

GMU Public Sociology Conference Abstracts 2014

Allison Ford

A time of unprecedented environmental change corresponds to a period of US political opposition to policies that address environmental problems such as climate change, resource management, access to food and water, toxicity, and risk associated with extraction and use of resources. Environmental social movements appear to lack broad political support, and many in the environmental field wonder why Americans are not reacting to known environmental problems. Meanwhile, American self-sufficiency movements are on the rise. Preppers, homesteaders, permaculturists, and participants in transition towns are changing their daily activities in response to perceptions of environmental and social problems, risk, and the ability of social institutions to meet their present and future needs. But they are using vastly different cultural narratives to justify their activities, many of which overlap. This paper asks why people are turning to self-sufficiency activities by analyzing the activities and motives of “preppers” and “homesteaders”, two sub-cultures of what I contend is a broader cultural movement towards self-sufficiency. Using qualitative methods including participant observation and in depth interviews, I conclude that middle class Americans are exploring activities that are perceived to provide self-sufficiency as a way to reconnect to the environment that the market cuts them off from. By changing the patterns and routines of daily life and anticipating a future that will require a significantly different skillset to survive, homesteaders and preppers are actively resituating themselves in relationship to nature and the state. In drawing attention to the ways in which self-sufficiency movement participants engage with the material world of “nature”, I call into play the role of the natural world in shaping our social processes, positioning environment not as a marginal background context, but as a central element of a process oriented social life.

Alyssa Edwards

Cities are now home to the vast majority of the world’s population. Recognition of the global trend in urbanization has shifted environmental efforts to focus on cities, along with growing awareness and concern of urban sites as primary producers of global greenhouse gases. This paper seeks to explore the impact of climate change considerations on urban sustainability efforts. I argue that the insights of urban sociologists have been largely absent from such efforts, limiting the ability for urban sustainability and climate change response programs to yield the greatest amount of social benefit. Likewise I posit that in response to pre-existing environmental justice concerns, the insights of urban sociology need to be situated at the forefront of climate change planning.

Amory Ballantine

The U.S.'s "car culture" links private automobiles with freedom and adventure, yet the private automobile is also a major factor in fossil fuel consumption and climate change. Public transportation can be an important resource for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and it has long had complicated implications for social justice. This workshop combines discussion, activities, and lecture to critically explore concepts of "spatial justice" in public transportation planning. Participants will consider the interdependence of health, environment, transportation and social justice goals in regional development initiatives. The workshop will start with a brief history of "transportation justice" in the U.S., followed by an overview of common transportation-related risks and opportunities in the realms of health, environment, mobility, and access. After an activity designed to help participants conceptualize access to resources in spatial terms and facilitate discussion, I will share results of a literature survey of methods which may promote social justice in transportation planning. Finally, I will facilitate discussion of possible community- and policy-based strategies to address distributive justice concerns.

Anne Saville

The environmental movement remains one of the most diverse and persistent social movements of the 21st century. With pressing issues like environmental injustice, pollution, animal cruelty, climate change, wilderness preservation, and sustainability, the need to intensify understanding of the organizations driving these issues is especially important. The impact environmental organizations have in a changing society needs to be analyzed and better understood especially at the local and state level. Research has shown that the accumulation of varying resources increases the capacity of organizations to accomplish their goals, yet relatively little research has examined the extent to which this is actually true for local and state level environmental groups. The analysis here examines a unique data set from a representative sample (n=187) of environmental organizations active in North Carolina. This paper focuses on the role of material, human, cultural and particularly social resources have in affecting the impacts of local environmental organizations. The author hypothesizes that North Carolina environmental organizations with more social capital will have a greater impact when controlling for the other resource types.

Christine Bovinette

In the North Texas town of Denton, citizens' have launched a campaign to ban hydraulic fracturing, a process of extracting natural gas. This essay attempts to frame this initiative within the Environmental Justice movement as well as breach the gap between its area of research and that of Science and Technology Studies by using Andrew Feenberg's notion of "democratizing technology" to show that the civil action in Denton is an example of such democratization. Ultimately, I will endorse Feenberg's goal to extend democracy to technology as such and to show that the environmental movement is fertile soil for such hybridity. Couched somewhere between materialist and constructivist sociologies of technologies, this study grows out of an area Feenberg terms "critical theory of technology," which "emphasizes the impact of contextual aspects of technology on design ignored by the dominant view" of technology that tends to be deterministic and narrowly fixed.

Chukwuma Onyia

Nigeria's climate has been witnessing changes in the last four decades, resulting in growing shifts in temperature, rainfall, and sea levels, 'ratcheting up' stress on resources like land and water already in limited supply, especially, in the arid north. Same time, Nigerian government's capacity to respond to these challenges has been inadequate or nonexistent. The effect is that, over time, desertification has eroded the agrarian economy of the region, pauperizing its people, and compels its uneducated youths to live in poorly developed urban cities. This paper argues that, it is the inability of the government to counter the impacts of climatic change, particularly in the north that has heightened security crisis in Nigeria, with potentials of threatening global stability. The study highlights the impact of people-unfriendly market reforms foisted on Nigeria since 1980s, coupled with the role of rent-seeking political elites, and wrong domestic political choices in incapacitating both the ability and willingness of the state/government in dealing with challenges of global climatic change. It examines the debilitating effects of climatic change on the livelihood of predominantly subsistent farmers in northern Nigeria, and explores the nexus between climatic change, poverty and insecurity in Nigeria. And underline how apparent failure of the state/government to deliver democratic goods to its people exacerbated these conditions. Summarily, it shows how these have interlaced to create palpable poverty which fuels youth radicalization that feed groups like Boko Haram. This paper concludes by stressing the urgent need for government and private sector partnership in undertaking initiatives towards addressing challenges posed by global climatic change, as a measure to stemming the tide of youth radicalization and rise of terrorist groups like Boko Haram.

Cristina Ramos

In July 2014, the Spanish National Institute of Statistics reported that Spain's population had declined with respect to the year before. This was due to a low birth rate combined with a negative net migration rate that came after having been one of the main European immigrant destinations in the first decade of this century. Largely because of the 2008 economic crisis, immigration into the country has slowed down in recent years and emigration has increased, both by Spanish nationals and by immigrants that are either returning to their home countries or migrating again to a new destination (INE 2014). One of the largest migrant populations in Spain leaving the country in relative numbers are the Ecuadorians, the most numerous Latin American community (ibid). Many Ecuadorians have been severely affected by the recession in Spain for two main reasons: unemployment has hit particularly those sectors where they were employed—construction and service—, and during the booming years, many Ecuadorians bought properties in Spain facilitated by mortgages and loan plans through the Spanish banks. So many people have been unable to meet their mortgage payments that Ecuadorian authorities decided to intervene and assist their citizens in Spain through legal advice and taking demands to the European Court of Justice.

