

Delta State University
SOC 422/522 COD 522
Spring Semester 2004

Study Questions, Week 3

Topics for the Week:

The Treadmill of Production & The Logic of Industrial Organization
Paradigms & Theories

Readings for the Week:

Frederick H. Buttel. 1976. Social science and the environment: competing theories. *Social Science Quarterly* 57(2):307–323.

William R. Catton, Jr. and Riley E. Dunlap. 1978. Environmental sociology: a new paradigm. *The American Sociologist* 13:41–49.

Allen Schnaiberg & Stephen Alan Gould. 2000. *Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict*. Caldwell, NJ: The Blackburn Press. Chapter 3.

Questions, Catton & Dunlap and Buttel readings:

- (1) What are the salient characteristics of the “Order (Functionalist) Paradigm?” What are the salient characteristics of the “Conflict Paradigm?”
- (2) What are the primary explanations for the causes of environmental problems in modern society? What solutions have been proposed? What assumptions frame these explanations?
- (3) What are the primary explanations for scarcity in modern society? What assumptions frame these explanations?
- (4) What are the salient characteristics of the “Human Exceptionalism Paradigm?” What are the salient characteristics of the “New Environmental Paradigm?”
- (5) Explain the significance of the “New Environmental Paradigm” in the discipline of sociology. Identify events that provoked the rise of the “New Environmental Paradigm.”
- (6) Given the perspective of Catton and Dunlap in 1978, and Buttel in 1976, how did they envision the future of environmental sociology? What themes or topics would be important? How would these diverge from sociology as it had been practiced up to that point?
- (7) Why had environmental variables not been considered important to mainstream sociologists prior to the 1970s?

Questions, Chapter 3:

- (1) Explain Schnaiberg & Gould's "industrial logic." Who are the different actors/entities in an industrial system? How do these actors/entities interact or relate to each other?
- (2) How do the conditions differ in the "low-regulation scenario" versus the "high-regulation scenario?" Why do Schnaiberg and Gould present these two scenarios?
- (3) What is meant by the term "externalities of production?" How do they fit into the ordinary calculations that firms make in their operations?
- (4) Explain the logic of competition. Why do firms compete? How do firms compete? How does competition lead to resource scarcity?
- (5) Given the logic of industrial expansion, what options are open to people concerned about environmental protection? How have the concerns of environmental social movements been institutionalized into government policy? Explain two perspectives on this process.
- (6) Which set of paradigms, those offered by Buttel or those offered by Catton & Dunlap, offers the best fit to the two competing perspectives that Schnaiberg & Gould describe beginning at the bottom of p. 55? Explain.
- (7) How do the restrictions imposed by government regulation differentially affect primary, secondary, and tertiary industries? In what ways do government regulators impose costs on these different types of industries? In what ways do firms impose costs on themselves related to environmental regulations?
- (8) In what ways do firm managers resist the actions of government regulators? Why do managers do this?
- (9) What is meant by the "bubble concept" of pollution control? Explain how this concept is put into practice.