

Eduard Brückner Award

16 March 2021

Thank you very much Professor Claussen and Professor von Storch for your generous words, and I also thank the Institute of Coastal Systems of the Helmholtz Zentrum in Geesthacht for their sponsorship.

It is a great pleasure for me to accept this Eduard Brückner Award from you. I am honoured to receive this recognition, not least because of the eminent scientists who have been previous recipients, many of whose work has influenced my own. It is also an honour because of the many interactions I have had with German climate scientists and institutions throughout my career. I have great respect for the scientific tradition, institutions and academics of your country. I can only observe with regret the decision made by my own country a few years ago to leave the EU. But, of course, cooperation and collaboration in science knows no boundaries, and so this Award is a great symbol of mutual friendship and respect between nations.

Nico Stehr and Hans von Storch first drew my attention 20 years ago to the work of Eduard Brückner in their extensive assessment of his life and works: Stehr, N. & von Storch, H. *'Eduard Brückner: The Sources and Consequences of Climate Change and Climate Variability in Historical Times'* (Kluwer Academic, 2000). Brückner's pioneering work was very much of the tradition of the English historical climatologist Hubert H Lamb, whose work had first inspired me in the late 1970s as a university student. Lamb shared with Brückner two core convictions. They both recognised that climates change in significant ways and for complex reasons on human time-scales and, second, that these changes have macro-scale significance for human societies and for the natural world. As Lamb's work taught me -- and as Brückner had realised many decades earlier -- climates and societies are in a deeply symbiotic relationship.

This is what today's social scientists might describe as 'entanglement'. And so now, today, to fully understand climate change and its significance, we have to study the phenomenon from a social and political angle as much as from a scientific one. All good Geographers recognise the importance of both scientific and social scientific studies and Brückner was exceptional in this regard. He was an early and pre-eminent European Geographer -- holding chairs of Geography first at the University of Bern and then later at Vienna. I, too, am a Geographer by training -- and now by my institutional title here at Cambridge as Professor of Human Geography -- and so Brückner's path for the study of climate change is one with which I am very much in sympathy.

My only regret today is that I cannot be present physically with you at the KlimaCampus in Hamburg for the 12DKT Conference and that I therefore have to miss the opportunity to reacquaint with you both and with other German colleagues.

Mike Hulme, University of Cambridge