

that ecological economics may wish to explore further than currently has been done.

Furthermore, there is a case for improving the mechanisms for monitoring health in such neighbourhoods. This could be done by local doctors and nurses, as is now reasonably commonplace. But it might be supplemented by paramedics and by trained community workers who know how to spot the emergence of pollution related ill health and build in proactive measures in good time, in addition to provide jobs. This would not be a hugely costly exercise, but it would not come cheap. So the real challenge for ecological economics is to argue for earmarked pollution levies to finance community health support facilities that creatively and effectively emerge to improve the common well-being for the polluter pays practice.

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Luiz Pinguelli Rosa, Mohan Munasinghe, Ethics, Equity and International Negotiations on Climate Change, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003, ISBN: 1843760487, 181 pp.

Ethics, Equity and International Negotiations on Climate Change, edited by Luiz Pinguelli-Rosa and Mohan Munasinghe (Edward Elgar, 2002), presents the work of various parties who have been involved in, or have observed, the process that resulted in what the world knows as the Kyoto Protocol. It asks the key question: what is the right way to structure a fair agreement to mitigate climate change?

The book’s perspective is that solutions to the problem of climate change are best founded on ethical and equitable grounds. This is not surprising, partly because this issue affects every person on earth. What is surprising is the strength of the argument that emerges from this collection of articles: that incorporating such ideals is not just a moral concern. The fact is, doing so leads to much more practical, effective solutions than our present utilitarian, market-driven strategy.

Ideally, the book should have a wide audience, but it is really directed towards those with a working knowledge of the political history of climate change and the relevant technical issues. It is particularly good at presenting the perspective of the developing world.

The science of ethics can tell us why a particular set of rules should be selected, according to University of Rio’s Maria Silvia Muylaert and Luis Pinguelli Rosa. That they be equitable is a declared concern of the Protocol; but a failure to effectively use ethics to develop rigorous applications of principles of fairness has left us with the diffuse “notion of the responsibility of all”, which “produces individual adaptations”. The default solution of “the fastest option” prevails. The problem is that the market solutions we have adopted are not commitments to the structural changes we need.

The failure to integrate equity is well illustrated by Argentina’s Raúl A. Estrada-Oyuela. He writes that industrialized countries do not want to pay the high cost of emission reductions, and developing countries do not want to limit their own growth. He says if we apply emission limits to developing countries it implies “consolidation of current different levels of emissions per capita”, and this is unacceptable. Alternative approaches exist, such as setting efficiency standards for technology and transportation, which could be equitable for both developing and developed countries. According to Brazil’s José Domingos Gonzalez Miguez, designing emission reduction targets from a base year (the well-known strategy of Kyoto) is inequitable (and impractical) because it penalizes early action. It also ignores responsibility for emissions by developed countries from a couple of centuries of past development. Another fundamental problem with the current agreement from the developing world’s perspective is that representation in negotiations has been imbalanced, favoring those who have technical resources and who speak English. The slant of the deliberations is poignantly illustrated by his example of a discussion of ‘value of life’ that looked at ‘willingness to pay’ for life insurance, but did not consider ‘lack of ability to pay’.

The point that repeatedly recurs is that the emissions trading scheme, encouraging the implementation of the easiest and cheapest solutions first,

postpones what is really needed—the development of low carbon economies. Hermann E. Ott and Wolfgang Sachs of the Wuppertal Institute suggest that the developed world assist poorer countries in developing solar, biomass, wind and hydroenergy sources. They note that the wealthier countries could now limit their own investment activities to such projects. Their discussion of the ethics of trading covers many fundamental concepts, such as that “temporary license” is preferable to “emission rights”; that the focus on nation-states ignores divisions within countries and the role of corporations; and that the allocation of emission rights now follows “first in time, first in right”. Instead of this efficient Realpolitik, allocation could be proportioned according to contribution and need, or parity. The idea that “every inhabitant of Earth enjoys an equal right of access to the resources of this planet” contrasts sharply with the current “grandfathering” and “cost-based” approach that “serves to codify the excessive appropriation of resources by the North”.

Taking equity seriously suggests a strategy in which short-term goals are “conducive to the achievement of longer-term goals”: building the capacity to transition to sustainability, according to Tariq Banuri and Erika Spanger-Siegfried of the Tellus and Stockholm Institutes, respectively. They note that analyses of equity and climate change have invoked such principles as “rights to the global commons”, “protection of the vulnerable”, and “differential capacity”. However, negotiations have “reverted from equity to (cost) efficiency”. Our current emphasis on inexpensive abatement options may leave developing countries burdened in later years “with an inequitable proportion of the deeper cuts” that will become necessary. The Clean Development Mechanism, “poised to enable cost-effective mitigation options”, could result in “enclave” development, whose benefits are captured by the few; but it could also promote technology transfer and “learning for sustainable development”. They pose the question: to what extent do “projects create capacity for implementation of other mitigation activities, enhance the range of win-win options, and bring a high-growth, low-carbon trajectory within the financial, institutional and technological reach of host countries”?

Sri Lanka’s Munasinghe describes a trans-disciplinary approach termed “sustainomics”, based on

concepts of ethics and equity that can lead to the sustainable development pointed to by the other authors. He notes that economic efficiency “provides guidance on producing and consuming goods and services more efficiently, but is unable to provide a means of choosing (from a social perspective)” among alternative patterns of consumption. He states that ethical and equity-based principles “provide better tools for making judgments about such choices”. Sustainable development would improve “the range of opportunities that will enable individual human beings and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potential over a sustained period of time, while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental systems”.

It may be true that most people are accustomed to thinking that basing international agreements on ethical and equitable principles is just too idealistic, and that a balance of existing powers is what we should shoot for. The book makes clear that we would be shooting ourselves in the foot if we failed to integrate the equitable and ethical principles that would clearly lead to a more practical approach to the problem. We should not be concentrating on the easy, low-hanging fruit. We need to act now to develop the capacity in all countries to transition to sustainable technologies and practices.

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Stefan Schaltegger, Roger Burritt, Holger Petersen, An Introduction to Corporate Environmental Management, Greenleaf Publishing, ISBN: 1874719659, 2003, 384 pp.

The essence of environmental management is to manage human activities such that humans do not interfere with the environment, which can manage perfectly alright by itself. Corporate environmental management is no exception. In this textbook, Schaltegger, Burritt and Petersen provide an overview of how this can be done.