

Environment, Technology and Society

NEWSLETTER OF THE SECTION ON ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2006

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Symposium on “The Death of Environmentalism” to be Published

In conjunction with the annual conference of the American Sociological Association last year in Philadelphia, the Environment and Technology Section convened a parallel session to discuss the recent essay, “The Death of Environmentalism,” by Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus (hereafter S&N). This combustible manifesto was formally presented at the 2004 meeting of the Environmental Grantsmakers Association and has since then been making waves via the Internet and other channels.

The panelists at the Philadelphia event have substantially revised and updated their original contributions and the output of this effort is scheduled to appear as an invited symposium in the March 2006 issue of the journal *Organization and Environment*. The collection comprises the following four contributions:

- *The Death of Environmentalism: Introduction to the Symposium*, Maurie J. Cohen
- *Spinning Our Way to Sustainability?* Robert Brulle and J. Craig Jenkins
- *Where’s the Data? An Examination of “The Death of Environmentalism’s” Ambiguous Empirical Foundations*, Riley Dunlap
- *A Call for Women to Lead a Different Environmental Movement*, Lynnette Zelezny and Megan Bailey

Maurie Cohen’s opening selection traces the background of S&N’s original essay and describes the reaction that it has elicited in certain activist and scholarly circles. He questions the timeliness of the proclamation that the environmental movement has “died” and argues that this recent proclamation is actually a bit belated since, for all practical political purposes, the demise of the post-1970s organized environmentalism occurred more than a decade ago. Cohen highlights the lethargic and uninspired role that major organizations played throughout the 1990s and their failure to develop advocacy programs to advance an internationalist policy agenda focused on climate change and sustainability. He contends that the American environmental movement, such as it exists today, must move beyond parochial issues of incremental—and largely inconsequential incrementalism—and embrace a more ambitious and transformational vision predicated upon the fundamental redesign of contemporary socio-technical systems of production and consumption.

The second contribution in the collection by Robert Brulle and Craig Jenkins begins with a review of the work of cognitive linguist George Lakoff that heavily informs “The Death of Environmentalism.” This research contends that political advantage is achieved by utilizing a salient masterframe to structure constituent issues into a coherent discourse. The success of conservative political interests, according to Lakoff, is due to their effective deployment of this rhetorical strategy while liberal politicians and organizations have relied on an incoherent grab-bag approach. Brulle and Jenkins interpret the New Apollo Project as an initiative that seeks to restructure the rhetorical politics of environmentalism without substantively altering the political economy of contemporary life. The authors also argue that S&N fail to appreciate the diversity that characterizes the contemporary environmental movement and underestimate the costs of adopting policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The final point of their critique charges that “The Death of Environmentalism” perversely advocates the same kind of arrogant elitism that its instigators seek to overturn.

The symposium’s third piece by Riley Dunlap interrogates the public opinion data upon which “The Death of Environmentalism” is premised. Drawing on the results of the Gallop Organization’s annual Earth Day survey, he contends there is reason to be skeptical of S&N’s allegations of a pattern of eroding civic support for environmental protection. Dunlap demonstrates that it is problematic to view environmental sensibilities in isolation of other political currents. Public opinion polling has found that environmental commitments in the United States are consistently overwhelmed by other considerations and that expressions of support are highly contingent on the specific format of survey questions. He moreover argues that for a range of contemporary policy issues it is necessary to interpret the results of opinion polling within the context of large shifts in the post-9/11 political landscape and the way in which the White House and Congress have pursued the “war on terrorism.” Dunlap proceeds to describe the complex web of organizational linkages that comprise the intellectual foundation for S&N’s research on social values and raises questions about the veracity of these methods. He concludes by speculating that the weakening the Bush administration has experienced in recent months due to scandal, flooding, and strategic errors in Iraq could precipitate renewal of public environmental attentiveness.

The final offering by Lynnette Zelezny and Megan Bailey focuses on the failure of “The Death of Environmentalism” to consider the gendered

dimensions of environmentalism. By devoting attention exclusively to the large national organizations that embody the mainstream of the movement and advocating for public-private partnerships as the basis of a reinvigorated environmental politics, they maintain that S&N ignore an accomplished and distinguished tradition of female-led activism. Zelezny and Bailey furthermore draw on an extensive body of empirical research in environmental psychology to assert that women have an enhanced sense of ecological responsibility and that political renewal should actively and aggressively seek to harness the unique features of this ethic of care before turning to untested alternatives.

