Of Limits and Growth

The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century

Of Limits and Growth connects three of the most important aspects of the twentieth century: decolonization, the rise of environmentalism, and the United States’ support for economic development and modernization in the Third World. It links these trends by revealing how environmental NGOs challenged and reformed the development approaches of the U.S. government, World Bank, and United Nations from the 1960s through the 1990s. The book shows how NGOs promoted the use of “appropriate” technologies, environmental reviews in the lending process, development plans based on ecological principles, and international cooperation on global issues such as climate change. It also reveals that the “sustainable development” concept emerged from transnational negotiations in which environmentalists accommodated the developmental aspirations of Third World intellectuals and leaders. In sum, Of Limits and Growth offers a new history of sustainability by elucidating the global origins of environmental activism, the ways in which environmental activists challenged development approaches worldwide, and how environmental non-state actors reshaped the United States’ and World Bank’s development policies.

Stephen J. Macekura is Assistant Professor of International Studies at Indiana University.
Global and International History

Series Editors
Erez Manela, Harvard University
John McNeill, Georgetown University
Aviel Roshwald, Georgetown University

The Global and International History series seeks to highlight and explore the convergences between the new International History and the new World History. Its editors are interested in approaches that mix traditional units of analysis such as civilizations, nations, and states with other concepts such as transnationalism, diasporas, and international institutions.

Titles in the Series
Stephen J. Macekura, *Of Limits and Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century*
Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third-World Nationalism*
Of Limits and Growth

The Rise of Global Sustainable Development
in the Twentieth Century

STEPHEN J. MACEKURA

Department of International Studies, Indiana University
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge. It furthers the University’s mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107072619

© Stephen J. Macekura 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015
Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Macekura, Stephen J.
pages cm. – (Global and international history)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
isbn 978-1-107-07261-9 (hardback)
HC79.15M293 2015
338.9'270904–dc23 2015014019

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.
# Contents

*List of Illustrations*  
ix

*Acknowledgments*  
xi

- Introduction: NGOs and the Origins of “Sustainable Development”  
1

## PART ONE. ORIGINS

1. The Rise of International Conservation and Postwar Development  
17

2. Parks and Poverty in Africa: Conservation, Decolonization, and Development  
54

91

## PART TWO. REFORMS

4. When Small Seemed Beautiful: NGOs, Appropriate Technology, and International Development in the 1970s  
137

5. Leveraging the Lenders: The Quest for Environmental Impact Statements in the United States and the World Bank  
172

219
PART THREE. PERSISTENT PROBLEMS

7 The Persistence of Old Problems: The Politics of Environment and Development at the Rio Earth Summit 261
    Conclusion: The Growth and Limits of NGOs 304

Archives 317
Index 321
Illustrations

1 Aileen B. Train and Russell E. Train on safari in Kenya, 1956, with a leopard shot by Russell E. Train page 2
2 Russell E. Train, Kenya, 1958, elephant tusks weighing 101 and 102 pounds 44
3 National parks and game reserves in East Africa, ca. 1970 58
4 Christian Herter and Russell Train meet with NGO representatives at the Stockholm Conference 122
5 Are not poverty and need the greatest polluters? Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi speaks to the Stockholm Conference, June 14, 1972 125
6 Map of Brazil, ca. 1981 200
7 Map of India, ca. 1996 215
8 WWF officials 238
9 Map of Zambia, ca. 1988 246
10 Maurice Strong speaks at the Earth Summit’s opening, June 3, 1992 294
11 President George H. W. Bush and his wife, Barbara, add their names to the “Earth Pledge” wall during the Earth Summit 295
Acknowledgments

No individual deserves more of my gratitude than Melvyn Leffler, who guided this project from its inception as a dissertation to its conclusion as a book. Mel was an ideal mentor during my graduate studies, and his friendship in the years since has helped to sustain my scholarship. Mel always inspired me to endure through challenging times, and he still does.

I also owe tremendous thanks to a number of other terrific scholars who have nurtured this project. Ed Russell introduced me to environmental history and provided incisive criticism at key moments in the growth of the dissertation. Brian Balogh showed me how and why to study governance, and he did so with characteristic good humor. Jennifer Burns encouraged me early in my graduate career, and she continues to be a great colleague for stimulating conversations about the history of economic thought. Will Hitchcock joined the project late, but he provided insightful commentary on many occasions. Josh Yates broadened my disciplinary horizons and stimulated my thinking about culture and political economy, and he became a great friend in the process. Ed Miller, whom I first met as an undergraduate and now know as a terrific colleague and friend, has consistently offered sound professional advice and frequently helped me think through the history of international development.

