

# The Palgrave Handbook of Sustainability

Robert Brinkmann • Sandra J. Garren  
Editors

# The Palgrave Handbook of Sustainability

Case Studies and Practical Solutions

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*Editors*

Robert Brinkmann  
Hofstra University  
Hempstead, NY, USA

Sandra J. Garren  
Hofstra University  
Hempstead, NY, USA

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*This book is dedicated to everyone who tries to make the world a better place through sustainability efforts in their home, their community, their nation, and the world.*

# Preface

The idea for this book emerged from conversations we had years ago when we saw that there was a need for greater information about practical and real-world examples of sustainability efforts from around the world. We were inspired by people like Wangari Maathai who worked hard in her own community yet stirred the world to think about local and global sustainability connections. It was our goal to showcase how people around the world were finding ways to come to terms with their sustainability challenges to not only inspire us but to teach us. We believe we have accomplished this goal. We hope the book will be of interest to anyone who wants to learn about ways that sustainability is addressed throughout the world.

The book was also inspired by our students. We have been teaching in the environmental field for many years, and we have found that students are motivated to get engaged in the field of sustainability if they can learn about real-world situations. As a result, each chapter of this book not only has significant background about a particular sustainability topic, it also has a case study to provide context for the issue at hand.

While defining sustainability can be problematic, we took a traditional approach in framing sustainability within the venerable three E's of the field: environment, equity, and economy. The first three parts of the book are roughly divided into these three areas. But we also attempted to obtain distinct regional examples of sustainability initiatives from around the world that can be framed more holistically. These examples make up the final part of the book. We tried to be comprehensive in scope throughout all four parts. However, any attempt to be comprehensive in a book like this will be flawed at the end. It is just impossible to capture all areas of sustainability in a time like this. The field and the world is just too vast. Please forgive any omissions

in content. Because sustainability is a holistic field, many chapters cover themes that might fit in other sections of the book. We know our readers are sophisticated consumers of sustainability information and will understand the challenges inherent in trying to divide sustainability content into comprehensive sections.

Our work on the book, and the work of many of the authors, was informed by the tumultuous times in which we live. We started working with contributing authors on their pieces in 2016 around the time of the Brexit vote and the subsequent elections that resulted in the US presidency of Donald Trump. As we write this preface in late 2017, throughout the world, there is great concern about the future of sustainability initiatives and even greater concern about the future of our planet in general, given the saber rattling of nuclear powers. While some people live in places where sustainability is about technological innovation, many others live in places where sustainability is about trying to find clean water and safety. We believe that the examples in this book are extremely important at this unique moment of time in our collective history. They not only give us a way forward, but they also give us faith that we can work together to solve significant problems.

Putting together such a big book came with some challenges. We worked with dozens of authors from around the world. We are so grateful for their contributions. Their efforts to make the world a better place motivated us. We are lucky to have so many outstanding authors as contributors. Unfortunately, some of the authors had health, family, or professional challenges and had to drop out of the project. While we regret not being able to publish their work, it was wonderful to get to know them. We were truly humbled by the work of so many people in very different settings.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges we had in developing this book was how to make this work speak to a global audience. Each case study is on a different topic and in a different setting. How do these pieces work together? As the chapters came in, we found that while sustainability infused all the writing, what really brought the work together is the process and the people. All over the world, individuals and communities are joining to work on important issues that have real implications for the survivability of the planet and the quality of life for future generations. The people involved with the case studies in the chapters represent just a small number trying to make the world a better place. The chapters not only inform us how to do sustainability, they also give us hope.

New York, NY, USA

Robert Brinkmann  
Sandra J. Garren

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# Editors and Contributors

## Editors

**Robert Brinkmann** is the Vice Provost for Scholarship and Research and Dean for Graduate Studies at Hofstra University which is located on Long Island in New York. He is also a Professor of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability. He has a Ph.D. in Geography and a Master's degree and Bachelor's degree in Geology. He has served on the writing team of the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council. His research focuses largely on human alteration of the planet. Specifically, he is interested in soil and water pollution and alteration of karst terrain. He has published dozens of books and articles on sustainability topics. Most recently, he is the author of *Introduction to Sustainability*, one of the first major sustainability textbooks published. He is also the co-editor of this book and the book series editor for environmental sustainability with Palgrave. His writing has been featured on *CNN*, *Newsday*, *Huffington Post*, and his blog, *On the Brink*. He has appeared on a number of television (*CNN*, *CBS News*) and radio stations to talk about sustainability issues. Brinkmann was recently awarded the Eddie Mitchell Memorial Award for his work on human rights in Florida.

