Man, Mind and Land Review: A Theory of Resource Use

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It is difficult to decide whether to be most enthusiastic about the substance or the methodology of *Man, Mind and Land*. The honesty and imagination with which the theoretical model is developed fulfills our expectations of the author of the ecology classic, *Land Use In Central Boston*.

The problem that Professor Firey has posed is the development of a general theory specifying "the necessary and sufficient conditions for effecting changes in people's use of land resources" (p. 12). As he points out, resource systems or man-mind-land structures can be approached from the ecological, cultural, or economic point of view. Unfortunately for the resource planner, the optimal resource desiderata of each approach do not coincide. While these uni-dimensional approaches may be useful in setting up ideal type resource plans, there is need for more theory to specify what can be achieved in the real order. The problem then becomes a search for methods of balancing off these three resource optima against one another. The author points out that resource planning can have either development or conservation goals or both. Although the two kinds of objectives need not be mutually exclusive, the necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of natural resources is the concurrent or antecedent existence of instability in the physical or cultural environment. The parallel condition for
for conservation of natural resources is a stable environment.

The major contribution of *Man, Mind and Land* is to specify one of the conditions of effective resource planning, namely, resource users' or "plannees'" consent. (Admittedly, coercion can be an alternative to consent but the cost is high and legitimacy is never achieved.) Using data from the South Plains of Texas, the author tests several of his hypotheses concerning the composition of attitudes which a resource planner needs to count upon if he is to win the consent of the resource users. He substantiates the proposition that if a plannee views a newly proposed process as undesirable and uncertain of actualization, the user will only employ it if it is gainful to himself. On the other hand, if a plannee asserts that a newly proposed process is both desirable and likely of actualization, he will feel obliged to employ it if it has the further attribute of being gainful to others as well as to himself.

Certainly all who are committed to the economic development of natural resources as a concomitant of population growth will welcome this multi-dimensional study. Professor Firey has succeeded in providing some theoretical underpinnings for the difficult choices that governments face in seeking to realize maximal utilization of land and resources.

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