Brent Cebul and Jamie Allison, two outstanding historians, have been with me from the start of this process. Brent’s insightful criticisms and wide-ranging knowledge of American history helped shape this project and continue to aid my work in innumerable ways. Jamie’s extensive careful editorial suggestions improved this project greatly and still inform my research and writing. They both aided me in critical ways during the early stages of this book, and I am grateful for their continuing support and,
above all, friendship. Here's to many more dinners, drinks, and conversations in the future.

I received tremendous financial support from a number of organizations that made possible the research and writing of this project. I wish to thank the George C. Marshall Foundation, the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, the Bankard Fund for Political Economy at the University of Virginia, the Albert Gallatin Graduate Research Fellowship at the University of Virginia, the University of Virginia Society of Fellows, the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, the Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs, and the Corcoran Department of History at the University of Virginia. During various stages of the project I had the honor of being a Fellow at the Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College, the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, and the Miller Center for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia. All three institutions are outstanding places for young scholars of U.S. foreign policy, political history, and capitalism and culture to work.

Countless archivists helped me throughout this project. While all deserve commendation, I owe a special thanks to Everlyne Were Makana and Richard Ambani for their help in orienting me to research possibilities in Nairobi. I also benefited from friends who let me sleep on couches or spare beds during extended research excursions. Kate Anderson and Paulina Michnowska opened their home to me during an extended stay in London, as Brad Wolcott, Jillian Rork, Brent Cebul, and Katherine Treppendahl did during trips to Boston.

This book has also benefited from a wide variety of colleagues in the field who have read chapters, commented on conference papers, or provided valuable feedback and advice in other ways. I thank Brent Cebul, Jamie Allison, Richard Tucker, David Ekbladh, David Engerman, Erez Manela, John McNeill, Nick Cullather, Brad Simpson, Amy Sayward, Sarah Snyder, Tom Zeiler, Tore Olsson, Roger Eardley-Pryor, Iris Borowy, Jan-Henrik Meyer, Wolfram Kaiser, Michael Manulak, Stephen Wertheim, Ryan Irwin, Ed Miller, Amanda McVety, and Chris Jones. Daniel Immerwahr, Tom Robertson, Frank Zelko, and Paul Adler deserve special thanks for reading through the entire manuscript and offering constructive feedback along the way. I am greatly appreciative of David Satterthwaite, Lee Talbot, and Jim MacNeill, each of whom took the time to field my many questions and enriched my understanding of environmentalism and international development.

I have had the tremendous good fortune of working with Debbie Gershenowitz at Cambridge University Press. Debbie supported this
book from the first day we met, and I am thankful for her thorough editorial work. Along with Debbie, Dana Bricken answered all of my questions and treated this new author with admirable patience. I am also indebted to the insightful anonymous reviewers who read this manuscript.

In Charlottesville, I received support and valuable commentary on this project at various stages from Christian McMillen, Jack Brown, Bernie Carlson, Marc Selverstone, Sid Milkis, Ben Cohen, Victor Nemchenok, Ethan Schrum, Mason Williams, Nir Avissar, Allison Elias, James Wilson, Barin Kayaoglu, Lauren Turek, Kate Geoghegan, Harold Mock, Evan McCormick, Ben Brady, Shannon Nix, Mary Barton, Kelly Winck, Andrew McGee, Laura Kolar, Bart Elmore, Tom Finger, and Leif Frederickson. In Hanover, I benefited greatly from the support and friendship of Jennie Miller, Udi Greenberg, and Gerald Auten during the final phase of this project.

Finally, I thank friends and family who helped me through this process. Trevor Holland, Anna Mikulak, Mike Salter, Rebecca James, Jenna Krumminga, Amy Essigmann, Jason Hartwig, Jonathan Hancock, Jillian Rork, Brad Wolcott, John Bair, Marina McClure, Andrew Martin, Laura Kolbe, Lindsay Turner, and Walt Hunter have all helped to make this project possible. The same is true for my family – Joseph, Mark, Dede, Virginia, Mickey, John, and Marty – who have been unwavering in their support. Allison Quantz came into my life at a late stage of this project, but she improved it in many ways. I am grateful for her guidance, support, and love, and I am especially appreciative for the many hours she spent listening to me talk about this project and the many more she spent reading through drafts. Allison, thank you.