**1. Watch the speech on the ‘Economics of enough’ at** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIG33QtLRyA>

**2. Read the following text and complete the table at the end.**

**Four Worldviews on Global Environmental Change**

Source: J. Clapp (2005) ‘Peril or Prosperity? Mapping Worldviews of Global Environmental Change’ in Clapp, J., & Dauvergne, P. *Paths to a Green World The Political Economy of the Global Environment*. Academic MIT Press.

**Four Environmental Worldviews**

We present four main worldviews on global environmental change and its relationship to the global political economy: those of *market liberals*, *institutionalists*, *bioenvironmentalists*, and *social greens*. These labels are intentionally transdisciplinary. Many books on the global environment confine the analysis to one disciplinary box—by limiting it, say, to political science theories or to economic models. This leaves far too many questions badly answered and far too many questions unasked. But we have had to make some choices. It is, of course, impossible to cover all disciplinary perspectives in one book. In our case we have chosen to rely mostly on the tools of political science, economics, development studies, environmental studies, political geography, and sociology. This focus, we believe, is narrow enough to do justice to the literature in these disciplines while still broad enough to provide new insights into the sources of environmental change and the possible options—both theoretical and practical—for managing it. […]

Within the political and economic literature, we stress arguments and theories that try to *explain* global environmental change—that is, the literature that looks at an environmental problem and asks: Why is that happening? What is causing it? And what can be done?

With those introductory remarks, we now turn to our typology.

**Market Liberals**

The analysis of market liberals is grounded in neoclassical economics and scientific research. Market liberals believe that economic growth and high per capita incomes are essential for human welfare and the maintenance of sustainable development. Sustainable development is generally defined by these thinkers along the lines of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED): “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In terms of improving global environmental conditions, market liberals argue that economic growth (production and consumption) creates higher incomes, which in turn generates the funds and political will to improve environmental conditions. Rapid growth may exacerbate inequalities, as some of the rich become super rich, but in the long run all will be better off. In other words, all boats will rise. Market-liberal analysis along these lines is commonly found, for example, in publications of the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), as well as in the media in publications such as *The Economist*.

Market liberals see globalization as a positive force, because it promotes economic growth as well as global integration. They concede that as states pursue economic growth, environmental conditions—such as air and water quality—may deteriorate as governments and citizens give firms more scope to pursue short-term profits, thus stimulating further economic growth. But once a society becomes wealthy, citizens (and in turn governments and business) will raise environmental standards and expectations. *The Economist* magazine explains the global pattern: “Where most of the economic growth has occurred—the rich countries— the environment has become cleaner and healthier. It is in the poor countries, where growth has been generally meagre, that air and water pollution is an increasing hazard to health.” The key, market liberals argue, is good policy to ensure that economic growth improves the environment in all countries.

The main drivers of environmental degradation, according to market liberals, are a lack of economic growth, poverty, distortions and failures of the market, and bad policies. The poor are not viewed as unconcerned or ignorant. Rather, to survive—to eat, to build homes, to earn a living— they must exploit the natural resources around them. They are, according to the World Bank, both “victims and agents of environmental damage.” It is unrealistic, perhaps even unjust, to ask the poor to consider the implications of their survival for future generations. The only way out of this vicious cycle is to alleviate poverty, for which growth is essential. Restrictive trade and investment policies and a lack of secure property rights all hamper the ability of the market to foster growth and reduce poverty. Market failures—instances where the free market results in an environmentally suboptimal outcome—are viewed as possible causes of some environmental problems, although these are seen as relatively rare in practice. More often, market liberals argue, poor government policies—especially those that distort the market, such as subsidies—are the problem.

