

Environment, Technology and Society

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

Fall 2009

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Teaching Environmental Sociology: Creative Approaches and Innovative Practices

by Jan Buhrmann and colleagues

A synopsis of the ASA Teaching Workshop, San Francisco – August 2009

Presenters:

Bill Freudenburg, University of California, Santa Barbara

Beth Caniglia, Oklahoma State University

Stephen Zavestoski, University of San Francisco

Organizer and Presider:

Jan Buhrmann, Illinois College

Overview: This interactive workshop presented a range of ideas, technologies, and innovations for engaging students in environmental sociology and environmental studies courses. Workshop participants had an opportunity to learn about: ways that technology can be effectively utilized in these courses; how fieldwork and a focus on specific locations can help students become active participants in their own learning; and how environmental studies and environmental sociology can be taught from an interdisciplinary perspective.

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ETS Awards at ASA 2009

Congratulations to this year's Section Award recipients!

Fred Buttel Distinguished Contribution Award

Harvey Molotch - New York University



From his groundbreaking work on the Santa Barbara oil spill to incisive contributions to urban sociology in publications such as "The City as Growth Machine" and Urban Fortunes, Harvey Molotch has had an enormous impact on the imaginations of urban and environmental sociologists and on the field of sociology. More recently, Where Stuff Comes From offers an intriguing sociological study of design and consumption, combining organizational analysis with a careful look at the aesthetics and design of material objects. Always innovative, Molotch's writing elegantly bridges the micro-level world of ethnography and macro-structural issues of political economy. It serves as a reminder that environmental sociology takes many forms and that it flourishes when it is in dialogue with many other subfields of the discipline. Molotch's work has won numerous awards and continues to inspire generations of students in the U.S. and around the globe to think critically, pragmatically, and creatively about environmental issues.

Outstanding Publication Award

Liam Downey - University of Colorado at Boulder

This year the committee considered series of thematically-related articles published between January 1, 2004, and December 31, 2008. Liam Downey re-

ceived the Outstanding Publication Award for the following four articles.

- Downey, Liam. 2005. "The Unintended Significance of Race: Environmental Racial Inequality in Detroit," *Social Forces* 83(3):971-1008.
- Downey, Liam. 2006. "Using Geographic Information Systems to Reconceptualize Spatial Relationships and Ecological Context," *American Journal of Sociology* 112(2):567-612.
- Downey, Liam. 2006. "Environmental Racial Inequality in Detroit," *Social Forces* 85(2):771-796.
- Downey, Liam. 2007. "US Metropolitan-area Variation in Environmental Inequality Outcomes," *Urban Studies* 44(5/6): 953-977.



These articles, which are part of an impressive research program, advance our understanding of environmental justice issues. Downey's work examining environmental racial inequality is highly original and important both theoretically and substantively. His use of geographic information systems is innovative and provides new insights into important debates. Collectively, these four articles, along with Downey's other work, have made a major contribution to environmental sociology.

Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Certificate

Awarded to Stefano Long - University of Oregon

Stefano Longo received the Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Award for his paper "Mediterranean Rift: The Metabolic Rift in the Sicilian Bluefin Tuna Fishery,"

which he presented at the ASA meeting in San Francisco. In the paper, Longo insightfully analyzes how the traditional Sicilian bluefin tuna fishery, which for centuries had been an important source of food for Mediterranean societies, was transformed in the modern era to conform to the demands of the global market economy, disrupting ecological and social relationships. Longo advances the domain of metabolic rift theory and makes an important contribution to our understanding of the social forces generating ecological crises in fisheries, and by implication other ecosystems, around the world.



Section Membership and You

ETS has been very successful over the past several years in increasing its membership. We now have well over 400 members and would like to increase our size to more than 500 members. This would give us more sessions at the annual conference and further demonstrate the centrality of environmental sociology in the discipline. Thus, the membership committee and ETS council asks you to actively encourage any new graduate students that you know who have an interest in environmental sociology, or any other graduate student or faculty member you know who is just beginning to conduct environmental sociology research, to join our section. In promoting our section to potential members, you can also highlight the strong collegiality and sense of community that exists

in the section. Thank you for helping to promote our section to new members.

Liam Downey
Membership Committee Chair
Liam.Downey@colorado.edu

An Offer You Cannot Refuse: Join the MAHB Today

Last month ETS Chair Bob Brulle sent forwarded an invitation to participate in a group that is forming to couple our expertise in the natural and technological sciences with social science in order to more adequately address present-day environmental challenges. the acronym of this initiative, MAHB ("mob") stands for the Millennium Assessment of Human Behavior. Professor Brulle serves on the core team, along with another ETS member, Eugene Rosa of Washington State University, and the famed Paul Ehrlich, Bing Professor of Population Studies at Stanford, among others.