However, even though many Ecuadorians are leaving because of the adverse situation they now face in Spain, we have not witnessed massive returns. Previous research and official data have shown that Ecuadorian migrants are in fact returning, but not in the large numbers expected by governments. This might be linked to several reasons that range from the impossibility to leave the country because of the debts incurred to the social attachments formed in Spain, especially those families with children. Additionally, there seems to be a tendency for some people that once they have acquired Spanish nationality they are migrating to new destinations in the European Union and the United States and even to send minors back to Ecuador while the parents stay in Spain with more geographical mobility. The purpose of this project is to examine who is actually leaving the country, under what circumstances and to what destinations.

Assessing the exact number and characteristics of migrants who are leaving Spain is complicated because of the lack of unified available data. Since the data on return or out-migration from Spain is not completely reliable for different reasons (because people often do not de-register when they leave the country, because the returns or emigration from Spain might be temporary or because many Ecuadorians have obtained Spanish nationality and, therefore, are no longer “counted” as Ecuadorians in certain statistics. Therefore, in order to obtain an accurate picture of the general out-migration of Ecuadorian migrants, I analyze data from three sets of databases: 1) from Spanish entities, 2) from Ecuadorian entities, and 3) the Latin American Migration Project.

Dylan Jones

The health of the Cheat River watershed is heavily impacted by acid mine drainage (AMD). This results in degraded fisheries, public health hazards, and overall reduction in ecosystem quality. This research report focuses on improving environmental conditions of the Cheat River watershed via policy prescriptions from data-driven research. The study examined the effectiveness of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit program via analysis of water samples from three points in the Martin Creek subwatershed of the Muddy Creek subwatershed, a major tributary to the Cheat River. The research was conducted using secondary data obtained from private, nonprofit, and public entities. Data analysis of water samples from three points in the Martin Creek subwatershed showed no improvement in receiving stream water quality below the NPDES point source treatment discharge point. The study concluded the NPDES Permit program is not effective in addressing overall watershed quality. The lack of secondary water quality data indicates the need for sample collection of receiving streams in which NPDES point source sites discharge treated water. Implications for future research include development of watershed-based management plans and improvements to the NPDES Permit program.

Eric Bonds

There is a large and growing body of literature that debates the extent to which global warming will cause increasing rates of violence in the years ahead. This is an extremely important topic, given its implications for environmental politics, human rights, and global conflict. From an environmental justice standpoint, however, much of the scholarly debate so far is troubling. For one, the statistical analyses used by researchers in this literature often rely on a strong environmental determinism, overlooking capacities for human agency and adaptation. Second, and most worrisome, this literature primarily focuses on the real or hypothetical violence of poor persons in the Global South, overlooking the very real violence of powerful actors in the Global North that own a great deal of responsibility for our current climate impasse.

In the paper I hope to present, I will outline these concerns, but also think about alternative ways to conceptualize violence. I will argue that the very extraction of fossil fuels in the Global South is often linked with multiple forms of violence (students and I are in the process of uncovering these links now). Just as importantly, I will argue that climate change itself is a kind of structural violence, in the sense that it will cause tremendous loss and suffering even if it is indirect and unintentional. Drawing inspiration from Martinez-Alier's (2014) recent insights that environmental justice movements have provided environmental studies scholars with key concepts and new frames to understand the world, I will argue that scholars might draw from the work of the Divestment Movement and the Fossil Free Index to demonstrate that specific fossil fuel corporations can be linked to specific forms of violence, conceptualized in several different ways.

Gilbert L. Michaud

In the past couple decades, government officials have been progressively concerned with developing the commercial and residential solar energy market in the United States (U.S.), yet the debate remains as to what approaches should be taken in terms of public policy. To better comprehend this convoluted situation, an analysis of the associated governance structure and institutional environment would provide much utility. An argument can be made that energy-related institutions in the U.S. formed based upon history and key focusing events. Elevated environmental values and a growing concern in the mid-20th century for climate change, a fear of running out of fossil fuels, and negative focusing events in oil, gas, and coal have pushed most institutional players toward solar energy. However, much solar counterattack remains from large investor-owned utilities, certain think tanks and advocacy groups. Nevertheless, historically, governmental institutions have most heavily impacted energy policy, particularly on the federal level. State governmental institutions are gaining force in the renewable energy realm, however, and are now the vehicle toward improved policies for solar. This can be predominantly ascribed to President Reagan's decentralization policies, and the rise of New Federalism. Though policy responses actually come out of state legislation in this realm, industry and non-governmental organizations continue to possess a prominent role in influencing solar policy. This interplay of public and private interests is mediated by state agencies and academic researchers by way of objectivity. The policy implications here are that state-level solar policies are becoming progressively more difficult to concur on and implement. In sum, by utilizing the historical institutionalist perspective, this paper will discuss the evolution of the key players that make up the set of energy-related institutions in the U.S. today, as well as how these institutions affect the nature or shape the set of state-level solar policies.

Jackie Smith

We have been training students for a world that is no longer theirs. The neoliberal university has been organized to prepare a compliant workforce to fill the shrinking numbers of precarious positions in a globalized labor market. Teachers have been disciplined by an increasingly corporatized university governance structure which has turned students into consumers and campuses into private country clubs. Our work has been speeded up by a ‘publish-or-perish’ mentality that has been accompanied by expanded demands for service and teaching. We’ve been socialized into a profession with a growing carbon footprint that shows no sign of responding to the evidence of its unsustainability. But despite changes in the world around us, our approach to teaching and research remains mostly unchanged. What change is encouraged tends to focus on incorporating new technology into our teaching practice. How do we prepare students to solve the kinds of problems they are likely to face after graduation? How do we, for instance, help them build their confidence in their own skills and self-worth so that they can survive multiple job-searches in an economy that has failed to produce enough meaningful jobs? How do we help them anticipate the effects of climate change while also helping them develop skills in collective problem-solving that such changes will no doubt require? How do we cultivate the critical thinking necessary for navigating today’s corporate-driven mass media culture? How do we develop in our own practices as well as in our students, a more collaborative approach to learning? This presentation offers reflections on classroom strategies for developing students’ critical problem solving skills. It also reflects on some of the professional obstacles that teachers and scholars face as we try to build our careers while preparing our students (both graduate and undergraduate) for a rapidly changing and crisis-prone world.

James P. Scanlan

Most research into demographic differences between rates at which advantaged and disadvantaged experience adverse or favorable outcomes is unsound as a result of the failure to recognize patterns by which standard measures of differences between outcome rates tend to be systematically affected by the prevalence of an outcome.

