

ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

President's Column

by **Ray Murphy**, President of RC-24

Department of Sociology

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This is the time when preparations are being made for a series of RC-24 initiatives. The Buttell Award Committee was put together, its Call for Nominations was repeatedly sent out, and the committee is hard at work making its decision and formulating its report. An elections committee was formed, and it too is busy seeking nominations for the executive and Board of governors for the next mandate from 2010 to 2014. You will be asked in due course to vote on the slate that the elections committee has put together.

Intense preparations are also being made for the 2010 World Congress in Gothenburg, Sweden, and I will devote most of this column to keeping you informed about those preparations. First let me congratulate you members on the fact that the RC-24's Call for Papers was met with a resounding success. Session organizers received in total 220 paper proposals by the 15 September deadline, which is another indication of just how active you RC-24 members are. RC-24 is so successful that presenting all the paper proposals in regular sessions would require more than double the number of sessions allotted by the ISA. This situation resulted because the ISA put a ceiling on number of sessions for an RC regardless of membership over 100, whereas small RCs were allotted sessions according to the number of members they have. We have 171 members according to ISA figures, and that number will increase dramatically by the time of the World Congress because giving a paper at a regular session incites people to join the RC-24 and the ISA. Since that ceiling was announced by the ISA in February 2009, I have been lobbying them to remove it because past experience shows that our members participate massively in the World Congress and the World Forum. Unfortunately, the ISA took so long to respond that they have painted themselves into a corner. They now admit that the ceiling was a mistake and will change it for the 2014 World Congress in Tokyo, but so far have refused to make changes for the July 2010 World Congress. The most recent part of the exchange between me and the ISA is given below in Appendix 1. I tried to use charm between March and October, but after their decision arrived at the end of October, I used somewhat more forceful language.

RC-24 session organizers are waiting until we know the exact number of sessions before confirming or rejecting paper proposals, but the ISA is so slow that we will have to act soon. The RC-24 organizing committee is also examining other possibilities for including papers, in particular a pre-Congress conference. I want to thank all submitters of papers for your patience. Your session organizer and/or the RC-24 organizing committee will respond as quickly as possible under the circumstances.

One of the sub-themes of the 2010 World congress is sustainability. The ISA decided that there will be five plenary sessions for each sub-theme, that each session will have two sociologists and one non-sociologist as speakers for the sustainability sessions, and that diversity by region,

gender, and age would be important in the choice of speakers. Former ISA President Alberto Martinelli is organizing the first plenary session on sustainability. Hans Joas (ISA Vice-president research), who is in charge of organizing plenary sessions around the sub-themes, asked the Presidents of RCs interested in sustainability for suggestions for themes and speakers for the remaining four plenaries. Specifically, he asked the Presidents of Environment and Society, Science and Technology, and several other RCs. I made suggestions concerning the structure of the plenaries and suggested names of speakers from RC-24. The ISA accepted my suggestions for the session themes and descriptions, and then chose some speakers from my list, chose others from the suggestions of Presidents of other RCs, and added some themselves. The result constitutes the plenary sessions that are given below in the “Upcoming Conferences” section of the Newsletter. I was also given the task of inviting the speakers, and I am discovering that it is difficult to attract renowned non-sociologists to speak for just 30 minutes.

RC-24 was also successful in being awarded an integrative session, which means a session with two other RCs. The session is being organized by Jeffrey Broadbent (USA). Its title and description are given below in Appendix 2.

As President, I have represented RC-24 at several symposia. I gave a keynote address entitled “The Chronic and the Acute: Mitigating Creeping Environmental Problems and Sudden Disasters” at the 2nd German Environmental Sociology Summit in Leipzig 5-7 November 2009, which was organized by RC-24 Treasurer Matthias Gross on the theme Reshaping Nature: Old Limits and New Possibilities. I will be giving the keynote address entitled “On Nightmares and Dreams: Managing Risk Under Uncertainty” at the symposium on Risk and Uncertainty in Environmental Management hosted by the Australian Sociological Association’s Environment and Society Working Group in Canberra, Australia on 1 December 2009 and organized by RC-24 Governor Stewart Lockie. I also sent a video of welcome from RC-24 to participants at the Second International Symposium on Environmental Sociology in East Asia in Taiwan 13-15 November 2009 organized by Juju Wang because I could not go to Taiwan at that date. That Symposium had the theme Low-Carbon Society and Green-Collar Alternatives and many of the speakers are prominent members of RC-24 from Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan. The two conferences that have already taken place are summarized in the “Recent Conferences” section of the Newsletter below.

Appendix 1:

Part of the ongoing exchange between RC-24 President Ray Murphy and the ISA concerning allotment of sessions.

Answer from ISA October 31, 2009 to a series of previous emails requesting more sessions for RC-24: “We have a collective problem affecting big RCs and this problem requires a collective solution. Unfortunately, however, this solution is very difficult. There is no doubt that for the 2014 World Congress the rule for allocating sessions will be profoundly revised as regards to big RCs. But ISA is very reluctant to introduce changes for the imminent Gothenburg Congress due to reasons of principle (rules regulating a process should not be changed when the process has already started) and to practical reasons as well (local organizers have already made arrangements according to the established structure of sessions).”

From RC-24 President Ray Murphy November 1, 2009:

“As you can imagine, RC-24 is deeply disappointed at the response of the ISA. If RC-24 is only allotted 21 sessions (and even assuming that it will be allotted another session for its business meeting), then its options are bleak indeed. If RC-24 allows 20 minutes for presentation and discussion of each paper (which is rushed but possible), then only 126 papers (= 21 x 6) could be presented in regular sessions of 120 minutes and 94 of the 220 submitted proposals will have to be given some form of other status (distributed but not presented, poster, etc.). The problem will be worse if the business meeting has to be included in the 21 sessions, since a big RC needs a business meeting. On behalf of RC-24, I request the ISA to reconsider its decision and increase the number of sessions well beyond 21 for the following reasons.

