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GREEN GOVERNANCE: INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INTO PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING

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Abstract

This study delves into the multifaceted domain of Green Governance, aimed at integrating environmental policies into public decision-making processes. Grounded in qualitative research methods utilizing secondary data, the investigation unfolds key insights derived from various thematic domains. The exploration begins by uncovering the foundational elements crucial to Green Governance, unveiling key components and imperatives for effective environmental policy implementation. Stakeholder perspectives emerge as pivotal, shaping policy realities and influencing the trajectory of environmental initiatives. The study navigates through theoretical perspectives, shedding light on the intricacies of policy integration into public decision-making, drawing from diverse lenses such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework and Institutional Theory. Additionally, the research meticulously explores various governance models, dissecting collaborative and network-based approaches and elucidating their distinguishing features and comparative advantages in integrating environmental policies. Findings underscore the significance of collaboration, adaptive structures, stakeholder engagement, and inclusive decision-making in crafting effective green governance frameworks. Ultimately, this research culminates in a comprehensive understanding of Green Governance, providing insights vital for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders.

Keywords: *Environmental Policy; Governance Models; Green Governance; Public Decision-Making; Stakeholder Perspectives*

INTRODUCTION

Environmental policy and governance have evolved significantly, reflecting the changing understanding of environmental issues and the need for concerted global action to address them. Environmental policies are measures governments, corporations, or other public or private organizations take to prevent or reduce the harmful effects of human activities on the environment. The earliest public policies aimed at environmental protection date back to ancient times, and since then, environmental policies have been implemented worldwide. Environmental governance includes policies, rules, and norms that govern human behavior and decision-making processes regarding environmental issues. It addresses who makes decisions, how decisions are made and carried out, and how the public and major stakeholders can participate in the decision-making process. Environmental governance seeks to minimize destructive human impacts on the natural environment while addressing social issues such as

diversity, equality, equity, human rights, safety, wages, and child labor. The global community faces intertwined crises, from poverty and inequalities to environmental challenges such as biodiversity loss and climate change, and strengthening environmental governance is crucial to addressing these challenges (Bueren, 2023; Matthews, 2023; Nature Hub, 2023; UNEP, 2001; Vig & Kraft, 2013; Zhao et al., 2021).

The publication of Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" in 1962 (Carson, 2015), which raised public awareness about the effects of pesticides on ecosystems, was one of the critical turning points in the development of modern environmental policy in the middle of the 20th century. Following this awakening, governments began to acknowledge the necessity of regulatory frameworks to address pollution, resource depletion, and habitat destruction.

One of the landmark moments in environmental policy was the establishment of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970 under President Nixon. This move signified a paradigm shift towards formalized governance structures specifically tasked with environmental oversight and regulation (McNamara, 1972).

The late 20th and early 21st centuries witnessed the emergence of global environmental governance through multilateral agreements and conventions. The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm laid the groundwork for international cooperation on environmental issues (Breidenich et al., 1998).

Subsequent global conventions such as the Kyoto Protocol (1997), the Paris Agreement (2015), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have reinforced the commitment of nations to combat climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote sustainable development (General, 2015).

Despite these advancements, environmental governance faces multifaceted challenges. One significant hurdle is the fragmentation of responsibilities among governmental agencies, leading to overlaps, inefficiencies, and gaps in policy implementation. Collaboration among nations is also necessary to address transboundary environmental issues due to geopolitical tensions and competing interests (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). Moreover, globalization and technological advancements have introduced new environmental concerns, such as e-waste management, biodiversity loss due to urbanization, and the impact of emerging pollutants.

In conclusion, environmental policy and governance have come a long way, transitioning from a localized concern to a global priority. However, the complexities and interconnectedness of environmental challenges necessitate adaptive and collaborative

governance frameworks. Addressing these challenges requires innovative policies, robust regulatory mechanisms, and sustained international cooperation. In navigating the complexities of environmental governance, policymakers, stakeholders, and citizens must work together to ensure effective policies that safeguard our planet's health and secure a sustainable future for generations to come.

