

Newsletter of the Section on Environment and Technology of the American Sociological Association

Wherefore Technology?

Editor's note: The recent essays by Fred Buttel (ET&S #104) and Allan Schnaiberg (ET&S #105) on whether or not to drop the "Technology" from the Environment and Technology Section name have sparked some additional comments. Some of these are included below...

Some Reasons to Retain the Centrality of Technology in Environmental Sociology, or whatever we call our enterprise.

Gene Rosa
Washington State University

Fred Buttel, picking up on Allan Schnaiberg's comments at the 25th anniversary of the section in Anaheim, suggests that we rename our enterprise "Environmental Sociology." I distill three reasons for Fred's recommendation. First, he is in apparent agreement with Allan's assertion that the section "has never lived up to its promise, or delivered on the stated intention, to integrate studies of environment and technology." Second, the underlying basis for the name "Environment, Technology, and Society," was, in fact, a political move, a rear guard action against the then upstart SKAT section. Third, Fred has attracted some puzzlement over what he does from scholars outside our world of environmental sociology.

I have three quick responses to these considerations. First, I do not know what Allan and Fred have in mind regarding the unrealized promise of integrating technology with environment. On what criteria would we judge whether such integration has taken place?

The relevance of this question is deepened by the fact that arguably there are few areas within a more narrowly defined environmental sociology that are integrated—a condition that will likely persist for the foreseeable future. Thus, I do not see why this standard—integration—should be applied to one part of our enterprise, technology, if it isn't to be used as the yardstick for all of it. Second, while our original naming stemmed from political considerations it was not entirely

unmindful of the central role technology plays in impacting environments, for good and for bad. Third, I don't see much of a way around the reality that when one engages in interdisciplinary or hybrid work, which is what defines environmental sociology, out-

I support the change dropping "technology" from the section name. Technology is involved in most environmental problems, so we always keep it in view. But having "technology" in the section name does more than that, and seems to spread us out over non-environmental technology issues as well.

--Larry Hamilton

siders have difficulty putting one in a convenient pigeonhole. I am not certain that including the word "sociology" will necessarily solve the problem.

In fact, when flying (which I frequently do) and I wish to do work or otherwise be left alone, I always answer the inevitable question from my seatmate ("So, what do you do?") simply with the term "sociology." With almost no variance the response usually includes a nod, a phrase that

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Notes from the Editor on the Summer 2002 issue...

Continuing the discussion on the E&T Section name, comments are included from Gene Rosa, Ruth Love, Larry Hamilton, and Penelope Canan. Your comments on this issue can appear in future newsletters. Let's keep the discussion going!

Your other submissions for the newsletter are also accepted at any time—brief reports on recent research (with graphs!), book reviews, opinion pieces, point-counter-point debates, member news items, department and program spotlights, calls for papers, etc.

In this issue, we focus on the Annual Meetings, with session and event listings, information on Chicago, and the Section name discussion, which will continue at the E&T Business Meeting.

If you make it to Chicago, be sure to attend the Section Awards Ceremony and Business Meeting. You can congratulate your colleagues, find out what's new with the E&T Section, and maybe even volunteer for a committee!



Award Committees, 2001-2002

Olsen Student Paper Award:
Harry Potter, Chair
Bob Edwards and Valerie Gunter

Distinguished Contribution Award:
Ken Gould and Section Council

Outstanding Publication Award:
Tom Rudel, Chair
Larry Hamilton and Penelope Canan

Boguslaw Award (to be awarded in 2003): Allan Schnaiberg, Chair

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ET&S is printed on recycled paper.



The Environment and Technology Section on the Internet:

Listserv: Envtecsoc
To subscribe, send an email to:
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Section Websites:

www.lbs.msu.edu/ets/ets.html

www.asanet.org/Sections/environ.htm



ET&S is a publication of the American Sociological Association, Section on Environment and Technology. The newsletter is a member benefit.