In his letter of invitation to sign up for to receive the MAHB newsletter, Professor Ehrlich writes:

There is growing consensus among environmental scientists that the scholarly community has adequately detailed how to deal with the major issues of the human predicament caused by our success as a species - climate disruption, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, toxification of the planet, the deterioration of the epidemiological environment, the potential impacts of nuclear war, racism, sexism, economic inequity, and on and on. I and my colleagues believe humanity must take rapid steps to ameliorate them. But, in essence, nothing serious is being done - as exemplified by the "much talk and no action" on climate change. The central problem is clearly not a need for more natural science (although in many areas it would be very helpful) but rather a need for better understanding of human behaviors and how they can be altered to direct humanity toward a sustainable society before it is too late.

That's why a group of natural scientists, social scientists, and scholars from the humanities decided to inaugurate a Millennium Assessment of Human Behavior (MAHB---pronounced "mob"). It was so named to emphasize that it is human behavior, toward one another and toward the planet that sustains all of us, that requires rapid modification. The idea is that the MAHB become a basic mechanism to expose society to the full range of population-environment-

resource-ethics-equity-power issues, and to sponsor broad global discussion involving the greatest diversity of people. It would, I hope, serve as a major tool for promoting conscious cultural evolution...

To find out more please see the [MAHB website](#). There you may request more information and sign up for the newsletter.

Calls for Award Nominations

Call for Nominations for the Fred Buttel Distinguished Contribution Award

The Fred Buttel Distinguished Contribution Award is to recognize individuals for outstanding service, innovation, or publication in environmental sociology or sociology of technology. It is intended to be an expression of appreciation, to be awarded when an individual is deemed extraordinarily meritorious by the Section. All members of the Section are invited to submit nominations for the award, together with supporting documentation. Nominations for this award must be received by March 1, 2010. To nominate an individual for this award, please send a letter of nomination describing the nominee's contribution to environmental sociology and/or the sociology of technology, accompanied by a copy of the nominee's CV, to the chair of the award committee Timmons Roberts (jtrobe@wm.edu).

Call for Nominations for the Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Award

This award 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). Graduate students or advisors on their behalf are encouraged to submit papers to this competition. The deadline for submitting papers is April 1, 2010. E-mail nominations to Richard York (rfyork@uoregon.edu).

Call for Nominations for the 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 books published from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2009. The committee will con-

sider self-nominations as well as nominations made by people other than the authors. Please send a nomination letter and three copies of the book to Richard York (Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, rfyork@uoregon.edu) by April 1, 2010.

Teaching Environmental Sociology (continued from page 1)

Participants were invited to share their own successes and challenges in teaching these courses, and provided with handouts that include ideas for exercises and websites useful in their own classes. Some specifics from each presentation follow below:

William Freudenburg – Teaching Environmental Studies Utilizing Diversionary Reframing

Bill's presentation focused on teaching Environmental Studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. He noted his work with the [Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences](#) and mentioned the value of two classic texts that he utilizes in his courses – *Overshoot* (William Catton, 1982) and *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*, (Mark Reisner, 2003). His courses emphasize human-environmental relationships, and pulls in ideas from both his 2005 article, "Privileged Access, Privileged Accounts [*Social Forces*, Sept. 2005, 84(1)], as well as his new book, *The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow* (Sept., 2009), co-authored with Robert Gramling, Shirley Laska, and Kai Erikson.

Beth Caniglia – Placed-Based Environmental Sociology

Beth's presentation focused on the concept of 'place,' as a center point for student learning. For her courses, this involves getting students to look closely at Oklahoma City, and its accompanying problems with urban sprawl. She notes the importance of students becoming aware of the concept of 'personal space' (i.e., "a presence of mind with regard to their local environment"). She encourages students to engage in weekly journaling in this area, by utilizing MyBlogSpot.com. Her courses emphasize both intellectual and analytical ways of knowing, include a focus on:

- Hikes, field trips, and tours to points of local historical and environmental significance, including Superfund Sites.
- Analyses of the history of local Native American and African-American communities in Oklahoma, and their relationships to the natural environment.

- An analysis of the land in relationship to industrialization and the subsequent extractive relationships.

