

ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

President's Column

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

Department of Sociology

University of Ottawa, Canada

The RC-24 section of the First World Forum of Sociology to be held in Barcelona, Spain in September 2008 promises to be a major intellectual event. There will be 24 RC-24 sessions where 144 research papers will be presented (six per session). RC-24 will also have a business meeting. In addition RC-24 is participating in two joint sessions: one with RC-13 (Tourism and Leisure), and another with RC-23 (Science and Technology). There is one worry however. Barcelona has become one of Europe's most expensive cities and the Euro has climbed to stratospheric heights with respect to other currencies, including the dollar. Many participants were shocked when they converted into their own currency the hotel prices the ISA had negotiated and indicated on its website. Hopefully environmental sociologists who want to present their paper at the World Forum will not be prevented from doing so because of financial barriers. Information about the RC-24 sessions and session organizers is listed below in the **Upcoming Conferences** section.

At the business meeting, the ad hoc committee established at the Durban World Congress to evaluate the possibility of launching an environmental sociology journal affiliated in some way with RC-24 will give a report about its activities and conclusions. Its members are Steven Yearley, Gert Spaargaren, David Sonnenfeld, and Dana Fisher. We will also discuss a suggestion by Timmons Roberts that a web site be created where the best papers from RC-24 conferences would be placed. Other issues of interest will also be discussed.

The globalization of Ph.D. theses makes for interesting comparisons. I have just finished evaluating a doctoral thesis and participating in a thesis defence in Bordeaux France. There were many similarities with the procedure I participated in previously in Canada, but there are several interesting differences. The thesis is first evaluated and a judgement made on whether it meets the requirements for a thesis defence, with the comments forwarded to the thesis director and candidate. This is the case everywhere. But in Bordeaux a thesis defence begins with panache unknown in Canada. It starts with a meal of French cuisine, and of course Bordeaux wine, in a restaurant where the thesis director and the four evaluators get to know one another and discuss the thesis. The candidate does not get invited to eat. Then, the group moves to a room in the university where the candidate and the public are waiting. Next comes the usual introduction of the dissertation by the candidate, the director's comments, the evaluators' assessments and questioning, and the candidate's responses. This part being rather long, there is a pause in the middle for "physiological" reasons, as it was explained to me. After the questioning, the candidate and public leave the room, the evaluators reach a conclusion, and the candidate and public are invited back in to receive the verdict. This, too, is typical in other countries. A reception then constitutes the grand finale, with more Bordeaux wine, Champagne, caviar and

French delicacies. In short, if you are ever invited to be an external evaluator for a Ph.D. thesis in France, accept.

The successful thesis by (now Dr.) Philippe Boudes examined the development of the sociology of the environment in France. This was compared to its development in the United States. Given the importance of history in French academic culture, the thesis began with August Comte. One of the conclusions of the dissertation was that French sociologists of the environment had not previously participated at the international level, mainly because most international conferences and publications are in English, and they had been slower than colleagues in other countries to adopt English as the common language of communication. It should be noted that there is also an International Association of French Language Sociologists with an Environment and Society section where the working language is French and in which French sociologists participate massively. The thesis also found that French participation in international associations with English as the working language is increasing rapidly, with young French sociologists of the environment now participating actively in international conferences of the ISA and also in the meetings of the European Sociological Association where the working language is also English. After reading the thesis I decided to check the nationality of authors of papers to be presented at the World Forum in Barcelona. The results are given in the following table. They are only indicative because I do not claim to have done an exhaustive analysis of the subtleties of differences between nationality and country of residence. They are nonetheless interesting. Obviously the geographical site of the World Forum affects participation rates, with Spain leading the way because the Forum is being held in Spain. But geography is not determinant, and Spanish environmental sociologists deserve a great deal of credit for their enthusiastic participation in the World Forum. Concerning France, the results show a significant participation of French sociologists of the environment, which confirms the conclusion Dr. Boudes documented in his thesis. Concerning other countries, I will let RC-24 readers draw their own conclusions.

