ANTHEM ENVIROEXPERTS REVIEW
Building a Community of Environmental Action and Reflection
MICRO REVIEWS AND AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND OPINIONS
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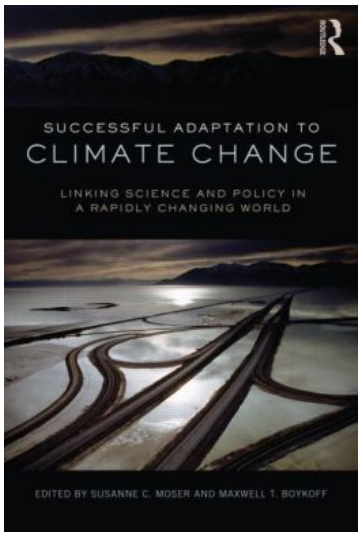
THE MONTHLY REVIEW



Successful Adaptation to Climate Change: Linking Science and Practice in a Rapidly Changing World

Edited by Susanne Moser and Maxwell Boykoff
Routledge, 2013, 331 pp.

Reviewed by Danya Rumore, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Planning and preparing for the impacts of climate change are among the most pressing concerns of the 21st century. However, while the importance of climate change adaptation is increasingly clear, there is little clear guidance on what "successful adaptation" means. What should planners, policy-makers, and other professionals working on adaptation aim to accomplish? How should we as a society judge our success in managing the risks associated with climate change? What tools, techniques, and processes are crucial to effective adaptation? These are the questions that adaptation scholars and practitioners take up in Susanne Moser's and Maxwell Boykoff's edited volume *Successful Adaptation to Climate Change*.

Through case studies ranging from adaptation efforts in the San Francisco Bay area to risk communication efforts in the Mekong Region, the authors explore the tricky terrain of adaptation. They don't try to provide a single, concrete answer to the question of "What is adaptation success?" Rather, the contributors try to help readers understand the challenges and opportunities inherent in adaptation decision-making. They make clear that "adaptation success" is context-specific and socially defined. And, they provide encouraging evidence that effective solutions can be found.

With fresh examples and interdisciplinary research from across the world, *Successful Adaptation to Climate Change* offers a thorough if not entirely comprehensive view of the adaptation landscape. The book's chapters take on issues spanning from science-

policy interactions to effective communication and engagement, drawing on empirical data and experiences to infer lessons learned. From the case studies, a number of valuable themes emerge, such as the importance of meaningfully engaging those likely to be affected by climate change impacts and adaptation decisions; the need for more effective decision-support systems that can feed relevant science and information into planning and decision-making; and the necessity of institutionalizing systems for monitoring, evaluating, and learning from adaptation practice. Perhaps the most striking take away for many readers is the conclusion that—as explicitly stated by Lisa Dilling and Rebecca Romsdahl in their chapter on “Promoting adaptation success in natural resource management through decision support”—investing in people and effective institutions is likely to be as important to successful adaptation as investing in scientific data and technical tools.

Successful Adaptation to Climate Change, while very accessible, is largely academic in tone and provides more in the way of big picture guidance than specific advice for those facing on-the-ground decisions. Hence, it is likely to be more relevant for academics, students, and those working at the science-policy interface than for most planners and policy-makers. However, in providing one of the most comprehensive overviews of adaptation concerns, research, and action on the ground to date, the book has valuable lessons for anyone working to support effective adaptation.