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University of San Francisco

**Let's Bring Intersectional Environmentalism to the Classroom:
A Qualitative Study Upon Voices of Intergenerational Asian American Activists**

A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in International and Multicultural Education

By

Michelle Paige Sun

May 2022

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ABSTRACT

Climate change and environmental pollution have been threatening people's lives in recent years. Many educators and environmentalists have called for environmental justice education. However, most of the dominant mainstream forms of environmental education perpetuate environmental injustice, continue systemic oppression of marginalized communities, and do not lead to the needed transformation. Neoliberalism makes environmental education individualistic, and education for environmental justice requires cultural recognition. Additionally, the environmental contribution from Asian American communities is always marginalized. My paper conducted semi-structured interviews with three Asian American environmental activists. Based on the qualitative interviews, we are able to see Asian American activists' experience in environmental movements and understand the worldview of environmental justice by Asian Americans and immigrants. Learning about Asian Americans' environmental activism provides valuable resources and makes us rethink the educational purpose of environmental justice and environmental education strategies, including intersectional environmentalism, art-based pedagogy, and ethnic studies as critical methods of education for environmental justice.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

When I was a first-year student at college, I was like most new students who did not know what I wanted to learn. I considered choosing a popular major such as economics or computer science because most teachers encourage students to learn something to earn pecuniary benefit if their students do not know what they want to do. Once I enrolled in a foundational course of environmental studies, though, I became intensely interested in environmental studies. I naively felt this is the field I want to pursue my whole life. However, when I spent four years learning environmental science and justice, I realized a lot of information and phenomena made students feel depressed and anxious. Some policies, such as the Paris Agreement, still uphold environmental injustice but do not make every nation accountable for climate change. When many proposals do not solve the environmental problems or the root cause of environmental injustice, people will quickly feel helpless and hopeless. Since many students feel discouraged and disappointed about environmental issues, I think we should rethink the educational purpose for environmental justice in order to change helpless feelings into empowered actions.

Statement of the Problem

Climate change and community pollution are major issues for the state, nation, and the world. There are increasing threats to people's living environment every day. Many members of the environmental justice and environmental education communities have called for more inclusion of environmental justice throughout environmental education; however, the mainstream environmental movement has failed to adequately address environmental justice issues and many courses related to climate or environment do not provide enough environmental justice content in environmental education (Kushmerick, Young & Stein, 2007). Different

negative news about climate change and environmental injustice may deepen students' anxiety and depression and even feelings of helplessness. Even though governments and the leadership of some schools require climate instruction, most of the dominant mainstream forms of environmental education perpetuate environmental injustice, continue systemic oppression of marginalized communities, and do not lead to the needed transformation (Leah, 2022). In recent years, most dominant environmental protests such as Global Climate Strike and Extinction Rebellion do not recognize the background and needs of people of color. There are many environmental groups that still uphold white supremacy, center white people's voice, and marginalize the contribution from working-class families and people of color. For example, the major leaders and activists of Climate Strike and Extinction Rebellion are white, and the participants in environmental spaces, and the ones who gain traction and attention for their advocacy are often white and wealthy people from North America and Europe. Furthermore, Asian activists' environmental movements are not well-known compared with other activists. The stereotypes about Asian populations often make their voice become silenced (Ng, 2020). This thesis will focus on Asian Americans and immigrants to display how Asian Americans generate their worldview and environmentalism through their cultural development in the United States, and show their approaches for environmental justice and contributions to environmental movements.

Background and Need

Among people of color in the United States, Asian Americans' positions are complex. Because Asian Americans' national median household income often out-earns white families according to the statistics, some might not see how Asians are being oppressed or marginalized because of environmental injustice. On the other hand, even though there are some Asian

Americans who are politically active, Asian Americans are still the most politically disengaged group with the lowest political turnout (Ng, 2020). The lack of political engagement and high earnings generate the "model minority myth" - the positive stereotype which makes Asian Americans appear more successful than they actually are, ignores the diversity of experiences in the Asian American community and reinforces ideas about meritocracy (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Overall, most people consider Asian Americans and immigrants as silent, withdrawn, and apolitical perpetual foreigners. However, those statistics and stereotypes do not represent the entire Asian American population, and there are many Asian Americans activists that are contributing to environmental justice, racial justice and social progress (Ng, 2020).

Education for climate change and environmental justice requires collective movements by the leadership and engagement of all races. We all need to realize the importance of engagement and contributions from Asian Americans and immigrants within the environmental movements, and we need to learn and participate in different ways to clearly understand there is not only one "right" way to help the planet. The majority of scholars do not have a lot of real experience of participating in social movements, so they do not have enough personal understanding of the organization and operation of the frontline. The lack of actual participation might lead scholars sometimes to make social movement strategies that do not match the actual situation, so scholars should have a clear understanding, maintain intellectual humility, and learn more from social movement participants and researchers. This thesis will provide more practical knowledge for scholars by learning from Asian activists of environmental justice movements, and fill the gap between academia and actual social movements.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to document through qualitative interviews the contributions to environmental justice from Asian Americans and immigrants and Asian Americans' potential that motivates environmental movements and activism. This thesis will use semi-structured interviews to learn the stories of Asian American and immigrant environmental activists. The thesis aims to help students know the history and cases of Asian Americans struggling for environmental justice, understand the concept of intersectionality and incorporate radical activism into their daily life. My thesis aims to show the engagement of Asian Americans and immigrants in the Bay Area for the fight against climate change and make readers become inspired to take action against environmental injustice in their communities. This thesis will be of interest to environmental educators in multicultural schools.

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality will be used as a theoretical framework for this thesis. Developed by Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is a theoretical framework that can explain how aspects of identities such as race, class, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, and body type can overlap and largely influence how people experience prejudices and privileges. Many environmental campaigns use singular voices and radical approaches that center on elite-led, one-way communications (Brulle, 2010). However, some approaches without cultural recognition have difficulty gaining people's solidarity for environmental justice. Bruelle (2010) mentioned in his research that only informing the public of and eliciting support for various elite policy positions cannot promote civic engagement. Environmental injustice is a complex social problem. Before creating protests and taking actions against resource inequality or climate change, we need to ensure that the environmental movement will benefit everyone equally. A person's identity could provide a unique cognitive perspective and opportunity; moreover, identity is multiple, fluid, and

socially constructed (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Therefore, there are bound to be differences and complexity between individual experiences within the same identity group. Integrating one's identity from past, present, and future into a cohesive, unified sense is a complex task (Tatum, 2000). Considering identity differences should be the key role of environmental justice education. We should consider the fact that individuals may be oppressed and differently impacted by environmental injustice based on various identity characteristics, and we need to interconnect and combine different social structures. Intersectionality will be used in this thesis because it provides space for all social injustices and interconnects the movements of social justice and environmental justice. The concept of intersectionality helps understanding of complex social relations of power and brings hidden dynamics forward in order to create transformative social changes (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays & Tomlinson, 2013).

