

# **(RE)VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & THE CRISIS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

October 18th, 2014



Photo: "City Streets" - Courtesy of David Aloisio



4th Annual Public Sociology Conference  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
George Mason University

Conference Held at Founders Hall, 3351 North Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22201

# **(RE)VISIONS OF THE FUTURE:**

## **Public Sociology, Environmental Justice & the Crisis of Climate Change**

Welcome to our 4th annual public sociology conference, hosted by both the George Mason University Public Sociology Association (PSA) and the Graduate Student Sociological Association (GSSA). This year's conference focuses on the pressing issues of environmental justice and climate change. The sessions scheduled for this conference address these issues from a number of different perspectives, including public policy, social movements, technology, and environmental activism, to name but a few.

It is our hope that this conference will generate rich, fruitful discussions regarding environmental justice and climate change. With much of the world experiencing drought, food and water crises, and dangerously high levels of smog and air pollution, we hope that these discussions will contribute towards plans and actions that seek to address these issues in a concrete fashion.

Additionally, in keeping with our commitment to support graduate students and scholarship that is both public and applied, there is another thematic thread running through this conference: a number of sessions and workshops will explore the challenges and opportunities facing graduate students in the rapidly changing landscape of higher education.

We thank you for your presence and for using your ears and voice throughout the day!

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**WHAT IS PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY?** | Though not without its critics, public sociology is an attempt to engage social problems and various publics in a manner that transcends the academy. It is not wedded to a particular theory, method, or subject matter. Rather, it is situated on the borderlands of academia, activism, and policy, reaching beyond an audience of professional sociologists to broader publics—their discourses and historical realities—in an effort to generate social empowerment and political, institutional, and social change.

**ABOUT THE PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY ASSOCIATION (PSA)** | The PSA is primarily composed of graduate students in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at George Mason University. Members of the PSA are committed to the tenants of peace, equality, and social justice in the face of vast social problems. While no solution is short of its own complexity, we are committed to utilizing the skillsets and ways-of-thinking about the social world that our discipline allows and engaging solutions in an open and democratic manner. We are political by practice in our sociology and in engaging various publics. For more information visit [gmupublic-soci.wordpress.com](http://gmupublic-soci.wordpress.com) or contact us at [gmusocgrads@gmail.com](mailto:gmusocgrads@gmail.com).

**ABOUT THE GRADUATE STUDENT SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (GSSA)** | The GSSA encourages social and academic community among the students in Mason's sociology graduate programs. This communal encouragement comes in form of social events, both informal and academic, professional development, brown-bags, goal setting, writing groups, and communal projects.

- Note to breastfeeding mothers: Room 118 on the first floor is our reserved private lactation room -

## General Schedule:

8:30	<b>Registration</b>
9:00-10:15	<b>Paper Session 1:</b> Policy, Planning and the Environment. Room 308. <b>Paper Session 2:</b> Environmental Crises & Disaster. Room 310. <b>Paper Session 3:</b> Fracking and Resource Extraction. Room 311. <b>Workshop 1:</b> Spatial Justice. Room 317. <b>Workshop 2:</b> The Mismeasure of Demographic Differences in Outcome Rates. Room 318. <b>Topical Round Table:</b> The Entrepreneurial Spirit in the Public University & its Discontent. Room 320.
10:30-11:45	<b>Featured Panel:</b> Combining Research and Practice: Climate Justice and the Academy. Room 126.
12:00-1:15	<b>Box Lunch</b> (in reception area) <b>People's Movement Assembly:</b> The Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Austerity, Precarity & Graduate Student Workers. Room 125. <b>Informal Discussion:</b> Doing Public Sociology. Room 318.
1:30-2:45	<b>Paper Session 4:</b> Social and Cultural Considerations in Environmental Justice. Room 308. <b>Paper Session 5:</b> United or Divided? Conflict and Motivations in Environmental Activism. Room 310. <b>Paper Session 6:</b> Vulnerable Populations. Room 311. <b>Paper Session 7:</b> Technology and Built Spaces. Room 317. <b>Workshop 3:</b> Part II of the People's Movement Assembly. Room 318. <b>Workshop 4:</b> Strategies of Cultural Confrontation: Connecting Art, Activism and Academics. Room 320.
3:00-4:15	<b>Paper Session 8:</b> Logics of Resistance and Domination. Room 308. <b>Paper Session 9:</b> Relating Climate Change to Structural Violence, Exploitation, and Conflict. Room 310. <b>Paper Session 10:</b> Management and Policy Concerns in Environmental Justice. Room 311 <b>Workshop 5:</b> Re-thinking Pedagogy and Professional Scholarship in a Time of World-Systemic Crisis. Room 317. <b>Workshop 6:</b> Academic Activism for Academic Laborers: Sociology in Support of Action. Room 320.
4:30-6:00	<b>Reception &amp; Closing Remarks.</b> Room 318.

