

Redclift, R. Michael and Graham Woodgate (eds.) 2005. New Development in Environmental Sociology. Edward Elgar Publishing, Ltd. Cheltenham, U.K. and Northampton, MA, USA. Hardcover Price: Unknown. xxvi + pp. 633 + index

This edited volume consists of five parts: Social theory and the environment; Ecological modernization; Society, nature and knowledge and the formulation and Implementation of public policy; Globalization, the state and the environmental governance; Agriculture, food and the sustainable rural development.

The discipline of Sociology has a long connection with the natural world and the environment. Early episodes of environmental degradation was brought to the world's attention by sociologists and environmental sociology and the study of boundaries have informed a special group of scholars who have been trying to understand and explain the theories surrounding "natural and artificial boundaries." Rural sociology, ecological and environmental economics, environmental anthropology, geography and political science discipline have attempted to influence boundaries studies. The disciplines referred to in this review have all endeavored to interrogate a number of issues which lend themselves to both the real world matters and those issues pertaining to post structural and post-modern theories.

The international dimensions of environmental issues make them very high in global agenda and context and as such it is not at all surprising that the world witnessed the problems that the World Trade Organization (WTO) had in Seattle (Washington State) in 1999 and in Soule, South Korea in 2005. Governments have begun to use environmental indicators and environmental accounting to develop methodical bases from which market economies can be examined environmentally.

This volume is timely in the sense that it provides an informed discussion on the environment from a sociological perspective rooted in rigorous theory. In the first part of the book, the authors provide the reader with very interesting perspectives on social theory and the environment. For instance, the reader is treated to classical concepts, theories and social imperatives in contemporary environmental sociology. The reader is bound to be grounded in the theoretical developments within environmental sociology upon examining this section.

In the second part; the contributing authors concentrate upon the idea of "Ecological Modernization (EM). In part three, the articles deviate from ecological modernization and focus more on the problem of developing and implementing environmental policy which would hopefully be more responsive to modern day concerns and be more sensitive to the plight of the majority of the citizens.

In part four, the authors are concerned with defining and debating matters pertaining to the process of globalization. The notion that “contemporary increases in environmental protection activities practiced by nation-states are the results of domestic processes prompted by environmental degradation and economic influence is challenged with great vigor. This section is a must read by policy scholars and students.

Part five takes on the discussion of familiar topics which address agricultural production, food and sustainable development. This reviewer must admit that this is an excellent book for students of environmental studies at both graduate and undergraduate levels. It is also highly recommended for the libraries.

Reviewed by
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