

Engaged Environmental Citizenship

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

2 December 2008, University of Melbourne

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

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

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

At the same time, 'devolution', 'partnership', 'empowerment', and 'capacity building' are the words and phrases governments use in seeking to address environmental problems within the institutional and philosophical framework of

market liberalisation and economic rationalism. Preferred policy settings are those that focus less on regulation and more on creating conditions under which individuals and businesses are encouraged to take greater responsibility for themselves and their conduct. Social and environmental standards, environmental labelling and certification, corporate reporting, emissions trading, and so on, provide the means to extend market mechanisms into natural resource management. Planning, auditing, and collaborative learning provide ways to match these with demonstrable environmental benefits.

How are these trends to be understood? As:

- democratisation in action;
- experiments in neoliberal governance;
- dimensions of ecological modernisation;
- distractions from the inherent contradictions of consumer society;
- something else entirely?

Call for papers

Paper proposals are welcome on any aspect of the relationship between ideas of citizenship, engagement and the environment. Potential topics include:

- Theoretical analyses and interpretations of engaged citizenship.
- International and national conventions, policies and regulations that seek to encourage, use or shape citizen engagement
- Private sector initiatives such as environmental standards and corporate social and environmental reporting.
- Social movement campaigns to encourage individual and/or corporate engagement.

- Analyses of who is involved in engaged citizenship initiatives, who is not, and why?
- Case studies of attempts to engage citizens in environmental activities, or of community engagement more broadly.
- The importance to mainstream social theory of environmental sociological perspectives on citizenship and engagement

Please forward paper proposals (including title, authors and abstract) of no more than 200 words to the Centre for Social Science Research (c4ssr@cqu.edu.au) by 5 September 2008.

Publication Plans

Subject to sufficient interest, authors of accepted proposals will be invited to submit a full paper for potential inclusion in an edited monograph to be published under the title *Engaged Environmental Citizenship*. A proposal will be submitted to commercial

publishers before the conference and participants notified, in advance, of publisher interest in the collection. All papers submitted for inclusion in the monograph will be double-blind reviewed for quality and relevance.

Registration

The *Engaged Environmental Citizenship* symposium will be held as a preliminary event linked to the Annual Meeting of The Australian Sociological Association (TASA).

Participation in the symposium will cost:

- \$60 regular registration

- \$30 student registration

The registration fee will cover morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Payment can be made through the TASA conference website at www.mcmconferences.com/tasa/.

Annual Meeting of The Australian Sociological Association, 2-5 December 2008

Under the theme, 'Re-Imagining Sociology', the 2008 TASA conference will assess the contribution of sociology to emerging social issues in a period of rapid global transformation. It will encourage dialogue on innovative theoretical and methodological tools to engage actively with the world.

Symposium participants are strongly encouraged to register for the whole conference. For more details go to www.mcmconferences.com/tasa/.

The University of Melbourne is located in the heart of Melbourne's CBD. For full details on transport links, accommodation options and registration please visit the conference website.

Important dates

Submission of paper proposals Friday 5 Sep

Submission of full papers Friday 31 October

Symposium Tuesday 2 December

Early bird registration for the full conference CLOSSES 13 October

Further details

For more information please contact the Centre for Social Science Research at Central Queensland University via email at c4ssr@cqu.edu.au