## FEATURED PANEL:

### Combining Research and Practice: Climate Justice and the Academy (Room 126, 10:30-11:45)

This year the public sociology conference is hosting a panel session which will discuss how public sociologists might bridge the gap between research and practice specifically as concerns problems of environmental justice and climate change. Those sitting on the panel are distinguished professionals in their respective fields, whose work has addressed environmental justice and climate change through a variety of different philosophies and practices.



**Thomas Lovejoy** (moderator) is a conservation biologist and currently serves as elected University Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at George Mason University; he also serves as a Senior Fellow at the United Nations Foundation. Along with Lee Hannah, he is working on a second edition of the book *Climate Change and Biodiversity*. In the past Dr. Lovejoy has served on the science and environmental councils of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations, founded the series *Nature* on public television, and was a Chief Biodiversity Advisor for the World Bank, to name just a few of his past accomplishments.



**Jacqueline Patterson** is the Director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program and, since 2007, has served as coordinator and co-founder of Women of Color United. Additionally, she serves on the Gender Justice Working Group of the US Social Forum, the Advisory Committee for The Grandmothers' Project, the Steering Committee of Interfaith Moral Action on Climate Change, as well as on the Board of Directors for the Institute of the Black World, Center for Story Based Strategies and the US Climate Action Network. In the past, Patterson has worked in various capacities at organizations such as IMA World Health, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Johns Hopkins University, and the U.S. Peace Corps. She has published a number of articles, with a book chapter entitled "Equity in Disasters: Civil and Human Rights Challenges in the Context of Emergency Events" in the forthcoming book *Building Community Resilience Post-Disaster*.



**Lilian Molina** is a Mestiza Environmental Justice Advocate, youth development expert and community organizer currently working at Greenpeace USA to set-up internal operating systems that align with the Jemez Principles and Environmental Justice Principles. Her work involves opening up Greenpeace's resources to environmental justice and climate justice community groups and alliances. Molina works to push for climate and social justice within the larger progressive movement, and in the past served as the inaugural Environmental Justice Director position at the Energy Action Coalition.



**Emily Vraga** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Communication at George Mason University and faculty researcher with Mason's Center for Climate Change Communication. She is also the Vice-Head for the Political Communication Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Her research examines how individual predispositions like partisan identity influence the processing of media content and expressions of political engagement, particularly in the evolving digital environment. Her recent work on climate change focuses on how people respond to incongruent information, whether social media impacts beliefs and attitudes associated with climate change and activism on the issue, and how message construction shapes audience response to the issue.



**Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr.** is a minister, community activist, and one of the most influential people in Hip Hop political life. He currently serves as President and CEO of the Hip Hop Caucus and his work spans from engagement with youth populations in regard to issues dealing with the green movement to electoral activism. Rev. Yearwood has been featured in various media outlets such as CNN, BET, Huffington Post, MTV, Ebony, BBC and Jet magazine, to name just a few. Rev. Yearwood was also the subject of a Discovery Network Documentary titled *Hip Hop Rev* highlighting his efforts to involve urban communities in climate activism and green economy solutions.

## PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT ASSEMBLY:

**The Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Austerity, Precarity & Graduate Student Workers**  
(Room 125, 12:00-1:15 and continuing from 1:30-2:45 in Room 318)

Under the current university model, which has been called the “neoliberal” university, many graduate students are working as research assistants, teaching assistants, or adjunct faculty at a low level of remuneration. Moreover, the working conditions associated with these occupations are often poor, and institutional support for graduate student workers is often absent. This People’s Movement Assembly (PMA) is an opportunity for graduate student workers to unite, discuss, and organize around these problems. It is our hope that those who attend this PMA will find solidarity and produce a concrete action plan for addressing the problems that graduate student workers commonly experience in the contemporary university structure.

