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Preface

HANDBOOK-MAKING

Handbooks are products of the careful curation of a diverse collection of contributions, but we rarely hear about how these collections come together — that is, about the processes of selecting, organizing, and looking after the items that end up in a collection. This Preface represents our effort to raise the curtain on our editorial process and the conditions under which the Handbook was created, which we see as part of our commitment to ongoing reflection on the question of how, why, and for whom the academic production of knowledge about resources matters (see Valdivia, Himley, and Havice, Chapter 1 this volume). It offers an overview of the intellectual-political method that unfolded incrementally and collaboratively during the production of the Handbook.

Our initial motivation for putting together this Handbook was to take stock of the increased attention to resource-related processes in geographical (and, more broadly, social-scientific) scholarship. Noting that this work was characterized by the application of a variety of critical-theoretical approaches to resource dynamics, we aimed to probe if and how these multiplying strains of scholarly activity came together into a subfield — “critical resource geography” — and, if so, around which kinds of questions, methods, and forms of praxis it might cohere. Our initial review of the literature suggested that a core objective of this scholarship was to destabilize dominant understandings of resources by detailing the power-laden as well as historically and geographically contingent practices through which resources come to be and circulate through social-environmental life. And yet, as an arena of scholarly inquiry, “critical resource geography” seemed emergent: a field-in-the-making, encompassing work by scholars who perhaps identified more squarely with other sub-disciplines in geography — cultural geography, economic geography, feminist geography, political ecology, political geography, among others — or other disciplines altogether, and thus brought a wide range of perspectives to questions of resources. From the initial stages of this editorial project, then, we knew that our task would *not* be — as is often the case with volumes like this — to provide a state-of-the-art assessment of an already existing, well-bound, and well-defined body of scholarship. Rather, we developed an approach to the project that was more about probing boundaries than reporting on them; more about working to identify the analytical, methodological, and normative concerns that stitch together critical resource geography as a field of inquiry (to the extent that these common concerns exist), rather than describing or making them accessible to new audiences. And we imagined the process of addressing these issues to be an iterative one — something we would undertake in conversation with contributing authors.

We envisioned a volume consisting of various kinds of chapters. Some would be genealogical, focusing on the history of resource geography and the multiple and diverse intellectual traditions that scholars have brought to it. Others would center on particular theoretical or methodological approaches, with an emphasis on exploring the advantages and limitations of these for informing broader debates about the role of resources in socio-environmental change. We also wanted to provide a venue for reflection on the practices of critical resource scholarship. The focus here would be on “engaged” forms of teaching and research, including those carried out via sustained

interactions with economic, political, and community actors beyond academia — for instance as part of public, participatory, and/or collaborative scholarship. Finally, we envisioned chapters showcasing, through empirical research, the value of critical resource geography’s theoretical and methodological tools. These chapters would be organized around the conceptual framing device of “resource-making/world-making,” a heuristic that came to take on broad significance in this project (for elaboration, see Valdivia, Himley, and Havice, Chapter 1 this volume). In terms of format, we were keen to take advantage of the relative openness that the Handbook model offered, and we imagined extending to contributing authors the opportunity to construct their chapters in inventive, non-traditional formats — something, we were delighted to see, several of our authors indeed ended up doing. Across these diverse chapters, our hope was that the volume would contribute an expansive approach to the study of resources and resource systems, one capable of making (more) visible the connections between the (un)making of resources and the (un)making of worlds.