Please note that you must be a member of the ASA in order to join a Section. Contact the American Sociological Association, Membership Services, at 1307 New York Ave., NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20005

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includes the word "interesting" in it, and a disengaging into solitude.

On a more serious note, I would like to return to the second criterion: the issue of technology's role in our enterprise. I cannot imagine making progress toward our foundational quest—to understand the interpenetration of human and ecological systems—without serious consideration of technology's transformative role. Indeed technology is what distinguishes (and makes infinitely more difficult, if not more exciting) human ecosystems from all other ecosystems. Humans have never been without technology—literally. Hence, human ecosystems have never been technologically pristine. That basic verity should be an embedded feature of our enterprise whether it is captured in a name or not. To the extent that the centrality of technology is preserved in our orienting perspective the actual name means very little. But the reality is that names have a way of shaping reality ("Boys named 'Sue' catch a lot of shit and get picked on a lot," Cash, Johnny, 1969). More formally, Weber pointed out that "Very frequently the 'word images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by dynamic interest" (*From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University press, 1958:280). Furthermore, the chief analytic tool for the anticipation of untoward impacts on the environment—risk—was developed as a tool of technology assessment, and now has been expanded to ever-wider domains—including environmental risk assessment.

In sum, apart from the specific name I think we would be shortsighted and theoretically unjustified in the jettisoning of the technology identity within our enterprise. It needs to have central billing in what we do. That billing can best be accomplished by retaining technology in our name, as it is now.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Key Variables and Utopian Visions

Ruth L. Love

Portland, Oregon [RuthLLove@aol.com]

The lively argument between Fred and Allan as to whether our section's name should revert to its original one (ETS #104 and #105 Winter and Spring 2002) presents new opportunities for stimulating discussions on the character of environmental sociology. Whether we retain "technology" in our section name is not overly important to



me. Only in formal writings did I ever use the full section name, staying with the informal "Environmental Sociology" otherwise. At one level, debate about our section name should bring to mind not only names for roses, but also a rephrasing of Gertrude Stein's comment about Oakland to read, "What there should be there?"

What is important however, is to clarify what our favorite hypotheses are for research, and possibly even subsequent application. In our favorite hypotheses, what are the independent variables, the dependent variables and the intervening variables? I suspect that in many of our favorite hypotheses, techniques (e.g., fire making) and technological objects (e.g., a flint) will appear as variables. Further, I suspect that when we list our favorite or most interesting or most compelling hypotheses, there will arise distinctions between technologies which have a net harmful effect on the ecological base (e.g., gasoline combustion engines) and those intended to have a net "improvement" on the ecological base (e.g., wind turbines and solar collectors for producing electricity). In short, I suspect that there is an underlying value base to our Section's interests which relates to actions, institutions, objects and techniques that, in the long run, ameliorate rather than deteriorate the ecological base (whether urban, rural or never "developed").

This sorting out of variables may also help us think through to what extent our preference for humane values can be coupled sensibly with our sociological focus on ecological factors. Here I am thinking about concepts and variables such as redistribution of wealth and income through better employment and working conditions, to make for a more egalitarian society. Concepts of "small is beautiful" and "sustainability" often spill over into broader utopian visions combining an enhanced ecological base with ideal type small cohesive communities where both poverty and exploitive immense corporate structures have been eliminated (Schnaiberg, 2002). From this perspective it becomes tricky to assess and evaluate recycling programs. If the programs have been shown to reduce the need for land fills or other means of garbage disposal, are they unsuccessful because they have not reduced manufacturers' packaging materials or changed corporate structures or have Dickensian working conditions? Should the effort to improve the environment be dumped because that same effort cannot remake the world into a kinder, gentler place for everyone?

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Member News

Carole Seyfrit has left Old Dominion University and taken the position of Dean of the College of Graduate and Extended Education at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. She is also a tenured Professor of Sociology. The new position officially starts June 25th. After 10 years in the big city, Carole says that it's great to be back in a more rural area.

