

**FROM ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY TO SUSTAINABILITY SOCIOLOGY:
ADVANCES THROUGH THE STATE OF THE ART**

**DA SOCIOLOGIA AMBIENTAL À SOCIOLOGIA DA SUSTENTABILIDADE:
AVANÇOS POR MEIO DO ESTADO DA ARTE**

**DE LA SOCIOLOGÍA AMBIENTAL A LA SOCIOLOGÍA DE LA SOSTENIBILIDAD:
UN ESTUDIO EN EL ESTADO DEL ARTE**



Marcela Furtado CALIXTO¹
e-mail: marcelafc.adv@gmail.com



Theófilo Codeço Machado RODRIGUES²
e-mail: theofilomachadorodrigues@gmail.com



Adriana Maria IMPERADOR³
e-mail: adriana.imperador@unifal-mg.edu.br

How to reference this paper:

CALIXTO, Marcela Furtado; RODRIGUES, Theófilo Codeço Machado; IMPERADOR, Adriana Maria. From environmental sociology to sustainability sociology: advances through the state of the art. **Rev. Cadernos de Campo**, Araraquara, v. 25, n. 00, e025012, 2025. e-ISSN: 2359-2419. DOI: 10.47284/cdc.v25i00.20034



| Submitted: 21/02/2025

| Revisions required: 16/09/2025

| Approved: 06/10/2025

| Published: 16/12/2025

Editors: Prof. Dr. Maria Teresa Miceli Kerbaury
Prof. Me. Paulo José de Carvalho Moura
Prof. Me. Luana Estela Di Pires
Prof. Me. Lucas Barbosa de Santana
Prof. Me. Maurício Miotti

¹ Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL), Alfenas – MG – Brazil. Ph.D. from the Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL -MG).

² Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Rio de Janeiro – RJ – Brazil. Ph.D. in Social Sciences from PUC-Rio. Professor in the Postgraduate Program in Political Sociology at IUPERJ/ UCAM.

³ Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL), Poços de Caldas – MG – Brazil. Professor in the Postgraduate Program in Environmental Sciences, Advanced Campus Poços de Caldas (UNIFAL -MG).

ABSTRACT: The present study was structured using the State of the Art methodology, aiming to understand the state of knowledge in Environmental Sociology, focusing on the Brazilian environmental movement of the 1970s as a temporal frame. Data collection was conducted through Brazilian thesis and dissertation databases, and the analyses led to an understanding of the scholarly output in this field. The results indicate the presence of a discussion in Environmental Sociology from various perspectives, with a predominance of the social dimension, as well as a pioneering holistic integration with studies that touch on the theme of sustainability, thus laying the foundation for a Sociology of Sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Environmental sociology. Sociology of sustainability. Society. Environment. State of the art.

RESUMO: O presente estudo foi estruturado por meio da metodologia do Estado da Arte, objetivando a compreensão do estágio do conhecimento da Sociologia Ambiental, utilizando-se como recorte temporal o movimento ambientalista brasileiro da década de 1970. A coleta de dados ocorreu em bases de teses e dissertações brasileiras, e as análises resultaram na compreensão das produções nesse campo. Os resultados indicam a constatação de uma discussão no campo da Sociologia Ambiental sob as mais diversas perspectivas, mas com predominância da dimensão social, além de uma vanguardista integração holística com os estudos que tangenciam a temática da sustentabilidade, fazendo emergir as bases para uma Sociologia da Sustentabilidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Sociologia ambiental. Sociologia da sustentabilidade. Sociedade. Meio ambiente. Estado da arte.

RESUMEN: El presente estudio se estructuró mediante la metodología del Estado del Arte, con el objetivo de comprender el estado del conocimiento en la Sociología Ambiental, tomando como marco temporal el movimiento ambientalista brasileño de la década de 1970. La recolección de datos se realizó en bases de tesis y disertaciones brasileñas, y los análisis resultaron en la comprensión de las producciones en este campo. Los resultados indican la existencia de una discusión en el ámbito de la Sociología Ambiental desde diversas perspectivas, aunque con predominancia de la dimensión social, además de una integración holística pionera con estudios que rozan la temática de la sostenibilidad, lo que hace emerger las bases para una Sociología de la Sostenibilidad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Sociología ambiental. Sociología de la sostenibilidad. Sociedad. Medio ambiente. Estado del arte.

Introduction

Environmental sociology can be defined, in a concise manner, as the branch of sociology focused on the study of the reciprocal interactions between society and the environment. As part of this field, it includes both the social impacts on nature and the effects of environmental transformations on social organization (Catton; Dunlap, 1978; Schnaiberg, 1972). It thus differs from purely anthropocentric perspectives by recognizing the interdependence between social and natural systems.

From the perspective of this field of knowledge, the social fabric encompasses a range of systems and areas that interconnect in contemporary society in order to enable sustainable development as a whole. This is because the integration of social, economic, political, and environmental fields—in a more holistic and structured way—is paramount in the environmental sphere, since the isolated structuring of each field hinders not only its efficiency but also its own development. In this scenario, it is worth highlighting that the interconnection between the social and the environment occurred late, and has not—or has not always—been explored in an integrated way in the field of sociology, since for a long period the anthropocentric approach prevailed.

