Governing Environmental Flows: Global Challenges to Social Theory (MIT Press)

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Globalization and the changing role of the nation-state call for new approaches to environmental governance and new ways to conceptualize it. Recent developments in sociology--seen in the work of John Urry, Manuel Castells, and others--show how social theory can be made less static, more fluid, and more directed toward flow and networks in order to encompass today's reality. Governing Environmental Flows explores what such a reformulation means for the environmental social sciences. Taking the term environmental flows--in both its traditional scientific sense and in a newer social dimension--as its key unit of analysis, the book focuses on the interrelationships of globalization, the environment, and the state. The consensus of the contributors is that the conventional nation-state-based approach to environmental policy is in need of revision; the goal of the book is to lay the foundations for a set of concepts capable of analyzing environmental governance in global modernity.The first part of the book takes a theoretical perspective on how to interpret and conceptualize problems of governance and material flows. Case studies follow, examining biodiversity policies, transnational governance of climate-change-related water risks, globalized food production and consumption, "green" urban office buildings owned by global corporations, and transport flows in everyday life. Using the flow and network conceptual framework, these case studies illuminate the new dynamics of environmental policymaking in the twenty-first century.

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