



ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY NEWS

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

Spring 2025

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SECTION CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Hello colleagues and friends,

Current political, economic, social, and environmental conditions within and beyond the United States are compelling us to wear many hats and bear multiple

burdens in offering aid and support to our family, friends, communities, colleagues, students, and others about which we care. Attending to such exigencies is nothing new for our Section members. Rather, it is characteristic of an ethic to show up for each other and “going to work” in times of crisis, as our colleague Dr. Lacey Satcher cogently argued in our Section’s winter 2025 newsletter.

It is heartening to see in this spring 2025 newsletter more evidence from our colleagues who are going to work these days and conducting critical and rigorous environmental-sociological scholarship, public sociology, and meaningful community engagement. In addition to reading about the fantastic publications and accomplishments of our colleagues in this newsletter, we encounter thought provoking reflections shared by colleagues in three featured essays. The first essay by Dr. Bradlow reflects on fieldwork in Brazil and South Africa and case studies of “climate projects” manifest in those countries’ attempted transition from internal combustion engine to electric-powered vehicles. That essay presents a call for environmental sociologists to attend to conditions that are shaping how individuals, organizations, and institutions attempt to link greenhouse gas emission reductions to changes in how development is imagined, institutionally organized, and practiced through “the mundane infrastructures of everyday production.”

Dr. Vallée’s essay brings us to the classroom and outlines four useful pedagogical strategies to inspire hope and engagement amongst environmental sociology students. Dr. Vallée’s assigned curriculum, in-class discussions, supporting materials, and assignments emphasize a solution-based approach that develops students’ understanding of how to address environmental-sociological problems with an eye toward advancing justice, sustainability, and resilience. Dr. Vallée’s pedagogical strategies compliment those found in our Section’s [Climate Change Teaching Resources](#) webpage.

I’m also thankful to Dr. Lengefeld and colleagues in the non-partisan Environmental Data and Governance Initiative (EDGI) for sharing their reflections in the third essay. Messages from Rachel McKane and I in the Section’s winter 2025 newsletter referenced the important and critical work by EDGI members. Now we all get to hear directly from some of the central contributors to the EDGI—Drs. Phil Brown, Alissa Cordner, and Grace Poudrier—about their continuing efforts to safeguard multiple forms of environmental, sociological, and health data that are central to facilitating democratic governance and academic freedom. The conversation in this essay brings to light the import of sociologists within and beyond our Section to the EDGI work, as well as the need for us to join our efforts during this challenging time of ongoing assaults by the Trump administration on our work and places of work. The essay closes with some acknowledgement of the risks and hesitations that some may feel in joining efforts like the EDGI during this time. “Despite these concerns,” Dr. Lengefeld notes, the apparent glue that helps to bind such initiatives is “a project of democratization through networks of solidarity and collective advocacy.” The Public Sociology and Community Engagement section of this newsletter indicates the spirit of the EDGI project carries on in allied efforts by Northeastern alum, Dr. Lauren Richter, and the Forever Lobbying Project and PFAS Project Lab.

Over the coming months, I am looking forward to new insights we will glean from other colleagues

who are going to work in various ways to restore, maintain, and improve equal protection of our communities and environments through their research, teaching, and service. I hope that those engaging in such work will answer the call posted at the end of this spring newsletter from Section newsletter editor, Ian Carrillo, and Section Policy and Research Committee Chair, Caleb Scoville, to share their thoughts in essays that would be published in our summer 2025 Section newsletter.

In the meantime, I would like to close with a report about my own efforts to respond to our current moment of interacting risks and crises. I was unsuccessful in my effort to work with the American Sociological Association (ASA) to develop supporting mechanisms for our Section. Instead, the ASA continues to share resources that help us convey the [value of sociology](#) to others and on [how to navigate an attack on you or your colleagues](#). Some of you may have also seen the April 24, 2025 [announcements from Democracy Forward and ASA President, Dr. Adia Harvey Wingfield](#). Those statements reported on the preliminary injunction the group won against the Trump Administration's implementation of the "Dear Colleague Letter," which threatened much of our work and places of work because of the foundational insights that sociologists within and beyond our Section bring to bear on dynamics of race, racism, and injustice.

In the context of limited opportunities to collaborate with the ASA, I consulted with Section Chair-Elect, Josh Sbicca, and Ian Carrillo and Michael Warren Murphy, in their roles as members of our Section's Committee on Racial Inclusion, Equity, and Justice. We confirmed our interest in maintaining the Section's mentoring program that Ian and I rebooted last year and that you all will be asked to approve institutionalizing in the forthcoming ASA Section election vote on the updated Section bylaws. Please note that election and voting opportunity has been delayed to a later date this year due to technical difficulties with the prior elections vendor that contracted with the ASA. Please be on the lookout for my forthcoming announcement to the Section listserv. That

message will include calls for respondents to a survey about last year's mentoring program, and for participants in this year's mentoring program. Josh, Ian, Michael, other Section council members, and I will also be working on ways to create a space for Section members to share challenges they are experiencing, what supports they need, and what strategies have been useful to help them navigate the difficult circumstances we are facing nationally and in our local and regional contexts.

In case it might be useful, I will briefly share what I have been able to do accomplish locally in my reduced service capacity while my family and I worked through our recent health problems that I shared in the winter with the Section through the listerv. Before doing so, I wanted to say thank you to Section colleagues for the well wishes that you sent my family and I.

In addition to serving as Section Chair, I am a participant in my faculty union, a supporter of student unions on campus, an Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in my Sociology Department, and an active member of my University Senate. These positions offered me opportunities to collaborate with my University of Oregon (UO) colleagues. We supported [faculty](#) and [student](#) unions' winning improved collective bargaining agreements, and we guided students through honors thesis and graduate research projects. As a Senator, I helped to (1) [uphold principles of shared university governance, inclusion, and freedoms of speech, assembly, and academic inquiry](#); (2) [establish a strategic plan for the UO to comply with Oregon's Sanctuary Promise Act to support our international community in the context of increased and traumatic Federal immigration enforcement](#); and (3) [pass a resolution to motivate the UO to commit to a mutual defense compact in the face of the Trump Administration's assault on higher education](#).

