

# Globalization and Environmental Policy

By John Barkdull

Globalization has generated widespread opposition, in large part because of the environmental threats globalization both exacerbates and creates. Conservatives, liberals, socialists, labor unionists, greens, and many others share a distrust of the globalization process as it is understood and implemented today. These disparate, often contending, groups differ considerably as to why they oppose globalization, some emphasizing economic values, others cultural, yet others ecological. This conflict of opinion among globalization opponents obscures important common ground that could produce more effective political organizing for defense of environmental values. Identifying and describing their shared values and perspectives can contribute to coalition building across ideological and policy lines so that environmental sustainability is more likely to be achieved.

Globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon. The term, as a contested and important political sign, carries many meanings. Various authors have defined it as a qualitative change in the character of interdependence, the deepening of the world economy, the emergence of a single world polity, the rising significance of transsovereign problems, the end of the significance of territory and distance, a subjective apprehension that we are all part of one world, and more. Efforts to define it in terms of a single significant dimension are misguided. In general, these various meanings amount to the claim that along many dimensions—cultural, economic, political, environmental, psychological—the world has become a single whole rather than a collection of loosely related national states. Which aspect of globalization is important, how it has come about, what implications it holds for human affairs will vary from context to context. Nonetheless, like other contested political terms (democracy, freedom, justice, power and the like) globalization refers to a related set of concerns.

Similarly, the term “environment” has no simple meaning. Environment might refer to the natural world, that which is not a product of human imagination and labor. This might in turn mean that the environment refers only, or mainly, to wilderness areas of the world. By contrast, it could refer both to the natural and to the built environment, meaning then all that exists outside the human body and mind. In practice, the line between the built and the natural environment is quite blurry. Wilderness areas are such only because humans have socially constructed the notion of pristine wilderness. Setting aside lands to represent wild nature is itself a human intervention into the natural world. Moreover, no part of the world lacks the stamp

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of human activity, although discerning it might be difficult to the casual observer. As Steven Vogel notes, the focus of our concern is “the world that surrounds us, a world that is always already the product of our previous practices, and changes as those practices change.”<sup>1</sup>

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## **Globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon.**

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Nonetheless, humans did not build or create everything on which human life depends. The planet, along with its bioregions, climate, landscapes, oceans, living plants and animals, and the complex relationships that tie all such entities together were here before humans and will likely be here after humans are gone. Environment here refers to the totality of external physical conditions that affect the growth, health, and development of living beings. The human environment designates the external physical conditions, both built and “natural,” that are more or less directly implicated in human well-being, while environment more broadly refers to the external physical conditions that affect all life on the planet.

The environmental problem is characterized by those human activities that affect external physical conditions in ways detrimental to the growth, health, and development of living things. Human activities that have been the focus of the policy debate have been mostly economic, mostly related to industrialization and the associated shift from low-energy, agricultural production to manufacturing and transportation utilizing significant amounts of energy from coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear power, and hydroelectric sources. Industrialization and high energy use, it is said, threaten to disrupt the external physical conditions for life, but they are also said to offer the best hope for raising global living standards. Globalization promises more industrialization and more energy use, which in turn means wider and more intensive effects on the environment for living beings, perhaps to the point that ecological systems deteriorate so far that the continued growth, health, and development of living things becomes questionable. Hence, the policy debate centers on the question of whether the predominant trend in global economic arrangements can be sustained for the long term. If so, how; if not, then what alternatives do we have?

In assessing the relationship between globalization and the environment, this paper focuses on several policy responses to globalization. These can be understood as “policy projects” that incorporate a set of values, make assumptions about human motivations, explain how the world works, identify the limits of the possible, and draw conclusions as to the best policies to adopt in pursuit of certain ends. The task here is to draw out the aspects of these policy projects relevant to the environmental question, with the aim of showing that widely divergent responses to the challenges of globalization can nonetheless find areas of agreement on which to advance effective environmental policies that enjoy broad popular support.

## THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization presents a number of challenges. Globalization, it is said, forces nations and subnational governments into a policy “race to the bottom.” As various authorities compete to attract and hold highly mobile corporate investment, they push wages down, discourage unionizing, offer corporate tax breaks and subsidies, and relax safety, labor, and environmental regulations. Globalization entails loss of sovereignty that threatens democratic governance as well as the social gains won through decades of hard political work. Furthermore, globalization is said to exacerbate income inequalities, especially in struggling nations in the developing world. Economic change brought about by globalization also creates social upheaval, threatens cultural identities and disrupts communities. All these and more can lead to high levels of political conflict and violence. Political conflict, in turn, creates massive refugee flows, destabilization, and powerful resentments against the nations pushing globalization forward, from which terrorist reprisals may ensue.

