



Sociology and the Environment: A Critical Introduction to Society, Nature and Knowledge

Alan Irwin

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Can sociology help us to tackle environmental problems? What can sociology tell us about the nature of the environment and about the origins and consequences of environmental risks, hazards and change? In this important new book Alan Irwin maps out this emerging field of knowledge, teaching and research. He reviews the key sociological debates in the field and sets out a new framework for analysis and practice.

Among the themes examined are constructivism and realism, sustainable development and theories of the risk society. Readers are also introduced to communities at risk, institutional regulation and the environmental consequences of technology. Particular topics for discussion include genetically modified organisms, nuclear power, pesticide safety and the local hazards of the chemical industry. Rather than maintaining a fixed boundary between nature and society, Irwin highlights the hybrid character of environmental issues and emphasizes the role of social and cultural factors within environmental policy.

Combining theoretical discussion and case-studies with a sensitivity to the concerns of environmental policy and practice, *Sociology and the Environment* provides an excellent introduction to an expanding and immensely important field. It will be a valuable text for students and scholars in sociology, geography, environmental studies and related disciplines.

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