Gale, Fred and Marcus Haward. 2011. *Global Commodity Governance: State Responses to Sustainable Forest and Fisheries Certification.* Palgrave Macmillan.

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Third-party certification to environmental standards administered by nongovernmental organizations is one of the most widely replicated modes of global environmental governance in the early 21st century. Gale and Haward make a timely contribution to the recent flurry of studies comparing the most prominent environmental certification and labeling programs with global aspirations, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). Unlike existing studies, *Global Commodity Governance* systematically addresses the question of state responses to nonstate certification; this book is therefore a must-read for scholars interested in understanding the dynamic relationships between governmental authorities and new nongovernmental authorities in the making of global environmental governance.

The book makes two analytically sophisticated comparative contributions. First, Gale and Haward develop a three-dimensional governance framework for understanding certification programs organizationally, conceptualizing political, institutional, and regulatory aspects of different programs. The political dimension refers to seven possible combinations of business, social, and environmental interest groups represented in the administration of certification programs. Politically, they conceptualize the FSC as tripartite (business/social/environment) and the MSC as bipartite (business/environment). The institutional dimension refers to different organizational forms of certification, which can range from corporations to foundations to quasi-governmental and intergovernmental bodies. Institutionally, the authors conceptualize the FSC as an association (because of its open membership structure) and the MSC as a foundation. The regulatory dimension refers to different types of certification standards, such as technological, management, and performance standards. The FSC and MSC share the regulatory characteristic of a performance-based standard. While the authors find that both the FSC and MSC have evolved into robust organizations of governance, the latter is seen as more elite-driven and "has found itself undertaking much more significant changes to cope with ongoing criticism from environmental and social stakeholders" (p. 263).

Second, Gale and Haward's core argument involves the development of a four-dimensional policy network framework for explaining state responses to non-state certification. Eschewing approaches that view the state as a unitary rational actor, they use a power-centric approach to conceptualize states as "disaggregated into sectoral policy networks with actors inside the network and outside in the broader policy community engaged in a strategic contest to maintain or gain policy leverage in pursuit of their perceived interests" (p. 39). Drawing on Michael Howlett and Jeremy Rayner's taxonomy of policy networks,[1] the

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1. Howlett and Rayner 1995.

book conceptualizes the main types of state-directed policy networks as bureaucratic, clientelistic, triadic, and pluralistic. Gale and Haward therefore offer a useful heuristic framework to assess the relative autonomy of states from, or capture by, different societal groups interested in ecocertification.

Importantly, the authors also conceptualize policy networks as dynamic configurations that change over time as they interact with four mutually interacting conditioning variables: the political economy of the region, the political economy of the sector or commodity, the ecology of the region, and the management discourse of the region. Gale and Haward use this additional ecological political economy framework, as they call it, to describe policy networks in countries and sectors in the early 1990s, to analyze how such policy networks initially responded to certification, and to evaluate the mutually interacting changes to the policy networks and their responses to certification over time. Their main argument is that a state's response to certification depends on the structure of the policy network reacting to the particular certification program and on the rigor of the program's environmental standard. Using Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom as case studies, the book culminates in a policy network evaluation of state responses to forestry and fisheries certification. The authors find that while the FSC received a more hostile response in these three countries in the early years, it has recently become more established in each country. They find an opposite pattern characterizing the MSC's development.

Although mostly framed in terms of national policy networks, their study includes policy network evaluations of forestry certification in sub-national contexts of Tasmania, Australia, and Canada. For the MSC, however, all policy network evaluations are national, which is somewhat surprising given the importance of regional and sub-national political economies and policy networks shaping marine fisheries in countries such as Canada.

The book concludes somewhat ambiguously about the potential effectiveness of certification and labeling as forms of governance. Although the authors recognize that the actual effects of the FSC and MSC remain below expectations and concentrated in countries of the global North, they tend to agree with proponents of environmental certification, asserting that "hybrid" forms of governance "appear better adapted to the complex reality of the twenty-first century . . ." and provide "a vehicle for transcending outmoded public/private divisions by refocusing attention on commodity sectors and commodity chains and on the enterprise of sustainable production literally from 'vessel to plate' and from 'tree to book'" (pp. 265–266).

This conclusion perhaps obscures how hybrid forms of governance are also influenced by power and interests, issues that Gale and Haward put at the center of their analysis of states and natural resource sectors. Applying insights from their policy network framework to analyses of certification organizations might have revealed to the authors significant overlooked incentives for and risks of regulatory clientelism and capture in the FSC and MSC governance systems, particularly concerning accredited third-party certification companies

and the clients who pay them to get assessed against global standards of sustainability.

Reference

Howlett, Michael, and Jeremy Rayner. 1995. Do Ideas Matter? Policy Network Configuration and Resistance to Policy Change in the Canadian Forest Sector. *Canadian Public Administration* 38 (3): 382–410.