

Cultural Ecology Newsletter
(CEN #37 -- Spring 2001)
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Announcements

Notes from Chair

Netting Award

Annals of the AAG manuscript call

AAG business meeting

Sustainability Science

Calls: Conferences, meetings, publications

Jobs/scholarships

Plenty

Meeting Reports

Access to Resources: Land Tenure and Governance in Africa

Members' News

Oliver Coomes

Book Reviews & Notes

Federico on Boserup

New Books

Announcements

The CESG Listserv (AAG-CESG-L) is for general exchange of information, news, views, debate, questions and answers by the members of the specialty group. All current CESG members have been subscribed to the list. Go to <http://lists.psu.edu/archives/aag-cesg-l.html>, select the link to join the list, and follow the instructions. Thereafter, you can manage your subscription and access the archives through the same interface. For all queries, email jpm23@psu.edu. Only list members (CESG members) can post messages. To do so, send your message to the list address: AAG-CESG-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU. Everyone on the list will receive your message so please ensure that the subject line is informative, and the content is appropriate. Contributions sent to this list are automatically archived for posterity.

Notes from the Chair - Spring 2001

We came, we spoke, we listened. The 2001 national meetings have come, gone, and once again demonstrated our group's vitality. Our membership as of the end of March stands at 330, about the same as the past several years despite the decline in overall

AAG membership. Other indicators also demonstrate our continuing institutional health and intellectual vitality.

We sponsored and co-sponsored some thirty-eight sessions, six of them alone and thirty-two with other groups. Clearly we continue to be an extremely active group that overlaps and collaborates with other groups in paper sessions and panel discussions. A breakdown of co-sponsorship provides some insight into which other groups we collaborate with. (The total adds up to more than thirty-two because of the number of sessions with more than two co-sponsors.)

Latin America 8; Human Dimensions 7; Africa 6; Cultural 6; Hazards 6; Asian 5; Indigenous Peoples 5; Qualitative Research 4; Geomorphology 4; Contemporary Ag 3; Political 2; CLAG 1; Climate 1; Biogeography 1; Coastal and Marine 1; Economic 1; Remote Sensing 1; Socialist 1; Urban 1; Water Resources 1.

Such data hardly allow for strong generalizations, but many of the co-sponsorships, especially toward the top of the ranking, obviously represent long-standing associations. The new Indigenous Peoples group clearly has much in common with the CESG. Also worth remarking on is the lack of co-sponsorship with many other groups that would seem to overlap with CESG in areas of interest: GIS, GPOW, Historical Geography, and others. Maybe next year?

Regarding some of the sessions in particular, Andrés Guhl and Robert Daniels organized a session of papers by graduate students called The Next Generation: Graduate Student Papers in Cultural/Political Ecology that with continued strong participation by our student members promises to become an annual event. And the panelists who reflected on commonalities, differences, and changes in some human-environment geographies provided some eloquent perspectives on who we have been, are, and might become. The Hazards and Human Dimensions groups deserve much credit for the success of those panels.

The Awards Luncheon also witnessed plenty of group activity. Congratulations to the following. Billie Lee Turner II (Clark) was awarded the 2001 Netting Award for his long-standing dedication to bridging geographical and anthropological scholarship (see below). Doug Deur (LSU) won the 2001 Nystrom Dissertation Competition for his research on precolonial agriculture in the Pacific Northwest. And we recognized the 2000 Student Paper awardees, William Moseley and Elizabeth Olson, and Student Field Study awardees, Jeffrey Bury and Ryan Galt.

This year, with twenty-two applications for the student awards, our student members once again demonstrated their commitment to our dynamic research tradition. The

2001 Student Paper Award has gone to Paul Laris (Clark), with Bradley Walters (Mount Allison) as runner-up and honorable mention to Andrea Nightingale (Minnesota). The 2001 Student Field Study Award has gone to Elizabeth Olson (Colorado), with Claudia Radel (Clark) as runner-up and honorable mention to Daniel Mensher (Madison). Congratulations to them and, in fact, to all the applicants for the high quality papers and proposals that made this such a tough decision for the Board.

Last but far from least, I need to thank Barbara Brower for her contributions over the last year and welcome our new Western Region Councilor, Rheyne Laney.

Andrew Sluyter, CESG Chair

Netting award - thanks

Billie Lee Turner II, Higgins Professor of Environment and Society at Clark University, has been awarded the 2001 Netting Award for contributions to cultural ecology. He says:

"I can't recall the practice of Netting awardees addressing the CESG, and I hope I do not break some appropriate convention by doing so. With this note I express my appreciation for the honor given to me by the group. The long traditions of geographical research on human-environment themes are served well by the CESG, which has a large number of other highly qualified scholars who will, no doubt, be honored in the near future. I was extremely lucky to have known Robert Mc. Netting, serving on various NRC panels and committees with him, as well as spending many an hour (but all too few) discussing the intricacies of agricultural change theory applied to small holders (in which we were joined by Ester Boserup once!). He held geographers of our traditions in high regard, as we held him and continue to hold his work. Again, I thank the membership."