Globalization does have its ardent supporters. They counter with claims that the surest road to economic growth is opening and liberalizing the market. Economic growth raises the incomes of the poor. It also provides the means to pursue social goals, such as worker safety, education, income support, and environmental protection. Moreover, economic growth induces a demographic transition, slowing the birth rate and alleviating a major cause of environmental harm. Also, globalization, by turning countries toward the market, encourages political liberalization, opening space for environmental activism to operate. Cultural conflict declines, without necessarily erasing identities. International cooperation to solve common problems becomes normal, and countries learn to negotiate rather than fight. Global communications technologies enable the oppressed to be heard, injustices to be addressed, and environmental values to be presented to a global public.

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Despite such optimistic interpretations, it is difficult to overlook the environmental challenges globalization both creates and makes worse. Mainly human-induced, global climate change is bound to increase as globalization proceeds. Economic growth that is driven by the world market is heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Transporting goods to serve world markets requires energy mostly from oil and coal, and development around the world means increasing reliance on automobiles. Economic growth especially in the less developed countries also will generate more air, water, and soil pollution. The global demand for wood products is driving lumber operations into previously untouched areas, such as Siberia, as well as accelerating deforestation in the tropics. The result is lost biodiversity, estimated now at one thousand species per year extinct due to human activities.<sup>2</sup> Demand for food and urban space hurries the conversion of wild areas to agriculture and pavement.

In the face of these and many other environmental problems, the capacities for governance are limited. A relative handful of countries have strong laws, plus the willingness and ability to enforce those laws. International environmental treaties are numerous but, focusing for the most part on discrete environmental problems, they fail to address the bigger issues of the ecological effects of economic growth. Moreover, the ideology of economic growth predominates in policy making circles. National leaders and the guiding hands in the international financial institutions generally agree that the cure for social ills is growth—sustainable growth, they may claim, but growth before all else.

Opponents of globalization lack the unity to press an effective environmental agenda. Opponents have many divergent reasons for finding current globalization trends distressing. Some are most troubled by the threat to social democracy; they fear that globalization will render popular organizing irrelevant and result in the dismantling of hard-won social protections. Others deplore the loss of national identity and autonomy. They believe that the nation is something to be valued in its own right, not merely because a government can deliver the goods to individual consumers. Some are worried that Main Street, domestic-oriented businesses will succumb to global competition. Yet others find the loss of local traditions, direct democracy, and human-sized economic institutions distressing. To some in wealthy countries, globalization means lost income and benefits for workers, as the impoverished in developing nations take well-paid manufacturing jobs away. A few see globalization as just the latest chapter of capitalist development, meaning more exploitation, more violent repression of the opposition to profit-making corporate activities, more war, and all the rest that capitalism, they say, brings. Hence, globalization opponents might promote nationalism, direct democracy, unions, the welfare state, or revolutionary change as the appropriate response. Although all are opponents of the current brand of globalization, they differ widely on why. What common ground can these diverse and often contending foes of globalization find regarding environmental matters?

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In part, the question of which way to address the environmental effects of globalization depends on some notion of how severe the environmental problem is. Positions on this issue vary widely. Enthusiasts for globalization would be most likely to say that no crisis exists. Resource scarcities and threats to human well-being arising from environmental pressures are best met by allowing the market and human ingenuity to devise new solutions. Probably the most widely held view, shared by many adaptationists, is that environmental problems are serious and require policy intervention; leaving things to the market is not sufficient. Nonetheless, existing institutions—the market, representative democracy, the system of sovereign states—are fundamentally sound and able to adapt to environmental challenges. Greens,

deep greens, leftists, and others tend to argue that environmental problems can only be met successfully with significant institutional transformation. The corporate-dominated market and the electoral system awash in corporate cash offer little hope of real change, but more democratic, egalitarian institutions might. Lastly, for pessimists, it is already too late for an effective response. Human population has already exceeded the earth's carrying capacity, and the kind of sweeping reform needed to reduce population and enact stringent environmental laws is remote; survivalist escape is the sensible option for the prescient individual. Although only experience can resolve this matter, the truth regarding human well-being probably lies somewhere between those who see the problem as manageable and those who advocate institutional reform to meet the problem. In other words, the environmental challenge is significant enough to require a high-level response, but the world is not about to end, nor even the human race.

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Yet, if we broaden our view beyond the needs of human beings, the situation does appear considerably worse. Environmental philosophers remind us that our ethical obligations extend beyond ensuring the survival of the human species and guarding against health threats posed by environmental degradation. Other living creatures, they claim, have moral standing too. Hence, biodiversity loss presents a serious moral issue, and an adequate response to globalization must respect the rights of other living things to have a home on planet earth. If this is so, then that means we also have an obligation to refrain from disrupting the evolutionary processes on which biodiversity depends. Therefore, even if the most sanguine view of how pressing the environmental challenge is for human well-being is correct, an important duty to address these problems remains.

