

Environment and Race, Gender, Poverty and Intersectionalities

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Why gender, race, poverty and other aspects are important?

- Impacts of global environmental change are not neutral with regard to gender, race, poverty etc. (environmental injustice)
- People and communities are often marginalized based on these characteristics, their voices are not heard and excluded from decision-making (situated knowledges, epistemic injustice)
- Environmental and sustainability policies can exacerbate existing inequalities, if they are blind (gender/intersectional lens, gender responsive, gender transformative policies)

Brief history

Women in Development (WID) (1970's)

Involvement of women in development programmes mainly through small-scale economic activities, economic and social empowerment.

Failing to address the root inequalities and power relations and effectively leading to further exploitation of women's work („triple burden“)

Women, Environment, and Development (WED) (1970 - 1980's)

„Ecofeminism“ rooted in the Global South (Chipko movement, Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva)

Gender equality in decision-making processes related to environmental issues, contribution to conservation

Critique of „universal“ woman, omitting diverse experiences

Gender and Development (GAD) (1980's)

Gender is a socially constructed concept that affects both men and women, power relations and social norms perpetuate gender inequalities

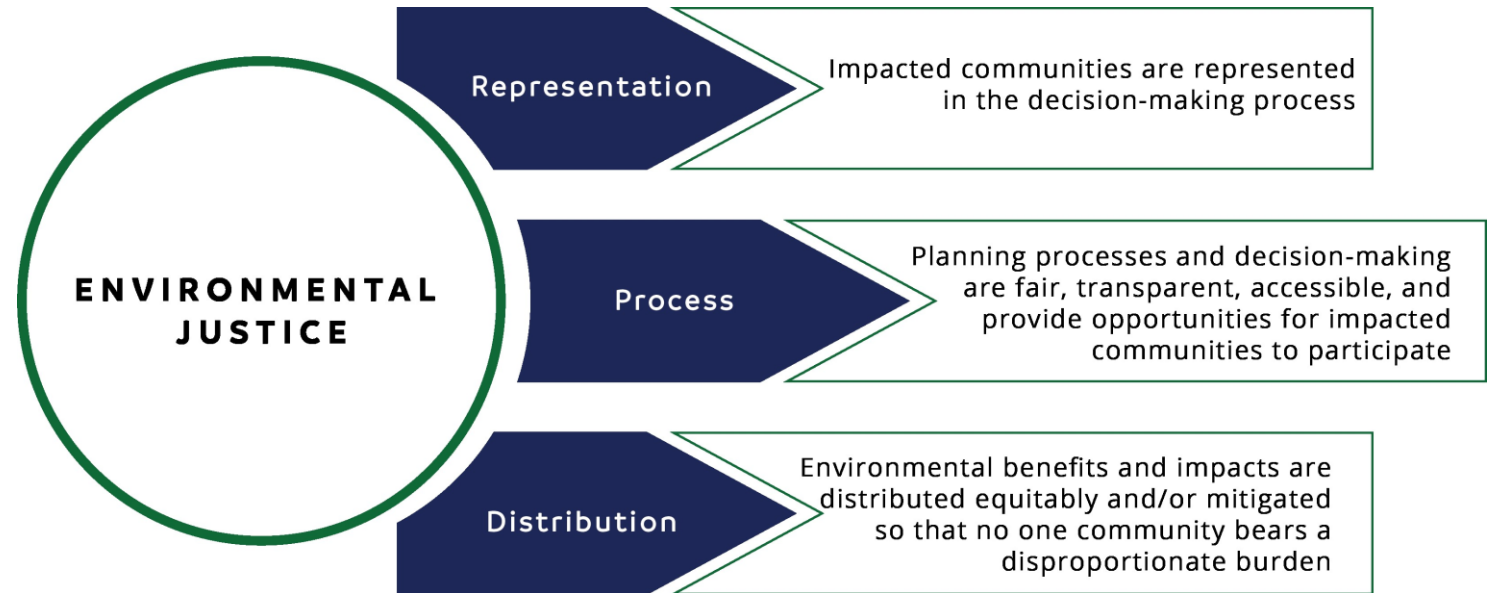
Gender mainstreaming, call for gender transformative actions and policies



Environmental justice

The principles of environmental justice call for the fair treatment of all people, regardless of race, culture, national origin, or income, in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

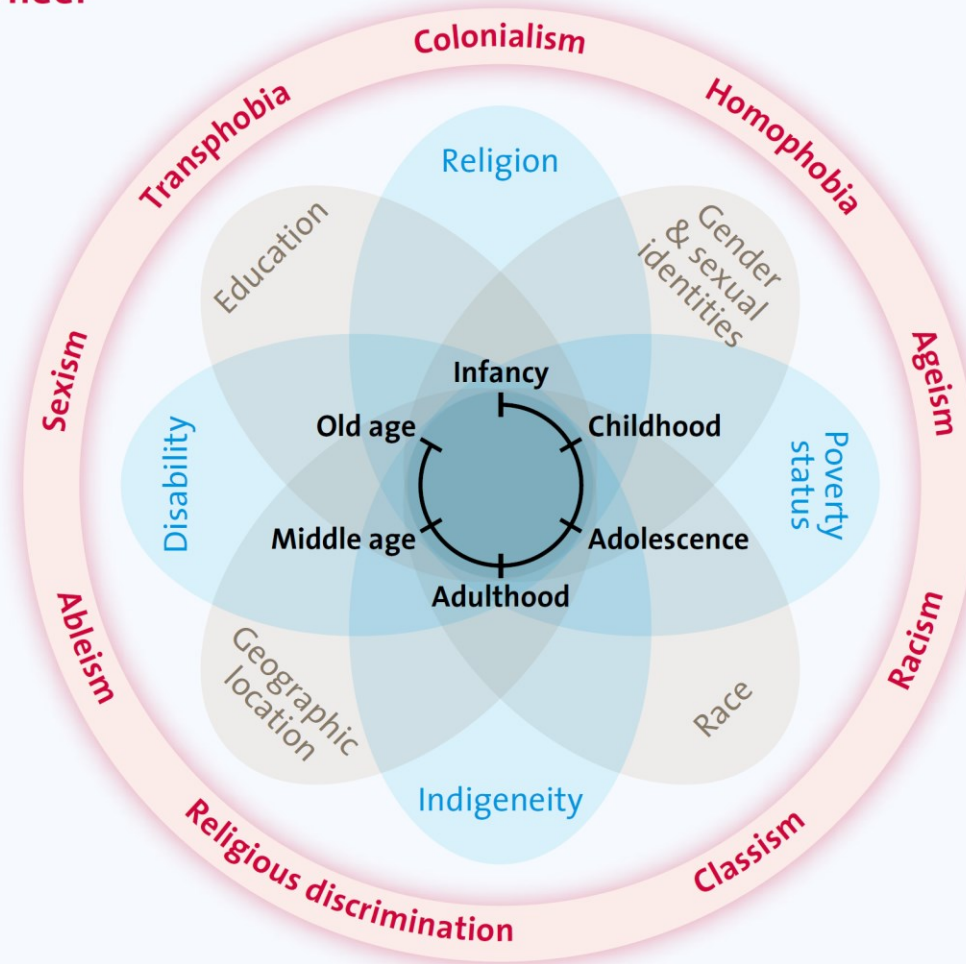
Environmental justice also necessitates dedicated outreach and transparent opportunities for all community members to represent their concerns in the decision-making process.



