
Eco-Business: A Big-Brand Takeover of Sustainability ...

Peter Dauvergne is Professor of International Relations at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment* and *Eco-Business: A Big-Brand Takeover of Sustainability* (with Jane Lister), both published by the MIT Press.

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As Peter Dauvergne and Jane Lister make clear in their opening pages, what they call eco-business is the takeover of the concept of sustainability and its use as a business tool for control and growth, aiming for sustainability of the business first and the planet second.

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Eco-Business: A Big-Brand Takeover of Sustainability After decades of mostly greenwashing efforts, big-brand companies like Walmart, Nike, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's are now competing surprisingly hard to position themselves as "sustainability leaders" - adopting farsighted goals and driving change through core operations and global supply chains.

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Eco-Business | The MIT Press

Eco Business: A Big-Brand Takeover of Sustainability. Authors: Peter Dauvergne, Jane Lister. Pub: MIT Press. Price: US\$24.95/£17.95. BUY. In Eco-Business's opening chapter, authors Dauvergne and Lister claim they will reveal that big brands' interest in sustainability is 'actually increasing risks and adding to an ever-mounting global crisis', a statement that I well believe could be true.

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Eco-Business: A Big-Brand Takeover of Sustainability ...

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McDonald's promises to use only beef, coffee, fish, chicken, and cooking oil obtained from sustainable sources. Coca-Cola promises to achieve water neutrality. Unilever has set a deadline of 2020 to reach 100 percent sustainable agricultural sourcing. Walmart has pledged to become carbon neutral. Today, big-brand companies seem to be making commitments that go beyond the usual "greenwashing" efforts undertaken largely for public relations purposes. In Eco-Business, Peter Dauvergne and Jane Lister examine this new corporate embrace of sustainability, its actual accomplishments, and the consequences for the environment. For many leading-brand companies, these corporate sustainability efforts go deep, reorienting central operations and extending through global supply chains. Yet, as Dauvergne and Lister point out, these companies are doing this not for the good of the planet but for their own profits and market share in a volatile, globalized economy. They are using sustainability as a business tool. Advocacy groups and governments are partnering with these companies, eager to reap the governance potential of eco-business efforts. But Dauvergne and Lister show that the acclaimed eco-efficiencies achieved by big-brand companies limit the potential for finding deeper solutions to pressing environmental problems and reinforce runaway consumption. Eco-business promotes the sustainability of big business, not the sustainability of life on Earth.

Today, big-brand companies seem to be making commitments to sustainability that go beyond the usual "greenwashing" efforts undertaken largely for public relations purposes. McDonald's promises to use only beef, coffee, fish, chicken, and cooking oil obtained from sustainable sources. Coca-Cola promises to achieve water neutrality. Walmart has pledged to become carbon neutral. This BIT examines some of these corporate sustainability efforts and their ultimate goal.

Two experts explain the consequences for the planet when corporations use sustainability as a business tool. McDonald's promises to use only beef, coffee, fish, chicken, and cooking oil obtained from sustainable sources. Coca-Cola promises to achieve water neutrality. Unilever seeks to achieve 100 percent sustainable agricultural sourcing by 2020. Walmart has pledged to become carbon neutral. Big-brand companies seem to be making commitments that go beyond the usual "greenwashing" efforts undertaken largely for public-relations purposes. In Eco-Business, Peter Dauvergne and Jane Lister examine this new corporate embrace of sustainability, its actual accomplishments, and the consequences for the environment. For many leading-brand companies, these corporate sustainability efforts go deep, reorienting central operations and extending through global supply chains. Yet, as Dauvergne and Lister point out, these companies are doing this not for the good of the planet but for their own profits and market share in a volatile, globalized economy. They are using sustainability as a business tool. Dauvergne and Lister show that the eco-efficiencies achieved by big-brand companies limit the potential for finding deeper solutions to pressing environmental problems and reinforce runaway consumption. Eco-business promotes the sustainability of big business, not the sustainability of life on Earth.

What it means for global sustainability when environmentalism is dominated by the concerns of the affluent—eco-business, eco-consumption, wilderness preservation. Over the last fifty years, environmentalism has emerged as a clear counterforce to the environmental destruction caused by industrialization, colonialism, and globalization. Activists and policymakers have fought hard to make the earth a better place to live. But has the environmental movement actually brought about meaningful progress toward global sustainability? Signs of global “unsustainability” are everywhere, from decreasing biodiversity to scarcity of fresh water to steadily rising greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, as Peter Dauvergne points out in this provocative book, the environmental movement is increasingly dominated by the environmentalism of the rich—diverted into eco-business, eco-consumption, wilderness preservation, energy efficiency, and recycling. While it's good that, for example, Barbie dolls' packaging no longer depletes Indonesian rainforest, and that Toyota Highlanders are available as hybrids, none of this gets at the source of the current sustainability crisis. More eco-products can just mean more corporate profits, consumption, and waste. Dauvergne examines extraction booms that leave developing countries poor and environmentally devastated—with the ruination of the South Pacific island of Nauru a case in point; the struggles against consumption inequities of courageous activists like Bruno Manser, who worked with indigenous people to try to save the rainforests of Borneo; and the manufacturing of vast markets for nondurable goods—for example, convincing parents in China that disposable diapers made for healthier and smarter babies. Dauvergne reveals why a global political economy of ever more—more growth, more sales, more consumption—is swamping environmental gains. Environmentalism of the rich does little to bring about the sweeping institutional change necessary to make progress toward global sustainability.

