

How does a changing environment impact political identity formation?

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WH131

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Research Question

My research is concerned with describing the ways in which communities react to the shock of a changing environment and the slower effects of environmental degradation, and how those responses translate into their political behavior and identities. In attempting to understand variation in the response of these communities, a few additional questions become relevant. First, are politically salient identities (such as race, ethnicity, religion, class, etc.) hardened or softened under these specific kinds of stress? A changing environment is at its heart a threat to the security of a group through their ability to access resources. In other types of security threat situations, often those which are violent in nature, we would expect most groups to solidify behind their identities. However, this has not been directly tested in the context of environmental degradation.

Another issue I hope to explore is the ways in which a government response might impact the reaction to environmental changes. Identity cannot exist in a vacuum and government action is a necessary condition for people to cope with environmental degradation. As such, those responses will likely be integral to understanding variation in responses from individuals and social groups. If a group with a preexisting relationship, say a strong ethnic tie, is in a situation where they are struggling to cope with environmental shocks, will government aid soften those ethnic ties? If a group is heavily marginalized, will they consider a lack of assistance from local or federal agencies as reinforcement of that marginalization? Does government action condition responses to changing environments?

In particular, I am interested in marginalized groups, who have the least power in society but are often impacted to a greater extent than their more privileged peers. Although there is a good deal of literature about the deprivations such group face, there is little to no work on the impact of climate changes on people's beliefs and attitudes. Previous scholarship in the realm of

climate politics has been overly focused on understanding perceptions of and belief in climate change and has put off understanding the behavioral effects of the phenomena. This is a major gap that needs to be addressed because these phenomena have already begun to impact various communities.

Literature Assessment

While I have yet to find other scholarship investigating the impacts of environmental changes on political identity, there are five main bodies of literature which are relevant here. First, the literature surrounding environmental racism and infrastructural violence describes the distribution of environmental degradation and access to aid in overcoming its effects. Second, an overview of the main focuses of climate scholars in political science and related social sciences shows its lack of focus on the effects of environmental degradation. Third and fourth, findings from racial and ethnic politics scholars as well as American minority behavior describe theories of identity formation, which I will argue both apply to the case of a changing environment. Finally, scholars of class identity provide a separate take on identity formation, which is embedded in the same structures of inequality discussed with racial and ethnic identity.

Although many places throughout the world have been degraded in some way, marginalized groups are the most vulnerable because they live within systems of inequality. They are the most likely to live near degraded areas and the least likely to receive aid (Nagel 2012). This is due to systemic issues such as infrastructural violence, a concept that articulates the way that infrastructure should be understood as embedded within political, social, economic, and cultural contexts (Rogers & O'Neill 2012). Infrastructure is a major factor in determining the organization of a state and as such it is able to perpetuate inequality and sustain that marginalization in wide

ranging aspects of life (Henderson & Wells 2021). Due to this pattern, if the political behavior of any group has been impacted by the environment it should be most obvious in groups who are marginalized.

The largest body of the literature surrounding climate politics seeks to explain variation in belief in and concern for climate change, which are highly correlated with each other and often used synonymously (Achen and Bartels 2016; Bechtel and Mannino 2021; Blankenship et al. 2020; Capstick and Pidgeon 2014; Egan and Mullin 2017; Fielding and Hornsey 2016; Harth 2021; Johnson, Brace, and Arceneaux 2005; Mackay et al. 2021). A separate branch investigates changes in climate and how they impact various individual level behavior, public opinion and electoral outcomes. For example, Natural disasters and high temperatures have been linked to decreased government legitimacy, more critical appraisal of climate mitigation measures taken by executives, voter turnout, and vote choice (Blankenship et al. 2020; Carlin, Love, and Zechmeister 2013; Gasper and Reeves 2011; Gomez, Hansford, and Krause 2007; Healy and Malhotra 2009). At an individual level, these variables are known to heighten feelings of aggression and competition and to increase support for expensive policy measures, hinting at an increasing level of risk acceptance in respondents (Anderson et al. 2000; Hazlett and Mildemberger 2019). What this literature doesn't do is explain group level effects, such as the strength of various types of political identity.

