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Peer reviewed

Review: Psychology of Sustainable Development

By Peter Schmuck and Wesley P. Schultz (Eds.)

Reviewed by [Taciano Lemos Milfont](#)
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Peter Schmuck, & Wesley P. Schultz (Eds.). *Psychology of Sustainable Development*. Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic, 2002. 327 pp. ISBN 1-4020-7012-8 (hardcover). US\$125.00

A psychology book dedicated to sustainable development is comprehensible for the reason that ecological problems were created, and still are, by patterns of behaviour. Thus, there is a principal question that this book aims to answer: "How can psychology help in the development of a sustainable society?" The authors demonstrate that psychology has an important role in the sense of promoting sustainable values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. As Peter H. Cock has concluded, psychology could help to change how we feel, think, and act in the world.

Eighteen contributors who come from seven countries and varying backgrounds wrote *Psychology of Sustainable Development*. Besides the table of contents, the list of contributors, the preface and the conclusion, the book is divided into 15 chapters, each comprised of four sections devoted to a specific theme.

The introductory section, which includes three chapters, points out historical aspects of sustainable development and its conceptualisation. This section shows that the transition to a sustainable future posits a social dilemma implying a revolution of ideas and also a challenge for psychologists.

The four chapters of the second section expound on the human relationship with nature from an individual perspective. This section emphasises four aspects that are crucial to the achievement of sustainable development: inclusion with nature, gender issues of sustainable development, environmental-specific emotions, and the experience and knowledge of people who are living sustainable lifestyles.

While the previous section focused on individual differences in sustainable behaviour, the third section explores cultural differences in sustainable development. Approaches to sustainability are discussed in light of southern and northern characteristics, such as independent and interdependent self-construal.

The final section reports examples of projects that aim to solve several

problems of sustainable development by supporting it in enterprises and in communities, counteracting overpopulation, and decarbonising the energy economy.

The contributors show us that sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality, political participation, and social equity. The conceptualisation of sustainable development focused on beliefs about humanity's ability to upset the democratic participation, equal distribution, limits to growth, and ethics related to nature.

In conclusion, this book maps the four primary domains that need be considered to achieve sustainable development: economic, environmental, institutional/political, and social. Although the book presents a psychology viewpoint, it will benefit any interested reader in environmental studies.

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