

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY NEWS

Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's
Section on Environmental Sociology

Winter 2019

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FROM SECTION CHAIR

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

I write to you from a rainy Eugene day as we enter our second month of government shutdown. We all find ourselves yet deeper into the national crisis of democracy with all its ecological and human repercussions from mobilizing white supremacy to another women's march on Washington. You certainly don't need me to remind you that our work as environmental sociologists matters more than ever.

How we do our work also matters more than ever too. Amongst the issues I hope to keep on your radar are the relationships between race, gender, sexuality and power within our intellectual, social and political communities.



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From the Chair (cont'd)

This past Fall, during the aftermath of the Kavanaugh appointment I wrote a post to our list asking our collective community to consider the relationships between gender violence and the environment. I invited each of us as professional sociologists to spend some time thinking about the relationships between sexual and gender violence—and its repercussions in the Senate, Presidency, and now our courts—and the onslaught on our natural environment. “Care-work,” “ecological reproduction,” and “environmental activism” are linked to our present day gender constructions. This care-work is the basis of life on earth. Our reliance on one another and on other beings to whom we hold responsibilities is directly kept invisible and underappreciated by way of sexual and gendered violence. This delusion of disconnection is generating capitalist wealth, ecological destruction, and climate change.

I noted as well that direct and indirect sexual and gender violence (e.g. the shaming and dismissal that structure who is taken seriously and who is ignored) affect whose voice counts, including whose scholarship gets out in different academic contexts. I shared my observations of how gender and sexual violence has been used to shape who is in our community and who is not, as well as my frustration that fewer female environmental sociologists post on our email listserv, and I have wondered both the reasons for this, and its consequences for our collective understanding of ourselves and our discipline.

Many of you wrote back, some on the list and many more to me in person. A number of themes emerged from this exchange including listings of articles and other resources, many personal stories of harassment and silencing, a back of the envelope calculation of how many women and men announced their articles on the list (26 of the last 23 announcements were by men), and a call for white male section members to form a task force on gender. Thank you all for your engagement with this important direction.

I write here to offer some updates, as well as some personal reflections in response to the many conversations and ideas. As a section, we'll be working to formalize the Committee on Racial Equity. At the suggestion of Kishi Animashuan (formerly our Council

Member At Large) we are also asking each of our internal committees to examine how their practices can be modified to better support and reflect our entire community. Beyond that, quite a number of women wrote back to my post sharing stories of their experiences as section members in a variety of contexts. I base the following thought on a combination of their experiences and what I understand of best practices for organizational change.

First, much of the time we are “together” as a community is via our section listserv. It is clear that many women feel less comfortable putting out our voices, our accomplishments on the list in part because it seems so big and anonymous, and in other cases for fear of negative reactions or past experiences of being ignored. There were some suggestions on the list itself (in response to the gendered balance of postings) that people should stop using the list to announce our publications. I for one really appreciate learning about all of your work through this medium, so I don't want anyone to stop announcing their work. I do think that there are a number of other ways we can handle the gender imbalance over time. All of us can especially **encourage our female colleagues to post their work**. Secondly, **when women do announce material, all of us can write them a note of congratulations** (individually please!), read this new material, if you like it **cite it, share it with your colleagues**, teach it in your courses (we should do it for one another anyway, right?). **Who we cite (and who we don't cite)** is at the heart of our field. This is how we build our discipline.

Secondly, **when you teach a course in Environmental Sociology** (or anything else), take a peek at who you are having your students read. What is the racial and gender identity of the scholars whose work you consider most important? Are there people who aren't on your syllabus but should be?

Thirdly, **nominations are coming up for many of our section awards**. Consider nominating your female colleagues; consider nominating your colleagues of color . . . All of these are ways we show who and what matters, what counts as good work, as environmental sociology. These actions shape who gets promoted, how each of us are seen by our department colleagues and Universities. They really matter.

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From the Chair (cont'd)

Fourth, ***please do grapple with gender and race in your research agendas***. I put out a few ideas of my own about how gender violence matters for the environment from the role that sexual and gender violence has played in the past transformations of places where each of us live and otherwise spend our time, to the ways gendered violence fundamentally legitimate political economic relations and state power today. There is so much important work to be done here.