The authors who have lent their voices to this symposium offer different views and engage with tenets of the original essay in a variety of ways. This diversity of perspectives is largely a result of the tremendous ambitiousness and importance of the task that S&N have launched. While all of the contributors are in their own ways critical of “The Death of Environmentalism,” there is a palpable recognition that sweeping change in how the environmental movement pursues its goals is both necessary and inevitable. The specific paths to be pursued will likely emerge out of a lengthy and spirited debate.

Submitted by
Maurie Cohen



The Chinese ideogram for “crisis”, which is on the cover of the original S & N essay. The two characters represent “danger” and “opportunity”.

Environment Knowledge, and Democracy

*International Sociology Conference
RC24 of the ISA*

*Marseilles-France, 6-7 July 2005
University of the Mediterranean,
Luminy Science Faculty*

The University of the Mediterranean at Luminy and the High School of Social Studies (EHESS) organized the conference, "Environment, Knowledge, and Democracy" of the Environment and Society Research Committee (RC24) of the International Sociological Association. Both the conference and workshops enjoyed singular success in the geographical, cultural, political, age, and gender diversity of the participants.

The inaugural plenary session was dedicated to the memory of Professor Frederick BUTTEL. Raymond MURPHY and Julia S. GUIVANT provided a fitting encomium to this courageous scholar, highlighting both his scientific contributions and his human qualities. Then followed a plenary session focused on French Environmental Sociology, with the contribution of Cécilia CLAEYS-MEKDADE, Suzanne de CHEVEIGNE, Marie JACQUE and Bernard PICON. This plenary was devoted to developing more scientific exchanges between French-speaking and English-speaking sociologists of the Environment. The third and final plenary session was devoted to environmental sociology from a feminist perspective, with presentations by women scholars, from the North and the South: Hillary TOVEY (Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland) and Angela D. FERREIRA (University Federal of Paraná Brazil). The conference concluded with syntheses of the conference's four workshops:

Workshop 1: The borders between scientific and popular knowledge, (Carole Barthélémy and Audrey Richard, CEMAGREF, France)

Workshop 1 focused on the issues of considering popular environmental knowledge and methods for doing this. Discussing the place for scientific and for popular knowledge brought out matters such as: legitimacy and power balance between scientists and citizens; expert evaluation; learning; knowledge circulation and changes; perception and memory. Citizen participation was the workshop's major issue. The variety of the cases led us to make international comparison and raised the issue of cultural differences. In the presentations, besides popular and scientific, other concepts were juxtaposed to

characterize knowledge such as: local/general; practical/theoretical, situational or familiar/public.

Workshop 2: The cultural diversity of knowledge about nature and the environment, (Xavier Lemaire, University of Warwick (UK))

The main theme of this workshop was about the gap between the logic of protection of the environment defined by an elite and the way of living of local communities who oppose to the experts their own knowledge about nature. Main conclusion was that if the rights of local actors are now formally acknowledged, they remain weakly established. Participatory approaches in order to achieve public inclusion still need to be nested in global, national and local power relations in order to counter the natural tendency of decision spheres to reduce environmental debates into discussions between experts.

Workshop 3: The Place of Knowledge in Decision Making (Eugene A. Rosa, Washington State University, USA)

The theme of the RC24 "Environment, Knowledge, and Democracy" highlighted one of the pivotal issues facing all democratic societies: how to make informed choices about sustainable environmental management through democratic processes. Workshop 3 provided the core focus for exploring alternative theoretical and policy perspectives on decision-making. Four dominant themes comprised these papers: (1) the shaping of environmental policy with sociological knowledge and insight; (2) an understanding of risk and its role in policy assessment and environmental management; (3) the complicating problem of uncertainty, especially at the horizon edges of scientific understanding; and (4) the challenge of determining the role of stakeholders in policy decisions and determining who qualifies as a legitimate stakeholder.

Workshop 4: The environment in the public sphere (Suzanne de Cheveigné CNRS-EHESS)

The third workshop discussed debates about the environment, either in participatory processes or in the media and on Internet. One of the main question concerning public participation was simply what is happening? Is democracy being enhanced, are lay people being empowered? In discussing both themes, it became clear that both material and cognitive resources are needed to play an active role in debating problems which are, as a number of detailed analyses of classical media also showed, often highly technical.

Submitted by
Cécilia Claeys-Mekdade

Future Matters - Futures Known, Created and Minded: An International Conference

Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building
September 4 – 6, 2006

The conference brings together academics, artists, entrepreneurs and policy makers to consider questions of the future that address three overarching themes:

Knowing futures - relates to our ability to anticipate futures through art, science and imagination.