- 1) The ISA now realizes its mistake. As you state: “There is no doubt that for the 2014 World Congress the rule for allocating sessions will be profoundly revised as regards to big RCs”. But inexplicably the ISA chooses to persist in its error for the 2010 Congress even though there are over 8 months left to improve the allotment of sessions. In fact the ISA had much more time than that to make the correction. As soon as Presidents of RCs were notified of the ceiling on number of sessions, I emailed you and the ISA on 1 March 2009 specifying the problems this would cause for big RCs and for the ISA, and requested changes. I acted promptly precisely in order to make the correction at the beginning of the process and to give local organizers time to make arrangements. But the ISA chose to do nothing for the 8 months between March and October and let this easily foreseeable problem fester. Persisting in this error has nothing to do with “reasons of principle” and much to do with lethargy. Now the ISA claims it is too late, even though there still remain over 8 months until the 2010 Congress. This is unacceptable. As sociologists like Michel Crozier who study bureaucracy have long argued, rigid procedures should not be allowed to become an obstacle to the correction of organizational mistakes and the attainment of substantive goals.
- 2) Since participating at a World Congress is particularly expensive (registration 275 euros for members and 375 for non-members, membership US\$255, travel from distant countries and accommodation), sociologists will not attend if allowed only a distributed but not presented paper or a poster. Your suggestion to give young scholars only a poster would be damaging to the ISA, since they are the future of the organization. The vast majority of young scholars who submitted proposals to RC-24 have tenure-track positions and already have impressive publishing records. They have higher expectations than just a poster or a distributed paper that can not be presented.
- 3) The ceiling on number of sessions results in serious inequities among RCs. Those RCs with low participation will be able to include almost all their submitted proposals in regular sessions, whereas RCs that have been more successful in attracting submissions will have to place almost half (43% = 94/220 in the case of RC-24) of their submissions in the ‘distributed but not presented’ or ‘poster’ categories. And this is assuming 21 sessions + a business meeting. This problem should be corrected for all RCs, not just RC-24, by allotting sessions in proportion to ISA membership as of 31 January 2010, which ISA Guidelines state is the deadline for a revised membership count. “If, however, on January 31, 2010, just before the deadline for submitting the programme of sessions, a RC, WG or TG has a higher number of members in good standing, it will be granted the corresponding additional number of regular sessions, and if its membership dropped

below its level on April 15, 2009, the number of sessions it is allocated will be decreased.”

- 4) The valid number when considering sessions to allot is the number of paper proposals, which will be directly related to the number of ISA members as of 31 January 2010. As you know, people who have their papers accepted for presentation at regular sessions become members of the ISA. In this way, the World Congress is an important means of recruitment for the ISA. The 171 figure you quote for RC-24-ISA membership will be greatly increased when paper submitters are informed that their paper has been accepted for a regular session. As President of RC-24, I will instruct session organizers to encourage presenters to become ISA-RC-24 members if they are not already members. This was done before the last World Congress and if you check your statistics, you will find that it brought in a great many new members for the ISA. So if RC-24 has an adequate number of regular sessions, its membership will climb substantially beyond 220 on 31 January 2010,
- 5) As I mentioned in previous emails, the experience of RC-24 at World Congresses and the World Forum proves that there are very few no-shows among presenters whose papers have been accepted for regular sessions. It would be misleading to cultivate the hope for sociologists whose paper will only be distributed that they can replace a no-show in a regular session.

RC-24 can only conclude that the decision-making process of the ISA is deeply flawed. For the 2006 World Congress in Durban, the ISA made the mistake of depriving sessions of PowerPoint, which has become an indispensable tool for any research conference and especially for an international body that seeks to bridge linguistic barriers. For the 2010 World Congress in Gothenburg, the mistake is being made to impose a punishingly low ceiling on successful RCs. This discourages participation at the World Congress and will seriously restrict membership in the ISA. I plead with you to correct this error promptly because I value the ISA so much and want it to be as successful as possible.”

Appendix 2: Integrative session of Research Committees RC-24 Environment and Society, RC23 Science and Technology, RC07 Futures Research

Coordinator: Jeffrey Broadbent, University of Minnesota, USA, broad001@umn.edu

According to the overwhelming majority of climate change scientists (as represented most prominently by the reports of the IPCC), the impacts of global climate change will have increasing and profound impact on human society over the next several centuries. In response, human society must reduce (mitigate) the causes of the problem (reduce the levels of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere). If we do not mitigate the problem, it will continue to increase in severity and eventually overwhelm our efforts to help vulnerable populations adapt to the disasters at earlier levels. To mitigate the causes of climate change, societies around the planet, especially the high industrialized countries like the US, but soon also industrializing countries like China, must quickly and radically reduce their emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHG). GHG emissions are mainly due to carbon dioxide released by burning fossil fuels, but some also come from methane releases from large scale animal husbandry and rice farming as well as some other sources.

Managing global GHG reduction will require not only alternative energy technology, but also global cooperation, social reorganization and cultural redefinition at historically unprecedented levels. Such global climate management will require a new culture of global citizenship that instills responsibility for managing the planetary ecological systems, and new forms of trade and cooperation under new institutions that promote trust and shared burdens. Will humanity be able to rise above its petty bickering and internecine wars to meet this immense challenge? The answer is uncertain; many pathways are open. Humanity can move toward overcoming the problem by building global solidarity and cooperation. Or we can keep on with business as usual, reacting sporadically to local disasters until huge forced migrations and wars produce “adaptation apartheid” (Bishop Tutu), and eventually even these fortress societies succumb to devastation. Can we learn to govern earth systems and to steer our “Spaceship Earth” in a sustainable direction?

The three RCs each bring valuable perspectives to the consideration of this theme, with its alternative potential pathways to the future. RC-24, Environmental and Society, focuses on the relation between human society and the limits of Nature, which are very evident in the climate change dilemma. RC23 Science and Technology considers both the causes and the solutions to this huge problem as they spring from human scientific ingenuity. And RC07 is practiced in projecting future trajectories from current trend, and will help us peer into the future to discern the possible consequences of our current decisions and actions on this problem. The organizer, Jeffrey Broadbent, is the organizer of global project on the sociological study of national reactions to climate change, “Comparing Climate Change Policy Networks” (COMPON), which was recently featured in the journal Nature. He will offer a short (5 to 7 minute) introduction to the panel sketching out the scientific projections about the effects of climate change, the range of policy options now available and the social dilemmas we face in handling them.

