

been even stronger. Such criticism, however, is perhaps too tall an order in a research environment that has limited funding for such a large effort. In the end, it is striking the extent to which the chapters hang together as a whole to give us an in-depth analysis of people, coffee, and the environment in Mexico and the Central America while at the same time enabling us to derive lessons and implications far beyond the Western Hemisphere.

## References

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Oosterveer, Peter. 2007. *Global Governance of Food Production and Consumption: Issues and Challenges*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

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The increasingly globalized system of food production and consumption has its costs and benefits. Those of us living in cold regions can enjoy fresh produce year round, and have access to a dizzying array of exotic foodstuffs at our local supermarkets. But the price of this variety and convenience is that our food now comes from much further away than it did a generation ago, and its route to our markets and kitchens entails far more complex global supply chains than before. As a result, Oosterveer argues in this impressively thorough study, conventional nation-state-based regulatory institutions that have been charged with ensuring the safety of our food are no longer up to the task. This inadequacy in existing institutions of governance is partly due to the complexity of global food provisioning processes. It is also partly due to increasing public skepticism about the role of natural science in conventional risk politics, which supposes that an impartial regime of science-based regulation primarily engaged in testing and inspections can serve the public interest in minimizing risk and safeguarding food supplies. Several high-profile failures of this conventional regime of food governance, including the outbreak of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, or “mad cow disease”) and the ongoing controversy surrounding genetically-modified foods, reveal the limits of this model.

Oosterveer’s project involves both theoretical conceptualization and empirical research, drawing on developments in social theory and utilizing three case studies (on BSE, GM foods, and aquaculture) to analyze several innovative governance arrangements through a conceptual lens. According to conventional risk politics, actors within nation-states treat risk within three distinct scientific

phases, drawing on distinct methods: the natural sciences are used to assess risk, and the social sciences to manage that risk (typically through cost-benefit analysis) and communicate its relevant facts to the public. But globalization makes risks more difficult to track and assess, the rapid pace of technological advancement introduces new risks more quickly than conventional risk politics can respond, and the social theory critique of a purely scientific strategy for managing risk has led many to conceptualize risk as a social phenomenon as well as a scientific one. Traditional risk politics is therefore challenged by changing objective and subjective distributions of risk such that “consumer trust in food and food regulation can no longer simply be pre-supposed or reconstructed with the help of science alone” (p. 30). Innovative approaches to risk have emerged in response to this challenge, and this study aims to document and assess several of those recent innovations.

Viewing food consumption as a social rather than strictly an economic activity, social theorists like Manuel Castells and John Urry have urged both the reconceptualization of modernity as based in a “global network society” that organizes space and time in terms of flows (of capital, information, commodities, etc.) rather than places, and new forms of governance in the “space of flows” rather than in the “space of places”, which have the effects of shifting the location of and restructuring traditional institutions of governance. Nowhere are these changes more evident than in food governance, so Oosterveer’s study examines the recent appearance of several arrangements for governing food in the space of flows as an application of this theory and as a conceptual means for analyzing various effects of globalization. Given that traditional governance is rooted in places and that food production and delivery involves transnational flows, only international or global actors like the World Trade Organization or food-based or environmental NGOs have the capacity to employ this alternative model of governance, and his case studies consider the ways that such actors have responded to the deficiencies of nation-states in seeking to govern food production and consumption differently. Such actors, he writes, “may be more passive or more active, incidental or permanent, formal or informal and sometimes acting at large distances through global networks or within the immediate surroundings through social communities” (p. 59). Examples are presented of each of these types of arrangements, with an emphasis on revealing the diversity of innovative approaches to food governance rather than evaluating the various strategies for effectiveness.

Herein lies one minor shortcoming: Oosterveer becomes so enamored with theory that the conceptual cart seems to be leading the evaluative horse. While his well-researched and carefully documented analysis of the merits of food governance in the space of flows offers a compelling case for finding such arrangements superior to the traditional forms of governance in the space of places, this distinction occasionally seems to become a meta-normative standard, where the latter are dismissed as inadequate and where no further evaluative distinctions are made between varieties of the former. In his conclu-

sion to the aquaculture case, for example, he suggests that existing nation-state-based forms of regulation “will probably not be able to respond effectively” to health or ecological threats from fish farms since “this supply chain of fish production and consumption has acquired the character of a global flow” (p. 182). A more nuanced set of evaluative criteria might also offer the analytical tools necessary for a fuller evaluation of the merits and limits of eco-labels, which are endorsed as a promising strategy, based largely on this theoretical distinction. Nonetheless, this engaging study offers an important analysis of the challenges posed by the globalization of food production and consumption, and should therefore be of interest to scholars with interests in global regulatory innovation.

Pellow, David Naguib. 2007 *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

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In *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*, “transnational” is the operative word. David Naguib Pellow argues that in an increasingly globalized world influenced by corporate and state actors that enforce hierarchies of race, class and nationality, the Global South is the steady victim of transnational environmental injustice. Hand-in-hand with this transnational inequality, however, a growing movement of environmental justice activists connects across national borders to resist these injustices, “produc[ing] new spaces for the articulation of global citizenship” (p. 55).

Specifically, Pellow examines the global waste trade through the lens of three theories. These theories are ecological modernization, wherein “the design, performance, and evaluation of production processes have been increasingly based on ecological criteria rather than simply being rooted in narrow economic calculus” (p. 18); Allan Schnaiberg’s treadmill of production theory, in which capitalism depends on unending, constant economic growth that prioritizes use of natural resources for their market value; and Ulrich Beck’s “risk society” thesis, which equates modernity with ecologically harmful practices. Pellow argues that ecological modernization in the Global North is only possible because of extensive environmental damage and cheap labor in the Global South. From the vantage point of the Global North it may look like corporations are becoming more environmentally responsible, when in fact they are shifting hazardous production and waste disposal practices along the “path of least resistance” (p. 13) to communities in the Global South disadvantaged in terms of race, class, and nationality.

Pellow’s concept of the “political economic opportunity structure” is an important contribution to the study of environmental justice. The concept refers to the structure of the state and the systems of alliances and opposition fac-