In line with our approach of exploring the boundaries of critical resource geography — and aware of the role that Handbook editors play as “gatekeepers” in the production of academic knowledge (Schurr, Müller, and Imhof 2020) — our author-invitation strategy sought to cultivate a multiple-perspective exchange of ideas on the nature and potential futures of this body of scholarly work. We contacted potential authors who were at different career stages, from different disciplinary and sub-disciplinary “homes,” and at institutions in a variety of countries. We encouraged prospective authors to invite co-authors as a way of bringing a broader and more diverse set of voices into the conversation. Several of our original invitees declined to contribute a chapter, including for reasons that brought the political economy of academic work and publishing directly to bear on the content and trajectory of this project. Several prospective authors declined simply due to being overcommitted — an all-too-common characteristic of work in the neoliberal university (Mountz et al. 2015). A pre-tenure scholar declined on the basis of advice from their department chair, who had said that a chapter in an edited volume like this would be of limited value for tenure and promotion. In another case, a potential author chose not to participate in part because of the model of knowledge production and circulation itself. Specifically, they were concerned by how commercial publishers benefit from established routes through which scholars accumulate academic prestige and by using paywalls that limit public access to knowledge — a concern about for-profit academic publishing that is shared by many and persists even with the emergence of creative and experimental ways of publishing scholarship (see Batterbury 2017; Kallio and Hyvärinen 2017; Kallio and Metzger 2018). In a number of cases, declined invitations from senior scholars came with alternative suggestions that led us to early-career scholars of whom we would not have been aware, and whose contributions have enriched the volume greatly. Several authors responded to our invitations with questions: What *is* critical resource geography? What makes it distinct and worthy of its own handbook in a crowded field of handbooks? Why this project and why now? What do you mean when you say *critical*? These questions prompted exchanges that helped to hone the project and to develop our ideas about what resource geography is, and what it might be.

Our editorial process involved deep engagement with contributors, with one of us serving as lead editor for each of the chapters. For each manuscript, the lead editor and one other editor provided comments on the first draft; for subsequent drafts, the second editor “switched” to the one of us who had not read the first draft. We chose this strategy so that authors would benefit from our

collective energies and expertise while also ensuring that all three of the volume's co-editors developed up-close knowledge of each of the chapters. To foster conversation among authors, we organized a series of three panel sessions at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers held in Washington, DC, in which 16 of the volume's authors participated. This was a valuable opportunity to think across chapters and to identify cross-cutting themes at an early stage in the editorial process.

We took a collaborative, co-creative approach to write this Preface and the Handbook's introductory chapter. We outlined these pieces during a multi-day editors' meeting in North Carolina in early 2020. Soon after this, when we had final or near-final versions of all the volume's chapters, we began holding weekly virtual meetings to exchange ideas, to discuss the themes and literatures with which to engage, and to experiment with approaches to collaborative writing. Week after week, we drafted text, suggested revisions to each other's contributions, refined the volume's organizational structure, and worked through generative tensions in our approaches and perspectives in a process that embodied the "restless thinking" that we describe in Chapter 1.

Publication authorship and productivity are typically seen as key measures of the impact, relevance, and importance of scholarly work and function as "benchmarks" in academic hiring and promotion decisions. As a technology of accounting, authorship order is also significant, including because it can signal whose voices are represented, and can reproduce oppressive practices (Kobayashi and Lawson 2014; Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi 1995; Mott and Cockayne 2017). In high-ranking geography journals, for instance, women are underrepresented in authorship positions that equate to respect and merit, and women more frequently write co-authored papers for which it may be difficult to clearly attribute credit for work (e.g., Rigg, McCarragher, and Kremenec 2012). For us, because we each have tenure, the stakes in deciding authorship order may have been lower than if we were in less-secure academic positions; but they still gave us pause. We settled on a strategy that involved cycling through our names on the different elements of the project and contextualizing our collaboration in this Preface. Yet, we remain aware that prevailing norms regarding authorship order and attribution — coupled with the strangeness and ambiguity of "unbounding" these norms — can act as a constraint on innovation in research and engagement in critical resource geography and other fields (see also Ahlborg and Nightingale, Chapter 2 this volume). We are heartened that it is now common to see authors add "equal-collaboration" statements to their writings or elect to list authors in reverse-alphabetical order. We also note that many natural-science journals now require a statement summarizing the contributions of each author to data collection, analysis, and writing. To attend directly to authorship questions like these is to highlight "the labor process, assumptions, possibilities and risks" of co-authorship — undertaken among academics or in collaboration with non-academic authors — as a tool for making nuanced critical interventions (Nagar 2013, 1).

