



The relationship between **CAPITALISM & CLIMATE CHANGE**



WHAT'S THEIR RELATIONSHIP?

Climate change is one of capitalism's most negative outcomes. The rapid growth of industrialization resulted in an increased number of factories, burning fossil fuels for operation/profit. Severe pollution and constant carbon emissions happen while carbon dioxide accumulates in the air and causes the greenhouse effect. As the temperature rises annually, it impacts many living creatures significantly. "Climate scientists believe that anything beyond a 2-degree centigrade increase will lead to dangerous climate change which can lead to food shortages, desertification, increased incidences of disease, coastal flooding, and erratic climate disturbances" (Robbins, 2018). believe that anything beyond a 2-degree centigrade increase will lead to dangerous climate change which can lead to food shortages, desertification, increased incidences of disease, coastal flooding, and erratic climate disturbances" (Robbins, 2018).

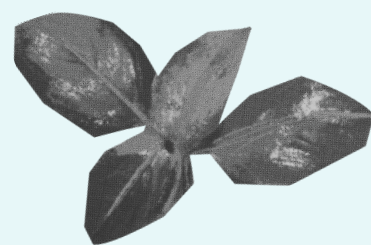
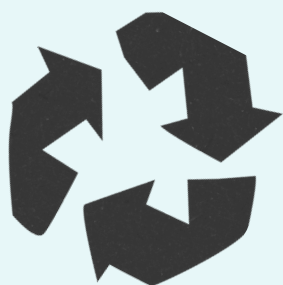


THESE CHALLENGES THREATEN HUMAN LIVES...

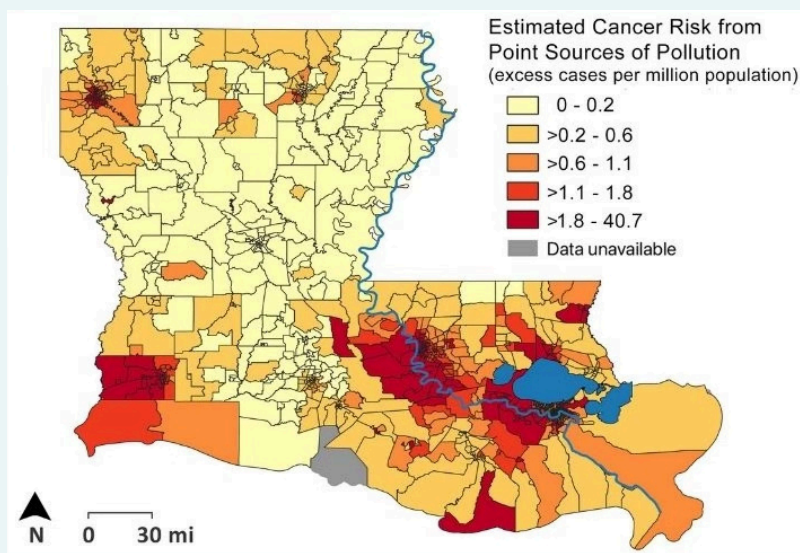
The film "Sun Comes Up" describes an example of individuals who struggled with the rising sea level. The Carteret Islanders (residents of an island on the South Pacific Ocean) once lived with the ocean peacefully. However, it took their homeland and threatened survival over time; the disappearances of lands. People were forced to relocate to a nearby region called Bougainville. However, their migration wasn't welcomed by residents in Bougainville. Out of many visits to cities in Bougainville, only one accepted their relocation. Many disagreements and life-threats happened along with their journey but the Carteret people couldn't stop as their food shortage worsened back in the island. In addition, the narrators continuously mentioned how their government was ignorant of the first environmental refugees. However, ignorance from politicians doesn't end locally, it happens internationally.