Stephen Zavestoski – Using Technology in Teaching Environmental Sociology

Stephen's presentation highlighted two ways in which technology can be utilized in teaching Environmental Sociology and other environment-related courses. The first approach, using new web 2.0 tools to engage students in a more interactive learning community, is a trend happening throughout higher education. In environment-related courses, the use of wikis, blogs, and other interactive online tools allows for the rapid collection and aggregation of data by a class. One exercise demonstrated in the presentation has each student in a class identify the place of origin of 20 items in her/his living space. As they post the results to a course wiki, students are able to see patterns emerge in the data. Smaller groups can be assigned data analysis tasks such as creating product sub-categories or performing more in-depth analysis on the products originating from a specific country or region. Lessons around carbon footprints of consumption, economic dependence, and product chain impacts can all be discussed in class while examining the data on the wiki. A possible reading to accompany this exercise is Jared Diamond's *Collapse*, in particular Chapter 3 which focuses on how the trade dependencies among three Pacific Islands resulted in their demise. For an example of this exercise, see [here](#).

In-class use of wikis as collaborative learning tools was also discussed. In one exercise, students are placed into groups with one student in each group having a laptop. The groups are instructed to perform content analysis on the top 25 selling climate change books on various booksellers' websites. Among other things, students code for whether the books in their list take a skeptical view of climate change or not. At the end of this in-class exercise, each group's results can be shown by the professor on an overhead LCD display and the class can discuss the nuances of the positions in the books they coded. Discussion then leads to the broader topic of public attitudes towards climate change. Readings to accompany this exercise can include popular articles like Michael Shnayerson's "[A Convenient Untruth](#)" in the May 2007 Vanity Fair; or any of the scholarly works on the climate skeptic movement (e.g., McCright, Aaron M., and Riley E. Dunlap. 2000. "Challenging Global Warming as a Social Problem: An Analysis of the Conservative Movement's Counter Claims." *Social Problems* 47(4): 499-522). For an example of this exercise, see [here](#).

The presentation also covered how using technology in teaching environment-related courses

can encourage students to think creatively about harnessing the power of new communications technologies for addressing environmental problems ranging from the local to the global. For example, in the same way a group of students in a class can utilize a wiki to collect, share, and analyze data on product origins, environmental organizations and research centers are using the web to collect important climate change-related data. [Project Budburst](#) allows visitors to input data based on their observations of the timing of leafing and flowering in their area. Similarly, Reef Environmental Education Foundation runs a [volunteer survey](#) in which SCUBA divers and snorkelers observe and report information on marine fish populations, invertebrates, and algae species along the West Coast of the US and Canada. Many examples of smaller scale, local uses of collaborative data collection through the use of [web tools](#) can be found at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology "Citizen Science Central" website. Engaging students in discussion about the uses of the data in these types of projects can lead to questions about the quality of scientific knowledge and what type of knowledge is necessary to justify action.

Whether using technology to enhance the student learning community, or to illustrate how data about real-world problems are being collected by citizens and scientists, the larger lessons for students to learn have to do with integrating our intellectual resources with technological capabilities to identify and implement solutions to environmental problems.

Jan Buhrmann – Facilitating Student Engagement in Environmental Sociology Classes through Fieldwork, Research, and Critical Thinking

Jan's presentation focused on the importance of student engagement in environmental sociology courses that can result in better retention of information, an improvement in grades and overall student achievement, better attendance, and more active class discussions. She noted that student engagement in these courses can be facilitated through developing specific skills, utilizing a variety of assignments:

- Fieldwork - Students develop skill in focused interviewing, and start to make connections between 'real people,' 'real industries,' and environmental problems. In addition, students begin to develop confidence in their ability as social researchers.

- Critical thinking skills - This is an important component of learning to view environmental issues utilizing a sociological perspective. Students are asked to think critically about the benefits and drawbacks of a technology that we generally 'take for granted' and/or see as 'necessary.'

- Research and presentation skills – This type of

'more traditional' assignment can help students sharpen their skills in: seeking out and reviewing current literature; applying a sociological perspective to a specific environmental issue; linking environmental problems to human health issues; preparing for, and making presentations.

- **Learning Styles** – It's important to pay attention to ways that we can more effectively tap into the different 'learning styles' of our students (i.e., visual, auditory, and kinesthetic). These variations in student learning styles can be addressed through specific activities and assignments varied throughout the course of the semester.

By integrating a range of assignment methods and approaches, faculty in environmental sociology courses can more specifically engage students in a process of active learning. As students become directly involved, through assignments and projects that help them transition into active agents of their own learning, they experience benefits that can serve them academically, personally, and in their future career lives.