The PMA is co-sponsored by the George Mason University Public Sociology Association (PSA) and the International Network of Scholar Activists (INoSA).

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## Panel and Paper Sessions:

### 9:00-10:15 - SESSIONS I

**Paper Session 1: Policy, Planning and the Environment. Room 308** - Moderator: Patricia Masters, Associate Professor of Sociology, George Mason University.

- *One Lobby, Varied Preferences: Understanding Climate Policy Preferences of Oil and Gas Companies in Alberta, Canada.* Joanna Dafoe, Yale University.
- *Critical Success Factors of Acid Mine Drainage Remediation in the Cheat River Watershed.* Dylan Jones, West Virginia University.
- *Tackling Climate Change at the City Level: The Need and Opportunity for Urban Sociology.* Alyssa Edwards, Florida International University.

**Paper Session 2: Environmental Crises & Disaster. Room 310** - Moderator: Andrea Robles, Research Analyst, Corporation for National and Community Service

- *Disaster in Dixie: Comparing Elk and Dan River Water Crisis.* Ryan Thomson, North Carolina State University.
- *“Because Science is Never Wrong”: Representations of Environment and Science in Disaster Films.* Lauren Griffin, University of Florida.

**Paper Session 3: Fracking and Resource Extraction. Room 311** - Moderator: Nancy Xiong, George Mason University.

- *Between Technological Rationality and Democracy: Fracking and a Critical Theory of Technology.* Christina Bovinette, University of Montana.
- *The Paths of Development in the Amazon Border of Peru: The Case of the Illegal Exploitation of Timber.* Johanna Espin, University of Florida.
- *Community Engagement in Shale Gas Development: A Sustainable Foray in an Unsustainable Industry.* Nicole DelCogliano, Appalachian State University.

## 9:00-10:15 - SESSIONS I continued

**Workshop 1: Spatial Justice. Room 317** - Facilitators: Amory Ballantine and Roger Lara (see affiliation below).

- *Transportation Justice: Exploring distributive impacts of car culture and alternative transportation.* Amory Ballantine, Evergreen State College.
- *Quixote's of L'America: Cyclist Odysseys in the New World.* Roger Lara, Texas State University.

**Workshop 2: The Mismeasure of Demographic Differences in Outcome Rates. Room 318**

Facilitator: James P. Scanlan, Law Office of JP Scanlan.

**Topical Round Table: The Entrepreneurial Spirit in the Public University & its Discontent. Room 320**

Discussants: Vali Mansouri, Shaun Michel, Avidah Mayville, George Mason University.

## 10:30-11:45 - Panel

**Featured Panel: Combining Research and Practice: Climate Justice and the Academy. Room 126**

Moderator: Thomas Lovejoy, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, George Mason University.

- Jacqui Patterson, Director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program.
- Lilian Molina, Environmental Justice Advocate, Greenpeace USA.
- Emily Vraga, Assistant Professor of Communication, George Mason University.
- Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Minister, Community Activist & President CEO of the Hip Hop Caucus.

## 12:00-1:15 - Box Lunch (in reception area)

**People's Movement Assembly: The Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Austerity, Precarity & Graduate Student Workers. Room 125** - Facilitators: The Public Sociology Association and the International Network of Scholar Activists.

**Informal Discussion: Doing Public Sociology.** Room 318. Moderator: Justin Lowry, Term Professor of Anthropology, George Mason University.

## 1:30-2:45 - SESSIONS II

**Paper Session 4: Social and Cultural Considerations in Environmental Justice. Room 308** - Moderator: Justin Lowry, Term Professor of Anthropology, George Mason University.

- *Class, Status, and Climate Change: An Analysis of Climate Change Belief and Green Culture.* Jean Boucher, George Mason University.
- *Prison Waste: The Ecological & Social Consequences of Throwaway Culture.* Lemir Teron, University of Delaware.
- *From Models to Roadmaps: Practical Lessons from Pro-Environmental Behavior (PEB) Research.* Joshua King, University of Missouri.