The method of doing intersectional research involves interviewing a specific group of people and recording their own perspective based on their lived experiences and the environments they grew up in. Malin & Ryder (2018) make the claim that solving socio-environmental problems are connected to intersecting forms of structural environmental injustice and dominant ideologies, and intersectionality provides the conceptual tools to strengthen environmental justice scholarship. Leah (2022) describes intersectional environmentalism as a more inclusive version of environmentalism that advocates for both the protection of people and the planet. Schlangen (2020) adds intersectionality is the bond between environmentalism and environmental justice to both acknowledge where we came from and who has been harmed in the process. Taken together, these authors provide a rationale for understanding why it is important to incorporate intersectionality to our environmental justice movements.

Methodology

This thesis will be informed by qualitative interviews, which are also called intensive or in-depth semi-structured interviews. I will conduct a series of semi-structured interviews of Asian American environmental activists and collect their experiences as diverse examples that can be incorporated into a model environmental curriculum. Interviewing Asian American activists is the most helpful method for this thesis because those activists provide perspectives that are hidden by mainstream narratives. Their stories are useful for us to rethink the strategy of environmental education. The education for environmental science and sustainability development is always intertwined with indigenous studies, because nature is a part of indigenous people's cultural practices and food security; Indigenous knowledge recognizes connectivity between different roles and responsibilities within a system (Daniel, 2019). We need to understand the environment through reviewing indigenous worldviews. For other people's worldviews, we need to listen and explore their own stories and diverse experiences to help ourselves create a broader worldview, which may help us build a more inclusive and comprehensive environmental curriculum. These data have been analyzed to understand the worldview of environmental justice that is generated by Asian Americans and immigrants. The participants of the study include three generations of Asian American environmental activists: Pam Tau Lee, Kenneth Tang, and Jacob Linde.

Pam Tau Lee is an Asian American organizer and activist in San Francisco. Her childhood experience with her grandma in the garment factory inspired her to struggle for better working and living conditions for people of color and low-income communities. Pam was involved in the struggles of the environmental justice movement in the Bay Area, and she is a

co-founder of Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), Chinese Progressive Association (CPASF) and Just Transition Alliance (JTA).

Kenneth Tang is an immigrant from Hong Kong, and he is passionate about connecting with the Chinese community. Kenneth is a staff member of APEN and the lead community organizer in Oakland. As an Asian immigrant who grew up with a capitalist mindset, Ken did not know anything about environmental justice movements. He started to realize the systemic oppression from extractivism and capitalism through participating in the work of APEN.

Jacob Linde is a student at University of San Francisco with an Environmental Studies major. He is the president of BIPOC Students for the Environment (BIPOC4E), which is a student organization to broadly expand the representation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color, in the environmental program, field, and movement. Jacob is passionate about engaging with activities in the sustainability field.

My participants are all from San Francisco and Oakland, and these two cities contain a long history of Asian Americans' struggling and involvement. In 1969, the student strikes at San Francisco State University, which was a burgeoning moment for Asian Americans, helped to establish the first Ethnic Studies department in the United States and helped upend popular depictions of Asian Americans as quiet foreigners forever striving to assimilate into white society (Wallace, 2017). Therefore, understanding the history of Asian Americans in the Bay Area, especially San Francisco and Oakland, is critical to a deeper understanding of Asian Americans' engagement in environmental justice.

Limitations of the Study

This thesis is limited by several factors including: (a) the sampling procedure and sample size; (b) timing of the study; (c) data collection process; (d) researcher positionality. The number

of participants was limited due to the time restriction for completing this study with a single researcher working within one semester. Additionally, the participants of this study represent only two programs: BIPOC4E and APEN. Most members from these two programs are East Asians or South East Asians. The quantity of the data collected may hold limitations because the small size of the sample means that the results of this study cannot be used to define the environmental justice movement about the population of Asian Americans as a whole. Finally, it is important to note that my positionality is impacted by being a practitioner in the field being researched; moreover, I have experiences and perspectives, as a Bay Area resident who has almost never personally experienced racial discrimination, and a Chinese American who grew up in a working class family that has little experience with social justice, that I needed to check during my interpretation of the data collected.

Significance of the Thesis

This thesis may be of interest to environmental science teachers from multicultural K-12 schools because most knowledge of climate change and environmental science remains abstruse, and the teaching of climate change mostly relates to negative news. Intersectional environmentalism with multicultural stories may help teachers explore teaching methods to inspire and empower students to become agents of change through diverse ways. It may hold significance for students who are Asian Americans and immigrants, because their environmental science classes in the past might have focused on white-washed narratives and policies from neoliberalism. Teaching the histories and stories of Asian Americans' activism with intersectionality can help Asian American students develop more leadership and engagement in the environmental justice movements. In addition, this thesis may hold significance for students from multicultural K-12 schools because these students will become future leaders to address the

global climate and public health crisis; therefore, educators should ensure they receive a comprehensive education on environmental issues. Intersectional environmentalism with a multicultural background may help teachers explore teaching methods to inspire and empower students to become agents of change through diverse ways. Finally, this thesis may be important to students who are studying environmental studies in higher educational institutions because intersectional environmentalism may become an effective theory to let them engage the environmental movements as global citizens, and instruct them to be inclusive and comprehensive environmental educators to teach future generations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The claim for this literature review is that cultural recognition of local communities and consideration of diverse identities is important to environmental justice education, and intersectionality provides the conceptual frame to achieve this goal. The body of scholarship that justifies this claim includes three sets of evidence that demonstrate that: cultural recognition is core to the attainment of social and environmental justice; neoliberalism makes environmental education focus on privatized and individualized activities; and the environmental contribution from people of color, especially Asian Americans is marginalized.

