

Environmental Sociology: Theory and Practice can be used as a textbook for such courses as sociology, environmental studies, political science, and geography. For academics, professionals, and librarians, it is also a key resource in this new field of growing importance.

Definition[edit] Environmental sociology is typically defined as the sociological study of societal-environmental interactions, although this definition immediately presents the problem of integrating human cultures with the rest of the environment. Although the focus of the field is the relationship between society and environment in general, environmental sociologists typically place special emphasis on studying the social factors that cause environmental problems, the societal impacts of those problems, and efforts to solve the problems. In addition, considerable attention is paid to the social processes by which certain environmental conditions become socially defined as problems. History[edit] Ancient Greeks idealized life in nature using the idea of the pastoral. Much later, Romantic writers such as Wordsworth took their inspiration from nature. Modern thought surrounding human-environment relations can be traced back to Charles Darwin. Although typically taken at the micro-level, evolutionary principles, particularly adaptability, serve as a microcosm of human ecology. Sociology developed as a scholarly discipline in the mid- and late 19th and early 20th centuries, in a context where biological determinism had failed to fully explain key features of social change, including the evolving relationship between humans and their natural environments. In its foundational years, classical sociology thus saw social and cultural factors as the dominant, if not exclusive, cause of social and cultural conditions. This lens down-played interactive factors in the relationship between humans and their biophysical environments. Environmental sociology emerged as a coherent subfield of inquiry after the environmental movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. The works of William R. In the late 1960s, they called for a new holistic, or systems perspective. Since the 1970s, general sociology has noticeably transformed to include environmental forces in social explanations. Environmental sociology has now solidified as a respected, interdisciplinary field of study in academia. Concepts[edit] This article relies largely or entirely on a single source. Relevant discussion may be found on the talk page. Please help improve this article by introducing citations to additional sources. June Existential dualism[edit] The duality of the human condition rests with cultural uniqueness and evolutionary traits. From one perspective, humans are embedded in the ecosphere and co-evolved alongside other species. Humans share the same basic ecological dependencies as other inhabitants of nature. From the other perspectives, humans are distinguished from other species because of their innovative capacities, distinct cultures and varied institutions. Human creations have the power to independently manipulate, destroy, and transcend the limits of the natural environment Buttel and Humphrey, According to Buttel, there are five basic epistemologies in environmental sociology kindly mention them. In practice, this means five different theories of what to blame for environmental degradation, i. In order of their invention, these ideas of what to blame build on each other and thus contradict each other. Hardin offered privatization of resources or government regulation as solutions to environmental degradation caused by tragedy of the commons conditions. Many other sociologists shared this view of solutions well into the 1980s see Ophuls. There have been many critiques of this view particularly political scientist Elinor Ostrom, or economists Amartya Sen and Ester Boserup. Even though much of mainstream journalism considers Malthusianism the only view of environmentalism, most sociologists would disagree with Malthusianism since social organizational issues of environmental degradation are more demonstrated to cause environmental problems than abstract population or selfishness per se. For examples of this critique, Ostrom in her book *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* argues that instead of self-interest always causing degradation, it can sometimes motivate people to take care of their common property resources. To do this they must change the basic organizational rules of resource use. Her research provides evidence for sustainable resource management systems, around common pool resources that have lasted for centuries in some areas of the world. Amartya Sen argues in his book *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* that population expansion fails to cause famines or degradation as

Malthusians or Neo-Malthusians argue. Instead, in documented cases a lack of political entitlement to resources that exist in abundance, causes famines in some populations. He documents how famines can occur even in the midst of plenty or in the context of low populations. He argues that famines and environmental degradation would only occur in non-functioning democracies or unrepresentative states. Instead of agricultural technology and scale determining and limiting population as Malthus attempted to argue, Boserup argued the world is full of cases of the direct opposite: Eco-Marxist scholar Allan Schnaiberg below argues against Malthusianism with the rationale that under larger capitalist economies, human degradation moved from localized, population-based degradation to organizationally caused degradation of capitalist political economies to blame. He gives the example of the organized degradation of rainforest areas which states and capitalists push people off the land before it is degraded by organizational means. New Ecological Paradigm[edit] In the s, The New Ecological Paradigm NEP conception critiqued the claimed lack of human-environmental focus in the classical sociologists and the Sociological priorities their followers created. This view was shaped by the leading Western worldview of the time and the desire for Sociology to establish itself as an independent discipline against the then popular racist-biological environmental determinism where environment was all. In this HEP view, human dominance was felt to be justified by the uniqueness of culture, argued to be more adaptable than biological traits. Furthermore, culture also has the capacity to accumulate and innovate, making it capable of solving all natural problems. Therefore, as humans were not conceived of as governed by natural conditions, they were felt to have complete control of their own destiny. Any potential limitation posed by the natural world was felt to be surpassed using human ingenuity. Research proceeded accordingly without environmental analysis. In the s, sociological scholars Riley Dunlap and William R. Catton and Dunlap suggested a new perspective that took environmental variables into full account. The NEP recognizes the innovative capacity of humans, but says that humans are still ecologically interdependent as with other species. The NEP notes the power of social and cultural forces but does not profess social determinism. Instead, humans are impacted by the cause, effect, and feedback loops of ecosystems. The Earth has a finite level of natural resources and waste repositories. Thus, the biophysical environment can impose constraints on human activity. It was additionally a critique of Malthusian views of the s and s. This environmental aspect of Durkheim has been discussed by Schnaiberg as well. There was cross pollination. Neo-Marxism was based on the collapse of the widespread believability of the Marxist social movement in the failed revolts of the s and the rise of many New Social Movements that failed to fit in many Marxist analytic frameworks of conflict sociology. Sociologists entered the fray with empirical research on these novel social conflicts. Therefore, some sociologists wanted to stretch Marxist ideas of social conflict to analyze environmental social movements from this materialist framework instead of interpreting environmental movements as a more cultural "New Social Movement" separate than material concerns. So "Eco-Marxism" was based on using Neo-Marxist conflict sociology concepts of the relative autonomy of the state applied to environmental conflict. For Moore, the modern world-system is a capitalist world-ecology, joining the accumulation of capital, the pursuit of power, and the production of nature in dialectical unity. Moore argues that the emergent law of value, from the sixteenth century, was evident in the extraordinary shift in the scale, scope, and speed of environmental change. What took premodern civilizations centuries to achieve—such as the deforestation of Europe in the medieval era—capitalism realized in mere decades. This world-historical rupture, argues Moore, can be explained through a law of value that regards labor productivity as the decisive metric of wealth and power in the modern world. From this standpoint, the genius of capitalist development has been to appropriate uncommodified natures—including uncommodified human natures—as a means of advancing labor productivity in the commodity system. This conflictual concept has overwhelming political salience. First, the economic synthesis states that the desire for economic expansion will prevail over ecological concerns. Policy will decide to maximize immediate economic growth at the expense of environmental disruption. Secondly, the managed scarcity synthesis concludes that governments will attempt to control only the most dire of environmental problems to prevent health and economic disasters. This will give the appearance that governments act more environmentally consciously than they really do. Third, the ecological synthesis generates a hypothetical case where environmental degradation is so severe that political

