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THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FRAME

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When the Flint, Michigan, water crisis broke into the national news, and stories appeared about low-income African American children being exposed to unusually high levels of lead, the term *environmental justice* (EJ) was already somewhat familiar to the general public. But in the later part of the 20th century, the concept was still being invented. EJ emerged from a number of different directions, as a way of "framing" (or naming in a new way) a pattern of injustices that disproportionately exposed minority and low-income communities to toxic hazards. Multiple social actors, including social movement activists and scholars, have shaped its evolution. In this chapter, I'll begin by revisiting an EJ case from my research that dates back to the time when the EJ "frame" was starting to spread through local and national networks (Čapek, 1993). The Carver Terrace case reveals some of those early dynamics and provides an interesting comparison and contrast with present-day EJ activism. I'll also discuss how I was woken up to the issue of EJ, and how it shaped my research. Then, I'll focus on "framing" theory as a useful analytical tool, and I'll reflect on how the EJ frame has evolved over time. Throughout, I'll draw selectively on the broad and rich field of EJ scholarship, which investigates not only where harm has been done but also how a socially and ecologically just society can be envisioned (see Agyeman, Schlosberg, Craven, & Matthews, 2016). But first, let's imagine a community named Carver Terrace, a place that no longer exists, whose residents learned about EJ through a persistent struggle to get justice.

CARVER TERRACE

Picture this: In Texarkana, Texas, a thriving African American neighborhood called Carver Terrace is flourishing in the 1960s. Proud homeowners inhabit the neighborhood, jobs are plentiful, strong social networks connect neighbors, and the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church is an active place. Residents compete to have the best lawns; children play safely outside; and gardens yield flowers, fruit, and vegetables. The neighborhood seems close to ideal. Fast forward to the early 1990s, and the neighborhood sits empty, surrounded by a chain link fence with posted "NO TRESPASSING" signs. The houses and church are boarded up, and weeds are growing in the once well-manicured yards. You'll notice the unnatural silence. There are no people—no children playing outside, no neighbors calling to each other. By 1993, the houses and church are completely gone, and only the concrete pads, driveways, and streets are still in place. Some gardens are still blooming—the last "residents" to give up on the place. How could a place so promising disappear?

Carver Terrace was built in the 1960s by a Louisiana-based developer who intentionally designed an affordable community for prospective African American homebuyers. Given the realities of racially segregated space in the South (and elsewhere), a development like this was highly desirable. As a resident told me, "It was a drawing card to us, because there had not been any houses of this quality available to us." Those who moved in had a variety of stories—

PHOTO 2.1: Patsy Oliver, Camille Brown, and Bettye Davis.
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some were middle-class professionals; others were working-class residents who had never owned their own home. All were thrilled at the opportunity offered by Carver Terrace. The houses were eagerly bought up, and for many years, the neighborhood appeared to thrive.

CARVER TERRACE ON CONTAMINATED LAND

But there was a catch. Although it didn't seem too significant when people bought their houses, the land for Carver Terrace was part of a former industrial site that the city had rezoned "residential." Starting in 1910, a number of industries operated there, using creosote to coat wood. The most recent was Koppers, Inc., beginning in the 1940s. When Koppers ceased operations in Texarkana, they left behind buried tanks and residues of creosote. Some local residents knew about the former creosoting operation, but when they expressed concerns, they were reassured by the city that it would be safe to live there. So, they anchored their lives to this place and made it flourish.

Decades went by. One day in 1984, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employees in "moon suits" showed up in the neighborhood, testing the soil. This is how residents found out that there was suspected contamination under and around their homes. In 1979, Congress had asked the 50 largest chemical companies in the United States to report hazardous waste sites (a reminder about the importance of passing good laws!). Koppers reported hazardous chemicals, including creosote. Coal tar creosote, used as a wood preservative, has been declared a probable human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR, 2002). Over the years, Carver Terrace residents had noticed an unusual number of illnesses in the neighborhood, from rashes to a variety of cancers, and a surprising number of miscarriages and even deaths. But without good information, it was easy to normalize and explain away such incidents. Now, as news of the testing for toxic chemicals spread through the neighborhood, the health problems and the odd materials dug up during landscaping took on a new meaning.

