

scientists, is recognized by many of the authors as an important component of the problem at hand, but perhaps merits more focused consideration in future considerations of the topic, with an eye toward practical, small-scale implications.

The strength of the individual chapters is that most are synthetic, based on several case studies (as opposed to the long, rambling accounts of individual projects that are found in some past volumes on the topic), and written by experts in the field with many years of experience as it has evolved over the past two decades. For this reason, the book would be appropriate for use in graduate seminars, or perhaps upper level undergraduate courses, as well as development agency courses. Interdisciplinary scientists and policy workers specializing in Latin America, as well as anyone interested in a concise, broad treatment of sustainable agricultural development and resource management, will also appreciate the significant contribution of this volume.

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Goldfrank, Walter L., David Goodman, and Andrew Szasz, eds. *Ecology and the World-System*. Westport, CT/London: Greenwood Press, 1999. 265 pp. \$65 (hardcover). ISBN 0-313-30725-3.

Reviewed by **Arthur P. J. Mol**
 Department of Social Sciences
 Wageningen University
 Wageningen, The Netherlands

Sometimes volumes are published on a subject numerous scholars have been waiting for. One can be sure that these volumes will find their way through the academic institutions, even before taking the opportunity to assess the contents and at the scholarly quality of that particular book. This is to a large extent the case with *Ecology and the World-System*. While during the last decade all the major sociological schools of thought applied—and partly adapted and modified—their frameworks and conceptual models to better understand the social dynamics behind ecological catastrophes and the way societies dealt with these ecological challenges, the world-systems approach kept silent. World-system contributions were largely missing when during the last decade the subdiscipline of environmental sociology witnessed an exponential growth and increasing diversity of theoretical approaches. This is even more astonishing as throughout the 1990s this increasing attention to ecological questions was more and more interwoven with the emerging globalization debates. If there is one area where world-system scholars have a major contribution to make it is on global issues, making their enduring absence in the field of global ecological issues even more remarkable. In repairing this omission in world-system studies, Immanuel Wallerstein sets the pace in the opening chapter of this volume, acknowledging and underlining the importance of environmental challenges for this theoretical tradition.

This volume aims to show the value of world-system perspectives in understanding how our globalizing world order induces environmental problems, and how these environmental challenges rebound on local, national, and global systems, undermining their capacity to reproduce themselves. In particular, the book is organized in three parts, contributing to three major questions in the field of environmental sociology. The first part looks into the way global capitalism and the absence of global regulating mechanisms are at the foundation of the emerging threats of the global environment. The second group of chapters provides more restricted analyses, both historically and geographically, showing the differences in ecological impacts among different societies. The last three chapters focus on the variations of the local and national environmental movements in a limited number of countries and their (stagnating and failing) contributions to environmental reforms. The volume does not seek to arrange the chapters into a very strict overarching conceptual framework or structure, allowing for partly diverging analyses and observations. This seems a wise decision of the editors at this stage of world-system analyses on the environment, and provides an insight in the variation of world-system perspectives in entering a new field of study.

In general, the chapters show scholarly quality, although there are—as is usual in edited volumes—stronger and weaker chapters. The book does not cover all the major environmental questions for social scientists, while other topics are dealt with only in a limited or one-sided way. The last part on environmental movements, for instance, hardly moves into the emerging area of global NGO (nongovernmental organization) networks (such as the ones fighting the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, negotiated in 1997/1998, and the World Trade Organization [WTO] negotiations in Seattle, 1999) and transnational organizations such as Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), or Friends of the Earth International. But the book as a whole provides us a sense of the kind of contributions we can expect from world-system studies in the coming decade, and the contribution of Roberts and Grimes is perhaps most clear and complete in setting the agenda for the future of world-system studies on the environment. Their conclusion is twofold, to put it simply: Much has to be done, but the framework is promising and can be repaired to contribute to analyzing these environmental challenges.

My conclusion from the book as a first step on this agenda is that world-system theory has its strength in analyzing the causes and social dynamics behind global environmental disruption and especially the unequal environmental and economic costs and benefits linked to that. Several chapters (e.g., Bunker and Ciccantelli; McCormack; Massa) provide detailed and theory-informed analyses of the major (world capitalism) triggers behind ecological catastrophes and the logic of these catastrophes in particular the peripheral regions and sectors, in relation to the growth areas of capitalism. Or as Roberts and Grimes put it, world-system theory “has certain advantages over other approaches as an integrative framework for understanding environmental damage in global capitalism” (p. 76). But the last sentence of the editorial introduction also expresses the hope that the contributions “inspire fruitful inquiry and advance the pursuit of a sustainable world-system” (p. xv). It is exactly on this point that the volume shows the weaknesses of world-system studies on the environment. In hardly any of the contributions can one find starting points of an analysis that gives us hopes for the future, that analyzes the environmental reform strategies or practices (be it only in the making), or that provides us with paths or trajectories of societal change that are both feasible and radical. And this is even more striking in a time when environmental reforms do not have to start from zero. We have witnessed several—albeit partial and far from sufficient—changes of institutions and social practices, and in 30 years we

have moved beyond the time of merely environmental window dressing. It seems that on this front world-system approaches have still a major step to make, if such a step is possible and these shortcomings are not immanent in the theory itself.

The (hopefully near) future will teach us whether world-system theory has enough conceptual tools to make this editorial hope come true. Notwithstanding the outcome, this is a state-of-the-art book of key authors in what we might call environmental world-system studies. And as such, it is a must for environmental sociologists and social scientists. Although the book as a whole is too fragmented to suit graduate courses, several chapters in especially the first two parts are useful in courses in environmental sociology and world-system theory.