

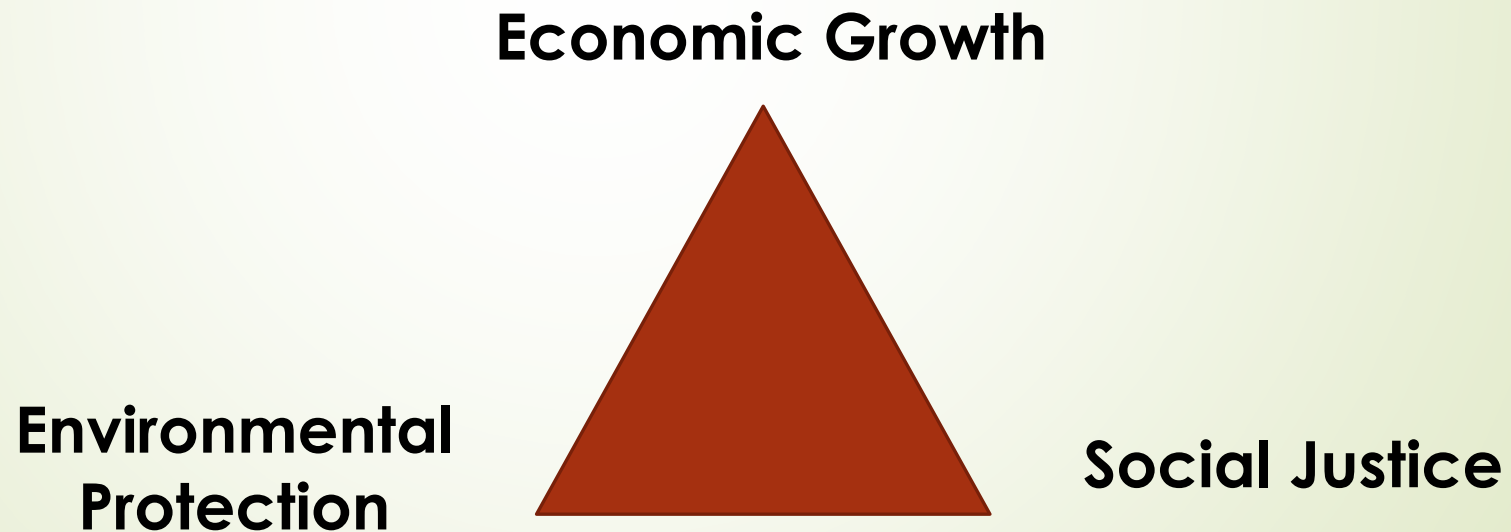


Theme 4: Exploring Environmental Theory & Reflective Activity

EC6001: Sustainable Communities & Global Development

The Main Issue

- Sustainable development means different things to different people
- Can we have all three elements of sustainable development at the same time?





Does Climate Change Affect Everyone?

- *Effects of climate change on health will effect most populations in the next decades and put lives and wellbeing of billions of people at increased risk*
- Costello, A. (2007) 'Managing the health effects of climate change' *The Lancet* Volume 373 (No. 9676, May 2009) p. 1693 DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(09\)60935-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60935-1)



