



**ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY NEWS**

Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's  
Section on Environmental Sociology

Winter 2021

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**SECTION CHAIR'S MESSAGE**

**W**elcome to 2021! We hope this newsletter finds you healthy and finding good things where you can. With the incoming Biden Administration, environmental sociologists once again have the opportunity to study the potential for the U.S. federal government to institute environmental reforms and justice along with the role of environmental movements and counter-movements. We can hope it is the dawn of some changes in environmental regulation.

I also encourage you to keep an eye open for upcoming registration for the online ASA meeting this year. Norah MacKendrick, chair-elect, has put together an exciting call for proposals covering climate change and social transformations, environmental justice, and a joint session with the Section on Indigenous People and Native Nations. While I miss seeing colleagues in person, we must also consider that this new on-line format gives us the opportunity to reduce our environmental impacts while also reducing some of the barriers to participation by eliminating the costs of travel (though membership and registration fees of course still result in inequalities).



I hope that many of you have submitted papers and that we will have the opportunity to learn from each other and interact in August.

With warm regards,

Rachael Shwom  
Chair, Environmental Sociology Section of the  
American Sociological Association  
Associate Professor, Department of Human  
Ecology  
Rutgers University

## CALLS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Call for Paper: ASA 2021 Annual Meeting

Our section sessions are listed [here](#) and in the body of this message. This year we have a joint session with the new section on Indigenous Peoples and Native Nations. Thank you to Kari Norgaard and Angela Gonzales for helping to make this happen.

#### Here are some important details:

1. The meeting this year is virtual.
2. The deadline to submit a full paper or extended abstract is **Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 11:59 p.m Eastern.**
3. For more information on how and where to submit click [here](#). You can submit a **full paper** or **extended abstract** of 3-5 pages. If you submit an extended abstract you have until early July to submit a full paper. Given the interruptions to our research and writing posed by the pandemic and extra caregiving work, don't hesitate to take advantage of the extended abstract option.
4. If you are new to our section or haven't yet joined us, please consider submitting to one of our section sessions or roundtables. And please forward this email to colleagues and encourage them to submit.
5. Our section sessions are as follows:

#### i) Climate Change and Social Transformation

Papers in this session will address social and political responses to climate change, broadly construed. We welcome papers that investigate the disparate impacts of climate change on groups or populations, recovery from and adaptation to climate-related disasters, political economic approaches to addressing the causes or consequences of climate change, as well as new waves of protest movements incorporating climate justice as a central goal.

#### ii) Environmental Justice: Critical and Multi-Scalar Perspectives

This session will consider how power structures and social systems bear upon the distribution of environmental inequalities and shape how groups respond to environmental injustices. We welcome papers exploring the intersection of multiple categories of difference, including (though not limited to) race, ethnicity, class, citizenship status, gender, and sexuality. Papers can employ theoretical or empirically-driven methods and can examine environmental justice issues at multiple spatial or geographic scales.

#### iii) Environmental Sociology, Indigenous Peoples and Native Nations

Co-organized with Angela Gonzales, Arizona State University

This session will consider Indigenous approaches to the environment and climate change, Native resistance to ecological damage, and the ways settler colonialism structures environmental practices and ideologies. Co-organized with the section on Indigenous Peoples and Native Nations.

#### iv) Environmental Sociology: Open Topic

This is an open session incorporating papers that do not fall within the themed sessions but fit within the broader category of environmental sociology.

## Call for Award Nominations: Olsen Student Paper and Schnaiberg Outstanding Publication Awards

**The Marvin E. Olsen Student Paper Award** recognizes outstanding papers presented by graduate students at the annual American Sociological Association meetings. In addition to recognition, recipients will receive a modest monetary award to help defray expenses associated with registration fees for the ASA meeting. Nominees are limited to graduate student-authored papers accepted for presentation at the 2021 annual meeting. The paper can be presented at any session or roundtable at ASA. Papers with one or multiple graduate student authors are eligible. All members of the ASA and the Section are invited to submit nominations. To nominate a paper, please send a PDF copy of the paper along with a nomination letter and confirmation that it has been accepted for annual meeting presentation by **March 15, 2021** to **Sara Grineski** at [sara.grineski@soc.utah.edu](mailto:sara.grineski@soc.utah.edu).

The Award Committee includes Michael Mendez, Jean Sapinski, Michael Murphy and Anne Mook.