Denevan on Barney Nietschmann, 2000 winner.

Annals of the AAG

We struggled to get a human-environment or nature-society vision and editor for the Annals last year. We now have a responsibility to insure a steady flow of manuscripts to this section of the Annals. The past year this flow dropped off significantly. It appears to have regenerated, but we need to make sure that remains strong. Please submit the very best of your work that appeals to the geographic community to the nature-society section of the Annals.

B. L. Turner II

Meeting notes for CESG business meeting New York City, Feb. 28, 2001

Tom Whitmore recording

1. Opening comments from the new Chair, Andrew Sluyter

a. New chair Andrew Sluyter opened the meeting by thanking the outgoing officers, Oliver Coomes and Emily Young.

b. The CESG membership is estimated by the AAG at about 238, but that this is a preliminary figure and will likely grow since the AAG meeting was held so early this year. Problems with new software and staff at the AAG offices have delayed a more accurate count (also see below). As before the CESG ranks about 10th in memberships among all AAG SGs.

c. Sluyter noted that in the 2001 AAGs CESG sponsored or co-sponsored 38 sessions.

d. From the AAG SG chairs meetings, Sluyter noted a number of issues for the group to consider.

i. Reg Gollege has a project to create a number of on-line geographical case studies ? members wishing to contribute should contact Reg directly.

ii. Starting in 2002, the AAG will go to an anniversary membership renewal system rather than the calendar year system now in place. Sluyter noted that this will potentially impact our accounting since we potentially won't have a firm count of members or of our cash balance (on deposit with the AAG) with the new system.

iii. The 'New' Annals is seeking MS submissions. Currently the acceptance rate is about 30%. The new editors are hoping for a faster turn around rate.

2. Treasurer's report by Tom Whitmore.

a. Tom noted that the AAG office problems lead to no financial report being prepared by the AAG in advance of the meeting as has been the case in the past. It is not clear what will be done in future given the changing registration procedures being initiated in 2002.

b. A provisional report (through Feb. 2000) was created for the SG Chairs meeting but it was incomplete due to the early date of the meeting and late registration by members.

i. In that report, the CESG is credited with 109 regular members and 50 student members through Feb. 2001 and 22 regular and 57 student members for 2000. It is not clear if the 2000 figures are for the entire year, however, and they probably only represent members not accounted for in the end of 2000.

ii. Given these membership numbers, the AAG foresees depositing in our account (maintained by the AAG) \$110 for the unregistered yr 2000 members and \$545 for the 2001 members for a total of \$655.

c. The current balance of the account (as of the meeting dates in late Feb) is unknown, but an e-mail dated 1/2/01 from the AAG treasurer, Paul Able, notes a balance then of \$446. Apparently this balance did not include the \$110 for the late 2000 members. We will have more explicit data soon when the AAG's official accounting is received.

3. Report on the CE chapter in the forthcoming new edition of Geography in America.

a. CESG chapter co-author, Tom Bassett noted that the editors of the new volume (Gale and Wilmott) have been rather unresponsive and have not provided information unsolicited.

b. A draft of the CE chapter has been written and circulated to members of the committee.

c. Gary Gaile was contacted and noted that the SG has until mid-summer to give a complete version, but it is not clear if the present version has been reviewed externally.

d. Chapter authors, Bassett and Zimmerer, hope that the resulting piece faithfully represents the diversity of the SG and that no one feels slighted. Many thanks offered to the large number of submissions of reprints or other material? the resulting bibliography will be huge.

e. The status of the chapter will be noted on the web site.

4. Newsletter report from Simon Batterbury (read by Sluyter since Simon not present)

a. Simon is still happy to be the newsletter editor if the membership approves.

b. Simon gets very little feedback from the membership and would welcome suggestions, criticisms, and praise.

c. The spring 2001 issue of the newsletter is not yet complete but will be posted soon [this is it].

d. Simon noted that while he sent many books out for review, few reviews returned. He questioned the utility of the book review section since so few were actually posted.

i. Kent Mathewson suggested giving the book only after the review was submitted.

e. Simon wondered if other, substantive sections should be created to replace/augment the book reviews?

i. Paul Robbins suggested that the full text of some of the debates on the Listserv could be copied for more permanence on the web site.

f. Simon asked if the newsletter should be continued as a web site or should it be available only on the Listserv?

i. Oliver Coomes noted that the current web format was useful in that it was more permanent and even searchable and that is an advantage to students and others.

ii. Andrew Sluyter noted that the Listserv archives have an 8 month life.

