

1.1 Perspectives

1.1.1 A perspective is how a situation is viewed and understood by an individual.

- Based on a mix of personal and collective assumptions, values and beliefs.
- Perspectives influence how people understand and react to environmental and social issues.

Example: Someone valuing biodiversity may advocate conservation, while someone focused on economic growth might prioritize development, even if it impacts the environment.

1.1.2 Perspectives are informed and justified by sociocultural norms, scientific understandings, laws, religion, economic conditions, local and global events, and lived experience.

- **Sociocultural Norms:** Traditions, customs, and societal norms influence our thinking and behavior, molding our perspective from an early age.
- **Science:** Scientific discoveries and theories provide us with frameworks for understanding the physical world and our place in it. These insights influence how we perceive and react to challenges.
- **Laws and Regulations:** Legal frameworks can significantly influence our perspectives regarding compliance and civic responsibilities (e.g. towards environmental conservation).
- **Religion:** Spiritual beliefs often guide ethical and moral judgments, impacting how we perceive environmental stewardship.
- **Economy:** Our broader economic climate and personal financial situation can strongly influence views, particularly on issues like resource utilization and sustainability.
- **Local and Global Events:** Events such as natural disasters or international agreements on climate change can reshape our perspectives by highlighting specific issues or solutions.
- **Lived Experience:** Personal experiences, whether through direct interaction with nature or environmental impacts on our lifestyle, can profoundly shape our perspectives.

Perspective vs Argument

- A **perspective** is a viewpoint or a way of seeing the world, influenced by external factors.
- An **argument** is a series of logical statements constructed to support or defend a perspective.

In a sense, all of the points discussed above are sources of arguments that defend perspectives...

Case study: Dakota Access Pipeline conflict ([video](#))

A pipeline in the USA, intended to transfer crude oil from Dakota to Illinois. It had to cross under the Missouri River, north of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation. Local tribes and environmental groups opposed the pipeline, fearing that it could contaminate their water supply and disturb sacred lands.

Stakeholders:

- **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe:** Opposed the pipeline due to potential threats to water safety, sacred sites, and treaty rights.
- **Energy Transfer Partners:** The company behind DAPL argued the pipeline is a safer, more environmentally friendly way of transporting oil than trucks or trains.
- **Environmental NGOs:** Supported the tribe's concerns, highlighting risks to water sources and advocating for renewable energy alternatives.
- **Federal and State Governments:** Varied positions; some officials supported the economic benefits of the pipeline, while others expressed concerns about environmental justice and indigenous rights.

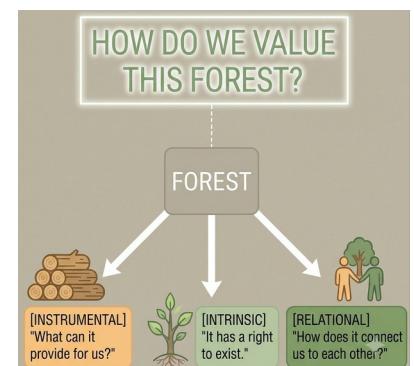
Events:

- **Protests:** The project drew massive media attention and public protests, both in situ and online, highlighting the clash between industrial development and environmental and indigenous rights.
- **Legal Battles:** Numerous lawsuits were filed concerning the legality of the pipeline's route and the adequacy of the environmental reviews.

1.1.3 Values are qualities or principles that people feel have worth and importance in life

Values are deeply held principles that shape perspectives, influence behavior and guide decisions in life, impacting how people and communities approach environmental issues. Different values often lead to tensions between individuals and between organizations.

- **Instrumental values:** things that are a means to a desired end and often include nature's contributions to people.
- **Intrinsic values:** beliefs that habitats or species are worth protecting as ends in and of themselves.



- **Relational values:** refer to the meaningfulness of people-nature interactions, and among people.

Example: Oil Exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR; [video](#))

1.1.4 The values that underpin our perspectives can be seen in our communication and actions with the wider community.

Values held by organizations can be seen in advertisements, media, policies and actions

- **Advertisements:** For example, a company valuing innovation may advertise its latest technology to highlight its commitment to advancing modern solutions.
- **Media Content:** Shared through social media, press releases, or public engagements and reflects core values. A nonprofit focused on education might regularly feature stories on educational equity.
- **Policies and Actions:** For example, diversity hiring practices or sustainable resource use. These not only guide internal operations but also send a message to the world about what they stand for.

