

Working and Breathing in Global Africa

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Abstract

For over a century, African minerals have played a particularly important role in fueling industrialized life across the globe. Today, the toxic residues of mineral extraction and use continue to plague communities throughout the continent – along, of course, with more recent forms of industrialized contamination. As the planet’s environmental crisis continues to worsen, I argue that — contrary to stereotypes of Africa as marginal and “lagging” behind other continents — we must look to African experiences to understand the present and future of working and breathing on our planet. I explore this theme through two examples: large-scale gold and uranium mining in South Africa’s Gauteng province, and air pollution in West African cities.



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