

New Frontiers of Environmental Justice

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 See also the **New Frontiers of Environmental Justice** section, pp. 48–134.

A decade ago, *AJPH* published a special supplement on environmental justice (<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/toc/ajph/101/S1>), with dozens of articles addressing themes such as residential proximity to hazardous facilities, expanded risk assessment frameworks that acknowledged cumulative exposures and differential vulnerability, and perspectives on community engagement, empowerment, and capacity building.

Much has changed over the past decade. The escalating burden of climate change, growing recognition of the insidiousness of racism, and political extremism have had profound influences on public health and environmental justice. Given this, we put out a call for papers on “New Frontiers of Environmental Justice,” soliciting articles that address novel topics, utilize innovative methods, and reflect on approaches for addressing environmental justice in the future. In the current and subsequent issues of *AJPH*, we present articles that grapple with some of these complex questions.

This special section features complementary framing and research articles that beckon more inclusive understandings of oppression and action-oriented processes to pursue justice. For instance, Goldsmith and Bell (p. 79) explore how environmental exposures

disproportionately affect the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and others) population while Collins et al. (p. 54) and Gaard (p. 57) discuss the implications of an intersectional approach within environmental justice research and policy. Relatedly, McDonald et al. (p. 50) expose toxic disparities in beauty products marketed toward people of color, including LGBTQ+ members, and call for regulatory changes within the cosmetics industry.

Some articles apply novel approaches or frameworks to address legacy environmental issues. For example, Pace et al. (p. 88) utilize geospatial data sets to evaluate racial/ethnic disparities within community water systems and domestic well areas in California. In forthcoming issues, accepted articles will point to some valuable new directions related to racial inequities in air pollution exposures, considering previously unexamined groups, using new approaches to yield more spatially resolved air quality estimates, and empowering communities to address local air quality. Other articles address the effects of cold (Ryti et al., p. 107) or heat (Schwarz et al., p. 98), important given a rapidly changing climate, with the latter study focusing on the understudied vulnerable population of homeless individuals.

Innovation needs to happen not just on research methods but also on processes and policies to ensure that overburdened communities have a seat at the table. Carrión et al. (p. 59) reinforce the importance of community-engaged research to allow for greater inclusion and better-informed research, and Bourland et al. (p. 63) emphasize that funding processes need to prioritize frontline organizations working in overburdened communities. Atencio et al. (p. 116) propose approaches for meaningful Tribal consultation related to the cumulative impacts of projects. Sullivan et al. (p. 124) argue that the Environmental Protection Agency needs to restore funding and structures to address children’s environmental health given important environmental justice implications. Meanwhile, Hernández (p. 66) shifts the gauge of resilience toward the social, economic, and structural dimensions of housing after demonstrating how climate change is experienced within residential settings.

Ultimately, these articles on diverse topics reinforce the importance of an environmental justice lens to characterize susceptible and vulnerable populations and to address the effects of historic and contemporary racism. Given the direct connections between environmental justice and the disproportionate burdens from COVID-19, climate change, and other major stressors, there needs to be much broader and deeper engagement. Levy et al. (p. 69) argue that the reduced environmental health content in MPH education leaves students unprepared to address these challenges of our time. Turpin et al. (p. 75) and Guidotti and Cwikel (p. 77) reinforce this argument and emphasize that practitioners across public health need environmental health expertise to center health

equity when working to create resilient and sustainable communities.

In future issues of *AJPH*, articles will continue to grapple with the central public health challenges of our time, centering issues of racial justice and health inequities. We look forward to continued innovation and increased emphasis on environmental justice.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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