SHAPED BY CHEVRON:

RACE, RESPONSIBILITY, AND RESISTANCE IN RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

A Dissertation Presented

By

Mia Renauld

To

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Richmond, California is known both for the Chevron Richmond oil refinery – one of the largest and oldest in the country – and for housing some of the most progressive politics in the country. A long history of environmental justice activism has culminated in Richmond becoming a Climate Justice Alliance Our Power pilot city for a just transition and germinated the Richmond Progressive Alliance, a progressive non-partisan political alliance fighting "Big Oil" on an unprecedented level. Though such a progressive movement has put Richmond on the map, it has also further exacerbated existing tensions within the city between different racial groups and with Chevron Richmond.

This dissertation delves deep into community history to understand how the evolution of corporate community relations practices have shaped regional racial formation, community development, and community organizing in Richmond. By triangulating archival research, oral histories, interviews, and data from participant observation, this dissertation expounds on how place-making and sense of place are shaped by Chevron.

The findings from this dissertation contribute to a range of literatures that focus on issues of environmental and social justice, including sociology, geography, and energy studies, by providing a critical analysis of corporate behaviors and its influence on lived experience and spatial memory. This dissertation argues that corporations play an active role in constituting local racial hierarchies, community development, and community organizing through three distinctive stages of corporate community relations. Moreover, it challenges common conceptions about environmental and social justice organizing by exploring the various ways that these practices further divide the very communities they seek to bring together. This dissertation provides critical research on life with oil to expound on understudied impacts of industrial polluters.

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It takes a village to raise a child and Rome wasn't built in a day. Using poetic license, I mash these two axioms together for a remix to elaborate that it took a village of people to nurture me as I cultivated this dissertation over the course of five years. And, that being said, I could not have accomplished all that I have during my stints as a PhD student and PhD candidate without the tremendous patience, guidance, and support from a slew of people. And, even saying that, I don't even know where to beginning.

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INTRODUCTION

Early in the evening on August 6th, 2012, residents of Richmond and North Richmond were shocked by the sound of two loud explosions. From their porches and front lawns, they could see a large tower of tar-black smoke billowing across the sky from the vast vibrant fires at the Chevron Richmond oil refinery. Though a shelter-in-place was issued, over 15,000 residents were hospitalized for various health-related complications like respiratory ailments. Following the fire, Chevron Richmond plead no contest to six misdemeanor criminal charges for violations of labor, health, and safety standards and accepted three and half years of criminal probation, $1.28 million in fines, and more than $720,000 in restitution payments to three different agencies (Fraley and Rogers 2013). Two years later at a ceremony commemorating the incident hosted by the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition, a resident exclaimed: "While the explosions were horrifying and sickening, literally, it also did good. It woke a lot of people up! There is now a growing awakening."[1] The 2012 industrial accident, caused by a diesel leak and inadequate maintenance, is just one example in a long history of corporate negligence and violations, including the 1989, 1999, and 2012 explosions and fires, that has catalyzed the residents' resistance to the 113-year-old oil refinery.[2] Catastrophes like these and routine daily exposure to environmental hazards have become the "new normal" (Perrow 2011) that disproportionately impact low income and communities of color. In Richmond and North Richmond, 79% of people within one mile of the refinery are people of color and over 25% are below the national poverty line (Lopez et al. 2009).

It is not industrial accidents alone that generate residents' concern, but acute daily emissions and exposure, including hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), from the facility are what

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[1] Field Notes, August 6th, 2014: Our Power Convening, Candlelight Vigil Commemoration Ceremony.
[2] The refinery was 113-years-old at the time of the commencement ceremony.

residents attribute to the area's health disparities. Such worry about environmental exposure is not unfounded as Chevron Richmond, the oldest and largest oil refinery on the West Coast, is the largest greenhouse gas emitter in California. The refinery processes 245,300 barrels of light, sour crude daily and releases about 575,669 pounds of emissions with known respiratory and neurological effects annually (Doan 2014; Kay and Katz 2012). Air monitoring studies conducted in Richmond verify emissions and exposures, including some of the highest levels of vanadium and nickel in the state and particulate matter levels that exceed California's annual ambient air quality standard (Brody et al. 2009; Brown et al. 2012). It is the exposure to these emissions that residents attribute their disproportionate rates asthma (highest in the state), lung cancer (most common and deadly cancer county in the county), and other acute health problems associated with industrial pollutants like headaches, nose and throat irritation, and nausea (McKetney and Brunner 2008; Lerner 2005; Lopez et al. 2009).

While residents recognize the fire to be a tremendous disaster and acknowledge these health disparities as being emblematic of an environmental justice community, the politically-active residents at the 2014 commemoration ceremony and who are involved with the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition, particularly the Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA), root these local matters within a larger crisis of "petro-capitalism," the modern corporate industrial form of capitalism that depends on the extraction, circulation, and consumption of petroleum (Huber 2017; Sawyer 2001; Watts 2004). Because of the linkages between energy usage, development, and global power, petro-capitalism highlights how integral energy and all its production processes are for capitalism to operate. Consequently, petro-capitalism intensifies climate change in addition to gross social and ecological inequalities that are inherent to petro-capital's profitable operations (Altvater 2007; Klein 2014; Newell and Paterson 2010). This

recent spurring of social movement activism in Richmond, expanded by the 2012 explosions and fires at the facility, has, in and of itself, generated a number of contradictions and tensions within the Richmond area as long-term residents struggle for basic amenities and rights, including making rent and being able to access and afford groceries.

This dissertation seriously considers such a history of living with one of the largest and oldest oil refineries in the country, managed by one of the most profitable corporations in California and the world (McIntyre and Frolich 2015; Gensler 2016). Specifically, this dissertation scrutinizes the community history of Richmond and North Richmond as a means to highlight the various ways that Chevron Richmond is embedded in the community's social, political, and economic spheres, and, therefore, actively involved in shaping community and economic development. The century-long investigative span stresses how community perceptions of and activism against the company and the company's own actions have transformed, culminating in a contemporary "glocal," simultaneously local and global, (Anguelovski and Alier 2014; Köhler and Wissen 2003; Moyersoen 2010) climate justice movement seeking to reclaim autonomy over local governance while combating global climate injustice. By tracing the evolution of corporate community relations between the Chevron Richmond oil refinery and the surrounding area, this dissertation examines how corporate practices effect racial formation, community and economic development, and community organizing that have compounded over time and culminated in the contemporary progressive climate justice movement. The analytical focus of this dissertation is centered on processes that ultimately come to define various components of life: the processes of corporate community relations, the processes of racial formation (the way in which individuals and communities negotiate their racial identities through their own actions and the actions of others), and the

processes of community organizing and mobilization. Together, these questions are centered around reconceptualizing social justice in terms of petro-capitalism as multi-scalar activism around the globe has called to do just that like the 2014 and 2017 People's Climate Marches (Giacomini and Turner 2015).

This chapter will proceed with an introduction to the theoretical landscape in which this dissertation is situated before delving into the specific questions that this dissertation explores. Understanding the theoretical gaps this dissertation aims to address, I will then elaborate further on my research questions before providing a description of the remaining chapters that highlight the investigations into those questions.

RETHINKING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TERMS OF PETRO-CAPITALISM

This dissertation is situated in the intersection of overlapping political economic literatures from sociology, geography, critical race theory, and energy studies that explore the implications and ramifications of a system of global capitalism predicated upon multiple dimensions of exploitation of people of color, namely racism in all its forms, in the pursuit of petro-profits above all else. The expansion of global petro-capital enterprises after World War II and the rise of America's mission for energy independence after the 1970s oil crisis serve as the juncture point across these political economic literatures on issues around social justice, particularly civil rights and environmental justice. While these diverse literatures explore social justice from different vantage points, their focus on the effects of global capitalism, I argue, should be re-oriented around global petro-capitalism to highlight the structural and systemic dominance that oil companies have on politics, economics, social stratification, and ecological wellbeing.

Contemporary theoretical lineages are situated within the Anthropocene, the current geographical epoch defined by the dominant influence human activity has had on the climate and the environment. Scholars point to the Industrial Revolution as the origin of not only ecological crises, but also of modern industrial society. Consequently, academics have been challenging the concept of the Anthropocene with alternative theories like "capitalocene" (Moore 2017, Moore 2018), "fossil (fuel) capitalism" (Malm 2016, Altvater 2007), "carbon capitalism" (Di Muzio 2015), "climate capitalism"(Newell and Paterson 2010, Lovins and Cohen 2011, Sapinski 2015), and "petro-capitalism" (Sawyer 2001, Watts 2004b, Barrett and Worden 2012, Huber 2009) that directly link carbon-centric development, energy use, and capital accumulation with globalizing processes that have exacerbated social, economic, political, and ecological inequalities, including climate change. While the Industrial Revolution set the foundations, it was the Second Industrial Revolution, or the Technological Revolution, at the turn of the 19th century that solidified an energy-based economy complemented by petro-chemical mass manufactured goods that represents the modern form of capitalism that scholars have been investigating. It is this particular modality of capitalism, predicated upon petro-capital production, that scholars attribute the origins of climate change and, in response to such an ecological crisis, "the first instance of societies collectively seeking a dramatic transformation of the entire global economy" (Newell and Paterson 2010: 1).

Central to petro-capitalism is oil. Oil itself is "the primary commodity underpinning modern economic expansion and a fundamental ontological construct shaping social and political life in the United States and beyond" (Barrett and Worden 2012: 269), and, therefore, is not merely just a material object, but a set of social relations (Harvey 1973, Huber 2011). These relations are inherently racialized as racial subjugation has been the most successful strategy for

petro-capital accumulation, because nonwhite populations bear the burden of negative externalities, labor exploitation, and stratification across the board. In fact, natural resources, specifically oil, are "used and abused to support racial hegemony and domination and have been at the core of this process [of racial subjugation] for a half millennium" (Pellow 2007: 50). The proliferation and expansion of colonial and American oil firms and their global investments ascribe to a norm of white supremacy based on the legacy of practices from early mining booms and market formation in the American West and Southwest (Vitalis 2002). It is this understanding that contemporaneous scholars and social movement activists are calling for a reconstitution of racism itself. Scholars and activists argue that the material sources and structural foundation of racializing processes and systems of oppression of people of color by white Europeans and Americans are situated in the natural world (Pellow 2007). It is, therefore, petro-capitalism that drives the gross inequities that are bolstered by racial privilege to unequal claims to social and ecological resources from jobs, citizenship, political power, education, and housing (Barlow 2003).

These contemporary critical climate justice movements and the corresponding scholarship can be considered "social movement spillover" (Meyer and Whittier 1994) from and "movement fusion" (Cole and Foster 2000) between the civil rights, environmental, environmental health and justice social movements that have grown and adapted over the decades. The political paradigm shift in academic inquiries, particularly in urban and environmental sociology, germinated during the rise and ramifications of global petro-capitalism post-World War II. In the 1960s and 1970s, both environmental and urban sociology experienced paradigm shifts to political ecology and political economy, respectively, that overlapped in their explorations of inequality and political conflict to explain how global capitalism is implicated in

spatial and social and ecological stratification. While both disciplines employed Marxist and other conflict analyses, environmental sociology expanded urban sociology's conception of industrial capitalism to incorporate the ways in which the environment, extraction, and exposure were integral to its success and the contradictions therein. Contemporaneously, I argue that there has been a shift to critical, interdisciplinary scholarship, including critical environmental justice, race theory, geography, and energy studies, that is centered in a time of petro-capitalism crises as social inequities are exorbitantly extortionate and climate change have pushed the planet and its population to the brink. Therefore, petro-capitalism is and should be considered the basis of coexisting social movements and scholarship.

Political ecology and political economy mirror each other in many regards, which should be no surprise as a large portion of environmental sociology is situated in the urban context. The focus on cities elucidates the power such a setting has in developing alternative practices and resistance against hegemonic projects that generate enviro-social change (Harvey 2000; Swyngedouw and Heynen 2003). Both are neo-Marxist approaches that focus on the deleterious effects of capitalism and modernity on social well-being, but political ecology also incorporates the nexus of social and ecological well-being (O'Connor 1988; Foster 1999). These approaches demonstrate how the increased separation between production, consumption, and intensified labor specialization have compounded social inequality and how uneven development – intent on maximizing profit from the production, circulation, and consumption of petro-capital – is inherent to capitalism (Castells 1979; Smith 1986; Smith 2008, Harvey 1996).

Because urban sociology's treatment is largely structurally economically deterministic and emphasizes class dynamics (Logan and Molotch 1987; Walton 1993), it tends to overlook how race and the environment – in terms of natural resources – are crucial components to the

successful function of capitalism. Moreover, such emphasis on abstracted theories of capital-state relations overlooks the structural mechanisms utilized by undemocratic and elite-controlled organizations, institutions, and networks to maintain control over capital accumulation, including the ways in which corporations themselves intervene in policy-making processes (Domhoff 1990; Downey 2015). Other theorists, particularly environmental justice scholars, have built on these political economic/ecology theories in order to give due weight to the role, mechanisms, and processes of power and governance that extend and escalate both social and environmental inequality.

EJ scholarship recognizes that the externalities of capital production are unequally experienced as low income and communities of color, due to social location and geographical proximity, bear the burden of environmental hazards and exposure in their everyday life and environments (Pellow and Brulle 2005; Schlosberg 2009). This body of literature posits that distributive inequality stems from the intersections of global capitalism and the institutionalization of racialized, classed, and gendered attitudes and beliefs about the values of different lives and lived environments (Heynen 2003; Holifield et al. 2009; O'Rourke and Connolly 2003; Osofsky et al. 2012; Pellow 2006). EJ scholars demonstrate how the political economy of place shapes distributions of people and pollution and ultimately gives rise to environmental inequality through historical patterns including industrial development and racialized labor markets, suburbanization and segregation, and economic restructuring (Brown 1995; Morello-Frosch 2002; Schlosberg 2009; Szasz and Meuser 2000). While the literature focuses predominantly on these forces that perpetuate racial segregation – the physical and geographic isolation of populations based on race and ethnicity – this dissertation explores how

these forces and processes contribute to racial formation – the individual and community racial identity and how it impacts one's relation to space.

While these encompassing definitions explicate the intersectional and multiple axes of oppression that drive enviro-social inequalities, the roots of EJ are centered on environmental racism. Environmental racism emphasizes how historic marginalization of African Americans, Latinos, and Asians has produced racialized geographies where polluting industries, including oil and gas, are concentrated, both deliberately and through other socio-economic factors of oppression (Bullard 1993, 2000; Pulido 2000; Szasz and Meuser 1997, 2000). Decades-long debates on the salience of race or socioeconomic status as the driving factor of EJ issues have shown that race is the strongest indicator, but studies explicate that facilities are located in areas where communities lack political power, education, and community organizing (Bullard et al. 2007). These more nuanced factors, that impact both low income and communities of color, shifted movement focus from environmental racism to the "master frame," a broad collective action frame for which "activists identify problems and assign blame and causality" (Taylor 2000: 514), of environmental justice that is considered more elastic and inclusive (Benford 2005) to the multiple dimensions of discrimination that generate inequities.

EJ scholars have also expanded critical analyses of structural and systemic forces. EJ scholars demonstrate how the polluter-industrial complex – an extensive network of globalized corporate industrial elites and political allies – have continued to expand the neoliberal policies of the 1980s to dismantle the welfare state, remove liberal environmental policies and health and safety standards, and many other barriers to corporate profit (Faber 2008; Downey 2015). Moreover, these scholars explicate how "sacrifice zones" – areas designated by petro-capitalists for disproportionate health and economic sacrifices by low-income and communities of color for

the benefit of affluent populations and petro-profits – of varying scales are created in the process to ensure production and circulation of capital can continue, like the Louisiana petro-chemical corridor and East Bay refinery corridor, where this dissertation is situated (Lerner 2010). This macro-level EJ literature is attuned to the weight natural resource industries play in intensifying the processes that perpetuate inequality through theories like "resource curse," also known as the paradox of plenty, that argues natural resource nations typically experience low levels of democracy, economic growth, and development outcomes (Ross 2001; Ross 2015). These analyses focus on the ways in which the political-economic structure is arranged for the benefit of corporate industries.

Central to all explorations and explanations of EJ is the lack of procedural justice for affected communities and citizens to participate in decision-making processes. This has started to change as effective EJ organizing across the United States over the past two decades has not only resulted in the creation of state- and federal-level policies, but has also developed new patterns of interaction between the state, corporations, and EJ organizations (Pellow 2001). Increases in more democratic processes, like stakeholder engagement, have lead scholars and activists to shift their conceptions of justice as more forms of injustice emerged in these participatory settings. While there might be a "promise of participatory equity" when people are granted a "place at the table," scholars have contended that for procedural justice to be realized, participation needs to be inclusive and representative so that negotiations occur when all parties are *recognized* (Schlosberg 2004, 2007). Recognition, therefore, not only highlights the diversity of needs in need of being addressed, but is vital for distributive justice (redistributing goods, bads, resources) and procedural justice (just and equitable participation) (Banerjee 2014; Sen 1981; Fraser 1998; Young 1990).

After President Clinton's 1994 Executive Order, federal and state governmental agencies have implemented environmental justice plans and EJ language have entered into corporate social responsibility. With the increasing institutionalization of EJ, a managerial framing has emerged that scholars and activists consider problematic in both conceptualization and implementation (Block and Whitehead 1999; Holifield 2004, 2012). For example, a number of scholars have demonstrated how countermovement actors in the state and industry have coopted EJ by reframing its definition in policies as a means to gut EJ policy design and implementation (Harrison 2015; Holifield 2012; Liévanos 2012). Scholars argue that this has driven mainstream environmental organizations and the state to rely on "undemocratic market-based and individualized mechanisms of change that obscure the structural causes of environmental inequalities, let industry off the hook, and fail to redistribute power over decision-making" (Harrison 2015: 242). Consequently, EJ activism against the polluter-industrial complex has failed to halt the ecological crisis that prior theories and movements had cautioned about.

