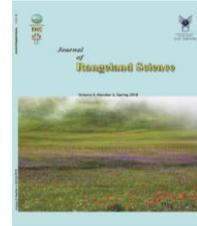


Contents available at ISC and SID

Journal homepage: [www.rangeland.ir](http://www.rangeland.ir)



## BOOK REVIEW

# Transformational Change in Environmental and Natural Resource Management

John Leake

A Guidelines for Policy Excellence

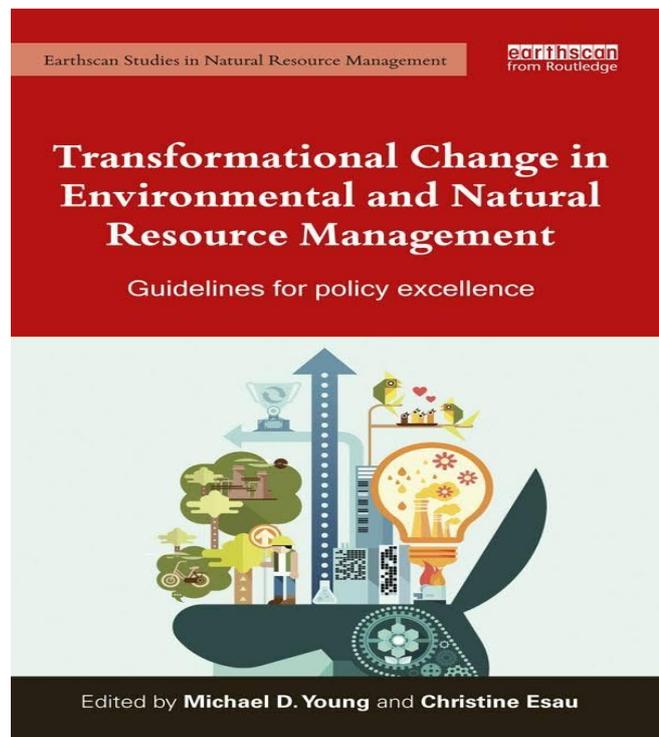
Michael D Young and Christine Esau (Eds.). Routledge 2016

Received on: 17/11/2017

Accepted on: 20/12/2017

It is widely agreed the *Anthropocene* has seen an unprecedented decline in the natural resources conditions that have underpinned the economic growth of the last few hundred years. As communities, we have not responded to Boulding's vision of 'the coming space ship earth'<sup>10</sup> although not for want of much official and private effort. As 'wicked problems'<sup>11</sup> the impacts have been often ignored or off loaded to policy makers, with mixed success.

As this book describes, a key difficulty for policy makers is articulating a compelling narrative while the changes needed to 'transform' the situation can occur. Transformational change, like innovation, suffers from the 'shock of the new', there are few pointers to success and the links between cause and effect are often widely separated in time. The changes needed are often 'public goods' and not easily converted into financial benefits that might motivate individual action.



<sup>10</sup>. *The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth* Kenneth E. Boulding 1966 quoted in In H. Jarrett (ed.) 1966. *Environmental Quality in a Growing Economy*, pp. 3-14. Baltimore, MD: Resources for the Future/Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>11</sup>. A good discussion of the interdisciplinary and intractable nature of 'Wicked Problems' appears in *Wicked Problems worth solving; A hand book & call to action*. Kolko J. Austin Centre for Design 2012. quoted in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* Mar 2012

Unpicking ‘why, and how’, to draw lessons and guidelines useful to others, is the task the authors have set for themselves.

### **Have they succeeded?**

The book arose from a conference organised by Young while he held the Gough Whitlam and Malcom Fraser Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard. It was funded by the Harvard Centre for the Environment in the context of the need for water reform in the then context of drought in Western USA. Young brought his experience to bear, plus that of many Australians from other domains (including ex-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd) to illustrate lessons of success and failure. Readers will find authoritative dissections of our climate change policy machinations, the ‘Pink Batts’ fiasco, drought policies over time and the unanticipated benefits derived from Landcare.

He also attracted a range of relevant international specialists from the private and public sectors to contribute case studies and to review a set of guidelines developed by Young. Readers will find fascinating dissections of cases as varied as the New York and Phnom Penh water supplies, the New Zealand fisheries sector, water pricing in China, empowering consumers as part of forest product certification and difficulties with Payments for Ecosystems Services. The authors of each study highlight reasons for success but do not gloss over the weaknesses experienced.

Among the general lessons discussed; the importance of context, reform ‘champions’, the consistent support of a wide range of stakeholders over time and action through different layers of government emerged as important.

The book also succeeds where it discusses the tools used to gain the support of stakeholders such as; the uses, abuses and cost of participation<sup>12</sup>, the importance of evaluation with stakeholders as an iterative learning process. Game theory, a good tool for modelling social and institutional responses, was mentioned but might have been explored further, since this is one way of quantifying social responses to logically inform changes in approach<sup>13</sup>. Risk is another area in which coverage was mixed, it was very well covered in the private sector innovation case, but not so well in cases dealing with the Public sector. However, some tools were not covered; such as ‘concept mapping’, useful in helping people with limited shared languages or culture to follow the development of complex ideas during planning<sup>14</sup>.

This writer’s main negative criticism has is to do with these cross-cultural aspects of change, the book does not discuss the importance of articulating and communicating the ‘world view’<sup>15</sup> of different stakeholders; the ‘meaning of life’ lenses through which people will see a narrative for change. Without articulating this, stakeholders can have little insight into how each will

---

<sup>12</sup>.The classic source for discussions about participation is *Arnstein’s ladder of participation*, for example see, <https://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>

<sup>13</sup>. A good discussion of this potential is contained in, *Using Game Theory to Address Modern Resource Management Problems*, Grantham Institute Briefing Note No 2. September 2015 Imperial College London

<sup>14</sup>. A good discussion of different types of concept mapping is contained in *Concept Mapping, Mind Mapping and Argument Mapping: What are the Differences and Do They Matter?* Unpublished. W. Martin Davies. The University of Melbourne, Australia [wmdavies@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:wmdavies@unimelb.edu.au)

<sup>15</sup>. In the fuller meaning of the German word *Weltanschauung*; the framework of ideas and beliefs that individuals and groups use in interactions with the world, not so much subconscious, as seldom challenged.

respond to the change being promoted, particularly those at the ground level, who are expected to act. A good example is the excellent case study of the conflict between the land managers in the Catskills and the New York water supply authorities. Here, even though the conflict and reactions took place over decades, the realization of each other's views that eventually enabled a solution of sorts to evolve, only gradually emerged causing much delay and cost. In some cultures, it is a matter of belief that no one 'owns' water and activities to change these are slow and sometimes negative<sup>16</sup>. Failure here is analogous to taking up the lessons in the *Wealth of Nations* without considering the value system Adam Smith expressed in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* as the moral firmament upon which he considered collective and individual actions to be based.

**However, the book does succeed:**

Young and Esau have produced a very valuable primer for policy makers and stakeholders at different levels. The book is well illustrated with diagrams and tables and benefited from the reflection possible while editing the work at the Rockefeller funded Bellagio Centre in Italy.

John Leake. Associate Professor, University of Adelaide and Director, the Institute for International Development South Australia.

---

<sup>16</sup>. A recent US example where this is discussed at least implicitly is *A good that transcends: undermining Environmental Reform*. E Feyfogle. Uni. Chicago 2017? Reviewed in New Scientist 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017