Intersectionality

- The concept of intersectionality describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects.
- The term 'intersectionality' has its roots in Black feminist activism (Combahee River Collective), and was originally coined by American critical legal race scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989.
- It recognises that people’s lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression depending on a person’s context and existing power structures such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism.
- It identifies hidden structural barriers and supports an understanding of how individual experiences differ, even within already marginalised or underrepresented groups.

Intersectionality Wheel



The original design is adapted from The Equality Institute's version of the Intersectionality wheel

UN Women, 2021, Intersectionality resource guide and toolkit

Gender, consumption and environment

- Sustainable lifestyles shows clear patterns of differences between groups of people depending on categories such as gender, class, age and ethnicity, and where social norms are drivers in how people, with their values and behaviours, express differences from and connection with others through paid and unpaid work and leisure activities.
- Animal-based diets have a greater environmental impact than vegetable-based diets, and men as a group consume more meat than women as a group. Attitudes to climate change push individuals' diets towards reduced meat consumption and a more vegetable-based diet, regardless of gender, and women are more concerned about the climate than men.
- However, motives other than concern for the climate seem to be significant for the difference in meat consumption between women and men – motives which have clear links to norms of femininity and masculinity.

Masculine meat and feminine vegan? Gender stereotypes in food choices

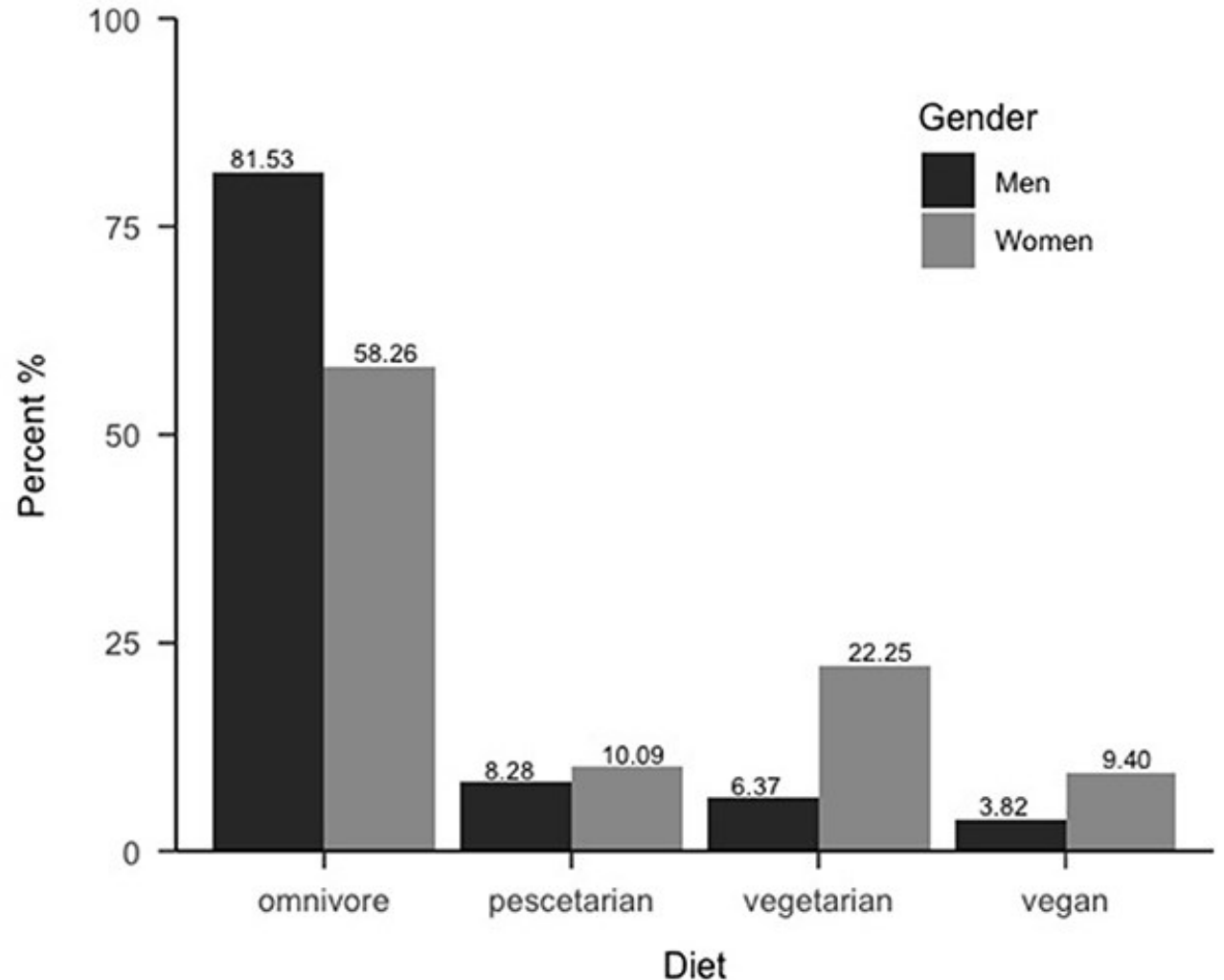
- Vegetarian or vegan diets are not yet popular with most men, though they are beneficial for both health and the environment. Men's low preference for such diets might stem from the prevalent association of meat with masculinity, and of veganism with femininity.
- Meat consumption is linked to gender stereotypes of masculinity, probably explaining men's lower willingness to adopt plant-based diets.
- Smaller servings, healthier foods, and even certain dishes (e.g., sushi, couscous, and green salad) were perceived as more appropriate for women. Food for men, in contrast, was defined by large portions, and by being hearty and filling (e.g., hamburgers, hot dogs, and pizza).
- It was assumed that the salad and partly also the spaghetti carbonara have a more feminine connotation, while goulash and burgers tend to have a more masculine connotation.
- Typically, men show a strong tendency to behave according to gender roles and to avoid products and behavior associated with women. Women, on the other hand, seem less concerned about maintaining their gender identity.