While scholars and activists agree that this is in large part due to the sheer power of corporate industrialists, some scholars have criticized the EJ movement and EJ scholarship itself. Some scholars have expressed concern that because environmental justice theory emerged in tandem and in service of a specific social movement, the literature has been too limited and instrumental in its scope (Swyngedouw and Heynen 2003). Initial activism and statistical studies centered on distributive claims to analyze patterns of bias and discriminatory concentrations due to how environmental law places the burden on affected communities to prove intent (Brown 1995; Mohai and Bryant 1992), resulting in a long lineage of too narrow a focus on proximity and distribution of technological pollution, waste, and risk (Walker 2009). Moreover, by framing solutions primarily in terms of distributive justice, the movement may be placing too much faith

in the efficacy of using extant legislative and judicial systems to remedy problems (Adamson 2007). EJ groups have been successful at halting some siting decisions because of this distributive justice lineage, but efforts focused on contamination cases and other issues at existing facilities are consistently less successful since "corporate actors and industrial operations are more firmly entrenched in the community and supported by allies and policy at all levels of government" (Adamson 2007: 1261). Understanding such entrenchment and its nuances at more micro-levels are crucial to expanding EJ literature.

Pellow and Brulle (2005) note that while the EJ movement may have had significant influence within wider environmental and academic communities, progressive movements and academics have had to confront the harsh reality that the political and economic structures on which the US operates have not been significantly altered with regard to ecological protection and social justice. Consequently, scholars have criticized that the literature and movement for being too celebratory and uncritical, for lacking a coherent national or international EJ movement; for having an insufficient understanding of procedural justice, and for having an inadequate approach for addressing and challenging such a powerful system (Faber 2008; Pellow and Brulle 2005). There remains a lack of focus and attention on democratic justice, leading scholars in a new wave of theory to develop more substantive forms of justice, a more critical environmental justice, and movement for transformative environmental politics that could challenge and cripple the polluter-industrial complex that reinforces petro-capitalism's control over global society (Faber and McCarthy 2001; Pellow 2012).

Since the EJ movement has yet to succeed in generating meaningful transformative change, there has been an emergence of critical environmental justice (Pellow and Brulle 2005; Pellow 2016), coupled with energy justice (Sovacool 2014; Jenkins et al. 2016) and climate

justice (CJ) (Parks and Roberts 2010; Dunlap and Brulle 2015), that seeks to achieve just that. Critical EJ is a self-reflexive examination of the EJ movement and literature that not only re-evaluates the movement's tactics, strategies, discursive frames, organization structure, and resource base, but also explores both successes and failures of political power and rhetorical strategies and practices (Pellow and Brulle 2005). At such a critical moment for human and ecological health, a global climate justice movement driven by environmental and social justice "movement fusion" (Cole and Foster 2000) has shifted scholarship and activism concerned with public policy to mitigate risk to include cultural components that highlight issues of ideology and representation to galvanize grassroots actions for transformative socio-environmental change to overturn petro-capitalism (Pellow 2007; Ciplet et al. 2015).

Climate change has given risen to multi-scalar, multi-issue climate justice movements and corresponding multi-disciplinary scholarships that address the aforementioned shortfalls of environmental justice (Caniglia et al. 2015; Rosewarne et al. 2015). Climate injustice, an extension of EJ, theorizes that low income and communities and countries of color bear the brunt of climate disruption with economic, ecological, and health burdens, though they contribute less to the issue (Bullard and Wright 2012; Roberts and Parks 2007). Since frames are not static or given, but the result of active and continual redefinition and reformation, it is clear to see the evolution of EJ to climate justice as social movement framing manifests through the interactive relationship between activism, corporate practices, and governmental processes (Benford 2005). Moreover, the 'cognitive schemata' used to make sense of situations, attribute blame and identify causes, prescribe solutions, and motivate participation are also ongoing processes of production and reproduction, in this case, influenced by mounting enviro-social crises (Goffman 1974). Just as environmental racism adjusted to environmental justice, environmental justice has advanced

to climate justice as EJ scholars have deemed energy, specifically petro-capitalism, the new frontline in EJ resistance and action (Sze and London 2008).

Critical scholars view the undemocratic control of private capital – namely petro-capital – over the state and the public as the root problem of the crisis. Based on principles of social justice, democratic accountability and participation, and ecological sustainability, academics and activists assert that policies must reinforce and derive from participatory democracy to affect the causes, not just the symptoms, through community action, planning, and organizing (Shutkin 2000). Moreover, many academics and activists recognize that environmental and climate justice are just not symptoms of existing injustice, but also as necessary conditions for achieving social justice and, as such, contend that fundamental social and environmental change will only be realized through transformative environmental politics (Faber and McCarthy 2003), new forms of grassroots political organizing, more democratic governance, and more progressive social policy (Walker 2009; Rutherford and Coutard 2014; Holland 2017).

At the local level, communities are dealing with immediate consequences of climate change while experiencing issues of injustices in everyday life (Bulkey et al. 2014; Aldrich 2012). Consequently, cities are increasingly characterized as important sites of political, economic, cultural, and environmental transformation because the city scale is large enough for government to have meaningful power, yet small enough for democratic governance processes to be successful for citizens to affectively negotiate with petro-capitalists (Dahl 1967; Brenner 2004; Feinstein 2000, 2010). It, then, is no surprise that grassroots organizing for social and environmental justice has largely been centered on the city scale and scholarship in various disciplines have developed overlapping theories on just cities and transitions. For example, the Climate Justice Alliance – a collaborative of over 35 community-based and movement support

organizations – launched the Our Power Campaign to develop city-level models of grassroots

solutions for just transitions, a structural and systemic reconfiguration of technology,

infrastructure, policy, scientific knowledge, and social and cultural practices toward a sustainable

and equitable system (Newell and Mulvaney 2013; Geels 2002, 2005). In 2013, Richmond,

California became a pilot project site to challenge Chevron and to galvanize residents to generate

the start of just transition, a local sustainable, economically justice economy.

The right of citizens to produce the spaces they live in harkens back to the beginning of

urban political economy when scholars like Harvey (1973), Lefebvre (1996), and Purcell (2003)

argued that creating alternative modes of production, consumption, and distribution would

enable citizens to reduce uneven development and reorganize the class structure through citizens'

right to the city, the right to both use the city and to participate in its social and political

production. Its proponents expound on the limitations of the prior concentration on distributive

justice and expand procedural justice to include acknowledgement of difference and active

recognition (Young 1990, 2000; Fraser 1997, 2000). Concept such as the "good city" emphasize

the relationship between justice, responsibility, and the built environment and how this should be

achieved through "good" governance, one that is well-functioning, inclusive, responsive,

transparent, and participatory (Harvey 1992, 1996; Merrifield and Swyngedouw 1997;

Friedmann 2000). Pushing even further, the concept of the "just city" garnered theoretical

developments around transformative governance to explicate how strengthening feelings of

solidarity and mobilizing civil society can effectively motivate a broad base of citizens to

overcome social divisions and push for more progressive politics (Fainstein 2000, 2010; Marcuse

2009; Connolly and Steil 2011). Similarly, EJ scholars highlight procedural and participative

injustice, caused by affected populations having low representation in governing bodies, little

access to power and decision-making, and being affected by exclusionary processes that deny these populations the ability to effectively participate (Camacho 1998; Ikeme 2003; Shrader-Frechette 2002). Critical EJ scholars promote the theory of ecological democracy, an alternative democratic model that incorporates interested and affected citizens into environmental decision-making and that does not systematically and spatially concentrate negative externalities, that corresponds with the right to the city (Agyeman and Angus 2003; Mitchell 2006; Faber 1998). This proliferation in residents' reclamation of local governance permeates across disciplines in a hopeful, celebratory light, but as such movement efforts have been realized, it is imperative that scholars critically investigate the positive and negative impacts of such endeavors.

Moreover, collective organizing has been successful at local, state, and national levels over the past decade, leading to new patterns of interactions between the state, corporations, and social movement actors (Pellow 2001). At the national level, scholars indicate that access to decision-making processes has increased (Schlosberg 1999), but others demonstrate that inclusivity does not translate into comprehensive participation (Guana 1998). This issue is the same at the local level where proximity to polluting industry correlates with the intensity of mobilization against its operations (Cole and Foster 2001). In more recent years with the rise of climate justice organizing though, we see even more adaptations to accommodate demands for democratic participation. Little research has been done to investigate how increased public participation has influenced the relationship between the public, the state, and the firm and what implications this shift has on decision-making itself. There is a need for research to explore the novel mechanisms and processes that corporations and industry develop to adapt to democratic demands, while attempting to maintain their dominance in decision-making. This dissertation aims to do just that.

THE RESEARCH

This dissertation traces the evolution of corporate community relations between the Chevron Richmond oil refinery and the city of Richmond and unincorporated North Richmond to understand how corporate practices effect racial formation, community and economic development, and community organizing. I investigate how corporate social responsibility has developed in response to and in tandem with community history, thereby providing a thorough evaluation of the evolution of a company town. This emphasis on shifting corporate behavior and social movement responses is important because it seeks to uncover what is lost in current analyses that oversimplify corporate-stakeholder interactions and that tend paint environmental justice communities as a collective monolith. Moreover, this dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of progressive grassroots organizing seeking a just transition, a burgeoning field with contemporaneous policy implications and as this project provides an investigation into how CSR and community organizing frames, discourse, and rhetoric dialectically influence each other and the resulting material, social, political, and economic implications.

This dissertation utilizes the convergence of theories on stratification in sociology, geography, and critical racial theory to demonstrate how academic inquiry of the ramifications of global capitalism as we know it and study it today should be understood in the context of *petro-capitalism*. While these literatures survey the structural impacts and effects of racism on people of color in the United States, scholarship on racism still lacks in its examination of the totality of ways in which environmental and natural resource extraction and destruction is embedded in institutional racism (Pellow 2007). This dissertation helps resolve that deficiency by analyzing how petro-capitalists, specifically Chevron, are directly involved with regional racial formation

by influencing community development through processes including hiring practices and spearheading redevelopment projects.

Additionally, this dissertation explores the social movement activism that has emerged in such a setting and in a response to these corporate practices. While focus on the successes and failures of social movement activism is crucial, the actions, practices, and changing processes for corporations and industries have remained overlooked and understudied. It is vital that studies moving forward incorporate the narratives used by corporate industrial elites, especially in oil, because of the iterative process of their creation and because of the way they challenge or inhibit social movement organizing. As researchers, we must work to understand how corporations and industry are adapting to the rise of democratic actions that challenge them and to investigate the ways in which new forms of democratic processes either remain circumscribed by corporate industrial power or affectively alter the power structure.

A defining characteristic of petro-production sites around the United States and the globe is their location in severely destitute communities (Swistun and Auyero 2009; Appel 2012a, 2012b). Consequently, the paradox that an oil giant actively would contribute to the development of a socially- and ecologically- just transition away from fossil fuels has become an emerging trend in the industry. This dissertation explores the processes and implications of the shifting nature of a company town, focusing on the co-constitutive relationship between Chevron Richmond and community organizing that "simultaneously reflect[s], reinforce[s], and transform[s] existing institutional and governance arrangements" by investigating the "consensual or conflictual relationships between different actors and the unequal distribution of power within and among social groups and interests" (Rutherford and Coutard 2014: 1369). Moreover, it inspects dynamics that emerge between and across social movement organizations

and the contradictions that manifest when a progressive political composed of social movement actors reclaim local governance structures.

Therefore, this dissertation traces the genealogy of the refinery and the city in order to 1) uncover the evolution of entanglements between the state, firm, and community that emerge through corporate community relations, 2) how these entanglements influence race relations, community development, and community organizing, and 3) how corporate social responsibility, including stakeholder engagement, and community resistance have resulted in effectively integrating Chevron Richmond in achieving a just transition.

This research contributes to the theoretical gaps and oversights mentioned in the theoretical overview above. By deciphering the dialectical relationship between the corporation and the community, this dissertation contributes to both celebratory and critical environmental justice literature, in addition to urban sociology, by exploring the possibilities and contradictions tied up in corporate social responsibility. This dissertation will also add to the sociology of race and ethnicity and critical geography by exploring the ways in which a company influences regional racial formation and community and economic development. Moreover, environmental sociology, geography, and energy studies have been investigating the burgeoning movements for a just transition, so this dissertation will help expand those fields understandings of how such an action unfolds and the contradictions and issues that emerge through such a process.

I draw upon multiple bodies of social scientific research related to environmental justice, urban sociology, racial formation and race relations, corporate-community relations, and energy studies to explicate the evolution of this company town and the ramifications that have emerged throughout time. This multi-method, multi-disciplinary approach will interrogate the complexities of oil relations that emerge and evolve through entrenched and entangled socio-

spatial landscapes. And, while there exists the simultaneity of different "scale politics" (Smith 1992) in which petro-capitalists operate, this dissertation focuses on the local level to highlight the lived experiences and spatial memories of the everyday life that are often left out of political economic investigations at larger scales to understand how the company is entangled with "the politics of space and the spatialization of politics" (Roy 2011) and "the racialization of space and the spatialization of race" (Lipsitz 2007).

METHODS

Overview

This study employs a qualitative multi-method research design for a critical ethnography extended case study (Burawoy 1991; Madison 2005). Urban ethnography and participant observation in the summers of 2014, 2015, and 2017 enabled me to immerse myself into the community, gain trust and rapport, and document daily lived experience and power dynamics (Bernard 2011; Duneier et al. 2014). Building on this prior research, I collected various materials, including archival research, interviews and oral histories, and participant observation. The mix of these qualitative methods produced rich, detailed data that uncovered meanings, processes, and mechanisms that served as the foundation of my dissertation inquiries (Goodwin and Horowitz 2002). While earlier and mainstream research have been known to silence members of oppressed and marginalized groups (Rossman and Rallis 2003), this research is designed to highlight those voices and experiences through critical and phenomenological approaches (Delgado 1989; Marshall and Rossman 2011). The data collected includes oral histories/personal narratives, semi-structured interviews, and risk and resource mapping in addition to extensive field notes from ethnographic participation taken over three different months-long field visits to allow for a unique ability to include temporality in analysis. Not only

unique, but this temporal approach will also highlight differences seen throughout the years as corporate campaigns were either active – like the 2014 local election and the Chevron Modernization Project – and more passive. This data was triangulated with archival research, existing survey data, and content analysis of publicly available secondary data, including public records, news archives, government documents, Chevron promotional materials, and corporate, community, and government websites.

Temporality

Since I had a background of community organizing with some of the stakeholders at the field site, I developed a research design I hoped would ensure that data was guiding the theoretical framework and findings. Such an interactive approach enabled data and theory to inform each other in order to refine the research questions and cultivate strong research findings. As such, I started data collection with broad and open questions so that the data itself would drive the direction and scope of the research around the issues most pertinent to the research participants. Ultimately, I decided to do research in three phases.

The first, an exploratory phase, assessed the social landscape of Richmond during a hot-bed of corporate community tensions, including the 2014 $1 billion Chevron Richmond Modernization Project and the time leading up to a mid-term election in which Chevron spent over $3 million dollars, something unheard of at the local level. The second, a strategic phase, followed up on with the fall-out from the mid-term election and project approval and investigated the beginning stages of the roll-out of the $90 million community benefits agreement that was an amendment to the Modernization Project. The third, a tactical phase, delved deep into the questions and concerns that emerged from refinement from the prior two phases and ensured that a more representative sample was collected during a time when active

corporate social responsibility campaigns weren't being executed other than their typical standard practices.

This multi-phase approach not only improved the dissertation project because it allowed for a temporal dimension to be added to the analysis, but because it also permitted effective refinement of the research questions while overcoming hiccups in the research process. While the exploratory phase aimed to explore the rise in social capital and political capability for residents and how this has contributed to Chevron's involvement with the just transition, the final rounds of data collection demonstrated the rise in community tensions and a growing distrust of the city's progressive organizing. This shift in the research questions occurred because research conducted during the exploratory phase revealed that residents and even local politicians were not cognizant of the just transition movement. Consequently, as the research questions shifted, they became more critical and analytical of the burgeoning progressive movement in the city and its impacts on residents. Conducting field work in three stages also helped to gauge community perceptions and activism over time, not just during the heat of a historical permitting decision, thus enabling a better representation of how activism plays out in the everyday life of Richmond residents.

Another issue that emerged during the exploratory phase off fieldwork was community perception and relationship with my gatekeeper, Henry Clark. My prior work experience at Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice connected me with Henry since he was a board member. Given that he led some of the initial environmental justice fights in Richmond in the 1980s, Henry and I believed that he would be a good help to connecting me with research participants, especially key informants involved in movement organizing. This changed once I got to the field site and started engaging with residents, community organizers and activists, and

local government officials, as people responded with discontent when I mentioned Henry's name. Ultimately, this issue became a large component of the research project and provided insight into tensions that emerged in the city, given the area's regional racial formation and presence of multi-scalar and extralocal environmental justice organizations.

Data Collection

Data collection was completed in 3 installments that informed each other: summer 2014 (July-August), summer 2015 (June-August), and summer 2017 (June-August). The data completed during these three field visits include archival research at the Richmond Museum of History and the following qualitative data: 14 key informant interviews, 25 interviews with residents – 19 of which were extended with oral histories with those who were born-and-raised or long term residents, and risk and resource mapping[3] in addition to over 200 hours of participant observation of community events and meetings, including city council and commission meetings; North Richmond Advisory Council meetings; toxic tours with residents, community organizations, and California Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. EPA representatives; the Our Power Campaign Richmond National Convening; and key community events that Chevron sponsors like Juneteenth Festival and the North Richmond Music Festival. Key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, and oral histories had purposive, representative sampling that showcase the diversity of perspectives on these issues (Marshall and Rossman 2011).