From this context, discussions about Environmental Sociology emerged in a scenario of major global transformations in the field of Social Sciences. The theme had its landmark after World War II, due to a restructuring of post-war economic policy (Ferreira, 2006). The progress of this field occurred gradually, in which the environmental issue ended up being marked by the overcoming of anthropocentric thought (Fortunato; Porto, 2020), effectively incorporating themes such as human ecology, rural ecology, as well as the sociology of natural resources in sociological studies (Solyno Sobrinho, 2018). These advances represented a paradigmatic shift, evidencing an evolution that brought with it an environmental perspective, breaking with approaches that ignored its symbiotic relationship with society (Silva, 2021).

The relevance of the interaction between the social and the environment therefore justifies this study, since such understanding is important for the analysis of recent theoretical production on the relationship between the field of sociology and the environment. Thus, this study aims to establish a point of reference for the knowledge produced, valuing the interrelation between the sociological field, human beings, and nature, a relationship that is symbiotic and interdependent. Therefore, the objective was to understand the current state of theoretical production in the field of Sociology from an environmental perspective, intending to contribute to a holistic understanding of socio-environmental issues, as well as to reflect on

the interrelation between society and the environment. To achieve the proposed objective, the following question was adopted as the guiding question of the study: what is the integration between the social field and the environment throughout history?

Using the State of the Art methodology, this study presents the current state of knowledge on the subject, and consequently on the field. The methodological process was guided by a systematic search of academic production, situated from a specific historical moment in the environmental field – that is, the environmental movement in Brazil in the 1970s. The research objects were works published in national databases from that historical moment, which, therefore, delimits the temporal scope of the study, allowing for the identification, mapping, and discussion of academic production on the intersection between society and nature. The analysis process segmented analytical categories aimed at observing approaches and emphases, consolidating the systematization of knowledge in the field.

Methodology

Methodologically, as mentioned earlier, this study is characterized as a State of the Art – a method that consists of systematically carrying out bibliographic research on the production of a particular field of knowledge (Vosgerau; Romanowski, 2014). For Romanowski and Ens (2006), bibliographic research that uses this methodology can be considered an important contribution to the constitution of a particular theoretical field in any of the thematic components of a given research focus.

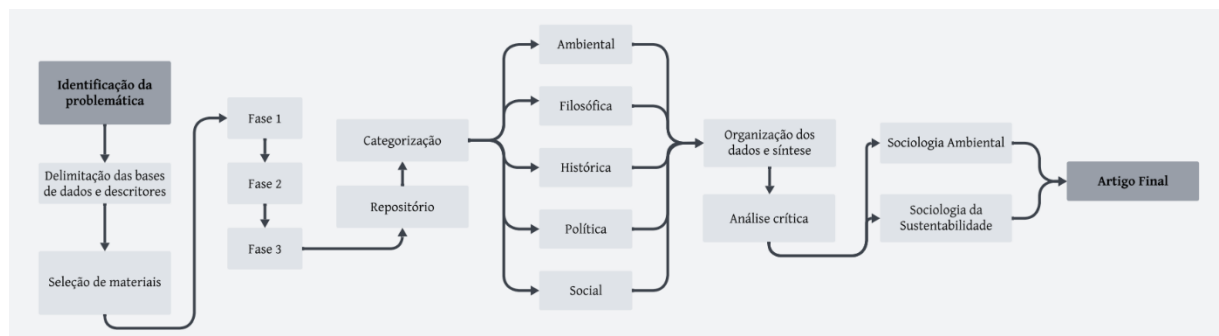
Given the context presented above, the research's timeframe is guided by the environmental movement of the 1970s up to the contemporary production of the field of Environmental Sociology. The bibliographic survey for this article was based on the CAPES Catalog of Theses and Dissertations and the Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, which compile Brazilian academic production of theses and dissertations. In the databases, descriptor and connector pairings were performed to catalog the main results of production in the field. The descriptors initially used were “sociology” with the addition of the connector “and” and the descriptor “environment.” In a second search, the descriptor “environmental sociology” was added.

The works resulting from the search using these parameters, presented below, had their titles and abstracts read beforehand so that, after reading, the data that contributed to the

construction of the State of the Art could be extracted and organized according to the dimensions of analysis—environmental dimension, philosophical dimension, historical dimension, political dimension, and social dimension. The delimitation of these dimensions followed the proposal by Giddens (1997), in which the author discusses the new agenda of Social Science, which includes social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects.

Establishing these dimensions is important because it helps us understand the aspects under which Environmental Sociology is being addressed, as well as contributing to justifying the importance of understanding the interaction between society and the environment. Figure 1 below illustrates the methodological path adopted in the research, encompassing everything from identifying the problem to writing the final article. The flowchart organizes the stages of data collection, selection, categorization, and analysis, highlighting the environmental, philosophical, historical, political, and social dimensions that underpin the discussion on Environmental Sociology and the Sociology of Sustainability.

Figure 1 – Methodological flowchart of the study



Source: Authors' own work.

