

Doktorandentag

14.06.2021

09:30 - 12:15

online



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Organized by Jonatan Palmblad, Pui Ting Wong and Talitta Reitz



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ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY



LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

Doktorandentag

Program

09:30 – 09:40 Introduction

Panel 1

09:40 – 09:45 Introduction of speakers

09:45 – 09:55 Regina Bichler

The “Zero Waste Cities” Munich and Kamikatsu: waste prevention, recycling and the integration of technological innovations to establish sustainable waste practices

09:55 – 10:05 Danielle Schmitz

How Economists ‘See’ the Environment:
Textual Framing and Research Bias in Current Economic Research on the Environment, 2016-today

10:05 – 10:25 Joint discussion

- 10 minute break -

Panel 2

10:35 – 10:40 Introduction of speakers

10:40 – 10:50 Lena Schlegel

Caring for Climate Change? (Re-)Configuring Human-Nature Relations in Context of the Australian Black Summer – Towards a New Materialist Sociology of Care

10:50 – 11:00 Zhanna Baimukhamedova

Seen as Wild: Narratives and visual history of the Bavarian Forest National Park

11:00 – 11:20 Joint discussion

- 10 minute break -

Panel 3

11:30 – 11:35 Introduction of speakers

11:35 – 11:45 Huiying Ng

Infra-structural remediations:
Agroecological futures in Thailand as prospective ethnographies of hope

11:45 – 11:55 Lotta Ortheil

Urban food forests: A multispecies approach for resilient and sustainable cities

11:55 – 12:15 Joint discussion



Panel 1

09:45 – 09:55

The “Zero Waste Cities” Munich and Kamikatsu: waste prevention, recycling and the integration of technological innovations to establish sustainable waste practices

Regina Bichler

The increasing production of waste and its environmental impact is a pressing global issue that has yet to be solved. One approach is the concept of the “Zero Waste City”, which is also pursued by the city of Munich, Germany. In Japan, the town Kamikatsu on the island of Shikoku has achieved a remarkable Zero Waste transformation in the recent years. This poses the question if Munich could utilize the experiences and knowledge from Kamikatsu for its own anti-waste agenda.

In my dissertation project, I want to examine how the interplay of social practices, innovative materials and technologies can contribute to waste reduction and sustainable consumption in a circular economy model for Munich. Therefore, I aim to analyse current waste related practices in Munich, Kyoto (as a comparable Japanese city), and Kamikatsu, identify the benchmarks of their associated meanings, materials, and competences, and uncover possible cultural differences, which must be considered when trying to transfer methods from Japan to

Germany. By field study in Kamikatsu, the implementation of its Zero Waste agenda and the accompanying changes in daily routines of consumption and waste handling, as well as the materials and technologies applied therein, will be scrutinized. Contrasting them with the current practices in Munich and Kyoto will allow to deduct chances and challenges for other Zero Waste Cities-to-be. Investigating the state of the art in sustainable material science, recycling, and waste processing technologies, and assessing their integration potential into daily practices shall provide insights into the possibilities and limits of a socio technological approach. In the context of an international and transdisciplinary workshop on sustainable lifestyle and waste practices, scenarios of Munich's future anti-waste strategies will be developed to contribute to the city's “Zero Waste München” project. This research is aimed at providing suggestions how to deal with one's own waste load in the global North without externalization of the environmental effects.

Panel 1

09:55 – 10:05

How Economists 'See' the Environment:

Textual Framing and Research Bias in Current Economic Research on the Environment, 2016-today

Danielle Schmitz

This dissertation addresses how 'the environment' is being framed in economic research. The research spans from the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change until today and pertains to various economic sub-disciplines which conduct research on the natural environment. Articles are selected from a variety of top-ranked academic journals, such as Ecological Economics, and Nature Sustainability, which cover diverse issues related to economics of sustainability. Three topics which cross the disciplinary boundary between economics and environmental sustainability have been selected for study, namely, renewable energy, waste management and sustainable farming. In this dissertation, I analyse economic articles on environmental sustainability to both highlight and unpack the implicit biases being constructed into studies about the natural environment. What I hypothesis to discover is that framing causes partiality towards

particular economic prescriptions based on the environmental assumptions inherent to each frame type. The research method employed is one of qualitative frame analysis, specifically, economic articles pertaining to the three selected topics in environmental sustainability are categorized based on fundamental phrases and rhetorical mechanisms using the coding software AutoML Natural Language. This highly significant research brings together frame analysis and economics, contributing to an interdisciplinary understanding on research biases in economics. Through this dissertation, I aim to bring awareness about environmental framing in economic research in order to contribute to reducing unconscious biases in the humanities. This research increases in significance when one considers the broader societal impact that economic research has in influencing environmental policy prescriptions.

Panel 2

10:40 – 10:50

Caring for Climate Change? (Re-)Configuring Human-Nature Relations in Context of the Australian Black Summer – Towards a New Materialist Sociology of Care

Lena Schlegel

The ways humans relate to nature translate into normative frameworks, political decisions and social orders, determining the frame within which socio-ecological problems can be understood and addressed. I argue that by addressing climate change from within Western thought, dualist categories including nature vs. culture, material vs. social, or body vs. mind narrow down the problem perception and limit the space for social action. The Australian “Black Summer” bushfires of 2019/20 have been perceived as harbingers of the unfolding climate crisis, opening up a discursive space for repoliticising debates about climate action and human-nature relationships. In my PhD project, I therefore explore the potential role of human-nature relations for eco-social change in context of the Australian Black summer. By conducting qualitative interviews and ethnographic fieldwork with various societal groups which stand in different relationships with nature, I seek to explore which kinds of human-nature relationships were exposed by the bushfire crisis, how they were perceived and

