

HUMAN DIMENSIONS

Q U A R T E R L Y

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The Planet and the Painted Globe

Richard C. Rockwell

Some years ago a clever cartoonist drew a puzzled astronaut looking down on an Earth painted like a library globe: blocks of pinks, greens, and blues set off the countries, bold lines clearly delineated boundaries, and countries were identified in large letters. Research on human dimensions of global environmental changes would be so much easier if that cartographer's globe were real. Unfortunately, what the astronauts have actually seen is a planet from which human politics have seemingly disappeared. They see an Earth on which the human creations of countries and their boundaries are veiled

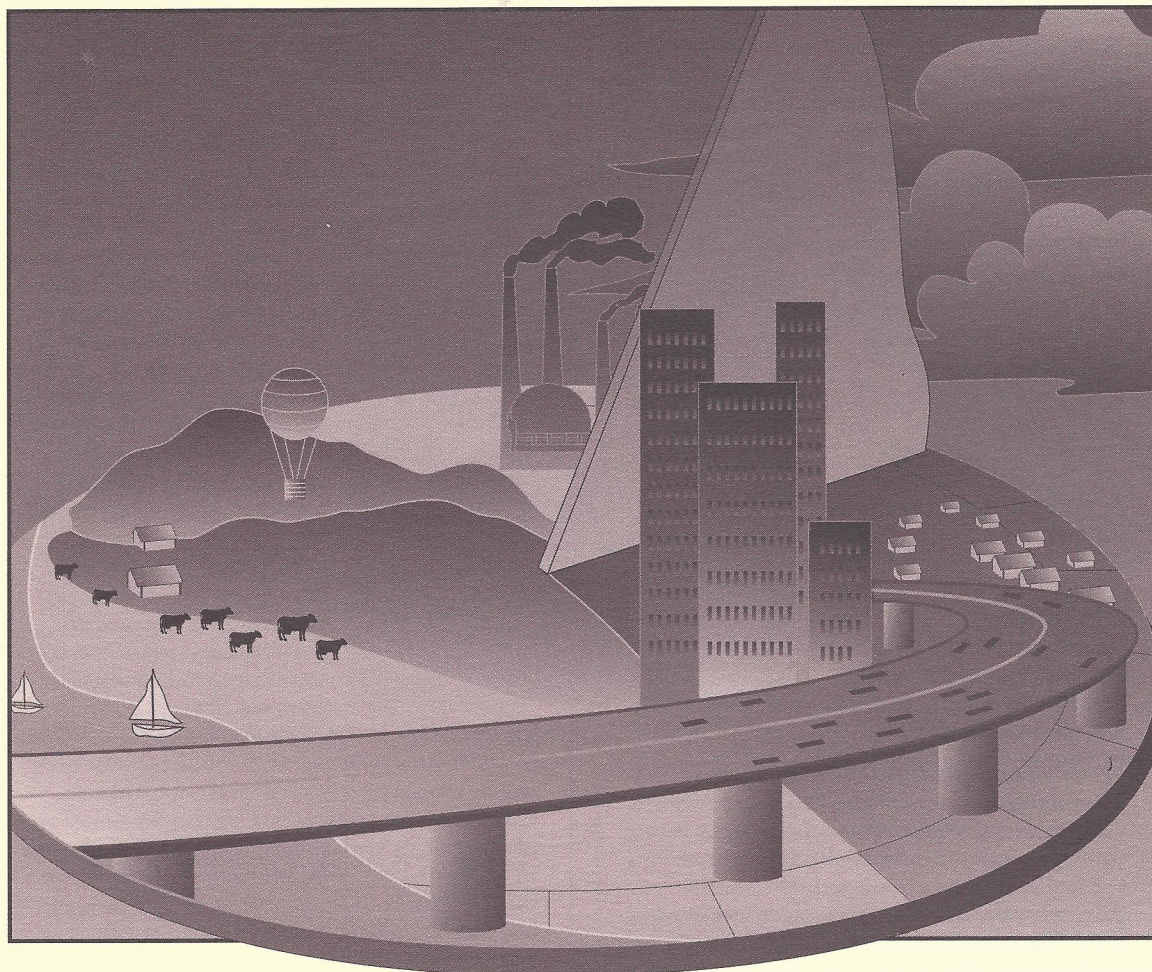
by the natural features of the planet—the oceans, seas, rivers, forests, ice fields, plains, and mountains that were mostly here before anyone thought to draw a national boundary or paint a map.

This globe without apparent political demarcations is the natural stage on which environmental changes play. It is not, however, the globe on which social science research is conducted. The human-centered globe of the social sciences has places, cities, and nation-states of which social scientists must take account. How to do so in a manner that permits linkages of social and natural science research is problematic.