Lawrence Hamilton (University of New Hampshire) presented a paper titled "Planning for the Impacts of Megaprojects: Two North American Examples" at a NATO Advanced Research Workshop in Apatity, Russia. The paper, coauthored with Keith Storey (Memorial University of Newfoundland) included overviews of the Red Dog Mine in Alaska and Hibernia oilfield development in Newfoundland. Hamilton also presented "Above and Below the Water: Co-Evolution of Fisheries and Fish in the

Northern Atlantic" (co-authored with Cliff Brown, University of New Hampshire, and Richard Haedrich, Memorial University of Newfoundland) at the Nordic Arctic Research Program symposium in Akureyri, Iceland. Both meetings took place in May.



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Maybe packaging materials should be treated as a separate variable rather than part of a larger vision. What would it take for consumers to buy their nail scissors or cookies without elaborate, protective packaging? In the Portland area a norm is emerging gradually to bring large sacks for reuse when shopping. When one makes a small purchase, clerks routinely ask whether you need a sack, and quite a few people even say right away that a sack is not needed as they pocket the small purchase. At the same time, casual observation does not suggest that Portland residents are willing to give up their physical morning newspapers in favor of reading news, comics, sports, and weather on the Web. All this is can be studied by specifying the entire chain of variables needed to reduce the manufacture of things that end up in recycle boxes or garbage cans after a very short useful life.

Likewise, an entire chain of variables and concepts are needed to assess the value of central neighborhood laundrettes in contrast to individuals washers and dryers (and/or outdoor and basement clotheslines!). Somewhere I read, but can't recall where, the argument that laundrettes located in neighborhood malls would reduce the need for energy and material resources that go into making individual home laundry appliances. At the same time, such

I believe that the section name Environmental Sociology lets us incorporate technology where/when/how we want to, as we often do. But this name does not connote that we specialize on the sociology of technology which we seldom do.

Penelope Canan

laundrettes would help promote neighborhood communities. Interesting, I thought, but I was not convinced. Neighborhood laundrettes might generate more auto trips, depending on what other stores were located nearby. (This is testable.) Likewise, the number of households living within walking distance of a laundrette as well as the routing of public transit would affect the net resource savings from a central laundry facility.

But what percent of households would give up convenient home laundries for possible sociability at the laundrette? What factors determine whether a particular laundrette contributes to community and neighborly cohesion, sociability, etc? Since laundrettes often have much heavier-duty machines than do homes, and since life-cycles of laundrette machines are probably much shorter than home machines, over a ten or twenty-year period, which way of organizing laundry machines consumes less net energy and resources?

One strong appeal of "environmental justice" studies is that the variables have been fairly specific: namely the disproportionate exposure and proximity of low-income households and minority group households

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Calls for Papers

Call for Chapter Proposals for Phase III of The Project on Environmental Change and Foreign Policy

The Project on Environmental Change and Foreign Policy began in early 1998. The objectives of the Project are to better understand the role of foreign policy processes in international efforts to address adverse environmental changes at the local, regional, and global levels; to analyze the actors and institutions—both domestic and international—that constrain and shape national actions on environmental issues; to show how environmental changes influence foreign policy processes; and to critically assess environmental foreign policies. The Project also seeks to provide a forum for new and groundbreaking research, and particularly to influence foreign policy by sharing this research with governmental and non-governmental practitioners and activists.

Chapter proposals are invited for Phase III of the Project, the role of foreign policy processes in shaping European and EU responses to environmental change. We expect to publish two books: One on Environmental Change and European Foreign Policy and a more focused book on Global Warming/Climate Change and EU Foreign Policy.

We welcome proposals on specific environmental foreign policies of individual countries (e.g., those on environmental resources, regional air pollution, environmental aid, fisheries, etc.), the environmental foreign policies of a group of European states, and foreign policies of European states or the EU regarding global warming/climate change.

To propose a chapter, please contact the Project Director, Paul G. Harris at: Project on Environmental Change & Foreign Policy; Department of Politics; Lingnan University; Tuen Mun; HONG KONG; Tel: (852) 2616 7199; Fax: (852) 2891 7940; pharris@ln.edu.hk. by August 15, 2002. (For proposals that are accepted, completed chapters for full consideration and peer review will be due in January 2003). (All correspondence and exchange of papers to be conducted via e-mail.)

