

# Global Environmental Politics, chapter 1

## Global Macrotrends

- Hidden material flows
- A question of **distributive justice**
  - “By some estimates, basic health care and nutrition for the world’s poor would cost about \$13 billion a year, less than the \$17 billion that is spent on pet food in Europe and the US” – similar stats for makeup, perfumes, ice cream vs. reproductive health, literacy, drinking water and immunization, etc.

## An Introduction to Global Environmental Politics

- “Global environmental politics can be defined by two dimensions: the environmental consequences of the economic activity in question and the states and non-state **actors** involved. If the consequences are global, or if the actors transcend one region, we consider it a global environmental issue”
- Four clusters identified by Oran Young
  1. Commons (Antarctica, high seas, ozone, climate, outer space)
  2. Shared natural resources (oil, migratory species, complex ecosystems)
  3. Transboundary externalities (Chernobyl, destruction of tropical forests)
  4. Linked issues (example: linkage between environment and development)
- Characteristics of global environmental politics
  1. The importance of **veto power**, veto/blocking states, and veto coalitions
  2. Political dynamics determined by the state actors’ trade in particular products
  3. Economic power can affect the outcome of bargaining; military power less so
  4. Some sort of agreement is usually reached, the above difficulties notwithstanding
  5. The role of public opinion and nonprofit NGOs are very important
- International **regimes** as “a system of principles, norms, rules, operating procedures, and institutions that actors create or accept to regulate and coordinate action in a particular issue area of international relations. Principles are beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behavior. Rules are specific prescriptions...”
- What does it mean to say that “in multilateral negotiations, all states must win”?
- **Framework convention** and **protocols**
- **Soft law**: “a nonbinding agreement...that establishes norms that influence state behavior”
- Overview of Global Environmental Regimes: MARPOL, CITES, LRTAP, Montreal Protocol, Basel Convention, Rotterdam and Stockholm, CBD, UNCLOS, FCCC and Kyoto

## Theoretical Approaches to International Regimes

1. Structural: the relative power of state actors involved determines the outcome
2. Game-theoretic (**zero-sum** or **non zero-sum**)
3. Institutional bargaining: states have too many conflicting military and economic concerns. As a result, international institutions must drive the outcome
4. Epistemic communities: scientific research and transnational experts determine the outcome

## Paradigm Shift and Environmental Politics

- What is a dominant social **paradigm**?
  - Currently, the exclusionist paradigm (because it excludes human beings from the laws of nature) – also called frontier economics, and is based on neoclassical economics
  - The **sustainable development** paradigm
  - A paradigm shift: **globalization** as a variant of the **exclusionist paradigm**
  - Added in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition (in addition to a section on “environmental change as a security issue”): “The **precautionary principle**: a new paradigm for environmental policy”