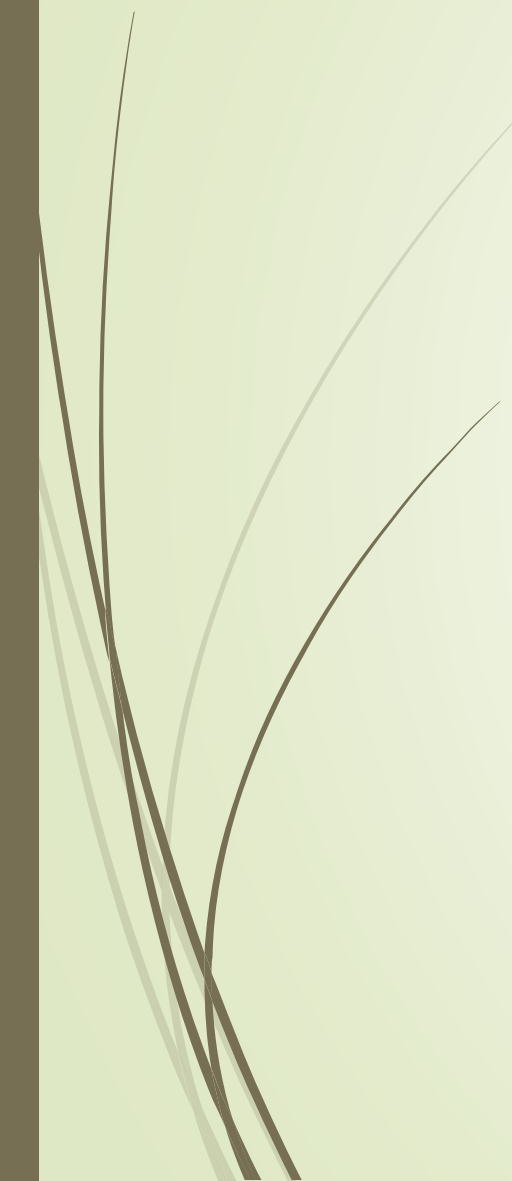
Environmental Inequality in the UK

- Environmental inequality has been defined as:
 - “Environmental inequality refers to the unequal
 - social distribution of environmental risks and
 - hazards and access to environmental goods and
 - services, and is closely related to the concept of
 - environmental justice”.

(Sustainable Development Research Network, 2004)



Measures of Environmental Inequalities

- 
- Air pollution
 - Industrial pollution
 - Flooding
 - Access to food and water
 - Transport and public transport access
 - Access to natural green spaces and biodiversity
 - Access to employment
 - Noise
 - Housing
 - Safety
 - Race and equality issues
 - (London Sustainability Exchange, no date)



Four Key Areas of Environmental Inequality

- Immediate locality or 'front door' issues such as
 - litter,
 - neighbourhood noise
 - and the accessibility to
 - and condition of open and green spaces
- Wider service issues such as access to
 - environmental services,
 - local transport facilities,
 - healthy food
 - and fuel poverty
- Planning, infrastructure and development issues such as
 - air and water quality,
 - environmental noise,
 - road traffic accidents
 - and flood risk
- Multiple environmental deprivation, considering the ways in which
 - environmental problems accumulate
 - and have combined effects on an area and people's health
- (London Sustainability Exchange, no date)



'Soft' or 'Hard' Sustainable Development

Soft focuses on

- Prevention of catastrophe for human society
- Acceptance of science and modern technology
- Anthropocentric-Human centred
- Intergenerational distribution treated separately
- Lower environmental risk aversion

Hard focuses on

- Promotion of society in harmony with supporting ecosystems
- Questions science & seeks alternative technology
- Eco-centric- Values nature
- Intergenerational distribution central to sustainable development
- High environmental risk aversion



'Soft' & 'Hard' views of Sustainable Development

- Techno-centric versus Eco-centric
 - These terms were defined by Timothy O'Riordan in his 1989 work
 - 'The Challenge for Environmentalism'
 - Seen by O'Riordan and others as being
 - in opposition to each other
- One focuses on
 - Technology
 - and the other on Ecology



Techno-Centric Interventionists

- Have complete faith in
 - human ingenuity,
 - science,
 - and the market
 - to solve all problems
 - and 'improve' the quality of the environment
- It is argued that this is the view of
 - those who control industry and commerce
- Sees the Natural World as
 - a means to the end of human well-being
 - also known as androcentric or anthropocentric
- Examples would be
 - GM crops
 - Let's change nature for the good of humankind



Techno-Centric Accommodationists

- Largely follow the view of Interventionists but are
 - more moderate
 - and express a note of caution
- They believe
 - some accommodations are needed
 - to mitigate the impact of humans on the environment
- Believe that
 - technology and institutions
 - can adapt to deal with
 - resource scarcity or environmental problems



Techno-Centric Accommodationists

- ▶ At the most moderate end of the 'Accommodationist' spectrum are those accused of
 - ▶ wishing for the 'status quo'
 - ▶ i.e. when asked they want an undisturbed environment
- ▶ But also want
 - ▶ a house,
 - ▶ car,
 - ▶ luxury goods
 - ▶ and overseas holidays
- ▶ An example of cognitive dissonance?



Eco-Centric 'Environmentalism'

- Environmentalist noun
 - a person who is concerned with or seeks to
 - protect the environment,
 - especially from pollution (OED, 2023)
- Often seen as concerned with
 - conservationism and preservation
 - e.g. national parks
- Can be seen as being
 - technocratic
 - i.e. try to win arguments on the terms of governments
 - and industry rather than being 'radical'



Eco-Centric

Deep Ecologists / Deep Greens

- Phrase coined by
 - Arne Naess in 1973
 - expanded on in 1989
- Must focus on what is
 - good for the planet
 - rather than what is good for humankind
- Human society can only be understood from
 - the viewpoint of ecology
- Sees
 - The connections between every organism
 - as being important



