



## THESIS DEFENSE



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10:00 AM [Zoom](#)



### Seohyung Kim

Seohyung Kim is a master's student at Purdue University in the Department of Anthropology and Ecological Sciences and Engineering Program. She previously received a BA in cultural anthropology from Yonsei University. Her current research is about rethinking and reshaping environment and pollution politics and knowledges against normalcy, exploitation, colonialism, and racism. Her research has been engaged with medical anthropology, environmental anthropology, environmental and health sciences, and feminist science and technology studies.

### Dr. Zoe Nyssa Major Professor

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### NOT CATASTROPHIC BUT QUOTIDIAN: HOW PARTICULATE MATTER BECOMES A MATTER IN SOUTH KOREA

Particle pollution in South Korea has become a matter of such public concern that it was declared a “social disaster” by government proclamation in 2019. My thesis research shows how present interventions to tackle particle pollution in South Korea as a “social disaster” that required expansive monitoring technology infrastructure, is paradoxically contributing to maintaining the status quo. This study explores how particle pollution has been naturalized and justified anthropogenic pollution through close ethnographic attention to peoples' lived experiences, discourse, and data surrounding particle pollution by mapping citizen-based knowledge systems in the linking of anthropological, public health, and environmental sciences perspectives. Based on four months of fieldwork, interviews, and collaborative work with residents, scientists, and activists in South Korea, this thesis offers a new understanding of how citizens' experiences and knowledge practices have reshaped the concepts of pollution, toxicity, and health. Drawing on scholarship in feminist Science and Technology Studies (STS), medical and environmental anthropology, this study problematizes harm reduction-based environmental and health intervention practices by describing the current individualized particle pollution responses. The research reveals how people in Korea living with/in particulate matter have perceived, datafied, defined, adjusted, and responded to particle pollution and its toxicity.