Cultural Recognition is Core to Environmental Justice

Research demonstrates that cultural recognition is core to the attainment of social and environmental justice. This includes a study that illustrates cultural recognition must be addressed in order to improve people's participation in the environmental justice movement (Schlosberg, 2004); a study that articulates how the environmental justice movement brought culture into the conversation from the start, and that raises concerns with the lack of recognition of how communities of color are central to considerations of climate justice (Schlosberg, 2013) and a study that claims environmental activities or educational courses for learners need to make climate change information more personally relevant and meaningful (Monroe, Plate, & Oxarart, 2017). These studies are important because taken together, they claim that cultural recognition is the primary consideration for environmental justice.

Schlosberg (2004) addressed that most theories of environmental justice are inadequate and only focus on fair processes for the distribution of goods and benefits, which are incomplete theoretically and insufficient in practice. Schlosberg sought to figure out the true meaning of

environmental justice, or what people should recognize for environmental justice. He found that cultural recognition is certainly central to the attainment of social and environmental justice, and justice itself requires an understanding of the unjust distribution and the lack of cultural recognition in political and social processes. The author concludes that there is a direct link between justice as equity, cultural recognition, and democratic participation; those forms of injustice must be addressed simultaneously in order to improve learners' participation in environmental education and movements.

Over the next decade, Schlosberg (2013) rethought his previous theories of environmental justice and tried to expand and theorize the concept and the movement of environmental justice. This subsequent study included environmental scientists, educators, and philosophers. The results of this study demonstrate that concerns with the lack of cultural recognition of communities of color are central to movement considerations of environmental justice and climate justice. Schlosberg (2013) concludes that environmental justice is a very significant part of environmental education because it aims to focus on bringing attention to the environmental conditions in which people are immersed in their everyday lives. This is also related to the work of Monroe, Plate, and Oxarart (2017) that describes the importance of local culture relevant to education for environmental justice.

Following the findings of Schlosberg's research in 2004 and 2013, Monroe, Plate, and Oxarart (2017) addressed that most young people do not understand basic climate science, and many educators do not know how to effectively teach students about climate science. The authors tried to report a range of educational outcomes that increase awareness and knowledge of climate change science with potential impacts locally and globally; moreover, they found useful strategies for designing activities or educational interventions to engage learners. This study

implies the significance of local cultural involvement. The authors conclude that effective climate science and environmental education must make climate change information more personally relevant and meaningful for learners.

In summary, research demonstrates that cultural recognition is core to environmental justice. Taken together, this body of research justifies the significance of considering identity and cultural background into environmental movements.

Neoliberalism Makes Environmental Education Individualistic

Research also demonstrates that neoliberalism and global capitalism make environmental education focus on privatized and individualized activities. Neoliberalism is defined as a political approach that favors free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending. In the field of environmental education, neoliberalism plays a significant role in influencing the teaching direction of environmental justice and climate change. Studies documenting this influence include a study that demonstrates neoliberalism constrains people's thinking and practice to environmental problems (Hursh, Henderson, & Greenwood, 2015); a study that illustrates neoliberalism is making market solutions to educational problems and making environmental education sectors dependent on private funding to support its work (Jickling & Wals, 2008); and a study that claims the rise of neoliberalism and its social, environmental, and cultural impacts emphasize individualism (Fletcher, 2016). These studies are important because taken together, they demonstrate that neoliberalism makes environmental education focus on privatized and individualized activities and moves the focus away from collective action and governmental action.

Hursh, Henderson and Greenwood (2015) addressed environmental education as deeply shaped by the political, cultural, and economic logic of neoliberalism. The authors did this by

studying different and irreconcilable educational ideologies between professional environmental scholars and policymakers. Then the authors tried to promote alternative social imaginaries that privilege the environment and community over neoliberal conceptions of economic growth and hyper-individualism. This study included environmental educators, environmental policymakers, and some people who are interested in effective environmental education without the influence of neoliberal ideology. The findings of this study demonstrate that neoliberal political and economic policies undermine people's ability to respond to current economic and environmental crises, and privilege some groups over others based on the class of wealth to promote market transactions and reject other collective solutions from lower classes. Their claims are related to the findings of Jickling and Wals (2008) who find neoliberalism supports market solutions to educational problems and makes environmental education sectors dependent upon private funding.

Jickling and Wals (2008) investigated neoliberalism in environmental education in order to understand the relationships between sustainable development, environmental thought, democracy, and education. They demonstrate that the trend from environmental education to education for sustainable development seems like a policy-driven transition of neoliberalism and global capitalism. Sustainable development is like a political instrument to change people's behavior in a predetermined direction, and the educational outcomes of sustainability follow market-driven trends like international policies and corresponding economic incentives, rather than innovation-driven trends such as lifelong learning and competence-based education. The authors imply that environmental thought and environmental ethics are dynamic, and sustainability should be used for the interests of earth rather than business. Jickling and Wals'

(2008) work is related to Fletcher (2016) who writes that neoliberalism and its social, environmental, and cultural impacts emphasize individualism in environmental education.

Fletcher (2016) argues that the trend toward neoliberalization within environmental education is dangerous. Fletcher (2016) studied the growing influence of neoliberalism in educational policies around the world. The key findings of this study include (a) neoliberalism causes many cutbacks of state funding for education, (b) neoliberalism in the educational field skews accountability toward quantitative measurements of student performance, and (c) environmental education under neoliberalism emphasizes individualism and centers the model of environmental citizenship on privatized and individualized activities. The author argues that students should critique the structures of power and the neoliberal processes at work in the capitalist world economy and society. Fletcher (2016) suggests that people should discuss the social structure and processes that allow teachers and others to transform themselves/communities/environments through reflection and action, focus on inspiring collective and direct political action that pursues decommodified and common resource management, and create alternative forms of pedagogy and practice that embody progressive principles to counter neoliberal doctrine.

In summary, research demonstrates that neoliberalism and global capitalism make environmental education focus on privatized and individualized activities. Taken together, this body of research justifies the deep influence of neoliberalism in global environmental education and environmental policies. Related to this is a body of scholarship that demonstrates the environmental contribution from Asian Americans are marginalized because neoliberalism upholds the myth of Asian Americans being a model minority, such as focusing on individualized and technical skills, which reduces the engagement of Asian Americans.

Asian American Communities' Important Contributions Are Always Marginalized

Research demonstrates that the environmental contributions from people of color, especially Asian Americans are marginalized. This includes a study that illustrates Asian immigrant communities are crucial to expand definitions of environmentalism and community-based activist approaches for environmental justice (Sze, 2004); a study that claims the research for environmental justice preferred to focus on public health issue and a sociological approach without the involvement of ethnic studies or Asian American studies (Sze, 2011); and a study that articulates how the inaccurate and outdated stereotypes about Asian Americans makes invisible the civil engagement and contribution from Asian Americans to the environmental justice movement (Ng, 2020). This scholarship is important because taken together, these studies demonstrate that the engagement in and contributions to environmental justice from Asian Americans are always ignored or marginalized because of stereotypes and neoliberal ideologies.

