

[Hartley Dean](#)

Social rights and natural resources

**Book section – accepted version
(Refereed)**

Original citation:

Originally published in Fitzpatrick, Tony, (ed.) *International Handbook on Social Policy and the Environment*. Elgar original reference. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, pp. 401-418. ISBN 9780857936127

© 2014 [Edward Elgar](#)

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/57848/>

Available in LSE Research Online: January 2015

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

This document is the author's submitted version of the book section. There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

Social Rights and Natural Resources

Chapter 15 from T. Fitzpatrick (ed.) *International Handbook on Social Policy and the Environment*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. [final draft]

Hartley Dean

Introduction: Genesis vs. Gaia

This chapter considers the competing ways in which human beings socially construct their claims upon natural resources. The axis around which conventional thinking tends to revolve is a distinction between anthropocentrism on the one hand and eco-centrism on the other. The former entails a set of assumptions about the primacy of humanity over Nature: assumptions that are challenged by the latter. The foundations of anthropocentrism run deep. The Biblical account of the Earth's creation conceptualises the Earth as an environment created for humanity: a world created for a free-willed species supposedly made in the creator's image. The Genesis narrative has not only informed the major religions of the world, but its allegorical potential has resonated with Western Enlightenment thinking, insinuating itself into the conceptual ethos and cultural norms of believers and non-believers alike. The challenge to this orthodoxy has equally ancient roots in Greek mythology, which on the one hand warns humanity against the hubris of Prometheus, who stole fire from the Gods to give to mere mortals, while on the other celebrating Gaia, the primordial Earth Mother, whose name has been appropriated by a contemporary hypothesis that the Earth as a self-sustaining organism will defend itself against the reckless encroachments of mortal humanity.

The Genesis narrative gives humanity licence to take from Nature. The Gaia hypothesis commands that humanity must live in harmony with Nature - or not at all. This is, if not a false dichotomy (Cockburn, 2010), a tired and oversimplified characterisation of a complex morass of ideas that this chapter will try in part to unravel. It will begin by recounting an earlier discussion concerning competing ecological discourses, before turning to a related discussion of competing approaches to human needs and social rights. It will attempt a synthesis between these two discussions and suggest the basis upon which social rights claims in relation to natural resources might in future be negotiated. It will conclude by re-examining the relevance to that negotiation of Marx's concept of *stoffveschel*, suggesting that it offers the possibility of a decisive break from the Genesis vs. Gaia dichotomy and an alternative understanding of social rights and natural resources.

Ecological discourses

In a previous article I attempted to model the different ways in which 'green citizenship' might be conceptualised (Dean, 2001) and suggested that prevailing discourse draws upon analytically distinctive ecological moral repertoires that may be defined not so much in relation to the Genesis vs. Gaia dichotomy, as a twofold distinction reflecting

two intersecting dimensions along which Nature and humanity may be conceptualised. The first, inspired in part by Habermas' classification of social movements (Habermas, 1987), distinguishes between emancipatory and defensive approaches: between, on the one hand, concerns for the freedom of the individual or for collective self-determination and, on the other, concerns for the preservation of the natural or the customary order. The second is a distinction (clumsily termed) between 'anti-social-humanistic' and 'pro-social-humanistic' approaches: between, on the one hand, a vision of the individual as an autonomous subject in a personal struggle for survival and, on the other, a vision of humanity as a social species engaged in a shared struggle for survival.

[insert Figure 1 about here]

The model or taxonomy that this analysis produced is illustrated in Figure 1. It defines four ecological moral discourses, each of which characterises a strand of thinking within the broad church (or 'Green tent') that is or has been the environmentalist/ecological movement, albeit that different individuals or groups within the tent may in practice draw on a combination of these discursive repertoires:

Eco-modernisation is arguably the dominant discourse of the current era, reflecting an orthodoxy that emerged following the Brundtland report (Brundtland, 1987), but which finds variously inflected forms of expression in the writing of prominent academics (Dryzek, 1997), activists (Porritt, 1984) and, occasionally, policy makers. Though often espoused by social democrats, it is essentially liberal-individualistic. It seeks to emancipate the individual subject by freeing capitalism from the constraints of Nature. Its aim is to ameliorate the ecological consequences of industrial capitalism and apply technological fixes for the environmental obstacles to continued economic growth. Ecological sustainability is a means to an end.

Deep greenism is the most radically eco-centric discourse and is reflected both in abstract idealism (Fox, 1984) and direct action. It is essentially misanthropic, since it subordinates the interests of the human species to the interests of other species and the interests of the Earth itself. It seeks to defend the planet from incursions by humanity. Its aim is to constrain economic production *and* human population growth. Ecological sustainability is an end in itself.

Eco-communitarianism represents an older tradition that espouses humanity's oneness with Nature and the idea of the Earth citizen (Van Steenberg, 1994); a tradition with both spiritual and republican dimensions. It is essentially conservative, inasmuch as it defends an ideal of natural harmony. It seeks to maintain or restore a social order in which human beings peacefully co-exist with the natural world. Ecological sustainability is a moral good.

Eco-socialism is by and large a discourse of the intellectual Left. Its roots are deep (Bukharin, 1925) and its contemporary relevance to social policy has been recognised (Bookchin, 1991), but its practical purchase has been limited. Its premise is that human exploitation of the Earth stemmed from humans' exploitation of other humans and that human emancipation from capitalist exploitation is a condition precedent for the survival of the Earth. Ecological sustainability is an ethical necessity.