I learned from the past few months that wearing many hats is overwhelming and can lead to difficult choices about where one channels their support and solidarity for others. I apologize for having to step back from some of my duties as

Section Chair during this time. As we transition to the summer, I am looking forward to refocusing my service activity in my capacity as Section Chair and rescaling my supportive work to the Section.

Thank you all for your time and the important work that you do. I wish you all well and good health.

In solidarity,

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FEATURE ESSAYS

From Factory Floor to Climate Future: The Social Life of “Climate Projects” in Brazil and South Africa

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Is the future of a climate changed world to be found in a factory?

As I write, headlines shift on an hourly basis about the spiraling trade war between the United States and much of the rest of the world. The tariffs enacted by the Trump administration are being justified on the basis of the need to bring manufacturing “back” to the United States.

The Trump administration is remarkably hostile to efforts at inducing a decarbonized energy transition. But there are surprising continuities between the Trump administration’s industrial vision and dominant policy paradigms that have emerged from more explicitly climate-oriented efforts. These include efforts to reshape global markets away from a free trade paradigm, a pivot away from reliance on global supply chains, and the introduction of industrial policies aimed at incentivizing investments in specific technological pathways. Across the political spectrum, statecraft is being retooled to shape markets in accordance with perceived strategic imperatives—whether to protect certain categories of jobs, shore up energy “security,” or encourage innovation and scaling in decarbonizing technologies.

This emergent “postneoliberal” paradigm, for all of its evident chaos and inchoate form, has a certain affinity with the rise of “climate projects” that Araos, Bhardwaj and Klinenberg (2024) recently defined as “purposeful responses, or plans for responses, undertaken by individuals, groups, or institutions in the face of the reality of climate change.” This essay explores the social life of climate projects through a particular site: what I call the *climate factory*—a place where visions of environmental, economic, and political futures are materially assembled and socially contested.

These “projects” do not exist in a vacuum. They are embedded in global political economies and constrained by histories of uneven development. Their life is necessarily global and transnational. And here, the role of the Global South is especially significant.

Middle income countries in the Global South have long pursued the development of automobile manufacturing as a critical sector through which to develop labor-absorbing industrialization. In fact, no country has graduated from middle income to high income status, according to conventional definitions, without making cars in significant volume.

I have been conducting fieldwork in Brazil and South Africa since 2023 to understand how their auto manufacturing sectors are navigating one of the most consequential global and transnational “climate projects”: the rich world transition from internal combustion engine (ICE) to electric-powered vehicles (EVs). I have so far conducted 75 semi-structured interviews with auto firm executives, metalworker union officials, auto parts engineers, and policymakers at the national, state / provincial and municipal scales across both countries. The transition from ICE to EV technology is not merely an environmental “project,” but also a radical restructuring of global industrial geographies. Such a technological transition opens up new forms of competition and cooperation, and it creates new opportunities for capturing value, especially around

battery technologies, critical minerals, and low-emission manufacturing processes. But it also threatens to further marginalize those regions that are already disadvantaged in the global political economy.

For nearly half a century, Brazil and South Africa have built internal combustion engine auto manufacturing sectors on the backs of investments from large multinational firms. Each produces significant volumes for export. In fact, more than half of South Africa's annual output goes to Europe and the United Kingdom, precisely the geographies that have instituted bans on the sale of ICE cars within the coming decade.

In my fieldwork, I am seeking to understand how key actors in their automotive manufacturing sectors—government agencies, multinational firms, and labor unions—are navigating this global EV transition. These countries are not merely passive recipients of change; they are active sites of contestation, experimentation, and institutional innovation.

In Brazil, policymakers are seeking to leverage the country's existing industrial capacity and one of the world's greenest electricity grid (nearly nine-tenths of which is powered by water, wind and sun) to attract investment in EV manufacturing. Longstanding multinational automakers remain wary of the high upfront costs and uncertain consumer demand for EVs in a market where price sensitivity remains high. New entrants from China, however, see an opportunity. In a development full of geopolitical symbolism, Chinese firm BYD — the largest EV-maker in the world — has refurbished an abandoned factory in the town of Camaçari in the state of Bahia, which was previously owned by Ford.

Furthermore, ever since the global oil crisis of 1973, the Brazilian government has invested in the home-grown development sugar cane-based ethanol fuel. These efforts helped to spur the growth of generations of engineers in the auto sector. Today, nearly 90% of the cars on the road today in Brazil have a so-called “flex” motor that can run on both gasoline and ethanol. While policymakers and automakers across the globe are debating a technological future between electric and gasoline powered cars, their Brazilian counterparts are vigorously contesting what role ethanol fuel might have in future auto production. When I interviewed metalworker officials in late 2023, their preference was to maintain ethanol combustion motors in a hybrid ethanol-battery technological path; this, union officials believe, will maintain jobs that otherwise would be lost to the simpler production process associated with battery electric vehicles.

In South Africa, the situation is even more fraught. The country's automotive sector is deeply integrated into global value chains, especially through its exports to Europe, which account for more than half of the country's total auto production. As the European Union tightens emissions standards and moves toward banning the sale of ICE vehicles, the South African operations of multinational automakers face intense pressure to pivot — or to even disappear entirely. The domestic context presents steep challenges: South Africa's electricity supply is dominated by coal, and its power grid is plagued by chronic blackouts. Transitioning to EVs under these conditions would mean decarbonizing both the grid and the factories. This is a double burden in the context of limited fiscal space. As I write, the country's governing coalition is teetering on the edge of a break-up due to an inability to agree to a budget framework.