forces would respond with sustainable policies. The driving factor would be economic damage caused by environmental degradation. The economic engine would be based on renewable resources at this point. Production and consumption methods would adhere to sustainability regulations. These conflict-based syntheses have several potential outcomes. One is that the most powerful economic and political forces will preserve the status quo and bolster their dominance. Historically, this is the most common occurrence. Another potential outcome is for contending powerful parties to fall into a stalemate. Lastly, tumultuous social events may result that redistribute economic and political resources. Treadmill of production[edit] In , the highly influential work of Allan Schnaiberg entitled *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* was a large contribution to this theme of a societal-environmental dialectic. Moving away from economic reductionism like other neo-Marxists, Schnaiberg called for an analysis of how certain projects of "political capitalism" encouraged environmental degradation instead of all capitalism per se. He analyzes only the United States at length, though sees such a treadmill of production and of environmental degradation in operation in the Soviet Union or socialist countries as well. The desire for economic expansion was found to be a common political ground for all three contentious groupsâ€”in capital, labor, and the stateâ€”to surmount their separate interests and postpone conflict by all agreeing on economic growth. Therefore, grounds for a political alliance emerge among these conflictual actors when monopoly capitalism can convince both of the other nodes to support its politicized consolidation. This can appeal to the other nodes since it additionally provides expanding state legitimacy and its own funding while providing at least at the time secure worker employment in larger industries with their desired stable or growing consumption. This political capitalism works against smaller scale capitalism or other uses of the state or against other alliances of labor. This acceleration he felt was at root merely an informal allianceâ€”based solely on the propaganda from monopoly capital and the state that worker consumption can only be achieved through further capitalist consolidation. This provides grounds for both to reject their treadmill alliance with monopoly capital. Schnaiberg is motivated to optimism by this potential if states and labor movements can be educated to the environmental and livelihood dangers in the long run of any support of monopoly capital. This potentially means these two groups moving away from subsidizing and supporting the degradation of the environment. This deceleration was defined as state and working labor movements designing policies to shrink the scale of the economy as a solution to environmental degradation and their own consumptive requirements. Meanwhile, in the interim, he argued a common alliance between the three is responsible for why they prefer to support common economic growth as a common way to avoid their open conflicts despite mounting environmental costs for the state as well as for laborers due to environmental disruption. Ecological modernization and reflexive modernization[edit] Further information: Ecological modernization By the s, a critique of eco-Marxism was in the offing, given empirical data from countries mostly in Western Europe like the Netherlands, Western Germany and somewhat the United Kingdom that were attempting to wed environmental protection with economic growth instead of seeing them as separate. This was done through both state and capital restructuring.

Chapter 2 : Formats and Editions of Environmental sociology : theory and practice [calendrierdelascience.com]

Environmental sociology is the study of interactions between societies and their natural environment. This field emphasizes the social factors that influence environmental resource management and cause environmental issues, the processes by which these environmental problems are socially constructed and defined as social issues, and societal responses to these problems.

The duality of the human condition rests with cultural uniqueness and evolutionary traits. From one perspective, humans are embedded in the ecosphere and coevolved alongside other species. Humans share the same basic ecological dependencies as other inhabitants of nature. From the other perspective, humans are distinguished from other species because of their innovative capacities, distinct cultures and varied institutions. Human creations have the power to independently manipulate, destroy, and transcend the limits of the natural environment (Buttel and Humphrey). According to Buttel, there are five basic epistemologies in environmental sociology. In practice, this means five different theories of what to blame for environmental degradation. In order of their invention, these ideas of what to blame build on each other and thus contradict each other. Hardin offered mass privatization or a tyrannical state to induce presumed environmental solutions. Many other sociologists shared this view of solutions well into the 1980s (see Ophuls). There have been many critiques of this view, particularly sociologist Elinor Ostrom or economist Amartya Sen. Even though much of mainstream journalism considers Malthusianism the only view of environmentalism, most sociologists would disagree since social organizational issues of environmental degradation are more demonstrated to cause environmental problems than abstract population per se. For instance, countries with low numbers of people can "outconsume" countries with high numbers of people and have a higher environmental impact this way. New Ecological Paradigm

In the 1980s, The New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) conception critiqued the claimed lack of human-environmental focus in the classical sociologists and the Sociological priorities their followers created. This view was shaped by the leading Western worldview of the time and the desire for Sociology to establish itself as an independent discipline against the then popular racist-biological environmental determinism where environment was all. In this HEP view, human dominance was felt to be justified by the uniqueness of culture, argued to be more adaptable than biological traits. Furthermore, culture also has the capacity to accumulate and innovate, making it capable of solving all natural problems. Therefore, as humans were not conceived of as governed by natural conditions, they were felt to have complete control of their own destiny. Any potential limitation posed by the natural world was felt to be surpassed using human ingenuity. Research proceeded accordingly without environmental analysis. In the 1990s, sociological scholars like Riley Dunlap and William R. Catton and Dunlap suggested a new perspective that took environmental variables into full account. The NEP recognizes the innovative capacity of humans, but says that humans are still ecologically interdependent as with other species. The NEP notes the power of social and cultural forces but does not profess social determinism. Instead, humans are impacted by the cause, effect, and feedback loops of ecosystems. The earth has a finite level of natural resources and waste repositories. Thus, the biophysical environment can impose constraints on human activity. It was additionally a critique of Malthusian views of the 18th and 19th centuries. This environmental aspect of Durkheim has been discussed by Schnaiberg as well. There was cross-pollination. Neo-Marxism was based on the collapse of the widespread believability of the Marxist social movement in the failed revolts of the 19th century and the rise of many New Social Movements that failed to fit in many Marxist analytic frameworks of conflict sociology. Sociologists entered the fray with empirical research on these novel social conflicts. Therefore, some sociologists wanted to stretch Marxist ideas of social conflict to analyze environmental social movements from this materialist framework instead of interpreting environmental movements as a more cultural "New Social Movement" separate than material concerns. So "Eco-Marxism" was based on using Neo-Marxist conflict sociology concepts of the relative autonomy of the state applied to environmental conflict. Foster challenged those who assumed Marx neglected the environmental concerns as had been argued in the 1980s against using the classical sociological theorists as a foundation for environmental sociology. In stereotypical interpretations of Marx that eco-Marxist scholar

Foster critiques, there was a Promethean view of Marx that assumed Marx was very similar to the humanocentric cultural views critiqued by early environmental sociologists as the Human Exemptionalism Paradigm. By this, Foster critiques the assumption in early environmental sociologists that classical sociological thinkers like Marx were supportive of the "Human Exemptionalist Paradigm" and neglectful of environmental conditions in their analysis. This conflictual concept has overwhelming political salience. First, the economic synthesis states that the desire for economic expansion will prevail over ecological concerns. Policy will decide to maximize immediate economic growth at the expense of environmental disruption. Secondly, the managed scarcity synthesis concludes that governments will attempt to control only the most dire of environmental problems to prevent health and economic disasters. This will give the appearance that governments act more environmentally conscious than they really do. Third, the ecological synthesis generates a hypothetical case where environmental degradation is so severe that political forces would respond with sustainable policies. The driving factor would be economic damage caused by environmental degradation. The economic engine would be based on renewable resources at this point. Production and consumption methods would adhere to sustainability regulations. These conflict-based syntheses have several potential outcomes. One is that the most powerful economic and political forces will preserve the status quo and bolster their dominance. Historically, this is the most common occurrence. Another potential outcome is for contending powerful parties to fall into a stalemate. Lastly, tumultuous social events may result that redistribute economic and political resources.