This brief re-capitulation already incorporates some additional reflections and a realisation that this taxonomy does not necessarily tell us much about how social rights to natural resources may be constructed.

Reflections on rights and needs

Social rights, following Marshall (1950), are widely construed as rights enjoyed by citizens of the modern welfare state; as rights to individual livelihood, public services and social protection. It is assumed that as rights of citizenship social rights became possible only after a framework of civil and political rights had been established. Even when recognised as a component of our human rights under the UN's Universal Declaration of Rights, social rights have been referred to as 'second generation' rights (Eide, 2001); rights that could only be contemplated when 'first generation' civil and political freedoms had been won. It has lately been argued that social rights should be thought of as having preceded civil and political rights (Isin et al, 2008): that it is as social beings that we recognise the claims that others make upon us and that we might make upon them (Dean, 2013). The claims that human beings make upon the Earth's resources were initially framed as customary rights; rights founded on social negotiation and mutual respect in order that human beings might survive. Such rights were and are axiomatically social. Surely, concepts of citizenship - including social citizenship - came along only *after* humans had begun to satisfy their needs as interdependent beings by framing their claims on natural resources as social rights.

And here we might pause to reflect on human need and that which humanity requires from Nature. I referred above to the intersecting dimensions along which humanity and Nature may be conceptualised. Those dimensions, I suggest, articulate with two kinds of distinction that may be drawn when seeking to understand human need (Dean, 2010).

The first is a distinction between inherent and interpreted need. To understand need as something that is *inherent* to the human individual requires a theory of personhood. Need stems from a person's objective interests or their personal preferences (Thomson, 1987); their inner drives (Maslow, 1943) or the very nature of their species-being (Marx, 1844). Any theory of personhood is premised upon a doctrinal or ethical assumption about what it means to be human and therefore implies some notion of emancipation; some idea that to be a person requires a measure of relative autonomy or freedom. Alternatively, *interpreted* need entails an understanding of need that is pragmatic. Needs may be shaped by the norms and expectations of society (Baudrillard, 1970; Smith, 1776), or they may be inferred or deduced from expert opinion, through the demands that people make or by means of comparative study (Bradshaw, 1972). This pragmatic understanding is concerned with the moral grounds on which needs claims may be advanced and the practical basis on which they may be defended. Very clearly, inherent and interpreted understandings of need are mutually constitutive; they each inform the other. But the distinction is important to our understanding of how needs are constituted and how claims upon resources are legitimated.

The second distinction relating to the understanding of human need may be expressed as a distinction between thin needs and thick needs. This is a shorthand

allusion to Aristotle's (c. 350BC) distinction between 'hedonic' and 'eudaimonic' wellbeing. *Thin* need refers to the things required in order for a person to obtain pleasure and avoid pain. It is premised on a utilitarian calculus of individual satisfaction. *Thick* need refers to the things required in order for a person to flourish and to achieve a good life. It is premised on a commitment to human fulfilment and social engagement. Clearly, thin needs and thick needs are both important to human wellbeing. But different understandings of need may entail different emphases.

[Insert figure 2 about here]

The taxonomy that may be constructed using these two dimensions is illustrated in Figure 2. It defines four needs-based approaches, each of which characterises a different foundation for social rights claims as socially mediated claims upon natural resources.

The *particular needs approach* is essentially economic and commensurate with free market liberalism. Human needs are particular in the sense that they reflect a call for autonomous participation in a perfectly competitive, yet harmoniously functioning, market economy. Our claims on Nature are mediated by the market. The right to have material needs met is doctrinally conceived in that the efficacy of markets as a mechanism through which to exploit natural resources is believed to depend upon the application of principles of formal equality of opportunity. In practice, therefore, substantive social rights are selective. They arise where a person - by reason of age, impairment or misfortune - lacks the means or the opportunity by which directly to participate in the process by which markets supposedly 'produce' material resources from Nature; she must have such education or training, healthcare or temporary financial assistance as will enable her to join or re-join the productive process. Rights are premised on the principle that the social subject should be specifically enabled to have an ostensibly self-sufficient (but in fact market dependent) relationship with Nature.

The *circumstantial needs approach* is essentially moral authoritarian and commensurate with the Hobbesian/Benthamite approach that once informed social provision under the Poor Laws (yet remains in evidence today). Human needs are circumstantial in the sense that they reflect the imperative of survival in a hazardous natural environment. Our claims on Nature are not socially mediated; they stem from brute contingencies of individual existence within a competitive and unforgiving social environment. Insofar as one can claim against another a right to have one's 'natural' needs met, that right is necessarily conditional. People may bargain honourably with one another for the means of access to natural resources and this may give rise to everyday claims or expectations to which the term 'rights' may attach. However, if a person is unable to satisfy her needs by such means, she may seek social assistance only on condition that she is morally deserving. Rights are conditional on obedience to the moral authority of those who govern access to natural resources.

The *common needs approach* is essentially paternalistic and commensurate with social conservatism. Human needs are needs held in common, reflecting an imperative of conformity and stability in a protective, but hierarchically ordered, society. Our claims on Nature are mediated by the social order. The right to have material needs

met is claimed on the basis that one belongs to and accepts one's place within a settled society. Such rights arise because the common denominator shared by all members of society is a degree of present or potential vulnerability within the natural world. Social rights are a matter of mutual moral obligation and the sharing of natural resources.