### THE ENTHUSIAST POLICY PROJECT

As currently practiced, the globalization process reflects a human-oriented environmental philosophy and the belief that corporate-led economic growth is the best solution to environmental problems. Although the globalization enthusiasts in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and most of the world's major financial and political capitals nod in the direction of "sustainable development," the overriding concern is to maintain the conditions for economic growth. The enthusiasts' view toward globalization more generally is that it is progressive and all but inevitable. Their main fear is that misguided governments facing domestic political resistance will halt progress toward further economic liberalization to serve immediate political needs. In short, as an International Monetary Fund article put it, "The forces of globalization must be embraced."<sup>3</sup>

Behind this attitude lies the belief that endless economic growth is both possible and desirable. Faced with claims that there are environmental limits to growth, globalization enthusiasts have adopted a particular formulation of the concept of sustainable development, or, in a widely known definition, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>4</sup> More simply, the World Bank calls for “development that lasts.”<sup>5</sup> The emphasis remains on maintaining the conditions for strong economic growth. Unless environmental problems are addressed, the World Bank says, “resource depletion and population growth places the sustainability of development at risk in a large number of the poorest countries.”<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the IMF worries that environmental degradation could “dampen a country’s economic growth.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the IMF claims that the export-oriented growth policies of the East Asian nations resulted in reduced poverty and “progress on democracy and other fronts, such as labor standards and the environment.”<sup>8</sup> The main worry expressed in such venues as the major international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization is that environmental concerns might serve as a pretext for limiting capital flows and for non-tariff barriers to trade.

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Critical observers have noted that sustainable development as interpreted by these enthusiasts for globalization places the emphasis more heavily on development than on sustainability.<sup>9</sup> Development is understood as implementing a certain model of economic and social norms. Nations are considered “backward” or underdeveloped to the extent that they fail to emulate industrial democracies; the United States and Europe are the norm to which all ought to aspire. Sustainability became an issue only when resource scarcities and possible limits to growth began to appear. Yet, rather than seeing ecological limits as signs that the system might contain a self-destructive flaw, these barriers to unplanned, unrestrained industrialization were viewed as relatively minor management problems. Limited management would provide the framework for continued corporate-led economic expansion. Ultimately, the best managers came to be the corporations themselves. Efficiency was the solution to resource scarcities and environmental pressures, and who could better implement economic efficiency than corporations responding to the bottom line? Thus, the enthusiast take on sustainable development calls for more thoroughgoing adoption of global integrated markets, with associated values of consumerism and utility maximization. In short, business as usual, only more fully implemented. This, critics assert, is the thinking that has brought us to the current state of ecological decline. Yet, it is also the prevalent thinking shaping current policy, in both north and south. Unless resisted or changed, the policies that flow from the enthusiast policy project portend ecological disaster.

**ADAPTATIONIST POLICY PROJECT**

Where is the resistance to emerge? As noted, four distinct opposition views are identifiable in policy literature and among political activists. To begin, the adaptationist response (in three variations) is most congenial to the enthusiast view. The adaptationist policy project assumes that globalization is so far advanced that reversing the process would be unbearably costly. Moreover, properly managed by enlightened public authorities (not left to corporate managers) globalization has been and can continue to be beneficial. Adaptationists are primarily concerned to both reap the benefits of global liberalization of markets and to preserve and expand the gains of social democracy. Adaptationists accept that unregulated capitalism will, as its more radical critics claim, undercut the gains made regarding worker rights, wages, social protections, consumer safety, and environmental protection. Still, they say, we need not abandon the free market to preserve these gains. One policy options is “shared austerity,” collective belt-tightening by labor, capital and the public sector so the nation’s economy remains internationally competitive. Another, the global Keynesian response, would raise the level of management to match the scope of the market, meaning more reliance on multilateral organizations to regulate global capital, thus solving the problem of corporate mobility. A third response is for public policy to enhance those factors of production that are not highly mobile—a trained and dedicated workforce, an efficient public infrastructure, and a legal system that ensures the security of investment—so as to attract mobile capital with the promise of high profits and low-risk.<sup>10</sup>

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As noted, adaptationists generally see environmental regulations as part of the gains of social democracy, to be preserved against unchecked economic globalization. They do not reject the enthusiasts’ prescription (reliance on corporate social responsibility, technological progress, and market efficiency) but add to it. For example, the Progressive Policy Institute, associated with the “New Democrats” in the United States, posits the need for a “third way” between nationalist unilateralism and *laissez-faire*. The Progressive Policy Institute asserts (in agreement with enthusiasts) that free trade provides the national wealth, higher personal incomes, and changed values that underpin effective national environmental policies. Yet, they also note that “the market alone will not account for environmental costs, particularly degradation of the global commons, such as air and water, so a world of liberalized trade needs to also expand its system of environmental protection.”<sup>11</sup> They believe that an open world economy and environmental regulations aim at the same goal: a higher quality of life. The question is how to ensure a cleaner environment “as trade expands, as it inevitably will



do.”<sup>12</sup> They reject the notion that environmental conditions be written into trade agreements. Rather, economic institutions such as the World Trade Organization ought to work toward opening the world economy, while separate agreements should address the environmental challenges created by industrialization and economic growth.

