

The U.S. Environmental Movement

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Abstract

The U.S. environmental movement is perhaps the largest, most long lived, and complex social movement in the U.S. To understand this movement from a sociological viewpoint requires an analysis of the different belief systems or “discursive frames” that define the different communities that make up this movement. This paper starts with a description of these discursive frames. Using this perspective, it then describes the historical development of the different communities, and their relative levels of economic resource mobilization.

The U.S. environmental movement is perhaps the single largest social movement in the United States. With over 6,500 national and 20,000 local environmental organizations, along with an estimated 20-30 million members, this movement dwarfs other modern social movements such as the civil rights or peace movements. It is also the longest running social movement. The first local environmental organizations were founded before the Civil War and several still existing national environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, and American Forests, were founded in the late 19th century.

The question facing social scientists is how can we understand and examine this enormously complex social movement? There are three commonly used approaches. First, sociologists examine the belief systems that define the various components of this social movement, which is termed Discourse Analysis. Secondly, the development of the social movement over time is examined using Historical Analysis. Finally, the techniques used to garner financial resources for the organization is examined through the perspective of Resource Mobilization Analysis. By combining all three of these perspectives, one can gain a more complete picture of the environmental Movement.

Discourse Analysis of the U.S. Environmental Movement

The first approach is to view this movement as the group of distinct communities, each based on a particular world view. For example, if you were asked to describe organized religion in the U.S., you could list all of the various denominations, such as Catholics, Jews, Episcopalians, Baptists, etc. When you describe religion using these terms, what you are saying is that there are a number of different religious communities, each based on a particular set of beliefs.

This approach can be applied to describing the U.S. environmental movement. Just like organized religion, the environmental movement is made up of a number of different communities, each based on a particular world view. Sociologists label these different world views as “discursive frames.” A discursive frame is the set of cultural viewpoints that informs the practices of a community of social movement organizations. Each discursive frame provides

a cultural viewpoint from which the environmental organization acts. This discursive frame defines the goals and purposes of the organization, and provides guidance for the actions of the organization.

For example the Wilderness Society belongs to the discursive community defined by the discourse of Preservation. This discursive frame focuses on the preservation of intact ecological systems and protection of biodiversity. Oriented by this viewpoint, the Wilderness Society seeks to create and maintain wilderness areas, and to ensure the long-term ecological diversity in these areas. Conversely, the Center for Health, Environment and Justice is informed by the discursive frame of Environmental Health. It seeks to protect the health of urban area residents by eliminating toxic chemicals from their environment. So while these two organizations both have an environmental focus, their discursive frames are distinct.

When you look at the U.S. environmental movement from this perspective, it is clear that it is comprised of several distinct communities, each based on a unique discursive frame. Thus to understand this movement, it is important to recognize its multiple foci based on unique discursive frames. There are eleven major discursive frames that define the environmental movement in the U.S. Thus to understand the environmental movement, you must be familiar with each one.

Wildlife Management

The oldest and first manifestation of concern over the natural environment appeared in the U.S. over the issue of hunting. Around the middle of the 19th century, wealthy Americans became concerned about the depletion of wildlife for hunting. These sportsmen organized the first environmental organizations. These organizations lobbied for the creation of bag limits on both game animals and fish. This movement expanded into a national movement toward the end of the 19th century with the appearance of organizations such as the Boone and Crockett Club, and the National Audubon Society.

In the early 1930s, this movement underwent a profound shift. Up until this time, the only strategy followed was to control the demand on fish and game animals through limiting the number of animals that could be taken, or by limiting the hunting season to a specific time period. However, due to the loss of habitat, this strategy was unable to ensure that a sufficient number of game animals was available. Thus a new strategy of wildlife management was created. This strategy focused on both reducing demand, and also in increasing the supply. To increase the supply of game animals, wildlife refuges were established. This strategy of managing both the supply and demand of game animals has worked successfully since its development. This approach defines a major environmental discourse in the U.S. Its key components are:

- The scientific management of ecosystems can ensure stable populations of wildlife.
- This wildlife population can be seen as a crop from which excess populations can be sustainably harvested in accordance with the ecological limitations of a given

area. This excess wildlife population thus can be utilized for human recreation in sport hunting.

- The scientific management of ecosystems can ensure stable populations of wildlife.

The discourse of Wildlife Management defines both a unique viewpoint, and the practices of a distinct community of organizations. This community is centered on wildlife conservation issues, and they define their objective as conserving or rationally developing our wildlife resources to provide for human recreation needs. They use words such as "maximizing the supply of game", or "conserve our wildlife resources." Some major organizations in this discursive community are Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, and the National Wildlife Federation.

Conservation

Perhaps the most influential early discursive frames in the U.S. environmental movement was developed by the Conservation Movement. Around the turn of the 19th and 20th century, there was a great deal of concern regarding the over-exploitation of natural resources by market forces. This concern led to the creation of the Conservation Movement. These organizations, such as the American Forestry Association (founded in 1875), advocated government control to ensure that these resources would continue to provide an adequate supply for the economy. This philosophy was put into practice during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt in the creation of the National Forests. Over the time period from 1900 to around 1960, this perspective dominated American environmental policy.

