

**Elena Feditchkina Tracy**

**Resilient Environmental Governance: Leadership, Values, and Institutions (Book Manuscript)**

For resilient environmental governance protection, making the right policy choices is only a part of the story. The other part is staying committed to conservation objectives long enough to allow the desired effects to take place. Therefore, a particular type of leader and practitioner is needed to flourish, operating at all levels of governance and possessing certain traits consistent with the Aristotelian tradition of *phronesis*, or “practical wisdom.” Aristotelian virtues include prudence, courage, good judgment, the ability to deliberate, truthfulness, empathy, and other traits. Likewise, for Aristotle, leaders and practitioners who develop the virtues of practical wisdom are more likely to know the right decision to make when confronted with a difficult choice, and how to implement this decision in the long run, and in a way appropriate for a particular context.

A discussion of the role of Aristotelian ethics in environmental governance will guide the first theoretical section of the book, and include an examination of the institutions and incentives and the way these institutions should be transformed to encourage environmental leadership. In the empirical section, the book will provide a number of case studies on the implementation of nature protection policies and initiatives in New Zealand, Norway, Canada’s British Columbia, and Russia’s Far Eastern region, all resource-based economies.

**Practical Wisdom for Resilient Environmental Governance (Article)**

In today’s world, the most prominent calculus of environmental decision making is utilitarian, expressed primarily in terms of cost-benefit analysis. In some cases, decision makers also evoke deontological ethics expressed in the language of human rights (for example, the right to a safe and clean environment). Yet as important as they are, these ethical foundations are not sufficient when it comes to the protection of environmental values. Appeals to human rights or economic calculus are ill suited for some aspects of environmental protection, for example for the conservation of endangered species. Rules (rights) and incentives (cost-benefit) are important, but they are often not enough.

The wholesale collapse of ecosystems, the disruption of the global climate, and the irreversible loss of species diversity calls for leaders informed by the Aristotelian tradition of practical wisdom (*phronesis* and *metis*), making the right choices and implementing them in a manner congruent with the local context.

In “Nicomachean Ethics,” Aristotle describes *phronesis* as “the science of what is just, fine and good for a human being.” It requires skill in gathering knowledge and making good judgments grounded in the virtue of prudence—making the right balance between two or more extremes.

The paper will analyze existing cases of the application of the Aristotelian tradition of *phronesis* in the practice of environmental governance. The Precautionary Principle guiding the implementation of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity (1992) is one such example, embodying Aristotelian *phronesis* and prudence in decision making when the consequences of one’s actions are not yet known (thus the risks are uncertain), or are potentially irreversible.