Environmental Justice/ Racism

I. The rights of persons

A. Because humans have moral standing they are guaranteed

rights

1. derived from both Kantian and utilitarian moral

theory

2. given substance in America

a. Declaration of Independence: life, liberty,

and the pursuit of happiness

b. given substance in the constitution: freedom of

speech, belief, thought, expression, person under

law

3. given broader substance in international law

a. UDHR, Convention on Economic, Cultural, and

Social Rights

b. rights include work, housing, health care, food

4. some feel environmental rights of person should be

included

a. right to clean and healthy unpolluted environment

b. is a necessary precondition to life, liberty, and

the pursuit of happiness

B. While pollution affects us all, in US and globally it affects

some people more than others

1. racial minorities

2. poor

c. indigenous people

II. Environmental justice movements have emerged, one of those is the Environmental racism movement

A. Environmental racism first used as a term by Rev. Benjamin Chavez with the release of "Toxic Waste and Race in

the United States"

B. summary of environmental racism

1. poverty important, but race most important variable in locating hazardous waste facilities

2. blacks, hispanics, native americans, Asian/pacific islanders overrepresented in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites

3. 5 o 6 areas of worst industrial pollution if 78%

minority

4. 50% more likely to die of exposure to hazardous

waste

C. environmental racism making a sociological distinction

1. difference between personal racism and institutional

racism

2. cause of environmental racism is institutional racism

a. personal racism

b. institutional racism

i. ways in which society's institutions are

arranged

ii. different power arrangements

iii. differential treatment and consequences

c. both US and global social arrangements are

organized in such a way

i. certain gourps are affected to a greater

or lesser degree by environmental

practices

ii. deprived of environmental rights

D. social organization

1. most societies are stratified by income, wealth, and

power

2. those at the top haave

a. access to institutions

b. control over institutions

c. power to shape society in their favor

3. conversely those at the bottom have less

access, control, power

4. literally translates into life chances

a. Titanic

b. minorities and poor higher infant mortality,

lower life expectancy, hunger and disease

c. also most affect by a society's negative

evironmental practices

E. Urban American

1. social construction of the urban ghetto

2. environmental injustice in urban area

a. highest levels of air pollution because of

concentration of traffic

i. blacks die of asthma at 3x the rate

of whites

ii. environmetal cancers

b. site of most toxic and hazardous dumps

i. south side of Chicago, toxic triangle

ii.

c. slumlording and lead poisoning

i. in Chicago ten areas with highest rate

of poisoning 70% minority, 90% of cases

ii. 37% of black urban preschoolers suffer

from lead poisoning

d. most illegal dumping is done in urban areas

i. 80% of dumping in areas that are 65%

minority

ii.

a. People of color are twice as likely to live in counties with highest levels of indusrial toxins

b. People of color are three times more liely as Whites to live near one of the largest toxic waste dumps in the country

F. Native Americans

1. dumping on reservations

2. uranium mining and nuclear testing

G. Migrant workers

1. EPA

2. DDT sprayed on workers in third world plantations

a. 2 million pesticide poisonings a year

H. EPA

1. enforces laws and regulations less vigorously

2. leviews lower fines in minority areas, 1/5

3. slower to put toxic waste sites on Superfund list

4. policy of containing waste, rather than remove it

III. global environmental justice

A. First and third world (color)

1. history of this relationship 500 years of

colonialism

2. environmental consequences were catastrophic

3. indigenous people

B. new arrangements called "free trade"

1. GATT, NAFTA, FTAA- WTO

2. limits to agreement

a. serve interests of first world/ mnc

b. severe impact on communities, people,

maquiladoras

c. lack of environmental regulations

3. "developmental" projects

a. 40% mining and oil

b. increase in % withough environmental impact

Examples,

A. Toxic and hazardous waste dumps are located more often in inner city areas, and in areas that are predominately black and latino

1) Chicago's south side

2) 99 of 162 toxic hot spots in areas that are 65%

minority

3) 10 areas with highest lead poisoning 70 per cent, over

90% of cases

4) worst 5 of 6 areas for industrial pollution 78% minority

B. Most illegal dumping is in the inner city, half of city wards

that are 65% or more minority account for 80% of illegal dumping tonnage.