Are Environmental Sociologists Looking at Reducing Consumption?

*by Ezra Markowit, University of Oregon
Matthew Thomas Clement, University of Oregon
Tom Bowerman, PolicyInteractive*

Based in Eugene, OR, PolicyInteractive (PI) is a nonpartisan, interdisciplinary team of researchers working to understand general public opinions about global climate change. To this end, we have closely reviewed media reports and independent public opinion surveys on the topic as well as conducted our own opinion surveys. Since 2008, PI has conducted 4 surveys, each with sample sizes of approximately 400 Oregon residents. These polls have asked Oregonians a variety of questions related to climate change. Thus far, some of the findings include: 1) Concern of global warming or climate change is not a top tier issue with Oregonians; 2) A large majority of Oregonians think government should enact a strong energy policy and higher vehicle efficiency standards; 3) A strong majority of Oregon citizens believe lifestyle changes will be more effective than technological solutions in addressing climate change; and, 4) Oregonians believe the country would be better off if we consumed less.

The results from these surveys offer interesting and novel insights into how Oregonians think about the various facets of climate change. However, it is this last finding, namely the widely held belief that we would all be better off if we consumed less, that we believe should especially spark the interest of environmental sociologists seeking to understand how society may

successfully resolve the most serious environmental problem it has ever confronted. In three polls since April 2008, the following statement was made to the survey respondents: "Our country would be a better place if we all consumed less." Respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statements using a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The percent of individuals answering either "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" dropped from 87% in April 2008 to 74% in November 2008, moving up slightly to 75% in the April 2009 poll. Perhaps, the further entrenchment of the economic downturn had something to do with this drop in support for reducing consumption; whether or not this drop continues is something we will look for in future surveys. Nevertheless, 44% and 31% of Oregonians, respectively, either "Strongly Agree" or simply "Agree" that the United States would be better off if we all consumed less.

The broad support for reducing consumption is something that surveys asking about support for climate policy do not find. Nevertheless, the connection between support for deconsumption and resolving the climate crisis should be made. Why? Because consumption, in the broad sense of material throughput, measured for example in terms of GDP per capita, is a primary driver of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. And, according to a set of in-depth interviews with a non-representative sample of PolicyInteractive survey respondents, it seems that Oregonians tend to think of support for deconsumption in terms of reducing material throughput. They were asked, "What comes to mind in terms of possible actions or decisions on your part to consume less?" The top three most-frequently given responses were: "Drive Less" (n=10), "Eat Less" (n=4), and "Buy Less" (n=5). This suggests that most respondents have a materialist view of "consumption." Therefore, the connection between support for deconsumption and resolving the climate crisis seems justifiable.

So, should climate policymakers be moving on a platform of reducing consumption? This is where we start to see how a sociological analysis of support for deconsumption would be helpful. At first glance, we observe that American politicians, as a whole, are tied to a pro-economic growth platform. Supporting deconsumption would likely ruin a politician's career. So, what does this mean for the future of climate policy? Is its future to be found at the grassroots of society? But, when it comes to support for climate policy, even the grassroots are divided along lines of political ideology and religiosity. Thus far, our research at PolicyInteractive has not found the same degree of political and religious division in terms of public support for deconsumption. Could climate policy inadvertently proceed through a completely different set of stated goals about reducing consumption and improving quality of life in the process? If so, since consumption also drives human society's broader ecological footprint, a

whole range of environmental problems might also be resolved by reframing the debate.

All the same, we should not get carried away in speculating about the fate of climate policy framed in terms of reducing consumption. And, we should not assume that support for reducing consumption is an unproblematic platform. Even though a large fraction of Oregonians support it, do other Americans feel the same way? Furthermore, not only politicians but also business leaders would clearly be in a position to lose out as a result of intentional, voluntary deconsumption. Can we ever get them to want us to consume less? Environmental sociologists have helped us understand public support for environmental policy and concern for environmental degradation. So, it would seem an easy transition to explore what are the causes and consequences of support for reducing consumption. For example, as many environmental sociologists have pointed out, technological improvement by itself will not solve the climate crisis. Therefore, some degree of deconsumption seems inevitable. What are the obstacles and opportunities in reducing our consumption?

Conferences, Calls for Papers and Program Advertisements

“Energy Transitions and the Evolution of Global Governance,” a session of the International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology

July 11-17, 2010
Gothenburg (Goteborg), Sweden

Call for papers for “Energy Transitions and the Evolution of Global Governance,” RC02 Session 8 of the International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology. Chairs: Chris Chase-Dunn and Kirk Lawrence, Institute for Research on World-Systems, University of California-Riverside.

