



THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE: TOWARDS A NEW ONTOLOGY OF HUMANNATURE RELATIONS

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Abstract

This study focuses on the philosophy of social science in the context of climate change with the aim of exploring the ontological transformation of human-nature relations at the local level. How do communities reconstruct their views of nature from an anthropocentric paradigm towards a more relational ecological consciousness that has implications for everyday social practices? The method used is qualitative with a phenomenological approach, through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation in Sumberjo Village, Ambulu District, Jember Regency, East Java. Data analysis was conducted thematically using the Miles and Huberman model to interpret community experiences related to climate change. The results of the study show a shift in the community's perspective, which no longer views nature solely as an object of exploitation, but as a partner in sustainable living. This is reflected in adaptive agricultural practices, spiritual interpretations of disasters, and social criticism of the unfair distribution of climate impacts. The implications of this research emphasize the need for social science philosophy to develop a new ontological framework that integrates local experiences, traditional knowledge, and modern epistemology to strengthen ecological justice and sustainable climate adaptation policies.

Keywords: *Philosophy of Social Science, Climate Change, Human Nature Relationship*

INTRODUCTION

Climate change currently has a major impact on the environment, society, politics, and epistemology. In recent times, social science philosophy has been asked to examine the interactions between individuals and social structures. This includes the relationship between humans and nature as an important component of social life and the interaction between humans and social structures themselves. The philosophy of social science now not only discusses institutions, norms, and power structures, but also considers the role of nature as an important factor that influences social dynamics. The traditional convention between social science, philosophy, and environmental science has been shifted by important discussions on concepts such as socio-ecological systems, environmental justice, and the ontology of various species (Najma Hilyah Azla et al., 2024).

The relationship between humans and nature can no longer be viewed exclusively as human domination over the environment, as human actions pose a direct threat to the social, economic, and cultural sustainability of

communities (Shah et al., 2024). state that relational socionatures reveal maladaptation formed through a combination of matter and discourse that shape each other. The relational approach allows for an understanding that nature is not a passive object, but rather helps shape human experiences and adaptive responses. Furthermore, according to(Tue & Tsasil Lasulika, 2024) , although humans have the ability to change nature, uncontrolled exploitation often triggers environmental damage, such as pollution, deforestation, and climate change. Conversely, the environment influences aspects of human life, including settlement patterns, livelihoods, and culture. Furthermore, there is a need to shift the anthropocentric paradigm and introduce a more pluralistic, inclusive, and equitable ontology. As stated by (Turnhout, 2024), environmental science practices and priorities often serve established interests and weaken marginalized voices, including indigenous peoples and local communities, resulting in solutions that are less responsive to local contexts and dimensions of justice.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how social science philosophy can help build a new ontology of human-nature relations. This approach is not only academically relevant but also useful in promoting ecological awareness, sustainable policies, and social justice in an era of increasingly complex climate change (Hidayah et al., 2024). This is used to create a new ontology of human-nature relations from the perspective of social science philosophy in the era of climate change. Specifically, this study will answer questions about how communities interpret human-nature relations in the face of the climate crisis and how ecological awareness influences change. It will also examine the strengthening of communities' socio-ecological awareness in facing the global challenges of climate change (Somantri, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach. The focus of the research is to explore the meaning of people's experiences and perceptions of the human-nature relationship in the context of climate change(Saparini et al., 2024). Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation to obtain a comprehensive understanding of ecological awareness and developing social practices. The research location was in Sumberjo Village, Ambulu District, Jember Regency. This area is an agricultural area that is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as drought and changes in cropping patterns. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, so that patterns of meaning and socio-ecological relations could be interpreted in depth.

During the data collection process, in-depth interviews were conducted with farmers, community leaders, and village officials who had direct experience dealing with climate change. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was recorded with the informants' consent. Field observations were conducted over a period of two months, focusing on the daily practices of the community in managing land, preserving ecosystems, and adapting their lifestyles to changing climatic conditions. In addition, documentation in the form of village records, agricultural reports, and data from the Jember Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) was used to enrich the validity of the research data (Guntur et al., 2024).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves choosing research subjects who are considered to have a deep understanding of the issues being studied. The main informants consisted of ten farmers who were active in local farmer groups, two traditional leaders who understood local traditions regarding the relationship between humans and nature, and three village officials involved in environmental policy making. The diversity of the informants' backgrounds provided a comprehensive picture of how climate change is perceived and responded to by communities at the local level (Al-Jallad, 2024).

The data analysis technique in this study followed the stages of the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and simplifying the interview results to find the main themes related to human-nature relations (Putra Daulay & Titin Sumanti, 2024). Data presentation was carried out through descriptive narratives and tables of findings, while conclusions were drawn inductively by linking field findings with social science philosophy theory. Data validity was strengthened by triangulation of sources and methods, so that the research results could be academically accountable.