To understand this aspect of behavior, we can turn to two groups of scholars whose theories mirror each other. The ethnic political literature suggest that identity is shaped by “security threat”—individuals cluster together creating a group of insiders to which outside groups are deemed the “other” and dangerous. Groups under threat thus begin to construct an identity to enhance their security (Lake & Rothchild 1996). This identity is malleable and can change considerably over time as different factors raise the political salience of ethnic identity and groups

adapt to meet new challenges (Barth 1969; Weber 1978; Eller & Coughlan 1993; Jesse & Williams 2011). The key here is that identity is context dependent and adaptive, indicating that major shocks like environmental change should precipitate some sort of change in the strength of political identity. While they do not test this assumption, there are also some in this literature who assume that the process I am arguing exists as a causal mechanism when predicting conflict levels with weather patterns and other environmental measures (Baranovitch 2019; Ishiyama & Pechenina 2012; Sirin 2011; Swain 1996).

Americanist scholars of minority behavior see racial identity similarly, as a socially constructed method of othering certain groups. Theories in this trajectory are built upon the foundations of two concepts: group consciousness and linked fate. Group consciousness is an awareness of relative group power disparities as being connected to historical processes and an understanding of group identity as a politically relevant category (Omi & Winant 2014). A long history of identity politics and White political strategies which explicitly sought to limit access to power for non-white groups has created a racial hierarchy surrounding power in political, social, and economic realms (Omi & Winant 2014). Because race impacts the ways in which an individual experiences politics, it can also condition the attitudes and behaviors that they adopt within political society. Linked fate, a concept originally used to describe the impact of chattel slavery on Black group consciousness, takes this one step further and articulates an assumption that whatever happens to one person within a group will impact the outcome of others and that what happens to the group will influence the fate of individuals (Dawson 1995). The minority behavior literature also provides support for my argument that government action might mitigate or intensify reactionary identity formation. While Black Americans came to their identity through the experience of chattel slavery and the civil rights era, other groups have been racialized more

recently and thus their identity has been impacted by more recent political issues. For example, Vargas, Sanchez, and Valdez (2017) found that the immigration laws impacted pan-Latino conceptions of racial identity, with stricter legal structures leading to stronger linked fate. Similarly, Silva et al (2020) show that local police performance is a racializing experience that impacts public opinion.

Essentially, these last two fields are both pointing to the same phenomena despite their lack of integration. Some recent work has sought to begin such an integration, such as Donnelly (2021) who investigates class-based linked fate in the UK, Germany, and Canada. This is promising for my work in that Donnelly's findings support the assertion that while racial linked fate is a phenomenon unique to the United States, linked fate itself is a concept that homes up in wider contexts and can harmonize effectively with comparative politics' understandings of political identity. This work also provides a jumping off point for my investigation into class identity.

Class based identity is a highly entrenched aspect of many people's lives, in part due to a large-scale lack of social mobility (Gugushvili, Bukodi, and Goldthorpe 2017; Maas & Van Leeuwen 2016). Here, just as in the literature surrounding racial and ethnic identity formation, context is a key determinant. Class based identities shift and change along with both short-term salience (Tajfel & Turner 1996; Zaller 1992) and longer-term structural phenomena (Marx & Engels 1964; Walsh, Jennings, and Stoker 2004). This fits well within the theoretical framework I have established, because low-income countries and low-income groups within all countries are systematically more impacted by environmental degradation than are their higher earning peers (Landrigan et al 2018). I argue that in the context of institutional violence being expressed as environmental marginalization, affected groups will respond with hardened political identities and stronger senses of linked fate, depending on the regional context.

