Environmental Justice in Seattle: Practices to Increase Access to Green Space in Historically Underinvested Neighborhoods Without Causing Gentrification and Displacement

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Environmental justice is a critical framework to engage with when working within urban communities, as all work done in the built environments directly impacts both people and the natural environment. New practices are still being established within urban planning, community development, and community organizing to support effective and meaningful environmental justice efforts. This research seeks to understand how urban communities can work towards environmental justice by increasing access to green space in historically underinvested communities, focusing on Seattle specifically, without catalyzing gentrification and resulting displacement. In order to answer this question, I made an annotated bibliography for 10 sources related to environmental gentrification and displacement prevention as well as conducting 7 expert elicitation interviews. The interviews were 45 minutes long, conducted over Zoom with professionals in the greater Seattle area who had expertise in park planning, community development, community organizing, and environmental justice. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then qualitatively analyzed through a grounded approach to thematic analysis by creating codes for statements related to environmental gentrification and displacement prevention as well as conducting 7 expert elicitation interviews. The interviews were 45 minutes long, conducted over Zoom with professionals in the greater Seattle area who had expertise in park planning, community development, community organizing, and environmental justice. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then qualitatively analyzed through a grounded approach to thematic analysis by creating codes for statements related to environmental gentrification and displacement prevention as well as conducting 7 expert elicitation interviews. The interviews were 45 minutes long, conducted over Zoom with professionals in the greater Seattle area who had expertise in park planning, community development, community organizing, and environmental justice. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then qualitatively analyzed through a grounded approach to thematic analysis by creating codes for statements related to environmental gentrification and displacement prevention as well as conducting 7 expert elicitation interviews. The interviews were 45 minutes long, conducted over Zoom with professionals in the greater Seattle area who had expertise in park planning, community development, community organizing, and environmental justice. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then qualitatively analyzed through a grounded approach to thematic analysis by creating codes for statements related to environmental gentrification and displacement prevention. The findings of this research are primarily meant for Lake City Collective (LCC), a community organization in North Seattle, by providing them with information that can support them in ensuring that their environmental justice work directly benefits the people they serve and does not have unintended consequences.


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In October 1962, China and India waged a war to contest the demarcation of their shared border, a culmination of years of escalating hostilities between the two governments. One month later, after overwhelming the Indian military, the Chinese declared a unilateral ceasefire. By contrast, seven years earlier at the 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, leaders from each country signed pledges for peace and mutual non-aggression. Speeches by Indonesian host and president Sukarno, Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and Chinese foreign minister Zhou Enlai imparted on attendees, most of whom represented newly decolonized countries, a sense of cautious optimism for their collective advancement. However, the "Bandung spirit" dissipated by 1965, as evidenced by the cancellation of the Second Asian-African Conference in Algeria. While most scholars focus on the Sino-Soviet Split and 1965 Algerian coup to explain the Bandung spirit’s rupture, I study the 1962 border war and failed mediation efforts by neutralist governments, like Indonesia, as evidence of the Asian-African alliance’s early...
fracturing. Drawing from primary sources such as English and Indonesian language newspapers, Indian, Chinese, and Indonesian government documents, and the writings of Indian and Indonesian politicians, I argue that Indonesians advocated for a stricter definition, relative to Nehru, of anti-imperialism tinged with Asian nationalism. Indonesian leaders’ reluctance to defend Nehru, their partner at Bandung, demonstrate that the Sino-Indian War exposed ideological differences between India and Indonesia, thus facilitating the Bandung Spirit’s demise. By framing the war with the Bandung Conference, I explore how governments fall short of their lofty visions of anti-imperialism and perpetuate the nationalistic hierarchies they originally eschew.

The Effect of Juche Ideology on North Korean Nuclear Weapons Development
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Mentor: Christopher Jones, Jackson School of International Studies