We would like to organize the Integrative Session by having three speakers, each representing one of the RCs. This process would produce three overview papers looking at the big picture of possible future scenarios and the social actions in the present that, from the sociological point of view, would increase the possibilities of successfully governing and mitigating global climate change over the course of the next 100 years.

Notes from the Editor

by **Dana R. Fisher**, Secretary of RC-24 and Editor of the Newsletter
Department of Sociology
Columbia University, USA

Hello Colleagues:

I write to you on the eve of the COP-15 climate change negotiations in Copenhagen, which begin in less than two weeks. At this point, everyone agrees: the climate talks in Copenhagen will not result in a binding treaty. It is not for want of trying; negotiators have emitted tons of carbon flying to meetings around the globe to try to hammer out a deal. Nonetheless, world leaders have announced that the talks will merely serve as a step toward an agreement to come sometime in the future.

One of the main barriers to an agreement is the United States. Even though 89% of all cities with more than 30,000 people in the United States have signed onto an agreement to implement policies similar to those included in the Kyoto Protocol, this local action has not translated to binding policy at the national level. Today, there continues to be no national climate policy in the United States. Even though progress on a climate bill that would create a national climate policy has been stalled in the US Senate, it looks like the Obama Administration is preparing to come to the negotiations with a commitment to emissions targets. The Administration states that these targets are possible given its ability to regulate carbon dioxide as a pollutant through the national Clean Air Act. Already, the US Chamber of Commerce has threatened to sue the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over this policy, which will hold up implementation of such a policy indefinitely. Also, even if the Administration commits to emission targets and aims to have the EPA to enforce them, the US cannot ratify any international climate agreement without the approval of the US Senate. Given the lack of progress on the climate bill, we should not be optimistic that the ratification of a climate treaty by the US government will be any easier.

Although the current stalemate does not bode well for addressing what many scientists have called the “greatest challenge of our age,” it provides unprecedented research opportunities for environmental sociologists around the world. As sociologists, we are equipped with an extensive set of tools to understand this contentious issue that is affecting all sectors of society and all scales of governance.

Based on submissions to the World Congress in Gothenburg, many of us are already doing research to understand aspects of this important issue. To date, however, our work has not received the level of attention that it deserves. For example, Giddens’ *Politics of Climate Change* is likely to be the most read sociological work on climate change this year. We have so much to contribute to this important debate—within sociology and throughout the world. Moving forward, I hope that members of our Research Committee will coordinate their efforts to create publications that resonate throughout the field of sociology. In addition, we should target our work to broader audiences so that the important research being done by RC-24 members gets the attention it deserves.

State of the RC-24, Compiled by Treasurer Matthias Gross

As of 22 July 2009, the ISA RC-24 had 208 registered members. The breakdown of membership by continent is:

Continent	#
Africa	15
Asia	37
Australia / Oceania	11
Europe	67
North America	56
South America	22
Total	208

Not all of our members are on our e-mail list. If you have an e-mail address and are not currently receiving mail from our list, please send an e-mail to RC-24 Secretary, Dana R. Fisher at dana.r.fisher@columbia.edu

Call for Nominations: RC-24 Executive Board 2010-2014

The RC-24 Nominations Committee, appointed by the current Board, is seeking nominations for the next election, to be held this winter. We will be electing a new set of officers to assume positions at the World Congress in Genburg, July 2010, which they will hold for the next four years. The Committee is soliciting nominations for President, Vice-President, Secretary and six Board Members (the Treasurer is appointed by the President). The key duties of these officers are as follows:

- a. The President represents RC-24 in all meetings or correspondence with the ISA and other bodies, is responsible for coordinating the activities of RC-24 and seeing that the other officials of RC-24 fulfill their responsibilities, etc.
- b. The Vice-president chairs the Frederick H. Buttel Award Committee and is responsible for all duties associated with the award.
- c. The Secretary produces the Newsletter and is responsible for the operation of the listserv, getting messages out to members, etc. Up till now the website was also maintained by the secretary, but that might be relocated to one of the other Board members
- d. The members of the Board are expected to be active in representing RC-24 and in organizing RC-24 co-sponsored conferences in between the World Congresses, and for responding to requests for input and decisions from the President.

All RC-24 members are encouraged to submit nominations for these positions. When doing so keep in mind that the RC-24 Statutes specify that, "An effort shall be made to ensure a fair regional, national, and gender representation, and to ensure that each Board consists of some continuing and some new members. Board members should be nominated, above all, in recognition of their activity in and service to RC-24, and of their contributions to environmental sociology scholarship." Self-nominations are acceptable, and encouraged. Information on the RC-24 Board and the election process can be found in the ISA RC-24 statutes at http://www.isa-sociology.org/rcs/RC-24_st.htm).

The members of the Nominations Committee are: Arthur Mol, the Netherlands, Chair; Midori Aoyagi-Usui, Japan; and Riley Dunlap, USA.

Submit nominations to Arthur Mol at Arthur.mol@wur.nl by December 1, 2009 at the latest.

In Memoriam: Allan Schnaiberg

Allan Schnaiberg, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Northwestern University, died June 6 at his home in Chicago, at age 69.

Son of Belle and Harry Schnaiberg, Allan was born August 20, 1939 in Montreal. He graduated with distinction in general science from McGill University and went on to earn a Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan. He joined the sociology faculty at Northwestern University in 1969 and served as sociology department chairman from 1976-1979, receiving numerous honors and awards for his scholarship over the years. He retired from Northwestern in 2008 but remained actively engaged in his field. Allan was the author of scores of scholarly articles and books on topics ranging from globalization and the environment to labor and social inequality. He was a leader in the field of environmental sociology, generating a groundbreaking Treadmill of Production framework for understanding environmental degradation and authoring a seminal 1980 book *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity*. Allan served as mentor to countless students and was widely known for his devotion to and continued connections with former students, practicing an open door—and open heart—policy. He was wide open to the adventure of life. He was very much loved and will be deeply missed by all.