As residents became more aware of the threat of toxic chemicals, their relationships to their land and houses began to change. Distrust of local and federal agencies rose. While it is possible that in the 1960s less was known about the carcinogenic nature of certain chemicals, the rezoning of an industrial site like this one as "residential" was at best careless; at worst, it was negligent. It is also highly likely that a lower standard of scrutiny and safety was applied to land use for an African American and less affluent neighborhood. Residents felt deeply betrayed. The EPA declared Carver Terrace a Superfund site in 1984 (the federal Superfund was created to fund cleanups of contaminated sites) and placed it on the National Priority List. The next year, EPA and Koppers worked on a remedial plan, and Koppers did some soil removal and sod replacement in some people's yards. But the process moved slowly, and little information was shared with residents. They anxiously wondered what would become of their neighborhood, and of their lives.

Chemical contamination is sneaky, pernicious, and unsettling. It is often invisible, and its boundaries are unclear, which makes it difficult to assess and

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to address (for example, it is challenging to prove in a medical or legal sense). It makes its way into physical structures, land, water, and air, and into human bodies, planting seeds of doubt and fear. Just as devastatingly, residents discover that their property has suddenly lost its value when word of the contamination gets out. They are unable to sell their homes, which are typically their largest financial investment. They find themselves literally trapped in a place that is making them sick. Children, whose bodies are more vulnerable to contaminants, are at even greater risk. The almost unimaginable stress of such a situation is well documented (Edelstein, 2018).

In response, in 1985 approximately 60 Carver Terrace residents filed a lawsuit against Koppers for damages. Lawyers for the corporation played up genetic factors among African Americans to explain away the residents' illnesses and to exonerate the corporation. The trial was a major disappointment, and many residents became discouraged. But others became even more determined to fight for their right to live in a safe place. The EPA eventually proposed a cleanup technique called soil washing/filtering, claiming that contamination levels were not high enough for a buyout and relocation. But EJ scholars and grassroots groups charged that federal health studies were based on faulty designs. Carver Terrace residents began to try out some new strategies to get justice.

To understand this shift, let's "zoom out" and look at the bigger picture. Texarkana already had an environmental group, Friends United for a Safe Environment (FUSE). Predominantly white, and active in some form since the 1970s, FUSE had experience with fighting environmental problems. One of its members, Don Preston, spoke with several acquaintances in Carver Terrace about their situation, and attended an EPA meeting:

> I was absolutely appalled by the things I heard, the things that were happening to the people who lived out there. So when I told [FUSE] member Jim [Presley] about these things, I said, "We're environmentalists, here is the biggest cause in this town. We've got people with obviously catastrophic health complications as a result of the homes they're living in, and they're being stonewalled by the people who are supposed to protect them." We decided to go out and see what the people in Carver Terrace wanted.

Preston was a "conscience constituent," someone who supports a social change movement for ethical reasons, without directly benefiting (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). He knew schoolteacher Frances Shears in Carver Terrace, and they arranged a meeting in her living room. It was a small group conversation at first. Some residents were eager to meet, while others questioned the motivation of "these white men." Some had become discouraged and didn't show up at all. Several ministers in Carver Terrace were already brainstorming about how to move forward and were looking for the best strategy. Eventually the conversation grew into an extraordinarily effective, respectful collaboration between FUSE and what became the Carver Terrace Community Action Group (CTCAG). Patsy Oliver, who became one of the most outspoken (and globally oriented) CTCAG activists, told me, "It was really an inspiration to me to be part of FUSE because they were bi-state, bi-racial—and this was a first for Texarkana, you know."

Zooming out even further, the organizers in CTCAG and FUSE would benefit enormously from the support of regional and nationally networked EJ

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groups, some of which were beginning to use the term *environmental racism.* With their help, and through their own dedication and persistence, Carver Terrace residents eventually won a federal buyout and relocation, over the EPA's objections. I'll return to their story later, but first, I'll comment on my personal and scholarly connection to Carver Terrace. You'll also learn about an emerging network of EJ organizations that offered advice and assistance to places like Carver Terrace.