Case Study: Patagonia's "Don't Buy This Jacket" Campaign ([video](#))

Patagonia, a company known for its outdoor clothing and gear, has long emphasized environmental sustainability as a core value. The campaign, launched in 2011 in The New York Times on Black Friday, challenges the norms of consumer culture. This bold statement was accompanied by an explanation that emphasized the environmental cost of production. The ad detailed water and energy used to produce the featured jacket and encouraged consumers to consider the environmental impact of their purchases.



Stakeholders:

- **Patagonia:** Uses the campaign to enhance its reputation as an environmental leader.
- **Consumers:** Target audience, environmentally conscious consumers and outdoor enthusiasts.
- **Competitors:** Other companies that monitor Patagonia's marketing strategies.
- **Environmental Organizations:** May collaborate with Patagonia due to shared values and goals.

Impact of the Campaign:

- **Brand Identity:** Reinforced Patagonia's position as an environmentally responsible brand. By promoting reduced consumption, it differentiates itself from competitors in the industry.
- **Consumer Perception:** Shifted consumer perception and fostered brand loyalty among consumers who prioritize sustainability.
- **Market Influence:** Influenced the broader apparel industry by setting an example of corporate responsibility. It showcased how companies can use their influence to promote environmental awareness and drive change within the industry.

1.1.5 Values surveys can be used to investigate the perspectives shown by a particular social group towards environmental issues.

Values **surveys** gauge public perspectives on environmental issues.

Key Survey Design Considerations:

- **Inclusive Questions:** Closed and open-ended questions to capture diverse views without bias.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Tailor questions to be relevant and respectful of the targeted group's culture.
- **Clear Objectives:** Focus on specific issues to enhance clarity and result interpretation.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure surveys are accessible by considering language, literacy, and platform.

Impact of Values Surveys: This information helps guide policy and community outreach.

- **Informing Policy:** Provides data that aligns policy decisions with community values.
- **Guiding Advocacy:** Helps environmental groups focus on the public's main concerns.

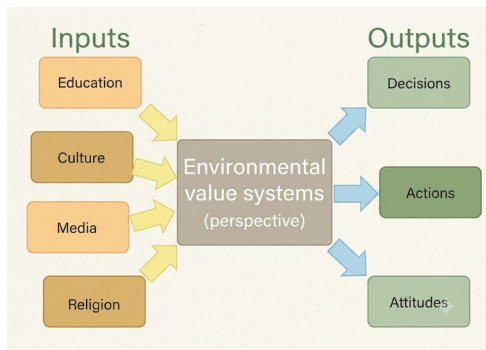
1.1.6 Worldviews are the lenses shared by groups of people through which they perceive, make sense of and act within their environment.

External Influence and lived experience → Worldview → **Perspective** (Situational) → Action and Behavior

A worldview guides how individuals interpret and interact with their environment. They shape people's values and perspectives. Today, more worldviews are available for us to interact with, due to the rise of the internet and social media. Interacting with them also makes our own worldview more complex, because access to global perspectives enables a broader understanding of cultural and environmental issues.

Classifying worldviews and perspectives is challenging, due to high **variability**. Each worldview is unique, shaped by personal experiences and beliefs, it will not necessarily fit neatly into categories. Also perspectives evolve over time and are **dynamic**, especially with new information from digital media.

1.1.7 An environmental value system is a model that shows the inputs affecting our perspectives and the outputs resulting from our perspectives.



An **Environmental Value System (EVS)** is a framework that helps explain how individual and collective environmental **perspectives** are formed and how they influence behavior. It maps the inputs (influences) that shape our perspectives on the environment, and the outputs (actions) that result from these perspectives.

1.1.o Environmental perspectives (or worldviews) can be classified into the categories of technocentric, anthropocentric and ecocentric.

Ecocentric Worldview	Anthropocentric Worldview	Technocentric Worldview
Ecocentrism regards nature as the most important component of existence, emphasizing the intrinsic value of all living and non-living elements. Ecocentrists advocate for the protection of the environment regardless of direct benefit to humans, often advocating for significant changes in lifestyle and policies. <i>Deep ecologists</i> are the most extreme type of this category. An example of an <i>ecocentrist</i> is Greta Thunberg. A lot of aboriginal and indigenous communities share that view: Aboriginal Australians (video)	Anthropocentrism places humans at the center of existence, viewing all environmental elements in terms of their value to humanity. This perspective varies widely but generally involves managing the environment for human benefit. It can range from conservation efforts aimed at preserving resources for future human use to exploiting natural resources for immediate human gain. Bill Gates is a popular example of an <i>anthropocentrist</i> (although a technocentrist too).	Technocentrists believe that any ecological challenges can be addressed through scientific and technological innovation. They see technology as a means to sustain human life and economic growth without necessarily reducing consumption or waste. <i>Cornucopians</i> are a more extreme version of this, they fully trust new technology and the future to save the planet while ignoring other factors. An example of a <i>technocentrist</i> is Elon Musk.

