

Review of: "Promoting Pro-Environmental Behavior for Sustainable Water Resource Management: A Social Exchange Perspective"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

ARTICLE: "Promoting Pro-Environmental Behavior for Sustainable Water Resource Management: A Social Exchange Perspective."

PUBLICATION DECISION: Accepted with substantial modifications and improvements.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed article addresses a very relevant issue for human societies at present and shortly: the sustainable management of (scarce) water resources.

The use of a social analytical perspective adds value to the paper because the usual approach to this issue is technical and economic. The basic underlying idea is sociological and anthropological: water use is a human activity so the use of the resource (good or bad, efficient or inefficient) and its outcomes in socioeconomic and ecological terms depend on personal attitudes (selfish or pro-social), values, rules, and norms (formal and informal institutions) that are present in a social context.

COMMENTS (FOR MODIFICATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS)

Text (writing)

The text is very clear. However, in the "Introduction" I note some recurring ideas. In addition, I think this section is a bit long in the context of a theoretical essay. I would recommend shortening it and using a more direct style and structure (subject of study, objectives, and structure of the paper).

The author writes "in bloc" (without separating paragraphs), which makes the text a bit heavy to read. I would recommend using paragraphs.

Methodology

The "documentary research method" is confusing and inappropriate for describing the methodology employed. In Social Sciences, this method refers to the analysis of secondary sources such as reports, plans, media news, minutes, etc.

The author writes a theoretical essay based on a specific bibliography (although it is not exactly a review or “state of the art”). In this case, the introduction of a specific section called “methodology” or “research method” could be confusing and perhaps out of place. This section is mandatory in an empirical work, but not in a theoretical essay. In sum, I recommend not to use this expression.

In this regard, the section 2 (“Research method”) should be the theoretical framework. I would call it “Social dilemmas: the tragedy of (water) commons” (or something like that).

Theoretical and conceptual framework

As I have said, the theoretical framework should be focused on social dilemmas and the “tragedy of the commons”, and then develop the central objectives of the work in section 3.

It is essential to clearly distinguish common property resources (refers to a property regime) from common (or common-pool) resources (a type of resource). Many works develop the main features of common-pool resources. Likewise, there is a large body of work in Social Sciences (Ecological Economics, Ecological Anthropology, Economic History...) that criticizes the “tragedy of the commons” theory. Certainly, the author does not confuse those concepts, but I think that the distinction (and the critical approach to the “tragedy” theory) should be clearer.

Other comments

It is very rare (and disconcerting for me) to cite authors and their works with a super-index number (the bibliographic reference). Is this a publication norm of Qeios?

Opportunistic behavior in the case of common pool resources (not common property resources) will arise especially if, among other factors, there are no regulations on access and use of the resource. Hardin's "tragedy of the commons" is the situation that arises in the case of an unregulated and open-access common-pool resource.

References to the case of Iran are sporadic and, therefore, dispensable. However, it could be very useful (and advisable) to cite empirical works (references) to exemplify or support some ideas or statements. I think that some assertions or ideas are held in a kind of theoretical vacuum (they require an empirical basis).

Point 3 (“Scarcity”) seems out of place in a section devoted to analyzing social factors, norms, and values. I think that it should be removed.

Point 7 (“Social Sanctions”) is, I think, a subtype of point 2 (“Rewards and Punishments”).

The “Water security” concept, regularly used at the end of the text, is essential in the discussion. I think it should be defined, at least in a footnote.

JABM. University of La Laguna. Spain, November 15, 2023.