PERSONAL INTERSECTIONS AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

You might wonder how I came to be involved with this story as a sociologist, since I didn't live in Carver Terrace myself. In graduate school I studied movements for social justice, especially affordable housing, tenants' rights, and inclusive urban design. When I moved to Arkansas to take a position as an assistant professor at Hendrix College, I soon found out about some very disturbing environmental problems in the state, and my research turned in that direction. One site that taught me important lessons was Jacksonville, Arkansas, where Agent Orange had been produced for the Vietnam War, and where the highly toxic chemical dioxin was extracted and stored in barrels near the Jacksonville Air Force Base (Čapek, 1992). There were 29,000 leaking barrels of one of the most toxic substances created by human beings located near residential neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive waterways, and enormous disagreements in the community about what to do. The "city fathers" (the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce) wanted to hush it up, fearing damage to the business climate. Residents experiencing health issues, especially women with children, wanted the dioxin removed. Others (including some of their spouses) didn't want to publicize the problem, fearing a loss of property values or even their jobs.

This complicated situation woke me up to the difficult realities of toxic environments. I started interviewing grassroots environmental leaders in Arkansas (grassroots refers to organizations that originate locally, rather than having a national top-down structure). I also tried to learn more about dioxin. It wasn't easy—the EPA first assessed the dangers of dioxin to human health in 1984 but withdrew its document under pressure from the chemical industry. Astoundingly, it would take more than 20 years to reissue a public reassessment declaring dioxin to be a human carcinogen with other significant health effects. This lack of access to crucial health information taught me about the often politicized nature of federal scientific research. I became involved in an environmental organization, the Environmental Congress of Arkansas (ECA), and encountered some key national anti-toxics organizations that supported Jacksonville citizens who wanted the dioxin safely removed. I learned about the challenge of underfunded, reluctant, corporate-influenced federal agencies like the EPA, and how difficult it was for people without any political power to get something done about their situation. As an environmentalist and a sociologist, I could see that *justice* needed to be paired with the word *environment*, and that *environment* needed to include the people who inhabit it.

My first trip to Carver Terrace (located about three hours away) was for a national conference on environmental justice in 1989. A FUSE member and an

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ECA member had attended an inspiring meeting and demonstration in Wichita, Kansas, that brought together grassroots environmental leaders from many states. They suggested Texarkana as the next site. The Texarkana EJ conference brought in national leaders from the anti-toxics movement, including Lois Gibbs, a white working-class mother who had organized support to win the first federal buyout of a contaminated community in Love Canal, New York. She went on to become director of the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes (CCHW, later renamed the Center for Health, Environment & Justice), a resource base created to help other contaminated communities with scientific information and action strategies.

In addition to talks by national anti-toxic leaders and environmentalists, the program included a "citizen's public hearing," a rally with speeches by experienced activists from around the country, informal strategizing sessions, and a culminating march through Carver Terrace demanding a federal buyout. Lois Gibbs and other speakers strongly emphasized that legal strategies could go only so far and that, based on experience of grassroots anti-toxics groups around the country, political organizing and direct action tactics were more effective. She advocated putting a "face" on the problem—identifying specific politicians and others who were accountable. Environmental writers who attended publicized the story nationally, and Jim Presley of FUSE wrote an article for the *Texas Observer* titled "Toxicana, U.S.A." As in Jacksonville, the "city fathers" were not happy.

The conference provides an early snapshot of this segment of the EJ movement, and how it envisioned (framed) environmental justice. Presentations focused on toxic chemicals, critiques of corporate capitalism, ineffective state and federal agencies, the need for more democracy, and building grassroots coalitions to challenge unequal treatment. Most of the speakers were white, including Larry and Shelia Wilson from the Highlander Center, an organization that had crossed racial lines for social justice since the 1930s, cultivating social change activists for the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, and more (Marguerite Casey Foundation, 2015). Pat Bryant, of the Gulf Coast Tenants' Association and one of the few African American environmental leaders at the conference, underscored the emerging EJ movement's significance:

> I'm looking here at a whole community of refugees—soon to be refugees from your own community! I live in New Orleans where there are many refugees from Central America who have been on the wrong end of the foreign and military policy of the United States government, and now I'm looking at the prospect that by the year 2000 all across this country, people who *live* and *die* to make this country will be refugees in their own communities. That is a very shocking, but real, understanding of what is happening. The numbers are so staggering, brothers and sisters, that you undoubtedly are part of *the* movement of the '90s. (Presley, 1989, 9)

I came to Carver Terrace to learn, and to express solidarity through my ECA involvement. Like Don Preston, I was a conscience constituent (but with much less knowledge and experience). Later that year, I represented the ECA at a Stop Toxic Pollution (STP) workshop at the Highlander Center and heard more firsthand testimony from residents around the country who had become

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anti-toxics organizers. Their stories had similar ingredients: toxic sites leading to suffering through illness and devalued homes and land; residents who weren't high on the social hierarchy of power, whether they were white or people of color; local, regional, and federal authorities who were unresponsive or outright denied the problem; stigmatizing of (and sometimes violent threats against) residents for "stirring up trouble"; and overall a strong sense of injustice.