Overall, this research method was designed to ensure that each finding had a strong empirical basis and could be linked to the contemporary social science philosophy framework. Using a phenomenological approach, this study was able to reveal the subjective experiences of communities that had been neglected in scientific discourse (Saputro, Damayanti, and Pratitis 2024). Meanwhile, diverse data collection techniques and systematic analysis enable a deep interpretation of the new anthology of human-nature relations in the era of climate change. Thus, this methodology is not only relevant to answering the research questions but can also serve as a reference for similar studies in other regions facing similar ecological challenges (Ezquerro et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human-Nature Relation in the Prespective of Social Science Philosophy

The relationship between humans and nature is central to the philosophy of social science, which continues to evolve amid the global ecological crisis and climate change (Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, 2023). However, as awareness of environmental damage increases, sharp criticism has emerged against this paradigm because it is considered to have created ecological alienation and inequality between humans and their environment. One informant said, "Now the seasons are unpredictable, sometimes the rains come early and sometimes late. However, I believe that nature has its own balance. If we take care of it, it will also take care of us. Therefore, it is necessary to teach that humans are not the rulers of the earth, but part of the earth. If we only learn from books, without seeing how farmers take care of their fields or fishermen respect the sea, then our knowledge will not be complete." This shows that a critical epistemological understanding of the modern education system often separates scientific knowledge from ecological experience. Social science should not only explain the relationship between humans and nature rationally, but also include the dimensions of ethics and ecological morality (Illahiyah, Nafis, and Ahsan 2024).

In social science philosophy, this view can be linked to the concept of deep ecology, which sees all living things as having intrinsic value beyond their

instrumental benefits to humans (Syahri & Wibowo, 2024). Therefore, the human-nature relationship is considered a moral and spiritual relationship that forms the core of social life. Furthermore, this perspective supports the idea that social science philosophy must accept epistemologies that do not originate from the West and recognize the various ecological knowledge that has developed in local cultural contexts. The informant also said that "Lessons about the environment are taught as if nature is an object that must be protected, not a part of ourselves. However, if children are taken directly to the fields and rivers, they will better understand that humans and nature are interconnected (Tjahjadarmawan and X 2023). Furthermore, we also produce people who are intelligent and wise towards nature." Ecological education is not only rational but also ethical. In social science philosophy, this is in line with the criticism of modern positivism that removes moral values from the scientific process (Agus Setiawan, 2024). Furthermore, the relationship between humans and nature is not only material, but also spiritual and moral. This is in line with the concept of deep ecology, which asserts that every living thing has intrinsic value and equal moral standing.

Through phenomenological interpretation, the community in Sumberjo Village is constructing a new ontology of the relationship between humans and nature. Social science philosophy must transcend the boundaries of conventional disciplines to integrate ecological, ethical, and spiritual dimensions in constructing social theories that are more responsive to the global climate crisis (Shahzad et al., 2024). Nature is no longer seen as a passive object, but as a subject that has moral, spiritual, and social value. This perspective has implications for the formation of a more relational social science philosophy paradigm, in which knowledge, ethics, and sustainability become an integral whole. This reinforces the view that the environmental crisis is not only a technical problem, but also an epistemological and ontological crisis in the way humans understand nature (Zhang et al., 2024).

Ecological Awareness and Social Transformation

Patterns of ecological awareness are beginning to shape the collective behavior of society. One informant said, "We have started to limit the use of single-use plastics because we are aware that the impact is not only on the environment today, but also on future generations (Sudur, Ahmad Syukri 2024). We feel that climate change makes the poor suffer more. Those who do not have access to adaptation technologies are ultimately the most affected." This shows that intergenerational ethics is a form of social responsibility for the future. This is in line with social science philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of distributive justice in facing ecological risks (Fadrullah & Syam, 2024).

Another informant added that "The changes in cropping patterns in our village have made us realize that nature can no longer be treated arbitrarily (Mikyal Hardiyati, Hasanah, and Rohman 2023). There is a balance that must be maintained, otherwise we ourselves will suffer. The change is very noticeable, Ma'am. Water used to be abundant, but now many rice fields are dry. We have to adjust our farming methods. But I have learned that this is not just a matter of weather. It is about how we treat nature. We used to spray pesticides indiscriminately, but now we have started using organic fertilizers. (Ibrahimi, 2025) This awareness is not merely the result of formal education, but rather a process of reflection from daily social and ecological interactions. This is in line

with the theory of ecological modernization, which states that social transformation can occur when communities begin to internalize the principles of sustainability in their daily practices (Ayu Putriana Dewi, Enjelika Enjelika, and Agung Winarno 2024).