**The Allan Schnaiberg Outstanding Publication Award** is given for publications of special noteworthiness in the field of environmental sociology. It is given in alternate years for either (a) a book in even years or (b) a single article in odd years. This year the committee will consider articles published within the period, January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2020. All members of the ASA and the Section on Environmental Sociology are encouraged to submit nominations; self-nominations are welcome. To nominate an article, please send a PDF copy of the paper along with a nomination letter by **March 1, 2021** to **Sara Grineski** at [sara.grineski@soc.utah.edu](mailto:sara.grineski@soc.utah.edu).

The Award Committee includes Tarique Niazi, Angela Mertig and Evan Shenkin.

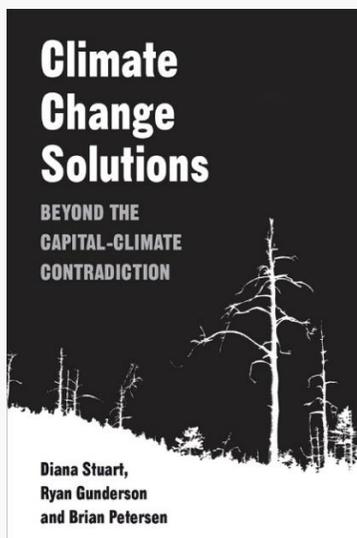
## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

*Climate Change Solutions Beyond the Capital-Climate Contradiction*

Diana Stuart, Ryan Gunderson, and Brian Petersen

University of Michigan Press

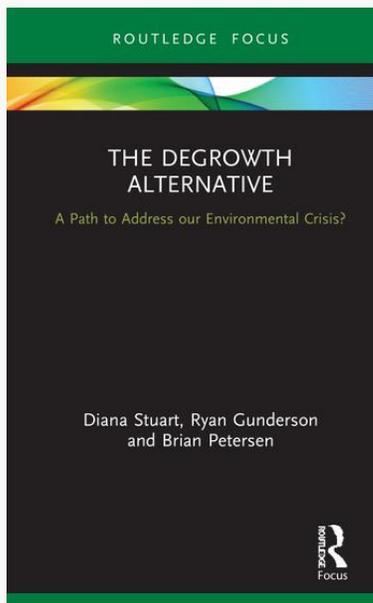


Climate Change Solutions represents an application of critical theory to examine proposed solutions to climate change. Drawing from Marx's negative conception of ideology, the authors illustrate how ideology continues to conceal the capital-climate contradiction or the fundamental incompatibility between growth-dependent capitalism and effectively and justly mitigating climate change. Dominant solutions to climate change that offer minor changes to the current system fail to address this contradiction. However, alternatives like degrowth involve a shift in priorities and power relations and can offer new systemic arrangements that confront and move beyond the capital-climate contradiction. While there are clear barriers to a systemic transition that prioritizes social and ecological well-being, such a transition is possible and desirable.

## *The Degrowth Alternative: A Path to Address our Environmental Crisis?*

Diana Stuart, Ryan Gunderson, Brian Petersen

Routledge



Degrowth is a planned economic contraction in wealthy countries that reduces production and consumption—and, by extension, greenhouse gas emissions and stresses on global ecosystems—to sustainable levels within ecological limits. This book explores the idea of degrowth as an economic alternative to offer a more sustainable and just future.

A growing number of scientists and scholars now recognize that a system that continues to prioritize economic growth will prevent us from effectively addressing the dual environmental crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. To establish the case for degrowth, the text opens by posing critical questions about our current system and identifying its limitations, as well as discussing the ineffectiveness of "false solutions" that seem to offer something new but would actually preserve the status quo. The concept of degrowth is then fully introduced along with a discussion of core principles and goals as well as major critiques and questions. The book explores what living in a degrowth society would entail and the policies needed to support degrowth. Finally, the work concludes by examining the opportunities and

challenges for degrowth and a successful transition to a sustainable steady-state economy.

This book provides an advanced introduction to the environmental issues around degrowth for students, scholars and activists interested in economic alternatives, sustainability and the environment.

**Diana Stuart** is Associate Professor in the Sustainable Communities Program and School of Earth and Sustainability at Northern Arizona University.