In 2004, Sze addressed how the environmental justice contribution from Asian immigrants and Asian American communities has not been well documented in the literature, or well recognized by the wider environmental justice community. The author did this by studying the role of Asian immigrant and Asian American communities in advancing the environmental justice movement. Sze set up a timeline about the history of Asian immigrants and Asian Pacific Americans, and provided different examples to prove the linkage between Asian Americans and the environmental justice movement. This study makes a good connection between the movements of environmental justice and racial justice. The findings of this study demonstrate that the environmental problems of Latino, Asian, Native, and African American communities are numerous and often distinct from one another; The primary environmental justice issues and the activism from Asian American and Asian immigrant communities are similar to Latino

immigrant communities, and include occupational health issues and the injustices associated with being limited-English-speaking populations and immigrant populations. Sze (2004) concludes that Asian immigrant communities care about public and human health concerns, and they are seriously taking the responsibilities of community activism and the environmental justice issues that affect them in their own localities. Overall, Sze (2004) illustrates that considering the contribution from communities of Asian immigrants and Asian Pacific Americans is extremely important in expanding the concept of environmental justice and in advancing the legal and community-based activist approaches for environmental movements with racial justice.

Seven years later, Sze did more research about the environmental justice activism of Asian American immigrants and refugees under neoliberal urbanism. Sze (2011) addressed how the conceptual contributions of Asian immigrants and Asian American activists for environmental justice have still been ignored because of a focus on distributive justice that is about fair distribution of resources among populations (Malin, Ryder & Lyra, 2019). Moreover, Sze (2011) mentioned the research for environmental justice preferred the public health and sociological approach but generally ignored the fields of ethnic studies and Asian American studies. The results of this study demonstrate that the environmental movements should use procedural justice such as participatory aspects of environmental justice (Malin, Ryder & Lyra, 2019), to help Asian Americans ensure community members' rights during crucial environmental decision-making processes and concentrate on the complex stories of activist movements rather than distributive justice that only emphasizes the outcomes of processes. Sze (2011) concluded that working class Asian American immigrant and refugee communities can have great environmental justice perspectives based on their unique worldview and experiences. Compared with the vision of mainstream environmentalists, those perspectives are more dynamic

and reflective of the environmental and public health conditions in diverse real-world communities. Finally, Sze (2011) suggested people incorporate intensely local struggles and a broader historical, cultural, and ideological framework into existing discourses. The author believes that activists from Asian American immigrant and refugee communities would promote policies and do well to engage meaningfully for better environmental conditions. This is related to the work of Ng (2020) who writes that Asian Americans are currently active and will continue to become increasingly active in environmental justice movements.

Building on the findings from Sze in 2004 and 2011, Ng (2020) did a qualitative case study to address that there are many inaccurate and outdated stereotypes about Asian Americans in society, which cause people not to know Asian Americans' civic engagement and social contribution to the environmental justice movement. In order to diversify narratives of environmental leaders, bring visibility to existing Asian American environmental justice activists, and understand social movement participation patterns of this racial group, the author interviewed prominent Asian American environmental justice activists, using case studies to let readers know Asian Americans are active in the movement for environmental justice and will become increasingly active as they become more aware of issues in their respective communities. The small portion of evidence that displays Asian Americans earning the highest national median household income could not represent the entire heterogeneous Asian American population; South, East, and Southeast Asian ethnicities are not privileged in America's mainstream society (Ng, 2020). The key results of this study demonstrate that neoliberalism creates the myth of the model minority, which focuses on Asian Americans' individualized and technical skills, and only acknowledges the stories of Asian Americans who were already middle class or above in the United States. Ng (2020) concludes that the model minority myth and

perpetual foreigner stereotypes cause Asian Americans to often be overlooked for support, services, and resources.

In summary, research demonstrates that Asian American communities' important contributions are ignored or marginalized. Taken together, this body of research justifies that research with ethnic studies and Asian American studies might be very significant to expand the definition and concept of environmental justice; environmental educators need to use some of these approaches to let Asian immigrants', refugees', and Asian Americans' environmental justice activism be documented into the literature and well recognized by the wider society.

Summary

This literature review claims cultural recognition of local communities and consideration of diverse identities is important to environmental justice education. Evidence that supports this claim shows that cultural recognition is core to the attainment of social and environmental justice, that neoliberalism makes environmental education focus on privatized and individualized activities, and that contributions to environmental activism from people of color, especially Asian Americans, is marginalized. This claim and body of evidence addresses how the lack of cultural recognition, outdated stereotypes of minority groups, neoliberalism and global capitalism contribute to dominant forms of environmental education that perpetuate environmental injustice and continue systemic oppression of marginalized communities without transformative outcomes. With my thesis, I observe three generations of Asian Americans' engagement for environmental justice in the United States and identify some educational strategies with critical theories for effective environmental education.

CHAPTER III

ASIAN AMERICANS' ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Introduction

In 2019, Asian activist Pam Tau Lee came to my college and gave a speech about Asian Americans' radical perspectives for environmental justice. Her stories made me realize Asian Americans also have made a big contribution to environmental movements, and deeply inspired me to think more about environmental education as a Chinese American. During her speech, I learned that she participated in various Asian American struggles during the 1960s and 1970s and helped found various organizations: Chinese Progressive Association (CPASF) and Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN). These two organizations let me know environmental justice is a central issue for Chinatowns and Chinese-American communities in the Bay Area. Black, Indigenous and people of color usually experience environmental degradation in their homelands or living places, and they easily suffer the worst environmental harms. Therefore, many Asian Americans or immigrants aim to work towards a future that combines environmental protection with community justice.