The first group of qualitative data collection is key informant interviews with Chevron representatives and employees, community organizers and non-profit organization workers, and

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[3] While risk and resource mapping ended during the second phase of field work, the data gathered was utilized and incorporated into the coding process and into the analysis for the dissertation. There were a number of consistencies across the risk maps. These consistencies were often brought up in interviews and personal narratives with residents regardless of the risk mapping exercise.

local government officials. While I had aimed to interview at least 5 Chevron representatives and employees, the company itself reached out to me after I contacted individual employees to inform me that employees are not allowed to speak on behalf of the company. Instead, Chevron Richmond provided me with a single statement. Additionally, I spoke with a former employee and a consultant for Chevron Richmond, both of whom were born-and-raised in Richmond. I interviewed 5 community organizers and non-profit workers and 6 local government officials. The purpose of these interviews is to gain a deep understanding of the current dynamics between Chevron Richmond and the city of Richmond and North Richmond and their perspectives on the frames, discourse, and rhetoric used by all parties. I recruited these key informants at events where I was conducting participant observation and extended with snowball sampling to ensure that key stakeholders were interviewed. These key informants have a particular knowledge and understanding of community relations due to their direct involvement in negotiation, therefore providing insight into how community and corporate campaigns are developed and executed.

These one-to-two-hour interviews focused on questions pertaining to community issues and corporate community relations between the refinery, Richmond and North Richmond, and community organizations and questions included topics such as negotiation processes, tactics and strategies, and narratives and discourse. Preliminary findings from these key informant interviews served to refine and inform my interview guide for residents who were not necessarily directly involved with corporate community relations, but who were directly impacted.

Table 1: Purposive Sampling and Research Participant Distribution

Purposive Sampling and Research Participant Distribution			
Key Informant Interviews**	Chevron Representatives and Employees (n=1)	Community Organizers and NPO Workers (n=5)	Government Officials (n=6)
	(n=12)		
Semi-Structured Interviews**	Black Residents (n=9)	White Residents (n=7)	Asian Residents (n=4)	Hispanic/Latino Residents (n=9)
	(n=25)		
total: n= 37			
Oral Histories	Black Residents (n=12)	White Residents (n=5)	Hispanic/Latino Residents (n=2)
	(n=19)		
** Residents who were born and raised in Richmond or North Richmond completed oral histories that were conducted in conjunction with interviews to ensure that historical and contemporary histories were covered.			

The second step of data collection was conducting interviews and oral histories with a representative sample of 25 Richmond and North Richmond residents. Residents were recruited from participant observation at key community events and through snowball sampling. I interviewed individuals representing diverse perspectives from different ages, socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, gender, and duration of time living in Richmond. Interviewing residents across these axes enabled me to explore the impact of each axis and the intersectional impact on residents (Crenshaw 1991). The purpose of these interviews was to understand the positive and negative impacts of Chevron Richmond from the perspective of residents who may or may not be active in local politics where corporate community relations are often hashed out. These one-to-two-hour interviews focused on community interactions between residents, the refinery, and local government and covered topics such as environmental risk perception and political engagement.

To gain a more historical understanding of the relationship between Chevron Richmond and surrounding communities in Richmond and North Richmond, I collected oral histories with 19 of those residents who were born and raised in Richmond, specifically seeking resident elders. These oral histories/personal narratives were collected in tandem with interviews, but before interview questions were asked. This method helped decipher the three stages of community relations – company town, company bought town, and circumscribed collaboration company town – that emerged during pilot research data analysis. While the semi-structured interviews with residents were guided by pre-determined questions, oral histories were open-ended with little to no prompts so that research participants could reflect in their own preferred order on their relationship with the community and city's relationship with Chevron Richmond. Such an approach gathers temporal data to explore changes over time, but also unearths what events, issues, and concerns are more important to the research participant and links larger issues related to the oil refinery with individual lived experiences.

Each interview and oral history was audio-recorded if the participant consented and then later transcribed verbatim. The interviews with key informants and residents took place in various locations throughout Richmond and North Richmond. I allowed the research participants to choose where and when would be best for them. I recorded research notes during interviews and personal narratives in addition to composing memos following each. Research participants were not compensated for their time as they elected to voluntarily participate with this understanding.

Consent documents were signed after reviewing them verbally, including a discussion about using their real names. This option was only available after participants who wanted their voice heard and their stories told about their movement efforts and concerns about Chevron

demanded that they use their names. The IRB amendment was approved after conversations with the board about residents' rights to have their story shared, rights to refuse pseudonyms that are used to protect research participants' anonymity, and the rights to have their stories documented and shared. Participants who didn't want to use their name or did not care either way were assigned pseudonyms randomly or by self-election. Throughout this dissertation, those participants who used pseudonyms will be donated with an asterisk (*).

In addition to consent, I initially started asking residents how best they wanted the data from the study to be prepared and utilized. Many participants, especially a number of those politically active, had asked for a documentary to be made about the workings of the growing progressive movement in conjunction with environmental health and justice issues that have impacted the community for over a century. Though I did not have the resources to make a video documentary, the city has received lots of mass media coverage because of the 2014 election – that is covered in more depth in chapter 5. Additionally, "glocal" climate justice organizations highlight Richmond through their work and media due to the city being a pilot model for the Climate Justice Alliance's campaigns for just transition, especially in the United States.

This dissertation project originally also sought to visualize and map data in innovative ways to highlight residents' voices and experiences. I asked the aforementioned research participants if they would like to participate in either or both risk and resource mapping and a photovoice project. I kept these optional due to lack of compensation for participants for their time. I ultimately dropped the photovoice project altogether because of the amount already being asked of research participants. For the mapping exercise, I asked participants to draw a socio-spatial map of their community atop a printed GIS buffered map, but I dropped this after the first two field visits because of time limitations and the amount already asked of participants. Risk

was defined here as "exposure to potentially unfavorable circumstances, or the possibility of incurring nontrivial loss" (Smith et al. 2000: 1946), and resources were defined as physical and conceptual items that provide beneficial services, support, or sustenance. I continued with only an oral technique of risk and resource mapping with 19 participants through a two-stage system of ordinal rankings where respondents first identify risks or resources as prompted by open-ended and non-leading questions and then rank them in order of importance (Quinn et al. 2003; Lu et al. 2014). Risk and resource maps can be compared for different groupings (e.g., age, gender, economic sectors) and can be used to connect perceptions to actions. In the end, the oral exercise more or less echoed what pilot study participants had recorded on the GIS buffered map. While the dissertation project lost the components of data visualization, the concerted effort to collect rich qualitative data was fruitful.

Analysis and Reflexivity

Once interviews, oral histories, and verbal risk mapping were completed, I transcribed the recordings verbatim and added in research notes that provided an additional qualitative richness. For example, I included descriptions of the research participant's home, their body language, and neighborhood context. This extended case study tests theories that have too long neglected racial formation and, thereby, aimed to expose the dynamics, tensions, and differences that emerge in such a context. Coding highlighted the uniformities and diversities in the data and enabled me to develop abstract concepts to account for the differences (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Lofland and Lofland 1995; Bernard 2011). Analytic induction was also used for content analysis of secondary documents and archival research – both of which verified what was uncovered

during oral histories and interviews, pieced together missing pieces of the story, explored things that were not covered, and filled in the gaps of people's memories. This inductive coding process generated parent and child themes (or codes and subcodes) that composed a codebook for the analysis of all data (Snow et al. 2003). The data was analyzed using the qualitative software Dedoose by attaching codes and sub-codes to the text for which they applied. Sometimes, multiple codes were attached to the same text. Throughout the coding process, I revisited and re-evaluated previously coded data to validate that the coding remained consistent. There were codes and sub-codes that differed between different stakeholders, but there were also codes that overlapped. Moreover, I will be coded respondents to explore how the axes of race, gender, and distance from the refinery affect perceptions of the various issues covered. This inductive coding process highlighted and refined themes and patterns which drove the second round of inductive coding of all the highlighted excerpts from the data.

It is also important to note that reflexivity and positionality played an important role throughout the research process. Differences in power relations and my own personal biography, including race, gender, educational and occupational status, among others, were especially important for me to recognize, acknowledge, and reflect upon throughout all aspects of this research (Stacey 1988; Freshwater and Rolfe 2001). As a middle-class, white, female graduate student, I aimed to be reflexive about my privilege – especially white privilege – and my own narratives while conducting fieldwork and maintained a critically reflective research journal throughout the research process (Faria and Mollett 2014; Ortlipp 2008). This journal complements research memos that were completed after data collection and participant observation and throughout analysis.

This self-reflection also extends to the data itself. The data itself is protected by IRB to protect the participants of the study. While few participants asked for a documentary to be made to share these lived experiences, most did not ask for the data to be shared beyond the dissertation itself. Circulation of these stories and findings through publication won't occur beyond this dissertation itself, but the coverage of Richmond's transition is being well-documented with a collection of books written by people involved in the movement (Early 2017; McLaughlin 2017), multiple social movement websites[4], major news outlets[5], and Facebook[6]. One resident works at a local community college and has asked me to help her host a workshop on racial formation in Richmond and to help with the tensions that currently permeate Richmond, some of which will be covered in chapter 3. We have been in contact since I will be living in the Bay Area.

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[4] Including organizations like the Climate Justice Alliance (https://climatejusticealliance.org/) and the California Environmental Justice Coalition (https://cejcoalition.org/).

[55] Including the New York Times, Jacobin, National Public Radio (NPR), The Nation, Medium, Grist, Dissent.

[6] Facebook is used by the city, Chevron, social movements, and residents, each broadcasting their perspective on the key themes covered in this dissertation.

Table 2: Research Design

Research Design				
Research Questions	**Data Sources**	**Data Analysis Focus**	**Data Analysis Method**	**Data Analysis Outcome**
1) The evolution of entanglements between the state, firm, & community that emerge through corporate community relations	A) Archival data from the Richmond Museum of History	Corporate language, strategies, and tactics presented in corporate materials to compare with newspaper clippings reporting on those corporate practices and community and government responses	Using Dedoose software to code for parent and child themes and for variables of race, gender, and distance from refinery	Characterize the three time periods of community relations: 1) company town, 2) company-bought town, and 3) collaborative-company town
	B) Contemporary Chevron materials* including newsletters	Corporate language, strategies, and tactics emphasized in materials to be used to compare with qualitative interviews with residents and key informants		
	C) Oral histories with long time residents and interviews with key informants	Long-term residents and key community organizers and government officials (past and present) responses about attitudes, perceptions, and access to goods and resources		
2) How these entanglements influence race relations, community development, & community organizing	A) Archival data from the Richmond Museum of History	Corporate language, strategies, and tactics presented in corporate materials to compare with newspaper clippings reporting on those corporate practices and community and government responses	Using Dedoose software to code for parent and child themes and for variables of race, gender, and distance from refinery	Characterize how regional racial formation, community development, and community organizing shifted in each time period to understand affects of that period's CSR
	B) Contemporary Chevron materials* including newsletters	Corporate language, strategies, and tactics emphasized in materials to be used to compare with qualitative interviews with residents and key informants		
	C) Oral histories and interviews	Long-term residents and key community organizers and government officials (past and present) responses about attitudes, perceptions, and access to goods and resources		
	D) Ethnographic Field Notes from Participant Observation	Field note about the interactions and exchanges between government, community, organizers, and Chevron Richmond in meetings and other community events		
3) How CSR tactics and community resistance have resulted in effectively integrating Chevron Richmond in achieving a fossil-free future	A) Contemporary Chevron materials* including newsletters	Corporate language, strategies, and tactics emphasized in materials to be used to compare with qualitative interviews with residents and key informants	Using Dedoose software to code for parent and child themes and for variables of race, gender, and distance from refinery	Characterize the contemporary company town formation and explicate emergent forms of democratic negotiation that have lead to starting a just transition
	B) Oral histories and Interviews	Long-term residents and key community organizers and government officials (past and present) responses about attitudes, perceptions, and access to goods and resources		
	C) Ethnographic Field Notes from Participant Observation	Field note about the interactions and exchanges between government, community, organizers, and Chevron Richmond in meetings and other community events		
*Chevron Richmond has increased its accountability through newsletters and websites that highlight their practices – both facility processes and corporate social responsibility.				

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Chapter 1: "Exploited, Excluded, Expunged:" Cumulative Sedimentary Racial Formation

Chapter 3 introduces the community history of Richmond and North Richmond in relation to the Chevron Richmond oil refinery to explore how the uneven racialized landscape of the area was codified by actions carried out by Chevron. Focusing on the racialization of space and the spatialization of race (Lipsitz 2007, 2011), this chapter argues that corporations like Chevron Richmond have an active hand in perpetuating racial divisions and isolation because of their active involvement with community and economic development. Moreover, this chapter specifically argues that the area of North Richmond, the predominantly African American unincorporated area that shares its borders with the refinery, is an intentional "internal colony" whose population has been "exploited, excluded, and expunged"[7] from political participation and from community and economic development. Together, this chapter demonstrates how the corporation is active in shaping both community development and regional racial formation.

Chapter 2: Localized Stages of Petro-Capitalism

Chapter 4 focuses on the shifts in corporate community relations. I argue that there are three localized stages of corporate community relations: 1) the company town, 2) the company-bought town, and 3) the circumscribed-collaboration town. The first stage is emblematic of the experiences of many other company towns for which a seeming harmony exists between the company and community as employment at the firm enables residents to live the American Dream. The second stage is marked by the introduction of corporate social responsibility strategies in which the firm becomes actively involved in assisting community and economic development by changing employment practices, intervening in education, and commencing

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[7] Fieldnote from Richmond Museum of History lecture entitled, "World War I, Resistance, and the New Negro in California."

copious amounts of spending and sponsorship in community affairs. The third stage is defined by increased opportunities for democratic engagement and participation between the firm, residents, and local government in addition to an immense increase in corporate social responsibility strategies. By understanding how these stages emerged, I argue that Chevron employs corporate community relations strategies that adapt to changing tides of community acceptance of the firm, which has led to a dialectical process in which the firm responses to the community and vice versa.

Chapter 3: Transition Management vs. the Status Quo: A White Privilege Duo

Chapter 5 explores how the long standing corporate capture of local government by Chevron has been challenged by social movement actors seeking to reclaim autonomy over decision-making that influences where they live, work, and play. The first half of the chapter focuses on the political landscape of Richmond during the circumscribed collaboration phase of corporate community relations to understand how Chevron Richmond has changed its corporate strategies for political influence and the rise of the Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA), a coalition of concerned residents and community organizations seeking to reclaim political control. The second half of the chapter highlights the tensions, dynamics, and contradictions that have emerged in the political landscape in the third stage of localized petro-capitalism. Chevron's "dirty tactics" and insular good ol' boy network are highlighted as they are also part of the reason for the rise in transformative environmental politics. Community critiques of the Richmond Progressive Alliance are then explored to emphasize the contradictions and tensions that emerge when extra-local actors and newer residents led local movement and political efforts. This investigation into the political landscape of Richmond demonstrates that it remains an elite

white space as Chevron's corporate influence continues and the RPA's dominance reflects white progressive ideologies.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Chapter 6 recap the three major findings of this study that were elucidated on in chapters three through five before discussing the significance of this dissertation and its broader impacts. This chapter also discusses the implications this dissertation has for theory, highlighting some key theoretical contributions, and for practice, focusing on environmental justice organizing and academic work on these matters.

CHAPTER 1

"Exploited, Excluded, and Expunged:"
Cumulative Sedimentary Racial Formation in Richmond

Introduction

>*"Richmond is unique because it is a very, very diverse city."*
>*– Marvin Willis, Richmond city councilmember[8]*

Richmond, a minority-majority city located within a minority-majority state, has

undergone many transformations, from an agricultural outpost to an industrial powerhouse to the

homicide capital of the United States to a progressive hotspot. The one thing that has remained

consistent throughout Richmond's history is its diversity. It is this diversity throughout time,

mixed in with one of the nation's largest and oldest oil refineries, that a unique regional racial

hierarchy and consequential political activism has emerged and put Richmond on the map.

This chapter explores how racialized petro-capitalism has produced a racialized

landscape in which African Americans have been "exploited, excluded, and expunged"[9] from

political participation and, therefore, from community and economic development. While racial

formation in Richmond follows patterns typical in producing a racialized landscape in the United

States, the role that Chevron played in localized racial formation is unique due to interventions

the company took in community development that amplifies the segregation patterns consistent

in the literature. This chapter argues that corporations like Chevron Richmond have an active

hand in perpetuating racial divisions and isolation because of companies' direct involvement

have in community and economic development.

This in-depth exploration of community history traces the ways in which racialized petro-

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[8] Interview and personal narrative with Marvin Willis. July 14th, 2017.
[9] Fieldnote from Richmond Museum History lecture entitled, "World War I, Resistance and the New Negro in California."

capitalism operates on the ground through overt practices that serve to segregate, subjugate, and subdue non-white populations to ensure maximum profit for petro-capitalist elites. It is with this detailing of the political economic growth and development of place that I argue that North. This chapter also explores the various ways in which segregation and racial privilege have been bolstered by Chevron's actions and practices. Together, this chapter illustrates the compounded, sedimentary history of racial formation in Richmond and the role that Chevron played in cultivating such stratification.

Theoretical Framework

By employing literature from subfields in sociology with those in critical geography and critical race theory, this chapter highlights community history to examine how regional racial hierarchy in Richmond has shifted over time. Moreover, this chapter considers how tensions between different groups ebb and flow with changes in access to goods and resources, paying particular attention to the role that Chevron Richmond plays in community and economic development. Urban and race theory have largely looked at the impacts that industries have on the spatialized racial and class patterns across the cityscape and the impacts that such distributions have on everyday life and the life course, but the direct intervention that companies themselves can have on the surrounding communities has largely been overlooked. The interdisciplinary analytical approach applied in this chapter aims to address this gap by investigating the various ways Chevron Richmond has shaped both Richmond and North Richmond, thereby impacting racial formation both directly and indirectly.

