

ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

President's Column

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

Department of Sociology

University of Ottawa, Canada

The feedback I received concerning the RC-24 meetings at the First World Forum of Sociology in Barcelona confirmed that it was a great success. There were 24 RC-24 sessions and three joint sessions. Each session had six planned presentations. Very few paper presenters did not show up, and the sessions were well attended. In addition Mercedes Pardo and Tom Burns participated in an Open Debate on "Sustainable Development," and I gave a paper at what the ISA calls a Common Session. I would like to thank all who participated in the First World Forum of Sociology for making RC-24 the research committee with the greatest participation. The organizing committee for RC-24 was made up of David Tabara from Barcelona, Mercedes Pardo from Madrid, Ernest Garcia from Valencia, and me from Canada. Mercedes handled the RC-24 grants and Ernest is writing the assessment in this Newsletter. My role was mainly to provide continuity and guidance based on what has been done at World Congresses. I would like to thank the other members of the organizing committee, and especially David. It is he who did most of the organizational work. As the point man for inquiries, he answered emails from all participants, and that is a great deal of work when there are 150 participants. Before going on his summer vacation, he sent out an email warning that he would be incommunicado for the next several weeks and added: "I love you all, but ...". So you participants gave him a well deserved break. David also organized the tapas dinner reception, which he paid for from his research grant. Everyone I have spoken to agreed that sociological discussion was particularly lively when wine flowed and tapas were enjoyed. In addition, David organized an RC-24 International workshop entitled "Key challenges of environmental sociology to sustainable societies research" the day following the Forum. Although I was unable to attend because as RC-24 President I had to participate in the ISA Research Council meeting, I heard it was very successful. So congratulations David for much work well done.

The World Forum was a wonderful initiative on the part of the ISA Vice-President (Research) Arturo Rodriguez Morato that RC-24 took full advantage of. There were 42 of the 55 RCs that participated and 2300 of the ISA's 4000 members gave papers. Nevertheless, a few problems emerged. Since there were only four days (World Congresses are longer) and some time slots were reserved solely for plenary sessions, a big RC like ours had to double up sessions, with two sessions occurring in each time slot, and three sessions in several slots. In this sense RC-24 has outgrown the confines of the ISA World Forum. At the Research Council meeting, I suggested that in the future more time slots be made available to big RCs like ours even if that means having sessions at the same time as plenary sessions because it is particularly bad if an RC has to compete with itself. I took the position that the First World Forum of Sociology was an excellent initiative and should be repeated, but also pointed out several weaknesses (the printed

programme, inadequate publicity for the special and common sessions and for the open debates, etc.). The decision whether to hold a Second World Forum will be taken by the ISA executive sometime in the future.

The next World Congress of Sociology will be held in Gothenburg Sweden 11-17 July 2010. Its overall theme is “Sociology on the Move” and its five subthemes are “Sustainability,” “Worlds of Difference,” “Action and Imagination,” “Violence and War,” and “Religion and Power.” The first subtheme is directly related to RC-24 research and I will do everything I can to have RC-24 participate massively in it. The next two subthemes also offer possibilities with the aid of the sociological imagination. You will find elsewhere in this Newsletter a “Barcelona Manifesto” written by participants at David Tabara’s Workshop. I will attempt to convince the ISA to implement the suggestions found at the end of the document. I have already written the following email to Hans Joas, ISA Vice-president Research and organizer of the “sustainability” subtheme:

“I have been mandated by RC-24 to offer you our complete cooperation for the Congress, especially since the general theme is ‘Sociology on the Move’, and one of the main topics of the Congress is ‘Sustainability’. I am attaching a manifesto written by speakers at an RC-24 workshop we organized following the World Forum in Barcelona. As you can see, RC-24 believes that sociology needs to move to deal with environmental issues, in particular global climate change, which threatens to affect all other socio-economic issues. RC-24 is very interested in participating in plenary sessions on these themes and in other kinds of sessions the ISA chooses to create. RC-24 was one of the RCs that had the greatest number of participants in the recent World Forum and in the last World Congress in Durban. We expect that to be the case for the 2010 World Congress too. Many of our members are world renowned environmental sociologists who do research on sustainability and climate change, and some have made major contributions to other areas of sociology as well. RC-24 would be pleased to contribute to the success of the 2010 World Congress.”

Professor Joas responded as follows: “Dear Professor Murphy, I find this an excellent idea. I will communicate about this with my co-organizers. Many thanks!” So the ball is now rolling and we will see what Professor Joas comes up with.

I also want to find a way to give the Buttell Award winner more time at the World Congress to make a presentation. The RC-24 organizing committee for the World Congress consists of four members: Raymond Murphy of Canada as RC-24 President, Matthias Gross of Germany as RC-24 Treasurer, and two RC-24 members from Sweden – Magnus Boström and Mikael Klintman. By the way, The 2014 World Congress will be held in Tokyo, Japan with support from South Korea and China.

