

# JOURNAL OF The History of the Behavioral Sciences

## *Call for Papers*

### **Our Present Crises: Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Social Inequality**

A special issue of the *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*

Special Issue Guest Editors: Graham W. Pickren and Wade E. Pickren

Alarmed by the emergent links among climate change, massive biodiversity loss, and rising social inequality, this special issue will feature historical analyses of these links based in the social and behavioral sciences, broadly defined. It is now clear that these crises are connected – for example, the processes driving carbon emissions and mass extinction are related to the vast accumulation of wealth by an increasingly powerful global elite. These problems, both individually and collectively, pose an existential threat to social, political, and biological systems, both currently and with increasing impact over the next half-century and beyond. Given that behavioral, political, and economic processes are directly linked to our current state of climate emergency, what can historical analyses of these processes – including the role of the social sciences in shaping them - contribute to our understanding and shape our responses?

At the most general level, this special issue seeks to understand how we have arrived at this particular historical moment. Of particular interest are papers that examine the ways in which certain concepts and ideological constructs, such as modernity, liberalism, growth, capitalism, patriarchy, race, and freedom have shaped socio-natural practices that have produced our current crises. Historically unpacking the ontologies and epistemologies undergirding the contemporary moment has tremendous value for identifying gaps and alternative pathways in the possible futures that lie ahead. The search for knowledge and praxes otherwise, that is, in addition to the Western Enlightenment model of rationality, will help us create a *pluriversal* approach to finding such futures (Escobar, 2017).

We invite contributions from scholars whose work is based in the social and behavioral sciences, including geography, anthropology, STS, sociology, economics, political science, psychology, sustainability studies, communications, urban planning, public health, and environmental history.

The special issue seeks to unpack the cultural and political histories that undergird our present emergency, as well as the practices that have come to define it. Within this broad framing, possible topics include but are not limited to:

- The genealogy/history of the idea of limitless growth embedded within Western, settler colonial societies. How and why did concepts of 'freedom' as developed within the social and behavioral sciences become tethered to notions of unfettered consumption and access to natural resources?
- The history of post-WWII development policies and their environmental impact.
- Histories of patriarchy and the link to extractivist and exploitative practices on the earth.
- Modernity and the history of coloniality of knowledge of the environment/earth/ecology.
- Histories of social movements, environmental activism, indigenous worldviews, and utopian projects that run counter to modern Western liberal environmentalism.
- Histories of the study of biodiversity and cultural diversity.
- The ecological impact of the ontological dualisms of Euro-modernity: nature/culture, mind/body, woman/man.
- The continued evolution of industrial agriculture and the application of biotechnology in agrifood systems from a historical perspective.
- Histories of Neo-Malthusian ideas such as the 'population bomb', carrying capacity, and the tragedy of the commons.
- Histories of neoliberalism that track how this particular ideology lends itself to narrow forms of environmental action centered on individual behavior changes and 'greener' consumption choices.
- Histories of the scientific management of nature and culture that replaced the complexities of the life sciences with practices that served instrumental development and bureaucratic goals.
- The antecedents of modern paradigms of security and climate change: the convergence between militarism and biological, climate, and earth sciences.

Papers should examine the conceptual, analytic, historiographic, ethical, contextual, cultural, and political factors that play a role in how the issues presented are linked to our current crises.

**We invite 500-word proposals to be submitted for review by September 15, 2020, with decisions and invitations for full manuscripts completed by October 15, 2020. We anticipate that the special issue would appear in the Summer 2021 issue.**

***Please submit questions and proposals directly to Wade Pickren: wpar29@gmail.com***