

Wealth Does Not Dictate Concern For The Environment, Study Finds

ScienceDaily (July 27, 2008) — It has been a long-held assumption that poor nations will not support efforts to protect the environment since their citizens are too preoccupied with meeting basic needs, such as food and housing.

However, a new study in *The Sociological Quarterly* reveals that citizens of poorer nations are just as concerned about environmental quality as their counterparts in rich nations.

Riley E. Dunlap, PhD, of Oklahoma State University and Richard York, PhD, of the University of Oregon compared results from four large cross-national surveys, each conducted in several dozen nations ranging with differing economic statuses. Representative samples of citizens were surveyed in each nation.

Results showed that citizens of poorer nations were equally if not more concerned about the environment compared to citizens in wealthier countries. The citizens of the poorer nations were supportive of efforts to solve environmental problems.

The authors believe that previous studies failed to recognize that environmental problems are often a threat to material welfare and not just quality of life. For example, deforestation may threaten the livelihoods of people who depend on forests for firewood, food sources, and economic products.

“Our results suggest that well-designed policies to promote sustainable development will have more appeal to citizens of poor nations than is often assumed,” the authors conclude.

Journal reference:

1. Riley E. Dunlap and Richard York. **The Globalization Of Environmental Concern And The Limits Of The Postmaterialist Values Explanation: Evidence From Four Multinational Surveys**. *Sociological Quarterly*, Volume 49 Issue 3, Pages 529 - 563
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