The ISA is examining the possibility of creating an on-line source of state-of-the-art articles of 5000 words. These would be peer reviewed and of guaranteed quality. RCs would be involved in the process, but it has not yet been decided how they would be involved. The name presently favoured by the ISA executive is “Sociopedia,” but I argued at the Research Council that is a poor choice because the ISA does not want it to be regarded as an encyclopedia and because it sounds like Wikipedia.

We took advantage of so many RC-24 participants at the World Forum to hold a business meeting. I gave a report on RC-24 activities, Treasurer Matthias Gross gave a financial report, Vice-President Julia Guivant reported on the 2010 Buttell Award, and Steve Yearley reported on the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on the possibility of creating a journal affiliated with RC-24. The possibility of creating a web site where papers from RC-24 conferences would be posted was discussed, but it was decided not to advance in that direction partly out of concern for the impact such postings might have on the subsequent possibility for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Given the large number of RC-24 papers presented at the World Forum, the possibility of making the process of presenting papers at the World Forum and World Congress more selective was also examined. This could be done by requiring full papers six months in advance and then selecting or rejecting papers. However there was consensus at the business meeting that the present inclusive system works well and that rejecting large numbers of papers could damage the RC-24. The inclusive format has resulted in quality papers, with low quality being a rare exception. Other RC-24 meetings can be selective, but it was agreed that the World Congress and World Forum should be an inclusive opportunity to present papers and be heard by environmental sociologists from around the world. Inclusiveness does however create the problem of too many papers crammed into too few sessions the ISA allocates to RC-24, but that is the lesser evil. It was decided, nevertheless, to require submission of full papers to session organizers two weeks in advance of presentation so that the organizer can be more aware of the content and facilitate accessibility. Efforts will be made to make abstracts more readily available. At the Research Council meeting I discovered that the ISA as a whole is also examining the possibility of posting papers on the web and making abstracts more accessible, and has reached similar conclusions as the RC-24.

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:

I write to you from the United States, where we are all anxiously awaiting the inauguration of our new President. After eight long years of regressive environmental policies during the Bush Administration, it looks like the new Obama Administration will put the United States back on a more environmentally sensitive path.

Although we cannot be certain how the president-elect's campaign promises will translate into actual policy, all indications suggest that the new President will move forward on a number of environmental initiatives early in his term. In particular, there is no question that the US position on climate change will change. To what degree, however, is still uncertain. Barack Obama ran his campaign on a platform that included the implementation of a cap-and-trade policy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. In addition, he has also stated that he will address the economic problems facing America by investing in green jobs. If implemented, these policies will compliment a number of environmentally oriented initiatives that have been working their way through the US Congress.

Even though the new Administration will have a very different position on climate change, it does not take office until after this round of climate change negotiations, which are taking place the first two weeks of December in Poland, are over. Even though the US is sending a delegation that represents the Bush Administration to the meeting in Poland, it is likely that the US position will lean in the direction of the new Administration. The Obama Administration's position will be firmly in place in time for the meeting in Copenhagen, where a deal is expected to be finalized to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. If they are successful in passing a national climate change policy prior to the meeting in late 2009, which is going to be tough for many reasons, the Administration will have more credibility in the international arena, as well as with the US Congress, when it negotiates for the post-Kyoto agreement.

More generally, it is also worth noting that the campaign's success has been attributed to its grassroots outreach to American voters. In contrast to recent Democratic campaigns, which have been found to rely on more professionalized forms of voter mobilization, the Obama campaign implemented a strategy that mobilized an army of volunteers to get supporters out to vote. In the aftermath of the election, members of the campaign are considering how they can keep connected with all of the people whom they mobilized to get Obama elected. These supporters may prove very useful as the new President works to get his legislative agenda, including his environmental policies, passed through the Congress in the coming months. Whatever happens, there's no question that the next year is going to be an exciting time to study environmental politics in the United States!

State of the RC-24, Compiled by Treasurer Matthias Gross

As of 27 August 2008, the ISA RC-24 had 207 registered members. The breakdown of membership by continent is:

Continent	#
Africa	15
Asia	39
Australia / Oceania	10
Europe	73
North America	68
South America	17
Total	207

Not all of our members are on our e-mail list. If you have an e-mail address and are not currently receiving mail from our list, please send an e-mail to RC-24 Secretary, Dana R. Fisher at drf2004@columbia.edu

Reports from the World Forum of Sociology in Barcelona, Spain

Welcome Address to ISA RC-24 Participants in Barcelona

By **Joan David Tàbara**

Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (IEST)

Institut de Ciència i Tecnologia Ambientals (ICTA)

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Dear Colleagues:

The first thing I'd like to do is to give you a very warm welcome to Catalonia, I hope you are having a good and intellectually exciting time here in Barcelona.

