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The Environment as a Shared Concern among Human Stakeholders (Jacob Hörisch)

Mankind depends on the natural environment and nature matters for stakeholders. Freeman et al. (2010), therefore, acknowledge the need to recognize the natural environment in stakeholder theory. Based on earlier literature, two alternative and fundamentally different possibilities of introducing the natural environment in stakeholder thinking can be identified: As the natural environment plays such an important role for stakeholders, the maybe most obvious possibility is to introduce it as an additional stakeholder. Alternatively, in stakeholder theory the environment can be considered as a shared concern of various human stakeholders. This second view highlights the importance to empower human stakeholders, who are able and willing to articulate environmental issues and to develop strategies preventing ecological problems and disasters.

Hörisch, J., Freeman, R. E., & Schaltegger, S. (2014). Applying stakeholder theory in sustainability management: Links, similarities, dissimilarities, and a conceptual framework. Organization & Environment, 27(4), 328–346.