

Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice is impressively researched and persuasively argued. It deserved to be read by anyone interested in questions of environmental politics, social justice, and public health. While some readers might not care for the extended discussion of political philosophy in the book's first chapter, they should press on. Harrison has done a careful job taking seriously the claims of all stakeholders and presenting a clear and comprehensive story.

Sarah T. Phillips
Boston University

Food. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 200 pp. ISBN 9780745649368, \$19.95 paperback. Jennifer Clapp. 2011.

Jennifer Clapp's book, aptly and simply titled *Food*, is the new must-read primer for those trying to make sense of the suddenly turbulent world of drought and food shortages, price spikes and financial crises, biofuels and commodity index funds, food riots, and social unrest. *Food* is part of Polity Press' interesting "Resources" series with additional one-word titles on, for example, water, oil, fish, timber, land, and coltan. The series sets out to explore the "geopolitics of key natural resources" in a concise and accessible way. With *Food*, they have achieved that lofty goal.

Clapp gives us a concise analysis of what has changed with globalization, identifying four "key forces": state-led expansion of industrial agriculture and global food trade, trade liberalization to open markets, the rise of transnational firms, and the growing "financialization" of food with the growing dominance of financial capital. These have brought with them the commodification of food, reducing the staff of life to one more tradable commodity. Even though the vast majority of food in the world is not traded internationally, international commodity markets set global prices that affect even those distant from those markets. These changes have also produced unequal and volatile markets, with the poorest countries increasingly dependent on imports from rich country exporters. Finally, it has deepened the "ecological fragility" of global agriculture, a problem only exacerbated now with the increasing effects of climate change.

Clapp's thesis, which is provocative, is that where farmers and consumers used to have much more say over local, regional, and even global food economies, now vast "middle spaces" have been opened between them. These are being occupied by powerful economic and political actors, from transnational firms to financial investors. Her book examines, in a remarkably accessible way, how "the evolution of the global food system in this direction raises important concerns of a social, economic, and ecological nature" (p. 23). She puts those concerns in context with well-referenced explanatory chapters on each of the four forces she identifies.

The focus on the financialization of the global food economy and transnational firms are particularly welcome, as they are formidable actors in the "middle spaces." The concentrated power of a small number of transnational firms in key agricultural markets is an acknowledged fact, but a trend barely addressed in global

governance. These firms wield enormous influence, both economically, through sheer market power, and politically, through aggressive lobbying with international bodies like the World Trade Organization, and with national governments in their vast networks of global operations. They are very often larger, in financial assets, than the countries in which they operate.

The quite recent financialization of global commodity markets has come to attention with the global financial crisis and the related speculative bubble in largely deregulated commodity derivatives markets. While economists debate the extent to which the food price spikes of 2007–2008 and 2010–2011 were caused by financial speculation, no one denies the rising prominence—if not dominance—of financial interests in what used to be relatively well-functioning futures markets that helped farmers and commodity buyers hedge risk. Clapp’s treatment of this issue is deep and balanced, and she places it at the center of her analysis.

The final chapter “Can the World Food Economy Be Transformed?” lays out well the competing visions and contending interests battling over the future of food and agriculture. Clapp writes: “As the middle spaces in the world food economy have been captured by key agents, the mercantilist aims of states, the development goals of international organizations and private foundations, the profit motives of transnational corporations, and the financial objectives of investors have begun to dominate the purpose of food and agriculture. A further outgrowth of this process is that farmers’ choices concerning production and individuals’ choices concerning consumption have become largely disconnected from one another, and instead have been influenced by the choices made by others who hold the balance of power in the world food economy” (p. 158).

With repeated food price spikes causing riots in developing countries and with resources constrained by natural limits and climate change, there is official alarm concerning the ability of global agriculture to feed the world. The dominating response, however, is the expansion of corporate-led, technology-driven industrial production and a push to further deepen global market integration. In contrast, Clapp presents a range of alternatives, which focus on reducing, rather than deepening, the commodification of food, promoting the more equitable distribution of food and food-producing resources, and addressing the serious ecological impacts of industrial agriculture by advancing more ecologically sound methods. She highlights fair trade initiatives, the food sovereignty movement, and what she calls the “global food justice” movement, which includes the growing “right to food” approach.

If there is any disappointment with this book, it is getting to the end. At the end of her excellent concluding chapter, Clapp offers the provocative subheading: “Which Way Forward?” Unfortunately, she gives us only a paragraph. We can only hope that this is Clapp’s way of teasing her readers for a forthcoming sequel because we finish *Food* hungry for her answer to precisely that question. In this clear and compelling book, Clapp has certainly demonstrated her qualifications to provide an authoritative response.

Timothy A. Wise
Tufts University