In , the highly influential work of Allan Schnaiberg entitled *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* was a large contribution to this theme of a societal-environmental dialectic. Moving away from economic reductionism like other neo-Marxists, Schnaiberg called for an analysis of how certain projects of "political capitalism" encouraged environmental degradation instead of all capitalism per se. He analyzes only the United States at length, though sees such a treadmill of production and of environmental degradation in operation in the Soviet Union or socialist countries as well. The desire for economic expansion was found to be a common political ground for all three contentious groups--in capital, labor, and the state--to surmount their separate interests and postpone conflict by all agreeing on economic growth. Therefore, grounds for a political alliance emerges among these conflictual actors when monopoly capitalism can convince both of the other nodes to support its politicized consolidation. This can appeal to the other nodes since it additionally provides expanding state legitimacy and its own funding while providing at least at the time secure worker employment in larger industries with their desired stable or growing consumption. This political capitalism works against smaller scale capitalism or other uses of the state or against other alliances of labor. This acceleration he felt was at root merely an informal alliance--based solely on the propaganda from monopoly capital and the state that worker consumption can only be achieved through further capitalist consolidation. This provides grounds for both to reject their treadmill alliance with monopoly capital. Schnaiberg is motivated to optimism by this potential if states and labor movements can be educated to the environmental and livelihood dangers in the long run of any support of monopoly capital. This potentially means these two groups moving away from subsidizing and supporting the degradation of the environment. This deceleration was defined as state and working labor movements designing policies to shrink the scale of the economy as a solution to environmental degradation and their own consumptive requirements. Meanwhile, in the interim, he argued a common alliance between the three is responsible for why they prefer to support common economic growth as a common way to avoid their open conflicts despite mounting environmental costs for the state as well as for laborers due to environmental disruption. See

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risk society is potentially being transformed by the environmental social movements of the world into structural change without rejecting the benefits of modernization and industrialization. Proponents of this school are Hannigan, particularly in *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist View*

Chapter 3 : Environmental sociology | Revolv

Environmental Sociology theory: the core of each of the previously existing sociological theories has remained fundamentally intact. The modifications have occurred through a process of extension - i.e., integrating previously ignored concerns into the fabric of the existing theories.

It has a dual focus. On the one hand it deals with the ways in which people in society relate to the natural world. Environmental sociology involves the study of the reciprocal interactions between the physical environment, social organization, and social behavior. Within this approach, environment encompasses all physical and material bases of life in a scale ranging from the most micro level to the biosphere. An important development of this sub-discipline was the shift from "sociology of environment" to an "environmental sociology. Environment is the sum total of all surroundings of a living organism, including natural forces and other living things, which provide conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage. Such interactions include the ways in which humans influence the environment as well as the ways in which environmental conditions often modified by human action influence human affairs, plus the manner in which such interactions are socially construed and acted upon. The relevance of these interactions to sociology stems from the fact that human populations depend upon the biophysical environment for survival, and this in turn necessitates a closer look at the functions that the environment serves for human beings Dunlap and Catton Environmental sociology is defined as the study of interactions among the physical environment, social behavior and social institution. Third, the environment provides our home-where we live, work, play, travel, and spends our lives. In the most general case, the planet Earth provides the home for our species. Environmental sociology emerged as a coherent subfield of inquiry after the environmental movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. The works of William R. In the late 1960s, they called for a new holistic, or systems perspective. Since the 1970s, general sociology has noticeably transformed to include environmental forces in social explanations. Environmental sociology has now solidified as a respected, interdisciplinary field of study in academia. Environmental sociology is a relatively new area of inquiry that emerged largely in response to increased societal recognition of the seriousness of environmental problems. Many areas of sociology have similarly arisen as a result of societal attention to problematic conditions, including poverty and inequality, racial and gender discrimination, and crime and delinquency. Environmental sociology is unique, however, in that sociological attention to environmental problems had to overcome strong disciplinary traditions that discouraged giving attention to nonsocial conditions such as environmental quality. Consequently, the growth of sociological work on environmental issues has been accompanied by a critique and reassessment of core sociological assumptions and practices, with the result that environmental sociology has a somewhat ambivalent stance toward its parent discipline

http: The realist approach The realists are those who want to help find the solutions needed to improve the environment, however, these individuals also understand that there are some concessions that need to be made out of necessity for the benefit of humans.

CONCLUSION Generally, environmental sociology study has its importance both to the environment and to the human being, first it help in the preservation of both man and nature, it gives man opportunity to change the negative action that damage and kept to a minimal, also it help research that can help when it comes to finding a careful balance that help mankind, enlightened sense of give and take between human and environment, as well as environment sociology help to determine the man kind and nature interact each other. A new ecological paradigm for post-exuberant sociology. The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change. University of Illinois Press Cohen, E. The origins, structure and dynamics of a role. Theory and Practice, Toronto: Captus Press Leahy, T.