Racial stratification is a fixture of societies around the globe and a prominent feature of the United States that has had profound impacts on the lives and bodies of people of color, especially as these racial formation processes are amplified at the local level (Wolfe 2016;

Cheng 2013b, 2013c). Sociologists have long explained that white Americans intentionally and systematically oppress non-whites through racial stereotypes, images, ideas, emotions, and practices in order to maintain their supremacy, wealth, and privilege (Feagin 2000; Omi and Winant 1994; Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2004). The material and physical consequences of systemic racism have been greatly explored by urban sociologists who often integrate historical explanations, comparative studies, socioeconomic processes, spatial relations, race and ethnicity and community, and social and political movements to explicate the structural explanations for urban inequities (Walton 1993). As such, many scholars have demonstrated the covert and overt forms of racism such as steering, redlining, and covenants that have produced racialized landscapes across the United States, segregating and isolating people of color from whites, resources, employment, goods, services, and adequate housing (Drake and Cayton 1945; Wilson 1987, 1996; Massey and Denton 1993; Lipsitz 2007). Moreover, regional racial hierarchies emerge from the specificity of these local histories, which consequently shift and shape relations and further redistribute access to goods, resources, and power (Barraclough 2009, 2011; Cheng 2013c). Often overlooked in these formation processes are the roles that local companies, especially large-scale industrial polluters, play in such dynamics.

The separate environs in which these marginalized populations live are also plagued by environmental hazards, often due to the concentration of polluting industries in these racialized spaces. The environmental justice (EJ) movement itself emerged out of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950-60s and the environmental movement that started in the 1960s-70s and combines the interests of humans and their surrounding environment by demonstrating how the effects of neglect, abuse, and exploitation harm both (Di Chiro 1996; Pellow and Brulle 2005; Schlosberg 2009). Environmental justice scholarship recognizes that externalities of capital

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production are unequally experienced as low income and communities of color, due to social location and geographical proximity, often bear the burden of environmental hazards and exposure in their everyday life and environments (Brown 1995; Pellow 2006). The degree of environmental harm and exposure, in addition to corresponding social stressors, are so extreme that low income and communities of color have a disparate health status in comparison to other groups (Morello-Frosch et al. 2002). Moreover, procedural and participative injustices, such as having low representation in governing bodies, little access to power and decision-making, and exclusionary processes actively deny these populations the ability to effectively participate in governance and politics (Camacho 1998; Ikeme 2003; Shrader-Frechette 2002, 2007). Taken together, environmental justice recognizes that socially vulnerable populations are fighting for social, distributive, procedural, and participatory justice and recognizes communities' abilities to make their own decisions about where they live, work, and play (Bullard 1990; Cutter 2012; Novotny 1995).

While these literatures demonstrate how these factors unfolded in cities across the United States, Richmond's beginnings as a company town separates itself from the pack and corresponds to other extractive and manufacturing company towns and regions like Detroit, Michigan or the Appalachian region of West Virginia. Company towns, unlike other industrial cities where social segregation was developed through a mixed-bag of socio-economic pressures, had the ability to impose ghettos from early in their development through deliberate company policies of residential and employment segregation (Porteous 1970). When understanding this framework through the lens of petro-capitalism in the United States, company towns like Richmond are demonstrative of internal colonialism or domestic colonialism (Du Bois 1899, 1903; Clark 1965; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Blauner 1969; Allen 1969).

Atop the systematic subordination of African Americans, Latinxs, and Asian Americans through policies and practices of various social institutions are those exerted by petro-capitalist firms in the communities in which they are situated to ensure said distinctions remain solid. Such corporate processes heighten persistent resident segregation (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Bullard 2001, 2007; Charles 2003), significant educational inequality (Bullard 2007; Cole and Foster 2001), systematic economic subjugation (Oliver and Shapiro 1995; Rugh et al. 2015; Sampson and Sharkey 2008; Sharkey 2013), and absolute health disparities (Brulle and Pellow 2006; Morello-Frosch and Shenassa 2006; Morello-Frosch and Lopez 2006). Consequently, these internal colonies for petro-captial production are deliberate sites of exploitation in which residents and the local ecosystem are sacrifice zones for the beneficiaries of petro-profits (Bullard 1996; Lerner 2010; Sze 2006). This petro-produced systematic inequality therefore produces comprehensive underdevelopment to a higher degree than other (post)industrial counterparts as an intentional process to diminish resistance against and regulation of the petro-captialist corporation.

A Tale of Two Cities

Richmond grew from a rural, sparsely populated agricultural outpost into a heavy industrial area rather rapidly. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad terminal station set Richmond's foundation, including the construction of the oil refinery before the city itself was founded in 1905.

After Standard Oil had purchased the Pacific Coast Oil Company in 1900, the company commenced "a campaign of expansion in every phase of the oil industry," based on its vertical integration (Standard Oil Bulletin 1929: 3). The company had purchased 118 acres in Richmond

Figure 1: Poverty and asthma rates by census tract in Richmond.

Poverty and Asthma by Census Tract in Richmond
in relation to the Chevron Richmond refinery
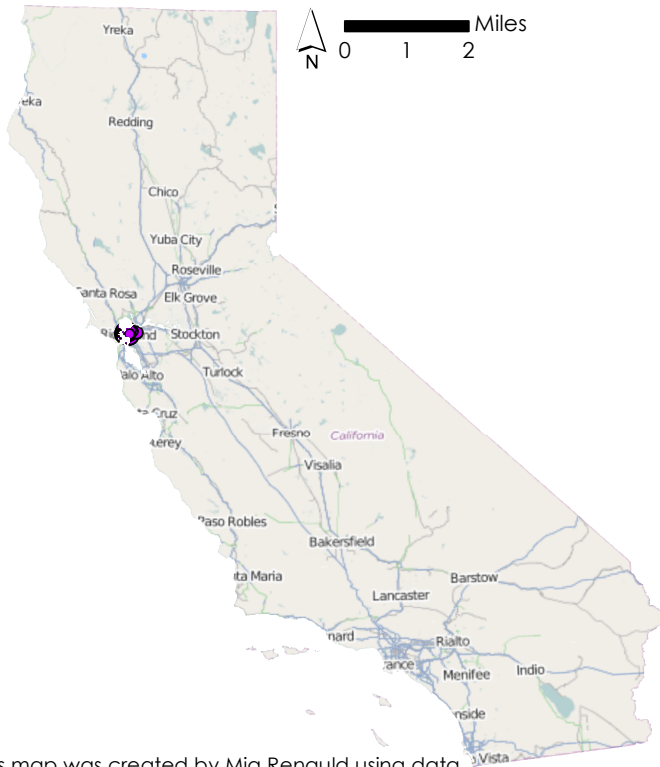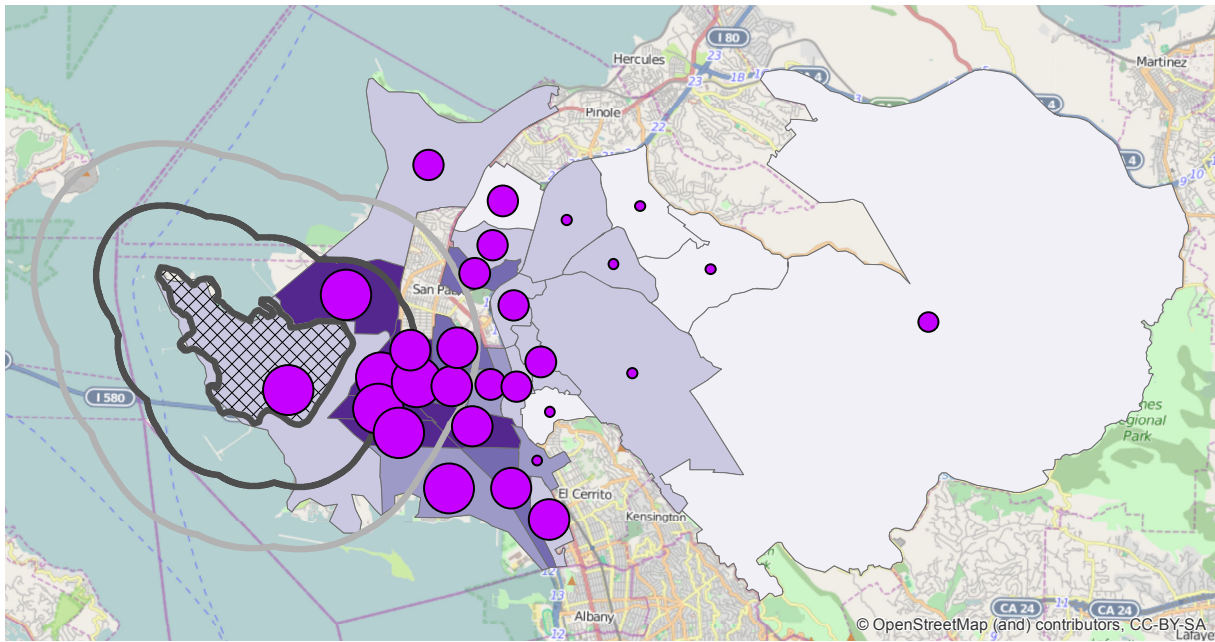
Miles
0   1   2
N

1 Mile Buffer

2 Mile Buffer

Chevron Richmond

Poverty

Percent of population living below two times the federal poverty level

Less than 16%

17% - 28%

29% - 35%

36% - 45%

More than 46%

Asthma

Rate of emergency department visits for asthma per 10,000 residents

41 - 51

52 - 62

63 - 83

84 - 114

115 - 121

This map was created by Mia Renauld using data from the US Census, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and Open Street Map

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on September 14th, 1901, but soon after purchased an additional 1,750 acres of surrounding

filled marsh, tidelands, hills, and flatland. Refinery construction broke ground on October 28th,

1901 and was completed and in operation by July 3rd, 1902. A new pipeline constructed to connect the facility to burgeoning oil extraction in California's Central Valley began delivering oil on July 18th, 1903, prompting the development of a 164-acre storage site called San Pablo Tank Farm on more acquired land in the northern part of the city.

Industrial activity flourished after the completion of the refinery, prompting the city's incorporation in 1905 with a population of 2,105. Once incorporated, more industries began locating in the city including Winehaven, Pullman Palace Car Shops, American Radiator, Standard Sanitary Company, Stauffer Chemical Company, and, eventually the Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant and Kaiser Shipyards. The city's steady growth continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s, leading to the emergence of a downtown where businesses and retailers thrived.

By 1940, Richmond's population had reached 23,600. One percent of these residents, or 270 persons, were African Americans who were almost all relegated to a four-block area in the northern part of the city (Rogers 2011). Though their residences were spatially segregated, the area experienced a multi-cultural quality where Italians, Portuguese, African American, and all other residents mingled freely (Moore 2000). Scholars often attribute this prewar tolerant social climate to the relatively small number of black residents at the time (Moore 2000; Johnson 1996; Drake and Cayton 1945). Richmond as a whole remained a small industrial town until World War II when the area began to undergo massive development due to the influx of immigrants and migrants taking advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the area's industrial sector.

Figure 2: Education and unemployment rates by census tract in Richmond.

Education and Unemployment Rates by Census Tract near Chevron Richmond in California
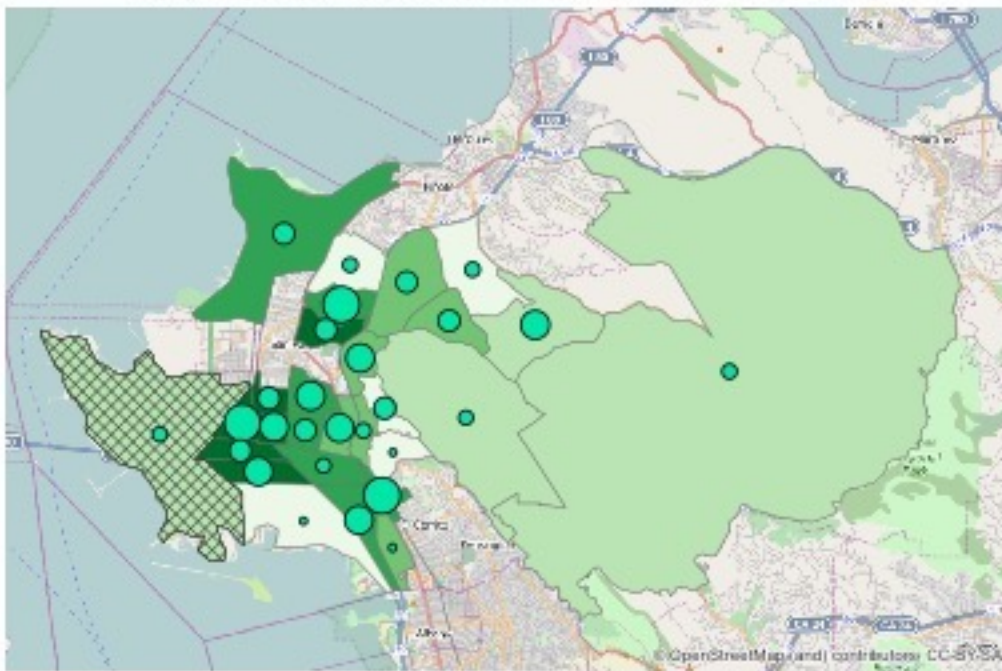
Miles
0   1.25   2.5

Chevron Richmond

Education

	Less than 5%
	6% - 9%
	10% - 16%
	17% - 26%
	More then 27%

Percent of population over 25 with less than a high school education

Unemployment

·	Less than 7%
●	8% - 10%
●	11% - 12%
●	13% - 15%
●	More than 16%

Percent of the population over the age of 16 that is unemployed and eligible for the labor force

This map was created by Mia Renauld using data from US Census Bureau, Open Streen Map, and the California Environmental Protection Agency

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During the war years, the population of Richmond jumped to 50,000 in 1942, 93,776 in 1943, and hit its peak of 110,00 residents in 1946, resulting in transformation of a small industrial town to a bustling city. A good portion of this increase was due to the Second Great Migration. Just as African Americans had massively migrated out of the American South to areas in the Northeast and Midwest in the early 1900s, another wave of African Americans migrated to the American West between the 1940 and 1970 to take advantage of the expanding work opportunities linked to wartime industries as demands for goods to be sent to troops and allies abroad mounted during World War II. This "proletarianization" (Trotter 1985) of the African American workforce provided an improvement in livelihood from racial violence and exclusion from industrial work in the South and, therefore, helped wartime migration assume its own momentum independent from recruiting efforts from the industrial sector (Jones 2007).

Wartime housing shortages in the city, strained city resources, frustrated city officials' attempts to regulate growth and change in the city, and generated resentment from Richmond authorities and prewar whites who feared the influx of unskilled workers would burden county relief rolls and who had, in their eyes, started destroying their neighborhoods and altering established customs. Longtime black residents also harbored hostility as they feared that the privileges and gains they garnered in pre-war years would be lost with the influx of southern black migrants. As such, whites and prior black residents alike perceived these newcomers as ill-educated social transgressors who upset the fragile racial equilibrium of Richmond. Though sociological research like that of the Chicago School have explored the intra-racial conflicts that emerged during the Great Migration, African American migrants during this second wave were moving into urban industrial areas that differed from those who moved to larger, older spatially-defined Black urban communities in the East and Midwest. Moreover, this second wave in the

West spawned segregation at an accelerated rate and in a more solidified fashion than their first wave, Northeast and Midwest counterparts.

While some attribute the staunch segregation of Richmond specifically to the Kaiser Shipyards, the wartime industrial boon at large is responsible due to the ways in which housing shortages were dealt with. A large portion of the immigration is linked to the Kaiser Company, four shipyards that employed 90,000 people, including 18,000 African Americans, at peak production. Though Kaiser provided health plans and hospitals for all its workers, the wartime migrant housing became known as "shipyard ghettos" that confined African Americans to separate and less desirable quarters, creating parallel communities with their own schools, shopping centers, and community facilities (Johnson 1996).

Additionally, the proliferation of public housing projects that swept across urban American in the 1940s and 1950s also took hold in Richmond and North Richmond. The Richmond Housing Authority (RHA) was established in 1941 to serve as the representative body to carry out the Federal Public Housing Administration program for low-income families (Moore 2000). These projects housed over 60% of the city's total population, with Whites comprising about 80% and African Americans about 19% as thousands other remained on extensive waiting lists, looking to the private market and other means for shelter (Moore 2000). In addition to concentrating black residents in projects near the shipyards and railroads and all-white units near downtown, Richmond housing officials also discouraged blacks and whites from interacting socially by maintaining separate activity spaces (Moore 2000).[10] Moreover, the private housing market was plagued with by rapacious landlords, racially-restricted housing covenants, and racist real estate practices that resulted in the concentration of African Americans in North

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[10] Also mentioned by several research participants in their oral histories, including Henry Clark, Robert Evans*, and Brianna Hall*.

Richmond and Iron Triangle (Moore 2000; Taylor 1999; Johnson 1996). This was similar to practices employed and experienced in the Northeast and Midwest during the first Great Migration but heightened by wartime housing erected by the Federal Housing Administration and U.S. Maritime Commission.

Before African Americans were relegated to North Richmond, the area has remained relatively undeveloped due to its isolation from Richmond's industrial uses, which were located farther south and west and because the area was flood-prone due to its low elevation and proximity to creeks. While other areas of Richmond were receiving planning and development, North Richmond grew up haphazardly as no municipal or federal agency would take responsibility for the area to provide it with adequate utilities, garbage collection, lighting, medical facilities, or even sewage and paved roads.[11] Racial discrimination prevented African Americans from securing loans and building permits after they secured lots in North Richmond, resulting in the construction of homes using scrap lumber from the shipyards, violating county building codes and sanitary regulations.[12] In addition to the pollution from the oil refinery, the area served as the dumping ground and industrial waste, and housed the city's landfill, its recycling plant and metal scrap yards. Regardless of the pollution and myriad of other shortcomings, North Richmond served as the only available residential option for African Americans and functioned to harden racial lines and tensions between their community and whites in Richmond.