Creating futures - relates to industrial societies capacity to produce long-term futures. We produce such futures everyday through work and play, politics and technology.

Minding futures - Relates to sustainability and the need to know, care and take responsibility for long term futures of our making that are already underway.

This will be a lively, multi-disciplinary event and presents a unique opportunity for speakers to address an audience beyond their usual field of expertise. Contributions should look to engage people from different backgrounds - critical thinkers, artists and social entrepreneurs.

Keynote Speakers

Wendell Bell, Futurist and Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Yale University

Jérôme Bindé, Director of Foresight, Philosophy & Human Sciences, UNESCO

Josephine Green, Director of Trends & Strategy at Philips

Wolfgang Sachs, Author, Director of Globalisation & Sustainability Project, Wuppertal Institute

David Ambrose, Storyteller, Wales

Gwyneth Lewis, National Poet of Wales 2005

More information (including a booking form and suggested accommodation options) is available on the web at <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/futures/conference/>

Call for Abstracts: please send abstracts of papers or descriptions of pieces to be exhibited/performances (max length 200 words) by email as either Word or PDF files to: futures_conference_2006@Cardiff.ac.uk. Deadline for submission is 31 March 2006.

First International Conference on Carbon Management at Urban and Regional Levels: Connecting Development Decisions to Global Issues

Mexico City, September 4-8, 2006

Pathways of regional development are sequences of interlinked transformations in socioeconomic processes and institutional settings. Regional changes over time have diverse impacts, including consequences for carbon stocks and fluxes that constrain feasible development options. Cities are complex drivers of both regional development pathways and carbon emissions. On the one hand cities are centers of key activities (e.g. transportation) driving changes in the carbon cycle and the climate system. They also have an ecological footprint extending to distant and remote places, arising from their demands for energy and material goods. On the other hand, cities are centers of cultural opportunities and changing lifestyles that can induce transformations in consumption behavior and technological development. One of the societal challenges posed by human-induced climate change is to find ways of reducing carbon emissions through changes in consumption and technology. The conference aims to address the challenge of climate change and carbon management in urban centers.

The conference will explore the question "How can cities, regions, and cities-in-regions together lead in the de-carbonization of our societies and by so doing stabilize greenhouse gas emissions and climate change?" In particular we will focus on five themes:

1. Patterns and variability in urban and regional carbon footprints
2. Measurement and observations of regional/urban emissions trajectories
3. Mitigation opportunities, constraints and challenges at local (municipality), city, regional and rural scales
4. Influence of development processes on present day net emissions
5. Modeling strategies at multiple scales and complexities.

The Global Carbon Project is planning an exciting program, bringing together the natural and social science research communities as well as policy advisors and analysts supporting the decision making process.

For more information please refer to the conference website at www.gcp-urcm.org.

Job Openings

Center for Environmental Studies

Tenure Track Assistant Professor, Sharpe Endowed
Chair in Environmental Studies

The Center for Environmental Studies (CES) at Brown University seeks a faculty member for an endowed chair at the ASSISTANT PROFESSOR level with broad interests in environmental sciences as well as public policies related to environmental issues. This appointment will be tenure track and entail a joint appointment between CES and one of the following academic units: Community Health, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, the Division of Engineering, Geological Sciences, Political Science, or Sociology, depending on the background and research record of the candidate. We seek candidates who can integrate basic and applied environmental sciences and work at different scales from local to regional and global.

Requirements include a PhD in an environmentally-related discipline, a strong record of research and outreach, commitment to excellence in graduate and undergraduate teaching, and potential for interdisciplinary collaboration. The mission of the Center for Environmental Studies is to carry out interdisciplinary education, research, and outreach on a variety of topics related to the environment. CES interests encompass the natural sciences, social sciences, and public health. For more information about the CES visit:
<http://envstudies.brown.edu/env/index.php>.

To apply, please send a letter describing research, teaching, and outreach interests and the fit of the candidate with the CES, a current CV, and 3 letters of reference to: Professor Osvaldo Sala, Director, Center for Environmental Studies, Box 1943, 135 Angell Street, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912.

For further inquiries, please contact
Osvaldo_Sala@Brown.edu.

Applications will be reviewed starting on February 28, 2006 and accepted until the position is filled. Brown University is an EEO/AA employer.