From the viewpoint of the discourse of Conservation, nature is a resource to be used by society to meet human needs. This forms the basis for collective action to ensure that natural resources are used by applying the criteria of rationality and efficiency to achieve the maximum utility to society. Key components of this perspective are:

- Physical and biological nature is nothing more than a collection of parts that function like a machine.
- Humans need to use the natural resources provided by nature to maintain society.
- Nature can be managed by humans through the application of technical knowledge used by competent professionals.
- The proper management philosophy for natural resources is to realize the greatest good for the greatest number of people over the longest period of time.

Organizations based on this discourse define their objective as conserving or rationally developing our natural resources to meet long term human needs. They use words such as "ensure wise use of natural resources", or "bring about efficient conservation and development". Some organizations in this discursive community are the Society of American Foresters, American Forests, and Scenic America.

Preservation

The third environmental discourse to emerge in the U.S. during the 19th century was Preservation. As economic development expanded across the U.S., there was the growth of concern regarding the disappearance of “wild” lands. In 1890, a dramatic proclamation was issued by the U.S. census bureau. The census reported that it could no longer define a frontier line. For a country that had previously thought of the west as an inexhaustible source of natural resources and land, this was a profound psychological shock. This meant that the U.S. was running out of natural resources and wild areas.

This led to a concern over the loss of wilderness and the animals that occupied those areas. Based in this concern, a number of organizations arose, such as the Sierra Club (founded in 1892). These organizations advocated for the preservation of wilderness as both a natural and spiritual resource. This discourse took the form of Preservation. It defines a spiritual and psychological relationship between humans and the natural environment. In this discourse, nature in the form of wilderness, untouched by human activity, has intrinsic value. Nature also serves as a site for self renewal through the experience of its aesthetic beauty. This translates into a concern over the preservation of scenic areas, wilderness, and wildlife. Key components of this perspective are:

- Natural systems are self-creating evolutionary wholes that cannot be reduced to the sum of their parts. Hence nature is not a machine, but an intact organism.
- Human actions can impair the ability of natural systems to maintain themselves or to evolve further
- Wilderness & wildlife are important component in supporting both the physical and spiritual life of humans.
- Human values go beyond those measured by the national income accounts to include the preservation of wild lands and life.
- Continued existence of wilderness and wildlife is critical to the spiritual well being of humanity.
- Protection of wilderness areas and wildlife for the current and future generations is an essential environmental task.

Several key features identify organizations based on this discourse. First, they define their objective as preserving wilderness in a pristine state, untouched by humans. This includes leaving all of the plants and wildlife that inhabit that area to develop in a "natural" manner, i.e. unaffected by human influences. They use words such as "preserve and protect", or "ensure the continued existence of wilderness areas." Some Preservation organizations focus only on a specific species, or geographic region. This is reflected in the name of the organization. Some examples of these types of organizations are the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, and the Nature Conservancy.

Reform Environmentalism

The most dominant discourse of the present day is Reform Environmentalism. This discourse is, in fact, so dominant, that it is generally used to refer to the multiple discourses that

make up the current environmental movements. However, this was not always the case. Up until around 1966, environmentalists were commonly referred to as Conservationists. This all changed in the mid 1960s. In an enormous expansion of the environmental movement, reform environmentalism rose to its current position of dominance in under a decade.

Concerns about pollution has been around since the mid 1800s. The development of industrialization brought the burning of coal, the concentration of factories, and human crowding in urban areas. This created environmental problems in the industrial cities in U.S., and included crowded tenement districts, air and water pollution, garbage disposal problems, and occupational hazards in the rapidly expanding factories. The brunt of these environmental problems was borne by the working class and the poor. As Brian Obach shows in his essay, this environmental pollution had adverse impacts on worker's health and economic opportunities.

The concerns over urban environmental pollution first manifested themselves in the Sanitary Movement. The Sanitary Movement arose after the Civil War to address community health problems. Its aim was to improve urban living conditions, and dealt with problems such as sanitary water supplies, sewage systems, garbage, and air pollution. This was followed by concern over the excess of refuse and garbage in urban areas. Several protests occurred and a number of civic organizations were founded in the 1890s to demand urban cleanliness. This movement became known as the Municipal Housekeeping Movement. This movement primarily took the form of antilittering campaigns, education about sanitary procedures, city cleanup days, and advocating effective sanitation ordinances. Finally, around 1900, labor unions began pressing demands to address the exceptional levels of exposure to environmental pollution in urban factories.

