

Environment, Technology and Society

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

SPRING 2007

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www.linfield.edu/soan/et/index.htm

Policy Research on Environmental Injustice

by David Naguib Pellow
Chair, Policy and Research Committee

This winter and spring have been a busy time for scholars working on issues of environmental inequality and environmental justice. In the span of three months, a number of major studies and reports were published that remind us that environmental inequality and racism are still with us and that the problems are worsening locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

In a local/regional study of environmental inequality in the San Francisco Bay Area, Manuel Pastor, James Sadd, and Rachel Morello-Frosch find that communities of color—especially those with high concentrations of low-income persons and/or Latino and Asian immigrant populations—face disproportionate exposure to industrial toxic releases and disproportionate cancer risks and respiratory hazards from air toxics concentrations in the region. The study argues that what little regulatory attention has been paid to communities suffering from environmental racism is largely the result of the efforts of grassroots community activists (i.e., the environmental justice movement).

With regard to environmental justice studies at the national scale, as part of its efforts to mark the twentieth anniversary of the 1987 *Toxic Wastes and Race* study (which found that race was the most important predictor of the location of the nation's commercial hazardous waste facilities), the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries commissioned a new study. Sociologists Robert Bullard, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha, and Beverly Wright are the principal authors of the *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty* report. This new study is the first national-level analysis using 2000 census data and distance-based methods to measure the degree of racial and socioeconomic disparities in the location of polluting facilities in the U.S. These new data and methods allow the researchers to improve upon earlier techniques, in that they were able to better match where people and hazardous sites are located. Some key findings:

* In 2000, the majority of persons in neighborhoods hosting hazardous facilities are people of color (host neighborhoods are defined as communities within 1.8 miles of a facility). People of color are 56% of the population in these neighborhoods, as compared to non-host areas, where people of color are 30%.

* Those neighborhoods hosting clusters of several hazardous facilities have higher percentages of people of color than communities without such clusters (69% versus 51%). Those areas containing clusters of facilities also contain populations experiencing high poverty rates.

* Not only do racial disparities in hazardous facility siting still exist, they have actually *intensified*, creating greater environmental inequalities today than reported in 1987. That is, in many parts of the nation, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders are more concentrated in neighborhoods hosting hazardous facilities than they were twenty years ago.

To address these continued and increasing disparities, the authors offer a number of policy recommendations, including a charge to the U.S. Congress to codify into law Executive Order 12898 “Federal Actions To Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” and a call to strengthen Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to allow a disparate impact test, rather than intent, to prove environmental discrimination. The authors also suggest that community redevelopment can be achieved through the establishment of tax increment finance funds and the development of community land trusts.

In a separate but related paper presented at the AAAS meetings this February, Paul Mohai takes on the “minority move in hypothesis”—the idea that perhaps environmental racism is the result of people of color moving into areas where hazardous industries are located, rather than the other way around. Using a longitudinal analysis of national data, Mohai puts this debate to rest by revealing that, more often than not, these facilities were located in communities that were already heavily nonwhite. Furthermore, in many cases, these disparities continued to widen after the facilities located in the community. Hazardous facilities are drawn to vulnerable populations and cluster in these neighborhoods.

Each of the above studies underscores that environmental racism is alive and well in the U.S. and that, paralleling what has occurred with class inequalities over the last several decades, environmental inequalities are widening at an alarming rate. These studies also reveal that immigrant populations (particularly Asian and Latinos) confront environmental racism as much as any other group. This finding speaks to ongoing concerns of the immigrant rights movement and suggests that advocates for that cause might build stronger bridges

with the environmental justice movement (and vice versa) to link concerns over human rights violations with the scourge of environmental racism. These studies also make it clear that we inhabit a fundamentally toxic and unsustainable society and that virtually no regulatory program in existence is equipped to challenge that reality. Accordingly, these researchers emphasize the critical role of grassroots social movements in mobilizing for transformative regulatory and industrial policy reform, and the importance of scholarship that uncovers and makes visible these inequalities and the struggles to combat them.

Sources:

Bullard, Robert, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha, and Beverly Wright. 2007. *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: Grassroots Struggles to Dismantle Environmental Racism in the United States*. Report prepared for the United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries. Cleveland, OH. February.

Mohai, Paul. 2007. Which Came First, People or Pollution? How Race and Socioeconomic Status Affect Environmental Justice. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) held in San Francisco, February 17.

