

Climate Equity & Justice: Global Citizen, Corporate Oil & Regional Migration

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Research proposal on climate equity & justice
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*I will not be able to attend the Bonn workshop, but I would like to be considered for future conversations and to be included on the equity and justice listserv. This abstract serves as a proposal idea as well as an introduction to my research on oil exploration, climate activism and migration as impact and asset.

This abstract presents two proposals and on-going research projects. 1) The first proposal asks how inequity and injustice between local and global citizens and oil and gas corporations influence national policy on climate change and energy development. Currently, I am studying how community and environmental activism against oil and gas expansion plans in Aotearoa New Zealand and Florida have included climate change as one of several frames in their narratives of resistance. To justify resistance to new oil and gas proposals, activists in Aotearoa New Zealand represented climate change as a global and abstract concern, while in Florida activists framed climate change as a locally relevant and increasingly urgent impact worsened by new oil and gas extraction. Both activists offered energy alternative plans. 2) The second proposal asks how migrant populations serve as both vulnerable and impacted communities as well as assets for broadening and connecting conversations and actions on climate change between their first residence or home and their second one. Currently, I am developing a regional project that examines climate-related public education efforts in South Florida from professional or political meetings to street-side demonstrations. I find education alongside omissions. While institutional professionals have informed the public on some of the experienced or expected impacts of climate change, they have neglected discussions of causation and equity. South Florida reflects both wealthy coastline communities and tourism businesses vulnerable to sea level rise alongside lower income frontline yet higher ground communities vulnerable to gentrification and development interests. The region has an opportunity to connect climate awareness, education and action across the Caribbean and Latin America, as it is a region of migration with many residents maintaining ties to their places of birth. Yet in climate conferences and meetings that I have attended in the region, it is this population who has been absent, but who may be most affected and may be most able to connect parts of the U.S. to the wider region on climate change education, awareness and action of adaptation and mitigation. I suggest that residents with extended networks in the Caribbean and Latin America represent an undiscovered asset: undiscovered by the professional and political class, and an asset for its potential to expand climate discussion and connection between the US and Latin America or the Caribbean. Findings may be generalizable to coastal regions of inequality and migration that are experiencing direct impacts that may demand relocation. [A portion of this work on climate change in South Florida is currently under review with a journal.]