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### Examining Race in America: Environment

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# Examining Race in America: Environment



While, environmental racism seems like vague concept, concrete examples are scattered all around like debris at a construction site. [Governors State University](#) Professor [Joseph Day](#) cites these:

*\*A lead-laden water pipe supply in Flint, Mich. that left thousands of children exposed to the deadly dangers of lead and other toxins in 2014.*

*\*A Chicago Public Housing project on Chicago's far southeast side, surrounded by landfills and other toxic sites– the largest concentration of hazardous waste sites in the country. Residents, who experienced the highest rates of cancer in the city, nicknamed their neighborhood "toxic donut."*

*\*A predominately Mexican-American Chicago neighborhood where residents suffer the highest rates of asthma, obesity, teen birth, and poor mental-health compared to the rest of the city.*

Environmental racism has emerged from the shadows over the last three decades because more and more communities of color were discovered in sinkholes of toxicity. A 2018 study by the EPA's National Center for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) found people of color are more likely to live near polluters such as industrial plants,

highways, and landfills. The study also found that people who live near these sites breathe air polluted by particulate matter, solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air.

Exposure to particles can affect both the lungs and heart, creating premature heart problems, asthma and other lung related issues.

Dr. [Day](#) says environmental racism reflects a value judgement against African Americans, who as enslaved persons were counted as “three-fifths of a free individual,” according to Article one, section two of the U.S. Constitution.

“If I don’t respect you as a human and I have power, why would I care about the quality of water you drink or the kind of air you breathe?” Day asked. “At the end of the day, it’s about resources. In Flint, it was cheaper for them to switch the water source and not the pipe that carried it.”

Click [here](#) and watch Dr. Joseph Day describe the children who inspired him to study community health trends.

Visit "[Examining Race in America](#)" to view the full multimedia series.

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