

**Coloniality and Environmental Injustice in Abya Yala:
Toxic Sacrifice Zones and the Fast-Fashion Landfill**

Abstract

Colonisation left behind territorial and epistemic patterns of subordination that persist today in new guises. Drawing on decolonial theory, this article analyses the continuity of coloniality in contemporary environmental governance through two case studies in Abya Yala – America. **I) Arica, a toxic ‘sacrifice zone’.** More than 20,000 tonnes of waste containing lead and arsenic were shipped from Sweden to the urban periphery, causing severe public-health and socio-ecological impacts. Over the past twenty-five years local communities have denounced the disaster, while the state’s response has largely normalised it. The analysis probes the tension between local practices of care-resistance and policies of negligence-normalisation while examining the emerging horizontal conflicts and their implications for socio-environmental justice. **II) Alto Hospicio, the global landfill of fast fashion.** Today this territory hosts one of the world’s largest textile dumps, the result of offshoring the ecological liabilities of the fast-fashion industry. Fieldwork employing visual methods and critical analysis shows how a ‘geography of discard’ links textile production in former colonies (Mozambique, India, Bangladesh), mass commercialisation in the Global North, and final dumping in the Atacama Desert, creating a transnational chain of exploitation, dispossession and structural violence. Taken together, the cases reveal how environmental coloniality reproduces historical hierarchies and generates new forms of territorial and epistemic subordination. This seminar seeks to underscore the need for decolonising practices that interweave socio-environmental justice with strategies of care-and-resistance, with the aim of transforming the structures of domination that perpetuate these crises.