The *universal needs approach* is essentially humanitarian and commensurate with social democracy or democratic socialism. Human needs are universal in the sense that they reflect a call for human fulfilment and the realisation of social humanity. Our claims on Nature are socially mediated by reason of our species-being. The right to have human needs met is an ethical imperative. Social rights are axiomatically inclusive, comprehensive in nature and unconditional. Such rights are premised on an ideal of collective responsibility for the optimal use of natural resources.

This model defines competing approaches to human need and social rights that are seldom if ever espoused or implemented in ideal form, yet it characterises the range of approaches upon which social policy makers may draw in complex and often unreflexive and contradictory ways. The approaches co-exist with and feed off each other. They are dialectically implicated in the policy making process. To a certain extent these needs-based approaches loosely map onto the ecological discourses outlined above and each might attempt to accommodate its anthropocentric tendencies with its eco-centric propensities. Each might acknowledge the cause of ecological sustainability in a different way.

Social-ecological praxis

Discussions of environmental rights (Boyle, 2007; Friends of the Earth International, 2003; Gearty, 2010) allude to issues of human access - individual and/or collective - to land, shelter, food, water and air as factors necessary for human security, livelihoods and health. By and large environmental rights are regarded as a broad category of human rights, rhetorically defined or defined with reference to existing strands or 'generations' of rights within the international human rights framework. But this chapter is concerned with the environmental rights as social rights; rights grounded in sociality and which are subject to specific and ongoing processes of negotiation; rights grounded in a post-Marshallian conception of social citizenship as a quotidian human practice or process (Dean, 2013). To that end, we may take the two taxonomies outlined above and consider how differing constructions of human need engage with or inform a variety of ecological discourses.

This enables us theoretically to identify competing social-ecological praxes: different ways in which conceptual or ideological assumptions are, or could be, translated into practice with different implications for the future of social policy. The dimensions around which our two preceding taxonomies were constructed may be synthesised into two further distinctions. The first distinction is concerned with the different ways in which policy issues may be framed: a distinction that maps on to that between emancipatory and defensive ecological approaches illustrated in Figure 1 and that between inherent and interpreted approaches to human need illustrated in Figure 2. It is a

distinction between the **systemic** and the **pragmatic** framing of policy issues; between, on the one hand, a strongly theoretically informed praxis, predicated on systemically conceived ideas of progress and personhood, and on the other, a more reactive form of praxis, predicated on experiences of, and pragmatic responses to, everyday challenges. The systemic-pragmatic continuum captures the degree to which claims on natural resources are *reflexively* defined. The second distinction is concerned with the different ways in which praxis may be oriented: a distinction that maps on to that between pro- and anti-humanistic ecological approaches illustrated in Figure 1 and that between thick and thin approaches to human need illustrated in Figure 2. It is a distinction between **solidaristicly** and **individualisticly** oriented forms of praxis: between, on the one hand, a strongly collectivist or co-operative social group orientation and, on the other, a more autonomistic or competitive individualistic focus. The solidaristic-individualistic continuum captures the degree to which claims on natural resources are seen as *shared* claims. The resulting taxonomy is illustrated in Figure 3.

[insert Figure 3 about here]

Managing the Planet. The particular needs approach and the eco-modernisation agenda.

Insofar as there is an emerging, albeit partial, global consensus it is underpinned by an economic or essentially neo-liberal systemic framing. It is assumed that it is through the management of economic globalization that we may achieve the sustainable exploitation of natural resources. The emphasis is on low-carbon production techniques, renewable energy sources, waste re-cycling, carbon trading schemes and tax-incentives aimed at changing both corporate behaviour and individual life-styles. Social rights can over the longer term be developed or maintained through the avoidance of scarcity; they are adjuncts of economic competitiveness and continued economic growth.

Staying Alive. The circumstantial needs approach and the deep ecology agenda. The 'deep' green movement- or, at least, its most misanthropic and authoritarian elements - appears to have been less in evidence of late. There is perhaps a paradox to be addressed. What is characterised above as the circumstantial needs approach (which is at best sceptical towards ideas of 'rights' but is accepting of authority) can have populist right-wing appeal. However, the deep Green agenda demands a degree of selflessness and human sacrifice that is inimical to populist individualism. The messages of even light Green or moderate advocates of 'de-growth' (e.g. Jackson, 2009) attract neither popular nor political support. Nevertheless, it might be foreseen that at the point where the effects of climate change self-evidently threaten life and limb, we may anticipate popular moral panic, including urgent and wholly selfish support for measures to mitigate the exploitation of natural resources and, in order to survive, a willingness belatedly to submit to the dictates of Nature: out of necessity, not principle.

