

## Call for Papers

### The political ecology of social-environmental extreme events

**Conveners:** Maria Rusca (Uppsala University), Filippo Menga (University of Reading), Gregory Simon (University of Colorado Denver) and Raven Cretney (University of Waikato).

**Format:** Online session

In recent years, the world has witnessed an increase in a range of extreme events. The anthropogenic nature of these events is increasingly recognised. Human activities are triggering an increased number of landslides (Froude & Petley, 2018) and anthropogenic climate change is exacerbating extreme event occurrences – e.g. widespread wildfires (Abatzoglou & Williams, 2016), prolonged heatwaves (Vogel et al., 2019), floods (Blöschl et al., 2019) and droughts (Marvel et al., 2019). Crucially, exacerbating extreme events will have widespread and unevenly distributed socio-economic impacts and affect the ability of different societal groups to recover from and adapt to rapidly changing environmental conditions (Mechler and Bouwer, 2015; Eriksen et al. 2020). This recognition has eroded the conceptual boundaries between physical, hydroclimatic historical, political and economic processes generating these extremes and their uneven impacts, urging scholars from different disciplinary perspectives to rethink extreme events in the Anthropocene as interwoven social and environmental processes (Castree, 2015; Collard et al., 2018; Breyer et al., 2018; Balch et al., 2020; Rusca, 2021).

Attending to these calls, in this session we seek to examine and theorise the relation between the genesis of social-environmental extremes, planning, preparedness and response efforts, and differentiated recovery trajectories across multiple spatial and temporal scales. This entails linking, for example, the nested experiences and intentions of households, city agencies and national governments over time. Multiscalar research also asks us to connect immediate policy actions to longer-term impacts and recoveries. Critical disaster studies have mostly focused their work on social vulnerability to extreme events (Adger, 2006; Bolin, 2007; Enarson, 1998), and to what Simon (2014) refers to as ‘vulnerability-in-production’, exploring the uneven accumulation and entrenchment of societal risks and benefits (Collins, 2010; Hewitt, 1983; Mustafa, 2005; Pelling, 2003; Simon 2017). Less work explicitly engages with multiscalar considerations associated with speculative and anticipatory planning for environmental extremes, long-term recovery trends and experiences, or the cascading, transformative potential of extreme-related disasters. Building on emerging scholarship addressing these dimensions (Rusca et al., 2021; Eriksen et al. 2020, 2014; Rhiney, 2020; Cretney, 2019), we invite panelists who through their theoretical and empirical work can contribute to the above debates, by addressing themes that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Multi-scale genesis of unprecedented social-environmental extreme events:** the political economy of natural resource use and the production of social-environmental extreme events.
- **Speculative political ecologies of extreme events:** PE scholarship has importantly critiqued processes of exploitation and the choreographies of power shaping uneven exposure and vulnerability to extreme events. Yet, the implications of these analyses for future social-

environmental configurations have been far less explored. We invite papers that engage with and theorize future societal responses to extreme events.

- **Uneven recovery trajectories:** there is widespread consensus within social science scholarship that multiple dimensions of inequalities - class, gender, socio-economic status, race and ethnicity – intersect in critical ways in the production of vulnerability to hazards (Eriksen and Simon 2017, Eriksen et al., 2020). Here we invite papers that examine immediate response to and long-term recovery trajectories from social-environmental extremes.
- **The interplay between social groups and governing bodies across multiple scales as they anticipate and prepare for extreme environmental events.** As different groups are faced with planning for and coexisting with uncertain, risky and tumultuous futures, what are some creative and productive ways for researchers to understand the 'present' in relation to the 'future' in social-environmental extremes research?
- **Disaster and Emergency Capitalism:** the role and exercise of power in mediating the politics of response and recovery to disasters in the Anthropocene. Dynamics of power, both political, discursive and economic, are interwoven through these trajectories and play a crucial role in uneven patterns of impact, vulnerability and risk across both human and more-than-human communities (Rickards 2016, Collard 2018, Grove, 2013). We invite papers that look at how dynamics of power are articulated, entrenched and resisted in response to extreme events, and their implications for catalysing transformative change.
- **The transformative potential of an extreme-related disaster:** the aftermath of a disaster can drive a range of dynamics, from transformative change to top-down repression or acceleration of the pre-disaster trajectories. The increasing focus on socio-technical transition and transformation also raises important questions for how disaster events may catalyze or build momentum for multi-scale change. We invite papers that engage with both reactionary and progressive transformations generated by social-environmental extreme events.
- **The ethics and politics of engaging social-environmental extreme events as sites of possible transformation:** As Derickson et al. (2015) illustrate, the hope that crisis can cultivate progressive change is complex given such events hold significant potential for further entrenchment of current capitalist politics and relationships, and in turn may act to replicate uneven and inequitable harm. With this in mind, we invite papers that interrogate and question the politics of situating social-environmental extreme events as sites for potential progressive change.

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