In practice, although the State of the Art methodology is suitable for systematizing academic production, it has limitations that need to be recognized. The difficulty of accessing some complete documents, as well as the heterogeneity of indexing criteria in different databases, can restrict the scope of the analysis. Furthermore, by prioritizing descriptive mapping, this type of study requires an additional effort of critical interpretation to avoid being limited to a simple quantitative survey (Romanowski; Ens, 2006).

Results and discussion

Using the first descriptor “sociology” and adding the connector “and” to the descriptor “environment,” 57,370 studies were located on the CAPES platform and another 81 studies on the IBICT platform. Considering the high volume of results that were not directly related to the work’s focus, the search was refined by inserting the descriptor “environmental sociology.” From this refinement, 79 studies were located on the CAPES platform and 75 studies on the IBICT platform. The total research results are described in Table 1.

Searching the descriptor pairs “environmental sociology” and the connector “and” together with the descriptor “state of the art,” no work was found, which may indicate an important contribution of this work to the field. We recognize that the study of the interaction between society and the environment is the core of Environmental Sociology, which involves studying the effects of the environment on society. In this work, such a study is carried out through the exercise of the State of the Art, thus contributing to overcoming a gap identified here.

Table 1 – Quantitative results of academic papers by descriptors used.

Items analyzed	Platforms	
Descriptors	CAPES	IBICT
“Sociology” and “environment “	57,370	81
“Environmental sociology”	79	75
“environmental sociology” and “state of the art”	0	0

Source: Authors’ own work.

After reading the titles and abstracts, 79 works found on the CAPES platform and 75 works found on the IBICT platform were cataloged. However, the cataloging process revealed that 34 of the works found were deposited on both platforms. Thus, since these 34 duplicated the total found, it was decided—for the purposes of this study—to exclude them from the IBICT database count, thus maintaining the counts found on the CAPES platform.

Table 2 – Quantitative results of academic papers by descriptors used, with duplicate papers removed from both databases.

Items analyzed Descriptors	Platforms	
	CAPEs	IBICT
“Sociology” and “environment”	57,370	81
“Environmental sociology”	79	75
“Environmental Sociology” (with duplicate works removed)	79	41
“Environmental sociology” and “state of the art”	0	0

Source: Authors’ own work.

In a third phase, for the cataloging of studies, all the titles and abstracts of the works listed in Table 2 were read. This exercise allowed for the identification of those works that are not related to the theme of the present study; the identification of others that address the theme directly; and still others that address it in a reflexive or transversal way, that is, those that have an indirect approach to the theme worked on here.

After this exercise, those works that did not fit the theme were rejected, leaving only those related to the central core of the research. Thus, in this third phase, 78 works originated from the CAPES platform and 33 from the IBICT platform, as shown in Table 3. As a result of this exercise, we established a repository with 111 works separated only by platform origin.

Table 3 – Quantitative results of academic papers after reading (titles and abstracts)

Items analyzed Descriptors	Platforms	
	CAPEs	IBICT
“Sociology” and “environment”	57,370	81
“Environmental sociology”	79	75
“Environmental Sociology” (with duplicate works removed)	79	41
“Environmental Sociology” (post-reading)	78	33
“Environmental sociology” and “state of the art”	0	0

Source: Authors’ own work.

After analyzing the titles and abstracts, the phase of collecting the complete files for the creation of the repository of works revealed that the IBICT platform had a collection of 30 works with available files, meaning that 3 works lacked the complete file. In contrast, the CAPES database of theses and dissertations provides a larger number of complete works, with 62 documents having accessible files, but another 16 works without this digital availability. Given the inaccessibility of the complete works, the analysis of the 111 works resulting from the cataloging was not feasible, and therefore, the State of the Art analysis was conducted on a total of 92 works effectively available for consultation, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – Quantitative result of academic works by access to complete files for the creation of a State of the Art repository.

Items analyzed Descriptors	Platforms	
	CAPES	IBICT
“Sociology” and “environment”	57,370	81
“Environmental sociology”	79	75
“Environmental Sociology” (with duplicate works removed)	79	41
“Environmental Sociology” (post-reading)	78	33
“Environmental Sociology” (with full access to repository)	62	30
“Environmental sociology” and “state of the art”	0	0

Source: Authors’ own work

After the survey and cataloging phases, the resulting works (92) were grouped into dimensions aligned with the themes related to the new Social Sciences Agenda (Giddens, 1997). Table 5 shows the grouping of the works according to the dimensions, and, in addition, graph 1 shows this grouping in percentages, demonstrating the proportion of works in each dimension.

