

Kyoto International Workshop 2020

Consumption and Sustainability

Past, Present and Future

February 17-21, 2020

Kyoto University

Japan



Summary Report



The Asian Platform for
Global Sustainability &
Transcultural Studies



Opening and Introduction

After having welcomed all participants, the International Workshop was opened by **Shuji Hisano** (Kyoto University), presenting the objectives and key questions of the workshop, and explaining why we need to focus on sustainability and consumption, and why it should take the form of a workshop consisting of international and multidisciplinary participants.

Objectives and Goals

First, he showed two cartoons featuring sustainability. The one, titled “Sorry, Son!” (by Elihu Duayer), conveys the message “What kind of world are we handing over to the next generation?”. This illustration evokes a widening divide between generations and growing dissatisfaction among younger generations as represented by strong statements of Greta Thunberg. The other one, titled “Capitalism Sells Us Our Own Destruction” (by Stephanie McMillan), is meant to warn us that “Industrial capitalism profits by destroying the world, then again by selling us fake ‘green’ lifestyle products”. This is the reality, or the problems concerning the theme of the workshop: “consumption and sustainability”, that we are now witnessing in the context of the recent boost of sustainable development discourse and practices. The message given in this cartoon was clear and understandable for all the participants of the workshop, but not necessarily understood by the general public, not necessarily accepted by those in the mainstream political, business and academic communities. Therefore, the situation described in the cartoon needs to be put into a critical investigation by using analytical concepts and theoretical frameworks from various social science disciplines. This is why the workshop was convened.

He, then, reminded the participants of the key questions to be addressed during the workshop: *how does the consumption of food, clothes and luxury products affect social, economic, cultural and environmental sustainability?; how does, or should, business contribute to the development of sustainable society and economies?; who are the main actors in these processes?; and, how and in what way can and should we as academic scholars convey our knowledge about sustainability to students and next generation researchers as well as the general public?* And for this purpose, senior and young scholars with geographically and disciplinary diverse backgrounds were invited. The reason why this gathering was named as a “workshop” instead of “conference” was, he explained, that the gathering was expected as a place for conversation rather than simply a series of research presentations, and that our discussions throughout the workshop would lead up to the faculty development sessions, where we were to exchange our experiences and ideas about what to teach and how to teach sustainability.

Why Sustainability

As cynically noted by Thiele (2016), we have to admit that “owing to the frequency and looseness of its usage, sustainability has been called one of the least meaningful and most overused words in the English language”. The best response, however, is “not to stop using the word, but to define it clearly while making its practice more measurable and impactful” (Thiele, 2016). The latter point, how to make sustainability practice measurable and impactful, as already being tackled (though not necessarily successfully) by the international community through the so-called 17 Sustainable Development Goals, was beyond the scope of the workshop. Instead, Shuji Hisano emphasised the importance and necessity to face a simple fact that all of us, including mainstream business actors, are talking about sustainability without clear definitions and criteria; there is no consensus regarding how to achieve what sustainability and how to solve inevitably existing conflicts over interests and values in the course of pursuing sustainable development. *What we have to do as*



critical social scientists is to uncover, identify, and politicise the ideas and social (power) relations behind sustainability policies and practices (e.g. green business, green consumption). This was the primary objective of the workshop.

Relating to this and another objective of the workshop: “sustainability education”, Shuji Hisano introduced the mission of the Kyoto University Graduate School of Economics’ international graduate programme for East Asia Sustainable Economic Development Studies (EA Programme), where he’s been serving as the Director. That is, for the EA Programme, sustainability is “meant to address broader and comprehensive issue areas, more than economic objectives, more than environmental objectives... It is also about a well-balanced development among different regions, different industry sectors, different socio-economic classes, and different generations; about justice and equity, diversity and mutual respect and understanding. We encourage students to seek out their own way of understanding and their own style of contributions to sustainable development locally as well as globally. We also encourage students to develop multidimensional, multidisciplinary, multicultural perspectives as well as a critical sense of reality, which are sometimes missing in economics”. Over the past several years, the GSE and EA Programme have been awarded several internal competitive grants from the university to promote the internationalisation of graduate education with a particular focus on sustainable development studies. Although its subsidised activities in the past years, including the Kyoto Graduate Seminar 2016, were targeted at graduate students, he and his colleagues decided this time to upgrade and upscale their SD-related activities to invite international scholars to the workshop, expecting it to be a stepping stone for the further development of their graduate education and wider scholarly collaboration for critical research on sustainability.

Why Consumption?

Shuji Hisano then went on to explain why we need to pay attention to consumption, firstly, by showing several cartoons meant to reflect and criticise a recent trend of corporate environmentalism and ecological consumerism. As implied in the cartoon (1), how to produce what kind of products attract attention, but how much question tends to be ignored. Also, a continuing wave of new sustainability categories, such as GMO-free, locally-sourced, free-range, no-antibiotic, sustainably-farmed, and all-natural in the case of sustainable food consumption, exemplify the so-called fetishisation of (green) commodities. This is also well described in the cartoon (2). It would be nice to have increasing options of environmentally and socially sustainable goods. However, without challenging the capitalist market system, we are quite likely to have overproduction and overconsumption of these green products. Consumers might be “lost in green consumption” not only because of the overwhelming number and volume of green commodities as described in the cartoon (3) “Tower of Eco Babel”, but also because these eco-labelling and green marketing practices fetishise green commodities and make the realities of social relations behind the label invisible to consumers. Furthermore, we have to think about who are sustainable consumers and how they look like, and if and how corporate actors (and other hegemonic political-economic actors) can contribute to sustainable development or not, as humorously portrayed in the cartoons (4) and (5). We have to go beyond the worn-out and superficial marketing discourse of CSR (or its updated version of CSV, or investors’ version of ESG) and uncover the politics of sustainability and sustainable consumption.