The theme of the RC-24 sessions for the First World Forum of Sociology has been 'Contributions of Environmental Sociology to Sustainable Societies.' Over 140 papers have been presented in these sessions. For me, the success of the Research Committee 24 call for abstracts—having been on of the RCs with the most sessions and papers presented in the Forum—is perhaps indicative of a significant trend which is occurring not only within sociology but also within society as a whole. On the one hand, society is now entering into an age of unprecedented global risks and environmental challenges, which cannot escape people's experiences and perceptions. But on the other hand, it is also true that the growing number of global urban dwellers have great difficulties in actually learning about the negative impacts of their own daily actions in other many parts of the world. Environmental sociology can and may be contributing to improve the social awareness of the interconnectedness of the global society and of the negative side effects and risks of our own development.

The type of societal transformations that are required to meet the sustainability requirements extend also to the way we act as a community. As sociologists engaged in some of the most critical themes of our time, we need to be able to create these much needed spaces for interaction and change, and in this respect, I understand that the openness and the inclusiveness of the RC-24 is one of its major strengths. We need to expand our collaboration to other disciplines, participate in international research programmes and build new capacities. Disciplinary science, and not only sociology, finds itself too constrained to deal with any type of complex problem alone, and most importantly, that of sustaining global human societies.

The ISA community of Environment and Society is growing and evolving. When I look back almost 20 years ago when I first met pioneers such as Riley E. Dunlap, Fred Buttel or Michael Redclift, I can see that the diversity and the presence of environmental sociologists worldwide has nothing to do with that bleak situation that I found when I first started my professional career. Fortunately, some things have already improved, but I still feel that we need to do a lot more. Environmental sociology can decisively help to provide more socially and ecologically robust descriptions and explanations of the type of problems that we now face and to support the making of open and transparent institutions and societal pathways that meet the requirements for

sustainability. And in this respect, I believe that environmental sociology can play a crucial role in the processes of social learning for sustainability.

As mentioned, society is now facing unprecedented risks and challenges, but those large scale challenges also pose great opportunities for social scientists if we manage to strengthen our community and project ourselves outside our own academic walls. We have a unique perspective to understand how communication with large publics can be carried out, the constraints and opportunities to modify inequalities and power structures that reproduce existing unsustainabilities, and to identify human agency and responsibilities in the misuse of natural resources. We must explore those opportunities, build alliances and increase the visibility of the environmental sociology community worldwide and prove its value. We can do that and I feel we are actually doing it, as it has been shown in work being presented during these RC-24 sessions.

Good luck with your work and enjoy your dinner!

Joan David Tàbara
Barcelona 6th September 2008

Report on the RC-24 at the ISA World Forum

By Mercedes Martinez-Iglesias and Ernest Garcia

Universidad de Valencia, Spain

The First ISA World Forum on Sociology, held in Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain) from 5 to 8 September 2008, was a massive gathering, joining in a single event many of the usual activities between two world congresses. The idea of the Forum gathered and redefined the traditionally organized Research Council conference and the interim conferences of Research Committees. It was an event with two kinds of programs: a general program conceived as a dialogue between RCs and made up of the papers presented by the RCs' delegates to the Research Council conference, and the parallel programs of the RCs organized by them.

The presence of environmental sociology at the Forum was very visible. First of all, by the number of people involved: the call of the RC-24 for Barcelona meeting attracted many participants (seemingly, the economic crisis had not yet reached us in the RC-24, but one might wonder about the carbon footprint of our meetings). About 150 papers were presented in 24 sessions of the RC-24 and two others shared with the Research Committee on Sociology of Science and Technology (RC-23) and the Research Committee on Tourism (RC-13). This massive participation responds to two factors whose relative strength can only be judged in the future. On the one hand, the expansionary trend of environmental sociology, which shows no signs of exhaustion. On the other hand, the attractiveness of Barcelona as a tourist destination. [A short remark on this point: Lots of people in this city find the accelerated conversion of its historic center into a thematic park of concern, and a growing citizens' anti-tourism mood can be easily perceived there. But even from that perspective, we should accept that environmental sociologists have shown themselves as gentle visitors much more than as noisy intruders (sure: we are not impartial). And anyway, it seems that Barcelona can handle without excessive trauma

such a large quantity of environmental sociologists. Maybe Stillwater, Oklahoma, to mention -as only an example- a place of reference for environmental sociology, would suffer much more].

We must also outline the diversity of the issues under discussion: social learning, global environmental change, de-growth and post-carbon societies, global food markets, restoration and adaptation, the environment and the information age, environmental attitudes and behaviors, environmental justice and ecological debt, risk and technology, communities, citizens' participation, the relationship between knowledge and power, local movements in a globalized world, environmental organization, social responses, identities, water and climate, emerging environmental debates and new analyses, biotechnology and sustainable tourism, along with "classic" items, such as opinions and attitudes, risk, ecological modernization or new social movements, we must record the arrival of emerging issues, such as the environmental effects of the "very new" technologies, the ecological debt or the prospects of de-growth.