Sharing Earth's Bounty. The common needs approach and the green communitarian agenda. Light Green communitarianism and, for example, the Christian Democratic tradition emphasise the essentially conservative notion of 'stewardship'. Social rights are about the pragmatic preservation and sharing of available resources, albeit that the social order, like Nature itself, is not necessarily just or even handed - especially

when there is not enough to go round. The existing order should where necessary be defended against the 'manufactured risks' (Beck, 1992) associated with technological innovation. The environment should be conserved for the benefit of future generations. Social rights may be sustained, even during an era of austerity, by sensible collaboration between social partners. Or else social rights may be restored by going back to Nature and finding alternative ways of harnessing social resources. *Working with Nature*. The humanitarian approach and the eco-socialist agenda. I shall return in a moment to Marx's concept of 'social-ecological metabolism' (*stoffwechsel* - translated in some texts as the 'exchange of matter between Man and Nature'). The idea that human need is to be systemically framed with reference to the definitive characteristics of the human species is captured by Marx's metaphorical allusion to humanity's distinctive metabolism with Nature and his notion of the 'metabolic rift' occasioned by capitalism (Foster, 1999). It is an idea that has not explicitly informed left-wing thinking about the environment. Moderate eco-socialists do not necessarily demand that capitalism should be completely rolled back in order to restore the equilibrium between humanity and Nature. Nevertheless, they contend that ecological sustainability requires that social policy and planning should take precedence over economic policy and planning: economic production should be constrained so as to produce no more than is required to meet humanity's needs, while resources should be redistributed so as to ensure that everybody's social rights are adequately and meaningfully fulfilled.

Like our preceding taxonomies, this model is a heuristic device. It does not precisely describe any of the factions or camps actually to be found within the 'Green tent'. Nor does it purport to predict future scenarios. It is an attempt critically to reflect upon the competing logics that are immanent within and expressed through hybrid forms of social-ecological praxis. It is a way of thinking about the multitude of fragmented and often suboptimal processes and practices through which social policy at every level may engage with the cause of ecological sustainability: whether at an everyday community level, at the nation state level, or at the level of supranational or global policy frameworks.

Central to this multi-layered and multidimensional approach has been the concept of social-ecological praxis and it is to this that the final section of this chapter will turn.

Stoffwechsel

Mention has already been made of Marx's application of the concept - *stoffwechsel*. The contemporary translation of the word - 'social-ecological metabolism' - is apt, but it is worth recalling the 1887 English translation of a key passage from *Capital*:

The labour process ... is human action with a view to the production of use-values, appropriation of natural substances to human requirements; it is the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between Man and Nature [*stoffwechsel*]; it is the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human existence, and therefore is independent of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase. (Marx, 1887: 183-4) (see also Colletti, 1975: 28 regarding translation).

This is the historical materialist alternative to both the Genesis narrative and the Gaia hypothesis. It may be argued that historical materialism offers a theoretical basis for understanding the equilibrium between society and Nature (Bukharin, 1925: ch. V) and the regulation of that relationship 'from the side of Nature by natural laws governing the physical processes involved, and from the side of society by institutionalised norms governing the division of labour and distribution of wealth' (Hayward, 1994: 116). Benton (1988) would suggest that, taken as a whole, Marx's writings present two interdependent accounts: one concerning the need to 'humanise Nature' (to shape or civilise the natural world in the interests of humanity); the other concerning the need to 'naturalise humanity' (to restore human beings' unity with Nature). *Stoffwechsel* - the process of social-ecological metabolism - defines the relationship between humanity and Nature as neither dominant nor parasitic, but symbiotic. Humanity is a product of Nature, yet interacts with it. Human society reflects the human essence of Nature and the natural essence of humanity, albeit under industrial capitalism in an 'alienated form' (Marx, 1844: 355). The human species as a product of Nature is defined through *work* (i.e. the labour process as a distinctive form of metabolism with Nature); through its capacity for progressive *historical development*; through the unique form and level of cognition or *consciousness* that makes both purposeful work and historical development possible; and, fundamentally, by its *sociality*, its constitutive mutual interdependency (Markus, 1978). Through the wage relation, capitalism estranges human beings from their metabolism with Nature and through the commodity form, it reduces their species-being to an 'alien essence' (Chitty, 2009). Capital, as the manifestation of abstract value, obscures the meaning of humanity's substantive needs and the symbiotic claims on natural resources that stem from such needs. It is within this constrained context that the existing Marshallian concept of social rights has been forged, a concept that reduces social rights to claims mediated by capital and by the capitalist welfare state.

This account of humanity's essence and the subversion of its relationship to Nature is at one and the same time both normative and theoretical. It can be situated within the taxonomy presented in Figure 3, but it also provides an analytical critique through which to consider all forms of social-ecological praxis. Long before the birth of the environmental movement and contemporary concerns with environmental pollution, ecological degradation, resource depletion and climate change, Marx accused capitalism and specifically capitalist forms of industry of undermining the equilibrium between humanity and Nature. For example, in the often neglected third volume of *Capital*, he pays particular attention to problems back in the mid-nineteenth century of soil degradation and environmental damage associated with the emergence of the fertilizer industry and the failure to recycle urban organic waste (Marx, 1894). But more generally throughout his work, he sought to emphasise that capitalist production simultaneously undermined 'the original sources of all wealth - the soil and the worker' (Marx, 1887: 505). Foster would contend that this amounts to a 'larger conceptual framework, emphasising the metabolic rift between human production and its natural conditions' (1999: 320).