Chapter 4 : Environmental sociology | Modern Wiki | FANDOM powered by Wikia

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Although typically taken at the micro-level, evolutionary principles, particularly adaptability, serve as a microcosm of human ecology. Sociology developed as a scholarly discipline in the mid- and late and early 20th centuries, in a context where biological determinism had failed to fully explain key features of social change, including the evolving relationship between humans and their natural environments. In its foundational years, classical sociology thus saw social and cultural factors as the dominant, if not exclusive, cause of social and cultural conditions. This lens down-played interactive factors in the relationship between humans and their biophysical environments. Environmental sociology emerged as a coherent subfield of inquiry after the environmental movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. The works of William R. In the late 1960s, they called for a new holistic, or systems perspective. Since the 1970s, general sociology has noticeably transformed to include environmental forces in social explanations. Environmental sociology has now solidified as a respected, interdisciplinary field of study in academia. Concepts Existential dualism The duality of the human condition rests with cultural uniqueness and evolutionary traits. From one perspective, humans are embedded in the ecosphere and co-evolved alongside other species. Humans share the same basic ecological dependencies as other inhabitants of nature. From the other perspective, humans are distinguished from other species because of their innovative capacities, distinct cultures and varied institutions. Human creations have the power to independently manipulate, destroy, and transcend the limits of the natural environment Buttel and Humphrey, According to Buttel , there are five basic epistemologies in environmental sociology. In practice, this means five different theories of what to blame for environmental degradation , i. In order of their invention, these ideas of what to blame build on each other and thus contradict each other. Hardin offered privatization of resources or government regulation as solutions to environmental degradation caused by tragedy of the commons conditions. Many other sociologists shared this view of solutions well into the 1980s see Ophuls. There have been many critiques of this view, particularly political scientist Elinor Ostrom or economists Amartya Sen and Ester Boserup. Even though much of mainstream journalism considers Malthusianism the only view of environmentalism, most sociologists would disagree with Malthusianism since social organizational issues of environmental degradation are more demonstrated to cause environmental problems than abstract population or selfishness per se. For examples of this critique, Ostrom in her book *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* argues that instead of self interest always causing degradation, it can sometimes motivate people to take care of their common property resources. To do this they must change the basic organizational rules of resource use. Her research provides evidence for sustainable resource management systems around common pool resources that have lasted for centuries in some areas of the world. Amartya Sen argues in his book *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* that population expansion fails to cause famines or degradation as Malthusians or Neo-Malthusians argue. Instead, in documented cases, a lack of political entitlement to resources that exist in abundance causes famines in some populations. He documents how famines can occur even in the midst of plenty or in the context of low populations. He argues that famines and environmental degradation would only occur in non-functioning democracies or unrepresentative states. Instead of agricultural technology and scale determining and limiting population as Malthus attempted to argue, Boserup argued the world is full of cases of the direct opposite: Eco-Marxist scholar Allan Schnaiberg below argues against Malthusianism with the rationale that under larger capitalist economies, human degradation moved from localized, population-based degradation to organizationally caused degradation of capitalist political economies to blame. He gives the example of the organized degradation of rainforest areas which states and capitalists push people off the land before it is degraded by organizational means. New Ecological Paradigm In the 1980s, The New Ecological Paradigm NEP conception critiqued the claimed lack of human-environmental focus in the classical sociologists and the Sociological priorities their followers created. This view was shaped by the leading

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Treadmill of production In 1973, the highly influential work of Allan Schnaiberg entitled *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* was a large contribution to this theme of a societal-environmental dialectic. Moving away from economic reductionism like other neo-Marxists, Schnaiberg called for an analysis of how certain projects of "political capitalism" encouraged environmental degradation instead of all capitalism per se. He analyzes only the United States at length, though sees such a treadmill of production and of environmental degradation in operation in the Soviet Union or socialist countries as well. The desire for economic expansion was found to be a common political ground for all three contentious groups—capital, labor, and the state—to surmount their separate interests

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Ecological Modernization and Reflexive Modernization

Further information: Ecological modernization By the s, a critique of eco-Marxism was in the offing, given empirical data from countries mostly in Western Europe like the Netherlands, Western Germany and somewhat the United Kingdom that were attempting to wed environmental protection with economic growth instead of seeing them as separate. This was done through both state and capital restructuring. Major proponents of this school of research are Arthur P. Mol and Gert Spaargaren. Popular examples of ecological modernization would be " cradle to cradle " production cycles, industrial ecology , large-scale organic agriculture , biomimicry , permaculture , agroecology and certain strands of sustainable development --all implying that economic growth is possible if that growth is well organized with the environment in mind.

Reflexive Modernization The many volumes of the German sociologist Ulrich Beck first argued from the late s that our risk society is potentially being transformed by the environmental social movements of the world into structural change without rejecting the benefits of modernization and industrialization. Proponents of this school include John Hannigan , particularly in *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist Perspective*

Events Modern environmentalism United States The s built strong cultural momentum for environmental causes, giving birth to the modern environmental movement and large questioning in sociologists interested in analyzing the movement. Widespread green consciousness moved vertically within society, resulting in a series of policy changes across many states in the U. Earth Day of , celebrated by millions of participants, represented the modern age of environmental thought. The environmental movement continued with incidences such as Love Canal.

Historical studies While the current mode of thought expressed in environmental sociology was not prevalent until the s, its application is now used in analysis of ancient peoples.

Chapter 5 : Captus Catalogue: Environmental Sociology - Michael D. Mehta

Environmental sociology is typically defined as the sociological study of societal-environmental interactions, although this definition immediately presents the perhaps insolvable problem of separating human cultures from the rest of the environment. Although the focus of the field is the relationship between society and environment in general.

Theoretical issues and Opportunities for Synthesis. The contribution of rural sociology and rural sociologists It has often been observed that the majority of the earliest contributors to contemporary environmental sociology were either self-identified rural sociologists, or else sociologists who worked in cognate specialty areas especially the sociology of development and community studies and who interacted frequently with rural sociologists. A brief list of the pioneers of environmental sociology during the 1950s and early 1960s who were rural sociologists includes scholars such as D. But if we think of rural sociology according to the expanded definition above, we can see that scholars such as W. Why has the rural sociological contribution to environmental sociology been so substantial? No doubt part of the explanation is that what is now known as environmental sociology did not emerge 25 or so years ago de novo, but rather was a field created in substantial measure through the amalgamation of several pre-existing areas of scholarship, most of which were actively contributed to by, if not coterminous with, rural sociology. For example, what is now thought of as natural resource sociology sociological research on parks and leisure, public lands management and policy, land use planning, and the like predated contemporary environmental sociology, and became one of its earliest tributaries during the early 1950s see Burch Much of the natural resource sociology community shifted its attention to social impact assessment by the mid to late 1960s. Likewise, much of the community studies tradition in rural sociology that survived the behaviorist turn of sociology and rural sociology in the 1950s and 1960s see Buttel et al. Sociological analysis of resource-dependent communities was the second major tributary leading to modern environmental sociology. These two traditions of rural sociological scholarship and their contributions to environmental and resource sociology are extensively discussed in Field and Burch A third tributary of modern environmental sociology was the social movements research tradition, from which several scholars began to devote attention to the emerging environmental movement as this movement sprang on the U. For example, one of the first major research anthologies in environmental and resource sociology, Social Behavior, Natural Resources, and the Environment Burch et al. While the social movements field is not generically tied to rural sociology, many of the most influential analyses of the environmental movement were undertaken by persons who otherwise identified as rural sociologists see, e. A fourth tributary of contemporary environmental sociology was that of neo-Durkheimian human ecology e. Rural sociology has been amply represented among the four main tributaries of environmental sociology. In addition, it is useful to note that over and above the lineage of environmental sociology to some of the major specialties within rural sociology, one can attribute to rural sociology a more overarching quality that caused it to be particularly hospitable to a sociology of environment and natural resources. As I suggested earlier, environmental sociology is ultimately a sociology built on recognition of the material bases of social structure and social life. Rural sociological receptiveness to the notion of material embeddedness of social life is illustrated by the fact that environmental sociology was able to legitimate itself and achieve recognition as a serious area of work earlier in the Rural Sociological Society than it was able to do so in other sociological organizations. Environmental sociology in the 1960s: Today, the two most influential components of the environmental sociology literature remain those originally contributed by Dunlap and Catton and by Schnaiberg during the mid to late 1960s. Before discussing and assessing these two major contributions, it is useful to begin by stressing that environment-society relations are very difficult to theorize. In part, this is because environmental and biophysical processes are multifaceted and complex. A vast array of human behaviors and institutions can be said to be affected by, or have impacts on, the natural world. In addition, the core objective of many in environmental sociology to elucidate the roles played by natural forces that are not apparent, at least in their full essence, to social actors further complicates the task of conceptualization. This objective implies a commitment to a realist as opposed to a nominalist ontology, in which it is posited that there exist underlying sociophysical or ecological phenomena which

