

# Moving Forward Together: A Just Transition for the Environmental Justice Movement in Massachusetts and Rhode Island

A thesis submitted by

Elizabeth Pongratz

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning

Tufts University

August 2017

Adviser: Sumeeta Srinivasan

# Abstract

---

The thesis provides an analysis of how and why the environmental justice (EJ) movement in Massachusetts (MA) and Rhode Island (RI) uses the just transition framework to resolve disproportionate environmental burden. The EJ movement is using the just transition framework through education and training, youth empowerment, coalition building, and fostering an equitable process among nonprofits, engagement with national networks, and support from environmental nonprofits. The movement is currently limited, however, due to a lack of adequate funding, a non-cohesive movement structure, a flawed risk assessment approach to environmental problem-solving, unsustainable legal services, by remaining “trapped” in policy silos, and by the lack of sufficient impact from green jobs initiatives. Nevertheless, opportunities exist to build ownership, capacity, resiliency and power in low-income communities and communities of color in both states. Threats that inhibit the movement include ecological gentrification, the housing market, the privatization of services and the power of the natural gas industry and polluter-industrial complex. The EJ movement should move forward with “just green enough”, jobs with justice, and public services in order to achieve a just transition for MA and RI.

# Acknowledgements

---

## Thesis Committee

Advisor, Sumeeta Srinivasan

Reader, Julian Agyeman

Reader, Daniel Faber

## Interview Participants

Kalila Barnett, Community Labor United

Lee Matsueda, Alternatives for Community and Environment

Juan Leyton, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Roseann Bongiovanni, GreenRoots

Michaelann Bewsee, ARISE for Social Justice

Elena Letona, Neighbor to Neighbor

Marvin Martin, Greater Four Corners Action Coalition

Sylvia Broude, Toxics Action Center

Cristina Cabrera, Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island

Roberta Hazen Aaronson, Childhood Lead Action Project

Amelia Rose, Groundwork Rhode Island

# Table of Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Historical Approach to Environmental Justice</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Environmental Justice Regionally</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Key Partners</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Results</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Strengths: Implementing a Just Transition</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Weaknesses Limiting Just Transition</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Opportunities to Build Up Community</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>Threats Inhibiting Just Transition</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>73</b>

# List of Tables

---

Table 1. Interview Sample .....	4
Table 2. DSNI Board Composition .....	30
Table 3. DSNI Board Composition .....	30

# List of Figures

---

Figure 1. EJSCREEN Results for MA.....	10
Figure 2. EJSCREEN Results for RI .....	13
Figure 3. Key Players in EJ Movement.....	16
Figure 4. Gas Leaks in Worcester. Source: Department of Public Utilities .....	57
Figure 5. Just Transition Framework for MA & RI .....	65

# Introduction

---

At the beginning of the new millennium the EJ movement in Massachusetts (MA) and Rhode Island (RI) was generally focused on cleaning up neighborhoods, defending low-income communities and communities of color against the siting of additional polluting industries and waste sites, and advocating for environmental justice (EJ) policy. Today, this approach is too limited because of the current political climate. The divide between the EJ discussion happening at the state and federal government level and the EJ conversations at the grassroots level is huge. Since January of 2017, the new presidential administration under President Donald Trump has declared priorities that are not supportive of environmental justice, and could be seen as a threat to communities suffering from disproportionate environmental burdens. The EJ movement is shifting its focus from merely fighting defensive battles towards building power at the grassroots level and using a just transition strategic framework.

Our economy has been built to support mass consumerism using fossil fuels. The “interests of fossil fuel sector actors have been accepted more broadly as the general interest, and the structures of governance, socio-technical systems, and markets are framed around fossil fuel actors’ interests” (Pearse, 2009; Pearse et al., 2013). This exposes low income and communities of color to a disproportionate level of environmental health risks from air and water pollution. The model for changing this system to one

where the economy is built at the local level and distributes wealth a power more equitably while minimizing health risks, is called, the just transition framework. Just transition is a model for breaking down the resource extractive economy while building an economy based on social and ecological well being. The solutions to the negative impacts of the traditional system are also the building blocks to the alternative system. The EJ movement must address the structural disadvantage that creates social and economic insecurity if they wish to resolve health risks in vulnerable communities.

Based on the Climate Justice Alliance's principles of environmental justice, "the transition itself must be just and equitable; redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future" (CJA, 2016). To the Just Transition Alliance, a San Diego based nonprofit, just transition is about working with community members who live and work along the fence-line of polluting industries to create healthy workplaces and communities (JTA, 2010). The literature finds that the just transition framework is an effective approach to achieving environmental justice (Evans & Phelan, 2016; Burrows, 2001; Healy & Barry, 2017; Slatin & Scammell, 2011).

The thesis focuses on environmental justice as it impacts people at a local level in this region. The research question for the thesis is the following: "how can the just transition framework help the EJ movement as it goes forward to address disproportionate environmental burden on vulnerable

communities?” The thesis will discuss approaches that could be strengthened by the framework, opportunities that facilitate use of the framework, and how the framework could resolve threats to the movement.

This analysis is necessary because the EJ movement in this region needs to reorient away from fighting defensive battles and take a proactive approach to building resilient communities. The methodological lens used for this analysis of the EJ movement and its progress in implementing a just transition is a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) framework.

# Methodology

---

The thesis includes a literature review on the background of the EJ movement and an interview process to assess its use of just transition. The interview process included an introductory email, a template of questions and a consent information sheet. The content of the questions template was comprised of prompts regarding the strengths and needs or their organization and their view of environmental justice movement broadly. In addition, the template provided similar prompts regarding weaknesses, threats, needs and opportunities. The question template is included as Appendix A.

**Table 1. Interview Sample**

<b>Grassroots Social Justice Nonprofits - MA</b>	<b>Environmental Nonprofits</b>
Community Labor United	Toxics Action Center
Alternatives for Community & Environment	
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative	<b>Grassroots Social Justice Nonprofits - RI</b>
Neighbor to Neighbor	Environmental Justice League of RI
Greater Four Corners Action Coalition	Childhood Lead Action Project
Chelsea GreenRoots	Groundwork Rhode Island
ARISE for Social Justice	

The thesis focuses on Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The states were selected due to their proximity, similar coastal geographies, and history

of working together to further the movement. The nonprofits that were interviewed are listed in the table above. Setting interviews involved calling and emailing the executive directors and other position holders in nonprofits. After explaining the thesis and asking over the phone or by email if the individual would be willing to participate in the interview, the questions template was administered by phone or during a scheduled meeting. These individuals were asked to recommend other people and groups that could add value to this thesis.

The interview sample, shown in Table 1, consisted of individuals who have experience working on environmental justice issues in MA and RI. The sample includes grassroots community-based social justice nonprofits and environmental nonprofits, both of which partially work on EJ issues. This thesis consulted nonprofits for a number of reasons. First, this study assumes that nonprofits are highly engaged and the staff are in constant communication with negatively impacted communities. Those working in the groups may even be members of the communities, or have friends or family that are. Therefore, they should be knowledgeable of the environmental justice movement's impact. Secondly, though individuals who are being directly impacted would have firsthand knowledge, it would be much more difficult to contact them. Also, people subjected to environmental burdens such as polluted water or air, may not even realize the burden they are being subjected to. Thirdly, though state officials may also advocate for and better understand the issues of their state, and academics may have a better

scientific and theoretical understanding of the issues, has the ability to articulate the current needs of the EJ movement quite like the selected nonprofits.

# Background

---

## Historical Approach to Environmental Justice

The EJ movement started out by fighting defensive battles in the 1970s and 1980s and did not consider implementing a just transition framework which would prevent the exploitation of the vulnerable and build resilient communities. The EJ movement is paved with activists, academics, and politicians. The history of the environmental justice movement (EJM) has been covered by many authors in the literature (Agyeman, 2005; Bullard, 2008; Faber, 2001), so this section will just briefly go over the origin of the movement.

The first legal action taken in the name of EJ occurred in Houston, Texas in 1979. A waste management company was charged with environmental discrimination under the Civil Rights Act for siting their waste facility in a predominantly African American community (Bean vs. Southwestern, 1979). Robert Bullard served as an expert witness in this case. Bullard is often called the father of the EJ movement. In the lawsuit, he conducted the first comprehensive study of environmental discrimination, entitled Solid Waste Sites and the Black Houston Community. The study found that all five city-owned garbage dumps, six of the eight city-owned garbage incinerators, and three of the four privately owned landfills were sited in black neighborhoods, even though blacks made up only 25 percent of the city's population (Bullard, 1983).

The consensus is that the environmental justice movement didn't gain national attention until 1982, when a community stood up for themselves in Warren County, North Carolina. A low-income minority community was being burdened by 142-acres toxic waste dump for two decades. More than 500 protesters were jailed for claiming that they were being exposed to greater environmental burden than their wealthy white counterparts. Finally, the government stepped in to detoxify the land. The pollution was so extensive, they had to burn 81,500 tons of oil-laced soil to remove contamination from the soil. After this event, many grassroots groups started popping up all over the country to advocate for environmental justice in their community (Agyeman, 2005; Bullard, 2008; Faber, 2001).

The first national effort to officially ratify a set of Principles of Environmental Justice for the country were written by movement activists at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991. This meeting led to an effort to bring separate groups together to form regionally-based and national constituency-based networks (Agyeman, 2005; Faber, 2001). The principles have many parallels to the just transition framework. They mostly call for breaking down the exploitive and resource extractive economy: "universal protection against extraction", "opposed the destructive operations of multi-national corporations", "opposes exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures", but they also call for building strong communities; "rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring cultural integrity of all our communities", "ethical, balanced and

responsible uses of land and renewable resources”, “make personal and consumer choices to consume as little resources as possible” (People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, 1991). Just transition provides a strategy for enacting solutions that engage these principles.

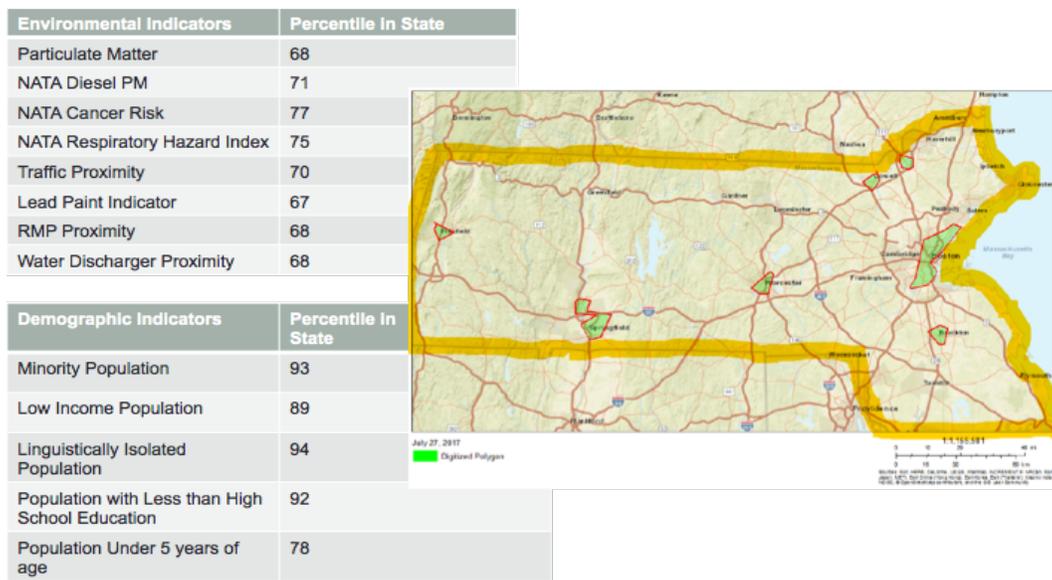
## **Environmental Justice Regionally**

Threats to the EJ movement in Massachusetts need to be taken seriously. The current economic system is allowing communities to be exploited. A study called Unequal Exposure to Ecological Hazards 2005: Environmental Injustices in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts found that in Massachusetts “striking inequities in the distribution of... environmentally hazardous sites and facilities are placing working class families and people of color at substantially greater risk of exposure to human health risks” (Faber & Krieg 2005). Environmentally hazardous waste sites and pollution-causing industrial facilities are disproportionately located in communities of color and lower-income communities. The study also found that, “in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts minority populations live each day with substantially greater risk of exposure to environmental health hazards than white communities,” and this has worsened in recent years (Faber & Krieg 2005). A person living in a community of color in Massachusetts is 39 times more likely to live in one of the 30 most environmentally burdened communities in the state (Faber & Krieg 2005). The Executive Director of the

Northeastern Environmental Justice Research Collaborative, Daniel Faber, is currently conducting an updated version of this study.