5. Issues regarding the CESG Listserv

- a. Andrew Sluyter noted that the move to anniversary membership in the AAG might make managing the Listserv difficult since the membership might be constantly changing.
 - i. One way to handle this would be to make the Listserv an 'open' list and let people add themselves.
 - ii. This raises, however, problems of list etiquette that can be managed now by the managed list.
 - iii. Paul Robbins noted that in principal an open list was preferred.
 - iv. But, an open list is potentially open to spamming. Someone asked if the sysop of the list could deal with the spamming and Andrew said that he'd ask.
 - v. Andrew noted that in the Chair's meeting the issue of AAG management of the SG's Listservs was raised but Ron Abler declined to commit to that option at this time.
 - vi. Ultimately Andrew felt that it might be best to leave things as they are for the time being to see how these changes impact us.

6. Awards by the CESH

- a. Student awards presented at the Awards Luncheon
 - i. Field Study: Jeff Bury and Bill Mosley
 - ii. Paper: Elizabeth Olsen and Ryan Gault
- b. Currently there are more than 2 'field' and 10 'paper' entrants (the deadline is the end of March).
 - i. This is far more than in past years and someone wondered if the the Listserv was responsible for getting the word out.
- c. The Netting award was presented to Billie Lee Turner II who could not attend the business meeting. Billie Lee's profound thanks were reported to the meeting by Eric Keys. (Subsequently Billie Lee wrote a formal thank you and posted it to the Listserv. It will be reproduced in the Newsletter [above] as will a brief bio by Thomas Whitmore).

7. New business

- a. Donald Friend of the Mountain geography SG noted that 2002 is the UN 'year of the mountains' and as such the SG would be seeking special issues in several journals to promote mountain geography. He urged CESH members with interests in mountains to be aware and to submit manuscripts.
- b. The issue of additional CESH awards was widely discussed.
 - i. Kent Mathewson suggested 2 new awards (structured like the Netting ? not necessarily awarded each year): the B.Q. Nietschmann 'Applied Cultural Ecology' award and the J.M. Blaut 'Critical Cultural/Political Ecology' award.
 - (1) Melinda Meade noted satisfaction with both.

(2) Tom Whitmore noted that care needed be taken with the process of nominating and voting for these and the existing Netting award. (NB currently nomination and voting takes place among the CESG Board comprised of the Chair, the Sec/tres, Student representative, and the regional representatives)

(3) Suzanne Michel noted that other SGs have awarded groups such as NGOs or Indigenous rights groups with plaques or the like. These were nominated by SG members who know of their work and the winners were invited to the AAGs to receive their plaques.

(4) Andrew Sluyter suggested that we use the Listserv to discuss the issue further and that Kent post a more detailed proposal with criteria to the Listserv.

(5) Oliver Coomes questioned the utility of adding any more awards for senior scholars (as these would presumably be).

(a) Anthony Bebbington agreed and suggested a new 'scholarship' award to be awarded for the best paper annually regardless of rank or seniority.

(6) Andrew Sluyter suggested that the entire issue ought too be discussed more fully among the Board and over the Listserv.

c. It was suggested that we inquire soon if there are available AAG funds to bring a distinguished scholar to the meetings in Los Angeles ? A name noted was J. Diamond of UCLA.

d. The AAG wants SGs to be thinking of how to celebrate the centennial of the AAG in Philadelphia in 2004 so members are encouraged to be creative.

e. Paul Robbins noted that discussion of a potential name change of the SG could be profitably postponed until the LA meetings.

f. Lastly, but certainly not least, the SG elected a new Western representative to replace the resigning current representative. Rheyana

Laney of Sonoma State University was elected by acclamation.

Sustainability Science. CESG member Robert W. Kates directs members to the Sustainability Science Forum, which seeks to facilitate information exchange and discussion among the growing and diverse group of individuals, institutions, and networks engaged in the emerging field of sustainability science. The Forum will cover evolving discussions over the core questions of sustainability science, documents that chart the field's aims and progress, events of special interest to the sustainability science community, and programs and institutions that are playing a special role in the evolution of the field. The concept of this web site grew out of discussions at the Friibergh Workshop on Sustainability Science, held in Sweden on October 10-14, 2000. Go to: -- <http://sustsci.harvard.edu/> .