Adaptationists who advocate attracting capital to the immobile factors of production note that the most highly valued workers are also the most mobile. “Symbolic analysts,”<sup>13</sup> unlike production workers and direct service delivery workers, are barely tied to any particular locale. Their products—financial analysis, consulting work, advertising, brokering—are often produced and delivered via phones, fax, email, and the internet. Symbolic analysts are therefore free to choose where they live based on quality of life concerns, including environmental quality. Pollution, inadequate recreational opportunities, ugly surroundings, and the like will drive symbolic analysts to areas that offer a clean, diverse environment. With them go the investment capital, high-paying careers, demand for upscale entertainment and culture, and the tax base, as well as demand for many workers in the direct service sector. Recognizing this should induce policy makers to maintain environmental protections, rather than engage in the race to the bottom. Hence, this aspect of the adaptationist policy project would support policies aimed at sustainability, at least in certain areas.

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Adaptationists are more likely than enthusiasts to acknowledge that a serious environmental problem exists. They understand why the public and environmentalists are wary of globalization. They call for a significant public policy role in meeting the challenge. Yet, they remain wedded to the priority of economic growth, and they tend toward a human-centered evaluation of environmental policy. Separating trade and investment policy from environmental policy seems to make protecting the environment an afterthought. Only after we have experienced market-led growth and observed the untoward consequences do negotiations begin to mitigate the problems. Those who advocate linking environmental issues with economic issues insist that both must be dealt with together, which third way adaptationists reject. Further, if environmental protection can be won for some areas by relying on symbolic analysts’ preferences, it remains that this is no guarantee against unsound environmental practices in other areas. Without some larger vision, the best that might be had is a kind of bioregional NIMBY approach that displaces environmental harms from symbolic analysts’ neighborhoods in northern California, the Pacific Northwest, the Alps, and other chic locales onto the neighborhoods of the poor and powerless.

Certainly, the adaptationist policy project represents an environmental gain over the enthusiast embrace of globalization. Adaptationists are more willing to use public policy to achieve socially desired ends. The political space this opens up could enable domestic interest groups and “global civil society”<sup>14</sup> to win protections of some wilderness areas, convince governments to negotiate somewhat stronger environmental



treaties, and put pressure on regulatory agencies. Still, the adaptationist project rests on the claim that trade, environment, and the rights of labor are not in conflict, that a third way can be found that resolves apparent conflict in a wider harmony of interests. Sustainable economic growth is the common bond that brings this harmony of interests about and allows a degree of consensus on the proper role of public policy in balancing these concerns. If the proposition that endless economic growth is sustainable is wrong, which way will adaptationists go? Will they shed environmental commitments (especially obligations to protect the well-being and interests of non-human species) so that economic growth can continue for a while longer? Will they move toward calls for more fundamental institutional change that might meet the environmental challenge, but perhaps at the price of giving up market-led globalization? Although only experience can answer such questions, it is important to note that the adaptationist policy project does include explicit recognition of environmental values and some dissent from the current methods for implementing globalization.

### CONSERVATIVE NATIONALIST POLICY PROJECT

Stronger opposition to globalization, although less obvious support for environmental values, emerges from the conservative nationalists. Conservative nationalists believe that a nation is a unique cultural and historical phenomenon, as such the proper object of human loyalty. They deplore globalization mainly because it undercuts the autonomy and distinctiveness of the nation, and it leads policy makers to adopt policies that are not in the national interest. The conservative nationalist position can tend toward xenophobia and even racism.<sup>15</sup> More measured versions assert that one ought to value one's own nation, but that foreigners have the same right and duty. America for Americans, France for the French, and Argentina for the Argentines—no nation need be assumed to be superior or more worthy, but all are unique and valuable. To be sure, in practice, maintaining the line between seeing one's own nation as uniquely valuable and seeing it as also superior to others is difficult to maintain. Be that as it may, conservative nationalists have voiced as much opposition to such symbols of globalization as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization, and the European Union as radical critics.

Patrick Buchanan's book *The Great Betrayal*<sup>16</sup> offers one of the most focused statements of this view in the context of U.S. politics. Buchanan calls for returning trade policy to its historic protectionist stance, reversing the foolish liberalization begun during Woodrow Wilson's administration and stepped up dramatically after the Kennedy Round of the GATT negotiations. Buchanan condemns footloose corporations that have lost their ties to their countries of origin, and he favors policies that support Main Street businesses and industries. Main Street, he presumes, will maintain the post-war social contract with labor to maintain decent living standards in exchange for productivity and harmony. In Buchanan's view, falling real wages experienced by the American working and middle classes are the direct result of globalization, particularly free trade. Buchanan's view represents the perspective of

most conservative nationalists, but without the overt racism and anti-semitism found in some quarters. The focus is almost entirely on the cultural and economic effects of globalization. Conservative nationalists tend to be silent on environmental issues. Indeed, in most instances, conservative nationalists are found lining up with the globalizing advocates of laissez-faire in opposition to environmentalism. Moreover, they are especially worried about the loss of manufacturing jobs, jobs in the very industries that cause the most environmental concern.

