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2011年北京外国语大学811英语能力测试(写作) 考研真题及详解

I. Summarize the view(s) in the following passage (around 300 words) and then write a commentary (around 500 words) (70 points)

I appreciate the arts, I love film, TV, music and books like most people, I enjoy the occasional trip to the theatre or art gallery and I am in awe of the skill of the world's greatest athletes. Although I have an appreciation from these arts and gain enjoyment from them on the whole I detest what they have collectively become. It's long since gone beyond providing entertainment and has evolved into a business that we call the "entertainment industry". The face of this industry is a mosaic of aesthetically pleasing masks covering a collectively ignorant mind controlled only by financial gain and the ultimate social status of "celebrity"

In the western world it now seems that the status of "celebrity" has become akin to that of the God status. We look to these people with their plastic faces and hollow minds that are motivated by greed as role models, a task they are neither suitable for nor capable of. This status of theirs is promoted by a media that has long since given up on reporting real news in favour of religiously following the lives of celebrities. The more media attention they get the more attention is drawn away from the real issues that we should really be concerning ourselves with.

This role model responsibility that society has placed upon the celebrity status has either been ignored by the celebrities or abused. Celebrities are the worst possible role model for any society, especially the young who look up to them with such admiration. Celebrities glamorise sex, abuse drugs, degrade women, promote ignorance and

ultimately of all the people in society,they are not fit for purpose.

It appears that celebrities actively sexualise themselves like high-end prostitutes, this is intimidated by those in society who are infatuated with the cult of celebrity. As a result society has become increasingly shallow, the measure of man is no longer his morals but his appearance, and as a result morality has lost its place in society in favour of casual sex, and other morally deprived actions advocated by the celebrity.

The celebrity cult has also once again reduced the status of women in society who are overtly objectified by both sexes in the celebrity world. Whether it be a rapper boasting about his sexual exploits with his "bitch" or a female singer selling her albums not by her voice but by parading herself half naked all over TV, this has become interwoven into our every day life and it is now accepted that women are objects of sex.

It seems the term "n-word" has made it back into society this time through popular music. Although it still conjures up images of 1960's American racism and slavery it is tolerated even by those who it should offend most.

Narcotics use has become another decadent pastime glorified by the celebrities who excuse themselves through the biased and ignorant press. Then we have the violence portrayed in movies, music and video games in such a way that it appears almost fashionable to shoot one's fellow man or bash his head in with a bat.

It sickens me to know that Footballers can earn £90,000 per week and have the respect of thousands while a front-line soldier fighting in Afghanistan might be on less than £20,000 per year, yet the latter is doing a significantly more important job than any footballer ever will but nobody knows his name or sacrifice.

I have noticed this get progressively worse over the

years,I fail to see why it is that society is fascinated by a group of people who are motivated by selfish des ires and greed.It only seems appropriate on ATS to suggest

that this may be caused by some type of mass brain washing or a symptom of the NWO's plans, however I do not think this is true. Rather I think that it is just a symptom of the nature of man we always seem to want more and are for the most incapable of a humble status. Greed is what is fuelling this ultimately evil and corrupt culture that we have developed.

The celebrities want to get rich by flaunting their mediocre talent and beautiful yet plastic faces. Their producers, agents, directors and just about everyone else in this entertainment industry want to get rich by prostituting the celebrities. The ignorant masses who follow them seek similar riches and so they imitate the celebrities in everything they do in attempt to find similar riches because they, like most of men, are inherently greedy and lazy. Becoming a celebrity by going on a talent competition is a much easier and lazier way to achieve riches, without having to go through the challenge of working through a university course or career ladder. These people who worship these celebrities as a collective omnipotent being are fundamentally greedy and lazy.

Celebrities do make some contribution to a society in helping to shame our culture, however it is my opinion that doctors, religious leaders, troops, scientists and so on make a much more significant contribution to our communities and should therefore be respected and paid in the same way as celebrities. Celebrity culture has created a society where the ignorant and selfish are leading and breeding the selfish and ignorant...

