

SSSP
Section on
**ENVIRONMENT
& TECHNOLOGY**

WINTER 2024
NEWSLETTER



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

ANGUS NURSE

*ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, UNITED KINGDOM*

Dear E&T Community,

I'm delighted to have taken over as the E&T Division Chair for 2024 to 2026. As we near the end of 2024, I am excited about the opportunities for us to engage in and continue our work in social-justice informed scholarship and activism. Considering a range of recent political and policy

developments I think it's more important than ever that we continue to do so. In the coming months I suspect we will have to up our game to deal with, comment on and act against some of the challenges we face in the technology and environment arena.

SSSP creates an amazing space for us to do our work and the range of meetings and sessions I attended in Montreal in August reminded me not just of the great work that is already underway, but also the potential for our division to continue and develop. We have a great space in which to advocate for Social Change, but also to provide support for our colleagues and communities who are facing anxiety, challenges and marginalisation within an increasingly polarised environment.

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Social justice is as important now as it ever was, maybe more so.

The Division has proposed several sessions for the 2025 annual meeting which takes place in Chicago in August 2025. I hope that E&T members find the proposed sessions exciting and relevant, and we have several interesting collaborations with other divisions. The conference theme is Insurgent Sociology in a Time of Crises, and our proposed panels are designed to reflect several of the multiple crises we face in contemporary society: global capitalism, climate crisis, assault on critical studies, the criminalisation of activism, the misuse of technology and the rise of fascism and ecofascism.

Huge thanks to everyone who organised or proposed a session for Montreal. Thanks also to those who proposed a session for Chicago, 2025 and who have volunteered to serve on the paper committee or to serve as a presider or discussant for the Chicago meeting. I'd like to encourage all E&T members to look at the proposed sessions and to submit an abstract to present at the conference. It's a great way to meet other members of the division and fellow SSSP members. If there isn't a session that we've organized that meets what you do or if you see a gap in the programme for your area of work, please let me know and get involved in programme development for 2026.

When I took over as Chair one thing I hoped to do is to develop publication opportunities for the E&T division. We already have one edited collection underway but hope to work on other publications. Again, feel free to reach out to me if there is something you'd like to see pursued.

Finally, please encourage your students to submit their work to the graduate student paper award. A suggestion from a faculty member might go some way to letting your students know that their work is good enough for consideration and might help encourage them to submit to the paper award.

Hope everyone is doing well.
Angus Nurse



2024 BRENT K. MARSHALL GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD WINNER

The 2024 Brent K. Marshall Graduate Student Paper Award winner is “Environmental Risk and the Reorganization of Urban Inequality in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century,” by Jonathan Tollefson, Brown University. Congratulations to Jonathan for being the Winner of the Environment and Technology Division’s Student Paper Competition!

This paper investigates the changing nature of racial environmental inequality during the initial formation of the segregated and unequal neighborhood in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Environmental inequality research is largely left-censored to about the 1980s, primarily due to a lack of comprehensive environmental site data prior to EPA-era regulatory and monitoring requirements. As a result, the field has developed during a period in which neighborhood-scale racial inequality was already an established fact on the ground, and sociologists have limited understanding of the relationship between environmental and racial marginalization during the initial solidification of the neighborhood as the primary spatial structure shaping urban inequality. In response, this paper uses an original computational methodology to identify and geolocate sites related to a particularly important source of early industrial pollution. These sites are paired with geolocated historic census data to measure changes in the social stratification of environmental exposure in six US cities from 1880 to 1930. Results reveal that the 1880 to 1930 period was characterized by the steadily racialization of environmental risk, as nonwhite residents increasingly came to occupy the same neighborhoods and streets as hazardous industry. These findings suggest that racial-environmental inequality emerged much earlier than other empirical studies have demonstrated, and that environmental risk is likely more central to the formation of the neighborhood than previously acknowledged. **The award panel considered this paper to be an important contribution to environmental sociology.**



2025 BRENT K. MARSHALL GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD

Deadline: January 31, 2025

The Environment and Technology Division is pleased to announce its 2025 Brent K. Marshall Graduate Student Paper Award. This award honors the late Brent Marshall's (1965-2008) personal and professional commitment to the Division and encouragement of student engagement in academic scholarship and research. Papers will be considered in the areas of environmental sociology, including, but not limited to political economy of the environment, global environmental issues, social movements and the environment, technology and society, natural disasters and society, and risk perception. The winner of the Brent K. Marshall Graduate Student Paper Award will receive a plaque, a complimentary SSSP student membership, SSSP conference registration, and a cash award.