Pastor, Manuel, James Sadd, and Rachel Morello-Frosch. 2007. *Still Toxic After All These Years: Air Quality and Environmental Justice in the San Francisco Bay Area*. Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community: University of California, Santa Cruz. February.



(Image courtesy of New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance)

ETS Awards: Call for Nominations

Distinguished Contribution Award

The Council of the section annually gives the award to a current section member for outstanding scholarship, service, and innovative teaching in the field of environmental sociology. To nominate a section member, please send a letter of recommendation (or e-mail) describing the nominee's contributions to the field, accompanied by the nominee's CV to:

Craig R. Humphrey
Department of Sociology
215 Oswald Tower
Penn State University, 16802

Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Award

This certificate is given annually to recognize an outstanding graduate student-authored paper accepted for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the ASA (The paper can be presented at any session or roundtable at ASA, not only an Environment and Technology Section session). The certificate is announced at the Section business meeting and the student will be presented a certificate acknowledging the honored paper. The recipient receives \$200 to help defray the cost of participating in the Meeting. Graduate students, and their advisors on their behalf, are encouraged to submit papers to this competition. The deadline for submitting papers is May 1, 2007. Send three copies to:

David Pellow
Professor, Department of Ethnic Studies, 0522
University of California, San Diego
Social Science Building, Room 201
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, CA 92093-0522
dpellow@ucsd.edu

Outstanding Publication Award

This award recognizes outstanding research in the sociology of the environment and technology. In alternate years we consider research published either in book or article form. This year the committee will consider series of thematically-related articles published from January 1, 2001, through December 31, 2006. The committee will consider self-nominations as well as nominations made by people other than the authors. It will not consider nominations made by publishers. To be eligible for consideration,

please send 3 copies of the works, along with a nomination letter, by May 1, 2007 to David Pellow.

dpellow@ucsd.edu

The Robert Boguslaw Award for Technology and Humanism

This award is given to a doctoral student or young investigator whose paper addresses technology and human affairs, social action and social change, conflicts over values, or innovative solutions to emerging social issues associated with technology. The honored work should address the concerns of ordinary people, rather than reflecting organizational or institutional agendas. Unpublished papers or articles published within the last two years are eligible. Candidates may either submit their own work or be nominated by someone else. The deadline for submitting papers is May 1, 2007. Please send three copies of the nominated work, along with a nomination letter to J. Timmons Roberts.

timmons.roberts@ouce.ox.ac.uk or jtrobe@wm.edu

Greening of the ASAs: Update

Dear ETS Members,

As I mentioned in a message to our membership list earlier this year, I finally received a response to the letter that Phil Brown and I sent to the ASA Executive Council in June 2005, following our Council's decision to encourage the ASA to "green" its practices at its annual meetings. We pointed out that a professional association our size leaves a sizable ecological footprint on the landscape, and we provided some best practices models used by other organizations and offered the expertise of our section to work with the ASA. The ASA deferred discussion until its February 2006 meeting, and only approved those minutes last August. When I followed up on it recently, Sally Hillsman of the ASA Executive Council apologized for the delay and invited us to work with the ASA on this issue through "a small working group of the Executive Office and the Section to begin a dialog."

We are now in the process of constituting the working group. My thanks to those who have volunteered to be involved in this project and expressed support for it. We should know more about this development soon, and I will keep you posted.

Stella M. Čapek

**Environmental Sociology
Graduate Research Internship Program at the
University of Colorado-Boulder**

by Lori Hunter (lori.hunter@colorado.edu)

This is the third article in a series on teaching issues offered by the ETS Teaching and Training Committee.

Like many social science departments, CU-Boulder's Sociology Department has fewer available funded Research Assistantships than there are graduate students interested in hands-on research experience outside their own dissertation work. Given the large number of environmental institutions and organizations in the Boulder area, we decided to develop an internship opportunity that would yield both academic credit and research experience for our Environmental Sociology graduate students.

We have developed a list of organizations that have expressed interest in working with graduate students, but the students themselves are responsible for identifying external collaborators and potential research topics. Organizations with whom our students have worked include the National Center for Atmospheric Research, Global Greengrants, and the Colorado People's Environmental and Economic Network.

The research is developed in conversation with an organizational liaison in order to ensure that the internship contributes to the organizational mission, research ongoing within the organization, and that mentoring responsibilities are clearly specified. Students then work collaboratively with CU faculty to ensure that the work meets standard disciplinary scientific criteria. A contract is developed, which includes a project timeline, and the number of credits to be earned (maximum six).