【答案】

Summary:

Though I appreciate the art and artistic activities, I detest the “entertainment industry” they have now become, for this industry is hypothetical and produces the so-called “celebrity”

In the western world, the status of 'celebrity' has become similar to that of the God status as role models and they don't deserve such status. This is attributed to the media, who give up reporting the real issues.

Celebrities are the worst possible role model for any society for they ignore or abuse their model responsibility and they are not fit for purpose.

Celebrities have also had bad influence on the society and those who admire the celebrities because of the morally deprived actions advocated by the celebrity. The celebrity cult has also once again reduced the status of women in society and women become objects of sex due to the images of female celebrity on the screen. Popular music has brought back to society the 'n-word' which arouses the racial discrimination and celebrities have made public drug abuse and violence through movies or report of their personal lives by the biased and ignorant press.

Footballers appearing on the screen can earn much more than the frontline soldier, whose job is of greater importance and at the cost of their lives.

This situation gets progressively worse over the years and greed is what is fuelling this ultimately evil and corrupt culture. The celebrities are greedy and lazy when seeking riches, while these people who worship these celebrities are as greedy and lazy.

Celebrity culture has created a society where the ignorant and selfish are leading and breeding the selfish and ignorant. Other respectable profession, which have contributed more to society should be much more respected and get better paid.

Commentary:

Celebrities, as public figures, have great influence on people's lives, the lives of young people in particular. And in this world with increasingly explosive information

and free access to it, these celebrities would take an even greater role in our lives, representing not only what they

should be in their works on screen, but also their real values and ideas.

These celebrities or stars can play positive role in the audience's lives, only when they observe their professional ethics and behave ethically on screen. If they do so, they can not only bring to the audience meaningful and interesting works to enjoy and entertain with, but also guide the audience with right moral standards and encourage the audience to do what they should do rather than what they want to. In this process, all personnel, including the actor or actress, director, screenwriter, producer and etc. in the entertainment industry are very important. They must behave in accordance with their professional ethics and produce works to educate, to move or to entertain the audience.

But celebrities, if involved in negative or immoral things, will exert bad influence on audiences, especially their fans, who admire them not only because who they are in certain works, but also because who they really are.

And some extremist fans may even justify the wrong deeds of their idols, which is utterly destructive. And in modern world, it seems that scandals or gossips always accompany the celebrities; things like drug abuse and involvement in sexual scandal seem quite common.

Fortunately, in China, celebrities are not that high-profile, arrogant and privileged. They have to behave, at least in public, and stay away from immoral things or scandals, for Chinese audiences, as a relatively rational group, would despise those immoral ones and make them lose face or even fame. In this information age in particular, when everyone has access to posting pictures or videos and with the rapid spreading and exchange of information, a wrong doing may cost the celebrity large amounts of fans or potential fans and his moral reputation as well as the public trust on him. And the media is also relatively

harsh on the celebrities, who are often watched by the media for any big news. And scandals seem to always win over

good news. So in China, celebrities need to be quite careful about their personal life. So in general, Chinese celebrities, though not completely immune from scandals, are relatively trustworthy.

Anyway, we should look at the celebrities in a reasonable way. Actually, they may seem brilliant on screen, but after all, they are just as ordinary people as us behind the screen. It is just that they choose a different job from us at the cost of their privacy and taking an uneven way to become famous from nobody. And as long as they become somebody, they have their responsibility to shoulder in the society. So appreciate but not be over crazy about celebrities and the best thing to do is to grow with your idol and enjoy your colorful life.

II. Write an essay (around 1000 words) on one of the issues below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views. Your essay should have good structure, clear meaning and accurate expression, and should be written in your own words. (80 points)

Topic 1:

Culture should be prior to economy. All through the world, only a country with strong culture can boast a strong economy.

Topic 2:

In an information age like this, the importance of teacher's role, especially the role of moral guidance, is fading in university, because students are able to and are more easily influenced by information they received from various sources.

【参考范文】

The Important Rather Than Dominant Role of Culture

Culture, as the fundamental basis for a nation, plays a vital role in the development of a nation. Especially in this competitive world, when it is referred to as the soft power and is attached great importance to by all countries. But by no means should culture be placed prior to economy.

