



Defining Environmental Justice

An Introduction

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What is environmental justice?

"Environmental justice embraces the principle that all people and communities have a right to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws and regulations."

- **Robert Bullard,**
"Father of Environmental Justice"

"The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." - **US EPA**

"Environmental injustice can be seen as an affront to peoples' capacities to experience themselves in the world as having responsibilities for the upkeep, or continuance, of their societies."

- **Kyle Powys Whyte, Potawatomi scholar**

Why do definitions matter, and why are there so many?

Language has power:

- How a problem is framed changes **priorities**
- Definitions determine what the **policy options** are (1)
- Policy language influences legal landscape

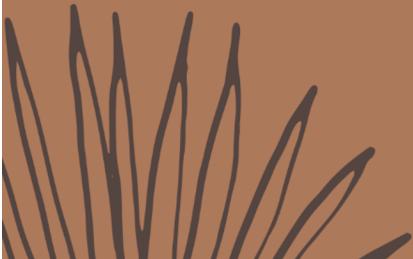
...and social movements are often expansive enough to hold many definitions of justice concurrently (2)

(1) Schattschneider, E.E. (1975). *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

(2) Schlosberg, D. (2007). *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature*. Oxford University Press.

**What does
environmental justice
mean to you?**

**Where have you
encountered definitions
of environmental
justice before?**



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Defining EJ in Practice