
Environmental Justice

Session 2: Climate Change & Climate Justice



Group Agreements



One Mic

Only one person should be speaking at a time!



Challenge Ideas, Not People

Try to question and critique the ideas being presented, rather than the person presenting them, so everyone can engage without feeling shut down.



Listen with Empathy

Everyone has different experiences and perspectives - try to avoid judgement and seek understanding



Step Up, Step Back

If you are usually quiet challenge yourself to take more space, and if you usually talk a lot be mindful to leave room for quieter voices



Land the Plane

Out of respect for our limited time, please try to get to the point of your comment or question as concisely as possible



Community Garden

If someone brings up a point that isn't relevant to our discussion right now, but still important, we will try to make time for it later in the course

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**This Week's
Assignment**

01

Introduction to Climate Change



What is the difference between
climate and weather?

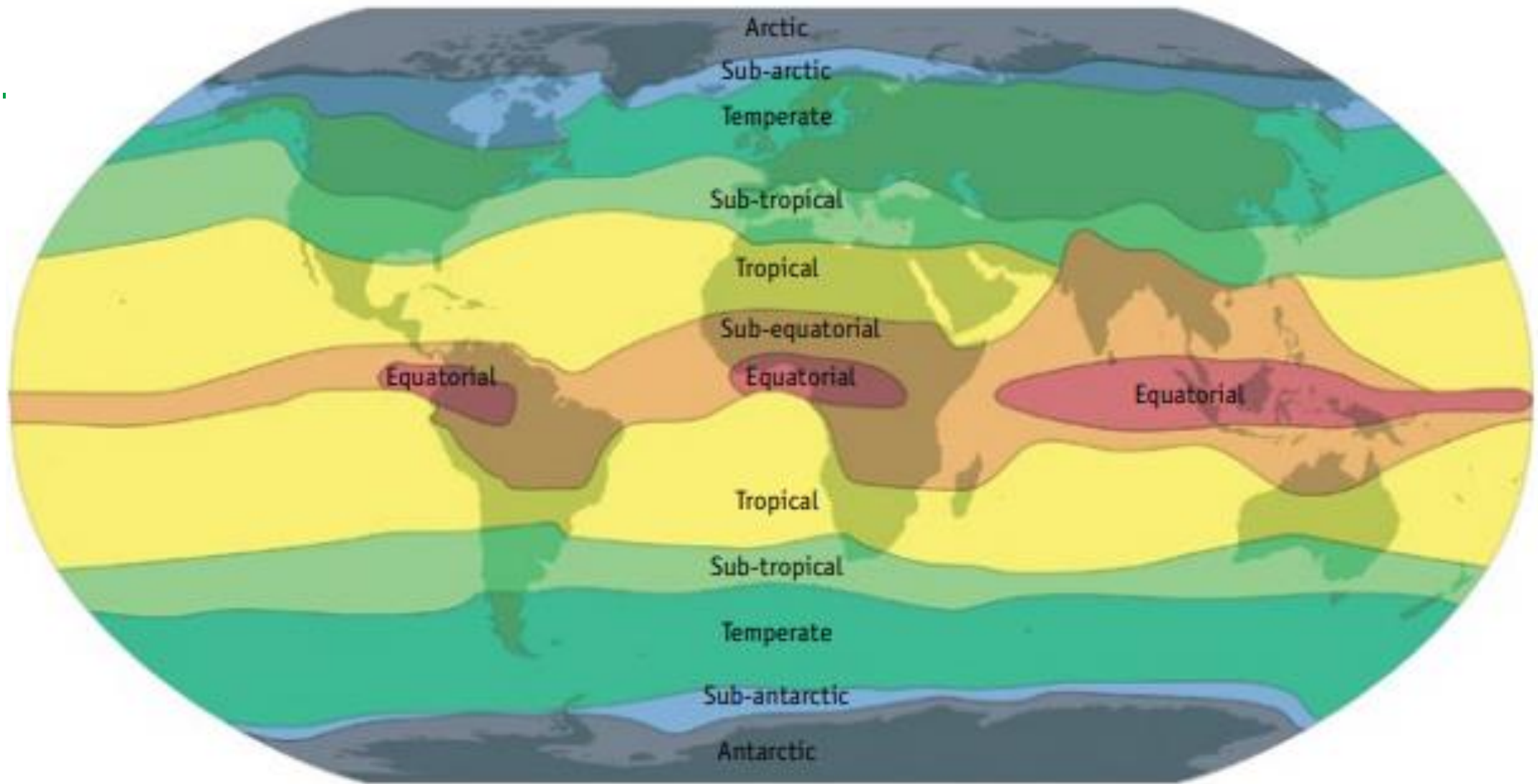


Weather

Weather describes the current state of our atmosphere in a specific place. It is always changing and can be impacted by many variables, including:

- Temperature
- Air pressure
- Cloud formation
- Wind
- Humidity
- Rain





Climate is the long-term pattern of weather in a particular area



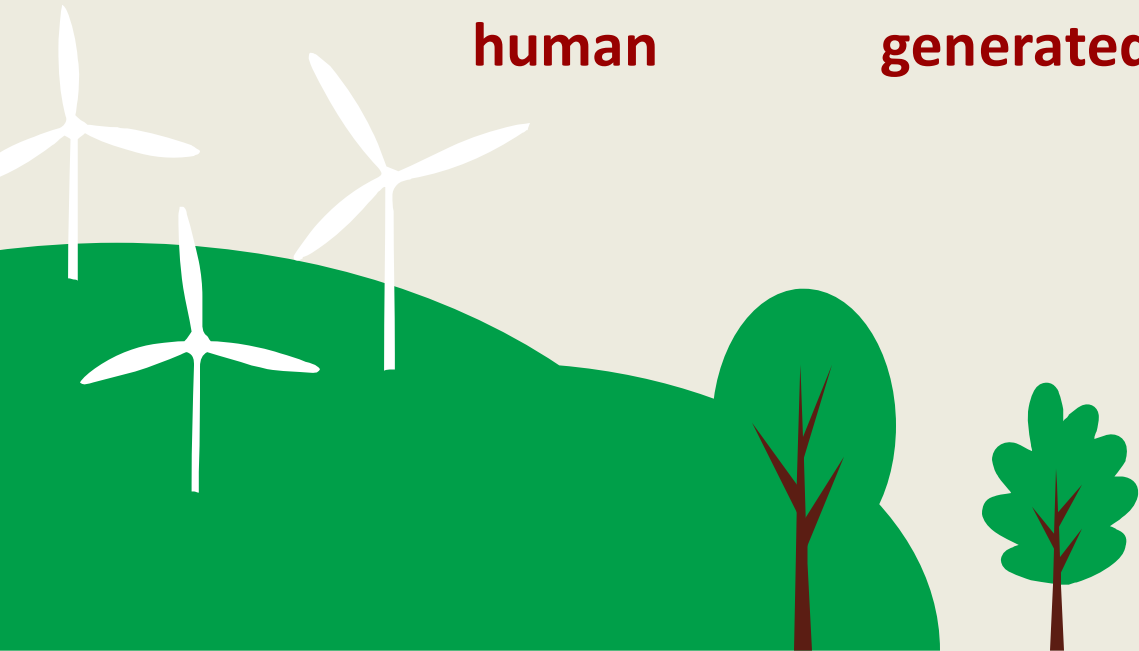
anthro - pogenic

human

generated

climate change

Long-term
weather
patterns



HOW DO WE KNOW?

Scientists track the climate by analyzing:

GLACIER LENGTHS **EARTH'S ORBIT** **TREE RINGS**
ICE CORES **OCEAN SEDIMENT** **POLLEN REMAINS**

with climate change impacts (evidence):