There are four standard measures of difference association between two outcome rates (proportions): (1) relative (percentage) differences between rates of experiencing the outcome; (2) relative differences between rates of avoiding the outcome; (3) absolute (percentage point) differences between the outcome rates; and (4) odds ratios. None of these measures provides a sound basis for quantifying the strength of the forces causing the rates to differ because, for reasons inherent in the underlying risk distributions, each measure tends to be systematically affected by the prevalence of an outcome.

The rarer an outcome the greater tends to be the relative difference in experiencing it and the smaller tends to be the relative difference in avoiding it. Thus, for example, as mortality and poverty decline, relative differences in experiencing those outcomes tend to increase while relative differences in avoiding them tend to decrease; as healthcare improves relative differences in receipt of appropriate care tend to decrease while relative differences in failing to receive appropriate care tend to increase; relaxing mortgage lending criteria or public school discipline standards tends to increase relative differences in adverse lending and discipline outcomes while reducing relative differences in the corresponding favorable outcomes. Similarly, among populations where adverse outcomes are comparatively rare (e.g., persons with high education or high income, British civil servants, inhabitants of wealth or health states or countries), relative differences in adverse outcomes tend to be larger, while relative differences in favorable outcomes tend to be smaller, than among populations where adverse outcomes are more common.

Absolute differences and odds ratios also tend to change as the prevalence of an outcome changes, though in a more complicated way than the two relative differences. Roughly, as uncommon outcomes become more common absolute differences tend to increase; as common outcomes become even more common absolute differences tend to decrease. As the prevalence of an outcome changes, difference measured by odds ratios tend to change in the opposite direction of absolute differences.

The only theoretically sound way to quantify the strength of the forces causing a pair of outcome rates to differ is to derive from the rates the difference between the means of the underlying distributions. The workshop will illustrate the ways standard measures of differences between outcome rates tend to be systematically affected by the prevalence of an outcome and demonstrate sound method for quantifying the strength of the forces causing a pair of outcome rates to differ.

Jean Boucher

In order to model the relationship between attitudes toward climate change and social class, this research utilizes a modified version of Pierre Bourdieu's field of cultural production. As Bourdieu theorized different periods of the fields of art and literature as in an inverse relationship with the ideological field of power, a similar correspondence may be hypothesized between the production of green culture (as signaled by environmental concern or climate change belief) and the mainstream, stereotypic image of U.S. consumer culture. Until "green consumption" becomes more highly popularized, green culture will remain (in certain degrees) inversely counterpoised to images produced as mainstream consumer culture. By using belief in climate change as a proxy for environmental concern, this research—still a work in progress—analyzes climate change belief in relation to social class and consumer behavior. This is my dissertation research and I am interested in brainstorming my proposed methods with interested others.

Jen Rainer

With an ethnographic research approach, I examine actions organized around environmental issues and concerns. I participated in two local actions organized by community environmental groups; I then attended a weekend-long environmental conference organized by a national coalition of environmental organizations, which focused on mobilizing young community organizers and leaders; and lastly, I participated in a weekend campout organized by an environmental justice group that campaigns against mountain-top removal in the Appalachian Mountains. My research design emerges from my academic and personal interest in unpacking the dynamic and multifaceted relationship between nature and society; more specifically, I focus on how this relationship is shaped, transformed, and contested. Thus, I am interested in how environmental spaces are constructed and made meaningful by environmental groups and social movements, and how this constrains and facilitates particular types of civil action. My data speaks to how environmental public spaces are constructed by social movement actors and organizations. A common thread I discovered among the different field sites and environmental groups is a relational process in which space was politicized to create environmental spaces. I identify a range of discursive strategies used to frame environmental issues, which then informed specific forms of social action. These frames also illuminate the different configurations of environmental logics that shape environmental organization, mobilization, and action.

Jesse Goldstein

This workshop will focus on two interconnected discussions. First, it will provide a chance to share experiences with various publication and distribution strategies for activist academics that can enable us to actively contribute to the creation of social movement culture. I will share my experiences with a number of print-based projects, from Occuprint (created during/for the occupation of Zucotti Park in 2011) to the Occupy Sandy Resources guide, the Crown Heights Neighborhood Bulletin, and most recently, the Rare Earth Catalog; which is an ongoing publication being launched for the People's Climate march happening this September in New York City. Workshop attendees will be encouraged to share their experiences as well, as we discuss our strategies, successes and failures in serving as academic-allies to the social movements that we participate in.

Second, during the workshop we will focus our discussion on climate change politics and environmental-activist communications – using the Rare Earth Catalog as our point of departure. The Rare Earth Catalog is an experimental collaborative publication project, initiated by Jesse Goldstein and Elizabeth Knafo, whose first issue will be produced September 16th. The Rare Earth Catalog will present a catalog-style listing of sites where extraction, enclosure, pollution or other types of industrial capitalist transformations are altering human health and other life-systems. It will also serve as a dispatch for methods and strategies that groups across the globe are using to fight enclosures, treaty violations, hazardous waste dumping, and environmental and racial injustices. Our aim is to provide a creative and engaging text that can help make connections between a wide range of environmental and political issues – linking ideas, people, places, technologies and struggles.

While the original Whole Earth Catalog seized on a moment in time when many in America were seeking to find ways of going ‘back to the land’ in order to create new forms of life “outside” of the dominant system, The Rare Earth Catalog rejects privileged visions of opting-out, embracing instead the necessity of making life in the face of an increasingly grim present. The Catalog depicts the explicit racisms and ecocidal requirements of industrial projects as well as the latent social and political opportunities that are emerging in the anthropocene, an era of human/capitalist-induced climate change that is in the process of reconfiguring all life on earth.

During this workshop, we will have copies of the first issue of the Rare Earth Catalog on hand, and will invite critique, criticism and a general discussion of both the possibilities and limits of this project. Discussion will shift with the interests of the workshop participants, though it will hopefully circulate around constructive ideas for ongoing and future collaborations (including more issues of the Rare Earth Catalog).

Jessica Emami

The postmodern, global Capitalist mode of production has created a system of animal abuse that not only endangers our planet, but keeps humans ensnared in a self-perpetuating cycle of oppression, inequality, and violence. The same process of Capitalist stratification that pollutes the planet without recourse, and commits billions of people to a life of poverty and exploitation, are also responsible for an ongoing animal holocaust. Ten billion animals per year are born, raised, confined and slaughtered in industrial facilities under the most oppressive conditions, for sale as pieces of food. Millions of other non-human animals are tortured for commercial product-testing, and several hundreds of thousands are entrapped in a lifetime of torture and bondage for profit in the entertainment industry. This silent holocaust has its roots in the same system of hyper-commodification that exploits the labor of humans for surplus and profit and has created environmental crises such as global warming (Sanbonmatsu, 2011).