[…]

Thinkers from the market-liberal tradition place great faith in the ability of modern science and technology to help societies slip out of any environmental binds that may occur (if, for example, there are unavoidable market failures). Human ingenuity is seen to have no limits. If resources become scarce, or if pollution becomes a problem, humans will discover substitutes and develop new, more environmentally friendly technologies. Market liberals see advances in agricultural biotechnology, for example, as a key answer to providing more food for a growing world population. Their belief in science leaves most market liberals wary of precautionary policies that restrict the use of new technology, unless there is clear scientific evidence to demonstrate it is harmful. Market liberals believe open and globally integrated markets promote growth, which in turn helps societies find ways to improve or repair environmental conditions. To achieve these goals market liberals call for policy reforms to liberalize trade and investment, foster specialization, and reduce government subsidies that distort markets and waste resources. Governments, too, need to strengthen some institutions, such as institutions to secure property rights or institutions to educate and train the poor to protect the environment. Governments are encouraged to use market-based tools—for example, environmental taxes or tradable pollution permits—to correct situations of genuine market failure. Innovative environmental markets—like a global scheme to trade carbon emissions or niche markets for environmental products such as timber from sustainable sources—and voluntary corporate measures to promote environmental stewardship are also reasonable ways to improve environmental management. But in most cases it is best to let the market allocate resources efficiently. Market liberals, such as the economist Jagdish Bhagwati and the business executive Stephan Schmidheiny, strongly argue that it makes economic sense for firms to improve their environmental performance, and for this reason it makes sense to let the market guide them.

**Institutionalists**

The ideas of institutionalists are grounded in the fields of political science and international relations. They share many of the broad assumptions and arguments of market liberals—especially the belief in the value of economic growth, globalization, trade, foreign investment, technology, and the notion of sustainable development. Indeed, moderate institutionalists sit close to moderate market liberals. It is a matter of emphasis. Market liberals stress more the benefits and dynamic solutions of free markets and technology; institutionalists emphasize the need for stronger global institutions and norms as well as sufficient state and local capacity to constrain and direct the global political economy. Institutions provide a crucial route to transfer technology and funds to the poorest parts of the planet. Institutionalists also worry far more than market liberals about environmental scarcity, population growth, and the growing inequalities between and within states. But they do not see these problems as beyond hope. To address them, they stress the need for strong institutions and norms to protect the common good. Institutionalist analysis is found in publications by organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and by many academics who focus their analysis on “regimes” (international environmental agreements and norms, defined more precisely in chapter 3) in the fields of political science and law.

Institutionalists see a lack of global cooperation as a key source of environmental degradation. Ineffective cooperation partly arises because of the nature of the sovereign state system, which gives a state supreme authority within its boundaries. In such a system states tend to act in their own interest, generally leaving aside the interest of the global commons. Yet like market liberals, institutionalists *do not* reject the way we have organized political and economic life on the planet. Instead they believe we can overcome the problem of sovereignty as the organizing principle of the international system by building and strengthening global and local institutions that promote state adherence to collective goals and norms. This can be most effectively carried out through global-level environmental agreements and organizations.

The process of globalization makes global cooperation increasingly essential (and increasingly inevitable). But institutionalists stress that unfettered globalization can add to the pressures on the global environment. The task for those worried about the state of the global environment, then, is to guide and channel globalization, so it enhances environmental cooperation and better environmental management. This point has been stressed most forcefully by key policy figures such as former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland in her role in the 1980s as head of the World Commission on Environment and Development and Canadian diplomat Maurice Strong as organizer of global environmental conferences. The aim of this approach is to ensure that global economic policies work to both improve the environment and raise living standards. Controls at all levels of governance, from the local to the national to the global, can help to direct globalization, enhancing the benefits and limiting the drawbacks.

For the global environment, institutionalists believe that institutions need to internalize the principles of sustainable development, including into the decision-making processes of state bureaucracies, corporations, and international organizations. Only then will we be able to manage economies and environments effectively—especially for common resources. […]