Allan is survived in his immediate family by his wife, Edith Harshbarger; step-sons Dan Harshbarger (Sharon Kucera) and Alan Harshbarger; daughters Lynn Schnaiberg (Geoffrey Bolan) and Jill Schnaiberg (Brendan Sylvander); and his beloved grandchildren, Ella and Benjamin Bolan; Milo and Sylvie Sylvander; Sam, Alex and Lucy Harshbarger. He also leaves behind his sister, Eileen Miller; his niece, Julie; his nephew, Bram, and several cousins.

Memorial donations may be made to MoveOn.org.

Reports from Recent Conferences

Report on the Lüneburg Workshop on “Communication and Learning in Networks – Potentials and Challenges for Environmental Sustainability,” Leuphana University of

Lüneburg, Germany

28-29 September 2009

By Jens Newig, Assistant Professor

Chair of Resource Flow Management and

Member of the Board of the Institute of Environmental Systems Research

University of Osnabrück

From 28-29 September 2009, some 25 international academics discussed the role of communication and learning in social networks for sustainable development at Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany. Scholars from eight different European and North American countries presented concepts and empirical research results from various disciplines such as sociology, education, political science and socio-ecological research. Key challenges that were

discussed included: How do networks foster communication and (collective) learning? What are the different approaches and particular challenges to gathering data of this sort? What are the strengths and limitations of adopting a network approach to learning? To what extent can one link social networks to ideas of sustainable development? Three major themes, all related to sustainability issues, served to structure the workshop and guide discussions:

- Knowledge generation and learning in networks
- Formal approaches of Social Network Analysis
- Governance and participation in networks.

While approaches to networks and sustainability varied greatly across the different (disciplinary) perspectives, the workshop proved an arena for cross-disciplinary learning on this important topic. The discussions revealed a number of pressing challenges for future research, including the relation of sustainability versus resilience and their respective network character, or the potential to integrate formal with qualitative approaches of network analysis.

The workshop was hosted by the Institute of Environmental and Sustainability Communication at Leuphana University Lüneburg and organized by Jens Newig, Maik Adomßent, Katina Kuhn, Daniel Schulz (Lüneburg) and Christina Prell (Sheffield).

Further information about the programme and results (papers, presentations) of the workshop can be found at www.leuphana.de/institute/infu/aktuell/workshop09/programme.html

Report on the 2nd German Environmental Sociology Summit, Leipzig, Germany

5-7 November 2009.

By Matthias Gross, Treasurer of RC-24

The 2009 German Environmental Sociology Summit was held under the topic “The Reshaping Nature: Old Limits and New Possibilities.” The theme was discussed and finalized at the business meeting of the Environmental Sociology section at the German Sociological Society’s conference in Jena, October 2008. The original idea of a biannually held English-speaking environmental sociology meeting in Germany was to foster exchange on current environment-related issues between a nationally oriented German environmental sociology culture and environmental sociologists from other countries (see also the report in our newsletter No. 30, May 2007). The conference was held at the “Kubus,” the conference center of the Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) in Leipzig.

All accepted abstracts were distributed to five overall themes, each introduced by a well known environmental social scientist (keynote). The first subtheme of the meeting was “Adapting and Mitigating to Climate Change” opened with a lecture by RC-24 president Raymond Murphy (University of Ottawa, Canada) on the “The Chronic and the Acute: Mitigating Creeping Environmental Problems and Sudden Disasters.” Since the conference was held on the campus a mainly natural science research institute, a lot of the local attendees were natural scientist by training. Murphy’s introductory talk, many later told me, was somewhat of an eye opener to them as to what environmental sociology is all about and it helped to clarify issues in our understanding of the nature-society interaction. Murphy’s avoidance of esoteric sociology jargon certainly helped here. The subsequent session topics included debates on the climate change regime, climate policy, environmental protection and climate change, lifestyle changes in climate

change, and adaptation and mitigation governance. All papers proved how vivid environmental sociological research on climate change with a global focus has become in the last few years. The second theme for the parallel sessions before lunch was entitled “Waste, Contamination, and the Challenges of Industrially Altered Landscapes,” introduced by the geographer Christopher De Sousa (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA) who presented his research findings on efforts to manage the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated sites in North America over the last 30 years. As regards his outlook on new possibilities he ended with a pessimistic note, but his overview on best management practices showed that in the future a shift to sustainable restoration and revitalization processes is needed. This talk as well as the subsequent paper presentations in the sessions showed that European and North American experiences in waste management and the revitalization of contaminated sites can learn a lot from each other.

The third thematic block of sessions was called “Environmentalism and Theories of Human-Nature Interactions.” It was introduced with a classical topic of the environmental social sciences, Garrett Hardin’s statement that “freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.” Andreas Diekmann (ETH Zürich, Switzerland) colorfully discussed the limits of rationality in environmental dilemmas ending with a rather pessimistic note on how the world’s leaders will make their decisions at the Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 to prevent further global warming and climate changes. The fourth and final theme of the first day was called “Knowledge and the Governance of Environmental Dynamics,” introduced with a keynote talk by Eugene Rosa (Washington State University, Pullman, USA). Rosa’s presentation gave an overview on the areas of social science research that have made remarkable progress in providing an understanding of the details and processes of the human-sustainability nexus. In great interdisciplinary fashion, Rosa drew on research from not only sociology, but also from anthropology, geography, policy analyses, and ecology. His outlook was the presentation of a refined template that brings into sharp relief key gaps where sustained research should be directed.

The second day of the conference linked the previous day’s discussion on the possibility of a sustainable future of the planet with the subtheme on “New Trends in Research on Sustainability.” Gert Spaargaren (Wageningen University, The Netherlands) opened the sessions with a keynote speech on “Climate Change Politics and Life(Style) Politics: A Sociological Perspective.” Against the background of the deepening climate crisis, Spaargaren argued that the empowerment of citizen-consumers as co-makers of change is an issue which deserves attention both from a theoretical and policy making perspective. In using a practice-oriented perspective to the role of human agents in climate change, Spaargaren argued, helps to emphasize agency in environmental change without lapsing into individualistic models of change.

