

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES,
ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Research Highlights 'Interview'



Self-Introduction

- Briefly introduce yourself, the department and school that you are in.

Md Saidul Islam is Associate Professor of Sociology, **School of Social Sciences**, and a Coordinator of the Environment and Sustainability Research Cluster in the School of Social Sciences and Asian School of the Environment. He's a former Visiting Scholar of MIT and University of Nottingham.

Elaboration

- Share with us what is your research project.

Prof. Islam's research interests include international development and environmental sociology, with a particular focus on industrial aquaculture, global agro-food system, climate change, food security, and environmental sustainability. His major research projects at NTU are as follows:

1. ***Privatizing Environmental Governance: A Global Study of the Effects and Effectiveness of Environmental Certification for Farmed Shrimp and Salmon*** (2007-2012), a joint research supported by a standard grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
2. ***Privatizing Environmental Governance and Global Food Security: The Neo-liberal Restructuring of the Global Agro-food System*** (2009-2012), funded by a start-up grant from NTU.
3. ***Climate Change and Food Security in the Asia- Pacific: Response and Resilience*** (2014-2017), funded by a Tier-1 grant, Ministry of Education, Singapore.
4. ***The Rise of the 'Green' movement in the Global Environmental Politics*** (2018-2021), funded by a Tier-1 grant, Ministry of Education, Singapore.

- **What inspired you to embark on this research project?**

In his long academic journey, he has been deeply interested in understanding how local development politics are connected with and shaped by global processes; how environmental and social landscapes are changing due to global and local economic activities; how marginal communities including women are largely bearing the brunt of development and consumption of the wealthy nations; and how corporations, social movements and states are battling to shape their worlds. These questions have led him to explore and examine the critical nexus between development, the environment and sustainability. He uses, among other issues, global agri-food system especially global aquaculture as an empirical lens to address these questions. Applying social science methodologies, he has thus been continuously searching for a 'sustainable earth' through, for example, meeting the needs of present and future generations while advancing human dignity and conserving the planet's life-support system.

- **What is/are the most interesting finding(s) of this project?**

Dr. Islam's 5 books offer ground-breaking findings on environment and sustainability. (1) ***Development, Power and the Environment: Neoliberal Paradox in the Age of Vulnerability*** (Routledge, 2013) identifies global sustainability challenges and offers pathways for a sustainable earth. (2) ***Confronting the Blue Revolution: Industrial Aquaculture and Sustainability in the Global South*** (University of Toronto Press, 2014) pushes us to reconsider our attitudes to consumption patterns in the developed world, and the question of sustainability. (3) ***Social Justice in the Globalization of Production: Labor, Gender and the Environment Nexus*** (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) unpacks a "critical nexus" comprised of flexible and exploitative labor conditions, the reincarnation and reinforcement of gendered ideologies in the workplace, and a treadmill of environmental destruction. (4) ***Education and Sustainability: Paradigms, Policies, and Practices in Asia*** (co-edited; Routledge, 2018) makes significant pedagogical, theoretical, and policy-oriented contributions to sustainability across Asia and beyond. (5) ***Sustainability through the Lens of Environmental Sociology*** (MDPI, Switzerland, 2018) is a novel contribution to environmental sociology and sustainability studies, covering a wide range of issues including climate change.

- **How do you think your research can impact society?**

Along with books, articles and book chapters, Dr. Islam has contributed quite substantially in various edited collections as well as encyclopedias related to food and sustainability such as ***Green Food, Green Culture***, and ***Green Ethics and Philosophy*** (SAGE Publications). He has a wide range of experiences serving in editorial boards of various environment and sustainability related journals such as ***Journal of Sustainable Development, Society & Natural Recourses***, and ***Sociology of Development***; and guest-editing special issues in journals such as ***Sustainability, Aquaculture***, and ***Societies***. With relevant sociology and interdisciplinary backgrounds, he has advanced some conceptual and theoretical frameworks such as "twin-driven commodity chain", "double-risk society", "neoliberal paradox", "development as a historical project of power", and "Islamic Ecological Paradigm". These frameworks address trans-society/transborder formations and processes of environmental governance, justice, and sustainability. His books and journal articles are cited by scholars and used as course readings in many universities across the globe. He brings global visibility to NTU by receiving international awards such as the Early Investigator Award 2015 (Canadian Sociological Association) and the Outstanding Scientist Award for Publication Excellence 2017 (i-Proclaim Annual Research Award, Malaysia).

Future Plans

- Tell us about your future research plans and if you are looking for any research collaborators!

Dr. Islam is currently working on his tier-1 project “The rise of green movement in the global environmental politics” aiming at producing a book and a number of articles. The project will end in 2021. Secondly, he will be guest-editing a special issue “Climate change and global food security” in *Sustainability* journal (MDPI) and the issue will be completed in 2020. Thirdly, he’s collaborating with the Texas A&M University for a project “Best social policies in Southeast Asia”. Finally, he will be collaborating with SUTD and MIT on a sustainable aquaculture network if a recently submitted global project on “network of the networks” to National Science Foundation (USA) becomes successful.