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Political Ecology

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Urban Political Ecologies of Waterfront Restoration: The Gentrification of the Anacostia River Waterfront

Until the early 2000s, Navy Yard was considered a dangerous, heavily polluted, and systematically neglected neighborhood in the shadow of the nation's capital. As the product of redevelopment through public-private partnerships, Navy Yard's catalytic development can be viewed as a microcosm of similar neoliberal planning efforts across the United States. Known as the "forgotten river," the Anacostia River, which borders Navy Yard, has become a dividing line that reflects racial and socioeconomic divisions of Washington, DC. The declaration of the Anacostia as a Superfund Site coincided with the intensification of redevelopment and investment in Navy Yard and may be seen as responsible for the fast-paced gentrification of the Southeast area. This paper will examine the redevelopment process of turning waterfront-adjacent Navy Yard into modern-day "Capitol Riverfront," draw upon the theoretical framework of racial capitalism to interrogate the environmental injustices associated with the Anacostia River and the effects of sustainable gentrification, and discuss the "just green enough" movement and environmental reparations as possible routes for future sustainable development of toxic waste sites.

I. A Brief History of Washington's Navy Yard

Navy Yard, located in Southeast Washington DC, served as the U.S. Navy's oldest shore establishment (Marolda 2004, 2). Navy Yard was chosen because of its proximity to the Capitol so that the government, suspicious of standing military forces, could be nearby. The land was first purchased by the federal government on July 23, 1798, and two additional adjacent plots were purchased in 1801 (Sheir 2013). On October 2, 1799, this public land was transferred into the custody of the Navy. This section of land served multiple purposes over time; it started as a shipbuilding center, then became an ordinance plant, and then acted as a ceremonial and administrative center. The Navy Yard was built under Benjamin Stodder, the first Secretary of the Navy, and was under the supervision of Commodore Thomas Tingey, who served as the first commandment of the yard for 29 years (Marolda 2004, 2). During the War of 1812, Commodore Tingey ordered the yard to be burned down in order to avoid capture. Navy Yard became less useful as a shipyard following the war because the Anacostia River was too shallow and was inaccessible to open sea, so the yard became a center for ordnance and technology (Sheir 2013).

Navy Yard's relevance returned as an integral part of the defense of Washington during the Civil War. By the end, however, the Navy Yard had reduced its workforce by 20 percent, and decades of pollution made it so the Anacostia could not flush the sediment out of its channel (Williams 2001, 415). The Anacostia went from forty feet deep in the 1700s to eight feet deep as a result of silt buildup, which made it too shallow for large ships. Even worse, eight outfalls dumped ten million gallons of raw sewage into the river on a daily basis (Williams 2001, 417).

As military installations continued dumping toxic pollutants into the Anacostia, the purpose of the Navy Yard changed in order to adapt to the changing environmental conditions.

During World War II, the Navy Yard became the largest naval ordnance plant in the world. At its peak, Navy Yard had 188 buildings on 126 acres of land with over 25,000 employees (Sheir 2013). The area was renamed to Washington Navy Yard when the phasing out of ordnance work began in 1961. The Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) was created in 1963 when the Washington Navy Yard transferred 55 acres to the General Services Administration (GSA) for redevelopment (*Hazardous Waste Cleanup: General Services Administration in Washington, DC*, 2020). The GSA maintained ownership of this land throughout the process of redevelopment. In 1964, the GSA converted the deserted factory buildings to office use. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Naval Historical Center moved into Navy Yard (Marolda 2004, 94). Navy Yard was deemed a "historic district" by Congress' Joint Committee on Landmarks in 1973 because of its "cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia" (Marolda 2004, 94). The 1980s saw the additional concentration of Naval offices in Navy Yard, as well as the promotion of tourist attractions such as a weekly "Summer Ceremony" that is arguably not too different from the summer concert series that occurs in modern-day Capitol Riverfront. Navy Yard's legacy as a historic site situated on federal land fated the area to be preserved through redevelopment efforts that emphasized privatization and environmental restoration.