Early man consistently used animals for survival in the form of food and clothing (Epstein, 2004). In those times, man sublimated the fear of his vulnerability by dominating non-human animals in many ways, including ritual slaughter, where animals were offered as prizes to the gods. These sacrificial animals were given the status of “sacred victims (Juergensmeyer, 2008) .” Today, however, animals do not enjoy even this pathetic status. Without institutional rights, they have become moral non-entities akin to the status of homo sacer, the ancient Roman legal status of a cursed man who is banned, able to be murdered by anyone and but not worthy of safeguarding or sacrificing (Agamben, 1998). Farm and laboratory animals in particular, those heavily commoditized in the global Capitalist system, have deliberately been declared to be outside the realm of all institutional protective mechanisms.

To deconstruct the concurrent processes that bring about this injustice, Critical Theory is most useful. However, one can look to Human Rights theory, which recognizes entitlements to rights as a consequence of shared vulnerability, as more useful in claiming rights for non-human animals (Turner, 2010). Feminist theory contributes richly to claiming rights for non-human animals based on a Caring

framework (Donovan, Josephine & Adams, Carol J., 1996) that avoids the pitfalls of arguments based on shared intelligence, reasoning, or theories that lack emotion (Singer, 2009).

Joanna Dafoe, Yale

This paper seeks to identify the conditions under which oil and gas companies support a given climate change policy in Alberta. The paper first asks if climate change policy preferences vary across firms, and then asks if a competitive advantage hypothesis (H0), which proposes that preferences are determined by a firm's resource mix, might help explain variation. Second, the paper inductively offers three alternative hypotheses for explaining variation.

Johanna Espin

The Peruvian Amazon constitutes an ecologically and culturally rich area that, in the last years, has been increasingly targeted of economic development policies based on exploitation of natural resources. In this area, extractive activities coexist with protected sites for the conservation of biodiversity and indigenous lands. The resulting landscape is a tangle of overlapping and competing exploitation concessions, conservation units, and indigenous territories whose resulting confusion has allowed the advance of the agenda of illegal actors (Salisbury, 2007, p. viii). Consequently, the history of development in the Amazon borderlands of Peru has been deeply related to the illegal extraction of raw materials and illegal coca cultivation.

Nevertheless, the gathering or extraction of resources constitutes only a first stage in global commodity chains, which linked not only illicit/licit and formal/informal aspects but also social and environmental impacts of illegal exploitation of natural resources and illicit goods at local level with (licit or illicit) distribution and consumption in markets worldwide. Considering an analysis of a first stage in global commodity chains, the research will be focused on examining the effects that existing illegal activities (logging, gold-mining and coca cultivation) in the province of Tahuamanu, –which have characterized development process in this border area– have had on forest conservation (environmental impacts) and local livelihood strategies (social impacts) in last years.

In the province of Tahuamanu, illegal activities have become main drivers of environmental degradation and important social conflicts (USAID, 2016: ix). Illegal actors (loggers, miners, drug traffickers, and others) operate illegally or quasi-legally within this border zone and, “in the absence of a strong governmental presence, the local people (indigenous and non-indigenous), largely invisible to authorities, struggle to survive with subsistence strategies while either negotiating with illegal interlopers to supplement their income or resisting them for their very survival” (Salisbury, 2007: viii). Furthermore, the province of Tahuamanu has a strategic geographical location in the Amazon border of Peru with Brazil and Bolivia, which allocates this area in an isolated geographical position that could facilitate the international transport of products to neighboring Brazil and its consequent insertion in global chains.

With regard to the methodology, this study will be focused on examining those illegal activities –as part of only a first stage in commodity chains– using analytical elements provided by both the Ecologically Unequal Exchange and Underground Economies theoretical frameworks. The intention of conduct an analysis of this kind of economic structure (global commodity chains) is to expose that, although some component of them could be licit (e.g., distribution, commercialization), there is another large portion (e.g., exploitation, production) that could be illegal or has illegal elements. The main intention is to elucidate that those illegal activities are generating critical social and environmental impacts at a local level.

Joshua King

The literature in Pro-Environmental Behavior (PEB) research has revealed robust models and pertinent variables in predicting the likelihood of environmentally significant actions on an individual level. From a practical standpoint, these predictive indicators possess a vital capacity to inform those developing campaigns aimed at increasing PEB. Accordingly, this paper focuses on (1) how PEB models and research can be utilized to inform policy, (2) how measurement must be tied to both practice and effect, (3) opportunities for practice-based research in social predictors, and (4) structural considerations for PEB that warrant a more sociological approach in PEB analysis.

Karen Bryant

Corporate, international financial institution, and governmental activities for resource extraction and industrial scale logging and agriculture play major roles in biodiversity and biocultural diversity loss, human rights violations, and climate change. These activities are enabled by numerous forms of structural violence. International efforts such as the requirement for free prior informed consent have been less than effective in halting these losses. The rights-of-nature movement is advocating the use of rights of nature to prevent further losses.

A case in point is the country of Ecuador which was the first country in the world to introduce rights of nature provisions into its constitution in 2008. Although two specific rights of nature cases in Ecuador resulted in judicial issuance of constitutional injunctions to halt ecological destruction, the executive branch of the Ecuadorean government is ignoring these provisions as well as the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and assembly in its plans and actions related to petroleum extraction and mining. The result is a state of exception which is posing great threat to continuity of life and culture in Ecuador's Amazonian regions, including that of the Sarayaku Kichwa and Achuar tribes. During a previous round of petroleum exploration conducted in their territory, the Sarayaku Kichwa documented human rights violations and successfully brought and won their case against Ecuador in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Although President Correa stated that Ecuador would observe the Court's decision, he is continuing his efforts toward petroleum extraction in their territory. The majority of the Ecuadorean citizenry experienced unfavorable economic conditions during the administrations prior to that of Correa, but their economic conditions have improved during Correa's administration. Consequently, Correa enjoys support from approximately 90 percent of the Ecuadorean citizenry.

A broader view shows that power imbalances are systemic, resulting in similar scenarios of exploitation in multiple countries. Central and South America in particular are slated for numerous open pit metallic mines. The nature-exploitation system is resistant to change. One can apply Donella Meadows' Thinking in Systems concepts to analyze for leverage points of this system. According to Meadow's scheme, the most effective leverage point is that of paradigm. If one can change the paradigm of the system participants to one conducive to promote ecological diversity, then one is more likely to be successful in effecting the desired outcome.

I am planning to perform social network analysis of directors and shareholders of financial corporations and nature-exploitative corporations to identify key individuals in the nature-exploitation system and to invite these individuals to participate in experiments designed to change their paradigm. The experimental treatment will be based on C. Otto Scharmer's Theory U, presencing, and vision quests. I anticipate using surveys of pro-ecological values prior to and after the experimental treatment as a metric in order to determine the effectiveness of the experimental treatments in altering their paradigms. Developmental trials may involve business students. A metric to determine the effectiveness of the treatment in transforming the nature-exploitative system to an ecosystem-health-promoting system is under development.