At the start of this research, I collected a lot of materials and emailed four Asian Americans' programs in California and one program in Boston. This led to three invitations to Asian American environmental leaders to share with me their stories: Pam Tau Lee, Kenneth Tang, and Jacob Linde. Pam was retired and left from the frontline protests, but she's keeping her environmental justice work by painting. Through the API Cultural Center, I got Pam's contact information and asked for a one-on-one conversation about her activism. Fortunately, Pam accepted my interview and she shared some things that had never been mentioned in her previous speeches. And then a lead community organizer from APEN, Kenneth Tang, accepted

my invitation for an interview and shared more about what APEN did in previous years. For the third interview, I paid attention to our students in the Environmental Studies major at the University of San Francisco. Jacob Linde is the current president of a USF student organization named BIPOC Students for the Environment (BIPOC4E). Jacob identifies as an Asian American and he was willing to share the great work that Asian Americans and BIPOC4E have been doing within the environmental movement. The ages of these three participants are in their 70s, 30-40s and 20s respectively. Their ages and experiences provide the intergenerational voices about Asian American activism that have very strong educational meanings to let us learn the leadership of Asian Americans from three different generations to our environmental movement.

Participants' Background

Pamela Tau Lee

The co-founder of APEN who has worked as an activist for more than 40 years, Pam represents the senior generation for environmental justice. Pam is an Asian environmental activist who was rooted in San Francisco's Chinatown. Her childhood experience with her grandma in Chinatown left her a very strong memory and became the starting point for her to participate in environmental justice movements. Pam's grandparents came from China. During the depression era, her grandparents migrated to the U.S., while her grandmother was pregnant with Pam's father. Her grandparents left two teenagers in China, who were revolutionaries to fight for the Communist Revolution. Pam said her grandparents would send back some money that they earned in the U.S. to help support the art and culture work during the revolution in China. When Pam was 7-years-old, she went to school in Chinatown and mainly spoke Chinese. Her dad was concerned about it and separated her from her grandmother's side, so Pam lost a lot of Chinese speaking skills. Pam said her dad experienced his own internalized oppressions as an

American-born Chinese in the 1920s. However, Pam's parents encouraged her to truly embrace Chinese culture. From the conversation with Pam, I felt she was a strong, persistent and inclusive elder with wisdom. Pam shared her lifelong movements to give the young generation support, mentorship, and hope.

Kenneth Tang

The Lead Community Organizer of APEN, Kenneth has been working in APEN for seven years and he represents the generation of activists following Pam. Kenneth was born in Hong Kong, and he immigrated to the United States when he was ten years old, with his elder brother and mom. His dad had his own business beyond the U.S. and chose to stay behind to financially support the whole family. Cantonese is Kenneth's native language and he can still speak Cantonese fluently. Kenneth thought his experiences in the U.S. are similar to other children who are from immigrant families: facing the challenges of language and cultural barriers, and trying to fit into the new environment. As an Asian immigrant, Kenneth considers there is a lot of learning and struggling in the cultural and educational system. He thinks that he grew up with a capitalist mindset like most of Asian children, because they may spend more time on social media which often show a consumer lifestyle; moreover, he believes Asian parents put high expectations upon their children so that the younger generation promotes more capitalistic approaches to life and strives for the degree and career that will serve them well financially. Under the environment of capitalism, Kenneth never knew or thought about environmental justice movements, until he started to volunteer at APEN. Then, he recognized that residents in Chinese communities required a more clean and safe environment in their workplaces and homes. Kenneth figured out that he wanted to become an environmental justice activist and utilize his ability for helping community members. Kenneth still appreciates many traditional

Chinese cultures and values, and he uses his “Chineseness” to serve his community and struggle for environmental justice.

Jacob Linde

A fourth year college student who wants to work in APEN as a Communications Associate, Jacob represents the youngest generation of activists. Jacob is a Korean American. However, he said his environmentalism might be different from other Asian Americans, because he was adopted by a white family at a very young age and grew up in San Francisco. Unlike some Asian Americans or immigrants, Jacob didn’t grow up in Asian communities and was not surrounded by a lot of Asian people during his childhood. On the other hand, his parents cared about his racial identity and tried to let him make connections to his original culture. Jacob said his parents introduced Korean culture to him, such as providing a traditional Korean birthday and giving him Korean money on his birthday. Furthermore, even though Jacob didn’t remember how to speak Korean, he still remembered his parents put him in Korean language lessons when he was a small child. Therefore, he could feel connected to his ethnic identity and heritage. Jacob considered that he had a lot of privileges, such as growing up with a white family and going to private schools for most of his life. He thinks the privilege has afforded him many amazing opportunities and let him get in touch with diverse people of color, and he would like to use his “privilege” to work for and with Asian American organizations or communities. Throughout the interview, Jacob came across as an outstanding student with an inquiring mind and passionate opinions.

The next sections describe the themes that came out of interviews with these three leaders. Those themes are intersectional solidarity for environmental movement, moderate

methods and optimistic narratives, creating a worldview and values by listening to elders, and strong adaptability for the rapid change of the world.

Intersectional Solidarity for Environmental Movement

Intersectionality is a significant core of environmental activism. Leah Thomas (2022) says in her book *The Intersectional Environmentalist*, “We can’t save the planet without uplifting the voices of its people, especially those most often unheard” (p.3). For more than 50 years, Pam worked for the Asian American activism and environmental justice movement to focus on environmental racism and include the voices and leadership of the most vulnerable. In the conversation with Pam, she emphasized intersectional philosophy for environmental justice saying, “We need to focus and uplift the most vulnerable groups. If we don’t uplift and address the issues of the most vulnerable groups, we don’t get uplifted at all, and there is no true justice.” In Pam’s environmental movement, she struggles not only to uplift unheard voices but also the voices of the most vulnerable. Her philosophy of thought completely fits with intersectional environmentalism.

Uplifting voices of the most vulnerable people is vital to the environmental justice movement. Moreover, we have to address interconnected and overlapping forms of discrimination if we hope to create solid change for environmental justice (Willow, 2018). To protect the planet, we have to think about the circumstances of its people.

Similarly, Kenneth mentioned, “This is important for all people to participate in, because the work of environmental justice is to take care of you and our planet. It’s not just taking care of my home, myself. It’s to take care of everyone.”

Thomas (2022) said one of the goals of environmental justice under the intersectionality framework is the fair treatment of all people. Kenneth emphasized that the work of

environmental justice is for taking care of everybody; Kenneth addresses environmental justice in a bigger picture and sees things through an intersectional lens for his work.

As the leader of a college student organization, Jacob has been working on increasing engagement with the diversity of students. During the interview, Jacob said:

We've struggled to host general meetings and our board is pretty diverse... There is a lot of diversity within our board, so the discussions are definitely super productive. The other people in my board definitely teach me about things that I was not aware of before. They help me try and make the most equitable decisions when I am trying to increase club involvement or just host events. Perspectives from other different communities are super important.