I thank you again for the privilege of serving in this leadership role. Jill Harrison and I are in regular contact and I can assure you that she'll be carrying forward our recent momentum in a good way (and likely missing fewer deadlines along the way!)

Kari Marie Norgaard, Section Chair
Associate Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies, University of Oregon

CALLS

Practice and Outreach Award Nomination

Nominations are invited for the biennial Environmental Sociology Practice and Outreach Award. This award, given in odd years, honors faculty members and other professional practitioners in the field of Environmental Sociology. The award recognizes the outstanding practice and outreach contributions of professionals not only in college and university positions, but also positions in journalism, government, service agencies, private sector environmental organizations, and non-profit environmental organizations. Section members are encouraged to nominate colleagues, and all are encouraged to self-nominate. Note that the Practice and Outreach Award is not necessarily a "life-time achievement" award, so people with innovative projects/programs should consider submitting a nomination packet.

In hopes of making the nomination process easier, this year the committee is requesting *letters of nomination only* at this time. Letters no more than four pages long should be submitted to Erica Morrell, Chair of the Committee on Teaching and Outreach, at erica.c.morrell@gmail.com by **February 15**.

Preliminary decisions on the nominations will be made by the Committee before March 1, and those narrowed down for the award will be asked to submit a description of practice/outreach project/program if not included in the nomination letter, CV, and up to 5 letters of support by April 1 for final consideration for the award. The award recipient will be determined in April.

Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Award Nomination

Nominations are invited for the Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Award. The Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Award recognizes outstanding papers presented by graduate students at the annual American Sociological Association meetings. In addition to recognition, recipients will receive a modest monetary award to help defray expenses associated with attending the ASA meetings. **Nominees are limited to graduate student-authored papers that will be presented at the 2019 annual meeting** in New York City. (The paper can be presented at any session or roundtable at ASA). All members of the ASA and the Section on Environment & Technology are invited to submit nominations for the award. To nominate a paper, please send a **PDF copy of the paper** along with a **nomination letter** or other supporting documentation by **March 15, 2019** to Jack Zinda at jaz65@cornell.edu.

Allan Schnaiberg Outstanding Publication Award Nomination

Nominations are invited for the Allan Schnaiberg Outstanding Publication Award. The Allan Schnaiberg Outstanding Publication Award is given for publications of special noteworthiness in the field of environmental sociology. It is given in alternate years for either (a) a book in even years or (b) a single article in odd years. This year the committee will consider **articles** published within the period, January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2018. All members of the ASA and the Section on Environmental Sociology are encouraged to submit nominations; self-nominations are welcome. To nominate an article, please send a **PDF copy of the article** along with a **nomination letter** by **March 1, 2019** to Jack Zinda at jaz65@cornell.edu.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Left to Their Own Devices: How Digital Natives Are Reshaping the American Dream

Julie M. Albright

(Prometheus Books, 2019)

<https://dornsife.usc.edu/drjuliealbright/left-to-their-own-devices/>

In this illuminating book, a sociologist explores the many ways that young people's enchantment with digital devices is weakening their ties to people, places, jobs, and other stabilizing structures, and what that means for all of us.

Digital natives are hacking the American Dream. The Internet, smartphones, and social media are quickly rendering old habits and norms a distant memory, creating the greatest generation gap in history. In this eye-opening book, digital sociologist Julie M. Albright looks at our device-obsessed society, and the many ways in which the Post World War II American Dream is waning for the Millennial generation. As contemporary "untethered" adults, they no longer adhere to traditional norms of marriage, parenting, buying a home and car, working in one place, going to church or temple, or being a member of a political party. The only constant is digital connectivity: The vast majority sleep with their cellphones, so as never to miss a message.