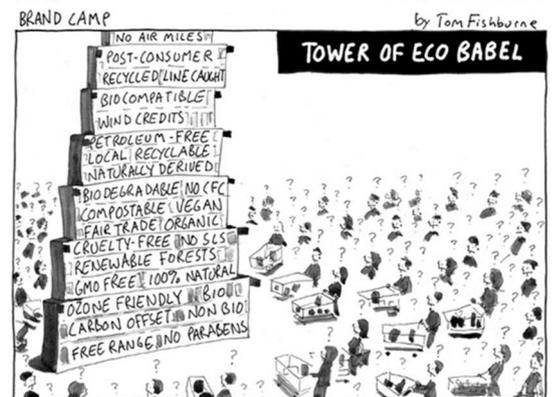
Then, Shuji Hisano pointed out that consumption as the concept and practice has not been squarely and comprehensively grappled with by the social sciences in



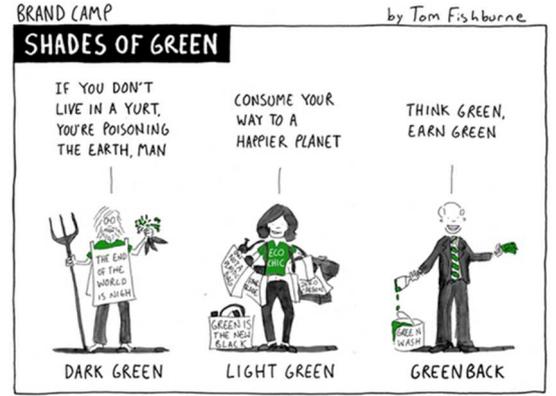
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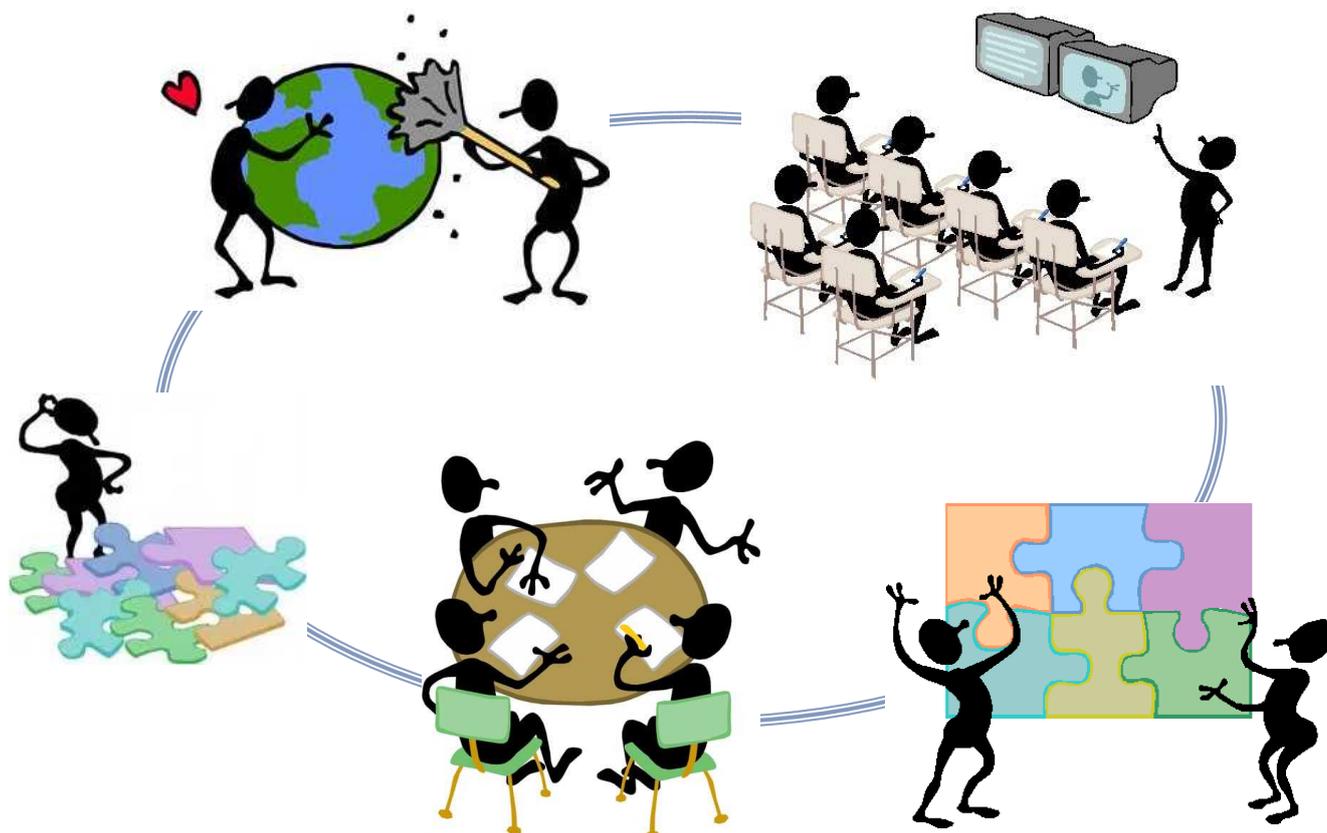
two or more disciplinary approaches; therefore, each participant in the process of interdisciplinarity pursues a real synthesis of relevant approaches. Trans-disciplinary approach is an attempt to create a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives; therefore, going beyond what the workshop was meant for. Rather, the workshop was aiming to be a collective journey of multi-disciplinarity, whereby opening a space for each participant to reflect on his/her own disciplinary perspective “together”.

Finally, Shuji Hisano introduced the structure of the workshop, explaining the outline of eight thematic sessions (Day 2 and Day 4), two young scholars sessions (Day 5), two faculty development sessions (Day 5), as well as city tours (Day 1) and excursion (Day 3), while giving all the chairs and presenters an opportunity to introduce themselves. Other participants were also given a chance to introduce themselves, so that all the participants, whether they would give presentations or not, knew each other and were ready to have lively and productive discussions throughout the workshop.