The next year, the ECA helped organize a Rally for the Environment at the state capitol in Little Rock to protest the state's decision to burn the dioxin in Jacksonville. National organizations and grassroots activists from around the country turned up, since the decision was seen as setting a terrible precedent (in effect, "a toxic landfill in the sky"). From CTCAG and FUSE, I heard the latest updates about Carver Terrace. The more I learned, the more I felt the urgency and importance of this unfolding story. Soon after that, I accepted an invitation from CTCAG/FUSE to do a sociological study of the community that would help document and analyze what was happening there.

DOCUMENTING THE CARVER TERRACE CASE

On a hot July day, Patsy Oliver drove me through the neighborhood, narrating a house-by-house story of economic and medical disasters. The catalogue of shattered dreams was disheartening. By then, some houses had been on the market for as little as $7,000, and worsening floods had invaded part of the neighborhood. Oliver herself had replaced the floor in her home for the third time and had lost her mother, Mattie Warren, to cancer in the previous year. It was one of many sudden deaths that shocked the community.

Loss came in so many forms that it would be easy to focus only on that part of the story. But the residents' resolute fight for social and environmental justice is just as remarkable. Over a period of many months, during short, intense research trips scheduled between my work obligations, I interviewed residents, attended many types of meetings, pored over documents, and thought hard about what EJ means in practice. I continued to visit the community during the transition to a buyout, and afterward I located and reinterviewed a number of families in their new homes. Using qualitative research methods, I did my best to create a holistic case study that would offer comparisons to other communities and preserve some of the unique details of this one. Like many of my colleagues, I hoped that my research, teaching, and writing about EJ would make some positive difference.

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> ***My mother could outwork me two to one.... She went down weighing 98 pounds before her death.... She was telling it in church, and she was shouting to it on Sunday, she was telling them all, it's poison over here that's killing people, EPA is lying to us! When we had a march out here in the neighborhood, she was one of the first, and she marched all the way in every march. Once I lost her to the chemicals here—and I know that's what it was, you know, no one has to second guess—I made her a promise that I would never let her down, and I would never stop the fight. The more involved I am, the more that part of her is living.***

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

In the 1980s and 1990s, different narrative strands were coming together around the concept of environmental justice, including one focused on *environmental racism*. At that time, environmental racism most often referred to the disproportionate targeting of minority communities for toxic burdens (like the siting of landfills, incinerators, or toxic industries). Warren County, North Carolina, became an iconic place symbolizing the coming together of the civil rights movement and the EJ movement when in 1982 African American residents engaged in direct action protests against the EPA-approved placing of a landfill with contaminated waste in their area despite the potential health hazards (see Chapter 1 in this volume).

In his 1990 book *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*, Robert Bullard not only researched the pattern of disproportionate impact on minority communities but also engaged in active outreach to affected communities (including Carver Terrace) to make the research usable in a fight against environmental racism. As Dorceta Taylor (2000) and others have pointed out, mainstream organizations focused on reducing human damage to the environment (often construed as "wilderness") but ignored social justice issues and the everyday spaces where people live. Thus, an EJ agenda was badly needed.

Although early images associated with environmental racism often emphasize black communities, the environmental racism component of EJ had a wide umbrella that included many other people of color—among others, Latinos, Native Americans, and U.S. Asian and Pacific Islander communities. For example, the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP), active since the 1980s supporting the rights of communities of color in the U.S. Southwest, easily found a place under this banner. In 1990, organizers in the Native American community formed the Indigenous Environmental Network. Also in 1990, SWOP wrote a now-famous letter to the so-called Group of 10 mainstream environmental organizations (for example, the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation), which were predominantly white and male, pointing out their exclusionary structure and issues. Responding to grassroots pressure, some of the Group of 10 began to diversify their organizations and issues. In a key development in 1991, the First National People of Color Environmental Justice Leadership Summit met in Washington, D.C., and adopted 17 principles (Principles of Environmental Justice, 1991). This would prove to be a transformative and radical reframing of environmental justice.