According to social science philosophy, social values and norms cause this change. Nature is considered part of social and spiritual life, as well as an economic resource. This concept is in line with the concept of environmental ethics which emphasizes that social morality consists of ecological responsibility (Hardianti et al., 2024). Informants said that "In our teachings, humans are caliphs on earth. This means we have a mandate to protect, not dominate. I often say in my lectures that if we destroy nature, we are violating God's mandate. Now I invite my students to plant trees every Friday. Because if awareness arises from faith, not from fear of laws or rules, then the change is more sincere and lasting." This view shows that social transformation is not only determined by material factors, but also by (Sulwana et al., 2025). This reinforces the idea that social ecology cannot be separated from ethical and religious dimensions.

The interview results show that in Sumberjo Village, practical experience, moral awareness, and spiritual values shape ecological awareness. Because of this awareness, behaviors, norms, and community structures that are more environmentally friendly have changed (Adelia Ramzar et al., 2025). This indicates a shift from a materialistic paradigm to a relational and ecological paradigm in the philosophy of social science. This paradigm views natural and social sustainability as part of the system of life. In this case, ecological awareness is not only the result of adaptation to climate change; it is a new form of social awareness that considers, which serves as the basis for moral and cultural change towards an ecologically just society.

Limitations of the Old Paradigm in Understanding the Climate Crisis

Philosophically, the old paradigm was shaped by the principle of anthropocentrism, namely the belief that humans are the center of all forms of life and that nature only has value for human interests (Arditya Prayogi and Riki Nasrullah 2024). Therefore, the scientific approach born of this paradigm tends to ignore the moral, social, and spiritual dimensions inherent in the relationship between humans and nature. One informant said: "In that paradigm, humans are the center of the universe, while nature is only considered a resource. This kind of perspective has led to massive exploitation, because there is no awareness that nature also has the right to live. We need a new, more relational paradigm, where humans are no longer the dominant subject, but part of the web of life." This shows that there is criticism of positivistic epistemology, which separates ethics from science. In line with the argument in Facing Gaia, that (Hapsah et al., 2024), we lose the ability to understand the planet as a living entity.

According to another informant (Wijayanti and Sugianti 2025), environmental policies only focus on technical mitigation, resulting in an old way of thinking that separates humans from nature. We need to build collective ecological awareness that every human action has an impact on the entire web of life. The old paradigm must be replaced with the awareness that we live with nature, not above it." This shows resistance to the modern anthropocentric and economic paradigm. As stated in line with the theory of reflexive modernity,

where society must (Putra, 2023).

The results of the interviews above show that, from an epistemological, moral, and practical perspective, the paradigm that has long been used to understand the climate crisis has significant weaknesses. Because they only emphasize technical aspects rather than relational and moral aspects, modern paradigms such as instrumental rationality, anthropocentrism, and scientific positivism cannot provide solutions to the complex climate crisis (Tania et al. 2025). According to the interviews, society, academics, and activists are beginning to realize the importance of a new ontology, namely a way of thinking that integrates humans and nature. With this awareness, social science philosophy will become more ecological, religious, and interdependent. This will be in line with the ecological paradigm that has emerged in modern philosophical discussions.

The results of the study show that in the era of climate change, social science philosophy must construct a new ontology of the human-nature relationship. In addition, society now sees climate change as a social, ethical, and philosophical problem (Santoso and Priambodo 2025). This change in perspective confirms the importance of integrating social science and ecology in modern philosophy. There is criticism of the old paradigm that focuses too much on humans, which is no longer sufficient to explain the multifaceted climate crisis. Instead, a new ontology that acknowledges the relationship between humans and nature can enable an understanding of socio-ecological reality that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, this research demonstrates the importance of social science philosophy to shift its perspective from anthropocentric to eco-social. This change is not only an academic necessity but also a daily necessity to face the increasingly apparent climate crisis (Abdullah and Hosaini 2024).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the modern paradigm based on instrumental rationality, anthropocentrism, and scientific reductionism has fundamental weaknesses in explaining the complexity of the relationship between humans and nature. The old paradigm places nature as a passive object that is subject to human will, thereby ignoring the moral, social, and spiritual dimensions of ecological reality. Through interviews with academics, activists, and local communities, it was found that the climate crisis is not merely a technical or scientific problem, but a crisis of epistemological and ontological awareness. Nature is understood as a living entity that has intrinsic rights and value, and humans are seen as part of an interdependent web of life. Thus, a paradigm shift towards an eco-centric and relational ontology approach is needed so that social science can respond to the challenges of today's ecological civilization.

Further research needs to develop an interdisciplinary approach that integrates philosophy, ecology, and sociology to build a new framework for thinking about human-nature relations. Future research is expected to be able to explore local epistemology and ecological spirituality more deeply as alternative sources of sustainable knowledge. In addition, it can also be directed at efforts to formulate an ecological education model based on reflective awareness and environmental ethical values, so that this new paradigm does not stop at the theoretical level, but is implemented in social policies and cultural practices. In this way, the philosophy of social science can play an active role in

shaping global ecological awareness and supporting social change towards a more sustainable life.

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