Value

Environmental degradation is a major threat to the human species as a whole in a myriad of ways and while many think of these issues primarily as problems of the future, this is not the case. Environmental degradation is closely tied to long term health outcomes and is already a factor in the lives of many people. For example, in 2015 pollution alone accounted for 16% of worldwide deaths, ranging up to 25% in low-income countries (Landrigan et al 2018). This is massive: fifteen times the number of deaths caused by warfare and interpersonal violence and three times as many people as those who died from malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS combined that year. Furthermore, this pollution itself is a small part of the picture here: other factors such as desertification, forest loss, and others are also present and growing. It seems highly unlikely that this will not have an impact on the behavior of those experiencing it.

We also know that identity is the strongest predictor of concern for climate change and that political identities which have been marginalized by their societies are the most impacted by these phenomena. Previous literature has failed to take into account the ways in which identity adapts to environmental threats which means that our current theories have little leverage in explaining the political outcomes of environmentally degraded regions. By thinking about environmental degradation as a security threat in its own right, and by investigating the ways in which political identity is impacted by that threat, this research bridges that gap.

This is a valuable academic contribution, but it also is important as a tool to help politicians and other actors understand the social impact that an increasingly degraded environment will have on their population. As indicated above, large swaths of the world's population have been living with environmental threats and this number will continue to snowball as time goes on until major

changes have been made to the way that we as a global community structure our infrastructures surrounding agriculture and waste disposal. This research and its later developments will be a vital tool for political leaders in their attempts to inform, mobilize, and compromise with their constituents and other politicians.

Preliminary Strategy

This work diverges from the previous literature in that I take well established theories about the ways that political identity is formed and hardened and apply them to the emerging threat of environmental degradation. I propose to do so through the three-article format with one chapter each on racial identity in the United States, ethnic identity in Africa, and class identity in Europe.

The American chapter will take the concept of linked fate, or the idea that race is a heuristic for racially marginalized groups to predict their likely interactions with other races and with the government and apply it to the concept of proximity to degradation. The linked fate theory heavily interacts with the idea that the past experience of racial groups with other actors will condition their understanding of their group's relative social position (Dawson 1995). I will utilize this idea in my argument that institutional violence and environmental racism are visible contributors to racial identity formation in the United States.

My second chapter will turn to ethnic identity and utilize the concept of ethnic identity hardening through a threat to security. This is in a way a divergence from previous literature, which more frequently thinks about security threats as conflict or competition related issues. However, I will argue that the definition of a security threat should easily fit with examples of widespread insertion of toxic materials into already fragile and sometimes failing ecosystems. In this subfield

in particular my argument is strengthened based off of a small literature which takes as a base assumption the argument that I plan to test empirically.

Finally, the third chapter will examine class identity in Europe. This is the least developed of my chapters, but there is a strong history of class-based conflict and political debate throughout this region. From the French Revolution to Karl Marx to the modern analysis of Donnelly (2021) discussed above; class identity has been a strong motivator for political discussion and mobilization for centuries. I will argue that environmental degradation is closely linked to existing power structures based on the evidence discussed above that the people most likely to be affected are those who are already marginalized by society. This should in turn affect the identities of those marginalized by those power structures in the same way that phenomena like industrialization did; by intensifying power disparities between different groups and making clear to those impacted their relative position to those who were less impacted.

Introduction/ Structure of the Dissertation

I plan to follow a three-article format for my dissertation, with each chapter looking at a different aspect of identity and its connection to environmental degradation. In the introduction, I plan to emphasize the scope of degradation and its impact on marginalized groups on a global scale. Then, each substantive chapter will tackle a different facet of marginalized identity; race, ethnicity, and class. While these are far from the only identities by which groups are marginalized, I focus on these three because while religion, sexual identity, or disability may be salient factors in some areas, colonial legacies and integration with the global capitalist system has led to a situation in which systemic environmental marginalization is directly tied to racial, ethnic, and class identity.