Please include the following in your proposal: Name; Title; Institutional affiliation; Email address; Telephone; Fax; Postal Address; 1-2 page summary of your proposed chapter, including the primary research question(s) and a summary of what your paper will say about environmental foreign policy in Europe.

Call for Papers -- Social Movements in Health

Outline proposals for contributions are invited for the tenth monograph in the series published by Sociology of Health and Illness, in conjunction with Blackwell Publishers, in the year 2004. The monograph aims to bring together the fields of social movements and medical sociology in a collection that is both theoretically informed and research based.

Possible areas for contributions are:

- 1) Social movement effects on access to the health care system and to specific services
- 2) Social movements and the social discovery of illness
- 3) Illness experience and advocacy movements
- 4) Citizen participation in creating scientific knowledge
- 5) Social movement theory and health social movements

Potential contributors should send an outline proposal for papers (up to 800 words) to co-Editor of the monograph, Phil Brown, Department of Sociology, Brown University, Providence RI 02912 by November 30, 2002. Email submission is encouraged (phil_brown@brown.edu) and all eventual paper submissions must be in electronic form. International contributions are particularly encouraged. The monograph will appear both as a regular issue of the journal and in book form.

All proposals will be reviewed and notifications of the outcome will be given by 14th January 2003. Those invited to contribute to the monograph will be asked to submit articles of 6,000-7,000 words by July 1, 2003, following the journal's stylistic guidelines, so that they can be refereed in the usual way. It is planned to publish the monograph in September 2004.

Call for Submissions: Curriculum Guide on Teaching the Sociology of Peace, War & Social Conflict

We invite submissions for the third edition of this curriculum guide, to be published by the Teaching Resource Center, American Sociological Association. A revision of the previous edition is urgently needed in light of the events of September 11, 2001. We welcome submissions from sociologists in diverse fields, regardless of Section membership.

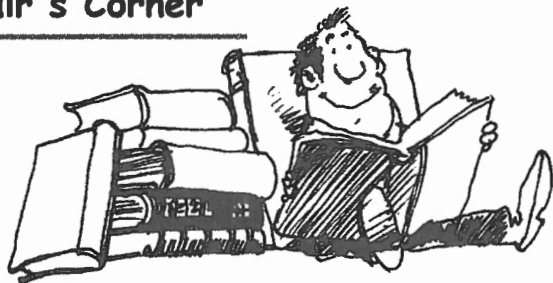
The guide will consist of three sections: I. Syllabi and other instructional materials; II. Essays on best practices for teaching; III. Bibliographies and lists of websites.

Deadline for submissions: December 10, 2002.

For more information and details on submission guidelines, contact: for Section I: Syllabi and other course materials-- John MacDougall, Ph.D; Dept. of Regional Economic & Social Development; 500E O'Leary Library, 61 Wilder St.; University of Massachusetts; Lowell MA 01854 USA; 978.934.4303 (work), 978.934.4028 (fax); E-mail: John_MacDougall@uml.edu or for Sections II-III Essays, bibliographies/websites-- Morten G. Ender, Ph.D; Dept. of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership; Thayer Hall, Room 282E; United States Military Academy; West Point NY 10996 USA; 845.938.5638(w) 845.938.2236 (fax); E-mail:morten-ender@usma.edu



Chair's Corner



Please send along any topics you'd like to have discussed by the Section Council at the Chicago meetings, as well as items that you'd like to see on the Section Business Meeting Agenda (llutz@wsu.edu).

The thoughtful discussions of the Section's name, and whether it ought to be changed and how technology relates to the environment that have been conducted on the pages of this newsletter will continue at the Chicago meetings. Whether we resolve those issues there, it seems to me, is less important than the fact that we are now seriously engaging questions of common understandings, identities and the health of environmental sociology as an intellectual movement.