Eco-Centric Gaianists

- Based on the
 - Gaia hypothesis
 - of James Lovelock
- The planet is
 - a huge inter-connected super-organism
- Creates
 - a self-regulating system
 - focused on maintaining life on earth
- Can see viruses such as Ebola
 - as nature's way of 'fighting back'
- Can even be
 - quasi-religious where the earth is seen as
 - an object of worship

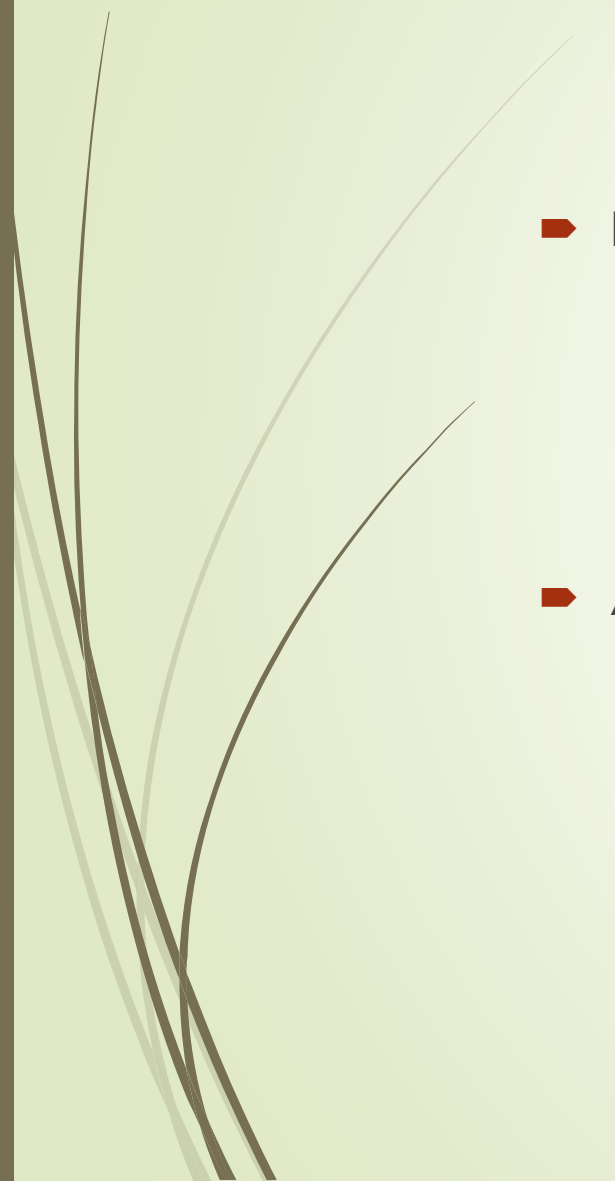


Political views of Sustainable Development

- Where a Technocentric sees
 - humanity as
 - the only priority
- An Eco-centric sees
 - ecology as
 - the only priority
- Other theories seek to
 - bring the two together ideologically
 - i.e. based on a set of shared values
- Two examples of these are;
 - Eco-feminist viewpoints
 - Eco-socialist viewpoints



Eco-Feminist



- Phrase coined by
 - Francoise D'eaubonne in her 1974 essay
 - Le feminisme ou la mort
 - Feminism or Death
- A merging of
 - ecological
 - and feminist ideologies
- Argues for
 - a positive re-evaluation of the connection
 - between women and nature
 - that has been 'forgotten' in Western society
- Stresses that
 - social gender roles
 - give women more of an affinity with nature