Brazil and South Africa are wrestling with a fundamental question embedded in all “climate projects”: who actually benefits from the green transition and what political coalitions do those benefits construct? Will the move to EVs replicate patterns of exclusion and inequality, or can it serve as a vehicle (so to speak) for more inclusive development?

What we are seeing in these cases is a collision of multiple temporalities and imperatives: the urgency of climate action, the global upheaval of industrial transformation, the immediate demands of workers, and

the long arcs of national development strategies. The EV transition is not simply a matter of technological substitution; it is a deeply social and political process that reshapes how states and societies relate to one another and to the planet.

For environmental sociologists, this moment presents a unique opportunity. We can and should examine how climate change is being materialized not only through carbon measurements or policy targets, but through the mundane infrastructures of everyday production: factories, supply chains, labor contracts, and investment flows. The “climate factory,” if we can call it that, is emerging as a critical site where questions of environmental justice, economic sovereignty, and global inequality converge. These are the territories of what Fisher and Jorgenson (2019) described as an “Anthro-shift,” in which “risk drives a reconfiguration among social actors that in turn leads to a different relationship between society and the natural environment.”

Indeed, “climate projects” are not only about reducing emissions—they are about reimagining development itself. For countries in the Global South, the stakes are particularly high. They must navigate the twin challenges of mitigating climate change and addressing persistent poverty and inequality. Their efforts to localize and reinterpret global climate projects are about shaping the social terrain of climate change in contexts in which the potential contradictions of such projects are at their most acute.

Are the sociological foundations of a climate-changed world to be found in a factory? Perhaps. But only if we understand that the factory is not just a place where things are made. It is also a site where visions of the future are contested and constructed; where climate action takes on material form, shaped by inherited histories and socially organized attempts to chart new paths forward.

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Emphasizing Solutions to Inspire Hope and Engagement Amongst Environmental Sociology Students

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Many sociologists teach in order to educate the next generation about social injustices and inspire them to become agents of change. However, teaching about significant social problems can produce despondency, which often leads to apathy and disengagement (Johnson 2005; Lueck 2007; Suzuki 2009), the opposite of what we strive for.

According to Michelle Lueck (2007), a major contributor to disengagement is hopelessness. She asserts that when students are taught a situation is hopeless, they are prone to despondency, apathy and disengagement. This problem is particularly germane to sociology, given our insistence on embedding social problems within complex and hard-to-change systems, and the undercurrent of pessimism found in sociology courses (Best 2001; Lueck 2007). As Johnson asserts: “unfortunately, many teachers portray the cause of social problems as so systemic that the teacher overwhelms students into thinking that nothing can be done individually or collectively to ameliorate the problem” (p. 52). Lueck (2007) argues the problem is particularly acute with environmental sociology, given our focus on problems that could cause civilizational collapse (including aquifer overextraction, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, and rising sea levels, to name but a few).

Given this, it behooves sociology instructors to implement pedagogical strategies that inspire hope. Towards that end, Lueck (2007) highlights three ingredients that inspire hope: 1) conveying that change is possible; 2) communicating that individual and collective action can lead to social change; and 3) enabling students to plan how to bring about change. Below I discuss four mechanisms I use to weave those ingredients into my environmental sociology courses, to create a hope-generating learning experience.

The Assigned Curriculum

First, I assign texts that identify solutions to problems we cover. Helpful in this regard is Michael Carolan’s textbook *Society and the Environment: Pragmatic Solutions to Ecological Issues* (2024), which has chapters dedicated to environmental problems related to water, food systems, biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy production. Importantly, each chapter provides a substantial discussion of solutions linked to those problems, as well as discussions of successful cases. For instance, the food systems chapter covers peasant movement successes, as well as the emergence of urban gardens and agroecology. Reading about successful examples conveys the important lesson that social change is achievable, which shifts the students’ focus from wondering whether change is possible to identifying what would it take to achieve it in their local environments. Beyond assigning works that address solutions, I also dedicate the last two weeks to readings that helps us envision what just, sustainable and resilient societies would look like, and what it would take to get from here to there.

In-Class Discussions

As Johnson (2005) emphasizes, in-class discussions are another significant mediator of student learning. Accordingly, I allocate sufficient class time to discuss solutions for each environmental problem we cover. Beyond reminding students about solutions mentioned in the readings, the discussions relate the solutions to the students’ environment, so that they can envision how to bring about change in their own backyard. This includes identifying essential steps for implementing solutions, obstacles they would likely face in doing so (such as cultural norms, legal structures and/or political resistance), and how groups of dedicated

individuals have overcome those obstacles. This enhances their capacity to plan for effective change, which is a key ingredient for nurturing hope (Lueck 2007).

Providing Support Materials that Reinforce the Message

To reinforce lessons from readings and lectures, in between lectures I share short videos about solutions to the problems covered in lectures. For example, following the biodiversity loss lecture I send the link to Enric Sala's (2021) TED Talk that explains how developing marine reserves has significantly increased marine biodiversity. Sharing these materials serves to reinforce the following ideas: communities of dedicated people are addressing these problems; effective solutions have been developed; and some of these can be implemented in the students' contexts.

Assignments

A fourth strategy is developing assignments that require students to engage with potential solutions. First, I assign a scaffolding assignment that asks students to: 1) pick an environmental problem they care about; 2) articulate why it matters; 3) identify human activities that contribute to the problem; 4) illuminate how those activities are mediated by context (i.e. behavioral norms, values, belief systems, regulations, enforcement regimes); and 5) highlight a place in the world (either a campus, city, or nation) that has made tangible progress on the issue. The next assignment asks them to: systematically compare the successful case to the local case, identify points of difference, and use course materials to account for those differences. These assignments help increase engagement in three ways: A) identifying an issue they care about helps to increase their course engagement; B) identifying a positive case provides encouragement that change can happen on their selected issue; and C) carrying out a comparative analysis helps students better understand the steps that are required to bring about change in their local context.