While insisting on the primacy of the material means of production in the shaping of human societies, Marx (1887: 43) none the less endorsed the classical economist, William Petty's, aphorism that though labour is the 'father' of material wealth, the earth is its 'mother'. Indeed it is the fetishised character of the wage relation and the commodity

form that conceals the origins and significance of the material wealth that is generated through the metabolism between social humanity and Nature. The metabolic rift can be repaired. But this would ultimately require a revolution wherein the pursuit of 'radical needs' (the realisation of human potential) would replace market value as the measure of human achievement (see Heller, 1974). It would entail a freedom that, according to Marx (1894: 820), can only consist in socialised humanity, as 'associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control'. In practice, some contend, 'capitalism will be humans' final mode of production on earth' (Harriss-White, 2012: 109) and that, for example, mitigating the effects of Man-made climate change is now impossible within the prevailing framework of finance-driven capitalism (Koch, 2012). And yet there is now no effective or immediate call to revolution against capitalism. Making the case for ecological socialism, O'Connor complains that conventional socialist resistance has in practice

consisted of struggles for higher wages, shorter hours of work, full employment, rent control, subsidies to small farmers, and so on, or what can be called 'distributive justice'. Socialists have had a qualitative theoretical critique of capitalism and too often a quantitative political practice. (1998: 324)

O'Connor calls - additionally or instead - for struggles over the qualitative *conditions* of production. He argues that elements of eco-socialism have been immanent within a variety of new social movements and this we can, of course, see in the call by feminists and others for recognition as well as redistribution (e.g. Fraser, 1997) and in the scepticism of post-development theorists towards narrowly framed 'politics of demand' (e.g. Escobar, 1995). The distinction between quantitative and qualitative dimensions, however, can also be seen in the context of the distinction made above between thin needs and thick needs. The Marxist theory of need is quintessentially qualitative and 'thick': by defining human need in relation to the constitutive characteristics of our very species-being it allows for the framing of social rights claims and an understanding of social policy that is fundamentally qualitative. Social policy can challenge the conditions of production for example through the partial de-commodification of labour (e.g. Standing, 2009) and the promotion of public services having social rather than market value (e.g. Jordan, 2008) in facilitating ecological sustainability.

The contention of this chapter is that social rights to natural resources could be sustainably mediated through social policies premised on a radical theory of need; by the realisation of our human species-being in terms not of abstracted value, but substantive fulfilment. Key to achieving this, perhaps, would be an anti-capitalist struggle that is not merely immanent within, but explicitly shared between, a variety of social movements (cf. Callinicos, 2003). The seeds of such activity might, for example, be seen in the World Social Forum and the Occupy and Los Indignados movements, though the sustainability of such movements, paradoxically, is probably as fragile as any eco-system. Nevertheless, let us speculate as to the likely components of a radical de-commodification social policy strategy:

De-commodification of labour. One of the defining features of capitalist welfare states is the degree to which they allow for the partial de-commodification of labour (Esping-Andersen, 1990). But the terms and conditions on which workers may be

supported outwith the labour market play a key part in the maintenance of labour discipline (Dean, 1991). Pushed far enough, quantitative claims for reduced working hours, higher wages, longer holidays, better pensions, greater job security can begin to impact qualitatively on the nature of wage labour. But global demands for 'decent work' (ILO, 1999) are nonetheless calibrated in quantitative not qualitative terms. And yet all work, according to Hegel (1805-6), must have qualitative 'moral value' - something that need not apply when the worker is a disposable commodity (Sennett, 1998). A radical de-commodification strategy would seek to break the link between work and subsistence: human beings need both, but one should not be conditional on the other. A case that can be made for the proliferation of basic income schemes - depending on the context and their adequacy - is that by breaking the link between work and subsistence, they could reign back destructive forms of economic production and promote socially useful activity (e.g. Torry, 2013).

De-commodification of land. Another distinctive feature of established welfare states has been the development of various forms of housing policy: including housing costs support, regulation of rents and housing conditions, and the subsidising and/or provision of social housing (e.g. Lund, 2011). But the provision of shelter for human habitation is wholly dependent on the ownership and control of land and housing policy is not the same as land policy (Davy, 2012), which has global implications not just for human shelter, but also for access to natural resources. Quantitative concerns with rents and housing costs do not address the fundamental qualitative issues that stem from the status of land as alienable property; as a commodity, rather than as space where people might lead their lives. But even the social provision of housing entails by and large only a partial de-commodification. A radical de-commodification strategy would seek to extend common ownership or control of land raising critical (though hardly new) questions as to just how collaborative use of common pool resources can be negotiated and managed (Ostrom, 1990).

The de-commodification of human services. Capitalist welfare states also make provision for human services which may to varying degrees be de-commodified, and globally there is concern to promote human service development. Foremost among these is educational provision. The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals include a global commitment to universal primary education (United Nations Development Programme, 2003), though secondary and tertiary education throughout much of the world is by and large only partially de-commodified. Neo-Marxist and some non-Marxist critics (e.g. Freire, 1972) complains that state-capitalist education systems directly serve capitalist interests through their reproduction of, and hegemonic influence upon, labour. A radical de-commodification strategy might seek to break the link between capitalist interests and educational practices by emphasising the role of education in developing the human personality (rather than developing human capital) or through what Freire called a conscientising 'pedagogy of the oppressed'. Healthcare is a more widely commodified human service, though in most countries the state is involved in regulating, funding and/delivering health provision. Once again, critics of socialised medicine under capitalism have long complained, on the one hand, that it serves capitalist interests (Doyal, 1979) and, on

the other, that its commodified form and the vested interests of medical professionals can have iatrogenic effects (i.e. medical interventions can cause not cure disease) (Illich, 1977). A radical de-commodification strategy might seek to foster public health and healthcare delivery models and technologies that do not objectify people as patients or consumers but allow them to optimise their lives in harmony with the environment.