Race, gender, and economic and social classes are all elements that should not be ignored. Jacob tried to increase the diversity of the student organization, and he always would like to hear different opinions to make good decisions. Jacob believed all racial groups in the U.S. should have representatives to stand out to make bold decisions to create a more just and equitable system. Jacob's working principle is cross-racial, illustrating that his environmentalism is intersectional.

Pamela, Kenneth, and Jacob represent three different generations, but they all mentioned the importance of thinking about different people and elements to organize environmental campaigns. Their activism is intersectional, and they focus on solidarity that can bring people together.

Moderate Methods and Optimistic Narratives

The people who are most adversely affected by environmental problems are usually those that hold less privilege (Willow, 2018). In the book *This Land is Our Land*, the author Suketu

Mehta (2019) indicated that America is the last one on a ranking of 18 nations in sustainability and is also the least likely to feel guilty about it. However, Indians and Chinese have the most sustainable lifestyles, but also feel the most guilty about their impact on the environment. This result of the study proved many nations and people have less privilege but might make more contributions to save our environment and ecosystem. Before creating actions for climate change and environmental problems, activists and organizers should hear and learn from different people's experiences. The most important thing is race, poverty and other elements need to be taken into account and should not be ignored. Understanding Asian Americans' activism is an essential part of the environmental justice movement.

Confucianism is an ethical and philosophical system of thought and behavior that has notable influences on cultures in East Asia (Nella, 2017). Confucian-oriented culture perceives assertive or aggressive communication styles as incompetent or immature (Sue, 1994, as cited in Jun, Kim & Woo, 2021). Compared with some famous radical environmental activities such as Climate Strike and Extinction Rebellion, Asian Americans pursue environmental justice using moderate methods and optimistic narratives. Jacob's thoughts prove that Asian Americans prefer optimistic narratives for moving forward through environmental movements. His opinion about those radical environmental campaigns is that their narrative and methods need to change or improve: "I fully believe that (radical/extreme environmentalism) is the biggest issue of our time. I'm not going to go and try and mess with people's lives, because I think that way of alarmism can be counterproductive."

Public engagement is a significant part of the climate change issue and environmental justice movement but it is an easy part to miss too. Climate change policies will always change depending on the existing attitudes, values, and perceptions of different audiences; and many

scientists and advocates expect to promote a broader public understanding of the problem's technical nature, leading the public to view it with the urgency that they do (Nisbet, 2009). Jacob dislikes some narratives that some radical environmental campaigns love to use, such as "climate change is extremely terrible, and we are all going to die soon if we do not do anything." Many environmentalists and even some scientists have attempted to counter the scientific uncertainty and economic consequences framed by emphasizing a Pandora's Box of looming "climate crisis" (Nisbet, 2009). Jacob thinks this kind of narrative is super pessimistic; Even though the narrative might not technically be wrong, it is hard to increase the participation or change the mind of those people who don't believe in climate change anymore. Jacob thinks a good narrative should let people know that all of them can do something or make changes in their daily life. Even if it looks like small changes, it is still something helpful. His opinion about the radical environmentalists and his strong wish to reframe the narratives about climate change indicates he prefers moderate approaches or optimistic narratives.

Realizing the wrongness of the narrative that mainstream environmental movements love to use, Jacob is always aware of the environment he grew up in and the privileges he has. He doesn't try to participate in any types of campaigns that keep upholding privileged voices. In addition, he would like to work with Asian American groups and maintain his race and culture by immersing in them:

Over the past couple of years, I've been trying to reconnect with my heritage and community. I mean, this is definitely a part of my life. I know that I have a lot of privileges, such as growing up in San Francisco, growing up with a white family, and going to private school for most of my life. Those privileges had afforded me all many amazing opportunities. Thus, now I think it is time to use the privileges I have to work

for, and with Asian American organizations and communities. We can, and it's very important for me to help Asian people in my community and become a part of it. You know, this is a way that I can connect. I think they (Asian American organizations) have a lot of knowledge and experience that I can learn from them. I think, aside from just cultural stuff, they probably face the barriers that I faced in my life as an Asian American, but not necessarily. I think they definitely would provide some cool insight on that.

Jacob owns an apparent self-awareness as an Asian American with a unique growth background. He always remembers he has privilege in some areas, and he does not try to help or expand power for people who already hold privilege. Therefore, his activism is intersectional and moderate for all types of people. In addition, Jacob tries to reconnect to his heritage culture by working with and for Asian communities, which means he's not assimilated into the mainstream white supremacy environment, and he is ready to grow more by learning from diverse perspectives and experiences.

Joint recognition of the problem is meaningful and raises an understanding of why Asian Americans evolve into activists to solve a problem collectively (Jun, Kim & Woo, 2021). Before creating an event or activity regarding environmental justice, Asian activists would like to do a lot of surveys and research to recognize their targeted participants' preferences and emphasis so that people could have solidarity and collective actions. For example, Kenneth told me that relationship building was his best strategy to maintain people's environmental awareness and sensitivity:

I don't know if it's about all cultures, but at least in Chinese culture, building relationships between individuals could help a lot. Relationship building is essential because it will

open many potential opportunities for an individual to engage in specific campaigns such as pollution, public health, and climate change. It is always the starting point because it's hard to give folks incentive to maintain their curiosity or focus. There are a lot of different strategies, like agitations, right? For example, you know, saying, "We all have grandchildren, and we want to provide a healthy environment to them, and a change that we can make today to make it happen." As we get closer and closer to knowing this person or working with this person, you have a channel and understanding of their skills, where they come from, what their history is, you know, and their values. Once you have those assessments in the visual, you can find what interests them.

Similar to Jacob, Kenneth also loved to build some positive narratives rather than threaten people to take quick action. Kenneth knows the importance of family values and cultural heritage for Asians. On the other hand, Kenneth also recognized that Asian elders care about the legacy they could leave for their future generations. Hence, he prefers to use "children" or "grandchildren" to encourage community members to participate in their campaigns.