**Bioenvironmentalists**

Inspired by the laws of physical science, bioenvironmentalists stress the biological limits of the earth to support life. The planet is fragile, an ecosystem like any other. Some even see the earth as behaving like a living being, a self-regulating, complex, and holistic superorganism—the so-called Gaia hypothesis, as articulated by environmental scientist James Lovelock. The earth can support life, but only to a certain limit, often referred to as the earth’s “carrying capacity.” Many bioenvironmentalists see humans as anthropocentric and selfish (or at least self-interested) animals. Some, like the academic William Rees, even see humans as having “a genetic predisposition for unsustainability.” All bioenvironmentalists agree that humans as a species now consume far too much of the earth’s resources, such that we are near, or indeed have already overstepped, the earth’s carrying capacity. Such behavior, without drastic changes, will push the planet toward a fate not much different from the ecological calamity of Easter Island of 300 years ago—where a once thriving people became over a few centuries “about 2000 wretched individuals . . . eking out a sparse existence from a denuded landscape and cannibalistic raids on each other’s camps.” These scholars stress the environmental disasters around us, often citing shocking figures on such problems as overfishing, deforestation, species loss, and unstable weather patterns. Publications of the Worldwatch Institute and the WWF are illustrative of this perspective.

For most bioenvironmentalists population growth is a key source of stress on the earth’s limits. The ideas of Thomas Malthus (1766–1834), who in “An Essay on the Principle of Population” predicted that the human population would soon outstrip food supply, were revived in the late 1960s by writers such as biologist Paul Ehrlich. Sometimes known as neo-Malthusians, these writers argue that global environmental problems ultimately stem from too many people on a planet with finite resources. The principle of sovereignty, which divides the world into artificial territories, aggravates the effects of too many humans, because it violates the principles of ecology and creates what academic Garrett Hardin famously called a “tragedy of the commons.” For him, too many people without overarching rules on how to use the commons creates a situation where individuals, rationally seeking to maximize their own gain at the expense of others, overuse and ultimately destroy the commons. This point, stressed by many bioenvironmentalists, is also made by many institutionalists, as discussed earlier.

Many bioenvironmentalists stress, too, that the neoclassical economic assumption of infinite economic growth is a key source of today’s global environmental crisis. For these thinkers, a relentless drive to produce ever more in the name of economic growth is exhausting our resources and polluting the planet. Many argue that the drive to pursue ever more economic growth is what has taken the earth beyond its carrying capacity. For bioenvironmentalists, human consumption patterns are as great a problem as population growth, and the two are seen as inextricably linked. They argue that together rising populations and consumption are drawing down the earth’s limited resources, and that we must respect the biophysical limits to growth: both for people and economies.

Not all bioenvironmentalists engage directly in discussions on economic globalization, but those that do tend to see globalization as a negative force for the environment. They agree with market liberals that globalization enhances economic growth. But instead of seeing this as positive for the environment, they see it as contributing to further environmental degradation. For them, more growth only means more consumption of natural resources and more stress on waste sinks. Globalization is blamed, too, for spreading Western patterns of consumption into the developing world. With much larger populations and often more fragile ecosystems (especially in the tropics), this spread of consumerism is accelerating the collapse of the global ecosystem. Globalization is also seen to encourage environmentally harmful production processes in poor countries that have lower environmental standards. For these reasons, these bioenvironmentalists argue that we must curtail economic globalization to save the planet.

Solutions proposed by bioenvironmentalists flow logically from their analysis of the causes of environmental damage: we need to curb economic and population growth. Those who focus on the limits to economic growth have been a core group in the field of ecological economics, pioneered by thinkers such as the economist Herman Daly and published in journals such as *Ecological Economics*. This group combines ideas from the physical sciences and economics to develop proposals to revamp economic models to include the notion of physical limits, which involves changing our measures of “progress” and the methods we use to promote it. Only then, these thinkers argue, can we reduce the impact of humans on the planet and prod the world toward a more sustainable global economy. Those bioenvironmentalists who focus more on overpopulation call for measures to lower population growth, like expanding family planning programs in the Third World, and for curbs on immigration to rich countries where consumption problems are the worst. At the more extreme end, some see a world government with coercive powers as the best way to control the human lust to fill all ecological space, destroying it, often inadvertently, in the process.

**Social Greens**

Social greens, drawing primarily on radical social and economic theories, see social and environmental problems as inseparable. Inequality and domination, exacerbated by economic globalization, are seen as leading to unequal access to resources as well as unequal exposure to environmental harms. While these views have long been important in debates over environment and development, and are themselves a mix of a variety of radical views, scholars in international political economy have only recently recognized them as a distinct perspective.