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The First Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Community:

An Overview

by Steven E. Sanderson, John F. Richards, and David C. Major

The First Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Community took place at Duke University, Durham, NC, on June 1-3, 1995. The meeting was conceived by the Social Science Research Council's (SSRC) Committee for Research on Global Environmental Change and co-sponsored by the Committee, the Human Dimensions Programme, the Consortium for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), and the Duke University School of the Environment. Some 300 academic researchers,

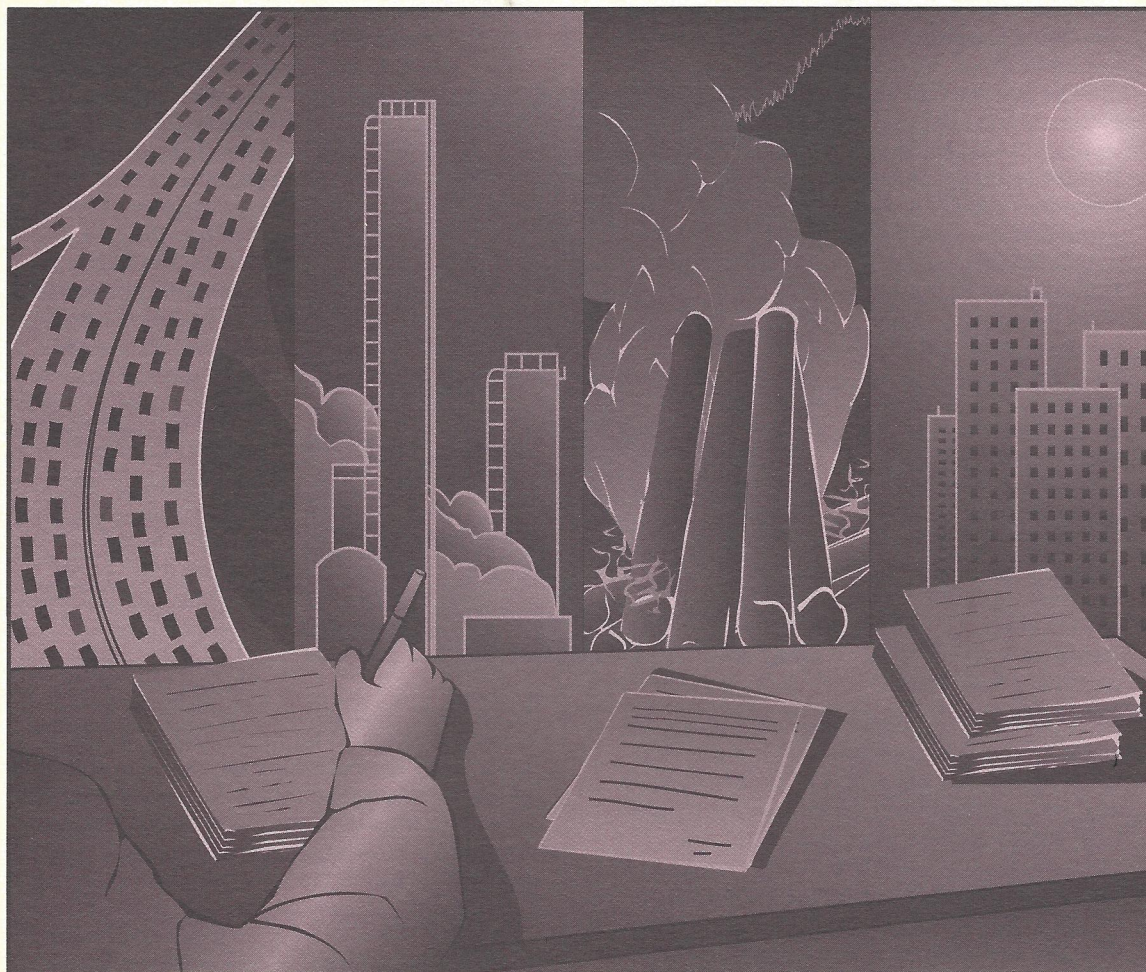
government experts, and graduate students attended the six plenaries, 25 small group sessions, and additional luncheon and evening sessions on special topics.

The purpose of the First Open Meeting was to bring together the growing human dimensions community to promote exchanges of information on current research, teaching and outreach; to encourage networking in this new field; and to attract social scientists, humanists, and others not previously involved in human dimensions work. The meeting organizers felt that the

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Why Do States Comply with International Agreements?

A Tale of Five Agreements and Nine Countries

by Edith Brown Weiss and Harold K. Jacobson

In 1972, when countries held the first international conference on the human environment, there were only three dozen multilateral agreements concerned with the environment. When countries met twenty years later in Rio, there were over 900 agreements and significant non-binding legal instruments concerned with the environment. The conclusion of new legal instruments continues at a rapid pace.¹

While it is always politically attractive to negotiate new agreements, it is important to ask whether these agreements are imple-

mented and complied with. It has been assumed that most countries comply with most international legal obligations most of the time. But there is substantial reason to question this assumption, at least for international environmental agreements. The traditional model of compliance assumes that countries accept treaties only when their governments regard them as in their interest; that because of this, countries generally comply with their obligations under the treaties; and that if they do not, sanctions are used to punish offenders and deter violations.