**Sandra J. Garren, Ph.D.** is the Director of Sustainability Research at the National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University. She is also the Director of Sustainability Studies and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability at Hofstra University. She completed her doctorate in Geography and Environmental Science and Policy Program in the Department of Geosciences at the University of South Florida,

Tampa, in May 2014. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Earth Science/Geology and a Master's degree in Teaching. In total, Sandra has more than 25 years of experience in both academic and environmental sustainability fields which includes principal investigator, project management, and technical expertise for scientific investigations related to sustainability, greenhouse gas accounting, climate change policy, water management, energy, and environmental regulation. Her research is focused on sustainability, water management, and climate policy issues both globally and nationally (including federal, state, and local governments) and is interdisciplinary and specifically focused on applied science and policy that solve problems and find solutions to the negative impacts of climate change and other environmental challenges. She currently teaches courses in sustainable development, sustainability theory, sustainable energy, and geospatial applications in sustainability.

## Contributors

**Kristin Aunan** is Senior Research Fellow at Center for International Climate and Environmental Research in Oslo (CICERO). Her research focuses on exposure to and health effects of air pollution in ambient and indoor environments in China.

**Christopher Schreier-Barreto** is an architect for the Ricardo Palma University and photographer by the Peruvian Institute of Art and Design. He is a candidate for a Master of Science degree with a major in Architecture: History, Theory, and Critique by the National University of Engineering. He is a full-time Assistant Professor of the Architecture and Project Development Degree at the University of Lima's Office of Academic Projects. He has conducted research on environmental topics for the Institute of Scientific Research of the same university since 2015. He has also participated in various academic publications and professional diffusion with articles on theory and analysis of work, as well as photographs of architecture.

**Michelle R. Oswald Beiler** is an Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA. Her primary research focus is on sustainable transportation engineering with an emphasis on sustainable performance metrics, pedestrian and cycling mobility, and climate change adaptation planning. She is a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional (LEED AP), a Professional Engineer (PE) in the state of Pennsylvania, and a Professional Transportation Planner (PTP).

**Morgan C. Benton** is a Co-founder of the Burning Man Project and Associate Professor of Integrated Science and Technology (ISAT) at James Madison University (JMU). He holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Information Systems from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. His research addresses innovation in learning and higher education, focusing on innovative policies, procedures, and environments for producing new knowledge.

**Shrimoyee Bhattacharya** is a Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), Bangalore. She has more than a decade of experience as both practitioner and a researcher in the field of urban and regional planning, policy advisory and research, and capacity building of urban institutions. She holds a Master's degree in Urban and Rural Planning from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee. Her research interests include various aspects of sustainable urban development. The author is grateful to Sujaya Rathi, Dr. Sujatha Byravan, Merlin Francis, and Dr. Jai Asundi for reviewing this chapter and to Noelene Marisa Yesudas and Sonali Anusree Patro for their unconditional support through data, graphics, and making this chapter complete by all means.

**Stuart Bretschneider** is a Foundation Professor of Organization Design and Public Administration at ASU's School of Public Affairs and CORD's Director of Research. His research focuses on innovation in public organizations, the use of information technology and the effects of those technologies on public organizations, and the evaluation of environmental and energy policies.

**Komal Brown** is a Study Coordinator at Louisiana State University, School of Public Health, USA. She oversees the Lead Exposure Assessment Drinking Water Study, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and regularly collaborates with Lead Safe Louisiana on lead poisoning prevention efforts throughout New Orleans. She works at the forefront of lead issues in New Orleans, focusing her efforts on community engagement, education, and intervention and evaluating the efficacy of potential policy solutions.

**Constance Carr, Ph.D.** is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning of the University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg. She obtained her doctorate from the Humboldt University in Berlin and, before that, her Master's from the Faculty of Environmental Studies of York University, in Toronto. She has published in various journals including *Local Environment*, *Regional Studies*, *Planning Theory & Practice*, *Raumforschung Und Raumordnung*, *European Planning Studies*, and *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Updates on her research can be found at [sustain.gov.blogspot.com](http://sustain.gov.blogspot.com).

**Jenni Cauvain, Ph.D.** is a Research Fellow at the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham, UK. Her field of research is social sustainability in cities. Her research interests include urban justice and citizenship, low-carbon interventions, energy vulnerability, and housing.