However, these issues were not a major focus of the leading discursive frames of the early environmental movement in the form of wildlife management, preservation, or conservation. Following a number of highly publicized environmental pollution incidents, and spurred on by the publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, pollution concerns rose dramatically among the American public. This gave rise to a new discursive community oriented around a concern that links human health and survival to environmental conditions. In this discourse, nature has a delicate balance, and humans are part of it. This perspective emphasizes that nature is an ecological system, that is, a web of interdependent relationships. Humanity is part of this ecological system. Hence human health is vulnerable to disturbances in the ecosystem. This animates action to identify and eliminate the physical causes of environmental degradation. Key components of this perspective are:

- Natural systems are the basis of all organic existence, including humans
- Humankind is an element within natural ecosystems, and hence human survival is linked to ecosystem survival.
- Ethical human actions (actions which promote the good life for humankind) necessarily promote action toward all life on earth in an ecologically responsible manner.
- Proper use of natural sciences can guide the relationship between humanity and its natural environment.

Organizations based in this discourse identify their organization's purpose as protecting the earth's ecosystem, and human health. The purpose of these organizations tends to use phrases along the following lines: "to protect and enhance human welfare and combat environmental deterioration", or "this organization is dedicated to improving environmental quality and public health." Some of the well known organizations in this discursive community include Greenpeace, Environmental Defense, and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Deep Ecology

Following the rise of Reform Environmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s, there was increasing disillusion with the results that the existing environmental movement was able to realize. One area of concern was the increasing exploitation of the few remaining natural areas in the U.S. These concerns gave rise to the formation of the Deep Ecology movement in the early 1980s. Although part of the environmental movement, it is much more radical in its belief that the requirements to maintain intact natural systems should take precedence over human needs. At the core of this discursive frame is the belief that a belief in the intrinsic value of all nature that will ground a respectful way of living in and with the natural, non-human world. In this discursive frame, nature is seen as a value in its own right, independent of human existence. Humanity is only one species among many, and has no right to dominate the earth and all of the other living organisms. This creates an ethic of radical wilderness advocacy. Unlike Preservation, which seeks to keep what remains, Deep Ecology seeks the restoration of fully functioning ecosystems, in which the evolution of life, unaffected by human actions, can continue. It also advocates the inherent rights of all nonhuman beings to exist in their natural state. In this sense, Deep Ecology makes a moral argument for the preservation of the natural environment. Key components of this discourse are:

- The richness and diversity of all life on earth has intrinsic value.
- Humankind's relations to the natural world presently endanger the richness and diversity of life.
- Human life is privileged only to the extent of satisfying vital needs.
- Maintenance of the diversity of life on earth mandates a decrease in the human impacts on the natural environment, and substantial increases in the wilderness areas of the globe.
- Changes (consistent with cultural diversity) affecting basic economic, technological, and cultural aspects of society are therefore necessary.

The organizations based in Deep Ecology generally define their objectives as acting to preserve the rights of all nonhuman beings to a natural existence, unaffected by human intervention. These organizations define their aims using words such as "defending the intrinsic rights of species to life" or "placing ecological considerations first in any decision making process". Some of the well known organizations in this discursive community include Earth First! and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

Environmental Justice

A second component of the U.S. environmental movement that arose in the early 1980s was the Environmental Justice Movement. Like Deep Ecologists, there was a deep sense of disappointment over the results of the 1960s and 1970s environmental movement. However, the concern of this community was not on wilderness. Rather, it was on the unequal burden of pollution that was placed on poor and minority communities. Thus they were concerned with exposures to persistent toxic pollution, in the form of local toxic waste dumps, high levels of air pollution, or unhealthy and polluted living conditions. From these concerns, a unique community arose that focused on urban environmental issues in systematically disadvantaged areas.

The discursive frame of environmental justice accepted the link between human survival and ecosystem survival as defined by Reform Environmentalism. However, instead of focusing on the physical causes of environmental degradation, this frame sees environmental problems as creations of human social order. Hence the solution of environmental problems lies in social change. Key components of this viewpoint are:

- Domination of humans by other humans leads to domination of nature.
- The economic system & nation-state are the core structures of society that create ecological problems.
- Commoditization & market imperatives force consumption to continually increase in the developed economy.
- Environmental destruction in low income/racially distinct communities, or third world countries originates in the exploitation of the people who live in these areas by the dominant social institutions.
- Resolution of environmental problems requires fundamental social change based on empowerment of local communities.

Thus Environmental Justice organizations focus on the social creation and resolution of environmental problems. While these groups focus on a large number of issues, they all seek to protect local communities from the adverse effects of environmental degradation. Additionally, regardless of their specific focus, groups based in the discourse of environmental justice define their objective as changing the social order in some manner to solve environmental problems. The means to carry out this goal include holding government and corporations accountable through democratic processes, or by bringing legal suits to end toxic waste dumping. Some organizations with this orientation describe the purpose of their organization in terms such as "Create economic democracy through localized decision-making", "Develop grass roots capabilities to involve local citizens in resolution of their communities environmental problems.", or "Abolish environmental racism". Some of the leading environmental justice organizations include the West Harlem Environmental Action Coalition, the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, and the Indigenous Environmental Network

Environmental Health

A discursive community closely associated with the environmental justice community is the environmental health movement. While the environment has always played a key role in community health, the relationship between environmental pollution and specific illnesses is still

not widely acknowledged. However, in a number of diverse locations, individuals noticed a strong relationship between environmental pollution and their health. Some of the key examples was the extremely high rate of breast cancer among women on Long Island, and the increasing rates of asthma among children exposed to automobile exhausts.