The program greatly enhances opportunities for Environmental Sociology graduate students to engage in applied research, with expected academic output, regardless of the availability of external and/or organizational funding. Simultaneously, it fosters linkages with participating organizations and the Sociology department more generally, potentially resulting in future collaborative efforts.



Conferences and Calls for Papers

**SOUTHERN RURAL SOCIOLOGY
SPECIAL ISSUE ON
Environmental Issues on the Mexican-U.S. Border**

Southern Rural Sociology, the official journal of the Southern Rural Sociological Association, announces a call for papers for a special issue on "Environmental Issues on the Mexican-U.S. Border." The Mexican-U.S. border has experienced extremely rapid population growth and industrialization over the last half century. This 2,000-mile border is one of the most dynamic border regions in the world and represents the starkest contrast in the abutting of the first- and third-world. Over the last half century, policies such as the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) along with the tremendous growth of agroindustry, manufacturing, and the population in the region have affected both the local population and the quality of the environment.

We seek original research manuscripts that contribute to understanding environmental issues on the Mexico-U.S. border. We are interested in manuscripts that examine the human and structural determinants and consequences of the deterioration of the environment in this region. We define the environment broadly to include diverse topics including air quality, water quality, uses of natural resources, pesticide use, soil salinity, groundwater mining, agricultural drainage, illegal dumping, public health, emissions of pollutants, solid and hazardous waste, and environmental racism to name a few. Authors should send four copies of the manuscript along with an electronic version (preferably in MS Word) to the Guest Co-Editors of the special issue by May 1, 2007.

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<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/aux/srsa/pages/about.html>
Journal of the Southern Rural Sociological Association

Sustainability Across the Curriculum Leadership Workshops

**July. 12-13 (Thurs-Fri), 2007
San Diego State University, CA**

AASHE, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, is pleased to invite participation in a two-day workshop for faculty leaders of all disciplines who wish to develop curriculum change programs around sustainability on their campuses.

Through an intensive two days of presentations, exercises, discussions, reflection, and planning, participants will become familiar with the philosophy of change in higher education developed through the Ponderosa Project at Northern Arizona University and adapted at Emory in the Piedmont Project. Participants will also experience a range of workshop strategies, hear local experts, enjoy outdoor place-based activities, and dialogue with faculty from around the country as they gain help in adapting this model to their own campus. In a supportive and stimulating environment, workshop members will reflect on their own roles in the transformation of higher education. Readings and materials will also be provided.

These highly successful workshops are led by Geoffrey Chase of San Diego State University and Peggy Barlett of Emory University. Peggy and Geoff are editors of *Sustainability on Campus: Stories and Strategies for Change*, published by MIT Press in 2004. Peggy and Geoff have many years of experience leading these kinds of workshops and have helped more than 200 faculty on several campuses revise courses in a wide array of disciplines.

Workshop tuition is \$350 for AASHE members and \$390 for non-members. Tuition covers snacks and lunches on both days of the workshop, handouts, materials, and an evening reception on the first day of the workshop.

Applications are due by May 18, 2007 and are available at:

<http://www.aashe.org/profdev/curriculum.php>



DISCCRS Conference

DISCCRS (pronounced "discourse") is an interdisciplinary initiative for recent Ph.D. graduates conducting research related to climate change and its impacts. The goal is to broaden research interests and establish a collegial peer network extending across the spectrum of natural and social sciences, humanities, mathematics, engineering and other disciplines related to climate change and its impacts. The initiative includes a public webpage, electronic newsletter, and annual symposia funded through '08.

DISCCRS III Symposium
<http://www.aslo.org/phd/discrposter.pdf>
September 10 - 17, 2007
Hawai'i Island
Application Deadline
April 30, 2007

Expenses: Airfare and on-site expenses are provided through NSF grant EAR-0435728 to Whitman College. Eligibility: Ph.D. requirements completed April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2007 in any discipline related to climate change and impacts. Recent Ph.D. graduates from all disciplines and countries are invited to join the DISCCRS network and apply to be a DISCCRS symposium scholar.