FRAMING THEORY, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

When I first encountered framing theory, theories of social movements had become very focused on "resource mobilization," or the so-called nuts and bolts of organizing—leadership and organizational skills, fundraising, mobilizing constituents, and the like. Although these are important, the equally significant

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issues of symbolic meaning and identity had taken a back seat. Noticing this gap, sociologist David Snow and his collaborators developed a theory of framing that focused on the social construction of meaning and its links to social action. They defined frames as "'schemata of interpretation' that enable individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences within their life space and the world at large. By rendering events or occurrences meaningful, frames function to organize experience and guide action, whether individual or collective" (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986, p. 464). In other words, interpretive frames serve the dual purpose of constructing meaning and offering strategies for action. Just like a frame around a picture, meaningful frames highlight certain elements of reality and affect how we look at (and act in) the world. A successful frame must "resonate," that is, it has to ring true and feel authentic to those who embrace it, individually and collectively.

Snow and Benford (1988) identified three types of "core framing tasks": *diagnostic* framing (analyzing a problem and identifying its causes); *prognostic* framing (envisioning plans for a solution); and *motivational* framing (providing a motive for action). Any viable social movement, they argue, needs to perform these framing tasks to mobilize supporters. To address an injustice, we try to figure out who (or what—but there is always a "who," as Lois Gibbs pointed out) is causing it and what we can do to change it. To actually change it, you have to believe that it's possible and that you should take action. As Carver Terrace residents found out, this is much easier if you aren't facing the problem alone; connecting with others provides experience, motivation, and courage to carry out all three framing tasks. You need courage when you challenge a powerful social hierarchy built around inequalities of gender, race, class, and more. Adopting a collective action frame is also often linked to a reframing of personal identity. The #MeToo movement and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement (BLM) provide excellent examples of powerful collective action frames that are also deeply personal. The same can be said about the EJ frame.

Importantly, frames don't just automatically "snap into place." Social movement scholar Aldon Morris (1986) reminds us that the nonviolent protest frame, for which the civil rights movement is so well known, was initially not widely embraced by African Americans in the South, who saw being unarmed in the face of armed opponents as a potential death sentence. Successful framing is always a product of meaningful social interaction. Also, framing is not a purely rational process. Rather, an injustice frame is frequently connected to a strong sense of "moral outrage," "a 'hot' cognition…that is emotionally charged" (Taylor, 2000, p. 511). A resonant frame channels emotions in a particular direction. The polarization in the United States during the Trump presidency illustrates all too well the competing frames that resonate among his supporters and opponents, amplified by social media networks.

Framing has multiple purposes: presenting issues to the public (for example, presenting climate change in a convincing way); emphasizing certain collective strategies among a movement's own participants and supporters (for example, validating direct action protest as the best choice); and influencing the social construction (reframing) of personal identity (for example, coming to see oneself as an EJ activist).

Framing theory has greatly influenced my work. I wrote that "'[e]nvironmental justice' can be understood as a conceptual construction, or interpretive 'frame' (Snow et al., 1986), fashioned simultaneously from the bottom up (local

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grass-roots groups discovering a pattern to their grievances) and from the top down (national organizations conveying the term to local groups)" (Čapek, 1993, p. 5). This is what I saw happening in Carver Terrace and nationwide during a time when the language of EJ was surfacing. Besides exploring the EJ frame more generally, I wanted to pay attention to the everyday experience of residents in contaminated communities and what environmental justice meant to them. Carver Terrace was a microcosm of this search for justice, with similarities to (and of course differences from) other communities. My research suggested at least five consistent EJ frame dimensions: (1) the right to accurate information; (2) the right to a prompt, respectful, and unbiased hearing; (3) the right to democratically participate in deciding the future of the contaminated community; (4) the right to compensation from those who inflicted injuries; and (5) commitment to solidarity with victims of toxic contamination in other communities. Are these dimensions still relevant? I will say a bit more about this later in the chapter, as we consider the past, present, and future of the EJ frame.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The EJ frame has expanded greatly since I first wrote about it. Consider the sheer number of contemporary EJ issues. More recent technologies like hydraulic fracking create new inequities, health risks, and environmental destruction. Unequal global "mobilities" with ecological consequences include both elite tourists inhabiting mostly white, privileged spaces, and immigrants driven from their homes by deadly violence, climate change, and global "free-trade" agreements that undercut their livelihoods (Urry & Larsen, 2011). As Pat Bryant presciently stated in Carver Terrace, many people have become climate refugees in their own communities, whether in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, or in Shishmaref, Alaska, one of a growing number of vulnerable coastal communities literally going underwater due to climate impacts disproportionately caused by others. Indigenous resistance is more visible, as reflected in the Standing Rock encampments supporting the Standing Rock Sioux protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), focusing on toxic pollution but also affirming Indigenous cultural values and treaty rights. Globally, Indigenous EJ activism networks have grown, although the risks are often high. For example, human rights activist Berta Cáceres in Honduras was tragically assassinated in 2016 after organizing effective opposition to destructive dams, mining, and logging on Indigenous Lenca lands. Her daughter has carried on her work. The list of other EJ issues is long: the "dumping" of toxic electronic waste from the Global North into the Global South; EJ debates about siting national parks and nature preserves (who gets access? who/what is protected or displaced?); food justice activism (for example, "food deserts," food sovereignty, food politics, farmworkers' rights, genetically modified organisms, and agricultural chemicals); sustainability and green design (sustainability for whom?); and much more. Destruction of scientific data joined the list during the Trump administration, as federal agencies were directed to delete information and websites about climate change.

