



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

On the disSection of Environmental Sociology and Technology

Allan Schnaiberg

Fred Buttel has written an eloquent argument, framed in the history of the Section, to drop "Technology" from our section name. I want to reject Fred's solution, despite the fact that my Anaheim address (Schnaiberg 2002) pointed out how little the Section's members had done in exploring the interface between technological change and socio-environmental processes. Instead, I want to encourage members to do more on technology, and not merely ignore it through changing the Section name.

Ironically, I had earlier argued vigorously (Schnaiberg 1986) against the original name change. To be fair, I am no longer sure what I argued then, but I think I feared that the shift to focusing on technological change would distract us from looking at the political-economic processes I had earlier laid out as the *treadmill of production* (Schnaiberg 1980). I still adhere to the major themes of that analysis, but I have a different view of the importance of technological change in understanding the social distributional features of both environmental problems and

environmental regulation.

Perhaps this is best articulated in the recent work I have done collaboratively (Weinberg et al 2000) on urban recycling programs. A central feature of that analysis is the displacement of labor-intensive community programs that were designed to achieve both environmental goals and greater socioeconomic fairness. With encouragement from the cost-conscious city planners in the Chicago area, these labor-intensive technologies were essentially displaced by a system of great capital intensity, and Dickensian conditions for the sorting workers in the new facilities. Moreover, in the course of this technological change, recycling shifted from an environmentally and socially conscious program into a commodified industry. The central parameters of the latter are costs and profits, and only materials generating profits are going to be recycled in the future. Moreover, because of the major investments of capital in these new technologies, there will be much resistance from the major firms

involved to transform recycling into a more socio-environmental program.

Interestingly, I note the recycling example because it so well illustrates an environmental sociology that doesn't do the difficult research of probing the interface between technological change, socioeconomic distributional changes, and the ecological outcomes of these processes. Thus, for example, some of our members take "recycling" as the major indicator for household's "environmental behavior," without exploring either the environmental or political consciousness of the actors involved. Likewise, many of the differences in goals and means of environmental movement organizations center on how they propose to relate to existing and proposed technological investments. The fact is that many of our members, like many of the organizational members, have a very limited understanding of how these technological investments are protected by a variety of political-economic mechanisms (such as Enron's use of the Cheney energy task force to pro-

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Committees, 2001-2002

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Steve Kroll-Smith, Chair
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Telecommunications: J. Timmons
Roberts and Eric Kostello

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Diane Sicotte, Diane Bates, & Aaron
McCrigh

Liaison: Lori Peek, Timmons Roberts,
and Mary Deming

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

In response to Fred Buttel's provocative piece from the Winter issue, Allan Schnaiberg makes the case for keeping the E&T Section name and broadening the work. Your comments on this issue will be welcomed for future newsletters. Let's keep the discussion going!

WONDERING HOW TO PASS ALONG YOUR NEWS AND INFORMATION TO YOUR E&T COLLEAGUES?

THIS IS THE PLACE!

Your submissions for the newsletter are accepted anytime—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.—keep 'em coming!

For the next issue, topics related to the Chicago meetings are especially welcome.



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

Environment, Technology, and Society Newsletter

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Publication Schedule: ET&S is published quarterly. The deadline for submissions for the next (Summer) issue is June 1. If at all possible, please submit text items electronically, as this greatly facilitates the newsletter production process. Articles on current research that can be represented graphically on the front page are especially sought.

ET&S is printed on recycled paper.



The Environment and Technology Section on the Internet:

Listserv: Envtecsoc

To subscribe, send an email to:
listserv@csf.colorado.edu with the
message text:
sub envtecsoc youremailaddress

Resources: The listserv archives and additional resources for environmental sociologists:

<http://csf.colorado.edu/envtecsoc>

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

mote an expansionary energy policy, despite the fact that the company was already in deep financial trouble).