A reconceptualisation of social rights could play a key part in healing the metabolic rift and restoring social-ecological metabolism.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been on the various ways in which the claims that humanity may make on Nature can be framed as social rights. It has shown how the relationship between social rights and natural resources is subject to a variety of competing discourses, moral traditions, and political approaches. It has argued for a post-Marshallian understanding of social rights and social citizenship, contending that as a social species, humanity's negotiation of individual and collective claims upon natural resources - whether locally or globally - has always proceeded and will continue to proceed in a multiplicity of ways. The implication is that social policy will respond to environmental issues - whether reactively or proactively - in a variety of ways, at different sites and in different contexts around the world. The taxonomy of socio-ecological praxes that has been presented offers a heuristic framework for the analysis of those multiple responses. The attempt to present a post-Marxist conception of social-ecological metabolism provides a particular means to critique such responses and a window through which to address key issues around ecological sustainability.

If, as surely we must, it is accepted that humanity faces a self-inflicted and imminent threat from environmental degradation, resource depletion and climate change, it will fall to social policy to address the consequences in terms of resource distribution, the maintenance of livelihoods and social sustainability. A praxis aimed at *Managing the Planet* will tend to subordinate social rights claims to the perceived constraints of market forces as these adapt reactively to ecological crisis: social policy will be on the back foot. This appears to be the dominant praxis, as expressed through an emerging consensus in favour of 'green growth' (OECD, 2011; United Nations Environment Programme, 2011; World Bank, 2010). A praxis focused on *Staying Alive* would not emerge until the ecological crisis is far advanced and social rights are self-evidently in jeopardy: social policy will be left waiting in the wings. Though it is a latent praxis, the possibility of harnessing an insurgent resistance against capitalism's self-destructive power must be borne in mind. A praxis aimed at *Sharing Earth's Bounty* will be forced to accommodate social rights claims to the ecological crisis, but the process will be brokered within existing and increasingly strained social relations of power: social policy will be subject to compromise. As a praxis, this embodies socially minded responses within the parameters of existing relations of power and is expressed, for example, in a demand made in a UNRISD report that a green growth economic strategy might incorporate social goals (Cook, Smith, & Utting, 2012) or, just possibly, by certain nascent elements

within the Corporate Social Responsibility agenda (Vogel, 2006). A praxis focused on *Working with Nature* would make social rights claims central to restoring equilibrium between humanity and nature: social policy would take centre stage. But it must be accepted that such a praxis might have to work with or within the context of other competing or suboptimal praxes.

Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to Ian Gough for helpful comments and suggestions upon an earlier draft of this chapter. The argument and its many flaws are entirely mine, however.