At the end of the opening and introductory session, Ai Hisano (Kyoto University) presented the details of the afternoon’s city tour, and the field trip scheduled on Wednesday. The main aim of the city tour was to explore the integration of landscape and build environment in Kyoto ourselves. To gain some on-site experience in the city and the challenges it faces regarding sustainability in urban areas. This includes the issue of over-tourism, but was quickly waved aside again because of the abnormally low tourist numbers due to the outbreak of Corona virus.

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Kyoto City Tour

In the afternoon, a city trip was scheduled. Those that wanted to join were given the option to choose between two different routes. **Route A** was guided by **Iris van Hal** (Wageningen University & Kyoto University). She took her group to the Ginkakuji Temple, where she spoke about the history of the temple, the structure of the garden and the concept of *wabi-sabi* (beauty in simplicity). They continued their walk along the Philosopher's Path, where everyone got the opportunity to go over their own thoughts, or just enjoy the gently flow of the stream and the first trees coming into blossom. But, all of a sudden Shuji took a left turn away from the Path. He told us he knew a place close by that was worth having a look at as well. And he was right. The Hōnen-in



Temple that Shuji took us to was an oasis of peace and calm in the hectic of the city and one's own thoughts. I think that for many participants, this little detour might have been the highlight of the whole afternoon... After having enjoyed the tranquility of the small temple, we continued our walk along the Philosopher's Path, towards our final destination: the Nanzenji Temple. The size, height and structure of the Sanmon (main gate) impressed all of us. Iris briefly spoke about the history and architecture of the temple complex, after which the group walked around and had a closer look at the Sosui; the large waterway construction.

The sun's attempts in trying to break through the clouds were not successful, which made it a chilly afternoon. Keeping a fast pace, the first sightings of blossoming plum trees, lots of laughter and a cup of *slow drip coffee* afterwards helped to keep both our hearts and bodies warm. --- by *Iris van Hal*

Route B was guided by **Heriberto Ruiz Tafoya** (Institute on Social Theory and Dynamics). He took his group to the so-called, 'ancient Kyoto.' The tour started at Yasaka shrine, where Heriberto spoke about the history of the place and broadly narrated the main characteristics of Shintoism and the main goods enshrined in Yasaka. The group continued walking through alleys of Yasaka neighborhood, Sannen zaka and Ninen zaka where everyone got the opportunity to appreciate the traditional architecture, including the exterior of Machiya houses. They stopped by at Yasaka pagoda where Heriberto explained her historical, symbolic and practical significance. The group continued the walking tour through Ninen zaka and Matsubara dori until Kiyomizu Dera Temple. In this temple they could appreciate a beautiful landscape, a clear view of the city. Heriberto signaled Osaka's skyscrapers, Nintendo, Kyocera, Nidec and other visible landmarks of the city. Inside of the temple, Heriberto explained its history and key visible elements of Hosso Buddhism. Some members of the group prayed and rang the bell while sending them through the universe. Going down through Chawan zaka the group swiftly observed pieces of traditional ceramics. Indeed, Heriberto explained the artistic value of this neighborhood for Kyoto and Japan. Amazingly, in a gallery, Hugh Campbell showed his knowledge about the art of ceramics. He gave us a chair on the creative process of art pieces, which made us understand the reason for such high prices. On the way to Gion, Heriberto guided the group through narrow streets, shrines and temples until Hanamikoji dori, a main street in Gion. The group walked through Gion while chatting about Geiko and Maiko culture. Heriberto showed how to identify tea houses, and places where local craft sake is sold. Also, some other references of food and architecture. Nearby Gion, in Pontocho, the group stayed warm while tasting sake in a bar. With renovated energies the walking tour in North Gion continue through traditional streets, beautiful paths and briefly through the red-pink zone. Finally, the group got dinner in Issen Yoshoku, which claimed to be the first Okonomiyaki place in Japan history... --- by *Heriberto Ruiz Tafoya*



Sustainability in History

This panel consisted of three presentations by Ai Hisano (Kyoto University), Hugh Campbell (University of Otago) and Midori Hiraga (Kyoto Tachibana University). While each scholar drew from different theories and applied different frameworks, all three presenters showed **how history can enrich our understanding of issues, such as unsustainable production and consumption practices**, that are located at the intersection of sustainability and consumption.

