

ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

President's Column

by Arthur P. J. Mol
 President of RC24
 Department of Social Sciences
 Wageningen University
 the Netherlands

If everything turns out well, this will be the last RC24 Newsletter that will reach you in material form. If we are indeed entering the Information Age as Castells has analysed and portrayed so colourfully and in much detail, it is about time that RC24 took part in it. As a global network, RC24 has still very much relied on the technological infrastructures of the former century. Elsewhere in this newsletter, Ray Murphy will outline how RC24 will send its newsletters digitally in the future, and how we aim to link a listserv to the RC24 network to smoothen and increase contacts and information exchange among RC24 members.

At the same time RC24 is opening a new website: <http://www.environment-societyisa.org>. At the present time this website contains all Newsletters (both current and old ones), information on RC24 conferences that are planned, information about the RC24 board of directors, specifics about how to become a member and to obtain travel grants for RC24 conferences and activities, and news from ISA. The old RC24 web-address was part of my department's website and rather difficult to find, even if you knew that it was there! This new address makes finding it easier (in fact it is not really a new site; we just redirect on the new address to the old site). A visible website and a listserv open up many new possibilities that should strengthen the RC24 community.

Going digital does not mean that face-to-face encounters become trivial. This newsletter again gives evidence of the large number of RC24 conferences that are organised, increasingly in different parts of the globe. RC24 just completed a conference in Florianopolis, Brazil which I attended. RC24 conferences will take place in South Korea (late June 2004), California (linked to the American Sociological Association's annual conference in August 2004) and in Italy (September 2004). This makes RC24 one of the most active research communities in the ISA, something we can be proud of. And now we can say:

look at our website for up-to-date information on all these conferences (and those in 2005).

In the meantime the International Sociological Association has started plans for the next world conference, which will be held in Durban, South Africa, from 23 to 29 July 2006. Around the end of this year, the topics of the RC24 sessions at the World Conference, as well as the session organisers, will have to be determined. From the summer onwards, Ray Murphy and I will start identifying session co-ordinators and session themes, but we very much invite you to approach us with ideas and suggestions on that. We have not yet been informed how many sessions we will be allowed.

Finally I wish to draw your attention to the special conference that is being organised in honour of Fred Buttel, our former president, by his departmental colleagues from Wisconsin (August 11, 2004, Sacramento, California; see again our website). If you already had plans to participate in the RC24 mini-conference on Community and Ecology and/or the ASA, the conference in honour of Fred is conveniently placed before the two, with Sacramento being a relatively short distance from San Francisco.

Notes from the Editor

by Ray Murphy
 Editor of the Newsletter and Secretary of RC24
 Department of Sociology
 University of Ottawa
 Canada

Saving Forests One Tree at a Time?

Does *Environment & Society* degrade the environment? Is your scrupulous Secretary convulsed with guilt because of the tree (might even be two) cut down to produce the RC24 Newsletter (high-quality paper used in the Newsletter usually contains some proportion of non-recycled paper)? Is RC24 technologically old-fashioned? Is one-way communication to members in a newsletter twice a year inadequate? What can be done about all this?

Your President and I consulted the RC24 Board of Governors and have decided to move to electronic

communication between members and an electronic newsletter. The Newsletter has already been posted on the website for some time and that will be continued. A listserv of e-mail addresses has been compiled and will be kept up to date. When a new Newsletter is produced in the future, a message will be sent informing you that it is available to be read on the RC24 website and/or downloaded by you when convenient for you. Anything lengthy will be posted on the website and all members will be informed that it is there. Please send anything you want to post on the RC24 website to the Secretary who will make sure it is posted. You should regularly check our website at the address given by the President in his column to see if there is anything new. You can also send short announcements (e.g., of conferences) to all members at any time by sending them to the Secretary who will forward them. We have decided to start this way because 1) RC24 is a world organization having members with electronic systems of different types and capacity, 2) we are attempting to avoid cluttering the mailboxes of members, and 3) we want to monitor the change to determine if it is working well. Please send any comments you might have about it to the Secretary. Our biggest challenge will be maintaining an accurate, up-to-date list of e-mail addresses of members, since members come and go and some members have never given us an e-mail address and perhaps do not have one. If you receive the Newsletter in paper format but do not receive an e-mail message telling you that it has been sent, please inform the Secretary of your e-mail address or of the fact that you do not have one.

Will this change enable your guilt-ridden Secretary to shed his feelings of culpability? He is undoubtedly aware of the initial promised land of electronic communication: e-mail would replace snail-mail; internet would supplant newspapers and magazines; hence the use of paper would be curtailed; ergo trees and whole forests would be saved from the chain-saw. Modern technology would come to the rescue of the environment. Well! Two decades later, newspapers are fatter and more omnipresent than before. Snail mail thrives, and faxes (which require paper at both ends) have made these snails speedy. Previously discipline was instilled in authors by slow pecking on a typewriter, followed by tedious cutting and pasting, then getting the prose right out of fear of being punished by more of the above. Now all that has been replaced by easy recombinations of text on a rapid word processor and speedy printing which, when combined with the irrepressible desire of authors to admire their wisdom on paper, have resulted in recombinant DAN (Drafts Ad Nauseam on paper). Even your humble Secretary's recycling bin is full of paper. The word processor has perversely led to more, not fewer, trees being processed.

In proposing this change, your President and I have no illusions about saving the environment or reducing guilt. Instead the change has the modest but important aim of improving communication between RC24 members.