Comparison by country of participation in the Environment and Society Research Committee sessions at the World Forum of Sociology in Barcelona September 2008

Country	Papers	(Co-)authors
Spain	25	46
Brazil	16	21
United Kingdom	15	27
United States	11	19
Germany	10	11
France	10	14
India	7	9
Italy	7	8
Portugal	7	17
Finland	6	8
Japan	5	9
Canada	4	5
Netherlands	4	4
South Africa	3	4
Australia	2	2

Russia	2	2
Sweden	2	4
Israel	2	3
Ireland	2	2
Mexico	2	2
Denmark	2	2
South Korea	1	1
Austria	1	1
Turkey	1	1
Colombia	1	1
Venezuela	1	2
Turkey	1	2
Moldova	1	3
Hungary	1	4
Taiwan	1	1
Belgium	1	1
Nigeria	1	1
Belize		1
Cameroon	1	1
Norway		1

On a very different subject, there is terrible news to announce. A young American environmental sociologist, Brent Marshall, was scheduled to present a paper to Session 20 of the RC-24 sessions at the World Forum in Barcelona. His paper written with two other authors was entitled “The Impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast and New Orleans: The Long road to Recovery.” Our organizing committee asked him to chair that session on “Social responses to environmental problems”. He graciously accepted. But sadly he was killed in a motorcycle accident in April (see **In Memoriam** below). This is a great loss for the RC-24 and for American sociology. I was especially looking forward to hearing his paper because it is in the same area of research as mine: the interface between environmental sociology and the sociology of disasters.

Notes from the Editor

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

Hello Colleagues:

As the academic year closes here in the United States, we are overwhelmed by the effects of the cyclone that hit Myanmar in the beginning of May and the earthquake in the Sichuan Province of China just 10 days later. Although these are natural disasters, as we all know too well, the ways that society—at the local, national and international levels—are responding to these disasters is most definitely social. These disasters around the world provide research opportunities for

sociologists to understand better the complex relationship between humans and the natural environment at a variety of scales.

At the same time, these natural disasters also give us the opportunity to envision ways to help our fellow people in times of need. The World Forum of Sociology in Barcelona in September will provide an opportunity for us, as a Research Committee, to discuss these issues (as well as many many other issues that are of interest to our members).

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the World Forum this year. It has been scheduled to take place during the first week of the academic year here at Columbia University. Although I will not be able to make it to Barcelona, I plan to follow its events from afar. In addition, information about the Forum will be circulated to our members through the RC-24 List and on our Website. The November issue of the RC-24 Newsletter will include discussions of the Forum from members who attended. If you are going to the Forum, please consider submitting something for our next newsletter. I wish everyone a safe (and productive) trip to Barcelona!

In Memoriam

Brent K. Marshall, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Central Florida (UCF) in the USA, passed away in the early evening of Sunday, April 27, 2008, from complications resulting from his motorcycle accident in the early morning of Friday, April 18, 2008. He was well attended by his family, friends, and colleagues throughout his hospitalization and passed comfortably around 6:00 p.m.

Brent grew up in the small city of Blaine, near Bellingham, Washington. He graduated from Blaine High School where he developed his love for good friends and basketball. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Washington and his master's degree in Political Science at the University of New Orleans. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Tennessee and moved to Orlando, Florida, in 2000 to continue his research and teaching at UCF. Brent dedicated countless hours to progressing the study of environmental sociology and sociological issues associated with disasters and natural resources. Outside his office, he enjoyed fishing, riding his motorcycle, playing with his dogs (Vonnegut and Bronte), and spending time with his friends and family. Words cannot adequately express how much he will be missed by family, friends, colleagues, students, and those who were able to share what limited time he had. His life and memory will be treasured by his sister, Barbara Satushek, her husband, Edward, and their children, Adam and Anna, and his brother, Brad Marshall, his wife, Astrid, and their children, Andrew, Athena, and Austin.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Brent K Marshall Memorial Scholarship Fund through the UCF Credit Union, 12253 Challenger Parkway, Orlando, FL 32826. This fund has been set up by the family to continue Brent's dedication to the educational and learning experience of graduate students in the field of environmental sociology.

A Faculty Spotlight story on Brent that originally appeared in November 2005 is available on the Office of Faculty Relations home page. Go to www.ucf.edu, type in "Faculty Relations," and click on Brent's photo to go to the story.

Report on Workshop on Scientific Knowledge and Collective Action in Socioenvironmental Conflicts (22-23 May 2008).

By **Ernest Garcia**

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

Universidad de Valencia, Spain

(Seminario Internacional Conocimiento Científico y Acción Colectiva en los Conflictos Socioecológicos). University of Valencia (Spain). May 22-23, 2008.