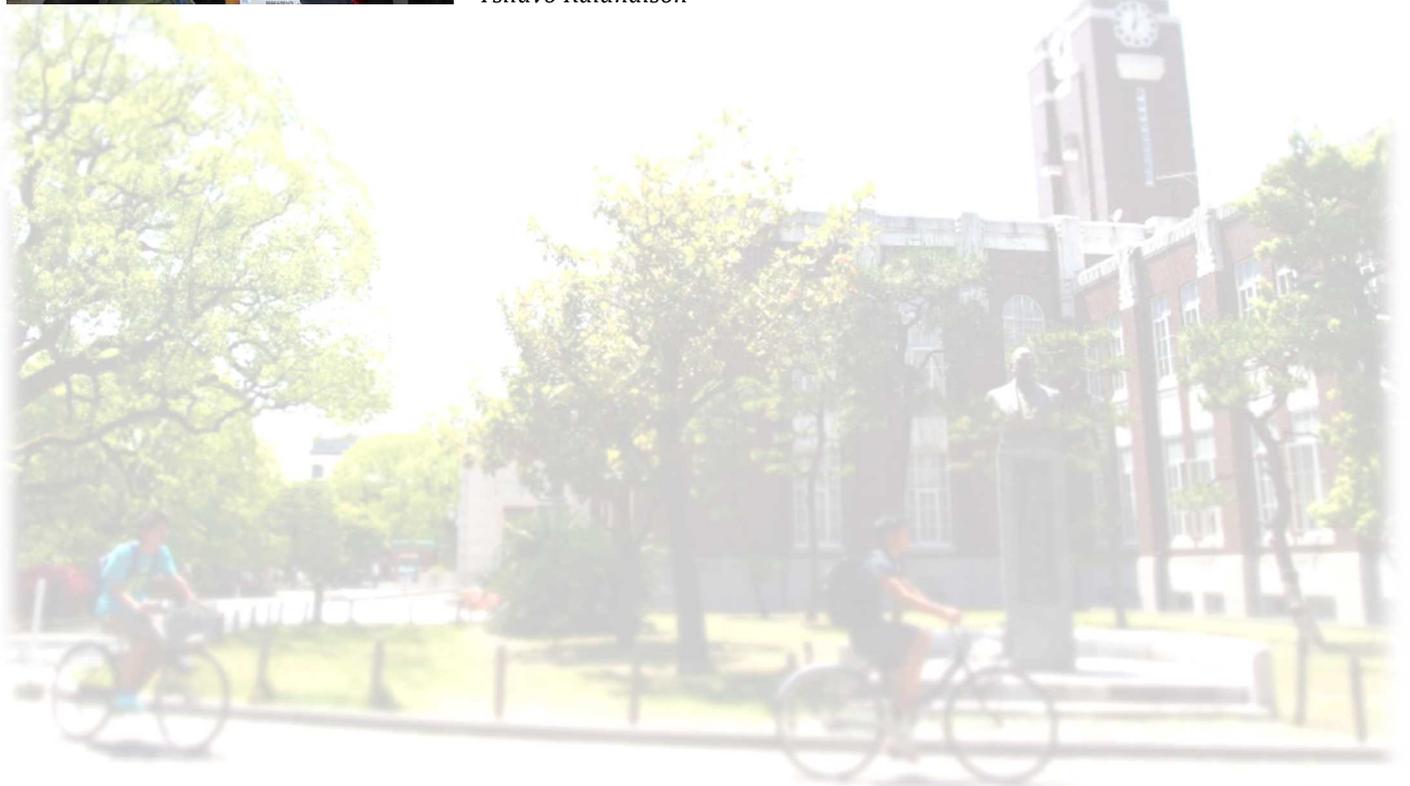


In the first presentation titled “Creating ‘Sustainable’ Business”, **Ai Hisano** spoke about how the concept of sustainability has evolved over time. Using the case of “green business” within the food, cosmetic and energy sectors, she pointed out how “green” business plans can be dated back to the 19th Century even though the terms “sustainability” or “green” had not yet appeared in the business lexicon.

In the second presentation titled “Farms at the Frontier: New Zealand’s farms and the Imperial Food Regime”, **Hugh Campbell** presented about how Maori farming systems in New Zealand were essentially replaced by European farming systems in the 19th Century. Drawing from food regime theories, he revealed how and why imperialism led to the disappearance of indigenous agro-food systems in New Zealand and other British colonies.



In the third presentation titled “Political Economy of Transforming Soy Oil into Everyday Foodstuff: From energy to industrial-military, then to cheap calorie”, **Midori Hiraga** presented her work that examines the historical, political and economic dimensions of soy oil. Her central argument was that soy oil was disseminated in the Japanese food market, not because of the raising demand of Japanese consumers caused by the Westernization of diets or increasing income, but rather as a result of the nation building project of modern Japan and its military and economic development during and after the Second World War together with Japanese large food companies and trading companies. --- by *Tsilavo Ralandison*



Sustainability under Corporate Food Regime

This panel drew together a series of case studies that demonstrate how corporations penetrate even the most unlikely and protected domains of food systems by camouflaging fundamental shifts in diet and agriculture with seemingly subtle changes. The cases of corporate control ranged from multilateral initiatives, such as climate-smart agriculture, to religious food standards and slum food. The shared narrative between all of the presenters was the uncovering of a corporate agenda that no longer limits itself to new innovations and marketing, but rather seeks to become normalized in a wide range of food lifeworlds regardless of scope.



In his presentation titled “Agents of Circulation of Corporate Packaged Food in Metro-Manila’s Slums: A Marxian approach”, **Heriberto Ruiz Tafoya** (Institute on Social Theory and Dynamics) discussed how packaged food has managed to become intrinsic to slum entrepreneurship and modern dietary change in Manila, conquering micro-spaces and co-opting meanings of food, conviviality and health. Here, corporations are working hard to hasten the discursive shift common in industrial countries, wherein processed food and food deserts become inescapable symbolic reference points for poverty and vulnerability. This is achieved by recruiting entrepreneurs into global capital circuits that rely on global commodities in order to facilitate penetration into slum areas.

In his presentation titled “A Conventionalization of Halal? Corporate penetration in halal slaughter standards in Indonesia”, **Anom Sigit Suryawan** (PhD candidate, Kyoto University) similarly analyzed how the normalization of the global meat dried and its co-dependence on industrial meatpacking methods is leverages Halal certification in Indonesia. Using data from a range of actors in the Indonesian Halal meat sector, he argued that the recent centralization of Halal certification under public auspices has made easier for the global meat trade and meatpacking industry to impose its own standards in parallel. Here, compliance with Halal certification moves together with a convergence on broader global slaughterhouse standards, which are covertly imposed by outsized leveraging of Australian animal cruelty standards.