**Ryan Gunderson** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Gerontology at Miami University.

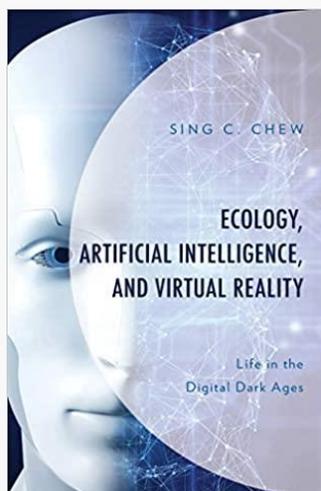
**Brian Petersen** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography, Planning and Recreation and Program in Sustainable Communities at Northern Arizona University.

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## *Ecology, Artificial Intelligence, and Virtual Reality: Life in the Digital Dark Ages.*

Sing Chew

Rowman & Littlefield.



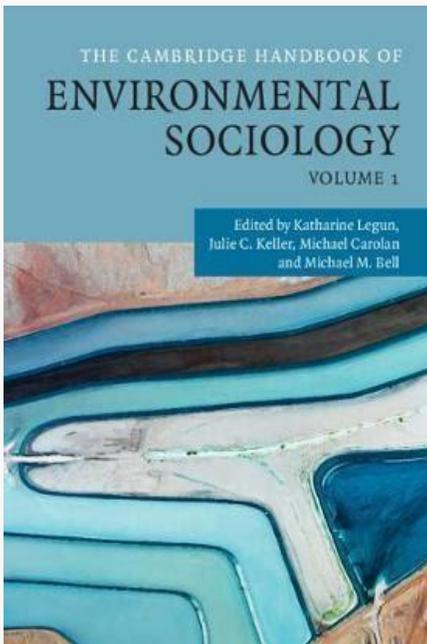
We live in a digitalized world that is experiencing environmental changes, scarcity of natural resources, global pandemics, mass migrations, and burgeoning global populations. In *Ecology, Artificial Intelligence, and Virtual Reality*, Sing C. Chew proposes that we meet these challenges by examining the connected global world we live in and by considering the advances that have been made in digitalization, miniaturization, dematerialization, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented realities, and machine learning, which have increased our socioeconomic and political productivity. Chew outlines potential structural avenues to address these challenges, suggests pragmatic choices to ease living during these chaotic crisis conditions, and outlines solutions that will enable us to traverse systemic crises.

**Sing C. Chew** is professor emeritus at Humboldt State University and founding editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Nature and Culture*.

*The Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Sociology*

Edited by Katharine Legun, Julie C. Keller, Michael Carolan and Michael M. Bell

Cambridge University Press



We are pleased to announce the publication of the Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Sociology. Over recent decades, Environmental Sociology has matured, diversified, and attracted an international following, and this expansive text, covering 60 chapters across two volumes, attempts to capture that depth and vibrancy. The text covers the rich theoretic foundations of the discipline, tracing some of its roots and future directions, as well as novel approaches and a diversity in emerging substantive areas of research. Many of the authors of the chapters are active members of the ASA Environmental Sociology Section, and we hope that the text resonates with the membership broadly and has some elements of familiarity, while also providing new ideas; fodder to broaden conversations, invigorate lines of thought, and inspire young colleagues who are considering venturing into the intellectual orbit of environmental sociology. While we aimed to capture the diversity of our work, the interdisciplinarity we tend to all tread, and the global interconnections of our research, we also value the tools we share and bigger questions to which we anchor our work, so crucial for confronting the fundamental challenges we face globally.

**Katharine Legun** is Assistant Professor in Strategic Communication at Wageningen University

**Julie C. Keller** is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Rhode Island.

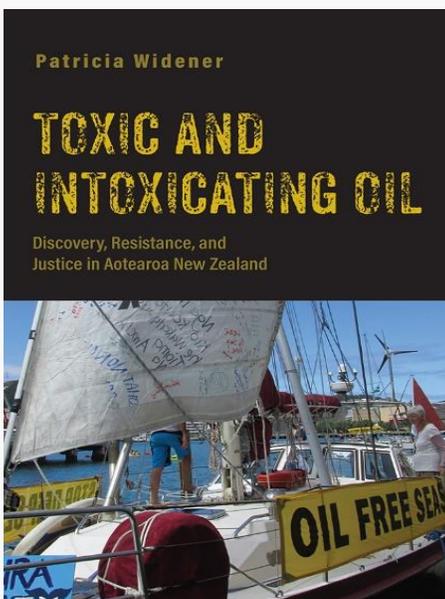
**Michael Carolan** is a Professor of sociology at Colorado State University

**Michael M. Bell** is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor of Community and Environmental Sociology of University of Wisconsin–Madison