So, with the full 15 years of research and reflection that originally undergirded my opposition to the "technology" part of our name, I now argue passionately to retain the name, and for us to actually do the relevant research on the drivers of technological change, and on how they produce distinctive social and environmental outcomes.

References

Schnaiberg, Allan. 2002. "Reflections on my 25 years before the mast of the Environment and Technology

section of the ASA." *Organization & Environment* 15 (1): 30-41.

Schnaiberg, Allan. 1986. "What's in a name? (More than you might think)." *Environmental Sociology* 45 Summer: 4-5.

Schnaiberg, Allan. 1980. *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Weinberg, Adam, David Pellow & Allan Schnaiberg. 2000. *Urban Recycling and the Search for Sustainable Community Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

2001 E&T Section Business Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2001

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Loren Lutzenhiser. Secretary-Treasurer, Ken Gould presented the minutes of last year's business meeting, which were approved pending the correction of minor typographical errors. J. Timmons Roberts provided a report on the stimulating and productive PEWS-E&T mini-conference on globalization and environment. Ken Gould reported on the Section budget. He reported estimated expenditures of \$2,350 for the 25th anniversary reception, and a contribution of \$500 toward the PEWS-E&T mini-conference. He also reported that, with some generous individual member donations, the section will break even this year, but will have spent the budget surplus generated by Bill Fruedenburg 10 years earlier. The Section awarded \$200.00 to the winner of the Olsen Student Paper.

Three awards were presented at the meeting. Ken Gould presented the Distinguished Contribution Award to J. Steven Picou of the University of South Alabama, and Allan Schnaiberg presented the Boguslaw Award to David Pellow of the University of Colorado-Boulder. The Outstanding Student Paper Award went to Michael Mascarenhas of Michigan State University.

Susan Roschke received a standing ovation for her work as Editor of the section's newsletter, *Environment, Technology, and Society*. She reminded all that contributions to the newsletter are strongly encouraged.

The Chair reported that this year the Section was allotted three regular and 12 roundtable sessions. He also noted that Adam Weinberg organized three additional sessions for us this year. David Pellow has contacted the

section on Collective Behavior about organizing joint sessions with them next year. The Chair also reported that E&T Section sessions will be on the first day of the ASA meetings in Chicago in 2002. Bill Fruedenburg noted that the Rural Sociology meetings will be held in conjunction with the ASA meetings in 2002, and that we can gain access to additional sessions through the Rural Sociology meetings.

The Nominations Committee reported on recent personnel changes. Phil Brown is serving as Chair-Elect. Tammy Lewis and Lori Hunter are serving as members of Council. Leaving Council are David Pellow and Stella Capek. Next year we will need to fill two Council slots.

The Chair noted that our section membership has roughly a 120-person turnover rate, and indicated that solidifying membership would be beneficial to the section. Rik Scarce noted openings for member participation on Membership, Nominations, and awards committees. J. Timmons Roberts noted that committees are not much work and that graduate students are welcome to serve on them.

The meeting ended with several members making announcements about upcoming conferences, jobs openings at various campuses, and the availability of the remaining 25th Anniversary E&T buttons.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth A. Gould,
Secretary-Treasurer

Claire W. Gilbert will no longer be publishing *Blazing Tattles*. Unfulfilled subscriptions are being taken over by a very fine publication, *Earth Island Journal*, put out by the Earth Island Institute. In the past, The *EIJ* and *BT* have had many common interests and at times published each other's articles. A complete set of eleven years of *Blazing Tattles* may still be obtained.

But, "retirement" will not be without projects... Gilbert has at least two books in the works—one on the global ecological damage of the Kuwait oilfires which is still being covered up; and the other about how she recovered from brain damage and Chemical Injury/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. She is also working as an investigative journalist concerning a scientific blunder—awarding a Nobel Prize for a mistaken theory claiming that BSE (Mad Cow Disease or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) is transmissible, when it is not transmissible but it is inducible. Last but not

least, she seeks to have her ecological garden in Tampa authenticated as a "Certified Florida Yard."