The complexities of environmental challenges demand a comprehensive framework that effectively integrates policies into decision-making processes. However, defining the foundational elements of green governance and understanding stakeholder perceptions are critical gaps. Additionally, identifying theoretical models and distinguishing governance structures for successful policy integration remain underexplored.

Research Objectives; 1. Unveiling Foundational Elements of Green Governance: The primary objective is to delineate the fundamental components constituting the framework of green governance. This research aims to identify and elucidate the core elements that underpin effective green governance structures by conducting a comprehensive review and analysis of existing literature and case studies. 2. Stakeholder Perspectives on Green Governance and Policy Implementation: This objective focuses on understanding how diverse stakeholders and institutions define and perceive green governance. Through surveys, interviews, and stakeholder analysis, this research aims to capture the spectrum of perspectives and discern how these perceptions influence the implementation of environmental policies on the ground. 3. Theoretical Models for Effective Policy Integration: This objective revolves around exploring theoretical lenses or models that provide insights into integrating environmental policies into public decision-making. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks and conducting comparative analyses, the research aims to highlight the strengths and limitations of various models in guiding policy integration processes. 4. Comparative Analysis of Governance Models in Policy Integration: The final objective is to assess the distinguishing features and comparative advantages of different governance models, such as collaborative and network governance, in integrating environmental policies into decision-making processes. Through case studies and comparative analysis, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how various governance models contribute to successful policy integration.

This research endeavors to unravel the multifaceted dimensions of green governance, ranging from foundational elements to stakeholder perceptions and theoretical frameworks. Addressing these critical gaps seeks to provide insights that can inform policymakers,

practitioners, and stakeholders, ultimately facilitating more effective and sustainable environmental policy integration into public decision-making. This journey toward understanding and synthesizing the components of green governance is pivotal for shaping responsive and adaptive governance structures that tackle contemporary environmental challenges.

These research questions aim to delve into the nuanced aspects of conceptualizing green governance, understanding theoretical perspectives, and assessing the applicability of various governance models in integrating environmental policies within decision-making frameworks. They can serve as a foundation for in-depth exploration and empirical investigation within environmental policy and governance. Research questions; 1. What are the foundational elements and critical components that constitute the framework of green governance? 2. How do various stakeholders and institutions define and perceive the concept of green governance, and how do these perceptions influence policy implementation? 3. What theoretical lenses or models offer insights into effectively integrating environmental policies into public decision-making processes? 4. What are the distinguishing features of various governance models and comparative advantages in integrating environmental policies into decision-making processes? These research questions aim to delve into the nuanced aspects of conceptualizing green governance, understanding theoretical perspectives, and assessing the applicability of various governance models in integrating environmental policies within decision-making frameworks. They can serve as a foundation for in-depth exploration and empirical investigation within environmental policy and governance.

METHOD

Qualitative research methods, particularly those utilizing secondary data, play a pivotal role in exploring the complexities of green governance and its integration into public decision-making. This research examines applying qualitative research methods guided by Creswell's approach to investigating the intricate dynamics of environmental policy integration (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell's approach to qualitative research emphasizes systematically analyzing existing data sources to gain insights into the phenomenon under study. In green governance, secondary data sources encompass various materials, including scholarly articles, government reports, policy documents, case studies, and archival records related to environmental policies and governance structures.

In employing secondary data, researchers pursuing the study of green governance can adopt a comprehensive approach to collecting and analyzing information. This involves systematic literature reviews to synthesize existing knowledge and identify gaps in understanding the integration of environmental policies. Analyzing policy documents, governmental reports, and case studies provides nuanced insights into green governance initiatives' mechanisms, challenges, and successes. Creswell advocates for thematic analysis to extract key themes and patterns from secondary data. Researchers can categorize information, identify recurring ideas, and discern trends in environmental policy integration. Themes may encompass stakeholder engagement, governance models, policy effectiveness, barriers to implementation, and successful case studies illustrating effective integration practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Unveiling the Foundations of Green Governance: Key Components and Imperatives

Green governance is the cornerstone of effective environmental policy implementation, encapsulating a multifaceted framework that fosters sustainability and addresses ecological challenges (Sarjito & Azhar, 2023). Its foundational elements unveil the essential components for shaping policies and strategies toward environmental stewardship. Defining the Elements of Green Governance. At its core, green governance embodies several interlinked components. Environmental policy scholars such as (Holzhacker & Albæk, 2007) emphasize the centrality of participation, transparency, and accountability as fundamental pillars. These elements are essential in decision-making and ensuring the inclusivity of stakeholders' voices within governance structures.