The meeting also hosted two sessions in Spanish, which were coordinated by Ignasi Lerma, the former president of the Spanish Network of Environmental Sociologists. Their dual aim, presenting at an international forum environmental sociology made in Spanish (which, by the way, is still one of the official languages of the ISA), and bringing to an RC-24 meeting a significant number of Spanish-speaking sociologists, was achieved only partially. Both sessions were quite busy, and resulted in a lively and vigorous debate, but, unfortunately, few non-Spanish-speaking participants decided to challenge the language barrier. In any case, as an experience of approximation between two areas of development in environmental sociology that do not always maintain sufficient contact, we need to assess positively the performance of both sessions.

In the RC-24 business meeting, which was led by Ray Murphy with his usual good work and his usual warmth, the possibility of launching a journal linked to the RC-24 was discussed. Steven Yearley expressed his willingness to serve as editor if the right conditions were given in terms of support from the publisher, and if no one else was offering him/herself for the position, but the matter remained on the table, waiting for further consideration. The healthy RC-24's financial situation was also reported, as well as some issues regarding the Buttel award and, finally, possible grants for young researchers.

Parallel activities, both social and academic, were also noteworthy. Two of them must be highlighted. The reception given to participants in the RC-24 sessions at the House of Convalescència (of the Autonomous University of Barcelona) allowed a few hours of tasty food and relaxed conversation. And, like many of us are addicted to work, the Forum's sessions were extended at the seminar held on October 9 at the CSIC (Spanish Council for Scientific Research), with the participation of prominent speakers (Riley Dunlap, Eugene Rosa, Tim O'Riordan, Joan Martínez-Alier, Steven Yearley, and Stewart Lockie). The hectic activity displayed by David Tàbara as the organizer of all these events was greatly appreciated by participants and allowed the other local hosts to enjoy an easier life.

In short: the meeting of the RC-24 in Barcelona has been another step in the consolidation of environmental sociology as one of the most productive and innovative lines of sociology in the world. It is still possible to detect a certain mismatch between the number of participants, and the

quality of their inputs, and the still relatively marginal position of environmental sociology in the field of sociology as a whole. However, both the internal dynamics of the subdiscipline and the increasingly visible centrality of environmental problems in contemporary society point to the overcoming of this mismatch.

The Barcelona Manifesto: Perspectives on a Role for Environmental Sociology in an Uncertain World

Prepared by:

Joan Martinez Alier, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Riley Dunlap, Oklahoma State University, USA

Stewart Lockie, CQUniversity, Australia

Timothy O’Riordan, University of East Anglia, UK

Eugene Rosa, Washington State University, USA

Joan David Tabara, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Steven Yearley, The University of Edinburgh, UK

Humankind faces two comprehensive dilemmas in this troubled age. Dilemma one is the beginning of a period of economic decline and possible recession, at least in the developed world in the near term. This is coupled with financial uncertainty and a restriction on credit, which is impeding investment and house purchase, together with unstable commodity markets. There is a squeeze on household incomes, so that elements of large scale poverty for energy, food and housing are beginning to emerge. The growing interaction and accumulation of negative side effects derived from economic globalisation and global environmental change in an increasingly interconnected world is creating an unprecedented total risk situation. The developing world is particularly vulnerable with the underclass especially exposed to increased poverty and to extremely uncertain economic prospects.

The second dilemma is the lack of security for future energy, notably oil and gas, and the global prospect of climate change with international pressure on the reduction of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. This spurs the possibility of expensive and long term risks of nuclear power. Even the possible transition toward renewable energy will be, by no means, cheap or will be able to be achieved on time. In addition the world faces the prospect of severe shortages of fresh water, the growing number of mega-cities, soil erosion at an unprecedented speed, predation of inshore and offshore fisheries, and the wholesale loss of healthy spaces for social-environmental interaction and diverse landscapes and habitats.

The recent expansion of the world economy has been fuelled by two factors, one financial, one environmental. Debts have increased enormously in the world, not only private mortgages, but also for instance the large budget and trade deficits in the USA. To pay these debts would require an enormous acceleration of economic growth. However, economic growth relies on mounting quantities of energy and materials, including water. Hence, the debts will not be paid. Getting more and more energy and materials causes a large quantity of increasing conflicts at the point of extraction, the ‘commodity frontiers,’ the complaints of the environmental justice movement, and the increasing examples of an ‘environmentalism of the poor.’ Environmental sociology has done much to show that environmentalism is not a luxury of the rich but it has also roots in the livelihood needs of the poor.