*Toxic and Intoxicating Oil: Discovery, Resistance, and Justice in Aotearoa New Zealand*

Patricia Widener

Rutgers University Press



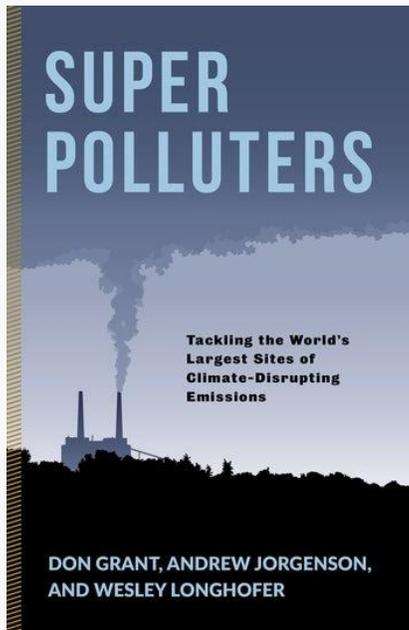
Unlike others who have experienced an oil spill, or hydraulic fracturing, or offshore oil and gas exploration, or climate fears, or disputes over unresolved Indigenous claims, New Zealanders were facing each one almost simultaneously. Collectively, these grievances mobilized civil society to construct and then to magnify a comprehensive critical oil narrative – in dialogue, local practice, and national aspiration. In this allied ethnography, quotes are used extensively to convey the tenor of some of the country's most passionate and committed people, including many community advocates and anti-drilling activists who believed themselves to be on the front lines of the oil industry's promotions and inevitable decline.

**Patricia Widener** is an associate professor of sociology at Florida Atlantic University.

## *Super Polluters: Tackling the World's Largest Sites of Climate-Disrupting Emissions*

Don Grant, Andrew K. Jorgenson, and Wesley Longhofer

Columbia University Press.



Fossil-fueled power plants are the single largest sites of anthropogenic greenhouse gases, making them one of the greatest threats to our planet's climate. Significant as they are, we lack a comprehensive understanding of the social causes that enable power plant emissions and continue to delay their reduction. *Super Polluters* offers a groundbreaking global analysis of carbon pollution caused by the generation of electricity, pinpointing who bears the most responsibility for the energy sector's vast emissions and what can be done about them. The sociologists Don Grant, Andrew Jorgenson, and Wesley Longhofer analyze a novel dataset on the carbon dioxide emissions and structural attributes of thousands of fossil-fueled power plants around the world, identifying which plants discharge the most carbon. They investigate the global, organizational, and political conditions that explain these hyper-emitting facilities' behavior and call into question the claim that improvements in technical efficiency will always reduce emissions. Grant, Jorgenson, and Longhofer demonstrate which energy and climate policies are most effective at abating power-plant pollution, emphasizing how mobilized citizen activism shapes those outcomes. A comprehensive account of who bears the blame for our

warming planet, *Super Polluters* points to more feasible and effective emission reduction strategies that target the world's most profligate polluters.

**Don Grant** is professor of sociology at the University of Colorado Boulder

**Andrew Jorgenson** is professor and chair of sociology at Boston College.

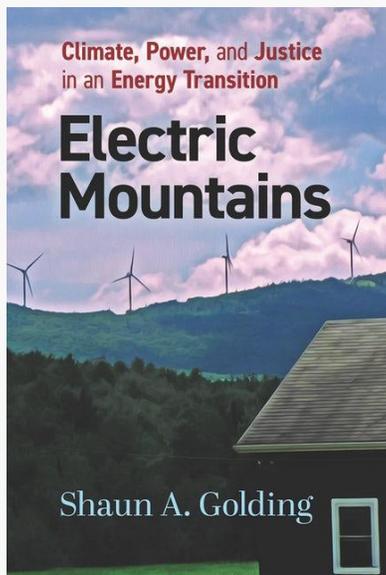
**Wesley Longhofer** is associate professor of organization and management at Emory University.

