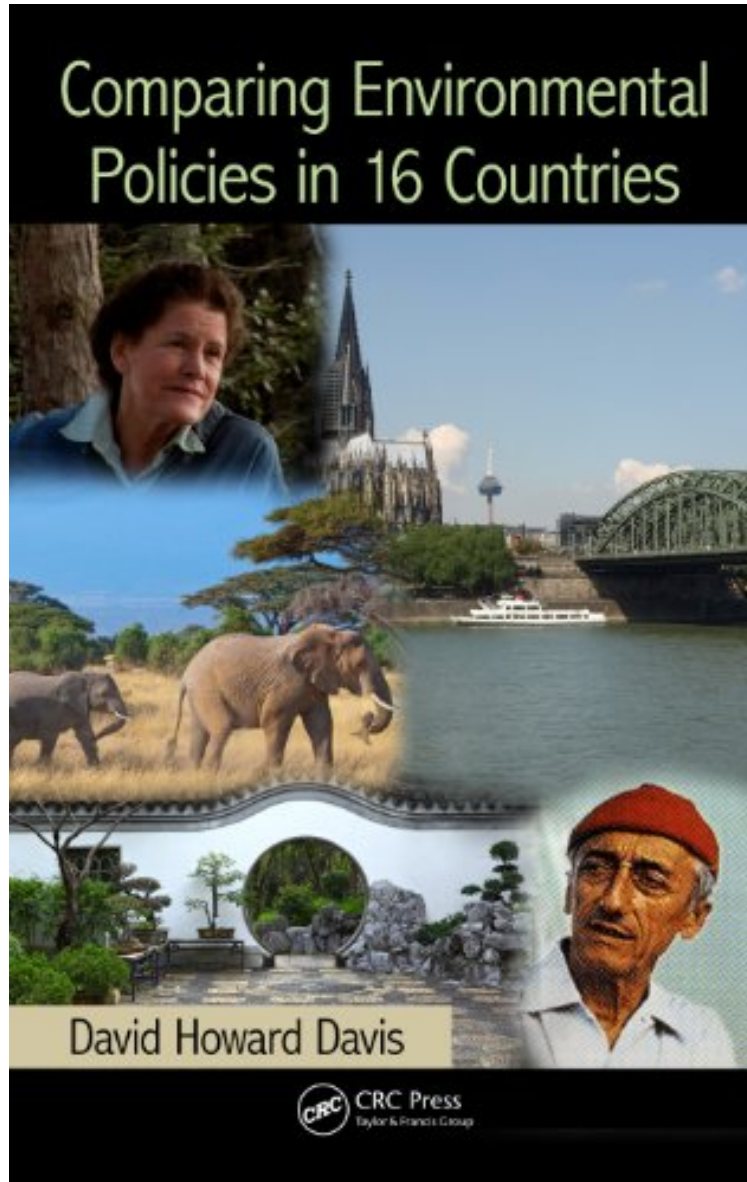


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Comparing Environmental Policies in 16 Countries

David Howard Davis

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David Howard Davis : Comparing Environmental Policies in 16 Countries before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Comparing Environmental Policies in 16 Countries:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. At a time of America-centric focus by most authors, Davis's book offers a rare comparison with foreign experience. By Frank T. Manheim Davis's book's subject gave me the impression that it was on a serious scholarly subject - which environmental policy certainly is. But having struggled for more than a decade with the subject of environmental policy - for which a search on Google Scholar yields a hopeless more than

2 million titles of scholarly articles and books - I can say that in my experience Davis's book is unique in several respects. American books on any kind of policy tend to follow academic models that emphasize theoretical concepts. Not this book. It follows what might be called an "informed tourist", reader-oriented approach. Davis delves selectively into the history, politics, and environmental policies of the United States and 15 other nations, bringing out details that he regards as especially interesting or of potential interest to readers. For example, he cites Pilgrim John Winthrop that "God has provided this place as a refuge". His long career as a scholar and educator (with a 4-edition textbook on energy policy) reveals itself in his ability to casually drop tidbits of information that it took me years to uncover - such as that the late Senator Howard Baker (R TN) had a prominent role in technology incorporated in the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts of 1970 and 1972. U.S. authors in general tend to have an America focus and pay relatively little attention to foreign experience. Davis's book is unique in my experience in making comparisons with foreign experience his main emphasis. He brings out essential information such as the difference between federal governmental systems vs. unitary systems, the functioning of parliaments, and environmental history. Here again most American authors hit a few high spots for American experience, citing John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and Aldo Leopold, but placing most emphasis on the 1970s environmental laws and the circumstances that brought them on. Davis goes much farther back and provides nuances, citing German science pioneers like Alexander von Humboldt, and offers unusual detail about American environmental history. For example he notes that Anne Gorsuch, President Reagan's first firebrand EPA administrator, rejected proposed legislative reforms of the Clean Air Act for more drastic action that led to her forced resignation after 22 months. I leave off the fifth star only because such arcane details as the above may not have the interest that they have for more casual readers that they have for serious researchers, while the latter may regard other treatments as too (necessarily) fragmentary. But

Based on the author's 39 years of teaching environmental policy, working in Washington, and traveling, *Comparing Environmental Policies in 16 Countries* offers a complete primer in environmental dilemmas and policies from a comparative perspective. The book covers 16 countries according to five themes: participation, interest groups, political parties, governmental structures, and the diplomatic agenda. The author has visited all of the 16 countries and offers original insights on the dynamics of their policies. The author balances theory and practical solutions, comparing policies, highlighting successes and failures, and suggesting best practices. He looks for common features such as the Environmental Decade or response to the Kyoto Protocol. He finds many cases of diffusion such as the impact of Rachel Carson or Jacques Cousteau. The analysis ranges from advanced industrial countries to developing ones. The tone is positive, with facts and ideas conveyed through vignettes. Each chapter concludes with highlights of what that country received from others, such as the popularity of Carson's book or Cousteau's films, and innovations, such as the idea of a national park or of a green political party. From the theoretical perspective, comparing environmental issues can illuminate other policy areas. Over all, the book demonstrates rapid diffusion among the Western democracies, and slower diffusion to Russia and China.