

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Environmental racism refers to rules and regulations that purposefully target specific groups of people in certain neighborhoods, resulting in an unfair amount of pollution causing health problems and economic insecurity.



LITTLE VILLAGE



Little Village is a small community made up mostly of Mexican people. In the 20th century, the rate of Mexican immigration skyrocketed as a nationwide labor shortage prompted a big demand for blue collar workers. Mexican immigrants were forced to live in the Lower West-Side and the South West-Side which helped contribute to a huge demographic transition. The same area today is still at 80% Mexican or of Mexican descent and in Chicago where Little Village is located, the Mexican immigrant community “in general has lower levels of educational attainment than any other foreign groups”. Not only are Mexican immigrants not getting the education they deserve, but the article also states that 33% of Little Village residents report living below the poverty line and that their research shows that the housing conditions are some of the most overcrowded in Chicago.

CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IN LITTLE VILLAGE



Decades of research show that people of color are disproportionately exposed to the harmful effects of industrialization, pollution, waste and lingering environmental toxicity. Simultaneously, it has been found that White communities are benefitting from the advantages of cleaner air, soil, water and work and home environments, contributing to the ideas behind White supremacy. Bullard defines environmental racism in the article as “any environmental policy, practice or directive that differently affects or disadvantages (Whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups or communities based on race or color.”.



HISTORICAL RELEVANCE



State-sanctioned legal and extralegal practices of xenophobia create conditions of social and economic insecurity that ease allowance of repeated positioning of environmentally-hazardous industries and waste sits near racialized, immigrant communities. Redlining, in the United States is a discriminatory practice used to hold back certain groups of people in specific neighborhoods. This practice affects mostly minority groups, immigrant groups, including people of color.



Kern, and Kovesi, C. (2018). Environmental justice meets the right to stay put: mobilising against environmental racism, gentrification, and xenophobia in Chicago's Little Village. Local Environment, 23(9), 952-966. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2018.1508204>