



# Environment and Society: Advances in Research

## Thematic Focus: Global Black Ecologies

Call for Papers  
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Since the late fifteenth century, African and African Diasporic people have been central to the transformations in ecologies and human community constituting what Françoise Vergès (2017) terms the racial capitalocene. This concept underscores the extractive and harmful transformations of Earth's geological and ecological processes in relation to the accumulationist prerogatives of racial capitalism (Robinson 1983; Gilmore 2007; Quan 2019; Pulido 2016). As Walter Rodney (1970) and Stephanie Smallwood (2008) demonstrate, the transatlantic slave trade helped to transform the geography and ecology of the West African Coast, precipitating not only the enslavement of millions of Africans but also unprecedented deforestation and discomoning. In the Caribbean as well as the Continental Americas, enslaved Africans were tasked with transforming indigenous landscapes into mining and plantation extractive complexes, as a result suffering the emergence of toxic and denuded landscapes, as well as disproportionate disease burdens, starvation, and exposure (Perry 2017; Marshall 2012). Black women's bodies in particular were dislocated by the slave trade, as Delores Williams (1993) and Katherine McKittrick (2006) demonstrate, and juridically transformed by the enactment of slave law into the sites of slavery's reproduction within the grammar of expansion for competing regimes of empire as Hortense Spillers (1987), Jennifer Morgan (2004), Sherwin K. Bryant (2014), Tiffany Lethabo King (2019), and Kathryn Yusoff (2019) historicize and theorize in different contexts.

Far from retreating, the entrenched ecological vulnerability foundational to modernity and other enduring legacies and relations of racial capitalism have reproduced and helped to define an ongoing dynamic in which African and African Diasporic communities continue to suffer the legacies of toxic stewardship. In Burkina Faso, Brazil, La Guajira, Colombia, the Southeast of Puerto Rico, Nova Scotia, in Tidewater, Virginia, and in rural North Carolina, Black communities continue to live in sites of violent extraction, endure toxic dumping, and face rising sea levels and desertification (McCommons 2020; Purifoy et al 2020; Pulido 2016). The designation of Black ecology incorporates a means of describing the historically sedimented and enduring geological marginality that African and African Diasporic people face. Further, Black ecologies index the impacts of the twin global processes of racialization and dispossession as experienced by Black populations, the regions/territories in which they live, and the landscapes on which they depend for sustenance and life. As such, the ecological struggles experienced by non-Afro descendant people, racialized as Black (such as Dalit communities in India (Sharma 2012) and Aboriginal communities in Australia) are encompassed within this framework.

Black ecologies are also a means of thinking about the radical epistemological interventions and practices born of African and African Diasporic ingenuity in relation to the matters of geographic and environmental vulnerability. From various analytic and conceptual frameworks, Christina Sharpe (2016), Monica White (2018), Chelsea Frazier (2018), Ashanté Reese (2019), Jarvis McInnis (2019), Hosbey and Roane (2019), James Padillioni (2019) emphasize that Black expressive and visual culture, intellectual production, and the everyday practices of Black communities encompass alternative and sometimes insurgent epistemologies for theorizing transformative relationships to dominant geographies of exclusion, exploitation, and the matters of ecology. To that end, Hilda Lloréns (2020)

argues that Black communities in different locations create mobile ecologies that give expression to mutual aid, collective possibility, and a fugitive Black commons (Roane 2018). This vision of Black ecologies as sites of possibility for alternative relationships hold bearing on future visions of robust sustainability, reciprocity, Blackness and (non) humanness, and ecological stewardship, despite their consistent demotion as heterodox, folk, or pathological.

We invite papers from a broad range of scholarly perspectives, theoretical alliances, and methodological and epistemological approaches that contribute to historical and contemporary understandings of Black ecologies as modalities of coterminous racialized dispossession and ecocide, and as a sites of possibility for futures defined by alternative visions of mutuality, belonging, and collectivity not dependent on environmental destruction to contribute to this special issue of *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*.

*Environment and Society* is a review journal that appears once per year. Its papers are meant to review substantial bodies of literature that inform the author's perspective, and we expect contributions to this issue to contain substantial literature reviews. We also find that the best papers tend to include original research material in their work. We therefore look for papers which blend original work and literature review with an explicit focus on the concepts and ideas that inform the paper topic.

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

- Black Feminist Ecologies
- Black Ecological Knowledge
- Environmental, Climate and Energy Justice and Black Ecologies
- Black Ecological Art and Ecocriticism
- Urban Black Ecologies
- Black Canadian Ecologies
- Leisure, Nature/the Outdoors and Racialized Uses of Space
- Nature and the outdoors as Therapy, Spaces of Healing and Liberatory Practices
- Black Ecology and Autonomy, Anarchy, Living Otherwise
- Gardening and Black Ecological Knowledge
- Black Culinary Traditions and Food Sharing
- Black Land Reclamation
- Black Ancestral Dwelling, Land and Ecosystem Stewardship Practices
- Cosmology, Religion and Black Ecologies
- The affective, sensory, and "felt" dimensions of Black Ecologies
- Embodiment of Black Ecologies
- Waterways and Fishing
- Mangrove Civilizations
- Animal and Non-Human Animal Relations in Black Ecologies
- Post-disaster Communities and Black Ecologies
- Blackness and/as Indigeneity
- Intergenerational Black Ecological Traditions and Knowledge
- Foraging in Black Ecologies
- Extractivism in Black Ecologies

## Key Dates

**Abstracts due**

**December 18, 2020\***

**Completed articles due for initial review**

**July 31, 2021\***

**Notifications for authors**

**January 15, 2021\***

**Final submission date**

**May 2022\***

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 [ares.journal@gmail.com](mailto:ares.journal@gmail.com). For more information, visit [www.berghahnjournals.com/environment-and-society](http://www.berghahnjournals.com/environment-and-society).

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