In addition, the EPA's EJSCREEN tool shows spatial environmental and demographic data associated with selected areas. I chose to look at the highlighted areas in MA, shown in Figure 1, because the EJSCREEN tool showed that these areas generally have a significant amount of EJ issues. I selected geographic areas that roughly include Greater Boston area, Lawrence, Lowell, Brockton, Worcester, Springfield, Holyoke and Pittsfield. Once highlighted, EJSCREEN takes the most recent available data for the selected area and creates tables of percentiles for environmental indicators and demographics. As you can see, the values for eight different environmental indicators in the highlighted areas are equal to or higher than

**Figure 1. EJSCREEN Results for MA Source: EPA EJSCREEN**



67% of the rest of the state. The value for NATA (National Air Toxic Assessment) Cancer Risk in the highlighted areas is equal to or higher than 77% of the rest of the state. These risks become EJ problems when coupled with a minority population equal to or higher than 93% of the rest of the state and a linguistically isolated population equal to or higher than 94% of the rest of the state.

Due to the pressure from the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Alliance (MEJA), a group of 20 grassroots organizations in the state, Governor Deval Patrick signed Executive Order 552 in 2014 (EO 552). Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) assisted the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in planning five EJ Listening Sessions across the state. The EJ EO was a priority demand at each session (ACE, 2014). According to the DEP, EO 552 requires Secretariats to take action in promoting EJ. The Executive Order also requires new strategies that will promote positive impacts in vulnerable communities and focus on several EJ initiatives. EO 552 was intended to help promote the Environmental Justice Policy signed in 2002 and incorporate it into the agencies in the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EEA). According to the DEP, environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment (MA DEP, 2017). Based on nonprofit comments submitted for the recent 2017 EJ policy update for MA, the following changes still need to be made. Interaction between community stakeholders and EEA staff should

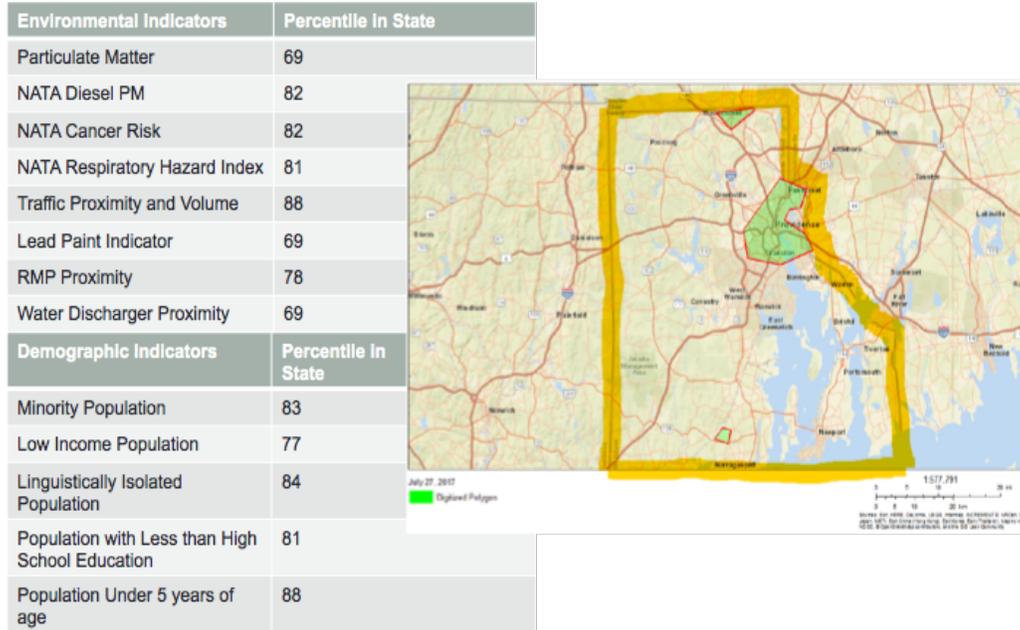
be increased during the public participation process. Community conversations and how they factored into final decisions should be documented.

EJ analysis criteria should include “disabled”. Disability is a unique indicator of vulnerability. Physical and cognitive disabilities can prevent meaningful involvement in public deliberation and put individuals and households at increased risk when exposed to environmental hazards. A definition for enhanced environmental review should be provided in order to establish a common set of expectations for EEA agency staff, proponents, and community stakeholders. Finally, enhanced environmental review should include climate change considerations.

A study has not been conducted of unequal exposure to ecological hazards in Rhode Island, although the EPA’s EJSCREEN tool can still be used to determine where environmental justice risks exist. For RI, I selected geographic areas that roughly include Woonsocket, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Providence, Cranston and Kingston. The values for the eight different environmental indicators in the highlighted areas are equal to or higher than 69% of the rest of the state. The value for traffic proximity and volume is equal to or higher than 88% of the rest of the state. These risks become EJ problems when you consider that the minority population in the highlighted areas is equal to or higher than 83% of the rest of the state and the

population under the age of five is equal to or higher than 88% of the rest of

Figure 2. EJSCREEN Results for RI Source: EPA EJSCREEN



the state.

The Port of Providence is the major energy and fuel hub for Southern New England, with many different fuel terminals and storage tanks transferring fuel to truck, rail and boat. Several of the top ten poorest census tracts in the state and are located just to the west of the port area (US Census, 2015). These densely populated neighborhoods are home to some of the highest rates of asthma and asthma-related emergency room visits and hospitalizations (RIDH, 2014). An asthma hotspot area near the port contains a high concentration of facilities listed in the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory for air releases (EPA, 2015). In addition, the area has old housing stock and a high number of rental, public housing and section 8 properties with poor

housing quality and numerous asthma triggers. There is also a history of childhood lead poisoning in the state. Residents under six years of age who live in the state's lowest income areas or in neighborhoods with a majority of pre-1950 housing face a threat of lead poisoning several times higher than average, according to a study of data from 1993 through 2005 (Vivier, et al, 2010).

In 2009, the Assistant Director of Air, Waste and Compliance for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) signed the Policy for Considering Environmental Justice in the Review of Investigation and Remediation of Contaminated Properties. The policy states that "Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, English language proficiency, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (RIDEM)." RIDEM addresses inequities by providing historically disenfranchised communities a fair and effective process for future involvement in site remediation projects. RIDEM believes that, "[E] will be achieved when everyone enjoys a fair share of environmental benefits and the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, as well as equal access to the decision-making process to help ensure a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work." Despite government efforts, low-income and minority populations still bear a disproportionate negative burden from environmental and health impacts (Bullard, 2012; Reider, 2011). Unlike

Massachusetts' EO 552, this policy does not require the consideration of environmental justice in all departments and programs in RIDEM and it does not have the support of the Governor's Office behind it.

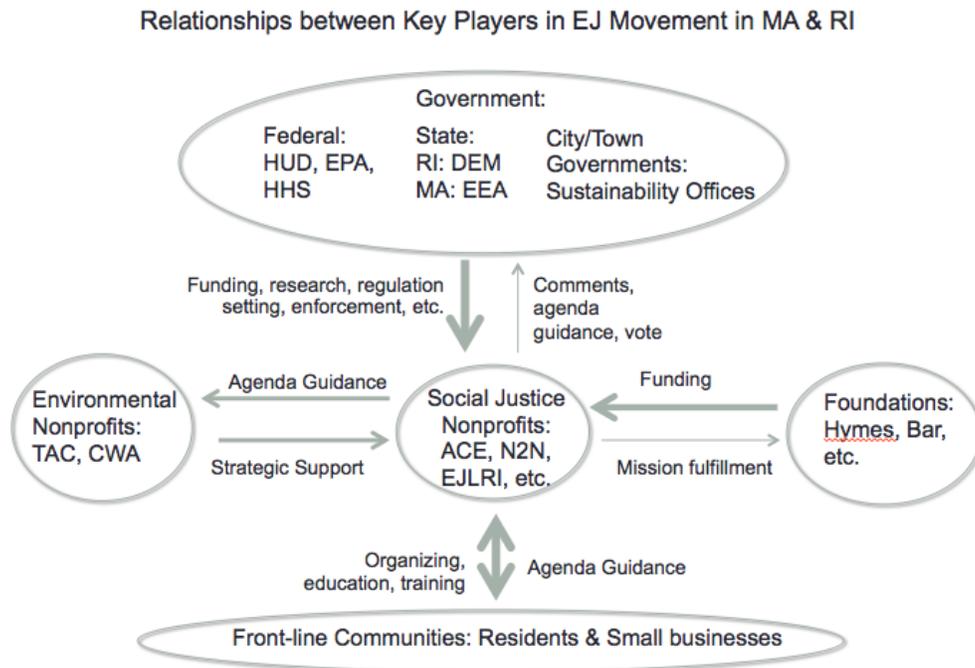
Federal and state regulations are limited in their reach. The literature shows that they do not acknowledge the connections between environmental abuse, poverty and economic inequality, racism, the lack of democracy, and the consolidation of corporate power. Government mainly seeks to control pollution rather than prevent it. We live in a neoliberal capitalistic society and there needs to be a fundamental social and institutional change before environmental justice can be achieved (Faber & McCarthy, 2001). Both the MA and RI EJ policies need to be improved.

## **Key Partners**

Government entities, environmental nonprofits, foundations and front-line communities all work with social justice nonprofits to reduce the disproportionate environmental burden on low income communities and communities of color. Figure 3 provides context for the EJ movement in the region by showing the relationship dynamics between the key partners. The diagram below is based off of interviews and background research and is meant to illustrate the relationships in the EJ movement from the perspective of social justice nonprofits. It is by no means a comprehensive diagram, as there are other partners in the movement such as universities, national networks, other state entities, and many more. To explain the diagram, the

width and direction of the arrows represent the direction and amount of leverage and influence that the partners of the environmental justice movement have. The system is flawed and limits the movement's ability to achieve a just transition.

Figure 3. Key Players in EJ Movement



The common sentiment among interviewed stakeholders was that government entities have more power and leverage than social justice nonprofits due to their role of providing funding, research, regulations and enforcement. Social justice nonprofits, such as Alternatives for Community and Justice, Neighbor to Neighbor and the Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island have the opportunity to provide comments on environmental actions, provide guidance on legislation and represent a certain amount of

voting power through their memberships. Based on discussions, environmentally-focused nonprofits such as Toxics Action Center and Clean Water Action and social justice nonprofits seem to have about equal leverage and influence due to the strategic support they offer each other and due to the agenda guidance provided by social justice nonprofits. Foundations such as the Hymes and Barr foundations seem to have greater leverage and influence over the social justice nonprofits than the reverse, due to their capacity to provide funding. The work done by the social justice nonprofits using the funding, along with many other nonprofits, which fulfills the foundations' missions. Lastly, front-line communities represent the membership of social justice nonprofits, therefore are essentially one in the same. Residents and small businesses in low income communities and communities of color offer guidance for the agenda of the nonprofits and the nonprofits offer education, training and other services.

To provide an example, a coal fired power plant was contributing health risks to a community in Holyoke, MA. The social justice nonprofit Neighbor to Neighbor worked with the community to help them close the power plant. Neighbor to Neighbor receives financial support from foundations, like the Hymes foundation. The environmental nonprofit, Toxics Action Network worked with Neighbor to Neighbor by helping them build a campaign. The EPA passed more stringent emission standards for coal fired power plants, which helped to build a stronger campaign to close the plant in Holyoke. This is a diagram of key partners and not a diagram of key players.

It doesn't include all of the players that have influence over the movement.

One of the greatest threatening influences over the social justice nonprofits is the fossil fuel industry.

# Results

---

The Massachusetts and Rhode Island Environmental Justice movement of 2017 possesses a unique set of strengths and weaknesses, and is facing a number of new opportunities and threats. The results section describes the findings of regional research and interviews with individuals who have experience working in the nonprofit sector of the EJ movement.