Eugene Rosa

Vice-President of RC24
Department of Sociology
Washington State University, Pullman
U.S.A.

Perspective and Place

RC24 can count its lucky stars for having such an accomplished scholar as its Secretary. Its stars may not be so lucky with the Secretary's call for members of the Board of Directors to write brief columns for the newsletter, for it actually convinced me, as the current Vice-President, to do so. And, like Vice-Presidents of the United States, their pronouncements are typically and justifiably ignored (an exception may have been Dan Quayle who provided our nation with a generous supply of comic relief).

What should an ignorable Vice-President say? Well, I don't know the answer to that question, but I know what I will not say. Unlike some others — dutifully providing the requested information about themselves — I will not say anything whatsoever about my official training, credentials, or professional accomplishments; those things can be found on my university website if you happen to be lucky enough to hit it on the day when it is up and running. However, I will mention my un-official training and other endeavors that do not normally make it to "official" vitae and websites. For example, few know that I am a devoted member of the Richard Pryor fan club and have completed studies at the Richard Pryor Institute for advanced study.

I will also mention something about environmental sociology. Intellectually I am reluctant to make many turns. A turn here, a turn there, and you often find yourself lost or back where you started. Or, even worse, you could follow the path of the mythic foo bird that flew (or turned) in ever smaller concentric circles to end up flying up its own arse. So, I have been a "straight-ahead" scholar committed to "science" and committed to the idea formulated by Imre Lakatos that science develops within research programs. Hence, this commitment gives a hint at another of my informal credentials — that I am a probationary member of the flat earth society.

I have actively pursued two research programs: human impacts on the environment and risk. Each is grounded in the absurd belief that a material world actually exists, that it is altered by human choices, and that it is somewhat knowable. Many colleagues have

some difficulty seeing an integral connection between the two. Pity them for their ability to think rationally and critically. They are better prepared to see that this is atavism pure and simple, especially in the context of such pre-theoretical frames as postmodernism and deconstruction, doubtless clearer paths to understanding how to achieve sustainability.

The first research program, begun a decade ago with Tom Dietz and recently joined by Richard York, is devoted to understanding what it is about human activities that is causing the many untoward environmental impacts (an environmentalist's illusion for Lomborg and the Cato Institute) that are being documented by a variety of sciences. The second research program is devoted to understanding the decision processes — always involving some degree of uncertainty — leading to the choices that ultimately impact the environment. Shorthand ways of referring to the programs are structural human ecology in the first instance and environmental agency in the second — environmentally focused concepts from our parent discipline that some among us always see looming over our shoulders.

While this orienting perspective has many pitfalls well-known to those who eschew science or who wish to see science merely as a bag of rhetoric (albeit highly arcane), I can, as a member of the flat-earth society, see some benefits with the approach. First, disciplined results are a more compelling basis to claim a place at the table for environmental sociology in the larger game of environmental analyses and policy — a game where it is difficult to find contributing social scientists. Second, it provides a roadmap to cumulative knowledge rather than a collection of Kipling's "just so" stories. Hence, unlike the proclivity of some in the younger generation of environmental sociologists to see a need for a continuous re-invention of the field the belief here is that at T+1 we may actually know something more than at time T. Third, it challenges conventional wisdom in other fields — especially the field of economics that, all of us know, is completely batshit in its environmental perspective.

I mention research programs and my commitment to them, not necessarily to convince anyone that this is the approach we should all follow (however, anyone so convinced would, according to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, become an "enlightened one"), but to point out that atavism lives and persists among us.

What accounts for this inveterate atavism? Perhaps it is due to geography. The region where I work and live, The Palouse, is in a fairly remote farm area of eastern Washington State and northern Idaho — off the beaten path of major populations centers of America. The Palouse is one of the vast open spaces of America where one can literally see for miles. Its remoteness was perhaps best summarized by a past basketball coach at Washington State University who

said: "The Palouse is not the end of the world, but you can see it from here". Geographical remoteness, perhaps, translates into intellectual remoteness — remoteness from intellectual trends (or are they fads?).

Aside from my research programs, three activities most engage me at the moment. First is the challenge of perfecting my recipe for egg drop soup so that I can help with the long recovery of an Asian-American friend who just lost one kidney to surgery, second is the challenge of leading the way to obtaining the necessary funds to acquire a self-portrait of Any Warhol for the Washington State University Museum of Art, and third is the challenge of salting enough money away to afford a life membership in the flat earth society.

Conference Reports

Workshop on technology, risks and uncertainty: challenges for a democratization of science

Florianópolis, Brazil

April 15-17, 2004

Report by Julia S. Guivant

This workshop was part of the series of annual events organized by the PhD Programme in Interdisciplinary Human Sciences of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil. These annual workshops deal with its different areas of research and teaching, this one focusing on Environment and Society. Embrapa (the Brazilian Agency of Agricultural Research) was the main partner in its organization, and was represented by Murilo Flores, who organized the workshop with me. We had significant financial support from the University, from Embrapa, and also from the British Council. The main objective of the workshop was the analysis from the viewpoint of environmental sociology of dilemmas for the governance of uncertain new risks — such as the ones related to GMOs — for civil society, public institutions and expert systems. This seminar sought to develop an international comparative analysis that could contribute to explaining specific terms of the debates and the transformations of national research systems when faced with new international trade demands. Some of the questions suggested for the papers were the following. How can the monopoly of expert systems in the decision-making process of which risks to take and which to avoid be opened up without falling into a populist perspective that idealizes lay perceptions of risk? What are the possible main directions of a public and democratic debate on the governance of uncertain new risks that takes into account national specificities of consumer citizens or science citizens? Are public forums ideal spaces for dealing with scientific and socio-technical controversies? How can these forums collaborate in the construction of a dialogical democracy?

