

Comparison of ecological understandings & prevailing assumptions & practices in industrialised societies (Hill 2006)

Ecological understandings

- Responsive to early indicators
- Cyclical, regenerative relationships
- Growth subject to limiting factors
- Most resources used for maintenance
- Based on solar & renewable energy
- Mutualism favoured
- Functional diversity & complexity confer stability
- Rich diversity of specialists, generalists, roles & niches within communities
- Uniqueness of time & place (reflected in all structures & processes)
- Gradual co-evolutionary structural change, with occasional bursts of creativity

Cultural & personal imperatives

- Building personal (including 'spiritual'), social & ecological capital & wellbeing, & a sense of enough; & living off the interest
- 'Conserver Society' (equitably meeting basic & aesthetic needs)
- Appropriate scale, resource efficient (solar, renewables); structures processes & technologies minimizing waste & impact
- Values-based decision making by an informed, participatory population (public education, access, transparency & inclusion) – for the greatest good (social justice)
- Regional self-reliance, shared leadership & responsibility; & context sensitive & specific designs, products & services
- Right to meaningful work (sense of purpose, place & valued roles within vibrant communities)
- 'Understanding', creative, & design focused science, technology & arts, & their integration

Prevailing assumptions/practices

- Wait for crises
- Linear material flows
- Unlimited growth (unsustainable)
- Production overemphasized
- Reliant on fossil fuels & nuclear power
- Competition emphasized
- Simplified, highly controlled systems (dependant & unstable)
- Few specialists & roles valued
- Structures & processes universalized (everything the same, everywhere, all the time)
- Rapid, forced change with few beneficiaries & many 'casualties'
- Inequitable & accumulating personal wealth (unsatisfiable & unsustainable); & living off the capital
- Growing consumption (increasingly emphasizing compensatory wants)
- Mega, powerful resource consuming; structures process & technologies waste producing & impacting
- Market forces (political & consumer manipulation through advertising & exclusion; short-term narrow focus, with neglect of externalities) – monetary system of values (economic rationalism)
- Transglobal corporate managerialism & hierarchical control; homogenized designs, products & services
- Mobile, disposable workforce (loss of sense of purpose, meaning, connection to place & community)
- Controlling & problem solving, specialized science & technology (understanding science & arts as disposable luxuries)