## **Strengths: Implementing a Just Transition**

The EJ movement in this region has shown the influence of the Just Transition model. EJLRI, ACE and CLU all referenced the model as one that they are trying to incorporate in their own organizations. The strength of any movement lies in the ability for organizations to share knowledge and collaborate with each other and unite to build stronger arguments and affect change. The fossil fuel industry's interests and polluter-industrial complex are undermining the general interest (Levy, 2012; Faber 2008). The just transition framework is changing discourse to encourage energy policies towards renewable, and energy-efficient systems, (Mitchell, 2016) and the emergence of sophisticated and globally-connected social movement campaigns for transition to a post-carbon future, a social movement that links multiple locations, issues, and communities (Bridge et al., 2013; Centre for International Environmental Law, 2011; Leggett, 2015; Pettit, 2004). Moyer et al. (2001) describes social movements as "collective actions in

which the populace is alerted, educated, and mobilised, sometimes over years and decades, to challenge the powerholders and the whole society to redress social problem or grievances and restore critical social values” (Moyer et al., 2001). Through the just transition framework, social movement campaigns aim to develop alternative cultures and narratives to win participation and support (Tan and Snow, 2015; Polletta and Gardner, 2015) and to hold governments and institutions accountable through a “counter-democracy of surveillance from below” (della Porta, 2015: 264).

The EJ movement in the Northeast has successfully contributed to a just transition through organized campaigns, direct actions, raised public awareness, built up capacity of community to address EJ issues, developed initiatives to impact and implement policy, and through the education and empowerment of communities to address and develop strategies to protect their environment and health. Members of local community-based groups work together to coordinate and advance collective action. Nonprofits look to residents of low income communities and communities of color to guide them on how organizing should happen. The movement is led by those who have the most to lose from the impacts of climate change and environmental injustice. The movement is changing systems to create a more equitable distribution of wealth. Nonprofits in the movement are building inclusiveness into their own organizations in order to develop alternative policies and institutions. They are engage in bottom-up coalition building regionally and network nationally. The movement raises the voices of those

being directly affected. It makes sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard.

### **Education and Training**

The EJ movement engages in base building and empowers the local community. Education and training are foundational to a just transition. Communities without the knowledge of how they are being disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution cannot begin to demand justice for their friends and family. Michaelann Bewsee, the Executive Director of the nonprofit, ARISE, in Springfield, MA noted, “we’ve got to educate our community, that is our main strategy when it comes to building a movement.” Providing training gives people the ability to better advocate for themselves and their community. Whether it is internal or outsourced, almost every organization involved in this study provides education and/or training to their constituents. For example, after assisting the minority community in Holyoke, MA with their fight to close one of the last coal fired power plants in the state, the social justice non-profit Neighbor to Neighbor retrained the power plant operators for new jobs, (though there were less than thirty workers at that point). That is also an example of the just transition framework in action, working to fight the extractive economy while working to build capacity at the the local level.

Groundwork Rhode Island is an environmental nonprofit that provides training to vulnerable communities. They work with communities in the poorest urban areas of Rhode Island. Their Adult Job Training

introduces 30 local residents per year to career pathways in the environmental sector – particularly in the areas of brownfield remediation, lead and asbestos abatement, stormwater management, and urban land restoration. The training offers many certifications that make participants more competitive job applicants, and gives them hands-on experience in stormwater, garden, and tree planting projects that also improve the places where they live and work. They are contributing to a just transition for the region by giving people the resources and skills they need to make a difference in their own communities. Groundwork is building a new and lasting force for change in participants’ own neighborhoods. Their education, employment, job training and stewardship programs all serve the common goal of creating and sustaining healthy, beautiful, and resilient communities (Groundwork RI, 2017). Groundwork works closely with their trainees and solicits input from them in order to improve the program.

Co-op Power is a consumer-owned cooperative with chapters in Boston and Western Massachusetts. Co-op Power exhibits a just transition framework in its business model. They offer neighbor-to-neighbor weatherization and solar installation programs in which people help each other make energy improvements under the supervision and guidance of trained energy auditors, efficiency contractors, and renewable energy system installers. This system builds power at the community level by sharing skills and it builds wealth by facilitating community ownership of the clean energy industry. Through its Good Green Jobs Project, Co-op Power and its partners

target unemployed and underemployed young adults, adults that do not hold a GED, long term unemployed and dislocated workers in Dorchester, Roxbury, Holyoke, Springfield, Orange, Franklin County and Pittsfield. The program provides on-the-job training at companies such as Energia and Spirit Solar. Trainees learn skills in energy efficiency, solar hot water installations, and green energy marketing (MassCEC, 2011). This program builds power in vulnerable communities while contributing to the renewable energy economy.

### **Youth Empowerment**

Another strength of the EJ movement in this region is they empower their youth. Almost every nonprofit in this study has a youth engagement program. They empower youth to participate in solving the problems facing their community. Many leaders in the regional movement started out in youth programs at the very same organization they now lead, including Roseann Bongiovanni, Executive Director of GreenRoots and Jesus Holguin, the Youth Leadership Director at EJ League of Rhode Island (EJLRI). Environmental Chelsea Organizers (ECO) is a team of 5 teens that runs out of GreenRoots. They work on projects important to youth in Chelsea, MA. They have led campaigns for the full implementation of a youth pass pilot program, conducted community-wide surveys to document health and displacement concerns, advocated for and designed parks, engaged in tree planting projects, and expanded peer teaching initiatives in public and private after school programs (GreenRoots, 2017).

Cristina Cabrera, the Executive Director of EJLRI, described how her nonprofit empowers youth in Rhode Island: “EJLRI strongly believes in education that serves as the foundation for movement-building because without it we will be replicating the same oppressive systems that are here in the first place”. They offer three youth programs. For the past nine years they have run their Community Environmental Justice College during the summer. The college is run entirely by youth and provides free classes, programming, and a stipend to up to 30 teenagers and young adults from frontline communities. They learn about social justice issues related to gender, race, classism, food justice, environmental justice and community organizing. The participants cook their own meals using produce from organic farms, they listen to guest speakers, go on field trips, and engage in hands on work. They work with urban agriculture, new building technology, community gardens, and housing development. EJLRI also facilitates ECO Youth. After the summer of classes, participants visit classrooms from elementary to high school, to provide workshops and teach students what they learned. Founded by graduates of Community Environmental College in 2011, the program empowers students to combat the racism and classism that lead to toxic pollutants and health hazards disproportionately affecting low-income communities and communities of color. EJLRI also offers their “graduate program”, which has more of a career pathway focus. They set up internships for students at education, environmental justice, art, and labor organizations.

The programs teach critical analysis skills and develop an awareness of the intersectionality of different sectors of EJ. The programs contribute to a just transition for the region by providing youth with knowledge, and enabling them to build the skills and personal commitment necessary to effectively improve environmental conditions in areas disproportionately affected by environmental concerns. They prepare students from predominantly low-income, racially and ethnically diverse communities to grow their leadership capacity through hands-on experience and environmental education. EJLRI is creating a new generation of environmental leaders while increasing the capacity of their communities to understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change. They are developing interest among a diverse group of students in pursuing careers in the environmental sector (EJLRI, 2017).

### **Coalition Building**

Nonprofits in the EJ movement in this region have had great success with building coalitions in the past and they are having success in the present. Emphasis on building or reviving and maintaining coalitions with shared agendas gives power to the EJ movement in its pursuit of a just transition. Another reason to maintain coalitions of organizations is to have a forum to communicate. Social justice advocates and environmental advocates are tackling very similar issues and are working within the constraints of the same neoliberal political system. To try to do this work solely within one would limit potential access to resources, opportunities, knowledge, support

and power. A monthly meeting, video conference, or phone call with organizations that have shared goals provides this forum. Many examples can be provided that show the EJ movement's success with coalition building.

Most local community-based nonprofits in the EJ movement further initiatives in their city or town, but Community Labor United (CLU), Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N), ARISE for Social Justice and the Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island (EJLRI) work to bring together community organizations and unions in the region to drive forward policies that benefit the area's low and moderate-income population. EJ communities are in part made up of immigrant populations. It would be ignorant to engage with them on the environmental pollution that is affecting them without also acknowledging the fear and urgent risks associated with immigration that they may be experiencing. CLU works with groups in eastern MA, N2N works all over MA, ARISE covers western MA, ACE works with groups in the greater Boston area and EJLRI covers RI. Through collaborative research, leadership development and organizing, these groups unite organizations and communities around a common vision and plan of action. They develop relationships between decision makers in community and labor organizations to collectively build power in the region.

Community Labor United is working with their partners to develop a 10 Year Agenda for MA. They have set up meetings across MA with labor,

immigrant, environmental and social justice groups to take place over roughly five months during the year of 2017. Barnett noted, “way too much of the work of the movement is reactionary”. They are hoping to collectively create long terms plans for workers, communities and the environment. CLU acknowledges that, “the Right Wing’s neoliberal agenda has made steady gains for decades in a way that has forced many of us to be on the defensive” (CLU, 2017). Working with partners will generate more power for the agenda. This initiative embodies to the just transition framework. CLU’s vision is to create an agenda that will “build power on the ground”, and be “grounded in their values and vision for a just world” (CLU, 2017). One thing to note about this process though is that the meetings are not open to the public. Based on interviews, it seems that there may be mistrust between grassroots nonprofits and mainstream environmental organizations and state and local government agencies. It seems like CLU is more comfortable collaborating with groups that they have worked with in the past and built a trusting relationship with. CLU is aiming to culminate the process in the fall with 500 people, representing community and labor gathering for a Member Congress to review, refine, ratify & celebrate the 10 Year Agenda.

ACE is partnering with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) and The Food Project and Tufts University’s Urban & Environmental Policy & Planning Department in the Dudley Real Food Hub initiative to increase access to healthy, locally-grown food for families in the Dudley neighborhood. The partners are conducting a mapping exercise to identify

raised bed gardens in the Dudley neighborhood and understand their impact on local food access (DSNI, 2017). DSNI also just launched the Boston Community Land Trust Network. They created this network so that they could work together with other community land trusts in Boston to advocate for better land policies, like equitable development of vacant land. DSNI collaborates and shares best practices with Chinatown, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan and others. By having a strong coalition, these organizations are able to more effectively put land ownership into the hands of the community.

One of the most active regional coalitions is the Green Justice Coalition (GJC). GJC is a partnership between at least 17 community groups, labor unions, environmental groups, and other organizations that support a sustainable, equitable, and clean energy economy in the Boston region. They work to ensure that low-income communities and communities of color are at the forefront of building a green and sustainable economy. They advocate for growing the green economy that creates quality jobs and develops local workforce opportunities, as well as promote healthier and safer communities (CLU, 2017). Lee Matsueda stated that ACE wanted to infuse the GJC with the just transition framework. GJC is working to promote community energy but the framework to weave together a multi-issue approach is missing. The GJC is going to implement community-owned energy pilot projects in different communities in order to show people in vulnerable communities the value of an alternative source of energy and to politicize and build support for community-owned energy. Labor union members in GJC will offer support

with the installation process. GJC is also developing a Community Choice Energy initiative, which advocates for a municipality's choice when selecting their primary source of energy. GJC demonstrates the value of having a coalition made up of groups with a diversity of interests. Bongiovanni noted, "GreenRoots has networked with lot of organizations through GJC, that we wouldn't otherwise have partnered with closely".

GJC is already starting to contribute to a just transition for the region by incorporating labor, transportation justice, education and climate change groups in their environmental justice work. They are able to come together and build support around bills, such as the Fair Share Amendment for MA. It offers potential for resources to come through the state level. It starts to create a progressive taxation that puts dollars towards the issues that GJC cares about. It could produce as much as a billion dollars a year for education and transportation.

