



# Environment and Society: Advances in Research

**Thematic Focus: Pollution/Toxicity**

Call for Papers

**Volume 12 (2021)**

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The livable surface of the earth is polluted. Images abound of plastic bags riding the currents of the Pacific Ocean and collecting in the Mariana Trench; stockpiles of nuclear waste pumped deep into earth's outer crust; smoke and smog (a fusion of particulate matter and ozone) settling in above sprawling urban colonies, slowly killing its denizens; spent oxygen containers pockmarking the snows of Everest; and billions of pieces of space debris endlessly falling in Low Earth Orbit, just beyond a thin and rapidly changing breathable atmosphere. So goes the narrative of the Anthropocene, a purportedly new geological epoch demarcated by the planetary effects of human activity.

The famed symbolic anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) understood pollution as "matter out of place," a kind of disorder that necessarily prompts efforts to "organize" the environment. Anthropology, geography, and allied fields have since pushed this conversation forward by inquiring into the materiality of pollution, the toxicity that manifests in situated encounters between bodies and environments, and the co-production of pollution/toxicity – two sides of the same coin, in our reading, one overflowing boundaries and the other seeping in – through those extended networks of physico-chemical, organic, and sociocultural life that constitute local and global political ecologies. Yet, questions about the source and form of pollution and the nature of its toxicity remain:

- How is the materiality of pollution/toxicity smelled, tasted, felt, experienced, embodied, or symbolized, both in crisis and in life?
- How and by whom are its impacts – material, sociocultural, political, ethical, etc. – measured or otherwise accounted for in technoscientific or other socioculturally and historically particular terms?
- How is it managed through policies, infrastructures, and everyday acts of care (sweeping, cleaning, planting, repairing)?
- How do its accounts give rise to more overt political mobilizations?
- How does it come to reshape socio-political life?

This volume of *Environment and Society* explores current thinking about pollution and toxicity at the intersection of symbolic anthropology, political ecology, and science and technology studies. We are interested in a broad range of scholarly perspectives, theoretical alliances, and methodological and epistemological approaches that contribute to historical and contemporary understandings of pollution and toxicity. Our aim is to understand the discursive and material co-production of pollution and toxicity, as well as the stakes of such an analysis for diverse communities of human and nonhuman beings.

Possible topics for this issue could include but are not limited to:

- The many biotic and abiotic forms that pollution/toxicity (or other pathogens) may take
- The material and symbolic "poles" of pollution/toxicity
- The affective, sensory, and "felt" dimensions of pollution, including feelings of uncertainty surrounding exposure
- The embodiment and experience of pollution/toxicity, and the narratives that are formed through social discourse
- The political ecologies of pollution/toxicity and the stakes of analysis for different communities of humans/nonhumans
- The implications of policy, infrastructure, and other design elements in the propagation and/or mitigation of pollution/toxicity
- The technoscience of pollution/toxicity, including the measurement and abatement of polluting matter, the medicalization of its embodied effects, or the formation of policy and/or sociopolitical mobilizations
- The geographic and spatial politics of pollution/toxicity and their implications in terms of the local, national, and global scales of analysis
- The racialized, gendered, and colonial dimensions of environmental in/justice as it pertains to pollution/toxicity
- The new social, economic, and ecological milieus that are produced within the dynamic context of pollution/toxicity.

*Environment and Society* is a review journal published once a year. Its articles are meant to review substantial bodies of literature that have appeared in previous years. We therefore expect contributions to this issue to contain substantial literature reviews. We also find, however, that the strongest articles tend to include some original material in their work. Articles that do so, while remaining overwhelmingly review articles, are welcome.

## Key Dates

### Abstracts due

(Abstracts may be up to 250 words)

**October 1, 2019\***

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### Notifications for authors

**November 1, 2019\***

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### Completed articles due for initial review

**July 1, 2020\***

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### Final submission date

**1 May 2021\***

Please submit at 250-word abstract to [ares.journal@gmail.com](mailto:ares.journal@gmail.com) to be considered for this special issue of *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*. Please send all inquiries to [jerry.jacka@colorado.edu](mailto:jerry.jacka@colorado.edu) or [ameliamoore@uri.edu](mailto:ameliamoore@uri.edu).

*\* all dates are subject to change*