And a country with strong culture doesn't necessarily boast a strong economy or a strong nation. Only when a balance is achieved between a strong culture, a strong economy and a strong social structure can they promise a strong nation.

Culture indeed matters in many ways. Some elements of culture, like that of language, values, ideas, customs and etc. are essential parts in people's lives. They can provide guidance for people's actions and directions.

They can enlighten and educate people. They can influence the thoughts of people. And language is a significant tool for the exchanges between people and for the creation and records of new cultural elements. Besides, other elements, like social mechanism and institution are what guarantee the order of human life. So culture is fundamental to other activities and can support the development of economy, society and other aspects of human life.

However, the prosperity of a nation as well as that of the culture is inseparable with the economic basis. A famous Chinese saying goes that "only when people are fed and secured in terms of food, can they learn about the ethics and virtues". Elements of culture, such as ethical standards and law can only emerge and get implemented when people possess enough food for their survival. And when people get these supplied, they can then be engaged in observing ethical standards and laws. Would they really stick to moral qualities and virtues when their survival is threatened? Maybe there are some moralists, but for the general public, nothing matters more than survival and

basic living necessities.

The emergence of a strong culture is always accompanied by a strong economy. For example, in the peak time of the feudal system in ancient China, that is the Prosperity under the Reign of Taizong in Tang Dynasty, China boasted a strong culture, with stable social order and low criminal rate. And converging in Chang'an, the then Capital, were people from different ethnic groups and even merchants from south and central Asia. All surrounding countries would come to visit and admire this powerful dynasty. And this prosperity of culture can in no way be achieved without the flourishing economy at that time. As was recorded, during the reign of Taizong, appropriate policies were adopted to relieve the taxes on farmers, so agriculture gets developed, while farmer's income and living standards get improved. Besides, many other incentives were implemented to facilitate the commercial development during that period, regardless of the low status of merchants in other feudal dynasties. Besides, with an open policy, Chang'an also embraces people from different ethnic groups and countries, so the famous Silk Road and Marine Silk Road were fully made use of during that time. Take the Qing Dynasty as another example. As a dynasty bestowed with brilliant culture by its predecessors, it had inherited many precious cultural traditions. And with its prosperous economy in its first few years, it could still maintain its status as a strong nation. However, with its economy declining, people's lives as well as its status declined, so it could no longer overlook the world in its culture and power. What a pathetic fact! So a strong culture is not enough for a strong nation.

The development of culture and the prosperity of a nation can never be isolated from an orderly and reasonable social structure. Only with a favorable environment, can culture get nurtured and developed, while the overall

strength of a nation gets elevated. Another reason for the prosperity of Tang Dynasty is the sound social order, a clean government as well as the well-structured political system for officials. In this way, policies by the dynasty

can be well put in to practice and the social order can be maintained; that is why the economy and culture can flourish. While the failure of Qing Dynasty, caused in part by the declining economy, could also be attributed to the backward social structure—especially when its social system is far worse than that of the western powers—the chaotic social order and the corrupted officials. So the whole atmosphere could be corrupted and degraded, let to say the culture influenced by it. So a flourishing country also requires a sound social structure apart from a strong culture.

All in all, a single strong culture can never promise a strong nation and to achieve that goal, we must strike a balance between culture, economic development and social structure. Focus only on economic development while ignoring cultural development and social structure will cost a nation its long-term development and the incentive for its development. Whereas, focus solely on the adjustment of social structure while neglecting the development of culture and economy will bring the country to decline, and even destruction. And with the single attention paid only to cultural development and cultural activities, a country can never run far. So there is no such a priority between them, only by balancing their development, can a country gain sustainable and sustained development.

That may explain why in China's modernization drive, China sticks to the coordinated development of economic, social, cultural and ecological civilization. And in recent years, though China has attached great importance to culture as part of the soft power of a country and devoted to developing the soft power to promote China's image in the international world, hard power, such as economic, military and technological power have never been overlooked.