The workshop (whose languages were Spanish and French) had the aim of discussing new knowledge about collective actions that are generated around socio-environmental conflicts. More specifically, its purpose is to clarify the extent to which the dissemination of scientific information is a causal factor in that kind of social conflicts and, more generally, the role played by experts' descriptions of the problems in their origin and development. In addition, the workshop tried to understand the interaction between experts and activists in the dynamics of the social movements (effects of collective learning, building capacity for proposal, etc.) as well as in the social role of science (expanded knowledge communities, legitimacy of information sources based on traditional knowledge, and so on).

Key-speakers and rapporteurs include Alain Gras and Aurélien Cohen (University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), Hellmuth Lange (University of Bremen), Iñaki Barcena (University of the Basque Country), Angels Alió, Joaquim Sempere and Jesús Vicens (University of Barcelona), Joaquín Valdivielso (University of the Balearic Islands), Alex Casademunt (Autonomous University of Barcelona), Ignasi Lerma, Mercedes Martínez and Ernest Garcia (University of Valencia).

For more information, e-mail: ernest.garcia@uv.es or go to the conference Website:

<http://www.uv.es/~mermari/>

Report on the US National Science Foundation Workshop on Sociology and Climate Change (30-31 May 2008)

By **Joane Nagel**

Center for Research on Global Change

University of Kansas, USA

Where are the voices of sociologists in policy and scientific discussions of global climate change? What does our discipline have to say about this important issue? What is the state of sociological research on global warming and climate change? What are the major research questions that sociologists should be asking and answering about climate change?

To begin to answer these questions for researchers in the United States, a workshop on the “Sociological Perspectives on Global Climate Change” is being convened on 30-31 May at the US National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia. The workshop brings together sociologists already addressing climate change in their research, sociologists working on related

topics, but not involved in research on climate-related global change, and organization and agency experts on the human dimensions of environmental change.

The workshop was designed to increase sociology's participation in what the US National Academy of Sciences has identified as one of the grand challenges of the 21st century: understanding the human dimensions of global warming and climate change. The challenge could not be more pressing, and sociologists have an array of theoretical and methodological tools to contribute to addressing this pressing problem of global concern. This workshop is focusing on the research challenges and opportunities for sociologists to study climate change and was intended to catalyze further social science research on the human dimensions of global climate change.

The workshop is being organized by Joane Nagel (University of Kansas), Tom Dietz (Michigan State University), and Jeffrey Broadbent (University of Minnesota). The 30 participating sociologists were asked to write short papers and make brief presentations answering two questions:

1. *What do we know*: What does Sociology bring to the table (theoretically & methodologically) for studying the human dimensions of global climate change?
2. *What do we need to know*: What are the major research questions that sociologists should be asking and answering about climate change?

Major workshop goals are to motivate sociological research on this important topic, facilitate the involvement of sociologists in interdisciplinary research on the human dimensions of environmental change, and set an agenda for future research on the sociology of global climate change. The workshop report, *Sociological Perspectives on Global Climate Change*, will be published in early 2009, and preliminary workshop results will be presented in several sessions at the 2008 American Sociological Association annual meeting in Boston.

For more information on the workshop, go to: www.ipsr.ku.edu/NSFWorkshop

Report on Comparing Climate Change Policy Networks Project (COMPON)

By **Jeffrey Broadbent**
Department of Sociology
University of Minnesota, USA

Upon what factors do national reactions to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)-type claims about climate change depend? A plausible general hypothesis is that the political efficacy of any issue frame, including a scientific one, depends upon finding an effective social bearer, an "advocacy network" (Social Learning Group 2001:187-95; Sabatier and Jenkins-smith 2001). As a form of social movement, the mobilization and effectiveness of advocacy networks will be affected by the qualities of actors and of contexts. These qualities include actor interests and orienting frames, as well as the contextual opportunities presented by resources, economies, political institutions, cultures and national geophysical and demographic qualities.

A special characteristic of climate change is that, as a problem of environmental management, effective response may require widespread implicit acceptance of the scientific frame as a motive for compliance. If this is true, the transition to a low carbon society may require widespread persuasion and education, rather than simply new rules and regulations. In this regard, venues of “stakeholder participation,” as advocated by Agenda 21, if they work through egalitarian negotiation to produce widespread cooperation, may be crucial social institutions. However, such participatory venues are vulnerable to manipulation by powerful actors, in which case they would not produce widespread persuasion. This view raises the cross-national comparative social science question – would corporatist polities (with negotiatory, persuasive forums) or pluralist polities (with competitive, conflictual processes) be more effective in producing widespread cooperation in reducing carbon emissions? These and other scientific hypotheses animate the COMPON project.