### **Equitable Process**

All of the community-based nonprofits included in this study have an inclusive bottom-up decision-making process. Each nonprofit has an executive board whose members are voted in by local community members at the nonprofits' annual meetings. In addition to elections, community members bring up issues to focus on and the initiatives for staff and volunteers to work on for the coming year are discussed and agreed upon. The most inclusive example of equitable process is exhibited by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. Firstly, their decision-making structure is

determined by their community land trust model. Secondly, the election process for the board of directors is very inclusive of the community. The bylaws require the Board of Director seats to be filled by residents and

**Table 2. DSNI Board Composition Source: DSNI Bylaws**

<b>Number of Seats</b>	<b>Residents in Core Area</b>
4	Black - elected
4	Cape Verdean - elected
4	Latino - elected
4	White - elected
4	Core Area Youth - elected
2	Residents - appointed

business owners of the Dudley Square area. Each seat is voted on every two years by the members of DSNI. The bylaws require the board to reflect the

composition of Dudley Square, with representation from Black, Cape Verdean, Hispanic and White cultures, as well as youth, local businesses,

**Table 3. DSNI Board Composition**

<b>Number of Seats</b>	<b>Non-Residents</b>
2	Community Dev. Corporations - elected
2	Religious Institutions - elected
2	Businesses - elected
7	Agencies - elected

religious institutions and other entities shown in the table (DSNI).

Environmental nonprofits are key to achieving environmental justice using a just transition framework. They follow an equitable process by supporting and engaging with vulnerable communities. Toxic Action Center and Clean Water Action take direction from frontline community members. All of their initiatives focus on eliminating the environmental burdens

identified by the people who are being put at risk, such as the siting of a pipeline or fossil fuel power plant. While some of the nonprofits who offer support do not explicitly include environmental justice as part of their mission, others do. For example, the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) has been a huge player in the New England EJ movement for a long time. One of their three main goals is to fight for environmental justice. “They work towards removing the unfair environmental burdens imposed on low-income and communities of color and bolster the quality of life for all New Englanders. Environmental justice is a thread that runs through everything that CLF does” (CLF, 2017). CLF works in courtrooms, in statehouses, and in boardrooms. They are “a critical mover in building a new energy infrastructure...and safeguarding the health, quality of life, and economic prosperity of families and neighbors for generations to come” (CLF, 2017).

CLF is suing Shell for the company’s endangerment of local communities. CLF is citing violations of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) as grounds for the lawsuit. Located along the banks of the Providence Harbor, Shell’s Providence Terminal sits directly in harm’s way as sea levels rise and storms becomes more extreme. CLF claims that Shell has failed to protect its Providence Terminal against the effects of climate change and has violated the conditions of its permit (CLF, 2017). The risk is that flooding could cause toxic substances to leak into the community. In close collaboration with local groups and residents in communities burdened by environmental justice

issues, CLF works to reduce the environmental hazards that threaten public health and well-being across the region (CLF, 2017). CLF is also working with Chelsea Greenroots on a lawsuit against Exxon.

The social justice nonprofit in western MA called ARISE for Social Justice has to fight for a more equitable representative governing system for the city of Springfield, MA. The city used to have all out large electoral system. The system favored white middle class communities. Most of the councilors came from two wards in Springfield. With a 9 member city council, only 1 was a person of color. Considering that in 2010 the population of Springfield was 22% Black and 39% Hispanic, the city council was not representative of the city (US Census, 2010). It took 12 years for ARISE and other stakeholders to change the structure of their city council. Now they have a city council that is majority people of color.

### **Engaging with National Networks**

By engaging with national networks, local and regional EJ groups can have an impact at the national level. The Political Director for ACE, Lee Matsueda, discussed the various national networks that ACE works with. They aim to incorporate successful strategies they see national groups using, such as the Asian Pacific Island Network's (APEN) model for engaging the community with development of vacant land that has just been remediated. ACE and other local nonprofits are partnering with national networks such as Grassroots Global Justice, Climate Justice Alliance, Right to the City, and the Indigenous Environmental Network. In response to what is happening

globally, these networks are connecting the dots between environmental justice, immigrant and worker rights, and building political power, and having discussions at a larger scale in order to impact federal policy. Local and regional groups are able to come together in order to strengthen a campaign. Through the Climate Justice Alliance, ACE was introduced to the organization Movement Generation. They produce political education materials for community groups to use in order to strategically link local priorities to larger political issues. They created the Just Transition Framework diagram, shown below, for their Our Power Campaign. It portrays a strategy for moving from consumerism and exploitation to cooperation, regeneration and social and ecological well-being by drawing money and power down to the local level. The national networks use the just transition framework because it links together the issues that many of them are fighting for. They are engaging their members and partners through the framework.

Another example of a national network that works to improve the environment in economically distressed communities is Groundwork USA. They have a network of 20 offices across the country, called Trusts that share a mission and a common approach. "Groundwork USA provides a national model, informed by best practices and research. Groundwork Trusts tailor the approach to the unique needs of small- to medium-sized cities, neighborhoods, and rural communities across the US, working hand-in-hand with local residents, government officials, and business owners. Groundwork

Trusts are independent 501c3 nonprofit entities established by local stakeholders in communities struggling with environmental, economic, and social decline. Groundwork Trusts act as trusted intermediaries between local government and neighborhood residents, engendering in communities the more commonly understood definition of the word “trust”: the trait of believing in the reliability and honesty of others” (Groundwork USA). Three Groundwork Trusts in MA cover Lawrence, Somerville, and the South Shore and one in RI covers Pawtucket, Central Falls, Providence and Olneyville. The Groundwork model allows the trusts in this region to share knowledge, strategy, best practice and lessons learned. The most beneficial part of the model is that it lessens the burden of fundraising. Groundwork USA is able to provide the trusts with support from national funders such as the National Park Service, the US EPA, the Ford Foundation and more. When multiple trusts are working on the same initiative, the projects are bundled together in order to share funding from a large grant. The Groundwork USA organizational structure is a good model for social justice nonprofits in this region to learn from.

## **Weaknesses Limiting Just Transition**

This section describes the weaknesses that limit movement’s ability to use the just transition framework. The movement is operating in the midst of the Trump era and his neo-liberal agenda. Weaknesses include a lack of funding, insufficient coalition building, silos, a flawed approach to risk

assessment, unsustainable legal services and green jobs. These weaknesses inhibit the movement's ability to reduce environmental burden on low income communities and communities of color.

### **Lack of Funding**

A lack of funding is one of the largest inhibiting factors to the EJ movement's ability to engage in the just transition strategy in this region. Bullard noted, "all Americans have a right to a clean, green, and sustainable environment; and not just those communities that have the money to hire lawyers and scientists to make sure their communities go green" (Bullard, 2010). A study of the movement's funding at a national level found that it "may be the most underfunded social movement in America" (Faber & McCarthy, 2001). An environmental justice nonprofit in Chelsea, called Chelsea Greenroots has 11 staff, which is a lot for this type of nonprofit. The Executive Director of Chelsea Greenroots, Roseann Bongiovanni noted, "there is so much to work to be done that we could have a team of 40 and everyone would have work to do". Limited funding has caused the number of paid staff at social justice nonprofits in MA and RI to be severely diminished, in one case to just one person. The issue has caused some nonprofits to close their doors. Another side effect is the inability for the movement to pay for the technical expertise needed to build a legal case or detect environmental contamination. There are not many foundations that provide funding for EJ work and foundations typically do not take solicitations. If nonprofits want to partner with a new foundation, they have to somehow develop a relationship

with them. Also, based on feedback from interviews, applying for funding is a time consuming task, and foundations typically stipulate a specific purpose for their funds. This purpose often doesn't line up with the mission of the nonprofit. One strategy for addressing this need would be for foundations to provide a large annual grant to a network of environmental justice nonprofits. The nonprofits would need to work together on shared goals, and funding could be distributed to smaller local groups that do not have the capacity to apply for funding from large foundations.

Juan Leyton, the Executive Director of Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, noted that 87 percent of their funding comes from about six foundations, including the Boston Foundation, Hynes Foundation, Barr Foundation, and Haymarket, and the rest comes from donations, fees, and fundraising events. He wished either the foundations would offer grants that were more in line with their mission or that all of their funding consisted of membership fees so they has more control on how best to use the money to meet the needs of the Dorchester community. Many nonprofit representatives shared this sentiment.

Marvin Martin, Executive Director of Greater Four Corners thinks that the greatest needs of the movement are funding, and sharing resources. He recommends sharing book keepers, communications experts, and other positions that don't need to be full time. In addition, nonprofits could share access to technical assistance and equipment. He says that in MA, there are

not many organizations that support organizers, and it is difficult to approach the ones that exist. Building a good donor base is important. Nonprofits need to gain better access to big private donors. They need to look for a new type of donor, such as professional athletes. People who have disposable money and give to charity, could provide funding to front line groups.

### **Non-Cohesive Movement**

Currently the EJ movement in this region is made up of a combination of initiatives that are working independently of one another. While there are coalitions of groups working together to enhance environmental justice for the region, there is no consolidated effort. The capacity of environmental justice nonprofits needs to be increased so that they have the flexibility to work together. There is a lot of turnover in the environmental justice movement and so it would be beneficial to have a summit so that new stakeholders who are not linked into the movement can network and strengthen the region's ability to achieve environmental justice.

One area of environmental justice that needs a more cohesive approach is transit justice. Marvin Martin, the Executive Director of Greater Four Corners Action Coalition (GFCAC) in Dorchester has recommendations for the movement. GFCAC has a transit plan for the greater four corners area in Dorchester, DSNI has one for Dudley Square, ACE has one for Roxbury, and GreenRoots has one for Chelsea. He thinks that an assessment needs to be made of the transportation landscape, and that we should combine

strategies. The movement has a reactionary approach and only comes together when the MBTA says they will hike up fares. The movement needs a collective transit strategy.

### **Silos in the Movement**

Though many of the social justice nonprofits I spoke with do engage in cross sectional work, the environmental justice movement as a whole is siloed. Linking environmental justice and just transition, “requires a focus that goes beyond just one environmental issue and requires adopting a holistic approach in which campaigns for environmental change also include social issues such as access to affordable housing, quality education and healthcare into a broader understanding of the local ‘environment’” (Farrell, 2012). The key partners in the movement such as government entities, foundations and environmental nonprofits need to shift to using a framework that intuitively connects these issues. By connecting these issues, the movement can build more power around a systems shift. There is also a disconnect among members of the community. Low-income people and people of color in the communities that EJ nonprofits support are just starting to be advocates for climate change mitigation on a global scale. It may be difficult to understand how climate change is and will continue to impact them on a local scale. Communities understand risks associated with extreme heat and want to know how to address those, but there is a disconnect between that and a fight around pipelines and energy consumption and renewable energy. ACE is learning from the Indigenous

Environmental Network how to show the community the connection. For example, having a small scale renewable energy installation in a neighborhood could show them the value of clean energy.

In addition to issues being siloed, I learned from interviews that key partners within the EJ movement are also siloed. There needs to be greater awareness for roles that people choose to play in the movement. Government allows certain communities to be neglected and taken advantage of by corporations, and these communities have every right to be weary and skeptical, especially during the Trump administration. Still, judgment and cynicism towards the government is not always a productive approach. Relationship building and partnering with people who think differently is very important for the EJ movement. There are plenty of people that work for the city/town, state and federal government who may not fully appreciate the environmental injustices felt by certain communities, but they want to listen and they want to offer support and help however they can.

### **Flawed Approach to Risk Assessment**

The federal and state policies in MA and RI do not properly assess the risk of activities that contaminate our environment. The government needs to use the just transition framework to stop perpetuating an extractive and exploitive economy and move toward creating policies that build resilient communities. A study released in January by the Brookings Institution argues the importance of Trump's administration in focusing on improving environmental justice. It argues that, "the problems faced by black Americans

are deep, stubborn, and structural...People with access to safe housing and neighborhoods tend to be healthier and more likely to succeed in terms of upward mobility, employment, and financial security” (Matthew, 2017). The paper specifically discusses on environmental quality is different for African Americans. The paper says, “Whether it is water quality in Flint...[or] environmental hazards in Dickson, Tennessee... the experience of living African American is different, and is allowed to be different, than any that would ever be accepted for white communities” (Matthew, 2017). The study also argues that the practice of segregation with land-use results in African Americans having a greater risk of exposure to health hazards. The authors wrote, “segregative land-use rules mean that toxic dumps and power plants are often found nearest to poor, predominantly minority, neighborhoods ...segregation means that the health of low-income black Americans is all too often out of sight, and out of mind—until a crisis of national proportions erupts, such as the one in Flint, Michigan” (Matthew, 2017). The Brookings Institution study argues that discrimination against African Americans allows society to put them in environments where they are at a disadvantage.