To continue the tradition we started in Lüneburg in 2007, at this year's meeting a workshop was also launched. To prepare for a lively discussion, a background paper, co-authored by Huib de Vriend and Anna Wesselink, was circulated before the conference. Huib de Vriend, an engineer from the Technical University of Delft and director of the EcoShape Programme of the Netherlands not only attended his very first sociology meeting that day but with his co-author Anna Wesselink (University of Leeds, UK) he critically presented the EcoShape Programme with a talk on “Building with Nature: Ecodynamic Design in Practice.” The goal of the Dutch program is to design and shape the Dutch coast line by using dunes and beaches together with

elements such as rocks and jetties with novel technologies. The invited commentators Gert Spaargaren (Wageningen) and Wolfgang Krohn (Bielefeld University, Germany), together with the audience of the conference certainly accepted that the idea of “Building with Nature” (BwN) can be seen as a good example to foster win-win solutions for society and nature but they also pointed to the many obstacles and unintended side effects that large landscape design processes based on novel approaches in hydraulic engineering and its relationship to ecosystem dynamics can bring.

After lunch on Saturday, the closing plenary address was delivered by Hellmuth Lange (University of Bremen, Germany), who discussed “First and Third World Environmentalism: Competing Concepts or Two Sides of the Same Coin?” Lange unfolded in detail what First and Third World environmentalism can mean from different disciplinary perspectives. He also discussed on how much globalization leads to a blurring of any clear boundaries between both “environmentalisms.” Based on this debate, Lange ended by discussing a list of research themes that will certainly gain in importance for environmental sociology in the near future fostered by the globalization of (un-) sustainable lifestyles, consumption patterns, as well as environmental awareness and behavior. In short, there is more work for environmental sociologists to be done than ever before.

As regards content of the overall conference theme, the meeting has supported the view that European environmental sociology is increasingly forging links with other disciplines, thus highlighting the inter- and even transdisciplinary potential of sociology as well as – at least on the local level – its strong focus on pragmatic solutions of environmental problems. Although the venue for the 3rd German Environmental Sociology Summit has not been finalized as of November 2009, there is good reason to look forward to the next meeting in November 2011.

Report on the Second International Symposium on Environmental Sociology in Asia: Low-Carbon Society and Green Collar Alternatives in Taiwan (13-15 November 2009)

Juju Wang, Professor
Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan

After an accordion performance with the music of “Tie a yellow ribbon around the old oak tree,” the three-day 2009 Taiwan symposium on environmental sociology in East Asia was opened by a videotaped remark from President Murphy of the RC-24. The symposium invited two keynote speakers, Prof. Michael Hsiao (Institute of sociology, Academia Sinica) and Lawyer Robin Winkler (Wild at Heart Legal Defense Association, Taiwan), who provided accounts of the Journey of a Taiwanese Environmental Sociologist and a Taiwanese EIA Committee Member. Twenty-four papers in seven sessions were presented, as well as five presentations in a special session on the International COMPON Project led by Prof. Jeff Broadbent. In addition, there were and three presentations in a student session on “the low-carbon campus in action.” Due to visa problems, nine Chinese participants from Nanjing area could not join us at the Taiwan Symposium. Presentations were made by participants from Japan, China, Korea, France, USA, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Among them, ten graduate students participated in some sessions. COMPON also hosted a pre-conference workshop and met with early arrivers at a campus Café for fruitful discussions.



Two side events were sponsored by the Taiwan symposium, which were associated with the theme of the symposium: Low-carbon Society and Green Collar alternatives. They are Green Market and Festival on Ecological Wisdom of Indigenous People. All participants were invited to the site and enjoyed an organic lunch there. Post tour, the Working Holidays on Environmental Sociology was suspended due to registration of a few participants. A proposal was made at the business meeting that it would be integrated into part of the next symposium.

For a greener symposium, we provided a business card carrier and hand book made by recycled papers, while no disposable items (such as paper cups) were used in the Symposium. Lunches provided in the Symposium were organic and local farmed with a low-carbon food mileage. Most travel during the vent involved walking and public transit on the THSR (Taiwan High Speed Rail). In this way, a low-carbon society was initiated by a low-carbon symposium.

In the concluding session, four representatives from East Asia made comments and suggestions on the symposium: Prof. See-Jae LEE (Catholic University of Korea, Korea), Prof. Kocihi HASEGAWA (Tohoku University, Japan), Prof. Dayong HONG (Remin University of China, China), and Prof. Juju Wang (Tsing Hua University, Taiwan). Finally, Prof. Ryouichi Terada (Meiji University, Japan) provided a summary of the Taiwan Symposium as follows:

- Green policies, CO2 reduction policies

- For whom? By which agent? On which level?
- CO2 and construction capitalist state
 - River, dams, nuclear power plants
- Twofold effects of the problematic of “global warming”
 - It legitimized wider range of environmental policies and actions
 - It narrowed the scope of environmental issues or disregarded other issues
- What is unique contribution of environmental sociology for global warming issues
 - Alternative lifestyle, GNH
 - Public sphere
 - Community action
 - Incentives, such as Eco Action Point.
- How do we construct the issues
- What is the relationship between environmental sociology and mainstream sociology

According to the consensus of business meeting, the Third International Symposium on Environmental Sociology in East Asia will be held in Korea in 2011. See you then!

Upcoming Conferences (in chronological order)

Engaged Environmental Citizenship: A one day symposium hosted by The Australian Sociological Association’s Environment and Society Working Group

University of Melbourne, Australia

2 December 2008

Engaged citizenship has been identified by numerous actors as key to the resolution of environmental crises. No longer is it sufficient for individuals and corporations simply to obey environmental regulations; engaged citizens must play an active role in identifying environmental problems and in mobilising resources to address them. But what does this mean in practice and what are the sociological implications?