**Innocent Chirisa, DPhil, MSc, BSc Hons.** has completed Rural and Urban Planning, (University of Zimbabwe), DipLMISR (IHS, Erasmus University), MZIRUP (Zimbabwe), Full Professor teaching Urban and Environmental Planning courses in the Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe. Currently he is serving as the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Zimbabwe. Also, he is currently serving as the Acting Chairman of the Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe. Professor Chirisa was recently appointed as a Research Fellow, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, for the period 2016–2020.

**Tim Cooper** is a Professor of Sustainable Design and Consumption at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), UK. His research interests are multi-disciplinary, embracing design, consumer behavior, public policy, and environmental ethics. He has a specialist expertise in product longevity and is contributing editor of *Longer Lasting Products* (2010). Tim has managed and contributed to a wide range of research projects, funded by the European Commission, Council of Europe, EPSRC, ESRC, Defra, WRAP, and industry and third-sector organizations. He has acted as research evaluator for the Research Council of Norway, Irish Environmental Protection Agency, and Belgium Federal Science Policy. He is currently Head of the Sustainable Consumption and Clothing Sustainability Research Groups at NTU and Co-director of the EPSRC-funded Centre for Industrial Energy, Materials, and Products.

**Nicole Darnall** is a Professor of Management and Public Policy at ASU in the School of Public Affairs and the School of Sustainability. She is Associate Director of ASU's CORD and team leader of the Sustainable Purchasing Research Initiative (SPRI). Her research focuses on factors that facilitate or impede the enactment of organizational sustainability and individuals' sustainability behaviors. Learn more about SPRI's research at [spa.asu.edu/spri](http://spa.asu.edu/spri).

**Lisa F. Daugherty** is a Project Manager/Senior Environmental Scientist at Kleinfelder, Inc. in Mount Dora, Florida. She earned her M.S. in Environmental Science and Policy at the University of South Florida.

**Aaron Deslatte** is an Assistant Professor of Public Administration and a Faculty Affiliate at the Institute for the Study of Environment, Sustainability, and Energy at Northern Illinois University, USA. His research revolves around local government management and innovation, land-use policy and development, the environment, and social equity.

**Cornelia Diethelm** is the Director of Sustainability & Issue Management at Migros and Board Member of Öbu, the Swiss network for sustainable management. She has two Master's degrees in Political Science, Business and Economics, and Corporate Communications Management.

**Marc Edwards** is the Charles P. Lunsford Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech. In 2016 Edwards was named among the most influential people in the world (Time), greatest thinkers in the world (Foreign Policy), greatest leaders in the world (Fortune), and people most influencing politics in the world (Politico). Edwards is a MacArthur Fellow (2007) and has won numerous awards for defending the public interest at great personal risk.

**Catherine Fisher** is the Assistant Director of the Faculty Computing Services Department at Hofstra University and an adjunct faculty member in the Information Systems and Business Analytics Department. At the university, she supports the assessment efforts and the classroom technology for the faculty as well as the administration. Before joining Hofstra in 2006, Ms. Fisher worked as a systems analyst at the New York Stock Exchange for over ten years. She received her M.B.A. from St. John's University and M.S.Ed. at Hofstra University.

**Deborah Rigling Gallagher** is an Associate Professor of Resource and Environmental Policy at Duke University. Her research focuses on public policies at the intersection of business and the environment, and more specifically on public-private partnerships for sustainability. She is a leading scholar of environmental leadership, having edited the SAGE Reference Handbook of Environmental Leadership. She is the former Director of Duke University's Environmental Leadership program.

**Aimee C. Gibbons, Ph.D.** was awarded her doctorate in Earth System Science from the University of California, Irvine. Her research applies geostatistical techniques to in situ and Earth observations to characterize responses in groundwater quality to increased use.

**David Gibbs** is a Professor of Human Geography at the University of Hull. His main research interests are focused on the political economy of the environment and on economy-environment interrelationships. He is particularly

interested in exploring the policy implications of these interrelationships, especially at the local and regional level.

**Melissa Grigione** is a Professor in the Biology Department at Pace University in New York. She earned her Ph.D. in Ecology at UC Davis and concentrates her research in mammalian spatial ecology, emphasizing conservation biology for species whose populations have been seriously altered as a consequence of habitat degradation and fragmentation. She is co-author of numerous peer-reviewed papers and articles and the recipient of more than a dozen grants and fellowships.

**Christopher V. Hawkins** is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Administration at the University of Central Florida, USA. His research focuses on regional governance, political institutions, and urban sustainability policy.

**Kirsten Holmes** is an Associate Professor and the Co-director of the Tourism Research Cluster at Curtin University, Australia. Her expertise is in volunteering in leisure, tourism, events, and festivals, and she is the lead author of *Events and Sustainability* (Routledge, 2015). Most recently, she conducted research for the International Olympic Committee on the volunteer legacies of the Sydney and London Olympic Games.