When the land was functionally abandoned by the Navy and the federal government, the land became increasingly inhabited by low-income, Black residents. The neighborhoods surrounding the Anacostia, including Wards 7 and 8 have the highest concentrations of low-income and Black residents in the District. It is no coincidence that they inhabited abandoned

land surrounding toxic waste sites; theories of racial capitalism explain how the devaluation of Black bodies is tied to the increase of capital. In his book *Black Marxism*, Cedric Robinson traces the emergence of racial order in feudal Europe and its impact on the organization of labor under capitalism. He used the term "racial capitalism" to refer to the expansion of capitalist society and the impermeability of social relations which "pursued essentially racial directions" (Robinson 1983, 3-23). This notion of racial capitalism has been reproduced to provide a more meaningful analysis of the role of the political economy in urban environmental conflicts. Racial Capitalism argues that debates used to center on whether policymakers and planners had racist intentions, rather than an examination of the historic forces that have reproduced segregation and structural racism (McCreary & Mullgan 2018, 4). In both Pulido and Robinson's work, they challenge the Marxist notion that racism can be reduced to class. Pulido explains, "racial difference, similar to gender inequality, creates a variegated landscape that cultures and capital can exploit to create enhanced power and profits" (Pulido 2016, 7). Pulido applies this idea of racial capitalism to explain how Flint, Michigan was considered "disposable" because it was predominantly poor *and* Black, which deemed environmental justice attempts not financially worthy. The historic pollution of the Anacostia River occurred within a similar framework, but the devaluation of its Black, low-income residents has repeated when clean-up efforts paired with investments created a neighborhood no longer meant for them.

Although the initial transfer of land happened in the early 1960s, redevelopment efforts did not take off until the 1990s. Congress began reducing Defense Department budgets at the beginning of the 1990s. As a result, the Navy consolidated some of its operations by ending their expensive building leases in Northern Virginia in favor of expanding operations in Navy Yard

(Marolda 2004, 98). In part because of increased employment at the Navy Yard, it was included as a stop in the Metro's green line expansion in 1991. During the same year, the GSA released a master plan of the area, which proposed a $1 billion redevelopment of the SEFC (MacKinnon 2017, 76). Although this process was continually delayed by federal budget cuts, the expansion of the workforce in Navy Yard continued; in 1995 the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) transferred 4,000 jobs from nearby Crystal City. A major advocate for the redevelopment of Navy Yard, Eleanor Holmes Norton, responded in support, "I am ecstatic that in a time of downsizing the Navy Yard will get further use. The combination of the development of the Southeast Federal Center and the revival of the Navy Yard will remake the surrounding neighborhood". (MacKinnon 2017, 89). Congresswoman Norton was instrumental in spearheading government involvement in the redevelopment process and pairing government funds with private investment. She was fiercely passionate about improving the living conditions of Black Washingtonians, which meant advocating for the cleanup of the heavily polluted Anacostia River.

II. The Pollution of the Anacostia River

Superfund Site Declaration

The legacy of high levels of pollution led to the listing of Navy Yard as the first Superfund site in the District (Loeb 1997). The biodiversity of the area had taken a hit; species such as the peregrine falcon and the spotted and marble salamanders faced extinction (Williams 2001, 422). The water had low levels of dissolved oxygen and high fecal coliform counts, which bred diphtheria and dysentery. The conditions were so bad that the "river's ailing fish, which depend on their vision to catch prey, could not see in the absence of light and careened blindly

around the river bottom like student drivers in a parking lot" (Williams 2001, 423-424). In response, Congress gave $200 million for efforts to restore the waterfront (MacKinnon 2017, 89). Through the lens of EPA intervention, it is fairly easy to track how the cleanup efforts of the Anacostia River led to fast and intensified investment.