Spectrum of Environmental Values Systems (EVS):



1.1.9 Perspectives and the beliefs that underpin them change over time in all societies.

Over time, perspectives can be influenced and changed. Some influences include technological development, significant events, social and demographic change, trends, campaigns, decisions by government or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Examples: The [Earth Hour Campaign](#) by **WWF** is an annual global event organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) where millions of people turn off their lights for one hour to raise awareness about climate change and energy consumption. This highlights to individuals, communities, and businesses the potential for energy conservation and climate action. The ["Save the Whales" Campaign](#) spearheaded by **Greenpeace** is another iconic environmental movement (1970s) contributing to halting commercial whaling.

Social and Demographic Changes: As societies evolve, so do their values and beliefs. Changes in demographics, such as age distribution and urbanization, can lead to shifts in environmental perspectives. For example, younger generations might prioritize sustainability more than previous ones, influencing policies on waste management and resource conservation.

1.1.10 The development of the environmental movement has been influenced by individuals, literature, the media, major environmental disasters, international agreements, new technologies and scientific discoveries.

The Environmental Movement originated in the 1960s although people have been concerned before. Factors that have influence over our behavioural norms include: influential individuals, governments, businesses, pressure groups (e.g. [Extinction Rebellion](#)), intergovernmental organizations (e.g. [UN](#)).

Environmental Movement - Major Examples of Influence

Influence Category	Examples	Your own examples!
Individuals	Greta Thunberg , Jane Goodall , David Attenborough	
Literature	Rachel Carson's ' Silent Spring ' (1962), Al Gore's ' An Inconvenient Truth ' (2006)	
Media	David Attenborough 's Documentaries (Breaking Boundaries ,	

	2021); Cowspiracy (2014); Seaspiracy (2021)	
Environmental Disaster	Chernobyl (Ukraine, 1986), Bhopal (India, 1984), Great Smog (London, 1952), Hurricane Katrina (US, 2005), Australian Bush Fires (2019)	
International agreements	Paris Agreement (2015), High Seas Treaty (2026), COP15 CBD (2022)	
Technological developments	Tesla , Plant Based Meats (2021), Solar Panels , Wind Turbines	
Scientific discoveries	Biopesticides , PETase (2016), Algae and Seaweed additives in cattle feed , Integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (1970's)	

Examples of Worldviews

The societies below demonstrate significant differences

- First Nation Americans and European pioneers (exploitation of seemingly unlimited resources).
- Buddhist and Judaeo-Christian societies.
- Communist and capitalist societies.

Native Americans on *Communal property* (no one owns property)

See the environment as communal and prior to the arrival of the Europeans in the late 16th century, had a subsistence economy based on barter. Use low-impact technologies and live in harmony with the environment. Practised an animistic religion where all things have souls (animals, plants, rocks, mountains, rivers, stars). A clear *Ecocentrism* classification.

Buddhism believes that suffering arises from attachment to desires, and ceases when attachment stops. Emphasises human interrelationships with all parts of nature and considers it unrealistic to see ourselves as isolated from it. Believe in reincarnation (human spirit can be reborn as human or animal) and vegetarianism. Compassion is the basis for their balanced worldview. Buddhists tend to be more *Ecocentric*.

Judaeo-Christianity believes that genesis suggests that God gave the planet to humans as a gift and man is in charge of nature. This philosophy veers towards *Anthropocentric* (i.e. responsibility to stewardship) or *Cornucopian* (i.e. we can do as we want to the planet because God gave it to us).

Capitalism is heavily based in private business, which is often blamed for environmental degradation. It accepts maximizing profit at the expense of the environment, but ensures sound use of resources. It also allows free speech and environmental awareness, though finding it difficult to reduce environmental abuse. This leans towards an *Anthropocentric* or *Technocentric* EVS.

Communists meant to distribute the wealth evenly, but they may have used resources without care. They believe themselves to be victims of the "Tragedy of Commons". Not much space is left for free speech, and they also find it difficult to reduce environmental abuse. They were criticised for poor environmental record, as the economic principles of communism inevitably lead to environmental degradation when free natural resources are seen as existing to serve the state. Typically results in an *Anthropocentric* approach.