**Lily Hsueh** is an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at ASU's School of Public Affairs. She is a CORD Senior Affiliate and Senior Sustainability Scientist at ASU's Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability. Her research focuses on the emergence, evolution, and impacts of voluntary programs and market-based policies across policy issue areas, such as climate change, toxic chemicals, ocean and marine resources, and sustainable purchasing.

**Heidi Hutner** is an Associate Professor of Sustainability and English, Director of the Sustainability Studies Program, and Associate Dean in the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook University. She writes about women and the environment, environmental justice, environmental humanities, and nuclear history. Hutner has published books with Oxford University Press, University of Virginia, and she publishes widely in anthologies and at news sites such as *New York Times*, *Ms. Magazine*, and others. Hutner's current book project, *Accidents Can Happen: Women in Nuclear History, Film, and Culture*, looks at the role of women and gender in nuclear stories. Hutner's website: [HeidiHutner.com](http://HeidiHutner.com)

**Ralf Isenmann, Ph.D.** is a Professor of Business Administration in Innovation and Technology Management at the Wilhelm Büchner Hochschule—University of Applied Sciences, Pfungstadt/Darmstadt (Germany)—and a Professor at the Institute for Project Management and Innovation (IPMI) University of Bremen (Germany), Faculty of Business Studies and Economics. Further, he is a Professor of Sustainable Management and Innovation at the University for Sustainable Development Eberswalde (HNEE). Prior to this, he was a Professor for Sustainable Future Management, Faculty of Business Administration, Munich University of Applied Sciences. He studied Industrial Engineering, Management and Business Studies at the Technische Universität Kaiserslautern and received a Dr. rer. pol. (Ph.D.) in Business Administration. From the University of Bremen, he holds a Dr. rer. pol. habil. (Habilitation, *venia legendi*). His expertise and focus in research, projects, publications, and teaching is in the interface between Technology and Innovation Management—in particular, technology foresight methods like Delphi and road mapping—and Sustainability Management, in particular Industrial Ecology Management and ICT-based Sustainability Reporting.

**Adrienne L. Katner** is an Assistant Professor in Environmental and Occupational Health at Louisiana State University School of Public Health, USA. Her research on lead in water resulted in a statewide policy change to require water testing during home inspections of lead-exposed children. In 2015, New Orleans non-profits recognized her with a Katrina Hero Award for Environmental Justice. Most recently, Dr. Katner has been involved in raising awareness about the lack of education to rural low-income residents reliant on groundwater as their potable water source.

**Sarah Kettley** is a Reader in Relational Design within the Product Design subject area at Nottingham Trent University, UK. Her research is concerned with how networks of things can be designed for networks of people. She is a member of the Design for Health and Wellbeing, and the Digital Craft and Embodied Knowledge Research Groups at NTU, and represents the University as a member of the steering group for the international Arcintex research network. She is an elected council member of the Design Research Society and convenes the tentSIG special interest group in tangible, embedded, and networked technologies. She received her doctorate from Edinburgh Napier University in 2008 and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

**Kristina Kleinlercher** is a Research Assistant and Doctoral Candidate at the Institute of Retail Management, University of St. Gallen. Her research inter-

ests are Cross-Channel Management, Digital Marketing, and Sustainability Management.

**Johanna Kovarik, Ph.D.** received her doctorate in Geography and Environmental Science and Policy in 2015 from the University of South Florida. Her primary research focuses on the impacts of human use of natural landscapes, groundwater vulnerability, and karst hydrogeology. She was the recipient in 2016 of the Forest Service's Rise to the Future for Excellence and Leadership Friend of the Fish/Watershed for her work with karst watersheds. She currently serves as a National Program Lead for the US Forest Service and has worked for the agency for over 14 years.

**Rachel M. Krause** is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Affairs and Administration at the University of Kansas. Her research focuses on issues of local governance, urban sustainability, climate protection, and community perceptions and acceptance of innovative environmental technologies. Her research on "Integrated City Sustainability: Administrative Apparatus for Overcoming Collective Dilemmas of Agency Fragmentation" is funded by the National Science Foundation's Science of Organizations program.

**Yanna Lambrinidou** is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Science and Technology in Society at Virginia Tech and founder of the non-profit environmental health organization Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives. She served on the US EPA's National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) LCR Workgroup and the CDC's Education and Communication Workgroup of the National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures. Her work has highlighted unethical industry-government practices and challenged paradigms in public participation in science and policy.