The Workshop began with a lecture by Alan Irwin (Brunel University, UK) on "Scientific Governance and Democracy in Europe: seven challenges (and opportunities) for the future". The following days were organized in a way that allowed time for debates: papers were presented, then two participants debated each one. The main themes discussed were "Science, market and democracy in a Global and Uncertain World: A comparative analysis of the construction of GMOs as a public problem in France and the USA" by Pierre-Benoit Joly (INRA, France); "Social participation in the process of agricultural research" by Antonio Maria G. de Castro (Embrapa, Brazil) and Suzana Lima (Embrapa, Brazil); "Research, innovation and strategies for public participation" by Marcio Miranda (Embrapa, Brazil); "Expertise and experience in the governance of science: what is public participation for?" by Alan Irwin (Brunel University, UK); "Risk, uncertainty and vulnerability: GMOs and the challenge for governance" and "Environment in the Information Age: The transformative powers of environmental information" by Arthur Mol (Wageningen University, Holland, and President of RC24); and "Risk Regulation — Crossing Boundaries" by Ann Bruce (University of Edinburgh, UK).

The debates during the sessions were very effective for exchanging ideas. They also led to stimulating parallel conversations during coffee breaks and during informal get-togethers by the sea in Florianópolis while enjoying the mild autumn evenings in the rare relaxation periods between seminars. An important feature of the sessions was the attendance by many students, who told me later that they discovered new sources of motivation to do or to continue doing research on environmental sociology. A book will be published in Portuguese presenting the main results of the workshop. The possibility of a joint research project by some of the participants using a comparative perspective to analyze the main issues discussed during the workshop is also being actively considered.

Upcoming Conferences

II Annual Conference of the National Association of Graduate Study Programmes and Research in Environment and Society (ANPPAS)

May 26-29, 2004

Campinas (São Paulo), Brazil

The Conference includes 12 Working Groups, 6 round tables, and will have as main speaker Steven Yearley (Department of Sociology, University of York). The deadline for abstracts to the Working Groups is December 15, 2003. Notification of acceptance of abstracts will be available by February 20, 2004. More information can be found in the homepage of the event

«www.anppas.org.br». Lucia da Costa Ferreira can be contacted for details of the Conference at «lucia@nepam.unicamp.br».

TECHNONATURES II Environments, Technologies and Spaces in the 21st Century

Thursday June 24, 2004

Department of Geography and the Environment,
University of Oxford

In an era marked by accelerating environmental change, and deepening battles over eco-technological and biotechnological transformations, the nature of "Nature" and the politics of n/Nature is increasingly up for grabs. Overlapping conversations in geography and sociology concerned with "the production of nature" (Lefebvre, Smith, Castree/Braun), "contested natures" (Urry/Macnaghten) or "socio-natures" (Swyngedouw), have drawn attention to the irreducibly cultural and political qualities of contemporary socio-environmental relations and processes. Elsewhere, in science and technology studies and anthropology, Haraway's "cyborgs", and "companion species", or Latour's obsessions with "quasi objects" and "actants" indicate a new desire to think through hybridity. For others still, (Harvey, Castells, Urry), a defining feature of contemporary times is how political economies of scapes, flows and mobilities criss-cross the globe, reworking space/time, places and technocultures with increased intensity. Whether working through landscapes and townscapes or ecologies and bodies, we appear to be increasingly negotiating our ways through "technonatures".

If Apocalyptic, Romantic and Malthusian laments or Promethean technological optimism and a shrill scientism appear increasingly inadequate responses to the rise of "technonatures" what other critical responses are there? How can we map and engage with a world where "Nature" has become an accumulation strategy for capital all the way down (Katz) yet returning to "pure nature" is neither possible nor indeed desirable? In "technological times" are there ways of moving beyond technophobic assertions while still being fully aware of the dangers of a society that now "takes technological change alone as the model of political invention" (Barry)? What is the most appropriate balance of cultural analysis, political economy and political ecologies that can critically unpack the new "power geometries" (Massey) of these developments? What are the most effective ways to analyse new battle lines emerging between those seeking to administer, regulate, patent or own emerging technonatures and alternative projects to construct alternative modernities, sustainable technonatures and environmentally just spatial relations?

The aims of the technonatures symposia are to create spaces for interdisciplinary conversations between the various critical theoretical traditions which now populate sociology, geography, anthropology and technology studies (e.g: eco/post Marxism, post structuralism and actor network theory; critical ecological modernism, cyborg feminism and political ecology). Technonatures aims to generate an on-going discussion on how we could move and expand debates about "the environment" beyond ecocentrism and high modernist framings; it seeks to imagine "spaces of hope" in unpromising times and anticipate and support a new critical politics of technonatures.

Confirmed Speakers include Erik Swyngedouw Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford; John Urry Sociology, Lancaster University; Noel Castree Geography, Manchester University; Andrew Jamison Science and Technology Studies, University of Aalborg; Andrew Barry Sociology, Goldsmiths College, University of London; Bromyn Parry Geography, University of Cambridge; Damian White Sociology, James Madison University; Gail Davies Geography, University College London Chris Wilbert Planning, Anglia Polytechnic University, Fletcher Linder Anthropology, James Madison University.