Shuji Hisano’s (Kyoto University) presentation titled “Sustainability Washing: Corporate takeover of sustainable development in agriculture and food” complemented these in-depth cases by surveying a wide landscape of corporate penetration into global food and agricultural initiatives that are otherwise trying to coalesce around new meanings of sustainability. He showed that multilateral agencies (e.g. FAO) become complicit in the appropriation of important global sustainability initiatives for corporate ends. Here, future-focused ideas such as Climate-Smart Agriculture or Precision Agriculture become platforms through which corporate innovations can gain wider credibility and market positioning—including genetically engineered food, agricultural machinery, information technology, and agro-chemicals. While corporations are naturally suited to contribute to new initiatives such as Vertical Farming, given the capital intensity of the



production, these initiatives must be lent credibility by orchestrating the structural, instrumental and discursive re-alignment necessary to make such initiatives apparently suitable for global institutions. The subtlety of this process was well-indicated by the case study of plant-based meat, for which seeming victories for sustainability, such as declines in meat consumption, mask the intrusion of unhealthy ingredients and genetically modified organisms, while diverting attention away from more radical options.

Many of the cases presented by Prof. Hisano referred to the covertness of corporate penetration by revealing it as different modalities of green washing. Some examples included: grain washing, which involves leveraging food security discourses; heal washing, whereby dietary improvement is associated with addition of synthetic nutrients; blue washing, in which pre-existing global initiatives sponsored by multilateral institutions are hijacked by corporate actors. By extension, the case studies of Dr. Ruiz Tafoya and Mr. Suryawan involve similar forms of discursive re-alignments that allow for corporate penetration into unlikely places, such as poor country slums, and protected spaces, such as religious dietary practice. **Demonstrating and highlighting these processes gives space for local actors to more reflexively evaluate the presence of food corporations in increasingly new domains.** --- by *Hart Feuer*

Alternative Food Networks

The session on “Alternative Food Networks”, moderated by **Iris van Hal** (Wageningen University & Kyoto University), was occupied by 4 delegates from the Rural Sociology Group of Wageningen University, the Netherlands. This session clearly contrasted with the previous session on “Sustainability under Corporate Food Regime”, which was largely focused on the power of hegemonic corporate actors and the penetration of their influence into everyday actors. All speakers gave a brief introduction, starting with **Joost Jongerden** (Wageningen University), who in his presentation with a provocative title “[Sustainability] and (Anti-Politics)?”, zoomed out and discussed the anti-politics of sustainability thought and the political-economy critique. This was followed by **Oona Morrow** (Wageningen University), who then zoomed in alternative and diverse economy initiatives on community composting in New York City. In the third presentation titled “Making City-region Foodscape a Reality: Mending the metabolic rift from within”, **Martin Ruivenkamp** (Wageningen University) presented on urban agriculture or “agroecological urbanism” in Nijmegen. And, in the final presentation titled “Opening up Spaces of Possibility”, **Anke de Vrieze** (Wageningen University) talked about arts-based methods for transformative engagement.



After these introductory talks, a “flipped panel” was performed. For this “flipped panel”, 5 balloons were prepared, each filled with a proposition. Someone in the room would pop a balloon and read the proposition which dropped out. This worked as a



kick-off for comments, suggestions and discussions from and with the workshop participants. These 5 propositions included: **“Societal transformation requires self-transformation”**; **“Societal transformation requires a radical imagination”**; **“Change happens at the local level”**; **“The central tenet of capitalism and sustainability are incompatible”**; and **“The work of science is performative, it opens up (and closes) possibilities”**. Although only 3 out of these 5 propositions were discussed due to a time restriction, we could have very active and intriguing exchange of opinions and ideas. In the session as a whole the Wageningen group emphasised **the importance of creative agency, relational analysis, and diverse economies as analytical lenses**. --- by Joost Jongerden and Shuji Hisano

Sustainable Fashion in Practice

The session on Sustainable Fashion in Practice was specifically designed for **Pascale Gatzen** (ArtEZ University of the Arts). She reflected on her experience working and teaching in fashion and how these practices have informed her current journey to sustainable fashion – as experienced through a worker-cooperative in New York (Friends of Light), and the novel collaborations between farmers, artisans, volunteers are stewarding landscapes, seeds, and skills for local flax production, processing, and linen production (the



Linen Project). Building on the lessons from her first year of seeding, weeding, harvesting, and processing – she shared her plans for the following coming year to purposefully “scale down” and do all parts of the linen project by hand with volunteers, who share responsibility and care for the Linen Project. To further this shared stewardship model, we sought input from the conference participants on **how to negotiate and value labor, what other economic models people are aware of from their own contexts, and how to balance different needs in such ventures**. --- by Oona Morrow



Field Trip

For our field trip, we left Kyoto University at 9am sharp! In front of us was a 1.5 hour bus drive towards Yokkaichi City. After we left the urban jungle of Kyoto and all participants had rubbed the sleep out of their eyes, we could enjoy beautiful sightings of the Japanese landscapes along the way, including green tea plantations! At 11am, we arrived at our first stop: Jibasan-Mie Regional Industry Promotion Centre. We were welcomed by one of their employees, who had prepared an amazing talk about the Mie Regional products. He told us about the different arts and crafts that are characterizing this region. To illustrate his presentation, all objects he was talking about were displayed on a table in front of the room. We started with the famous *Yokkaichi Banko Ware* (ceramics and pottery) and a traditional hotpot and teapot were shown. The workshop participants listened eagerly and asked some very relevant questions about how to use the object, how to recognize their authenticity and how they are being produced today and in what way that differs from production processes in former times. Next up was *Suzuka ink*. From the 9th century onwards, this special type of ink was produced using the resin of pine trees from the Suzuka mountains. Then, we continued with *Ise Katagami*, a very special type of paper, used to paint patterns on kimono fabrics. These patterns were extremely detailed because of the many cut-outs, impressing all participants by the patience and handwork skills this required... Finally, we got introduced to the *Hinaga Fan*, a popular souvenir that is made up of a complex bamboo construction. Now that we knew exactly what the Mie region had to offer, we were given some free time to look around ourselves in the souvenir shop at the ground floor...