From this concern, a movement took shape in the late 1980s that focused on the relationship between environmental pollution and human health. This movement defined a unique discourses that defined the perspective of Environmental Health. Key components of this viewpoint are:

- Human health is the outcome of interactions with physical, chemical, biological and social factors in the natural environment, especially toxic substances and pollution.
- To ensure community health requires a livable and healthy community, with adequate social services, and elimination of exposures to toxic or polluting substances.
- The precautionary principle (no technology or material can be used unless it is proven environmentally harmless) should guide industrial development.

The organizations in this discursive community seek to reduce the use of toxic materials, and to ensure a safe and clean environment for all peoples. Organizations in this movement describe their purposes such as: “Preventing exposure to toxic materials that cause breast cancer”, “Creating safe schools to protect our children’s health”, or “Ensuring that medical waste from hospitals is disposed of in an environmentally responsible way. Some examples of actions taken by these types of organizations include ensuring that all toxic materials are removed from schools to ensure that children are not exposed to them, and ensuring the safe disposal of industrial wastes. Some of the leading environmental organizations in this discursive community include the Center for Health, Justice, and the Environment, and the 1 in 9 Breast Cancer Action Coalition.

Ecofeminism

The fourth environmental discourse to develop in the 1980s was Ecofeminism. This discursive community grew out of the feminist movement. Thus it links the development of a patriarchal society, and the domination of women by men, to the domination of nature by humanity. Specifically, Ecofeminism defines the problem of ecological degradation as originating in the treatment of nature as an object to be possessed and dominated, instead of a partner to be cooperated with. This cultural treatment of nature is tied to the development of an patriarchal society, and the domination of women by men. Just as man dominates women, humanity dominates nature. Thus the resolution of our ecological problems thus entails a shift from a manipulative and controlling culture toward both women and nature to a culture of co-operation. Key components of this discourse are:

- Earth is home for all life and should be revered & nurtured.
- Ecosystem abuse is rooted in androcentric concepts, values, and institutions.

- Relations of complementarity rather than superiority between culture/nature, human/nonhuman, and male/female are desirable.
- The many problems of human relations, and relations between the human and nonhuman worlds, will not be resolved until androcentric institutions, values, and ideology are eradicated.

There are very few ecofeminist organizations in existence. Those that do exist focus on empowering women to function as decision makers. Some examples of the purposes of ecofeminist organizations include: “Representing the viewpoints of all women in international affairs”, or “Facilitation the development of women in leadership roles in the environmental movement.” In addition, they seek to correct the perspective in economic development programs that fail to recognize the role of women and the household economy in the overall system of economic production. The largest and most well known ecofeminist organization in the U.S. is the Women’s Environment and Development Organization.

Ecospiritualism

In 1967, a landmark essay, by Lynn White, titled *The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis* appeared in Science Magazine. In this essay, White argued that the western biblical tradition, on which both the Jewish and Christian faiths are based, was the root of the environmental crisis. Since the bible created a separation of man from nature, man was seen as master of and apart from, the rest of creation. This image, White argued, created a wholly anthropocentric view of nature, in which man was commanded to subdue the earth. So the exploitation of nature for man’s needs was natural and appropriate. The remedy for our ecological crisis was clear. He argued that if the biblical belief system created a disregard for the natural environment, and led to our ecologic crisis, we need to develop a new religious viewpoint that would accommodate man to live in harmony with nature.

This viewpoint posed a major problem for western religious theologians. The ecological crisis created doubt of the Christian idea that a providential God was providing for humanity. Following this essay, a number of different religious thinkers developed unique religious perspectives that integrate concern over the natural environment into religious belief systems. Out of these writings, a unique discourse of Ecospiritualism emerged. Key components of this discourse are:

- Nature is endowed with spiritual value.
- Humanity, as part of nature, has a moral obligation to preserve it intact.
- Religious beliefs need to be developed that embody this ethic.
- These beliefs can then inform actions to create an ecologically sustainable society.

This new viewpoint spread through the U.S. religious community, and by 1995, virtually all of the major churches in the U.S. issued proclamations on environmental degradation. Additionally, in 1993, the National Religious Partnership was formed. This organization is composed of the United National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference, Consultation on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network. This action united the major Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Evangelical communities into one

organization focused on developing and implementing religious approaches to combat environmental degradation. Recently, this viewpoint has gained increasing support in large evangelical churches. So while this discursive community is rapidly expanding, it has a unique structure. Its organizations are not single focus social movement organizations. Rather, they involve religious organizations that are expanding their role into environmental affairs.

It is important to realize that there is no absolute line that defines the environmental movement. Rather, it is a gradient, moving from organizations that have an exclusive focus on environmental issues to those that deal with environmental issues as part of a group of associated issues. The final two discursive frames that are being examined in this paper fall into this category.