By the 1950s, it was evident that massive migration into Richmond prompted by World War II resulted in greater housing segregation and racial polarization between Blacks and Whites,

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[11] Mentioned by several research participants in their oral histories, including Henry Clark, Robert Evans*, and Brianna Hall*. Also discussed on the two toxic tours led by Andrés Soto that I attended.
[12] Highlighted in-depth by Robert Evans*, but also discussed by other residents including Henry Clark and Brianna Hall*.

federally sanctioned racial segregation – the physical and geographical separation of populations

based on race and ethnicity – through public housing that impacted postwar neighborhood

patterns, and virulent white racism that functioned to maintain the segregation spawned during

the prior decade (Moore 2000; Taylor 1999; Johnson 1996). Though tensions had mounted

between African Americans who had lived in the area before the war and newcomers during the

beginning of wartime, they banded together to fight against the policies and practices that

promoted housing segregation and employment discrimination (Moore 2000). In fact, newcomer

activism took the lead in forming organizations to combat the racial barriers in the workplace, in

housing, and in other areas of their lives which served to end black racial deference and removed

romanticized notions of prewar relations in order to have a united front against oppression

(Moore 2000).[13]

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[13] Source: archival research of local newspapers, community organizing materials like pamphlets, and documents from non-profits.

Figure 3: Map of Segregated Spaces in Richmond and North Richmond
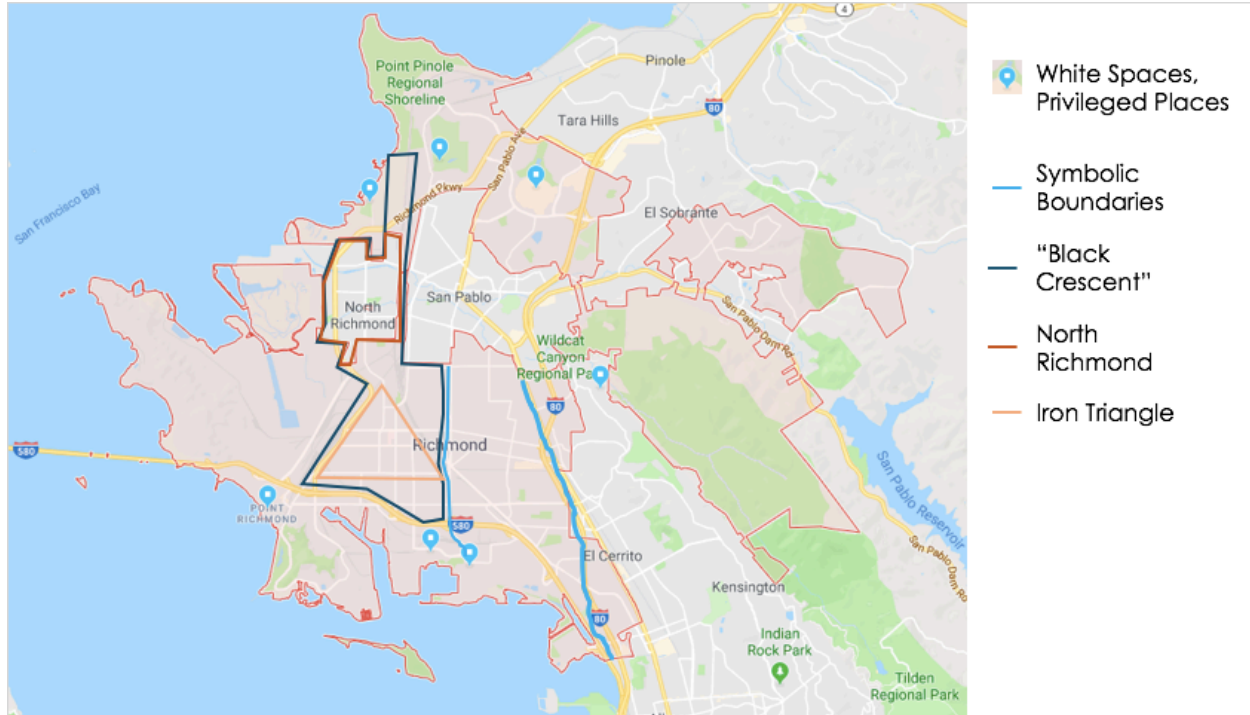
In addition to founding the United Negros of America (UNA), African American

Richmondites formed the Richmond branch of the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People (NAACP), which quickly became the fasted growing NAACP branch on the

West Coast (Moore 2000). [14] The Richmond NAACP branch had the reputation for being a

radical organization that provided a unified front for attacks on California Jim Crow that

ultimately complemented the growing Black Panther movement in the San Francisco and East

Bay areas. [15] In fact, in addition to providing resources to the NAACP to help mobilize African

American residents against issues other than housing and employment discrimination, including

police brutality, the Black Panthers provided self-help care for the North Richmond community –

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[14] Source: archival research of local newspapers, community organizing materials like pamphlets, and documents from non-profits.
[15] Source: archival research of local newspapers, community organizing materials like pamphlets, and documents from non-profits.

including providing breakfast for school children and walking them to school.[16] Other than national and regional groups, African Americans in North Richmond also created their own organizations including the Neighborhood House and the North Richmond Neighborhood Council, which was the first neighborhood council in the San Francisco Bay Area (Rogers 2011).[17] The growing strength of these organizations demonstrated the interest convergence of old-timer and newcomer interests as external pressures of racism and the solidified color line brewed even stronger racial tensions between African Americans and Whites.

Beyond a color line, class divisions were widening in the city and within the African American community. There were no African American middle or professional classes in the city until the 1950s because those who did move to the area moved to other cities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, including Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco (Moore 2000). White flight could not occur to concentrate poverty in North Richmond since there were no whites living there to begin with, but the African Americans who did better economically and held onto postwar industrial jobs longer than others moved out of the community. One such place they moved was Parchester Village, a development built just northeast of North Richmond and imagined to be an integrated suburban community by white developers eager to provide housing for the emerging black middle class (Moore 2000). Regardless of this intention, Parchester Village became solidly African American making it a middle-class, planned version of North Richmond that possessed the infrastructure that North Richmond lacked (Moore 2000). As such, North Richmond and Parchester Village were noticeably demarcated from the rest of the city as African American enclaves, isolated geographically, socially, politically, and economically, but the movement of the growing African American middle-class away from North Richmond

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[16] Discussed by many residents including Henry Clark, Greg Sampson*, and Brianna Hall*.
[17] Source: archival research of local newspapers, community organizing materials like pamphlets, and documents from non-profits. Also discussed by residents including Greg Sampson*, Henry Clark, and Brianna Hall*.

resulted in the concentration of poverty in the community. These growing inequitable conditions in housing, schooling, employment opportunities, and other public services heightened the existing unrest from the war-years, leading a series of race riots in the 1960s.

Two race riots stand out as influencing the future development of Richmond and North Richmond. In the spring of 1966, two-weeks of riots broke out across the city due to a fight between African American, Mexican American, and white students at Richmond High School.[18] These riots mobilized African American residents with community groups that became stronger than the immediate post-war years and resulting in the advancement of black political, economic, and social programs linked to civil rights legislation at the federal level. In 1967, unarmed, 22-year-old construction worker, African American North Richmond resident Denzel Dowell was shot six times and killed by a Martinez police officer in the early hours of the morning.[19] Because the case was rendered a justified homicide, the Black Panther Party organized a street rally and protest against police brutality where 15-armed members of the Black Panthers led demonstrators.[20] This event helped to establish the Black Panthers in the national spotlight to bring awareness to these issues, but the continuation of protests and riots accelerated Richmond's white flight that had already begun in the postwar era, leading to the area's continued decline. The white flight included the movement of the major business anchors of Richmond's downtown to the newly constructed Hilltop Mall on Chevron's former San Pablo Tank Hill so that white business owners could move due to "economic and safety issues," which ultimately lead Richmond's downtown to become "a deserted ghost town" that still exists today, as 83-year old African American Richmond resident Brianna Hall*[21] explained.

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[18] Discussed by multiple residents including Andrés Soto and triangulated with archival research.
[19] Discussed by Andrés Soto and triangulated with archival research.
[20] Discussed by Andrés Soto and triangulated with archival research.
[21] Interview and personal narrative with Brianna Hall* and triangulated with archival research.

Though North Richmond and areas of Richmond had been deemed "ghettos" by the late 1940s (Johnson 1996; Moore 2000; Rogers 2011), the hypersegregation (Massey and Denton 1993) and concentration of poverty transformed the area into projects rife with gangs, crime, drugs, blight by the 1980s, deemed the "Drug War Years." Before long, Richmond had become the homicide capital of the United States with large numbers of their young African American population died in violent gang-related violence.

The deterioration of property and lack of resources and infrastructure was compounded by growing environmental concerns as by the 1990s, as North Richmond's status as the region's dumping ground accelerated. In addition to the landfill and recycling facilities that emerged in the 1940s, private and commercial business all over the Bay Area looked to North Richmond to unload their waste for free because of the lack of sheriff patrols to monitor illegal dumping due to North Richmond's unincorporated status. Furthermore, highly toxic industries, in addition to the oil refinery, surrounded the community, including an ammunitions factory and floral greenhouses that used hazardous herbicides and pesticides. These factors together galvanized North Richmond residents and residents on the borders in Richmond to fight against the hazards they were exposed to and the increasing political disenfranchisement.

Social movement organizing against environmental injustice and Chevron's corporate control over Chevron began in the late 1970s and 1980s with state-level Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and local-level West County Toxics Coalition (WCTC), which were founded to empower low and moderate-income residents to exercise greater control over environmental problems that impact their quality of life and health. In the decades since, CBE and WCTC have advanced coalition building across a broad suite of health, environmental, and social justice organizations in order to bridge and bond movements for a unified force against the

control Chevron still yields over the community. In 2003, a group of activist residents frustrated by Chevron's continued ability to control city politics started the Richmond Progressive Alliance, a non-partisan political organization aimed at envisioning and enacting a better Richmond for all residents. Joining forces, these organizations and more joined together to form the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition that strives to improve environmental, social, and health conditions of residents and have elected Richmond to be a pilot study for transformative change for the national Our Power Movement for climate justice. The growth of multi-scalar environmental justice coalition building and organizing in Richmond has engaged organizations and residents though multiple efforts to increase social capital in order to forge a new path for the city away from corporate capture and towards higher standards for environmental health and safety.

Despite these efforts, Richmond and North Richmond alike are beset by a bad reputation for air, water, and soil pollutants that has diminished investment opportunities, depressed land and housing prices, and served to further cast North Richmond in a negative light. The mounting environmental and health issues, coupled with social, economic, and political disenfranchisement that increasingly plagued North Richmond have created a cycle of pauperization that has reinforced the neglect of the community and its residents today.

Discussion

Spurring and Solidifying Sedimentation

> *"Richmond, it was kind of a window into the nation in terms of how some of our systemic injustices, you know, the poverty and etcetera, manifest themselves, largely because of big corporations that have dominated the scene."[22]*
> – Gayle McLaughlin, two-time Richmond mayor

Sociological inquiries of urbanization and race relations have long demonstrated how racial tensions and racist practices segregated immigrant and migrant workers in industrial cities in the first half of the 20th century. Such inquiries focused on the practices of white residents, realtors, and businessowners in addition to racially motivated policies and practices that policed the color line. While this scholarship demonstrated how racism became embedded in urban landscapes and influenced which populations were excluded from access to resources, development, and political participation, these inquiries largely overlooked the active role that local corporations and industries played in spurring and solidifying such divisions. It is because of the active corporate involvement in city development that residents like Henry Clark believe that "racial issues are American issues. They are everywhere, but they are amplified here."[23]

Standard Spatial Segregation

> *"There are those folks in the flatland and those in the hills."*
> – Marvin Willis, grassroots community organizer and city council member[24]

The brief overview of Richmond and North Richmond demonstrates consistencies with the urban, race and ethnicity, and environmental justice literatures. Spatial divisions in Richmond, predicated upon race *and* class, materialized during the war years when a mass influx of Okie and African American migrants moved to Richmond to seize job opportunities. The division of labor within the factories and industrial facilities were mirrored within the landscape.

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[22] Interview with Gayle McLaughlin. April 16th, 2016.
[23] Personal narrative with Henry Clark. June 23rd, 2014
[24] Interview and personal narrative with Marvin Willis. July 13th, 2017.

As Robert Evans* explains,

> The flatland was where the workers lived. When you started going up the hill [at Point Richmond], you'd have managers, and the top of the hill and the Bay side was where the owners lived. There was stratification back then… Those who controlled the labor pool were the ones who lived there.

This separation of the population based on different sectors of the workforce was also reflected in the housing itself. Residents like Dalisay Reyes* noted how managers and other high-ranking employees lived in large houses along the main boulevards where the company trolley lines ran, hence why the largest houses in Richmond remain to be those in the city center along the main streets. Moreover, housing for low ranking and African Americans were of much lower-quality, whether it be the temporary wartime housing built by the government or the projects constructed by the Federal Housing Authority. North Richmond faced issues greater than those experienced in the city as Robert* elaborated:

> [North Richmond] was the wasteland that no one cared about… people built their own houses out of whatever they could find… there was the dump on Gertrude where developers would drop all the left-over materials and people would just go there to get the things they needed to build their houses.

The out-of-code housing and insufficient infrastructure in North Richmond was compounded when the rains came: "North Richmond had a flood problem. It would flood every year. And you had to have a rowboat to get around," explained Brianna Hall*.[25] These divisions during the war years were stark and immediate as populations quickly settled into the West Coast industrial hub.

This spatial segregation was fossilized from when Standard Oil started developing the Richmond area, resulting in a sedimented history grounded in these first formations regardless of Richmond's minority-majority standing. White areas remained white and became isolated in their own ways. Anthony Armstrong* explains it best, "Point Richmond, Marina, Hilltop, El

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[25] Personal narrative with Brianna Hall.* July 31st, 2014.

Sobrante, and the Annex. They are all wealthier and white."[26] More specifically, Point Richmond,

the historical hill of white industrial elite, is now dubbed the area of white gentrifying

progressives. Such tensions about those in Point Richmond have boiled up again as residents

describe an air of difference from the rest of the city. Davina Thompson* explains that "One

Richmond is really one Richmond, really all together. Point Richmond is the divided area."[27]

Allison Stone* goes so far to say that "people in Point Richmond don't think that they live in

Richmond."[28]

The general geographic difference of the hills and the flatlands has remained, only to be

reified by symbolic barriers. San Pablo Avenue serves as a symbolic barrier because the flatlands

and the hills. Residents like Camila Rodriguez* explain,

> San Pablo is where the rich people live, people, houses that are more, people that are well off, the houses are more expensive, and below here are the poor people. Less education, more gangs. It divides the city. San Pablo Avenue divides the people.[29]

These barriers aren't limited to the hills and the flatlands but exist within the flatlands as well.

23rd Street divides the flatlands from the large white working-class neighborhood of the North

and East from low income communities of color that were constructed around industrial activity.

While some residents like Sylvia White explain they don't go across 23rd Street "because that's

when it starts to get kind of, you know, ugly," others like Elisabeth Caldwell* explain,

> the dividing line in this area between like where you would feel safe walking at night and where you wouldn't which is basically 23rd Street. It's where the neighborhood takes a pretty major shift and like the people on this side of 23rd Street don't really go to the other side of 23rd Street much. I don't go up into North Richmond but that is on the other side of 23rd so I guess that counts as well.[30]

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[26] Personal narrative and interview with Anthony Armstrong*. July 18th, 2017.
[27] Interview and personal narrative with Davina Thompson*. June 19th, 2017.
[28] Interview and personal narrative with Allison Stone*. July 30th, 2014.
[29] Interview with Camila Rodriguez. July 25th, 2014.
[30] Risk mapping exercise with Elisabeth Caldwell* on July 16th, 2014.

While North Richmond had garnered national attention for excessive gang violence and drug wars that unfolded during and after the Drug War Years, connotations of it being a dumping ground have remained since it was first developed. Residents, in turn, have come to internalize this material reality to a psychological one, viewing themselves as the region's discarded garbage (Shabazz 2015).

Splintered by Chevron

These spatial and symbolic boundaries that segregate North Richmond from Richmond and from the most vulnerable populations in Richmond have further been amplified by actions carried out by Chevron Richmond. Concentration of poverty prompted by white flight and the exodus of the black middle class in these neighborhoods was further reified when Chevron Richmond precipitated the move of the downtown business district amidst mounting civil unrest in the 60s and 70s and the drug and gang wars of the 80s. It is during this time, that Davina Thompson* and other residents explain that "the city was redeveloped with money from Chevron and then the city turned into a suburb city."[31] It is this loss of the downtown in Richmond through the workings of Chevron that residents argue was reshaped the city as a whole.

When examining attempts at revitalizing and redeveloping Richmond, we see efforts of diversifying the city's business community away from a heavy concentration of heavy industry. It this diversification that Joe Kinard, chief executive officer of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce stated, "Richmond is no longer going to be a city of smokestacks."[32] The irony cannot be lost when such stories of the city's "successful" diversification that were "ahead of the

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[31] Interview and personal narrative with Davina Thompson*. June 19th, 2017.
[32] Archival research. West County Times article from April 27th, 1989.

trend"[33] are at the hands of the biggest smokestacks in the city, Chevron. Chevron Land and Development Co. is attributed with being "the most prominent example of Richmond's new business diversity"[34] with its 950-acre planned, mixed-community "kingdom"[35] comprised of commercial, office, residential, and light industrial complexes atop its former San Pablo Tanker Hill oil storage facility.

Negotiations around Chevron's development of Hilltop centered on the city government's attempts to implement safeguards for community vitality. The city council questioned "how the taxes and other fees paid by Chevron Land to the city compare with what the city has spent on road work, public safety and other services for the development" as the council believed Chevron was capitalizing on the exploitation of city services and finances, especially as issues over the amount the corporation pays in taxes has been a hotly contested issue over the century[36]. While the Richmond government bodies tried to use this permitting process as a point of leverage to secure provisions and protections for the city, Chevron initially threatened to terminate the project and, thus, putting Richmond's efforts for economic development on the line.

