

between the citizen and the nation. The mandate to maintain this difficult relationship falls to government/city officials whose tactics range from surveillance mechanisms that are punitive and exclusionary to infrastructure developments that cultivate popular support. For example, the superblock and the flyover emerge as unexpected symbols of a polemical social politics. Kusno also argues that the mnemonic traces of ethnic riots, rape, and imprisonment shape these urban histories, suggesting that like many of her regional neighbors, Indonesia forges its democratic subjectivities through ugly socio-political realities that are contested, often in liberating ways, by a politics from below.

———Anoma Pieris, University of Melbourne

Edward B. Barbier, *Scarcity and Frontiers: How Economies Have Developed through Natural Resource Exploitation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

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This survey of a fundamental theme in global history, the role of natural resource extraction in the development of economies and political systems, is a tour de force, covering each major stage through history in detailed local and global perspective. It integrates a vast range of previous studies into a lucid synthesis, and each chapter includes numerous detailed explanatory end-notes and an exceptionally useful bibliography. This will be a major source for environmental historians as well as political and economic historians, locating human impacts on the biosphere within the structures of economic growth.

In the introductory chapter, “Scarcity and Frontiers,” Edward Barbier defines a frontier area as “an area or source of unusually abundant natural resources and land *relative* to labor and capital,” or “the initial existence of abundant land, mostly unoccupied, and by a substantial migration of capital and people” (pp. 7, 9). He considers both horizontal frontiers (land and its surface resources of soil, water, and vegetation), and vertical frontiers (sub-surface riches of minerals and fossil fuels). In other words, scarcity of resources has been a moving process from one region to another over time.

Barbier traces this perspective through the agricultural and urban transitions to the emergence of a world economy by 1500, demonstrating with great erudition how a geographically wide range of economies achieved economic development through the first ten thousand years of settled human communities.

Two chapters on the worldwide expansion of Europe’s imperial reach, “The Atlantic Economy, 1500–1860,” and “The Golden Age of Resource-Based Development, 1870–1914,” constitute one of the most incisive economic history surveys for historians of colonial, political, and environmental history. “The Age of Dislocation, 1914–1950” is a particularly valuable

chapter in that it shows continuities in the macroeconomic contours of two massive wars bookending a decade of relative stability and prosperity and the global depression of the 1930s. This chapter gives structure to a chaotic era that is often marginalized in the research, or else treated only in segments.

“The Contemporary Era, from 1950 to the Present,” centers on the challenging question of why most “developing” economies have failed to improve general welfare or environmental stability in the way that the major industrializing economies previously had. In preceding chapters, Barbier is occasionally diffident or euphemistic in noting that the value of extracted resources went largely to the imperial economies rather than being reinvested in the “host” economies’ broader development. Dependency Theory historians and their latter-day progeny could find this a major weakness, but this chapter corrects it, dealing more directly with that central issue.

Finally, in the “Epilogue: The Age of Ecological Scarcity?” Barbier argues that the broad lessons of resource-based development through history are still relevant for the new era of severe deterioration of the global commons. He shows how the world’s poor are the most vulnerable victims of the decline of water and air quality. He stresses the wide range of policies that distort the market’s ability to reflect resource scarcity and environmental distress. He ends with guarded hopefulness: the severe recession that began in 2008 can lead to public policies that combine more globally equitable economic expansion with more sustainable environmental preservation, particularly in relation to fossil fuel consumption. But he shows in some detail that though the key institution for international cooperation, the G20, has considered many environmentally forward-looking policies, it has so far failed to move concertedly forward.

In sum, this book is an indispensable reference for the economic history of natural resource extraction and frontier history, and especially for environmental historians who add the dimension of transformation and deterioration of ecosystems.

———Richard Tucker, University of Michigan