To be eligible, the paper must meet the following criteria:

- the paper must have been written in 2024;
- the paper must be authored by one or more students and not co-authored by faculty or a colleague who is not a student;
- manuscripts should be limited to fewer than 10,000 words (inclusive of notes, references, and tables) and the paper must not be published or accepted for publication.

Students should send their submissions to each member of the award committee: Angus Nurse (angus.nurse@aru.ac.uk), Marko Salvaggio (msalvaggio@tulane.edu) and Jonathan Tollefson (jonathan_tollefson@brown.edu).

Please note that students may submit to only one Division for a student paper award. Authors should ensure that they receive a confirmation of receipt for their submission. In order to be considered for the Brent K. Marshall Graduate Student Paper Award, applicants are required to submit their papers through the annual meeting Call for Papers. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Angus Nurse (angus.nurse@aru.ac.uk).

SSSP 75TH ANNUAL MEETING

AUGUST 8-10, 2025, PALMER HOUSE HILTON
CHICAGO, IL



← THE CALL FOR PAPERS IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS 11:59 PM ET ON JANUARY 31, 2025.

ENVIRONMENT & TECHNOLOGY SESSIONS

SESSION TITLE: ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM AS A FORM OF INSURGENCY
ORGANIZER: ANGUS NURSE

This panel invites papers that explore the insurgent nature of environmental activism. Papers are particularly welcomed that consider activism as challenging ideologies and practices that suppress or deny access to environmental justice, those that view activism as promoting social justice and directly confronting environmental harms committed by powerful actors and endemic to neoliberal market perspectives.

SESSION TITLE: CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISPLACEMENT
ORGANIZER: HAIJU HUANG

This session explores the impacts of climate change and its impact on vulnerable populations and those most at risk of the effects of climate change. It considers the challenges of migration and forced displacement as a consequence of climate change and invites papers that examine this as a pressing social problem.

CO-SPONSORED SESSIONS

SESSION TITLE: ECO FASCISM: IMPACTS AND RESPONSES

ORGANIZER: KAT FULLER

COSPONSORED WITH GLOBAL DIVISION

Eco fascism marries racist, reactionary politics and environmentalism to situate environmental threats within debates around immigration, a 'natural order' of a healthy white environment and a restrictive view on who should have access to natural resources. This panel invites papers on the impacts and responses to how environmentalist ideas can be weaponized in pursuit of a fascist political agenda.

SESSION TITLE: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIES OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

ORGANIZER: LAURA PARSON AND ALEX MAGELAS

COSPONSORED WITH INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

This session focuses on institutional ethnographies of new technologies, particularly those that explore Artificial Intelligence. We are interested in papers that use institutional ethnography as a method to explore new technologies and the ways that new technologies both capture and are captured in work across industries and contexts.

SESSION TITLE: ENVIRONMENT AND ETHNOGRAPHY (THEMATIC)

ORGANIZER: LAUREN EASTWOOD

COSPONSORED WITH INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

This session seeks papers that are based on either ethnographic or institutional ethnographic approaches to researching environmental problems. While we recognize that IE approaches the gathering of data in ways that are often different than traditional ethnographers, we hope that this session will bring researchers into conversation with each other in order to explore the ways in which we approach the study of environmental problems "on the ground" in specific locations.

**SESSION TITLE: ECO-ANXIETY AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS:
UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING NEW MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES**

ORGANIZER: NELS PAULSON

COSPONSORED WITH DISABILITY, MENTAL WELLNESS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

This session provides a platform for mental health and environmental professionals to discuss the emerging issue of eco-anxiety and to share innovative technological solutions like apps designed to help individuals cope with their anxiety.