Costs: (lunch, tea/coffee and programme) £20 waged; £5 unwaged/postgraduate. To secure a place at the symposium/obtain further details contact Damian White, Dept of Sociology, and Anthropology, James Madison University, Sheldon Hall, MSC 7501 Harrisonburg, Virginia, 22801 USA whitedf@jmu.edu or Chris Wilbert, Dept of Planning, Anglia Polytechnic University, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ. c.wilbert@apu.ac.uk

Globalization, Localization and Environment

June 27-30, 2004

Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea

Organizer: See-Jae Lee

RC24 (Environment and Society) of the International Sociological Association and the Korean Association for Environmental Sociology are jointly organizing a 2004 RC24 conference. On behalf of the President of RC24 and the local organizing committee, I would like to invite you to attend the conference. The conference theme, *Globalization, Localization and environment* reflects the significance of the environment in the changing world system having both globalization and localization features. The conference will provide a very good opportunity for sociologists from around the world to share experiences and interests. For further information contact Prof. See-Jae Lee, Chairperson of the local organizing committee, Department of Sociology, The Catholic University of Korea, e-mail: «sjlee@cuk.ac.kr».

"Think globally, act locally". The two main streams, globalization and localization, are the main processes by which the world is being integrated and decentralized as well. As these transformations mature, the socio-political settings and arrangements are being transformed. Thus, it is anticipated that we will be faced with new environmental challenges not only on a world-wide scale, but also on a local basis. With such implications, this conference aims at providing an opportunity for the participants to explore from different theoretical perspectives what the implications for the environment are in the processes of globalization and localization, and how globalization, localization, and the environment interweave and collide. To achieve the aims, this conference plans seven sessions.

1. The Environmental Implications of a Changing World system
2. Regional Environmental Cooperation and Conflicts in Asia
3. Ideology and Practice for Achieving global and Local Sustainable Development
4. Technological and Policy Transformations for environmental Reform.
5. Challenges and Strategies for Implementing Environmental Justice.
6. Environmental Beliefs, Attitudes and Lifestyles.
7. Greening Production and consumption in an Era of Globalization.

Each presenter will have 15 minutes of presentation time, followed by 5 minutes of question time. The deadline for submissions of abstracts (about 500 words) was 31 March, 2004. The convener is Dr. Hee-Je Bak, Department of Sociology, Kyung Hee University, South Korea, e-mail: hbak@khu.ac.kr. Completed papers should be submitted to the convener by e-mail before May 31, 2004.

Early registration (before April 30): US \$150.00 (US \$75.00 for the third countries). Late registration (after May 1): US \$200.00 (US \$100.00 for the third countries). Students: US \$75.00 (please provide evidence of full-time student status when you register). (US \$37.50 for the third countries).

For more information go to the conference website:

<http://www.ecosociety.org/rc24.htm>

XI World Congress of Rural Sociology Globalisation, Risks and Resistance

July 25-30 2004

Trondheim, Norway

Deadline for abstracts: December 15, 2003

information: «<http://www.irsaworld.org/index.html>»

A Symposium to Honor Fred Buttel
“Sustainability and Social Justice:
Reflections on Agriculture, Technology and the
Environment in an Age of Globalization”

August 11, 2004

Sacramento, California, U.S.A.

Organizers: Jack Kloppenburg (jrkloppe@wisc.edu)
and

Daniel Kleinman (dlkleinman@wisc.edu)

The achievements and contributions of Fred Buttel are well known to members of RC24. The University of Wisconsin Department of Rural Sociology is organizing a symposium to honor Fred and his accomplishments as scholar, teacher, mentor, colleague, and leader.

As you may be aware, Fred has faced a number of health challenges. This symposium is being scheduled with these circumstances in mind. The symposium will be held at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel on the day before the beginning of the 67th annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society. The day-long symposium will include three seminars featuring internationally prominent pre-senters, a panel discussion, and an evening banquet.

The seminars will treat the areas in which Fred has made important contributions: the sociology of agriculture and agro-food systems, the sociology of agricultural science and technology, and environmental sociology. Two hallmarks of Fred’s work have been its critical orientation and its commitment to socially progressive outcomes. With reference to their own areas of scholarship and interest, seminar presenters will reflect on issues of justice and sustainability in the context of globalization.

Phil McMichael will chair the seminars and Larry Busch will serve as the master of ceremonies at the evening banquet. Seminar presenters include Larry Busch, Martin Kenney, Bill Friedland, Jane Collins, Harriet Friedmann, Bill Heffernan, Riley Dunlap, Arthur Mol, and Allan Schnaiberg. In addition, a pre-dinner panel comprised of early-career rural and environmental sociologists — Rachel Schurman, Kevin Wehr and Doug Jackson-Smith — will address the future of the discipline.

The UW Department of Rural Sociology is now seeking donations — large and small — to underwrite what promises to be an enjoyable and intellectually engaging event. We expect to charge those attending the symposium and banquet a nominal registration fee, but we would like to collect the funds needed to underwrite the symposium and banquet as soon as possible.

