

**SOCI 101**  
**INTRODUCTION TO**  
**SOCIOLOGY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**SOCIOLOGY**

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**Environmental Sociology**

**1. Resources: The Logic and Limits of Growth**

**a.** The **logic of growth** thesis holds that **more powerful technology has improved lives** and new discoveries will continue to do so in the future. We can overcome overuse. **Economic growth** is the most important value in this model.

*But, "progress" can lead to unexpected problems:*

**b. The limits of growth** thesis suggests:

- Natural resource development today exceeds the Earth's **carrying capacity**;
- We cannot invent our way out of problems because technological "solutions" frequently present further problems;
- We must seek to control population & limit damage to the environment (growth must have limits)



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**Environmental Sociology**

**2. The list of environmental problems related to social development is long:**

- a. Waste Disposal (**Toxic**; **2**, and **Non-Toxic**; **6PGP**)
- b. Water supply **pollution** and **scarcity** **2**
- c. Acid Rain **1** | **2**
- d. **Oil Spill Contaminations**
- e. Air pollution **1** | **2** | **3**
- f. **Ocean Acidification**
- g. **Reduction in biodiversity** (species extinction)  
Are we undergoing another **mass extinction**?  
Evidence of link between sea-level rise and extinction

**3. Climate Change**

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## Environmental Sociology

**Population** increases in recent years in combination with **Industrialization** related to **Urbanization** has created global environmental impacts.

The most wide-ranging effects have been related to global **Climate Change**.

### 3. Climate Change (i.e. "Global Warming")

An increase in CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) and other greenhouses gasses (GHG's) over the past century has been observed, and it is hypothesized that this is a result of industrialization (chiefly [due to the burning of fossil fuels](#)).

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## Environmental Sociology

Because of an increase in CO<sub>2</sub> and other industrial gasses, **the earth's temperature has increased in the past century due to the "greenhouse effect."**

The greenhouse effect warms the atmosphere by trapping heat radiation near the earth's surface.

[Human industrialization is clearly linked to the greenhouse effect.](#)

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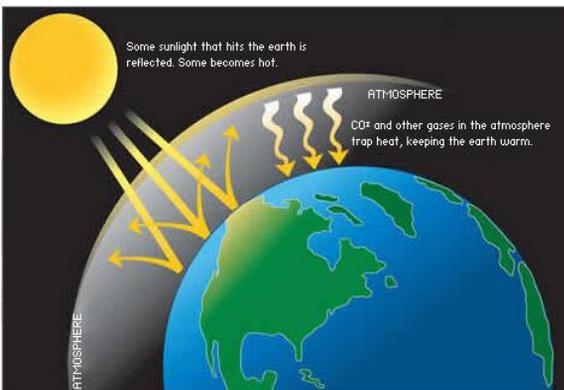
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### The Greenhouse Effect