Lauren Griffin

Beyond campy thrills, disaster films constitute an important dialogue in the cultural conversation about environmental problems, particularly climate change. Modern environmental crises are characterized by a lack of public consensus on the issues, despite overwhelming scientific evidence for anthropogenic climate change. The field of media studies suggests that portrayals of a phenomenon in media can impact on how people perceive that phenomenon. Environmental sociologists have long suspected that the media acts as an interpreter for science, presenting issues in a way that the public can understand without scientific training. For many people, then, the media is a major source of frames about environmental problems like climate change.

This paper presents preliminary results of a content analysis of disaster films conducted as a portion of my doctoral dissertation. It seeks to understand how disaster films represent both the causes and implications of climate change, as well as how the plotlines of such films depict human-environment interactions. I use formalized content analysis, which involves groups of coders recording their interpretations of the media on scoring sheets to produce quantitative data for statistical analysis. I define disaster films as films in which: 1) the main conflict that must be solved is a weather-related catastrophe (i.e. tornado, blizzard, etc.), and 2) the disaster is of such scale and intensity as to threaten entire cities and regions. My coding instrument draws on the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), a respected tool for measuring environmental attitudes. While some research has been done on the impacts of disaster movies, most studies limit their scope to one or two big-budget films, ignoring the genre as a whole.

Approximately twenty-five disaster films were screened and coded for themes of climate change, human exemptionalism, and balance of nature, as well as representation of major environmental actors (government, scientists, military, etc.). Films were also coded for the use of technology to control/dominate natural systems. Preliminary analysis suggests that while climate change is a theme in many films, it tends to be limited to a phrase that advances the plot, and little context is given to human-environment interactions. Interestingly, while many plots are driven by human interference with natural systems (climate change, rogue science experiments, etc.), human control over nature is almost universally reasserted by the film's end. This is frequently done through the use of military technology and weaponry.

Understanding popular culture representations of the environment and climate change is important because film can serve as a tool for people to ground their understandings of scientific phenomena, some of which have not yet occurred or are happening over the course of many years, in the familiar format of a story. Media experts are increasingly realizing that relying on news media to inform the public is inadequate to shift attitudes on climate change. By taking popular culture seriously as a site of contention in the construction of environmental meanings, this study opens access to an under-theorized but important domain.

Lemir Teron

Prison Waste: The Ecological & Social Consequences of Throwaway Culture

American jurisprudence's answer to crime, which is largely a proxy for systemic social disorganization, is mass incarceration. The prison industrial complex is emblematic of a throwaway society; carceral institutions are the ominous embodiment of this culture, in which both lives and resources (natural, economic and social) become highly disposable. This paper explores the ecological impacts that prisons have on local communities and greater society. It applies ecological footprint analysis to the corrections system, along with an examination of the geographic stresses that these institutions exude by exploring prison siting. A political ecology framework is used to examine the political and economic machinations that undergird the milieu which enables the pipelining of significant societal resources into the prison industry, and away from consequently distressed communities. The paper ultimately finds that prisons, as being symptomatic of greater injustice that permeates society, perpetuate ecological and environmental

injustice. It concludes with the author's call for societal responses to social disorganization that culminate in mass incarceration to be reevaluated.

Lena Campagna

The battle for environmental justice has been ongoing for many Native American tribes. This has been especially evident in the interests of disposing nuclear waste where many companies have broken longstanding treaties and created more ambiguity regarding tribal sovereignty almost to the extent of economic racism (Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, 2010). This injustice is exacerbated when coupled with the fact that twice as many Native families live below the poverty line than other sectors of U.S. society and often have few if any options for generating income (Tighe, 2014). Native Americans are the most economically impoverished ethnic group in the United States. Fewer educational opportunities, high unemployment, permanent residency issues, homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, and geographic isolation are realities and challenges that contribute to the proliferation of social problems experienced by Native Americans (Tighe, 2014). This poverty stems from the negative effects of settler colonialism. Native Americans have consistently been demonized by their perceived "otherness" from their initial interactions with EuroAmerican settlers. Natives were seen as a population that was barbaric, inhumane and justifiable for genocide and extinction (Smith, 2003). In addition to the negative aftermath of settler colonialism, Natives have also been subjugated to unethical research practices by researchers and the university (Pacheco, et al., 2013). As a result, there still remains a distrust between academic/research institutions and many Native communities. In order to prevent worsening these gaps between marginalized groups and so-called "experts" and create a foundation for future partnership, integrating applied sociological methods in sociology curriculums, particularly from a community based angle is paramount in order for future sociologists to address the aforementioned environmental injustices. The following paper will address the importance of applied sociological methods when working with marginalized communities, particularly Native tribes and the importance of integrating these methods in an undergraduate and graduate sociology curriculum.

**Marisa Allison,
Basak Durgun,
Randy Lynn,
Samantha Parsons**

The working conditions of faculty on U.S. college and university campuses has shifted dramatically in the last 30 years. Tenured and tenure track faculty, who made up almost 60 percent of total faculty in 1975, are now only 25 percent of the professoriate. Non-tenure track faculty (both full- and part-time) are the new faculty majority, as they comprise 75% of the total faculty on college and university campuses in the United States. Often described as "contingent faculty" because of the precarious nature of their employment, these faculty include adjuncts, lecturers, term faculty, part-timers, post-docs, and teaching assistants, among other titles. Most of these are part-time teachers: in 2009, part-time non-tenure track faculty comprised nearly 50 percent of the total faculty.

Research has shown that hiring temporary faculty was initially a short-term solution to a set of larger problems in higher education, including a booming student population and a decline in government funding. But it has now become the primary hiring method at colleges and universities. This trend toward contingency is accompanied by several well-documented problems, including a decline in educational quality, lower graduation rates and less contact time between the teacher and students, band-aid solutions to larger educational staffing problems such as reduced hiring standards, and the rise of what has been described as "caste-based faculty system" in which contingent faculty, especially part-timers, lack equitable compensation, benefits, job security, professional development, and advancement opportunities.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the Public Sociology Association at George Mason University took up the cause of contingent academic labor rights utilizing our training as public sociologists to engage these faculty through research and advocacy in attempt to organize and advocate for the invisible contingency of our university. Since we began our research, contingent faculty at GMU have begun to organize and mobilize. For this year's conference, we propose a panel discussion on the ways our work has been utilized to support a growing movement here at Mason, in the DC metro area, and nationally. We view this panel as an opportunity to educate current students and faculty on the working conditions faced by contingent faculty, to introduce them to (and engage them with) leaders in the local movement, and to give a model practice in public and applied sociology for participants to consider in their own work.

