



Structural Economics: Measuring Change in Technology, Lifestyles, and the Environment

Faye Duchin

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In all societies, the main causes of environmental degradation are resource extraction and the generation of wastes by households and industries. Realistic strategies for mitigating these impacts require an understanding of both the technologies by which resources are transformed into products, and the lifestyle choices that shape household use of such products.

Structural Economics provides a framework for developing and evaluating such strategies. It represents an important new approach to describing household lifestyles and technological choices, the relationships between them, and their impact on resource use and waste. In this volume, economist Faye Duchin provides for the first time an authoritative and comprehensive introduction to the field, including its social as well as its technological dimensions. The presentation is accessible to non-specialists while also including a substantial amount of new research.

Duchin's primary achievement is to integrate a qualitatively rich understanding of technologies and lifestyles into a flexible, quantitative framework grounded in established principles of input-output economics and social accounting. She uses tools and insights from areas as diverse as demography and market research to conceptualize and describe different categories of households and their lifestyles. She also draws on the expertise of engineers and physical scientists to examine the potential for technological change. The framework Duchin develops permits the rigorous and detailed analysis of specific scenarios for alternative technologies and changes in lifestyle. The author uses the case of Indonesia for illustration and to refine new concepts by testing their relevance against factual information.

The new field of structural economics represents an important step forward in the effort to apply the power of science to solving the problems of modern societies. This book should prove invaluable to students and scholars of economics, sociology, or anthropology, as well as environmental scientists, policymakers at all levels, and anyone concerned with a practical interpretation of the elusive concept of sustainable development.

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