Albright notes that in the former age of traditional media (dominated by three major TV networks and the national print media), values were more harmonized and time, synchronized. Today, with a deluge of information available 24/7, we are experiencing a sort of digital tribalism, with people coalescing inside of increasing fragmented informational echo chambers. Digital media allows bad actors to enlarge the rifts between these siloed tribes in divide and conquer fashion, frothing up fears by propagating fake news and fake people online.

What are other effects of hyper-connectivity coupled with disconnection from stabilizing social structures? Albright sees both positives and negatives. On the one hand, mobile connectivity has given "digital nomads" the unprecedented opportunity to work or live anywhere.

New businesses can be born out of dorm rooms or co-working spaces that rival the biggest multinationals. Digital natives can become "citizens of the world" with far-flung friends or romantic partners they may never have met. On the other hand, new threats are emerging, including cyberbullying and the ability to radicalize marginalized youth, decreased physical exercise, increased isolation, anxiety and loneliness, ephemeral relationships, fragmented attention spans, lack of participation in community activities and the political process, and detachment from the calm of nature or the refuge of religion. Stalwart businesses who fail to adapt are foundering. Digital have-nots are left behind.

In this time of rapid, global, technologically driven change, this book offers fresh insights into the effects of always-on devices on the family, community, business and society at large.

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

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MEMBER NEWS

Shannon Bell

Shannon Bell's 2016 book, *Fighting King Coal: The Challenges to Micromobilization in Central Appalachia* (MIT Press) received the Society for Human Ecology's Gerald L. Young Book Award.

Shannon Bell

Interviews and other content from Shannon Bell's first book, *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice* (University of Illinois Press, 2013) were used in the creation of a theatrical performance titled, *The Ironweed Tales*, which was produced by Folklab and performed by Felicia Cooper. The performance ran from May 30-June 3, 2018 at Aftershock Theatre in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

TRANSITIONS

Job Change and Promotion

Shannon Bell in Fall 2017 moved from University of Kentucky to the Sociology Department at Virginia Tech, where she is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies for the Sociology Department's Ph.D. program.

Transition to Eternity

R. Scott Frey (1951 – 2018), longtime environmental sociologist and professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, passed away on December 24, 2018 at Knoxville, Tennessee. We have printed below a few tributes from section members who have worked with and/or new Professor R. Scott Frey

Tributes to Dr. R Scott Frey

R. Scott Frey was a pioneer of environmental sociology as well as a wonderful colleague and academic leader. Cutting across these professional roles was a deep and thoughtful concern with fairness. He was also a scholar's scholar with a command of diverse literatures and a commitment to tracking ideas to their sources.

Starting twenty-five years ago and continuing through his most recent work, Scott offered insightful examinations of inequities in exposure to environmental and technological risk in developing countries. His work

was always attentive to the way power and structure generated inequality. While we are all aware of this issue now, that awareness can be traced in substantial degree to Scott's work. His analyses were grounded not only in a meticulous reading of the academic and gray literature and careful interrogation of quantitative data but also on extensive field work in a dozen Asian nations. Several prominent scholars in our field have noted that their decisions to become environmental sociologists were driven in no small part by reading Scott's early publications in this area.

Even before his work on global environmental justice, Scott was one of the first sociologists to engage with risk. In the early 1980s he worked at the U.S. National Science Foundation in the emerging Risk Analysis Group, where he helped shape a program that continues to be a major source of funding for social science research on risk. His NSF work led to a series of conceptual papers that laid the foundation for the sociology of risk, and an ongoing series of papers on health risks in the U.S. as well as in the developing world.

These accomplishments alone would reserve Scott a role as a founder of environmental sociology. But his creativity was boundless, and led to several other less well known but equally innovative lines of scholarship. He was one of the first sociologists to recognize that our work on environmental policy and especially social impact assessment would be most influential if they were grounded in a clear normative theory. He showed that rapid population growth might be most problematic for its impact on democratic institutions. His work on the Ogallala aquifer laid the base for an emerging sociology of water. A sharp eye for methodological issues led to several important papers that offered re-analyses of well-known studies, always with an idea towards complementing rather than attacking the previous work. He was also much engaged with popular culture, teaching courses on film and music as lenses on American society.