Compared with other racial/ethnic minority groups, Asian Americans in the U.S. tend to be more politically silent, and their cultural inclination is to avoid direct confrontation (Lee, Tao & Li, 2021). This means Asian Americans would like to take other tactful ways of joining the social movements but not to have a face-to-face confrontation. There are many diverse campaign methods that activists could take for environmental and racial justice. Asian American activism includes social media, political, and advocacy actions (Jun, Kim & Woo, 2021). Kenneth thinks his best strategy is not only relationship building but also includes political education. Kenneth believed some stereotypes of the model minority myth still exist in Asian Americans' life, which are deeply rooted in their culture. Political education could help Asian Americans realize their

importance in participating in voting, elections, and speaking out to make a transformative change. In the interview, Kenneth said: “Through political education, or through our relationship, we could keep encouraging someone to vote and see changes could actually happen.” As a person who has lived in the Asian community for a long time, Kenneth has deep Chinese cultural roots. Therefore, his strategies are targeted and established for Chinese Americans and match the tendency of Asian Americans’ activism.

Pam prefers to encourage people to switch their position to think about different people’s situations and generate more empathy:

I mean solar panels and things like that... it's good, you know, it's fine, but they use a lot of chemicals. I think bringing people on toxic tours, being able to expose other people to frontline conditions, being able to provide safe spaces so that frontline people can actually share and talk, then others will listen carefully to their stories. Finally, frontline people will be respected for what they have, what they do. I think those kinds of things are really important. So, bringing people to the fields... Let's create scenarios when it's hot. Now, put yourself in the place of a farm worker, during climate change, and the crops and the fields need to be weeded and watered, and the crops picked or you run the tractor, or you pack the boxes. What do you think that they have? They will probably be appalled by being able to go to the bathroom, being able to drink water, and being able to have air conditioners. For the majority of the farm workers, they don't have access to those conditions.

In Chinese culture, there is a term called switch position to think, which could also be called perspective-taking. Switching position to think is similar to the term empathy, as a way of thinking to make people listen to others' perspectives and seek consensus, understanding, and

collaboration. In other words, it's an effective tool for improving positive attitudes and behaviors toward intergroup and outgroups (Shih, Wang, Trahan Bucher & Stotzer, 2009) and also an important mechanism for unlocking diversity's potential (Hoever, van Knippenberg, van Ginkel & Barkema, 2012). Pam always sets different scenarios and tries to be involved in them for the most vulnerable people. For example, she encourages people to participate in toxic tours to better recognize low-income communities of color that are most directly impacted by climate change and pollution. Pam put perspective-taking into her activism and strategies. In addition, Pam did not purely critique the mainstream environmental content such as solar panels, organic food, and electric vehicles. She thought those solutions were good options, but she reminded us that we also need to realize other people's conditions to have more positive and transformative approaches to our environmental justice education. Pam's activism is optimized and creates enormous possibilities and potential for environmental education.

Creating a Worldview and Values by Listening to Elders

To Asian people, it is vital to learn and know how to treat their elders because people tend to respect hierarchy and status in Confucian-oriented culture (Nella, 2017). Learning from elders is a familiar characteristic Asian activists have, which is very similar to Indigenous culture and worldview.

Pam and Kenneth share their experiences about learning things from elders' wisdom. According to Pam's biography on the website GreenBiz, Pam is well known for her community-based participatory action research conducted with hotel room cleaners. Furthermore, this achievement resulted from elders' suggestions in Chinatown. In the interview, Pam told me: "I got a job as a room cleaner because I wanted to work in labor. The elders in Chinatown said, 'if you want to do that (research) work, you need to do the work and get the

experience.' And I said okay." One of the components of doing participatory action research is participation, especially the participation of the people who will be researched. Pam did not choose to be a researcher who just learned knowledge from co-investigators. Instead, she chose to participate in the work she wanted to study, which means she became a part of the participation. I think this is why she possessed such insightful consciousness, education, and experience for her research, and listening to elders' advice contributed to her success.

Kenneth shares similar sentiments about elders' wisdom. He said APEN called those old or retired members who engage in their work "leaders." Those people are the core of APEN to elect steering committee members and make decisions for the community, and they developed a lot of time and energy towards APEN values. Kenneth said:

We should really acknowledge and appreciate the groundwork that seniors have laid out. We should know the work that they have done. We should applaud their leadership and their work. It is important, especially in a more public space where lots of members gather around for celebrations. I think that is also part of our culture where we respect people who are older than us.

Kenneth emphasized that people should act respectfully towards seniors, which represents a significant point of Chinese culture: respecting people who are elders in the hierarchy and trying to learn something through those elders' life experiences.

Strong Adaptability for the Rapid Change of the World

Compared with some individualistic ideologies of Western society, Asian culture is more strict about social order and collectivism in major catastrophes. Pam and Kenneth both said something about how Asian American activists take care of people during the pandemic, or people who work at home.

In 1991, Pam was invited to the People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit for contributing to the Environmental Justice Principles based on her experience as a community worker and labor organizer. She was one of the Asian American delegates and they played an imperative role in developing Principle 8: Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

Since 1991, Pam has been thinking about people's working environment and their rights, including workers who work at home. Thirty-one years later, she has a deeper understanding and special feeling during the pandemic:

If you read Principle Number 8, which talks about unfair choices and work, and exposures of workers of color, which I feel was really profound and visionary, because it talked about people working at home. If you go back to read it, at that time, a lot of women, and men, they're unpaid labor at home, right? So I felt Principle 8 was a huge contribution that brought women in the group to the discussion. Right now, when you look at the current situation, such as zoom meetings and working from home in the pandemic, most people are working from home, for almost 24/7... it's, it's crazy. So that I felt like, wow, you know, until today, those environmental justice principles still uphold the conditions here and internationally.

Pam thinks about people's circumstances under Covid-19 and immediately relates it to the environmental justice principle 8. She tries to take previous analysis to mobilize people's conditions that illustrates Asians could have very quick adaptability and strong resilience for environmental change.

Throughout the interview, Kenneth showed me how APEN quickly made solutions to help community members after the epidemic's outbreaks:

In APEN, we have bridge meetings with our members to talk about particular and specific issues. Most times, we don't really just jump into the topic and presentations. I think one important part is that we do icebreakers beforehand. We want to make sure we know everybody's situation, especially during the pandemic. We all work from home and everybody is stuck at home. And relationship building is to care about their well-being, right? We really care about our members' well-being, which will always work well. Feeling good is important, right? If our group members are feeling very negative, or feel slightly depressed, how can you move them to work? Therefore, we want to take care of our members. We would do just phone calls just to check up on them, such as checking whether they need more masks during the pandemic. As a non-profit organization, we have more access points to acquire these types of materials, and we will call everyone to see how they're doing. Are those families being taken care of or having enough meals? Masks, gloves and meals are the things that we would provide. Just calling, following up and checking if they need any kind of these types of support. APEN's members are generally Asian immigrants, Chinese workers, and also seniors, so their age range is between 40 to 80 years old. So when we do these types of well-being calls, we want to ensure that all our members are at the right place without the fright mentality. You know, it's not all about the work, it's about maintaining good relationship building and mental state before we engage the work.