To investigate such hypotheses, the Comparing Climate change Policy Networks (or COMPON) project will gather information on the flow of climate change related scientific beliefs and action-related norms from the IPCC/UNFCCC and other sources into and through different societies and their affect upon policy outcomes. The COMPON project currently includes scholarly research teams in 17 cases: China, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, India, United States, Canada, Brazil, England, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Greece and Russia, plus the international case of UNFCCC regime formation. The cases vary on important factors, including political institutions, levels of prosperity, vulnerability to climate change disaster, interest group investments, basic social structure and cultural orientations. The project uses the well-developed policy network method to design the common survey and gather objective data on these processes (Knoke et al. 1996; Laumann and Knoke 1987; Raab and Kenis 2007). Several country cases have funding and other funding efforts are underway. The project is modular, so researchers can add new country cases (for more information, contact Jeff Broadbent at: broad001@umn.edu). The COMPON survey will be repeated at 5 to 7 year intervals and produce a publically-available data set for the comparative study of changing national reactions to global climate change over time.

COMPON held its first conference and workshop on 25-28 January 2007, at the University of Minnesota (for more information, go to: <http://igs.cla.umn.edu/research/conferences.html>). We have since held panels and workshops in Greece and Berlin. The PI is currently in Japan as a visiting researcher at Keio University working on the design of the COMPON survey and on the implementation of the Japan case.

For more information, e-mail Jeff Broadbent at broad001@umn.edu

Upcoming Conferences and Calls for Papers (in chronological order)

First ISA World Forum of Sociology

“Sociological Research and Public Debate”

RC-24 theme: “Contributions of Environmental Sociology to Sustainable Societies”

Barcelona, Spain

5-8 September 2008

The final program for the RC-24 sessions and the book of abstracts are available on the RC-24 website:
www.environment-societyisa.org/Conferences.html

The Fifth International Nanotechnology, Society and Environment Seminar—V SEMINANOSMOA

Natal, Capital of Rio Grande Do Norte State, Brazil

15-17 October 2008

At this meeting, we will discuss the relationship between Nanotechnology, the environment, and society, as well as the economy, ethics, agriculture and policy making. All members of the RC-24 who are working with nanotechnology are invited to participate in this event.

For more information: please contact Paulo Martins at: marpaulo@ipt.br

Journals, Volumes, and Calls for Submissions/Participation

The latest issue (spring 2008) of *Nature and Culture* is now available at:

<http://berghahn.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/berghahn/natcult/2008/00000003/00000001;jsessionid=sbjhtxnuw4ue.victoria>

The Editors encourage new submissions to the journal, which will publish three issues in 2009.

The contents of the next issue (volume 3, number 2) are:

Perspectives

Natures of Change: Weathering the World in Post-Tsunami Tamil Nadu

Frida Hastrup

Articles

Green or Brown? Environmental Attitudes and Governance in Greater China

Paul G. Harris

Thinking Ecographically: Places, Ecographers and Environmentalism

Jamon Alex Halvaksz and Heather E. Young-Leslie

Zoning: Environmental Cosmopolitics in and around the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, Guatemala

Silvia Posocco

Confronting Nuclear Risks: Counter-expertise as Politics within the French Nuclear Debate
Sezin Topçu

For more information, go to: <http://www.berghahnbooks.com/journals/nc/>

The June 2008 issue of *The American Sociological Review* (volume 73, number 3) includes two articles that are likely to be of interest to RC-24 members:

The Social Production of Toxic Uncertainty –Javier Auyero, SUNY-Stony Brook and Debora Swistun, Universidad Nacional de la Plata

Corporations Promote “Toxic Uncertainty” Regarding Environmental Hazards

Based on two and a half years of research in Flammable, an Argentine shantytown, sociologists Javier Auyero and Debora Swistun explore how people perceive and often resist the idea that their communities are contaminated by health-threatening toxins. Adjacent to a petrochemical compound, Flammable’s soil, air, and water streams are highly polluted. Residents, especially children, exhibit signs of contamination. However, many locals deny that their environment is polluted, despite scientific and anecdotal evidence to the contrary. Auyero and Swistun argue that these denials derive from “toxic uncertainty,” or skepticism and ignorance regarding environmental dangers. As opposed to catastrophic toxic disasters, Flammable’s contamination has built up slowly over time. This slow contamination, in addition to contradictory actions by physicians and governmental and corporate leaders, has led to widespread doubts and mistakes about Flammable’s polluted habitat, which further endangers its residents.