I had the very good fortune of being assigned the office next to Scott's at the start of our faculty careers. We began collaborating almost immediately. Those who had the privilege to work with Scott know that he was tireless and held to the highest scholarly standards. But

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Tributes (cont'd)

he was also a loyal friend with a clear moral compass as well as an ever-present dry wit, and a unwavering devotion to his family. The field will miss his contributions and many of us will miss a good friend and exemplar of the best in academic life.

Thomas Dietz, University Distinguished Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, Sociology and Animal Studies, Michigan State University

I had the pleasure and honor of meeting Scott Frey some years ago during a visit to his campus. His research on transnational waste flows and global environmental inequality is enormously important and foundational for the field, and he totally transformed my thinking on the topic. Only a small number of social scientists have examined this topic with particular attention to the social forces behind the waste trade, and Scott's work opened my eyes to the fact that the global trade in hazardous wastes is also a case of environmental inequality that reflects enduring historic divides between global North and South. As Frey argued, sending poisons to poor nations around the globe adheres to the historical pattern of siphoning wealth out of nations that are often former colonies, but is a new form of exploitation because it involves the export of what he called "anti-wealth"—the opposite of wealth; substances that drain a nation's resources and disrupt its ability to produce resources in the future. Despite that troubling reality, Scott's work also reminded me that we could draw hope and inspiration from the fact that a number of transnational social movement networks have emerged to draw attention to and combat these practices. He will be missed.

David N. Pellow, Department Chair, Professor, and Dehlsen Chair, Environmental Studies Program; Director, Global Environmental Justice Project, University of California, Santa Barbara

Starting from when I was in graduate school and continuing throughout my career, I have been greatly inspired by Scott's work on global inequalities and injustices. On an interpersonal level, I also found him inspiring. I have a fond memory of spending a fair amount of time with him in Bar Harbor at the Society for

Human Ecology meeting there over a decade ago. He was charming, funny, and brilliant. I will miss him.

Richard York, Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies, University of Oregon

All of us in the UTK Sociology community are shocked and deeply saddened at Scott Frey's passing. Scott became an important and valued member of our community when he and his wife Sally moved here from the University of North Florida in 2004. Scott came in as department head and did a great deal to stabilize us during a time of substantial department need. Scott was a prolific scholar, leaving behind an enduring body of work in environmental sociology, especially focused on Asia. He was also a great traveler, spending significant time in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Cuba, among many locales. Scott was also a mentor who took his role in graduate education very seriously. Many graduate students – over 50 – benefited from his knowledge and calm guidance at George Washington University and Kansas State University, as well as here at UTK. We will miss him.

Jon Shefner, Professor and Head, Dept. of Sociology, University of Tennessee – Knoxville

Scott was a wonderful person and a brilliant environmental sociologist. My first publication when I was in graduate school was a book review, where I reviewed his *Environment and Society* edited collection. When the review was published, Scott sent me a kind note of thanks and encouragement, and after that we crossed paths many times through the years. It was always a pleasure to see Scott at conferences and workshops and to chat over a glass of wine or a nice meal. He was one of the pioneers in bringing world-systems analysis into environmental sociology, and he was a truly genuine and supportive colleague. Scott's work has influenced so many of us. He will be missed.

Andrew Jorgeson, Professor and Chair, [Department of Sociology](#); Professor, [Environmental Studies](#), Boston College

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Tributes (cont'd)

Scott Frey has been my adviser since I started my advanced graduate study in 2015. His research on the political economy of environmental problems and injustice within and between nations has inspired me to find my own niche in academic odyssey. He has been an indefatigable source of encouragement to me. He helped me developing my research ideas, forming my professional behavior, and showing the right path at the times of dubiety. His professionalism never ceased amazing me. He treated me with sincere regards. He believed in me so much that it helped me rediscover my strength and weakness. Even weeks after his passing, I am completely at a loss for words. Knowing him very closely has been an amazing experience, and I will forever cherish this memory.

Nikhil Deb, PhD Candidate (Dr. Frey's advisee), University of Tennessee, Knoxville