Thirty-six applicants will be selected by an interdisciplinary committee of research scientists. During the week participants will provide oral and poster presentations in plenary format, hone interdisciplinary communication and team skills, and discuss emerging research, societal and professional issues with each other and with established researchers invited to serve as mentors. Mentors are:

Kenneth H. Broad
<http://iri.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/staff?kbroad>

Charles Kolstad
<http://www.bren.ucsb.edu/people/usernew.asp?user=kolstad>

Susanne Moser
<http://www.isse.ucar.edu/moser/index.html>

Terry L. Root
<http://terryroot.stanford.edu>

Stephen H. Schneider
<http://stephenschneider.stanford.edu>

Contact: discrs@whitman.edu

Spatial Justice - Call for Papers

The debate on justice is crucial to democratic societies, at all scales. The context of academic rejection of metanarrative theories and the relativism associated with postmodern deconstruction has, however, undermined a rich engagement with this topic for some time. This process has been reinforced by the rise of various social movements (feminist, ecologist or anti-racist...) as well as the development of multiculturalism which has meant that a range of key political players have been confronted with differing concepts of what is "just" and "unjust". At the same time, in a rather vexing development, some ultra-liberal discourses are increasingly ignoring the issue of social justice. Paradoxically, social protest movements, deconstructivist intellectual movements and neo-liberal economics discourses have converged to contest the idea of a universal justice. This context forms the basis of our exploration of the notion of spatial justice.

This international interdisciplinary conference will take place on March 12, 13 and 14, 2008, at the University of Paris X-Nanterre, France, on the initiative of the Gecko Laboratory. This three-day conference will address the issue of Spatial Justice. Please send abstracts of no more than one page (in French or in English) to the following e-mail address: Philippe.Gervais-Lambony@u-paris10.fr

The deadline for proposals is April 30, 2007. Abstracts from a wide range of disciplines and professional affiliations are welcomed and contributions will be accepted in the form of presentations, round tables and posters.

With the support of :Gecko Laboratory (Géographie Comparée des Suds et des Nords, EA 375, Paris X University,France) Mosaïques Research Group (UMR LOUEST, CNRS/ Paris X University /EAPVS, France) UMR 5600, Environnement, Ville, Sociétés, CNRS-Jean Moulin University (Lyon III University, France) CUBES Laboratory (Centre for Urban and Built Environment Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa) Dipartimento di Pianificazione, Università luav di Venezia (Italy) UCLA Social Sciences Division (USA).

Conference organisers : F. Dufaux (Mosaïques-UMR LOUEST, University of Paris X-Nanterre), P. Gervais-Lambony (Gecko, University of Paris X), S. Lehman-Frisch (Mosaïques-UMR LOUEST, IUFM of Versailles), S. Moreau (Gecko and Laboratoire Etude Comparée des Pouvoirs, University of Marne-la-Vallée), M. Rubin (CUBES, Witwatersrand).

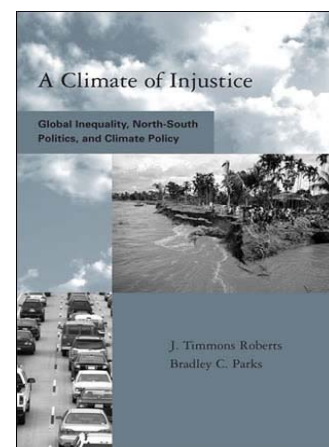
Publications

A Climate of Injustice Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy

J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley C. Parks

The global debate over who should take action to address climate change is extremely precarious, as diametrically opposed perceptions of climate justice threaten the prospects for any long-term agreement. Poor nations fear limits on their efforts to grow economically and meet the needs of their own people, while powerful industrial nations, including the United States, refuse to curtail their own excesses unless developing countries make similar sacrifices. Meanwhile, although industrialized countries are responsible for 60 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, developing countries suffer the "worst and first" effects of climate-related disasters, including droughts, floods, and storms, because of their geographical locations. In *A Climate of Injustice*, J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley Parks analyze the role that inequality between rich and poor nations plays in the negotiation of global climate agreements.

Roberts and Parks argue that global inequality dampens cooperative efforts by reinforcing the "structuralist" worldviews and causal beliefs of many poor nations, eroding conditions of generalized trust, and promoting particularistic notions of "fair" solutions. They develop new measures of climate-related inequality, analyzing fatality and homelessness rates from hydrometeorological disasters, patterns of "emissions inequality," and participation in international environmental regimes. Until we recognize that reaching a North-South global climate pact requires addressing larger issues of inequality and striking a global bargain on environment and development, Roberts and Parks argue, the current policy gridlock will remain unresolved.