The expansion of the economy requires energy and materials. But oil extraction is reaching the peak of Hubbert's curve, and this helped from 1998 to 2008 to increase its price. The OPEC oligopoly holds because of the trend towards scarcity of supply. Social resistance to extraction of raw materials, and the awareness of the damage from greenhouse gases would not be enough by themselves to stop the increasing thirst for energy and materials in the growing world economies. The increased price of oil and other raw materials has contributed to the financial crisis (many debts will not be paid). In the rich countries the moment is ripe for opening a social discussion on "sustainable de-growth," to which environmental sociology has much to contribute. Scholarly observers and distinguished commentators estimate a window of a decade to resolve the pressing dilemmas between economic sufficiency and progress toward sustainability. In other words, the next decade is all the time that may realistically be available for profound changes to be made to the global and national economies, to societies and to governing arrangements, if humanity is to maintain its capacity to nurture and care for its global family for the rest of the century.

This suggests the need for unprecedented shifts in social and cultural practices—in the way markets work, in systems of education and in the operation of government. The challenge is magnified because these shifts may have to be put in place just when there are the least propitious economic, social and political circumstances for their acceptance.

This is a time of considerable challenge for the science community, the policy community, for business and civil society, and for government at all scales of action. We believe that this period of immense challenge offers a unique opportunity for social scientists generally, and environmental sociologists in particular, to make crucial contributions to the dialogue and practical action that will be necessary to create the transition to global sustainability. The goal of sustainability comprises a number of key objectives: the redistribution of global opportunities for wellbeing and of economic renaissance around renewable energy, localisation of food supplies and economies more generally, and the acceptance of peacefully managed migration and community cohesion. Social sciences, and in particular environmental sociology, can contribute significantly to the process of social learning for sustainability, to identifying the social and political constraints that impede the necessary worldwide collaboration and societal transformations toward a viable world, and to unveiling the social-environmental inequalities that make present communities and global societies increasingly unsustainable. In this increasingly interconnected and risky world, transformations are not only needed in existing institutional designs, but also in the way current professional and academic practices are carried out.

As a concerned group of environmental sociologists, we suggest the following ways forward:

1. To redouble our efforts to establish an integrated science of sustainability by working with all disciplines of the sciences, the social sciences and the humanities to enable society and economy and governing institutions generally to make the necessary transition.
2. To create plausible scenarios, narratives and policy pathways that are transformational and yet socially understood and acceptable to all cultures, and to

- assist communities worldwide in identifying their sustainable needs and creating paths to meeting those needs.
3. To establish a better basis for evaluating the social justice and ecological implications of any policy shift, so that appropriate political attention and citizen commitments are made with full consideration to fair treatment and to ecological resilience.
 4. To work with a range of interested parties and stakeholders to devise forms of governing that are sensitive, robust and caring toward citizens, enabling them to adjust to the coming changes peacefully, effectively, and with confidence and self-respect.
 5. To create an educational revolution so that every child in the world knows how to live sustainably in their communities and so that all members of future populations understand and are trained to live sustainably and with a nourishing quality of life.

To this end, we suggest that the next World Forum for Sociology be held in Gothenburg, Sweden in September 2010 should address these issues and provide both space for discussion and for establishing and approving a plan of action. This may take a number of forms: (i) a full day of discussion led by environmental sociologists and incorporating a range of other interested parties, including politicians and civic leaders; (ii) special plenary sessions with not only social scientists, but also representatives from the natural sciences, arts, law, and the humanities, and (iii) workshops devoted to assessing the state of social science knowledge of sustainability and the contributions we can make to global discussions and deliberations concerning sustainability. The goals in the coming months are to begin exploring such an agenda and to examine realistic possibilities for collaboration between the Research Committee on Environment and Society (RC-24), other components of the ISA, and a range of public and private actors interested in promoting sustainability. A main goal should be to increase the educational and research capacity of social scientists worldwide to contribute to the achievement of sustainability, particularly in the form of specific research projects and open training programmes.

This Manifesto was prepared by speakers at the International Workshop on “Key challenges of environmental sociology to sustainable societies research,” in Barcelona on 9 September 2008, following the First World Forum of Sociology of the International Sociological Association and in particular its Environment and Society Research Committee (RC-24) meetings.

Report on the International Conference on Environmental Thought, “Our Challenging Agenda 2008, Confronting the Global Ecological Crisis-Linking Environmental Thought to Public Philosophy” in Chiba, Japan (15-17 June)

Hiroshi Matsuno

Research Centre for Global Welfare
Chiba University, Japan

The International Conference on Environment Thought, which focused on Confronting the Global Ecological Crisis—Linking Environmental Thought to Public Philosophy, was held at Chiba University in June. The conference focused on addressing issues related to how we can construct an environmentally sustainable society and what we should do for the purpose of the public citizen. The conference concluded by drafting the “Chiba Declaration,” which addressed

issues to be discussed at the G-8 meeting in Toyako, Japan in July 2008. The Chiba Green Declaration Group included Dr., John Barry (Reader, Queen's University, UK), Dr., Robyn Eckersley (Professor, University of Melbourne, Australia), Masaya Kobayashi (Professor, Chiba University), Dr., Hiroshi Matsuno (Professor, Chiba University) and others.