SESSION TITLE: ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE, POLICING AND INEQUALITIES
ORGANIZER: MARKO SALVAGGIO AND ANGUS NURSE
COSPONSORED WITH LAW AND SOCIETY AND POVERTY, CLASS, AND INEQUALITY

This session presents papers exploring environmental injustice and the manner in which policing and regulatory bodies contribute to or fail to address environmental risk. The panel also considers how surveillance and enforcement activities can also be negative factors in achieving effective environmental justice and contribute to environmental inequality and injustice.

NEW RESEARCH OF INTEREST:

Cannon, C. E. B., Chu, E. K., Natekal, A., & Waaland, G. (2024). Institutional Designs for Procedural Justice and Inclusion in Urban Climate Change Adaptation. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 0(0).

Abstract: Although there is broad consensus that more inclusive approaches are needed in climate adaptation planning, it is unclear how cities should redesign rules, institutions, and decision-making processes to produce more equitable forms of participation and engagement. This paper evaluates different planning procedures and institutional arrangements across twenty-five U.S. cities. Although arrangements are context-specific, institutional designs fall into three categories: consultative partnerships, strategic collaborations, and expansive co-governance arrangements. Each institutional design leads to different kinds of inclusion outcomes. The author's results empiricize how cities can pursue more inclusive climate adaptation planning and highlight opportunities to advance and implement broader procedural equity goals.



Cannon, C. E. B. (2024). Critical Environmental Injustice: A Case Study Approach to Understanding Disproportionate Exposure to Toxic Emissions. *Toxics*, 12(4), 295.

Abstract: Environmental justice research has focused on the distribution of environmental inequalities, such as proximity to landfills, across the U.S. and globally. Background: Public health research and environmental health research, specifically, have focused on toxic exposure—encompassing individuals or communities that are disproportionately exposed to contaminants that are harmful or potentially harmful to them. Yet, little research has applied critical environmental justice theory—characterized by the idea that marginalized communities need to be treated as indispensable rather than disposable—to the study of toxic exposure. To fill this gap, the current paper offers a case study approach applying critical environmental justice theory to the study of disproportionate and unequal exposure to toxic contaminants. Methods: This case study is of Kettleman City, a rural, unincorporated community in the heart of California’s Central Valley (USA). This community experiences the co-location of environmental hazards, including residing at the intersection of two major highways and hosting a class I hazardous-waste landfill, which is one of the few licensed to accept PCBs. PCBs are a contaminant that has been linked with several adverse health outcomes, including cancers and low birthweight. Residents may also experience poor air quality from proximity to the highways. Results: This case highlights the uneven distribution of pollution and environmental degradation that may be shouldered by the community, along with their experiences of adverse health and social impacts. This analysis reveals the importance of incorporating a critical environmental justice perspective to unpack experiences of not only disproportionate exposure but also disproportionate procedural and recognitional inequality. Conclusions: This research highlights the untapped potential of environmental justice to catalyze exposure science in challenging the unequal distribution of contaminants.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS:

1. **Submit a paper for the 2025 Annual Meeting** to be held August 8-10, 2025, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL. The Call for Papers is open, the deadline to submit is January 31, 2025.
2. **Apply for the 2024 Brent K. Marshall Graduate Student Paper Award.** The deadline to apply is January 31, 2025.
3. **Please send through any information you'd like included in the next Division newsletter.** Recent job moves, details of any new publications or research, details of any new courses and teaching initiatives are all welcome. We'd also welcome short articles on topics of interest to the division membership for our newsletters. Please feel free to contact Angus Nurse if you have an idea for an article.
4. If you have not already done so, **don't forget to renew your membership for the 2025 calendar year.**
5. Please also **consider gifting a SSSP membership** perfect for friends, students, and colleagues alike or support us with an online donation. Your donations are tax deductible and help support the SSSP's vital work. Together, we can make a difference.