Animal Rights

The first related discursive frame is animal rights. Concern about the treatment of animals dates from 1866 in the United States, when the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was founded. Although the primary focus of this movement has always been on domestic animals and pets, it has also been a significant actor regarding the treatment and preservation of wildlife. For example, Henry Bergh, who founded the ASPCA, was a key force in trying to stop the indiscriminant slaughter of Bison in the 1870s.

This concern over animals has developed into a well defined discursive community. In this discursive frame, all species are seen to have intrinsic rights to realize their own evolved characteristics, and to live an independent life free from human direction or intervention. Key components of this discourse are:

- All of creation is endowed with an ability to define itself and evolve
- Life thus has a right to be left to develop according to its own character
- Humanity has no right to infringe on these rights of animals

The organizations in this discursive community usually focus on both the protection of domestic and wild animals. There are a large number of organizations that focus on the rehabilitation and release of injured or sick wildlife. Some of the better known animal rights organizations in addition to the ASPCA include the Free Willy Keiko Foundation, and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

Anti-Globalization/Greens

The second discursive frame related to the U.S. environmental movement is the Anti-Globalization/Greens frame. This frame, which arose in the 1990s, focuses on the rise of a global economy, and the impacts of this process for both the quality of life, and its impacts on the environment. Specifically, it sees the process of economic globalization and the weakening of national labor and environmental standards as encouraging a “race to the bottom”, as nations lower these standards to attract business investments. Key components of this discursive frame are:

- All humans and their communities deserve to live in an equitable, just and environmentally sustainable world.
- Global abuses - such as ecological destruction, poverty, war, and oppression - are linked to global capitalism and the political and economic forces that have allowed the development of social inequality and injustices.
- The coercive powers of international financial institutions need to be eliminated so that national governments are accountable to the democratic will of their population.

This community of organizations is still developing. The first large scale collective action of this community in the U.S. was the series of demonstrations in conjunction with the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999. This community is loosely organized in the U.S. Network for Global Economic Justice, a coalition of over 200 social movement organizations. Some of the better known organizations in this community include the Ruckus Society and the Pesticide Action Network of North America.

Distribution of Organizations by Discursive Frame

The number of organizations in each discursive frame is shown in Figure one. As this

(Figure 1 about here)

graph shows, the largest number of organizations are found in the long established discursive frames of Reform Environmentalism, Preservation, and Conservation. Together, these three discursive frames represent 78% of the environmental movement. All of the other discursive frames represent 5% or less of the total organizations. Thus, although a great deal of attention is given to the newer discursive frames in the academic literature, the environmental movement continues to be concentrated in these more conventional and long lived discursive frames.

Historical Development of the U.S. Environmental Movement

The second approach to understanding the U.S. environmental movement is to examine its historical development over time. The current environmental movement is the result of the cumulative historical development of the different discursive communities over the past 150 years. This growth in organizations is shown in Figure 2. To simplify this presentation, the number of discourses illustrated has been reduced. First, due to the relatively small number of organizations with the discourse of Wildlife Management, and its close ideological similarity with Conservation, these two discursive frames have been combined. Secondly, due to their small numbers, organizations with the discursive frames of Animal Rights, Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, Ecospiritualism, Environmental Health, Environmental Justice, and Anti-Globalization/Green have been combined into one category, labeled here as “Alternative Discourses.” As this graph illustrates, there was a substantial increase in the levels of organizational foundings starting in the mid 1950s up until around 1967. This was followed by explosive growth starting in the time period 1968 - 1970, and again in the 1988 - 1990 time frame.

(Figure 2 about here)

To further examine this growth by different discursive frames, the relative growth rates of the different communities are shown in Figure 3. This graph clearly shows that the discursive frames of Preservation and Conservation/Wildlife Management were dominant up until the end of the 1930s. In the 1940s, there was a significant rise in the number of alternative discursive organizations. This was due primarily to the increase of environmental health organizations founded during World War II. Additionally, the founding of Preservation organizations dramatically declined in the 1940s. However, in the 1950s, Preservation foundings increased rapidly, and Conservation/Wildlife Management foundings started a long slow decline. Additionally, Reform Environmental organizational foundings started a long and steady increase, which culminated in an explosive rate of growth in 1970. Additionally, as more alternative discursive frames were developed in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a slow but steady growth in these organizations in the time period from 1960 on.

(Figure 3 about here)

What this graph shows is that there are unique developmental dynamics to each discursive community. It is the cumulative impact of these different developmental dynamics that have lead to the highly differentiated environmental movement we encounter today.

Economic Resource Mobilization

The third approach focuses on the economic resources that each discursive community has available to promote its particular environmental agenda. The mobilization of economic resources is an extremely important determinant regarding the effectiveness of a discursive community to realize its goals. Every year, all nonprofit organizations are required to inform the U.S. Internal Revenue Service of their annual income and expenses. Based on this information filed with the IRS in 2003, Table 1 shows the total income of these different discursive communities.

