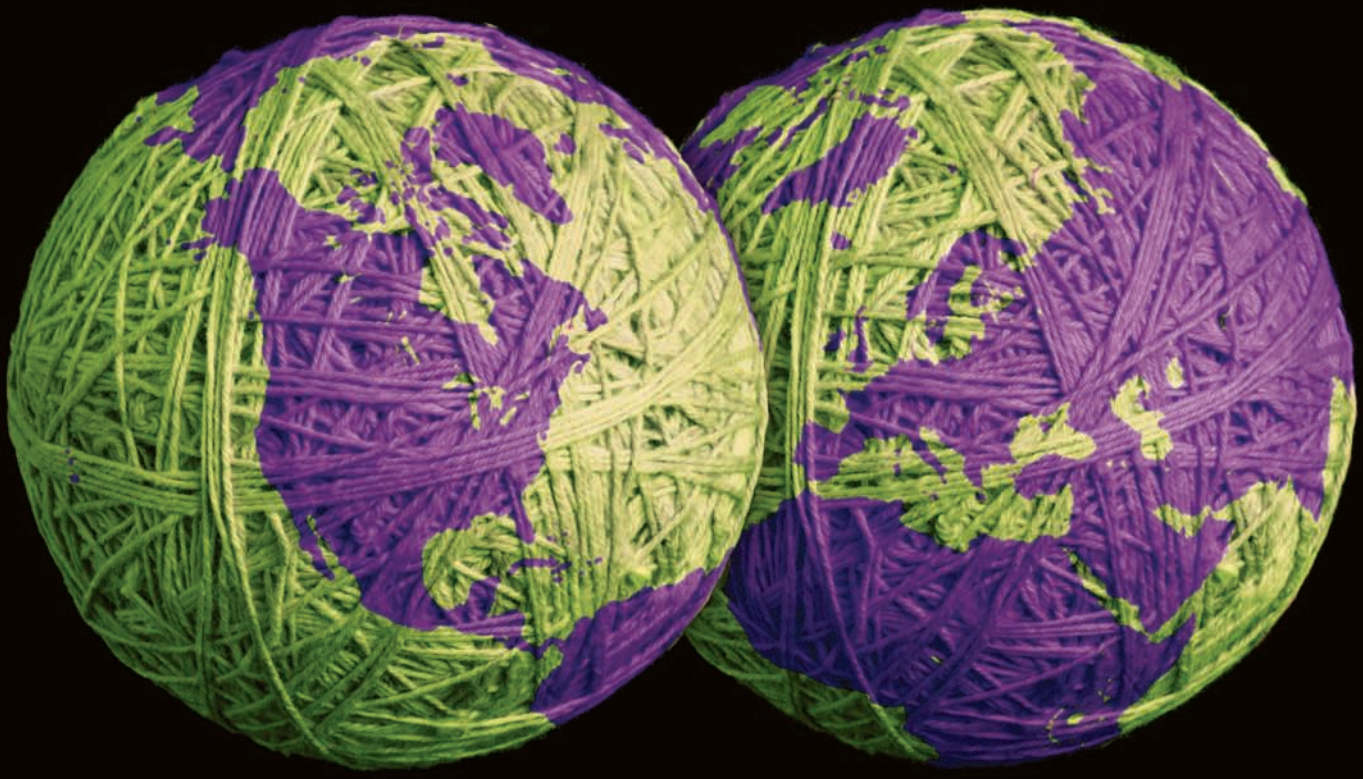
Pearson New International Edition

The World Economy
Geography, Business, Development

Frederick P. Stutz Barney Warf

Sixth Edition



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ognize that future growth will be constrained by resources that are finite or whose availability is difficult to determine. Finally, we must realize that no region can achieve sustainability in isolation. A desirable and sustainable future will be the result of many social and policy changes, some small and at the local level, others international and far-reaching. If we accept that the futures of the world's rich and poor are inextricably linked, perhaps we will enforce policies that lead to a more just and equitable distribution of the world's resources. However, a world that rewards only the rich at the expense of the poor—as has been the case globally for the past several decades—is doomed to social inequality and environmental destruction.

From a Growth-Oriented to a Balance-Oriented Lifestyle

Given the dynamics of the market system, it is unlikely that energy availability will place a limit on economic growth on the earth; however, ultimately, drastic changes in the rate and nature of the use of energy resources are certain. The ultimate limits to the use of energy will be determined by the ability of the world's ecosystems to dissipate the heat and waste produced as more and more energy flows through the system.

In countless ways, energy consumption improves the quality of our lives, but it also pollutes. As the rate of energy consumption increases, so too does water and air contamination. Sources of water pollution are numerous: industrial wastes, sewage, and detergents; fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides from agriculture; and coastal oil spills from tankers. Air pollution reduces visibility; damages buildings, clothes, and crops; and endangers human health. It is especially serious in urban-industrial areas, but it occurs wherever waste gases and solid particulates are released into the atmosphere.