Calls; conferences, meetings, publications

Urban Political Ecology, Justice and Scale in Advanced Capitalist Countries
Organized by Erik Swyngedouw (School of Geography, Oxford University) and Nik Heynen (Department of Geography, Indiana University) for the 2002 AAG Meeting in Los Angeles. Urban political-ecology has recently emerged as an important lens through which to understand the urban environmental ramifications of contemporary global capitalism. Despite encouraging recent developments, there still exists the need to expand the approach, both through better theorization and informed case-studies. Most of the recent political ecological research has favored Third World contexts due to the exploitive forms of environmental degradation that have persisted within these regions. However, urban environmental degradation is also prevalent in advanced capitalist landscapes, hence, greater attention to these contexts is necessary. While issues of scale have been paramount within recent political-economic investigations, they have been conspicuously absent in the majority of political-ecological inquiry. Of particular concern are the many different scaled structures that lead to inequitable socio-ecological relations within urban areas. Although issues of justice have been dealt with by those involved in the environmental justice movement, the movement's emphasis on praxis, rather than theory, has impeded our understanding of the ways in which the destructive forces of contemporary capitalism affect urban environments. The need exists to develop a theoretically-embedded research agenda concerned with understanding the historical-geographical materialist structures affecting advanced capitalist urban environments. Such an agenda will contribute to a better understanding of the complexity inherent to the urban space/ecological justice nexus. This agenda must ask and seek to answer, through an empirically grounded array of urban contexts, who gains, who pays, and how unjust socio-environmental conditions are produced and maintained? This session seeks to bring together people with interests in asking, and answering questions about the urban political ecology of advanced capitalist countries. Please contact Nik Heynen if interested in presenting in this session: nheynen@indiana.edu

Jobs/scholarships (all dated, don't apply)

Job at Iowa. The University of Iowa, Department of Geography, Visiting Assistant Professor. One year, beginning in August, 2001. The department seeks a person to expand and complement our teaching and research capabilities in Environmental Studies. Specialties in environment and development, and human dimensions of global change are especially welcome. A Ph.D. by the time of appointment is required. The 3/2 teaching load (five courses per year) is spread over introductory, intermediate, and graduate levels. The successful candidate will be expected to teach

one semester of a large, introductory social science course on contemporary environmental issues. The department seeks a person with a commitment to research publication, excellent teaching, and graduate education. Send letter of application, vita, and evidence of teaching ability, and arrange to have three letters of reference sent as soon as possible. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The University of Iowa is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Applications from women and minorities are especially encouraged. Apply: Gerard Rushton, Search Committee Chair, Department of Geography, 316 Jessup Hall. The University of Iowa, Iowa City 52242, USA. Phone (319) 335-0151. E-mail: gerard-rushton@uiowa.edu

Job at Waterloo. The Faculty of Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a tenure-track position at the Assistant Professor level. Appointment is conditional on the successful applicant being approved as a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair. The Faculty is seeking candidates with a focus on development, broadly defined. While the Faculty is committed to development that is sustainable, we welcome applications from candidates with expertise in particular aspects of this, including initiatives with an urban, rural and resources focus, at a community and global scale and with emphasis on social, ecological and economic components. The individual may be especially interested in development within Canada or within any other country or region, but should also have at least some experience in international activities. This is chiefly a research chair. While the successful candidate will be expected to teach at the graduate and undergraduate levels, the appointment will be focused on research. Candidates should hold a PhD and have a well-developed research programme, along with a demonstrated ability to obtain external funding and to manage important research projects. The Faculty will favour candidates whose research interests are compatible with the interests of the Faculty and whose work promises opportunities for fruitful collaborations within and beyond the Faculty. Research and teaching in Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo uses diverse knowledge and methods from different disciplines to enhance understanding of human relationships within the built and natural environments. Current research initiatives, basic and applied, are undertaken in ecosystems and communities within Canada and internationally. The Faculty of Environmental Studies comprises two professional schools - Architecture and Planning - and two academic departments - Geography and Environment and Resource Studies. In addition there is a Local Economic Development Master's programme and an Environment and Business programme at the undergraduate level. Candidates must submit a letter of application setting out main areas of research and teaching interest as well as a statement of research goals and favoured approach to teaching and learning. Applicants must include with the letter of application a current curriculum vitae and arrange for three letters of

reference to be sent to The Chair, Canada Research Chair Selection Committee, Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1 Canada. The closing date for submission is 15 April 2001. The appointment may begin as early as May 2002, but a later appointment date can be considered. The appointment is open to Canadians and non-Canadians and the Faculty encourages applications from all qualified individuals, including women, members of visible minorities, native persons, and individuals with disabilities. Additional information about the Faculty may be found at www.fes.uwaterloo.

Job at Michigan. The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan invite applications for a postdoctoral research position to work on a study of population and environment since 1880 in the U.S. Great Plains. This multi-disciplinary project uses a combination of census and environmental data, plus family interviews, to study long-term interactions between population and environment. Two-year appointment, with the possibility of renewal; flexible start date beginning after August 1, 2001. Requirements include a Ph.D. in an appropriate field, a strong research background, and an interest in the relationship between population and the environment. We are especially interested in applicants with training in demographic research, environmental history, geographical information systems, or environmental sociology. Please send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, three letters of reference, and appropriate supporting material to Myron Gutmann, ICPSR, University of Michigan, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1248, USA. Inquiries can be sent to myron@prc.utexas.edu. The University of Michigan is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer.