For proponents of ecological or environmental citizenship, dealing with global environmental issues requires that collective responsibility is separated from the boundaries of the nation-state. Citizenship must be global and cosmopolitan. But it must also be localised through self-imposed control of consumption and involvement in community environmental initiatives.

At the same time, ‘devolution,’ ‘partnership,’ ‘empowerment,’ and ‘capacity building’ are the words and phrases governments use in seeking to address environmental problems within the institutional and philosophical framework of market liberalisation and economic rationalism. Preferred policy settings are those that focus less on regulation and more on creating conditions under which individuals and businesses are encouraged to take greater responsibility for themselves and their conduct. Social and environmental standards, environmental labelling and certification, corporate reporting, emissions trading, and so on, provide the means to extend market mechanisms into natural resource management. Planning, auditing, and collaborative learning provide ways to match these with demonstrable environmental benefits.

How are these trends to be understood? As:

- Democratisation in action;
- Experiments in neoliberal governance;
- Dimensions of ecological modernisation;
- Distractions from the inherent contradictions of consumer society; or
- Something else entirely?

For more information, please contact the Centre for Social Science Research at CQUniversity Australia via email at c4ssr@cqu.edu.au

XVII ISA World Congress Sustainability Plenary Sessions

Gothenburg, Sweden

11-17 July 2010

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development presented evidence documenting the degradation of the environment on a planetary scale, and concluded that the present pattern of development is environmentally unsustainable over the long run. The Commission proposed and popularized the concept of “sustainable development,” which it defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” After almost a quarter of a century of talking about sustainability, it is time to assess relations between sustainability discourse and sustainable practices, which implies examining relations between social constructions and nature’s constructions. In addition to the sessions being organized by the RC-24, this series of plenary sessions at the 2010 World Congress of the International Sociological Association will address those issues.

Sustainability Plenary 1: “Epistemic communities, knowledge regimes and interdisciplinary cooperation in the study of sustainable development and environmental change”

Sustainable development and environmental governance are high priority issues in the global agenda. Scientific and epistemic communities are playing a fast growing role in the analysis of these issues and in the definition of policy options to cope with them. The main reason for this growing influence is the fact that the problems which decision makers—both government and business, both domestic and international—must address are becoming less familiar and more complex. Decision makers are unable to gather new information anytime they should take a decision, therefore they rely on existing shared knowledge. Scientists and policy professionals, sharing value judgments and interpretative frameworks, form transnational epistemic communities, that are active at the national level as well and play a decisive role in fostering national governments cooperation in implementing the programs of international regimes. Knowledge regimes, i.e. the scientific disciplines and scientifically based assumptions which exercise a hegemonic influence on policy, have undergone significant changes; they have evolved through phases, with the social sciences joining the natural sciences and economics in the present ‘third phase’ of environmental policy or, to put it in different terms, with environmental issues being framed into the more general context of sustainable development. Environmental research has become more and more multidisciplinary and in a few cases interdisciplinary. The role of sociological theory and research is considered more and more a

basic requirement in this kind of studies, as it was affirmed by Rajendra Pachauri (chairman of the International Panel on Climate Change) at the First World Social Science Forum in Bergen. The aim of the session is to discuss the main contributions of sociological research to the multidisciplinary study of sustainable development and environmental change, and the role they can play in multilateral, mixed actor and multilevel governance of these issues.

Chair: Alberto Martinelli, University of Milan and former President of the ISA

Speakers:

sociologists:

- Tom Burns Emeritus Professor University of Uppsala and Stanford University
- Julia Guivant, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil, and Vice-President of RC-24 Environment and Society

non-sociologists:

- Lars-Erik Liljelund, former head of the Swedish EPA and now General-Director in the Prime Minister's office for Climate Issues and Baltic Sea Policy, Chair of the Management Board of the EU's European Environmental Agency, and member of China's Environmental Advisory Council
- Rajendra Kumar Pachauri, Chair of the International Panel on Climate Change or other member of IPCC.

Sustainability Plenary 2: "Responding to the new vulnerabilities of modernization and globalization"

The question of sustainability has arisen with the emergence of the technological compression of time and space, globalization, the depletion of resources on a planetary level, and the use of the oceans and atmosphere as waste dumps on a vast scale. A particularly important problem that affects all others consists of global climate change resulting from human activities. Whether societies will respond to emerging vulnerabilities by constructing mitigation, robustness, adaptation, and resilience remains an open question. Is the contemporary modern age a period characterized by the long incubation of a human-made disaster? What incites sustainable social practices and what constitutes obstacles to them in this context of modernization and globalization?

Chair: Hans Joas, University of Erfurt, Germany

Speakers:

sociologists

- Dayong Hong, Renmin University, China, President of Chinese Sociological Association Committee of Population and Environment
- Jeffrey Broadbent, Institute for Global Studies, University of Minnesota USA and Director of the International Comparative Study of Societal Reactions to Global Climate Change (COMPON)

non-sociologist

- Awaiting confirmation. Klaus Töpfer was the minister of environmental affairs in Germany from 1987 to 1994 and, from 1998-2006, the director of UNEP, the environmental program of the United Nations, in Nairobi. He has recently been appointed director of a new Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Potsdam

Sustainability Plenary 3: "Reason and Risk"

Human reason has been depicted as the ultimate resource that bestows the power to socially construct substitutes when needed as physical resources become depleted. Is this path to sustainability a mirage? Reason has also increased risk by unleashing dangerous and perhaps irreversible new dynamics of nature. Yet reason is in addition the ultimate basis of foresight that enables humans to attain safety by mitigating the risk of degrading the natural environment future generations will need. Will institutions be constructed to make a triage of technologies and commodities to reduce risk and promote sustainability, and what will these institutions look like? Or will societies accept risk in order to maintain consumption aspirations, and overstate their capacity to assess the risk of nature's backlash in a modern form of hubris?