There is a large literature in social science about the importance of the capture of free energy in the evolution of socio-cultural complexity and hierarchy. This panel focuses on the relationships between energy regime transitions (from wood to coal to oil, etc.) and the evolution of institutions of global governance in recent centuries and in the coming decades of the 21st century. The rise and fall of hegemonic core powers and the emergence of international political organizations have been affected by energy regime transitions in the past are likely to be so in the future. This panel will gather together social scientists who are researching the relationships between physical energy and power structures. How

will the coming era of “peak oil” affect the possibilities for further political globalization and eventual global state formation?

For further information on the ISA Congress, please see the [ISA website](#). For details on the sessions under the “Economy and Society,” see [here](#).

“Conservation for a Changing Planet” The 24th International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB)

July 3-7, 2010
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The Social Science Working Group (SSWG) of the [Society for Conservation Biology](#) invites those of you interested in species and ecosystem conservation to participate in the 24th International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB), the 2010 meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB). SCB is a international professional organization with more than 10,000 members around the globe.

The call for abstracts is now open. The **deadline is January 20th**. Contributions from all fields of conservation research and practice are welcome, including natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

The SCB's [Social Science Working Group \(SSWG\)](#) is making particular efforts to encourage social scientists to consider this invitation, in the hopes of widening SCB's international network of social and policy researchers who are doing work in applied conservation. SSWG is a global community of conservation professionals interested in the application of social science to the conservation of biological diversity. With nearly 700 members in 65 countries, SSWG is home to social scientists (anthropologists, economists, historians, human geographers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and many others), ethicists, natural scientists, and conservation practitioners (governmental, nongovernmental, and business sectors).

Since 2005, SSWG has worked closely with the SCB annual meeting organizing committees to stimulate social science contributions for the meetings. In each year since then, the prevalence of social science and integrative conservation, reflecting the marriage of social and natural science, has increased significantly. We hope to continue that trend in Edmonton, with strong social science and integrative contributions that will promote collaborations between social and natural scientists interested in conservation issues that transcend location- or case-specific application.

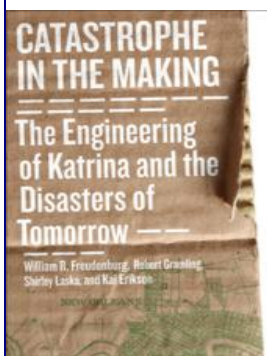
Additional information on the meeting, including links to instructions for submitting proposals, is available [here](#). If you are interested in participating in the meeting and have additional questions, please contact Rich Wallace, SSWG vice president and program committee chair, at rwallace@ursinus.edu.

Publications

Books

Catastrophe in the Making: The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow

William Freudenburg, Robert Gramling, Shirley Laska, and Kai Erikson
Island Press (2009)



When houses are flattened, towns submerged, and people stranded without electricity or even food, we attribute the suffering to “natural disasters” or “acts of God.” But what if they’re neither? What if we, as a society, are bringing these catastrophes on ourselves?

That’s the provocative theory of *Catastrophe in the Making*, the first book to recognize Hurricane

Katrina not as a “perfect storm,” but a tragedy of our own making—and one that could become commonplace.

Based on the false promise of widespread prosperity, communities across the U.S. have embraced all brands of “economic development” at all costs. In Louisiana, that meant development interests turning wetlands into shipping lanes. By replacing a natural buffer against storm surges with a 75-mile long, obsolete canal that cost hundreds of millions of dollars, they guided the hurricane into the heart of New Orleans and adjacent communities. The authors reveal why, despite their geographic differences, California and Missouri are building—quite literally—toward similar destruction.

“The best account yet of why the levees failed. The authors also warn of more disasters to come if politicians and government agencies continue to promote huge engineering projects along unstable coastlines.” (Bruce Babbitt former secretary of the Interior)

“Fabulous. I am amazed at the quality of writing—it often left me breathless—and the depth of analysis. This penetrating and engaging book is essential for understanding the many catastrophes that stem from ignoring nature in our quest for economic growth.”

(Charles Perrow professor emeritus, Yale and author of *Normal Accidents*)

Advances in Ecopolitics (new book series)

Liam Leonard, Senior Editor

Emerald Press (2009 on)



The *Advances in Ecopolitics* series will include a range of publications which discuss a significant element in the area of environmentalism which now represents an important aspect of sustainable living. The first edition of the series, to be published this year, is titled 'the Transition to Sustainable Living'.