As Okoye (2018) asserted, transparency within governance mechanisms involves open access to information, facilitating public awareness, and informed decision-making. Additionally, (Bovens, 2007) highlighted that accountability demands accountability and responsibility from institutions and actors involved in environmental governance processes. Furthermore, sustainability stands as a linchpin element in green governance. It balances environmental preservation, economic viability, and social equity (Holden et al., 2014). Integrating sustainability principles across governance frameworks aligns policies with long-term environmental objectives while accounting for societal needs and economic realities. Folke et al., (2010) emphasized the idea of resilience as a crucial component in green governance, which has gained prominence. Building resilience within governance structures

involves adaptability to environmental changes and unforeseen challenges, ensuring robustness in policy responses.

The quest to unravel the foundational elements and key components of green governance necessitates an exploration through theoretical lenses that shed light on effective governance structures. Ostrom's Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework emerges as a guiding theoretical construct to understand the intricacies of governance, particularly in managing common pool resources within environmental sustainability. The IAD Framework: Understanding Foundational Elements of Governance.

Ostrom's IAD framework, as elucidated in "Understanding Institutional Diversity" (Ostrom, 2005), offers a comprehensive lens to decipher the essential building blocks of governance structures. At its core, the IAD framework delves into the design principles that underpin successful governance, emphasizing the management and preservation of common pool resources. The framework elucidates various elements critical to the functioning of effective governance systems within the context of green governance. One such foundational element is the importance of clear and well-defined institutional arrangements. Ostrom highlights the significance of institutional design principles, including clearly delineated rules, collective-choice arrangements, and monitoring mechanisms, as essential components contributing to successful governance.

Moreover, the IAD framework emphasizes the pivotal role of collective action and stakeholder participation. It underscores the necessity of inclusive decision-making processes where stakeholders are actively engaged in formulating, implementing, and monitoring policies related to environmental resource management. Furthermore, the framework accentuates the need for adaptive and polycentric governance structures. Ostrom's work underscores the importance of flexibility and the ability of governance systems to adapt to changing environmental dynamics. Polycentric governance, involving multiple centers of decision-making and authority, is deemed crucial for addressing the complexities of environmental challenges at various scales.

2. Stakeholder Perspectives on Green Governance: Shaping Policy Realities

The diverse interpretations and perceptions of green governance among stakeholders and institutions significantly shape policy implementation and environmental outcomes. Understanding these varied perspectives offers insights into the complexities that govern the adoption, execution, and effectiveness of environmental policies.

Defining Stakeholder Perceptions of Green Governance

Stakeholders, from governmental bodies to civil society groups, harbor multifaceted perceptions of green governance. According to (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016), governmental institutions often view green governance through the lens of regulatory frameworks and compliance measures. For them, it is about enacting laws and regulations that mitigate environmental harm and foster sustainable practices. In contrast, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and environmental advocacy groups view green governance as a platform for active participation and advocacy, aiming to influence policy formulation and implementation. They focus on inclusivity, public engagement, and integrating local knowledge and grassroots initiatives within governance structures (Wurzel & Liefferink, 2007).