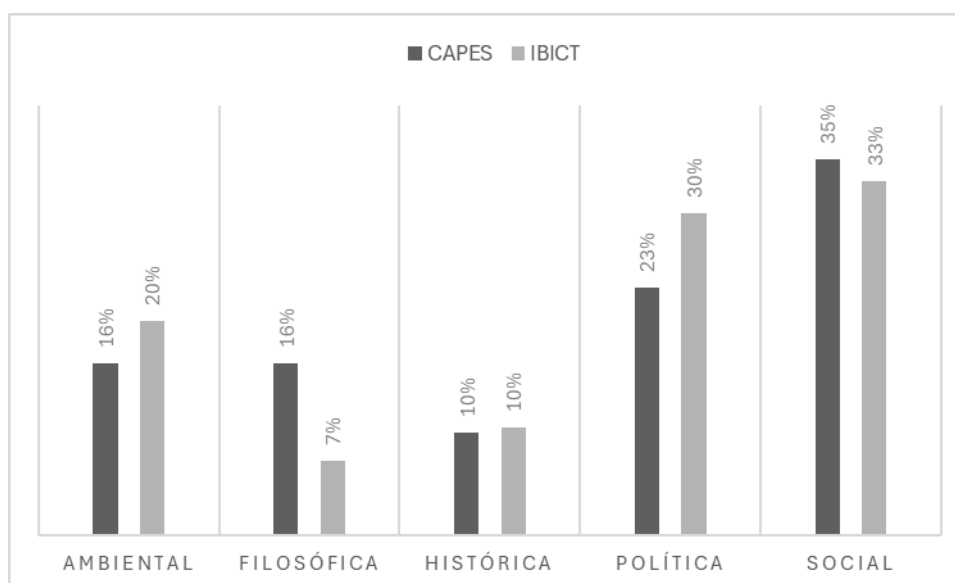
Table 5 – Quantitative results of work with available files, by dimension

Dimensions	Platforms		Total
	CAPES	IBICT	
Environmental	10	6	16
Philosophical	10	2	12
Historical	6	3	9
Political	14	9	23
Social	22	10	32
Total	62	30	92

Source: Authors’ own work.

It is noted that studies on the subject cover a wide range of approaches, given the importance of the interaction between the social and the environmental, as can be seen in the graph shown in Figure 2, which provides a percentage presentation of the linkage of available works by dimension.

Figure 2 – Methodological flowchart of the study with classification of the works found with the available files, by dimension (%)



Source: Authors' own work.

The analysis of the works that comprised the selection was carried out without the use of statistical data analysis programs. The Excel spreadsheet editor was chosen for use, given its suitability for the intended purpose of this study, that is, the systematic organization of the results cataloged in the bibliographic survey. In analyzing the themes of the works related to each of the proposed dimensions, it was identified that these dimensions together form a comprehensive framework for a holistic understanding of the complexities and interconnections that permeate human experience and the world in which we live.

In the environmental dimension, a great diversity of works was observed, invariably touching upon environmental themes, approached from a wide variety of perspectives. Notable studies range from sociological thought on environmental issues and approaches to the relationship between society and nature—including from a Marxist perspective—to reflective approaches with practical applications in diverse areas such as cosmetics, agribusiness, waste management, licensing, protected areas, water reuse, ethanol, as well as analyses of projects and case studies applied in society.

In this context, it is observed that the works contemplate the interconnection between the environment and the social environment, in addition to being based on guidelines for sustainable development, with an emphasis on balancing economic, social, and environmental issues. Furthermore, there are works that emphasize social mobilization for the benefit of the

environment, including the encouragement of social and environmental movements, in favor of balancing environmental, economic, and social systems.

In the philosophical dimension, the works address ethical, epistemological, ideological, and theoretical issues. Generally, they present conceptual, theoretical, and philosophical foundations in order to promote the interconnection between the social and environmental spheres. From a critical point of view, the discussions have long touched upon the integration of the environment into studies in the social field, given the numerous challenges to overcoming anthropocentrism. From diverse perspectives, the works also raise theoretical and ideological questions—in addition to addressing environmental education, regulation, communication, socio-environmental research—as well as issues integrated into the process of institutionalizing environmental sociology from a philosophical standpoint.

From a historical perspective, the works trace the evolution of sociology and the environment, presenting historical events, movements, and transformations within society itself that supported the development of studies in the field; they contextualize and scrutinize the historical, cultural, and political influences that shaped the approach to Environmental Sociology in Brazil.

The political dimension, in turn, encompasses a large number of works, observing a diversity of perspectives and analytical contexts that address the power structure of institutions, as well as theories involving public power, the environment, and society; the themes discussed also involve environmental regulation and its institutional arrangements. Within this dimension, discussions have also been developed that seek to understand Brazilian environmental policy in light of Environmental Sociology, the existing structures and arrangements, in order to contribute to the development of dynamics that balance the political, social, and environmental issues. It is worth highlighting that the works address topics such as political institutions and environmental management, water resource management, policy and charging for natural resources, environmental policy, NGO management, and the National Environmental Fund (FNMA).

Finally, the social dimension accounted for the largest number of studies, including human interactions, identity, and social dynamics and their interrelation within society and the environment. A wide range of themes were studied, with particular emphasis on environmental perception, water resources, sustainable consumption, environmental events—natural or anthropogenic—environmental resilience of society, sustainability, management, and environmental education. The contribution of studies within the social dimension to an

understanding of this dynamic interaction between society and the environment is evident, as they delve into themes previously unaddressed in the sociological field, leading to an overcoming of the anthropocentric view in social studies by the academic community.