Figure 1 Taxonomy of ecological moral discourses

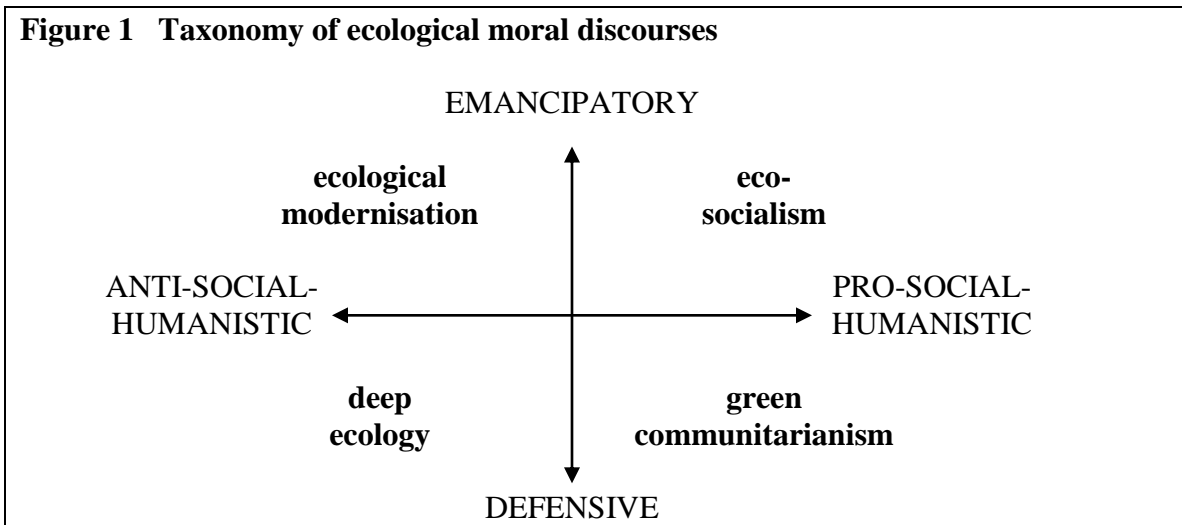


Figure 2 - A taxonomy of needs-based approaches

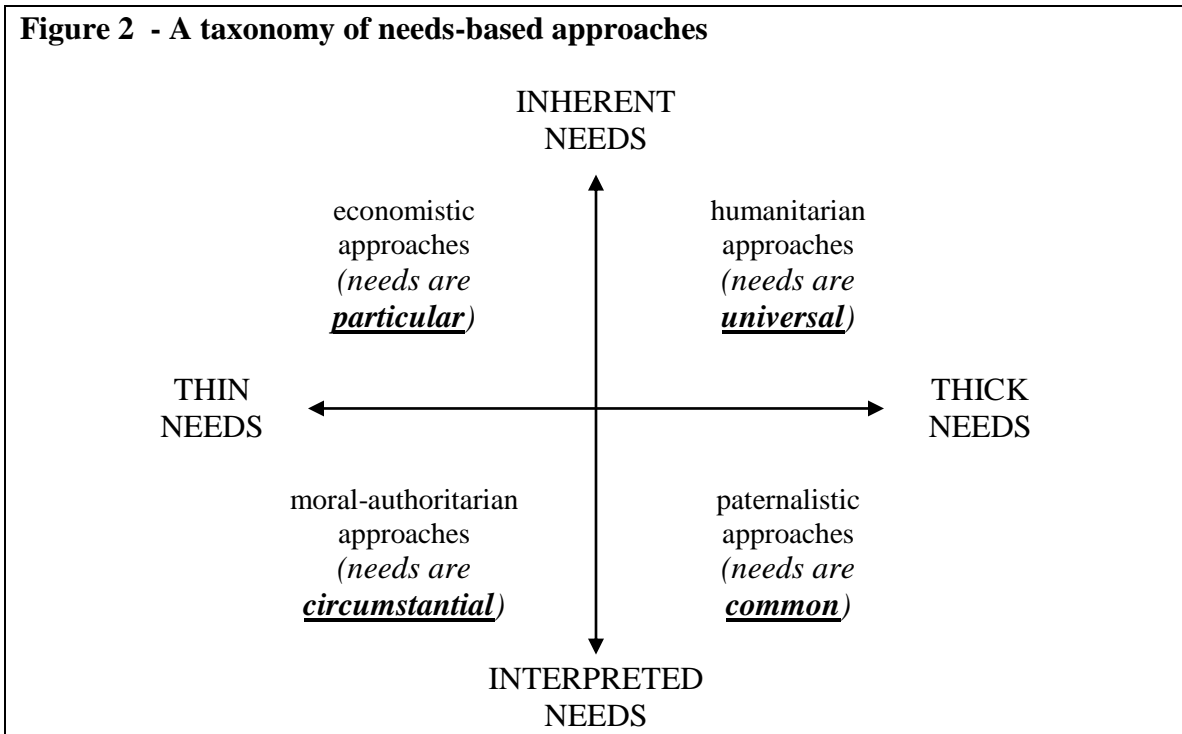
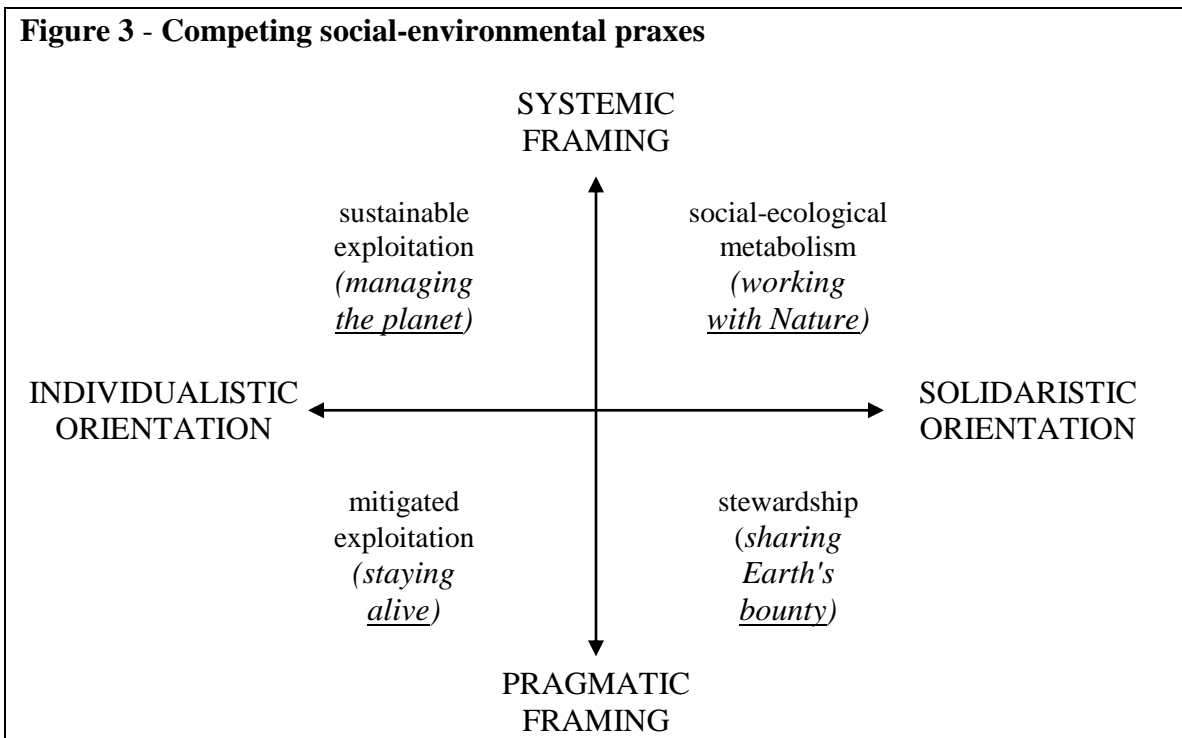