The Sierra Club opposed the designation of Navy Yard as a Superfund site because of the "bureaucratic delays that typically accompany such a designation" (Loeb 1997). Many environmentalists felt that a lawsuit from the Sierra Club would be addressed faster than a Superfund site listing from the EPA, which had fewer legal retributions. Sierra Club attorney Damon Whitehead argued that the public would be better served if the EPA "dropped the Superfund effort and vigorously enforced a draft cleanup order it sent to the Navy in August." In 1996, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund filed a lawsuit against the Navy and GSA for violating the Clean Water Act. After hundreds of years of industrial work on the Anacostia River, there was recognition for the environmental damage that had been caused. The plaintiffs in the case included Barry Farms Residents Association and the Kingman Park Civic Association, organizations that represented the community interests of two predominantly Black waterfront neighborhoods (Haynes 2013, 67). The case was ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, which called on the Navy to investigate and clean up the toxic emissions. Although both approaches had the same goal of cleaning up the Anacostia River, the Sierra Club was able to bring in Black residents in an attempt to pursue justice, while the EPA approach focused on economic investment into the river itself. If the Sierra Club had been able to pursue legal actions without EPA-spurred economic investment into the river, would the community have had more influence on the disbursement of funds?

It was not until 1997, after the EPA designation of the Anacostia as a Superfund Site, that developers began to show serious interest in the redevelopment of the Navy Yard neighborhood. A local developer, Florida Rick, proposed to build the headquarters for a non-profit group, Earth Conservation Corporation on the waterfront to facilitate waterfront activities in exchange for zoning changes. Changing zoning laws from federal or industrial sites to multi-family zones would be an important first step in redeveloping the area. In 1998, Anthony Williams was elected as the new mayor of Washington DC. He was a strong advocate of redevelopment; he immediately prioritized revitalization in 6 areas, including Navy Yard. His revitalization plan included $75 million for tax incentives for business, property acquisition, and neighborhood rehabilitation (MacKinnon 2017, 96). In an interview in 2016, Williams' former director of planning explained,

> I was appointed [Mayor Williams'] planning director in 1999 and when we first met . . . he took me to this place called Saint Elisabeth, which overlooks the Anacostia River . . . and he said: "This is what I really want to do; I think the Anacostia river has always been a divide for the city physically and symbolically; it's about race in the city, it's about class; it's a polluted river; it's the second river: The Potomac River gets all the attention with the monuments and memorials (Avni & Fischler 2019, 1788).

The Anacostia, on the other hand, served as a symbol of environmental racism for the DC government. This was at a time when neoliberal planning efforts attempted to clean up inner cities, and local governments saw pushing investment into neighborhoods like Navy Yard that were seen as sources of crime and drugs as a way to improve the livelihoods of the residents.

The cleanup efforts of the Anacostia River were advocated for by Black politicians and activists who wanted to see environmental injustices reversed. Despite their best efforts, by trying to increase the use value of the Anacostia River, they also raised the exchange value of the

surrounding area, specifically Navy Yard, which saw the beginnings of environmental gentrification. Smith argues that there were 3 waves of gentrification: sporadic gentrification in the ’50s, the 1970s, and 80s as gentrification became a more integral part of urban and economic restructuring, and in the 1990s when it became the most prominent (Smith 2002, 440). Gentrification can be understood by five characteristics: “the transformed role of the state, penetration by global finance, changing levels of political opposition, geographical dispersal, and the sectoral generalization of gentrification” (Smith 2002, 441). Jackson adds to this explanation and makes a compelling argument that gentrification is an extension of colonial “relationalities,” in which minority, low-income, and indigenous residents are devalued through the capitalist system (Jackson 2017, 52). She argues that gentrification is perpetuated based on the capitalist ideologies of private ownership and investment, which bring about unethical consumption and privatization of resources. Furthermore, she considers spatial development a tool of corrupt white privilege, “because the neighborhood is where diverse bodies share space—and struggle to make place—it is where difference is confronted” (Jackson 2017, 70). Finally, she explains how primitive accumulation refers to enclosure of the commons, conquest of land, and extraction of resources “at the fringe of capitalism’s reach,” and leads to the transformation of land into private property, creating a landless class (Jackson 2017, 52). While most Marxist views of primitive accumulation see a one-time round of expropriation, Black communities have experienced theft and enclosure as an ongoing, cyclical phenomenon (Roane 2018, 258).