Yet, Buchanan's conservative nationalism is not inimical to a new current in conservative circles, represented by the group Republicans for Environmental Protection. According to this view, conservatives ought to be environmentalists. Many of the values that motivate conservationists and even deep Greens are similar to values expressed in traditional conservative thought. Conservative nationalism champions respect for tradition, humility in the face of social complexity, attachment to place, and the importance of community over raw economic gain. Likewise, many environmentalists caution against human arrogance in the face of natural complexity, counsel respecting traditions (including those embodied in the myths and practices of indigenous peoples), and celebrate the value of place and community (albeit the biotic community rather than only the human).

John Bliese has argued convincingly that conservatives ought to be environmentalists, not unreflective allies of propertied interests. Drawing on traditional conservative thought, he asserts, "If we go back to the 'Founding Fathers' of American traditional conservatism, we will find a solid philosophical basis that would lead conservatives to be environmentalists."<sup>17</sup> Although traditional conservative writers generally antedate the environmental crisis, Bliese shows that they never advocated profit maximization, did not identify with the business community, and disavowed materialism. Richard Weaver, Bliese notes, offered an extended conservative critique of consumer culture, contrasting its materialism to the pursuit of virtue and engagement of the spirit found in traditional conservatism. Weaver went so far as to pronounce man's unrelenting assault on nature to serve material interests a sin.<sup>18</sup> The implication, concludes Bliese, is that "we are always to act as trustees, as faithful stewards of all we have inherited."<sup>19</sup>

Bliese's view is similar in some ways to J. Baird Callicott's elaboration of the land ethic.<sup>20</sup> The land ethic sees humans as part of a larger biotic community, and membership in a community entails obligations to maintaining that community. The land ethic's central moral precept is, that which enhances the stability, integrity, and beauty of the land (broadly understood) is good, and that which diminishes those values is wrong. Bliese and Callicott, no doubt, would have little to dispute on this. The remaining step is to link this view to the broader current of conservative nationalism, which would bring at least some conservative nationalists to support policies that enhance environmental integrity and sustainability. The step is a short one. If preserving the nation against the negative consequences of globalization is the conservative nationalist aim, then surely that must include preserving the nation's

natural heritage as well. Human communities are built on a certain kind of place. Their uniqueness is in part in how they have adapted to a given natural environment, whether mountain, desert, ocean, or plain. This natural heritage, without which the cultural heritage would be lost, should be as treasured as the historical legacy of a people, no more to be sacrificed to the “gods of the global economy” than any other part of the national heritage. Clear-cutting Oregon to provide Japan’s chopsticks and paper pulp is no less idolatrous, on this view, than flooding the U.S. market with foreign-made goods to serve distant corporate interests and a bankrupt economic ideology.

Contrary to the notion that conservative nationalists, like the global enthusiasts, are necessarily committed to the value of endless growth, Bliese cites traditional writer John Gray to say that growth “is the most vulgar ideal ever put before suffering mankind.” Bliese elaborates, calling the ideology of growth both unconservative and philosophically empty.<sup>21</sup> Growth in itself does not buy happiness, improve well-being, serve other valued priorities, or even indicate a successful economic policy. No doubt, the world will run up against the limits to economic growth, but long before then, Bliese says, “we reach certain points beyond which ‘growth’ is simply not *desirable* by any conservative standards.”<sup>22</sup>

To be sure, in practical politics, the deep-seated hostility of conservatives toward anything that smacks of environmentalism will be difficult to overcome. Yet, the emergence of the Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP), and the propagation of ideas such as Bliese’s, might herald just such change. Part of what REP wants is: “Protection for posterity of our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wild lands, and waters,” and “effective legal protection for threatened and endangered plants and animals in their native habitats.”<sup>23</sup> While not a call for radical institutional change, the REP position certainly moves toward recognition of the need for long-term sustainability. It implies in turn that this means policies that place environmental protection ahead of unbridled economic growth. In short, conservative nationalism resonates with the Burkean notion of an inter-generational compact, with attendant responsibilities to the future. Its rejection of materialism and emphasis on leading a virtuous life rather than scrambling for gratification provides intellectual resources for supporting environmentalist opposition to the unsustainable tendencies in the current globalization process.

### LIBERAL NATIONALIST POLICY PROJECT

Liberal nationalism includes such groups as trade unions, consumer advocates, feminists, and environmentalists.<sup>24</sup> In the United States, Green Party candidate Ralph Nader represents this policy response to globalization. Regarding globalization broadly, their main concern has been defending labor standards and wages against competitive pressures of the world market, but maintaining national environmental standards against downward harmonization is also on their agenda.