Mary E. Allen

Marine protected areas (MPAs), also known as marine sanctuaries, are common management strategies taken in response to fisheries stock declines, increased recreational and ecotourism use of the marine environment, increased activity by nongovernmental organizations in the area of marine conservation, and the global threat of climate change. There is no denying however, that due to the recognized interdependency between the social and ecological realms, the establishment of an MPA will have direct consequences on resource use patterns and quality of life of local people. Communities that are modified, either through opportunity or constraint, by MPA establishment must adapt to changing circumstances without losing critical social relations, economic options and political stability. The capacity and flexibility to adapt can vary for a myriad of reasons across multiple social scales. Recognizing the consequences of altering the relationship between people and the natural resources upon which they depend is critical to minimizing negative impacts, improving long-term viability and increasing the management effectiveness of MPAs.

Recent proposals to expand MPAs, such as the Pacific Remote Islands National Marine Monument, and to create new marine sanctuaries have raised contentious issues regarding ocean conservation and restriction of or prohibition on human activities, such as commercial fishing and energy exploration. For instance, expanding the Pacific Monuments would create the world's largest MPA. The expansion advocates marine ecosystem protection and is supported by environmental conservation groups, some of whom have a powerful influence on political actors. On the other hand, the expansion is likely to face criticism from local people who are most directly affected by the decision. The U.S. tuna fleets, recreational fishermen, and local communities use and depend on the region to receive economic, social and cultural benefits.

This presentation explores the costs and benefits of marine protected areas, and the issues revolving around social justice, fair distribution of environmental resources, and access to natural resources. These distributive issues are central features of the human dimensions of marine resources planning, and therefore play a pivotal role in determining whether MPA initiatives are efficient. From a social movements perspective, discussion focuses on the goals and strategies of various social groups and networks who support or oppose the establishment of MPAs, and considers how social movements (or counter-movements) may emerge accordingly.

Nicholas Kalich

The objective of this research is to produce an ethnographic study on the social movement opposed to keystone Pipeline XL and contribute to the general knowledge regarding both individual interest in joining social movements and the ability of social movement organizers to mobilize individuals. In August of 2011, the social movement opposed to keystone pipeline XL construction organized a week long act of civil disobedience that ended with 1,252 people arrested in front of the White House. In

November 2011, 12,000 people organized again in demonstration to circle and create a symbolic chain around the White House (no arrests were made). The social movement organizers have continued to call upon supporters to participate and contribute towards various acts of civil disobedience against the keystone pipeline. This research outlines three principles. The first principle identifies key rational choice decisions that lead individuals to participate in collective action among various observed demonstrations. Rational choice theory seeks to identify just how these preferences (attitudes, belief, and values) determine behavior (Aldrich 1993). The second principle identifies motivational factors that social movement organizers used to bring people together and demonstrate for their cause. Conflicts can mobilize the people that are most directly affected by oppressive manipulations of social and economic resources (Melucci 1980) yet other factors can be identified as sources of motivation towards collective action. The second principle describes how environmental movements must convey certain motivational messages in order for the individual to make the rational decision to participate. The third principle identifies the interaction between the social movement and the individual to describe how it affects participation and effectiveness of planned demonstrations. Nonviolent movements obtain their strength from the participation of people from all areas of society and the more members the movement has supporting it, the more effective the tactics will be when implemented (Merriman 2010). The results of this research are derived from 15 randomly interviewed participants at planned actions organized by social movement opposed to the keystone pipeline XL construction. Interviews and field observations obtained were limited to the planned actions that occurred in Washington, DC. Content analysis is the process of coding and analyzing related accessible materials that include written text, photographs, and recorded videos (Strauss 2007). The three principles will be derived from content analysis of the interviews and field observations. Previous contributions to social movement resource mobilization theories are were derived from quantitative analysis based on survey collected results. This research sought to collect data from direct interactions with social movements and individual participants involved in planned demonstrations. Given the fact that both supporters and opponents considered its construction inevitable, I was surprised by the amount of people that would continue to protest against it. The purpose of this study is to investigate why people engage in civil disobedience against large corporations and how social movements were able to attract and mobilize despite the fact that the odds are against the protestors.

Nicole DelCogliano

Today's concept of sustainability will only be successful with open discourse among participants, strong governmental reforms to secure common resources, and elevating human and community rights over corporate rights. This paper will focus on the recent boom in the oil and gas sector with the expansion of unconventional natural gas extraction (will be referred to as shale gas development). I look at the various tools that communities are using on a state, county and city level to mitigate the effects from this development. These strategies are further complicated due the lack of federal oversight and the strength of state primacy when it comes to local/ home rule procedures. How is civic engagement occurring in response to rapid shale gas development, particularly by the drilling process of hydraulic fracturing or "fracking"? How are citizens participating in decision-making, which affects this common resource being extracted? What tools are communities using to protect what they consider valuable for future generations so that they can meet their basic needs, "in a way that does not undermine the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (UN definition of SD).

Three case studies are investigated and compared based on how their community responded to fracking. In Wellsboro, Pa, land use ordinances and planning restrictions were used to begin to respond to the impacts from extensive drilling within town parameters. This tool used by the citizens worked within the state limitations in place at the time (the state law has now changed allowing more local control). Citizens from Broadview Heights, Ohio passed a community bill of rights, trying to bypass restrictions on local authority to restrict shale gas development by the state. These are now being challenged in the Ohio Supreme Court. Anson County, N.C. passed a county wide moratorium on fracking although it conflicted

with state primacy. This also was based on citizen's rights. These three cases are discussed in relation to state and federal regulations and how local authority is being compromised.

Shale gas development has proceeded at a rapid rate and communities have often found themselves unprepared. While local ordinances, zoning and land use planning are usually within the parameters of local authority, most states have limited these specifically for the oil and gas sector. This paper looks at how this development is impacting communities and how they are choosing to respond to protect their homes and communities. The regulations and state laws are rapidly changing and the most current information for each of these case studies will be presented.

Rebecca Rasch

Social theorists suggest that income inequality within a society leads to a breakdown of social cohesion and as a result, uneven public resource access. I will assess whether this social phenomenon is important to consider when measuring vulnerability to climate change in urban, middle-income countries. To test this relationship, I create a flood hazard vulnerability index at the municipality level and determine whether income inequality, measured at the municipality level, is a predictor of municipality vulnerability to flood hazard. The flood hazard vulnerability index incorporates socio-economic, built environment and natural environment data, providing a more holistic approach to vulnerability assessment. I draw on socio-economic and spatial data from urban municipalities across 25 Brazilian states.