POLITICS IN CAPITALISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Regional discrimination has built up from history during the era of slavery and segregation. As many of these towns are descended from emancipated Black businesses that are unincorporated, the majority-white parish governments make zoning decisions rather than local community leaders (McCoy, 2021). Due to the lack of local control, a federal policy was made to protect against future pollution; which has failed. According to Keehan (2018), the Clean Air Act (CAA) was established by the government in 1970 to regulate air pollution caused by various emissions from industries and address public health impacts. However, it wasn't successful due to multiple reasons. First of all, the policy was heavily influenced by industrial organizations. Then, representatives of the state opposed the authority of the CAA. Furthermore, the denial of air pollution's effect on public health limited the effectiveness of the act.



Today in Louisiana, United States, residents are struggling with the “Cancer Alley”, located along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Hundreds of petrochemical factories on the banks of the alley significantly affect the residents’ lifestyle.



As the issue continues, “[...] Louisiana has the highest concentration of petrochemical facilities in the Western Hemisphere, and in 2018 had the sixth-highest cancer mortality rate in the United States” (Castellón, 2021). The toxic pollutants from industries harm the environment and the quality of basic resources of residents; the water, land, and air for survival become unconsumable for people. In addition, Singer (2011) said people who live within one mile of chemical industries develop lung cancer 4.5 times greater than others. As the chemicals in the region are identified as bringing severe health issues, Mulvaney (2024) added that the high percentage of miscarriages and respiratory problems are other outcomes of the Cancer Alley.



Furthermore, as the majority of the residents are minority groups in America, the situation becomes more controversial. “[...] petrochemical industries would not have arrived or begun operating as they have if they had not first identified areas where the local population was predominately Native American and African American” (Pezzullo, 2003). The discrimination against the residents is an ongoing environmental injustice that has lingered for decades. According to Castellón (2021), this is categorized as environmental racism, which is a system in which people of color have to deal with the risks and negative consequences of environmental regulations that would otherwise benefit the entire community. To be more specific, regional discrimination has built up from history during the era of slavery and segregation. As many of these towns are descended from emancipated Black businesses that are unincorporated, the majority-white parish governments make zoning decisions rather than local community leaders (McCoy, 2021). Due to the lack of local control, a federal policy was made to protect against future pollution; which has failed.

SOLUTIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

It's time to take action!

STRUCTURAL INITIATIVES



REVISED REGULATIONS

- Today, many regulations are based on the corporation's interest over the needs of affected residents.
- Political representatives ought to take action to hear the local and minority communities.
- According to Rosene (2023), the construction of a solution needs to involve pathways for monitoring the enforcement of polluting corporations, with transparency and accountability.



THE GREEN NEW DEAL

- The Guardian (2019) stated that The Green New Deal is a program to decarbonize the world and create an economy that discourages growing climate change.
- Also known as the Green Industrial Revolution, the program promotes green employment and lessens the usage of fossil fuels.

GREEN EMPLOYMENT

“Just transition” is listening to the ones who get direct impacts from changes within the deal. For instance, practicing decarbonization means people who work with Fossil Fuels would lose their jobs due to the policy. To prevent unexpected unemployment, making sure that they understand the situation of climate change and offering new eco-friendly job opportunities are critical.

INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES



ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

- To solve the environmental crisis, understanding the complications of climate change is necessary. In the speech by Thunberg (2018), she stated that the rising rate of climate change was caused by people's ignorance of the effects of their daily consumption on the environment. The unawareness of the outcomes of daily behaviors needs to be corrected through effective communication.
- Since raising awareness plays a huge role in the spread of knowledge, new and more effective approaches may be taken into consideration. “Combining the categories of nature and culture tourism, the aim of such tours is to raise awareness and to help mobilize further action for environmental justice [...] (Pezzullo, 2003). Although promoting advertisements in the media market would help in the quick spread of knowledge, people's ability to understand cannot be guaranteed. For this problem, visiting the area and realizing the seriousness will help people understand the threats of climate change effectively.
- After seeing the destruction of the environment and the residents, practicing to lessen the ecological footprint of individuals will help to prevent further environmental degradation. As many organizations and campaigns are promoting practicing eco-friendly consumption, following that leadership can be an option. For example, utilizing renewable energy and cheaper public transportation can reduce carbon emissions globally. Small, simple steps of citizens can bring meaningful results to the Earth.



REDUCE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

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