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In the afternoon, we visited the Yokkaichi Pollution and Environmental Museum for Future Awareness. We were welcomed with a spectacular presentation from one of the museum-guides, which included a very clear video explaining the history of Yokkaichi's industry and the problems that brought along. On top of that, there was a special guest... Mr. Katsuzi Yamamoto joined us to tell his story around the pollution problematics in Yokkaichi. Mr. Yamamoto had been working in the petrochemical industry in the 1960's and saw the devastating effects the factories had on human health. Throughout his career, he has been advocating for cleaner air by holding the factories accountable. The room we were seated in was a reconstruction what a Yokkaichi classroom would have looked like in the 1960's, which made the experience complete. Now that we were all briefed on the history of Yokkaichi's pollution, we were ready to enter the museum! Here, we experienced the revolution of the petrochemical industry, the influence of World War II and the rise of the Japanese economy. This was all richly illustrated by lifelike interiors of what Japanese homes looked like in former times, maps, graphs, information signs and heartbreaking images and voice recordings of the Yokkaichi people that



suffered from respiratory problems as a result of the air pollution caused by the city's petrochemical industry. We were shown another movie, which richly illustrated the attempts around legal action against the polluting factories, and the victory that was achieved in 1972! This brought us at the last section of the museum, which represented today and the future. Here, we saw what measures were in play today to ensure clean air for Yokkaichi, its inhabitants and the environment. The museum gave us a very nice travel through time in which we got to explore all the details around the unique history that Yokkaichi city carries with it.

After a whole day filled with new impressions, stories, people and landscapes, we went back to the bus feeling tired, but satisfied. On our drive back, the spirits were still as high as in the early morning, although some people chose to close their eyes for a while... --- by Iris van Hal



Over Tourism and Sustainable Tourism

On the first day of the workshop, after the introduction session, the participants enjoyed a walking tour in Kyoto City (one group walked through Philosopher's Path from Ginkakuji Temple to Nanzenji Temple, guided by Iris van Hal; the other group walked through Gion district and the historic slopes up to Kiyomizudera Temple, guided by Heriberto Ruiz Tafoya). We had a chance to see a history and culture of Kyoto and Japan, while also feeling the gradual development of overtourism in Kyoto, although the number of tourists was much lower than usual mainly due to the outbreak of coronavirus at that time. On the third day, some of the participants had another chance to explore different aspects of regional development in Japan: Yokkaichi City in Mie Prefecture. The name of Yokkaichi, like Minamata in Kumamoto Prefecture, has long been associated with the history of serious pollution and environmental problems faced by the city during the post-war economic growth and industrialisation (between the late 1950s till the early 70s), but the city also attracts attention to the history of its struggle and achievement in terms of environmental restoration.

Relating to what we learned through these field trips, the session on "Over Tourism and Sustainable Tourism" focused on the contrasting models and realities of tourism and regional development in Japan.

The first presentation titled "Regional Sustainability and Lessons from the Experiences of Pollution and Over-tourism", **Tomohiro Okada** (Kyoto Tachibana University, emeritus professor of Kyoto University) provided a brief history and current situation of pollution problems and environmental regulation in Yokkaichi City and over-tourism and regional economy in Kyoto City, both through the lens of political economy and regional economic studies, and drew some implications to the sustainable development of regional economy and society, such as the power and empowerment of local residents and the role of municipalities and national-level regulations.



In the following two presentations, **Michael Juerges** (PhD student, Kyoto University) and **Kei Yan Leung** (PhD student, University of Natural Resources and Life Science, Vienna) presented the findings of their ongoing PhD research projects, respectively, but both looking at the potential and challenges of rural revitalisation through tourism against the backdrop of severe depopulation, ageing, and socio-economic difficulties faced by many rural communities across Japan. Based on his field research in Ayabe City, northern Kyoto Prefecture, Michael examined the role of agri-touristic entrepreneurs who are situated at the intersection between imaged ruralities and lived realities and therefore expected to serve as "rural ambassadors" in rural revitalisation policies on the ground. Kei Yan, on the other hand, conducted field research in Tokamachi City, Niigata Prefecture, and examined the transformative potential (and limitations) of the arts in strengthening rural communities to cope with socio-economic and environmental changes, in her case, Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale. --- by Shuji Hisano



Fashion in Business History

Fashion was another focus industry in the workshop. The session “Fashion in Business History” had fascinating talks related to sustainability and networks in the fashion industry. Though these talks were primarily historical in their approach, both speakers made sure to link their studies to present day developments and debates. This allowed for a lively discussion following the talks, so lively in fact that the programme organizers made additional time after lunch so that we could continue it further.

Ben Wubs’ (Erasmus University Rotterdam) talk was titled “The Unsustainability of Fashion in Historical Perspective” and it gave a long-term perspective on the current criticism directed at the fashion industry for being environmentally unfriendly. Prof. Wubs showed how the fashion industry has long struggled with problems such as overproduction, responding to changes in consumer taste, and intense price competition which has driven the outsourcing of production to locations where labour conditions and environmental protection have often been poor. He also discussed the impact of the movement from natural fibres (cotton, silk, wool, flax etc.) to synthetic alternatives (rayon, nylon, polyester, etc.) and how this has negatively affected the environment. Wubs argued that market competition has driven these problems and that government intervention on a global level is necessary to regulate the industry so as to alleviate the considerable negative externalities it generates.

Rika Fujioka’s (Kansai University) talk was titled “Network Evolution in the Japanese Fashion Industry” and in it she explored the expansion of the Japanese fashion industry from the 1950s to 1980s and then its shrinking since the 1990s, ultimately seeking to understand how the structure of the industry changed in response to various developments that occurred over this period. Among several developments Prof. Fujioka discussed the emergence of China as the production site for many of the major international players in the “fast fashion” industry and the development of e-commerce noting how these challenged the structure of Japanese businesses in particular as they had sought to control the whole supply chain. In order to survive in this highly competitive industry firms inevitably have to be flexible in their arrangements and ready to make constant adaptations.

