

New book argues that social sciences are critical to climate conversation

August 21 2015, by Alex McKechnie



Pope Francis recently made an impassioned plea for a "cultural revolution" to combat climate change, calling for collective action and "a conversation which includes everyone."

Thus far, the climate conversation has often neglected the contributions of one key group: [social scientists](#). According to the new book "Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives," engaging the social – and not just natural – sciences is essential for effecting large-scale change.

"Though more work always remains, the physical sciences have accomplished their core task when it comes to climate change," said Bill McKibben, a professor at Middlebury College and author of "The End of Nature." "We know what we need to know about the causes and consequences of our actions. What we don't know is how to stop ourselves, which is why this book—and the social sciences—are so important from here on out."

Edited by environmental sociologists Robert J. Brulle, PhD, a professor in Drexel University's College of Arts and Sciences, and Riley E. Dunlap, a professor at Oklahoma State University, the book breaks new ground by presenting climate change as a thoroughly social phenomenon, embedded in behaviors, institutions and cultural practices.

"We need to expand the conversation to include sociologists who can help address these human dimensions of climate change and answer questions like, how can we change our culture of consumption, how will we respond to [extreme weather events](#) caused by climate change and how do we bridge the political divide on this issue," Brulle said.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIETY

Sociological Perspectives



EDITED BY RILEY E. DUNLAP & ROBERT J. BRULLE

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION Task Force on Sociology and Global Climate Change



This collection of essays summarizes existing approaches to understanding the social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of climate change. From the factors that drive carbon emissions to those that influence societal responses to climate change, the volume provides a comprehensive overview of the social dimensions of climate change.

The book is scheduled for release from Oxford University Press in September. It is available for pre-order from the [publisher](#) and from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

According to the authors, an improved understanding of the complex relationship between climate change and society is essential for modifying ecologically harmful human behaviors and institutional practices, creating just and effective environmental policies and developing a more sustainable future. "Climate Change and Society" provides a useful tool in efforts to integrate [social science research](#), natural science research and policy-making regarding [climate change](#) and sustainability.

Provided by Drexel University

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