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Conflicts Over Resource Ownership: The Use of Public Policy by Private Interests, Albert M. Church

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CONFLICTS OVER RESOURCE OWNERSHIP: THE USE OF PUBLIC POLICY BY PRIVATE INTERESTS

ALBERT M. CHURCH

Lexington: D. C. Heath & Co. 1982. Pp. 242. \$24.95.

Conflicts Over Resource Ownership is a critique of micro-economics as an aid in analyzing natural resource controversies. The title is misleading in that the book is not really about ownership. "Ownership" seems to emphasize legal rights to exclude users. The theme of this book is that resource policy is the product of a complex of political and social as well as economic forces. The book focuses on the economic forces, particularly taxation.

Professor Church outlines clearly what micro-economics has to tell policy makers about resource policy. His continual emphasis that economic analysis is an aid to policy formulation is a refreshing contrast to the bombast of other economists who emphasize a partial technique as the controlling premise for policy.

One of the book's peculiarities is that a long chapter of American and Canadian case studies appears immediately after the introductory Overview. While the chapter is an admirably useful review, many readers may become lost in the thicket of detail before they reach the high ground of the subsequent theoretical discussions. The case studies contain much information and deserve a second reading.

The subsequent chapters develop the framework for analyzing resource problems. Professor Church kindly provides very plain and conspicuous benchmarks for the guidance of novitiates. Rigorous (logically valid) concepts are explained with enough detail to challenge the understanding of all but the most sophisticated readers. This complementation makes *Conflicts Over Resource Ownership* particularly useful for persons who wish to refresh their analytical skills.

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