Quastel defines ecological gentrification as “the displacement of vulnerable human inhabitants resulting from the implementation of an environmental agenda driven by an environmental ethic,” and tracks its origins to overly competitive neoliberal real estate markets in

the early 2000s (2009, 697). Checker looks at environmental gentrification from a political perspective, and places responsibility on "politically neutral planning" and well-intended environmental justice activism (Checker 2011, 212). Simply explained, when hazardous sites are created in a neighborhood, affluent residents have the wealth and mobility to leave, which explains the premise of environmental injustice (Eckerd 2011, 32). The story continues, however, as once hazardous sites are cleaned up and there is an improvement in environmental quality, this development attracts a new 'creative class' (Florida 2002). This phenomenon occurs because the devaluation of human lives in a system of uneven development leaves low-income individuals unable to escape environmental hazards. As such, a definition of environmental gentrification must address the role that capitalism and neoliberal planning policies play in this process of devaluation.

Cities tend to use sustainable development as a mask for underlying gentrification through primitive accumulation and the privatization of green amenities. Pearsall gives an overview of the challenges that environmental gentrification poses for environmental justice. She argues that gentrification has most recently been associated with these types of "improvements," such as green space creation, park restoration projects, bike lane infrastructure, and the opening of farmers' markets (Pearsall & Anguelovski 2016, 2). Navy Yard has been acclaimed as a vision for sustainable development; the redevelopment process saw the implementation of many of these innovations. Sustainable development oftentimes is merely an attempt to make healthier, more green cities. At what point do intentions matter, when displacement is rampant and often a side-effect of this kind of redevelopment?

Redevelopment Efforts

In 1999, DC Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton introduced a bipartisan resolution to create a public-private partnership to speed up SEFC development where the government would maintain ownership of the land but make it available to a developer. The developer would be chosen competitively and fund the project, but they would not have to buy the land. Simultaneously, the federal government was forced to address the pollution of the Anacostia River. As the historian Edward Marolda notes, "the modernization of historic Navy Yard buildings and beautification of the surrounding grounds generated positive publicity for the Navy and its relationship to Washington, DC. But the effort also brought to the surface the environmental degradation caused by almost 200 years of industrial production that polluted the shore site and the Anacostia River" (Marolda 2004, 98). The federal government had already spent about $30 million on the cleanup of the Anacostia River Waterfront (MacKinnon 2017, 98). To encourage redevelopment, the District provided tax incentives and liability protection for developers who planned to build on the polluted site. The Anacostia River, which has served as the dichotomy of a cultural watering hole and toxic wasteland, was now being used as the tool with which to facilitate and attract rapid redevelopment.

Urban waterfront redevelopment can be attributed to a number of factors but is historically reliant on 1) technological changes following World War II that led to the abandonment of industrial land adjacent to waterfronts, 2) the historic preservation movement, 3) increased environmental awareness and cleanup efforts, 4) pressure to redevelop central city areas, and 5) urban renewal (Sairinen & Kumpulainen 2006, 121). In the case of Navy Yard, all of these forces played a visible role. This period of regeneration has been fueled by inter-urban competition and the need for cities to continually attract investment.