cannot be directly measured or experienced, but that essentially operate, at least in part, "behind the backs" of social actors. Interestingly, Marxist and Durkheimian sociologies are also characterized by realist ontologies. It is therefore not surprising that there has been some affinity between paradigmatic versions of environmental-sociological theory and neo-Marxism. Thus, ironically, the representatives of the classical tradition that are most often criticized by environmental sociologists for their "exemptionalism" are those that share an ontological kinship with environmental sociology. This ontological kinship is among the reasons why environmental sociology has had such a contradictory relationship with Marxism. Environmental-sociological criticism of Marxism is commonplace. At the same time, there is a vast neo-Marxist literature in environmental sociology, and there are few other areas of sociology today that remain so strongly influenced by Marxism. A brief summary of their theoretical systems will help to illustrate the arguments that are most central to the core of environmental sociology scholarship. The treadmill of production holds that modern capitalism and the modern state exhibit a fundamental logic of promoting economic growth and private capital accumulation, and that the self-reproducing nature of this process causes it to assume the character of a "treadmill. But there is also a complementary growth logic within the sphere of the state. State agencies and officials prefer growth over stagnation in order to ensure tax revenues the essential fiscal basis of the state and to enhance the likelihood of re-election or continuity of power. In order to enhance private accumulation, the state undertakes spending aimed at subsidizing or socializing the costs of private production and accumulation. The accumulation that is fostered tends to be capital intensive, and thus leads to automation, unemployment, and potentially to demands for job-creation or welfare-state-type programs on the part of those displaced or marginalized by capital intensive accumulation. This tendency to legitimation crisis in turn dictates that progressively more subsidy to private capital accumulation be undertaken in order to provide employment and state revenues sufficient for paying the "social expenses" associated with the dislocations of private accumulation. Capital intensive growth creating the dislocations and political demands that drive even more state expenditure on and encouragement of capital intensive growth is the essence of the treadmill character of modern industrial capitalism. Further, Schnaiberg argues that the treadmill of production is directly linked to ecological crisis, since this accumulation process typically requires resource extraction "withdrawals" and contributes to pollution "additions". One is that both perspectives involve realist ontologies in which dynamics that are not directly observable to human actors. The second is that both have a relatively singular conception of the environment. Further, both theories posit that the essential dynamic of modern industrial-capitalist societies has been toward environmental degradation. Finally, both of these styles of analysis are geared primarily to understanding the material substructure of societies; while Dunlap and Catton and also Schnaiberg devote considerable attention to environmental movements and beliefs, the overall thrust in both styles of analysis is to give priority to material-ecological substructure over beliefs and behaviors that are self-consciously environmental. Recent trends in environmental-sociological theory Following the development of these core notions of environmental sociology in the late 1960s and early 1970s, environmental sociology came to be strongly influenced by trends in environmental mobilization and in sociology at large. The first major influence was the explosion of attention to global warming and global environmental change from onward. Dunlap and Catton have demonstrated that public attention to global change facilitated growth in environmental sociology. Further, and perhaps most significant, dissemination of scientific information about global change served to shore up the confidence and resolve of many environmental sociologists that their theories can and should give priority to the material-ecological substratum of social structure and social life see especially Dunlap and Catton The demise of Eastern European and Soviet state socialism, the growing influence of conservative ideologies, and the diminished appeal of Marxism and socialism have contributed to the decreased persuasiveness of some of the more materialist components of sociology such as neo-Marxism and political economy. At the same time, the excitement generated by cultural studies, constructivism, feminism, postmodernism, semiotics, and so on in academia at large has spilled over into sociology. One consequence of the cultural turn of the larger discipline is its growing receptivity to seeing environmentalism and related phenomena as being of social significance. Thus, on one hand, one sees that notables of the discipline, such as Giddens and Beck, are increasingly placing very strong emphasis on environmental

postures and beliefs. Relatedly, cultural-environmental sociologists and sociologies have made major inroads into environmental sociology in recent years. Dickens, Greider and Gafkovich, McNaughten and Urry, Brule, and Yearley are examples of the "cultural invasion" of environmental sociology during the early 1980s. Environmental sociology is now frequently undertaken through discourses in which notions such as modernity, postmodernity, risk society, and ecological modernization figure prominently. Equally significant has been the drift of sociologists of science, and their notions of the social construction of scientific knowledge, into the environmental sociology arena as interest has grown in researching the environmental sciences and the connections of environmental knowledge production to environmental politics and the environmental movement (Taylor and Buttel; Wynne; Yearley). The trends of the past decade have thus been uneven or mixed as far as environmental sociology is concerned. On one hand, the legitimacy for studying environmentally related social phenomena has never been greater within sociology. At the same time, the postures that have essentially defined the core of environmental sociology for nearly two decades—materialism, structuralism, and realism—have declined in persuasiveness in the discipline. Most important for present purposes, these contradictory trends have led to major polemics within environmental sociology. Dunlap and Catton and Murphy, for example, are prominent pieces of recent literature in which the cultural-constructivist invasion of environmental sociology has been strongly rebuked. Each has argued that cultural-environmental sociology is essentially incompatible with a sociology that is able to recognize the material and biophysical substructure of nation-states and global society. For these reasons environmental sociology over the past half decade or so has become more specialized and, to some degree, balkanized. Also, because some of the most influential theories are essentially metatheories, and do not readily lend themselves to test and falsification, there has been some trend to embracing more middle range theories. Other scholars, particularly those whose interests lie in resource extraction processes such as agriculture, mining, and timber, have found themselves more at home with theoretical views that come without presuppositions as to the singularity of environmental quality and degradation (see, e.g.,). Thus, environmental sociology in the 1980s has a dual character. On one hand, it remains strongly influenced by several strands of realist-materialist scholarship many of which have some direct or indirect roots in rural sociology that place major emphasis on revealing the material-ecological substructures of modern societies. At the same time, environmental sociology is now a less consensual and more contested area of scholarship than it was a decade ago. In large part this has been due to the cultural turn of environmental sociology and the challenge that cultural-environmental sociology has presented to the materialist core of the subdiscipline. While recognizing that environmental sociology faces a major challenge owing to strife over the role that social constructionism and cultural sociology should play, I would argue that over the long term the current period will prove to have been a creative and productive one. In my view, the field is now characterized by several major dualisms and debates, a number of which will be briefly discussed below. In each case, however, there are promising avenues for synthesis that can be seized and exploited. The intense debates that now crop up in the literature and, more commonly, take place in annual meeting hallways and classrooms are providing the raw material for advance in the field. Emerging opportunities for synthesis within environmental sociology