I develop the index using 2010 census data and municipality-level institutional data from the IBGE (Brazilian statistical office), low elevation coastal zones spatial data (McGranahan et al. 2007) and urban extents spatial data based on nighttime lights from the Global Rural Urban Mapping Project (GRUMP). I control for flood hazard in the regression model using flood frequency spatial data from the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Using multi-level regression models, which control for state-level political economy impacts, as well as for the spatial dependence of flood hazard vulnerability, I test whether income inequality in a municipality, in addition to poverty level, increases vulnerability to flooding, the most prevalent climate hazard in Brazil. I use several measures of income inequality to determine whether the effect of income inequality varies depending on where along the income distribution the income inequality lies. My data illustrates that considering income inequality as part of vulnerability assessments can significantly aid in crafting more effective, sustainable adaptation efforts by helping to better identify which areas are most vulnerable to climate change.

Roger Lara

A strange paradox is appearing surrounding the future of human powered transport. On the one hand, some are increasingly coming to the realization that, "the car is a threat to other road users," (The Dutch Bicycle Master Plan 1999: 30), and giving motorists free reign over public space is a recipe for inequality, inaccessibility, pollution, and an appalling amount of carnage – and yet motorization is rapidly increasing across areas of the world that once relied on other transport paradigms, such as China and Latin America. Many of these areas also have extremely lax environmental standards – such as still relying on leaded gasoline. This global increase in motorization, as well as continued domination of automobile hegemony in the developed world, presents a Sisyphean task to advocates of increased Human Powered Vehicle (HPV) usage – the diamond framed "safety" bicycle being the most iconic and available example. Yet, cycling *is* gaining ground both culturally and as practice.

Cycling adherents, especially those who do not own an automobile, relying instead predominantly on cycling, either by choice or necessity, represents a sliver of an already thin slice of the American transit population – but identifying their motivations, as well as some of the barriers they face, is one of the keys to stimulate cycling. By listening closely to cyclist narratives, especially the all-important story of *how* individuals come to *begin* adult cycling, it is possible to fill a sorely needed gap in the academic understanding of cycling.

The social effects mass cycling may have in modern American communities are largely unknown, as are ways to reverse current disregard of cycling. Beyond that are attendant issues of increased global motorization being detrimental to collective automobility (as concept), and ways to promote cycling as part of an integrated and diverse system of transportation_s – with a wider range of options than the currently myopic American system of fossil based motorization and privatization – which is being rapidly exported. The private-in-public uptake of space represented by the automobile (as vehicle), being a main source of destructive frustration in the modern zeitgeist. Cycling may prove helpful in reassessing these ways of life.

This is currently the subject of a thesis by the author, which is in progress, and may be good fodder to provoke discussion. It is currently hoped to be presented as a discussion piece aiding in the guidance of ongoing research.

Ryan Alan Sporer

This ongoing dissertation research is an ethnographic study of a social movement to build sustainable and off-grid eco-housing. The houses are called Earthships. They are designed to interface with natural phenomena in such a way that heating and cooling, potable water, sustainable food production, renewable energy, and treatment of sewage are provided without physical infrastructures or markets. The homes are built with up 40 per cent of recycled materials. The construction costs are similar to conventional homes and utility bills are less than 100 dollars a year. The collective action of building physical structures and the different lifestyle the building afford its dwellers is itself a novel form of a social movement. Dwellers can choose to not engage in markets for the necessities of life. This is what I refer to as a politics of circumvention. This politics is as much material as it is cultural. Environmental sociologists and sociologists of science and technology have long noted the importance of including the natural world or materiality when analyzing the social world. Despite these advances most research on social movements still takes a solely discursive approach. In order to study how the material and social are entangled the researcher will trace the associations that constitute the Earthship Movement. For example, while building an eco-house what legal or natural problems unexpectedly come up and who or what is required to overcome the issues? Is an electrician, a city building inspector, a local artisan, a new tool, a lawyer, a website administrator, an object that has been repurposed, or a landfill manager, etc., brought in to solve the problems? What happens when the legal or natural issue cannot be overcome? Additionally, how does this constellation of social and material dimensions impact the culture of the movement? Lastly, what grids do builders and dwellers choose to “stay on” and what reasons do they give? In this way a more full description of what constitutes eco-housing and the politics of circumvention is made possible.

Ryan W. Thomson

The Duke Energy coal ash spill at the Dan River Power Station (presently estimated around 82,000 tons and 27 million gallons of waste water) on the North Carolina and Virginia boarder occurred just twenty four days after Alpha Natural Resources catastrophe in the Elk River, West Virginia. The Freedom Industries facility chemical spill (releasing an estimated 7,500 gallons of crude 4-MCHM) which left 14 hospitalized, over 160 injured and hundreds of thousands of residents throughout 9 counties without drinking water. This spill corresponded with the fifth agreement in recent years between state agencies and coal companies, resulting in the largest civil penalty under the Clean Water Act for over 6,000 permit violations since 2007. The following analysis makes use of multiple methods including geospatial information systems (GIS), semi-structured interviews (of state officials, corporate representatives and expert witnesses), and narrative analysis to compare the role of political-economy in these two environmental crises. Synthetic theorization is used to interpret and explain the events within an ecological justice framework.

Sandra George O'Neil, Ph.D.

The need to decrease dependency on fossil fuels is evident. Renewable energy sources offer promise, but the efficacy of their promotion, implementation, and installation are often less explored. One such area needing further exploration is medium to large scale, ground mounted solar. Where are these larger ground mounted projects located? Are all stakeholders involved in the siting process? Are specific populations and/or communities disproportionately affected by installations? Since these installations are often considered aesthetically unpleasing and often do not fit with residential concepts, are they more frequently installed near marginalized populations as an environmental justice frame might indicate? This research aims at exploring the distribution of large scale sites (greater than 250 kilowatts) in Massachusetts to determine if similar to other environmental injustices, marginalized communities are faced with the burden of housing these large scale projects.

In 2008, Massachusetts implemented the Green Communities Act. This, in addition to federal level incentives, was part of a strong push for alternative energies, and increased the incentives for renewable projects as well as specified goals for renewable energy. Cities and towns across the commonwealth were encouraged to welcome large ground mounted solar projects. Complicating this “landscape”, however, is a state statute (Massachusetts General Law 40A Sec3) created in the 1980s exempting solar projects from local zoning. The combination of renewable incentives and the Massachusetts solar zoning exemption have created the unintended consequence of Massachusetts developers pushing for large-scale, industrial solar projects in green spaces and these projects are seemingly permitted virtually anywhere in a town or city. The projects in Massachusetts are coming from individual land owners and developers, and are not growing from the “ground up” (Vine 1981, Moratto 1990). Examining the distribution of these sites becomes even more critical when viewed within a framework that indicates that many communities may be left powerless and disenfranchised from the decision making process involved in the siting of projects. Previous research has indicated that middle income areas may be more likely to adopt rooftop solar (Hernandez 2013). In addition, there have been efforts such as California Environmental Justice Alliance, Solar for All, and Just Energy to name a few, working to make rooftop solar more accessible to lower income residents, not only moving more people to solar, but to decentralized, consumption based solar.¹ However, the centralized, large scale solar projects, and the desire to keep residential areas both aesthetically pleasing and properly zoned has fuelled the opposition to some large scale solar projects (O'Neil 2014). While some of this resistance may be driven by what could be considered, although reductively, NIMBY, it is also important to consider the potential environmental justice consequences of these policies. This research is currently in the data gathering phase, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) data will be compared to demographic data to determine the characteristics of the areas and populations that surround these large scale sites. Preliminary results will be available for discussion at the October meeting.