Conclusion

Bringing about social change is not easy, nor does it occur rapidly. However, it does require an engaged citizenry. When we identify effective solutions and show how people have brought about change, we help preserve our students' hope that change can happen. In turn, that hope strengthens class engagement and, hopefully, inspires them to join us in creating the just, sustainable and resilient world we know is possible.

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Data Democracy: An Interview with Environmental Sociologists on the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative

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Data – and control over it – is a powerful tool that animates modern social action, from the macro-level of institutions to the micro-level behavior of individuals. Scientific research, public awareness, governmental resource allocation, corporate firm behavior, and social movements all rely on access to data that is mobilized for high-stakes decision-making regarding social problems such as environmental protection and public health. The Environmental Data and Governance Initiative (EDGI) is a social movement organization that emerged in response to attacks on data and democracy and its self-described effort to “advocate for and uphold state science practices and environmental regulatory agencies while maintaining a critical approach to their politics of knowledge production.”

The transition to a new executive administration has reanimated the prior concerns that guided EDGI’s work since its creation. It has also presented emerging challenges of greater urgency and severity. I asked three environmental sociologists about their experience with EDGI, the novel challenges of data governance and democracy, and the role of environmental sociologists. Phil Brown is a University Distinguished Professor and the Director of the Social Science Environmental Health Research Institute at Northeastern University; Alissa Cordner is an Associate Professor, Paul Garrett Fellow, and the Chair of Sociology at Whitman College; and Grace Poudrier is a recent PhD graduate at Northeastern University. Each of the interviewees has a long history of working with EDGI and collectively they have contributed across various working groups focused on web monitoring, data rescue, interviewing, and policy analysis.

On the question of how EDGI’s work has changed during the new presidential administration, interviewees discussed EDGI’s broad historical perspective on presidential transitions. “There was this focus on presidential transitions in general and that let us have this really long historical arc for understanding the ways that presidential administrations might influence what career folks are working on or what agencies are able to prioritize. Because of interviews and contacts with folks in the agencies, they were able to learn about aspects of EPA regulation or data management that might be challenged,” said Dr. Cordner.

The organization has also been reflexive. Dr. Brown observed that “we learned that we needed to work with more groups and go beyond just environmental data. There was a lot of concern with health data this time around. We were able to form the environmental data partners group that brings together a number of organizations that want to preserve data and make it available.” He also added that “we are working to make this data accessible. We’re not just saving it. We’re trying to figure out practices for making this available to people. And even in good times, EPA didn’t always have the simplest ways for people to access data. Our goal is to make it much more accessible, and going into the future in more democratic administrations, we would like to find ways to make data understandable to people, to make it very broadly accessible in schools and community groups and any kind of civic association that needs it, or any individual who needs it. Data access is a big deal too in science communication, environmental health literacy, and all the things

that go towards giving people the ability to find and use data make it much more available and understandable to a lay audience. So those are things that we're also pioneering.”

Also drawing connections to the EDGI’s reflexivity and continuity across presidential transitions, and its longer historical view on EPA enforcement, Dr. Cordner noted that EDGI brought a non-partisan critical lens to understanding enforcement and presidential transitions. “Under the first Trump administration, that focus on enforcement, they then carried into the Biden administration. I think one of the things that EDGI is able to do really well, because of their close connections with folks who are actually working in the agencies, is to challenge the sort of overly simplistic framings of what a particular administration might be like.” In articulating this non-partisan focus, she further commented “There were ways in which the Biden EPA got off to a pretty slow start in enforcement. I think having that sort of critical eye, critical in terms of taking a rigorous scientific perspective on what the agencies are doing, that's really the goal of EDGI, regardless of who might be in the White House.”