Risk Society and Contested Illness: The Case of Nuclear Weapons Workers – Sherry Cable, University of Tennessee; Thomas E. Shriver and Tamara L. Mix, Oklahoma State University

Nuclear Weapons Workers’ Illness Claims Aggressively Denied by Authorities

Modern economies depend on technologies that may expose citizens to dangerous substances. Knowledge of such exposure is, more often than not, hidden from the public. In their extensive study of the Oak Ridge Nuclear Reservation, a team of sociologists from the University of Tennessee and Oklahoma State University analyze how the government, corporate, and medical communities contest nuclear weapons workers’ claims of contamination. Despite attempts to minimize risk at the nuclear facility, workers were contaminated at work. One worker the team interviewed described, “Headaches! Terrible headaches, daily, every single day!” Corporate management and medical personnel used a variety of tactics to contest workers’ illness claims. Management would punish workers who complained of contamination with undesirable work assignments and deny them access to on-site medical records. Medical personnel would not inform workers of their medical test results and personally discredit other physicians who legitimated workers medical claims. Advocating greater transparency in dangerous workplaces, the authors conclude, “With access to accurate information and open discourse to assess risks, citizens decide which risks they will not accept and can protect themselves from the risks they deem acceptable.”

These articles are available through the Ingenta database: (<http://www.ingentaselect.com>)

Special Issue of *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability* will be out in July 2008.

The issue, which is being edited by David Sonnenfeld and Stewart Lockie, focuses on "Communities, Natural Resources, and Environments." The contents are:

Editorial

Communities, Natural Resources, and Environments: African and Asian Experiences
Stewart Lockie & David Sonnenfeld

Articles

Institutional Configurations Around Forest Reserves in Zimbabwe: The Challenge of Nested Institutions for Resource Management
Frank Matose, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Prospects for Enhancing Livelihoods, Communities, and Biodiversity in Africa through Community-Based Forest Management: A Critical Analysis
Robert E. Mazur & Oleg V. Stakhanov, Iowa State University, USA

Local Knowledge and Fisheries Resource Management: A Study Among Riverine Fishing Communities in Kerala, India
D. S. Sunil, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

Hanging in Balance: Benefit Sharing in Community-Based Fishery Resource Management in the Lower Mekong Basin
Le Nguyet Minh, Oxfam America, East Asia Regional Office, Cambodia

Groundwater Management in Rice Terraces: A Case Study of a Lakeside Community in Shiga Prefecture, Japan
Sanae Yamamoto, Kwansai Gakuin University, Japan

Gender Roles and Practices in Natural Resource Management in the North West Province of Cameroon
Lotsmart Fonjong, University of Buea, Cameroon

For more information, contact David dsonn@esf.edu or Stewart s.lockie@cqu.edu.au

Call for Participation in the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences
Bill Freudenburg

I am writing to invite my fellow ISA members to join me in a new organization that's intended to go beyond a different set of boundaries -- disciplinary boundaries -- while advancing the study of human-environment relationships. It's called the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences, and by modern-day standards, it's cheap (\$30 US) to join. If you're ready to sign up now, go to <http://aess.info> and sign up. If you'd like more information first, please read on.

I've spent most of my career "in" departments of sociology and rural sociology, offering an "environmental" class once every year or so -- a pattern that's pretty widespread. When I got an offer to join one of the oldest environmental studies programs of the modern era, at UCSB, I assumed I'd be joining the same professional association as people who were already in the program. What I found was that there WAS no such association -- no place to learn about the latest developments in the field, meet people who are teaching similar classes on other campuses, argue about new theories and findings, and do all of the other things we've long seen as "normal" for almost every other field of study imaginable.

Our first step was to hold a pretend annual meeting -- the sort of meeting you'd expect to see if such an organization WERE in existence -- and see if anyone would show up. (For info on what we called "the Santa Barbara Summit on Env. Studies," see https://aess.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=2155&club_id=939971&item_id=26111).