One outcome of these negotiations was the Richmond Parkway, which connects Hilltop Mall with other interstate highways that connect the city to the rest of the Bay Area along the corridor between North Richmond and Chevron Richmond. This expressway was originally dubbed the Richmond Bypass, but was renamed after North Richmond residents felt that the name degraded them even further than the negative connotations of their area already were, especially as tensions continued to boil over North Richmond's continued isolation and

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[33] Archival research. East County Times article from December 4th, 1989.
[34] Archival research. West County Times article from April 27th, 1989.
[35] Archival research. West County Times article from March 9th, 1983.
[36] Archival research. West County Times articles from November 20th, 1985 and December 6th, 1985.

unincorporated status and residents' inability to participate in decision-making processes like this that shape their land and everyday lives.[37]

Many residents continue lamenting over this loss, describing today's downtown as "dead" or a "ghost town." What is often overlooked are the issues around contamination and of the impacts such a move had specifically on businesses of color. While environmental impact reports were mandatory for such construction, residents like Marshall Jennings* convey real concern, "The whole hill is contaminated. People don't even know, and they are planning on building more houses there. We used to call it tank farm hill."[38] This environmental amnesia (Steingraber 2008) of Chevron's facilities removes the company's liability for environmental hazard and harm in this facet of its control and contamination of the landscape. Moreover, the housing projects further concentrated poverty as whites and the black middle class moved to Hilltop. Shenice Williams* explained the changes she experienced as a kid in Richmond's Black middle class,

> Downtown has changed… Hilltop was thriving when I was in high school, junior high… There weren't a lot of Black people in Hilltop. Kids bused to Hilltop from North Richmond but there were economic differences with our own culture.[39]

Consequently, residents argue that this Chevron-sponsored development project was a deliberate attempt to break apart the growing Black mobilization in the city.

There are those who believe that this removal of businesses from the downtown was an intentional move by Chevron to protect the white elite in the city, there are others who either thought Chevron was just capitalizing on the shopping mall phenomena sweeping the nation or who did not realize there Moreover, such applauding of Chevron's capitalization of their own land disregards how this movement pulled away white businesses from the city center and. Once

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[37] Discussed by Henry Clark and Andres Soto on multiple occasions during fieldwork including the Toxic Tour on July 16th, 2014.
[38] Field Notes. City Commissioners Meeting, July 10th, 2014.
[39] Interview and personal narrative with Shenice Williams*. July 7th, 2017.

those large business anchors like Macy's moved to Hilltop, businesses ran by people of color lost

the foot traffic and, eventually, their businesses themselves. Black born-and-raised residents had

the strongest connection this loss as the downtown business district helped harbor the "village

feel" that fostered social capital amongst residents. Brianna Hall* elaborated,

> Around here was the business area. Macy's, JC Penny, Payless. The business community was here. Chevron, they built some houses up on the hill. They made more off our land that then did on product. So, up at Hilltop, where the mall is. The mall is half empty. Only Macy's and JC Penny's and Sears. When they go, the businesses moved out. Sort of a death… It's becoming a ghost town.[40]

While residents new and old bemoan the death of downtown and its continued ghost-like

state, Hilltop Mall itself over the years had become quite the ghost town itself. This can in part

be attributed to how Hilltop is isolated from the rest of Richmond and has resulted in limited and

reduced access to goods and services for non-white residents. Protests against changes in bus

access to the mall in the 1990s were fraught with "cries of racism and class discrimination" as

residents and the AC Transit general manager herself argued that limiting and restricting bus

routes was because "[Hilltop] does not want minorities and the poor to come to the mall."[41] Now,

redevelopment efforts of Hilltop Mall – now called Shops at Hilltop – is now based on bringing

businesses that it once denied, catering to consumers once denied. The new mall owners have

brought in a new Taiwanese American anchor tenant, grocery chain 99 Ranch Market, and has

plans to include "new outlet stores, restaurants with a focus on Asian cuisine, and "family-

friendly" entertainment venues that would appeal to Richmond's and the Bay Area at large's

growing Asian population.[42]

The yearning for the revival of the city of Richmond with a central downtown district and

the mall itself has been decades long with various attempts at jumpstarting economic vitality.

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[40] Personal narrative with Brianna Hall.* July 31st, 2014.
[41] Archival research. West County Times articles from February 2nd, 1995 and February 11th, 1995.
[42] The Mercury News. May 22nd, 2018. "Hilltop Mall Aims for 'Asian-centric' Shopping, Signs 99 Ranch Market."

Ethnographic participation at various city meetings, including an economic development meeting, illuminate how eager residents and the local government are in their endeavors to bring about the business diversity Chevron had promised would save the city in the 80s. Chevron's development of Hilltop, I argue, was a splinter, further driving divisions and segregations socially, physically, and economically between the North Richmond and Richmond. Furthermore, this demonstrates what is often overlooked in the literature: how local corporations have a direct hand in dictating the landscape and lived experiences of city residents by determining the (under)development of the surrounding area, and, therefore, cultivating a dependency relationship in which the corporation has the leg up.

Changes in Racial Formation

> *"The face has changed."*
- Fernanda Machado*, 14-year Richmond resident[43]

This sentiment was echoed time and time again by residents have have witnessed exceptional demographic changes over the decades. While Richmond has maintained its minority-majority status for decades, there was a flip from an African American majority to a Latinx majority in the 1980s. More unique and consequential has been the substantial decrease in the African American population this past decade: an 18% decrease in North Richmond and a 10% decrease in Richmond. With the power of numbers, it is no surprise that there has been a rise of Black-Brown tensions in the city and North Richmond, as residents broker regional racial formation with "rotating centers" (Mutua 1998) and "shifting bottoms" (Mutua 1998) amidst this "shifting ground" (Kurashige 2010).

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[43] Interview and personal narrative with Fernanda Machado*, Brazilian who moved from next to Chevron refinery in Brazil to Berkeley in 1992 and then to Richmond in 2004. June 23rd, 2017.

Table 1: North Richmond Demographic Changes

2000	2010	% Change
51% African American	33% African American	-18%
39% Hispanic/Latinx	50% Hispanic/Latinx	+11%
18% White	17% White	-1%
6% Asian	15% Asian	+9%

Table 2: Richmond Demographic Changes

2000	2010	% Change
37% African American	27% African American	-10%
26% Hispanic/Latinx	40% Hispanic/Latinx	+14%
32% White	32% White	0%
12% Asian	13% Asian	-1%

With these dramatic changes, Melvin Willis explains, "There is a real racial divide. We've seen a decrease in black population and an increase in Latino community. The black community feels like Latinos are the ones chasing them out but I tell them they are just like us."[44] Jayden Carter*, a Ceasefire (a community organization dedicated to reducing gun violence) coordinator working to bridge the Black and Brown communities, explained that each group "don't [sic] understand each other's cultures. It produces fear and anxiety and stereotypes."[45] While there Latinx and Blacks share many experiences due structural and systemic white supremacy in the United States, residents — regardless of race — elucidate that "Blacks suffer the most."[46]

In addition to black residents expressing that they are "feeling displaced in their own community,"[47] Greg Sampson* exclaims, "Us blacks are the last on the totem pole for resources so we have to fight and struggle to get stuff."[48] Jayden Carter elaborated that "the black

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[44] Interview and personal narrative with Melvin Willis. July 14th, 2017.
[45] Interview and personal narrative with Jayden Carter*. July 17th, 2017.
[46] Interview and personal narrative with Helen Huang*. June 23rd, 2017.
[47] Interview and personal narrative with Anthony Armstrong*. July 18th, 2017.
[48] Interview and personal narrative with Greg Sampson*. July 19th, 2014.

community feels like Latinos are taking their jobs, that undocumented people are using all the resources and getting opportunities over citizens."[49] This is compounded by residents like Pastor Armstrong who contend that "[Blacks] feel threatened because they feel like Latinos get special treatment with ESL, various programs, and many other privileges.[50]

Latinx residents have also expressed their own concerns and stereotypes that drive the tensions between these communities. Andrés Soto, Latinx born-and-raised Richmond resident explained that the "transition has been very rocky because Latinos don't speak English so there are language and cultural barriers in addition to general victimization of immigrants."[51] Issues over the lack of interrupters in community meetings came up time and time again as Latinx residents struggled to communicate or be heard.[52] While no Latinx research participant explicitly communicated this, one of the hosts at a "Bridging the Black and Brown Communities" event exclaimed, "Some of the hard things didn't come out tonight like how some Latinos are deeply afraid of blacks!"[53] This was exemplified by Pastor Etiwanda, who runs the non-profit REACH, explained how numerous times Latinx residents called the cops on African American REACH workers who were cleaning the streets of North Richmond.[54](10)

While there are numerous events run through non-profits, the city, and the Richmond Progressive Alliance calling for "racial reconciliation for Richmond," it is clear that racial animosity has exacerbated with the stark demographic changes over the past decades. The shifting racial formation of Richmond has influenced the politicization of residents. While Latinx residents have become more active with the Richmond Progressive Alliance and political

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[49] Interview and personal narrative with Jayden Carter*. July 17th, 2017.
[50] Interview and personal narrative with Anthony Armstrong*. July 18th, 2017.
[51] Conversation with Andrés Soto during the Our Power Conference and Convening toxic tour on August 7th, 2014.
[52] One example being a huge argument between Black and Latinx North Richmond residents during the North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council on July 21st, 2015.
[53] Field notes from "Bridging the Black and Brown Communities" event on June 26th, 2017.
[54] Field notes from North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council Meeting. July 2nd, 2015.

organizing, prominent Black political leaders have been experiencing increasing criticism as they fight to keep their seat at the table. These divisive tensions are additionally exploited by Chevron Richmond as the company attempts to splinter the community, break down community mobilization, and utilize vulnerability to garner support.

Conclusion

Whites' socially constructed 'racing' of American society to create a racially hierarchical system of control and oppression to be used as tool to maintain white supremacy simultaneously services to create spaces in which they can dominate (Powell 1997; Haney-Lopez 1994; Moore 2008). Moreover, I argue that petro-capital corporations, themselves elite white spaces, exacerbate these systemic processes and amplify exploitation. While the construction of race itself is used to categorize people to determine rights and status, racism functions to legitimate white domination that results in the denial of rights, resources and status to non-white populations that manifest materially and, consequently, geographically as space embodies the social relations that construct them. Furthermore, this removal of rights from non-white populations has granted whites excessive privileges that go unchecked because white supremacy and, therefore, white privilege operates at the status quo (Harris 1993; Powell 1999). As such, the laws and institutions like oil corporations also function through processes of white privilege that continue to perpetuate racism through strong subtlety in a color-blind era that ignores the longevity of unearned white privilege that proceeds to unevenly distribute wealth, goods, and resources to populations that have been actively segregated (Moore 2008; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Feagin 2000).

Vast amounts of literature exploring the intersection of race, racism, poverty, and urban space demonstrates how these processes have unfolded overtime and have produced spaces of

hyper-segregation and the underclass (Wilson 1987; Massey and Denton 1993; Drake and

Cayton 1945; Staples 1987) but have not looked to unincorporated areas beyond cities and

suburbs that embody the same realities through legal segregation through the active denial of

recognition. Similarly, studying unincorporated areas provides the opportunity to investigate the

dynamics between unincorporated and incorporated areas that often share borders. In the case of

North Richmond and Richmond, the borders that segregated the two have shifted as the color

line moved from North Richmond's border to 23rd Street, creating "splintering urbanism" (Small

2008) in Richmond that mirrors that practices of racial segregation and consequential uneven

development and distribution of goods and resources that ghettoized North Richmond over the

past sixty-five years.

In addition to color-blind practices that maintain racial uneven development, it is

important to recognize that legal advancements that attempt to eradicate segregation operate by

keeping segregation in place. The decades of racism that forged segregation are embodied in the

built environment and remain there, preserving dynamics that perpetuate the problems that ensue

due to segregation. Furthermore, they are literally embodied in the African American

population's bodies as the forces of segregation unloaded environmental hazards and, therefore,

exposure has led to tremendous health disparities that plague them with higher rates of a

multitude of health issues, from heart disease to asthma to even mortality (Corburn 2013). These

environmental injustices are linked to dehumanization of African Americans as property during

the founding of the country, morphing into the devaluation of their personhood as being viewed

as an expendable population to bear the burden of the externalities of white privilege and capital

production (Feagin 2000; Harris 1993). Sustained segregation itself, especially in unincorporated

areas like North Richmond, preserves conditions and dynamics that constrain household mobility,

enable to continuation of severe service deficiencies, heighten exposure to undesirable and toxic

land uses, and inhibit participatory voice for these communities.

CHAPTER 2

<div align="center">

Localized Stages of Petro-Capitalism:
The Evolution of a Company Town

</div>

Introduction

> *"Chevron is a shapeshifter. From paternalism to spreading a lot of money… Is the leopard just changing its spots?* [55]
> – Steve Early, labor activist who moved to Richmond in 2012

Richmond is a company town like many across the United States, but it differs in important ways from the typical one, where the company owned services and resources like grocery stores. Company towns are understood to be spaces in which the dominant industry of the local economy is responsible for the area's underdevelopment, poses a threat to residents' health, and interferes with local politics since the departure of that dominant industry would be downfall of these floundering towns. This holds true for Richmond as well. What sets Richmond apart from other company towns like Detroit, Michigan; Youngstown, Ohio; Pullman, Illinois; and Camden, New Jersey is the more than a century old Chevron oil refinery, a large-scale, immobile industrial facility too expensive to send overseas and too profitable to shut down. This chapter explores the evolution of a company town in this petro-chemical context that sets it apart from company towns in other industrial and energy sectors including manufacturing and coal.

In this chapter, I argue that there are multiple localized stages of corporate community relations correspond to multi-scalar pressures from citizens. I explore how Chevron has developed and perpetuated their community economic identity (Bell and York 2010) through maintenance that depicts them as a good neighbor and the backbone of the community. These campaigns have emanated from Chevron's legacy of being one of Richmond's largest employers, but that role has greatly diminished over the years as the treadmill of production and increased

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[55] Fieldnote from "The Making of a Progressive City" event with Steve Early and Marvin Willis, hosted by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society on July 13th, 2017.

mechanization have concomitantly reduced the workforce and increased the demand for high skilled workers as a means to increase productivity and profits (Gould et al. 2008, Schnaiberg 1980, Foster 2002). Consequently, I argue Chevron employs corporate community relations strategies that adapt to changing tides of community acceptance of the firm, which has led to a dialectical process in which the firm responds to the community and vice versa. This dialectical process enables Chevron Richmond to paint their own identity as their campaigns become materially, physically, politically, and socially embedded into the everyday lives of residents, resulting in a divide between residents who realize or resist the corporation's frames and strategies.

I locate three stages of corporate community relationships: 1) the company town, 2) the company bought town, and 3) the circumscribed collaboration town. The first stage is emblematic of the experiences of many other company towns for which a seeming harmony exists between the company and the community as employment at the firm enables residents' realization of the American Dream. The second stage is marked by the introduction of corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies in which the firm becomes actively involved in assisting community and economic development by changing employment practices, intervening in education, and commencing copious amounts of spending and sponsorship in community affairs. These strategies enable the company to promote itself as a good neighbor and the backbone of the city while reacting to community pressure. These strategies continue into the third stage, but what sets the circumscribed collaboration town apart are increased opportunities for democratic engagement and participation between the firm, residents, and local government in addition to the prodigious amplification of corporate social responsibility campaigns. In total, this chapter finds that Chevron's public relation and corporate social responsibility campaigns aim to quell

community concerns over employment, counter environmental justice organizing, and divide communities in order to maintain their political influence, which is used to mediate their adherence to human, social, and environmental rights (Watts 2005).

Theoretical Framework

Corporate social responsibility

Corporations have been developing corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaigns that conceptualize their relations with the communities in which they operate due to mounting public concern, legislation, and social movement activism around social and environmental impacts of economic growth. Corporate social responsibility was largely initiated by corporations throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s during a surge in international policy interventions seeking sustainable solutions to the rise of environmental and social inequalities and to respond to broader social critiques of industrialization (Jenkins 2004; Ruhl 1998; Banerjee 2008). Consequently, CSR has become intertwined with international development, poverty alleviation, and sustainability as these campaigns have been substituting for the role of the state subsequent to deregulation, neoliberalization, and, eventually, deindustrialization (Blowfield 2005a, 2005b; Newell and Frynas 2007). While this literature is largely concentrated in the Global South, often in "resource curse"-afflicted nations or with coal mining in Appalachia, extractive industries across the United States have employed such campaigns and have increased their involvement in urban politics gradually since the nineteenth century (Dahl 1967).

Polluting industries at large often employ substantial CSR campaigns in which they frame their attitudes, strategies, and relationships with their stakeholders and often include interventions to improve the locales where the company operates (Jenkins 2004). The oil and gas industry has long been considered the industrial leader of corporate social responsibility (Frynas

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2005, 2009). The oil and gas sector's championing of CSR is rooted in their need to elicit a "social license to operate" (Burke 1999), often though community development schemes, from the communities where their large-scale, immobile, polluting facilities are situated (Wilburn and Wilburn 2011; Frynas 2005). While CSR consists of clearly defined policies and practices, it is narrowly defined and intended to legitimize the power of the corporation itself, while pacifying communities where oil operations exist to secure their power over decision-making (Mitchell 2011; Sawyer 2004). CSR, therefore, frames the narratives and imagery of the company's identity in strategic ways aimed at curating its reputation, perception of and relationship to the community, and how it responds to legitimacy threats (Newell and Frynas 2007; Bell and York 2010). Often times, CSR not only depicts the company as an expert, good neighbors, and a great citizen, but also appropriates the concerns and demands of residents as goals of their own design, therefore diverting responsibility and blame for their own failures by producing positive outcomes and effects (Shever 2010; Rajak 2011; Bebbington 2010). By framing responsibility as voluntary, proactive, and philanthropic, corporations aim to disregard their accountability to impacted communities and to obscure the power inequalities within 'local dependence' (Cox and Mair 1988) between firms, communities, and local government (Akpan 2006; Newell 2005).