Despite the thematic richness observed, it is noted that much of Brazilian production remains descriptive and engages little with international references. The literature of authors such as Beck (1992), Buttel (2000), and Hannigan (1995)—who discuss risk, ecological modernization, and the social construction of environmental problems, respectively—could offer valuable comparative elements. This gap suggests that there is room for greater integration between national production and the international debate, which would contribute to consolidating Environmental Sociology on broader and more diversified bases.

In a general context, the body of work analyzed offers a broad and varied view of the theoretical diversity of the discipline in question. From these works, it was possible to highlight especially the new challenges and demands that arise within the area of knowledge. Among these new challenges, the recent emergence of theoretical formulations that occupy the field of Sociology of Sustainability stands out, because they stem from overcoming the intersection between environmental studies and sociological studies, focusing on the mutual influence between social structures and the environment and the socio-environmental impacts that result in social (in)justices. Furthermore, these studies show an orientation that seeks positive, balanced, equitable, and lasting solutions to contemporary environmental problems and challenges caused by societal action.

Thus, the studies highlight the importance of understanding the diverse perspectives on the environment, as well as the need for collaboration and cooperation among different actors, including governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and local communities. Furthermore, the works emphasize the importance of environmental education, awareness, and social mobilization to promote positive changes towards more sustainable and responsible practices.

From environmental sociology to the sociology of sustainability

Historically, the consolidation of Environmental Sociology has been linked to global institutional and political milestones. Documents such as the Club of Rome Report (1972) and the Stockholm Conference (1972) signaled the emergence of international concerns about the

limits to growth and the ecological crisis, creating a favorable environment for the legitimization of the discipline. These historical episodes—along with the academic discussions that were gaining momentum in the United States and Europe—were fundamental to the expansion of the field in Brazil as well (Fleury *et al.*, 2014).

Within the field of environmental sociology, there are two main moments of transformation: the first (1970s), in which radical ecologists disseminated a reductionist, conservative, and catastrophic perspective if there was no adherence to their ideals; and the second (1980s), in which ecologists began to have a more moderate and holistic view of the relationship between society and the environment (Ferreira, 2006). It is in this second moment that space opens up for a debate on the relationship between environment and society, based on studies within the field of Environmental Sociology.

Environmental Sociology resides in the study of the interaction between the environment and society, as mentioned. Within this relationship, the role of this discipline is to examine the impacts of the environment on society—provision and regulation services—and the impacts of society on the environment—use of natural resources and environmental degradation (Schnaiberg, 1972). The use of the term Environmental Sociology began in 1976, when the American Sociological Association designated an exclusive section that studied the environment and sociology. This aspect was reaffirmed by Catton and Dunlap (1978) when the sociologists published a concept for the term under discussion—the study of the interactions between society and the environment or socio-environmental interactions (McReynolds, 1999). In the 1980s, Beck (2011) established that nature can no longer be conceived without society and vice versa. Although the approach to Environmental Sociology is relatively recent, the study of the relationship between the environment and sociology is old (McReynolds, 1999) and has been guided by various perspectives, from the anthropocentric, through the integrated, and currently based on the holistic. Important names in sociology such as Marx (2004) and Engels (2010) already discussed this theme extensively in the 19th century.

From the 1990s onwards, it is worth mentioning the studies carried out by Anthony Giddens, in which the author highlights his vision of “socialized nature” (Torres, 2010). According to Goldblatt (1996), Giddens seeks an integration and understanding of the origins and impacts of environmental degradation, based on the lifestyle of modern societies, considering the dangers, risks, and rewards of this relationship (Giddens, 1997). With this, the author points out that there is a new agenda in Social Science that is directly related to the transformations of society in relation to the aspects that influence it; these transformations are

traversed by social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions (Giddens, 1997). The author defends the relationship between the environment and society in his book *New Rules of Sociological Method*, pointing out that...

The difference between society and nature lies in the fact that the latter is not a human product, it is not created by human action. As a multi-person entity, society is constantly created and recreated, if not *ex nihilo*, by the participants in each of the social encounters. The production of society is an ingenious, sustained, and “created-to-happen” achievement by human beings (Giddens, 1996, p. 29, our translation).

Bringing this approach to the Brazilian context, Bacchiegga (2013) demonstrates that Environmental Sociology, as an academic field in Brazil, is still in the process of consolidation. Although it was institutionalized late, there is a growing theoretical production, which reinforces the need for greater inclusion of the discipline in postgraduate Sociology curricula. Ferreira (2006) points out that the discipline of Environmental Sociology has drawn a new vision for the relationship between environment and society based on theories proposed by great thinkers in the Social Sciences. Thus, Environmental Sociology has unfolded in various ways in order to integrate this interaction between the social field and the environment. An evolution of this integration can be noted in the works analyzed in the State of the Art exercise—already presented—where there is a movement towards the integration of the economic and social axes with the environmental one. This occurs in contrast to the ideal merely focused on capital, a scenario in which sustainability emerges as one of the directions for the balance between the social, economic, and environmental.