**INCREASES IN OCEAN
TEMPERATURES, SEA
LEVEL AND ACIDITY**

**CHANGES IN
FREQUENCY,
INTENSITY AND
DURATION OF
EXTREME
WEATHER EVENTS**

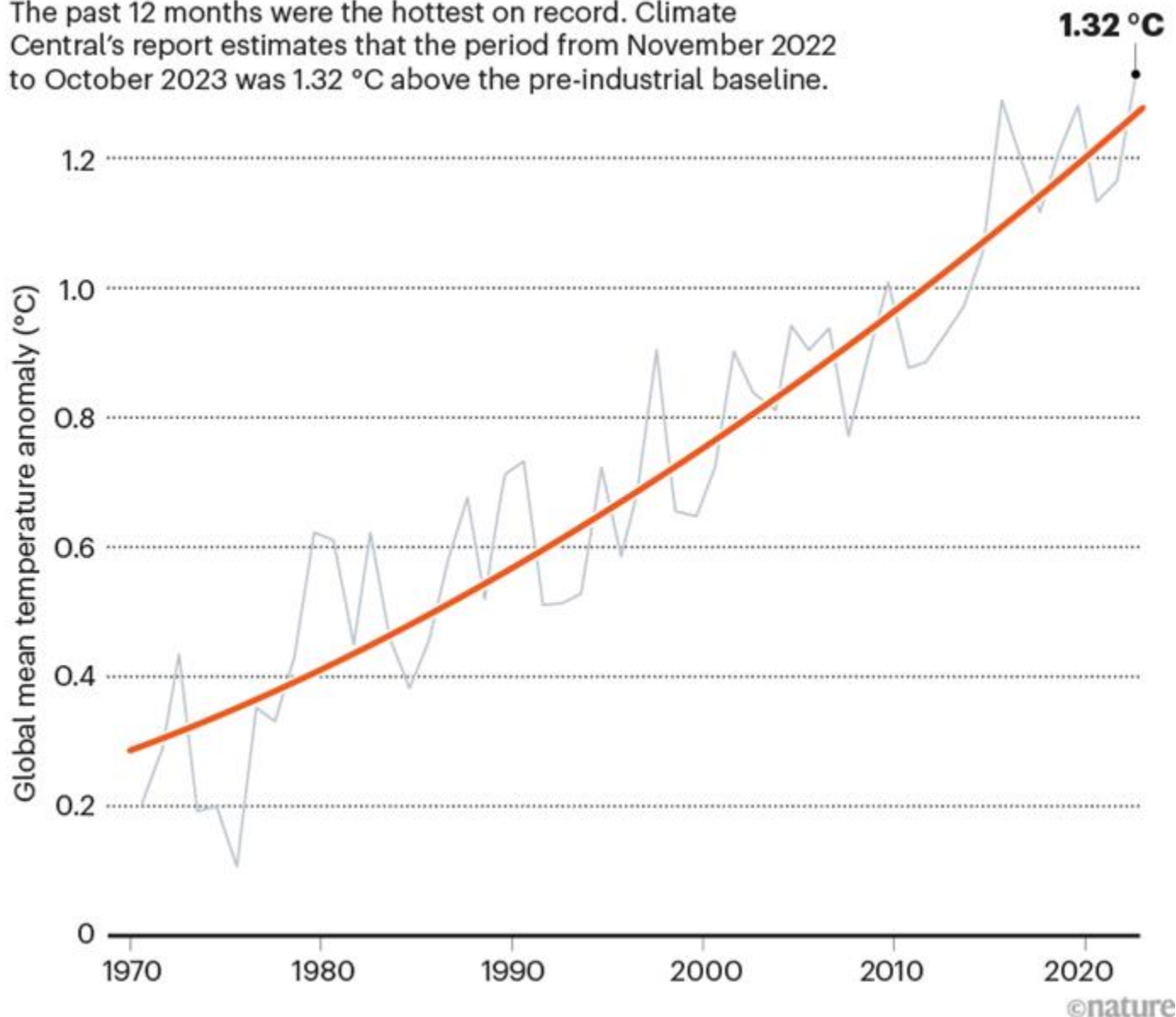
**MELTING OF
GLACIERS
AND SEA ICE**

**CHANGING
TEMPERATURE AND
PRECIPITATION
PATTERNS**

**SHIFTS IN ECOSYSTEM
CHARACTERISTICS**

HEATING PLANET

The past 12 months were the hottest on record. Climate Central's report estimates that the period from November 2022 to October 2023 was 1.32 °C above the pre-industrial baseline.



What **human activities** contribute to climate change?





What are the **impacts** of climate change?