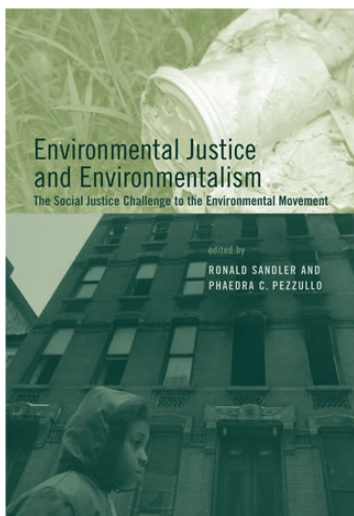


Environmental Justice and Environmentalism The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement

Edited by Ronald Sandler and Phaedra C. Pezzullo

Although the environmental movement and the environmental justice movement would seem to be natural allies, their relationship over the years has often been characterized by conflict and division. The environmental justice movement has charged the mainstream environmental movement with racism and elitism and has criticized its activist agenda on the grounds that it values wilderness over people. Environmental justice advocates have called upon environmental organizations to act on environmental injustice and address racism and classism in their own hiring and organizational practices, lobbying agenda, and political platforms. This book examines the current relationship between the two movements in both conceptual and practical terms and explores the possibilities for future collaboration.

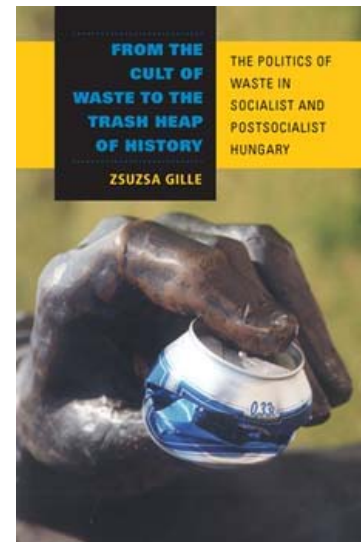
In ten original essays, contributors from a variety of disciplines consider such topics as the relationship between the two movements' ethical commitments and activist goals, instances of successful cooperation in U.S. contexts, and the challenges posed to both movements by globalization and climate change. They examine the possibility and desirability of one unified movement as opposed to two complementary ones by means of analyses and case studies; these include a story of asbestos hazards that begins in a Montana mine and ends with the release of asbestos insulation into the air of Manhattan after the collapse of the World Trade Center. This book, part of a necessary rethinking of the relationship between the two movements, shows that effective, mutually beneficial alliances can advance the missions of both.



FROM THE CULT OF WASTE TO THE TRASH HEAP OF HISTORY The Politics of Waste in Socialist and Postsocialist Hungary

Zsuzsa Gille

From *The Cult of Waste to the Trash Heap of History* advances a long overdue social theory of waste based on empirical research into Hungarian state socialism and post-Cold War capitalism, including the effects of the Eastern enlargement of the European Union.



Environmental Protest in Western Europe

Edited by
Christopher Rootes

The rise of environmentalism has been one of the more remarkable developments in the politics of western societies in recent decades. However, as environmental awareness has become more generalised, the forms of expression of environmental concern have changed. Established environmental movement organisations have become embedded in policy networks, but, in some countries, there has been a resurgence of environmental radicalism. New groups, adopting innovative tactics, have mounted spectacular and disruptive protests.

These developments pose interesting questions for social scientists and policy-makers. Has the institutionalisation of established environmental organisations demobilised their supporters and reduced them to a passive, credit-card waving 'conscience' constituency? Has direct participation in environmental protest become the specialised activity of smaller numbers of people? Has there been a decline in the total volume of environmental protest, or

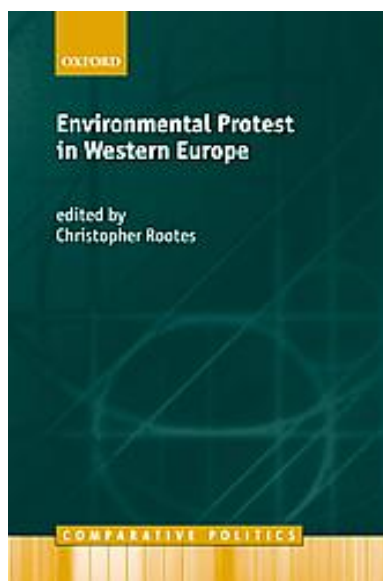
is it merely that the forms of protest have changed? Have the protest repertoires of established groups moderated over time, or have they been stimulated by the emergence of more radical groups to adopt more challenging tactics? Has environmental protest become more confrontational? Do protests employ different repertoires of action according to the issues at stake? How does the incidence of protest vary over time and from one country to another? Is there evidence of a Europeanisation of either the issues or the forms of environmental protest?