Overall, this was a thoroughly engaging session, as demonstrated by the lengthy and lively discussion it generated. It reunited former co-authors Prof. Fujioka and Prof. Wubs and provided us with an excellent opportunity to consider the effects of consumer demand, technological change and competition on both environmental and industrial sustainability. --- *by Steven Ivings*



Martina_L via Getty Images (modified)

Environment, Knowledge and Communication

The afternoon session on ‘Environment, Knowledge and Communication’ unveiled the intricate processes of knowledge creation and communication in sustaining and restoring the environment and people’s lives. A concept shared by all speakers was the use of citizen science – the participation of on-professionals in the collection and analysis of data.

Aya Hirata Kimura (University of Hawai’i at Mānoa) presented her research on the role of citizen scientists in the cases of the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear accident and the spread of genetically engineered food. In addition to elaborating on the tasks performed by citizens, she also addressed dilemmas related to ‘the scientization of politics’, ‘the politicization of science’, ‘individual monitoring and self-responsibilization’ and ‘gendered scientization’.



Karly Ann Burch (University of Otago) discussed the implications of Tokyo Electric Power Company’s nuclear power plant disaster on food consumption and distribution, mainly from the perspective of ontogeny. This concept – borrowed from Anne Marie Mol – explores which version (of food safety) is ‘better’ and for whom in the context of a world which is marked by disorder and messiness. It is concerned with questions around how to distinguish good from bad, what counts as real, how is a dominant way of understanding (safe food) produced and how are alternative ways of understanding pushed to the margins.

Alayna Ynacay-Nye (MSc student, Kyoto University) presented her research about the tsunami following the Fukushima nuclear disaster and its impact on the fishing industry at the Sanriku coast in Japan. Her specific interest was in the relation between a revitalization of the fishery industry and knowledge about sustainable environmental fishery. Analyzing broad consequences of natural and human disasters, all presenters addressed issues related to the role of “science,” the creation and access to knowledge, and the relationships among various actors including scientists, large companies, central and municipal companies, and citizens.

Their presentations and questions from the audience shed light on a range of broad issues such as how knowledge and ideas about science are constructed as a product of negotiations between these actors and how knowledge and discourse rounding the knowledge are embedded with the political and social climate of certain time and place. --- *by Ai Hisano*

Development and Justice

In the second part of the afternoon, we moved on to the session ‘Development and Justice’. Due to the cancellation of distinguished professor from Regional Centre for Sustainable Development at Chiang Mai University, Thailand, Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, and his colleague Malee Sitthikriengkrai, we had two presentations in the session.

In her presentation titled “Urban Redevelopment, Environmental Vulnerability and Equity: The case of Bangkok”, **Tamaki Endo** (Saitama University) focused on how the reorganization of urban space, and their ‘sustainability’, especially in relation to new environmental vulnerabilities such as flood risks. Not only the physical damage is of concern, but also the prioritization of profit and business interests over protecting Bangkok’s risk areas. On top of that, gentrification and the resulting relocation of lower income groups in Bangkok’s urban fringes increases the risks for certain groups in society. Tamaki argued that this ‘risk production mechanism’ is embedded within the urban settings of global cities itself. The competition among



developers creates highly unsustainable conditions for lower income classes, illustrating the challenges that lie ahead of us in designing and managing megacities.

The second presentation titled “Addressing Justice in Food System: Food workers in Thailand”, **Sayamol Charoenratana** (Chulalongkorn University) talked about socio-economic vulnerability in food systems, highlighting the invisibility of food workers and gender roles. Not only are food workers invisible for the consumer, they also are not recognized as workers by the government. This excludes them from most labor protection policies, including wages, occupational safety, health- and social protection schemes. Moreover, seeing themselves as entrepreneurs, they are not organized and do not enjoy collective rights or labor protection. Despite the fact that Thailand has been promoting the tourist industry for years, small food retailers are not perceived as part of the growing urban economy, leaving them unrecognized. Finally, the jobs with the lowest pay in the food sector are performed by women. This takes away their opportunity from participating in the formal economy, where more secure jobs and higher incomes are being offered. Sayamol talked about how she investigates the integration of labor dimensions and a gender lens within the Thai food system. She specifically addressed issues related to wage, health, social protection and gender inequality. On top of that she expressed the importance of returning the human face and voice of food workers and how this can hopefully widen the scope of food system studies towards a more ‘just’ food system --- *by Joost Jongerden and Iris van Hal*



Young Scholar Workshop (1)

In this session, four PhD candidates presented their on-going research and received feedback from their peers and senior scholars about various aspects of their research, such as design, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and publishing.

The first two presentations were about Japan's "teikei" movement - a grassroots initiative to connect organic farmers with consumers and bring equity and democracy to the food system. **Nami Yamamoto** (PhD student, Kyoto University) and **Chika Kondo** (PhD student, Kyoto University), in their presentations titled "Seasonal Vegetable Basket as an Alternative Food Practice" and "Can Japan's Teikei Movement Evolve without the Stay-at-home Housewife? A gender analysis on solidarity economic practices" respectively, both presented on this topic and discussed question related to how these practices are produced and how a lack of gender awareness impacted teikei. **Zulfa Adipurta** (PhD student, Kyoto University), in her presentation titled "Uncovering the On-the-ground Consequences of Voluntary Sustainability Standards: Enabled and disabled power in the RSPO legitimization process in Indonesia", spoke about her studies on the impacts of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil legitimization process on smallholders in



Indonesia. She found out that certification legitimizes oil palm production over food production, but also that certification enforces logics of managerism, productivism and efficiency. Alternative understandings of sustainability, she argues, are rendered invisible. How do different social groups shape urban space? This question was addressed by **Try Thuon** (PhD student, Chiang Mai University) in his presentation titled "Contested Strategies among Emerging Strategic Groups in Shaping Urban Space and Resilience in Cambodia Secondary Towns". Referring to the work of James Scott, and his concepts of infra-politics and resistance, he showed how subaltern (marginalized) groups have shaped urban space in Cambodia secondary towns. --- by *Tsilavo Ralandison*