We were surprised to find that the meeting attracted a total of 250 folks, counting students, from a total of seven countries. We were delighted to find that they found the interactions every bit as stimulating as we had hoped, and there was strong support for trying something similar again. At the second Summit, which was held last year at Syracuse Univ., the folks in attendance voted strongly in favor of setting one up. Still, that left open the question of how to handle the details.

Ultimately, a small band of volunteers decided that the sensible thing to do was to follow the advice we academics often provide to professional resource managers, taking an "adaptive management" approach. We needed to be "learning by doing" while setting up an independent organization. After much negotiation, the Environmental Studies Program at UCSB ultimately agreed to serve as the initial business office, using web-based resources that will automate (or at least make it possible for someone here to handle) darned near everything that can be automated, as well as making it fairly simple for us to generate reports, news, committees, newsletters, share photos, put together events calendars, do surveys, host discussion groups, and so forth.

The key piece of information is that it is now possible to become a charter member of the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences (AESS), simply by going to AESS.INFO. Learning from studies of the diffusion of innovations -- specifically the finding that people are more likely to try something out if it's not too costly -- the numbers we picked out of thin air are \$30 U.S. for a professional membership, and \$15 for a student membership. Once you become a member, any student who works with you becomes eligible for an even cheaper membership rate of just \$10.

The time is now. First, please click on <http://aess.clubexpress.com/> -- or else on the shorter and easier-to-remember <http://aess.info> (which will bounce you through to the same site) -- and sign up! Second, please forward this information to everyone else in your program -- students, faculty, staff -- who ought to have a chance to become a charter member.

Many thanks for your support, and thanks in advance for helping to advance our shared cause, over the years that lie ahead.

For more information, e-mail Bill Freudenburg at freudenburg@es.ucsb.edu or go to: <http://aess.clubexpress.com/>

Announcements and Resources

Cornell University Post Doctoral Associate and Graduate Research Assistantship in Environmental Social Science

We seek a highly motivated environmental social scientist and graduate student applicants of significant promise to work with an interdisciplinary team on a NSF funded Coupled Natural and Human Systems project entitled "Understanding linkages between social and biogeochemical processes in agricultural landscapes." Sociologists, geographers, economists and others with environmental social science interests and expertise related to agriculture and technical change are encouraged to apply.

We seek to analyze spatial (in)congruence of institutional capabilities, cropping systems and water pollution in the Mississippi River drainage. The project will evaluate hypotheses regarding institutional linkages supporting co-evolution of organizations, production systems and ecosystem processes at multiple scales. Analytic perspectives including ecological modernization, innovation studies, and environmental governance will be relevant. Experience in application of quantitative methods and analysis of large-scale survey data is highly desirable. Please send CV and letters of inquiry to Steve Wolf (saw44@cornell.edu). Interviews will be scheduled on a rolling basis and applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

The Saudi Association of Sociology and Social Work (SASSW) held a forum about Saudi Family and Contemporary Changes on 11-12 May 2008. The forum, which was sponsored by Prince Nife Bin Abdul-Aziz the Interior Minister, included 34 papers and a public lecture by a very well known thinker, and a training scion about communication between family members. This was declared by Prof. Abdul-Razzag Zahrani the chair of the SASSW, and the member of ISA.

Ortwin Renn, Professor of Environmental Sociology at the University of Stuttgart, and co-author with Carlo Jaeger, Gene Rosa, and Thomas Webler of *Risk, Uncertainty, and Rational Action*. London: EARTHSCAN, the book that won the 2000-2002 Outstanding Publication Award of the Section on Environment and Technology of the American Sociological Association was awarded an honorary doctorate at ETH (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule) in Zurich, the M.I.T., of Switzerland (and where Einstein studied from 1896-1900).

Recent Member Publications and Talks (in alphabetical order)

Gellert, Paul K. 2008. "What's New with the Old?: Scalar Dialectics and the Reorganization of Indonesia's Timber Industry," in *Taking Southeast Asia to Market: Commodities, Nature, and People in the Neoliberal Age*, edited by Nancy L. Peluso and Joe Nevins. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gould, Kenneth A., David N. Pellow, and Allan Schnaiberg. 2008. *The Treadmill of Production: Injustice and Unsustainability in the Global Economy.* Boulder, CO.: Paradigm Publishers.

Ian Penna, University of Melbourne, has made his Ph.D. Dissertation, "The Political Ecology of the Japanese paper industry," accessible on the web. It can be downloaded from:
<http://eprints.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/archive/00003907>

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