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Review: Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment

By Jennifer Clapp and Peter Dauvergne

Reviewed by Amy E. Harth

Illinois, USA

Clapp, Jennifer, and Dauvergne, Peter. *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011. 354pp. ISBN 9780262515825. US \$27.00, trade paperback.

Clapp and Dauvergne begin by presenting four environmental worldviews: market liberal, institutionalist, bioenvironmentalist and social green. They attempt to explain these worldviews from an insider's perspective. The authors begin with the market liberal perspective because this is, chronologically, the first point of view, and subsequent viewpoints are responses to the market liberal perspective ingrained in modern economic and political thought. They demonstrate that the institutionalist view arose from concerns about market forces and the need for governmental oversight, while the bioenvironmentalist view is a more recent combination of Malthusian population concerns and their global environmental impact. Finally, Clapp and Dauvergne explain that the social green perspective reflects 20th century concerns about social justice and the rights of marginalized groups.

The authors explore several macro-level topics of political economy and their environmental components through the lens of each of these worldviews. They address environmental concerns about globalization; poverty and the inequality of resources and wealth; trade; international business investment and international financing. They close by summarizing how each worldview would propose an ideal environmental world.

The scope of the authors' examination is broad. While the analysis is at the macro-level, examples used provide specific scenarios to contextualize the conclusions of each worldview. The agenda, by definition, requires the authors to subsume their own viewpoints and variously adopt the philosophies of each of these four groups. The authors acknowledge that these groupings are somewhat artificial, as the typical person would appreciate some points from more than one group. The authors do an excellent job of avoiding obvious bias. One suggestion for the next edition is to have each author identify the worldview he or she sympathizes with most to contextualize this information. This would allow the reader to determine if the authors are being gentle with, or aggressive toward, their own viewpoints either consciously or otherwise.

The structure of the analysis is unique. Instead of arguing for one path, the authors present multiple options and examine each option through the viewpoint of its adherents and detractors. One possible concern is that since the viewpoints are presented in chronological order, there may be a perception that this presents the viewpoints as covering a spectrum from reasonable to impractical. This does not appear to be the authors' intention; however, this structure – starting with the established view and presenting alternatives ranging from the plausible to the outlandish – is a device often used in academic analysis. Because of this practice, it may be challenging for the reader to give serious consideration to all four points of view.

The intended audience appears to be the interested student. The book is accessible for talented undergraduates. It would also be useful for graduate students and for those in various related academic disciplines. One suggestion for the next edition is to include a definition of political economy. As this is the central framework of the book and an often used term, it would be helpful to have the author's opinion of what this means.

Perhaps most importantly, this is not only an academic work. This would be an excellent primer for political, non-profit and commercial leaders. Leaders representing different sectors might be able to create more effective projects because of their understanding of different approaches to environmental

protection and preservation. A better understanding of the ideas of one's colleagues would facilitate creating viable solutions rather than leading to stalemate because of worldview-based conflicts.

Thus, Clapp and Dauvergne do an excellent job of presenting complex, macro-level issues and providing ways of seeing important environmental concerns that are relevant to the global community.

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