



The Journal of Global Environmental Justice
Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Volume III of the Journal of Global Environmental Justice. This issue features articles at the cutting edge of critical environmental justice with topics ranging from indigenous land rights, prison abolition and racial capitalism, all the way to the social history of Bay Area housing and zoning.

Ki' Amber Thompson and Mara Henderson's articles included in this edition show us that grappling with the implications of environmental justice in carceral systems requires going beyond the physical sites of prisons and jails, though these sites serve as the critical point of departure for both authors. Thompson's article features novel research findings from their interviews with formerly incarcerated people in Texas, who explain the risks of climate change and environmental injustice that they faced in carceral facilities. Thompson's article embarks on a journey with these interviewees to understand the related environments where they did or did not experience environmental justice, namely in parks and green spaces in their communities. Thompson's article includes a significant contribution to the literature of food justice and abolition, wherein they put forth the concept of "fullness" as a critical way to think about

community health, environmental justice, and the absence of racism and stress while sharing meals.

Mara Henderson addresses a similar theme but in the exceptional context of a natural gas plant construction in Port of Tacoma, Washington, which is in the immediate proximity of an immigration detention center and Puyallup tribal resources. Her article introduces this fossil fuel infrastructure project through the community mobilizations on behalf of detained people at the Northwest Detention Center. Henderson scales out to analyze all of the interested parties in the natural gas project, and how the city government came to be a proponent of this development, in spite of regulatory concerns and citations from the local fire department. Henderson's analysis of the Port of Tacoma natural gas plant drives home the critical importance of racial capitalism to all analyses of environmental justice. Without understanding the profit motive and racist implications of private actors, municipal politics, or the geography of the plant location, this fossil fuel infrastructure project could be easily explained as yet another "dirty" investment, rather than part of a larger equation of the circulation of capital with the attendant devaluation of the lives and environments of people of color.

The other major theme addressed by multiple articles in this issue is the environmental justice implications of Bay Area housing and zoning, particularly on low-income elderly residents. Madeline Bacolor's thesis goes into detail about urban renewal development in San Francisco in the mid-twentieth century to analyze how elderly Filipino residents of Manilatown were affected by corporate interests in city politics, especially as related to the displacement of people living in residential hotels. She compares the case of the struggle to preserve the I-Hotel in Manilatown with the displacement of residents of another residential hotel in Yerba Buena, an

area of San Francisco populated by elderly white men who had also worked as day laborers in the 1930s and 40s. She finds that racism compounded with anti-regulatory politics to allow for the eviction of both groups of low-income elderly men living in residential hotels, but found that residents in Manilatown had less leverage to negotiate for the construction of new affordable housing units.

Anita Carragher applies innovative statistical methods to understand the demographic breakdown of neighborhoods exposed to hazardous sites in the Bay Area's Silicon Valley. Her analysis of census data from the 1970s-90s aligns with the later period of the San Francisco displacement and urban renewal projects, but she looks at the adjacent Santa Clara and Alameda counties centering around south bay cities like San Jose, Mountain View, and Palo Alto, as Santa Clara county has the highest number of Superfund sites of any county in the country. She tracks demographic markers over this period in their distance to hazardous waste sites to understand what convergence of residential zoning practices were linked to hazardous exposure. Carragher found that Black communities in the Bay Area were disproportionately burdened, as were communities with low-income elderly residents and in-county workers. She supplements this analysis with the history of "bedroom" cities and industrial areas in the Silicon Valley, which contributed to the incredible disparity in housing types and quality within these counties.

Finally, Christina Vagnoni's analysis of the application of the biocultural rights of Indigenous peoples and "legal personhood" of the environment points us toward emergent legal theories of stewardship as they relate to Indigenous sovereignty. Her research on Rights of Nature laws in Bolivia, Ecuador, New Zealand, and Columbia highlight the need for these laws to be customized to separate communities. She finds that Indigenous voices in Rights of Nature

laws are imperative to their success. Vagoni uses the two models to analyze literature and case studies and substantiate her claim that the “legal personhood” and rights of nature models have the possibility for mobilizing and fostering environmental and social change.

As student editors of the University of California Santa Cruz, we are scholars, residents, observers, and actors. Throughout the production process for this journal, particularly in the rainy season, we found ourselves reflecting on the compounding crisis in the Central Coast region. The atmospheric rivers that hit California this winter have continued to impact the region, and those bearing the brunt of the repeated flooding and rain events are those who were already impacted by the substandard housing market and homelessness before the rains started. The atmospheric rivers showed how much injustice is wrought by the increasing prices of housing, food, and other necessities in high cost areas of California like Santa Cruz, and how climate-induced weather events can exacerbate homelessness within a matter of hours.

Equally as importantly, national debates about the inclusion of critical race theory in high school and college curriculums proliferate. It is of dire importance that people in the U.S. identify the role of racism within structural violence in this country in the systems of capitalism, mass incarceration, and environmental justice. In turn, accurately identifying the role of racism enables us to critically engage with solutions that will slow the rate of capitalist expansion and can build up the true resilience of disenfranchised communities to weather the storms of the climate crisis. The Global Environmental Justice Observatory serves as an environmental justice academic space that promotes the observations and work of undergraduate students as they apply the theoretical and analytical tools of this field to the problems that they see in front of them.

Editing and working with these authors has been an honor, and we know that these authors as well as this journal will continue to promote the work of critical environmental justice.

In community,

The 2022 and 2023 Editorial Team of the Journal of Global Environmental Justice

Abby Cunniff and Flynn Lloyd