Environmental sociology in the 1980s, though more successful than ever as a subdiscipline of sociology, has made these gains even as it has moved to the precipice of dissension and disarray. Partisanship in the service of ecological realism vs. These debates as currently undertaken in which there is less focus on the specific issues at stake than on the ostensible superiority or inferiority of one or another theoretical systems or "paradigms" are not likely to be fruitful. Typically, there is little to choose between the core arguments of each. I would argue, however, that more progress can be made if some of these debates are disaggregated into more specific arenas or topics. In this section of the paper I will outline what I see as among the most important lines of debate. For each I will suggest some emergent or plausible lines of synthesis or resolution. What are the principal phenomena to be explained? The subject matter of environmental sociology is, in a sense, straight-forward, consisting of social aspects of environmental problems and environmental issues. This notion, however, obscures the fact that there are two general categories of environmentally related phenomena that need to be accounted for by environmental-sociological theories. One category consists of "ordinary" social practices and phenomena that have environmental

dimensions or implications, although they remain invisible or unrecognized. Humans tend to engage in production, in consumption of goods and services, and in institutional behaviors with essentially no recognition or awareness of the resource intensities or ecosystem impacts that are involved. I refer to these practices as being "substructurally-environmental" ones. The second major class of environmental phenomena consists of behaviors or institutional patterns that are self-consciously environmental or environmentally relevant. These intentionally environmental practices are social patterns or behaviors in which actors are subjectively conscious that they are engaging in environmentally relevant activities, or else are social relations in which at least some actors see the practices as being environmentally related. Examples include environmental mobilization, participation in an environmental movement organization or engaging in resistance to an environmental group or agency, environmental conflict and politics, environmental regulatory processes, adherence to the "new environmental paradigm," and participation in a recycling program. To a significant degree existing work in environmental sociology has tended to privilege one or the other category of environmental practices. Macrostructural theories, for example, have tended to emphasize substructurally-environmental social relations, while theories of environmental activism and politics have tended to focus almost exclusively on intentional environmental phenomena. I would argue that a strengthened environmental sociology must take into account both classes of environmentally-relevant phenomena, and be rooted in a more detailed conceptualization of the relations among substructurally-environmental and intentionally-environmental phenomena. There has been some progress on this count. For example, what has made the work of scholars such as Dunlap and Catton, Schnaiberg, and Murphy so influential is that each has strived to treat both categories of environmental phenomena. But much of this literature has tended to conceptualize the fundamental relation between the two types of phenomena as being essentially a progressive rationalization and environmental consciousness-raising process; it is argued or assumed that, over time, the elaboration of environmental-scientific understanding of the natural world provides environmental movement organizations and, ultimately, citizens and policymakers with the information required to recognize the ecological embeddedness of social institutions. Thus, social practices are seen to shift from being substructurally-environmental to being intentionally-environmental. However, the notion that scientific understanding of the natural world will tend to be a core building block of environmental consciousness and reform must confront contradictory processes. As Murphy acknowledges, and Schnaiberg and Gould stress, the growth of scientific knowledge of the natural world has had a myriad of positive and negative environmental impacts and, if anything, the historical balance has tended to be negative as far as environmental quality is concerned.

Chapter 6 : Environmental Sociology

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Environmental sociology Save Environmental sociology is the study of interactions between societies and their natural environments. The field emphasizes the social factors that influence environmental resource management and cause environmental issues , the processes by which these environmental problems are socially constructed and defined as social issues , and societal responses to these problems. Environmental sociology emerged as a subfield of sociology in the late s in response to the emergence of the environmental movement in the s. Definition Environmental sociology is typically defined as the sociological study of societal-environmental interactions, although this definition immediately presents the problem of integrating human cultures with the rest of the environment. Although the focus of the field is the relationship between society and environment in general, environmental sociologists typically place special emphasis on studying the social factors that cause environmental problems, the societal impacts of those problems, and efforts to solve the problems. In addition, considerable attention is paid to the social processes by which certain environmental conditions become socially defined as problems. History Ancient Greeks idealized life in nature using the idea of the pastoral. Much later, Romantic writers such as Wordsworth took their inspiration from nature. Modern thought surrounding human-environment relations can be traced back to Charles Darwin. Although typically taken at the micro-level, evolutionary principles, particularly adaptability, serve as a microcosm of human ecology. Sociology developed as a scholarly discipline in the mid- and late and early 20th centuries, in a context where biological determinism had failed to fully explain key features of social change, including the evolving relationship between humans and their natural environments. In its foundational years, classical sociology thus saw social and cultural factors as the dominant, if not exclusive, cause of social and cultural conditions. This lens down-played interactive factors in the relationship between humans and their biophysical environments. Environmental sociology emerged as a coherent subfield of inquiry after the environmental movement of the s and early s. The works of William R. In the late s, they called for a new holistic, or systems perspective. Since the s, general sociology has noticeably transformed to include environmental forces in social explanations. Environmental sociology has now solidified as a respected, interdisciplinary field of study in academia. Concepts Existential dualism The duality of the human condition rests with cultural uniqueness and evolutionary traits. From one perspective, humans are embedded in the ecosphere and co-evolved alongside other species. Humans share the same basic ecological dependencies as other inhabitants of nature. From the other perspectives , humans are distinguished from other species because of their innovative capacities, distinct cultures and varied institutions. Human creations have the power to independently manipulate, destroy, and transcend the limits of the natural environment Buttel and Humphrey, According to Buttel , there are five basic epistemologies in environmental sociology kindly mention them. In practice, this means five different theories of what to blame for environmental degradation , i. In order of their invention, these ideas of what to blame build on each other and thus contradict each other. Hardin offered privatization of resources or government regulation as solutions to environmental degradation caused by tragedy of the commons conditions. Many other sociologists shared this view of solutions well into the s see Ophuls. There have been many critiques of this view particularly political scientist Elinor Ostrom , or economists Amartya Sen and Ester Boserup. Even though much of mainstream journalism considers Malthusianism the only view of environmentalism, most sociologists would disagree with Malthusianism since social organizational issues of environmental degradation are more demonstrated to cause environmental problems than abstract population or selfishness per se. For examples of this critique, Ostrom in her book *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* argues that instead of self-interest always causing degradation, it can sometimes motivate people to take care of their common property resources. To do this they must change the basic organizational rules of resource use. Her research

provides evidence for sustainable resource management systems, around common pool resources that have lasted for centuries in some areas of the world. Amartya Sen argues in his book *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* that population expansion fails to cause famines or degradation as Malthusians or Neo-Malthusians argue. Instead, in documented cases a lack of political entitlement to resources that exist in abundance, causes famines in some populations. He documents how famines can occur even in the midst of plenty or in the context of low populations. He argues that famines and environmental degradation would only occur in non-functioning democracies or unrepresentative states. Instead of agricultural technology and scale determining and limiting population as Malthus attempted to argue, Boserup argued the world is full of cases of the direct opposite: Eco-Marxist scholar Allan Schnaiberg below argues against Malthusianism with the rationale that under larger capitalist economies, human degradation moved from localized, population-based degradation to organizationally caused degradation of capitalist political economies to blame. He gives the example of the organized degradation of rainforest areas which states and capitalists push people off the land before it is degraded by organizational means. New Ecological Paradigm