Although they share many liberal values with adaptationists, they recommend foreign economic policies closer to the conservative nationalists. Their view is that the most congenial home for social democracy has been the nation-state. Unlike adaptationists, they are not ready to concede that the national government is relatively powerless against the forces of globalization, nor are they ready to agree that the outcomes of globalization will be beneficial for democracy, workers, the environment, or national prosperity.<sup>25</sup> Liberal nationalists oppose preemption of local regulations that intend to protect the environment, preserve jobs, and serve other socially valued ends. One prominent proposal asserts that it is time for a “new protectionism” that will “put governments at a local, national, and regional level back in control over their economies, and to relocalize and diversify them.”<sup>26</sup>

The main tension within the liberal nationalist camp arises when environmental concerns appear to conflict with job security. Environmental protection can appear to put the needs of snail darters and spotted owls ahead of workers and their families. On the other side, liberal nationalist environmentalism tends to be associated with an older model of pollution abatement with primary attention to the urban environment and the workplace, rather than wilderness protection. These tensions can be exploited to divide environmental activists from their natural constituency in the working class, by picturing the environmental movement as elitist backpackers who care little for the working person.

Perhaps the more acute issue for liberal nationalists is that environmental problems fail to match up with national boundaries. While many problems are amenable to national policies, global challenges such as climate change and ozone depletion require multilateral responses. This means, in turn, engaging international politics, an arena lacking a government on which to focus political pressure. Recognizing this, some environmental advocates sympathetic to liberal nationalism have called for international treaties and more effective international organizations to cope with transnational environmental problems.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, such a strategy soon confronts global structures of power and wealth that do not respond much to these policy tools. The remedy for this is the relocalization of the economy, a general policy-led retreat from globalization that will dissolve the problems it creates. Otherwise, the answer is to bring about sweeping institutional change on a global level.

### TRANSFORMATIONALIST POLICY PROJECT

Thus, liberal nationalism can easily shade into calls for fundamental institutional transformation. The transformationalists present such a policy project without reservation. Globalization in general, they say, is simply the broadening and deepening of the exploitive world system of capitalism. Global capitalism is unjust, exacerbates social problems, leads to wide gaps of income and wealth, violates human rights, oppresses women, sparks wars and rebellions, and heedlessly degrades the natural environment. Such a system cannot sustain itself, no matter how much effort its masters exert to keep it going. It is headed for an inevitable breakdown.<sup>28</sup>

Some transformationalists are explicitly ecocentric. Their proposals for change arise directly from their belief that existing arrangements oppose important environmental values. Bioregionalists, defenders of traditional hunter-gatherer and peasant agriculture society, libertarian socialists, anarchists, ecofeminists, neo-Luddites, and others strive for a radically transformed society based on ecological values. Most accept at least some aspects of deep ecology.<sup>29</sup> They indict current practices for taking little heed of the right of other living things to a fair share of the planet, for leading to self-destructive outcomes as the ecology degrades under the pressure of the profit motive, and for privileging masculinist, individualist values. Reform of existing institutions, they argue, is too little, and far too late, to prevent global ecological disaster.

Yet, transformationalist responses to globalization need not express any great concern for the environment, although many do. Socialists still attached to the older doctrines of Marxism might well place rapid industrialization of poor countries ahead of environmental concern. Indeed, one third world critique of Western environmentalism asserts that the call for environmental protection is little more than old-fashioned imperialism in a new guise, aimed at hobbling poor nations' use of their natural resources to achieve higher standards of living. Ending exploitation, alleviating poverty, and redistributing wealth would take precedence over wilderness preservation, pollution abatement, and other environmental goals. More commonly, the environmental harms of capitalism are noted, but ecological concern is not the central issue. It is simply one among many social justice goals: "We will have to stress the contents of the new project [for social change] and use specific, activating concepts such as participatory democracy, human rights, environmentalism, pacifism as an ideal, feminism, economic democracy, sexual freedom, social justice, ethnic liberation, local power, workers' power, and so on."<sup>30</sup>

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## **To address global climate change will require replacing the global economy "by a localized economy with its vastly reduced energy and resource requirements."**

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The ecologically minded transformationalists propose fundamental institutional change. For instance, Arne Naess, deep ecology's most prominent exponent, writes, "Broad ecological sustainability may be compatible with a variety of social and political structures, provided they all point towards the Green pole." In practice, this will mean societies in which "there will be no political support of greed and unecological production."<sup>31</sup> Corporate-led 'sustainable development' (the hope of the enthusiasts for globalization) celebrates greed and fosters unecological production and thus offers little hope.<sup>32</sup> Those in the government and corporate offices have "rebuilt the world economy since 1945 along ecologically destructive lines." Thus we now need a "localistic ecological populism, as a transformative social project," one which will "rebuild this global corporate order along much different institutional lines: small-

scale, energy-sensible, locally managed, labor intensive, bioregionally structured communities of economic autonomy.”<sup>33</sup> To address global climate change will require replacing the global economy “by a localized economy with its vastly reduced energy and resource requirements.”<sup>34</sup> Alternatively, the worsening crisis of global capitalism might well call for global governance to bring about the transition to an ecological and socially equitable democratization.<sup>35</sup>