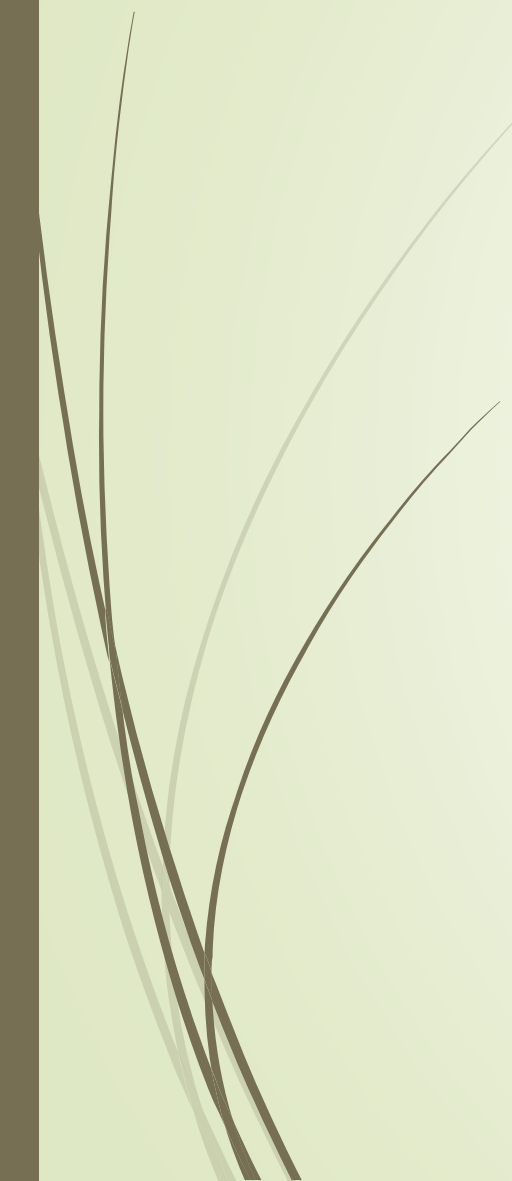
Eco-Feminist



- Can see
 - both women and nature
 - as being repressed by patriarchy
- Argues that
 - women living in developing nations
 - tend to be managers of natural resources
 - firewood, water etc
- Often criticised for being
 - 'essentialist'
 - i.e. assuming all women are the same
- Different strands emphasise
 - the ecological,
 - the social
 - and the female spiritual dimensions



Eco-Feminist



- ▶ Charlene Spretnak (1990) defines three main routes to eco-feminism
 - ▶ Radical/social feminism
 - ▶ Earth-based goddess religions & spirituality
 - ▶ Environmentalism
- ▶ In the late 20th & 21st Century it has also developed
 - ▶ animal rights strand,
 - ▶ anti-cosmetics
 - ▶ toxics strand,
 - ▶ anti-nuclear strand
 - ▶ and others



Eco-Socialist

Eco-Socialism

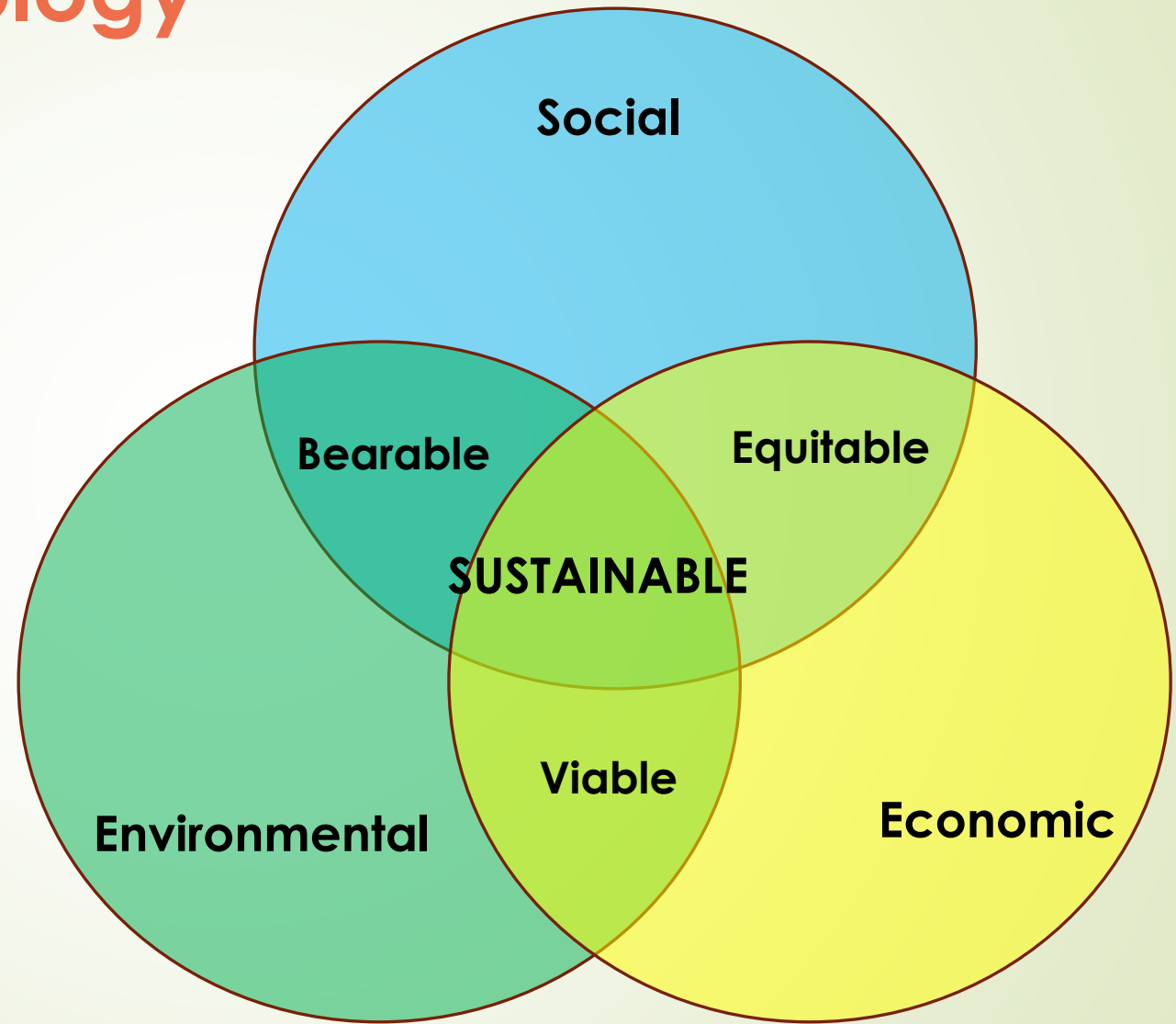
- Interested in the
 - social inequalities that exist between
 - humans and how this is reflected in the wider environment
- Capitalism
 - alienates us from our work,
 - from nature,
 - and from ourselves
- Redistribution of wealth and natural resources
 - would improve both society and the environment
- Often criticised for being
 - unrealistic in the same way that 'environmentalists' are
- Argues that
 - environmental inequality
 - can lead to mass migration



