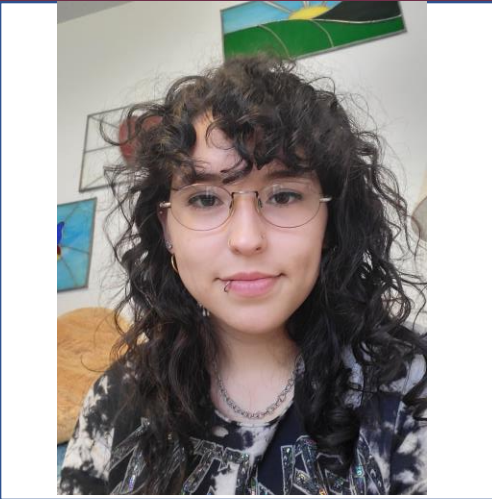


The Hazardous Climate of Environmental Racism

Brittney Cuevas
Aza Davis-Picou
Kaleb Nichols



Brittney Cuevas
Major: Economics
Minor: Sociology
4th year
Student/Concurrent
MSE Student
Economics Club
President



Kaleb Nichols
Major: Liberal
Studies
Minor: Double
minor
2nd Year
Student



Aza Davis-Picou
Major: Human
Development & Family
Studies
Senior

NCORE/ISCORE Scholars

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin this event with a land acknowledgment. Iowa State University is located on the ancestral lands and territory of the Baxoje (bah-kho-dzhe), or Ioway Nation. The United States obtained the land from the Meskwaki and Sauk nations in the Treaty of 1842. We wish to recognize our obligations to this land and to the people who took care of it, as well as to the 17,000 Native people who live in Iowa today.

NCORE-ISCORE Mission

The NCORE-ISCORE Project supports Iowa State University's diversity efforts. The project provides positive interactions and dialogue regarding race, ethnicity, and multicultural relations through local and national initiatives including participation in two conferences: NCORE (National Conference on Race & Ethnicity) and ISCORE (Iowa State Conference on Race & Ethnicity).

Research Statement: We seek to highlight water conditions amongst Black Communities and Indigenous communities in the United States. Water conditions include water quality, management, infrastructure, and accessibility.

Agenda

- Key Terms
- Historical Data and Background on Black Communities
- Insight on Water Issues in Black Communities & Responses to Water Pollution
- Indigenous Communities and The Environment
- Impacts on Community Capitals
- Water Issues and their Impacts
- Discussion
- What to do?

Activity: Key Terms

Important terms to remember when thinking of Environmental Racism.

Water Quality: Water quality refers to the physical, chemical, biological and taste-related properties of water.

Water Impairment: When water is contaminated by pollutants

Environmental Racism: Racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the presence of life-threatening poisons and pollutants for communities of color.

Environmental Justice:

Environmental Justice: The fair treatment/involvement of all people regardless of race, color, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations.

Cumulative Impact:

Cumulative Impact: Combination of different pollution exposures and effects, public health stressors, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities that are affecting a community.



**ACCESS TO
SAFE WATER
IS A HUMAN
RIGHT**

Historical Data and Background On Black Communities

Historical Black Americans have been disproportionately impacted by severe environmental issues, pertaining to water pollution, air pollution, and chemical waste

“The economic power, social policies, and political influences differ by place, race, and income as a result of historical disinvestment, discriminatory practices and policies over time, structural racism, higher pollution burdens, and inadequate access to healthcare resources.” – Princeton.edu

Data: “Drinking water systems that constantly violated the law for years were 40 percent more likely to occur in places with higher percentages of residents who were people of color, according to EPA data from 2016-2019 analyzed in the report.” –NRDC.org

Why does Water Pollution Happen in Black Communities?