**Margaret Linehan** has an MBA in Sustainability from Antioch University. She has worked over 25 years in the Information Technology Finance divisions of numerous financial institutions, including Goldman Sachs, ING, ABN and Royal Bank of Scotland, and is currently working at the non-profit Social Impact Exchange. She initiated Goldman Sachs Brooklyn Recycling Program and worked on the Environmental Committee of the Park Slope Food Coop.

**Rurik List** is a conservation biologist working on the ecology and conservation of carnivores and species at risk, as well as in species' reintroductions and identification of conservation priorities. He created the Janos Biosphere Reserve—Mexico's first federal protected area created with the objective of protecting native grasslands—and is Head of the Research Area on

Conservation Biology at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Lerma in Mexico.

**Judith Mair, Ph.D.** lectures in Event Management in the Tourism Cluster of the UQ Business School, University of Queensland, Australia. Her research interests include events and sustainability, in particular greening of events and festivals, and the impacts of events on community and society. Her recent projects have focused on researching the links between events and social capital, examining the potential for events to act as spaces for pro-environmental behavior change and assessing the potential impacts of climate change on the tourism and events sector.

**J. C. Martel** is a Doctoral Student in the School of Public Affairs and Administration at the University of Kansas and Analyst for the City of Kansas, Missouri. Her work focuses on policy and program development guided by statistical and spatial modeling of energy, water, and greenhouse gas emissions. Her research uses institutional analysis and policy process theories to explore sustainability and climate change policy issues.

**Abraham R. Matamanda** is a registered full-time Ph.D. student in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Free State in South Africa. He holds Master's degree in Social Ecology from the Graduate Centre for Applied Social Studies and a BSc Honours degree in Rural and Urban Planning. Both degrees were obtained from the University of Zimbabwe. Abraham's Ph.D. study focuses on emerging human settlement forms and urban dilemma nexus focusing on water, sanitation, public transport, and security issues. He is a keen researcher and emerging academic who has shown his interest in research work through publications in peer-reviewed local and international journals such as *City, Territory and Architecture*, *Regional Development Dialogue*, and *Zambezia*, among others. Specifically Abraham's researches focus on urbanization, sustainability, environmental planning, rural development, and the planning of cities and towns.

**Anna Metaxas, Ph.D.** is a Professor in Oceanography at Dalhousie University. Her research focus is on factors that regulate marine populations from shallow water to the deep sea, in tropical and temperate regions. She is particularly interested in population connectivity, as it relates to conservation.

**Corey Morris, Ph.D.** is a scientist at Fisheries and Oceans Canada. His research is largely applied toward measuring population connectivity, MPA effectiveness, and environmental impacts of marine industries.

**Liaison Mukarwi** holds a BSc Hons in Rural and Urban Planning from the University of Zimbabwe. Liaison is a freelance researcher whose researches focus on Urban Management and Governance, Environmental Design, Housing and Community Issues, and Transport and Sustainability issues.

**Ishani Mukherjee** is a Research Fellow (Adj.) at the Institute of Water Policy and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), National University of Singapore. She received her Ph.D. in Public Policy, with a focus on Environmental Policy and was the recipient of the World Future Foundation Ph.D. Prize for Environmental and Sustainability Research in 2014. She also received the Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Administration Best Article Prize for 2016 and the Policy and Politics Ken Young Best Paper Award for 2015, along with her co-authors. Widely published, Ishani's research interests combine policy design and policy formulation, with a thematic focus on policy instruments for environmental sustainability, renewable energy, and energy efficiency, particularly in Southeast Asia. She worked previously at the World Bank's Energy Practice in Washington, D.C., on formulating guidelines and evaluating projects related to renewable energy, rural electrification, and energy efficiency. She obtained her M.S. degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Economics from Cornell University.

**Nora Munguia, Ph.D.** holds a doctoral degree from the University of Massachusetts Lowell in the field of Cleaner Production and Pollution Prevention. She is a Senior Professor/Researcher in Sustainability Issues at the University of Sonora, Mexico. She is coordinator of the sustainability graduate program, professor, and researcher in the University of Sonora in Mexico and adjunct professor in the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She also is a member of the Mexican Research System.

**Yumiko Nakanishi** is a Professor of European Union Law at the Graduate School of Law, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, Japan. She obtained Master of Law (Hitotsubashi University 1993), Magister Legum (University of Münster, Germany, 1995), and Doctor of Law (University of Münster 1998). Her areas of research are EU environmental law, EU constitutional law, and EU external relations law. She is the author of numerous books and articles including the following books: *Y Nakanishi* (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Environmental Law*, Springer 2016.