Please help us honor Fred by making a contribution now. Checks should be made payable to “Rural Sociological Society — Buttel Symposium” and should be sent to Kenneth Pigg, Treasurer, Rural Sociological Society, Department of Rural Sociology,

106 Gentry Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-7040. Contributions are tax deductible, and will be acknowledged on the symposium program.

Registration materials for the symposium and banquet will be included in the 2004 Annual Meeting registration packet that members of the Rural Sociological Society will receive in April. If you are not a member of the Rural Sociological Society, you need not register for the RSS meetings in order to attend the Buttel Symposium. In that case, please request Buttel Symposium registration materials by contacting Edith Pigg (e-mail: ruralsoc@missouri.edu; phone: 573-882-9065; fax: 573-882-1473; mail: Rural Sociological Society Business Office, 104 Gentry Hall, University of Missouri, 65211-7040). Buttel Symposium registration materials will be mailed to you.

Community and Ecology: The Intersection of
Community Sociology and Environmental
Sociology

August 13, 2004.

San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

Organizers: Terry Nichols Clark and
Aaron Matthew McCright

RC 24 (Environment and Society) and RC 03 (Community Research) of the International Sociological Association announce a CALL FOR PAPERS for a ISA Mini-Conference at the Hiram W. Johnson State Office Building. The submission deadline is May 15, 2004.

Over the past thirty years the discipline of sociology has witnessed both the emergence of a sustained focus on human-environment interactions and a lively debate on the dynamics and significance of communities in a globalizing world. These trends have even produced an abundance of existing works attempting to integrate theories and research agendas across these two areas. This mini-conference attempts to continue this fruitful line of sociological endeavor. We designed this mini-conference to increase the dialogue between these two areas of sociology so that the theoretical insights and body of knowledge of each will enhance the ongoing work within the other. Furthermore, such an explicit focus on the intersection of these two areas can facilitate the creation of a more general sociology that is ultimately more powerful in explaining and providing an understanding for the relationships among humans (in communities) and between humans and the biophysical environment.

Members of the ISA and other interested individuals are invited to submit formal papers to be considered for inclusion in the 2004 Mini-Conference Program. All papers should cohere to the general theme of the mini-conference. For further guidance, we identify four sub-thematic areas that papers may, but are not required to, address. 1) The concept of

community within an ecological framework: theoretical and methodological innovations from ecology; New Urbanism; green architecture; local adoption and implementation of the Earth Charter; intergenerationality; aesthetics and the urban environment; environmental education. 2) Local and regional sustainability: social, economic, and ecological dimensions of sustainability; theorizing and empirical research on local population and economic growth and its ecological consequences; ecological footprinting; "green cities;" environmental inequality; local dimensions of ecological risk. 3) Local or community-level environmental politics: local or regional political cultures; community-level environmental policy-making; environmental movements; civic leadership, social capital, and internet individualism; resource mobilization strategies for environmental activities; environmental public opinion; environmental justice. 4) The global-local nexus of global environmental change: theoretical and empirical work on the social and ecological effects of globalization on local areas; global communities of environmental scientists and activists; international trade and the displacement of ecological impacts; globalizing patterns of environmental movements; the role of the internet and transnational models of activism.

All paper submissions for the 2004 mini-conference are due by May 15, 2004. All submissions must be made over electronic mail (e-mail). Paper authors should prepare an e-mail message with the subject line of "ISA Mini-Conference Submission" to mccright@uchicago.edu with the following information enclosed:

1. paper title
 2. full names, institutional affiliations, and contact information for all authors (especially e-mail addresses, as this facilitates speedier communication)
 3. abstract (up to 250 words)
 4. request for audio-visual equipment, if necessary
 5. attach the paper file that fulfills each of the "submission criteria" below
- A. this paper file must be either converted to a PDF file or prepared as a Word, WordPerfect, or basic text document [.txt or .rtf])
- B. if your paper is not finished by May, then simply send an e-mail containing information in 1-4 above; upon acceptance of your abstract, you will be responsible for sending the completed paper to the e-mail address above in a timely fashion. Submitting authors will receive an e-mail acknowledgment of successful submission receipt.

Only completed papers, not abstracts, outlines, or rough drafts, may be presented at the mini-conference. All paper submissions must comply with the following submission criteria.

Original Contribution. Papers must reflect original work or major developments in previously reported work.

Length and Style. Papers as submitted are limited to 30 double-spaced pages, including footnotes, tables, and bibliographies.

Number of Submissions. Authors may submit one or more separate and distinct papers, provided they realize that they will be limited to two presentations on the final program.

Language. To optimize opportunities for discussion, all papers must be submitted in written English, and all accepted papers must be presented in spoken English.

A presider shall convene each thematic paper presentation session, introduce each of the presenters, and manage the time for the session. Presenters shall be given approximately 20 minutes to discuss their paper. Presenters are encouraged to be clear, brief, and budget their time wisely. The remaining time in each session shall be devoted to questions and comments from the audience.

Each presenter may bring multiple hard copies of your paper to distribute at the conference. However, we request that you keep this amount to a minimum, since we will archive all the papers presented at the mini-conference on an Internet website (in PDF format) immediately after the mini-conference.

The registration fee for this mini-conference is \$30 for employed professors, lecturers, post-doctorates, and related professionals. The registration fee is \$15 for full-time students, unemployed professionals, or retired individuals. For further information please contact Aaron Matthew McCright at mccright@uchicago.edu.

Global Pressures on Local Autonomy: Challenges to Urban Planning for Sustainability and Development

September 4-8, 2004.

Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A.

This is the International Urban Planning and Environment Association's Sixth Biennial Symposium and Tenth Anniversary Celebration. Come join academics and practitioners from across the globe in economic development, urban planning and other fields in exchanging ideas about how to promote economically and environmentally sustainable urban development. We expect to top IUPEA's last symposium, held in Oxford, England in 2002, that drew 250 different participants from 36 nations.

Conference Sub-Themes will address questions such as the following.

- What Does Planning for “Sustainability” mean?
- How Can We Define, Measure and Promote “Effectiveness” in Pursuit of Sustainability?
- What Institutional Frameworks and Structures Promote Sustainable Urban Practices?
- How do Resource Consumption, Environmental Quality and Sustainable Development Relate to Each Other in Practice?
- What are “Best Practice” Examples and Lessons for Planning Sustainable Urban Areas?
- What can be learned from — and for — a local Case Study of Louisville, KY?

Details on abstract submission are available at <http://cepm.louisville.edu/IUPEA6/index.htm>.

The official deadline for abstracts is January 30; some exceptions may be made, so ask ...

Local Institution Building for the Environment: Perspectives from East and West

September 9-10, 2004

Gorizia, Italy

Organizers: Luigi Pellizzoni
pellizzoniL@sp.univ.trieste.it

Giorgio Osti
ostig@sp.univ.trieste.it

This conference is organised by the Department of Human Sciences of the University of Trieste in collaboration with the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia (ISIG) and RC24. It aims at addressing a wide range of issues related to institution building and institutional change, from the implications of the transition of the Eastern Countries to democracy and the market, to the relationships between local, national and supra-national institutions, to the different aspects of institutionalisation processes from cultural, historical, organisational and regulatory viewpoints.

The conference will be held in Gorizia, a n Italian town located on the Slovenian border. Gorizia, which split into two parts after the Second World War, is a good observatory of the relationships between Eastern and Western countries. The current cooperation between the administration of Gorizia and Nova Gorica, its Slovenian counterpart, can be regarded as an example of new institution building.

The latest version of all that is relevant to our conference can be downloaded at the website: <http://www.interuniv.isig.it/envtrieste/eindex.html>

The deadline for abstract submissions has now expired. About 30 proposed contributions have been received. European countries are well represented (mostly Western but also Eastern ones) as well as some non-European ones such as Turkey and India, but only one or two proposals have come from America.

The basic aims of the conference are threefold: to explore the institutionalisation and de-institutionalisation processes, i.e. how institutions for the environment are created, transformed, and dismantled; to explore how institutions for the environment are internally structured and how they actually work; to explore how institutional design is connected with mission-definition, specification of norms and sanctions, and social legitimation.

The basic hypothesis of the conference is that environmental management and protection centre to a significant extent on local institutions — and that the very idea of local institutions makes sense as an analytical perspective.

Drawing on different meanings of local institution we have singled out four main themes according to which the conference will be articulated.

1. East-West Interfaces.
2. Institutions and Governance.
3. Institutionalisation: Historical and Comparative Perspectives.
4. Dynamics of Institutional Differentiation.

Waste — The Social Context: Sociology, Psychology and Economics of Waste Management

May 11-15, 2005

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Organizer: Jerry Leonard jerry.leonard@edmonton.ca

The conference will include, but is not limited to, the following topics. 1) Attitudes and Behaviour: Public Perception, Attitudes and Actions; History of Waste. 2) Stakeholder Participation and Involvement: Public Decision Making Process; Public Participation and Consultation. 3) Environmental Policy: Policy Making and Policy Instruments; Multi-Level Governance. 4) Economics of Waste Management: Solid Waste Economics; Trade with Waste and Recycling Products. 5) Sustainability of Waste Management: Urbanizing World and Waste Management; Waste Management in Developing Countries. 6) Environmental Justice and Ethics: Culture of Waste; Ethics of Waste.

Environment, Knowledge and Democracy.

July 6-7, 2005.

University of the Mediterranean, Marseille, France.

Organizers: Cécilia Claeys Mekdade, Suzanne De Cheveigné and Marie Jacqué.

Biodiversity, global change and risk management are among the main contemporary environmental issues. Most of the international conventions signed since 1992 on the theme reaffirm the development of democracy as a condition of sustainability. Such an “environmental democracy” rests on the mobilisation of

participative democratic procedures bringing together politicians, economic actors, scientists and citizens. In these forums, socially differentiated forms of knowledge, representations and practices about the environment confront each other. Thus the development of these forms of "environmental democracy" raises, as central issues, questions about the production, diffusion and uses of knowledge about nature and the environment.

The border between scientific and popular knowledge

For the past 30 years, protectionist positions about the environment have been widely developed and diffused. Scientifically based, this discourse has been progressively appropriated by the public, even among popular classes. This historical evolution raises the question of the relationship between scientific and lay knowledge. A double process of attraction/repulsion can be observed between these two forms. On one hand, an explicit hierarchy still exists between them. On the other, they seem more borderless than they used to be: popular discourse calls on forms of scientific expertise; scientific discourse emphasises the importance of uncertainty. Environmental issues seem particularly propitious to the development of what Giddens calls "reflexivity". In this context, what is the place of science within environmental controversies?

