



Environment and Society (4th Edition)

By Charles L. Harper

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This integrative book about human-environment relations connects many issues about human societies, ecological systems, and environments with data and perspectives from different fields of study. While the viewpoint is primarily sociological, coverage is specifically designed to relate to a diverse audience and encompass viewpoints from a variety of natural and social science approaches.

KEY TOPICS Chapter topics include environmental problems and ecosystems; the resources of the earth: sources and sinks; global climate change, scientific uncertainty, and risk; population, environment, and food; energy and society; transforming structures: markets, politics, and policy; environmentalism: ideology, and collective action; and globalization: trade, environment, and the third revolution. For individuals with an interest in– and concern for–the environment.

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Editorial Review

From the Publisher

This text looks at the connections between human societies, ecosystems and the geophysical environment. While the perspective is mostly sociological, coverage is specifically designed to be relevant to a wide range of readers and to encompass viewpoints from an assortment of disciplines.

From the Inside Flap

Preface

Environment and Society: Human Perspectives on Environmental Issues is intended to provide college students and other interested readers with an introduction to environmental problems and issues. More specifically, it is about the human connections and impacts on the environment—and vice versa. There are many specialized research reports and monographs about particular environmental topics and issues, but I intend this book to work as an integrative vehicle for many different human and environmental issues. It is intended to be usable in a variety of settings that are seriously concerned with the connections between human societies, ecosystems, and the geophysical environment. It is appropriate for upper division undergraduates and, with appropriate supplements, for beginning graduate students.

Stimulated by the enormous growth of interest in environmental issues and problems in higher education, the book is addressed to the diverse backgrounds of students in classes and programs that attend to environmental and ecological topics. My own classes have a yeasty mix of students from biology, environmental sciences, the social sciences, and sometimes others from education, philosophy, or marketing. I tried to write a book that is at least understandable to them all. Its social science perspective is mostly sociological, but readers expecting a narrow disciplinary treatise will be disappointed. I hope it will be intellectually challenging for students, but perceptive readers will note that in some places the book alternates between more advanced and more elementary topics. This is deliberate, because social science students know some things that natural science students do not, and vice versa.

The book treats blocks of material that recognizably constitute contemporary environmental concerns, controversies, and discourses that you can see from the table of contents. The second edition has new data in many places, new material about human ecology and world political economy that connects human environmental issues to the evolution of ecosystems; that material frames later, more particular issues. This edition also has new material in many places—about, for instance, the economic costs of declining biodiversity, energy transitions at the end of the fossil age in the coming century, community resource management, environmental movements, and global issues.

As with most such books, some chapters can be omitted or rearranged, but I have tried to write a book that is truly developmental and ties the topics of different chapters together. One pervasive theme is that disciplinary scholars bring very different intellectual views (paradigms) to the understanding of human-environmental issues. I argue that these different views are not ultimately irreconcilable. But if you do not like attention given to different points of view, this is probably not the book for you.

This is a book about "big issues," but it is, I hope, written in a way that engages individual readers. I had intended to include an epilogue to examine the connections between big issues and the personal life, but reviewers suggested that I do so in smaller installments at the end of each chapter instead of at the end of the book. So each chapter is followed by some questions and issues ("Personal Connections") that attempt to

make macro-micro links between large-scale issues and the lives of persons. These are not "review questions" that summarize chapter content, but rather they provide opportunities for dialogue between the book and its readers. They may provide points of departure for discussion and argumentation. I hope they are useful, but they are clearly not everybody's cup of tea, nor will they be useful for every setting in which the book is used.

Every intellectual work is in some sense autobiographical. My early college education (of many years ago!) was in biology and the physical sciences. But I subsequently pursued graduate studies in sociology, and for years I have been engaged in a professional life that dealt only peripherally with environmental and ecological issues. This book attempts to put together the chronological pieces of my education into a coherent whole, and to do so in a way that addresses important intellectual and social concerns of our times.

This book is also dedicated to George Perkins Marsh, Aldo Leopold, Rachael Carson, Lois Gibbs, Karen Silkwood, Jaime Lerner, Chico Mendez, and Wangari Maathai—in different ways, all pioneers in consciousness and concern about the connections between humans and the natural world. All appear briefly in these pages. Some were stigmatized by powerful people and agencies. Some paid with their lives.

Intellectual works are not just autobiographical. They involve the insights, encouragement, and constructive criticism of many others. I am indebted to many persons for helping to bring the idea for this book to completion, and I need to thank them. I thank my colleagues and students at Creighton University, who contributed substantially to this work and who also tolerated me while I was working on it. Thanks especially to Tom Mans, who fed me a constant stream of relevant articles and material for several years, and to James T. Ault, who had the patience to read and critically comment on many parts of the book. Thanks to Dean Barbara Braden of the Creighton University Graduate College for her important material support. Finally, thanks to Karen Prescott, our reliable departmental secretary, who suffered through the formidable task of helping to get this manuscript ready to send to the publisher.

I also want to thank a truly amazing network of environmental social scientists at other institutions who supported the first or second edition. They include Riley Dunlap (Washington State University), William Freudenburg (University of Wisconsin), Eugene Rosa (Washington State University), Thomas Dietz (George Mason University), Robert Brulle (George Washington University), J. Allen Williams (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Andrew Szasz (University of California at Santa Cruz), Paul Stern (National Research Council), and Bruce Podobnik (Lewis and Clark College).

These colleagues sent me, sometimes unsolicited, an incredible collection of their research papers and reports that inform various parts of the book. I do not, of course, hold them responsible for errors or omissions. They are mine alone. I thank the reviewers of the manuscript at different stages of completion, who were critical but universally encouraging, especially Victor Agadjanian, Arizona State University. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Publisher Nancy Roberts and Managing Editor Sharon Chambliss, who have suffered with me through several projects and who have been patient, supportive, and encouraging. Through the years they have been the "human faces" of Prentice Hall.

If you would like to contact me, I would be happy to hear your comments and reactions to the book and its uses. I look forward to improving it.

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From the Back Cover

Environment and Society, 2/E, covers the connections between a range of easily-recognizable human and environmental issues such as:

resource issues and pollution population growth, food, and consumption issues energy and technology issues climate change, uncertain risks, and "megaproblems" sustainability, inequality, and social change environmentalism and environmental movements environmental politics and policy globalization and environmental problems

To help readers further understand the effects of the "big issues," Harper includes questions and issues at the end of each chapter that attempt to make "macro-micro" links between large-scale issues and the lives of people. Truly multidisciplinary in approach, Environment and Society, 2/E, offers fascinating insight into important environmental concerns.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Florence Whitney:

As people who live in often the modest era should be up-date about what going on or data even knowledge to make these keep up with the era which can be always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe will update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to a person is you don't know which one you should start with. This Environment and Society (4th Edition) is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and wish in this era.

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