The Presidential Memorandum accompanying Executive Order 12898 directs Federal agencies to analyze the environmental effects, including human health, economic, and social effects, of their proposed actions on minority and low-income communities when required by NEPA (EPA, 2017). NEPA review comes into effect when certain environmental hazard thresholds are met, such as the size of a new building or the level of air or

water pollution that will result from the facility. There is a weakness to this policy. Demonstrating that the siting of a toxic facility will have a racially discriminatory effect in court, as opposed discriminatory intent, does not count as a Title VI Civil Rights violation. The U.S. Supreme Court made this ruling in 2001 with the Alexander vs. Sandoval case. This means that a toxic facility can legally be sited in a low income community of color in MA or RI that is already being exposed to environmental burdens instead of a wealthy white community with no environmental burdens.

In addition, the MA and RI EJ policies have a weakness as well. They require EJ analysis and enhanced public involvement if a toxic facility is being sited in a low income community of color. An EJ analysis uses GIS data to compare the environmental burden of the community where the facility is being sited to the surrounding communities. Unfortunately the analysis is only used when considering ways to minimize health risks to the community. An environmental review of a new or existing facility does not take into account cumulative impact, only the impact of the facility in question. The EJ analysis cannot be used to legally forbid the permitting of a new or existing facility.

### **Unsustainable Legal Services**

Legal services are instrumental in fighting toxic practices from happening in low-income communities and communities of color. The government engages in enforcement of environmental laws associated with the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, NEPA and the Civil Rights Act. Based

on my interviews, low income and communities of color in this region are not satisfied with this enforcement.

Another support system is offered by Alternatives for Community and Environment's (ACE). They run the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Assistance Network (MEJAN), which has been a crucial support to vulnerable communities in MA. MEJAN was once a network of more than 200 attorneys, law firms, public health professionals, and environmental consultants, who provide pro bono assistance to groups throughout the state (ACE, 2014). The Conservation Law Foundation was a part of MEJAN and fought many EJ battles in New England. ACE believes in, "leveling the playing field" by providing legal and technical services (ACE, 2014). They provided free legal assistance in environmental justice cases to community residents and groups in lower income communities and communities of color in Massachusetts that cannot afford counsel. One example of how their services helped a community was for residents in Chelsea, East Boston, and Revere. ACE lawyers helped them convince Global Partners' to withdraw their proposal to transport dangerous amounts of ethanol by train through densely populated neighborhoods (ACE, 2014).

While MEJAN is an amazing service, it is not a sustainable model. Through my interviews I learned MEJAN does not seem to be currently operating. It worked well for a long time but new funding considerations

have compromised its function. Other key partners in the movement besides ACE need to work to provide a more reliable and stable legal support system.

### Green Jobs

The green jobs initiative has a lot of potential and some may think of it as a silver bullet that will solve environmental justice problems. Interviewing EJ organizations revealed that in practice, the idea becomes complicated and challenging to implement. The premise behind the green jobs idea is that the environmental and clean energy movements could offer, good blue collar jobs at a living wage to unemployed people of low-income and people of color. This sounds good on paper. Increasing the income of a household can help alleviate vulnerability to environmental burdens. The catch to this strategy that may not be at the forefront of green jobs is the question of ownership. Bullard finds that “people are out there working on the green economy, moving toward clean and renewable energy, and trying to move to more sustainable types of industrial operations. But there is a whole segment of society being left behind. It is similar in a way to the Katrina response” (Bullard, 2010). Who has ownership over the clean energy industry? Green jobs isn’t creating ownership for vulnerable communities. It is not enough to offer training and temporary jobs to vulnerable communities.

Community-based social justice nonprofits have a strong commitment to listening to their communities’ needs. Based, on my interviews I learned that many nonprofits prefer to use the terminology “jobs with justice”, rather than “green jobs”. While “green jobs” may be the term that is most widely

used to mean new jobs for low-income and minority communities in the environmental and renewable energy sector, it has become a buzzword that has not delivered on its promise. Nonprofits are being told by the members of their community that the initiative for green jobs, while politically popular, is not always thought through to accomplishing the real goal of improving people's livelihoods. Training that is offered doesn't lead to a job or the job is temporary or seasonal or there is no potential for growth or ownership or the employees are not treated with respect. Green jobs are not succeeding in building wealth in vulnerable communities.

## **Opportunities to Build Up Community**

The EJ movement has for the most part been taking a reactive approach with its efforts to tackle an extractive economy. A synergy of environmental justice and just transition concerns can potentially build “foundations for a broad and united community campaign that addresses environmental, social and economic issues together” (Evans & Phelan, 2016). To Lee Matsueda, the Political Director of ACE, just transition means continuing these fights, while “building a regenerative economy that is based in a different set of values, that supports the communities we care about, is based in cooperation, has deep democracy, is about people caring for each other and the land that we live on.” Activists in the EJ movement are starting to gravitate towards and build around this positive vision. At this moment in time, many opportunities exist in this region that the EJ movement should

take advantage of. Opportunities include building community ownership, capacity, resiliency and power.

Matsueda likes the just transition framework because, “it acknowledges that we have to continue fighting the bad but we also have to figure out how we create and build the new.” While there are many toxic industries operating where ACE is located, in Roxbury, they are part of the same system that is creating other problems in their neighborhoods. It is linked to the lack of affordable housing, inadequate public transportation and access to healthy food, and unemployment. The neoliberal system at play upholds corporate profiting. The just transition framework doesn’t just take into account the propagation of resource extraction taking place in this region, it also takes into account the wealth, and culture extraction taking place through gentrification. This section discusses opportunities that build community ownership, capacity, resiliency and power.

### **Building Community Ownership**

The just transition framework takes ideas that have been used for years, like community land trusts (CLT) and other community-owned entities and brings them to the forefront of the conversation. For instance, while DSNI has been operating a CLT since 1988, other local groups including ACE, have been making progress with this strategy recently. As vacant lots have been getting cleaned up and the value of these properties is increasing, the question now is how to best utilize this land to build wealth for the local community that was being burdened by the blight. Since many groups now

have had experience with CLTs and other types of community-owned entities, there are a lot of resources available to support the strategy.

### **Building Community Capacity**

Many federal and state programs exist to add capacity to the EJ movement. For example, the Environmental Justice Small Grants Program provides financial assistance to eligible organizations to build collaborative partnerships, to identify local environmental and/or public health issues, and to envision solutions and empower communities through education, training, and outreach. Through this program EPA is assisting Childhood Lead Action Project (CLAP) with reducing the incidence of childhood lead poisoning by providing them with funding to improve housing conditions in Central Falls, RI. The project also seeks to increase the capacity of residents to address the presence of lead based paint in their community. The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program provides financial assistance to eligible organizations working on or planning to work on projects to address local environmental and/or public health issues in their communities (EPA). Through this program, the EPA is assisting the “Springfield Healthy Homes Collaborative” with reducing the disproportionately high rates of asthma and poor housing conditions in low-income neighborhoods throughout Springfield, Massachusetts.

### **Building Community Resiliency**

There are several examples of programs offered by the state of MA that are pushing for transformative justice in the EJ movement. The

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has invested over \$5 million in the Gateway City Parks Program through the Environmental Bond Bill. The program funds the creation or restoration of significant urban parks and trails in the 26 Gateway Cities, projects that would otherwise be difficult to build. EEA determines gateway cities using vulnerability demographics. The state partners with local grassroots organizations who handle community outreach. This program helps to build ecological well being in these communities.

In 2011, authorized by the Act Relative to Clean Energy and signed into law by Governor Patrick in November 2009, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's (MassCEC) Pathways out of Poverty Program was launched, with the goal of jumpstarting training in clean energy careers for low- and moderate-income residents. Poverty and pollution go hand-in-hand, and illnesses and disease are not far behind. This program offers an important opportunity because environmental policies need to reach into communities that historically have been left out and left behind (Bullard, 2010). The MassCEC provided four grants totaling \$734,000 for green job training programs that helped to train unemployed and underemployed people for jobs in the clean energy community. Many of those trained through the initial 2009 grant round were either placed in full time employment, continued their training at community colleges, or started their own "green" businesses (MassCEC, 2011).

## **Building Community Power**

The MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) also engages in efforts to assist communities with environmental justice. They seek input from the public, including individuals, communities and groups, before issuing certain types of air quality permits or approvals. They also operate the Massachusetts Environmental Strike Force. The Strike Force is an interagency unit comprised of scientists and engineers from the MassDEP, environmental police officers from the Department of Fish & Game, State Police, and prosecutors from the Office of the Attorney General. The Strike Force gathers evidence during undercover investigations, carefully builds cases against alleged environmental violators, and then takes them to court (MassDEP, 2017). MA programs succeed with enhancing open space, providing jobs in the clean energy industry and encouraging community participation in permitting and enforcement in disenfranchised communities.

In 2012, Governor Deval Patrick signed the Community Investment Tax Credit (CITC) into law. The CITC provides the opportunity for Community Development Corporations (CDC) and other community-led economic development entities to leverage private contributions. Individuals, corporations or nonprofits make a donation or investment of \$1,000 at minimum and the CITC provides them with a 50% tax credit against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts tax liability. The donor may also receive up to 35% of the federal tax deduction for the balance of 50% of the donation. The CDCs use these donations to increase affordable housing,

local farming, open space, protect residents from displacement and negotiate community benefits for development projects. Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, a nonprofit working to achieve environmental justice for a community in Dorchester. They operate a community land trust called Dudley Neighbors, Inc. Dudley Neighbors Inc. is eligible to receive funding through CITC.

### **Threats Inhibiting Just Transition**

Certain forces and systems are at play in this region that threaten the achievement of environmental justice in this region. On March 8th, the assistant associate administrator for environmental justice at the Environmental Protection Agency, Mustafa Ali, resigned after 24 years with the agency. He left because he became convinced that the new administration has no intention of protecting vulnerable from disproportionate environmental burden (Marsh, 2017). The fact that such a strong advocate for government support of environmental justice decided to leave the government does not bode well for communities that rely on government policies to protect their health. Threats include ecological gentrification (Dooling, 2009), the housing market and privatization of services.

### **Ecological Gentrification**

In the last 25 years there have been transformations in the EJ movement as the number of contaminated properties has been reduced and property costs have increased. Many nonprofits I spoke with regarded

gentrification as a threat to the EJ movement's ability to achieve a just transition in this region. Communities are being stripped of their culture and wealth due to the displacement of families and small locally-owned businesses. EJ nonprofits in this region are being forced to take on issues such as housing justice in their mission.

The available literature has many names for ecological gentrification, including environmental gentrification, eco-gentrification, the greenwave (Checker, 2011), and greentrification (Smith, 2001). Leslie Kern, author of *From toxic wreck to crunchy chic: environmental gentrification through the body* has seen in the literature that environmental gentrification is, "...a process in which environmental improvements result in the displacement of working-class residents as cleanup and reuse of undesirable land uses make a neighbourhood more attractive and drive up real estate prices (Kern, 2015)".

Urban green spaces offer many solutions to the problems of dense cities. China, a country with some of the densest cities in the world, is a prime example of some of the issues associated with urbanization, particularly the effects of pollution. The Chinese city of Hangzhou has attempted to return much of the lost green space through revitalization of industrial areas (Wolch, 2014). They have been focusing on taking out old factories and putting in parks, putting green space under rail lines and planting trees along urban streets. Despite their good intentions, these areas are still unsafe for

people to use because of pollution and evidence that shows that the insertion of green spaces has increased property values and caused displacement (Wolch, 2014).

A paper by the International Journal of Urban and Regional Research gives a review of author, David Harvey's work on ecological gentrification from 1996. He offers the example of Seattle as a city that has pushed out communities (Dooling, 2009). In this case, the community is made up of homeless people living in public green space. With limited affordable housing options, people are left to live out on public property like green space. While living in parks and conservation areas isn't illegal, ordinances in Seattle criminalize basic human functions that people are forced to carry out in public places (Dooling, 2009). So instead of improving the wellbeing of people in a community, ecological development in Seattle ends up damning them to prison. Gentrification from the addition of green space still persists as a problem today because even plans with good intentions can end up hurting people.