Editorial Objectives: *Advances in Ecopolitics* provides a series of insights into real alternatives to the current economic malaise, with an examination of key themes such as transition towns, sustainable utopias, co-operative farming, sustainability and activism, ecofeminism, green protectionism, intentional communities, environmental justice, environmental movements, green philosophies, politics and green economics.

Topicality: *Advances in Ecopolitics* provides an series of environmental alternatives which require our fullest consideration in light of the ongoing economic downturn which has accompanied the latest incarnation of unsustainable practices. The book series provides a forum for debate about a positive set of sustainable alternatives which set out an understanding that 'another world is possible'.

Key Benefits: *Advances in Ecopolitics* is essential reading for all academics, researchers and practitioners who are involved in the areas of environmentalism. The series:

- Acts as a forum for the debate and publication of papers which establish understandings of environmentalism and sustainability.
- Provides a unique opportunity for the exchange of peer reviewed knowledge on the widest extent of environmental and ecological issues.
- Allows for the establishment of working networks of environmental academics from across the globe.

Key Audiences: *Advances in Ecopolitics* particularly encourages academics, researchers and practitioners from both Europe, North America and from developing nations to share their experience, knowledge and practices with an international audience. Contributors from across the globe that focus on issues and research which will affect and inform ecopolitical studies are welcome to submit work for consideration in the series.

Coverage: The series encourages well-written articles with the focus on interdisciplinary, international and comparative standpoints on contemporary management issues. Coverage includes, but is not restricted to:

- Ecological politics
- Sustainable development
- Environmental philosophy
- Green party politics
- Environmental economics
- Environmental movements
- Ecofeminism
- Sustainable living practices

Volumes within this series:

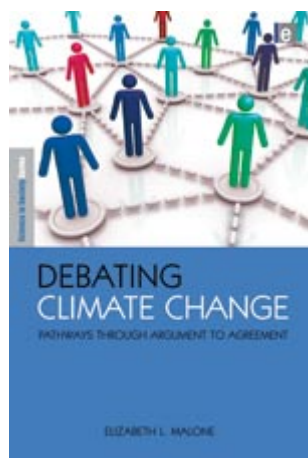
Volume 1: 'The Transition to Sustainable Living' (December 2009)

Volume 2: 'Global Ecopolitics' (forthcoming in 2010)

For further information: Contact Liam Leonard (liam_leonard@yahoo.com), Series Editor.

Debating Climate Change: Pathways through Argument to Agreement

by Elizabeth L. Malone
Earthscan (2009)



As greenhouse gas emissions continue unabated and contentious voices fill the air, the question gains urgency: How can people with widely varying viewpoints agree to address climate change? Each participant in the debate seems to have a different agenda, from protecting economic growth in developing countries to protecting the energy industry in industrialized

countries, from those aghast at the damage done to the Earth to optimists who think we just need to adjust our technological approach.

Debating Climate Change sorts through the tangle of arguments surrounding climate change to find paths to unexpected sites of agreement. Using an innovative sociological approach - combined discourse and social network analyses - Elizabeth L. Malone analyzes 100 documents representing a range of players in this high-stakes debate. Through this she shows how even the most implacable adversaries can find common ground - and how this common ground can be used to build agreement.

Written in a clear, accessible style, this original research and insightful use of communication analysis

will help advance understanding and negotiation on climate change throughout the pivotal times to come.

"As climate change has moved from the science pages to the front page of the world's newspapers, this very timely book makes sense of the current debates in climate policy. With admirable rigour Elizabeth L. Malone demonstrates that despite the diversity of arguments, all is not yet lost and agreement is in reach."

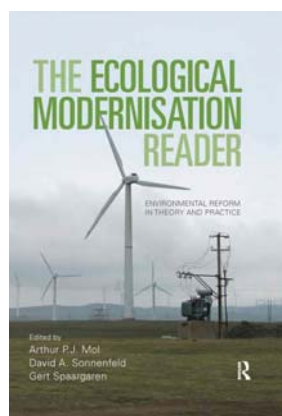
Dr Richard J.T. Klein, Stockholm Environment Institute

The Ecological Modernisation Reader

(announcing the paperback edition)

Arthur P. J. Mol, David A. Sonnenfeld, and Gert Spaargaren (eds.)