Figure 1

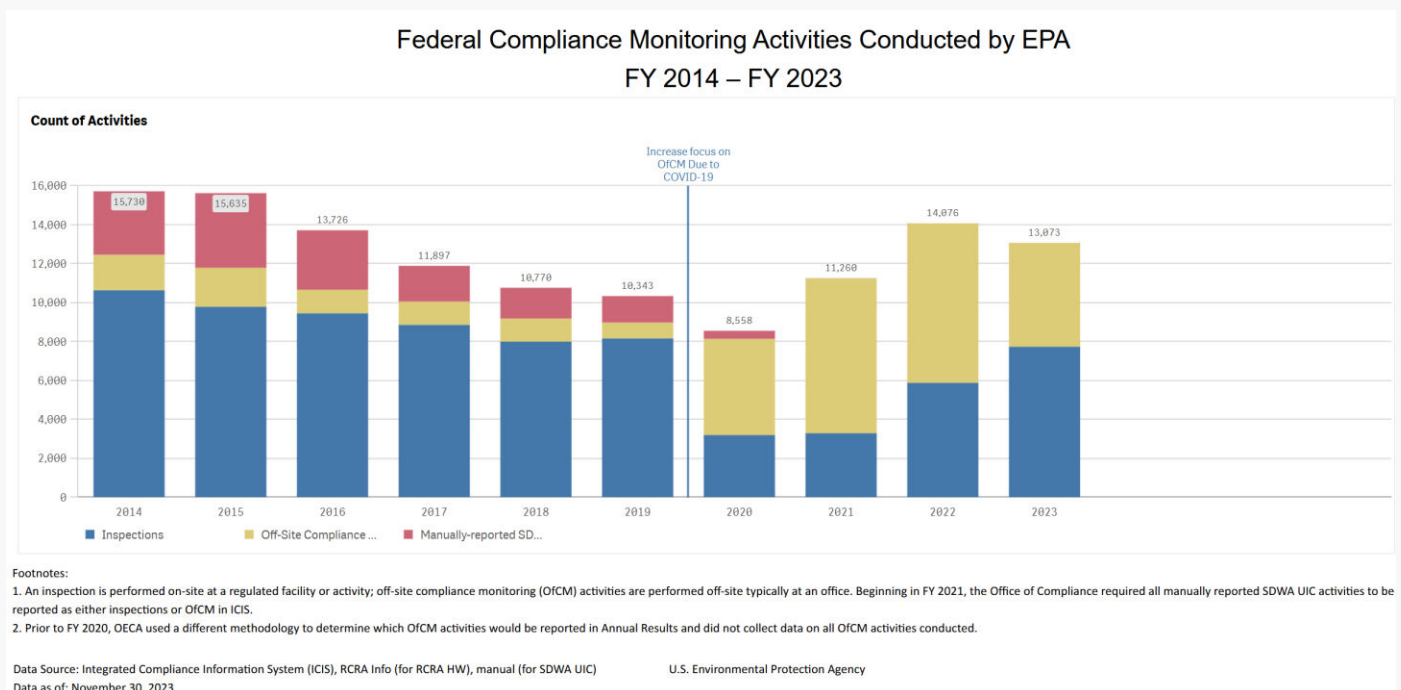
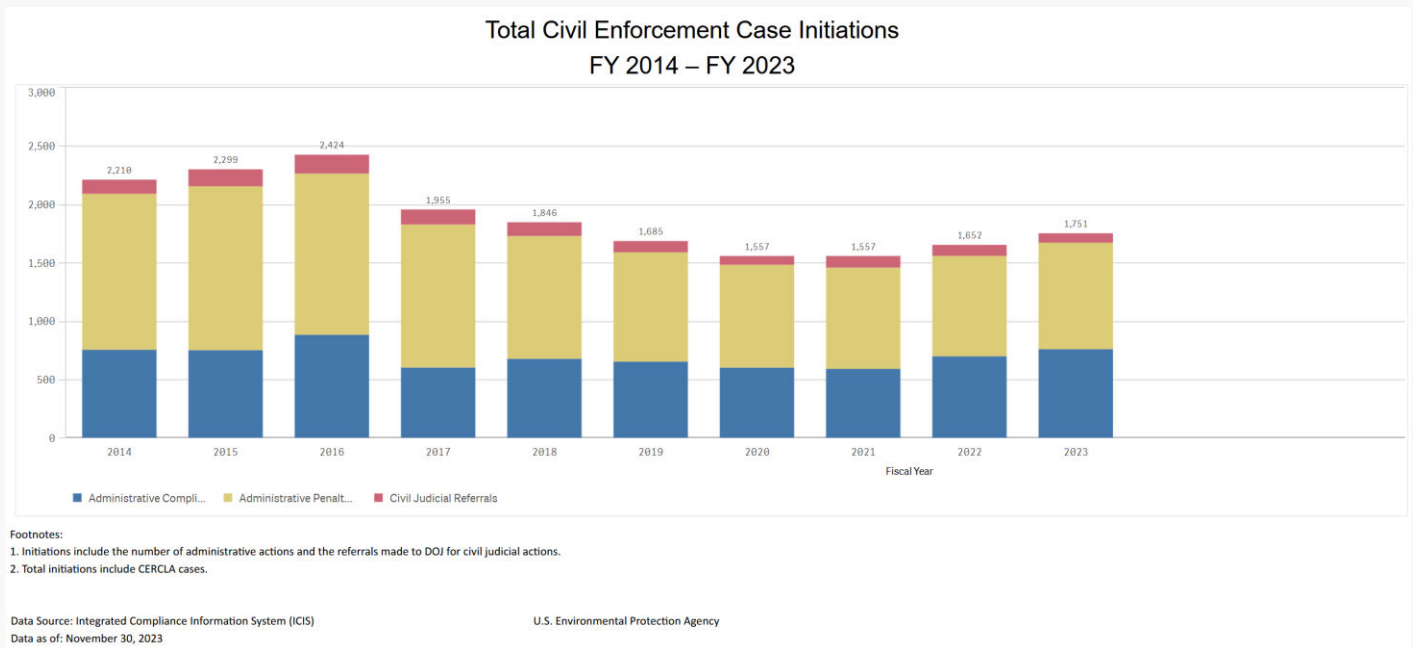