These changes require transformation of our experience of the world: “Uprooted from our home in nature, uprooted from natural cycles, separated from other creatures, we feel lost and terrified... The first step is to break through our denial about this predicament. The second step is to feel, to come alive, to come out from under the deadening of the machines and the mechanistic worldview.”<sup>36</sup> The goal of the long-range deep ecology movement “has been to bring about a major paradigm shift—a shift in perception, values, and lifestyles—as a basis for redirecting the ecologically destructive path of modern industrial growth societies.”<sup>37</sup>

Most transformationalists call for an infusion of democratic decision making, assuming that more democracy will counter the environmentally damaging militarism of the state, and the profit-seeking of the corporation. To be sure, some suspect that democracy subverts environmental values. These “ecoauthoritarians” and “ecoradicals” cannot trust democracy either to cope with the impending ecological crisis or to take society toward the green notion of the good life.<sup>38</sup> Yet, transformationalist greens also make powerful pleas for more democratic politics, arguing that an open democratic political process is far more likely than authoritarian structures to promote ecological values.<sup>39</sup>

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## **The most powerful resistance to globalization comes not from ecological concern but from ethnic and religious conflict.**

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The main challenge facing transformationalist ecology is feasibility. Whatever the precise institutional recommendations, one must question the prospects for bringing about sweeping and fundamental social and political change. The outlook for transforming global capitalism and the state system is not encouraging at present. The post-cold war period has seen most of the world’s governments adopt some form of the neoliberal development model. Variations on the model do exist, resistance to its most demanding requirements continues, and even the major international financial institutions have had to reign in somewhat as experience has shown the ill effects of shock therapy. Still, the main elements of the neoliberal (enthusiast) policy on globalization dominate. The ideology of growth and competitiveness, coupled with the mobility of capital, make the global market a global policy prison<sup>40</sup> with little immediate hope of escape. The most powerful resistance to globalization comes not from ecological concern but from ethnic and religious conflict.<sup>41</sup> Virulent identity politics provides little hope for implementing environmental values.

## CONCLUSION

We have reviewed five responses to globalization and briefly considered what each orientation says about the environment. The five policy projects tend to be concerned with the larger picture, not only with environmental problems. They offer broad, comprehensive approaches to dealing with the range of challenges globalization presents. Our question has been how much potential exists in these alternatives for implementing environmental values: diversity, human health and well-being, protection of other living things, and respect for the stability, integrity, and beauty of the ecosystem as a whole. It is unlikely that humans will achieve consensus on any one of these policy projects. Conservative nationalists are unlikely to become green socialists any time soon. Nonetheless, we can see that each approach contains some potential for implementing environmental values, which opens up the possibility of political coalitions across the ideological lines.

Although the enthusiast approach appears to offer little to ecological values, the potential that does exist ought not to be overlooked. After all, the enthusiastic embrace of globalization enjoys the support of powerful global actors. They are not likely to abandon this view, but they can be held to account for the environmental promises they have made. Sustainable development is a contestable term; it need not reduce to business as usual, pursuit of profit and corporate efficiency. Indeed, the struggle over the meaning of sustainable development is carried on daily in such arenas as the major international financial institutions, the United Nations, and national legislation. Non-governmental organization activity has led to international organization engagement with "civil society," including environmental activists. The activities of environmental groups to sway the globalization process toward some degree of environmental accountability can and should continue. Still, all this said, it remains that the enthusiast position is the target for reform and critique, if environmental values are to be given an important place in policy debates over globalization and sustainability.

Adaptationists, who also enjoy some access to policy making, can be allies in this effort of critique and urging reform. Adaptationists are more likely to acknowledge the need for authoritative intervention in markets than enthusiasts. They are also concerned to preserve the social gains made through decades of political struggle, including gains in environmental protection. At the same time, their commitment to an open global economy both gives them credibility in policy circles and creates doubts about their commitment to environmental values. They too should be held to account. Adaptation ought not to imply abandoning environmental values when the economic going gets rough, say during a global recession. Instead, adaptationists should be held to a high standard of what sustainable development means. Further, they need to be reminded that quality of life does not mean only bigger paychecks and more careers for symbolic analysts. Quality of life means a healthy, beautiful natural environment. Perhaps some adaptationists can even be led to see this as an intrinsic value rather than merely a means to attract mobile capital and cutting-edge consultants.



Liberal nationalists already emphasize the environmental dimension of resistance to unchecked globalization. Activists in this camp have fought for decades to develop national environmental regulatory frameworks. They are now concerned to preserve these gains against the downward harmonization of global trade and investment agreements. Their main task may well be to resolve the tension between labor and environment within their own ranks. Beyond that, environmental liberal nationalists should remain open to forging coalitions with the environmentally minded in other camps. In particular, liberal nationalists ought to encourage the greening of conservative nationalist thought. Without abandoning their commitments to other liberal and conservative values, nationalists should work together on matters of environmental protection. Both forms of nationalism enjoy the strategic advantage of working within the domestic national context. Despite globalizing tendencies, the state remains a significant arena for political struggle.