Alma Elisabeth Scholz, Jan Lenhart (2023) Masculinity and veganism: the effect of linking vegan dishes with masculinity on men's attitudes toward vegan food. Frontiers in Communication, Volume 8 .

Most participants had an omnivorous diet, but there were clear gender differences in the number of vegans and vegetarians compared to omnivores, with women being more likely to be vegan and vegetarian than men

Masculine framing of vegan dishes slightly shifted the perspective but it did not lead to significant changes in men's broader attitudes toward vegan dishes or veganism in general.

Alma Elisabeth Scholz, Jan Lenhart (2023) Masculinity and veganism: the effect of linking vegan dishes with masculinity on men's attitudes toward vegan food. Frontiers in Communication, Volume 8.



Gender assumptions and stereotypes

- **Women are caring and connected to the environment.**

Interpreting caring norms and connection to nature as innate feminine qualities obscures a wide range of factors that shape people's experiences and expectations about their roles.

- **Women are homogenous and vulnerable.**

Essentializing women as a vulnerable group with homogenous climate change experiences and adaptation needs can exacerbate inequalities and obscure opportunities to address different people's needs.

- **Gender equality is a women's issue.**

Narrow focus on women in climate change adaptation or mitigation can eclipse understandings of local socio-cultural contexts and power structures, leading to misguided strategies that risk backfiring and creating greater inequality.

- **Gender equality is a numbers game.**

Equality in numbers is a poor proxy for gender equality. It obscures whether opportunities, access and participation translate into meaningful and actionable change for different people.

*Lau, J.D., Kleiber, D., Lawless, S. et al. Gender equality in climate policy and practice hindered by assumptions. Nature Climate Change **11**, 186–192 (2021)*

Illustrative story

What a hurricane means when you live in Louisiana's 'Cancer Alley'

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/06/us/hurricane-ida-cancer-alley-pollution>



Questions

- How would you define „compounded risks“?
- Which major environmental risks are mentioned in the article?
- Which aspects of intersectionality can be observed?

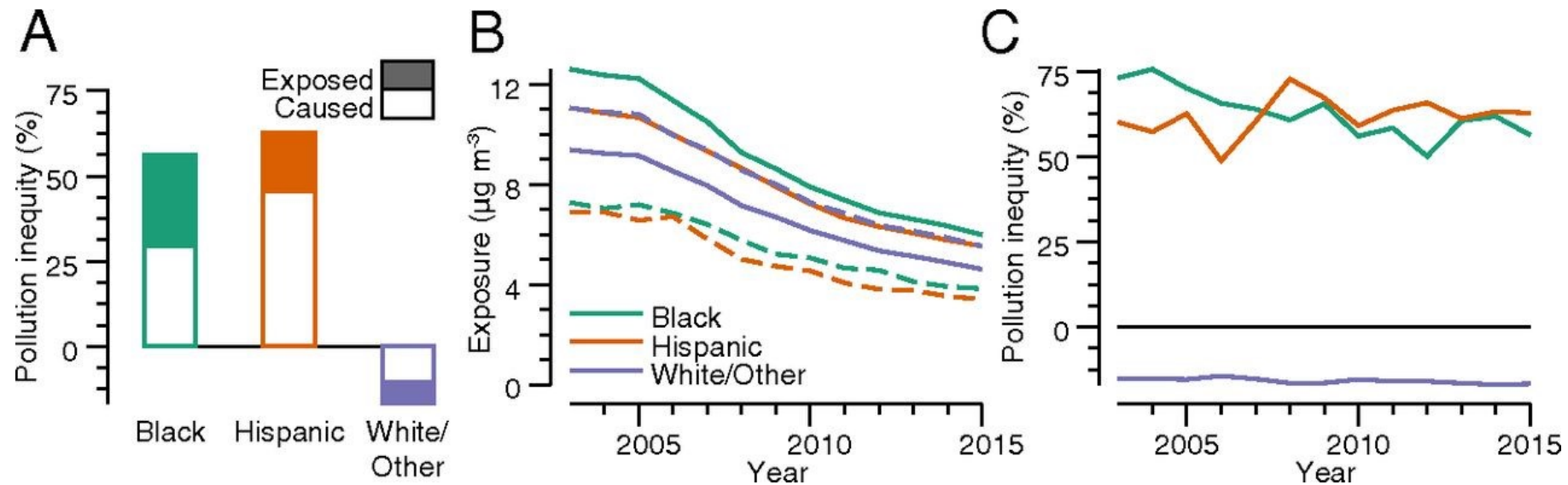
Environmental racism

- Communities of colour (or other ethnic or marginalized communities) are disproportionately burdened with health hazards through policies and practices that force them to live in proximity to sources of toxic waste such as sewage works, mines, landfills, power stations, major roads and emitters of airborne particulate matter. As a result, these communities suffer greater rates of health problems attendant on hazardous pollutants.
- Indigenous populations often suffer from environmental racism. In the US, Native Americans communities continue to be subjected to large amounts of nuclear and other hazardous waste

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/what-is-environmental-racism-pollution-covid-systemic/>

Hispanics (LatinX) on average breathe in 63 percent more of the pollution that leads to heart and breathing deaths than they make. For African-Americans the figure is 56 percent.

Non-Hispanic whites (Caucasians and other) on average are exposed to 17 percent less air pollution than they make.