Gilbert has been interested in the environment since she was a young mother who read a book (nearly 50 years ago) called "Road to Survival." Later, she was inspired by watching the Hudson River roll by when she lived in Manhattan.

Gene Rosa, Washington State University, has been appointed to a three-year term on the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council Board on Radioactive Waste Management, one of the longest standing committees of the National Academy of Sciences.

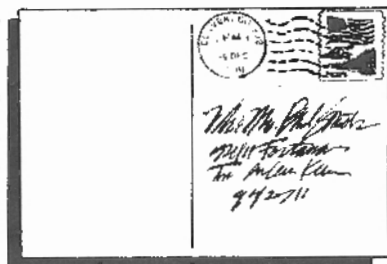
Gene Rosa is also an Invited group leader for the *Workshop on Reinventing the Use of Materials* at Princeton University.



Envirosoc Students Go to Washington for Labor and Environment Miniconference

"Labor and Environment: A Fragile or Enduring Coalition?" was the theme as Timmons Roberts' Environmental Sociology class from the College of William and Mary met Tammy Lewis' Social Movements class from Muhlenberg College at the W&M Washington office on March 15th. Both classes read the book, "Coalitions Across the Class Divide: Lessons from the Labor, Peace, and Environmental Movements" by Fred Rose, and an article on the subject by Brian Obach of SUNY-New Paltz. The classes met to hear Rose and Obach speak and to hear environmental and labor activists debate the successes and difficulties of coalitions between the two groups.

The focus was on the "tough issues" for the coalition, such as CAFE auto fuel mileage standards, drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the Bush Administration's position on climate change. Panelists included activists who had played a role in forming the "Seattle Coalition" during the World Trade Organization protests and have been working on the difficult coalition for decades. These included labor activists, such as John Howley from the Service Employees International Union and Jane Perkins formerly of the AFL-CIO. Environmental activists were represented by Brent Blackwelder, the President of Friends of the Earth and Dan Seligman of the Sierra Club. Greg LeRoy, the President of Good Jobs First, is pushing for "Smart Growth" that labor and environmentalists can both favor, by focusing on union job losses due to the relocation of industries out of center cities. There was consensus on the importance and difficulty of the coalition work, with all agreeing on the need for more contact and a focus by environmentalists on a "just transition" which takes care of displaced workers who might lose their jobs as we move to a more sustainable society. The day allowed excellent contact between the students and those on the front line in the difficult effort to forge a durable blue/green alliance.



Conferences and Calls for Papers

Conference on Ecolabels and the Greening of the Food Market

Date: November 7-9, 2002

Place: Boston, Massachusetts (USA)

Organizers: Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University

Contact: Willie Lockeretz, willie.lockeretz@tufts.edu

Web: <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/conted/ecolabels>

Deadline for submitting an abstract: May 17, 2002

Special Issue of IAPA on Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

Announcing "The Practice of Social Impact Assessment," a special issue of *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* (IAPA), the official journal of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). The special issue will bring together case studies where a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) was actually completed on a plan, policy, programme or project. Deadline for manuscripts in electronic form is September 1, 2002.

For details contact Guest Editor, Rabel J. Burdge, Department of Sociology and Environmental Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, 98225-9081, USA. Phone 360-650-7251 or 360-676-9892. E-mail burdge@cc.wvu.edu or Rabel.Burdge@wvu.edu. For style guidelines go to www.iaia.org or consult a recent copy of IAPA.

ETS Section Members Are Organizing for Pre-ASA Social Movements Conference

ASA's Collective Behavior and Social Movement Section is holding a mini-conference, right before the ASA, August 14-15 at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN (about 1.5-2 hours away from Chicago). The conference theme is "Authority In Contention: Interdisciplinary Perspectives." Please visit the conference website for more details: www.nd.edu/~dmyers/workshop/

Several of us who are working on environmental health issues think this will be a very valuable place to examine social movements in health, the environment, and the combined area of environmental health. These are fields where social movement theory and scholarship have not focused much attention, despite the importance of social movements in health and the environment. Phil Brown (Brown University), Steve Zavestoski (Providence Col-

lege), Sabrina McCormick (Brown University), and Brian Mayer (Brown University) will present a paper, "Health Social Movements: Uncharted Territory in Social Movement Research." We will also lead a series of workshops on this subject that will extend over both days.

