

undermine the usefulness of the book. In some cases the authors are bogged down in technical minutiae (Gary Cook and Eldon Boes on renewable energy technologies). In other cases the information provided is so rudimentary that it seems the authors misperceived the level of sophistication of the book's likely audience (Jacob Park on climate change policy; David Inouye's optimism about biodiversity conservation; Cook and Boes' conclusions). In still other cases, the authors take too narrow a view of the problems they address (Marc Cohen's failure to address global trade or the U.S. industrial food system in the chapter on food policy; Heather Conley and Warren Phillips' focus on the political economy of fossil fuel production in their chapter on energy, security, and cooperation).

Some chapters are more successful. Ken Conca's approach to global water prospects and Matthias Ruth's chapter on the socioeconomic and political challenges of climate change both balance technical and social considerations. Patricia Marchak's chapter on forest degradation and the timber trade is perhaps the best-structured chapter of the topical section of the book. She begins by explaining the relevance of her chosen topic to the challenge of achieving ecological security and then addresses the relevant social and technical issues in doing so.

The inconsistency of the topical chapters serves to weaken the book by robbing it of the ability to provide a cohesive statement on ecological security. The closing chapter by Cousins reviews the topics that form the foundation of the concept of ecological security introduced by Pirages in the first chapter: ecosystem functionality, complexity and uncertainty, values and environmental policy, institutions and change, and global concerns and local contexts. Although Cousins discusses each of these topics compellingly and with valuable insight, he barely mentions ecological security, leaving the reader confused about the point of the volume. The apparent hands-off approach of the editors results in a missed opportunity to contribute an important work to a field of practice and scholarship that is already of great relevance to resource management in the 21st century.

Princen, Thomas. 2005. *The Logic of Sufficiency*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

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Thomas Princen's *The Logic of Sufficiency* argues for a radical change in the way we think about the relationships among resource use, production, and consumption. It is a hugely ambitious book, offering a comprehensive indictment of the logic of efficiency, a detailed discussion of the logic of sufficiency that he argues should replace it, and three case studies of the latter logic in action. The book is a must-read for those scholars who look at the relationship between human society and the natural environment at the macro scale. Whether or not it

is ultimately convincing, this insightful and engaging book will get the reader thinking.

Princen's book is part of a growing literature in the study of environmental politics on consumption, and the need to relate patterns of human consumption to the carrying capacities of the natural environment. Its particular target, however, is not modern consumer society, but rather modern producer society, and in particular the idea of efficiency that drives modern production. Efficiency is central not only to how we think of about production; it is also the core concept in the way we think about environmental management, and Princen is equally critical of the concept in both instances. His concept of sufficiency is not based on ratios of input to output, as is the case with efficiency. Rather, it is based on the absolute size of inputs and outputs. Sufficiency means we do not take out of the environment more than it can support, and we do not take in to our economies more than we need.

The book itself provides both a detailed social history of the concept of efficiency, and a critique of the concept as a tool both for managing the environment, and for managing our own working lives. The three case studies of the logic of sufficiency focus on renewable forestry in California, sustainable lobstering in Maine, and automobile-free transportation in Toronto. The book concludes with a set of "what ifs" that provide a guide to how a sustainable future might look rather than a guide for how to get there *per se*.

A book this ambitious, one that tries to rewrite the very underpinnings of the economy and society more broadly, will inevitably have weaknesses. A weakness of this one is that the logic of efficiency, while an effective rhetorical foil for Princen's argument about sufficiency, might not be quite up to all of the opprobrium that he heaps upon it. Efficiency may in fact be quite a useful tool in a world of limited resources and considerable human need. The environmental and social problems that we face are certainly related to the goals toward which we use efficiency, but the goals themselves, driven as they are by a consumerist capitalist society, are not necessarily as inherent in the logic of efficiency as he claims. Furthermore, production-oriented societies that are not as focused on efficiency as ours (the Soviet Union and China in their processes of industrialization come to mind) do not seem to treat their natural environments any better.

A second weakness in the argument is a tension that is never quite worked out between human needs and environmental capacities in the logic of sufficiency. According to this logic we should draw no more resources than we need, and no more than can be used sustainably. Ideally the former quantity will be smaller than the latter. But what if it is not? How do we know what is enough from the human end? Does environmental carrying capacity always trump human need in the logic of sufficiency? The argument is not always clear on these issues. The case studies are not particularly good guides to these questions either. All three of them look at people who may not be wealthy by contemporary North American standards, but who are enormously wealthy by both

global and historical standards. Can the planet support more than six billion people at the standard of living enjoyed by Toronto Islanders, or even Maine islanders? Probably not.

In this sense, Princen's examples are in a way quite politically conservative. They are all examples of decisions by those who control natural resources to limit the use of those resources, usually by excluding those who do not control them. This model of conserving looks appealing from the perspective of those who have resources to control. But from the perspective of, say, the billion-plus people living in Third World urban slums who control no resources, this model of local control can look a little scary, because it can leave them frozen out of an economy of sufficiency.

These are all issues raised by *The Logic of Sufficiency* that need to be thought through. This book will get people thinking about them. It points to problems at the core of contemporary approaches to environmental management. One can quibble with the details of how it portrays those problems or with its proposed solutions, but at the same time it is hard not to appreciate both the magnitude and the necessity of the task Princen has set himself in this book.