The following pages are just a collection of ideas gathered here and there, found by chance or by reference. It is not intended to be exhaustive or coherent, but hopefully it will provide some food for thought.

THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WAR, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: beyond the negative impact on nature.

A common view about the correlation between war and environment points out at the consequences that terrorism or illicit cultures have on the ecosystems, woods and water resources. But the causal relation between these elements is far from being linear. As a mater of fact, environmental factors (and in particular the control of natural resources and territories) are at the root of violence since ancient times. On the other side, the social conflict is also deeply entangled with the environmental problems, and thus they should be consider when facing ecological issues.

Cardenas M, Rodríguez M. Guerra, Sociedad y Medio Ambiente. Foro Nacional Ambiental. pg 13-47. 2005. This document was produced during the National Environmental Forum in Colombia.

POVERTY, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT: what does really poverty mean?

[...] Perceptive Africans feel that Western-inspired definitions (of poverty) are patronising and insinuate that what Africa is going through is incomparable to any others in the history of the human race. It is, therefore, vital to understand how poverty has been created and what it really is in Africa. Laking an African definition of poverty so far, our answer probably lies in the wise words of the renowned Indian author and environmentalist, Dr Vandana Shiva, who says: "It is useful to separate a cultural conception of simple, sustainable living as poverty from thematerial experience of poverty which result of dispossession and deprivation."
[...] what makes poverty is that people are no longer able to live "off the land", instead they are forced into becoming consumers.
[...] Multilateral institutions devoted to "development" overwhelmingly adhere to growth-oriented strategies of capital accumulation, privatisation and investment. These institutions, including the World Bank and IMF, consistently ignore evidence that growth does not necessarily alleviate poverty and may, in fact, exacerbate it.

New African. 477:12-16. January 2006. New African is a monthly magazine published by IC since 1966. (Paper copies of the complete article are available)

SUSTAINABILITY AND ECONOMICS: revising the methods of modern economics.

Abstract.
This paper briefly reviews key insights from natural resource and environmental economics, ecological economics and industrial ecology in an effort to identify the major contributions of these fields to the understanding and promotion of sustainable development. Each is based on overlapping worldviews, methods and tools. Their synthesis and extension - subsumed under the rubric of "Natural Economics" - is suggested as a new thrust in environmental research, offering valuable guides to policy making.
[...] A society faced with allocating scarce resources to meet its needs may eventually decide to allocate fewer resources to the discipline that claimed to study the best use of scarce resources but failed to deliver its promised valuable insights.

Some definitions:

- Environmental economics and industrial ecology developed partly to address the need for biophysical reality in the analysis of human-environment interactions. Ecological economics is based on the tenet that all economic activity must be regarded as a subset of the ecosystem in which the economy is embedded and on which it depends. [...] Industrial ecology has been guided by the quest for production and consumption processes that minimize waste generation and, thus, environmental impact.

- Four major themes for a natural economics:

    1. Building on concepts from nature.
    2. The role of efficiency and effectiveness in decision making.
    3. The need for adaptive and anticipatory management.
    4. The need for holistic impact assessments.

- Efficiency and effectiveness are important guides for decision-making. Efficiency requires the highest productivityper unit of a resource; and effectiveness requires the highest utility from what is used.

Ruth M. A quest for the economics of sustainability and the sustainability of economics. Ecological Economics 56:332-342, 2006.

ENTROPY, GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY: are the physical laws relevant to economic analysis?

Conclusions.
In this paper we have formally analyzed the consequences of physical conservation laws and the second law of thermodynamics for production and consumption. We

have shown that in a static setting, these physical laws imply that economic activity is likely to depend critically on natural resources and on the ability of the environment to absorb generated emissions. Without either of these, no production or consumption is possible, except for goods that are produced and consumed by completely reversible processes. In a dynamic setting, the physical constraints imply that, even with the possibility to accumulate human or physical capital, more production of a good with non-vanishing marginal entropy production always necessitates more resources use. [...] As already discussed in the Introduction, many of the above results are "common sense" in ecological economics. The contribution of our analysis is that it provides a formal proof of these results that is based on fairly general model.

Entropy, limits to growth, and the prospecs for weak sustainability. Ecological Economics, 58:182-191, 2006. Ecological Economics is published by Elsevier.