

Send abstracts (of no more than 500 words) in one of Laboratorium's working languages (English or Russian) to Oksana Parfenova ([oksana.parfenova@gmail.com](mailto:oksana.parfenova@gmail.com)) and Marc Elie ([marc.elie@cercec.cnrs.fr](mailto:marc.elie@cercec.cnrs.fr)) by December 1st 2011.

## **Waste and trash in the 21st century**

CfP for Laboratorium

Sociologists have drawn attention to the paradox that trash, the least valuable substance in the value hierarchy of modern societies, is nonetheless crucial to explaining how society works. Refuse diffuses among societal layers, and how we handle trash reveals important aspects of the social order.

It is often assumed that modern societies created trash as the last element of the consumption chain, breaking the traditional circularity of agricultural production. What society rejects is nonetheless or precisely because of this replete with symbols, values, and ideologies. Practices of trash disposing, sorting, collecting, and reusing give insight into belief systems, social hierarchies, class and gender behavior, and many other social phenomena. What are the social practices of trash gathering, classifying, reusing, and recycling throughout history and today? What do they tell us about interactions between people, of the patterns of consumption and of the conception of otherness?

In recent years, with the growing pace of industrialization and urbanization around the world, the controversial and problematic aspects of trash have come to the forefront of global politics and science. As trash is no longer considered an unavoidable consequence of progress, the management and recycling of industrial and domestic waste has become not only a pressing technological and logistic issue for municipalities and states, but a poignant bone of contention between social and economic actors.

Waste management – where to locate landfills or build waste incineration and recycling facilities – is more often than not an issue of environmental justice. How do citizens and public authorities tackle the trash issue? How is it framed in public discourse by civic associations, parties, scientists, and officials?

With the change of scale of environmental damages, trash and industrial hazardous materials now travel across natural and administrative borders. A recent development is the international trash trade: trash is treated as a commodity and shipped from richer to poorer countries (from Western Europe to West Africa, for instance). But this is not always the case, as the recycling of nuclear waste in Russia and France shows. What are the economics and politics of the globalized waste trade?

Laboratorium's special issue on waste and trash welcomes papers in sociology, history, political sciences, anthropology, social geography and other disciplines that can provide insight into social practices around waste. Work based on transnational or comparative approaches is especially welcome.

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Authors of abstracts selected for publication will be notified by January 15th 2012 and will be expected to submit full-length articles (in one of two languages) no later than June 1st 2012. Laboratorium will publish the papers that succeeded in the peer-review process in one of its issues for 2013.