WHO ALL IS

Everyone is impacted, but people can be more vulnerable based on their:

AGE **HEALTH** **INCOME** **HEALTHCARE ACCESS**

Populations of concern are groups with:

EXPOSURE TO HAZARDS **SENSITIVITY**

LOW ADAPTABILITY TO CLIMATE STRESSORS

The impact on vulnerable populations:

LOW INCOME

childhood
asthma
diagnoses
= 15% more
likely

extreme temp.
labor hours
lost = 25%
more likely

MINORITY

childhood
asthma
diagnoses
= 27% more
likely

extreme temp.
labor hours
lost = 35%
more likely

NO H.S. DIPLOMA

childhood
asthma
diagnoses
= 16% more
likely

extreme temp.
labor hours
lost = 26%
more likely

Climate change impacts peoples' health, the environment and the economy:

Warmer
temperatures



Increase the
frequency, intensity
and duration of
heat waves

Ecosystem changes



Influence plant/
animal species
lifecycle events

Changes in rainfall



Can affect water
supplies, quality
and electricity

Worsening air and
water quality



Increase the spread
of diseases

And alters
frequency/intensity
of extreme weather
events



Increase losses to
property, cause
costly societal
disturbance and
reduce insurance
affordability

*Source: EPA.gov
Spread by Ali Levens*

02

Origins of Climate Justice



How would you define **climate justice**
and **environmental justice**? What
might be the difference between
these terms?

Turn to a neighbor and discuss



From Environmental to Climate Justice

We talked last week about the history of environmental justice (mostly in the United States)

- 1982 Warren County PCB Protests
- Black communities adapting the tactics of the civil rights movement
- Seen as “the merger of the environmental and civil rights movements”



Protesters preventing trucks filled with soil contaminated by polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) from reaching the proposed Warren County landfill in Afton, North Carolina, September 1982