These are some of the questions this volume addresses. Based upon an analysis of the protest events reported in one quality newspaper in each of eight countries during the ten years 1988 to 1997, this is the first systematically comparative study of environmental protest in a representative cross-section of EU member states. It breaks entirely new ground in the study of environmental politics in Europe and is a major contribution to the study of protest events.

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Preface

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Organization & Environment

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Making Sense of Corporate Environmentalism: An Environmental Contestation Approach to Analyzing the Causes and Consequences of the Climate Change Policy Split in the Oil Industry.

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Preservation and Freedom. Deborah Fleming

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Problems for Local People: From Arctic Oil to Los Angeles Smog. Horace Herring

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Pulse: The Coming Age of Systems and Machines Inspired by Living Things by Robert Frenay

Paul B. Thompson

A Postcapitalist Politics by J.K. Gibson-Graham

Ted Rutland

The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America by Ben A.

Minteer

Julia Schluns

Ecodidactic Perspectives on English Language, Literatures and Cultures edited by Sylviam Mayer and Graham Wilson

Patrick D. Murphy

John Burroughs and the Place of Nature by John Perrin

Fay Beebee

The Green and the Brown: A History of Conservation in Nazi Germany by Frank Uekoetter

Michael Zimmerman

**The Editors of the Electronic Green Journal
are pleased to announce the publication
of our latest issue (24):**

<http://egj.lib.uidaho.edu/egj24/index.html>

In our editorial we present the opinion on global warming expressed by the millennium generation. Marta M. Jankowska asks her peers if they are ready to put their "sexy back" into the fight against global warming by using tools such as Wikipedia, YouTube, MySpace, blogging, and Facebook.

In issue 24 we published three articles. The first article, by Nelson R. Shaffer from the Indiana Geological Survey, describes quartz-rich sand deposits as a renewable resource. The second article, by Mohammed Ali, M. A. Kabir and A.T.M. Rafiqul Hoque from Canada, Bangladesh and Japan, proposes how resources and social factors shaped sustainable development of Bangladesh forestry and forest products. In the third article Muhammad Shoaib, Umar Karim Mirza, and Muhammad Avais Sarwar from Pakistan present a study on how the population of Multan contributed to growing environmental risks such as solid wastes.

Issue 24 also contains one essay, one regular column by Flora Shrode with recommended environmental resources, and 20 book reviews. The essay by W. T. Johnson on the spiritual lives of great environmentalists focuses on John Muir and Calvin DeWitt.

Bevc, Christine A., Brent K. Marshall, and J. Steven Picou. 2007. **Toxic Exposure and Environmental Justice: Toward a Spatial Model of Physical Health and Psychological Well-Being**. *Social Science Research* 36:48-67 (available online since Dec. '05).

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Dunlap, Riley and Brent K. Marshall. 2006. **Environmental Sociology**, in D. Peck and C. Bryant (Eds.) *The Handbook of 21st Century Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Marshall, Brent K. and J. Steven Picou. 2007. **Post-Normal Science, The Precautionary Principle, and Worst Cases: Managing Scientific Uncertainty in the 21st Century**. *Sociological Inquiry*, forthcoming.

Marshall, Brent K., J. Steven Picou, Cecilia Formichella, and Keith Nicolls. 2006. **Environmental Risk Perceptions and the White Male Effect: Pollution Concerns among Deep-South Coastal Residents**. *Journal of Applied Sociology* 23(2):31-49 and *Sociological Practice* 8(2):31-49.

Marshall, Brent K. and Warren Goldstein. 2006. **Managing the Environmental Legitimation Crisis**. *Organization and Environment* 19(2): 214-232.

Overdevest, C. and M.G. Rickenbach. 2006. **Forest Certification and Institutional Governance: An Empirical Study of Forest Stewardship Council Certificate Holders in the United States**. *Forest Policy and Economics*. 9(1):93-102.

Picou, J. Steve and Brent K. Marshall. 2007. **Katrina as Paradigm-Shift: Reflections on Disaster Research in the Twenty-First Century**. In D. Brunsma, D. Oversvelt, and J. S. Picou (Eds.) *The Sociology of Katrina: Perspectives on a Modern Catastrophe*. Rowan & Littlefield Publishers.