**Paper Session 5: United of Divided? Conflict and Motivations in Environmental Activism. Room 310**

Moderator: Jessica Emami, George Mason University.

- *I'll Do It Myself: Self-Sufficiency Movements and the Environment.* Allison Ford, University of Oregon.
- *Linking Environmental Justice and Conflict Management: Critical Elements in Sustaining Collaboration.* Sarah Lashley, Centre College.
- *Against All Odds: A Sociological Examination of the Social Movement Opposed to the Keystone Pipeline XL.* Nicholas Kalich, George Mason University.

**Paper Session 6: Vulnerable Populations. Room 311** - Moderator: Cortney Hughes Rinker, Director of Anthropology Programs, George Mason University.

- *The Importance of Applied Sociology in Training Future Sociologists to Effectively Address Indigenous Environmental Injustices.* Lena Campagna, University of Massachusetts-Boston.
- *The effects of income inequity on vulnerability to flood hazards in Brazil.* Rebecca Rasch, City University of New York.
- *Economic crisis in Spain and out-migration of Ecuadorian immigrants.* Cristina Ramos, University of Florida.

## 1:30-2:45 - SESSIONS II continued

**Paper Session 7: Technology and Built Spaces. Room 317** - Moderator: Jason Smith, George Mason University.

- *Industrial Solar and Environmental Justice in Massachusetts*. Sandra O'Neil, Curry College.
- *Policies to incent residential and commercial solar deployment in the United States: An evolution of institutions and processes*. Gilbert Michaud, Virginia Commonwealth University.
- *Constructing a Social Movement through Buildings: The Case of Eco-Housing*. Ryan Sporer, University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Workshop 3: Extended Discussion of the People's Movement Assembly. Room 318**

Facilitators: The Public Sociology Association and the International Network of Scholar Activists.

**Workshop 4: Strategies of Cultural Confrontation: Connecting Art, Activism and Academics. Room 320**

Facilitator: Jesse Goldstein, Commonwealth University.

## 3:00-4:15 - SESSIONS III

**Paper Session 8: Logics of Resistance and Domination. Room 308** - Moderator: Johanna Bockman, Associate Professor of Sociology, George Mason University.

- *Animals and Sustainability: A Rights-based Approach*. Jessica Emami, George Mason University.
- *Social Justice Activism and the Approach to PETA: How can we better assess our activist allegiance?* Stephanie Baran, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
- *Beyond the Nature/Society Binary*. Jen Rainer, George Mason University.

**Paper Session 9: Relating Climate Change to Structural Violence, Exploitation, and Conflict. Room 310**

Moderator: Nancy Hanrahan, Associate Professor of Sociology, George Mason University.

- *Can Theory U Application Transform the Nature-Exploitation System?* Karen Bryant, George Mason University.
- *Carbon Violence*. Eric Bonds, Beatrice Ohene-Okae, and Zakaria Kronemer, University of Mary Washington.
- *Climate Change and Conflict in Nigeria: The Boko Haram challenge*. Chukwuma Oniya, George Mason University.

**Paper Session 10: Management and Policy Concerns in Environmental Justice. Room 311**

Moderator: Josh Tuttle, George Mason University.

- *Winners and Losers of Marine Protected Areas: A Social Movement Investigation*. Mary Allen, East Carolina University.
- *From a Suicide Trap to Sustainable Agriculture: An Experience of Andhra Pradesh, India*. Vivek Prasad, George Mason University.
- *How Do Networks Matter? Social Capital, Resources, and the Impact of North Carolina Environmental Organizations*. Anne Saville, East Carolina University.

**Workshop 5: Re-thinking Pedagogy and Professional Scholarship in a Time of World-System Crisis. Room 317**

Facilitator: Jackie Smith, University of Pittsburgh.

**Workshop 6: Academic Activism for Academic Laborers: Sociology in Support of Action. Room 320**

Facilitators: Marisa Allison, Basak Durgun, Randy Lynn, and Samantha Parsons, George Mason University.

**4:30-6:00 - Reception & Closing Remarks. Room 318**

**Thank You for Participating!**