When defending environmental gentrification as a positive result, the type of perceived benefits typically focus on economic investment and urban growth and revitalization. A constant theme seen throughout the literature is the view of an area as though it has no value, when in fact, that is not the case. Developers, realtors and city officials that only concern themselves with economic and environmental development don't see the social value that

exists within post-industrial spaces that are home to or are near disadvantaged communities. Capitalism encourages cities to clear out areas where there is no obvious economic value, and utilize sustainable branding. Sustainable branding is when cities boast about having an environmental image, when really it is a disguise for continued economic growth and ignorance of social equity. Government systems often take a neoliberal view of environmental benefits. This is the case with the Baker administration in MA. Environmental and economic benefits typically receive greater attention in policy discussions than the social benefits (Pearsall).” The prevailing view, in the literature of ecological gentrification is that it is unjust. One of the biggest causes of environmental gentrification is excluding disadvantaged people from decisions regarding environmental development.

There is a key research question that remains unanswered. It is clear to see from the empirical evidence in the literature that ecological gentrification can cause displacement. The EJ movement has the challenge of representing the disadvantaged in a society driven by capitalism. Missing from the literature though is research on the overall outcomes of ecological gentrification. Low-income residents of a blighted community should be valued just as highly by developers as wealthy incomers. The research question is, “does ecological gentrification do more overall to help or hurt the disadvantaged in a city that is adopting sustainable city branding?” Despite the goal of green development often being to create places for the wealthy, is there a trickle down effect that ultimately benefits the low-income residents

and does not just move them? The answer to this question shouldn't take any weight from the responsibility that society has to value all humans equally. The answer could be harnessed to increase benefits for the disadvantaged during sustainable development.

Planning and policies have become too focused on place and have lost sight of the original goal of improving life for people. All of the potential benefits that urban ecological concepts have for people have been coopted by capitalism. For example, using adaptive reuse to conserve resources and appreciate our history has been eclipsed by the economic value of this style of building. Sustainability has become something that is only deserved by the wealthy.

### **The Housing Market**

The EJ movement in this region has been going through a huge transition. The movement has had a lot of success with cleaning up illegal dump sites and making neighborhoods more livable. This success, among other trends such as an increasing population in urban areas due to a recovering economy and an increasing awareness around living a sustainable lifestyle, MA and RI's urban areas are going through a housing boom. The Boston area saw a 42 percent increase in the number of building permits issued in 2015 for new apartments and condos, according to CMD Construction Data (Boston Real Estate, 2016).

While Rhode Island is seeing less progress, according to Rhode Island Association of Realtors INC., 1044 single family apartments were sold in May of 2017, up 60 percent from 654 sold in May of 2008 (RI Living). Kalila Barnett, the former Executive Director of ACE notes, “the real estate market has shifted EJ work”. Nonprofits in the EJ movement are beginning to see that if they want their members to be able to remain in these newly attractive neighborhoods, they need to be cognizant of gentrification. They need to partner with community development corporations and affordable housing developers. One example of a nonprofit that has been doing this the longest is DSNI. DSNI has been working with affordable housing developers to building affordable housing in their community land trust since the 1980s.

### **Privatization**

The EJ movement needs to use the just transition framework to shift society away from supporting a neoliberal power structure and move towards supporting a cooperative bottom-up power structure. Privatization threatens this transition. Even though the services in MA like transportation are not privatized yet, many nonprofits have concerns, especially Community Labor United. The MBTA is being run by administrators who have a business mindset. The former general manager came from the Pioneer Institute and he ran the MBTA like a business. The Pioneer Institute is a right-wing think tank that promotes privatization and a neoliberal agenda in MA. Through an interview, I learned that the MBTA train line that has the most breakdowns serves low-income communities of color. Taking on the neoliberal power

structure in this region unites many groups in this region. A power analysis needs to be conducted to find out who is really pulling the strings. The majority of the financial capital that flows through MA and RI may be coming from corporations.

Other service sectors are also being privatized. Privatized housing is expanding at a rapid rate in the Boston area. In addition, a study done by NEJRC found that there are 23 towns and cities in MA with privatized water systems. Companies sign contracts with the municipalities and then cut costs by not doing maintenance and upkeep on the systems. When the contract expires, the systems fall apart and the costs are diverted onto the municipalities (Dehner, 2011). The EJ movement is being threatened by the neoliberal power structure in this region. Public ownership provides a democratic solution that moves power to the local level.

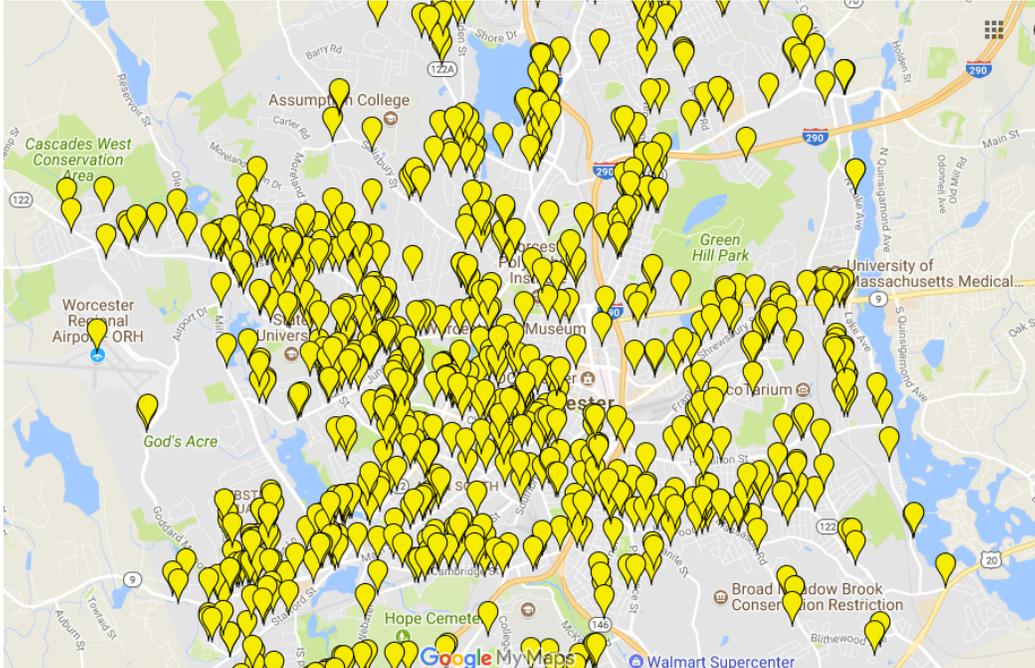
### **Natural Gas is Encroaching**

This region's energy system is in the midst of a radical transformation. Pressure is building for an energy future with natural gas. Part of adopting a just transition for this region involves implementing initiatives that dismantle the use of extractive fuels and build an inclusive renewable energy market. Bullard finds that, "...while the rest of the world and the rest of the nation are talking about moving to green and clean, communities of color and low-income communities are still getting dirty, risky, polluting industries" (Bullard, 2010).

A natural gas future for this region is a major threat to the EJ movement. Almost all other industries “occur in a zoned industrial area, inside of buildings, separated from home and farm, separated from schools” (Howarth, 2011). By contrast, the industry spawned by fracking “permits the oil and gas industries to establish [their infrastructures] next to where we live. They are imposing on us the requirement to locate our homes, hospitals, and schools inside their industrial space” (Howarth, 2011). Natural gas infrastructure in MA and RI currently exists next to low-income and minority communities. There is the risk of explosions and air pollution from leaks poses serious health risks to these communities.

Boston University researchers and collaborators conducted a mobile greenhouse gas audit in Boston and found “hundreds of natural gas leaks under the streets and sidewalks of Greater Boston” (Phillips, 2011). Some of the most vulnerable cities in the state are amongst the municipalities highest number of gas leaks, such as Dorchester with 416, New Bedford with 333, Springfield with 568 and Worcester (shown in Figure 4) with 906 (Department of Public Utilities, 2017). The burning of natural gas contributes to climate change, which is and will continue to disproportionately impact vulnerable communities due to sea level rise, urban heat island effect, and other impacts. Recently, the Toxics Action Center has targeted the natural gas plant, Mystic Generating Station as one of the five largest polluting power stations in MA.

Figure 4. Gas Leaks in Worcester. Source: Department of Public Utilities



In our current economic system, large energy corporations have a lot of wealth and power, therefore their interests are holding more weight than the interests of the community (Pearse, 2009; Pearse et al., 2013). One consequence of this system is the propagation of fossil fuel dependency or “carbon lock-in” (Unruh, 2000: 818). The Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) discovered that New England’s governors held, “secretive proceedings that led to a plan to overbuild the region’s natural gas infrastructure – with costs in the billions to be paid by ratepayers. After CLF revealed the role of industry insiders and the incomplete analysis in shaping the plan, it was ‘put on hold’ by the New England States Committee on Electricity (NESCOE), the regional entity charged with its implementation” (State of the Region 2014-2015).

An environmental nonprofit called Mothers Out Front is one of the leading groups holding the natural gas industry accountable in this region. An energy corporation called Spectra wants to extract natural gas from the Appalachian Basin's, move it through Massachusetts and ship it abroad. This involves the installation of dangerous industrial infrastructure throughout the state, including compressor stations, LNG storage terminals and pipelines. The proposed pipeline infrastructure involves many issues of economic, social, and racial justice. For instance, a compressor station is proposed to be sited in Weymouth, and a high pressure pipeline will connect in West Roxbury to a metering and regulating station across from the entrance to an active crushed Stone blasting quarry. The facilities, which are expected to increase asthma, heart disease, cancer, and other diseases in the community, would be built in and near communities already suffering health and other effects of decades of industrial infrastructure.

Cristina Cabrera, the Executive Director of EJLRI shared the just transition strategy EJLRI has created. They are using every resource and ally they can to fight a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility from being built at the port of Providence. The facility is proposed to be built within a mile of homes, schools, and hospitals. While trying to hold polluters accountable, EJLRI is working with the city to integrate a better understanding of EJ in each department. They also received funding through EPA's EJ Small Grants program to address the asthma hotspot in communities near the port. EJLRI

is working to stop the bad, while driving racial equity and social justice in Rhode Island.

# Recommendations

---

Based on background research and interviews with local community-based environmental justice (EJ) nonprofits and environmental organizations in MA and RI, the following recommendations were identified for a regional environmental justice movement agenda that uses the just transition framework. Evans notes that, “A synergy of environmental justice and just transition campaigns challenges economic, social and political injustices that cause oppression and insecurity, including social and economic inequity based on class, gender, race and other oppressions” (Evans & Phelan, 2016). The following recommendations outline how the environmental and EJ movement and EJ issues can become better integrated with other movements and issues in order to challenge injustices that cause oppression. The recommendations are ideas for advancing a conversation in MA and RI about how the environmental and EJ movements can move forward and advance a more transformative politics.

## **Just Green Enough**

To deal with the challenge of ecological gentrification, planners are trying to focus their efforts on advancing public health, social justice, and environmental equity in cities (Wolch, 2014). An example in Brooklyn, New York has working-class residents teaming up with developers to improve public health. They avoid creating parks, cafes, and river walks, and look

towards environmental cleanup. They only move forward with projects while being certain to preserve industrial use and blue-collar workers in the surrounding area. The team harnesses public and private investments to make improvements that allow residents to become resilient and stay in the community (Wolch, 2014). Another example of equitable strategy involves local non-profits in Toronto, Canada. They fight for urban agriculture and community garden spaces. These efforts address the existing issues of unemployment, human health, and food deserts (Wolch, 2014). It is important not to forget the people that don't even have homes, and use public green space as refuge. The review of David Harvey's work on ecological gentrification gives strategies on helping them. Harvey suggests that speaking and listening to local homeless individuals talk about why they are living in a park is a good first step (Dooling, 2009). The next is bringing their stories to the political arena. Harvey heard from the homeless that they wanted a Green Stewardship Program that would allow them to live in a green space without harassment; they would maintain the grounds and receive a living wage for their work (Dooling, 2009). Efforts like these have been made to address ecological gentrification.

Community-based organizations and environmental groups have been active in addressing ecological gentrification. Both entities have worked toward remediating brownfields and adaptive reuse of abandoned infrastructure in efforts to improve environmental justice and public health (Wolch, 2014). Green gentrification is an important topic in planning and

policy because it is difficult to avoid. Even the most well-meaning public servants can try to improve the quality of life in a neighborhood and accidentally force those people to move to a worse area. It is important for local officials and developers to work with stakeholders in the community on efforts to make the specific changes in the urban environment that are needed.