Life experiences could facilitate the development of structural awareness and collective identity, and then motivate collective action (Tran & Curtin, 2017). As an Asian activist,

Kenneth could immediately realize his community members' needs for materials and mental health. He has joint recognition of the problem with other APEN members to solve a problem collectively. It illustrates Asian Americans' strong internal management, group activism and resilience while facing disaster.

Summary

These three participants represent three generations, but they all show how intersectionality is the core of Asian Americans' environmental justice movement. And Asian Americans' activism is influenced by collectivism and heritage culture, which are more moderate and optimized than some radical perspectives for the environment. They are willing to learn knowledge from elders and build strong relationships within the internal system. Overall, even though these three interviewees are in three different age stages, they all express their activism with collective identities and actions. Because of their life experiences and collective identities, Asian activists are more aware of structural inequality and environmental injustice, which motivates them to have empathy and solidarity to engage in environmental activism.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

A long time ago, I took my introductory environmental classes in Silicon Valley. In this place with high-tech development, I gained a lot of useful knowledge and scientific solutions about environmental protections, so I thought that being an environmentalist meant doing some cool and fashionable things such as appealing to all people to participate in solar panel projects, getting everybody to use electric vehicles, and buying organic food from Whole Foods Market in the neighborhood or local farmers markets. This kind of thought once made me proud to study Environmental Studies; however, it also made me fall into self-doubt later. I wondered whether I could be considered an environmentalist if I cannot afford a house with solar panels, an electric car, or organic food. After I had more critical learning for environmental justice, I realized those solutions depend on self-realization through capitalism or consumption. On the other hand, I learned about environmental education and sustainability in a college with a high ratio of white students. We learned about more general and science-oriented things from school. Even though we also had environmental justice and education as a part of our studies, there were not a lot of other students of color. My college experiences made me wonder whether communities of color have enough time and energy to care about environmental conditions and climate change. By interviewing my three participants, I found there are so many Asian American environmental activists. They are struggling to improve the environmental conditions in their communities and all other marginalized groups. However, their work or achievements are not being mentioned in environmental studies classes. From the website of the Environmental Protection Agency, most lesson plans and teacher guides are about climate change, ecosystems, air, water, waste, recycling, or energy. For environmental education, the distinction between science and

humanities is very clear; Environmental classes still focus on things regarding environmentalism, but the issue of environmental racism is ignored or isn't addressed enough. The topic of environmental justice might only be taught in some social studies courses or classes in higher education institutions. There is a lack of intersectionality currently in environmental science classes in K-12 education.

Discussion

Through this qualitative study, my mind about environmental education has been reshaped. I recognized there are some root causes explaining why many Asian students are not involved in sustainability or environmental justice education. Cultural recognition is an integral part of environmental education and Asian Americans' contribution should not be marginalized. Asian Americans have been painted as quiet, apolitical, and submissive groups for a long time. We learn very little about Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) activism and agitation for change. After interviewing three Asian American environmental activists, I find that there is little about Asian or Asian Americans' struggle, resistance or activism from textbooks. If textbooks and curriculum do not show all people's history or struggles, how can students feel belonging and connection to engage in our environmental movements? The "model minority myth" truly exists in some places or groups of people, but this kind of positive stereotype should not erase Asian Americans' revolutionary spirit and ability. People do not have enough consciousness of AAPI oppression or AAPI resistance. As Kenneth and Jacob said, San Francisco has a meaningful and long history and deep roots of struggles for environmental and racial justice, including by Asian Americans. Asian American activists embrace their identity or culture as a source of power and turn this kind of power into concrete action. We need a platform

in the school to show their activism, and environmental education can illustrate multicultural contributions and development.

Recommendations

Arts-based Pedagogy

By the end of the interview, I asked for recommendations of bringing Asian Americans' environmental activism to our K-12 students. Pam answered that she likes to use art and photographs that have the young people to interpret what they see and know. Art and design can engender a more thorough and straightforward understanding of scientific knowledge; moreover, art and design have the potential to improve public engagement and communication (Tosca, 2019). If we want to have classes of environmental education about environmental justice and Asian Americans' activism for the social justice movement, having arts-based methods is a good option to consider for teaching and learning.

Ethnic Studies

In chapter 2 of *The Intersectional Environmentalist*, Thomas (2022) mentioned the American civil rights movement is not only about racial equality but also included environmental equality (p.48). We do not need to object to the environmental strategies of mainstream education, but we cannot blindly pursue it as the only true way. Trying to assimilate into environmental education under neoliberalism makes it difficult for us to honor the legacy from our own ancestors. Ethnic Studies is important for environmental education, especially education for environmental justice, because it focuses on different racial groups' resistance, struggles and activism (Cuauhtin, Zavala, Sleeter & Au, 2019). Without Ethnic Studies, people would not have enough consciousness of Asian Americans' oppressed history or the resistance from Asian Americans. Environmental justice education could intersect with Ethnic Studies because they

have deep connections to each other. Racial justice and environmental justice are tied to each other and also bound by the system of neoliberalism and global capitalism. And Jacob also recommended that educators empower students and educate them about environmental justice. Jacob said:” It's good to start talking about justice early on and show the effect of climate change. Such as climate change doesn't affect everyone equally, and it's not caused equally by everyone. And talking about the situation of marginalized communities and wealthy countries, and so on.”

San Francisco Unified School District is the first one that is trying to implement a History or Social-Science Core Curriculum and Pedagogy rooted in Ethnic Studies, and Ethnic Studies may develop and expand meaningful relationships between land and people. On the other hand, the purpose of environmental justice education is to dismantle systems of oppression and have fair treatment to all people and the planet. These goals illustrate that there is an intersection of Environmental Justice Education and Ethnic Studies, and the overlapping area is the racial justice movement. Based on the framework of Ethnic Studies, environmental educators could teach environmental justice through first-person stories, experiences, and knowledge from Black, Indigenous and people of color.

In summary, Ethnic Studies could have a deep connection to intersectional environmentalism and help to develop a wider lens to environmental justice education. Environmental education has infinite possibilities. For educators, intersectional environmentalism provides an opportunity to rethink environmental justice education, and might be the best option into classroom education to make students have more belonging to engage into our movement.

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