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## *Electric Mountains: Climate, Power, and Justice in an Energy Transition*

By Shaun A. Golding

Rutgers University Press



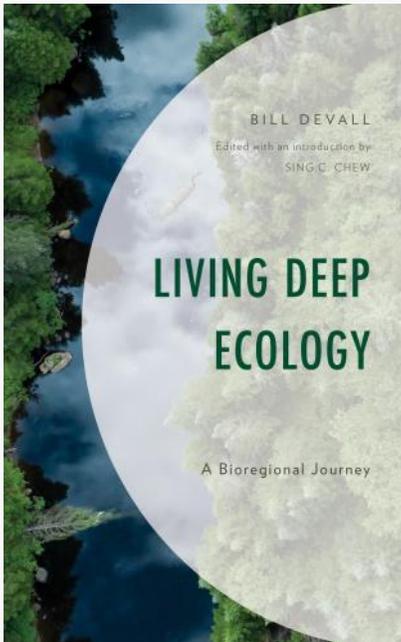
The world's quickening energy transition is heralded by iconic changes to our landscapes and exciting new modes of transit, heating, and cooling. And yet society's shift away from climate-harming energy is far from the urgent transformation warranted by climate change predictions. *Electric Mountains* explores the dissonance between electricity transition and energy transformation through the story of a region's renewable energy policies and the popular backlash against them. Contextualizing narratives commonly dismissed as NIMBYism, *Electric Mountains* engages with the themes of rurality, risk, justice, and Ecological Modernization in predominantly white and ecologically progressive Northern New England. It encourages students and practitioners of Environmental Sociology to discern nuance across different regional political economies of energy and to recognize the imprints of energy hegemony, as well as our own biases and privileges, in our energy realities and energy transition roadmaps.

**Shaun Golding** is a recent Fulbright Fellow and Assistant Professor of Sociology at Kenyon College.

## *Living Deep Ecology: A Bioregional Journey*

Bill Devall, Edited by Sing Chew

Rowman & Littlefield.



*Living Deep Ecology: A Bioregional Journey* is an exploration of our evolving relationship with a specific bioregion. It is set in Humboldt County in northwestern California, in the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion. By focusing on a specific bioregion and reflecting on anthropogenic changes in this bioregion over three decades, Bill Devall engages the reader in asking deeper questions about the meaning we find in Nature. He addresses questions such as how do we relate the facts and theories presented by science with our feelings, our intimacy, and our sense of Place as we dwell in a specific bioregion. This book engages the reader to consider our place in Nature. Devall approaches the bioregion not from the perspective of agencies and government, but from the perspective of the landscape itself.

**Bill Devall** was in the Department of Sociology, Humboldt State University from 1968-1995 and Professor Emeritus from 1995-2009.

**Sing C. Chew** is professor emeritus at Humboldt State University and founding editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Nature and Culture*.

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### Journal Articles and Book Chapters

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Alvarez, Camila Huerta, and Clare Rosenfeld Evans. "Intersectional Environmental Justice and Population Health Inequalities: A Novel Approach." *Social Science & Medicine* (2020): 113559

Cohen, Daniel Aldana. 2020. "New York City As 'Fortress of Solitude' After Hurricane Sandy: A Relational Sociology of Extreme Weather's Impact on Climate Politics." *Environmental Politics*. Online first: 1-21.

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## Section Officers (2020-2021)

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Rachael Shwom  
Rutgers University

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Norah MacKendrick  
Rutgers University

### Past-Chair

Jill Harrison  
University of Colorado-Boulder

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Hannah Holleman  
Amherst College

### Treasurer

Amalia Leguizamón  
Tulane University

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SUNY-Buffalo

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Mounty Royal University

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Lourdes Annette Vera  
Northeastern University

### Award Committees Chairs

#### Allan Schnaiberg Outstanding Publication

Sara Elizabeth Grineski

#### Marvin Olsen Student Paper

Sara Elizabeth Grineski

#### Fred Buttel Distinguished Contribution

Jill Harrison

#### Teaching and Mentorship Award

Janet Lorenzen

#### Practice and Outreach Award

Janet Lorenzen

#### Robert Boguslaw Award for Technology and Humanism

Norah MacKendrick

### Communications

**Newsletter Editor:** John Chung-En Liu

**Website Manager:** Michelle L. Edwards

**Listserv Manager:** Jean Boucher

**Social Media:** Tim Haney

**Section Website:**

<http://www.envirosoc.org/wordpress/>

**Section Listserv:** [envirosoc@listserv.neu.edu](mailto:envirosoc@listserv.neu.edu)

**Grad Listserv:** [envirograds@listserv.neu.edu](mailto:envirograds@listserv.neu.edu)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/EnviroSocASA/](https://www.facebook.com/EnviroSocASA/)

**Twitter:** @EnviroSocASA & @envirograd