Routledge (November 2009)



Environmental reform by governmental, intergovernmental agencies, private firms and industries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is a worldwide phenomenon. This definitive collection showcases an introduction to Ecological Modernization Theory; state-of-the-art review essays by key international scholars and a selection of the key articles from a quarter

century of social science scholarship. It is aimed at students, researchers and policymakers interested in a deep understanding of contemporary environmental issues.

According to Routledge, the paperback edition of this important book will be available in mid-November and ready for adoption for courses beginning in January 2010. The ISBN for the paperback edition is 978-0-415-45371-4. We believe it will be priced favorably for broad course adoption.

Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada

University of British Columbia Press (2009)

Julian Agyeman, Peter Cole, Randolph Haluza-DeLay, and Pat O'Riley (Eds.)

Bottleneck: Humanity's Impending Impasse.

by William R. Catton, Jr.

Xlibris Corporation (2009)

Bill Catton is also the author of *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*.

Theory and Methodology of World Development: The Writings of Andre Gunder Frank.

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Member News

In Memoriam: Allan Schnaiberg

Allan was a brilliant and incisive critical analyst. His contribution to the sociological understanding of the relationship between social systems and ecosystems was groundbreaking, prescient, and enduring. Although he never accepted the designation of "environmental sociologist" he was a founder of the field of environmental sociology, providing it with a deeply rigorous analytical foundation upon which it still rests today. His Treadmill of Production framework for understanding the social causes and consequences of

environmental problems formed the first, and still the most comprehensive and influential sociological approach to understanding environmental problems. His 1980 book, *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity* remains one of the most important works in the field, and a necessary point of departure for any student of environmental sociology. His intellectual work was motivated by a deep and sincere concern for people's quality of life. He was convinced that we could do better by each other as a species, and dedicated his intellectual life to identifying how we might do so, and critiquing false promises that he viewed as a distraction from more fruitful paths. Allan was always unafraid to reach unpopular conclusions when solid analyses lead him there, and believed deeply that it was better to do good than to feel good when it came to the pursuit of social change. Allan produced a body of work that was essential to the intellectual development of environmental sociology, and remains central to intellectual debate in the sub-field. Many of his earliest insights have come to be accepted as basic premises of socioenvironmental analysis, although they were far from such when he first theorized them, such as:

The degradation of the environment, and the degradation of people are part of the same systemic process, and deeply interrelated.

The costs of environmental problems are distributed downward and thus borne disproportionately by the poor and disenfranchised, while the benefits gained in creating those problems are distributed upward, going disproportionately to the powerful and privileged.

The causes of environmental problems are deeply structural, complex, and multifaceted, and not readily attributable to single factors such as "overpopulation", "runaway technology", or "overconsumption".

A politically activated and mobilized citizenry is a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for environmental (and social) improvement.

His unique insights into our human relationship with nature continue to be taught to students all over the world, and will no doubt influence the ways in which that relationship is renegotiated in the 21st century.

The concern for the real lives of real people that drove Allan's intellectual work was even more evident in his interactions with his students. Allan was a great and caring mentor. He was, as we say, a real mensch. For graduate students his office was a refugee camp, a sanctuary, a homeless shelter, and a safe harbor in an often-hostile academic sea. Some of my best memories of graduate school are of sitting in Allan's office, him poised in his recliner amid stacks of academic papers that accumulated like geologic layers, sharing grand analyses and little insights. To

his students, Allan was an awesome intellectual, a caring shoulder, a career advisor, and a friend. Allan insisted on dealing with us whole people, warts and all, rather than simply as students there to have knowledge and skills imparted to us. And in that approach, he was truly a rare find. In the nearly two decades since I left Northwestern I have listened in astonishment to my colleagues tales of their distant, unsupportive, and exploitative relationships with their graduate advisors. I always find myself alien to these discussions, as I had quite the opposite experience. Throughout my career, when I've shared my experience as Allan's student, colleagues consistently use one word to describe their perception of my experience, and that word is "lucky". I have to admit that it took me some time to realize just how lucky I was to have come to work with Allan. Having no basis for comparison, I thought that his intellectual rigor, professional encouragement, humane treatment, and respect were the norm. If only that were the case, how much better would academic life be?

Also unlike many of us in the academy, Allan was not driven by a need to reproduce himself in his students. He was a facilitator and supporter of students following their own heads, especially when others proved less willing to work with students whose own intellectual paths diverged from their own. The result is that the great majority of his graduate students over his decades long career as a mentor and teacher did not do work in his sub-field, but took the insights they gained from Allan into a wide range of sub-fields of his students own choosing. That is a clear marker of an all too rare selflessness, and an astoundingly wide-ranging intellect as well. Allan quite frankly set the standard for the role of graduate advisor, and if his model can be a source of encouragement for others to strive to treat the role as he did, it would certainly contribute to the improvement of the academy as a whole.

