rhetorical theory but rather employs the well-known neo-Aristotelian work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. Smullen classifies agency reform arguments using their interpretation of Aristotle's definition of the means of persuasion by ethos, logos and pathos. She also deploys their categorization of arguments in terms of the *loci* or commonplaces of argumentation. Examples include the quantitative or qualitative, the unique or new, the difficult, and the precarious. Also studied is the use of metaphors which legitimate reform and articulate its trajectory in each case. Rhetorical theory is combined with grid group cultural theory, drawn from anthropology and employed previously in public administration research by Christopher Hood. This is used to classify the political culture of the

respective countries: Sweden, predominantly egalitarian then hierarchical (high group); Netherlands, similar to Sweden but with greater individualism (high group); and Australia, predominantly individualist (low group). She uses this typology to explore the effects of political culture on the language of agency reform.

The second achievement of this book is the in-depth empirical examination of reform arguments. One reason that rhetoric has been under-utilized as an analytical construct is that it requires lengthy and painstaking empirical analysis, given that it is interpretive and not amenable to classification by the automated word search software preferred by some discourse analysts. Smullen has undertaken such an in-depth analysis of administrative argumentation, for which few would have the patience. The book presents findings from her comparative, longitudinal analysis of official documents on agency reform in each of the three countries, Australia, the Netherlands and Sweden.

The key finding is that, despite the international spread of public management fashions, reforms were always translated through national trajectories of management language and durable national styles of speaking. In this respect, she shows that, firstly, national variations and culture remain crucial despite claims that the national has declined in importance with globalization. Secondly, she shows that rhetoric has a key role in interpreting ideologies through localized culture and for specific audiences. Rhetoric did vary broadly according to cultural type, with Smullen finding that high group cultures were expert-oriented, referring to agencies in terms of public values and science, while the low group culture privileged private values. Where she did find commonality was in the individualistic flavor of official agency talk, emphasizing efficiency and financial incentives. Furthermore, she rejected other research which located shifts in reform language in pendulum swings characterized by blaming past cultural commitments. Instead, she found that language varied with the speaker and rhetorical situation, highlighting the role of individual political actors and organizations in constructing styles of political communication.

Smullen's more general observations at the conclusion of the book perhaps hold the most interest. She drew the following four key conclusions about the reports: 1) official documents offered only very superficial accounts of reform; 2) managers and employees of agencies were allowed only a limited voice in these official accounts; 3) citizens and citizenship also hardly featured, despite the arguments for reform in support of democracy; and 4) only very limited, and often questionable, research was conducted in support of reform. All this adds up to a picture of reform discourse as rhetorical in the most pejorative sense. Elite groups seem to have decided amongst themselves that agency reform was necessary, and official reports were justifications for decisions already taken. Each argumentation made concessions to national culture and public management history, however these were not in themselves explicitly deliberative documents. Speaking persuasively involves a degree of creativity on the part of the speaker, and significant attention to the audience, but effective argumentation from a position of authority does not seem to require much involvement from the citizens, who are relegated to the role of audience in its most passive sense. This book reveals how even the most innocuous official discourse on agencies is rhetorical in nature.

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Rethinking the public: innovations in research, theory and politics, edited by Nick Mahony, Janet Newman and Clive Barnett, Bristol, The Policy Press, 2010, 179 pp., ISBN 978 1 84742 416 7

The public is not what it used to be. That is the core argument of *Rethinking the Public*, a collection of nine case studies framed with an introduction and conclusion by the editors. In both theory and practice, the editors argue, the image of 'the public' as a firmly established and clearly delineated, singular entity is giving way to an image of 'emergent publics', a term drawn from the title of a book by Canadian political and cultural theorist Ian Angus.

Rethinking the Public approaches emergent publics in a manner that, while informed by contemporary theory, places an emphasis on 'empirical grounding' (p. 2). With a series of detailed, nuanced studies, the book questions the significance of the public/private distinction, draws attention to complexities in the representation of publics, exhibits forms of mediation involved in the way publics are summoned and assembled, and stresses the emergence of multiple and fluid publics through processes of becoming.

The problem posed by the image of a singular and stable public sphere may be overstated. Indeed, as Michael Warner (2005, pp. 55–56, 296 n. 58, cf. Torgerson 2010) has argued in pointing out misinterpretations of Jürgen Habermas on this score, 'there is no necessary conflict between the public sphere and the idea of multiple publics'. The book also neglects Hannah Arendt, in particular her suggestion that the remarkable thing about public spaces of debate, especially under conditions of modernity, is that they exist and endure at all. That said, the book as a whole makes an important and persuasive case that publics should be viewed in terms of complexity and contingency as being 'flexible and mobile' (p. 3), emerging from and acting upon historical contexts.

In stressing the emergence of publics, the book distances itself not only from the image of a singular public sphere, but also from normative investments in it. While directing attention to a multiplicity of publics in processes of becoming, moreover, the editors take pains to disassociate themselves from the vogue of simply endorsing plurality and difference or, for that matter, celebrating new media as straight-forward means of empowerment. Still, *Rethinking the Public* clearly remains guided by normative concerns, vacillating between pessimistic and optimistic accounts of multiple publics. Here concerns are expressed about the depoliticized neoliberal logic of the individualized, responsible citizen while hopes are raised about the potential for public action as part of a 'progressive' politics in transnational as well as national contexts (p. 4).

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the book is its accent on a 'politics of mediation' involving 'discursive, material and institutional practices' that shape the emergence of publics (p. 2). Running through the case studies in various forms, this accent involves the role of new and old communication media in chapters by Richenda Gambles and Scott Rogers; Clive Gabay's account of the significance of 'naming' in multiple publics concerned with global poverty; the importance of 'issues' as galvanizing elements in the construction of publics, a Deweyan theme stressed in Liza Griffin's treatment of fisheries governance; and the 'paradoxical publicness' of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender movement in Brazil, with which J. Simon Hutta troubles Warner's binary of 'publics and counterpublics'. The mediating role of states and state agencies in the emergence of publics is stressed in Gurpreet Bhasim's portrayal of British efforts to constrict and control publics in colonial Delhi, in Nick Mahony's discussion of how governmental as well as non-governmental public participation experiments mediate publics, in Jessica Pykett's analysis of the ambivalence in citizenship educational policy as it moves from centralized

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formulation to implementation by teachers in local schools, and Eleanor Jupp's description of the way housing policy programs create 'contact zones' (p. 78) for active encounters between government officials and citizens.

These admirable case studies become deeply immersed in complicated details that resist easy summary or quick conclusions, yet the studies nonetheless make valuable contributions to the overall project of rethinking the public. As orchestrated by the editors, indeed, this set of studies achieves the goal not only of rethinking the public, but also of avoiding the 'stale' and the 'predictable' character of much current discussion (p. 173) by focusing on the detailed examination of emergent publics in concrete settings.

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