**Leslie A. North, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor of Environmental Geoscience in the Department of Geography and Geology at Western Kentucky University (WKU). She serves as the Associate Director for Education and Outreach in the WKU Center for Human GeoEnvironmental

Studies (CHNGES). Her research interests focus on the development of effective informal learning education materials and techniques, particularly those related to water resources, climate change, sustainability, ecotourism, and karst landscapes.

**Thaddeus Chidi Nzeadibe, Ph.D.** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and also the Coordinator of the Waste & Resource Management Research Group (WARMREG), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria. He obtained a doctorate in Environmental Management and has published in some top journals in environment and development. He is co-editor of the book *Dealing with waste: Resource Recovery and Entrepreneurship in Informal Sector Solid Waste Management in African cities* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2017) and currently serves as editor in the journal *Cogent Environmental Science*. Email: chidi.nzeadibe@unn.edu.ng

**Friday Uchenna Ochenna** is from the Department of Geography and Environmental Management, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He is currently a doctoral student at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, under the CAS-TWAS President Fellowship. He has some peer-reviewed publications to his credit. Email: uchenna.ochega@uniport.edu.ng

**Kirstie O'Neill** is a Fellow in Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Kirstie's research interests focus broadly on sustainability, in particular sustainability transitions, alternative food systems, and green building. She is also interested in policy networks and governance for sustainability.

**Sheetal Patil** is a Researcher at Azim Premji University, Bangalore. With formal training in engineering and computer applications, her research interest is in policy impacts on agricultural sustainability and its assessment at micro level. Using the lens of sustainability, she focuses on agrarian and related issues that range from natural resource management to food security to livelihood sustenance to alternate institutions to safeguarding traditional and cultural knowledge. For more details and other publications: <http://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/SitePages/sheetal-patil.aspx>.

**Diane M. Phillips, Ph.D.** is a Professor of Marketing at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Dr. Phillips is also a Guest Professor at the Institute for Retail Management at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. She received her doctorate from Penn State University and focuses her research in the broad area of sustainability and marketing strategy. Dr. Phillips has been writing, speaking, and doing research on sustainability for more than 20 years and recently became a certified member of the Climate Reality Leadership

Corps, an elite group of thought leaders that have been trained by former Vice President Al Gore to deliver The New Climate Reality presentation. Each semester, she teaches several classes on the topic of sustainability at the graduate and undergraduate levels. She also speaks to national and international conferences, businesses, and universities on the topic.

**Jason Keith Phillips, Ph.D., C.T.L.** earned a doctorate in Management Science, Operations, and Logistics from Penn State University. His research has appeared in numerous prestigious international journals including the *Journal of Business Logistics*, the *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, and the *Transportation Journal*. With over 20 years of teaching experience, Phillips is currently a Professor of Marketing at West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Dr. Phillips has also developed and leads numerous highly successful student study tours, both international and domestic, annually.

**Kelsey Pieper** is a USDA-NIFA Postdoctoral Fellow in the Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech and a member of the Flint Water Study Team at Virginia Tech. Her research focuses on lead exposure in drinking water and evaluating the effectiveness of common remediation practices. Her work has brought national attention to water quality challenges experienced by low-income rural populations—problems that are often associated with less regulated small community water systems, and unregulated systems, such as private wells.

**Pierre Pepin, Ph.D.** is a Senior Oceanographer and Quantitative Ecologist at Fisheries and Oceans Canada. His research focuses on population connectivity, prey-predator dynamics, community-habitat relationships, climate change, and development of ecosystem-based approaches to management.

**Seema Purushothaman** is a Professor at Azim Premji University. She uses interdisciplinary approaches to study social, ecological, and economic change in livelihoods and policies in India, investigating their linkage to food and agrarian crises. Her research spans across the concept and issues of sustainability in and around forests and family farms. Her teaching interest includes sustainability as a concept, as an agrarian concern, as well as from an economic perspective. For more details and other publications: <http://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/SitePages/seema-purushothaman.aspx>.

**Nicole M. Radziwill** is an Associate Professor of Integrated Science and Technology (ISAT) at James Madison University (JMU). She is a Fellow of the American Society for Quality (ASQ), a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt

(CSSBB), and Certified Manager of Quality and Organizational Excellence (CMQ/OE) and one of ASQ's Influential Voices (<http://qualityandinnovation.com>). She is the author of *Statistics (The Easier Way) with R* and *End-to-End Solved Problems with R*. Her research emphasizes quality, innovation, and design in production systems, in particular, cyber-human and cyber-physical systems.