Rickenbach M.G. and C. Overdevest. 2006. **More than Markets: Assessing FSC Certification as a Policy Tool**. *Journal of Forestry*. 104(3):143-147.

New Organizations

Institute for Inquiry

In the United States, 92 million people go online for news, according to a leading survey cited in PEW's "State of News Media" report released March 2007. And yet, the kind of news found there – online -- is increasingly dominated by those who've learned to use it for political, activist, or corporate interests. In a telling aside, the report's authors say that politicians, interest groups, and corporate public relations people tell them they're "delighted" with the results of secretly retained bloggers. Obviously concerned, the report's authors say that changes in news media have taken "the shape of branding, targeting, and diminished ambitions."

What do such changes in news media mean—to notions of democracy, to purposes of education, for a public charged with understanding the conditions it is creating for life on earth? At the Institute for Inquiry (IFI, a non-profit organization), we've set up a radical new model that invites academics, grad students, students, and others to change what the news is and what it could be. We've redefined the "epicenter" of the news as events signaling changes in physical, biological, and human cultural life.

Please visit: www.instituteforinquiry.org, which launched two weeks ago. We suggest that you start with the Interactive Essay, then proceed to the first inquiry, "A Wireless Age?" We invite you to consider how your current projects may be relevant, or how you might use questioning found on site to stimulate classroom discussions and student participation. We begin with the presentation of four lead contributors and the questions their pieces inspire. Additionally, we are rapidly posting Network Invitations, which include: How are language extinctions, epistemological changes, and ecological changes made observable through uses of wireless technologies? What must we consider with wireless wildlife management—increasing emf-exposures and surveillance? How do we understand the bioeffects of emf through solar/geomagnetic storms? Has research been inappropriately suppressed on common emf exposures and the diminished efficacy of tamoxifen to slow breast cancer? Is the mineral used in cell phones—coltan—the new 'conflict diamond'?

This ambitious project is just getting started. We invite your participation in bringing it to life and to refining it with us. Isn't it time to mediate real world concerns with the most rigorous questioning possible—in the public realm? (www.instituteforinquiry.org)

The Center for the Applied Study of Economics and the Environment (CASE&E).

We are economists troubled by environmental degradation and social injustice, by the wide and growing inequality of wealth and income in America and in the world, and by the harmful impacts of the globalized economy on the natural ecosystems that support human activity. In order to change what is wrong with the economy, we must change what is wrong with economics as it is currently taught and practiced. CASE&E promotes a vision of an *engaged* and *realistic* economics, in which an understanding of social equity and environmental protection cannot be separated. (www.case-and-e.org)

Member News

Eugene A. Rosa, professor in the WSU Department of Sociology, was named to deliver the 2007 Distinguished Faculty Address during the March 23 Showcase luncheon. The honor carries a \$2,500 award and recognizes the work of a faculty member whose achievements in research, scholarship and teaching place that person in the front ranks of his or her discipline.

Rosa is a world-renowned environmental scholar and international leader in multidisciplinary

work assessing how the U.S. and other countries contribute to environmental impacts and how they attempt to resolve social risk associated with environmental change.

Through his research, policy work and teaching, he has changed how people everywhere view environmental impacts and their consequences. His work warns of the risks emanating from various societal concerns ranging from nuclear power to global warming. The title of his talk was: "Characterizing Risk to Harness Uncertainty."

<http://www.wsutoday.wsu.edu/NISStory.asp?StoryID=6271>

Eugene A. Rosa also gave a keynote address "A Thousand Flowers, A Thousand Weeds: New Challenges to the Rationality of Risks" at the Conference on Risk and Rationalities, SCARR (Social Contexts and Response to Risk) at the University of Cambridge, UK. Rosa's paper addresses the theme of the challenge to developing rational frameworks for comparing risks across widely differing domains, e.g., terrorism versus global warming.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/scarr/events/rrspeakers.htm>.



Eugene Rosa



David Sonnenfeld

David A. Sonnenfeld, Washington State University, will be Guest Professor with the Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University, the Netherlands, in May, where he will co-teach a graduate course on "Superpowers in Global Environmental Politics: China and the U.S.". In addition, he has been invited to become an Affiliate of the Sloan Industry Studies Program, and will participate in a Sloan-sponsored workshop on globalization and the pulp and paper industry at Georgia Tech, also in May.