My expectation for this analysis is that respondents who are marginalized along one of these lines will have stronger ties to that identity when they are living in a degraded area. It is not that pollution, deforestation, desertification, or any other indicator leads directly to identity hardening, but rather that close association with degradation increases the salience of these identities and triggers a consideration of relative group positionality and its association with environmental injustice. On the flip side, respondents who see evidence of government action to mitigate environmental degradation should have softer identities, because government aid to marginalized groups could represent a counterfactual to a strict deterministic identity hierarchy.

Chapter 1: Racial Identity in a Changing World: The Impact of Environmental Degradation on Racial Linked Fate in the United States

Purpose: The first substantive chapter seeks to understand the impacts of environmental degradation on racial identity politics in the United States. Race, as a highly salient political motivator in this country, will allow me to investigate environmental degradation within a social structure widely regarded as marginalizing.

Literature Review:

Political science's study of group identity formation in American politics begins with the concept of the *Black utility heuristic*, which describes the ways in which the shared historical experience of Black people in America, such as chattel slavery, segregation, and fighting for civil rights, shapes their understandings group identity as conditioned upon their positionality relative to other groups (Dawson 1995). This later developed into group consciousness and linked fate,

two essential concepts in this literature. Group consciousness is an awareness of individual identity in the context of relative group power disparities and the racially hierarchical nature of American political culture (Omi and Winant 1994). Linked fate builds on this and argues that history should inform racial minorities' assumptions about their likely treatment by other groups and by the government (Bobo & Gillinham 1990; Dawson 1995). Essentially, if a group has historically been treated badly, individuals within that group have every reason to believe that they may be personally impacted by biased systems and the actions of individuals from other groups.

However, identity is still malleable; it is conditioned by personal experience and by contextual salience. For example, we should expect within group differences between those with different backgrounds. Latino group consciousness is not quite as strong as Black group consciousness, because Latinos are a more varied group that has been affected heterogeneously by immigration systems (Junn & Masuoka 2008; Sanchez & Masuoka 2010). It is important to emphasize government policy here, as the actions of the government send a strong signal to minorities of their positionality and power relative to other groups. This association between racial identity formation and government policy is the first linkage that I will emphasize with environmental degradation, because the distribution of environmental effects is influenced by the same structural inequalities as immigration and policing systems are.

The study of climate change politics in Political Science has been primarily focused on descriptive works which detail the influence of identity on belief in or concern for climate change, and on the individual, public opinion and electoral outcomes brought on by various environmental factors (Achen and Bartels 2016; Bechtel and Mannino 2021; Blankenship et al. 2020; Capstick and Pidgeon 2014; Egan and Mullin 2017; Fielding and Hornsey 2016; Harth 2021; Johnson, Brace, and Arceneaux 2005; Mackay et al. 2021). Natural disasters and high temperatures in

particular have been linked to decreased government legitimacy, more critical appraisal of climate mitigation measures taken by executives, voter turnout, and vote choice (Blankenship et al. 2020; Carlin, Love, and Zechmeister 2013; Gasper and Reeves 2011; Gomez, Hansford, and Krause 2007; Healy and Malhotra 2009). At an individual level, these variables are known to heighten feelings of aggression and competition and to increase support for expensive policy measures, hinting at an increasing level of risk acceptance in respondents (Anderson et al. 2000; Hazlett and Mildemberger 2019).

The largest body of climate politics literature by far is that which describes the impact of demographic variables on belief in or concern for climate change (Egan and Mullin 2017). As an issue which has been subject to heightened levels of politicization and polarization over recent decades, it is not surprising that political party and ideology are the strongest predictors of climate concern (Egan and Mullin 2017; McCright and Dunlap 2011). Closely following these are age, gender, and (more importantly for our purposes) race, and socioeconomic status. The effects of climate change and environmental degradation are disproportionately felt by marginalized racial groups, women, and those of low socioeconomic status. This link between marginalization, climate concern, and climate vulnerability serves as the foundation of this theory of the environmental determinants of minority political behavior. What is largely missing from the literature is an in-depth analysis of the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on group behavior.