Thinking the cultural diversity of knowledge about nature and the environment

In Western countries, the wide diffusion of environmental discourse no longer allows strong oppositions between the representation of different social classes to be made. However, differences are still observable in social practices. Moreover, on the international level, strong differences are clear, especially between the North and the South. For instance, Western NGO's and scientists have become actors in the management of the environment in Southern countries, where they tend to impose their own conception of nature, sometimes to the detriment of local populations. In this context, the issue of knowledge will allow us to rethink the social and cultural relationships involved into the management of the environment.

The place of knowledge within decision making

Management of the environment is more and more oriented towards the development of participative democracy. Public debates, consensus conferences, local fora, etc. belong to what has come to be known as governance. These different forms of debate introduce a plural conception of knowledge(s). As Callon, Rip, and Latour show, science is explicitly replaced by "the sciences" in such debates and the monopoly of the scientific community breaks down, leading to a hybridisation of the political, economical and juridical fields. The traditional dualisms of

object/subject and nature/culture as well as the old debate around realism versus constructivism are brought into question.

The media, internet and the environment

For the "ordinary" citizen, the media are an important source of information on environmental problems: they configure and relay both local and global discussions and debates in the public sphere. Press, radio, television and the internet frame environmental problems in various manners and also echo the different visions of nature harboured by their publics. What role do they play in enabling citizens to take part in democratic processes around environmental problems? What forms of knowledge circulate in their pages or on their screens? How are culturally diverse conceptions of the place of humans in the world reflected in the media?

Interdisciplinarity: background perspective

Environmental issue break down the borders between scientific and popular knowledge, between sciences and society, between North and South. They also affect the internal partitions of scientific knowledge. The classical divisions between scientific disciplines do not always manage to catch the complexity of environmental issues. Pluridisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and even transdisciplinarity tend to be developed. What can we learn from these experiences? Are these borderless sciences an appropriate answer to the implications of scientific knowledge in the management of what Mol and Spaargaren call "environmental flows"?

Submissions of abstracts and deadlines

- We seek contributions from sociology and also from different fields in the social sciences to stimulate interdisciplinary debate on the topics of the conference. All paper submissions will be reviewed before being accepted for the conference.
- All the accepted papers will be published on a CD-ROM and a selection of papers will be published in a review or a collective book.
- Deadline for submission of abstracts is December 31, 2004.

Further information about the conference, contact Claeys.Mekdade@luminy.univ-mrs.fr

Double Standards and Simulation: Symbolism, Rhetoric and Irony in Eco-Politics.

2-4 September 2005.

Bath, England

Organizer: Ingolfur Bluehdorn

How do advanced modern societies sustain a model of civilisation that has long been known and acknowledged to be unsustainable? How do they manage to cope with the two certainties that a) in the established model ecological degradation continues, despite all eco-political efforts, in a largely unabated manner, and that b) an attractive and viable alternative model is nowhere in sight?

In advanced western societies, environmental issues are no longer at the top of the agenda. Ecological problems have not lost any of their urgency, but western societies seem to have accommodated and pacified the issue. Concern for the environment has been institutionalised. Environmental issues have been repackaged as economic issues, technological issues, consumer protection issues or security issues, and they are — supposedly — being dealt with by the appropriate systems. However, even the EU cannot achieve its targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases; resource consumption keeps rising; biodiversity continues to diminish; car and air travel are expanding like never before; and so forth. Across the industrialised world, economic growth, competitiveness, efficiency gains and the stimulation of accelerated consumption are the first priorities of national and supranational governments. From an ecological perspective, problems may be seen to be mounting, but advanced modern societies seem rather relaxed. They continue to rely on prospective efficiency revolutions, ecological modernisation, technological innovation, efficient regulators and ecologically informed consumerism. There is some talk about the relocation of economic structures, about subsistence, and about the return to a low-growth or no-growth economy, but realistically, the readiness to introduce significant changes to the established order is at a long-time low. As a matter of fact, in the face of global terrorism an unprecedented consensus of defence is actually being forged across the world of liberal consumer capitalism that the unsustainable has to be sustained — at virtually any price.

Against this background, the question for environmental sociology is no longer just: How do we manage the transition to an ecologically more benign form of society and civilisation, i.e. how do we change the unsustainable *status quo*? The more any significant change is being postponed into the future, the more does environmental sociology have to address a different question: How do advanced modern societies cope whilst they *do not* change the unsustainable status quo, i.e. whilst they are either waiting for change or at least say they are waiting for change? The argument of the unsustainability of the *status quo* has always rested on the assumption that the principles of equality, justice, inclusion, freedom and peace have to be maintained. The current practice of sustaining the unsustainable, in turn, necessarily implies increasing

levels of inequality, injustice, exclusion, suppression and violence. How do late-modern societies cope with a model of civilisation that is evidently incompatible with their modernist beliefs?

The suggestion of this conference is that symbolism, simulation, rhetoric and irony are key strategies. Symbolic action is the replacement of genuine and effective action by token action. A range of different reasons are imaginable for such a replacement. Rhetoric may be used to consciously deceive others; and it may also be a strategy of self-deception. Irony is a way of distancing oneself from ones rhetoric and actions. It is a major mode of communication in late-modern societies. It signals that nothing is serious or authentic and indicates fundamental uncertainty. To explore how contemporary eco-politics is shaped by symbolic action, rhetoric, simulation and irony is the objective of this conference. It will bring together empirical research on case studies of double standards, symbolic politics, eco-rhetoric, the politics of irony, agenda hijacking, etc. and theoretical work trying to conceptualise and theorise such instances of symbolic politics, simulation, rhetoric or irony in eco-politics.