Finally, over the last year, we concluded this project in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a surge of anti-racist social mobilizations in numerous parts of the world. We acknowledge these world-transforming events here in part because they have shaped our thinking about resources, including by (further) drawing into sharp relief the centrality of resources and resource systems to the contemporary world. We see various ways in which thinking critically with resources sheds light on the emerging impacts of and responses to COVID-19, and well as

the linkages between the pandemic and the systems of oppression that today's justice movements aim to dismantle. Several governments, for instance, have used the economic fallout of the pandemic as a justification to accelerate private investment in land appropriation and resource extraction (logging, mining, oil extraction, etc.), the negative socioecological effects of which tend to fall heaviest on marginalized groups (Davenport and Friedman 2020; El Comercio 2020; Torres and Branford 2020; Vila Benites and Bebbington 2020). More broadly, the making of and trade in resources has long been central to the systems of coloniality, patriarchy, and racial capitalism that have delineated patterns of vulnerability to COVID-19 and that are key for understanding the pandemic's syndemic characteristics. In particular, it is increasingly clear that people already living under the "noxious social conditions" of capitalism (Adams 2020; Herrick 2020) have been especially vulnerable to the virus and to the pandemic's socio-economic effects, such as: historically disenfranchised peoples suffering from long-term disinvestment in public health and basic services (Angelo 2020; Bagley 2020; Johns 2020; Kestler-D'Amours 2020; Saffron 2020); the descendants of original peoples who have experienced repressive state actions under COVID-19 emergency declarations (IWGIA 2020); and migrant workers whose mobility and livelihood opportunities are limited by stay-at-home and social distancing orders (Roy 2020a, 2020b) or who are at the frontlines of COVID-19 outbreaks as "essential workers" in food industries (Groves and Tareen 2020; Havice, Marschke, and Vandergeest 2020; Jabour 2020).

Our own personal and professional lives also have been impacted by the pandemic. During the last year of the project, we worked remotely from home while caring for and supporting the remote or home-based educations of our young children, whose own daily lives have been radically changed, including due to the closure of schools, the cancellation of out-of-school activities, and the inability to interact in-person with many of their friends and loved ones. Many of our contributing authors experienced similar situations, caring for isolated loved ones, and made their ways through these pandemic conditions with restricted or anemic support systems. During this time, we also learned that many authors had carved out time to support students, friends, and allies whose status had been jeopardized by sudden travel restrictions or changes to student visa rules, and others had committed to mutual aid and fundraising efforts to expand caregiving to those most vulnerable to COVID-19. Professionally, even if the research agendas of critical resource geographers and allied scholars are not directly tied to justice-oriented social mobilizations or COVID-19, the events of the past year have profoundly transformed everyday spaces of research, teaching, and advocacy. COVID-19-related mobility restrictions, for instance, have affected access and connectivity in research and advocacy (c.f. Finn et al. 2020), while the pandemic's deepening of existing inequalities has reshaped the worlds about which critical resource scholars produce knowledge.

These events have shaped our thinking about this collection and, of course, impacted how we worked together and with contributing authors to complete the project as we faced instability and disruption at every turn. Working through this moment of rupture added to the urgency of advancing a critical resource geography that explores how resources come to be and how their histories, geographies, and the social and political-economic systems through which they circulate are intertwined with the worlds we inhabit *and* with the worlds that might be.

We continue to be inspired by the contributors who put trust in the idea of a Handbook of critical resource geography. We thank them for engaging seriously with our questions and suggestions. Their intellectual generosity and curiosity fill the pages that follow. We urge readers to draw upon the innovative insights and reflections in the contents of this Handbook — as we have — to navigate the present and envision future possibilities for resource geography and the world.

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