Job at Syracuse The Department of Geography at Syracuse University invites applicants for a Visiting Post-Doctoral Instructor in Human Geography for academic year 2001-2002, beginning August 27, 2001. We seek a Human Geographer to teach courses in Global Environmental and Population Change, and also to teach a regional course from among the following: USA, Former USSR, China, South Asia, or Africa. The successful candidate will be responsible for four different courses, two in each semester. A Ph.D. at time of appointment is preferred. Deadline: June 4, 2001. Review of materials will then begin, and will continue until the position is filled. Syracuse University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer; women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Applicants should send a detailed C.V., accompanied by a letter of application indicating research interests, teaching experience, and the names of three referees, to: John Western, Chair, Department of Geography, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-1020. jcwester@maxwell.syr.edu.

Meeting Reports

Access to Resources: Land Tenure and Governance in Africa. 5 Mar 2001, University of Manchester, UK. [Transformations in African Agriculture series]

This workshop was the third in a series of ESRC-funded meetings on 'Transformations in African Agriculture' and was convened by Phil Woodhouse at IDPM, University of Manchester. The event was linked to the publication of a new edited volume resulting from joint work funded by ESRC (Woodhouse P, Bernstein H and Hulme, D (eds) 2000. African Enclosures? The social dynamics of wetlands in dry lands. Oxford: James Currey). The first paper by Phil Woodhouse, African Enclosures - the default mode of development issued a challenge in suggesting that African agrarian systems tend - in the absence of other constraints or processes - towards a 'default' of increasing individualization of production, and increasing commoditisation, over time. These processes are particularly marked in wetland areas that have been used for intensive agrarian production or grazing. Four wetland environments that have seen rapid change of land use in recent decades were studied in great detail. Phil argues that three perspectives dominate writing on African land tenure systems

- 1) Customary land rights, expressed as 'land to the tiller', or 'land to the inheritor' - do not protect the poorer or disadvantaged members of communities, and need to be reformed.
- 2) The negotiability and ambiguity of rights is a positive feature of customary systems, because it means there is always some opportunity for the poor to gain resource and land access often through informal mechanisms and derived rights such as sharecropping and loans.
- 3) The negotiability and ambiguity of rights is indeed a feature of African systems, but the default mode of privatization of land actually increases inequality across societies, because powerful social actors gain access or resources at the expense of poorer actors. 'Land to the buyer' becomes the default mode.

Which of these perspectives was best supported by the case studies? Woodhouse and his team studied an irrigated swamp in Kimana, Kajiado, Kenya; a newly irrigated area of the Sourou valley, Mali; the Mutale river valley in Venda, northern Province, South Africa, and dams in Mmutlane village, Shoshong Hills, in the central district of Botswana. In each case, changes in the governance of natural resources has been rapid

- generally towards the 'default mode' of individualization and commercialization of production and tenure. Elite capture of progressive privatization of resources appears in each case. However the cases exhibit a strong degree of local initiative, and therefore local political bargaining, without much state or donor involvement. The four studies showed a diversity of land access mechanisms and degrees of privatization of the resource, but the studies lead Woodhouse to support perspective 3 above, and to focus on the tendency of individualized or privatised systems to actually increase - rather than diminish - socio-economic differentiation. Clearly customary tenure has not been a barrier to investment in the four cases - however neither has it protected the poor - it has not permitted enhanced livelihoods to develop in an equitable fashion. Most interestingly, in Botswana a system of Land Boards with elected local representatives and political nominees adjudicates land allocation decisions, aided by customary leaders - but even here, equality is not assured.

The authors of the book argue that processes of socioeconomic differentiation are downplayed in populist writing on African land use systems, and in 'sustainable livelihoods' thinking which focuses on the strength of local initiative and local knowledge. In the book, it is suggested that the 'Lie of the Land' style arguments (identified in African Enclosures with the IDS Environment group) about the power of global discourses to dominate African policymaking rightfully identify power inequalities in determining the fate of African landscapes, but fail to adequately explore the political economy of socio-economic differentiation, particularly between members of local communities. We need to better understand the implications of the 'default mode' through the tools of political economy and local level investigations - particularly market based access to land and water.

Comments from Christopher Clapham and the other workshop members reinforced this point, and moved the discussion onwards to consider political and fiscal decentralization programmes in Africa, which are trying to push decisionmaking 'downwards' to local bodies and to communities themselves. Would the communities' studies in African Enclosures be suitable targets for decentralized government structures? The participants had their doubts. Decentralization programmes, may - in theory - permit greater local governance of wetlands in dry lands. Yet the case studies showed that de facto local governance was already in place, and this was often exclusionary and conflictual. We cannot assume that poverty reduction or equity will emerge from vesting power with local communities and their leaders - this is a very naive assumption. Clapham stressed that there is a strong reason lying behind decentralisation efforts - the manifest failure of many African central states to govern effectively and to respect human rights. But notions of good governance still take their cue from an erroneous, and western inspired view of accountability and politics basically that civil society is worthy of support. What constitutes civil society,

however, is rarely fully understood - in fact the range of actors is diverse, and not always separate from the state or from business. So there are ranges of "unintended consequences of well intentioned actions" under the guise of decentralization. Three issues will not go away, and will stymie efforts to vest control in local communities:

- 1) Conflicts internal to communities over resources will be exacerbated or repressed by decentralization. Local power structures are unequal, and contain significant age and gender biases that will endure.
- 2) Conflict between 'indigenous' and 'immigrant' or 'outsider' communities are widespread. Dissent over land access can be particularly hard to handle in these conditions. Decentralization can vest more power in 'indigenous' leaders to exclude others. As David Hulme argues, political leaders 'play' with ethnicity and social differentiation.
- 3) There is also a clash between holders of rights to land often local people - and a range of 'providers' of rights external to communities - particularly governments and NGOs. He argues the state is always needed to counterbalance local political conflict over land and to manage the activities of NGOs etc. External providers like NGOs act as a magnet for local people, and can create competition.

Clapham proposed that customary authorities are a 'screen' behind which other things happen - exploitation, as well as mediation and resolution of conflicts. We need to penetrate this screen. However be wary - if, under devolved governance, 'rights' to land or resources were rendered more transparent and clear cut, would the poor be able to negotiate and retain informal or derived rights? Unlikely. Clapham feels the only option facing us is to abandon western models of equity and good governance, and to 'go with the flow' (view 3 of land reform above), even if this means tacit acceptance of the 'default mode' as an actually existing model for social and economic change.

In discussion there was agreement, following Henry Bernstein, that 'access to land is not enough' - the studies revealed that access to labour, to materials, to health, and other social and material goods is also paramount in addressing rural poverty. It was also very clear, as he argued, that a national level politics often lies behind land tenure reform and decentralisation of governance - witness the racial and economic disputes that have affected land reform in South Africa in the last three years. Land politics are often the result of other forms of politics.

Camilla Toulmin of IIED presented a paper on Identifying a research agenda for the reform of land tenure that bravely proposed some avenues for future research and policy reform, in the light of the realities of politicized land access and tenure struggles. She also suggested that land access conditions have tightened over time for rural people - for example in West Africa, elders will no longer allocate land to young men in the community without question (creating exclusion), and these youth

sometimes rebel against working without pay on the family farm for several years (leading to individualisation). In areas of strong immigration, local villagers are trying to reclaim land already given to immigrant farmers. In these conditions, domestic groups are fragmenting (one part of Woodhouse's default mode) with short-term calculation of economic advantage often replacing reciprocity as a driving principle of household decision-making. But people need to negotiate a complex path to ensure land access, sometimes resorting to fictive documents issued by local leaders or personages, that lack legal authority, to 'claim' land as theirs. There is therefore a 'plurality of norms' for assuring land access. There is also confusion in several countries about the mechanisms proposed under decentralisation programmes. IIED efforts which have been sponsored by DFID and other donors, and are some of the most important research and publications programmes currently ongoing in Britain - include a major DANIDA-funded project called Making Decentralisation Work - see <http://www.iied.org/drylands/research.html> . Not only is IIED stressing the varieties of ways in which people actually gain access to resources through derived rights and various forms of loan and ownership, but it is supporting an eclectic 'Anglo-Saxon empiricist' view of ways to secure poor peoples access to resources. This includes detailed studies of land policy (H Bernstein also called for more ethnographies of land access to register the political terrain in which reform must work), support to land networks linking African researchers with policymakers right across regions of Africa, and engagement with decision makers in land ministries, traditional authorities, and donor agencies. The idea here that inclusive decisionmaking is better than exclusionary policies dominated by established interests.

A surprising turn to the discussion, and one very important to land tenure policy, is over the new geography of African citizenship. As Camilla noted in Ivory Coast, Ivoriens are ranking their Ivorien identity - often invented - well above that of the long term and short term Burkinabe migrants that provide the majority of labour on the country's plantations, and fill many urban jobs. In a situation of political turmoil, Burkinabes are being ejected or are leaving the country voluntarily, amidst harassment and loss of livelihood (such harassment has been seen before, in Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and elsewhere, of course since the 1950s). Citizenship is being used to adjudicate claims to land - with Ivoriens winning out, and the two million Burkinabes losing what they once had. These sorts of citizenship debates are clearly influencing land questions more and more - in the Zimbabwe land redistribution crisis, in S Africa, and in the Ivory Coast, for example.