In the s, The New Ecological Paradigm NEP conception critiqued the claimed lack of human-environmental focus in the classical sociologists and the Sociological priorities their followers created. This view was shaped by the leading Western worldview of the time and the desire for Sociology to establish itself as an independent discipline against the then popular racist-biological environmental determinism where environment was all. In this HEP view, human dominance was felt to be justified by the uniqueness of culture, argued to be more adaptable than biological traits. Furthermore, culture also has the capacity to accumulate and innovate, making it capable of solving all natural problems. Therefore, as humans were not conceived of as governed by natural conditions, they were felt to have complete control of their own destiny. Any potential limitation posed by the natural world was felt to be surpassed using human ingenuity. Research proceeded accordingly without environmental analysis. In the s, sociological scholars Riley Dunlap and William R. Catton and Dunlap suggested a new perspective that took environmental variables into full account. The NEP recognizes the innovative capacity of humans, but says that humans are still ecologically interdependent as with other species. The NEP notes the power of social and cultural forces but does not profess social determinism. Instead, humans are impacted by the cause, effect, and feedback loops of ecosystems. The Earth has a finite level of natural resources and waste repositories. Thus, the biophysical environment can impose constraints on human activity. It was additionally a critique of Malthusian views of the s and s. This environmental aspect of Durkheim has been discussed by Schnaiberg as well. There was cross pollination. Neo-Marxism was based on the collapse of the widespread believability of the Marxist social movement in the failed revolts of the s and the rise of many New Social Movements that failed to fit in many Marxist analytic frameworks of conflict sociology. Sociologists entered the fray with empirical research on these novel social conflicts. Therefore, some sociologists wanted to stretch Marxist ideas of social conflict to analyze environmental social movements from this materialist framework instead of interpreting environmental movements as a more cultural "New Social Movement" separate than material concerns. So "Eco-Marxism" was based on using Neo-Marxist conflict sociology concepts of the relative autonomy of the state applied to environmental conflict. For Moore, the modern world-system is a capitalist world-ecology, joining the accumulation of capital, the pursuit of power, and the production of nature in dialectical unity. Moore argues that the emergent law of value, from the sixteenth century, was evident in the extraordinary shift in the scale, scope, and speed of environmental change. What took premodern civilizations centuries to achieve—such as the deforestation of Europe in the medieval era—capitalism realized in mere decades. This world-historical rupture, argues Moore, can be explained through a law of value that regards labor productivity as the decisive metric of wealth and power in the modern world. From this standpoint, the genius of capitalist development has been to appropriate uncommodified natures—including uncommodified human natures—as a means of advancing labor productivity in the commodity system. This conflictual concept has overwhelming political salience. First, the economic synthesis states that the desire for economic expansion will prevail over ecological concerns. Policy will decide to maximize immediate economic growth at the expense of environmental disruption. Secondly, the managed scarcity synthesis concludes that governments will attempt to control only

the most dire of environmental problems to prevent health and economic disasters. This will give the appearance that governments act more environmentally consciously than they really do. Third, the ecological synthesis generates a hypothetical case where environmental degradation is so severe that political forces would respond with sustainable policies. The driving factor would be economic damage caused by environmental degradation. The economic engine would be based on renewable resources at this point. Production and consumption methods would adhere to sustainability regulations. These conflict-based syntheses have several potential outcomes. One is that the most powerful economic and political forces will preserve the status quo and bolster their dominance. Historically, this is the most common occurrence. Another potential outcome is for contending powerful parties to fall into a stalemate. Lastly, tumultuous social events may result that redistribute economic and political resources.

Treadmill of production In , the highly influential work of Allan Schnaiberg entitled *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* was a large contribution to this theme of a societal-environmental dialectic. Moving away from economic reductionism like other neo-Marxists, Schnaiberg called for an analysis of how certain projects of "political capitalism" encouraged environmental degradation instead of all capitalism per se. He analyzes only the United States at length, though sees such a treadmill of production and of environmental degradation in operation in the Soviet Union or socialist countries as well. The desire for economic expansion was found to be a common political ground for all three contentious groups—"in capital, labor, and the state"—to surmount their separate interests and postpone conflict by all agreeing on economic growth. Therefore, grounds for a political alliance emerge among these conflictual actors when monopoly capitalism can convince both of the other nodes to support its politicized consolidation. This can appeal to the other nodes since it additionally provides expanding state legitimacy and its own funding while providing at least at the time secure worker employment in larger industries with their desired stable or growing consumption. This political capitalism works against smaller scale capitalism or other uses of the state or against other alliances of labor. This acceleration he felt was at root merely an informal alliance—based solely on the propaganda from monopoly capital and the state that worker consumption can only be achieved through further capitalist consolidation. This provides grounds for both to reject their treadmill alliance with monopoly capital. Schnaiberg is motivated to optimism by this potential if states and labor movements can be educated to the environmental and livelihood dangers in the long run of any support of monopoly capital. This potentially means these two groups moving away from subsidizing and supporting the degradation of the environment. This deceleration was defined as state and working labor movements designing policies to shrink the scale of the economy as a solution to environmental degradation and their own consumptive requirements. Meanwhile, in the interim, he argued a common alliance between the three is responsible for why they prefer to support common economic growth as a common way to avoid their open conflicts despite mounting environmental costs for the state as well as for laborers due to environmental disruption.

Ecological modernization and reflexive modernization By the s, a critique of eco-Marxism was in the offing, given empirical data from countries mostly in Western Europe like the Netherlands, Western Germany and somewhat the United Kingdom that were attempting to wed environmental protection with economic growth instead of seeing them as separate. This was done through both state and capital restructuring. Major proponents of this school of research are Arthur P.

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The human community, Marx believed, can no more free itself from the need to control its interaction with nature than it can free itself from the need to take into consideration the natural conditions of human existence. Yet rational control of the relation between nature and humanity is inherently opposed to the mechanistic domination of nature in the interest of the ever increasing expansion of production for its own sake. In a society of freely associated producers, Marx argued, the goal of social life would not be work and production, in the narrow forms in which they have been understood in possessive-individualist society, but the all-around development of human creative potential as an end in itself, for which "the shortening of the working-day is a basic prerequisite. Sustainability must lie at the core of the human relation to nature in any future society. Material wealth in its widest conception understood in terms of use values has to be distinguished from value creation under capitalism the world of exchange value. It is a contradiction of capitalism that it pursues exchange value profit while largely ignoring the qualitative conditions associated with use value and wealth in its larger context, which includes the natural environment and the productivity of nature. Marx seems to have clearly understood the basic ecological principal that "nothing comes from nothing," popularized in recent years by Barry Commoner and others. As Marx himself wrote, What Lucretius says is self-evident: Creation of value is transformation of labor-power into labor. Labor-power itself is energy transferred to a human organism by means of nourishing matter. They were convinced that capitalism was economically and politically unsustainable. It would eventually give rise to the revolutionary forces that would overthrow it. The same critique of capital accumulation led them to conclude that the system lacked a sustainable relation to nature. In their analysis, however, this problem did not yet loom so large that it would affect the future of capitalism which they thought would soon die a natural death as a result of its economic and political contradictions. The stability of any future society, Marx clearly recognized, would be dependent on the creation of a wholly new and more balanced relation to the natural world

