
Responsible science and the polycrisis –

new hope and false solutions

SGR Conference 2023

Summaries and speaker profiles

Why behaviour change is a better bet for climate action than offsetting and speculative technology

Most governments continue to run scared of promoting the full potential of positive behaviour change to reverse the climate emergency. But, increasingly, unproven and highly speculative technological solutions are given centre stage. Yet many of the behaviour changes that could reduce emissions such as active travel and dietary change bring with them multiple additional benefits. How can responsible science help politicians embrace behaviour change, give people hope and steer us away from false solutions?

***Prof. Lorraine Whitmarsh MBE** is an environmental psychologist, specialising in perceptions and behaviour in relation to climate change, energy and transport. She is Director of the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST), and is based at the University of Bath. Her research projects have included studies of energy efficiency behaviours, waste reduction and carrier bag reuse, perceptions of smart technologies and electric vehicles, low-carbon lifestyles, and responses to climate change.*

Security, economy, environment – the unavoidable connection

Global heating and climate breakdown are dominant threats but fossil carbon use is backed by well-funded and entrenched lobbies and is difficult to counter. The situation is not yet irredeemable, but time is now short to achieve the radical decarbonisation that is necessary. It also means recognising that the current structure of the global economy is working against such a change as, too, is the current security paradigm with its prioritising of military force over human and common security. That must change, and organisations such as SGR have a major role to play in the process.

***Prof. Paul Rogers** is Emeritus Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University and Advisor on International Security to Open Democracy. He originally trained as a biologist at Imperial College, taught environmental sciences for eight years and joined peace studies 40 years ago partly to work on resource conflict and environmental security.*

Degrowth and green growth – what’s the difference for rapid climate action?

The approaches of degrowth and green growth are often pitched in opposition to each other. But are they irreconcilable? Can activists from both sides of this debate reach a truce and work together for an equitable and climate safe economy? Beth Stratford argues that proponents and sceptics of green growth have often ended up talking past each other and that it’s time to unite against the real enemies of environmental justice.

***Dr. Beth Stratford** is an ecological/political economist and a founding member of the London Renters Union. Her work focuses on the relationship between rentier power and ecological crisis. She is a lead author of [The UK’s Path to a Doughnut-Shaped Recovery](#) and [Land For The Many](#), a report for the UK’s Labour Party. She has a PhD from Leeds University and lectures at MSc level on housing, land and banking reform. She sits on the advisory board of Positive Money and The Social Guarantee. Previously she was in Labour’s Sustainable Economics Working Group and a fellow at the New Economics Foundation.*

From corporate science to responsible science – what’s the role of R&D in tackling the polycrisis?

Corporate values are increasingly being embedded across scientific research and technological development. These include more private ownership of scientific information, a preference for technological innovation over alternatives, and a prioritisation of narrow economic benefits at the expense of positive social and environmental outcomes. This presentation will outline how these and related problems are contributing to the polycrisis, and discuss what ‘responsible science’ looks like, and how it can help create a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

***Dr. Stuart Parkinson** is Executive Director of Scientists for Global Responsibility, a post he has held for over 20 years. He has researched and campaigned across ethical issues in science and technology, including especially climate change and energy, the militarisation of science and technology, and corporate influence on R&D. He is author/ co-author of numerous SGR reports, including [Science and the Corporate Agenda](#) and [Irresponsible Science?](#)*