Eco-Socialist Social Ecology

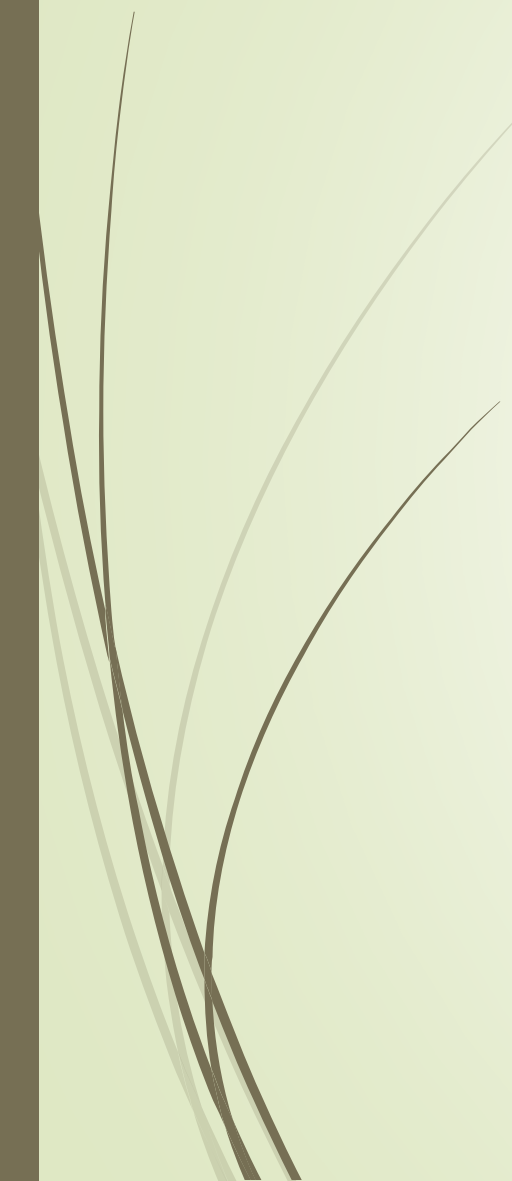
- Created by the anarchist and libertarian socialist
 - Murray Bookchin
- Sees environmental abuse as
 - a direct result of the domination of groups of humans by other humans
- With the exception of natural disasters
- Most major ecological disasters in the 20th and 21st centuries have been caused by
 - ethnic,
 - cultural
 - or commercial conflict.
- Argues that
 - if humans can live in harmony with each other,
 - they will also live in harmony with nature

Social Ecology





Eco-Socialist Communalists

- Often seen as a more radical form of eco-socialism and developed from Social Ecology
 - Focuses far more on local economies, self-sufficiency and sustainable lifestyles
 - Local communities are best placed to decide what is best for the environment and therefore themselves
 - More about producing less rather than redistributing what is produced
- 



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Sustainability: A personal reflection

- How environmentally friendly you feel you are now?
 - What, if anything, you do that you feel is environmentally friendly?
 - How environmentally friendly you would like to be in the future?
 - Any changes you would like to make that you feel are possible?
 - Any changes you would like to make that you feel are not possible?
- 

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