### **Green Jobs with Justice**

EJLRI and CLU align themselves with a national network called Jobs with Justice. Jobs With Justice fights for workers' rights and an economy that benefits everyone. They lead national campaigns and shape the public discourse to build power for working people. They enact change for workers by combining research and policy advocacy with grassroots action and mobilization (Jobs with Justice, 2017). While the organization does not have an environmental focus, the MA and RI nonprofits that do EJ work prefer to approach new jobs in the environmental and energy sectors through the Jobs with Justice lense. Green jobs with justice include "training people, providing guidance on health and safety, and making sure that there is a pathway to a safe job and livable wage" (Bullard, 2010). These groups are not interested in short term solutions for their members, they are in it for the long haul. Government and foundations need to push for the systems shift that is needed to build resilient communities. It is not enough to offer training and temporary jobs to vulnerable communities. In order to achieve a sustained

improvement in their livelihoods, these communities need to become better integrated with, and have ownership of the clean energy industry.

One example of jobs with justice in action is at Groundwork Rhode Island. Their social venture, GroundCorp is a landscape design-build and maintenance service. Fully-insured and licensed as a contractor in the state of Rhode Island, GroundCorp provides valuable, paid, hands-on work experience to graduates of their job training program as they search for permanent employment. Projects demonstrate urban landscape restoration and stormwater management best practices, contributing to the health and vitality of the people and places in Rhode Island's urban communities, including installation of rain barrels, rain gardens, compost, and lead-safe yard retrofits. The initiative provides employment that allows people in economically distressed urban areas to contribute to the reduction of the heat island effect and flooding in their community (Groundwork Rhode Island).

## **Public Services**

The privatization of essential services, such as access to transportation, energy, clean water and air, could put EJ communities at greater risk. Community Labor United (CLU), a social justice nonprofit based in Roxbury is leading an initiative to stop the privatization of services in Massachusetts, called "An Eye on Privatization". This initiative needs more support behind it. A report released in June of 2017 called Reclaiming Public

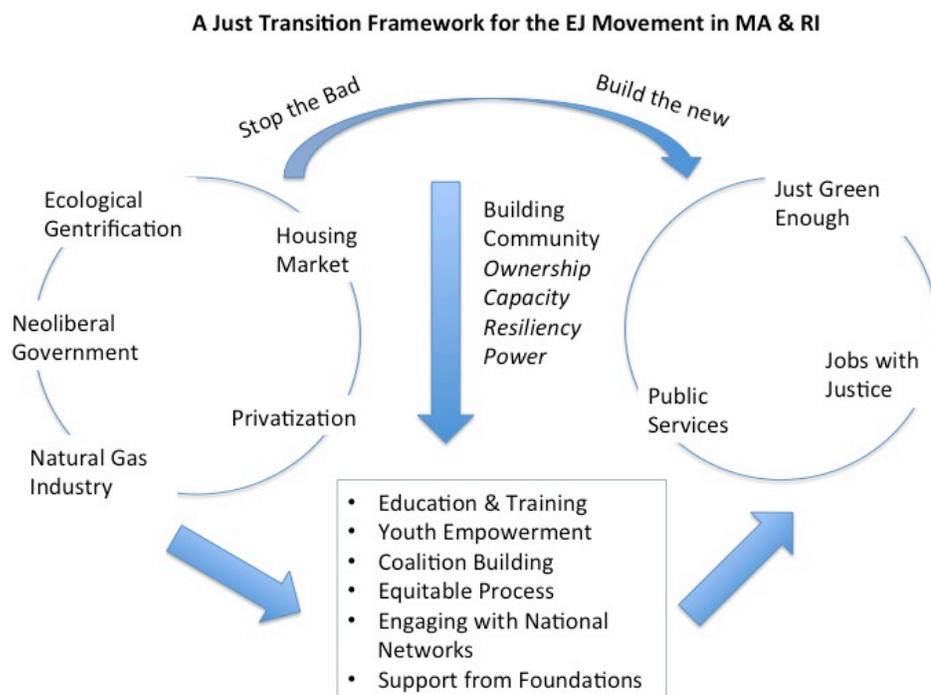
Services: How cities and citizens are turning back privatisation, reveals that 1,600 cities in 45 countries have had more success with public ownership of services (including water, energy, transportation and waste management) compared to corporate ownership (Kishimoto, et al, 2017). The authors call the process of moving from private ownership of services to municipal ownership, (re)municipalisation. They found that this decision “succeeded in bringing down costs and tariffs, improving conditions for workers and boosting service quality, while ensuring greater transparency and accountability” for cities worldwide.

Elected officials in local governments see value in privatization because the short term financial benefit is attractive. In the long term, private companies have to bring in money to their shareholders and executives, so they cut costs on maintenance, wages and services and they pass on the financial burden to the ratepayers. As a result, local wealth is redistributed to corporations. The study found that cities had difficulty with accountability from private companies, in the form of cost overruns, poor service and contract violations. In addition to (re)municipalisation, the study found that services owned by worker-owned cooperatives and nonprofits provide benefits for employers, young people, and vulnerable residents (Kishimoto, et al, 2017). CLU needs the support of the EJ movement in this region in order to keep vulnerable communities from being exploited through the privatization of essential services.

# Conclusion

The findings defend the claim that the just transition framework is critical to resolving the current crises of the EJ movement in this region. While the EJ movement in this region is trying to embody the just transition framework, (summarized in figure 5) all of the EJ nonprofits and key partners are not intentionally working together to utilize the just transition framework. The campaigns that are led by nonprofits in this region that open up possibilities for transition away from fossil fuel dependency to a postcarbon society can be strengthened by engaging with the just transition discourses (Evans & Phelan, 2016).

Figure 5. Just Transition Framework for MA & RI



The thesis identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the EJ movement. Figure 5 shows how and why the movement can use the just transition framework to turn threats into solutions, using opportunities and the movement's strengths. The weaknesses (lack of funding, a non-cohesive movement, flawed risk assessment, unsustainable legal services, silos, and the lack of impact from green jobs) identified in the thesis need to be repaired in order to enhance a just transition for the region.

The EJ movement in this region needs to think more about what the Just Transition framework would look like for Massachusetts and Rhode Island. They need to follow the money. How does money flow through the government, the real estate market and the fossil fuel industry? They need to advocate for essential services to be managed with transparency, accountability and equitably, by keeping them public and not privatized. The movement needs a stronger collective push against the encroaching increase of the natural gas industry. They need a stronger collective push toward moving capital into the hands of residents and small business owners who want to improve the social and ecological well being of the region. They need to advocate for opportunities that offer ownership of the clean energy industry to vulnerable communities with "green jobs with justice". They need to combat ecological gentrification with the "just green enough" approach that cleans up contaminated properties without displacing the community. The movement needs to think about how it can link issues to have a more powerful collective voice. Instead of just advocating for housing that has a

more affordable cost of rent, this issue can be linked to just energy by calling for community-owned renewable energy for these homes at the same time. Linking issues in this way allows for a diversity of groups to come together and build power behind a broader agenda. The just transition framework is the right strategy for the EJ movement in MA and RI.

# Appendix A

---



Office of the Vice Provost  
for Research

Title: Master's Thesis - Needs Assessment of Environmental Justice in MA

June 8, 2017 | Notice of Action

IRB Study # 1705010 | Status: EXEMPT

PI: Elizabeth Pongratz  
Faculty Advisor: Sumeeta Srinivasan  
Review Date: 6/8/2017

The above referenced study has been granted the status of Exempt Category 2 as defined in 45 CFR 46.101 (b). For details please visit the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) website at: [http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.101\(b\)](http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.101(b))

- The Exempt Status does not relieve the investigator of any responsibilities relating to the research participants. Research should be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles, (i) Respect for Persons, (ii) Beneficence, and (iii) Justice, as outlined in the Belmont Report.
- Any changes to the protocol or study materials that might affect the Exempt Status must be referred to the Office of the IRB for guidance. Depending on the changes, you may be required to apply for either expedited or full review.

IRB Administrative Representative Initials: EP.

# Interview Protocol

## INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear \_\_\_\_\_(I will fill in name),

I am a graduate student studying urban planning at Tufts University and I am writing a thesis on how non-profits view the current state of the environmental justice (EJ) movement in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. I am also engaged in this work as a Student Trainee in the Environmental Justice office at the US EPA in Boston. One product of my thesis will be a report that highlights the achievements and the needs of the EJ movement. I will share this with my colleagues at the EPA, the Director of the EJ Program at the MA DEP, with you and other non-profits. I am contacting you to ask if I can interview you at your office or a coffee shop for 20 minutes. I'd appreciate your input in order to inform my research.

My thesis advisor is Professor Sumeeta Srinivasan at Tufts University, and my readers are Julian Agyeman at Tufts University and Daniel Faber at Northeastern. For questions regarding this study, I can be reached at [Elizabeth.pongratz@tufts.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.pongratz@tufts.edu) and my advisor can be reached at [sumeeta.srinivasan@tufts.edu](mailto:sumeeta.srinivasan@tufts.edu).

Best,  
Liz Pongratz

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you for meeting with me. I appreciate you taking the time out of your schedule. So back in April, I was doing work around an environmental justice summit but it was becoming clear that there wasn't enough capacity for a summit and that there should be an assessment of the movement. Since your group is critical to the EJ movement, we want to hear from you. If you feel that some information is private, but would be helpful for my understanding, we can keep anything confidential and off the record.

1. What drew you to work for this organization?
  - a. How long have you been with this organization, what positions have you had, have you worked similar jobs before?
  - b. How do you like the work?
2. What is the organizational structure or decision-making structure?
  - a. Are you a membership organization and if so how are members engaged? Do you have an active or passive membership? Do members elect board positions or other leadership positions?
  - b. How does your organization engage in networking? How do you connect with other organizations?
  - c. What is the philosophy for the board? Are they representative of the community? Is it an active or passive board?
  - d. What are the strengths of your organizational structure?
  - e. Has the organizational structure been problematic? Are there areas that are in need of improvement?
  - f. Has the organizational structure changed? Do you foresee changes in the organizational structure and if so, why?
3. Can you briefly discuss your organizations accomplishments? What do you consider to be the most important and impressive accomplishments and why?
  - a. Can you provide materials that go over your accomplishments? Do you have any grant documents?

4. What is your philosophy for being successful with this organization?  
How has it changed over time?
5. What have been the dominant strategies or tactics that have been problematic or successful? Do you feel like these need to change and why?
6. How would you describe the financial standing of your organization?
  - a. Do you have a diversified funding strategy? Where does your funding come from? Do you receive funding from foundations or community members?
  - b. Have you been having trouble finding resources, are you having trouble raising money and why?
  - c. Have your budgets been going up or down? Have you had to give up any programs or projects because of lack of money?
  - d. Has growth of your organization impacted your financial situation?
  - e. What programs or projects would you have if you had more funding?
  - f. Would you be willing to share your financial history?
7. Where do you think the environmental justice movement in this region is headed?
  - a. What do you think are the most recent achievements of the environmental justice movement in this region?
  - b. What do you think are strengths and weaknesses of the environmental justice movement in this region?
  - c. What do you think are the greatest needs of the movement?
  - d. What do you think are opportunities and threats for the environmental justice movement in this region?
  - e. Do you think that there are benefits to networking; do you think that EJ organizations are well networked?

8. In the report that results from these interviews, what recommendations do you think should be made for the movement?
9. Do you know of someone at another non-profit that you feel would be appropriate for me to interview? Can I CC you in my email to them?
10. Those are all of my questions, thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. Just one more thing, I'm going to send you a consent form, if you wouldn't mind reading it over and emailing me back saying that you allow us to share your name and the information you gave us today. Do you have any questions for me?