I also assume that recruitment will, once again, be on our agenda. Anyone who has creative ideas and/or energies to apply to the problem of keeping our membership above the 400 mark should get in touch with membership chair Steve Zavestoski (szavesto@providence.edu) or other members of the Membership Committee.

The Council decided that our reception this year should be an informal affair, perhaps with the Rural Soc Society's natural resources interest group. I've been coordinating with RSS and am still scouting for a Chicago venue that's close to the convention hotels, conducive to good conversation, and not outrageously expensive (perhaps an impossible combination). We'll announce the site of the reception (which will be in the early evening of Friday, August 16th) at all Section-sponsored sessions at the meetings and on the listserve. Although we're working on several leads, if you have any suggestions regarding a reception site, PLEASE let me know ASAP.

Loren L.

Member Publications



Flora, Cornelia. 2001. *Interactions Between Agroecosystems and Rural Communities*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Rudel, Thomas K. 2002. "Sociologists in the Service of Sustainable Development?: Environmental Social Science in the Third World." *Society and Natural Resources*. 15:263-268.

Rudel, Thomas K., Diane Bates, and Rafael Machinguiashi. 2002. "A Tropical Forest Transition?: Out-migration, Agricultural Change, and Reforestation in the Ecuadorian Amazon." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 92(1):87-102.

Rudel, Thomas K. 2002. "Ecologically Noble Amerindians?: Cattle, Colonists, and Shuar in Ecuador." *Latin American Research Review*. 37(1):144-159.

Mutz, Kathryn M., Gary C. Bryner, and Douglas S. Kenney, eds. 2002. *Justice and Natural Resources: Concepts, Strategies and Applications*. Island Press. [Fourteen essays including "Beyond 'Traditional' Environmental Justice," by David Getches, School of Law, and David Pellow, Ethnic Studies, University of Colorado and "A Framework to Assess Environmental Justice Concerns for Proposed Federal Projects," by Jan Buhrmann, E.P.A. Region 8, Environmental Justice Program.]

Just over two decades ago, the environmental justice movement emerged after troubling research found that environmentally hazardous facilities were predominantly sited near poor and minority communities. This inequitable distribution of the burdens of industrial facilities and pollution persists today, yet is only half of the problem. Poor and minority communities are also often denied the benefits of our lands' resources and can suffer disproportionate harm from decisions about their management and use. *Justice and Natural Resources* is the first book to focus on the concept of environmental justice in the realm of natural resources. Contributors explore how decisions about the management, use and protection of resources can exacerbate social injustice and the problems of disadvantaged communities. They approach this more expansive view of environmental justice examining issues that are predominantly rural and western--many of them involving Indian reservations, public lands, and resource development activities.

The book describes concepts, identifies a range of strategies, and examines efforts to devise solutions. Contributing authors propose ideas that others can test, assess, and refine by focusing on three integrating questions: What claims are (and should be) the concerns of environmental justice?; What communities should have their interests championed under the banner of environmental justice?; and How do we remedy existing injustices and prevent future ones?



E&T-Related Sessions at the 2002 ASA Annual Meetings in Chicago

Note: All of these sessions are at the Hilton Chicago, except for #285

Friday, August 16th 8:30 a.m.

Session 28. Section on Environment and Technology Refereed Roundtables (one-hour)

Organizer: Loren Lutzenhiser, Washington State University

1. Methodological Issues in Environmental Sociology
2. Rules, Meanings, and Managing the Environment
3. Taking Environmental Sociology into the World
4. Meaning-making at the Frontiers of Change
5. New Directions in Socio-environmental Theory
6. Locality and Environmental Change
7. Social Impacts of Global Change
8. Citizens, Consumers, and Green Action

Friday, August 16th 9:30 a.m.

Section on Environment and Technology Business Meeting

Friday, August 16th 10:30 a.m.