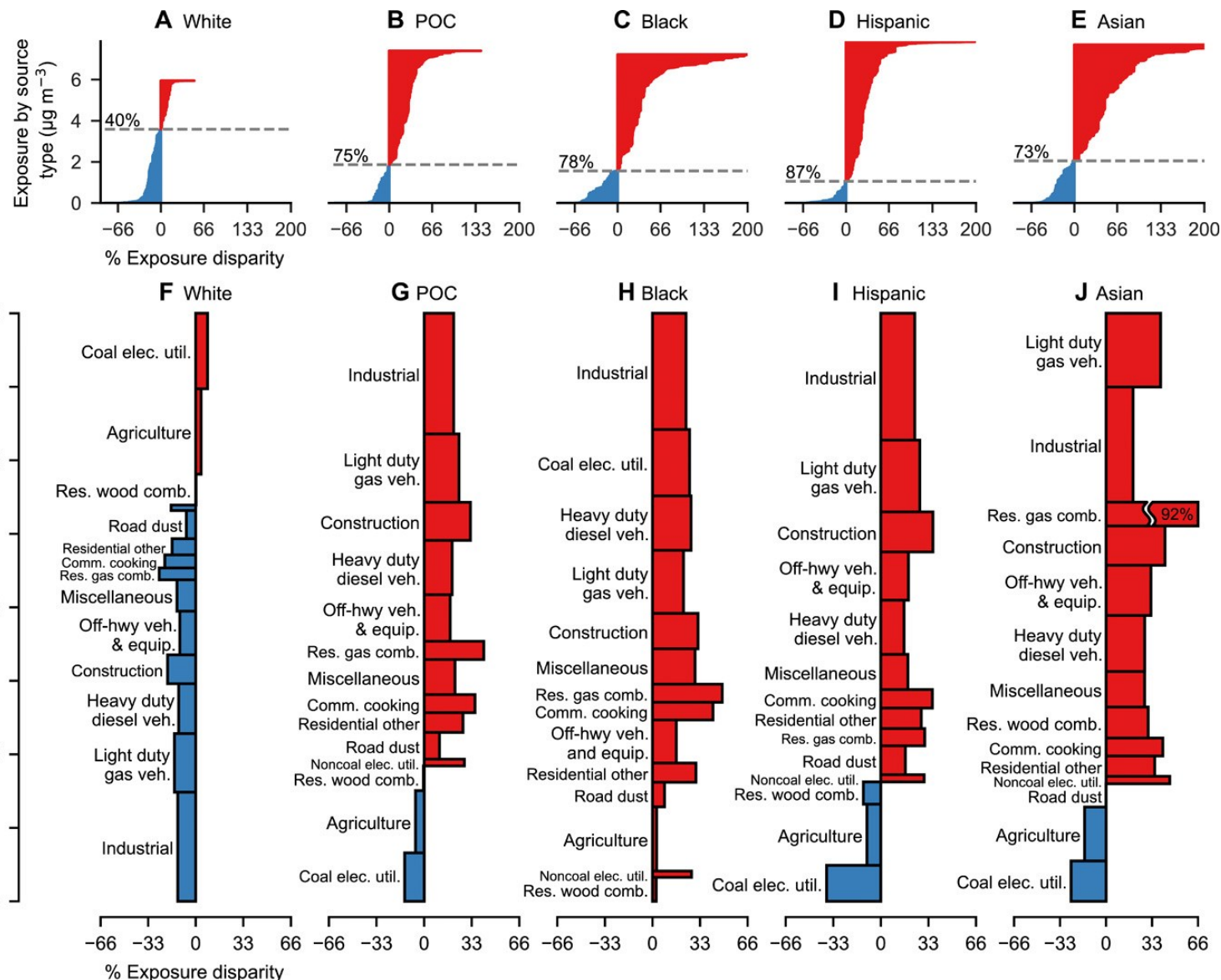


Tessum, C.W., et al. (2019). Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial-ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, 116 (13) 6001-6006.

Racial ethnic exposure disparities in air pollution

Of the emission source sectors that cause the largest absolute disparities, four out of the top six source sectors are the same for POC, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians: industry, light-duty gasoline vehicles, construction, and heavy-duty diesel vehicles. Residential gas combustion and commercial cooking are among the largest sources of relative disparities for all four groups.

Whites are exposed to lower-than-average concentrations from most emission sectors. The only sectors that affect Whites substantially more than average are coal electric generation and agriculture. Blacks are exposed to higher-than-average concentrations from all sectors.

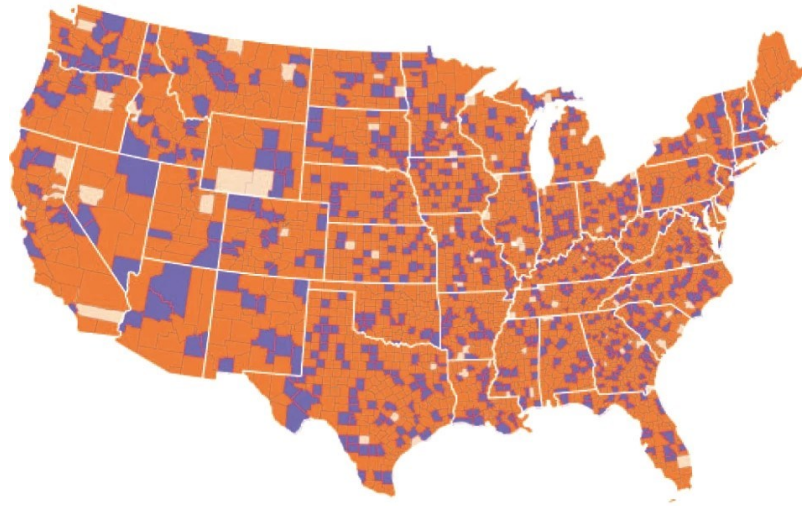


PM_{2.5} Polluters Disproportionately and Systemically Affect People of Color in the United States,” by Christopher W. Tessum et al., in Science Advances, Vol. 7; 2021