Many social greens from a more activist stance focus on the destructive effects of the global spread of large-scale industrial life. Accelerated by the process of globalization, large-scale industrialism is seen to encourage inequality characterized by overconsumption by the wealthy while at the same time contributing to poverty and environmental degradation. While agreeing broadly with this analysis, other, more academic social greens draw on Marxist thought, pointing specifically to capitalism as a primary driver of social and environmental injustice in a globalized world. They argue that capitalism, and its global spread via neocolonial relations between rich and poor countries, not only leads to an unequal distribution of global income, power, and environmental problems, but is a threat to human survival. Also inspired by Marxist thought, some social greens take a neo-Gramscian, or historical materialist perspective, focusing on the way those in power frame and influence ecological problems, primarily hegemonic blocs consisting of large corporations and industrial country governments. Other social greens like Vandana Shiva draw heavily from feminist theory to argue that patriarchal relationships in the global economy are intricately tied to ecological destruction. The key concern of all of these strands of social green thought, then, is inequality and the environmental consequences related to it. Social green analysis can be found in magazines such as *The Ecologist* and in reports of groups such as the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) and the Third World Network (TWN).

Social greens sympathize with bioenvironmentalist arguments that physical limits to economic growth exist. Overconsumption, particularly in rich industrialized countries, is seen by social greens to put a great strain on the global environment. Many, perhaps most prominently Wolfgang Sachs and Edward Goldsmith, see this problem as accelerating in an era of economic globalization. The arguments of social greens on growth and consumption, and on the role of the global economy in accelerating both, are close to bioenvironmentalist arguments. But few social greens accept bioenvironmentalist arguments regarding population growth, instead maintaining that overconsumption, particularly among the rich in the First World, is a far greater problem. Unlike bioenvironmentalists, most social greens see population-control policies as a threat to the self-determination of women and the poor.

Whether it is viewed as spreading industrialism or capitalism (or both), social greens uniformly oppose economic globalization, arguing that it is a key factor behind much of what is wrong with the global system. In addition to feeding environmentally destructive growth and consumption, globalization is seen to breed injustice in a number of ways. It exacerbates the inequality within and between countries. It reinforces the domination of the global rich and the marginalization of women, indigenous peoples, and the poor. It assists corporate exploitation of the developing world (especially labor and natural resources). It weakens local community autonomy and imposes new forms of domination that are Western and patriarchal (local customs, norms, and knowledge are lost, replaced by new forms unsuited to these new locations). Globalization is also seen to destroy local livelihoods, leaving large numbers of people disconnected from the environment in both rich and poor countries. This globalization is viewed by many social greens as a continuation of earlier waves of domination and control. In the words of the prominent antiglobalization activist Vandana Shiva, “The ‘global’ of today reflects a modern version of the global reach of the handful of British merchant adventurers who, as the East India Company, later, the British Empire raided and looted large areas of the world.”

From this analysis, it is not surprising that social greens reject the current global economy. Reactive crisis management in a globalized world, social greens believe, will not suffice to save the planet: tinkering will just momentarily stall the crash. In many instances the environmental solutions of market liberals and institutionalists, because they assume globalization brings environmental benefits, are part of the problem. For social greens major reforms are necessary, well beyond, for example, just strengthening institutions or internalizing environmental and social costs into the price of traded goods. Thus social greens, as the work of the International Forum on Globalization exemplifies, call for a dismantling of current global economic structures and institutions. To replace this, many social greens advocate a return to local community autonomy to rejuvenate social relations and restore the natural environment.

**Complete the following table juxtaposing the 4 different worldviews on global environmental change. This activity will help you clarify the views shared as well as the differences.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Worldview** | **Representative** | **Causes of environmental degradation** | **Solutions to environmental degradation** |
| **Market Liberals** |  |  |  |
| **Institutionalists** |  |  |  |
| **Bio** **environmentalists** |  |  |  |
| **Social Greens** |  |  |  |