The conference will promote a line of research that first became apparent in recent conferences and publications on issues such as “What is the future of Ecological Thought?”, “The End of Environmentalism?” and “Truth, Lies, Environment”. Importantly, what is described here as *simulation, irony, rhetoric* must not be confused with, or reduced to, the conspiratorial deception of the underprivileged by certain social elites. The objective of the conference and individual contributions will be not just to focus on the inconsistency, dishonesty, greed etc. of the usual suspects, but also to critically investigate the narratives, self-illusioning and (self-)construction of ecologically committed consumers, policy makers, movements and so forth. The approach to be taken is not simply one of moral accusations and normative prescriptions, i.e. of eco-political campaigning, but very importantly, this conference is about the sociological investigation of *societal* strategies of *societal* self-deception. Details on main thematic strands will be published in the next issue of the RC24 newsletter. In the meantime, please send all expressions of interests and outlines of proposed papers (300 words) to:

Ingolfur Bluehdorn (I.Bluehdorn@bath.ac.uk)

Marcel Wissenburg (M.Wissenburg@nsm.kun.nl)

Ian Welsh (WelshI@Cardiff.ac.uk)

Please copy all communication to all three addresses.

The latest information about the conference can be found at the website

<<http://www.bath.ac.uk/esml/conferences/index.htm>>

Sociological Olympics !!

July 2006

Durban, South Africa

Yes, the time has come to start preparing for the once-every-four-years ISA world meetings of 2006. Your President Arthur Mol and your Secretary Ray Murphy have agreed to act as overall programme coordinators for RC24's contribution. A deadline of October 31, 2004 has been set by the ISA Executive by which session topics and names of session organizers should be received at the ISA Secretariat in Madrid for publication at the congress website. This will become A CALL FOR PAPERS for any potential contributors to our sessions. Please send names of volunteers to organize a session and proposed session topics to Arthur arthur.mol@wur.nl or Ray Raymond.Murphy@uottawa.ca well before that date.

Recent Publications, Awards, etc.

Biel, Anders, Hansson, Bengt, and Martensson, Mona, 2003, *Individual and Structural Determinants of Environmental Practice*, Ashgate Series of studies in environmental policy and practice.

Dickens, Peter, 2004, *Society & Nature*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rootes, Christopher (ed.), 2003, *Environmental Protest in Western Europe*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

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Rootes, Christopher, 2003, "Why do Some Campaigns Against Waste Facilities Succeed Where Others Fail?", in C. Ludwig, S. Hellweg, and S. Stucki (eds.), *Municipal Solid Waste Management: Strategies and Technologies for Sustainable Solutions*, Berlin, Heidelberg and New York: Springer, pp. 425-428.

Rootes, Christopher, 2003, "Local Mobilizations Against Waste Incinerators in England", in C. Ludwig, S. Hellweg, and S. Stucki (eds.), *Municipal Solid Waste Management: Strategies and Technologies for Sustainable Solutions*, Berlin, Heidelberg and New York: Springer, pp. 439-445.

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Rosa, Eugene A., 2003, (Committee co-author). *One Step at a Time: The Staged Development of Geological Repositories*

for High-Level Radioactive Waste, Washington, DC: National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences.

Rosa, Eugene A., 2003, (Committee Co-Author). *Planning Climate and Global Change Research: A Review of the Draft U.S. Climate Change Science Program Strategic Plan*, Washington, DC: National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences.

Rosa, Eugene A., 2004, "Historical Perspectives on Re-shaping Knowledge, Re-shaping Society", in Nico Stehr (ed.), *Biotechnology Between Commerce and Civil Society*, New Brunswick: Transaction.

Rosa, Eugene A., and James Rice, 2004, "Public Reaction to Nuclear Power Siting and Disposal", in Cutler J. Cleveland (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Energy*.

Rosa, Eugene A., Richard F. York, and Thomas Dietz, 2004, "Tracking the Anthropogenic Drivers of Ecological Impacts", *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment* (Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences).

York, Richard F., Eugene A. Rosa, and Thomas Dietz, 2003, "STIRPATT, IPAT, and ImPACT: Analytic Tools for Unpacking the Driving Forces of Environmental Impacts", *Ecological Economics*, 46: 351-365.

York, Richard F., and Eugene A. Rosa, 2003, "Key Challenges to Ecological Modernization Theory: Institutional Efficacy, Case Study Evidence, Units of Analysis, and Pace of Eco-efficiency", *Organization and Environment*, 16: 273-288.

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Salleh, Ariel, 2004, "Global Alternatives and the Meta-Industrial Class", in R. Albritton, et al (eds.), *New Socialisms: Futures Beyond Globalization*. London: Routledge.

Salleh, Ariel, 2003, "Ecofeminism as Sociology", *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, Vol. 14: 61-74.

Salleh, Ariel, 2002, "Destabilising the Rhetoric of Production", *Tamkang Review*, Vol. XXXII: 95-109.

Salleh, Ariel, 2002, "A Green Questionnaire", in J. Birkeland (ed.), *Design for Sustainability*, London: Earthscan.

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Please send your actual address to: Matthias Groß, Institute for Science and Technology Studies (IWT), Universität Bielefeld, P.O. Box 100131, 33501 Bielefeld, Germany

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