

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

Evolving field

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The most prevalent, impactful, and prestigious topics in environmental sociology have shifted in recent years, according to a meta-analysis of nearly a quarter of a decade of articles. These trends reflect not just changes within the field as it responds to real-world conditions, but also its relationship to the larger discipline of sociology.

Jeremiah Bohr of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, USA, and Riley Dunlap of Oklahoma State University, USA, carried out a text analysis of the abstracts of environmental sociology articles published during 1990–2014. They found that among the four most studied topics in the field, work on environmental concerns and environment & society has declined in recent years whereas that on climate & society and political economy has increased; all four topics, however, have less impact in terms of citations compared with topics such as politics and demography. The authors also found that political economy articles are not strongly linked to other topics, suggesting that despite their growing prevalence and publication in prestigious journals, such articles are isolated from the rest of environmental sociology due to their unique theoretical perspectives.

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