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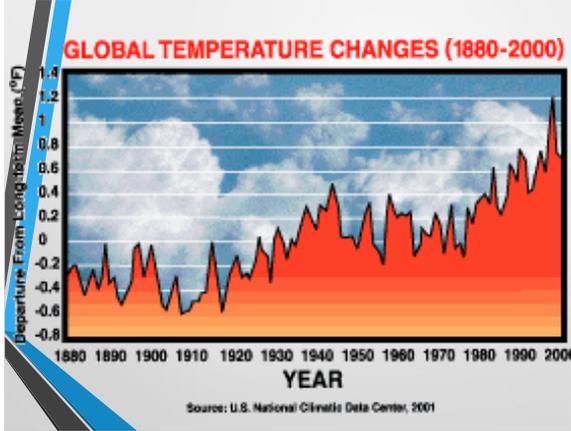
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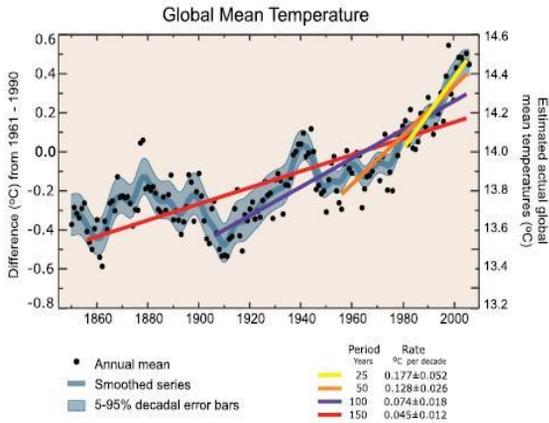
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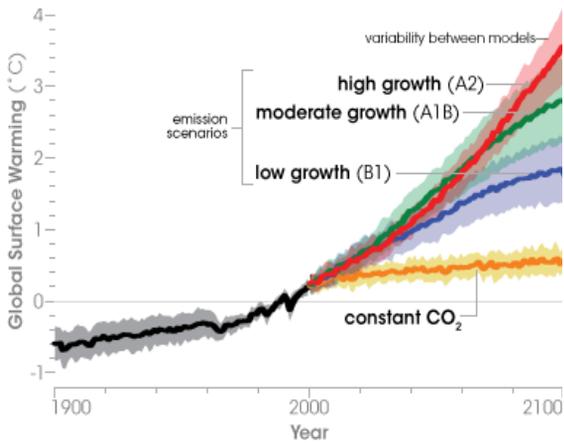
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## Muir Glacier, Alaska, 1941 and 2004



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## Environmental Sociology

### 5. What might resolve these environmental crises and others that could arise in the future?

#### a. Education and Awareness

For example, in 2014 only 63% of Americans believe that climate change is happening, and only 48% believe it is connected to human development (compared to 99% of climate scientists)! Why? [Politics](#).

#### b. Social Reorganization

Not just technological change (reliance on new energies and a synthesized approach to science technology and society), but real social change (new norms, roles, institutions and cultures).  
cf. the [Ecological Justice Movement](#)

"Our technology has surpassed our humanity." – Albert Einstein

"We are living beyond our means. As a people we have developed a lifestyle that is draining the earth of its priceless and irreplaceable resources without regard for the future of our children and people all around the world."  
– Margaret Mead (1901-78), American anthropologist

"Ecological catastrophe is as evil as white supremacist catastrophe, male supremacist catastrophe..."

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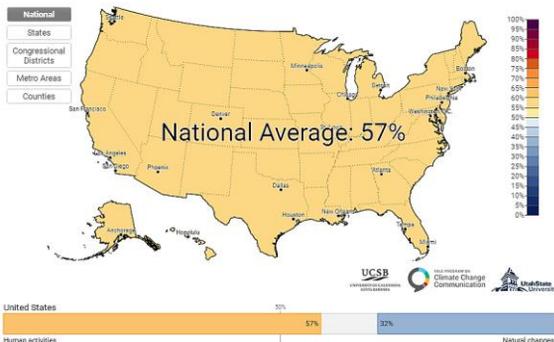
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## Estimated % of adults who think global warming is mostly caused by human activities (57%), 2020

Select Question: Global warming is caused mostly by human activities | Absolute Value  
Click on map to select geography, or:



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## Future Social Change

6. With all these problems, does hope exist in a world out of balance? Yes!

a. Hope exists in the knowledge of the individual:

People should act according to their "calling"; study the *Social Problems (SOCI 201)* that worry you in order to fix them.

"The aim of life is to know thyself." -- Socrates

"Be the change you want to see in the world." - Anon

SELF

b. Hope exists in the "public sphere" of society:

free people can act together in collective projects and *Social Movements - (SOCI 360)* to foster positive social change.

"Freedom is what you do with what's been done to you."

-- Jean Paul Sartre, French philosopher (1905-1980)

SOCIETY



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## Future Social Change

Q: Does hope exist in a world out of balance?

A: Yes!

c. Participatory Sociology opens the door to critically examining your self, your society, and the relationship between the two.

Biography / Self ← (institutions, roles, norms, etc.) → Society / History

*The Sociological Perspective*

can help build the new communities needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to overcome the injustices and social problems constructed in the last century.

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