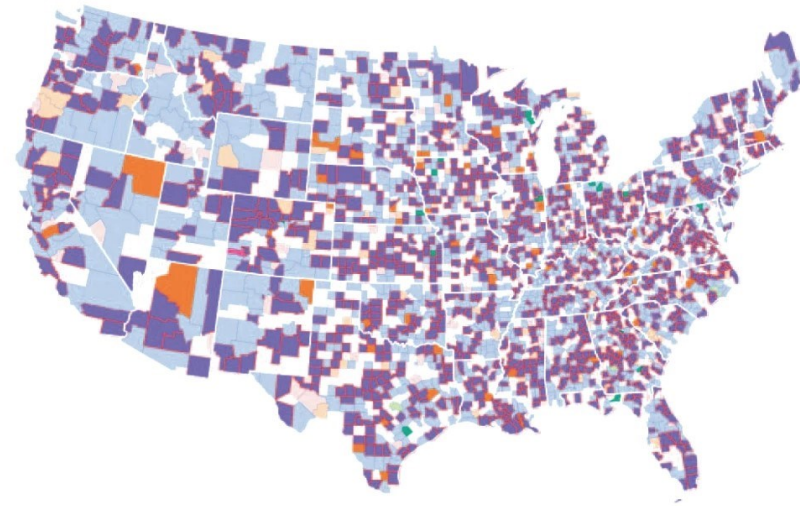
Racial disparities and ecosystem services

- Addressing how ecosystem services (ES) are distributed among groups of people is critical for making conservation and environmental policy-making more equitable.
- Distribution and equity of changes in ES benefits across demographic and socioeconomic groups in the United States (US) between 2020 and 2100.
- Specifically, land cover and population projections are used to model potential shifts in the supply, demand, and benefits of the following ES: provision of clean air, protection against a vector-borne disease (West Nile virus), and crop pollination.
- Changes in ES benefits are unevenly distributed among socioeconomic and demographic groups and among rural and urban communities, but are relatively uniform across geographic regions. In general, non-white, lower-income, and urban populations disproportionately bear the burden of declines in ES benefits.

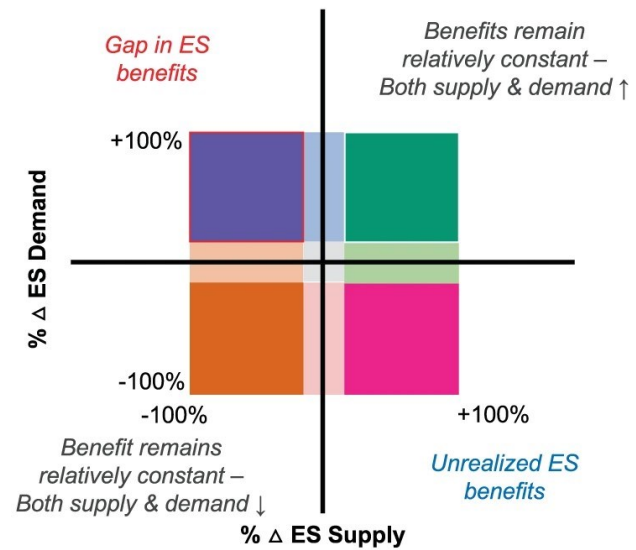
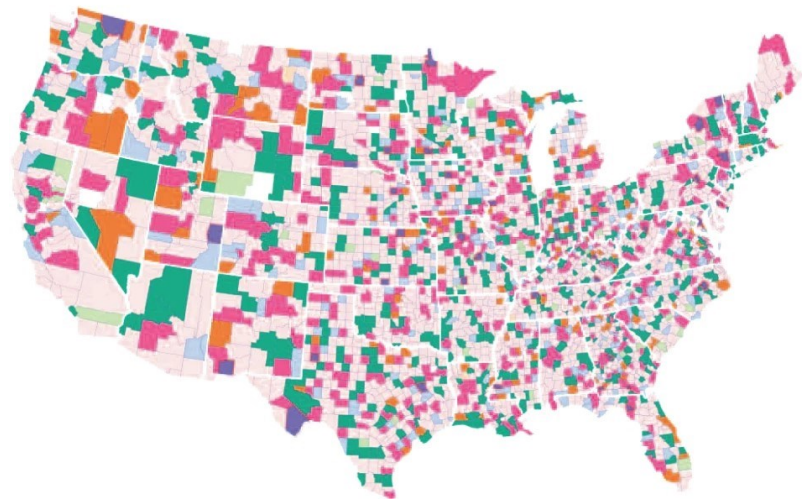
A) Air Quality