Conference Goals and Format

As the conference organizers view it, participants will explore the relationship among diverse forms of institutional and extra-institutional authority that are implicated in political mobilization and collective action. Although most recent work suggests that it is the state, polity, or institutionalized political arena that is fundamental, others would ask: Why is it only the state or polity that constitutes the significant reference point for the conceptualization of movements? What is to be done conceptually and analytically with collective challenges outside of traditional political arenas, such as retreatist and communal movements, movements of self-help and -renewal, lifestyle movements, not to mention the array of religious movements? What about recent movements that target corporate entities, the media, cultural producers, or civic, community or professional associations (the recent protests against the Boy Scouts is a case in point)? How should we understand movements challenging emerging transnational entities such as the WTO, regional trade alliances, international funding organizations or United Nations agencies? Do concepts that have been used to illuminate movements targeting the state also illuminate other forms of collective action, or do we need new or different concepts to understand these forms of mobilization?

The conference will have three levels of organization:

- 1) Plenary panels that feature scholars currently active in social movement research as well as scholars from other subfields and disciplines.
- 2) Thematic workgroups on a variety of specialized topics. The workgroups are meant to provide more specialized and fluid forums for discussion among people working on similar clusters of problems. They will be organized around short discussion statements rather than formal papers.
- 3) An interactive website consisting of thematic listserves as well as statements from participants.

How We Got Involved

In our Contested Environmental Illnesses Project, we have been very focused on social movements. We have been examining disputes over

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environmental factors in asthma, breast cancer, and Gulf War illnesses, as well as toxics reduction and precautionary principle approaches that seek to reduce people's exposure to the substances that may affect their health.

Health social movements are very important components of our health care system, and a major force for change in our larger society. They differ from most other social movements in three ways: 1) they introduce the biological body to social movements in previously unknown ways, 2) they typically include challenges to existing medical/scientific knowledge and practice, and 3) they often involve activists collaborating with scientists and health professionals in pursuing treatment, prevention, research, and expanded funding. Many of these same issues apply to environmental sociology as well.

It is surprising that the broader discussion of social movements does not take into account social movements in health and environmental matters. A significant number of medical and environmental sociologists have written about these movements, but these have involved articles or books on individual health social movements, rather than any attempt to develop over-arching theoretical and analytical frameworks for the study of health social

movement. It is also striking how absent health and environmental social movements are from social movement scholarship.

Recent attention to social movements in health and the environment has grown. The 2001 conference of the Society for the Social Study of Science featured a stream of four sessions on social movements, most of which were health and environmental social movements, organized by Adele Clarke and Steve Epstein. A "Medical Social Movements" symposium will be held in Sweden in Fall 2002.

We think that E&T members will benefit from engaging with other people doing work in social movements, and that we have much to offer in terms of our rich experience studying these movements. Native people's struggles against dams and mining, opposition to oil drilling in Alaska, and toxic waste and environmental justice activists fighting for safer communities are just a few examples of the social movements we study in our field. We have a lot to offer and a lot to learn. Let's bring our concerns to this larger sociological audience.

In addition to contacting the conference organizers through their website listed above, ETS members can contact Phil Brown (phil_brown@brown.edu) or Steve Zavestoski (szavesto@providence.edu).



Chair's Corner



For what it's worth (and we should hope it's worth a lot), I recently received the following from Charles Camic and Franklin Wilson, the editors of ASR.