Session 52. Disaster

Organizer and President: Havidan Rodriguez,
University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez

Session 63. Global Change, Local Response

Organizer: Loren Lutzenhiser, Washington State
University; President: Riley E. Dunlap, University of
Turku

Friday, August 16th 2:30 p.m.

Session 82. Teaching Workshop. Teaching Undergraduates about the Complexities and Diversities of Contemporary American Rural Life

Leader: Carol A. Jenkins, Glendale Community College

Panel: Joseph F. Donnermeyer, Ohio State University; J. Lynn England, Brigham Young University; Jan L. Flora, Iowa State University; Carol A. Jenkins, Glendale Community College

Session 99. Sociology of Scientific and Medical Knowledge

Organizer and President: Elaine Alma Draper,
University of California, Berkeley

Session 101. Biology, Technology, and Environmental Policy

Organizer and President: Loren Lutzenhiser,
Washington State University; Discussion: Eugene
Rosa, Washington State University

Friday, August 16th 4:30 p.m.

Session 139. Disputing Nature

Organizer: Loren Lutzenhiser, Washington
State University; President: Angela G. Mertig,
Michigan State University

Session 142. Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities Refereed Roundtables

Table 9. Land and Environmental Issues

Friday, August 16th 6:30 p.m.

E&T Reception -- Location to be announced at all Friday sessions!

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E&T-Related Sessions, continued from page 7

Saturday, August 17th 8:30 a.m.

Session 148. Ascription, Social Process, and Environmental (In)Justice

Organizer and Presider: Stephen R. Couch, Pennsylvania State University

Discussion: Glenn S. Johnson, Clark Atlanta University and J. Timmons Roberts, College of William and Mary

Saturday, August 17th 9:30 a.m.

Session 183. Research Poster Session. Information Technology

2. Web-Based Surveys and Instrument Effects of Images: Photographic Images and Support for the Protection of Endangered Species. James C. Witte and Catherine Mobley, Clemson University; James Hawdon, Clemson University

Saturday, August 17th 10:30 a.m.

Session 204. Business, Science, and Environmental Movements

Organizer and Presider: Stephen R. Couch, Pennsylvania State University

Discussion: Lori M. Hunter, University of Colorado, Boulder

Saturday, August 17th 12:30 p.m.

Session 235. Global Environmental Sociology: Theory and Research

Organizer: Stephen R. Couch, Pennsylvania State University; Presider: Susan H. Roschke, City of Norwood, Ohio

Discussion: Loren Lutzenhiser, Washington State University

Saturday, August 17th 2:30 p.m.

Session 285. From Environmental Injustice to Environmental Justice: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement (co-sponsored by the Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements and the Section on Environment and Technology) *at the Palmer House Hilton*

Organizers: David Pellow, University of Colorado, Boulder; Robert Brulle, Drexel University

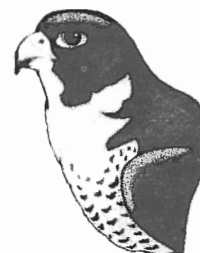
Monday, August 19th 10:30 a.m.

Session 507. Informal Discussion Roundtables. Structures and Processes in International Sociology

Table 12. Toward a Sociology of Genetically Modified Foods. Sita Reddy, University of Pennsylvania

Did you know...the peregrine falcon is the official bird of Chicago?

Check out <http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Environment/BirdMigration/> for "a bird's eye view of the migratory bird route over Chicago," and enter the site for more on Chicago's birds and bird migration--even live nest cams!



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to toxins, land fills, factory pollutants and similar environmental phenomena which are neither healthy nor aesthetic. The environmental justice movement which has emerged in conjunction with such studies does not seek to redress all the ills of society but has a much more focused, less lofty goal of insuring that no one social group should bear the brunt of environmental harm stemming from any actor or agency.

Thus the occasion for rethinking the name of our Section may also be an occasion for sorting out ecological, technological and social variables from utopian clothing.

Reference: Schnaiberg, Allan. 2002. "Reflections on my 25 Years Before the Mast of the Environment and Technology Section," *Organization & Environment* 15(1): 30-41.