



Rethinking Sustainable Development (The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Series)

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Throughout the past decade, the meaning of "sustainable development" - which rose to prominence following after the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development - has evolved toward a broad and integrative concept that focuses on environmental protection as well as intergenerational social equity, human rights, and social justice.

As the definition of sustainable development has expanded its meaning has become even more ambiguous, and the gulf between theory and practice continue to widen. Often obscured by jargon-laden debate and embedded in capitalism, the possibilities of realizing goals of sustainable development have begun to fade while the reproduction of the socioeconomic forces that lead to unsustainable development continues to thrive. Yet to dismiss the notion of sustainable development would be a tacit acceptance of the conditions of unsustainable development.

The rapidly maturing capitalism worldwide appears have brought sustainable development to an impasse both in terms of theory and in practice. Capitalism has shown remarkable creativity and power to undermine the goals of sustainable development by appropriating and exploiting the language and practices of sustainable development. To effectively engage with the interplay between capitalism and sustainable development it is urgent that the debate takes on a greater conceptual and analytical clarity and be centered on the consideration of a just world order. A specific institutional environment is needed to achieve sustainable social justice must be clearly identified and articulated in ways that could be translated into effective practice.

This special issue of *The ANNALS* takes a radical departure from current reformist approaches to sustainable development and makes the argument for the necessity of an alternative vision of global political economy linked to strong commitment to a equity and social justice. With the help of case studies from different parts of the world, this volume examines and provides a foundation for thinking about alternative framework of analyses. Especially, it calls to reexamine the currently dominant formulations concerning the 'desirable' role of the state and no-governmental organization (NGOs) in sustainable development.

Providing an in-depth look at the conditions and processes that perpetuate unsustainable development, these articles examine a myriad of pivotal topics: poverty, prosperity, insecurity, diversity, and (NGOs), overproduction and scarcity, the role of the state, cultures of instability and violence, and social justice.

Social and environmental theorists, practitioners, and activists will find an innovative and ardent perspective that strives radical changes in the current discourse of sustainable development.

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