In this capitalist context, Friedrich Engels argues that current capitalist logic generates socio-environmental impacts on the proletariat, directly intervening in their lifestyles (Rodrigues, 2023). Thus, the Sociology of Sustainability stands out, constituted from the interactions established in the relationship between the environment and society. However, Catton and Dunlap (2021) state that Environmental Sociology is clearly in its initial stages of development, and this aspect tends to hinder the process of integrating the concept of Sociology of Sustainability, as discussed by Rodrigues (2023). It should also be noted that Environmental Sociology was constructed from different theoretical perspectives, including the Marxist perspective, which emphasizes the contradictions of capitalism and its effects on nature; the constructivist perspective, which analyzes the social meanings attributed to environmental issues; and the realist perspective, which defends the materiality of ecological crises (Fleury *et*

al., 2014). These theoretical frameworks demonstrate that the field does not have a single trajectory, but is plural and traversed by conceptual and methodological disputes.

Thus, the Sociology of Sustainability encompasses all aspects involving the environment-society relationship, primarily environmental, economic, and social aspects. It assesses socio-environmental impacts, also incorporating aspects of environmental justice and injustice, whether natural or anthropogenic. This discipline differs from the approach of Environmental Sociology, which is limited only to the relationship between humans and the environment (Rodrigues, 2023). Furthermore, regarding the Sociology of Sustainability, it is evident that the concept of sustainability needs to be understood from a broader and more integrative perspective, so that it is not limited and maintains its holistic perspective. In this field, it is necessary to recognize that the various forms of human interaction with the environment reflect power systems—often influenced by income distribution and the existence of different social classes (Redclift, 2000, pp. 7-8).

Therefore, it is essential to recognize that the concept of sustainability cannot be dissociated from its social context; on the contrary, it is shaped by this context (Solyno Sobrinho, 2018). Thus, rather than assuming a linear evolutionary path between Environmental Sociology and the Sociology of Sustainability, it is necessary to critically reflect on whether the latter can be considered a consolidated field. Rodrigues (2023) suggests that there are indications of an emerging theoretical body in the field of the Sociology of Sustainability—but still under dispute—and it is worth questioning what its conceptual bases are and to what extent it differs from Environmental Sociology, whether through the studies evaluated or through the very insufficiency of the restricted analysis between human beings and the environment.

We therefore assume that throughout the implementation process of Environmental Sociology and the Sociology of Sustainability, several challenges are notable. However, the HEP (Human Exemptionalism Paradigm), widely discussed in the studies of Catton and Dunlap (2021), stands out. This paradigm directly addresses the issue of anthropocentrism and tends to hinder the acceptance of the NEP (New Environmental Paradigm), proposed by several sociologists.

The NEP (New Environmental Paradigm) was established based on the assumptions of various writings by environmental sociologists, such as Charles Anderson; William Burch Jr.; Frederick Buttel; William Catton; Denton Morrison; and Allan Schnaiberg, possessing a holistic perspective on the relationship between the environment and society, and placing the

human being as a component of a system that establishes relationships with the abiotic and biotic environment, valuing the Sociology of Sustainability.

Finally, the trajectory of Environmental Sociology up to the emergence of the Sociology of Sustainability reveals a field in constant theoretical and methodological dispute, in which different paradigms and perspectives on the society-nature relationship are articulated. Despite conceptual advances and the expansion of its analytical boundaries, the challenge of overcoming fragmented and anthropocentric views persists, especially in the face of the hegemony of capitalist logic that shapes production and consumption patterns. In this sense, the Sociology of Sustainability presents itself as a promising proposal, but still in the process of consolidation, lacking greater theoretical and empirical systematization.

Reflections on Environmental Sociology and the Sociology of Sustainability

As mentioned, the NEP inaugurated a holistic perspective on the relationship between the environment and society, integrating human beings and the environment in an organic and structural way to move beyond a focus exclusively on environmental impacts. Thus, although belatedly, this perspective has been established as this interrelationship between society and the environment has gained significant influence on sustainable development. Transformations over time have led to a weakening of the ideals of the Industrial Revolution, whose focus on capital and overproduction disregarded the resulting environmental impacts. From then on, with the shift in the view of the inexhaustibility of natural resources, environmental movements emerged – driving changes in perception and paradigm regarding the environmental field.

These movements led to an evolution of thought in the social field, associating the environment and the social field as interdependent. Demands involving society and the environment began to be analyzed in an integrated and organic way, with this relationship considered symbiotic. In academia, this integration consolidated the field of Environmental Sociology, approached from various dimensions—environmental, philosophical, historical, political, and social—as demonstrated in this study. The exploration of these dimensions enabled the development of new disciplines within the field of knowledge, giving rise to various strands and disciplines in the social field, aligned with the environment for sustainable development.

Therefore, the substantial transition in the relationship between the environment and society is evident—a relationship that was disciplined by Environmental Sociology and subsequently expanded into the Sociology of Sustainability—expanding the economic and social axis and contributing to integrating the interrelationship between the environment and society. These disciplines play a crucial role in understanding the interaction between society—in all its aspects—the environment, and scientific knowledge. It considers important interactions within the environment-society axis, such as themes like politics and science, and seeks to understand the controversies, divergences, and injustices that exist within this relationship (Kanashiro, 2009).