Figure 2

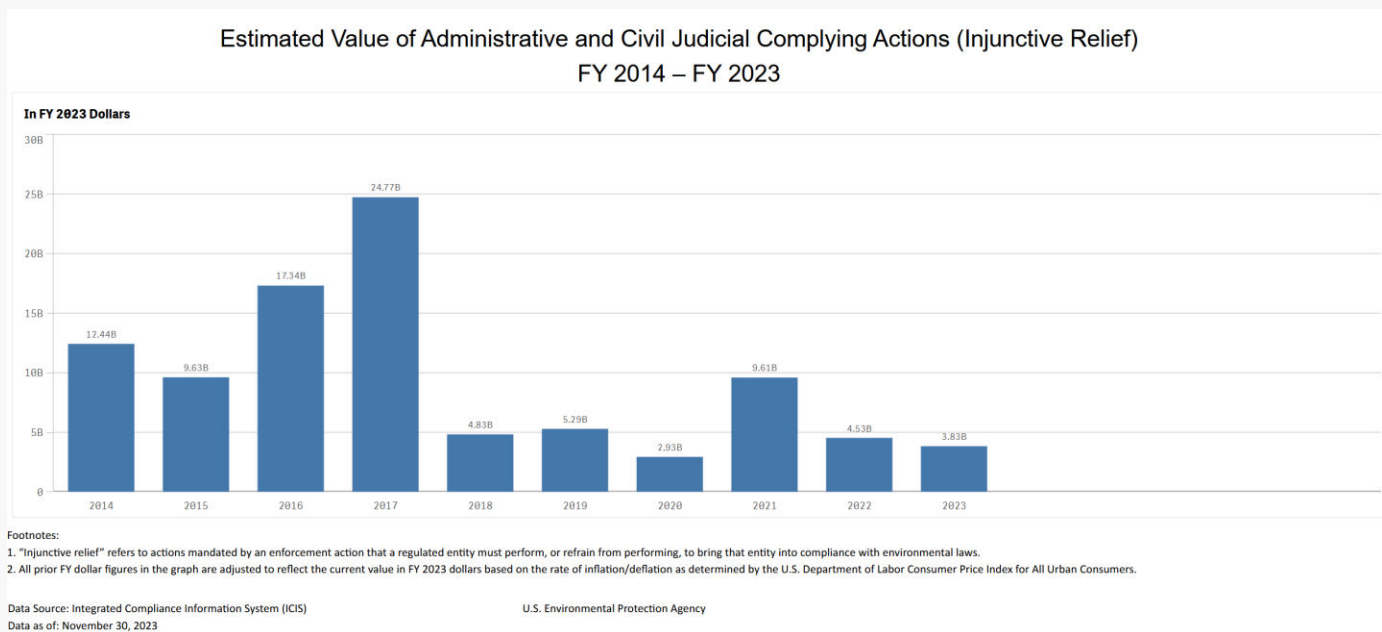


Dr. Poudrier pointed to the severity and urgency of renewed attacks on public web data. “During the first Trump administration, the climate-related webpages and reports that were altered or suppressed often still remained accessible on the web in some form, meaning that they were harder to find but still functionally online and publicly available if you looked for them. Under Trump 2.0, changes to the domains that I monitor have been much more sweeping. Recent examples are data on environmental justice grants, information about civil rights and EJ, and public information on environmental enforcement and compliance protocols. So far, the wholesale disappearance and deletion of web information is happening more quickly and on a larger scale, so the level of concern is higher and more urgent.” Echoing Dr. Poudrier’s observations, Dr. Brown noted that “we have seen so far Trump two is a lot more aggressive in every possible way than Trump one. So it wouldn’t be surprising that they would remove federal data, destroy it, which is illegal, but they’re doing so much else that’s illegal. But I think at that point [during the first Trump administration] they were worried that they would get caught. Somehow and whatever it would mean to get caught. But they’re being much more aggressive now. So it’s very likely that data will totally disappear.”

I also asked whether the interviewees felt particular types of data were the most pressing to preserve and the reasons why. The interviewees agreed that large data sets on issues of environmental outcomes and health were the most pressing, such as the Environmental Protection Agency’s databases on Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO), the Environmental Justice screen, and the Toxics Release Inventory. Dr. Brown explained that “these [databases] are important for people to understand the multiple cumulative impacts they have in their area, why are areas of low-income, areas of more people of color, are more highly contaminated. If you don’t have that data, people just aren’t going to be aware of what’s around them and they won’t be able to take preventive action and try to get states to do the work that they should do, because some states may still be responsive even if the federal government won’t be. And that’s just EPA that we’re talking about. A lot of other important data from other agencies from NOAA, from NASA that we need to know. And of course, in the area of health it’s very pronounced you know any kind of data that we need to know about any kind of inequalities, differences between groups of people of color, groups of people based on income, all that data goes down. This is total ransacking of data throughout the federal government, even when it’s not necessarily part of their anti-DEI efforts.”

Dr. Cordner also highlighted the implications of removing data produced for the public using public funding, and how they intersect with attacks on democracy and federal workers: “Large data sets that are public data that have been collected and produced with taxpayer money, and that have been historically and non-controversially hosted by federal agencies and that currently are being removed from federal websites are really essential for researchers and communities, or residents or journalists or whoever’s trying to get a sense of what’s happening at facilities. One of the consistent messages coming out of the Trump White House is that Federal employees are not valued and are not contributing to our society. And I think that is absolutely wrong, that federal employees are doing tremendous work. They are skilled and knowledgeable in their particular areas, and in the sort of knowledge of how to make things work within the federal system more generally. And so being able to document what that labor looks like and what those contributions are, I think is really important.”

Figure 3



Data governance, presidential transitions, and data preservation in the name of environmental protection and democracy indicate links between EDGI and the broader community work that environmental sociologists do. “For environmental sociologists, it is often very easy to understand the direct and tangible implications of the work that they’re doing. There’s a complex relationship with science that also connects with governance and environmental sociology,” said Dr. Cordner. The broadening of participation in EDGI points to a growing awareness of the risks to democratic governance, but also to the blurring of lines between formal academic work and advocacy. Dr. Poudrier asserted “I think the growing number of academics in EDGI speaks to a larger trend in folks refusing to perpetuate the false binary between activist and scholarly work in the academy... environmental data and the environmental right-to-know are public goods that I intend to keep fighting for.” In reflecting on environmental sociologists’ historical contributions to public sociology, Dr. Brown emphasized that a “cornerstone of the work that we do is to help assemble data to help people make complaints, to make requests for research and for regulation... sociologists always knew that public data was part of public sociology. So I think that made it very attractive for many sociologists to gravitate to EDGI.”

Broad and sometimes disparate resistance efforts across numerous organizations can lead to challenges, as described by Dr. Cordner. “There’s a danger of lots of folks separately trying to do this really important work. I would encourage if people have concerns about whether data is being lost or whether websites are being monitored, instead of starting as a standalone researcher, see what’s already out there and see if there are efforts that you trust, that resonate with your goals that you’d like to join up with, because there is so much work in this space. It would be great to not have a bunch of people all trying to do this one project when if they were working together, they’d be able to actually cover a larger part of the field of data justice or environmental governance.”

Lastly, the interviewees offered words of inspiration for those who might have hesitations about contributing to this type of work. Interviewees agreed that positionality has real implications and consequences for individual participation, but that the horizontal organizational structure provides enormous flexibility for scholars at any stage of professional development. These hesitations were clear for Dr. Brown: “I think if people are young, if they’re grad students, if they’re junior faculty, you might understand why they don’t want to be very public, but a lot of the work can be done without you know putting your name out in public. So I think there are ways to do this that protect you. There are so many different tasks that can be done not just with EDGI but with any kind of organization. Some people will be able to be very public open spokespeople for that. Others have been quietly working in the background. But wherever we are, we have to save all the data and all the democracy that’s reliant on that data.” Despite these concerns the interviewees resoundingly agreed that the effort is not just about data and democracy, it’s also about advancing a project of democratization through networks of solidarity and collective advocacy. As Dr. Poudrier concluded, “There is a place for you if you are interested in contributing to this work, and ample flexibility when it comes to time commitment and types of engagement. The best part of EDGI, for me, is finding community and solidarity among such an expansive and interdisciplinary network of folks who care deeply about what they do and how they do it.”

