

# Sustainability

Lecture Part 1

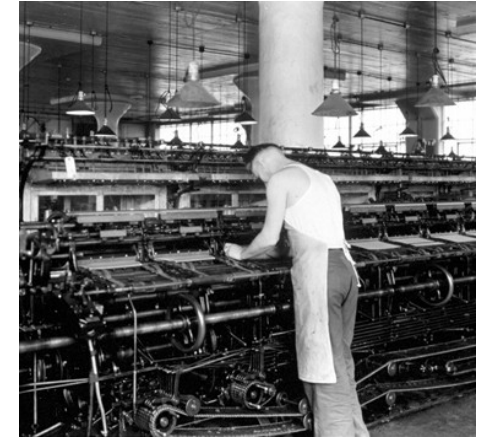
SOC165

Spring 2010



# This Week's Topic

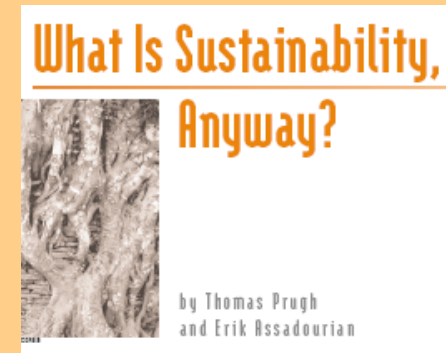
- Sustainability
  - Definitions
  - Examples
  - Debates



# This Week's Required Materials

## Required reading:

- Bell Chapter 4: Population and development
- Prugh and Assadourian: What is sustainability, anyway?
- Interview with Julian Simon



## Required video:

- Vandana Shiva: Defending biodiversity
- Patrick Holden: Sustainable agriculture
- Monsanto Company: Global benefits of plant biotechnology
- Bonnie Bucqueroux: Curing America's eating disorder



# In Part 1

- What is sustainability?



# Can the *Status Quo* Continue?

- Bell: “How long can we keep doing what we’re doing?”
- In last lecture, we saw data that environmental quality has measurably improved in ČR
- However, there are still many critical problems
  - Example: Over-fishing



# Definitions

- **What is sustainability?**
- Webster's dictionary:  
Sustainable = “a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged”



# Definitions

- Brundtland Commission, *Our common future*, 1987: the ability to meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- Three main factors: ecology, economy, society
- Intergenerational solidarity



# Definitions

Worldwatch: “Ultimately, sustainable development and sustainability itself are about collective values and related choices and are therefore a political issue....

Because values, politics, and our understanding of the Earth and its systems will evolve, notions of what is sustainable will never be static.”





# Theoretical Perspectives

Virtually every environmental sociology theory ultimately deals with sustainability – how to create a harmonious relationship between nature and society?



| <b>Theory</b>                          | <b>Perspective on Sustainability</b>   |
|--|--|
| HEP-NEP<br>(Dunlap & Catton)           | The New Ecological Paradigm calls for a new relationship with nature, in which society is not as exploitative  |
| ToP                                    | Get off the treadmill: radically change the current political and economic system to achieve sustainable development   |
| Marxism                                | Communism should be the ultimate sustainable society   |
| Ecological modernization theory        | Create new technologies that will make economic growth good for the environment  |
| Social constructionism                 | Environmental issues are social constructions, based on scientific knowledge and media presentation; “sustainable development” is one frame for viewing the human-nature relationship  |
| Environmental justice and eco-feminism | Sustainability involves liberation of oppressed minorities and, for feminists, a new relationship with nature based on beneficial coexistence rather than exploitation and destruction |



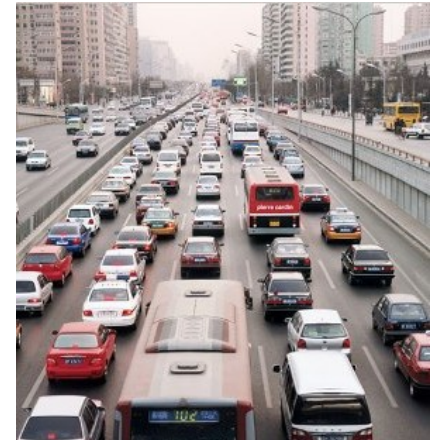
# Is Sustainability Possible?

- Debate
- Spectrum of opinions
  - Cornucopians
  - Reformists
  - Revolutionaries
  - Environmental determinists



# End of Part 1

Continue to Part 2.



# Citations Used in This Lecture

Bell, M. (2004) *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
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*Our Common Future* (1987) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prugh, T., Assadourian, E. (2003) "What is Sustainability, Anyway?"  
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Simon, J., and Buckley, Jr., W. F. (1982) "Answer to Malthus? Julian  
Simon Interviewed by William Buckley." *Population and  
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