It is important to add that there are theoretical and nominalist disputes surrounding the very name of the current geological period—whether Anthropocene, Capitalocene, or other “*cenés*.” As recent literature argues (Veiga, 2024), such debates reflect not only scientific divergences but also political and epistemological disputes about the structural causes of the socio-environmental crisis. In this scenario, Capital plays a central role in organizing the logic of production and, from this same perspective, analytical tools—such as environmental justice and environmental racism—are fundamental to understanding these impacts and their environmental and social consequences (Rodrigues, 2023).

Thus, the Sociology of Sustainability has brought to the academic sphere an important discussion about the relationship between the social field, humanity, and the environment. In the social field, it has become evident that it is not enough to discuss the relationship between humanity and the environment; an improvement and balance of this relationship is necessary. In other words, studies have advanced to include the economic and social axes of this relationship between humanity and nature within the social field, which transcend to the sustainability of this relationship.

The evolution of the environmental and social perspective has allowed for a more integrated and holistic understanding of the relationship between human beings and the environment, as mentioned. The NEP, by moving beyond an exclusive focus on environmental impacts, establishes an organic and structural view of this interrelationship, recognizing the importance of sustainable development. This paradigm has provided a new understanding of natural resources and has driven environmental movements that have transformed perception and the environmental paradigm, leading to a broader reflection on the interaction between society and the environment, which has transcended in a balanced way towards the sustainability of this relationship between humankind and the environment.

In general, the reflections presented in this section show that, although Environmental Sociology and the Sociology of Sustainability have advanced in constructing a more integrated view between society and nature, theoretical and epistemological tensions persist, limiting their consolidation as autonomous fields. The debate surrounding the Anthropocene and its conceptual alternatives, for example, demonstrates that understanding the socio-environmental crisis is not only scientific but also political and ideological, requiring the incorporation of critical tools such as environmental justice and environmental racism. In this sense, the Sociology of Sustainability represents a necessary evolution by broadening the economic and social axes of environmental analysis, but its strengthening depends on the ability to articulate plural and critical perspectives that address both structural inequalities and global ecological challenges.

Final considerations

The study on Environmental Sociology revealed a dynamic panorama. However, at a questionable pace—given the delay in transforming an anthropocentric view tied to the sociological field—into an integration between the environmental and social fields, which developed across diverse dimensions. Recent transformations, influenced by environmental issues that emerged from the movement that began in the 1970s, have driven the consolidation and progress of this area of research.

The institutionalization of Environmental Sociology as a discipline within the sociological field—given the unavoidable integration of studies between the social and environmental spheres—prevents any possibility of analysis in isolation. This results in an increase in academic production accompanied by critical evaluations aimed at identifying gaps and relevant aspects in the field, providing a necessary diagnosis to guide future research and improve teaching in this constantly evolving area.

Thus, based on the analysis carried out in this study, it was possible to observe a range of approaches encompassing everything from ethical and philosophical issues to political and social analyses within the context of the Social Sciences and the environment. These studies, grouped into different dimensions, provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interactions between society and the environment, promoting an integrated and

holistic vision that is essential for overcoming contemporary challenges and advancing sustainable development.

The pioneering approach of a Sociology of Sustainability was perceived not only in the state of the art, but also reinforced in the emerging literature on the subject, given the inclusion of the economic and social axis alongside the environmental axis in the sociological field. These critical analyses represent an important contribution to the development of Environmental Sociology, providing *insights* for researchers and educators.

In summary, the main contribution of this study lies in mapping gaps and trends in Environmental Sociology and the Sociology of Sustainability, highlighting that the latter should be understood more as an emerging field in dispute than as a fully consolidated discipline. Future research can advance the dialogue with international references, compare different theoretical traditions, and analyze the role of public policies and social movements in shaping these fields. This path will allow not only conceptual refinement but also greater practical applicability of sociological contributions to contemporary socio-environmental issues.