In 1999, the EPA issued the GSA an Administrative Order under the Solid Waste Disposal Act that asked them to identify contaminated areas and create an action plan to fight site contamination (*Hazardous Waste Cleanup: General Services Administration in Washington, DC*, 2020). The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) officially launched in 2000 as an initiative to clean up the river and redevelop the surrounding areas. The AWI, formed by Mayor Williams, consisted of the D.C. government, fourteen federal agencies, and four local quasi-governmental organizations. The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan was officially released in 2003 with five goals in mind; including 1) environmental healing of the river, 2) rethinking transportation to improve access to the river, 3) a waterfront park system featuring a river walk and a trail 4) livening up the waterfront to celebrate and explore cultural heritage, and 5) the promotion of sustainable economic development (MacKinnon 2017, 110). It is worth noting that access to the river for existing residents or economic protection against rising rents were not in consideration as the main goals.

Urban waterfronts and "blue space" serve important ecological and cultural purposes in the city. Avni and Fischler propose three concepts of "the river:" the river as a physical connection between two parts of the city, as a corridor with attractions to grab populations from both sides, and as a site for economic development (Avni & Fischler 2019, 1788). Williams looks specifically at the pollution of the Anacostia River, linking forces ranging from colonialism to nationalism, militarism, empire, racism, inequality, and urban renewal, to name a few (Williams 2001, 410). This discourse looks at the Anacostia River as a site of struggle between use and exchange values, with history favoring the latter. Williams argues in her work that activists cleaned up the riverfront area just for developers to come in and ruin their work. Many

organizations like the AWI and EPA, which had good intentions, played a role in this process. Williams' argument centers on a need for environmental justice to center on use-value for the existing community, rather than the exchange value of real estate prospects.

The notion that market-driven development on one side of the river would generate resources for investment on the other side was repeated throughout the planning process. The role of the AWI did not end there; the AWI has been responsible for mixed-use projects in Capitol Riverfront (the re-branded name for the area that encompasses modern-day Navy Yard), the new U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters, and the development of The Wharf. The AWI rationale as "trickle down" logic in which gains from development may or may not benefit neighboring areas did not necessarily serve its purpose. A report from the World Bank found that the AWI has attracted $25 billion in private and public investment and will generate $1.5 billion in additional tax revenue for DC annually (Amirtahmasebi et al. 2016). Considered by the World Bank to be one of the "largest and most successful redevelopment plans in the United States to date," the AWI area has seen a population increase of 40% between 2000 and 2009 (Avni & Fischler 2019, 1791).

Another important stakeholder in the mission to clean up the Anacostia was the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) which took a bottom-up approach which included river-cleaning efforts with small groups and volunteers, as well as groups that planted trees, restored the wetlands, raised public awareness, and developed educational activities (Avni & Fischler 2019, 1799). The Seafarers Yacht Club spent fifteen years removing 150 tons of trash from the river, and Frazier Walton, the president of the Kingman Park Civic Association, had repeatedly sued

the city, the Navy, and the EPA for polluting the Anacostia with PCBs and violating the Clean Water act (Williams 2001, 427).

To analyze the social dimensions of urban waterfront planning, Sairinen and Kumplulainen examine resources and identity, social status, access and activities, and waterfront experience (2006, 125). This planning strategy takes into account the gentrification process, for whom the housing and service areas were built, and accessibility to public spaces. Perhaps problematic in this approach, they continually segregate the "urban waterfront" to mean the development specifically, and water itself as a neutral entity. They argue, "the urban waterfront acts as a borderland between the controlled urban structure and the uncontrolled nature (Sairinen & Kumpulainen 2006, 132). However, in practice, the development is spurred by a change in the river, and the health of the river is a critical piece to entice investment.

From an environmental standpoint, the Anacostia River has shown significant improvement. It is no longer considered to be one of the most polluted rivers in the United States. Through the AWI's 2.6-billion-dollar Long Term Control Plan (LTCP), they created a system of underground tunnels that capture and treat sewer overflows which successfully reduced a significant number of overflow events during storms (Avni & Fischler 2019, 1798). They predict that this system will prevent 98% of future pollution and is planned to be fully operational by 2022. Additionally, through a five-cent tax on disposable plastic bags, the District passed the Anacostia River Cleanup and Protection Act in which four out of five cents go to the Anacostia River Cleanup and Protection Fund (Avni & Fischler 2019, 1799).