Green criticisms of Marx: Assumptions were that nature was an object to be exploited and nothing more, anthropocentric, Marxian value theory, we are frequently told, designated labor power as the source of all value, thereby denying any intrinsic value to nature, cite case of Eastern European nations and communism. Foster, John Bellamy, "Marx and the environment. Alienation, Emancipation and the Division of Labor, Routledge: London and New York. Both business and the state seek economic growth and private capital accumulation, the former must continually expand their operations and their profits, the former needs to ensure tax revenues and reelection. In order to enhance private accumulation, the state undertakes spending aimed at subsidizing or socializing the costs of private production and accumulation e. The accumulation that is fostered tends to be capital intensive, and thus leads to automation, unemployment, and potentially to demands for job-creation or welfare-state-type programs on the part of those displaced or marginalized by capital intensive accumulation. This tendency to legitimation crisis in turn dictates that progressively more subsidy to private capital accumulation be undertaken in order to provide employment and state revenues sufficient for paying the "social expenses" associated with the dislocations of private accumulation. Capital intensive growth creates the dislocations and political demands that drive even more state expenditure on and encouragement of capital intensive growth is the essence of the treadmill character of modern industrial capitalism. The treadmill of production is directly linked to environmental degradation, since this accumulation process typically requires resource extraction "withdrawals" and contributes to pollution "additions". Social Construction theories approach environment and nature as constructions of society, and focus on analyzing internal relations within society, i. He claims there is an experiential basis underlying our knowledge of the environment precisely because humans are themselves embedded in nature and its process

Murphy , Larson, and Gilbert W. The Sociology of Agriculture. The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change. University of Illinois Press. Towards a Green Social Theory. In "Struggling With Human Exemptionalism: Learning to Think About a Mountain. Freudenburg, William R and Robert Gramling. Beyond Left and Right. Greider, Thomas and Lorraine

Garkovich. The Social Construction of Nature and the Environment. The Apocalyptic Horizon of Environmental Reform. From Surplus to Scarcity. Spaargaren, G and P. Ecological Modernization as a Theory of Social Change.

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Future research is suggested in two areas: (a) applying Veblen's theoretical approaches to the ecological aspects of capitalism and (b) comparing Veblen with other classical theorists such as Marx and Weber within the subfield of environmental sociology.

Although typically taken at the micro level, evolutionary principles, particularly adaptability, serve as a microcosm of human ecology. Academic It became recognized in the latter half of the 20th century that biological determinism failed to fully explain the relationship between humans and the environment. As the application of social determinism became more useful, the role of sociology became more pervasive in analyzing environmental conditions. At first, classical sociology saw social and cultural factors as the only cause of other social and cultural conditions. This lens ignored the concept of environmental determinism or the environmental factors that cause social phenomena. The works of William R. In the late s, they called for a new holistic, or systems perspective. Since the s, sociology has noticeably transformed to include environmental forces in social explanations. Environmental sociology emerged as a coherent subfield of inquiry after the environmental movement of the s and early s. It has now solidified as a respected, interdisciplinary subject in academia. Concepts Existential dualism The duality of the human condition rests with cultural uniqueness and evolutionary traits. From one perspective, humans are embedded in the ecosphere and coevolved alongside other species. Humans share the same basic ecological dependencies as other inhabitants of nature. From the other perspective, humans are distinguished from other species because of their innovative capacities, distinct cultures and varied institutions. Human creations have the power to independently manipulate, destroy, and transcend the limits of the natural environment Buttel and Humphrey, Support for each perspective varies among different communities. Biologists and ecologists typically put more weight on the first perspective. Social scientists, on the other hand, emphasize the second perspective. This division has shaped the foundation for the primary paradigms of environmental sociology. Societal-environmental dialectic In , the highly influential work of Allan Schnaiberg transfigured environmental sociology, proposing a societal-environmental dialectic. This conflictual concept has overwhelming political salience. First, the economic synthesis states that the desire for economic expansion will prevail over ecological concerns. Policy will decide to maximize immediate economic growth at the expense of environmental disruption. Secondly, the managed scarcity synthesis concludes that governments will attempt to control only the most dire of environmental problems to prevent health and economic disasters. This will give the appearance that governments act more environmentally conscious than they really do. Third, the ecological synthesis generates a hypothetical case where environmental degradation is so severe that political forces would respond with sustainable policies. The driving factor would be economic damage caused by environmental degradation. The economic engine would be based on renewable resources at this point. Production and consumption methods would adhere to sustainability regulations. These conflict-based syntheses have several potential outcomes. One is that the most powerful economic and political forces will preserve the status quo and bolster their dominance. Historically, this is the most common occurrence. Another potential outcome is for contending powerful parties to fall into a stalemate. Lastly, tumultuous social events may result that redistribute economic and political resources. Treadmill of production In , Schnaiberg developed a conflict theory on human-environment interaction. The theory is that capitalism is driven by higher profitability and thereby must continue to grow and attract investments to survive in a competitive market. This identifies the imperative for continued economic growth levels that, once achieved, accelerate the need for future growth. This growth in production requires a corresponding growth in consumption. The process contains a chief paradox; economic growth is socially desired but environmental degradation is a common consequence that in turn disrupts long-run economic expansion Schnaiberg Shaped by the leading Western worldview of the time, this was the popular societal paradigm from the industrial revolution until the second half of the 20th century. Human dominance was justified by the uniqueness of culture, which is far more adaptable than biological traits. Culture also has the capacity to accumulate and innovate, making it an

unbounded resource capable of solving all natural problems. As humans are not governed by natural conditions, they have complete control of their own destiny. Any potential limitation posed by the natural world is surpassable using human ingenuity. Catton and Dunlap suggested a new perspective that took environmental variables into full account. The NEP recognizes the innovative capacity of humans, but says that humans are still ecologically interdependent as with other species. The NEP notes the power of social and cultural forces but does not profess social determinism. Instead, humans are impacted by the cause, effect, and feedback loops of ecosystems. The earth has a finite level of natural resources and waste repositories. Thus, the biophysical environment can impose constraints on human activity. Events Modern environmentalism The s built strong cultural momentum for environmental causes, giving birth to the modern environmental movement. Widespread green consciousness moved vertically within society, resulting in a series of federal policy changes in the s. Earth Day of , celebrated by millions of participants, represented the modern age of environmental thought. The environmental movement continued with incidences such as Love Canal. Historical studies While the current mode of thought expressed in environmental sociology was not prevalent until the age of modernity, its application is now used in analysis of ancient peoples. Societies including Easter Island, the Anaszi, and the Mayans ended abruptly, largely due to poor environmental management. The collapse of the Mayans sent a historic message that even advanced cultures are vulnerable to ecological suicide. At the same time, societal successes include New Guinea, Tikopia island, and Japan, whose inhabitants have lived sustainably for 46, years.

Chapter 9 : Environmental sociology - Wikipedia

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