Chair: Raymond Murphy, University of Ottawa, Canada

Speakers:

sociologists

- Ortwin Renn, Professor of Environmental Sociology and Technology Assessment at the University of Stuttgart, Germany. He is the author of *Risk governance: Coping with Uncertainty in a Complex World* (London: Earthscan, 2008).
- Dana R. Fisher, Columbia University USA, Secretary of the Environment and Society Research Committee (RC-24). She has published *National Governance and the Global Climate Change Regime* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), and *Activism, Inc.* (Stanford University Press, 2006).

non-sociologist

- Awaiting confirmation. Tony McMichael, Professor, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University, Honorary Professor in Climate Change and Human Health at the University of Copenhagen, Honorary Fellow of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, President of the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology. Author of many articles and co-author of the book *Climate Change and Human Health: Risks and Responses*.

Sustainability Plenary 4: "Sustainability of What?"

Reflection about environmental problems has raised the issue of what can and will be sustained. Some social structures are not worth sustaining: poverty, racism, environmental injustice, repressive systems of governance, etc. This plenary session will examine the dark side of sustainability. It explores the deficiencies of the concept of sustainability as it has become popularized in the public at large and in government and business circles.

Chair: Ari Sitas, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Speakers:

sociologists

- Michael Redclift, University of London. He was the 2002-2006 winner of the ISA-RC-24 Frederick H. Buttel Award for excellence in environmental sociology and has done extensive research in Latin America.
- Jacklyn Cock, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She is the author of *The War Against Ourselves: Nature, Power and Justice* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2007)

non-sociologist

- Awaiting confirmation. Vandana Shiva is an Indian physicist and environmentalist. She is one of the main contributors to the ecofeminist movement

Sustainability Plenary 5: “Sociology on the move: Incorporating long-term time frames and nature’s dynamics into sociological analysis”

The concept of sustainability constitutes, above all, a challenge to look beyond the habitus of present desires and to broaden perspectives to include the needs of future generations on a finite planet. Since future generations do not just include the generation of grandchildren, it implies the incorporation of the long-term time frame of the archeologist into sociology but projected into the future: will human societies be prospering in double the historical period five thousand years from now, or will they have collapsed? The issue of sustainability also challenges sociology to abandon its comfortable predisposition of bracketing biophysical dynamics out of the analysis and prompts it to examine the sociocultural in context, that is, to study social action in interaction with the non-social action of non-humans. What conceptual, theoretical, and methodological advances does all this require?

Chair: Emma Porio, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

Speakers:

- Ulrich Beck, Professor, Munich Ludwig-Maximilian University and London School of Economics, author of *Risk Society*, *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk*, *The Reinvention of Politics*, *Democracy without Enemies*, *World Risk Society*, *What is Globalisation?*, *The Brave New World of Work*, *Power in the Global Age*, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, and *World at Risk*.
- Raymond Murphy, University of Ottawa, Canada and President of the Environment and Society Research Committee (RC-24). He is the author of *Sociological Theories of Education* and *Social Closure*. More recently he has analyzed ecological irrationalities resulting from the modern process of rationalization in *Rationality and Nature* and explored their implications for the discipline of sociology in *Sociology and Nature*. He has just published *Leadership in Disaster: Learning for a Future with Global Climate Change*.
- Marina Fischer-Kowalski, Director of the Institute for Social Ecology at Klagenfurt University, Austria. With H. Haberl, she recently published *Socioecological Transitions and Global Change: Trajectories of Social Metabolism and Land Use* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007).

Unlike the first four plenaries, there are only sociologists as speakers in this last plenary session because this is where sociologists will reflect on the broader implications for their own discipline of the possibilities i) that the present pattern of modern, technologically based, consumer societies may not be environmentally sustainable over the long run, and ii) that sustainability will require that new relations be intentionally established between social constructions and nature’s construction.

For more information on the sustainability plenary sessions, see http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2010/plenary_theme_2.htm

Journals, Volumes, and Calls for Submissions/Participation

Nature and Culture, a refereed interdisciplinary journal exploring the relationships of human activity with the natural world, published its Winter 2009 issue on a Special Symposium on “The Ecology of Shrinkage:”

Table of Contents, Volume 4, Number 3, Winter 2009:

Introduction: The Ecology of Shrinkage

Rink, Dieter; Kabisch, Sigrun

Shrinking Cities: Causes and Effects of Urban Population Losses in the Twentieth Century

Rieniets, Tim

Demographic Change: Impacts on Rural Landscapes

Heiland, Stefan; Spielmans, Silke; Demuth, Bernd

Wilderness: The Nature of Urban Shrinkage? The Debate on Urban Restructuring and Restoration in Eastern Germany

Rink, Dieter

Review Essay: Can We? The Audacity of Environmental Hope

Bell, Michael M.

In March 2010, Volume 5, Number 1 will be published focusing on a Special Symposium on the “Reframing Floods”

Reframing Floods: Proposals and Politics

Anna Wesselink and Jeroen Warner

Reframing Poly-rational Floodplains: Land Policy for Large Areas for Temporary Emergency Retention

Thomas Hartmann

Leadership in Policy Innovation: A Conceptual Map

Peter Scholten

Reframing Floods: The Consequences for Urban Riverfront Developments in North West Europe

Jeuf Spits, Barrie Needham, Toine Smits, and Twan Brinkhof

Integration through Compartmentalization? Pitfalls of “Poldering” in Flood Action Plan 20, Central Bangladesh

Jeroen Warner

Social-ecological Systems Governance: From Paradigm to Management Approach

Niki Frantzeskaki, Jill Slinger, Heleen Vreugdenhil, and Els van Daalen

Evolution of River Management: Up to Integrated and Beyond?

Menno Straatsma and Reinier de Nooij

For more information on the journal, contact Melanie Heyde, Managing Editor, *Nature and Culture*, Department of Urban and Environmental Sociology, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, Permoserstr. 15, 04318 Leipzig, Germany; E-mail: nature.culture@ufz.de, Phone: 49 (341) 235 1746; Fax: 49 (341) 235 1836.

Announcements

J. David Tàbara of the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (IEST) and the Institut de Ciència i Tecnologia Ambientals (ICTA) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Barcelona, Spain won an award from the EU Conference, “Sustainable Development: a

challenge for European Research,” in Brussels 26-28 May 2009. The paper was entitled “Integrated Climate Governance and Sustainable Development.”