"The American Sociological Review invites manuscripts from members of the Section on Environment and Technology. ASR's mission is to publish the best contemporary scholarship from all areas of sociology. Without a healthy volume of

submissions on environment and technology, this goal is seriously compromised. We thus encourage members of the Section on Environment and Technology to submit their work for possible publication in ASR.

The ASR's Deputy Editors and the members of the editorial board ... comprise the largest and most intellectually diverse editorial team in ASR's history. The editorial team joins the Editors in welcoming a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches and contributions from all substantive areas of the discipline. Also, ASR's editorial policies are highly flexible as to form and can accommodate manuscripts of various lengths and styles...

As a result of these editorial arrangements, we hope to publish more than our fair share of the best contemporary work on environment and technology. We therefore strongly encourage Section members to submit their manuscripts to the American Sociological Review."

So there you have it.

Loren L

Member Publications and Other Publications of Interest

Ali, S. Harris. 2002. "Dealing with Toxicity in the Risk Society: The Case of the Hamilton, Ontario Plastics Recycling Fire". *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 39(1):29-48

Beamish, Thomas D. 2002. *Silent Spill: The Organization of an Industrial Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Series title: Urban and Industrial Environments.)

In the Guadalupe Dunes, 170 miles north of Los Angeles and 250 miles south of San Francisco, an oil spill persisted unattended for 38 years. Over the period 1990-1996, the national press devoted 504 stories to the Exxon Valdez accident and a mere nine to the Guadalupe spill—even though the latter is most likely the nation's largest recorded oil spill. Although it was known to oil workers in the field where it originated, to visiting regulators, and to locals who frequented the beach, the Guadalupe spill became troubling only when those involved could no longer view the sight and smell of petroleum as normal. This book recounts how this change in perception finally took place after nearly four decades and what form the response took. Taking a sociological perspective, Thomas Beamish examines the organizational culture of the Unocal Corporation (whose oil fields produced the leakage), the interorganizational response of regulatory agencies, and local interpretations of the event. He applies notions of social organization, social stability, and social inertia to the kind of environmental degradation represented by the Guadalupe spill. More important, he uses the Guadalupe Dunes case as the basis for a broader study of environmental "blind spots." He argues that many of our most pressing pollution problems go unacknowledged because they do not cause large-scale social disruption or dramatic visible destruction of the sort that triggers responses. Finally, he develops a model of social accommodation that helps explain why human systems seem inclined to do nothing as trouble mounts.

Canan, Penelope and Nancy Reichman. 2002. *Ozone Connections: Expert Networks in Global Environmental Governance*. Greenleaf. <http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com/catalogue/ozone.htm>. You can request a review copy or inspection copy from this site.

The book argues that we need to understand how the implementation of complex global environmental agreements depends on the construction and exploitation of social connections among experts who act collectively to define solutions to environmental problems. This highly original and provoking thesis synthesizes some of the more exciting social science concepts and methods, while refining our basic understanding of environmental social change and providing policy-makers with concrete success factors to replicate. This book will be essential reading for academics in the fields of sociology, political science, international relations, network studies, human communication, motivation, collaboration and leadership, as well as the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of environmental studies. Businesses will also find many applications for practical use. Finally, the many directly transferable lessons from ozone-layer protection make this book a key addition to the growing literature on climate change.

Caron, Cynthia M. 2002. "Examining Alternatives: The Energy Services Delivery Project in Sri Lanka." *Energy for Sustainable Development* 6(1): 37-45.

Cohen, Maurie J. and Joseph Murphy. 2001. *Exploring Sustainable Consumption: Social Science and Environmental Policy*. New York: Elsevier.

Dobkowski, Michael N. and Isidor Wallimann, eds. 2002. *On the Edge of Scarcity: Environment, Resources, Population, Sustainability, and Conflict*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, \$18.95

Dunlap, Riley E., Frederick H. Buttel, Peter Dickens and August Gijswijt, eds. 2002. *Sociological Theory and The Environment*, Rowman and Littlefield (ISBN 0-7425-0186-8 pb, 0-7425-0185-X cl). Information on the book (including copies of the Preface and the Introductory chapter) is available at: <http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com/>.

