

## Call for Paper Proposals

The Caribbean Geography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers is inviting submissions of paper proposals for a special issue on 'Environmental Justice in the Caribbean' targeting *The Geographical Journal*, a leading international geography journal.

**Special Issue Title:** Contours of Environmental Justice in the Caribbean

**Guest Editors:** Dr April Karen Baptiste, Colgate University, and Dr Stacy-ann Robinson, Colby College (bios below)

**Expressions of interest:** Please use this [Google Form](#) to indicate your interest by **May 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

### Description and rationale

The Caribbean region, though holding historical and contemporary significance, has not been at the center of environmental justice (EJ) discourse. The region, which has a deep history of contributing to the development of the Western Hemisphere, has been subjected to myriad environmental injustices yet these have not been widely documented. The special issue, which is being proposed by the American Association of Geographers' Caribbean Geography Specialty Group, seeks to begin a systematic collection of EJ struggles in the Caribbean, featuring scholars who have worked on and in the region for significant periods of time.

While EJ began in the US, it has spread rapidly across the world, though in the US groups tend to self-identify as EJ groups, which is not the norm globally (Scholsberg, 2007). Despite this, there are similar strands among marginalized groups as they seek to address injustices as it relates to their environments. Debbane and Keil (2004) alongside other scholars describe international EJ in the following ways:

- EJ can be used as a frame to analyze the allocation of resources and how this leads to inequities within different societal contexts – i.e. it is seen as a multiscalar concept which is dependent on a number of different processes at various levels that creates injustices (Debbane & Keil, 2004, p. 210; Pulido, 1996).
- It looks at both distributive and procedural justice issues in dealing with physical environmental resources (Pellow & Brulle, 2003; Zerner, 2000).
- It challenges the regulation and access to resources, but also the politics and policies that govern these resources (Debbane & Keil, 2004, p. 210-211; Pellow, 2000).
- It takes a political ecological look at resources (Debbane & Keil, 2004, p. 210).

From a preliminary review of the literature on EJ in the Caribbean region, we found that there is not a wide range of literature that specifically addresses EJ or injustice in the region. However, based on the research that has been done, there are three dominant themes relating to EJ in the Caribbean. These are briefly explained below.

1. Climate change, loss, and damage: By far, the most frequent subject that is addressed with respect to EJ is that of climate change and natural hazards and specifically invoking the frame of climate justice. Multiple studies have focused on the disproportionate impacts of

climate change on the Caribbean region (Douglass & Copper, 2020; Sealey-Huggins, 2017; Baptiste & Rhiney, 2016) while others have addressed the region's limited contribution to anthropogenic climate change (Baptiste & Rhiney, 2016; Robinson & Carlson, 2021). There was also discussion on the disproportionality in opportunities for post-disaster rehabilitation within the region (Douglass & Copper, 2020). Baptiste and Devonish (2019) alluded to this in speaking about land tenure in Barbuda after Hurricane Irma while Popke et al (2014) indicated that a common response to natural disasters and climate change for a region as a whole might not be useful. Robinson and Carlson (2021) indicated that there is disproportionality in responsibility for addressing the problem in the Caribbean region where former colonial powers are not held accountable for the impacts that these nation States face. Sealey-Huggins (2017) made it clear that the financialization of the climate crisis has led to the Caribbean region not benefiting from the funds that are being made available to address the problem. Robinson and Carlson (2021) proposed restorative justice as an alternative paradigm for addressing climate-related loss and damage in the Caribbean region.

2. Natural hazards and disaster preparedness: Two pieces of work examined this theme. The first article by Moulton and Machado (2019) focused on Cuba and Puerto Rico. The article indicated that governance systems play a significant role in influencing the ways that a country responds to natural hazards. The second article by Sheller (2020) introduced the concept of mobility justice particularly as it relates to the idea of disaster preparedness. Mobility justice is defined as the distribution of access to resources of mobility, and the control over others mobility. Given the limited land space in the Caribbean and the subsequent constraints on mobility, making mobility injustice central to the region.
3. Colonization: There are a few articles in the literature that attempt to capture the ways in which colonization has influenced environmental injustices in the Caribbean region. Douglass and Cooper (2020) spoke to this theme with respect to indigenous knowledge being eroded as well as the way in which settlement patterns have been shaped by the colonization period, placing the region in a vulnerable position to climatic changes such as coastal flooding and inundation, and droughts. Bell (2011) and Boruff and Cutter (2007) also indicated that colonialism created a history of dependence for countries in the Caribbean, putting them in fragile economic positions on the global market. This then leaves them susceptible to environmental exploitation, which further opens the door to injustices, particularly through extractivist sectors such as minerals or tourism.

