

Ecological Security: An Evolutionary Perspective on Globalization

Theresa Manley Degeest, Dennis Clark Pirages



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Global environmental politics has emerged from its initial incarnation in the arena of 'low politics' and is rapidly becoming a 'high politics' concern. Concern over water pollution, air pollution, deforestation, and related basic environmental issues is giving way to a broader ecological security agenda. In this pathbreaking book, Dennis Clark Pirages and Theresa Manley DeGeest argue for dramatically broadening the context in which security priorities are established in an age of increasing globalization. Addressing the very fundamental question of the sources of premature human deaths and associated insecurity, both historically and in the contemporary world, the authors observe that in the twentieth century starvation killed nearly as many people as did military conflict. But disease was responsible for killing nearly fourteen times as many people as was warfare. And in the contemporary world of the twenty-first century, environmental terrorism and biological warfare are blurring the traditional distinctions between natural disasters, accidental deaths, and military casualties. Ecological Security moves the analysis of global environmental and resource issues to the next level by developing an 'eco-evolutionary' perspective for analyzing emerging problems associated with rapid globalization. Preserving future ecological security will depend upon maintaining dynamic equilibriums among human populations, and between them and pathogenic microorganisms, other species, and the sustaining capabilities of nature. This eco-evolutionary framework is used to anticipate and analyze emerging demographic, ecological, and technological discontinuities and dilemmas associated with rapid globalization. The authors conclude by stressing the need for new kinds of global public goods to mitigate the harshest impacts of these rapid and interrelated changes.

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