**R. M. Wasantha Rathnayake, Ph.D.** is a Professor and an Environmentalist. His research interest is recreational planning. He has published several eco-tourism planning studies applying the travel cost method and the contingent valuation method. At present, he is Dean of Faculty of Management Studies at the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

**Daniel R. Rondinel-Oviedo** has an MSc in Architecture with a major in Ecology (2011) at Cornell University in New York, USA; Fulbright Foundation Scholarship (2010–2011); Architect 2003, Ricardo Palma University with membership to the College of Architects of Peru (2007); LEED G.A. (2011); and EDGE Expert & EDGE Auditor (2016). In the professional field, he has 13 years of experience in design, coordination, management, and development of projects with specialization in architecture and sustainable building and he has worked in projects for public and private entities. In the academic field, he has 12 years of experience as a teacher: Professor of the Project Workshop course at the Ricardo Palma University (2005–2009); Assistant Professor for the School of Architecture, Art, and Planning at Cornell University (2010–2011) for the Environmental System 1 and 2 courses; and Professor of Architecture at the University of Lima for the courses on Environment and Natural Resources (since 2011), Project Development (since 2013), and Design Studio (since 2014). He has developed research on sustainability for the Institute of Scientific Research of the same university since 2015.

**Mark Roseland** is a Professor of Planning in the Graduate School of Resource and Environmental Management and Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. He lectures internationally and advises communities and governments on sustainable development policy and planning. Dr. Roseland has developed Pando.sc, a network for sustainable community researchers and practitioners. The 4th edition of his best-selling book *Toward Sustainable Communities: Solutions for Citizens and Their Governments* is published by New Society.

**Thomas Rudolph** is a Professor at the University of St. Gallen. He manages and directs the Institute of Retail Management and the partnership program Retail Lab. His research focuses on Consumer Behavior, E-Commerce, Cross-

Channel Management, and Strategic Retail Management. He has published more than 10 books and over 300 articles on the topics of Marketing and Retailing.

**Jonathan Rushton** is a Professor of Animal Health in the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. He is a member of the Veterinary Epidemiology, Economics and Public Health Group where he focuses on improving the well-being of people and animals through improved resource allocation to food systems and animal health, disease, and welfare problems.

**Ellen Scully-Russ** is an Associate Professor of Human and Organizational Learning at George Washington University, USA. She studies the changing nature of work, with a particular interest in understanding the complex dynamics giving rise to emerging occupations. She has authored numerous award-winning articles on the intersection of sustainability and human resource development, including “Human resource development and sustainability: Beyond sustainable organizations” in *Human Resource Development International* and “Green HRD: A social-environmental systems perspective of the role of HRD,” in Volume 17 of *Advances in Developing Human Resources*.

**Christian N. Ryan** EDD is the Sustainability Coordinator at Western Kentucky University. She teaches courses for the MA in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities and the MBA in Sustainability Certificate. Her research interests include disruptive leadership, emergent leadership, organizational change for sustainability, and problem and place-based learning.

**Ronald Sarno, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor in the Biology Department at Hofstra University in New York. He earned his doctorate in Ecology/Evolutionary Biology at Iowa State University. Much of his past research has focused on the population ecology, evolution, and behavior of mammals, especially the wild South American camelids due to his interest in mating systems, social behavior, population dynamics, and conservation.

**Timothy M. Shaw** is a Foundation Director and Visiting Professor in the Ph.D. in Global Governance and Human Security at the University of Massachusetts Boston with visiting/adjunct status at Aalborg and Stellenbosch Universities as well as in Canada: Carleton and Ottawa in Ottawa and Dalhousie and Saint Mary’s in Halifax. He continues to edit series on IPE for Palgrave Macmillan ([www.palgrave.com/series/13996](http://www.palgrave.com/series/13996)) and Routledge ([www.routledge.com/series/ASHSER1146](http://www.routledge.com/series/ASHSER1146)) ([timothy.shaw@umb.edu](mailto:timothy.shaw@umb.edu)).

**Paul Snelgrove, Ph.D.** is a Marine Ecologist and Professor of Ocean Sciences and Biology at Memorial University of Newfoundland. He also serves as Director of the NSERC Canadian Healthy Oceans Network and Associate Director of the Ocean Frontier Institute. His research interests focus on marine biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, population connectivity, and ocean conservation.

**Maria Spiliotopoulou** is a Ph.D. Candidate in the School of Resource and Environmental Management and a Researcher in the Centre for Sustainable Development at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. Her research focuses on the concept of urban productivity as an alternative way to approach sustainable community development theory and practice.