C. Indian reservations, among the poorest areas in the US, have taken nuclear and toxic waste in exchange for money from the government or private waste companies

D. Lifeboat theory is racist, overpopulation is not just us

vs them, it is global problem caused by global system

but also women and children in the third world

E.The US ships several million tones of toxic and hazardous waste to poor third world countries, Germany is the biggest exporters of toxic waste to the third world

"impeccable logic"

F. Migrant workers are subjected to pesticides. There is no law in the US that a farmer or agribusiness has to inform the migrant workers what or if they are being exposed to

G.Plantations workers are sprayed in the fields and in their villages near the fields by pesticides that are outlawed in the US, DDT

H. Air pollution is more concentrated in the inner city where the majority of poor minorities live

Young black men die of asthma at a rate of 3 times

that of young white men

African Americans have higher rates of environmental

cancer rates

III.. Not just a question of pollution and toxic dumps, delayed and ineffective action

A. EPA enforces its laws and regulations less vigorousl

B.it levied lower fines in poor minority areas, 1/5th

C. slower to put toxic waste sites on Superfund list

D.policy of containing waste, rathe than removing it, put

a tarp over it

1 billion to clean up Potomac, 3% of that to clean it up

II. Environmental Racism - Native Americans

A. Nuclear Waste

1. 104 US nuclear power plants

2. 22 in Canada

3. Waste

a. 70, 000 metric tons high level

b. millions of liquid

c. spent fuel rods

d. tailings

e. mines: 1000 alone on Navajo land

f. affected: Hopi, Navajo, Lakota, Apache, Laguna

Ojibwe, Ok tribes, Alabama-Coushatta, Yakama, and

Spokane

B. Western Shoshone

1. 1951 AEC set of nuclear test site in Nevada within

W Shoshone Res

2. 1951-1992 US and GB 1054, 220 above ground tests

3. government claim very little exposure, equivalent of

chest x-ray

4. 1997 National Cancer Institute study:

a.160 million persons 200x to 3000x the amount govt claimed

b. 75,000 cases of thyroid cancer, many still at risk

because of long latency period

5. AEC and DofE would wait until winds would blow

north and east so radiation wouldn't blow towards

Vegas or La, but toward the Shoshone

a. they would duck and cover

b. structures not air tight

c. work outside and hunted when clouds came over

d. gather water outside

e. not even evaluated by DoE

6. Government wants land

a. Shoshone title has been recognized

i. Treaty of Ruby Valley 1853

ii. Indian Claims Commission offered to buy

land based on 1873 value $26 million now

$91 million

7. Shosone refuse to sell

8. Govt wants put nuclear waste dump there

a. Monitored Retrieval Site

b. govt and nuclear industry have been funding

Native tribal organizations research into turning

reservations into MRS

9. Govt has decided to dump all nuclear waste in W

Shoshone land at Yucca mountain

a. Nuclear Energy Institute ( nuclear industry) spent $12.8 million to their congressional delegates to get this through

b. get it out of our back yard 1997 Nuclear

Waste Policy Act

Sen Rod Grams of Minn: "We in the Senate have done our part in trying to restore the promises mad by the fereal government to the ratpayers os this country to move nuclear waste our of our home states."

DOE: "Native responsiblity to hold nuclear waste emanates from the 'superior Native understandin of the natural world' and the fact tht we are 'our brother's keeper.'

c. operating reactors still have to store waste for

five to ten years

d. 15,000 shipments + will lead to 268 accidents as

shipments pass through areas with 50 million

C. Navajo and uranium mining - 1950 to 1980

1. The birth of the atomic age created the need for

uranium ore

2. some of the richest deposits of uranium ore are found

on the Navajo reservation and the Laguna Pueblo

a. Four Corners

b. Colorado Plateau

3. between towards the end of WWII, esp between1950 and 1980 uranium was mined

a. mining companies heavily subsidized

b. Kerr-McGee

4. many of the workers were Navajo, mines and

processing mills

a. who were poor and desperate for the wages that mining pays

b. and responding to the appeal of their country

5. however, neither the tribal councils nor the miners were told about the dangers

a. by the start of the Manhattan Project, it was

known that uranium and radium caused

lung disease, cancer, and other fatal problems

b. studies by Public Health Service confirmed this

beyond a doubt but the AEC

i. sole purchaser said it had no responsibility

for the safety of the mine

ii. and the mining companies resisted taking

any safety measures

iii. Secretary of the Interior took no action to

protect the workers

"They dug the uranium ore with pick and shovel in the small mines called 'dog holes' or blasted the rocks with dynamite, breathing radon gas and silica-laden dust. They ate food tainted with uranium oxide and drank the contaminated water that dripped from the mine walls. They carried uranium home to their wives and children on thier shoes, clothes, and bodies."