For a copy of the Chiba Declaration, which was created during this meeting, contact Hiroshi at: dr_h_matsu@ybb.ne.jp

Report on the First International Symposium on Environmental Sociology in East Asia in Tokyo, Japan (4-6 October)

Ryoichi Terada

The Japanese Association for Environmental Sociology
Meiji University, Japan

The first international symposium on environmental sociology in East Asia was held in Tokyo. In the past few years, we, the board members of the Japanese and the Korean environmental sociological associations, have been talking about a plan to have a joint conference. A little later, we heard good news that Chinese environmental sociologists established their own association in 2006 and that they were having an RC-24 conference in Beijing in 2007. We extended our plan and proposed to have a joint conference with four East Asian countries and regions: China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. The first meeting was successfully held at Hosei University, Tokyo, on October 4 through 6 with 26 presenters and more than 200 participants.

All of these countries and regions have a lot of similarities in their environmental challenges, including acute industrial pollution resulting from rapid economic growth since the 1970s, as well as recent common concern over trans-border air pollution, e-waste transfer, food safety, etc. The East Asian region is now one of the most heavily industrialized areas in the world, having approximately one fourth of the world's population. It is crucial for us to make this area environmentally sustainable for the health of the whole planet. For our part, we have a lot of research fields to analyze comparatively among each country and region.

In the eight sessions of the conference, the topics included: water pollution and water resource management, local resistance to government sponsored large-scale development projects, grassroots environmental movements, the role of municipalities, sustainability, organic agriculture, and renewable energy policies. These topics as such are not so distinctively East Asian. It is likely that our perspectives on these topics will apply to other places that have influential centralized national governments as well.

Some of the Chinese scholars pointed out the fact that local governments sometimes water down or distort the more stringent national environmental regulations. A Japanese scholar introduced "environmental municipalities" in Japan that had been promoting advanced environmental policies. On the last day, we took a one-day fieldtrip to the city of Kawasaki, one of the representing "environmental industrial cities" that is promoting a successful waste-free industrial complex. We had an enthusiastic discussion on the causes of success, motivations, and the cost/benefit for industries with the city officials and the businesspersons. The discussion, both at

the symposium and during the fieldtrip, gave us a great opportunity to broaden our perspective and deepen our understanding of these similar but different regions.

As this was the first joint conference of the four countries and regions, and not an RC-24 regional conference, we called for papers only through the environmental sociological association of each country and region. However, I suppose that there are quite a few environmental sociologists outside these regions who are interested in or doing research on East Asian regions. So we aim to call for papers also from outside these regions next time. Our next meeting is scheduled to take place in November or December 2009 in Taiwan, hosted by Professor Juju Wang at Tsing-Hua University.

Upcoming Conferences (in chronological order)

Engaged Environmental Citizenship: A one day symposium hosted by The Australian Sociological Association's Environment and Society Working Group.

University of Melbourne, Australia
2 December 2008

Engaged citizenship has been identified by numerous actors as key to the resolution of environmental crises. No longer is it sufficient for individuals and corporations simply to obey environmental regulations; engaged citizens must play an active role in identifying environmental problems and in mobilising resources to address them. But what does this mean in practice and what are the sociological implications?

For proponents of ecological or environmental citizenship, dealing with global environmental issues requires that collective responsibility is separated from the boundaries of the nation-state. Citizenship must be global and cosmopolitan. But it must also be localised through self-imposed control of consumption and involvement in community environmental initiatives.

At the same time, 'devolution,' 'partnership,' 'empowerment,' and 'capacity building' are the words and phrases governments use in seeking to address environmental problems within the institutional and philosophical framework of market liberalisation and economic rationalism. Preferred policy settings are those that focus less on regulation and more on creating conditions under which individuals and businesses are encouraged to take greater responsibility for themselves and their conduct. Social and environmental standards, environmental labelling and certification, corporate reporting, emissions trading, and so on, provide the means to extend market mechanisms into natural resource management. Planning, auditing, and collaborative learning provide ways to match these with demonstrable environmental benefits.

How are these trends to be understood? As:

- Democratisation in action;
- Experiments in neoliberal governance;
- Dimensions of ecological modernisation;

- Distractions from the inherent contradictions of consumer society; or
- Something else entirely?

For more information, please contact the Centre for Social Science Research at CQUniversity Australia via email at c4ssr@cqu.edu.au

International Conference on Water, Environment, Energy, and Society

Firozabad (Agra), India
28-30 June 2009

Invitation

We invite experts, professionals, academicians, scientists, researchers, policy makers, managers, stakeholders and students to attend and participate in the various deliberations. Prospective authors are invited to contribute technical papers on the theme of the conference.