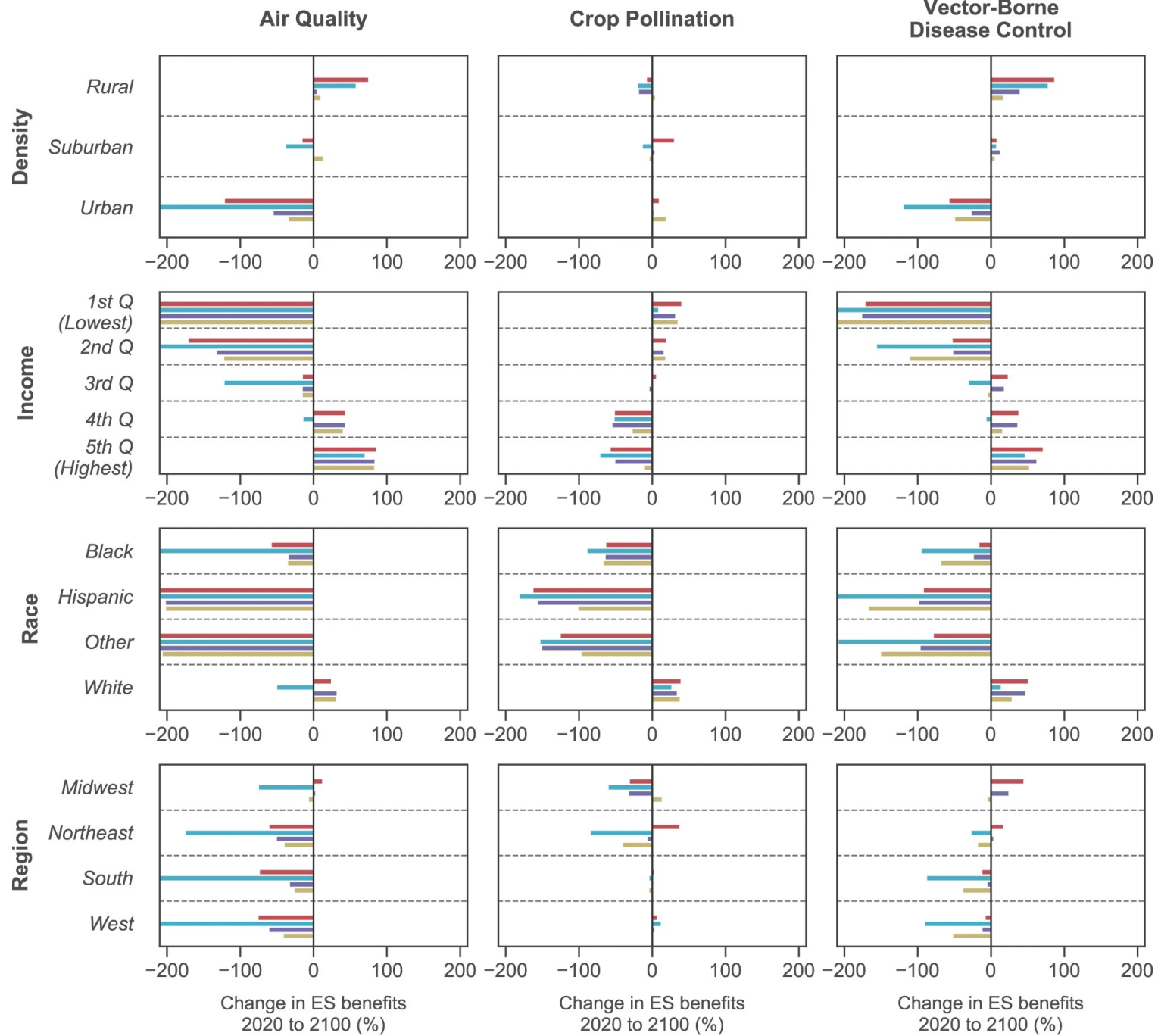
B) Crop Pollination



C) Vector-Borne Disease Control

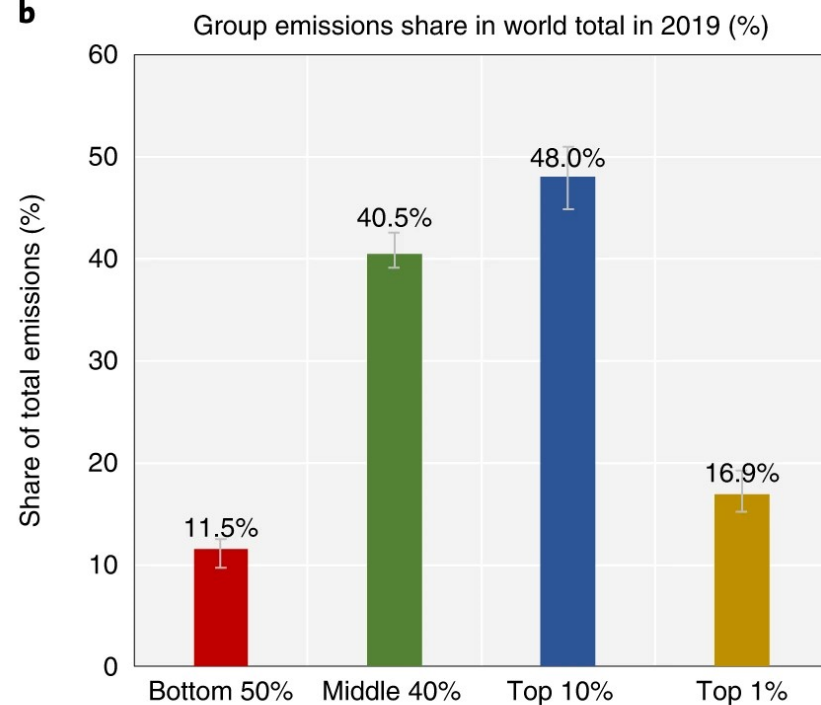
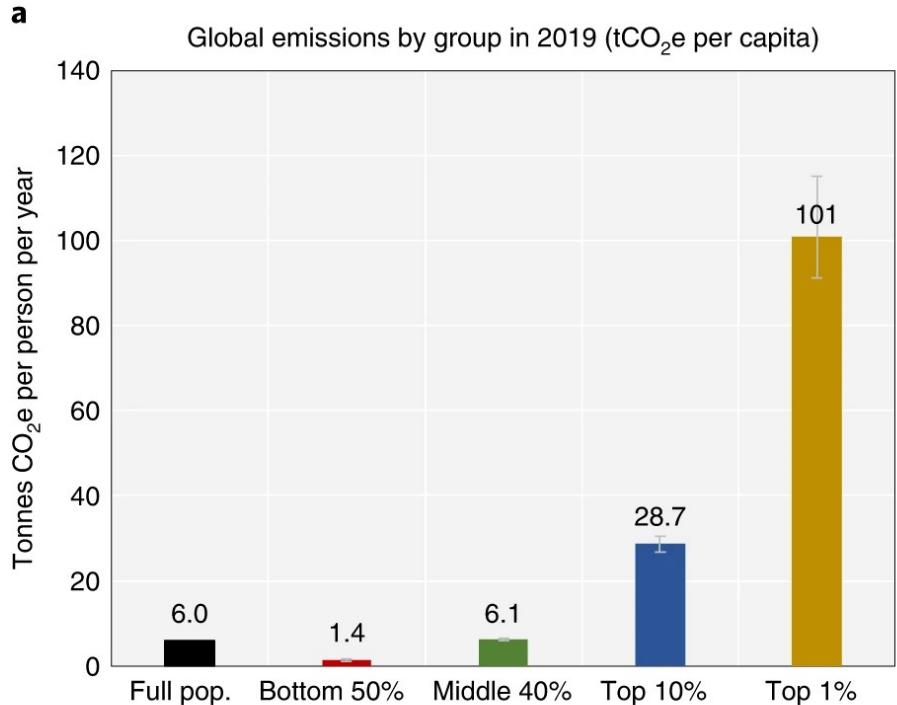


Gourevitch, J.D., et al. Projected losses of ecosystem services in the US disproportionately affect non-white and lower-income populations. *Nature Communications* **12**, 3511 (2021)



Climate change and inequalities

- Climate change impacts, adaptive capacity as well as drivers behind the climate change proved to be highly gendered
- Feminist and gendered perspective on climate change adaptation shows, that ignoring gender can lead to maladaptation and increases vulnerabilities of those already burdened disproportionately and/or by creating new types of exclusions