iii. no ventiliation system

no protective gear

iii. 20 years to impose limits for radiation

exposure

iv. after the deaths, mining cos and the gov

argued over who should compensate the victims or if any compesation was due

( few years after closing 1 in 5, cancer of

lungs, pulmonary fribrosis)

v. deaths are particularly bad

decimate small communities

leave families in poverty

c. Navajo fought fought congress and the courts in

70s and 80s

i. disregard for the rights of native peoples

ii. "discretionary function" - no court review of certain court functions (Federal Tort Claims

Act)

d. in 1990 Congress passed Radiation Exposure

Compensation Act

i. bureaucratic nightmare that natives have to

traverse

ii. slow processing of claims

iii. demands which subvert the intent of the

law

iv. this included the human guinea pigs,

fallout victims, other workers exposed

6. Not just death

1. left behind over 1000 mines uncapped

2. piles of radioactive mine waste ( tailings)

3. rain leaching uranium into ground water

4. small open pit mines filled with water inviting children to swim

5. Laguna Pueblo

i. 3000 acre open pit mine

ii. untouched for seven years after operations stopped

iii.pueblo started own reclamation

6. Shiprock

i. radioacative mill

ii. 70 acres of spent uranium with 85% of radioactivity

iii. about 20 yards from the San Juan river

7. Durango

i. Mt. Uranium tailings pile 23oo feet high

III. Environmental Racism - Native Americans

A. Mohawk

1. Akwesasne "Land Where the Partridge Drums"

2. 25 sq miles on St. Lawrence border between NY and

Canada

3. home to 8,000 Mohawks

4. GM factory Superfund site

a. 823, 000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated

materials

b. land , water, and bodies

5. Traditionally fishers

a. whales polluted

b. turtles polluted- Mohawk legend - *Turtle Island*

"This used to be a fishing village. That's all gone now. There's only one family that still fishes. We can't farm here because of all of those air emissions. Industy has pretty much taken the entire traditional lifestyle away from the community here.

c. 65% of Mohawks on Adwasnes have diabetes

d. from fish to spaghetti

5. history of polluting Mohawk land

a. 1900s Aluminum Company of America factory

b. 1950s cheap power from St Lawrence and Moses

Sanders Power Dam lured giant coporations

i. GM and Reynolds

6. Reynolds

a. 400 pounds of fluorides per hour, reduced in

1973 to 75 pounds ber hourd

b. but

i. stock losses

ii. vegetation

7. Today 25% of all NA industry is located on or near the

Great Lakes which are drained by the St Lawrence

8. Canada as designated Akwesasne Mohawk Res as most

contaminated

9. US side, GM had 258 acres near res

a. five saturate dlagoons

b. numerous PCB laden sludge pits

c. lead, chromium, mercury, cadmium,

9a. GM one of the worst polluters in the world

a. 1994 Multinational Monitor Top Ten worst corp

b. potentially responsible for 200 Superfund sites

10. EPA fined GM for multiple violations of the Toxic

Substances Control ACt and added site to Superfund for

cleanup

11. EPA resolve has weakened from "treatment" to

"containment"

a. limits amount of cleanup to 1/3

b. saves GM $15million

12. GM cleanup

a. sand and grave over contaminated areas

13. Women's Milk Project

a. women are first environment

i. baby, mother, family

ii. everything the mother feels, eats, and sees

affects the baby

b. bioaccumulation analysis from fish to wildlife

to breast milk

c. 200x the PCP levels for mothers who ate fish from the St. Lawrence

i. example one woman: PCBs, HCBs, DDC,

mirex (a flame retardent)

ii. fish is traditional food

d. same in studies of fetal umbilical cords

14. GM fights every step of the way

a. did some dredging in 1998-99

b. but shipped them off to some unlucky site in

Utah

c. may identify more hot spots, and may do more

remediation

15. fight is going international POPs, persistent organic

pollutants "dirty dozen"

16. Every one carries 500 measurable chemicals in their

body that were not in existence prior to 1920

a. effect brain development and behavior

b. endocrine functions

c. immune systems

d. reproductive systems

e. 72,000 are used on a regular basis, less than

20% have been tested