Young Scholar Workshop (2)

Another "Young Scholar Workshop" session received four promising young scholars who introduced the fruits of their ongoing research and their research plans respectively. With one postdoctoral researcher, two PhD candidates and one master's student presenting, the participants were at different stages of their projects, but they certainly all benefited from pitching and sharing their ideas, from which they got generous feedback from the audience and from one another. **The lively discussion that followed each presentation, I have no doubt, will motivate and encourage each of the participants to refine and further their promising research agendas.**



The first presenter, **Alice Jansens**, a PhD candidate and lecturer at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, introduced to the audience a part of dissertation which is nearing completion. The presentation was titled "Sustaining Konfection: Exploring the business strategies of a historical 'fast' fashion centre". Jansens provided an insightful historical exploration of "fast fashion" with the case of Berlin's fashion industry in which she explored the sustainability of firms over time in terms of their competitive strategy and relation to globalization and wider socio-political events. The second presenter, **Nahashon Nzioka Nthenya**, a PhD candidate at Osaka University, presented a part of his doctoral research. The presentation was titled "The Development of Apparel Firms in Kenya Since The 1990s: Entering Global Value Chains Through Asian Contractors". Nthenya offered a detailed overview of Kenya's apparel industry and the participation of foreign investors in it. The presentation allowed Nthenya to present his initial thoughts and discuss his methods with participants prior to his

upcoming fieldwork. Hopefully, this has allowed him to refine his ideas and prepare effectively for his fieldwork. The third presenter, Dr. **Urszula Frey**, based at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University, gave a talk on her ongoing research into gender and the workplace, particularly the portrayal of gender roles in mass media. The presentation provided a detailed explanation of the methods Dr. Frey uses to analyse television commercials from the 1980s and 1990s in order to chart changing attitudes towards gender in the workplace. The lively debate that followed



was evidence that the issues involved remain fresh today. The final presenter, **Riyoko Shibe**, a master's student on the Erasmus Mundus International Master Programme, introduced her thesis topic entitled "Demographics of Environmental Engagement: An Analysis of the Anti-Fracking Campaign in Scotland Since 2011". The presentation gave an interesting discussion of how environmental movements seek to reach out to specific groups and mobilize support effectively. In her ambitious project, Shibe plans to conduct a discourse analysis of Scottish government policy documents, the marketing materials of campaign organisations, news articles, and conduct interviews in order to understand how the debate on fracking is framed, and how the groups involved perceive others and themselves.

Overall, this was a fruitful session. **The eclectic mix of research topic made for a lively discussion and provided the presenters feedback from those in disciplines with which they do not usually have the chance to interact.** --- by Steven Iving

Faculty Development: *What do we teach and how do we teach?*

This session, moderated by **Hugh Campbell** (University of Otago), aimed at inviting all participants to actively get engaged to think and discuss about teaching themes around sustainability. To give the session some structure and a basis to start, 9 participants were asked to briefly speak about their experience with teaching sustainability.



During the workshop, the participants were invited to write any questions or ideas for discussion down on a post-it note, which were collected on a whiteboard. Following on that Hugh Campbell structured these to use them as the foundation of the session on Faculty Development. Several big clusters could be identified, for the question of **what we teach**, these were detailed curriculum questions and concerns, related to conflict, agency, creativity and consumers. For the question of **how we teach**, clusters were identified around 'integrating activism, applied research and engagement', 'dealing with "science"', 'classroom tactics and practices' and 'the personhood of teachers/students/parenting/mobility...'



On top of that, Hugh also identified some interesting provocations, such as: 'can you teach from within one culture/language? And, how to respond to different disciplines, paradigms, expertise and authority, the audience and what about ditching key terms?'

To discuss these issues, the group of participants split up in different sub-groups, each focusing on a different provocation. After around 20 minutes, we gathered back together and the participants would share their findings. This was done in very creative ways, which allowed for very clear spreading of the messages the different groups had come up with. --- by Iris van Hal



Closing

The closing remarks were presented by **Ben Wubs** (Erasmus University Rotterdam). In his presentation, he reminded the participants again how much we had discussed and learned during the past couple of days. Examples of (un)sustainability and the key questions these raise were provided. During the different sessions, we had seen numerous examples of reactions to such issues. Think of 'green washing', 'blue washing', and even 'white washing'! Of course, questions around 'structure and agency' were raised again, discussing to the role of consumers and citizenship. Moving on to consumption and production, Ben linked this to the 'Chicken or the egg' causality dilemma. With the concept of 'value' and its relation to economy, new opportunities for production and creation were discussed. But in order to implement such innovations, change is needed on multiple levels, including the scientific and political domain...Based on the insights we gained this week, Ben Wubs finished his talk by presenting some solutions that could help us in the right direction. It seems that **a change of the (capitalist) system and corporate power, while simultaneously providing more room and opportunities for local-, citizen- and community initiatives is the best way forward to achieve a sustainable future and conscious consumerism.** --- by Iris van Hal



Farewell Dinner

Kyoto International Workshop 2020 was finished with a common dinner, prepared by Nijjirogohan catering. The cooks did an amazing job and presented to us table **full of colorful food**. We got to try Chirashi sushi, salads, possum of deer, taro, shiraae, daikon and much more. This informal setting also provided **a great opportunity for some more networking among the participants**.



We look back at a wonderful workshop in Kyoto. With creativity, enthusiasm and a lot of effort from many people, we have been able to emphasize the importance of critically thinking about themes and questions around sustainability and consumption. By keeping an open view, including diverse perspectives, analyzing different relations and structures around agency and authority, **we can continue to move in the right direction.** --- by Iris van Hal