Inequalities in carbon/GHG footprints

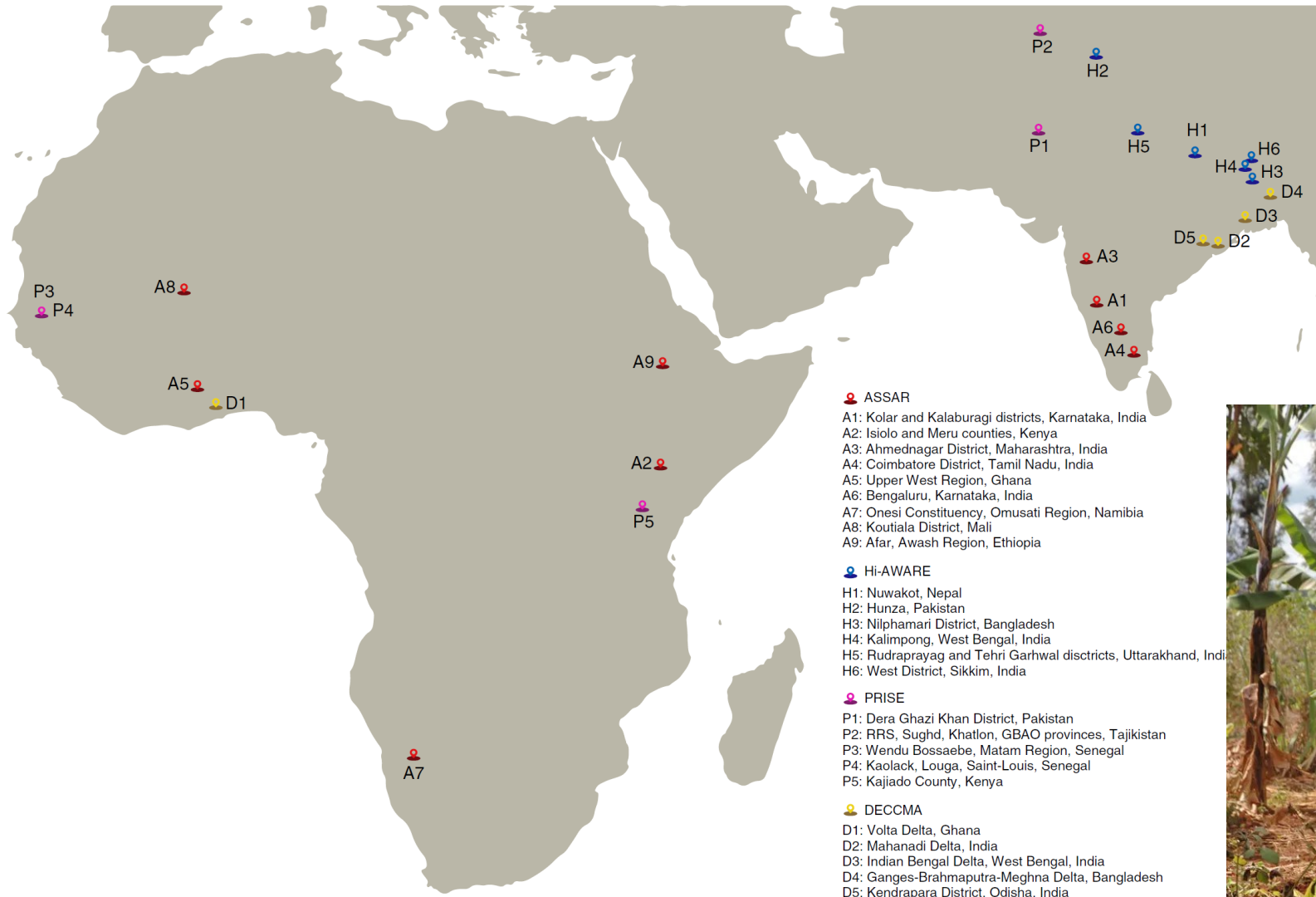
c Global emissions inequality in 2019: summary table





	Number of individuals (million)	Average (tonnes CO ₂ per capita)	Threshold (tonnes CO ₂ per capita)	Share (% total)
Full population	7,710	6	<0.1	100%
Bottom 50%	3,855	1.4	<0.1	11.5%
incl. bottom 20%	1,542	0.7	<0.1	2.3%
incl. next 30%	2,315	1.8	1.1	9.2%
Middle 40%	3,084	6	2.8	40.5%
Top 10%	771	29	13	48%
incl. top 1%	77.1	101	47	16.9%
incl. top 0.1%	7.71	425	125	7.1%
incl. top 0.01%	0.771	2,332	566	3.9%

The global bottom 50% emit on average 1.4 tCO₂e per year and contribute to 11.5% of the total. The top 10% emit 28.7 t (48% of the total).

Chancel, L. Global carbon inequality over 1990–2019. Nat Sustain 5, 931–938 (2022).

How women's agency contributes to adaptation responses in different climate hotspots



-  ASSAR
 - A1: Kolar and Kalaburagi districts, Karnataka, India
 - A2: Isiolo and Meru counties, Kenya
 - A3: Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra, India
 - A4: Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, India
 - A5: Upper West Region, Ghana
 - A6: Bengaluru, Karnataka, India
 - A7: Onesi Constituency, Omusati Region, Namibia
 - A8: Kouitiala District, Mali
 - A9: Afar, Awash Region, Ethiopia
-  Hi-AWARE
 - H1: Nuwakot, Nepal
 - H2: Hunza, Pakistan
 - H3: Nilphamari District, Bangladesh
 - H4: Kalimpong, West Bengal, India
 - H5: Rudraprayag and Tehri Garhwal districts, Uttarakhand, India
 - H6: West District, Sikkim, India
-  PRISE
 - P1: Dera Ghazi Khan District, Pakistan
 - P2: RRS, Sughd, Khatlon, GBAO provinces, Tajikistan
 - P3: Wendu Bossaebe, Matam Region, Senegal
 - P4: Kaolack, Louga, Saint-Louis, Senegal
 - P5: Kajiado County, Kenya
-  DECCMA
 - D1: Volta Delta, Ghana
 - D2: Mahanadi Delta, India
 - D3: Indian Bengal Delta, West Bengal, India
 - D4: Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Delta, Bangladesh
 - D5: Kendrapara District, Odisha, India



Nitya Rao et al., A qualitative comparative analysis of women's agency and adaptive capacity in climate change hotspots in Asia and Africa. Nature Climate Change 9, 964–971 (2019)

Women's agency and climate change adaptation

- Environmental stress is a key depressor of women's agency even when household structures and social norms are supportive or legal entitlements are available.
- Male migration does contribute to enhanced incomes, but the degree of such support is both uncertain and irregular. Confronted with issues of everyday survival, in the absence of supportive infrastructure and services, women often work harder, in poorer conditions and for lower wages across the hotspots studied, with negative wellbeing outcomes, seen particularly in the neglect of their health and nutrition.
- What emerges is an acknowledgement that environmental stress can combine with other contextual conditions to act as a major depressor of women's agency, despite the existence of other enablers.
- There will always be exceptions, pointing to the need for further disaggregation and acknowledgement of differences among women, whether of caste, class or location.