Theoretical Framework:

That environmental degradation and other factors related to climate change are disproportionately felt by the marginalized is not a secret. Just as feelings of alienation due to

immigration status make it easier for an individual to feel that their fate is intertwined with that of others in their racial or ethnic group, so too should situations of disproportionate allocation of pollution and other types of environmental degradation when these events impact them along racial and ethnic lines.

In practical terms, I can see two plausible pathways for this relationship, which I will term the low visibility model and the high visibility model. Under the low visibility model the community in question does not recognize when the local environment has been degraded and as such their levels of linked fate are not impacted. However, some actor (such as the state government, an individual who does not broadcast their actions to the larger community, etc.) contacts the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and begins the decision process to name the contamination zone an EPA Superfund site. Once that process concludes the site will either be approved or denied. If the site is denied in the low visibility model, I expect no change in reported levels of linked fate. The people living near the site did not notice the instigating degradation event and a denied site does not receive the visibility boost that an approved one has, so they would continue to live their lives as usual. In the counterfactual in which the same site was approved by the EPA and thus received the accompanying signage, fences, and other visible indicators that some pollutant exists in the area, I expect linked fate would increase. Respondents who were previously unaware of the site would not necessarily see site approval as a relief from concerns brought to the government, because they were not aware that a problem existed in the first place. However, community members who are naive to the impact of environmental degradation in their local area who suddenly come upon an EPA Superfund site would likely be shocked and have cause to contemplate how and why the degradation happened in the first place. Thus, the only way for linked fate to go is up.

Under the high visibility model, I expect that an approved site will lower levels of linked fate for a similar reason. A community who has brought concerns about local environmental degradation to the federal government and then sees action from the EPA, in the form of site approval, has had their concerns addressed. Linked fate is in many ways an expression of the way a respondent sees the way they are treated by the government. If the government is responsive, linked fate should decrease. Finally, a denied Superfund site should increase linked fate. A community has expressed distress about environmental degradation and has been ignored, which would likely drive perceptions of adverse treatment by the government.

Research Design:

This chapter will analyze the impact of three types of environmental measures on responses to the American National Elections Survey (ANES) from 2016 and 2020.

DV

The dependent variable in all of the models, *linked fate*, is operationalized as a question from the 2016 and 2020 waves of the American National Elections Survey. The questions ask each racial group (Black, Hispanic, and Asian) “How much do you think that what happens generally to [racial group] people in this country will affect what happens in your life?” The ordinal factor is restructured so that it increases as the level of linked fate increases: “Not at all” (0), “Not very much” (1), “Some” (2), and “A lot” (3). The location for the 2,317 observations is coded as the geographic center point for their legislative district. This is the lowest geographic level available for the respondents.

IV

I will operationalize environmental degradation in three ways. First, I will have a number of direct measures of environmental quality which I will condense from a much larger list using dynamic (to account for time variance) factor analysis. The larger list will include a variety of pollution variables, indicators of deforestation, desertification, and precipitation, and a measure that indicates the ability of an area to process pollutants and clean themselves. The factor analysis will turn this list into a much smaller number, each of which will receive its own model to allow more room for interpretability.

The second operationalization will address salience. For this, I will utilize LexisNexis, an AI language processing tool, to measure the amount of media attention that environmental degradation has in any given geographical area. This process will require me to first develop a corpus of keywords that to input into the program (which will mirror the pre-factor analysis base terms used to measure degradation, as well as the term “environmental degradation” itself, and other common words in discussions surrounding climate politics such as “environmental racism”.

The final measure will describe the influence of government interference through proximity to EPA superfund sites. This is a hazardous waste cleanup program established by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), generally referred to as the EPA “Superfund” program/project. NPL sites are measured in a few ways. I utilize the lowest level of geocoding available for ANES respondents, legislative districts, to narrow down their location. I take the geographic center points of each district and calculate the distance to all NPL sites in the corresponding state. The measure *distance* is the mean distance for that respondent, which has been logged to account for skewness. Second, *In District* is a simple dichotomous control variable indicating if there are any sites in that legislative district. Finally, I

include a control for the average *HRS score* for all sites within the state in order to account for the impact that site severity might have on perceptions of pollution in the area.