This chapter specifically explores how Chevron Richmond capitalizes on its "community economic identity" (Bell and York 2010) – a community identity tied to the legacy of energy industry's dominant role in local and regional economies – through corporate social responsibility campaigns in order to promote the firm's importance to the community as a provider, expert, good neighbor, and economic backbone of the community (Solecki 1996; Ferguson 2005). Scholarship on CSR has largely only been framed in terms of a corporate power dynamic over vulnerable communities and overlooks how corporate community interactions,

namely community activism, change corporate strategies and tactics. This chapter aims to re-examine corporate community relations to highlight the dialectical nature between the corporate tactics and community organizing. By exploring the shifts in these corporate practices overtime, I argue that there are three distinct stages of corporate community relations. Company town, as explained above, lacks CSR efforts while the second two stages are characterized by different degrees of CSR. The latter stage, circumscribed collaboration town, is markedly different by the degree to which community organizing has found points of leverage to hold CSR more accountable to the needs of the community and the corporate response to such actions.

These points of leverage and corresponding negotiations have increasingly resulted in community benefits agreements (CBAs) and good neighbor agreements (GNAs). While CSR is defined and directed by companies themselves, community benefits agreements (CBAs) and good neighborhood agreements (GNAs) have emerged in response to the lack of regulations on private capital and companies and to the absence of redistributive mandates for urban development (Lewis and Henkels 1996; Parks and Warren 2009). Integral to CSR, GNAs evolved as a non-legal tool to address community welfare issues while communities and companies developed partnerships. CBAs, on the other hand, are legally enforceable contracts linked to a single development project or environmental permitting process that are the product of community participation and deliberation to address their issues and particular needs (Gross 2007). Both CBAs and GNAs are processes and instruments of mutual benefit for the community and corporation to recognize and formalize their roles within a locality and a mechanism to enforce promises on both sides (Gross et al. 2005; Lewis and Heckels 1996).

CBAs have been characterized as empowerment tools that heighten self-determination and sovereignty through grassroots organizing, coalition building, and democratic deliberation

(Baxamusa 2008). The form of public participatory planning and deliberation that CBAs entail enables citizens and organizers to intensify their political power and apply political pressure by utilizing permits as points of leverage, thus garnering more control over corporate activities and re-shaping political and policy contexts at large (Lewis and Heckels 1996; Parks and Warren 2009). Moreover, CBAs foster collaboration and have the potential to transform adversaries into partners, therefore changing power dynamics around development (Saito and Truong 2014).

On the other hand, CBAs are also at great risk of cooptation or nonfulfillment by corporations. Since corporations often cast communities as extortionists, they often aim to work directly with local government officials to develop CBAs to avoid community constraint and demands (Gross 2007). More often than not, though, issues revolve around lack of implementation and enforcement as community organizers are tasked with monitoring follow-through regardless of being ill-equipped and/or under-resourced to do so (Parks and Warren 2009). This chapter will explore this tension between cooptation and collaboration in the circumscribed collaboration town stage using the 2014 $90 million CBA attached to the refinery's $1 billion modernization project as a case study.

"The marks of Chevron are everywhere."[56]

COMPANY TOWN (1901-1950s)

> *"When I was a kid, it was a company town. People's whole lives revolved around it. There was even a summer camp for kids. Most employees then were Oakies."*
> - Marsha Cowell,*[57] San Francisco resident who was born-and raised in Richmond

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[56] Fieldnote from City of Richmond Community Engagement Plan of Draft Strategic Action Plan community workshop for the Richmond Promise Program on June 8th, 2015. Quote from discussion with a concerned resident and meeting attendee.

[57] Fieldnote from Richmond Museum History lecture entitled, "World War I, Resistance and the New Negro in California." The lecture was followed by a lunch reception during which I talked with attendees like Marsha* who was born-and-raised in Richmond and currently lives in San Francisco.

Most company towns are regarded as spaces produced by the companies themselves, spaces in which stores and housing are owned and operated by the company (Porteous 1970), but this is not the case in Richmond. Regardless, Richmond has a notable history of being the company town of Chevron Richmond. Much of this is owed to the way the company has integrated itself the community throughout the first half century of its operations to heighten residents' connections to the firm. With these strategies, residents' work *and* social lives revolved around the refinery itself.

While Standard Oil and its subsidiaries, Chevron Chemical and Chevron Research, briefly lost its status as the city's largest employer during the war years, white residents reflect with fondness the days in which their families and friends could get good-paying jobs and the city itself thrived with a strong middle class. Reflecting on her own childhood, Allison Stone*[58] explained:

> When I was a kid, it seemed like every other person you'd met, you know, kids that you went to school with, their aunt, their uncle, well, someone, worked for Chevron. That was just the way it was and so you grew up with them kind of being a part of who you were.

While demonstrating the strength that Chevron had in this first stage of corporate community relations, Allison* also demonstrated a sense of loss that resonates throughout Richmond. Jake Fassberg*[59] similarly explained how "back in the day, everyone had a white picket fence. It was a bunch of white middle class [people]." While such laments tie the success of the city and its residents with the firm itself, the endearment towards Chevron Richmond is connected to residents' own identities as they distinguished themselves as part of the hard-working middle class living the American Dream.

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[58] Interview and personal narrative with Allison Stone*. July 30th, 2014.
[59] Interview and personal narrative with Jake Fassberg*. June 23rd, 2015.

Achieving the American Dream by being a hard-working Standard Oil employee making a living for yourself and your family was complemented by a suite of amenities and resources provided by the company. In 1921, the company constructed a recreational center for employees and their families that included an isolated private club with shooting ranges, sports courts, a yacht harbor, a dancehall, a clubhouse in addition to many more amenities. *Standard Oiler* magazines document the array of sports activities that company employees engaged in, including bicycle polo, tennis, and volleyball. The company even started the "Standard Oil Basket Ball Association" that hosted events for teams to challenge each other, including the barrel-house team and the engineering department team. Such tournaments, festivals, and celebrations were often accompanied or commenced with music from the Richmond Refinery Band. The articles documenting these activities are often highlighted with notions of *family*: of having amenities for the whole family and as being part of the Standard Oil family. While these amenities provided a social world of sports, celebrations, and other splendors, they were open solely to white employees and their families and friends, thereby excluding the areas non-white populations, particularly African Americans in North Richmond.

The Standard Oil family largely excluded the African American population that had moved into the city during the war years. African American residents who were born and raised in the area, one in Richmond and one in North Richmond, explained the racial discrimination experienced by the black community by Standard Oil. Robert* specifically explained a multitude of issues with the historical discrimination in hiring practices and with the division of labor for Blacks, ranging from inequitable pay, strenuous "heavy lifting work," to a general lack of employment and recruiting. [60] Regardless of these discriminatory practices, African Americans escaping the Jim Crow South saw Richmond as a vast improvement to the lives they had lived

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[60] Interview and personal narrative with Robert Evans*. June 24th, 2015.

back east and were granted economic opportunity at other industrial facilities in the city like the Kaiser Shipyards.

More than just cultivating a social sphere for residents, Standard Oil also integrated itself into the political landscape of the city. Richmond's political seats have often been filled by employees and business-friendly residents funded by the firm dating back to its beginnings when Standard Oil Company of California's then president William S. Rheem was a Richmond politician.[61] Company employees in powerful political seats like mayor or city councilor enabled the firm to have more control over decision-making that influenced its operations and operations, thereby circumventing serious parleying of issues that could affect their bottom-line.

During this stage of corporate-community relations, we see that Chevron Richmond portrays itself and its employees as one large family, providing for the family. The middle-class livelihood afforded by employment at Chevron was accompanied by off-the-clock amenities and activities that embedded the company into employees' family and friends' social well-being. This embedding led to embodiment in which white residents' identities were tied to the company itself, an association that remains today. It is with these corporate-community strategies that Richmond existed as a company town.

COMPANY BOUGHT TOWN (1960s-2000s)

> *"A lot of people are mad at Chevron because it was like they stabbed the community in the back."* [62]
> – Jake Fassberg*, born-and-raised Richmond resident and former Chevron Richmond employee

After the first half of the 20th century, the United States and Richmond itself underwent drastic changes dealing with postwar adjustment and deindustrialization and the rise of multi-

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[61] Included in Chevron Richmond's own historical timeline on their company website. (http://richmond.chevron.com/aboutchevronrichmond/history/early_years.aspx)
[62] Interview and personal narrative with Jake Fassberg*. June 23rd, 2015.

scalar movements for civil rights and environmental protection. Such factors contributed to a wave of change that influenced both community perception of Standard Oil and the company's tactics for engaging with the community. These changes ushered in a second stage of corporate community relations, the "company bought town" – a title taken from the words of North Richmond resident Robert Evans*[63] when he explicated corporate control and capture of local government. I argue that, during this stage, corporate social responsibility campaigns become the modus operandi for community relations as the company aimed to receive their 'social license to operate.'

Enhancing Employment

The previous half century at the refinery had been defined by its white population of workers capitalizing on petro-capitalism, but the rise of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements gave calls to action, demanding that racial discrimination be outlawed. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, companies had to address the gross inequalities in their employment practices. Chevron Richmond was no different. *Standard Oiler* magazines documented how the company was "moving along with affirmative action…" to provide "opportunities for women and minorities…" to meet the company's "ambitious goals."[64] By the 1970s, Standard Oilers provided "candid appraisals of the company" by black employees, questioning "how beautiful is Black" at the company.[65] The rate at which promotional materials included exposés on the different ways Standard Oil was a good equal-opportunity employer increased to address community concerns over the inequities that continued to remain regardless of the corporation's documented efforts.

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[63] Interview and personal narrative with Robert Evans*. June 24th, 2014.
[64] Archival research. *Standard Oiler* magazine, March-April 1974 edition, pg. 1.
[65] Archival research. *Standard Oiler* magazine, August 1970 edition, cover article.

Part of the problem, Standard Oil argued, was that the education Richmond residents received was insufficient for employment at the refinery. By the 1980s, Chevron partnered with the city of Richmond and the West Contra Costa Unified School District (North Richmond's jurisdiction) to provide free training for jobs in the petroleum and chemical industry. Beyond post-high school attempts to upskill Richmond residents for employment at the refinery, several residents discussed how Chevron representatives would go to the schools to inspire students to get involved in STEM-based studies in order to provide the proper backgrounds for employment at the increasingly technologically specialized facility. These programs remain in the community today as residents like Dalisay Reyes* described how it was "so cool to see"[66] Chevron engineers encouraging her children to apply themselves for high tech jobs and Desiree Marshall* who expressed the same sentiment but from her own childhood.[67]

In addition to issues over education, the pressure for employment at the refinery increased as the status of largest employer garnered more weight during deindustrialization. Reflecting on the continuing impact deindustrialization in Richmond that has continued up to today, Jake Fassberg* explained that in the 1980s, a big recession hit Richmond because

> Richmond lost 95% of its manufacturing plants. Now you can't even find a manufacturing plant. Most have been replaced by little mom and pop businesses that don't hire nobody. I used to work in factories. I was making good money, but all those manufacturing jobs just dried up.

As a former Chevron forklift driver at the refinery, Jake* continued, to explain that there were many changes at the refinery itself that hindered residents' abilities to get jobs. He postulated that increased automation and skill specialization caused waves of mass layoffs at the facility, including himself:

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[66] Interview with Dalisay Reyes*. July 1st, 2017.
[67] Interview with Desiree Marshall*. June 23rd, 2017.

Richmond used to be a people's town. It was like, 'where are you working' 'At Chevron!' People were making a living. I'm talking middle class. They started to hire people from Texas. I used to make so much money when I worked for Chevron. That was it. Chevron started to get away from the public. The shut downs started as they started to hire people from Texas, probably political. At that point, there were three to four generations of people working for Chevron but then Chevron got greedy. It used to be that you would go to school, graduate, and then work for Chevron. In 1994, Chevron totally cleaned house and got rid of all the contractors. They also fired all people 50 years old and up. They just said, 'Screw you, Richmond… It just seemed like they got greedier and greedier.

Challenging community perceptions of greed, Chevron's strategies incorporated a broad range of corporate social responsibility tactics starting in the 1970s and 1980s. A *Standard Oiler* article entitled, "On Being a Good Corporate Neighbor: Socal's (Standard Oil of California) Giving Goes Beyond Good-Deed Donations" from May 1977 explained that the increased utilization of community involvement and donations to receive the title of a "good neighbor" was part of their efforts to receive their 'license to operate.' In it, corporate contributions coordinator Henry Brett expounded:

> Our contributions program is really an investment program, not a giveaway. We don't like to use the word donation, because it does not reflect what we really do. We certainly are contributing to the community, but in ways which we feel also benefit the Company and its employees. We want to help make localities in which we operate better place in which to live and conduct our business. In the process we are creating good will, another of our objectives and a necessary ingredient for being a good neighbor.

Archival research and contemporary news outlets alike continue the coverage of corporate sponsorships and donations just as much as city events display the Chevron logo because of such funding. This type of corporate social responsible campaign makes Chevron extremely embedded and visible in the community as organizations and the city itself become dependent upon such funds to continue their operations.

While visibility in this light is heavily promoted, Chevron has also taken a number of steps, including "'good neighbor' gestures'"[68], to obscure and remove itself from the city. One

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[68] Archival research. *Standard Oiler* magazine, November 1978 edition.

such way is by making invisible the visible structures of the refinery through camouflaging techniques. During a toxic tour on July 16th, 2014 with both California EPA and U.S. EPA representatives, Richmond resident and local grassroots community organizer for CBE Andrés Soto explained that Chevron has paid over $1 million to figure out the right terracotta color to paint attempt to blend the company's oil storage tanks into the surrounding landscape where they reside. While the company promotes that "camouflage pleases local residents,"[69] anyone who travels around the Bay Area on Interstate 580 cannot help but to notice the tanks that dominate the hills or the tall smoke stacks trying to hide behind the hills themselves.

Out of sight does not mean out of mind, as growing national environmental concern in the 1970s led to the passing of various environmental laws including the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Art. As a refiner, Chevron largely challenged the rise of state and federal policies to reduce air emissions and waste, treat water, and prevent oil spills while having to deal with public scrutiny for its ecologically harmful practices. The company's frustrations were apparent, as evidenced in a November 1979 issue of the *Standard Oiler*:

> Today's managers must operate in a far more complex and confusing business environment… in an industry which is being drawn ever more prominently into the public arena. As they direct the complicated task of developing both conventional and alternative energy sources, Socal's managers must cope with the demands of increasingly intrusive governmental regulations and energy policies that change faster than Fifth Avenue fashions. While Socal's founding fathers has to move mountains to find out, then refine, transport and market it, today's management must move bureaucracies before they can get to the business at hand.

Regulation at the hand of state and federal governments wasn't the only place in which Chevron was receiving pressure to change its practices for increased environmental health and safety. Resistance to toxicity and environmental injustice in Richmond emerged from a political culture spawned from spatialized, racialized marginalization and disenfranchisement in North

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[69] Archival research. *Standard Oiler* magazine, November 1978 edition.

Richmond. Organizations such as West County Toxics Coalition (WCTC), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), and Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) emerged, fighting Chevron against environmental racism and challenging the corporation's long history of negligence and environmental abuse, including the 304 industrial accidents that occurred between 1989 and 1995 alone (Shah 2011).

Much of the reason for the firm's ability to continue operating as it was for nearly a century is because of its power over and control of local government. For example, a W.W. Scott, a Standard Oil Employee, was elected as Mayor of Richmond four times, in addition to holding a councilmember seat (Wenkert 1967). Scott is just one example of the history of Chevron employees holding elected government seats in Richmond. The ability to maintain political seats on local governing bodies enabled Chevron to pass or reject certain policies that influenced the company's bottom-line, even at the cost of community and ecological health. Additionally, it enabled Chevron to have an active say in debates around community and economic development.

I argue that it is these increasing strategies and actions to mitigate and improve community perception of the company amidst growing environmental and civil justice concerns that define the company bought town. Whether it be opening employment opportunities to women and people of color, providing job training to residents, or camouflaging the operating facilities, Chevron Richmond aimed to ameliorate negative associations with the company in order to generate their 'social license to operate.' At the same time, Chevron Richmond actively aimed to control local politics so as avoid anything that would affect their profitability. Such an approach afforded them a safety net since politically they could pass what they pleased regardless of receiving the 'social license to operate.'

CIRCUMSCRIBED-COLLABORATION TOWN (2000s-Present)

> *"Chevron has been here for so long they have been doing what they want. But things are changing. It isn't beneficial to go on doing business as usual."*[70]
> – Henry Clark, born-and-raised North Richmond resident who started the community's environmental justice movement

Community responses to the tide of corporate strategies targeting city citizens over the course of the second half of the 20ᵗʰ century have been mixed. What is clear in this third stage is that a coalition of local grassroots organizations has banded together to reclaim control of local government and have intervened in decision-making processes that influence how Chevron can operate and, consequently, has impacted the company's corporate social responsibility campaigns. This organizing emerged out of frustration over the various ways Chevron's embedding practices was influencing and impacting the community. While the next chapter will focus specifically on Richmond's politics, this section will focus on the proliferation of good neighbor agreements and community benefits agreements as a crucial component for this third stage of corporate community relations.

 While the 1980s experienced a global rise in corporate social responsibility, the 2000s and 2010s can be defined by the rise of community benefits and good neighbor agreements. The same can be said about Chevron Richmond. This introduction and influx of agreements emerged out successful social movement activism demanding more democratic processes for community input and for outcomes that directly benefit the community. This section will specifically utilize the 2014 $1 billion Chevron Richmond Modernization Project and its proposal period to highlight how Richmond has become a circumscribed-collaborative town.

The project – first entitled the Hydrogen and Energy Renewal Project – was first proposed in 2005 and was narrowly approved 5-4 by Richmond's city council in 2008. The

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[70] Personal correspondence with Henry Clark. November 12ᵗʰ, 2014.

original project sought to upgrade the refinery, replace the facility's fifty-year old hydrogen plant, and build a new power plant and catalytic converter for the aim of supplying hydrogen to other Bay Area refineries. Chevron hired around one thousand workers who completed construction on about half of the hydrogen plant when a Contra Costa Superior Court judge halted the project in 2009. The litigation that terminated the project was prompted by concerned citizens and local and regional EJ organizations who argued that the project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Chevron were not transparent about the intentions of the project, with specific concern about whether the refinery would process heavier crude that would increase harmful emissions and greenhouse gases or how Chevron would mitigate these said emissions. By 2010, the court dismissed the original 2008 EIR.