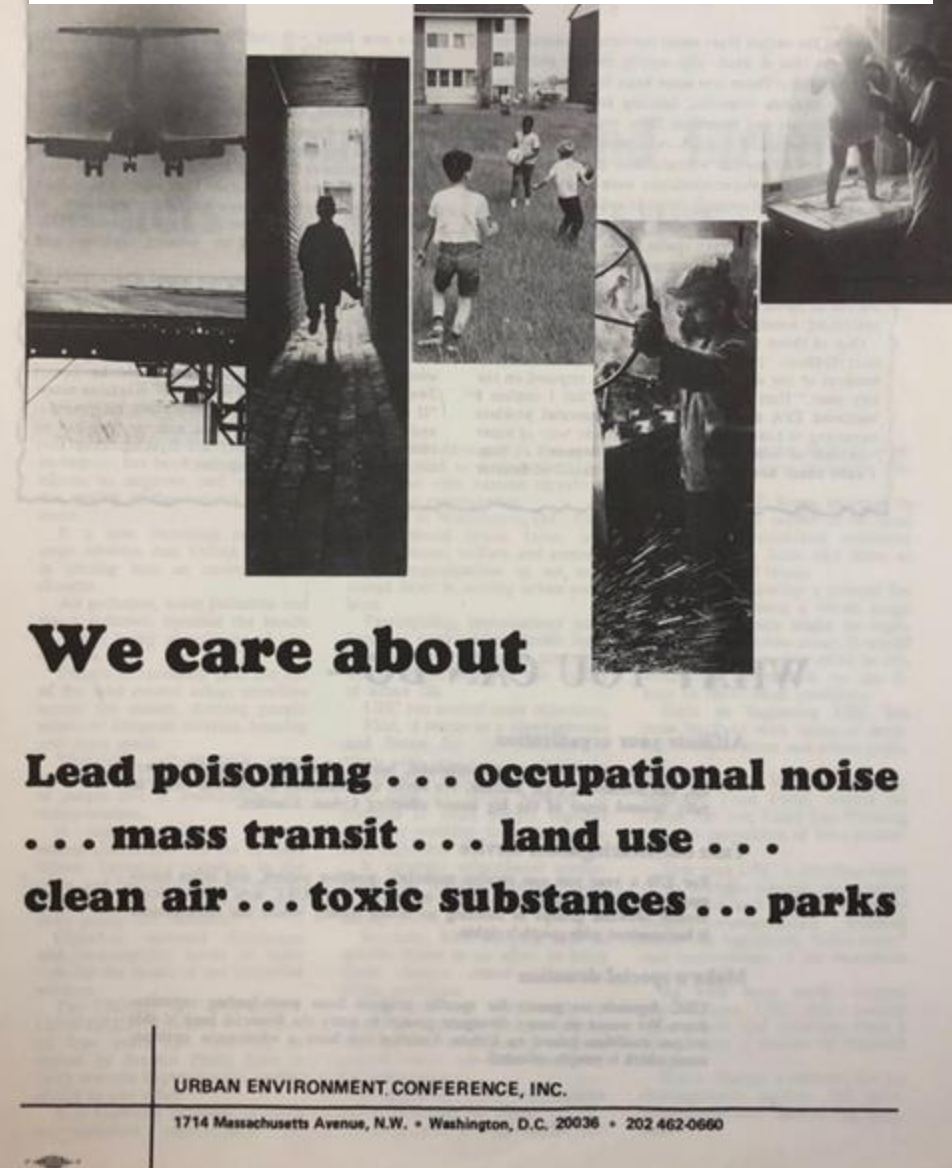


WE ACT co-Founders Peggy Shepard and the late Chuck Sutton raising awareness about poor air quality in Northern Manhattan

Before Warren County

- Early 1900s - Black labor organizers fighting against hazardous working conditions
- 1919 strike of black and white steel mill workers in Gary, Indiana & 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers strike
- Organizers focused on race as well as class-based organizing
- 1971 - Urban Environment Conference in Michigan

"Urban Environment Conference Flyer," *Give Earth a Chance: Environmental Activism in Michigan*, accessed September 13, 2024,



“***Environmental Justice*** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.”

— First National People of Color
Environmental Leadership Summit

What themes do we see here?



***“Climate Justice** recognizes the disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income communities and communities of color around the world, the people and places least responsible for the problem.”*

— UC Center for Climate Justice



Principles of Climate Justice

**Social & Racial
Justice**

**Natural
Solutions**

Human Rights

**Indigenous
Leadership**

Just Transition

**Intergenerational
Justice**

**Resilience and
Adaptation**

Education

**Benefits &
Burdens**

Two Notions of Justice



Environmental Justice

Focuses on ensuring that all communities have equal access to environmental protections and benefits, regardless of race, income, or national origin.

Aims to address the disparities that have resulted from systemic oppression of minority communities



Climate Justice

Focuses on the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, and on putting equity and human rights at the center of climate change action.

Aims to promote fair distribution of resources to address the impacts of climate change.

So how did these ideas converge?



03

Katrina and Climate Justice





BLACK AMERICAN HISTORY

49

HURRICANE

KATRINA



Post-Katrina Consensus

Environmental Justice meets Climate Justice:

- Underlying segregation, poverty, housing discrimination, educational racism, and poor infrastructure made the community more **vulnerable**
- Human created climate change made Katrina more **harmful**
- Systemic racism impacted the **resiliency** of the survivors