In conclusion, the meeting broadly supported Phil Woodhouse's/Henry Bernstein's thesis that the default mode of changing land use in much of Africa is individualization and commercialization of production, and agreed that this posed big problems for policy that purports to be driven by equity considerations. While it could

be argued that people gain from commercialization and make more money or increase their stability, similarly, other people nearly always lose. Current works such as Sara Berry's *Chiefs know their boundaries* (2000) illustrate this point very well. *African Enclosures* - a term not all the workshop participants were happy with - describes sometimes a territorial, and sometimes a social or ethnic exclusion from wetlands in dry lands. In thinking through future avenues for research and policy formulation, we need to (following David Hulme and Camilla Toulmin)

- Develop long-term research and monitoring programmes
- On decentralisation: start with decentralisation of services, before moving to more tricky issues like land allocation later, if appropriate
- Conduct political ethnographies of power and institutions
- Do not overestimate bureaucratic and administrative capacities at the local level, or their ability to set aside ethnic or historical claims.

There were 20 people at this stimulating and timely event.

Simon Batterbury

Members' (or those who should be..) News

Oliver Coomes (McGill) with Brad Barham and Yoshito Takasaki were among three finalists (of about 350 submissions) for the Global Development Network 2000 award for Outstanding Research on Development, for their work on peasant economic diversity in Amazonia.

Hires

Simon **Batterbury** (lecturer, London School of Economics) has been appointed Assistant Professor of Geography, University of Arizona from August 2001, and Visiting Professor in the International Development and Geography Department, Roskilde University, Denmark for three months in 2002.

Becky **Mansfield** (PhD student, University of Oregon) has been appointed Assistant Professor of Geography, Ohio State University.

Kendra **McSweeney** (PhD student, McGill University) has been appointed Assistant Professor of Geography, Ohio State University.

Bill **Moseley** (PhD Student, University of Georgia) has been appointed Assistant Professor of Geography, Northern Illinois University.

Book Reviews

All CESG members, and others, are invited to submit reviews of books that would be of interest to our Specialty Group. Publishers are invited to send books to the Editor, and willing reviewers are sought.

Review Essay by Giovanni Federico

Population, Agricultural Growth and Institutions: The Real Long-Run View. Boserup, Ester. 1965. *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure*. London, G. Allen and Unwin; Chicago: Aldine. 124 pp.

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This may be an unusual review for the series. In fact, Ester Boserup was not a professional economic historian and this is not properly speaking a work of history. Boserup was part of the staff at the United Nations and she wrote the book out of her experience as a consultant in developing countries. The book does not discuss in depth any specific historical event, and quotations of historical works are rather rare. It nevertheless is one of the most widely quoted works in economic history. Usually, it is labeled as "anti-Malthusian" and encapsulated with a sentence such as "population growth causes agricultural growth." This is undoubtedly an implication of her model and comes in handy to scholars who do not believe that the (human) carrying capacity of a given area is set, and cannot be exceeded. From this point of view, one can draw a parallel between *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth* and another highly influential book, Amartya Sen's *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford 1981), which dismantled another tenet of Malthusian theory -- i.e. that famines were always (or mainly) caused by absolute deficiency of food.

However, Boserup's book is much more than a simple rejection of Malthus. It aims at explaining all the characteristics of agriculture in any specific area and time according to the resource endowment -- the land/labor ratio. The more dense population is, the more intensive cultivation becomes. Agrarian economists in the 1950s focused on the Western world, and thus they could appreciate only a relatively narrow range of techniques. Looking at less developed countries, Boserup could list five different agricultural systems, according to the length of fallow between periods of cultivation (pp.15-16): 1) forest-fallow or slash and burn (15-20 years of fallow), 2) bush-fallow (6-10 years); 3) short-fallow (1-2 years); 4) annual cropping (a few months); 5) multi-cropping (no fallow). Even if the original evidence comes from the observation of primitive societies in the 1940s, the leap from changes in space to changes in time is short. Thus the rest of the book explores the consequences of intensification -- i.e. of the move from one stage to another caused by population growth. Each of them entails more labor per unit of (total) land, and thus the intensification increases the productivity of land and reduces that of labor. A household has to work more to keep the same level of income. The intensification brings about an improvement in tools (from the digging stick, to the hoe, to the plough) and in the long run also brings some investments in land improvement (e.g. irrigation schemes). With pre-industrial technology, land improvements had to be done manually by peasants. Thus, they are typical of the last stages of the process, when there is enough work-force and enough demand for food to justify them. Total factor productivity may increase in the long run, but surely most of the increase in total output is achieved with a massive growth of work effort by the agricultural population.

Finally, intensification also shapes institutions, and this is the most innovative aspect of Boserup's model. The forest-fallow system is inconsistent with household property of any given plot of land. The land belongs to (or more precisely is exploited by) the tribe as a whole. Property rights have to be created only when the cultivation cycle is shorter, and the quality of each single piece of land begins to matter. In the later stages of development some people could cease to work, and be entitled to rights to a part of the product (a "two-tier" society). However, Boserup is not nostalgic about primitive societies. She makes it crystal clear that the "two-tier" societies are better, even if in these latter some men did not work as hard as others.

