



CHANGER L'ENERGIE ENSEMBLE

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SEMINAIRE DU GRETS

Mardi 21 septembre 2010 de 9h30 à 12h30

*Maison des Sciences de l'Homme - 54, bd Raspail - Paris 6^{ème}
Salle 214*

Researching globalizing consumption from the bottom up: A view from India

Harold Wilhite

Centre for Development and the Environment, Université d'Oslo

Le mardi 21 septembre 2010, le séminaire du GRETS recevra Harold Wilhite, anthropologue et sociologue, spécialiste internationalement reconnu des questions de consommation et d'usage de l'énergie. Actuellement directeur de recherche à l'université d'Oslo, il y dirige un important programme de recherche sur les changements environnementaux et l'énergie durable.

Le séminaire du 21 septembre sera consacré au travail ethnographique d'Harold Wilhite sur les pratiques de consommation au Kerala, un état du sud de l'Inde parmi les plus prospères (voir la présentation en anglais ci-dessous). Il nous restitue une analyse stimulante et pour ainsi dire, en temps réel, sur l'émergence d'une société de consommation et l'ensemble des changements (économiques, culturels, moraux, domestiques) qui accompagnent cette émergence et transforment radicalement l'usage des ressources naturelles. Cette séance des séminaires présente un intérêt double pour tous ceux qui s'intéressent aux enjeux de la transition énergétique : elle offre des perspectives sur la diffusion des modes de consommation occidentaux dans les pays émergents mais invite aussi à une réflexion sur nos sociétés. Cette sociologie de la consommation remet en lumière l'ensemble des éléments de la chaîne qui en font des sociétés fortement consommatrices en énergie (notamment à travers des équipements tels que le réfrigérateur ou l'air conditionné).

Le séminaire se basera sur l'ouvrage publié par Harold Wilhite en 2008 : *Consumption and the Transformation of Everyday Life: A View from South India* chez Palgrave MacMillan.

La présentation aura lieu en anglais, la discussion aura lieu en français et en anglais.

From the early 1990s, India has experienced a significant socio-economic transformation. New commodities have rapidly taken a foothold in household consumption practices. Cars and household electrical appliances are fast becoming normal aspects of consumption for a growing middle class. The increasing consumption of these and other household products put pressure to a fragile resource base and are contributing to increased pollution and emissions, the brunt of which is felt by the poor and marginalized segments of the population. Thus, understanding these changes is important from a sociopolitical and environmental perspective. The change in attitudes and practices involving consumption is also interesting from a social theoretical perspective. This rapid transformation has offered an opportunity to observe, interpret and theorize how energy-intensive household consumption practices become normalized.

Interpreting these changes in consumption and their relationship to surrounding socio-cultural contexts is the subject of the book *Consumption and the Transformation of Everyday Life: A View from South India* (2008). The book is based on ethnographic research, centered in a middle class neighborhood in the Kerala capital city Trivandrum. The book examines the contributors to changing consumption from ground level (homes and neighborhoods) to broader social and political considerations both, regionally, nationally and globally. The research demonstrates how an understanding of gender relations; family and household structures; work migration in cross-national ethnoscaapes; and to changes in India's political relationship to global markets and globalizing media are all important to theorizing changing consumption.

Harold Wilhite is a social anthropologist. He is currently a Research Director at the University of Oslo's Centre for Development and Environment (www.sum.uio.no) and the Academic Director of a pan-University research program entitled 'Environmental Change and Sustainable Energy' (www.milen.uio.no). The principle themes of his research are consumption, energy use, energy conservation and North-South development policies and practices. He has conducted field work on these themes in several regions of the world, including Latin America, North America, Norway, Japan and India. His recent publications include 'Who really benefits from Fairtrade? An analysis of value distribution in Fairtrade coffee' in *Globalizations* (with S. Johannessen, 2010); 'The conditioning of comfort' in *Building Research & Information* (2009); and 'New thinking on the agentive relationship between end-use technologies and energy using practices' in the *Journal of Energy Efficiency* (2008). In addition to research and teaching, he has worked extensively with promoting sustainable energy policy, and particularly with connecting the disparate worlds of energy policy and energy research. Wilhite was the first Director of the European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (www.eceee.org), founded in 1992 and is currently a member of the Board of Directors.