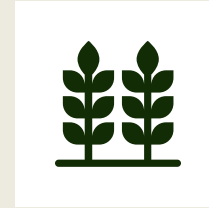
Distinctions in Emphasis



**Restorative
Justice**



**“Leave it in the
Ground”**



**Indigenous
Leadership**

04

Indigeneity and Climate Justice



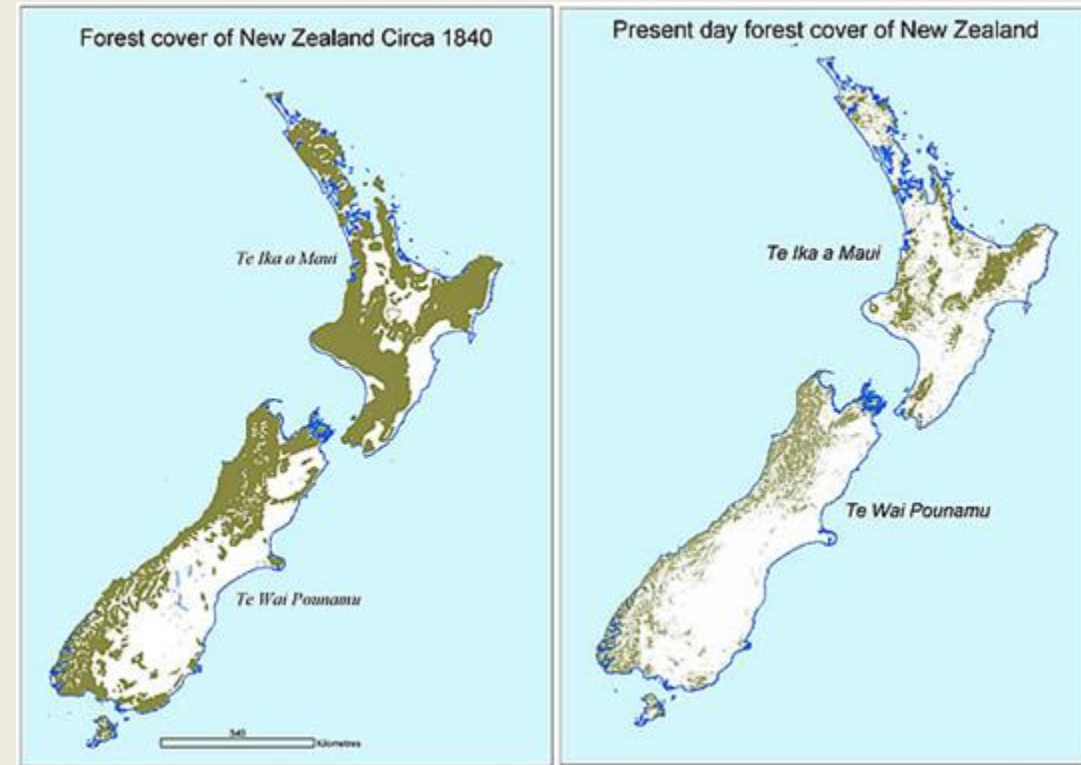
INDIGENOUS CLIMATE CHANGE STUDIES: INDIGENIZING FUTURES, DECOLONIZING THE ANTHROPOCENE

KYLE WHYTE

1. Anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change is an intensification of environmental change imposed on Indigenous peoples by colonialism.
2. Renewing Indigenous knowledges, such as traditional ecological knowledge, can bring together Indigenous communities to strengthen their own self-determined planning for climate change.
3. Indigenous peoples often imagine climate change futures from their perspectives (a) as societies with deep collective histories of having to be well-organized to adapt environmental change and (b) as societies who must reckon with the disruptions of historic and ongoing practices of colonialism, capitalism, and industrialization.

Climate Change as Intensified Colonialism

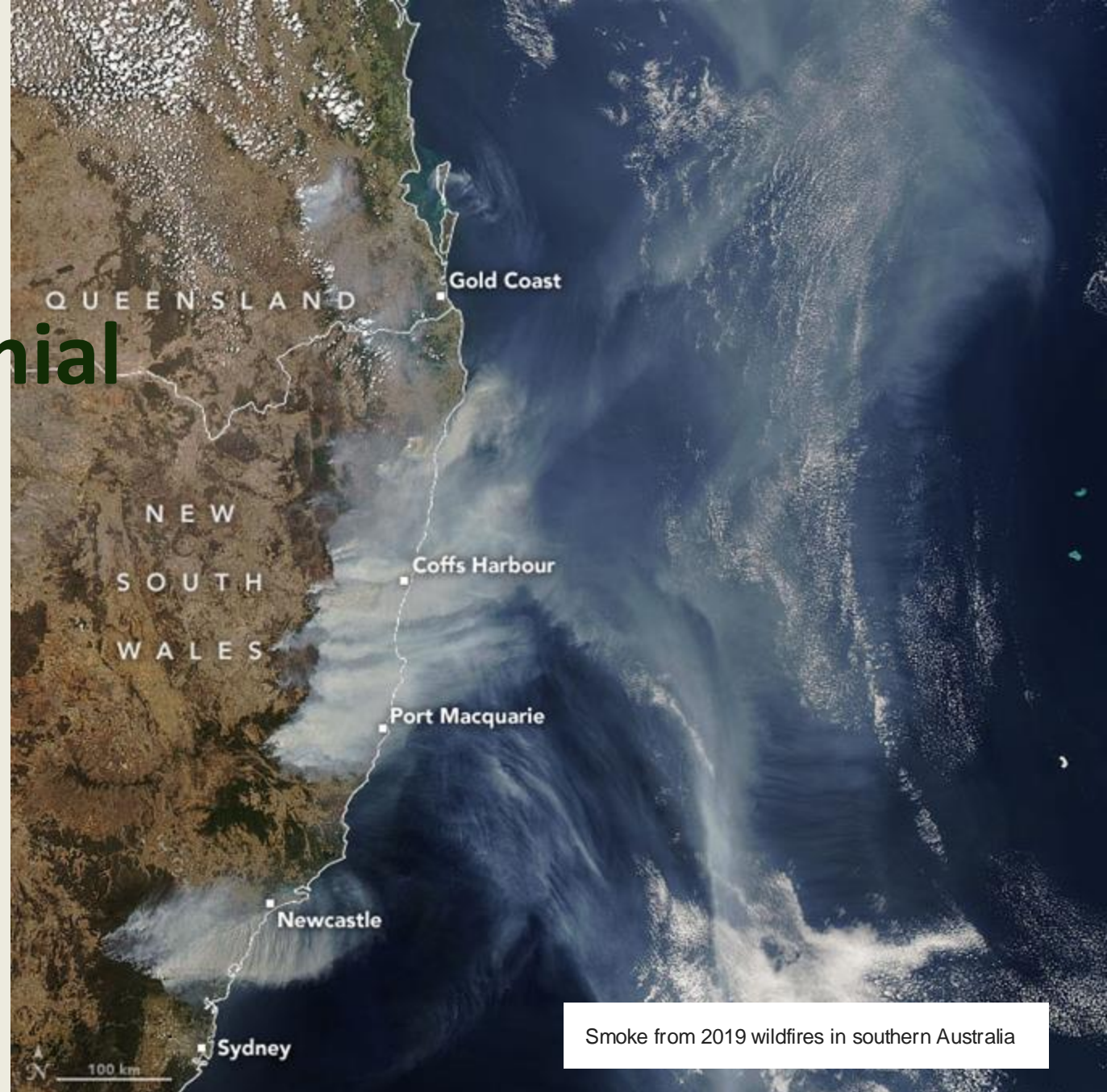
- Is climate change really caused by “human activity” writ large?
- How do colonial and capitalist ideologies perpetuate climate change?