Some years later, Boserup extended her model from agriculture to the whole of society (*Population and Technological Change: A Study of Long-term Trends*, Chicago, 1981). She added the concept of economies of scale. Many technologies can be properly exploited only if the population is dense enough. Population growth makes urban civilization possible. The second book is highly interesting, and has many insightful passages. Yet it fails to reach the simple elegance of *The Conditions*

of Agricultural Growth -- that quality which makes this book really deserving of being added to this list of masterpieces.

Of course, one could quibble endlessly about the "details" of Boserup's model such the number and the exact features of the "stages." The overall view provides a short, but powerful, history of the world, from prehistory to the nineteenth century arranged around one of the basic principles of economic theory -- that techniques (and much else) depend on resource endowments.

As you would expect from a seminal work, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth* launched and refocused many modern debates. Let me give two examples. When Boserup was writing, the British agricultural revolution (i.e. the change in rotations with the substitution of fodder crops for fallow) was considered an epochal change with far-reaching implications for the entirety of world history. This view is still diffused, if no longer dominant. In Boserup's model, the change is only part of the long-run process of world-wide intensification, and Europe was trailing behind the two other major civilizations, India and China. In fact, the most advanced areas of Europe reached Stage 4 while China was already at Stage 5. Another, and perhaps less obvious, example may be Greg Clark's thesis on the differences in work intensity between Eastern Europe and the West (including the US). He argues that in the early nineteenth century Eastern Europeans were less productive than Westerners, because they worked less hard, and that they worked less hard because "they were different" (Clark, 1987, p. 431). The thesis is very controversial (see the subsequent debate with John Komlos in the *Journal of Economic History*, in 1988 and 1989), but let's assume it is true. Is it not possible that the "different" work ethic had been shaped over the centuries by different land/labor ratios? Other examples could follow, but the main point is clear: Boserup's book is a treasure-trove of ideas. Unfortunately, it is more often quoted than used in actual research. As far as I know, there are very few really "Boserupian" works -- i.e., long-term analyses of agricultural change as driven by changes in factor endowments. The most ambitious is Kang Chao's book (1986).

Why this (relative) neglect in spite of the so frequent quotations? One can put forward three causes, which are not mutually exclusive. The first is academic specialization. Intensification lasted for centuries, even for millennia, and few scholars would feel at ease in discussing both pre-historical agriculture and nineteenth century techniques. This fate is common to all interpretations of long-term change (cf. Anderson, 1991). Second, the evidence on early-stage societies is very scarce, and by its nature it is often unfamiliar to historians. "Real" historical sources exist for Western Europe, China and India in the last three stages.

Last, but not least, the model has its own weaknesses. It is surely convincing as an account of long-term growth. It is less convincing as an explanation of short-term trends, and in this case the "short" term can last for decades. Boserup speaks as if all the techniques were known since the beginning, so that the population had only to choose the one best suited to its resource endowment and adjust its institutions if necessary. On the contrary, new techniques had to be learned, and sometimes discovered or re-discovered. In backward economies, information travels very slowly or not at all, and thus a people may not know that another one, maybe hundreds or thousands of miles away, has successfully managed to overcome a specific problem. And, even if it gets to know the right technique, plant, or implement, the population still may need time and effort to master it and to adapt it to its own environment. Thus a success in the long run may conceal several short-term crises. Outright failure cannot be ruled out entirely.

Second, Boserup assumes that population growth is exogenous, following a standard practice among economists in pre-Beckerian time. Today, however, most consider population growth to be endogenous, and largely affected by economic calculations. People could reduce population increase by delaying marriages, controlling births, migrating and the like. Slower population growth would, *ceteris paribus*, reduce the drive to agricultural intensification. This is, of course, an empirical issue.

Finally, Boserup seems to neglect the different nature of modern technology or, if you want, the new role of capital. Her world is a two-factor world -- labor and land. As said, capital does exist either as simple tools or as labor-intensive investment projects -- but not as labor-saving machinery and above all land-saving fertilizers. In her world, intensification is possible up to a point, but sooner or later it has to reach a limit. It is unclear whether in real history this limit had ever been reached, even if China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may be a good candidate. Aside from China, even in, say, 1800 there was a lot of "free" land on the Earth and thus a "Malthusian" crisis was still far away for the world as a whole. But sooner or later, a limit had to be reached, and further population increase beyond it was bound to cause a Malthusian crisis (even if smart people may prevent it with birth control). As everyone knows, the solution was technical progress, which has increased the productivity of both land and labor. (One wonders whether there are ecological or maybe ethical limits to technical progress). Boserup should have added a Stage 6 to her intensification model. Of course, she was very well aware of technical progress, but she did not. One may speculate that she was more interested in less developed countries than in advanced countries, or simply she did not want to add a stage which could not fit easily in a model based on the length of fallow. It is too easy to criticize *ex post* with the hindsight of decades of research. In spite of all its shortcomings, The

Conditions of Agricultural Growth remains a small masterpiece which economic historians should read -- and not simply quote.

References

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