(Table 1 about here)

As this table shows, fully 50% of the funding of the environmental movement is under the control of the organizations with a Preservationist frame. This is followed by the other three mainstream discursive frames of Reform Environmentalism, Wildlife Management, and Conservation, who range between 20.4% to 12.2% of the total income. The alternative discourses have very low levels of economic resources. Even if they are all combined, they total less than 5% of the total income distribution.

This economic distribution is mirrored in the income ranking of individual organizations. Table 2 shows the total and percent income distribution for the wealthiest 50 U.S. environmental organizations. Income among environmental organizations is highly skewed to a few extremely wealthy organizations. The Nature Conservancy, a large land trust organization, receives nearly 19% of the total environmental movement's income.

(Table 2 about here)

It is important to note that this list only shows the top 50 organizations. There are another 1,339 organizations that are not shown in this table. Between them, they divide the remaining 25.2% of total income. Thus the vast majority of environmental organizations have very limited economic resources available to them. Thus it is no surprise that the ones that mostly appear in the press and before congress are those organizations with sufficient funding to build and maintain a strong staff and organizational structure. Accordingly, one of the key areas of focus in current research into the environmental movement then is why these funding differentials exist.

Conclusion

The U.S. environmental movement is not a monolithic structure. Rather it is composed of a number of different discursive communities. Each of these communities has its own specific issue focus. Additionally, they developed under different historical and political circumstances, and have widely varying levels of economic resources. To understand this highly complex social movement requires that we use the full range of social movement perspectives.

One certainty is that this is not a static movement. Over the past century, it has developed several new discursive frames, and will most likely continue to do so in the future. There are several areas of potential development. For example, there has always been an uneasy alliance between trade unions and the environmental movement. Will they be able to develop a united political program? Additionally, the rise of environmental justice and the greens as significant actors in the movement has shaken to more established environmental organizations. How will these newer approaches work out within the overall environmental movement. Finally, the discursive frames that were once dominant have been replaced by other approaches. What discursive frames will become dominant in the future? How this movement will evolve in the future is an open question. However, as it has in the past, it will continue to be a major player in the politics of the United States.

Suggested Readings

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Table 1 - Income Distribution by Discursive Frame - 2003

Frame	N	% of N	Total Income	% of Total	Mean	Median
Animal Rights	35	2.5%	95,542,298	1.9%	2,729,780	420,819
Conservation	223	16.0%	627,813,084	12.2%	2,815,305	345,421
Deep Ecology	34	2.4%	17,763,087	.3%	522,444	270,092
Ecofeminism	4	0.3%	2,027,480	>.1%	506,870	115,100
Ecospiritualism	12	0.9%	8,776,361	.2	731,363	149,452
Environmental Health	33	2.4%	36,683,659	.7%	1,111,626	503,346
Environmental Justice	38	2.7%	57,301,562	1.1%	1,507,936	385,728
Green/Anti-Globalization	9	0.6%	8,844,870	.2%	982,763	571,318
Preservation	536	38.6%	2,590,627,143	50.3%	4,833,260	296,873
Reform Environmentalism	404	29.1%	1,048,293,688	20.4%	2,594,786	395,409
Wildlife Management	62	4.5%	656,084,214	12.7%	10,582,003	310,477
Total	1,390	100.0%	5,149,757,446	100.0%	3,704,861	348,058

Table 2: Income Distribution - Top 50 U.S. Environmental Organizations, 2003

Organization	Income	% of Income
NATURE CONSERVANCY	972368622	18.85
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY	347533674	6.74
SIERRA CLUB FOUNDATION, THE	241236005	4.68
CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION	229267098	4.44
POPULATION COUNCIL	197888299	3.84
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND	175582103	3.40
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY	172642826	3.35
TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND	153915522	2.98
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION	132004722	2.56
SIERRA CLUB	88203029	1.71
TIDES CENTER	69567396	1.35
AMERICAN LAND CONSERVANCY	68110320	1.32
FRESH AIR FUND	65459125	1.27
CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION	61007116	1.18
CONSERVATION FUND	60133583	1.17
ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION	55418970	1.07
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE	51657887	1.00
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL	50063972	0.97
WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE	48241872	0.93
BRANDYWINE CONSERVANCY	39007586	0.76
EARTHJUSTICE	34266715	0.66
OCEAN CONSERVANCY	31981555	0.62
DUCKS UNLIMITED	31475354	0.61
INSTITUTE OF ECOSYSTEM STUDIES	30206097	0.59
ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS	29865852	0.58
PHEASANTS FOREVER	27824126	0.54
YOSEMITE FOUNDATION	25967512	0.50
WILDERNESS SOCIETY, THE (TWS)	23180201	0.45
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION	22147238	0.43
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE	21779921	0.42
NATIONAL ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION	21337542	0.41
AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION	18861831	0.37
STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION	18714956	0.36
WATER ENVIRONMENT FEDERATION	18687081	0.36
PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS	18652096	0.36
WETLANDS AMERICA TRUST	17171656	0.33
ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY	16932539	0.33
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE	16634365	0.32
ENERGY FEDERATION INC INCORPORATED	15537392	0.30
ENVIRONMENTAL CAREERS ORGANIZATION	15468856	0.30
SAVE THE REDWOODS LEAGUE	14546107	0.28
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION	14351443	0.28
COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION	14265263	0.28
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY RESEARCH	12466225	0.24
ASPEN CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES	12402810	0.24
WATER ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION	12042492	0.23
NATIONAL SAVE THE SEA TURTLE FOUNDATION	11349324	0.22
MANOMET CENTER FOR CONSERVATION SCIENCES	11212735	0.22
GREENPEACE FOUNDATION	10986369	0.21
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST	10715102	0.21