As Dentoni & Bitzer (2015) noted, corporate stakeholders frequently approach green governance from a strategic and risk management perspective, perceiving it as an opportunity to improve corporate social responsibility (CSR) and market positioning. The influence of these divergent perceptions on policy implementation is profound. Variations in stakeholder perspectives often lead to conflicting priorities, trade-offs, and challenges in aligning policy strategies. (Gupta & Pahl-Wostl, 2013) argue that divergent stakeholder perceptions may result in policy inertia, bureaucratic hurdles, and a lack of coherence in implementation strategies, impeding effective environmental governance. The comprehension of how diverse stakeholders and institutions define and perceive green governance significantly shapes the policy landscape and influences the implementation of environmental policies. Freeman's Stakeholder Theory and Marsh and Rhodes' Policy Network Theory serve as crucial theoretical frameworks to delve into these perceptions and their impacts on policy implementation within green governance.

Stakeholder Theory

Freeman's Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 2010) provides a comprehensive lens to analyze the varied perceptions of stakeholders regarding green governance. It elucidates that stakeholders, including governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, businesses, communities, and individuals, hold diverse interests and expectations concerning environmental policies and governance structures. According to stakeholder theory, these diverse interests influence stakeholder engagement, decision-making processes, and the level of support or resistance toward environmental policies. Stakeholders may perceive green

governance through the lens of responsibility, profitability, ethical considerations, or social impact, thus shaping their engagement and influencing policy dynamics.

Policy Network Theory

Marsh & Rhodes (1992) introduced the "Policy Network Theory," which explores how stakeholder interactions within networks shape policy outcomes. This theory highlights that stakeholders do not operate in isolation but form coalitions, alliances, and relationships that influence policy formulation and implementation.

Policy Network Theory underscores the significance of these networks, their structure, and the power dynamics within them. It emphasizes that stakeholders' interactions, access to resources, and ability to influence decision-makers significantly impact policy implementation. Networks facilitate information exchange, collaboration, and coalition-building, influencing the adoption and execution of environmental policies.

Implications for Policy Implementation

The diverse perceptions held by stakeholders and institutions significantly influence the trajectory and effectiveness of policy implementation in green governance. Stakeholders' varying interests, power dynamics within networks, and level of involvement influence the design, adoption, and enforcement of environmental policies. Dissonance among stakeholders' perceptions may lead to conflicts, delays, or even policy gridlocks, affecting the successful implementation of green governance initiatives.

3. Theoretical Perspectives on Environmental Policy Integration: Insights into Public Decision-Making

Integrating environmental policies into public decision-making requires theoretical frameworks that provide insights into navigating complexities, influencing factors, and mechanisms for effective implementation (Sarjito, 2023). Exploring these theoretical lenses offers a deeper understanding of how policies intersect within decision-making structures.

Theoretical Lenses for Environmental Policy Integration

In understanding policy integration, the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), as proposed by (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999), offers insights into how coalitions of stakeholders with shared beliefs and policy preferences navigate within political systems to influence policy outcomes. This framework delineates how these coalitions interact, compete, and collaborate, influencing policy agendas and decisions within governmental structures. Additionally, (Rhodes, 1997) highlighted the Policy Network Approach, which emphasizes the

interaction of actors, networks, and institutions in policy formulation and implementation. This perspective elucidates the importance of networks and relationships among stakeholders, suggesting that effective policy integration depends on the relationships between actors involved in decision-making processes.

Additionally, the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework examines the institutional arrangements governing collective action, as (Ostrom, 2005) put forth. It offers insights into how institutions, rules, and governance structures influence the integration of environmental policies, emphasizing the importance of adaptive governance mechanisms and polycentric approaches for effective decision-making. Policy integration models, such as the European Commission's Multi-Level Governance approach (Bache et al., 2016), provide insights into how policies traverse multiple levels of government and governance structures. This model highlights the dynamics between supranational, national, and subnational entities, influencing the integration of environmental policies across diverse administrative levels. Understanding the intricacies of integrating environmental policies into public decision-making necessitates exploration through theoretical frameworks that illuminate the dynamics and influences shaping policy change. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and DiMaggio and Powell's Institutional Theory are crucial lenses to comprehend the complexities inherent in this integration process.

Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's ACF (1999) offers a comprehensive lens to analyze the integration of environmental policies into public decision-making. The framework elucidates the dynamics between advocacy coalitions—groups of stakeholders sharing beliefs, resources, and policy preferences. The ACF emphasizes how these coalitions compete and collaborate within the policy process, influencing policy change and implementation (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). Within environmental policy integration, ACF helps understand how diverse advocacy coalitions with differing beliefs and priorities engage in policy debates. These coalitions, comprising environmental groups, industries, governmental bodies, and other stakeholders, vie for influence and seek to shape policy outcomes. ACF highlights how the interactions, conflicts, and consensus-building among these coalitions influence the trajectory of environmental policy integration.

Institutional Theory

DiMaggio and Powell's Institutional Theory (1983) offers insights into how institutions shape decision-making processes. This theory delves into the influence of norms, rules, and cultural elements within institutions on policy integration. Institutional theory emphasizes that established norms and institutional structures significantly shape the adoption and implementation of policies (DiMaggio & Powell, 2004). In environmental policy integration, institutional theory aids in understanding how institutional structures, rules, and prevailing norms influence decision-making processes. The theory highlights the role of institutional legitimacy, power dynamics, and the inertia of existing structures in either facilitating or hindering the integration of environmental policies into public decision-making processes.

Implications for Policy Integration

Theoretical lenses such as ACF and institutional theory provide crucial insights into the complex interplay of stakeholders, institutional structures, and belief systems that influence integrating environmental policies into public decision-making. Understanding these dynamics aids policymakers in navigating diverse interests, building coalitions, and designing policies that align with institutional norms, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of policy integration efforts.

4. Exploring Governance Models for Effective Integration of Environmental Policies

Various governance models, such as collaborative and network governance, offer distinct features and comparative advantages in integrating environmental policies into decision-making processes. Understanding these models elucidates their unique mechanisms and contributions to fostering effective environmental governance.

Distinguishing Features of Governance Models

Collaborative Governance: Ansell & Gash (2008) highlighted the importance of partnerships among various stakeholders, including governmental organizations, non-profits, communities, and businesses. This model fosters joint decision-making, shared responsibilities, and collective action, leveraging the strengths and expertise of different actors. Its distinguishing feature is facilitating deliberation and consensus-building processes, enabling stakeholders to collaboratively co-create and implement environmental policies.

Network Governance: In contrast, Klijn & Koppenjan (2015) describe network governance as focusing on the connections and interdependencies between various actors and organizations. It underscores the importance of informal relationships, communication channels, and

stakeholder interactions across different levels and sectors. Network governance's distinguishing feature is its emphasis on flexibility, adaptability, and information exchange within dynamic networks, allowing for innovative solutions and rapid responses to environmental challenges.

Comparative Advantages in Integrating Environmental Policies: (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015) contend that fostering trust and social capital among stakeholders increases the likelihood of successful policy implementation. Its participatory nature ensures legitimacy and buy-in from stakeholders, leading to more sustainable and widely accepted environmental policies. On the other hand, network governance, according to Provan & Kenis (2008), has advantages in terms of scalability and resilience. Its ability to adapt to changing conditions and involve various actors fosters innovation and facilitates the integration of diverse perspectives, contributing to robust environmental policy solutions.

Integrating environmental policies into decision-making necessitates understanding governance models that facilitate collaboration, connectivity, and adaptive structures. Ansell and Gash's Collaborative Governance (2008) and Klijn and Koppenjan's Network Governance (2016) serve as instrumental frameworks to dissect various governance models and their distinctive features in environmental policy integration (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015). Collaborative Governance: Ansell and Gash's Collaborative Governance Framework (2008) illuminates governance models characterized by collaboration among diverse actors. This model accentuates the importance of stakeholders engaging in shared decision-making, collaborating to address complex issues, and jointly assuming responsibilities (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In integrating environmental policies, collaborative governance underscores the significance of inclusive stakeholder engagement, emphasizing partnerships between governmental bodies, NGOs, businesses, and communities. This model fosters collective problem-solving, consensus-building, and the sharing of resources and expertise. Collaborative governance models enable the pooling of diverse perspectives, thus aiding in crafting holistic and inclusive environmental policies.