York, Richard, Eugene A. Rosa, and Thomas Dietz. 2002. "Bridging Environmental Science with Environmental Policy: Plasticity of Population, Affluence, and Technology." *Social Science Quarterly* 83:19-34.

Fischer-Kowalski, Marina, Eugene A. Rosa, and Rolf Peter Sieferle (eds.) 2002. Special issue of *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* on "Nature, Society, and History: The Long-Term Dynamics of Social Metabolism" volume 14.

Getches, David and David N. Pellow. 2002. "Beyond 'Traditional' Environmental Justice: How Large a Tent?" Pp. 3-30 In Kathryn Mutz, Gary Bryner, and Douglas Kenney, eds. *Justice and Natural Resources: Concepts, Strategies, and Applications*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Hoffman, Andrew, and Marc Ventresca, eds. 2002. *Organizations, Policy and the Natural Environment: Institutional and Strategic Perspectives*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

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Member Publications, continued from page 7

Jones, Ellis, Ross Haenfler, and Brett Johnson (with Brian Klocke). 2001. *The Better World Handbook*. New Society Publishers. "A sociologically grounded guide for everyday actions that create a more just and sustainable world."

Mertig, A. G. and R. E. Dunlap. 2001. "Environmentalism: Preservation and Conservation," Pp. 4687-4693 in N. J. Smelser and P. B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 7. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Zavestoski, Stephen, Phil Brown, Meadow Linder, Sabrina McCormick and Brian Mayer. 2002. "Science, Policy, Activism and War: Defining the Health of Gulf War Veterans." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 27:171-205.

The papers presented at the special session on "25 Years of Environmental Sociology," organized by the ASA Section on Environment and Technology and held at the August, 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, have recently been published as a symposium in Organization & Environment, Vol. 15, March, 2002.

Loren Lutzenhiser, "Environmental Sociology: The Very Idea"

Riley E. Dunlap, "Environmental Sociology: A Personal Perspective on Its First Quarter Century"

Allan Schnaiberg, "Reflections on my 25 Years Before the Mast of the Environment and Technology Section"

Frederick H. Buttel, "Has Environmental Sociology Arrived?"

John Bellamy Foster, "Environmental Sociology and the Environmental Revolution: A 25th Anniversary Assessment"

***Special issue, American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 45, No. 9:
"Globalization, Governance and the Environment"***

Editors: David A. Sonnenfeld, Washington State University and Arthur P. J. Mol, Jr., Wageningen University

In the context of rapid economic globalization, radical changes in global geopolitics, and widespread adoption of free-market economics, major shifts and realignments in environmental governance have occurred over the past two decades. "Command-and-control" regulatory approaches have been criticized since the neoliberal counterrevolution of the late 1970s, and market- and civic-driven economic approaches - eco-taxes, "best practices" environmental management, green consumer activism, community-driven environmental regulation, and more collaborative models of environmental governance - have assumed a new visibility. Referred to in some quarters as "ecological modernization," such reform-oriented initiatives have provided the groundwork for considerable experimentation in environmental governance in northwestern Europe (and less so in North America) over the past two decades. Contributors to this symposium examine such new approaches to environmental governance from a variety of disciplinary, theoretical, and geographical perspectives. The volume begins with an essay and introductory article on globalization and the challenges of environmental governance. Other articles examine, respectively, experiences of environmental policy development in 30 advanced, transitional and developing countries around the world; new forms of environmental governance created in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); the effect of European integration on ecological modernization in Central and Eastern Europe; the alleged failure of regulation to stimulate environmental innovation in industrial technology; and the efforts of two of East Asia's high-growth economies - China and Taiwan - to integrate environmental considerations into economic policy making. The symposium concludes with the editors' synthesis of ideas and suggestions for further research.