

Governing Access to Essential Resources

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From Columbia University Press : Governing Access to Essential Resources before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Governing Access to Essential Resources:

Essential resources do more than satisfy peoplesqu;s needs. They ensure a dignified existence. Since the competition for essential resources, particularly fresh water and arable land, is increasing, and standard legal institutions, such as property rights and national border controls, are strangling access to resources for some while delivering prosperity to others, many are searching for ways to ensure their fair distribution. This book argues that essential resources ought to

be governed by a combination of Voice and Reflexivity. Voice is the ability of social groups to choose the rules by which they are governed. Reflexivity is the opportunity to question one's own preferences in light of competing claims and to accommodate them in a collective learning process. Having investigated the allocation of essential resources in places as varied as Cambodia, China, India, Kenya, Laos, Morocco, Nepal, the arid American West, and peri-urban areas in West Africa, the contributors to this volume largely concur with the viability of this policy and normative framework. Drawing on their expertise in law, environmental studies, anthropology, history, political science, and economics, they weigh the potential of Voice and Reflexivity against such alternatives as the pricing mechanism, property rights, common resource management, political might, or brute force.

Since the market routinely fails to secure access to the resources essential for survival, what are the alternatives? The editors of this volume propose a strong normative framework to resolve the 'tragedy of exclusion.' The contributors, writing from different theoretical perspectives and with diverse empirical materials in mind, highlight the challenges. The result is a real exchange that pushes forward a crucial debate. (Tania Murray Li, University of Toronto) Resource economics is too important to be left to economists alone. If we want to understand the plight and potential of humankind's most vulnerable, we must also consider people's own ideas of justice and their capacity to voice and act on them politically. Governing Access to Essential Resources offers a rich, suggestive set of analytical entry points for this challenge. (Christian Lund, University of Copenhagen) This landmark volume presents a unifying and analytical view of the crisis besetting humanity as a result of the way we collectively protect, produce, and distribute various resources so as to benefit some while leaving insufficient resources for others to fulfill their most basic requirements. Impressively, it goes beyond description and explanation to present sensible yet imaginative practical prescriptions. (Sanjay Reddy, New School for Social Research) The pleasure in Katharina Pistor and Olivier De Schutter's book is that it presents materials of massive complexity and obvious relevance in an accessible manner. It is a book of interest to anyone who is struggling with (but refuses to be overwhelmed by) the implications of globalization, the resource curse, land grabs, and water scarcity. The editors and contributors explain the failings of a global system, but the book offers a way forward not a one size that fits all solution, but elements to overcome entrenched problems and looming disasters. (Peter Rosenblum, Bard College) About the Author Katharina Pistor teaches at Columbia Law School and directs its Center on Global Legal Transformation. She is widely recognized for her scholarship on privatization, property rights, comparative corporate law and governance, and law and finance. In 2012, she was a co-awardee of the Max Planck Research Award for her work on international financial regulation. Olivier De Schutter teaches international law at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) and Sciences Po (Paris). A specialist in economic and social rights, he is a former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food and currently serves as a member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. He has held visiting professorships at Columbia University, New York University, and the University of California, Berkeley.