



Managed Realignment: A Viable Long-Term Coastal Management Strategy?; Esteves, L.S.

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BOOK REVIEW



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Managed Realignment: A Viable Long-Term Coastal Management Strategy? By Luciana S. Esteves, 2014. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer, 139 p. ISBN: 978-94-017-9028-4, Springer Briefs in Environmental Science. \$US 39.99.

This is an interesting book because it deals with some very old concepts that were forgotten with the advent of the industrial revolution (*ca.* 1760). Now with huge conurbations along the coast, concepts that were appreciated by aboriginals and preintensive agriculture or preindustrial revolutionists are now revived under different umbrellas. To put it simply, people long ago knew that it was not a very good idea to live close to the seashore because storms and floods could easily wipe out facilities and communities. With modern construction techniques and post-World War II desires to live on the coast, communities were developed along vulnerable coastal environments. Now there are major environmental problems caused by too many people living too close to the shore. Climate change and associated sea-level rise has exacerbated the problem to the point to where the danger is poignant to even casual observers.

This book is about potential solutions to the global problem of people loving the shore to death. Luciana Esteves expertly guides the reader through the maize of apparently potential possibilities for solving the problem while at the same time gently presenting the reader with what must ultimately be the most sensible solution to fall back (retreat) from the shore. That is what managed realignment is all about, falling back or retreating from harm's way. For many decades the strategy has been to fight Nature by attempting to hold the line against coastal erosion and relative sea-level rise. With large coastal populations coming under increasing risk due to coastal squeeze (less available space for accommodation), there is a need to shift from construction of hard coastal engineering structures to managed realignment.

The book contains the following 11 chapters: (1) The Need for Adaptation in Coastal Protection: Shifting from Hard Engineering to Managed Realignment, (2) What is Managed Realignment?, (3) Methods of Implementation, (4) Examples of Relevant Strategies and Policies, (5) Considerations on Managed Realignment in the Netherlands, (6) The National Trust Approach to Coastal Change and Adaptive Management, (7) Managed Retreat in Maui, Hawaii, (8) Managed Realignment in the U.K.: The Role of the Environment Agency, (9) Factors Influencing the Long-Term Sustainability of Managed Realignment, (10) Current Perceptions about Managed Realignment, and (11) Concluding Remarks. Perusal of these chapter titles gives a good overall impression of what aspects of

managed realignment the book deals with. Luciana has done a good job of answering all of the newspaper questions regarded as essential to effective reporting: who, what, when, where, why, and how. The need for such research and value of this book is immediately apparent after Luciana explains where there is a problem, who it is affecting, and why and how it is happening to most coastal communities around the world except in areas of glacial rebound.

Luciana contributed introductory material (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4) and concluding remarks (Chapters 10 and 11), whereas other chapters are completed by guest authors *viz.* Joost Stronkhorst and Jan Mulder (Chapter 5), Phil Dyke and Tony Flux (Chapter 6), Thorne Abbott (Chapter 7), Karen Thomas (Chapter 8), and Nigel Pontee (Chapter 9). The organization of the book is clear and presented in a logical and easy-to-follow manner.

There are color illustrations and tables and graphs that help present points of interest. Chapters are followed by references and the book is indexed. Appendix I contains an interesting and useful list of managed realignments projects in Europe. I found this list to be quite enlightening and interesting. Overall the book is well produced in soft cover at a reasonable price.

I enjoyed the book because it deals with reality and is not an academic exercise. And, the book is valuable because it illustrates the many positionalities that exist, showing that realignment requires managerial expertise and common sense. The latter is not so common these days due to politicization, which tends to obfuscate the reality of situations facing coastal communities. The authors have done a credible job of showing how it is not only desirable but possible to dance through political minefields. The feasibility of managed realignment lies at our fingertips if communities and their politicians are willing to be recognizant of that which is extant.

I recommend this book as a critical primer for those who wish to know more about the risks of living too close to the shore and who wish to reduce risk by proper management. Commendation goes to all of the authors for a job well done and to Luciana for foreseeing the need to get the word out. The world has witnessed a recent drang (drive or push) to the coast, but now it is prudent to recognize that climate change and relative sea-level rise require a fall-back response to avoid chaos in coastal conurbations as the sea reclaims what was taken by those wishing to abide by the sea. This paperback is a wake-up call for those who have not yet realized that managed realignment is not a suggestion but a requirement.

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