Source for Figures: EPA Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Annual Results for Fiscal Year 2023

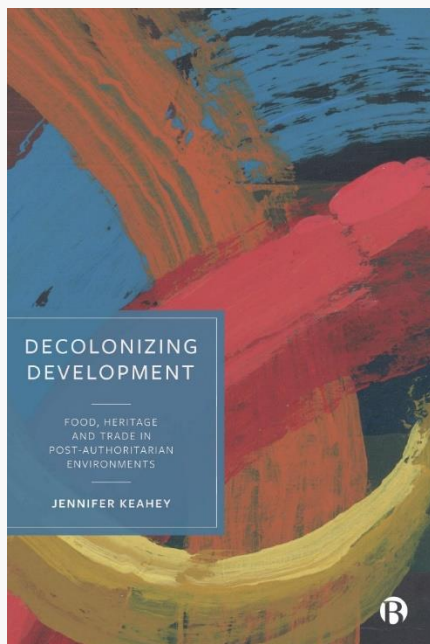
PUBLICATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Books

[Decolonizing Development: Food, Heritage and Trade in Post-Authoritarian Environments.](#)

Jennifer Keahey

Arizona State University

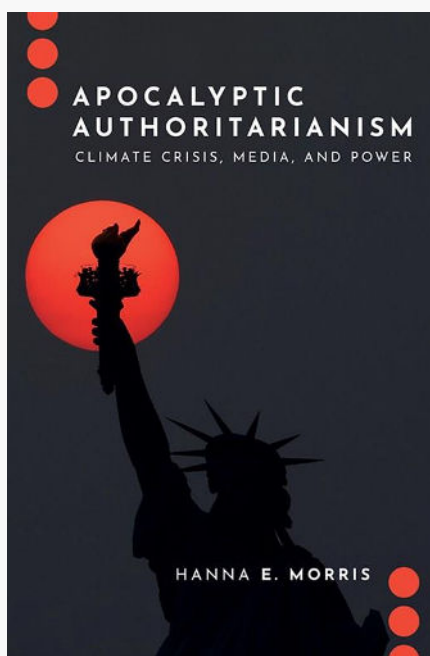


This book rethinks development in three critical ways. First, it disrupts a polarized political discourse by engaging the cases of post-Soviet Latvia and post-apartheid South Africa to unpack the similar impulses of command and capitalist economies. Second, it inserts a cultural voice into the discourse on sustainable development, showing how Indigenous knowledges and values have informed agrarian efforts to establish local food and fair trade networks. Third, it decolonizes thinking on social change by unpacking the current existential crisis in development, and by illustrating the importance of post-authoritarian contributions to global justice movements.

[Apocalyptic Authoritarianism: Climate Crisis, Media, and Power](#)

Hanna E. Morris

University of Toronto

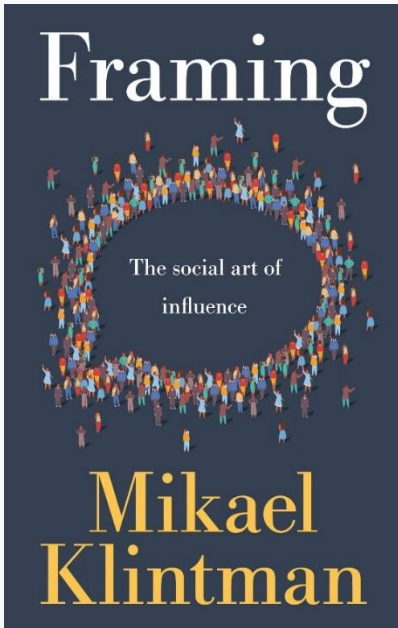


The book *Apocalyptic Authoritarianism: Climate Crisis, Media, and Power* (Oxford University Press, 2025) by Hanna E. Morris reveals how national anxieties following the presidential election of Donald Trump in 2016 have shaped American journalistic and political interpretations of climate change in ways that severely limit how it has come to be known, imagined, and contended with. Looking at climate change reporting across prominent and ideologically diverse U.S. news publications over the past decade, the book traces how news media create an illusion of control in the present through nostalgic and heroic stories of the past. The book identifies a new mode of reactionary politics called “apocalyptic authoritarianism” to describe the post-2016 alignment of historically privileged figures united by a common enemy of the “new” New Left and a shared appeal to fears of “total crisis.” This antidemocratic paradigm portends national and planetary disarray if progressive social and climate justice “warriors” are not controlled at home and if “unruly masses” of climate migrants are not contained abroad. In addition to contending with the implications of apocalyptic

authoritarianism, the book also calls for more robust forms of climate journalism and politics capable of facilitating—not impeding—radically democratic responses to climate change.

Framing: The Social Art of Influence.

Mikael Klintman
Lund University



Drawing on sociology, economics, and evolutionary biology, it offers a four-part approach—texture, temperature, position, and size—for revealing how we can be guided by subtle cues in communication as well as in practices. The book draws on wide-ranging international cases of social dynamics in multiple sectors - food, energy, transportation, chemistry, leisure, etc., showing how frame disputes and resolutions shape our interpretations of sustainability, development, and responsibility. Throughout the book, I explore how cultural and evolutionary tendencies make us receptive to certain frames, affecting where we assign blame or credit. By applying these insights to research, teaching, and outreach, we can recognize communication strategies more clearly and push for political engagement and activism.

Global Solidarities Against Water Grabbing: Without Water, We Have Nothing.