So stay cool in terms of the status of culture. It is important and essential, but not dominant. Let's seek a

road by striking a balance between culture, social structure and economic development and aspire for a strong and powerful China in the world.

2012年北京外国语大学811英语能力测试(写作)考研真题及详解

招生专业: 英语语言文学

科目名称: 英语能力测试(写作)

(考试时间3小时, 满分150分, 全部写在答题纸上, 答在试题页上无效)

I. Summarize the main points in the following essay (in about 300 words) and write a commentary (in about 500 words) relating the issue under discussion to Chinese reality. (70 points)

Americans today feel vaguely and uncomfortably disconnected. We tell pollsters that we wish we lived in a more civil, more trustworthy, more collectively caring community. The evidence from our inquiry shows that this longing is not simply nostalgia or “false consciousness.” Americans are right that the bonds of our communities have withered, and we are right to fear that this transformation has very real costs. The challenge for us, however, is not to grieve over social change, but to guide it.

Creating (or re-creating) social capital is no simple task. The ebbing of community over the last several decades has been silent and deceptive. We notice its effects in the strained interstices of our private lives and in the degradation of our public life. Weakened social capital is manifest in the things that have vanished almost unnoticed—neighborhood parties and get-together with friends, the unreflective kindness of strangers, the shared pursuit of the public good rather than a solitary quest for private goods. Naming this problem is an essential first step toward confronting it, just as labeling “the environment” allowed Americans to hear the silent spring and naming what Betty Friedan called “the problem that has no name” enabled women to articulate

what was wrong with their lives.

Naming our problem, however, is but a preliminary to the tougher challenge. In a world irrevocably changed, a world in which most women are employed, markets global, individuals and firms mobile, entertainment electronic, technology accelerating, how can we nevertheless replenish our stocks of social capital? Like most social issues, this one has two faces—one institutional and one individual.

We need to create new structures and policies (public and private) to facilitate renewed civic engagement. Leaders and activists in every sphere of American life must seek innovative ways to respond to the eroding effectiveness of the civic institutions and practices that we inherited. At the same time we need to fortify ourselves as individuals to re-connect, for we must overcome a familiar paradox of collective action. Even if I privately would prefer a more vibrant community, I cannot accomplish that goal on my own—it's not a meeting, after all, if only I show up, and it's not a club if I'm the only member. It is tempting to retreat to private pleasures that I can achieve on my own. But in so doing, I make it even harder for you to solve your version of the same problem. Actions by individuals are not sufficient to restore community, but they are necessary.

So our challenge is to restore American community for the twenty-first century through both collective and individual initiative. I recognize the impossibility of proclaiming any panacea for our nation's problems of civic disengagement. But I'm optimistic that, working together, we can once again be as civically creative as our Progressive forefathers.

Figuring out in detail how to renew our stock of social capital is a daunting task. There are six spheres that deserve special attention from aspiring social

capitalists: youth and schools; the workplace; urban and
metropolitan design; religion; arts and culture; and

politics and government. My focus in this essay is on youth and schools.

Philosophers from Aristotle and Rousseau to William James and John Dewey have begun discussions of civics with the education of youth. They have pondered the essential virtues and skills and knowledge and habits of democratic citizens and how to instill them. To start with, goals can be set to increase participation and deliberation in substantive activities—from team sports to choirs and from organized altruism to grassroots social movements.

The means to achieve these goals and the new forms of connectedness might be different from those of the mid-twentieth century, but some “old-fashioned” ideas are relevant. Take civics education lessons for example. We know that knowledge about public affairs and practice in everyday civic skills are prerequisites for effective participation. So reformed and improved civics education in school should be part of our strategy—not just “how a bill becomes a law,” but “How can I participate effectively in the public life of my community?” Imagine, for example, the civic lessons that could be imparted by a teacher in a high school, working with students to effect public change that her students think is important, like getting lights for a neighborhood basketball court.

We know other strategies that will work, too—meaningful, regular community service programs, well-designed service learning programs and intergenerational mentoring, to name just a few. Interestingly, research shows that voluntary programs seem to work as well as mandatory ones.

Volunteering in one's youth is among the strongest predictors of adult volunteering. Researches also show that smaller schools encourage more active student involvement and participation. Smaller schools, like smaller towns, generate higher expectations for mutual reciprocity and collective action. So deconcentrating mega-schools or creating smaller “schools within schools” will almost surely produce civic dividends.

Of course, our efforts to increase social participation among youth must not be limited to schooling, parents and the older generation should be involved. With the joint efforts of institutions and individuals, better plans and programs of a combination of values and fun can be designed to increase civic engagement of the youth and prepare them for the new century.

【答案】

Summary:

The bonds between American communities have weathered and people feel disconnected. So to improve the situation, the challenge lies in guiding it towards a better direction.

The declining of community is a silent and deceptive process, which can be demonstrated in the disengaged private and public life. But to realize and name the problem is just the first yet essential step forward. And after that, we are faced with tough challenges in this world with irrevocable changes, to recreate our social capital and this problem have to be dealt with from institutional and individual aspects. And we need to create new structures and improve the effectiveness of the civic institutions and practices and fortify the resolve of individuals to re-connect for collective action to deal with the problem. And I am confident that with the collective and individual initiative, we can again be civically connected.

To renew our stock of social capital, aspiring social capitalists should pay attention to six spheres, and this passage only focuses on youth and schools. Civics is an important topic of ancient philosophers for discussion and it is closely related with the education of youth. So the

first step is to set goals to increase participation and deliberation in substantive activities. Reformed and improved civics education is also part of our strategy for effective participation in the public life of the community. There are many other strategies including

voluntary programs, that will also work and smaller schools are also a useful method for student involvement and participation.

Parents and the older generation can be involved in our efforts and with the joint efforts of institutions and individuals, we can increase civic engagement of the youth and make them better prepared for the future.

Commentary:

China's Estranged Community

In this world with increasingly material prosperity, China is no exception from the eroding of the disengaged communities and relationships in its society.

The detached relationships and the degraded ethics can be found everywhere: from the defamiliarized relationship between neighbours to the ignored beggars on the way, from those intentionally engaged in finding fault with drivers by falling behind a car to those who would never offer their seats to the elders on a bus or help the elderly across the street. It seems that people's value of ethics have disappeared with the emergence of economic booming and better living standards.

Distrust permeates everywhere. However, as a nation with brilliant civilization and excellent traditions, China once boasted as a nation of virtues where the saying that "To have a close neighbour is far better than to have a distant relative" was well-known to every household, and where the virtue of mutual help and respecting the elderly was well advocated. What an irony it is to the reality nowadays. Though in some rural areas, the traditional

ethical standards are still observed in some way. But the erosion spreads everywhere quietly and progressively. And even those who insist may get frustrated and hurt at the daunting reality where these certain ethical qualities are refused and deemed silly. It seems as if when the

environment is polluted, our heart also catches an illness.

What can this be attributed to? I think there are two aspects which we may think over: the society and the individuals ourselves. First all, in this competitive and ambitious society, it seems that material wealth has become the primary measure for success. People can't help judging a person by his dress, by his salary and by his appearance other than something inside. And in such society, material wealth are indeed required for a home, for a family and for everything he needed to be safe and secure in this changeable world. We feel and we are made to feel that we need to be wealthy, so hurry, or you may be left behind by this cold world. It is not strange that people will become estranged and competitive in this society and get to be suspicious about others.

Of course, the individuals have their own part to blame. We are not persistent enough with who we want to be and our inner ethical standards and we can't defend ourselves from the temptation of the outside world and we get lost. And we become suspicious and can't truly trust those beside ourselves. And we think badly of other's kindness. Though this kind of estrangement and detachment need the action of both or all person, it is the distrust and coldness of each individual person that leads to the final fate.

But I believe in the heart of everyone, there remains a corner which cherish kindness and self-reflection. So I think with the importance gradually attached by the society to improve ethical conditions and personal quality, individuals should also find out the wrongdoings in ourselves and try to correct. When each individual tries, the society will improve and revive. In turn, it will cultivate a soil for people's self-reflection and self-improvement. Let's do it!

II. Write an essay (in about 800 words) on one of the issues below. Your essay should be clear in structure, logical in reasoning and accurate and appropriate in language. (80 points)

Topic 1:

Globalization is an irresistible trend. How can a country like China better preserve its cultural identity and use its culture as a soft power to promote its image internationally?

Topic 2:

Innovative spirit is one of the important qualities of a talent. What can Chinese schools and universities do to help cultivate more talents with innovative spirit?

【参考范文】

Schools Being the Hotbed for the Innovative Spirit

Innovation represents the wishes of human beings and all nations. The history of human civilization, filled with leaps from making fire by drilling wood to the invention of steam engine, from the smoking signal in the beacon tower to the popularization of Internet, symbolizes a history with constant innovation and unremitting struggle for excellence. The modern knowledge-based economy also yearns for innovation. The former president Jiang has made it clear that innovation is the soul for the progress of a nation, as well as the inexhaustible engine for the prosperity of a nation and a nation, deprived of innovative ability, can never rank ahead in the pantheon of nations in the world. While education in this respect has undertaken unique mission for cultivating innovative spirit and innovative talents of a nation.

So what can schools and universities do to live up to this mission? I believe there are two general directions we can

look at to deal with this:the schools or the universities and the teachers in them.

First of all,schools can do a lot to cultivate innovative spirit and talents,including providing a sound atmosphere for innovation,reform of their curriculum and their examination system,and encouragement of practice.A favorable and relaxed environment is quite important,in which students can have a good mood and inspiration for creativeness.Reform of the curriculum and examination system are specific measures which can relieve them from the heavy burden of school work and give them the time needed for imagination,which can conceive innovation. Schools should offer comprehensive classes for students to choose from,so as to find out their own interests and curiosity.And among those,schools should attach importance to the artistic subjects,music and painting included,for these subjects are beneficial for the development of students' creativity.Schools can also cooperate with the local artists for lectures or classes on artistic composing,which can help students understand how to extend an imagination to an artistic idea and then make it come true.And practice is also necessary for students to examine their ideas and learn from the experiments.Innovation means new or renewed things and its emergence may be uneven and checkered.In these circumstances,concentration and perseverance is key to success.So necessary practice and experiment are required for molding such spirit.And when the curriculum gets reformed,so should the examination system so as to ensure students the importance of innovation.I believe schools, if well done,can play a big role in promoting the innovative spirit in students.

Another important role lies in teachers.To cultivate

innovative spirit and talent, the teachers hired must possess several qualities: possessing creative spirit and awareness so as to enlighten the students; a good knowledge of the advanced achievements of the modern high and new technology to encourage the students for bold

exploration; the ability to engage in lifelong learning so as to tell students how to learn and having firm faith and excellent ethical quality for cultivating the values and personality of students.

Besides, there are other actions teachers should take.

First of all, they should have an updated and innovative philosophy for teaching. They should respect the personality and creativity of students and arouse the interest of students in learning and guide them to learn in appropriate and scientific way. Secondly, they should reform their teaching method. The traditional cramming method can discourage the students from being innovative, so new method like learning by discovering the problem, by the teachers' inspiration as well as learning by discussion should be utilized in a comprehensive way, so that students can explore the learning process and take initiative in it. Thirdly, teachers should encourage students to ask and even question teachers about the puzzled problems. They should encourage students to break away with the conventions and be bold in exploring forward. In this way, students can develop innovative ideas, which is fundamental for innovation. Finally, teachers have to change their criteria for evaluating students. Teachers' reaction can directly impact the students' feelings and a teacher's frustration may hurt students and smother their fire of unique ideas. So teachers, when assessing students, should encourage uniqueness and personal features and various approaches to the same answer as well. These can mean a lot to students.

So with the good atmosphere fostered by schools and teachers, students can benefit a lot. However, schools shouldn't be alone in this mission, and the society, family and government can also contribute a lot. Students, bestowed such responsibility in this modern age, should

take good advantage of these opportunities for self-improvement and self-perfection so as to make their own contribution to the motherland. And education system in particular, especially schools and universities should do

their part to the best for the sake of students,the
society and the whole Chinese nation.

2013年北京外国语大学811英语能力测试(写作)考研真题及详解

招生专业: 英语语言文学、新闻学

科目名称: 英语能力测试(写作)

I. Summarize the main points in the following essay (in about 300 words) and write a commentary (in about 500 words) relating the issue under discussion to Chinese reality. (70 points)

Over the last few years, one proposition has come to dominate the development policies of the United States and other major international development donors: poverty reduction is best achieved through equitable and sustainable economic growth. That proposition is both banal and troublesome. It is banal because inclusive and sustainable economic growth is poverty reduction, at least in its economic sense; it is troublesome because equitable and sustainable growth rarely if ever happens. When the goals of equity or sustainability conflict with the immediate political, economic, and security interests of the corporate or politically powerful in developed and developing countries, narrow self-interest prevails most of the time. More growth is constantly prioritized over better growth, thereby increasing inequality between the rich and poor and plundering increasingly scarce natural resources.

Champions of more growth continue to dismiss scarcity and sustainability threats, arguing that depletion of nonrenewable resources has been at the heart of most major development moments; human ingenuity will overcome any constraints to growth that emerge, or inequality and resource waste are a tolerable price to pay for building an economic elite whose wealth will trickle down to the poor in the long term. In economically and politically

nervous times many people agree with these arguments.

To confront these arguments in the next 25 years, progressives will have to find new ways to build a popular movement for sustainability and to combat resource scarcity, particularly in the United States. Why focus on the United States when its relative power is likely to decline in the coming decades? The emergence of new global powers (and particularly the growing power of emerging markets like Brazil, India, China, and Russia) has changed the global scarcity conundrum. Whereas convincing policy makers in Washington, D.C., to tackle the scarcity of natural resources is no longer close to sufficient for the health of our planet, the United States remains a necessary champion of any viable global governance mechanism capable of tackling the resource scarcity challenge.

Consider climate change: negotiations on a global deal to cut emissions stalled in negotiating the Kyoto Protocol, and made suboptimal progress at the 2010 conference on climate change in Copenhagen in part because successive U.S. presidents could not bring an acceptable deal to the table. Even if the presidents had a vision, they were domestically hamstrung by a Congress that refused to pass climate legislation, in large part because citizens in the United States do not care enough about the issue. In short, unless and until more politically influential citizens of the United States think climate change matters, there is no hope of a global deal.

Our collective failure, as humanitarians and conservation professionals, to build a broad political dialogue in the United States about managing global scarcity means that politicians can still use the concept of scarcity as anathema to growth.

Most innovation in the international-development sphere focuses on technical solutions to poverty. Life 2.0 could help reduce constraints on natural resources. We could have cows that eat less, defecate less, and yield meat that is more nutritious; drought-resistant grain that

produces twice as much edible rice while using less water; genetically modified organisms not just designed to make more profits for agricultural businesses, but to help poor farmers cultivate with less precipitation, land, soil nutrients, or time. It is important to recognize that these technological innovations will not necessarily benefit the poor, and even where they do, they will not be sufficient. We need new ideas to tackle the problem of power—who will benefit from technology?

The collective challenge of the humanitarian and conservation communities is to move toward environmental sustainability while increasing global equity, to give the poor more economic and political power; accommodating a growing global population; and pursuing global economic growth. These are not just technical challenges; they are also huge political challenges.

In the next 25 years, if humans are to start living within global ecological boundaries, consuming resources in more sustainable ways and ensuring that the poor are able to consume a larger share of food, we will need new ideas about power and politics. Conservation scientists and humanitarian organizations will need to engage each other in a discussion.

Scarcity does not mean the poor lack material goods or technology, but that they lack political power. Why are humanitarian and conservation professionals so nervous about casting scarcity as a political problem for the poor? Perhaps it is because of our shared political roots. Humanitarianism's *raison d'être* was a moral response to politics' ultimate failure: armed conflict. Similarly, the conservation movement is a response to the failure of politics to protect nature. Humanitarians and

conservationists want to generate ideas beyond politics,

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