For a copy of the paper, go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/sd/conference/2009/index_en.cfm?pg=programme-details&show=ps21#ps21

Environmental Sociology Discussed in *Nature Magazine*.

A number of RC-24 members were interviewed for a piece that discusses social scientific research on climate change. “The wisdom of crowds: climate change is inherently a social problem—so why have sociologists been so slow to study it?” was published as part of the Nature Reports Climate Change series. The article is available at:

<http://www.nature.com/climate/2009/0908/full/climate.2009.73.html>

Recent Member Publications (in alphabetical order)

Hellmuth Lange and Lars Meier (Editors). 2009. *The New Middle Classes: Globalizing Lifestyles, Consumerism and Environmental Concern*. Springer Verlag GmbH. ISBN: 978-1-4020-9937-3

The new middle classes of developing countries are held responsible for boosting extremely resource-intensive lifestyles beyond the OECD-world thus thwarting ongoing efforts to attain a more sustainable future. But how homogeneous are their consumption patterns and why should not globalization include the extension of environmental concern, too?

"The New Middle Classes" challenges a narrow understanding of lifestyles and consumption by analyzing the issue not only in terms of attitudes and preferences but of socio-economic features and governmental policies, too.

Original contributions from internationally renowned researchers bring fresh multidisciplinary insights in both theoretical and empirical respect.

"The New Middle Classes" will be of interest mainly to sociologists, political scientists, human geographers, and anthropologists

For more information, see:

<http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/social+sciences%2C+general/book/978-1-4020-9937-3>

Michael R. Redclift and Graham Woodgate. 2010. *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology, Second Edition*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Acclaim for the first edition:

'The scope of the volume is vast and, overall, the Handbook amounts to an almost encyclopaedic reference text for scholars of environmental questions across the social sciences, be they in sociology, geography, political science or wherever.'

– Neil Ward, *Environmental Politics*

'Each author writes with a distinctive style, yet the work flows well because the editors selected recognized scholars with outstanding credentials. Academic libraries, especially those serving a strong social science community, will find this work a worthwhile addition. Professors of sociology and environmental studies could use the essays for additional readings and reviews.'

– Marjorie H. Jones, *American Reference Books*

'This International Handbook is an important addition to the growing concern and publication in the field of environmental sociology. Certainly any serious scholar in the field should find this edited reference work of interest. . .'

– John J. Hartman, *International Social Science Review*

Contributors include:

W.M. Adams, B. Ambrose-Oji, I. Bárcena Hinojal, T. Benton, R. Bryant, F.H. Buttel, C.N. Buzinde, J. Carmin, T. Dietz, R.E. Dunlap, A. Escobar, J.B. Foster, M. Goodman, N. Haenn, J. Hannigan, E. Hinton, M. Kousis, R. Lago Aurrekoetxea, S. Lockie, D. Manuel-Navarrete, A.P.J. Mol, R. Murphy, B.C. Parks, M.R. Redclift, J.T. Roberts, E.A. Rosa, W. Sachs, J.-G. Vaillancourt, G. Woodgate, S. Yearley

For more information, go to www.e-elgar.com

Eugene A. Rosa, Andreas Diekmann, Thomas Dietz, and Carlo C. Jaeger. 2009. *Human Footprints on the Global Environment: Threats to Sustainability*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Contents:

1. Global Transformations: PaSSAGE to a New Ecological Era--Eugene A. Rosa and Thomas Dietz
2. World Risk Society as Cosmopolitan Society: Ecological Questions in a Framework of Manufactured Uncertainties----Ulrich Beck

3. Human Driving Forces of Global Change: Dominant Perspectives--Thomas Dietz, Eugene A. Rosa, and Richard York
4. Progress in the Study of Land Use/Cover Change and the Outlook for the Next Decade--Emilio F. Moran
5. The Effectiveness of International Environmental Regimes--Oran R. Young
6. Uncommon Ground: Critical Perspectives on Common Property--Bonnie J. McCay and Svein Jentoft
7. Vulnerability of Coupled Human-Ecological Systems to Global .Environmental Change--Jeanne X. Kasperson, Roger E. Kasperson, and B. L. Turner II
8. Human Dimensions of Coupled Human-Natural Systems: A Look Backward and Forward--Eugene A. Rosa and Thomas Dietz

We also note that the cover is based on a sculpture, "Biosfear I" by Gene Rosa.

For more information, go to <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=11926>

Dorceta E. Taylor. 2009 *The Environment and the People in American Cities, 1600s-1900s: Disorder, Inequality and Social Change*. Duke University Press.

In *The Environment and the People in American Cities*, Dorceta E. Taylor provides an in-depth examination of the development of urban environments, and urban environmentalism, in the United States. Taylor focuses on the evolution of the city, the emergence of elite reformers, the framing of environmental problems, and the perceptions of and responses to breakdowns in social order, from the seventeenth century through the twentieth. She demonstrates how social inequalities repeatedly informed the adjudication of questions related to health, safety, and land access and use. While many accounts of environmental history begin and end with wildlife and wilderness, Taylor shows that the city offers important clues to understanding the evolution of American environmental activism.

Taylor traces the progression of several major thrusts in urban environmental activism, including the alleviation of poverty; sanitary reform and public health; safe, affordable, and adequate housing; parks, playgrounds, and open space; occupational health and safety; consumer protection (food and product safety); and land use and urban planning. At the same time, she provides a historical analysis of the ways race, class, and gender shaped experiences and perceptions of the environment as well as environmental activism and the construction of environmental discourses. Illuminating connections between the social and environmental conflicts of the past and those of the present, Taylor describes the displacement of people of color in early America, the cozy relationship between middle-class environmentalists and the business community, and the continuous resistance against environmental inequalities on the part of ordinary residents from marginal communities.

For more information, go to www.dukeupress.edu/

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For more information, Please consult the RC-24 Website at:

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 - Resources
 - Statues
-

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