REFERENCES

- BACCHIEGGA, F. Desvendando as abordagens da Sociologia Ambiental: revisão de artigos selecionados. **Sustentabilidade em Debate**, v. 4, n. 2, p. 118-137, 2013. DOI: 10.18472/SustDeb.v4n2.2013.8090. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/231198867.pdf>. Accessed on: 7 Nov. 2024.
- BECK, U. **Sociedade de risco**: rumo a uma outra modernidade. 2. ed. São Paulo: 34, 2011.
- CATTON, W.; DUNLAP, R. Environmental sociology: a new paradigm. **The American Sociologist**, v. 13, n.1, p. 41-49, 1978. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27702311>. Accessed on: 7 Nov. 2024.
- CATTON, W.; DUNLAP, R. Sociologia ambiental: um novo paradigma. **Revista Sociedade e Estado**, v. 36, n. 2, p. 773-787, 2021. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/53234914/Catton_e_Dunlap_Sociologia_ambiental_Um_novo_paradigma. Accessed on: 7 Nov. 2024.
- ENGELS, F. **A situação da classe trabalhadora na Inglaterra**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2010.
- FERREIRA, L. C. Ideias para uma Sociologia da Questão Ambiental no Brasil. **Desenvolvimento e Meio Ambiente**, n. 10, p. 77-89, 2006. Available at: <https://revistas.ufpr.br/made/article/download/3096/2477>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.
- FLEURY, L. *et al.* O ambiente como questão sociológica: conflitos ambientais em perspectiva. **Sociologias**, v. 16, n. 35, p. 14-50, 2014.
- FORTUNATO, I.; PORTO, M. R. S. O método natural e o pensamento complexo: uma relação possível para a educação escolar. **Educação e Pesquisa**, v. 46, 2020. DOI: 10.1590/S1678-4634202046219428. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ep/a/nJgzSrC5hYJ7sLstjz8kHWh/#>. Accessed on 7 nov. 2024.
- GIDDENS, A. **Novas regras do método sociológico**. Lisboa: Gradiva, 1996. 181 p.
- GIDDENS, A. A vida em uma sociedade pós-tradicional. In: BECK, U. **Em defesa da sociologia**: ensaios, interpretações e trélicas. São Paulo: UNESP, 2001.
- GIDDENS, A.; LASH, S. **Modernização reflexiva**. São Paulo: UNESP, 1997.
- GOLDBLATT, D. **Teoria social e ambiente**. Lisboa: Instituto Piaget, 1996.
- KANASHIRO, V. Por uma sociologia do conhecimento científico da questão ambiental: a produção acadêmica brasileira sobre desenvolvimento sustentável e sustentabilidade: resultados preliminares. **Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociologia da USP**, v. 16, n. 1, p. 175-188, 2009.
- MARX, K. **Manuscritos econômico-filosóficos**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2004.
- MCREYNOLDS, S. A. Guia para o iniciante em sociologia do meio ambiente: definição, lista de jornais e bibliografia. **Ambiente & Sociedade**, v. 2, n. 5, p. 181-189, 1999. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-753X1999000200012>. Available at:

<https://www.scielo.br/j/asoc/a/BSwqwPSQwDPkcXRtXvp4dxP/?lang=pt>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

REDCLIFT, M. **Sustainability**: life chances and livelihoods. London: Routledge, 2000.

RODRIGUES, T. Bases conceituais para uma sociologia da sustentabilidade: capitaloceno, justiça ambiental e racismo ambiental. **O Social em Questão**, v. 26, n. 55, 2023. DOI: 10.17771/PUCRio.OSQ.61443. Available at: <https://www.maxwell.vrac.puc-rio.br/61443/61443.PDF>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

ROMANOWSKI, J. P.; ENS, R. T. As pesquisas denominadas do tipo “estado da arte” em educação. **Revista Diálogo Educacional**, v. 6, n. 19, p. 37–50, 2006. Available at: <https://periodicos.pucpr.br/dialogoeducacional/article/view/24176>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

SCHNAIBERG, A. **Environmental sociology and the division of labor**. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1972.

SILVA, T. M. A angústia diante do tornar-se: símiles no pensamento de Søren Kierkegaard. **Revista Ágora Filosófica**, v. 21, p. 38-60, 2021. Available at: <https://www1.unicap.br/ojs/index.php/agora/article/download/1981/1861/7908#:~:text=Kierkegaard%20prop%C3%B5e%20que%20se%20vivencie,%2C%20n%C3%A3o%20poderia%20angustiar%2Dse>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

SOLYNO SOBRINHO, S. A. Elementos para a construção de uma sociologia ambiental. **Paper do NAEA**, v. 1, n. 1, 2018. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18542/papersnaea.v1i1.11115>. Available at: <https://periodicos.ufpa.br/index.php/pnaea/article/view/11115>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

TORRES, M. B. R. A natureza socializada em Anthony Giddens. **Revista Eletrônica do Mestrado em Educação**, v. 24, 2010. Available at: [https://periodicos.furg.br/remea/article/download/3899/2326/10839#:~:text=Para%20Giddens%20\(1996a%2C%20p.,cada%20um%20dos%20encontros%20sociais](https://periodicos.furg.br/remea/article/download/3899/2326/10839#:~:text=Para%20Giddens%20(1996a%2C%20p.,cada%20um%20dos%20encontros%20sociais). Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

VEIGA, J. E. O âmago da sustentabilidade. **Rev. Bras. Ci. Soc.**, São Paulo, 2024. DOI: 10.1590/S0103-40142014000300002. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ea/a/KnKGvfh3nF8sTcWx9mSQBvk/?format=html&lang=pt>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

VOSGERAU, D. S. A. R.; ROMANOWSKI, J. P. Estudos de revisão: implicações conceituais e metodológicas. **Revista Diálogo Educacional**, v. 14, p. 165-189, 2014. DOI: 10.7213/dialogo.educ.14.041.DS08. Available at: <https://periodicos.pucpr.br/dialogoeducacional/article/view/2317>. Accessed on: 7 nov. 2024.

CRedit Author Statement

- ☐ **Acknowledgements:** No.
 - ☐ **Funding:** This research did not receive any financial support.
 - ☐ **Conflicts of interest:** There is no conflict of interest.
 - ☐ **Ethical approval:** The work respected ethics during the research.
 - ☐ **Data and material availability:** The data and materials used in the work are not publicly available for access.
 - ☐ **Authors' contributions:** Each author contributed equally to the construction of the article.
-

Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação
Proofreading, formatting, normalization and translation