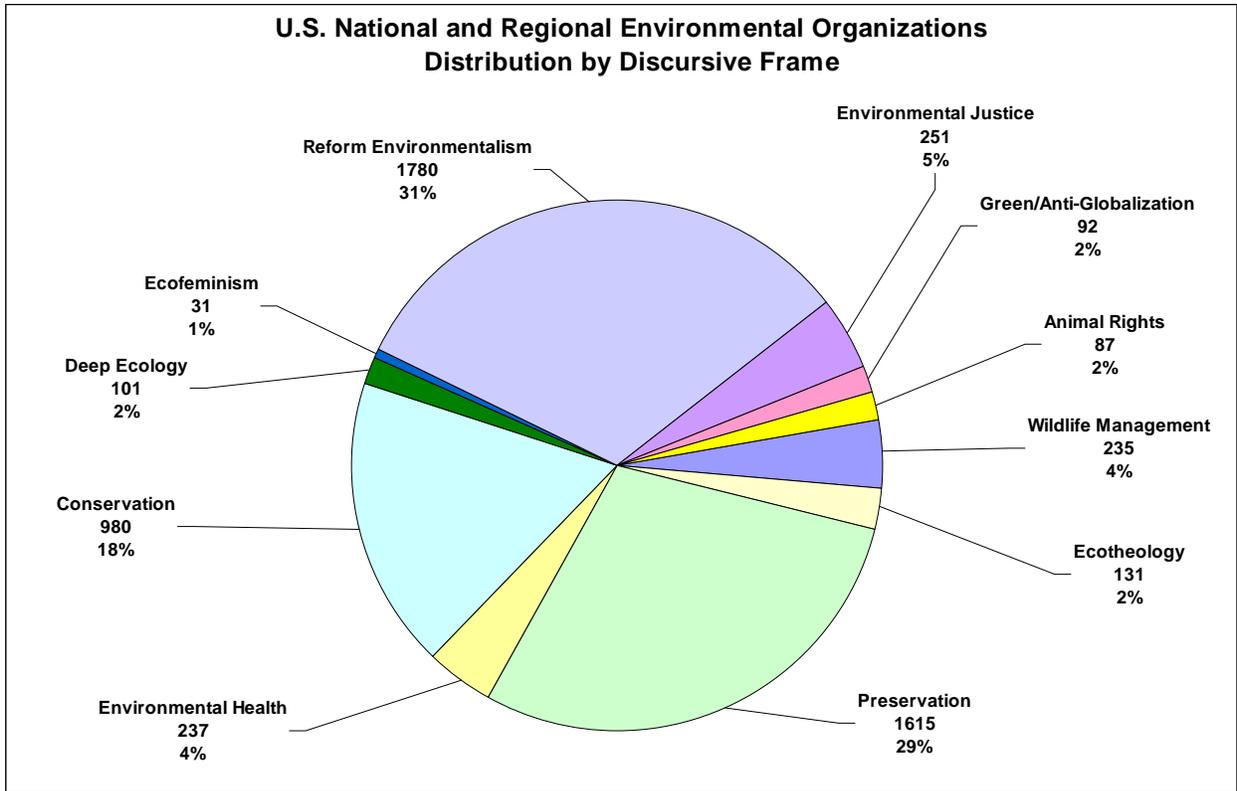


Figure 1

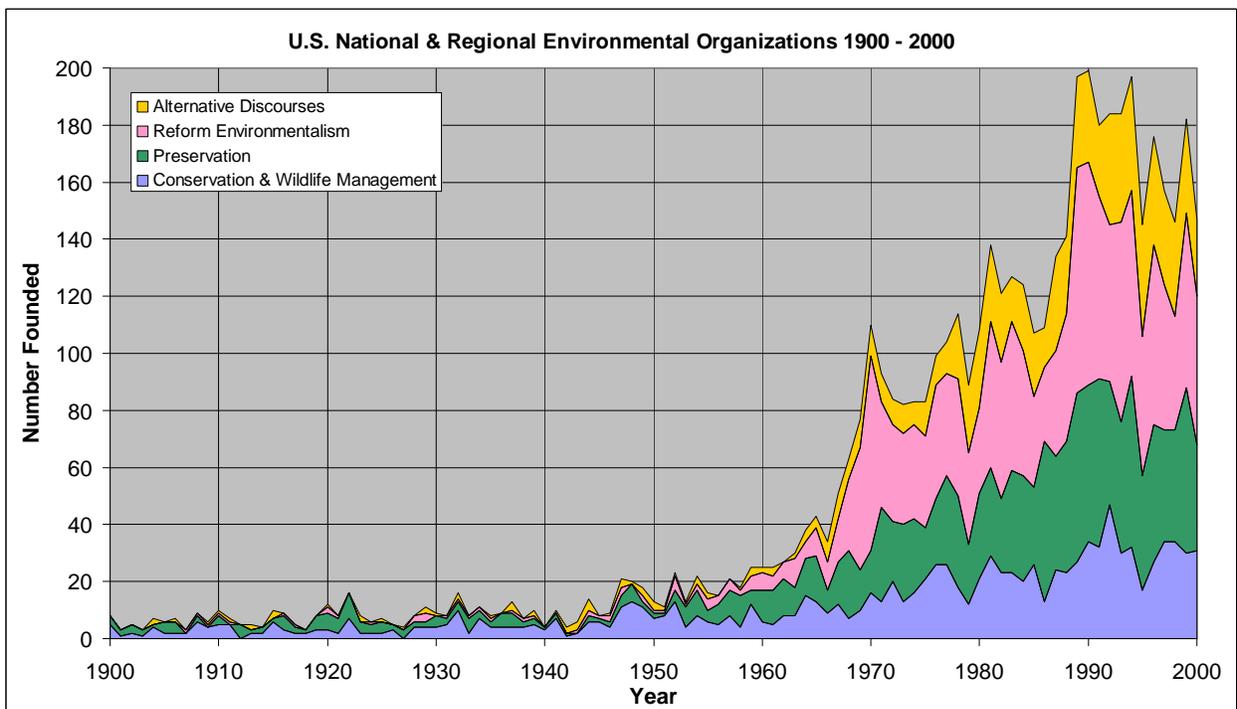