Chapter 2: Does environmental quality impact ethnic identity in Africa?

Purpose: The second substantive chapter seeks to understand the impacts of environmental degradation on ethnic identity in Africa. This region will be particularly helpful in applying existing identity theories to the environment because this is the context that most of the ethnic politics literature was created to describe and because of the unique salience of environmental degradation to the region.

Literature Review:

Constructivists understandings of ethnicity argue that identity is not an intrinsic part of belonging to one group, instead emphasizing a fluid and ever-changing concept of ethnic identity which is impacted by the socio-political context of the individual and of the group's relative position in society. This literature suggests that identity is often intrinsically linked to a threat to security; by creating a group of insiders to which outside groups are deemed other and dangerous, political leaders are able to construct an identity around group dynamics and increase the political salience of such disputes (Lake & Rothchild 1996; Eifert et al 2010; Ishiyama 2011). This identity is malleable and changes drastically over time as different factors raise the political salience of ethnic identity and groups adapt to meet new challenges (Barth 1969; Weber 1978; Eller & Coughlan 1993; Jesse & Williams 2011). The key here is that identity is context dependent and

adaptive, indicating that major threats to the security of both individuals and groups as a whole, like environmental change, should precipitate some sort of change in the strength of political identity.

There is a small literature which thinks along these same lines, in as much as they link environmental degradation to security threats. These works assume that environmental security should be associated with ethnic identity and ethnic violence in their investigations of environmental impacts on genocide, ethnic unrest, and other forms of domestic conflict (Baranovitch 2019; Ishiyama & Pechenina 2012; Sirin 2011; Swain 1996). However, none of these works test this assumption, indicating that my own work will be able to add nuance and validity to this emerging research tract.

The unique environmental situation in Africa is also important to note here, because this region relies heavily on rapidly degrading resources for their livelihoods (UN). In this area, over 70 percent of people rely on forests and woodlands for food, shelter, and income; but at the same time, illegal mining, logging, and poaching as well as other unregulated sourced of degradation run rampant, causing an estimated 195 billion USD in revenue loss annually (UN). As a whole, this is a fragile system that is worsening with time.

Theoretical Framework:

In the African context, I expect environmental threats to mimic other types of security threats, in that they both often result in competition over scarce resources. When multiple ethnic groups live in an area whose land or water has been degraded through pollution, desertification, or another mechanism, they will be required to allocate lesser resources (in both quality and quantity) amongst themselves. This competition should reinforce their identities as in- and out-groups,

especially in areas where those resources are particularly salient. For example, I would expect a higher impact on pastoral groups competing over land which has been less impacted by desertification than between ethnic groups in a more urban environment because grassland resources are intrinsic to the ethnic identity of pastoral groups.

However, government interference in degradation might sway respondents in the opposite direction depending on how it is implemented. Aid which helps those most in need regardless of their group identity would likely result in a higher likelihood of national identity while aid which is dispersed through patronage, a mechanism known to be related to ethnic outbidding (Fearon 1999; Chandra 2004), would strengthen ethnic ties further.

Research Design:

DV

The dependent variable comes from the Afrobarometer (specific waves to be determined, that selection will aim to include the largest number of countries possible). The survey question asks “Let us suppose that you had to choose between being a [R’s nationality] and being a [R’s ethnic group]. Which of the following statements best expresses your feelings?: 1) I feel only [R’s ethnic group]; 2) I feel more [R’s ethnic group] than [R’s nationality]; 3) I feel equally [R’s nationality] and [R’s ethnic group]; 4) I feel more [R’s nationality] than [R’s ethnic group]; 5) I feel only [R’s nationality].” This variable will be centered at zero so that negative responses indicate a closer tie to ethnicity and positive responses indicate a closer tie to nationality.