Sub-Themes

- Pollution of water bodies and sanitation ecological, economic, and social dimensions
- Environment and energy
- Water for Rural development
- Water and social health
- Private sector participation in water services
- Water politics, law, and public apathy
- Economics of water resources projects

Detailed Information about paper submissions and registration are available on the RC-24 website: www.environment-societyisa.org/Conferences.html

For more information, e-mail Dr U.S.Pandey at us_pandey123@yahoo.com

Journals, Volumes, and Calls for Submissions/Participation

A special issue of *CURRENT SOCIOLOGY*, Vol. 56:3 was published in May 2008. The editor organized a symposium on the topic of sociology as a discipline and the relative lack of scholarship on climate change.

Contents

Constance Lever-Tracy: "Global Warming and Sociology"

Steven R. Brechin: "Ostriches and Change: A Response to Global Warming and Sociology"

Terry Leahy: "Discussion of 'Global Warming and Sociology'"

Constance Lever-Tracy: "Reply"

The issue is available at: <http://csi.sagepub.com/content/vol56/issue3/>

A special issue of *Global Environmental Change* focusing on Globalisation and Environmental Governance was published in August 2008 (and was edited by **David A. Sonnenfeld**). The contents of the volume include a number of RC-24 members:

Editorial

Globalisation and Environmental Governance: Is Another World Possible?

David A. Sonnenfeld, State University of New York, USA

Articles

Governance, Flows, and the End of the Car System?

John Urry, Lancaster University, UK

Greening Global Consumption: Redefining Politics and Authority

Gert Spaargaren and Arthur P.J. Mol, Wageningen University, the Netherlands

Pioneer Countries and the Global Diffusion of Environmental Innovations. Theses from the Viewpoint of Ecological Modernisation Theory

Joseph Huber, Martin Luther University, Germany

Governing the Global Commons: Linking Carbon Storage and Biodiversity Conservation in Tropical Forests

David O'Connor, United Nations, NY

Commentary

Challenges and Opportunities for Global Environmental Governance in the 21st Century

J. Timmons Roberts, College of William and Mary, USA

For more information, contact David dsomm@esf.edu

Nature and Culture, a refereed interdisciplinary journal exploring the relationships of human activity with the natural world, invites submissions for a special issue on the viability of adaptive technologies in an era of global environmental change.

We encourage contributions covering alternate energy sources (wind, waves, solar power, and alternate fuels) that address the viability of different energy systems for the reproduction of human societies. Papers that focus on the issue of the sustainability of these alternate energy systems are also welcomed. Completed manuscripts are due June 1, 2009, via email and should be formatted in accordance with *Nature and Culture* guidelines

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For more information, contact Melanie Heyde, Managing Editor, *Nature and Culture*, Department of Urban and Environmental Sociology, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, Permoserstr. 15, 04318 Leipzig, Germany; E-mail: nature.culture@ufz.de, Phone: 49 (341) 235 1746; Fax: 49 (341) 235 1836.

Announcements and Resources (including summaries of members' books)

The journal *Ambiente e Sociedade* – a bi-annual journal of Environment and Society – is available on line at:

www.ambientesociedade.org.br

Magnus Boström and Mikael Klintman. 2008. *Eco-Standards, Product Labelling and Green Consumerism*. Palgrave MacMillian Press.

As conscientious consumers, we have become overwhelmed with alarms about food contamination, over-fishing, clear-felled forests, loss of biodiversity, climate change, chemical pollution, and other environmental and health-related risks. This book is an analysis of a primary set of tools aimed at dealing with these risks: green labels and other eco-standards. The authors address political, regulatory, discursive, and organizational circumstances and raise the questions: how can ecological complexities be translated into a trustworthy and categorical label? Is there a mismatch between the production and consumption of green labels? Is it possible to achieve broad public participation in environmental issues through labelling? This is a timely book that provides a social and policy-oriented analysis of the challenges for green consumerism through green labelling.

For more information, contact Magnus at magnus.bostrom@sh.se or Mikael at mikael.klintman@fpi.lu.se

William T. Markham. 2008. *Environmental Organizations in Modern Germany: Hardy Survivors in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*. New York: Berghahn Books.

