

PERSPECTIVES ON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. By T. O'Riordan. Pion, London, 1971. viii + 183 pp., diags., bibliogs., index. Monographs in Spatial and Environmental Systems Analysis, V. 3. \$6.25 (higher in the U.S.).

THERE is a special kind of book that I associate with British geographers. Basically, it is a series of extended review articles with little original research material, but creatively organized and comprehensively documented—it is, above all, useful. Such a book is Timothy O'Riordan's small volume in the Pion Series of Monographs in Spatial and Environmental Systems Analysis entitled *Perspectives on Resource Management*.

The perspective offered by a geographer with strong training and interest in economics and administrative science is the perspective of a social scientist:

it is the process of decision-making concerning the nature, amount, timing, and the location of resource use as it affects individuals and groups on the landscape within a certain institutional, legal and political-economic framework that constitutes resource management in the modern world (p. 145).

And the perspective is clearly on the decade of the 1960s. Only fifteen percent of the more than 700 items in the comprehensive bibliography carry a date prior to that decade. The eight chapters unfold the unique interdisciplinary focus of the recent decade of work: conservation is relegated to historical perspective, resources and environment are viewed both from a normative perspective, where evaluation and efficiency are the watchwords, and from a behavioral perspective, where the process of decision-making is the unit of study emphasizing managerial information, perception, attitudes, and behavior.

Such a volume offers a reviewer the dual opportunity: to review the presentation, the choice of organizing themes, the aptness of interpretation, the academic sins of omission, and the like; or to review the material itself. Because the author does well in his intent, my choice is the latter—the appearance of the volume offers a fresh opportunity for a retrospective view of progress in the field. O'Riordan is excited by his own and others' work:

The student of resource management is living in an exciting age. Increasing public concern and involvement with resource issues, probing new scientific and

technical discoveries, breakthroughs in new administrative and institutional forms, dynamics and dramatic shifts in resource legislation, and exciting reports by interdisciplinary teams point clearly to the rapid changes taking place all around him (p. 121).

To a considerable extent the excitement would appear justified. Scholars of resource management have made substantial contributions: to theory, particularly in the extension of welfare economics into the public sector; to methods, especially in the use of simulation in water resource planning and in application of behavioral techniques to the study of environmental cognition; to fact, with the routine availability of resource assessments and projections covering both major commodities and services; and to definition of professional role, by providing multiple examples of scholarship with relevance. Yet the history of the field in the sixties, very much a personal professional history as well, leaves this reviewer less buoyant and optimistic than the author, and I wonder why.

Perhaps the perspective of the sixties appears curiously narrow in 1972. We contemplate under the rubric of environment a series of penultimate human problems (O'Riordan would call them meta-problems): the ever-recurrent, Malthusian Dilemma, the growing, separate global concentrations of wealth and poverty; and the great disparity between technological capability and human control of technology. We bring to these overriding problems only the embers of our positivist arrogance, conscious as we are of the crisis in social theory, of the wide distrust of value-free methodology, and of the ethnocentricity of much that passes for factual knowledge.

The theory of the sixties is primarily economic theory, and the theory to explain environmental crisis relies upon externalities in the productive process. Despite the current heroic effort to wed thermodynamics and economics into a general equilibrium model of material flows, all existing economic theory, capitalist or otherwise, presupposes the existence of scarcity, the rightness of growth, and the conquest of nature. One seeks in vain for a theory to explain adequately the coexistence of hunger and gluttony, to rechannelize growth into redistribution, and to define the limits, not of the earth, but of human dominance.

Much of our methodology, be it computer simulations of a river basin or surveys of managerial perception of pollution, seems to presuppose that a transcendent public interest,

represented most often by government, can draw on scientific appraisal to ameliorate the disputes of disparate interest groups, but the power to reduce men to ciphers or to know what they think takes on a dubious and threatening role in the adversary settings of current environmental conflict. The available resource assessments that dominate the decade of the sixties seem curious if not shocking in their basic assumption of a continuing pattern of resource use, where forty percent of the world's resources supply six percent of its people, and where the continual substitution of technology for labor and land is the desirable pattern of growth to be "massively" transferred to the rest of the world. This ethnocentricity persists into the seventies with the common projection of the environmental crisis of the West onto the entire world. For most of the world's people it is drought rather than pollution that endangers health, and the invasion of locusts rather than the extinction of endangered species threatens the quality of life.

Perspectives on Resource Management faithfully records the synthesis and coming-of-age of a new and vital disciplinary focus. It is probably but another measure of the rapidity of social change, that this perspective, seen now in the winter of our discontent, is of resource management rooted in a sterile theory and applied to a classless world comprised solely of North America and the British Isles.

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MAN'S IMPACT ON THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT. Edited by Carroll M. Wilson and William H. Matthews. M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., and London, England, 1970. xxii + 319 pp., illus., maps, diags., bibliogs., index. Report of the Study of Critical Environmental Problems (SCEP), Paper, \$2.95.

MAN'S IMPACT ON THE CLIMATE. Edited by William H. Matthews, William W. Kellogg, and G. D. Robinson. M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., and London, England, 1971. xvii + 594 pp., illus., maps, diags., bibliogs., index. Collected back-

ground papers of SCEP, with selected papers from other sources. Thirty-nine authors.

INADVERTENT CLIMATE MODIFICATION. Edited by Carroll M. Wilson and William H. Matthews. M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., and London, England, 1971. xxi + 308 pp. Report of the Study of Man's Impact on Climate (SMIC).

TWO dominant themes run through the literature of environmental degradation—man-induced climatic change and ecosystem disruption. Both recur repeatedly in the documentation being prepared for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, to be held in Stockholm in 1972. It is safe to predict that we shall hear much of them for years to come—until, in fact, we are sure that technology has been brought into a safer relationship with nature.

Many members of the world scientific community have seen the Stockholm Conference as an opportunity to take stock of the environmental situation, and to urge remedial action on the assembled delegates. The most insistent and effective lobby has been organized by Carroll Wilson, of the Sloan School of Management at M.I.T., ably supported by William Matthews, of M.I.T.'s Department of Civil Engineering. With the help of many U.S. public and private institutions, and an able steering committee, they were able to convene in 1970 a month-long study session attended by sixty-eight scientists (natural and social) with numerous supporting consultants and observers. The Study of Critical Environmental Problems, or SCEP, as it came to be known, was an attempt to achieve consensus on threats to the natural environment among a group representative of well-informed American scientific opinion. The first volume under review, a paperback, was published only two and a half months after the Study closed in a deliberate effort to get the issues before the Stockholm secretariat well ahead of the Conference.

SCEP led to other initiatives. Many support papers were written for it, and the meteorological series were subsequently published in the hard-backed second volume under review. Several of these have been revised since the study session. More importantly, two other study sessions have been held. SMIC, or Study of Man's Impact on Climate, was held in Stockholm in a three week period in 1971. Its report, uniform with that of SCEP, is the third volume under review.

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