DEPARTMENT: School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies (SSAS)

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RESEARCH TITLE: Environmental Imaginaries and Ethics of Everyday Life in Postsocialist & Postwar Balkans

NUMBER OF STUDENT: 1

LANGUAGE: English

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION:

Over the last twenty years, postsocialist Southeastern Europe has emerged as one of the most environmentally vulnerable regions of the world (e.g. Herrschel and Forsyth 2001, Harper 2006, Gille 2007). Wars, marketization of the economy, rising poverty and infrastructural collapse have made worse a number of longstanding environmental concerns, related to agricultural and industrial production, as well as the energy sector, the water supply system and waste disposal. Yet, despite this environmental degradation, popular desires for natural and healthy living have remained a standard feature of everyday life, shaping consumption patterns, leisurely activities and even emergent communities seeking to promote alternative and more organic forms of living (e.g. Caldwell 2011, Jasarevic 2017, Yung et al, 2014, also Paxson 2014).

The aim of this project is to produce a comprehensive review of anthropological and related social scientific literature emerging at the intersection of environmental studies and ethnographies of everyday life, which gives special attention to new environmental imaginaries—popular discourses, practices and forms of community—that have sought to respond to the chemical and political toxicities by modeling alternative forms of life.

This literature review will help support professors’ new research on environmental politics in postwar Bosnia, and citizens’ responses to environmental degradation.

KEY LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

This work will not only train students to identify key debates in the discipline but also demonstrate how one situates independent research projects into a larger field of scholarly conversation. It will show students how small-scale ethnographic inquiries can make a contribution to disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge.

The review of scholarly literature will serve as a preparatory step for developing two new research projects in postwar Bosnia, one of which is a study of water politics, and the other which is a smaller-scale ethnography of mountaineering clubs as a site of popular environmentalism.