Changing Demographics

The environmental gentrification brought about by the cleaning up of the Anacostia River has also seen drastically changing demographics. In 2002, the median household income in Navy Yard was one of the lowest in DC at $15,071, and 90% of the population was African American. Only 19% of households were “owner-occupied”, compared to the DC average of 41% (“Neighborhood Cluster 27 District of Columbia Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan” 2002). The demographics of the area had drastically changed within only five years; prior to 2007 the average resident incomes was one of the lowest in DC, but the area had reached a median household income of $61,934 and had a population that was 50% Black and 43% White by 2007 (DC Office of Planning 2007). An analysis of how neoliberal planning efforts have emphasized environmental cleanup and sustainable development for the purpose of raising the exchange value rather than the use value must also reconcile with racial capitalism and the specific disenfranchisement of the Black community in DC.

Lipsitz delves into the racialization of space by looking at how the creation of landscapes, segregation, and exchange value manipulate experiences of space and solidarity within space for different races (Lipsitz 2007, 10-14). He argues that prioritizing the “public good over private interests” would manifest itself through environmental justice, affordable housing, education for all, and universal health care. His strategies to achieve just landscapes and inclusive spaces include an attack on the structural mechanisms that reinforce unequal systems of power for Black folks and the engagement with a spatial imaginary that prioritizes use value over exchange value. (Lipsitz, 2007, pp. 10-14). Lipsitz argues that space, which is valuable and finite, is racialized in a metaphorical construct that reveals social relations (Lipsitz 2007, 10-13). These social relations are amplified in Navy Yard, where there are physical manifestations of these unequal systems

which brought environmental justice to a very different demographic than those who experienced the injustices.

Furthermore, Lipsitz separates experiences of public space into the White spatial imaginary-- the normative subject, and the Black spatial imaginary-- the non-normative subject. “Not all people who are white consciously embrace the white spatial imaginary, and not all whites profit equally from their whiteness, but all whites benefit from the association of whiteness with privilege and the neighborhood effects of spaces defined by their racial demography” (Lipsitz 2007, 13). Therefore, a White spatial imaginary is based on exclusivity and augmented exchange value, while the Black spatial imaginary elevates the use-value of the neighborhoods that they reside in by mobilizing the community, bartering for goods, and establishing local businesses that cater to residents on ethnic and racial lines. Roane describes this phenomenon as the “Black commons,” and recalls “plotting” as a form of engaging with practices of place, such as the use value of the Anacostia River to Black residents. He sees plotting as a way to create distinctive “social architecture” that resists infrastructures of commodification and social control (Roane 2018, 242).

Lipsitz argues that changing the racialized framework with which we view public space would require us to abandon the white spatial imaginary and disassemble the mechanisms that prevent people of color from acquiring assets that are inheritable to other generations, and that can appreciate in value while creating a new spatial imaginary that prioritizes use value over exchange value. (Lipsitz 2007, 14). Within the framework of the Anacostia River, the Black spatial imaginary had a specific use-value associated with the river itself as well as the surrounding area. The increase in the exchange value of the river itself, as well as Navy Yard,

resulted in a shift toward an exclusionary White spatial imaginary. Pulido echoes this sentiment through her work with Flint and argues that the residents of Flint were devalued based on their Blackness and surplus status, with both factors mutually reinforcing the other (Pulido 2016, 2). It is vital to consider the role of racial capitalism where environmental injustice is concerned in order to understand the role of the political economy.

