

Sander van der Leeuw

Dean and Professor, School of Sustainability

Director and Professor, School of Human Evolution and Social Change

Education:

Ph.D., University of Amsterdam

M.A., Cambridge University

M.Litt., Prehistory and Medieval History, University of Amsterdam

B.A., History, University of Amsterdam

Dr. van der Leeuw was appointed Dean of the School of Sustainability at Arizona State University in 2010. He is an archaeologist and historian by training and has held teaching appointments at Leyden, Amsterdam, Cambridge (UK), and Paris (Panthéon-Sorbonne), and the School of Human Evolution and Change at Arizona State University, where he also holds the position of Director. He is an External Faculty Member of the Santa Fe Institute, a Correspondent of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a Member of the Institut Universitaire de France. In addition, Dr. van der Leeuw has held visiting positions at the University of Michigan, the University of Reading (UK), Australian National University and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Dr. van der Leeuw's research interests are in the study of long-term dynamics of socio-environmental systems, reconstruction of ancient technologies, (ancient and modern) regional man-land relationships, GIS and modeling. Since 1981, he has worked on applying Complex Systems Theory in various ways in all these domains.

From 1992, Dr. van der Leeuw has coordinated a series of major research projects financed by the European Union in the area of socio-natural interactions and environmental problems. Among these projects are ARCHAEOMEDES I (1992-1994) and II (1996-1999), concerned with understanding and modeling the natural and anthropogenic causes of desertification, land degradation and land abandonment and their spatial manifestations, using the Complex Systems approach. Up to 65 researchers from 11 European institutions were involved, which included disciplines from Physics, Mathematics and Computing, via Geology, Hydrology and the Life Sciences to Sociology, Social Anthropology, History and Archaeology. The fieldwork spanned all the countries along the northern Mediterranean rim. The "Environmental Communication" project (1996-1998) studied the difficulties of communication between scientists and decision-makers, while the MODULUS project (1997-1999) modeled land-use decision making from a complex systems perspective. The ISCOM project (The Information Society as a Complex System, 2003-2006) investigated the relationship between innovation and urban dynamics.