IV

The independent variables in this analysis will begin with the same factor analysis as the other chapters. As a reminder, I will have a number of direct measures of environmental quality which I will condense from a much larger list using dynamic factor analysis. The larger list will include a variety of pollution variables, indicators of deforestation, desertification, and precipitation, and a measure that indicates the ability of an area to process pollutants and clean themselves. This chapter will be the hardest to achieve a salience measure for, as the number of languages that media is produced in in this area will be difficult for me to understand and synthesize in the same way as the previous chapter. I am currently brainstorming work arounds for this. The third measure, government interference in degradation, will be measured by locating cleanup sites both from individual governments (which I expect to be highly limited due to state capacity) and from the UNEP whose work concentrates on the region.

Chapter 3: Does environmental marginalization lead to class consciousness or false consciousness in Europe?

Purpose: The third substantive chapter seeks to understand the impacts of environmental degradation on class politics in Europe. Here, marginalizing social structures are largely connected with industrialization and its modern counterpart deindustrialization. This connection between poverty and the environment is commonly cited, making this the perfect context to investigate class identity.

Literature Review:

When we look at theories concerning class, the literature can be disaggregated into older Marxist conceptualizations of class mobilization as a means to achieve redistributive goals, newer insights into socioeconomic status as a predictor for political behavior and works in party politics concerning the unionist instrumentalization of class.

Foundational to our understanding of class consciousness are Marx, Lenin, and their intellectual successors. This body of work is intrinsically linked to the context of industrialization and the exponential growth of exploitative capitalism in which it was created. These discussions pit the workers and (in later developments) peasants against those who own the means of production, arguing that a solidification of class consciousness among the oppressed was a necessary condition for the mobilization required for a mass redistribution of wealth and power in capitalist societies (Marx 1848; Lenin 1902; Przeworski and Sprague 1986). These ideas were highly influential for decades, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav war, political science started to pay more attention to ethnicity as a predictor (John, this morning).

Further developments in this path discuss defacto socioeconomic status as a predictor for political behavior rather than class consciousness, for example we know that people are highly motivated by economic concerns. They support policies that would help them personally (Iversen and Soskice 2001; Owens and Pedulla 2014; Rehm, Hacker and Schlesinger 2012) and retrospective economic concerns have been connected to voting behavior and other forms of participation (Evans and Anderson 2006). Where class consciousness remains relevant is when socioeconomic status is instrumentalized. This can be an important facet of union rhetoric and political mobilization (Ahlquist and Levi 2013; Donnelly 2016; Iversen and Soskice 2015; Watts 2002), meaning that when class is made salient it is still influential in the lives of the modern worker, just an understudied one. As mentioned previously, there is a beginning literature that uses

Americanist conceptualizations of linked fate and applies them to a variety of identity variables in Europe, finding that class linked fate impacts redistributive attitudes in predictable ways (Donnelly 2021).

Europe is on the forefront of the battle against climate change, a concept that, while theoretically distinct from the degradation I focus on here, is intrinsically linked in political discourse and thus relevant to understanding the way that individuals may react to information about environmental degradation itself. Europe's fight against climate change has had complicated impacts on the poor in particular. The "noxious deindustrialization (ND)" paradox describes the ways in which the green movement has been detrimental to the stability of the working class, taking two distinct forms to contrast differing corporate strategies (Feltin, Mah, & Brown 2022). Grey ND happens in low-investment areas. Here, local workers are increasingly unable to find factory work (which has become less accessible due to off-shoring cheaper labor) while at the same time being subject to sustained amounts of pollution from the factories that they used to be employed in, who have not updated their technology and merely seek the cheapest ways around increasingly strict regulations. Green ND happens where noxious industries invest in cutting edge technology. By doing so, they significantly cut their net pollution, but along with this technology comes higher unemployment due to the labor-saving nature of new tech. Workers in these areas are thus in a similar situation, unemployed and dealing with pollution (which still has cumulative effects, even if yearly contributions are declining). I will argue that how they interpret this situation will be impacted by other political mechanisms, which will be explained further below.