- A 41-year-old woman from case A3 (semi-arid South India) said ‘It is so difficult to get labour to work on our farms, especially during harvest season and when they do come, they demand too much money for us to pay... I have started working more on the farm now, I do not have a choice. My husband goes for construction work in the neighbouring town and if I do not do agricultural work the crops will die’.
- In the case of P1 (D.G. Khan, Pakistan), monsoon rains and floods destroyed the cotton crop and, as a young woman noted, ‘Men can easily migrate for work whereas we have to stay here (at home) to take care of the family. After floods, my daily wage decreased from Rs. 200 (\$1.62) per bale of cotton to Rs. 75 (\$0.61)’.
- Similar testimonies emerged from the other sites.

Disability and environment

- Climate and environmental change places disabled populations in more socially and economically disadvantaged positions.
- Data on climate and environmental change impacts on disabled populations is deficient.
- We need an active engagement of the disabled community in the research on climate and environmental change.
- Sustainable futures require global policies that include disabled populations.



Kosanic, Aleksandra, et al. (2022). An inclusive future: disabled populations in the context of climate and environmental change. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, Volume 55, April 2022, 101159.

Anthropocene?

“The Anthropocene marks severe discontinuities; what comes after will not be like what came before. I think our job is to make the Anthropocene as short/thin as possible and to cultivate with each other in every way imaginable epochs to come that can replenish refuge.

(Donna Haraway, 2015)

Good Anthropocene (E. Bennett et al.)

Capitalocene (J. Moore)

Chthulucene (D. Haraway)

(Plantantionocene)

(M)Anthropocene (G. Di Chiro)

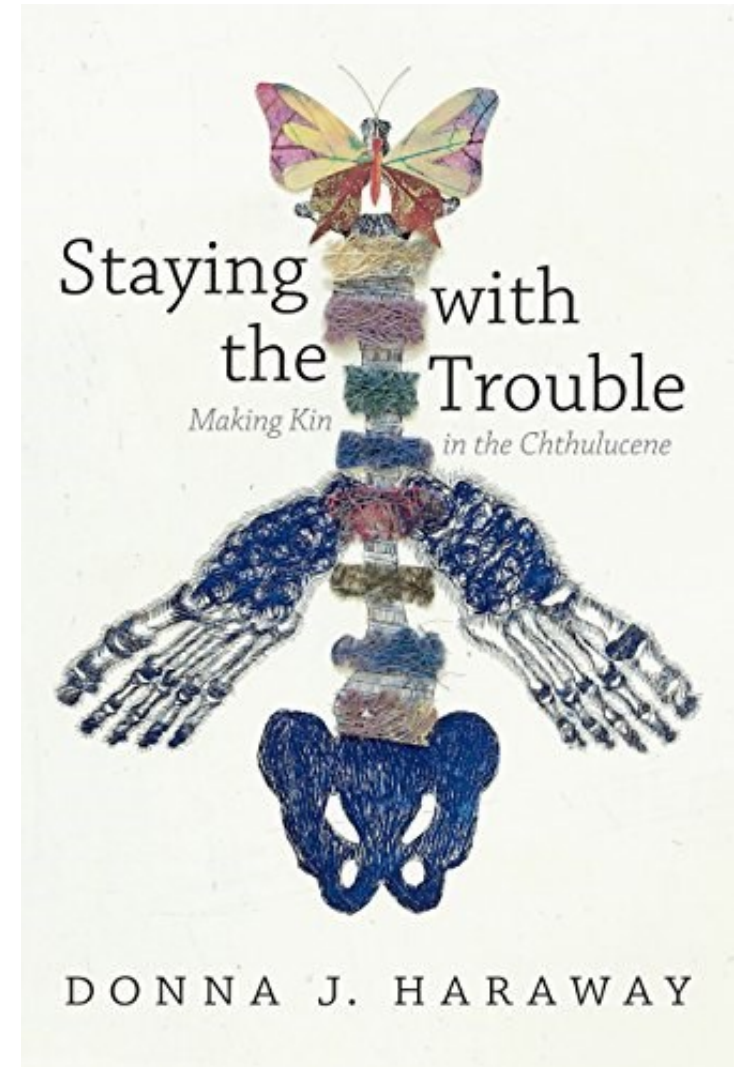
Planthropocene (N. Myers)



Fabrice Monteiro, The Prophecy

Revisiting human-nature dualism and the Anthropocene

- According to Donna Haraway, Anthropocene should be regarded more a boundary event than an epoch and we should make the Anthropocene as short/thin as possible.
- STS scholars and feminist critique of the Anthropocene: Plantationocene, Capitalocene and (M)Anthropocene are just equivalents reflecting the continuing gender and species inequalities.
- In the Chthulucene, humans are not the only important actors – they, along with other beings, are with and of the earth, and “the biotic and abiotic powers of this earth are the main story”



Feminist critique of the Anthropocene

- Anthropocene has been criticized to promote existing gender, race, class and other social inequalities, even in the name of environmental conservation.
- The common critique of the Anthropocene includes universality of humanity. We need to move from normative figure of universal human, usually represented by white male colonizing modernist Man, towards an expanded theorization of the body, sexuality, materiality, affect, and non-human life.
- The Anthropocene era is loaded with capitalist, postcolonialist and masculinist regimes, which triggered searching for alternative names of current epoch.

Multispecies justice

- Expanding environmental justice beyond human to non-human
- What about degraded, transformed, modified, manipulated, blasted landscapes?

Patricia Piccinini: Multispecies salon