Despite the significance of North Korea’s state ideology of Juche (translated as “self-reliance”) on all aspects of life and policy in the country, scholars have generally neglected to cite ideology as a cause for nuclear weapons development. In this research, I explore how Juche affects nuclear weapons development through a text analysis of close to 10,000 pages of primary documents produced by North Korean leaders from 1980 to 2007, utilizing keywords related to Juche and nuclear weapons to identify relevant texts. In this study, I find that the Juche ideology is the primary way in which North Korea justifies its nuclear weapons development up to 2007. In particular, North Korea justifies its nuclear weapons through Juche in four ways through the Juche core pillars of political independence (jaju), economic self-reliance (jarij), loyalty to the leader, and self-reliance in defense (jaw). I also find that the relationship between Juche and nuclear development has evolved over the years (from theoretical foundations in the 1980s to justification of nuclear weaponry in the 2000s). This study has important practical implications as it shows that an important reason North Korea elected to pursue nuclear weapons development is because it feels that doing so is the only way to uphold the core values of the Juche ideology and preserve its independence. It also shows that a central mission of Juche and North Korean nuclear weapons is ensuring that the Kim dynasty continues to rule and to maintain their hereditary succession. This means that the North Korean nuclear logic is significantly different from other countries like China, Israel, Pakistan, and India where the operative factor is primarily the “national interest.” As previous denuclearization negotiations have mostly neglected this aspect, future negotiations may benefit from keeping this unique characteristic of North Korean nuclear weapons development in mind.

Both Ways: A Climate Change Response Comparison of BP and Shell
Raeny Michal Nichols, Junior, Political Science
Mentor: Aseem Prakash, Political Science

This presentation discusses the climate change responses from two of the dominant international oil companies, BP and Shell. This project will start by comparing explicit corporate responses to climate change, including the respective companies’ mitigation and adaptation strategies. Both firms have included dedications to net-zero emissions in the future and adherence to international climate policy stipulations. My presentation will further discuss BP and Shell’s involvement in anthropogenic climate catastrophes, and compare these findings to the corporate-issued responses to climate change. Research will include corporate-issued memos, historical analysis of environmental responses, and governmental regulations of the oil and gas industry. This research aims to inform about the true reactions and responses towards climate change taken by two of the dominant oil and gas firms. Additionally, the research will prove the financial and social stability and dominance in which Shell and BP find immunity from climate issues. “Big Oil” has been one of the most violent drivers of anthropogenic climate change, and I expect my research to demonstrate the incredible impact of such, while demonstrating the rapid growth and profits that the oil and gas industry is experiencing during this climate crisis.

Resource Management During Scarcity: A Case Study of Water Policy Implications in California Agriculture
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Mentor: Yen-Chu Weng, Program on the Environment

This research project seeks to understand resource management policy and its effectiveness in practice, especially as climate change exacerbates pre-existing scarcities. As a case study, this project examines two policies that attempt to manage water use in California—the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (2014) and the Central Valley Water Project Improvement Act (1992). The former was chosen because it focuses on the regulation of groundwater, a resource that had yet to be overseen in California, and the latter was selected as it is one of the most recent pieces of notable legislation that sought to improve the sustainable management of surface water. By considering how effective the policies have been in regulating two important sources, it can provide insight into the current and prospective water situation in California. This project measures the effectiveness of these acts through the agricultural sector, given that the industry uses approximately 80% of the state’s water supply in a given year. Therefore, by measuring the growth of water intensive crops in the years following the passage of said legislation, we can better understand whether these acts were successful in curbing-
ing exorbitant water use. To measure growth, I record the acres harvested of almonds, walnuts, avocados, and wheat (as a control); I then translate this data into growth rate for each year and record the unit price for further understanding. After conducting the aforementioned methodology, this project finds that the Central Valley Water Project Improvement Act is significantly more effective in limiting the growth of thirsty crops, whereas the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act was found to have little impact.

The Payment of Justice: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Blazina vs. Washington State as an LFO Reform

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Mentor: Ann Frost, Law Societies and Justice, Sociology

Monetary sanctions and legal financial obligations (LFOs) are debts related to criminal convictions and consist of the fines, fees, and restitution imposed by the court as part of a criminal sentence. Over time they have become a staple within the U.S. criminal legal system. Prior research has shown these sanctions disproportionately impact impoverished communities and sweep thousands of citizens into a cycle of debt and incarceration, inhibiting social mobility and the establishment of generational wealth. Fortunately, in recent years, some reforms have been enacted and implemented to curtail the imposition of LFOs on offenders without the financial ability to pay these sanctions in full instantly. In the 2011 ruling Blazina v. Washington State, the Washington State Supreme Court mandated the creation of an “individualized inquiry” process in which judges had to confirm with defendants if they were financially stable to pay certain LFO payments. In this paper, I ask the question of whether the inquiry process has actively worked in decreasing the imposition of LFOs as a means to assess Blazina’s effectiveness in the last decade. To study this, I drew on previous literature about the enforcement of LFOs in recent decades, statistically analyzed LFO revenue reports from Washington State counties in recent years, and qualitatively analyzed recorded interviews with superior court judges to receive their perspective on the enforcement of Blazina and any reforms they believed were necessary. From this data collection, I found that despite the individualized inquiry’s attempt to curtail the imposition of LFOs on impoverished individuals, further reforms and legislation is needed to mandate a more holistic system not solely reliable on a defendant’s memory. The COVID-19 pandemic has financially affected thousands of Americans, increasing the likelihood of many getting swept up into this cycle making it necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of these reforms.

Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate: Inter-group Racism between Black Americans and East Asians

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When discussing racial tensions in the United States, the focus is usually on the relations between blacks and whites, and Asian perspectives are not included in racial discussions. This puts Asian Americans in a dilemma because both racial groups avoid identifying with them. I made two versions of the survey questionnaire. The English version was made by Google form and spread in the US. The target sample population are international students, immigrants, and Asian-born American. The Chinese version was made by Tencent form and spread in China. The target sample population is people who have never come to the US. The Tencent form collected the controlled sample data which are people who came to the US for zero years, and the Google form collected the dependent sample data which are people who stay in the US for different years. While doing the survey, I also conducted interviews. There are two versions of the interview questions. One is for international students and immigrants, and another is for American-born Asians. By visualizing on PowerBI, the percentage of change in the Anti-Asian hate crime rate in 2020, we can find that the largest growth was in New York which increase 833%. Only Washington DC has decreased in percentage which is -83% (Raw data from Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism). The relation between “time spent in the US” and “American/Asian Americans” attitude toward Black Americans seems a little complex. When Asians first came to the US, they generally hold fears of unknown towards Black Americans, but as the time they stays in the US passed, they feel better than before with Black Americans. Asians also suffered more discrimination than they projected because the percentage of people who answered yes to the questions “Asians are receiving discrimination” to have spent time in the United States is higher than the percentage who have never been to the United States. Asians are also not as indifferent to racial equality as other races are rumored to be. The percentage of Asians who support BLM is even much higher than that of whites and slightly higher than that of Latinos. It’s just that Asians tend to express their thoughts in a relatively calm manner such as showing solidarity on social media and donating.

China Virus, Chinese Flu, and Kung Flu: The Divisive Words Behind Anti-Asian Scapegoating During the Coronavirus Pandemic

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Mentor: Ann Frost, Law Societies and Justice, Sociology

The stress and uncertainty posed by infectious disease outbreaks generates intergroup social conflict. In communities with disparate distributions of power, one population
may blame another for spreading the disease. This social scapegoating subsequently exacerbates existing economic inequalities, medical discrimination, and harmful stereotypes. Amidst power struggles, political elites can mobilize scapegoating as a tool to unify their support base around a common enemy. In the United States, Asian Americans frequently fell victim to epidemic scapegoating, from outbreaks of smallpox in the nineteenth century to the more recent SARS outbreak of the twenty-first century. During these previous health emergencies, Asian Americans became associated with disease and cultural backwardness. The negative perceptions of Asian Americans then translated into restrictive immigration and citizenship policies. The Coronavirus Pandemic renewed anti-Asian American xenophobia. In 2020 alone, reported hate crimes against Asian Americans increased 150 percent. Racist and Sinophobic language proliferated the internet and media. President Donald Trump and other prominent politicians began utilizing location-based labels for the coronavirus, such as China Virus, Chinese Flu, and Kung Flu. This research assesses whether these location-based labels perpetuates anti-Asian xenophobia. To do so, this research analyzes the transcripts of 163 public appearances made by Donald Trump in 2020. I examined the frequency and context of Trump’s location-based terms throughout the year and compared this with the percentage of hate crimes considered anti-Asian. The data suggests that Trump’s utilization of location-based terms correlated with a rise in anti-Asian hate crimes in the early months of the pandemic. Additionally, the data shows support for the fact that the upcoming election motivated Trump’s usage of these location-based terms. By illuminating the mechanisms through which the President incited anti-Asian xenophobia during the coronavirus pandemic, this research provides insight into how to prevent social scapegoating in future epidemics.