BROWN

Semester at Sea

January-April 2007

For this voyage, I'm currently seeking interested faculty in the following disciplines: Economics, Religious Studies, Sociology, Communication Arts, Philosophy, English Literature, and Writing. The load is three courses (22 class meetings during the 100 day voyage). We will spend 50 days at sea and 50 days in port (Puerto Rico, Brazil, South Africa, Kenya, India, Burma, Vietnam, China and Japan). For an overview of faculty responsibilities and remuneration, please consult the website at http://www.semesteratsea.com/facultystaff/f_position_profile.html We depart from Florida in mid-January and return in late-April, 2007.

Interested parties should have a look at the SAS website and then contact me directly at mmaniate@allegheny.edu with questions and expressions of interest. I'm trying to wrap this all up in the next month or two.

I'd greatly appreciate it if you could forward this note to any colleagues who you think might be interested. Likewise, if you belong to other networks that might benefit from this notice, please re- or cross-post this announcement.

On a personal note, I've sailed as a faculty member twice before: Around the world in Spring 2001, and through the Baltic in the Summer of 2005. For me, these were "peak experiences." But then, I enjoy traveling, really loved being able to bring my family along, and have worked closely with undergraduate students for many, many years. And there's something about sailing into Capetown at dawn, or steaming slowly upriver to Ho Chi Minh City...

Submitted by
Mike Maniates
Allegheny College



Paid Summer Research Program in Watershed Studies

With funding from National Science Foundation, the College of William and Mary has available summer research positions for undergraduate students in environmental studies. Specifically, our focus will be on the interdisciplinary study of small watersheds in the southeastern coastal plain of the U.S. We invite student applications for research in the general disciplines of geology, biology, sociology and economics. Our goal is to create a cohort of faculty and students conducting place-based, environmental research across a number of subject areas.

Students will receive a \$4000 summer salary for the 10-week program, a \$500 food allowance, a \$500 allowance for research supplies, plus free housing and travel to and from Williamsburg, VA. Interested students are invited to visit our web site to review the project description, identify potential faculty mentors, and complete the summer research application due March 1 2006: http://www.wm.edu/environment/REU/Reu_Home.html

Point of Contact:
Randy Chambers,
Watershed Research Program Director
mail to: rmcham@wm.edu

Member News

Penelope Canan returns from Japan to the University of Denver where she will teach "Environmental Sociology" and "Global Warming and American Society" beginning March 27th. Her email address will be pcanan@du.edu.

Environmental Sociology Summer Faculty Converge on CU Boulder! The Sociology Department at the University of Colorado at Boulder is excited to welcome 3 visiting Environmental Sociologists through the "Faculty in Residence during Summer Term" (FIRST) program.

John Jermier (University of South Florida) will be teaching "New Corporate Environmentalism."

Steve Couch (Penn State) will be teaching "Disasters and Popular Culture."

Bob Edwards (East Carolina University) will be teaching "Civil Society and the Environment."

Publications

Bevc, Christine A., Brent K. Marshall, and J. Steven Picou. forthcoming. "Toxic Exposure and Environmental Justice: Toward a Socio-Spatial Model of Physical Health and Psychological Well-Being," *Social Science Research*.

Ozone Connections: Expert Networks in Global Environmental Governance by Penelope Canan and Nancy Reichman (Greenleaf 2002) has been translated into Japanese by T. Odagiri and Y. Fujimoto and published by Nippon Hyoron Sha in November 2005.

Hunter, Lori M., Jason Boardman, and Jarron Saint Onge. (2005). "The Association between Amenity-Related Rural Population Growth and Long-Term Residents Economic Well Being." *Rural Sociology*. Vol 70(4): 452-469.

Marshall, Brent K. and Robert E. Jones. 2005. "Citizen Participation in Natural Resource Management: Does Representativeness Matter?" *Sociological Spectrum* 25(6): 715-737.

Marshall, Brent K., J. Steven Picou, and Christine A. Bevc. 2005. "Ecological Disaster as Contextual Transformation: Environmental Values in a Renewable Resource Community." *Environment and Behavior* 37(5): 706-728.

Podobnik, Bruce. 2005. *Global Energy Shifts: Fostering Sustainability in a Turbulent Age*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.

Smith, Ted, David A. Sonnenfeld, and David Naguib Pellow, eds. *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, June 2006 (in press).

Thomas E. Shriver and Dennis K. Kennedy, "Contested Environmental Hazards and Community Conflict Over Relocation." *Rural Sociology* 70 (2005):491-513.

Textbooks

Davidson, Debra J. and Kierstin Hatt, editors. 2005. *Consuming Sustainability: Critical Social Analyses of Ecological Change*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Forthcoming from Temple University Press in June: *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry*.

www.temple.edu/tempres/titles/1788_reg.html