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Given the growing list of EJ issues, what can we say about the EJ *frame*? The frame continues to highlight what is wrong, who is responsible, and how to fix it. Contemporary EJ research helps to explain how the framing has changed. Let's consider sustainability. EJ scholars and activists have critiqued sustainability initiatives that unwittingly create bubbles of privilege. For instance, many U.S. urban planners, including those in my city, have been enthusiastic about the so-called complete street concept, which, instead of focusing on cars, includes spaces for pedestrian strolling, bicycle lanes, traffic calming elements, and green spaces. They frame this as good for small businesses and beneficial to everyone. However, some minority communities have protested because funding these projects attracts gentrification, where higher-priced retail businesses, restaurants, and housing drive up property tax and rents, pricing lower-income residents out of their own communities. A good idea in principle becomes a bad idea in practice if it contributes even unintentionally to segregation, displacement, and distrust. In the United States, green design (a good idea) is often pitched to a higher-income clientele (exclusionary), prompting EJ critiques of "green gentrification" (Checker, 2011; Gould & Lewis, 2017). For a full discussion of this phenomenon, please see Chapter 17 in this volume. Likewise, local food movements have been critiqued for being insular and supporting "white space" while ignoring a deeper history and diverse cultural perspectives (Mares & Peña, 2014; see also Chapter 12 in this volume). A growing body of research on "just sustainabilities" (Alkon & Agyeman, 2014; Agyeman et al., 2016) is contributing significantly to an expanding EJ frame.

Framing theory also reminds us that the EJ frame will look different depending on the depth of the *diagnostic* and *prognostic* process that produces it. A range of EJ scholars point out that today the EJ frame is more likely to reach deep into the systemic roots of inequalities like racism and sexism. As environmental racism became more prominent in the EJ frame, the frame expanded beyond seeking a remedy for a particular situation and targeted the racist logic prevalent in the U.S social structure and elsewhere—a deeper diagnosis, and a message that many white people either do not want to hear, or of which they are naïvely unaware. A highly visible example is how white bodies and bodies of people of color in particular spaces are treated differently (think Flint, Michigan, and the BLM movement). Who is privileged? Who is erased? Who is put under surveillance? Who is injured or killed? A deeper EJ frame also spotlights inequalities built into the global capitalist system and its political power; Laura Pulido and her co-authors question the effectiveness of merely "tinkering with policies" (Pulido, Kohl & Cotton, 2016, p. 12). The problem is multifaceted and includes the need for stronger democracy and confronting the deep roots of inequality embedded in the economic system. By understanding the framing process, we can discover who constructed a particular set of meanings, how this relates to social power, and how framing can support or undermine social justice. For example, "counterframes" spring up to challenge successful frames like EJ, targeting minorities and poor people as the problem, rather than the system that does violence to them.

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WEAVING TOGETHER PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The residents of Carver Terrace endured many institutional failures, made worse by systemic racism: the way land use was(n't) regulated, racialized housing markets, the way science and law was practiced, and encounters with outside agencies and other interactions that framed people of color as problematic and undeserving (Čapek, 1999). What about the five EJ frame dimensions that I identified earlier—Are they still relevant? Yes, but they are part of a bigger picture (and EJ frame) with many more dimensions.

