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The American Geographical Society Awards 2023 Council Fellowships

Description: The American Geographical Society (AGS) announces the recipients of the 2023 AGS Council Fellowship.

[New York City, NY] – [March 20, 2023] — The American Geographical Society (AGS) announced the recipients of the 2022 AGS Council Fellowships to support master’s and doctoral research. Established in 2013, each recipient receives a $2,000.00 award for their graduate research project. The recipients are Mr. Samuel Brandt, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles, Ms. Celeste Gunderson, a Master’s candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Ms. Oliva Meyer, a Ph.D. candidate from the University of Hawaii. Graduate students from universities around the world are eligible to apply for the Fellowships. AGS will recognize the three Fellows during its annual Fall Symposium, Geography 2050, to be held November 16-17, 2023 in New York City.

Mr. Brandt will use the fellowship funds to assist with his project, *More than a Home: Dwelling, Place, and Poverty in Rural Uruguay*. When asked about his research, Mr. Brandt explained, "My dissertation is a historical, ethnographic, and geographical study of Uruguay's Movement for the Eradication of Unhealthy Rural Housing (MEVIR), a policy that has dramatically improved the quality and supply of housing in rural Uruguay since 1967. I argue that MEVIR's success is due in large part to its understanding of the places in which and scales at which it operates. An AGS Council Fellowship will contribute to my time as a visiting researcher at the Institut des hautes études de l'Amérique latine (IHEAL) at the Université Paris III. At IHEAL's Pierre Monbeig Library, I will do a close reading of core texts in French geography and how they have been applied in Latin America. Ideas such as Vidal’s "genre de vie", Gravier's writings on France's macrocephaly, and Meynier's "paysages agraires" articulate place and rurality in ways that can help me to pinpoint the success of MEVIR as a purposefully geographic phenomenon, both in MEVIR's extensive use of geographic knowledge in its operations, and in MEVIR's commitment to strengthening rural people's attachment to place."

Ms. Gunderson’s fellowship funds will be used to cover fieldwork costs in Peru for her project, *Patterns and drivers of oil palm expansion and deforestation in Ucayali, Peru*. "This project examines the development of oil palm and the impact on forests in the Amazonian department of Ucayali in Peru. I will investigate both the spatial patterns and the underlying socio-economic and institutional drivers of oil palm expansion and deforestation among smallholder and industrial producers," explained Ms. Gunderson. "I am grateful to receive the AGS fellowship to help cover the cost of field work in Peru."

Ms. Meyer will use her fellowship to fund her research project, *Plastic Panacea: ‘Circular Economies’ of Plastic Waste in Thailand*. "In collaboration with local universities and grassroots groups, I will examine how social conditions mediate circular economy participation and knowledge production across regulatory, industry, recycler, and activist groups. By analyzing what makes a circular economy successful, this project examines Thailand’s place-specific approach to environmentalism and considers how other countries might navigate the international deployment of circular economy solutions," explained Ms. Meyer, adding "Research findings will advance understanding of how plastic pollution may be revalued through new sustainability models in Thailand and beyond."

Dr. Marie Price, President of AGS and Chair of the Selection Committee, remarked on this year’s recipients, "Every year the AGS Council members and I look forward to reviewing the applications for the Council Fellowship. It is exciting to see the research that young scholars are doing both domestically and internationally. This is the 10th year of the Council Fellowship program and the applicants are better than ever." Dr. Price added, "Our challenge as a Society is to find more financial support to grow this important program."

The American Geographical Society is a 21st-century learning society dedicated to the advancement of geographic thinking, knowledge, and understanding across business, government, academe, social sectors, and most importantly with teachers and students. Established in 1851, AGS is the oldest professional geographical organization in the United States. It is recognized worldwide as a pioneer in geographical research and education for 170 years. The mission of AGS is to convene a diverse global community of innovators, thinkers, and
practitioners; create and curate geographical knowledge, learning and exploration; and advance geographic science and technologies to address society’s challenges and opportunities. The Society maintains its headquarters in New York City.

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