(re-)configured through the Black Summer experience. I thereby combine a New Materialist relational ontology with a care-ethical approach to human-nature relations, conceptualizing human-nature relations as relationships of care within which caring needs can be perceived, conflicts addressed and practices of care exercised. Responsible care thus requires practical, affective (cognitive and emotional), as well as ethico-political engagement. Combined with a New Materialist social theory of embedded relationality, this perspective enables me to explore human-nature relations focusing on the role of emotions, the constitutive qualities of eco-systems, and the reciprocity of human-nature relations. I thereby seek to uncover conflicts of care underlying climate (in-)action, as well as solutions grounded in local experience and relational knowledge, following the assumption that if humans are constituted through their relationships with nature (New Materialism), practicing responsible relationships with nature (care) is key for eco-social change

Panel 2

10:50 – 11:00

Seen as Wild: Narratives and visual history of the Bavarian Forest National Park

Zhanna Baimukhamedova

The goal of this dissertation is to see the interconnectedness of the mediascape and the landscape of the Bavarian Forest National Park (BFNP), the mutual effects between the imagined and the real from the environmental humanities perspective (history, visual and cultural studies, ethnography). Simply put: how representation informs our understanding of and interaction with nature — both from within and without the national park borders.

Apart from creating a physical place where wilderness, however specifically conceptualized, reigns, the BFNP has created a mediascape — visual and textual narrative, that informs popular understanding of the NP, its nature, and what to anticipate experiencing in there. I would argue that narrative is just as important — if not more so in certain cases — as the physical conservation area itself: through its consumption, evaluation, and reproduction the idea of a national park becomes the lived and living reality which has direct repercussions on non-human and human

inhabitants dwelling in and around it. Seeing how these representations have been changing over the years in response to dramatic changes in the area and societal sensibilities at large allows us to understand their importance for proliferating (or promoting) certain ecological practices and nature conservation in general. The narrative-creation was happening when Grzimek et al. had to 'sell' the idea of establishing a national park back in the 1960s; different narratives followed many an instance when wildlife or other creatures did not behave according to specific wishes; presently, elaborate narratives are employed to showcase the national park as a place where one can experience nature in its most natural state. All these are not separate currents, but rather threads weaving together to form what can be called the 'Bavarian Forest National Park mythology.' The importance of the research lies in evaluating how stories make a storied place --- a place where conflicts, aspirations, ideas, and dreams translate to changes on land and who-/whatever lives in/on it.

Panel 3

11:35 – 11:45

Infra-structural remediations:

Agroecological futures in Thailand as prospective ethnographies of hope

Huiying Ng

In the 1960s-1980s, newly-independent Southeast Asian and East Asian nation-states began to embrace self-identified developmental policies, framing their actions in terms of economic competition with European and American commerce. This peaceable—if tense—competition was undergirded by the memory of imperial and colonial dynamics in the region, which prompted various forms of violent penetration and defensive reaction. Despite changes in the global economy since then, these dynamics persist in agricultural trade policies. Herbicides such as paraquat, patented in Switzerland and banned in 53 countries including Switzerland, have been imported by Thailand under agricultural trade laws until 2018. The uses of such herbicides are unevenly distributed in farming regions: since the civilizing project of the mid-to-late 1800s, the regions of North and Northeast Thailand have been strained for resources to build the wealth of the centre.

To trace an intersectional narrative of smallholder agriculture, I begin to trace a distilled, if specific political economic history of Thailand's agricultural economy and its interpenetration with imperial capital, beginning with the reign of King Rama V, to (the current) King Rama X. I seek to develop the concept of the agroecological learning assemblage as an emergent empirical phenomenon today, diverted or strengthened by the frictions between different interests, including state capital, corporate capital, farmers and artists, and environmental groups.

This research considers the dynamic movement of Chinese influence and pushback in northern Thailand (Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces up to the Mae Sai border with Myanmar), the Pattaya area, and northeastern Thailand (Isaan). These three sites provide me with grounds to range over forms of middle-class accommodation and accumulation (northern Thailand), consumption, tourism and investment (Bangkok-Pattaya), and resistance enmeshed or arising from the degradation of lands and farming communities (Isaan).

Panel 3

11:45 – 11:55

Urban food forests: A multispecies approach for resilient and sustainable cities

Lotta Ortheil

Industrialized food systems have proven to be unsustainable as they are leading to natural resource depletion, climate change, economic disparities across the value chain and negative health impacts. Food forests are biodiverse agroforestry systems using 3-7 layers of multifunctional plants. They have the potential to provide food, livelihoods, ecosystem services, and foster human-environment relationships.

Against the background of increasing urbanization and related sustainability challenges this doctoral project will explore the transformation potential of food forests in temperate and Mediterranean urban and peri-urban landscapes. Using a citizen science approach, it aims to observe and monitor economic, social and environmental aspects of ongoing food forests in collaboration with practitioners. As each food forest differs by geographical location, this research will focus on identifying sustainable design and conduct principles that can be used to improve existing systems and to enable new project developers to take full advantage by the experiences of the pioneers. A key aspect here is interactions between people and plants and, in particular, how ecological practices and knowledge are retained and transmitted in food forests. Resilience building will be discussed in relation to the current Corona pandemic, in which food forests have actively contributed to food security in cities (e.g. through donations to food banks).

In a second application-based step, a food forest project will be initiated and important practice-oriented factors in the implementation process (land acquisition, forms of financing, etc.) will be documented. In addition, contact will be made with city administrations to discuss the legal framework for land use, planning strategies and support mechanisms needed for a wide dissemination of urban food forests. Hereby, this project aims to bridge gaps in knowledge and practice and to provide results useful for city planners, policymakers and food foresters.