Sarah Lashley

Although efforts to manage conflicts in the environmental justice context collaboratively are beginning to emerge, the factors that promote and hinder effective collaboration in cases of environmental justice have not yet been explored. Thus, the purpose of this research is to highlight select attributes of environmental justice conflicts and, subsequently, begin to identify the impacts of these attributes and their implications for collaborative problem-solving.

A comparative case study approach is used to identify and probe the attributes of environmental justice conflicts in collaborative problem-solving efforts. Preliminary results suggest that different framing strategies have created situations where interdependence is not immediately perceived or opportunities to collaborate seized. Traumatic histories and procedural injustices have limited parties' experience with collaboration in the environmental justice context and signal a need for all parties to be oriented towards collaboration in this context. Both attributes influence process expectations and structures, and suggest nuances in how processes are structured may be needed to accommodate the diverse parties' needs and expectations.

Stephanie Baran

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or PETA has a noble cause – animal rights and the ending to all testing or essentially using animals for human consumption. This project seeks to examine the ways in which PETA engages the public and social justice activists with its messaging and advertising. As activists working towards total social justice for all beings (or at least we should be), we should understand that all oppressions are interconnected and one does not outweigh another. The variance within this construct is our individual experiences with it and within it.

Therefore, in reference to PETA, while the oppression of animals exists and is real, so is the oppression of women. Using the jarring image of 'women as meat' to conjure a reaction of anger and disgust is a faulty analogy because in the eyes of patriarchy, women *are* meat. Utilizing this analogy actually does more harm than good, and minimize issues that women face by simply existing within the patriarchal structure. The particular media frame PETA uses regarding the oppression of animals exploits women to express that point of view. This frame showcases violence and overt sexualization and objectification of women as normal to incite a reaction regarding the treatment of animals. There has been some research on regarding PETA's advertising and media image, but this analysis project seeks to accomplish two things. First, this project seeks to unpack the advertising of PETA over time and how that particular advertising frames their cause. This study uses a content analysis to examine the types of advertising and the way its messaging has been displayed over the last 10 years. More deeply, this study examines the content of PETA's video and photo advertisements. The key parts of this analysis include an examination of each advertisements perceived gender, the display of gender (whether nude or clothed, photo props), the content of the ad (what does the photo or commercial try to say), perceived class, race and the positionality of race in relation to the goal of the advertisement.

Often when thinking about social justice, cognitive dissonance can take hold. However, as individuals who are social justice advocates or are working towards being social justice advocates, it is important to understand the messaging of what we support. By supporting organizations such as PETA, we engage in supporting issues of sexualization, violence, classism and racism as normal.

Second, this project also seeks to find other ways social justice activism can support change without transferring oppressions from one recipient to another. Social justice work should never be complacent or satisfied with its work. Organizations such as PETA can co-opt the well-meaning intentions of real social

change with their messaging tactics. Therefore, as aspiring social justice activists, we should always be aware of the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality in the organizations that we support. The fundamental understanding of intersectionality is that we do not exist in a vacuum and all of our interactions and avenues of support make an impact.

Vali S Mansouri, Shaun Michel, Avidah Mayville

Since Michael Burawoy's calls for a public sociology there has been increasing attention and calls for the revival of the sociologist to actively participate in issues that concern the public. Since the ASA meeting in 2004 and Burawoy's speech, there has been an upturn in discussion revolving around building new methods of engagement with the public. Absent from all the discussions are the voice and perspectives of graduate students who constitute a huge mass of young energetic sociologists that must play a larger role in shaping the future of sociology and whether it will have a strong public turn. The purpose of this paper for us is to practice public sociology through collective collaboration by delving into the issues that most implicate and shape the graduate student experience resulting in lasting impacts on their desires for active involvement with the world. Here we aim to analyzing how discourse and practices of 'entrepreneurial' capitalism are transforming the public university and its consequences particularly for graduate students in sociology and the social sciences in further limiting prospects for meaningful public engagement. By reworking relations in the university first, can we hope to move beyond it to effectively engage publics and the issues central to them. Our approach to public sociology is distinct in that it is a collaborative effort that makes use of an overarching critical sociology and the pragmatic sociology of critique. This sociology listens to actors and participants in how they engage in debate and controversy on issues that most affect them, while continuing to recognize the role domination and inequality play in construction of institutions and resisting demands for change (Boltanski 2013).

Vivek Prasad, PhD

The Green Revolution increased agricultural production for many farmers world-wide and achieved significant gains in terms of food security. However, a majority of the small-farm holders did not benefit much from Green Revolution. Many small-farm holders, who have been using chemical fertilizers and pesticides, are caught in a debt trap due to the high cost of inputs, lack of credit, and poor access to market. In India, the crisis intensified in the late nineties and came into sharp public spotlight following a spate of farmers' suicides in Andhra Pradesh. Around year 1995 the first step in this direction was taken with the practice of Non-Pesticide Management (NPM) of agriculture by some NGOs- the prominent of these was Center for Sustainable Agriculture. The aim of NPM was to reduce the cost of cultivation and provide relief from debt by replacing pesticide application with ecologically friendly chemical free farming. The Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) builds on NPM and complements this process by adopting biological and agronomic soil fertility improvement measures leading to reduced use of chemical fertilizers. This has significantly reduced the cost of cultivation, the need for large amounts of credit, and consequent indebtedness. CMSA was first piloted in 2004 with only 250 farmers and on 400 acres. It has now reached around 1.9 million farmers and 3.87 million acres are under cultivation. When CMSA started the main purpose was to replace high cost input and increase profitability. Over the period and with increasing impact of climate change CMSA started proving a viable strategy for community-based adaptation.

Some of the innovations of CMSA are: creation of an institutional platform which is owned and supervised by communities. The institutional platform enabled the creation of a 'pro-poor investment climate.' The key factor that contributed to the success of these initiatives is institutional arrangements among various stakeholders. The paper/presentation will explore how social capital of communities was converted to agricultural profitability while reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture.