



Environment
and Society

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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Dear friends,

It has been a tumultuous six months since our last newsletter, and there is much about which to grieve during these difficult times. I would like to offer my condolences to any and all among you whom have suffered difficulties and losses. In this update, I would also like to celebrate our accomplishments, and our collective commitments to scholarship, mentorship, and collegiality, of which there is plenty of evidence!

To begin, I would like to report on RC24's participation in the World Forum of Sociology, our first major international conference in ISA to be held entirely virtually. Doing so demanded a herculean effort on the part of organizers to pivot from our original plans for an in-person meeting in Porto Alegre, and on the part of presenters and participants, including many of you. In fact, despite the challenges associate with different time zones (some members were presenting in the middle of the night!), connectivity issues, and struggles among many to juggle work and home schedules, we lost few sessions and presentations because of the shift to a virtual format. RC24 hosted 22 regular sessions, one joint session and one plenary session. In total, 190 papers were presented at our sessions, and the sessions themselves were well-attended.

We were also able to deliver on our pre-conference event, which was intended to highlight the scholarly contributions of our Brazilian colleagues in particular, was held the Saturday prior to the beginning of the virtual Forum. Titled Environmental Justice and Transition in the Global South, we adopted a panel format for the event, reserving lots of time for discussion. About 50 scholars participated, mainly from Brazil, and including several others from around the world.

Our newly-discovered capacities for virtual engagement led to two additional online events that have taken place since the Forum, both spearheaded by our members. The first includes a workshop focused on mental health in the academy, targeting young scholars in particular. Facilitated by RC24 members Dr. Catherine Wong and Angeline Letourneau, the workshop attracted 30 participants, and it was so successful we are considering holding workshops focused on mental health on a regular basis. The second online event was a symposium titled Weathering Extremes: African Environmental Politics in a Destabilized World, that took place 26-27 May, and organized by the RC24 members Lotsmart Fongjong, Frank Matose and David Sonnenfeld. Please

join me in thanking these colleagues for taking the initiative to offer these valuable opportunities for our community.

I would also like to provide you with updates on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion activities. As reported previously, our Board and Executive struck a committee in 2018 to consider how to ensure the pursuit of equity, diversity, and inclusion in our professional association. Following on the activities of this committee, I engaged the vice-president Research of ISA to discuss this issue and to stress its importance for ISA. The ISA Research Council subsequently invited me to initiate a broader, ISA-wide committee tasked to develop EDI-supportive policy and strategies to present to the ISA President's Council. I reached out to the Presidents of all the other research groups within the ISA seeking their participation. I am happy to report that invitation was enthusiastically received, and we now have a 12-member committee, and held our first meeting last month, so stay tuned!

I would also like to share the news, in case you have not heard it already though email communications from the ISA, that World Congress--set to take place in Melbourne in July 2022--has been postponed to 2023. Several organizational implications resulted from this decision, importantly including the extension of association memberships, and terms for our office holders, by one year. The RC24 Board decided to continue, however, with the four-year cycle of the Frederick H. Buttell Award, which means the next award will be granted in 2022. We may choose to revisit the timing of our Buttell Award in the future, which would require a change in our statutes.

Finally, as a result of the move toward greater levels of virtual engagement during the pandemic, and our relative success in doing so, there is now a lively discussion taking place across the ISA regarding whether to shift all future World Forums to an online format, while continuing to hold our Congresses in-person. There are many reasons in support for this potential shift that have arisen, including two in particular: the increased accessibility among those under financial constraint; and growing support for efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. As we all know, there are many positive aspects of meeting in person that are difficult to measure, making this a difficult decision. This discussion has by no means been resolved as of this date, and I welcome your input!

Stay safe,

Debra

A NOTE FROM THE SECRETARY

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Dear RC24 members,

It is hard to believe that another 6 months have passed since our last newsletter. For many of us it has been a difficult time, with health concerns, mounting family and care obligations and unexpected shifts in work practices taking up much of our time. This said, we have also had the privilege to witness the enduring commitment and amazing intellectual creativity of our members during the RC24 pre-conference and the ISA World Forum of Sociology earlier this year. I managed to attend a number of sessions and was very impressed by the high quality and scientific rigor of the presentations and the excellent discussions that followed. In particular, I enjoyed the format of the RC24 pre-conference which combined pre-recorded talks with short 'spotlight presentations' and extensive discussions that stimulated many new ideas.

Our newsletter also continues to reflect the vigour and vibrancy of our research community. Once again I would like to thank all those of you who contributed by sending in their publications, short research notes and information about upcoming conferences. Regarding the list of publications, plans are afoot to approach some of the contributors to turn their publication into an interactive and engaging talk, to be presented as part of a proposed new RC24 Research Talks series. This series will take place online and is intended to create new opportunities for exchange between RC24 members in between World Congress/Forum and to showcase the excellent work of RC24 members. More details to follow.

Our next newsletter will be published in December 2021. Please send me your contributions by 15th November 2021. In addition to information about new publications and upcoming workshops and conferences, I very much welcome research notes, workshop summaries or news of awards received (max. 200 words).

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

The 8th International Symposium on Environmental Sociology in East Asia (ISESEA-8) 5-7 November 2021

Environmental sociologists in East Asia have formed a network and organised a series of biennial conferences titled International Symposium on Environmental Sociology in East Asia (ISESEA). This fall, the academic meeting will be held either online or on Yuhua Campus, Yunnan Minzu University, Yunnan, China. <https://www.ynni.edu.cn/web/en/1>

Theme: Environment, Resource, and Social Development in East Asia

Fee for Attendance: Free

Schedule: Deadline for abstract submission has already passed. Registration will be open after June 5.

Contact: Dr Li Yunxia isesea8@163.com

ICESS 2022: 16. International Conference on Energy, Society and Sustainability

January 14-15, 2022 in Zurich, Switzerland

Deadline for submission of papers: July 14, 2021

<https://waset.org/energy-society-and-sustainability-conference-in-january-2022-in-zurich>

ICSEN002 2022: 16. International Conference on Sociology and Environment

September 23-24, 2022 in London, United Kingdom

Deadline for submission of papers: July 14, 2021

<https://waset.org/sociology-and-environment-conference-in-september-2022-in-london>

Please see also <https://conferenceindex.org/conferences/environmental-sociology> for additional conferences dedicated to environmental sociology.

RECENT MEMBER ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH NOTES

Reflexive Environmental Sociology

by Raymond Murphy

I just published a bookⁱ which analysed how deep the problem of climate change is because of society's dependence on fossil fuels as the energy for almost everything that is needed and enjoyed. The book then assessed proposed solutions. The analysis has troubling implications for sociology practices, but there is a partial remedy.

Impact scientists describe fossil-fuelled climate change in terms of gigatons of global emissions, but this has little meaning for non-scientists unless disaggregated into emissions resulting from social practices.ⁱⁱ Take flying. Passengers assume their flight has little consequence for climate change, but the cumulative emissions from jet-fuel combustion lifting and propelling heavy planes are massive because four billion passengers fly annually. Average economy-class return flights between London and Porto Alegre, Brazil emit 3,400 kilograms of carbon dioxide per passenger, which is 38 times the weight of average 90 kilogram passengers. More spacious business class is responsible for double those emissions, and first class triple. International conferences with participants jet fuelling around the planet produce huge emissions and environmental costs. This includes ISA World Congresses and World Forums. People wish for just-in-time technological fixes, perhaps planes propelled by green hydrogen, but these are uncertain. Relying on future technological mastery of nature to avoid modifying present fossil-fuelled practices is dangerous. Mandatory offsetting environmental damage by incorporating the full cost of combusting jet fuel into plane fares is needed. It would add US\$101 to economy-class fares in the London-Porto Alegre example if spent in developing countries and three times more if spent in wealthy countries. Proportionately higher amounts would be added to business and first-class fares. Multiplied by

four billion tickets annually, this would provide needed funds for mitigation, adaptation, and clean-energy research.

Technological fixes and socioeconomic changes will, however, take time even as atmospheric carbon rapidly accumulates because of aviation emissions. Therefore, I suggest reducing emissions by making World Forums permanently virtual. The February 2021 virtual Forum, which avoided enormous emissions, was remarkably successful for exchanging research and even for networking. Virtual conferences are also less expensive and more accessible. In-person conferences and visiting distant places are enjoyable, but we environmental sociologists should lead the decrease of dangerous social practices, including sociological ones.

ⁱMurphy, Raymond. 2021. *The Fossil-Fuelled Climate Crisis: Foresight or Discounting Danger?* Palgrave-Macmillan (<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030533243#reviews>)

ⁱⁱ Murphy, Raymond. 2021. "On translating climate science into a practical understanding" in *Social Science Matters* <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/blogs/social-sciences/murphy>

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Frederick H. Buttel International Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Environmental Sociology

Environmental sociology's most prestigious international award – *Frederick H. Buttel International Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Environmental Sociology* – is now open for nominations.

The award serves to recognize and showcase outstanding contributions by individual scholars to the study of environment-society relations during the four-year period 2018-22 (i.e. after the last nomination).

Any member of ISA and/or RC24 can nominate a person for the award. A nomination should be supported by at least two other members. Nominations should include the following information about the nominee:

- Cover letter providing the rationale for the nomination
- CV
- Publication list

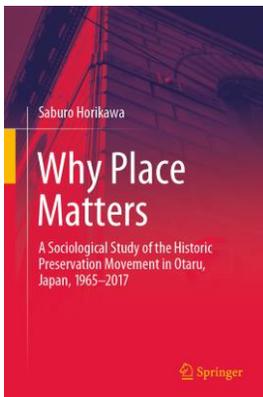
The award ceremony will take place at the RC24 business meeting at the ISA World Congress in Melbourne. For more information about the award and its rules, please visit our website: <http://www.isarc24.com/fred-buttel-award.html>.

The nomination period closes 1 December 2021. Please submit the nomination to rolf.lidskog@oru.se

PUBLICATIONS

- Bai, Y. and Givens, J.E. (2021) Ecologically Unequal Exchange of Plastic Waste? *Journal of World-Systems Research* 27(1): 265-287.
- Blue, G. and Davidson, D. (2021) Co-producing uncertainty in public science: The case of genomic selection in forestry. *Public Understanding of Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0963662520982540>

- Briscoe, M. D., Givens, J.E. and Alder, M. (2021) Intersectional Indicators: A Race and Sex-Specific Analysis of the Carbon Intensity of Well-Being in the United States, 1998–2009. *Social Indicators Research* 155(1): 97-116.
- Fischer-Kowalski, M., Löw, M., Noll, D., Petridis, P. and Skoulikidis, N. (2020) Samothraki in Transition: A Report on a Real-World Lab to Promote the Sustainability of a Greek Island. *Sustainability* 12(5): 1932. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12051932>.
- Fischer-Kowalski, M., Rovenskaya, E., Krausmann, F., Pallua, I. and McNeill, J. R. (2019) Energy transitions and social revolutions. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 138: 69–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2018.08.010>.
- Givens, J. E., Olson Hazboun, S., Briscoe, M.D. and Krannich, R.S. (2021) Climate change views, energy policy support, and personal action in the Intermountain West: the anti-reflexivity effect. *Society & Natural Resources* 34(1): 1-23.
- Haberl, H., Schmid, M., Haas, W., Wiedenhofer, D., Rau, H. and Winiwarter, V. (2021) Stocks, flows, services and practices: Nexus approaches to sustainable social metabolism. *Ecological Economics*, 182: 106949 [https://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S0921-8009\(21\)00007-0](https://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S0921-8009(21)00007-0)
- Hulme, M., Lidskog, R., White, J. and Standing, A. (2020) Social scientific knowledge in times of crises: What climate change can learn from coronavirus (and vice versa)? *WIREs Climate Change*, 11 (4): e656. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.656>
- Hysing, E. and Lidskog, R. (2021) Do conceptual innovations facilitate transformative change? The case of biodiversity governance. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 8: 61221. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2020.612211>



Horikawa, S. (2021) *Why Place Matters: A Sociological Study of the Historic Preservation Movement in Otaru, Japan, 1965–2017*. Springer. Available as e-book.

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-71600-4#toc>

This book is based on the author’s intensive fieldwork, spanning more than three decades. It chronicles a major movement that shaped the preservation policy in Japan in the 1980s and 1990s, providing “thick descriptions” of preservationists’ views and practices and their dynamics over time. The book reveals the movement’s efforts to bring about change, as opposed to preserving the status quo. Through this emphasis on change, the movement sought to ensure that the residents’ “place” would continue to be theirs.

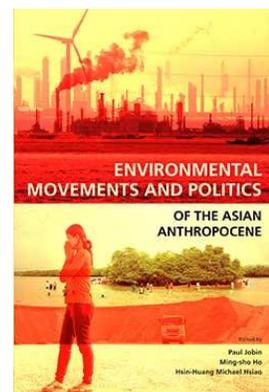
The original Japanese version of this book (published by the University of Tokyo Press) has won three major academic awards; most notably, “The Ishikawa Prize,” the highest award bestowed by the City Planning Institute of Japan. It is extremely unusual that a sociology book should receive such important recognition from the city planning discipline.

Jobin, P., Ho, M. and Hsiao, H.M. (2021) *Environmental Movements and Politics of the Asian Anthropocene*. ISEAS Publishing.

<https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/2497#contents>

“This collection provides a powerful and sophisticated analysis of how environmental movements influence politics in Asia, and how politics influences movements.”

John S. Dryzek, Centenary Professor, University of Canberra



- Jorgenson, A. K., et al. (2021) Inequality amplifies the negative association between life expectancy and air pollution: A cross-national longitudinal study. *Science of The Total Environment* 758: 143705.
- Karsgaard, C. and Davidson, D. (2021) Must we wait for youth to speak out before we listen? International youth perspectives and climate change education. *Educational Review*, Special Issue: Youth Activism, Climate Change, and Education. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1905611>
- Knight, K. W. and Givens, J.E. (2021) Gender and climate change views in context: a cross-national multilevel analysis. *The Social Science Journal* (2021): 1-18.
- Kukkonen, A., Stoddart, M.C.J. and Ylä-Anttila, T. (2021) Actors and Justifications in Media Debates on Arctic Climate Change in Finland and Canada: A Network Approach. *Acta Sociologica* 64(1): 103-117.
- Leonard, L. and Lidskog, R. (2020) Industrial scientific expertise and civil society engagement: reflexive scientisation in the South Durban Industrial Basin, South Africa. *Journal of Risk Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2020.1805638>
- Leonard, L. and Lidskog, R. (2021) Conditions and constrains for reflexive governance of industrial risks: The case of the South Durban Industrial Basin, South Africa. *Sustainability* 13(10): 5679. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13105679>
- Lidskog, R. and Lockie, S. (2020) Globalizing environmental sociology. In K. Legun, J. Keller, M. Bell and M. Carolan (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Sociology. Volume I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 30-46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108554510.004>
- Lidskog, R. and Standring, A. (2020). The institutional machinery of expertise: producing facts, figures and futures in COVID-19. *Acta Sociologica*, 63(4): 443–446 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699320961807>
- Lidskog, R., Elander, I. and Standring, A. (2020) COVID-19, the climate and transformative change: Comparing the social anatomies of crises and their regulatory responses. *Sustainability*, 12(16): 6337; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12166337>
- Matschoss, K., Fahy, F., Rau, H. et al. (2021). Challenging practices: experiences from community and individual living lab approaches. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy* 17(1): 136-152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2021.1902062>

- Romero-Lankao, P. *et al.* (2021) Of Actors, cities and energy systems: advancing the transformative potential of urban electrification. *Progress in Energy* 3(3).
<https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/2516-1083/abfa25/pdf>
- Yang, Y. and Stoddart, M.C.J. (2021) Climate Change Communication Networks on Weibo: Public Engagement in Authoritarian Environmentalism in China. *Politics and Governance* 9(2): 146-158.

VIDEOS, TALKS ETC.

SCORAI Europe Sustainable Consumption Teaching Series

This series of short video presentations is intended as a teaching tool to encourage critical thinking about (un)sustainable consumption. The SC Teaching Series is coordinated by RC24 member Marlyne Sahakian at the University of Geneva and received funding from the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, sd-universities programme (2014-16).

<https://scorai.net/teaching/videos/>

University of Geneva Sustainable Consumption Brown Bag Talk – ‘**Mobility practices across the life course**’, presented by Henrike Rau, LMU Munich

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQpZqhyvie0>

Energies United Fireside Chats on Energy & Sense-making - Marina Fischer-Kowalski in conversation with Hartmut Rosa (in German): <https://youtu.be/blF0ysq9xTQ>

WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE REPORTS

RC24 Workshop on ‘Academic mental health and well-being’

Angeline Letourneau, University of Alberta, aml3@ualberta.ca

On April 9, 2021, RC-24 hosted a workshop on ‘Academic mental health and well-being.’ Organized by RC24 member Catherine Mei Ling Wong, the workshop addressed the subject of mental health in academia, focusing on two areas: burnout and secondary trauma. The workshop’s objective was to provide early-career researchers with tools to identify early warning signals and strategies to cope with their mental health and well-being challenges. The workshop blended presentations from guest speakers and group discussions on mental health.

We were fortunate to have two thoughtful guest speakers join us. Dr. Raquel Peel from the University of Southern Queensland in Australia who spoke about burnout in the Academy. Dr. Peel covered essential basics such as what burnout is, factors that can lead to it, and red flags that often indicate burnout. Her presentation was empowering, offering an in-depth description of how we can recognize burnout within ourselves and our peers, and ways to mitigate or manage this mental health challenge.

Dr. Alisa Hasamoh from the Prince of Songkla University in Thailand addressed the issue of secondary trauma. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a frequently unrecognized result of fieldwork and can be both jarring and difficult to reconcile for those experiencing it. The risk of secondary trauma is particularly high for environmental scholars given their proximity to ecological destruction and the disruption or loss of human lives. Dr. Hasamoh shared her personal experience dealing with PTSD after her own field research, relaying to us the challenges she faced in not only recognizing how she had been affected by her research, but in finding help and support in order to overcome it.

It is no secret that academia is not a career path associated with good working conditions. Often, it can feel as though mental health and careers in academia are in constant conflict. Our conversations in this workshop with our guest speakers and among participants made two things very clear: managing your mental health requires a good deal of checking in with yourself and good mental health is closely related to the connections that we share with those around us. Dr. Peel, Dr. Hasamoh, and the workshop participants discussed a variety of measures that each of us can use to take ownership of our own mental health. Many mental health campaigns focus on these methods. However, what is equally important though considerably more challenging to address, is the need for community and peer support in managing mental health. After all, our ability to handle workplace stress is only effective to a certain degree, at which point other factors such as support from our supervisors and mentors, or the willingness of colleagues to listen to and empathize with us during particularly challenging times play a significant role.

A key learning from this workshop has been the desire among workshop participants for connection with other environmental researchers. Repeatedly throughout the workshop, participants emphasized their appreciation for a space to talk about these issues that define their careers and everyday lives and expressed their hope for more conversations like this to take place in the future. While the mental health supports available to participants varied greatly depending on their home institutions, even those from more 'supportive' institutions expressed an interest in hosting future events that facilitate more casual and relationship-oriented exchanges.

If you are interested in helping to organize or taking part in future opportunities to connect with other RC24 members to discuss mental health issues, please contact me at aml3@ualberta.ca

NEWS ON THE RC24 WEBSITE

Keynote talk - 'Toward a new paradigm for conservation/nature protection and human livelihoods'

Speaker: Dr. Nícia Givá, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique, delivered as part of the RC24 virtual symposium 'Weathering Extremes: African Environmental Politics in a Destabilized World,' May 26, 2021.

About the speaker: Dr. Nícia Givá has a PhD in Environmental Communication from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU); and an MSc in Education and Training for Development, from the University of Reading, UK. Her work focuses on community-based participatory

development, gender equity and empowerment, and institutional and networking analysis, among other areas.

<http://www.isarc24.com/activities.html>

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