Another, more descriptive, work linking class to environmental degradation in the modern day will be Rodrigo-Camino et al (2022). This piece discusses what the authors call a downward spiral of desertification poverty in Southern Italy, connecting urbanization; tourism; loss of good

agricultural practices due to aging farmers, migration of young workers to cities, and a lack of access to education; the mechanization of commercial agriculture; and a wide variety of other societal and environmental factors which explain the massive interconnectedness of poverty and the environment.

Theoretical Framework:

I expect the relationship between environmental quality and class identity to be highly influenced by leftist party politics. In particular the division between the “red” and “green” left will be highly influential, because this division is intimately tied to climate politics and its evolution over time. The red left is the political movement of the working class, the communist, socialist, and labor parties who draw upon Marxist and Leninist ideologies and their developments in mobilization rhetoric. The green left is the new left, whose politics are still often anti-capitalist, but whose focus is less about inequality and structural marginalization. Instead, these leftists are concerned with climate change and environmental degradation.

These two groups are similar in many ways, but their goals often seem diametrically opposed to each other. Both want regulation, but climate regulations often lead to layoffs, spikes in energy cost (Bez and Feltrin 2023), and transitions to emerging energy industries where unions are newer and may have less established bargaining power. The red left sees their green counterparts as a threat, meaning that they may be less accepting of information from those same actors indicating that they are experiencing environmental marginalization. This is false consciousness, an idea usually associated with capitalist exploitation, which explains an inability of some repressed groups to recognize the inequality or oppression around them due to an indoctrination in the values and social norms of a capitalist society. In this context, I expect that

political indicators such as union membership, party affiliation, and concern for climate change will mediate the impact of environmental change on class consciousness.

Research Design:

DV

The dependent variable for this analysis will tentatively be Donnelly's (2021) measure of class linked fate. This work is an extension of the Americanist racial linked fate theorization (and a direct replication of operationalization) to class linked fate in the UK and Germany. The question asks, "How much do you think what happens to [self-identified class] people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?" with responses ranging from "Not at all" to "A lot".

IV

The independent variables in this analysis will begin with the same factor analysis as the other chapters. As a reminder, I will have a number of direct measures of environmental quality which I will condense from a much larger list using dynamic factor analysis. The larger list will include a variety of pollution variables, indicators of deforestation, desertification, and precipitation, and a measure that indicates the ability of an area to process pollutants and clean themselves. The results of the factor analysis will be interacted with contextual indicators, such as union membership, political affiliation, and concern for climate change, to reflect the theorization above concerning false consciousness. As in chapter 1, I will also have a measure of salience

associated with media attention to environmental issues and some indicator of government interference in degradation, which will come from the relevant EU and UK agencies.

Time Frame:	Task:
Summer 2023	
May	Prospectus Defense
June - July	Revised Analysis for Article 1
July	Submit Revised Article 1 to Committee
August	Submit Article 2 Proposal for SPSA
August	Submit Article 1 for Publication
Fall 2023	
September	Submit Article 3 to Texas Comparative Circle
September -October	Write Research Design for Article 2
October	Submit Article 3 Proposal to MPSA
November - December	Write Research Design for Article 3
Spring 2024	
January	Present Article 2 at SPSA
January	Present Article 3 at Texas Comparative Circle
January - February	Analysis for Article 2 & 3
February	Submit Article 2 to Committee
March	Submit Article 3 to Committee
April	Present Article 3 at MPSA
April - May	Write Introduction and Conclusion
Summer 2024	
May	Submit Article 2 for Publication
June	Submit Article 3 for Publication
July	Submit Dissertation Draft to Committee
Fall 2024	
August	Defend Dissertation

August - December	Job Applications
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Spring 2025	
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January - April	Job Applications and Interviews
March	Submit Dissertation Revisions to Committee

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