Where public policy fails, can consumer choices lead the way to more ethical and sustainable production practices? “Buy local,” “buy green,” “buy organic,” “fair trade”—how effective has the ethical consumption movement been in changing market behavior? Can consumers create fair and sustainable supply chains by shopping selectively? Dara O'Rourke, the activist-scholar who first broke the news about Nike's sweatshops in the 1990s, considers the promise of ethical consumption—the idea that individuals, voting with their wallets, can promote better labor conditions and environmental outcomes globally. Governments have proven unable to hold companies responsible for labor and environmental practices. Consumers who say they want to support ethical companies often lack the knowledge and resources to do so consistently. But with the right tools, they may be able to succeed where governments have failed. Responding to O'Rourke's argument, eight experts—Juliet Schor, Richard Locke, Scott Nova, Lisa Ann Richey, Margaret Levi, Andrew Szasz, Scott Hartley, and Aret van Herdeen—consider the connections between personal concerns and consumer activism, challenge the value of entrusting regulation to consumer efforts, and draw attention to difficulties posed by global supply chains.

A new edition of a book that takes a comprehensive look at the ways economic processes affect global environmental outcomes. This comprehensive and accessible book fills the need for a political economy view of global environmental politics, focusing on the ways international economic processes affect environmental outcomes. It examines the main actors and forces shaping global environmental management, particularly in the developing world. Moving beyond the usual emphasis on international agreements and institutions, it strives to capture not only academic theoretical debates but also views on politics, economics, and the environment within the halls of global conferences, on the streets during antiglobalization protests, and in the boardrooms of international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and industry associations. The book maps out an original typology of four contrasting worldviews of environmental change—those of market liberals, institutionalists, bioenvironmentalists, and social greens—and uses them as a framework to examine the links between the global political economy and ecological change. This typology provides a common language for students, instructors, and scholars to discuss the issues across the classical social science divisions. The second edition of this popular text has been thoroughly revised and updated to reflect recent events, including the food crisis of 2007–2008, the financial meltdown of 2008, and the Copenhagen Climate Conference of 2009. Topics covered include the environmental implications of globalization; wealth, poverty, and consumption; global trade; transnational corporations; and multilateral and private finance.

An environmentalist maps the hidden costs of overconsumption in a globalized world by tracing the environmental consequences of five commodities. The Shadows of Consumption gives a hard-hitting diagnosis: many of the earth's ecosystems and billions of its people are at risk from the consequences of rising consumption. Products ranging from cars to hamburgers offer conveniences and pleasures; but, as Peter Dauvergne makes clear, global political and economic processes displace the real costs of consumer goods into distant ecosystems, communities, and timelines, tipping into crisis people and places without the power to resist. In The Shadows of Consumption, Peter Dauvergne maps the costs of consumption that remain hidden in the shadows cast by globalized corporations, trade, and finance. Dauvergne traces the environmental consequences of five commodities: automobiles, gasoline, refrigerators, beef, and harp seals. In these fascinating histories we learn, for example, that American officials ignored warnings about the dangers of lead in gasoline in the 1920s; why China is now a leading producer of CFC-free refrigerators; and how activists were able to stop Canada's commercial seal hunt in the 1980s (but are unable to do so now). Dauvergne's innovative analysis allows us to see why so many efforts to manage the global environment are failing even as environmentalism is slowly strengthening. He proposes a guiding principle of “balanced consumption” for both consumers and corporations. We know that we can make things better by driving a high-mileage car, eating locally grown food, and buying energy-efficient appliances; but these improvements are incremental, local, and insufficient. More crucial than our individual efforts to reuse and recycle will be reforms in the global

political economy to reduce the inequalities of consumption and correct the imbalance between growing economies and environmental sustainability.

Examining the potential benefits and risks of using artificial intelligence to advance global sustainability. Drones with night vision are tracking elephant and rhino poachers in African wildlife parks and sanctuaries; smart submersibles are saving coral from carnivorous starfish on Australia's Great Barrier Reef; recycled cell phones alert Brazilian forest rangers to the sound of illegal logging. The tools of artificial intelligence are being increasingly deployed in the battle for global sustainability. And yet, warns Peter Dauvergne, we should be cautious in declaring AI the planet's savior. In *AI in the Wild*, Dauvergne avoids the AI industry-powered hype and offers a critical view, exploring both the potential benefits and risks of using artificial intelligence to advance global sustainability.

This book is the first to analyze the environmental impact of Japanese trade, corporations, and aid on timber management in the context of Southeast Asian political economies. It is also one of the first comprehensive studies of why Southeast Asian states are unable to enforce forest policies and regulations.

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