III. Solutions to Mitigate the Effects of the Environmental Gentrification of Waterfronts

The literature surrounding environmental gentrification and the perils of waterfront redevelopment is plentiful, however, strategies to combat this cycle of displacement and disenfranchisement is lacking. What would success look like for a waterfront redevelopment project? If success means maintaining access for original residents, how can that be achieved? In the case of the Anacostia River, success for stakeholders involved in the planning and development process is measured by the appearance of diversity. A senior planner from the AWI explained,

> From the sense of "[h]as it brought the city together, and do people feel that somehow the division has been healed?", that's a tougher one because you're dealing with a very concentrated poverty east of the river that a riverfront alone can't on its own change. I do think if you go to the Yards Park and you go to [other] places down there you do see a lot of diversity. You see people using the park with different racial and socio-economic [profiles] and I think it has opened up the waterfront to people but I don't know if you could say really what east of the river people feel about the Anacostia riverfront … They probably look across and see the shiny stadium and all the development so that, you know, is it still a divide? … I think if you were to say "Is the job done?" I would say absolutely not done… the social equity piece east of the river—to continue [to] try to bring the city together—it takes a whole new generation of activities to do that (Avni & Fischler 2019, 1797).

Despite good intentions, policymakers and planners have systematically failed to find solutions for the displacement of original residents. Could planners and policymakers have done more to

ensure that sustainable development and waterfront clean-up efforts benefitted low-income and minority communities? Absolutely. However, attempts to incentivize environmental cleanup efforts prove nearly impossible without attempting to attract outside investment, making sustainable development without gentrification nearly impossible within a capitalist, neoliberal system.

Just Green Enough

Curran and Hamilton attempt to highlight a strategy to mitigate redevelopment in the face of environmental cleanup. "Just green enough" activism originated in Greenpoint, Brooklyn after Newton Creek, a waterfront area, was declared a Superfund Site in 2010 (Curran & Hamilton 2012, 1030). Similar to the Anacostia, Newton Creek was polluted over years of dumping toxic waste, in this case, oil. Activists within the community saw what was occurring in other areas of New York with developments such as the High Line and feared that the declaration of Newton Creek as a Superfund Site would raise rents and displace existing residents. The community specifically rejected a waterfront model and focused efforts on maintaining environmentally friendly manufacturing and greenspace that is accessible but not excessively attractive to outsiders.

This work of "just green enough" brings to light the dichotomy of trying to resolve life-threatening, inhumane environmental issues while facing the risk of losing the neighborhood and economic security. Curran and Hamilton argue that by refocusing the message of redevelopment from the transformation of toxic sites to the cleaning-up of a working-class neighborhood, activists and stakeholders were able to mitigate the process of gentrification. Haffner calls this process "conscious anti-gentrification," which is more slightly more agreeable than "just green

enough" because of the implication that these communities are limited to *just.* She argues that this process entails explicitly rejecting elements that would lead to gentrification, such as "fancy waterfronts" and emphasizing the inclusion of residents in the planning process (Haffner 2015). The "just green enough" movement, in essence, is attempting to raise the use value of toxic sites without raising the exchange value during the cleanup process. Unfortunately, there are no quantifiable rules or methods to ensure that cleaned-up areas do not surpass a certain boundary of increased exchange value, but the involvement of community activists in this process helped to ensure that the redevelopment process included the voices of the actual community.

Environmental Reparations and Community Benefits

Although environmental organizations have tried to better integrate social justice into their work, they have proven fairly unsuccessful. Despite their work around the Anacostia River acting as a catalyst for gentrification, the EPA mandate for cleaning hazardous sites includes consideration for how the cleanup will improve the lives of "traditionally underserved populations" (Eckerd 2011, 31-32). Some successful strategies have relied on long-term residents taking control of community resources and small industrial projects in their neighborhoods (Pearsall & Anguelovski 2016, 3). These communities rely on the creation of new types of business models that emphasize job creation and training, sustained income generation for long-term residents, and partnerships between nonprofits and businesses. For example, in a neighborhood in Boston, they were able to facilitate an integrated food network by bringing together food growers, food processors, retailers, restaurants, small waste management companies, and community land trusts. Several policy approaches have been found to slow down

the pace of gentrification, such as housing trust funds, community benefits agreements, and community land trusts (Pearsall & Anguelovski 2016, 4).