A comparison of forest cover before the British established a colony in New Zealand (left) versus today (right).

The Impacts of Colonial “Conservation”

- Banning of controlled burning in Australia and the United States
- Destruction of native forests with pine plantations in the western Himalayas
- Destruction of indigenous lands, harvesting, and hunting grounds



Smoke from 2019 wildfires in southern Australia

“That colonizers today, from settlers to imperialists, are concerned about climate change, suggests that they are now being affected by the seismic waves of massive ecosystem transformation that began over 500 years ago.”

— **Heather Davis and Zoe Todd**



Further Reading:

- Indigenous Climate Change Studies: Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene
- Salish-Kootenai Tribe's Climate Change Strategic Plan
- Petition To The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Seeking Relief From Violations Resulting from Global Warming Caused By Acts and Omissions of the United States (Inuit "Right to Be Cold" Petition)
- "Climate Changed: Reflections on Our Past, Present and Future Situation," organized by the Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Working Group
- Mandaluyong Declaration of the Global Conference on Indigenous Women, Climate Change and REDD Plus
- Pollution is Colonialism by Max Liboiron

05

Just Transitions



Grist



JUST TRANSITIONS

Workers

Suppliers

Communities

Consumers

Involving workers by anticipating employment shifts, respecting rights at work, ensuring dialogue, developing skills, protecting health and safety and providing social protection, including pensions and benefits.

Supporting suppliers in taking account of social impact on the path to net zero, strengthening local supply chains, applying labour, human rights and environmental due diligence along the supply chain.

Understanding the spillover effects for communities, respecting rights around impacts and involvement, focusing on vulnerability, enabling innovations such as community energy.

Prioritising implications for consumers with inadequate access to sustainable goods and services including energy, removing barriers to consumers to support the transition, including through financial services.

In Your Groups

1. **Imagine you have been appointed to a task force tasked with creating a proposal for a just transition for Beckley, a coal town in West Virginia.**
2. **What considerations would you need to take into account to ensure that residents are not left behind by the transition? Make sure to think about the implications for workers, suppliers, communities, and consumers when you think about your plan.**

Closing Reflections



Next Week's Assignment:

Listen to the following interview about cobalt mining in the Congo and as a group create 5 slides outlining why this is a climate justice and environmental justice issue, tying it back to the 17 principles of EJ.