Figure 3 - Competing social-environmental praxes



References

- Aristotle. (c. 350BC). *Eudemian Ethics - Books I, II and VIII* (1982 edn. translated by M. Woods). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1970). *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (1998 English language ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk Society: Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.
- Benton, T. (1988). Humanism = specieism: Marx on humans and animals. *Radical Philosophy*, 50, 4-18.
- Bookchin, M. (1991). Where I stand now. In M. a. F. Bookchin, D (Ed.), *Defending the Earth*. New York: Black Rose Books.
- Boyle, A. (2007). *Human Rights or Environmental Rights? A reassessment*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, School of Law.
- Bradshaw, J. (1972, 30 March). The Concept of Social Need. *New Society*.
- Brundtland, G. (1987). *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bukharin, N. (1925). *Historical Materialism: A system of sociology*. New York: International.
- Callinicos, A. (2003). *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Chitty, A. (2009). Species-being and capital. In A. Chitty & M. McIvor (Eds.), *Karl Marx and Contemporary Philosophy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cockburn, A. (2010). From Genesis to Gaia. *The Nation*.
- Colletti, L. (1975). Introduction. In L. Colletti (Ed.), *Karl Marx: Early Writings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin/New Left Review.
- Cook, S., Smith, K., & Utting, P. (2012). *Green Economy or Green Society*. Geneva: UNRISD.
- Davy, B. (2012). *Land Policy*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Dean, H. (1991). *Social Security and Social Control*. London: Routledge.
- Dean, H. (2001). Green citizenship. *Social Policy and Administration*, 35(5), 490-505.
- Dean, H. (2010). *Understanding Human Need*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Dean, H. (2013). The translation of needs into rights: Reconceptualising social citizenship as a global phenomenon. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, forthcoming.
- Doyal, L. (1979). *The Political Economy of Health*. London: Pluto.
- Dryzek, J. (1997). *The Politics of the Earth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eide, A. (2001). Economic, social and cultural rights as human rights. In A. Eide, C. Krause & A. Rosas (Eds.), *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A textbook* (2 ed.). Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Escobar, A. (1995). Imagining a post-development era. In J. Crush (Ed.), *The Power of Development*. London: Routledge.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Foster, J. (1999). Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical foundations for environmental sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(2).
- Fox, W. (1984). Deep ecology: A new philosophy of our time? *The Ecologist*, 14(5/6), 194-200.

- Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice Interruptus: Critical reflections on the 'postsocialist' condition*. London: Routledge.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Friends of the Earth International. (2003). *Cartagena Declaration*: <http://www.foei.org/en/get-involved/take-action/solidarity-work/The%20Cartagena%20Declaration>.
- Gearty, C. (2010). Do human rights help or hinder environmental protection? *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment*, 1(1).
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Vol 2: Lifeworld and System*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Harriss-White, B. (2012). Ecology and the environment. In B. Fine & A. Saad-Filho (Eds.), *The Elgar Companion to Marxist Economics*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Hayward, T. (1994). *Ecological Thought*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hegel, G. (1805-6). Jena lectures on the philosophy of spirit. In L. Rauch (Ed.), *Hegel and the Human Spirit (1983)*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Heller, A. (1974). *The Theory of Need in Marx*. London: Alison & Busby.
- Illich, I. (1977). *Towards a History of Needs*. New York: Bantam/Random House.
- International Labour Organisation. (1999). *Report of ILO Director-General: Decent Work, International Labour Conference, 87th Session*. Geneva: ILO.
- Isin, E., Brodie, J., Juteau, D., & Stasiulis, D. (2008). Recasting the Social in Citizenship. In E. Isin (Ed.), *Recasting the Social in Citizenship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Jackson, T. (2009). *Prosperity without Growth*. London: Sustainable Development Commission.
- Jordan, B. (2008). *Welfare and Well-Being: Social value in public policy*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Koch, M. (2012). *Capitalism and Climate Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lund, B. (2011). *Understanding Housing Policy (2nd ed.)*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Markus, G. (1978). *Marxism and Anthropology*. Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
- Marshall, T. H. (1950). Citizenship and social class. In T. Marshall & T. Bottomore (Eds.), *Citizenship and Social Class (1992 ed.)*. London: Pluto.
- Marx, K. (1844). Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts. In L. Colletti (Ed.), *Early Writings (1975 edition)*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Marx, K. (1887). *Capital (1970 ed. Vol. I)*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Marx, K. (1894). *Capital (1959 ed. Vol. III)*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50.
- O'Connor, J. (1998). *Natural Causes: Essays in ecological Marxism*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2011). *Towards Green Growth*. Paris: OECD.
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Porritt, J. (1984). *Seeing Green*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sennett, R. (1998). *The Corrosion of Character: The personal consequences of work in the new capitalism*. New York: Norton.
- Smith, A. (1776). *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1900 edition ed.)*. London: George Routledge.

- Standing, G. (2009). *Work after Globalization: Building occupational citizenship*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Thomson, G. (1987). *Needs*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Torry, M. (2013). *Money for Everyone: Why we need a citizen's income*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2003). *Human Development Report 2003 - Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations Environment Programme. (2011). *Towards a Green Economy*. New York: UN.
- Van Steenbergen, B. (1994). Towards a global ecological citizen. In B. Van Steenbergen (Ed.), *The Condition of Citizenship*. London: Sage Publications.
- Vogel, D. (2006). *The Market for Virtue: The potential and limits of corporate social responsibility*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- World Bank. (2010). *World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change*. New York: UN.