Many of these approaches center on returning wealth to the community, but none as directly as environmental reparations. Kaiman argues that a framework for environmental reparations must include recognition of and responsibility for the environmental injustice, acknowledgement of the affected community, respect and incorporation of the affected community in any discussions, and reparations in the form of community-based or individual funds. This could take the form of community goods such as paved roads, medical infrastructure, and community centers. Robert and Robin Collins explain that parks should not be regarded as a form of reparations, rather the allocation of environmental preservation districts as a form of reparations. They explain that the allocation of land, and not capital, is a new idea in the realm of environmental reparations, which would attempt to increase use value without exchange value, while also allowing nearby residents who own private property to increase their wealth through land value (Collin 2005, 219).

These reparations can and should be implemented at the federal, state, and local levels for communities that have experienced environmental injustices. In the case of the Anacostia River, this should include both federal and local reparations, with conversations that include original residents. One of the biggest issues that would arise is tracking down the affected communities, which will only get harder as more time passes. The situation in Navy Yard and Anacostia is especially unique because the environmental injustice was perpetrated by a multitude of federal organizations and occurred under the shadow of the nation's capital.

The Sierra Club's opposition to the declaration of the Anacostia as a Superfund Site by the EPA brought up the question of whether legal action would prove to be more effective in cleanup efforts and allow community groups to be more vocal in the remediation efforts. While it is impossible to know if Navy Yard would have turned out differently if not for the EPA, it is clear that the investment in the polluted river spurred more investment, and intensified redevelopment efforts. In a review of the legal possibility of environmental reparations, Catherine Kaiman found that communities who used legal action to challenge environmental injustices through laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, or the Resource and Recovery Act found very little success (Kaiman 2015, 1330). The minor successes resulted in settlements that did not fix environmental damage. She argues that legal action normally does not get to the heart of the issue: how environmental injustices are disproportionately affecting low-income and minority groups. In this way, the "just green enough movement" is not adequately addressing the issue either; both legal action and taking a mitigative approach do not fully bring justice.

IV. Conclusion

In a 1996 interview with Black resident Charles Martin, he gave insight into the river's fall from grace. "The city changed, he said. A lot of people who grew up loving the river moved out to the suburbs. And the river kept getting more and more choked by raw sewage, toxins and trash. So the new people who moved in could see the river only for what it was, forgotten and polluted. They didn't know what it used to be or could be again" (Loeb 1997). Anacostia resident Carl Cole agreed, "It was never a barrier to me -- never was, never will be. Rivers will get deep within you, and they will never leave you. Most people would not believe just the sereneness of

this all. You can just close your eyes and know you're off someplace else. You just sort of wrap yourself up in it and say, 'I'm home'" (Loeb 1997).

The Anacostia River serves as an example of the emphasis on exchange value within the White spatial imaginary that dominates urban redevelopment. It is evident that the river and the surrounding neighborhoods served as "Black commons," in which Black residents appreciated the use value of the river for fishing, swimming, and as a cultural anchor. The declaration of the Anacostia River as a Superfund Site after generations of misuse by the federal government served as an opportunity to bring justice to cleanup efforts of the waterfront and surrounding areas. Despite good intentions, the Anacostia River and surrounding neighborhoods have been cleaned up and cleaned out, with rapid redevelopment efforts and changing demographics. It might be too late for the Anacostia River, which is now on track to be swimmable in the next few years, and the surrounding neighborhood is known to be one of the most expensive and sought after in Washington DC. However, other cities have found ways to mitigate displacement. The "just green enough movement" and the prospect of environmental reparations serve as promising options to mitigate damage, include community residents in development decisions, and raise the use value of toxic sites. However, any approach used must serve its purpose and guarantee that environmental justice is served by ensuring that low-income and minority neighborhoods are not systematically home to toxic waste sites and environmental abuses. This will not be achieved until there are policies in place that protect these populations, regardless of land value or economic incentives, and hold local governments accountable.

V. Citations

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