Further Insight on Water Issues in Black Communities

Environmental Racism can be seen within the Black community through many modern-day examples

Jackson, Mississippi. (Water Pollution)

- The water crisis in Jackson has left the city without clean, usable water
- 24.5% of residents live below the national poverty line
- 83% of Jackson's population is Black
- Political leadership within the city has not taken charge to the situation

Flint, Michigan. (Water Pollution)

- Original problem occurred in 2013.
- City still has not recovered, no trust in EPA or Flint city government.
- Since July 2016, the city of Flint's water system has tested below action levels of the federal Lead and Copper Rule (LCR)- (Michigan.gov)
- Water Pollution has been a reoccurring environmental issue that hurts the Black community
- Numerous attempts at protesting unsafe water and implementing new policies



Further problems: Health concerns, prioritizing importance of education, money, and lifestyle, broken trust

Responses to Water Pollution

- Protests
- Community efforts often outweigh assistance from governmental agencies or organizations

Important to understand and value the strength of Black Communities.



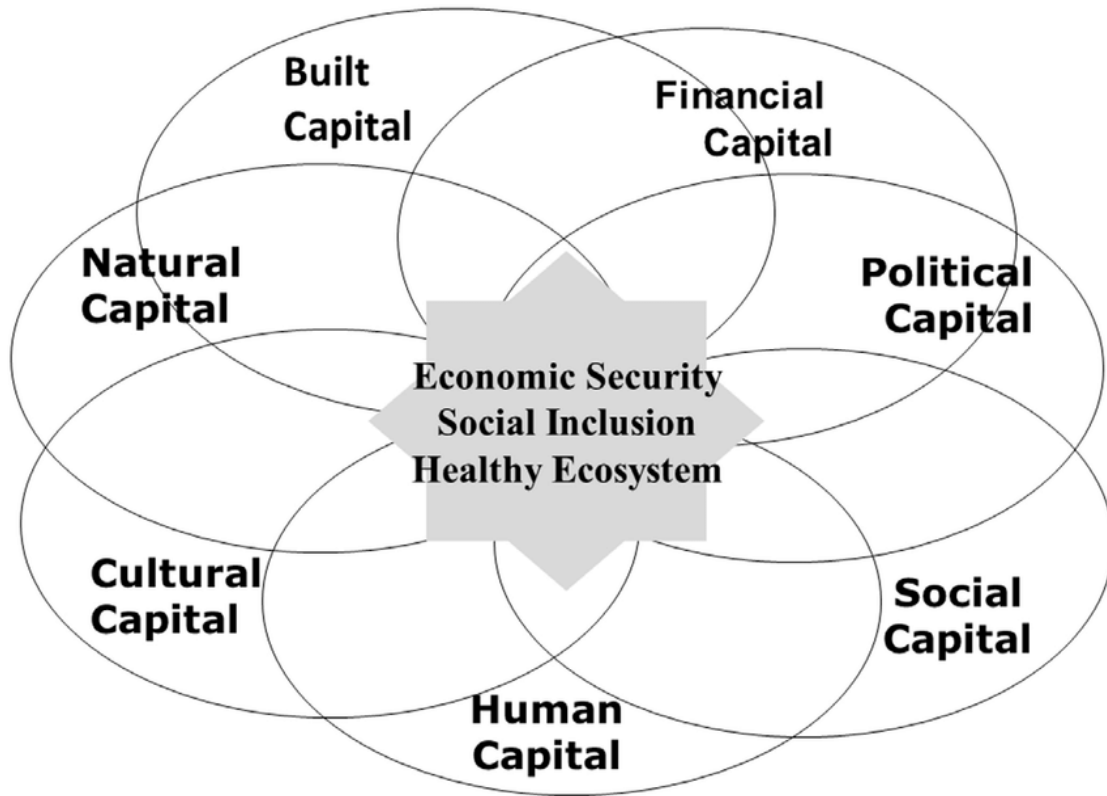


Indigenous Communities and the Environment

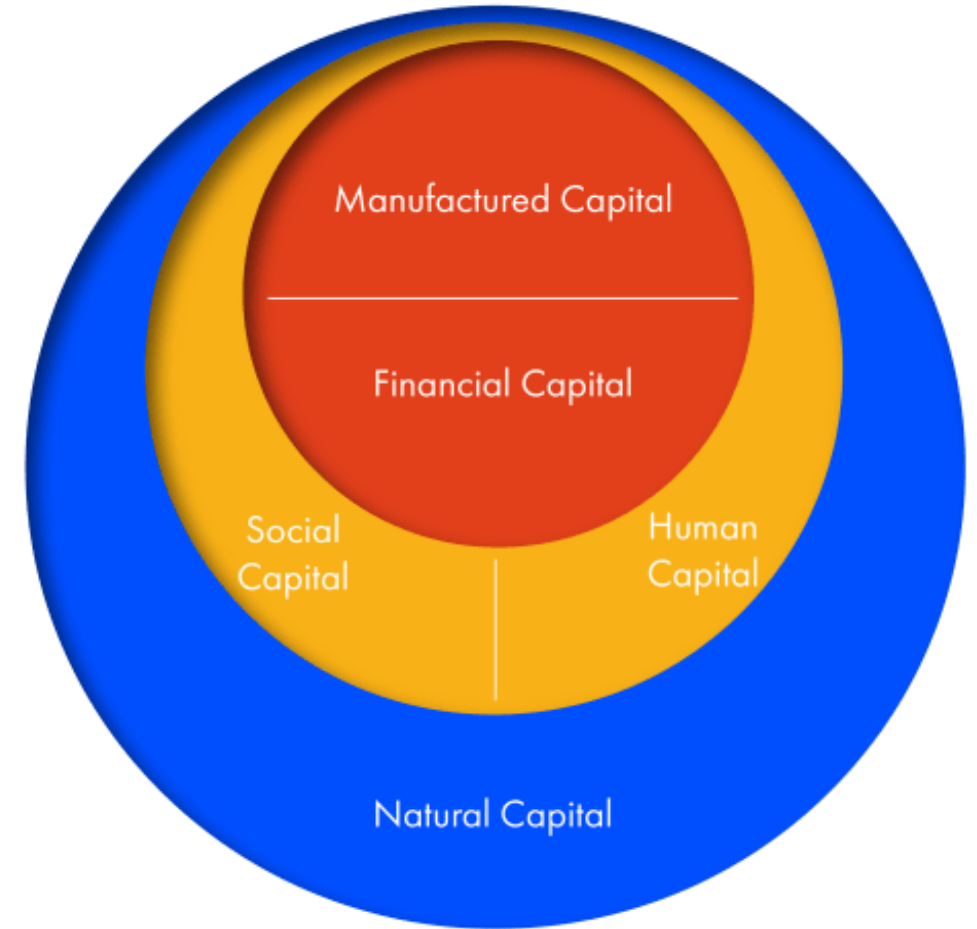
- United Nations: "Indigenous Peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live."
- We're fighting for soil, land, food, trees, water, birds. We're fighting for life." - Gregorio Mirabal (Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations at the Amazon Basin)
- Communities vs Corporations
 - Indigenous Communities vs Big Oil & Gas
 - Indigenous Communities vs Local & Federal Gov.



Impacts on Community Capitals



Source: *Community Capitals Framework & Sustainable Communities*,
