

# Cahiers des Amériques latines

Appels à contribution d'articles - ouverts

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## N° 97 - Everyday Life and Nature in Latin American Cities

*Cotidianidad y naturaleza en las ciudades latinoamericanas*

*La nature dans les villes latino-américaines au quotidien*

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### Context:

The Latin American continent is the most urbanized in the world. Latin American cities find themselves facing major challenges today: on the one hand, offering decent housing and living conditions for more than half of the inhabitants and, on the other hand, meeting the major issue of climate change. These challenges seem contradictory. Urbanization, and, more precisely densification or urban sprawl, is a source of environmental degradation. Indeed, the modification of land use, the reduction of public spaces and the destruction of the green ones modify the flow water, increase temperatures thus creating new hazards in the city. Besides, urban lifestyles, such as daily mobility and mass consumption, are sources of greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution, as well as waste and massive production of rubbish.

Urban populations are the first to be affected by the environmental degradation and risks produced by the current economic development model. The political economy of all the countries of the continent is based on extractivism which “must be understood as a model of accumulation based on the overexploitation of largely nonrenewable natural resources and the displacement of the borders of the territories until then considered ‘unproductive’ [Svampa, 2011: 105]. However, this economic development model does not only concern rural populations and areas [García-Jerez, 2019; Svampa & Viale, 2014]. The environmental damages produced

by it affects mainly city-dwellers. The difficult access to land led categories of population to occupy unurbanized and natural areas, further reinforcing risks. Other damages would particularly affect cities. The Latin American continent would be of no exception, such as floods and landslides linked to heavy, short-time rains, chronic respiratory diseases produced by atmospheric pollution, or sea-level rise.

At the same time, urban areas are privileged places to create alternative experiences and sustainable urban policies. Cities are central to the energy transition, as sources of innovations in urban services. They contain different forms of urban agriculture and produce innovative proposals that question relations between town and countryside. They also constitute a central place of mobilization against environmental inequalities or opposition to large urban developments, as evidenced by the growing number of urban socio-environmental protests.

Social science has been only recently interested in environmental issues in cities. Reflection on nature has long been associated with rural areas because the city has been considered as a privileged place of culture and civilization [Massard-Guilbaud, 2007]. Urban spaces were often viewed in opposition to nature or wilderness, until authors like William Cronon [1997], a precursor of environmental history, propose to study the links between Chicago's urban sprawl and its hinterland. Although the study of city-countryside relations is not new in France [Querrien & Lassave, 1997], William Cronon inspired North American researchers who will found urban political ecology. Since the 1980s, this current has critically questioned the links between the expansion of capitalism, urbanization and social construction of nature both material and discursive [Castree & Braun, 2001; Robbins, 2012]. It conceptualizes this process by studying urban metabolism as a transformation of both city and nature [Heynen et al., 2006], like the emblematic research on water in Guayaquil analyzed by Erik Swyngedouw [2004]. In France, the approach from 'technical networks' has questioned nature in so-called 'southern' cities through the study of services essential to daily life working as networks (water, energy, waste) [Coutard et al., 2002; Jaglin & Verdeil, 2013; Jaglin & Zérah, 2010]. These authors have highlighted the specificities of the regulations and techniques of these networks. They reveal the production of margins in the city [Coutard & Rutherford, 2009], the inequalities of access to urban services [Jaglin, 2004] and the challenges of waste management in 'southern' cities [Subrémon & Gouvello, 2012].

More generally, the urban environment has been understood through the concept of a sustainable city [Theys & Emelianoff, 2001]. Environmental public policies have been analyzed in order to understand the challenges they will face if they want to achieve sustainable development, as defined and advocated by international institutions since the publication of the Bruntland report in 1987 and the Rio Summit in 1992 [Emelianoff, 2007; Gauthier, 2006; Mathieu, 2006; Winchester, 2006]. In this sense, several studies have focused on the development of urban agriculture [Faliès & Mesclier, 2015], the transformation of city-countryside relations [Le Caro et al., 2016] and the issue of the energy transition [Subrémon, 2014]. More recently, with the influence of the *ecologia politica latinoamericana*, socio-environmental inequalities in Latin American cities led to research on urban socio-environmental protests [Aliste & Stamm, 2016]. This line of research shows an 'eco-territorial struggle' turn [Svampa, 2012] and reveals a transformation in the relations between the inhabitants and the environment. In social sciences, it questions the boundary between nature and culture [Descola, 2005; Haraway, 1991; Latour, 2013], as evidenced by the recent work on the transformations of humans and non-humans in urban production [Steele et al., 2019].

## Issue's main goals:

The special issue invites to go beyond a conceptual reflection (sustainable city, environmental inequalities, urban networks), which may sometimes confine the discussion. It aims at analyzing the daily relations between the inhabitants and nature looking at the materiality of spaces in which they are embedded, and its representation conveyed through environmental policies, which are sometimes contested. Urban production is based on financialization (French, Leyshon & Wainwright, 2011; Aalbers, 2019) and the greening of urban and housing policies (Barraqué, 2011; Mormont, 2013). These specific features shape the daily relations between inhabitants and nature and raise the question of living in Latin American cities. How does the production of exclusions, inequalities, segregation, in and by the city, overlap with contemporary environmental issues, and, how does it modify the daily relations of inhabitants with nature?

Three lines of research appear to be central to proposing a critical reflection on the relations of inhabitants with nature in Latin American cities today:

- The daily appropriation of nature by the inhabitants of the city. The articles may offer a reflection on the use, normalized or distorted, of urban spaces; the involvement of inhabitants in public policies for environmental protection or detection of environmental risks; or the construction of what they define as ecological alternatives.

- The links between conflicts for the appropriation of urban spaces and those for the appropriation of nature. The articles could offer a reflection on the interweaving between socio-environmental mobilizations and social movements claiming the right to the city carried by the inhabitants: their demands and strategies, their collective actions and their relations with the institutions.

- The effects of the greening of urban and housing policies on the daily life of city-dwellers. The articles could shed light on the different methods of appropriation of nature by institutional actors in the development of housing and urban development policies; the power relations between different actors during their implementation; and its effects on the transformation of lived spaces.

## Submission Instructions

Contributions will be based on unpublished fieldwork. Articles can be submitted in French, Spanish or English. They must contain the following information:

- Lastname, name;
- University or laboratory of affiliation;
- Brief presentation of a CV (between 3–4 lines), including email
- Paper title;
- The paper, 50,000 characters' maximum (including spaces, footnotes, and bibliography)
- Summary in 3 languages (fr, en, es or pt) and 5 keywords.

The Committee of Cahiers des Amériques Latines will notify you as soon as possible whether or not the proposal was accepted.

The contributions must be sent to the following address: [cal97villes@gmail.com](mailto:cal97villes@gmail.com) no later than June 20. They will be subject to a double-blind evaluation. The publication of the special issue is scheduled for July 2021. Please refer to the instructions to the authors: <https://journals.openedition.org/cal/2324>. Papers that do not follow these guidelines will not be reviewed.

The issue is scheduled for publication in July 2021.

Please consult the instructions to the authors:

<https://journals.openedition.org/cal/3726>

**Papers that do not comply with these instructions may not be considered.**

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