German environmental organizations have doggedly pursued environmental protection through difficult times: hyperinflation and war, National Socialist rule, postwar devastation, state socialism in the GDR, and confrontations with the authorities during the 1970s and 1980s. The author recounts the fascinating and sometimes dramatic story of these organizations from their origins at the end of the nineteenth century to the present, coupled with a detailed analysis of the issues and strategic decisions that confront them at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The book describes how environmental organizations reacted to powerful social movements, including the homeland protection and socialist movements in the early years of the twentieth century, the Nazi movement, and the anti-nuclear and new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, but it also examines their strategies for survival in periods like the current one, when environmental concerns are not at the top of the national agenda. The book joins a growing body of literature about environmental organizations in the U.S. and the UK but is the first book in English about environmental organizations in a non-English speaking country. Previous analyses of environmental organizations have almost invariably viewed them from the perspective of larger social structures, that is, as components of social movements, as interest groups within a political system, or as contributors to civil society. This book, by contrast, is grounded in theories developed specifically to analyze the behavior of organizations and NGOs. Working within this framework, the author examines how the social, political, and cultural contexts within which environmental organizations operate, as well as environmental conditions themselves, have influenced the organizations' goals, strategies, and structures, both at present and historically.

For more information, contact Bill at: wmarkha@uncg.edu

Gene Rosa, Washington State University, will give an invited address on population and global warming at the Council of Scientific Society Presidents in Washington, DC on December 6, 2008.

Mark Stoddart won the best student paper award from the Canadian Sociology Association in June 2008 for his paper, "The Politics of Snow: Skiing, Media, and Nature in British Columbia."

Damian F. White. 2008. *BOOKCHIN: A Critical Appraisal*. Pluto Press (UK)/University of Michigan Press (USA).

This book provides the first comprehensive overview of the work of Murray Bookchin, the political ecologist and left-libertarian social theorist, who is widely regarded as the visionary precursor of progressive environmentalism. Bookchin's writing spans fifty years and engages with a wide variety of issues: from environmental social theory to urban planning, environmental ethics to debates about radical democracy. Weaving insights from Hegel and Marx, Kropotkin and Mumford, Bookchin presents a critical theory whose central utopian message is 'things could be other than they are.' This book maps the evolution of Bookchin's project. It traces his controversial engagements with Marxism, anarchism, critical theory, postmodernism and eco-centric thought. It evaluates his attempt to develop a social ecology. Finally, it considers how his thinking relates to current debates in social theory and environmental sociology, critical theory, political ecology and urban theory. Offering a clear account of Bookchin's key themes, this book provides a critical but sympathetic account of the strengths and weaknesses of Bookchin's writing.

For more information, go to: www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=343660

Recent Member Publications (in alphabetical order)

Chatterjee, Deba Prashad. 2008. "Oriental Disadvantage versus Occidental Exuberance Appraising Environmental Concern in India – A Case Study in a Local Context." *International Sociology*. Vol. 23(1 January): 5–33.

Dietz, Thomas, Eugene A. Rosa, and Richard York. 2009. "Environmentally Efficient Well-Being: Rethinking Sustainability as the Relationship between Human Well-being and Environmental Impacts." *Human Ecology Review* 16:114-123.

Dunlap, Riley E., and Aaron M. McCright. 2008. "Social Movement Identity: Validating a Measure of Identification with the Environmental Movement." *Social Science Quarterly* 89:1045-1065.

Fisher, Dana R. 2008. "Who Are Climate Change Activists?" *Environmental Law Reporter*. 38 (December).

Garcia, Ernest. 2007. "La technologie et les dilemmes de la décroissance". *Entropia-Revue d'Étude Théorique et Politique de la Décroissance*, n° 3: 142-155. (Technologie and de-growth dilemmas)

Mayer, Brian. 2008. *Blue-Green Coalitions: Fighting for Safe Workplaces and Health Communities*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

McCright, Aaron M., and Riley E. Dunlap. 2008. "The Nature and Social Bases of Progressive Social Movement Ideology: Examining Public Opinion Toward Social Movements." *The Sociological Quarterly* 49:825-848.

McCright, Aaron M., and Riley, E. Dunlap. 2008. "Belief Systems and Social Movement Identity: An Examination of the Consistency of Beliefs About Environmental Problems Within the American Public." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72(4): Forthcoming.

Mercedes Martinez-Iglesias, Ignacio Lerma Montero and Ernest Garcia. 2008. "Políticas de medio ambiente y participación ciudadana". *CIRIEC-España*, n° 61, pp. 7-29. (Environmental policies and citizens' participation)

Rosa, Eugene A. and Lauren Richter. 2008. "Durkheim on the Environment: Ex Libris or Ex Cathedra?" *Organization and Environment* 21:182-204.

Joaquim Sempere, Mercedes Martinez-Iglesias and Ernest Garcia. 2008. "Ciencia, movimientos ciudadanos y conflictos socioecológicos". *Cuadernos Bakeaz*, n° 79: 1-17. (Science, citizens' movements, and social-environmental conflicts)

Whitfield, Stephen C., Eugene A. Rosa, Amy Dan, and Thomas Dietz. 2008 "Nuclear Power: Value Orientation and Risk Perception." *Risk Analysis* (forthcoming).

The RC-24 Board (Elected 2006):

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