**Ryan Stanley, Ph.D.** is a Quantitative Ecologist and Research Scientist working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. Dr. Stanley's research program focuses on the design and monitoring of MPAs and MPA networks in the Northwest Atlantic. His research interests focus on population connectivity, fisheries ecology, climate change, and habitat science.

**Justin M. Stritch** is an Assistant Professor of Public Management at ASU's School of Public Affairs. He is CORD Senior Affiliate and Research Fellow at SFI—The Danish National Centre for Social Research. His research focuses on employee motivation, management, performance, and decision-making in public organizations. He applies these topics to a variety of settings, including how organizations can encourage workplace participation in pro-environmental behavior.

**Elizabeth Strom** is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Affairs, University of South Florida. Her work focuses on urban issues such as downtown redevelopment and housing.

**Wilma Subra** is the President of Subra Company and the Technical Advisor to Louisiana Environmental Action Network. She provides technical assistance to community groups dealing with environmental and human health issues and serves on federal, state, and local advisory groups representing citizen issues and situations. She received the MacArthur Genius Award in 1999 for helping ordinary citizens to understand, cope with, and combat toxic chemicals in their communities.

**Kyungeun Sung, Ph.D.** is a Lecturer in the School of Design, De Montfort University (DMU), UK. She recently received a doctorate degree in the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment, Nottingham Trent University (NTU), UK. Her Ph.D. research is about sustainable pro-

duction and consumption by upcycling, which is part of the EPSRC-funded Centre for Industrial Energy, Materials and Products. Before undertaking a job at DMU, Kyungeun worked as a Research Associate/Fellow in Upcycling, Design and Business Management for an interdisciplinary research project between the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment and Nottingham Business School at NTU. Kyungeun's current research focuses on scaling up upcycling across industries. Her general research interest is in sustainable production and consumption focusing on sustainable design.

**Brian F. Thomas** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geology and Environmental Science at the University of Pittsburgh. His research focuses on coupled human/natural systems with a particular interest on watershed storage and groundwater/surface water interactions. His work combined Earth observation data and in situ records with statistical techniques to evaluate anthropogenic influences using rigorous quantitative methods.

**Velazquez Luis, Ph.D.** has 26 years of experience as Industrial Engineer, and since 1994 he has served as Director of Sustainable Development Group in the Engineering College at the University of Sonora. He is Senior Researcher in the Sustainability, Cleaner Production, and Pollution Prevention fields. Dr. Velazquez holds a doctoral degree in the major of Cleaner Production and Pollution Prevention from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He is a Professor and Researcher in the University of Sonora in Mexico and Adjunct Professor in the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

**Thelma I. Velez** is a Ph.D. student at Ohio State University (USA) in the School of Environment and Natural Resources. Her work has focused on various aspects of sustainability in both natural and social sciences. Some of her earlier research entailed carbon sequestration using biochar in organic agriculture settings and research on second-generation biofuel production in India. She is currently a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Program Fellow. Her dissertation focuses on alternative food movements, sustainable consumption, and pro-social behavior.

**Haakon Vennemo** is a Professor of Economics at Oslo Business School HIOA, Norway. His research focuses on energy and environmental economics in China.

**Jo-Ansie van Wyk** is a Professor of International Politics in the Department of Political Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa. She has published widely on political leadership, nuclear diplomacy, and foreign policy. Her recent research has focused on nuclear geography, nuclear diplo-

macy, and energy. She has co-authored a number of books and authored a number of chapters in books and articles.

**Salman Zafar** is the Founder of EcoMENA, and an international consultant, ecopreneur, and journalist with expertise in waste management, waste-to-energy, renewable energy, environment protection, and sustainable development. His geographical areas of focus include Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Salman has successfully accomplished a wide range of projects in the areas of biomass energy, waste-to-energy, recycling, and waste management. Salman is a professional environmental writer with more than 300 popular articles to his credit. He is proactively engaged in creating mass awareness on renewable energy, waste management, and environmental sustainability all over the world.

**Sascha Zinn, Ph.D.** is a Research Assistant at the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Higher Education at the Munich University of Applied Sciences. As an educationalist specialized in Adult Education and Education for Sustainable Development, he is in charge of developing innovative teaching approaches and a concept for Education for Sustainable Development for the Munich University of Applied Sciences. Supported by a scholarship from the “Foundation of the German Economy,” he did his dissertation at the University of Würzburg (Germany) in 2012. In Würzburg, he studied education, sociology, and psychology. His main research is focusing on higher education, organizational development, and sustainable future management.

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