

## *Global Environmental Politics, chapter 1*

### Global Macrotrends (2-11)

- Hidden material flows (2)
- 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” (Table 1.1) – similar stats for makeup, perfumes, ice cream vs. reproductive health, literacy, drinking water and immunization (3-4)
  - “The world’s richest people use on average twenty-five times more energy than the poorest ones; the richest comprise only 15 percent of the world’s population, but they use more than half its energy.” (6)
- News piece from last Friday – Bill Gates saying we need technology *and* sustainability: “As land becomes increasingly scarce, farmers are forced to turn to intensive agriculture; the dramatically higher levels of irrigation and chemicals will, in turn, contribute to soil erosion, salinization, deteriorating water quality, and desertification.” (6)

### 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” (12)
- Four clusters identified by Oran Young (12-13)
  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 (14-16)
  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**

Many definitions, but: “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 or proscriptions for action.” (17)
- What does it mean to say that “in multilateral negotiations, all states must win”?

- **Framework convention and protocols** (19)
- **Soft law**: “a nonbinding agreement...that establishes norms that influence state behavior”
- Overview of Global Environmental Regimes (20-23): 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: the outcome is determined by the number of parties involved and the nature of the conflict (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, but not towards sustainable development: **globalization** as a variant of the **exclusionist paradigm**

#### Recent articles and events of note

Good article on this year’s economics Nobel prize winners, who have nuanced Hardin’s “Tragedy of the Commons”:

[http://www.economist.com/businessfinance/economicsfocus/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=1463840](http://www.economist.com/businessfinance/economicsfocus/displaystory.cfm?story_id=1463840)  
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“Maldives Cabinet holds underwater meeting to highlight threat of global warming”

<http://www.newser.com/article/d9bct8i80/maldives-cabinet-holds-underwater-meeting-to-highlight-threat-of-global-warming.html>