



(Research on Lifestyles, Values and Environment)
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH

FORTHCOMING SEMINAR

Wednesday
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45b AZ 04
University of Surrey

Nora Räthzel

Department of Sociology, University of Umeå, Sweden

Resolving the enigma of sustainable development

Some reflections on the concept of sustainability and possible alternatives.

In this presentation I will argue that the separation between the economy, the social, and the environment in the Brundtland definition of sustainable development obscures the social character of the economy, the economic causes of social inequality, and the social production of the environment. Furthermore, it legitimises one-sided policies which seek to address the problem of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation. For instance, one set of policies sees the solution in changing consumer behaviour; while another thinks that technological fixes are the only way out.

As an alternative to these shortcomings, I will suggest an approach that takes different dimensions of the social as a starting point to understand issues of environmental degradation: the relations of production, consumption, and political relations.

Finally, I will discuss how such an approach is put into practice in two research projects I am involved in: one looks at the relationship between space, place and sustainability, the other investigates Trade Union policies towards sustainability within the context of the North-South divide.

Enquiries to Gemma Cook, RESOLVE Co-ordinator, 01483 686689