In smoothing an easy transition in our own relationship, from teacher-student to colleagues and collaborators, Allan again exceeded all expectations. Allan was always a generous and reliable collaborator. In 1991 I encouraged him to write and publish a second edition of *The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity*, as it had unfortunately been out of print for a few years. He expressed little interest in revisiting that solo work. Instead, he offered to write a new book, if I would write it with him. I had just completed my PhD and taken my first academic position, and I think his offer was as much intended to sustain our dialogue long-distance as anything else. That work became *Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict*. One of the great joys and rare privileges of my life was Allan's willingness to sustain

a dialogue with me on the environment, politics, life, and the human dilemma for over a quarter of a century, first mostly in his office and restaurants, and then mostly by email and phone. It is strange to grapple with the sociological issues that I do without that dialogue.

Allan truly enjoyed the “life of the mind”, and took great pleasure in the play of ideas. In intellectual agreement and opposition, he was a terrific partner. He took the issues his work addressed seriously, and could be effectively combative in debate. But he also knew not to take himself, or others, too seriously. He had a deep appreciation of irony, and paradox, the stuff of which real life is constructed. While many experience paradox as cognitive dissonance, Allan saw a good paradox as a marker for the place to drill down. The truth may lie deep in the nexus of the paradox, and if not, it was at least worth a good ponder, and a source of ironic humor.

Allan’s love of words and ideas was by no means limited to the academic realm. Allan was a great storyteller and lover of jokes. Good jokes, bad jokes, Yiddish jokes, off-color and inappropriate jokes. No doubt many of us have rolled our eyes at one of Allan’s puns. His sense of humor carried him through many a difficult moment, and carried me as well. When I saw one email marking his passing with the subject line “A Huge Loss to Environmental Sociology”, I could hear his voice remarking in a typically self-deprecating manner “I would have preferred to have been a Great loss rather than a Huge loss, but I did enjoy my food”. When others characterized his intellectual work as Marxist, he always refuted that label saying, with a Cheshire grin, “If I’m a Marxist it’s more Groucho than Karl”. And in all honesty, there were times in professional situations when he would launch into his jokes that I would think to myself, “can you go for Harpo not Groucho right now?” but he insisted on having his fun. Like the year he bought Adam Weinberg, himself and me these Marx Brothers ties to wear to our ASA presentation. An inside joke in public.

And then there is LUNCH! Anyone who ever had the pleasure of having lunch with Allan can appreciate that in addition to being a world-class eater, he was a world-class locator of gastronomic hidden urban treasures. He was a talented finder of high quality low-end eateries, with a specialization in Asian cuisines.

Between the two of us, the word “lunch” came to stand for *joie d’ vivre*, a *raison d’etre*, a reliable path to quality of life. Grad school for me will always be associated with 3 hour lunches at the Pine Yard Chinese restaurant in Evanston, discussing social theory and dumplings. Our best times together were spent over lunch. I remember vividly Adam Weinberg, Allan and I sketching out the outline for our book, *Local Environmental Struggles*, on a paper placemat at a Chinese restaurant during an ASA meeting, and Allan having the ASA business center make photocopies so we could each have one to work from. Then later trying to read the chapter titles through photocopied hoisin sauce. One of our oddest and last lunches was when I was flying back from a research trip to New Orleans through O’Hare, Airport. I had told Allan I would have a brief layover between flights, so he meets me at the airport so we can visit for an hour, and he brings pastrami sandwiches. There we were sitting in the middle of bustling O’Hare chatting away and dropping pastrami down the fronts of our shirts. You couldn’t ask for a better friend than that, or a better lunch partner.

As a person, Allan was also easily hurt, and often disappointed, qualities born in part from early deprivations, both emotional and material, and his experience of anti-Semitism in [the land where he grew up,] Quebec, and later elsewhere. As all comedians do, he covered his hurt with his humor when he could. Although he often told me “Don’t let the bastards grind you down”, they sometimes ground him down, and lunch was not always sufficient comfort. Despite, or maybe because of his own struggles, he was inclined to come to the rescue of others in their struggles. In my own bad moments, he routinely offered support of every kind. I deeply miss Allan’s great and open heart.

I could go on, and I will, but not here and now. In the end, the world is a much better place for having had Allan in it, and the field of environmental sociology is unimaginable without his contributions to its development.

He rests in peace.

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