



MAE Seminar Series 2026

Articulations of Poisoning

Historicity, Relationality, and Contextuality of Chlordecone Pollution in the French Antilles

dr Giorgio Brocco

May 13th | 3 PM CET on Zoom [\[LINK HERE\]](#)

Chlordecone, a highly persistent organochlorine insecticide, was widely applied to banana plantations in Martinique and Guadeloupe from 1972 until being banned in 1993. Decades later, its residues still permeate soil, waterways, food systems, and human bodies in the two islands. Classified as both a carcinogen and an endocrine disruptor, the chemical has generated widespread protests, epidemiological debates, and political critique. Drawing on six months of non-consecutive ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Martinique between 2017 and 2022, this article examines how people interpret and navigate the chemical's enduring effects. We develop the concept of "articulations of poisoning" to describe the ways in which chlordecone is rendered meaningful, not simply as a biomedical or ecological risk, but as a lived, historically sedimented, and politically contested experience. These articulations unfold along three interconnected dimensions—historicity, relationality, and contextuality—that shape how poisoning is perceived, embodied, and resisted on the ground. Through the voices of activists, farmers, medical professionals, institutional actors, and community members, we explore how poisoning becomes entangled with colonial legacies, political debates, and the everyday struggle for environmental justice in the French Antilles.

OPTIONAL REGISTRATION



Giorgio Brocco is a research associate and a lecturer at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Vienna. A member of the Research Group Health Matters, he has been researching the multiple ways humans conceive, interact with, and imagine the lasting presence of artificial chemical molecules in the two French overseas territories and the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

His previous work has documented the life experiences and socio-economic conditions of people with albinism living in the East African country.

Giorgio is the editor of a new book series with Berghahn Books called **Disability and Chronicity through the Ethnographic Lens**.

Medical Anthropology Europe

A NETWORK OF EASA