Beyond the synthesis provided in the above articles, two special issues have attempted to discuss environmental (in)justice from the perspective of climate change and natural hazards in the Caribbean. The first was published in *Geoforum* in 2016 and focused exclusively on climate justice in the insular Caribbean, particularly in the English speaking Caribbean. The second was published in the *Journal of Extreme Events* in 2019 and addressed EJ around disasters as it related to the 2017 North Atlantic hurricane season within which Hurricanes Irma and Maria, both Category 5 systems, devastated significant portions of the Leeward Islands and the Greater Antilles. While these special issues attempted to bring environmental injustice to the forefront of the Caribbean research agenda, they do not address broader societal environmental injustices that are beyond these narrow foci. As such, the special issue that we are proposing will begin to

contextualize and add to this body of literature to which the earlier special issues in *Geoforum* and the *Journal of Extreme Events* contributed.

The collection of papers will open the aperture to document the wide range of environmental injustices that are experienced in the Caribbean region. It will draw from a pool of Caribbean geographers working on and in the region for significant periods of time, encompassing a wide range of theoretical approaches and methodologies. The special issue will broadly address the following and related themes:

1. Siting issues - here, the papers will address cases of the siting or expansion of industries within communities or spaces that are deemed to be threatened
2. Accountability issues - here, the papers will address cases that seek to hold industry, government, environmental groups or other stakeholders accountable for environmental harms
3. Resistance/movements/protests - here, the papers will address the ways in which communities, countries, groups have pushed back against environmental harms

We welcome papers that address any of the above issues but would also be interested in other topics and themes that fall under the category of environmental justice.

#### **Short bio of Guest Editors:**

##### **Dr April Karen Baptiste**

Colgate University, Hamilton, NY; [abaptiste@colgate.edu](mailto:abaptiste@colgate.edu), 315-228-6740

Dr April Karen Baptiste is currently Professor of Environmental Studies at Colgate University, Hamilton, NY, United States. Her research interests lie at the nexus of environmental psychology, environmental justice, and natural resource management. Her research explores worldviews to environmental problems in the Caribbean with a focus on fishers' perceptions of climate change from which she has published in multiple journals including *Caribbean Geography*, *Geoforum*, *Area*, *The Black Scholar*, and *Environmental Conservation* to name a few. She is also author of multiple book chapters on environmental issues and climate change in the Caribbean. She is co-editor of two special issues: one in *Geoforum* on "Climate Justice and the Caribbean" (2016) and the second on "Knowledge, perceptions, concerns, and behaviors to climate change" (2018) published in the *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*. April's new research is expanding to look at environmental movements in the insular Caribbean with a lens to understand how groups mobilize around environmental problems. She is the outgoing Non-student at Large Officer for the American Association of Geographers' Caribbean Geography Specialty Group.

##### **Dr Stacy-ann Robinson**

Colby College, Waterville, ME; [smrobins@colby.edu](mailto:smrobins@colby.edu)

Dr Stacy-ann Robinson is Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Colby College in Waterville, ME, United States. Her scholarship investigates the human, social and policy dimensions of climate change adaptation in small island developing states, with a special focus on climate justice and on adaptation finance, an area in which she is a Certified Expert. She is a Contributing Author to Chapter 15 (Small Islands) of Working Group II's contribution to the Sixth

Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, due to be published in 2021. Her work has appeared in *Nature*, *Nature Climate Change*, *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews (WIREs): Climate Change*, *Climate Policy*, among other leading journals. Prior to Colby, Stacy-ann was a Voss Postdoctoral Research Associate in Environment and Society at Brown University. And before that, the Fox-Zucker Fellow (Environmental Stewardship and Multilevel Governance) at Yale University where she researched climate resilience and transformation in Caribbean small island developing states. Stacy-ann is the current Chair of the American Association of Geographers' Caribbean Geography Specialty Group.

## Expressions of interest

Please express your interest in participating in the special issue by completing this [Google Form](#) by **May 18, 2021**.

Should you have any questions, please contact Dr April Baptiste, Lead Guest Editor, at [abaptiste@colgate.edu](mailto:abaptiste@colgate.edu).

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