Pollution is the price paid by an economic system emphasizing ever-increasing growth as a primary goal. Despite attempts to do something about pollution problems, the growth-oriented lifestyle characteristic of Western urban-industrial society continues to widen the gap between people and nature. "Growthmania" is ultimately a road to self-destruction. Many argue that we must transform our present growth-oriented, economic system into a balance-oriented one that explicitly recognizes that natural resources are exhaustible, that they must be recycled, and that input rates must be reduced to levels that do not permanently damage the world's environment. A balance-oriented economy does not mean an end to growth, but a new social system in which only desirable low-energy growth is encouraged. It requires a de-emphasis on the materialistic values we have come to hold in such high esteem. If current resource and environmental constraints lead us to place a higher premium on saving and conserving than on spending and discarding, then they may be viewed as blessings in disguise.

Summary

We conclude by restating the resources-population problem. It is possible to solve resource problems by (1) changing societal goals, (2) changing consumption patterns, (3) changing technology, and (4) altering population numbers. In the Western world, much of the emphasis is on technological advancement and population control.

Following a review of renewable and nonrenewable resources, we explored the question of food resources. The food "crisis" is essentially a consequence of social relations, including war and disruptions of agricultural systems. Food production is increasing faster than population growth, yet more people are hungry than ever before. In the course of transforming agriculture into a profit base for the wealthy in the developed and in the less developed worlds, the Third World poor are being forced into increasingly inhospitable living conditions. Famine, like poverty, is a social construction, not a natural event, and its origins, like its solutions, must be found in the uneven distribution of resources among and within countries.

Unlike food, which is replenishable, nonrenewable minerals and fossil fuels, once used, are gone forever. We discuss some of the alternatives to fossil fuels and point to energy conservation as a potent alternative with potential that remains to be fully exploited. Finally, the comparison between growth-oriented and balance-oriented lifestyles underscores the importance of social concerns as they relate to economic growth. Growth and inequality are inextricably linked parts of social change and environmental protection.

Key Terms

acid rain
aquaculture
balance-oriented lifestyle
biomass
carrying capacity
chlorofluorcarbons (CFCs)
chronic malnutrition
conservation
deforestation
desertification
flow resources
fossil fuels
geothermal energy
global warming
Green Revolution
greenhouse effect
growth-oriented lifestyle
limits to growth
mariculture
maximum sustainable yield
minerals
nonpoint sources
nonrenewable resources
nuclear energy
nuclear fission
nuclear fusion
Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

overpopulation
ozone layer
passive solar energy
point sources
projected reserves
recycling
renewable natural resources
renewable resources
reserve
resource
solar energy
stock resources
strategic minerals
sustainable development
tragedy of the commons
transmaterialization
undernutrition
wind farm

Study Questions

1. What is meant by carrying capacity?
2. Differentiate renewable from nonrenewable resources.
3. What are the major causes of Third World hunger?
4. What are three methods of expanding world food production?
5. What was the Green Revolution? Where was it largely located?
6. Summarize major flows of oil on the world market.
7. Where are the major world coal deposits located?
8. What are some alternative energy options to fossil fuels?
9. What are some environmental consequences of high energy use? Be specific.
10. What is sustainable development?

Suggested Readings

Castree, N., and B. Braun, eds., 2001. *Social Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*. London, UK: Blackwell.

Ellis, R. 2003. *The Empty Ocean: Plundering the World's Marine Life*. New York: Shearwear Books.

Falola, T., and A. Genova. 2005. *The Politics of the Global Oil Industry*. New York: Praeger.

Klare, M. 2002. *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*. New York: Owl Books.

Zimmerer, K. 2006. *Globalization and New Geographies of Conservation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Web Resources

Conservation Databases—WCMC
http://www.unep-wcmc.org

The World Conservation Monitoring Centre, whose purpose is the "location and management of information on the conservation and sustainable use of the world's living resources," provides five searchable databases. Users can search by country for threatened animals and plants (plants are available for Europe only), protected areas of the world, forest statistics and maps, marine statistics and maps, and national biodiversity profiles (12 countries only at present). Information is drawn from several sources, and database documentation varies from resource to resource.

State of The World's Forests—FAO
http://www.fao.org/forestry/home/en/

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization presents information on the current status of the world's forests, major developments over the reporting period, and recent trends and future directions in the forestry sector. It provides information on global forest cover, including estimates for 1995, change from 1990, and revised estimates of forest cover change.

Environmental Protection Agency
http://www.epa.gov

This site provides everything you ever wanted to know about environment and material resources.

Log in to **www.mygeoscienceplace.com** for videos, *In the News* RSS feeds, key term flashcards, web links, and self-study quizzes to enhance your study of resources and environment.

Theoretical Considerations

OBJECTIVES

- To present the basic factors underlying the location decisions of firms
- To summarize the Weberian model of transport costs
- To show how production technique, scale, and location are interrelated
- To illustrate how and why firms grow and change over time and space
- To reveal the geographical organization of large corporations
- To describe the relevance of the product cycle in the changing locational requirements of firms
- To depict the role of business cycles, particularly Kondratiev long waves
- To emphasize the role of the state in shaping economic landscapes

Female workers on the assembly line at a low-voltage electrical appliance factory in Taizhou, China.