

## BOOK REVIEWS

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GEOGRAPHY IN AMERICA, edited by Gary L. Gaile and Cort J. Willmott. Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company, 1989.

When *American Geography Inventory and Prospect* was published in 1954, Geography was enjoying a truly halcyon period in its history. There seemed to be no real question about the definition of the discipline. One methodology, regional concept dominated (taking 8 percent of the space in *AGIP*, second only to Political Geography with 10 percent of the pages). The topical breakdown of the field seemed reasonable and exclusive. No serious philosophical issues were apparently in need of resolution. Description provided an ample avenue for presenting our research findings.

Twenty-five years later the contrasts are overwhelming. No one definition of Geography is accepted; debates about philosophy, epistemology and methodology are constant and often bitter; the subdivisions of the field are in both a state of flux and a blur. *Geography in America* is a well-edited, structured survey of virtually all the issues currently facing the field of Geography as viewed from the United States.

The book consists of an introduction by the editors and 33 chapters structured around seven major themes: environmental processes and resources, historical and cultural contributions to geographic understanding, analysis and management of societal growth and change, assessment and management of hazards and the infirm, international understanding through regional synthesis, emerging perspectives on geographic inquiry, and analysis and display of geographic phenomena. One not unanticipated result of this structure is that topics tend to get spread out over various chapters with only the index listing to link them. The only editorial flaw in the book is the lack of any cross-references within chapters to similar material elsewhere in the book. Immediately following the introduction is a chapter on geography in American education. The volume includes both a name and a subject index.

In general each of the 33 chapters has a similar structure. The recent history of the field is described and then major philosophical, epistemological, and methodological issues outlined. Then major research themes are described. Finally suggestions are made regarding which future research areas show the most need or promise. In general, the chapters describe general issues so that when individuals are mentioned, at most the major theme or net conclusion of research is alluded to. There is the expected variation from chapter to chapter: some emphasize current research, whereas others focus on critique which often borders on invective. There is considerable variation in the definition

of "American," with the work of Canadians, British, and even Israeli geographers cited.

This work will be useful to three groups. First, professional geographers everywhere will find it a ready source, given the extensive bibliographies which append each chapter. This group may find reading any one chapter frustrating as, given space limitations, it is not always possible to provide all the details about research issues which one may want. Second, graduate students will find the book a ready reference for the best search for future research areas. Third, non-geographers will find the volume an ample testimony to the excitement, richness and vitality which characterizes our research and teaching.

If *Geography in America* is to have an impact, the challenges facing the discipline must be quickly met. In the introduction, the editors cite five major challenges: an undercurrent of intolerance for approaches to Geography which differ from tradition and a resistance to change in general; the prevalence of geographic illiteracy which includes both the commonplace issue of general geographic illiteracy and our own intellectual deficiencies in quantitative methods, science, languages and cultures; the divergence of human and physical geography in their search for inspiration; the decline of international and regional interests and expertise; and the diminishing scale at which American geographers conduct their research. These issues must be resolved if Geography is to grow in stature within our Universities and attain credibility in its applied aspects. Widespread discussion and use of *Geography in America* will be an important first step in openly and honestly debating the challenges.

Roger Mark Selya  
University of Cincinnati

THE METROPOLIS ERA. VOL. 2, MEGA-CITIES, edited by Mattei Dogan and John D. Kasadra. Newbury Park: CA. Sage Publications, 1988.

This is the second of two volumes dealing with the growing phenomenon of the world's Mega-Cities. The first volume, also edited by Dogan and Kasadra, reviewed various aspects of this phenomenon in more general and comprehensive terms. This volume explores in detail ten giant cities from around the globe.

The selection of cities is interesting, focusing on two of the three poles of the global cultural environments: four cities of the developed Western nations and six of the rapidly urbanized Third World societies. With the exception of Shanghai, presented in this volume as a unique case of the Third World Mega-City, there is no other discussion of large cities belonging to countries with "centrally-planned economies." This is a major shortcoming of the volume.

The volume, edited by a sociologist and a political scientist, incorporates contributions of six sociologists, three geographers, two planners, a political scientist, an economist, an architect, and an historian. This seems to be a very promising selection of writers. Yet, the dominance of the editors, and possibly their terms of reference, as