Cornelia Butler Flora



Source: *Capitalism As If The World Matters*,
Jonathon Porritt

Water Issues and their Impacts

- Environmental Injustices → Economic Disadvantages → Intergenerational Effects
- Health Concerns: safe drinking water and basic sanitation

REFLECT

Do you drink the tap water in your home? Do your children?

How often do you shower? How long does it take you to do so?

Could you allocate \$200-\$500 per month for water expenses? How would such an expenditure effect your current lifestyle? Daily routine?

Let's Talk: Discussion

1. What are some injustices that you know of regarding either Indigenous or Black communities? What impact do you think those have had over time or will have in the future?
2. Do you believe that there is a way to remedy the environmental injustices faced by both groups? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe value can be added to the environmental justice movement by centering Indigenous and Black peoples' voices and experience/ knowledge? Why or why not? Do you think that'll ever happen?
4. Taking into account the things you have learned here today and your own personal knowledge, do you think the government would have the same response for predominately White communities facing water quality issues? Why or why not?



What to Do?

- **Invest in environmental justice efforts**
 - Research
 - Local Organizations
 - **Ex.** The Iowa League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) climate and environmental justice committee of Iowa, Iowa environmental council, and Great Plains Action Society
 - Policy makers



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Thank you!

Brittney Cuevas: bcuevas@iastate.edu

Kaleb Nichols: kjn1212@iastate.edu





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