Whether the entire system must be (rather than should be) transformed remains an open question. Transformationalists advocate alternatives that most directly and thoroughly implement ecological values, but until overwhelming evidence shows that global capitalism is in fact doomed, it is unlikely that such transformation will occur. Thus, just as radicals have encouraged trade unions and social movements that are best called liberal reformist, ecological transformationalists will make the greatest impact by encouraging and supporting green social movements, interest groups, NGO activity and the like.

Environmentalists are found in every policy camp. They need not see each other as political enemies. Nor is it necessary to work out all their disagreements over philosophy, morality, and social causality. Focusing on values—clean air, clean water, wilderness—rather than justifications for those values offers some possibility for coalition building and avoiding divisiveness. This is not to underestimate the immense practical challenges for building such coalitions, but recognizing the potential for unity on environmental values is essential.

### Notes

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<sup>2</sup> Tuxill, John, *Losing Strands in the Web of Life: Vertebrate Declines and the Conservation of Biological Diversity*, Worldwatch Paper 141 (Washington, D.C.: Worldwatch Institute, 1998), 9.

<sup>3</sup> "Forces of Globalization Must Be Embraced," *IMF Survey*, 26 May 1997, 1.

<sup>4</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 43, quoted in John I. Clarke, "The Interrelationship of Population and Environment," in *Just Environments: Intergenerational, International, and Interspecies Issues*, edited by David E. Cooper and Joy A. Palmer (London: Routledge, 1995), 42.

<sup>5</sup> World Development Report 1992 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 34, quoted in Wolfgang Sachs, "Global Ecology and the 'Shadow of Development,'" in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*, edited by George Sessions (Boston and London: Shambhala Press, 1995), 434.

<sup>6</sup> "Development at Risk from Environmental Degradation," The World Bank Group, Press Release No. 2002/112/S, Oct 25, 2001, available from <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/news/pressrelease/nsf/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ghandi, Ved P., *The IMF and the Environment*, in IMF Publications [database online] (Washington, D.C.: IMF Publication Services, 1998); available from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/exrp/environ/index.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> *IMF Survey* Supplement September 2000, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Sachs 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Albo, Gregory, "The World Economy, Market Imperatives, and Alternatives," *Monthly Review* 48, no. 7 (1996): 6-22.

<sup>11</sup> Bates, Jenny and Debra S. Knopman, "After Seattle," *The Environmental Forum*, January/February 2000, 30.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>13</sup> Reich, Robert, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Wapner, Paul, *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics* (New York: State University of New York, 1996).

<sup>15</sup> Rupert, Mark, *Ideologies of Globalization: Contending Visions of a New World Order* (London: Routledge, 2000) 101-110.

<sup>16</sup> Buchanan, Patrick J., *The Great Betrayal: How American Sovereignty and Social Justice Are Being Sacrificed to the Gods of the Global Economy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Bliese, John R. E., "Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk, and the Environment," *Modern Age*, Winter 1996, 148.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>20</sup> Callicott, J. Baird., *Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999). Callicott, J. Baird, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

<sup>21</sup> Bliese, John R. E., "Conservatism and the Ideology of 'Growth,'" *Modern Age* Spring 1999, 118-119.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>23</sup> "Philosophy," *REP America* (n.d.) [cited 5 May 2002]: available at <http://www.repamerica.org>.

<sup>24</sup> Rupert, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Barber, Benjamin, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Hines, Colin and Tim Lang, "The New Protectionism," in *Corporations Are Gonna Get Your Momma*, edited by Kevin Danaher (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1996). Hines, Colin and Tim Lang, "In Favor of a New Protectionism," in *The Case Against the Global Economy*, edited by Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996).

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<sup>28</sup> Goldsmith, Edward, "The Last Word: Family, Community, Democracy," in *The Case Against the Global Economy*, edited by Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Sessions, George, "Preface," in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*, edited by George Sessions (Boston and London: Shambhala Publications, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Burbach, Roger, Orlando Nunez, and Boris Kagarlitsky, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (London and Chicago: Pluto Press, 1997).

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<sup>32</sup> Sachs 1995.

<sup>33</sup> Luke, Timothy W., *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 207-208.

<sup>34</sup> Goldsmith, 510.

<sup>35</sup> Altwater, Elmar, "Restructuring the Space of Democracy: The Effects of Capitalist Globalization on the Ecological Crisis and on the Form and Substance of Democracy," in *Global Ethics & Environment*, edited by Nicholas Low (London: Routledge, 1999) 304.

<sup>36</sup> Glendinning, Chellis, "Recovery from Western Civilization," in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*, edited by George Sessions (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1995) 39.

<sup>37</sup> Sessions, ix.

<sup>38</sup> Mills, Mike, "Green Democracy: The Search for an Ethical Solution" in *Democracy and Green Political*

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<sup>40</sup> Lindblom, Charles E., "The Market As Prison," *Journal of Politics* 44 (1982): 324-336.

<sup>41</sup> Barber 1996.