Figure 2

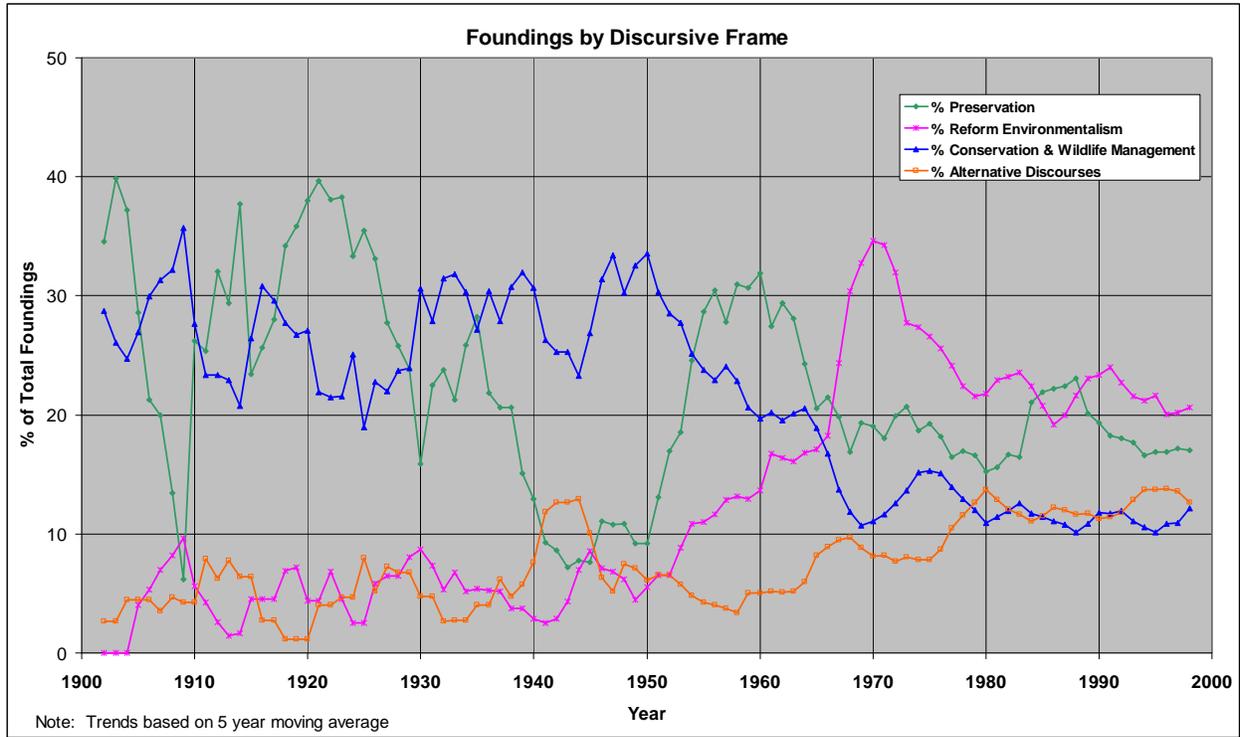


Figure 3