# Bibliography

---

- Agyeman, Julian. "Sustainable communities and the challenge of environmental justice". New York: New York University Press. (2005).
- Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE). "EJ EO Factsheet". 2014. <[https://www.aceej.org/sites/default/files/shared/EJ%20EO%20Fact sheet.pdf](https://www.aceej.org/sites/default/files/shared/EJ%20EO%20Fact%20sheet.pdf)>
- Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE). "Environmental Justice Legal Services". 2014. <<https://www.ace-ej.org/services>>
- Barry, John and Healy, Noel. "Politicizing energy justice and energy system transitions: Fossil fuel divestment and a "just transition"". Energy Policy, September 2017, Vol.108, pp.451-459.
- "Bean v. Southwestern Waste Management Corp. - Significance, Waste Management In Houston, Laches And State Action, Impact, Further Readings - JRank Articles". Law.jrank.org. 1979-12-21.
- Boston Real Estate. "Apartment Construction Booms". <<http://realestate.boston.com/buying/2016/03/30/apartment-construction-booms/>>
- Bridge, G., Bouzarovski, S., Bradshaw, M., Eyre, N., 2013. Geographies of energy transition: Space, place and the low-carbon economy. Energy Policy 53, 331–340.
- Bullard, Robert D. "Solid Waste Sites and the Black Houston Community". Sociological Inquiry, Vol. 53, April 1983, pp. 273-288.
- Bullard, Robert D. ; Wright, Beverly. "Disastrous Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters: An Environmental Justice Analysis Twenty-Five Years after Warren County". UCLA Journal of Environmental Law and Policy, 26(2), 2008.
- Bullard, Robert D., and Beverly Wright. "The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities." New York: New York University Press, 2012.
- Bullard, Robert D., and Olden, Kenneth. "Interview with Robert D. Bullard, Ph.D. and Kenneth Olden, Ph.D., Sc.D., L.H.D." ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, Volume 3, Number 1, 2010, <sup>a</sup> Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. DOI: 10.1089=env.2009.3101.

- Burrows, Mae. "Just Transition. (the lessening of job loss fars will help environmental programs)". *Alternatives Journal*, Wntr, 2001, Vol.27(1), p.29.
- Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), 2011. *Climate Change & Human Rights: A Primer*. CIEL, Washington, DC.
- Checker, Melissa. "Wiped Out by the "Greenwave": Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability." *City & Society* 23, no. 2 (2011): 210-29.
- Climate Justice Alliance (CJA). "Just Transition Principles" 2016. <[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxqkHpiiFq\\_eWk9QR1JwNFRDSndzZEVwRmtWZkZFcXdWWTBn/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxqkHpiiFq_eWk9QR1JwNFRDSndzZEVwRmtWZkZFcXdWWTBn/view)>
- Community Labor United (CLU). "Green Justice Coalition". <<http://clud6.prometheuslabor.com/green-justice-campaign>>
- Community Labor United (CLU). 10 Year Agenda. Accessed Aug. 8, 2017. <<http://massclu.org/initiatives/#1501530230142-6fb80e97-ae7c>>
- Conservation Law Foundation. <https://www.clf.org/about/>
- Conservation Law Foundation (CLF). "CLF Takes on Shell Over Endangerment of Providence Community". JUN 28, 2017 <<https://www.clf.org/newsroom/shell-providence-lawsuit/>>
- Curran, Winifred & Hamilton, Trina Hamilton. "Just green enough: contesting environmental gentrification in Greenpoint, Brooklyn". *Local Environment*, Vol. 17, No. 9, October 2012, 1027–1042.
- Dehner, Corey. "Private Sector Involvement in Public Water Distribution Assessing Local Water Systems in Massachusetts". *Journal of the New England Water Works Association*, Mar 2011, Vol.125(1), pp.25-67.
- Doolling, Sarah. "Ecological Gentrification: A Research Agenda Exploring Justice in the City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33.3 (2009): 621-39.
- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI). "BY-LAWS OF THE DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE, INC." Accessed July 10, 2017. <<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5515d04fe4b0263cc20b3984/t/55187578e4b057e153f9ec52/1427666296706/DSNI+By-Laws.pdf>>
- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI). Real Food Hub. 2017. <<http://www.dsni.org/sustainable-economic-development/#DRFH>>

- Environmental Justice Legal Services. Alternatives for Community and Environment. <https://www.ace-ej.org/services>
- Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island (EJLRI). "Community Environmental College". 2017. <<http://ejlri.org/community-environmental-college-2/>>
- EPA, US. "Environmental Justice and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)." Accessed October 10, 2016. <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-and-national-environmental-policy-act>.
- EPA, US. (2016, July 15). "Glossary of EJSscreen terms." Retrieved October 15, 2016, from Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool, <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/glossary-ejscreen-terms>
- EPA, US. "Our Mission and What We Do." August 18, 2016. Accessed November 03, 2016. <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/our-mission-and-what-we-do>.
- EPA, US. "Prepared Workbook, Process for Risk Evaluation, Property Analysis and Reuse Decisions." May 15, 2015.
- EPA, US, & ORPM. "Summary of executive order 12898 - federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations." Retrieved October 16, 2016, from US Environmental Protection Agency, <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-executive-order-12898-federal-actions-address-environmental-justice>
- Evans , Geoff and Phelan, Liam. "Transition to a post-carbon society: Linking environmental justice and just transition discourses". *Energy Policy* 99, 329–339, May 17 2016.
- Faber, Daniel R. *Capitalizing on Environmental Injustice: The Polluter-Industrial Complex in the Age of Globalization*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield (2008).
- Faber, Daniel R., and Eric J. Krieg. "Unequal Exposure to Ecological Hazards 2005: Environmental Injustices in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." (n.d.): n. pag. 12 Oct. 2005. Web. 26 Oct. 2016. <<http://www.northeastern.edu/ejresearchnetwork/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Final-Unequal-Exposure-Report-2005-10-12-05.pdf>>.

- Faber, Daniel and McCarthy, Deborah. "Green of Another Color: Building Effective Partnerships Between Foundations and the Environmental Justice Movement" (April 10, 2001).
- GreenRoots. "Environmental Chelsea Organizers (ECO)". 2017. <<http://www.greenrootschelsea.org/programs/>>
- Groundwork USA. 2017. <<https://groundworkusa.org/>>
- Groundwork Rhode Island (RI). "Training". 2017. <<http://groundworkprovidence.org/programs/>>
- della Porta, D., 2015. Democracy in social movements. In: della Porta, D., Diani, M. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 767–780.
- Department of Public Utilities. "City Maps of Gas Leaks". Home Energy Efficiency Team. <<https://www.heetma.org/squeaky-leak/natural-gas-leaks-maps/>>
- Healy, Noel and Barry, John. "Politicizing energy justice and energy system transitions: Fossil fuel divestment and a "just transition"". *Energy Policy* 108 (2017) 451–459.
- Howarth, Robert ; Santoro, Renee ; Ingraffea, Anthony. "Methane and the greenhouse-gas footprint of natural gas from shale formations *Climatic Change*, 2011, Vol.106(4), pp.679-690.
- Jobs with Justice. <http://www.jwj.org/about-us>
- Just Transition Alliance (JTA). "What We Do" 2010. <<http://www.jtalliance.org/docs/whatwedo.html>>
- Kern, Leslie. "From Toxic Wreck to Crunchy Chic: Environmental Gentrification through the Body." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33, no. 1 (2015): 67-83.
- Kishimoto, Satoko, Petitjean, Olivier, Steinfort, Lavinia. "Reclaiming Public Services How cities and citizens are turning back privatisation". Transnational Institute (TNI), June 23, 2017. <[https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/reclaiming\\_public\\_services.pdf](https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/reclaiming_public_services.pdf)>
- Leggett, J., 2015. *The Winning of The Carbon War*. Jeremy Leggett, London, UK.
- Levy, D., 2012. Private actors and strategies in global environmental governance: The role of information disclosure. In: Dauvergne, P. (Ed.),

- Handbook of Global Environmental Politics, 2nd ed. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, pp. 308–318.
- Marsh, Rene, Scott, Eugene. “EPA veteran quits, says Trump admin isn’t supporting ‘vulnerable communities.’” CNN. March 9, 2017. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/09/politics/epa-official-resigns-environmental-justice/>>
- Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC). “Pathways out of Poverty”. June 3, 2011. <<http://www.masscec.com/about-masscec/news/masscec-announces-pathways-out-poverty-green-collar-job-training-grants>>
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). “Mass DEP Environmental Justice.” Accessed April 4, 2017. <<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/service/justice/>>
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). “Environmental Strike Force.” <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/about/programs/enforcement-massachusetts-environmental-strike-force.html>
- Matthew, Dayna, Reeves, Richard, Rodrigue, Edward. “Health, Housing, and Racial Justice: An Agenda for the Trump Administration.” Economic Studies at Brookings. January, 2017. <[https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2017/01/ccf\\_20170116\\_racial\\_segregation\\_and\\_health\\_matthew\\_reeves2.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2017/01/ccf_20170116_racial_segregation_and_health_matthew_reeves2.pdf)>
- Mitchell, C. “Momentum is increasing towards a flexible electricity system based on renewables”. Nature. Nature Energy, 2016, (Article number: 15030).
- Moyer, B., McAllister, A., Finley, M.L., Soifer, S., 2001. Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organising Social Movements. New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, BC, Canada.
- Pearse, G., “Quarry Vision: Coal, Climate Change and the End of the Resources Boom, Quarterly Essay”. Black Inc., Melbourne, Australia. 2009.
- Pearse, G., McKnight, D., Burton, B., “Big Coal: Australia’s Dirtiest Habit”. New South Publishing, Sydney, Australia. 2013.
- Pearsall, Hamil. "From Brown to Green? Assessing Social Vulnerability to Environmental Gentrification in New York City." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 28 (2010): 872-86.
- Pettit, J., 2004. Climate justice: a new social movement for atmospheric rights. *IDS Bull.* 35, 102–106.

- Phillips, Nathan. "Researchers identify extensive methane leaks under streets of Boston." *Space Daily*, 20 May 2011. General OneFile, <libraries.state.ma.us/login?gwurl=http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=ITOF&sw=w&u=mmlin\_m\_tufts&v=2.1&id=GALE%7CA256840557&it=r&asid=9db2d717d07e441fde0b9a0ca8f658b1> Accessed 11 Aug. 2017.
- Polletta, F., Gardner, B.G., 2015. Narrative and social movements. In: della Porta, D., Diani, M. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 534–548.
- Rieder, Jessica M. "An Evaluation of Two Environmental Acts: The National Environmental Policy Act and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act." *Asia Pacific Journal of Environmental Law* 14.1 & 2 (2011): 105-138.
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). "Policy for Considering Environmental Justice in the Review of Investigation and Remediation of Contaminated Properties." August 8, 2009. <http://www.dem.ri.gov/envequity/pdf/ejfinal.pdf>
- Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDH). "The Burden of Asthma in Rhode Island". (pg 28). Asthma Control Program, 2014. <<http://www.health.ri.gov/publications/burdendocuments/2014Asthma.pdf>>
- Rhode Island Living. "Statistics". <<http://www.riliving.com/PressReleases/statistics/Default.asp>>
- Scammell, Madeleine and Slatin, Craig. "Environmental Justice and Just Transition". *NEW SOLUTIONS: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, 2011, Vol.21(1), pp.1-4
- Smith, D.p., and D.a. Phillips. "Socio-cultural Representations of Greentrified Pennine Rurality." *Journal of Rural Studies* 17, no. 4 (2001): 457-69.
- Tan, A., Snow, D., 2015. Cuultural conflicts and social movements. In: della Porta, D., Diani, M. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 513–533.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2017). TRI Explorer (2015 Dataset (released March 2017) (updated June 2, 2017)) [Internet database]. Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/triexplorer>, (August 14, 2017).
- United States (US) Census Bureau. "Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, RI". 2015. <<https://www.census.gov>>

- United States (US) Census Bureau. "Springfield, MA". 2010.  
<<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/springfieldcitymassachusetts/PST045216>>
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EJ SCREEN Report (Version 2016). [https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/ejscreen\\_SOE.aspx](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/ejscreen_SOE.aspx)
- Vivier, P, et al. "The Important Health Impact of Where a Child Lives: Neighborhood Characteristics and the Burden of Lead Poisoning". Oct 23, 2010. Maternal and Child Health Journal. November 2011, Volume 15, Issue 8, pp 1195–1202.  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10995-010-0692-6>
- Wolch, Jennifer R., Jason Byrne, and Joshua P. Newell. "Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities 'just Green Enough'." Landscape and Urban Planning (2014): 234-44.