Communities continue to struggle to get accurate information (dimension 1) about the safety of their land and homes, whether the problem is fracking, tar sands oil pipelines, urban air and water pollution, runoff from massive poultry or hog operations, pesticide drift, Indigenous sovereignty rights, and much more. Due to the hostility to regulation built into capitalism, citizens often don't get information without a fight. They hold agencies, politicians, and corporations accountable through protests, legal suits, and political action, as well as by creating alternative resources. When FUSE/CTCAG discovered that an important federal health assessment was withheld from the community, they held a press conference but also worked with the grassroots Environmental Health Network to collect their own data—a good example of what Phil Brown (1992) calls popular epidemiology (see Chapter 5 in this volume). Today, various nonprofit organizations continue to sidestep reluctant government agencies to study environmental health impacts and to share the information. Recently, researchers at the Silent Spring Institute, a public-interest nonprofit research organization, found that black hair products contain "multiple chemicals linked to cancer, asthma, infertility, and more" (Helm, Nishioka, Brody, Rudel, & Dodson, 2018). Researchers focusing on the "environmental injustice of beauty" found that employees of nail salons (predominantly Asian American and African American women) are disproportionately exposed to toxins from the products they work with (Zota & Shamasunder, 2017). EJ enters the most intimate spheres of our lives, especially where information is lacking. The European Union has stricter regulations for many everyday items, but U.S. corporations resist labeling their products and politically frame precautions as unnecessary, as if the labels themselves were toxic. Organizations like the Environmental Working Group (EWG) have stepped into the gap to provide important health information to the public, but the struggle for accurate information continues.

The problem is not just an information deficit. People want to be heard in an unbiased, respectful way (frame dimension 2). Sometimes disrespectful treatment results simply from an overworked bureaucracy, but beyond that, community residents have often felt the sting of second-class citizenship and—in places like Carver Terrace, Flint, and many others—racism. Carver Terrace residents who traveled to Dallas to get more information were locked out of the EPA regional office building and the police were called. Beginning with their lawsuit and extending through their struggle for a fair buyout price, they were assumed to be "wanting something for nothing." The grassroots Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice provided a space where they could be respected, sending a team door to door to collect residents' stories, and creating a public forum that included representatives of federal agencies

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and EJ groups, amplifying the residents' voices in a system that didn't want to "hear" them. More recently, the Dakota Access Pipeline protests created a space where Indigenous rights could be affirmed instead of erased from public view, despite strenuous efforts to shut down the protests. Social media, in addition to mainstream and progressive media outlets, spread the word nationally and globally, and the DAPL opposition eventually gained support from the Obama administration. The importance of such "alternative spaces" shouldn't be underestimated, even if victory isn't immediately within reach. For example, many conscience constituents have transformative experiences in such spaces, a reframing of personal and collective identity that inspires them to work for social change—like the Native American youth who organized ReZpect Our Water, creating a community of runners who publicized opposition to the pipeline, and organized a protest relay run from North Dakota to Washington, D.C. (Greene, 2017). At the same time, Indigenous Sami youth protested Norway's investments in DAPL. An energized Indigenous Caucus convened at the U.N. Climate Change conference in Bonn, Germany, to strategize (Monet, 2018). Creating alternative networks and spaces is important, given that the "state" is an unreliable ally—the Trump administration turned a deaf ear to EJ and approved the pipeline. Finding a way to be truly heard remains a creative and challenging struggle, but countless groups are mobilizing for EJ at local, regional, national, and international levels.

The other EJ frame dimensions I mentioned (the right to democratically decide the future of contaminated communities, the right to compensation, and solidarity with other contaminated communities) also continue to be relevant. I would now simply say "communities," since toxic contamination isn't the only issue (and never was). While Carver Terrace fought for a buyout and relocation, some other EJ battles are about staying in place and claiming health, dignity, and other human rights. Flint residents, where children's development was tragically compromised by lead contamination, had no choice but to stay in place and to call for accountability at all levels of government. By then, a more established and experienced EJ movement came to their assistance, including EJ scholars Paul Mohai (Mohai, Pellow, & Roberts, 2009) and Michael Mascarenhas (2007), who testified before the Michigan Civil Rights Commission (Michigan Department of Civil Rights, 2016). But the question of compensation hovers disturbingly over every EJ case. Who will pay for all the damage done to people's bodies and dreams when they encounter environmental *in*justice? Who will pay to relocate Shishmaref, a community whose suffering has been caused by others (especially when the "others" are less visible)? The answer is "no one," in the absence of strategic organizing and framing that provides an effective leverage point for justice. This makes the fifth EJ frame dimension more important than ever: building solidarity with other communities through sharing information, creating networks, joining in protests, and working at multiple levels for social justice. This means co-inventing an inclusive future that draws on EJ research and that uses imaginative organizing and framing skills to create alliances between groups that can support EJ together, even if temporarily. Coalition building is difficult but necessary work, since not only EJ, but also racism, is receiving new infusions of energy.