Network Governance: Klijn and Koppenjan's Network Governance Framework (2015) emphasizes the interconnectedness and adaptive structures within governance networks. This model accentuates stakeholder relationships, highlighting the dynamic nature of network interactions and information exchange (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015). In environmental policy integration, network governance emphasizes the importance of adaptive structures responding

to changing environmental dynamics. It underscores the role of relationships, interconnectivity, and the emergence of informal structures in decision-making. Network governance models facilitate the flow of information, foster innovation, and promote collaborative problem-solving, allowing for more flexible and responsive environmental policies.

Comparative Advantages: Collaborative governance models offer advantages in fostering trust, inclusivity, and collective responsibility among stakeholders. They promote consensus-building and participatory decision-making, leading to more widely accepted and sustainable environmental policies. On the other hand, network governance models excel in adaptability, flexibility, and information exchange. They enable swift responses to environmental challenges by leveraging interconnected relationships and diverse expertise, leading to innovative solutions and adaptable policies.

CONCLUSIONS

The foundational elements of green governance, encompassing participation, transparency, accountability, sustainability, and resilience, collectively form the bedrock of effective environmental policy frameworks. These components guide decision-making processes and shape governance structures that foster sustainable and equitable environmental outcomes. Understanding and integrating these elements are imperative for crafting robust policies that navigate the complexities of contemporary environmental challenges while promoting a harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world. The main parts of green governance can be seen through the lens of the Institutional Analysis and Development framework. These are the complex interactions between institutional design, inclusive participation, and structures that can change. Ostrom's framework provides invaluable insights into the prerequisites for effective governance in managing common pool resources within environmental policy. Understanding and integrating these elements within governance frameworks is imperative for shaping resilient and adaptive green governance structures that navigate the complexities of contemporary environmental challenges.

The diverse stakeholder perspectives on green governance significantly shape the contours of policy formulation and implementation. These varying viewpoints, from governmental, NGO, and corporate entities, introduce complexities and challenges in aligning objectives, priorities, and implementation strategies. Recognizing and reconciling these diverse perceptions is paramount for fostering collaborative, inclusive, and effective green governance

structures that holistically address environmental challenges while accommodating stakeholder needs and expectations.

Different theories, like the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the Policy Network Approach, the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework, and the Multi-Level Governance Model, give us different ways to consider including environmental policies in how the government makes decisions. Each theoretical lens highlights distinct aspects, be it stakeholder coalitions, network dynamics, institutional arrangements, or governance levels, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved. Incorporating these theoretical insights can guide policymakers and practitioners in devising adaptive and inclusive strategies for integrating environmental policies effectively into public decision-making frameworks. Stakeholder Theory and Policy Network Theory offer invaluable insights into the multifaceted perceptions of stakeholders and institutions regarding green governance. Understanding these perceptions and the dynamics of stakeholder interactions within networks is crucial for policymakers to navigate diverse interests, foster collaboration, and design policies that align with stakeholders' expectations, ultimately enhancing the successful implementation of green governance initiatives. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's ACF and DiMaggio and Powell's Institutional Theory offer multifaceted perspectives to comprehend the dynamics underlying the integration of environmental policies into public decision-making. Using these theoretical lenses helps to make sense of the complicated interactions between stakeholders, the dynamics of coalitions, and the effects of institutions. This leads to better strategies for integrating environmental policy that works.

With their distinct features and comparative advantages, collaborative and network governance offer valuable pathways for integrating environmental policies into decision-making processes. While collaborative governance emphasizes cooperation and consensus-building, network governance thrives on interconnectivity and adaptability. Both models, emphasizing inclusivity, flexibility, and relationship-building, contribute significantly to integrating diverse perspectives and stakeholder involvement, ultimately fostering more effective and sustainable environmental policy outcomes. Collaborative and network governance models provide distinct yet complementary approaches to integrating environmental policies into decision-making processes. Collaborative governance fosters inclusive decision-making and shared responsibilities, while network governance emphasizes adaptive structures and interconnectivity. Both models offer unique advantages in crafting and

implementing environmental policies that address complex challenges, paving the way for more effective and sustainable governance in the environmental sphere.

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