Caitlin Schroering
University of North Carolina, Charlotte

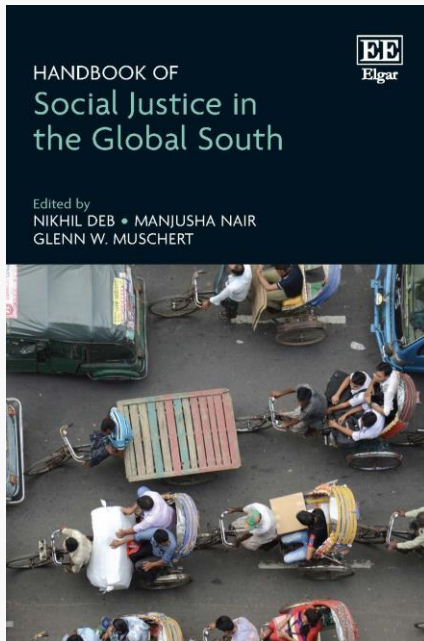


Conflicts over water are human-caused events with socio-political and economic causes. From Brazil's Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB) to environmental activists in Pittsburgh, people are coming together to fight for control of their water. This book examines how movements are communicating and organizing against water privatization and other forms of water grabbing, and explores how movements engage with and learn from each other. Water is at the heart of this book, but Global solidarities against water grabbing is as much about collective struggle and popular organization as it is about water. Based on extensive fieldwork with two movements fighting against water privatization, the book uses anticolonial and feminist research methods to show how global communications and organizing are occurring around water and how Global North movements are engaging with and learning from the Global South and vice versa.

[Handbook of Social Justice in the Global South.](#)

Nikhil Deb, Manjusha Nair, and Glenn Muschert (eds.)

California Polytechnic State University; George Mason University; Khalifa University



The edited book explores social justice in the Global South in an era of planetary crisis and shifting global dynamics. It features an impressive collection of 34 chapters, exploring a diverse range of topics. Importantly, it amplifies the voices of scholars based in the Global South and those who have carved out a "third space" in the Global North. Presenting the Global South as a space of belonging and resistance to the hegemony of global capitalism, this timely volume identifies how to reimagine transformative futures for a just world. The volume, according to a reviewer, "showcases the wealth of scholarship in the Global South and contributes to the ongoing process of decolonizing sociology."

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

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Boucher, Jean Léon, and Keith Matthews. 2025. "Testing a multi-scale, metabolic analysis at the sub-national versus national level: A societal ecological exploration of Scotland within the United Kingdom." *Next Research* 2(2):100184.

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<https://doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2022.254>

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Gounder, Sandhiya, Karly Burch, and Mira O'Connor. 2024. "Will Migrant Pacific Workers Be a Part of Aotearoa New Zealand's Farming Futures? A Call to Design Future Agritech Industry Transformation Plans with a Reciprocal Framework." *Policy Quarterly* 20(2): 37–45. doi: 10.26686/pq.v20i2.9477.

Graham, Nicolas. 2025. "Green Dreams or Fossil Schemes? Mapping Canada's Green Growth Policy-Planning Network." *Energy Research & Social Science* 123:104038. doi: 10.1016/j.erss.2025.104038.

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Knowledge and Response to Global Warming.” *Environmental Research Letters* 20(3):031006. doi: 10.1088/1748-9326/adb6c0.

Loy, Loredana, and Jennifer Jacquet. 2025. “The Animal Agriculture Industry’s Obstruction of Campaigns Promoting Individual Climate Action.” *Climate Policy* 0(0):1–10. doi: 10.1080/14693062.2025.2460603.

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Shtob, Daniel, Jordan Fox and, Patrick Greiner. 2025. “Planning for the complexity and uncertainty of urban socio-environmental futures.” *Nature Cities* 2: 187-197.

Torres-Alruiz, M. D. & Gómez-Liendo, M. J., (2025) “Just conservation? Knowing Mapuche perspectives on environmental justice at Villarica National Park, Chile”, *Journal of Political Ecology* 32(1): 5728. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2458/jpe.5728>

Vasi Ion Bogdan, Mario Paez-Arellano. 2025. “Video communication, blue marble awe, and attitudes toward climate change and renewable energy.” *npj Climate Action* 4, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-024-00203-4>

Public Sociology and Community Engagement

Richter, Lauren. Contributing member of the Forever Lobbying Project (18 academics and 46 journalists across 16 countries: <https://foreverpollution.eu/lobbying/>) and PFAS Project Lab, which compiled and publicly released a database of over 14,000 searchable PFAS industry documents hosted by the UCSF industry documents library: <https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/>.

Calls for Books and Articles

Call for papers - Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences, Special Issue: Disastrous futures? Confronting the scale, urgency and complexity of our crises, Guest editors: Steve Matthewman, Luke Goode and Raven Cretney. <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/tnzk20/20/2>

Call for essays – For the summer 2025 newsletter of the Environmental Sociology Section of the ASA, we are seeking brief essays on the second Trump administration's attack on environmental science and regulation. Disappearing datasets, canceled federal grants, personnel fired en masse, gutted regulatory frameworks, and a redoubling of fossil fuel extraction. What can environmental sociology tell us about where we are today, and what could come next? We are interested in contributions that range from theoretically informed diagnoses to notes from the field to promising examples of oppositional strategies and tactics offered by movements, organizations, or individuals. We also welcome reflections on comparative cases that place the situation unfolding in the USA in historical or international context.

If you are interested in contributing to the summer 2025 newsletter on this theme, please reach out to Caleb Scoville (ASA SES Chair of Policy and Research Committee) at caleb.scoville@tufts.edu by July 14, 2025.

Transitions

Todd Lu, PhD Candidate in Sociology at UNC Chapel Hill, will be transitioning to Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at the University of Cincinnati in August 2025. His dissertation is titled "At the Crossroads of Climate, Jobs, and Justice: Green Jobs Coalitions in North Carolina."

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