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CONCLUSION

> *If ten thousand people camping at Standing Rock to protect the Missouri River could not stop the siege of the Dakota Access Pipeline, then what does it take?...*I know, we all know, it will take *more*. And toward this, our work continues.—Layli Long Soldier (2017)

This chapter has invited you to explore the environmental justice frame and its evolution over time, using a case study of Carver Terrace as a point of comparison with more contemporary understandings of EJ. Carver Terrace was like many other contaminated communities but also atypical—the first minority community to demand and win a federal buyout. The story is richer and more complex than what I touched on here, but the abridged version allowed us to dive more deeply into a particular time and place and to think about connections and contrasts with other situations. I showed how a sociological framing theory is useful for understanding the EJ frame at multiple levels. Framing theory applies to much more than EJ; it helps you to think about your own life, your meaningful frames, and how they connect to your actions and those of others. It equips you to be more critically aware of the many frames that drift our way through cyberspace, mediascapes, and so many other sources. It gives you tools for social change.

Here is one last image, which is a contrast with the desolate landscape we encountered earlier. Carver Terrace residents finally won a federal buyout in 1990. Grassroots leaders who told them that "political organizing matters" were right. CTCAG/FUSE persuaded one of their key allies, Texas Democratic Rep. Jim Chapman, a member of the budget appropriations committee for the EPA, to attach a provision to the EPA's budget that authorized a Carver Terrace buyout. Without CTCAG/FUSE and their mobilizing, organizing, coalition-building, and *framing* skills, there would be no buyout. Flawed as the political-economic system might be, it pays to know how it works. Yet, consistent with deep and ongoing structural inequalities, the victory was bittersweet. Imagine the residents in new homes that they bought or built, breathing a sigh of relief, enjoying a space away from the toxic contamination. Then realize that some didn't live to see the relocation, and others died too soon afterward, including Patsy Oliver. Survivors won a safer place to live, but they lost their physical community. For those who moved away, and especially for younger generations, the battle was worth the precious chance for a healthier life and a better future. Yet to truly heal what systematically produces environmental injustice, environmental racism, and global pollution on a massive scale, as Layli Long Soldier says, "it will take *more*." The EJ frame will continue to evolve, as it must, if we want to live on a planet that is sustainable, and not only for the privileged few. As researchers, we also evolve (yes, it is happening at this very moment as I write!), discovering new questions and solutions that become part of the collective stream of EJ scholarship and recipes for action. You, too, can be part of this solution.

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DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Search the term *environmental justice* on the Internet, and see what you turn up. How visible is the EJ frame in cyberspace, and what do you learn from this?
2. Identify an EJ issue or event (preferably local), and analyze the effects of the framing of that issue. Do you see any evidence of a counterframe?
3. The way we construct meaning shapes how (and whether) we participate in social movements. Think about your own identity. Can you "see" yourself taking part in a protest action, for example, a march? If so, why? If not, why not?
4. Framing includes how we interpret everything—"nature," our bodies, race, gender, who/what we consider to be "other," and much more. Based on your own identity and, thus, interpretations, where do you draw the line and start feeling uncomfortable?
5. Social media has become an important part of the EJ movement. A recent strategy has been to post Indigenous names on Instagram during hikes in outdoor recreational areas, calling attention to the missing Indigenous history (https://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/affordable-housing/posting-your-hike-on-instagram-now-you-can-tag-your-locations-indigenous-name-20180523). What is your response to this? What are some other ways that technology could be used creatively for EJ?

I thank Samantha Lewis for her assistance with bibliographical research on environmental justice. Any quotes are from my own interviews unless otherwise attributed. I dedicate this to all who make EJ possible.

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