

Editor's Introduction: Moving Academic Geography Forward Amid Times of Compounding Crises and Change

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Moving Forward Amid Times of Crisis and Change

Our world faces many complex, interrelated, and compounding crises: biodiversity loss, climate breakdown, post-pandemic societal change, nature resource over-extraction, unsustainable consumption, food and water shortages, economic recession, supply chain disruption, racial injustices, land use change, displacement and migration, environmental degradation, social inequities, poverty, housing shortages, humanitarian conflicts and war (to name but a few). The disciplines of geography and environmental studies are integral to our understanding of such crises, their underlying components, impacts on interrelated systems and processes, and management solutions. Such crises and related topics have considerable salience and are incredibly timely, given the current socio-political, economic, and environmental climate we live in. Geographers and environmentalists (as well as those who straddle these disciplines) are well-equipped to explore these, and other, issues that are of significant relevance to the academic community, to policymakers, those in industry, and practitioners. *The Northeastern Geographer* welcomes theoretical and empirical manuscripts on these topics and many other salient and pressing issues.

It is here I suggest that *The Northeastern Geographer* becomes a space for critical

engagement with identifying, understanding, and addressing topics, issues and practices that comprise these times of crisis and change. This journal can, and should, be a home for a variety of article types (e.g., research articles, policy briefs, commentaries etc.) with a wide range of focus including theoretical, conceptual, empirical, and applied contributions. Given *The Northeastern Geographer's* growing visibility and consistent track record in publishing high-quality work, we now move forward to enhance the profile of research being done in, and on, the New England-St Lawrence Valley region. Additionally, the journal will continue to look for rigorous empirical and theoretical scholarship on topics that are germane to advancing geographical knowledge.

As societies emerge from the pandemic, it is important to recognize the impact that COVID-19 has had on geographical and environmental research. This includes the limitations of being able to conduct fieldwork and collect data across all sub-disciplines of geography and environmental studies. Additionally, the pandemic has influenced the ability of particular segments of the academic community to publish their research with some having to focus on more immediate and family-oriented priorities. Alongside the financial burdens of conducting research, particularly those conducting studies that are not externally funded or are self-funding their studies, there are multiple barriers to conducting research

(yet alone submitting it for publication) that the pandemic has exacerbated. Thus, *The Northeastern Geographer* is committed to supporting researchers looking to publish their research and particularly those that have been adversely affected by the pandemic.

Journal article publishing is largely the 'bread and butter' of how we disseminate knowledge within geography and environmental studies, as well as many other disciplines. Researchers now find themselves at the behest of advisors, department chairs, promotion committees and new job opportunities to have their work published in peer-reviewed journals. This places a high demand on researchers, editors, and reviewers. Securing appropriate and constructive reviewers can be challenging but their role in the peer-review process is essential to enhancing knowledge production. Journal articles can, and should, be a bridge between research and practice in many areas of our disciplines. Furthermore, they are an independent intermediary between knowledge and the public without restraints from authority and undue influences shaping the direction of research. Innovative knowledge is created in various ways and at all levels including multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies. It is only through this knowledge can solutions to complex compounding crises dominating the global environment, society and economy be addressed. It is here that *The Northeastern Geographer* seeks to draw attention to the innovative research undertaken by its authors and the knowledge and solutions they present.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Energy Research & Social Science*, Benjamin Sovacool (2023), recently commented that publishing supports knowledge creation, science communication, and development of the evidence base to support human and non-human societal growth and evolution. Publishing is a critical way to inform others of that the academic

community at large can build upon ideas and advancements. Sovacool notes that our contributions to our respective fields are less meaningful if we are silent and do not engage at all. This is particularly problematic for the various social problems that currently exist e.g., the climate crisis, covid pandemic, the war invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and so on. To not engage at all with these issues, Sovacool notes, is to be complicit with the status quo. Thus, publishing offers a meaningful approach to engage in social dialogue and to communicate openly about socio-economic and environmental challenges. *The Northeastern Geographer* therefore welcomes contributions from authors who wish to engage with the diverse crises, changes, and challenges that dominate our natural and human environments.

In this Issue of *The Northeastern Geographer*

I am delighted to bring you this issue of *The Northeastern Geographer*. Volume 14 contains a diversity of articles on a range of subjects that promises to excite our readership. From research articles on the sustainability potential of organic pigment processing to policy briefs on establishing markets for invasive green crabs in New England, this Volume presents the diversity of research on, and in, New England and St Lawrence Valley region. I want to take this opportunity to thank the manuscript reviewers who gave their time to peer-review the work of the authors.