In 2011, Chevron applied for a new conditional use permit application for the Chevron Modernization Project, which was a scaled down version of the original project removing the catalytic converter, power plant, and other new and replacement facilities from the proposal. Instead, it focused on the hydrogen replacement plant and hydrogen purity improvements. Though it was still debated whether Chevron would be processing heavier cruder oil, due to the lack of a coherent industry definition, it became clear that Chevron intended to process oil with higher sulfur content which would increase greenhouse gas and other harmful emissions. In 2014, city staff and third-party consultants from Holland and Knight, a global law firm with industry-based consultants, produced a 1,100-plus-page EIR that addressed the multiple concerns that came up during the 2009 lawsuit and presented multiple options for how Chevron could move forward.

The EIR was touted by Chevron representatives from the general manager to rank and file employees as "the gold standard of EIRs," as the "most comprehensive and community

health-oriented EIR" that "goes beyond current laws."[71] Concerned residents and community groups, on the other hand, contended with the staff attorney of Communities for a Better Environment when he said, "we support the EIR, but there are a few holes that need to be answered and don't have to be settled in court. We have conditions that address those holes."[72] While the city and its citizens have very little everyday leverage over Chevron, the permitting process for the modernization project granted that leverage, albeit temporarily, to the community they negotiated over increases for environmental health and safety.

This negotiation occurred in city planning commission and council meetings over the course of July 2014 in addition to a "backdoor deal" between some city councilors and Chevron representatives.[73] After about 20 hours of public comment periods held during the aforementioned meetings and deliberation between commissioners and councilors held in July 2014, the $1 billion Modernization Project was approved on July 29th with emissions reductions – as compared to their initial proposal of no net increase – and a $90 million community benefits agreement that would help fund a range of things to help boost economic and community development, including those that would realize a just transition away from a fossil fuel economy. Moreover, in what has been dubbed the 'clean safe jobs' permit by Mayor Butt, the approved modernization project permit and CBA required "Chevron to upgrade old, unsafe technology that allows excessive air pollution and poses catastrophic chemical release hazards, and to support a community-based Clean Energy Jobs Program for climate protection at $8

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[71] Field note from city council meetings. July 9th and July 10th, 2014.
[72] Field note from city council meeting. July 9th, 2014.
[73] Interview and personal narratives with Eric Zell on July 31st, 2017 and Eduardo Martinez on June 29th, 2017.

million per year through 2050."[74] In addition to the Clean Energy Jobs Program, Chevron

donated 60 acres of its property to be used to build the state's largest solar farm.[75]

Discussion

"From 1902 until today, the Richmond Refinery has been a source of energy and an

economic engine for the community we share," proclaims Chevron on a pamphlet distributed at

community events such as the 5th Annual North Richmond Music Festival for which Chevron

provided the stage, multiple shading umbrellas, and hosted a booth for residents to win Chevron

branded goods like water bottles, cell phone stands, beach balls, and $10 gas gift cards. From the

outset, it was readily apparent that Chevron employed multiple tactics to construct their identity

as both a good neighbor and the backbone of the community.

Richmond remains known as a company town regardless of the fact that only 5-7% of

Chevron Richmond employees are Richmond residents. While the company helped the city

survive the Great Depression and deindustrialization, the city remains riddled by high poverty

and unemployment rates. Furthermore, Richmond residents are plagued by alarming rates of

health disparities and have garnished a position in what activists call California's cancer corridor,

which directly maps up with the East Bay refinery corridor.[76] This paradox of having one of the

wealthiest companies in the world surrounded by such economic and health issues prompts

Chevron to use particular frames that address these concerns in order to reinforce their

legitimacy and control, especially in decision-making. As such, Chevron constructs a corporate

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[74] Mayor Tom Butt is notorious for his blog, social media interactions, and communication through community boards online. This except is from a press release from CBE he shared on his website (http://www.tombutt.com/pdf/cbe%20letter.pdf).
[75] https://www.kqed.org/science/20001/richmond-approves-contentious-chevron-project, https://richmondstandard.com/beyond-richmond/2015/08/17/wednesday-workshop-to-discuss-large-solar-farm-project-at-chevron-richmond-refinery-site/
[76] Residents and activists involved with the various organizations of the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition call the East Bay a "toxic oil alley," "refinery corridor," and "cancer corridor." These were brought up at events like toxic tours and the Our Power Convergence.

economic identity of being a good neighbor and the backbone of the community through discourse and corporate-community relations that embeds them within the city's communities. By mastering language to obscure their intentions and the existing impacts that the refinery has on the city, Chevron infiltrates Richmond with discourse and rhetoric – through promotional material and via various forms of manipulation – and through programs and initiatives that enable them to embed both the social and political landscapes of the city, influencing residents at each step of the way.

Community Economic Identity Maintenance During a Decision-Making Period

Walking through Richmond in August 2014 during the heat of the summer and of the debate over the Chevron Modernization Project, a Chevron mailer for a 'Telephone Town Hall' event held in April – five months prior – skipped along broken pavement in the breeze. Literally littering Richmond, Chevron's promotional material ranging from thick, glossy pamphlets, newsletters, to mailers were sent to each and every one of Richmond's hundred thousand residents. Multiple residents indicated that Chevron rented every billboard in Richmond, in addition to having plastered posters throughout the rest of the Bay Area from Oakland to San Francisco on the streets and in Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations and trains. These campaigns aligned with community concerns for jobs and environmental health and safety as almost every piece of Chevron's material promoted the "legacy of modernization" as creating a "newer, safer, cleaner refinery" that would enable Chevron to continue contributing to the community for years to come. These diverse materials contain the same language and framing that fall along three platforms they summarize with pictures of important members of the community – almost all residents of color so as to adopt environmental justice principles through imagery:

"To me, the other name for modernization is new jobs."
- Attributed to John Starling, graduate of the Regional Occupation Program

"To me, the other name for modernization is cleaner air."
- Ascribed to Lorena Huerta, executive director of Familias Unidas

"The other name for modernization is pure common sense."
- Accredited to Mark Ayers, Chevron Richmond's Chief of Emergency Service

The campaigns were not limited to these three. At a local coffee shop, residents discussed how upset they were to see the business owner on Chevron's promotional material. Elizabeth Caldwell exclaimed, "I haven't had the nerve to ask him, 'What the hell!?' I love that [business] and I don't have the nerve to talk to him about this because I don't want to make things uncomfortable… I was kind of floored when I saw him on a Chevron flyer."[77] The business owner explained, "They printed something I didn't say. I called them and complained but [the material] was already printed. People should know me well enough to know that I wouldn't say stuff like that. It is just hard because Chevron has many tricky tactics."[78]

These "tricky tactics" stem beyond these visualizations. They are also rooted in the language that Chevron uses to deceive residents about the intentions of the modernization project and to deem Chevron a good neighbor that has gone above and beyond the call of duty in regard to getting a project approved, eclipsing the ten years of lawsuits that prompted this second round of the proposal. The title change of the project is case and point. The project was originally titled the Hydrogen and Energy Renewal Project but was switched to the Chevron Modernization Project to portray the company as environmental leaders moving forward. A common sentiment expressed by residents was encapsulated when Elizabeth Caldwell exclaimed, "They fooled me for a long time with that. Modernization. Modernization *is* a great thing that *is* needed."[79]

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[77] Elizabeth Caldwell, 5-year resident. Interview, July 16th, 2014.
[78] Local business owner. Interview, July 28th, 2014.
[79] Elizabeth Caldwell, 5-year resident. Interview, July 16th, 2014.

Chevron, in their documents and during public hearings, continually expressed how vital it was

to replace the 1960s-era equipment, but never expressed the project would affect less than

quarter of the whole facility. Similarly, Chevron declared that the project would have "no net

increase" in emissions, especially greenhouse gases. It wasn't until Chevron was questioned by

progressive city commissioners did Chevron reveal that "no net increase" meant that refinery

would buy carbon credits to offset the project's 16-20% increase of emissions.[80]

The reason for the increased emissions is that the project would enable Chevron to

process oil with a different elemental make-up. A Chevron pamphlet asserted that this project is

"not about refining Canadian Tar Sands or heavy crude," but "provides flexibility to refine crude

oil blends and gas oils with higher sulfur content." The lack of a government or industrial

definition for 'heavy crude' from newer shale extraction sources across the globe enables

Chevron to manipulate the language about their intentions to process oil that has increased

environmental health and safety ramifications. Stephanie Hanson explains that dirty crude oil is a

hot commodity because there "is a new market for it so what [Chevron] really wants to do is

build a plant for that and they are doing it under the disguise of modernization,"[81] what Marshall

Jennings, a born-and-raised resident in his 80s, calls the "bait and switch.[82] Moreover, the same

pamphlet explained that the project would serve to enhance, not expand the facility and "would

not change the basic operation or throughput processing capacity of the refinery." When Greg

Karras, the senior scientist for Communities for a Better Environment, explained to the city

council that these technologies Chevron was bringing in would actually increase throughput

production and increase emissions, Chevron not only admitted that the senior scientist was right,

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[80] Field Notes. City Commissioner Meetings, July 9th and 10th, 2014.
[81] Stephanie Harvey, 5-year resident. Interview, July 14th, 2014.
[82] Field Notes. City Commissioners Meeting, July 10th, 2014.

but then ran a smear campaign against the scientist's credentials immediately after the meeting.[83]

Consequently, Corky Booze, a city councilor rumored to be 'bought by Chevron,' vocalized the

smear campaign in the subsequent meeting.[84] The lack of clarity and transparency on what oil

Chevron would be processing and changing capacity of the refinery were the precise reasons

why Chevron was sued and forced to halt the project in 2009.

Chevron's promotional material contended that they were being transparent by having the

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) with public comment periods, which not only ignores the

fact that this process is law, but also disregards the fact that this second round EIR with increased

measures for public awareness and corporate transparency was prompted by a court order and

because of Chevron's criminal probation standing with the Environmental Protection Agency

prompted by the 2012 fire itself. While Corey Judd, Chevron Richmond's general manager,

asserted that Chevron has been "listening with ears wide open"[85] and "working hard to earn back

[community] trust" after the 2012 explosion and fire[86], the staff attorney for Communities for a

Better Environment reminded residents that "Chevron has listened to the community only

through community pressure."[87] This elevation of Chevron good dealings is represented in the

way that Chevron promoted the EIR as well, constantly claiming it to be "the gold standard of

EIRs" that "goes beyond current laws" because it is "the most comprehensive and community

health-oriented EIR."[88] Chevron's ability to manipulate the language and discourse used around

the project functions to simultaneously depict Chevron's community economic identity and to

erase the facts and history behind the whole project. This discourse and rhetoric that Chevron

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[83] Field Notes. City Council Meeting. July 22nd, 2014.
[84] Field Notes. City Council Meeting. July 29th, 2014.
[85] *Richmond Today*, a Chevron Richmond Publication. July 2014
[86] Field Notes. Planning Commission Meeting. July 9th, 2014.
[87] Field Notes. City Council Meeting, July 22nd, 2014.
[88] Field Notes. City Commissioners Meeting. July 9th, 2014.

prompts through intense public relations campaigns permeates through Richmond's political processes.

Embedding in the Social Landscape

"Chevron is more like public private corporation because it invests so much money into the community" propounded a Chevron-clad public commenter.[89] Chevron has increased its public relations campaigns and targeted corporate social responsibility over the years to reify their community economic identity as a good neighbor and backbone of the community that provides jobs and money to the city. This intensification is due to successful community organizing of residents like Stephanie Harvey who explicated that:

> The bottom line is that what Chevron gives is disgraceful for the community. They make, you know, trillions of dollars annually. I think their plant here refines 25% of their total capacity and they give less than .00001% in community benefit, whether it is through taxes to the county, city, or its donations to non-profit organizations.[90]

Though these figures are opinions, Chevron pours a tremendous amount of money into the community from philanthropy, corporate sponsorship of community events and groups, and 'astroturf' community organizations, all of which began in the second half of the 20th century during the 'company bought town' stage of community relations. These mechanisms embed Chevron into the community and makes the company visible in the everyday life of residents, thereby fortifying the refinery by increasing its community economic identity and invokes the city's dependency on the facility.

Chevron, often partnering with other community organizations, gives back to the community through events that are consistently broadcast in the local media. "This here is propaganda," proclaims Ms. Harvey as she handed me a backpack – a green drawstring tote bag made of cheap materials – that Chevron gave out to community children along with other school

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[89] Field Notes. City Commissioner Meeting. July 9th, 2014.
[90] Interview with Stephanie Harvey. July 14th, 2014.

supplies at the Bay Area Rescue Mission Back to School Block Party.[91] She continued to explain

how it was incapable of functioning as a backpack because its size and poor quality. Furthermore,

she conveyed that she and her kids felt like cows being herded in the heat of the summer, waiting

for hours in line that were seemingly militarized by Chevron to ensure everyone received only

one package. Stephanie expounded, "what they do is try and create this sense of desperation for

the people before they partake or accept this gift. It's very demeaning to me. It is another

dependency tactic."[92] Moreover, Greg Sampson* elaborated this further:

> "They always come out and give out free stuff. They bought out most of the
> town, they own most of the property… Richmond is maintained by Chevron so they can
> do what they want to. It would look too criminal to not give so they have to give. But
> what they give out is silly stuff that costs them nothing when they can do real things to
> help the community."[93]

It is African American residents who already feel that they are "the last on the totem pole for

resources so [they] have to fight and struggle to get stuff"[94] that are impacted the most by these

dependency tactics and feel the most exploited by Chevron Richmond. This side of the story of

Chevron's philanthropy is ignored in the representations of these events in media and showcases

the superficiality of such sponsorships and donations.

Community groups and events are also supported by Chevron through corporate

sponsorship, donation of equipment, and volunteerism by employees. Born-and-raised Richmond

resident Allison Stone* expressed that Chevron is involved in the community through funding

and sponsoring that enables them to "be a presence here. They help out with so much stuff that

we do, you know. I would like to think of how there are a lot of things that would not happen in

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[91] Interview and personal narrative with Stephanie Harvey. July 14th, 2014.
[92] Interview and personal narrative with Stephanie Harvey. July 14th, 2014.
[93] Interview and personal narrative with Greg Sampson*. July 19th, 2014.
[94] Interview and personal narrative with Greg Sampson*. July 19th, 2014.

this city if they weren't here."[95] Allison* and other residents communicated that Chevron gives

$500 to neighborhood associations and community groups, and, in return, a Chevron employee

attends all the groups' meetings. The sponsorship helps neighborhood associations to host events

like picnics and music festivals. As a result, community events like the North Richmond Music

Festivals and Richmond Juneteenth festivals become branded by Chevron, as their sponsorship

not only earns them a spot on all the promotional material for the event, but the event itself

becomes a Chevron-filled canvas with their logo covering the stage, shade tents, and their own

promotional booth gifting Chevron-branded goodies to residents to tote around in trademarked

bags. Elizabeth Caldwell* noted:

> it is discouraging to see how much that influences people. They give money to somebody who has got a community project going, that is someone who knows a lot of people and they are going to be chatting with their friends saying, 'Oh, and we got this money from Chevron. Isn't that nice how wonderful they are?'[96]

These corporate sponsorships, therefore, become embedded in the physical and social landscape

of the community.

Chevron also has its hand in astroturf community organizations to further reinforce their

community economic identity as the backbone of the community and a job provider, regardless

of the limited jobs they offer to community residents. In the process, Ms. Harvey asserted,

> They target the disadvantaged communities with the money and the programs… giving to the most desperate organizations in the disadvantaged communities of color that do not care about the health impacts as much as they care about the money. They are still promising these jobs that they know that there is a small, select amount of them and they are promising them to people who they know can't get the job.[97]

One such example is *For Richmond,* an astroturf non-profit organization funded by Chevron with

principle tenants for jobs, health, safety, and education that align with the construction of their

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[95] Interview with Allison Stone*. July 30th, 2014.
[96] Interview with Elizabeth Caldwell*. July 16th, 2014.
[97] Interview with Stephanie Harvey. July 14th, 2014.

community economic identity. Throughout the public hearings, vulnerable community residents who were promised jobs through *For Richmond* donning 'Richmond Proud' Chevron t-shirts exclaimed, "For Richmond paid by dues to get back into the union!," "For Richmond and Chevron, thank you so much for supporting me!," "Thank you Chevron for sponsoring me so I can now work!," "They helped me with everything from my boots on my feet to my tools!"[98] City commissioners and councilors questioned Chevron about the amount and type of jobs the modernization project would offer since various numbers were being floated around. Moreover, a city commissioner claimed, "access to higher paid jobs, higher levels jobs… We are concerned about that in your company. We want our middle class back!"[99] Though Chevron retorted with the various community programs and sponsorships they provide, another commissioner maintained, "Some of your programs are not working. We need to do more to make sure Richmond residents can move up your corporate ladder."[100] While Chevron and its astroturf organizations tout that the company has remained the city's largest private employer since after the war years, the company tries to obscure how its historical discriminatory practices are maintained through a hierarchical hiring scheme in which Richmond residents of color are predominantly hired for unskilled, labor-intensive positions that lack mobility within the company.

All these public relations campaigns that depict Chevron's community economic identity as the good neighbor and backbone of the community are reinforced through the company's own various publication outlets like the *Richmond Standard* – online "community driven news" "to

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[98] Field notes. City Planning Commission Meetings and City Council Meetings. July 9th, July 10th, July 22nd, and July 29th.
[99] Field notes. City Planning Commission Meeting. July 10th, 2014.
[100] Field notes. City Planning Commission Meeting. July 10th, 2014.

provide a voice for Chevron Richmond on civic issues"[101] – and *Richmond Today* – a Chevron

Richmond publication mailed to every resident. While the majority of residents I spoke too from

all racial and economic backgrounds described these publications as propaganda, Robert*

believed that they were a part of "the new face of Chevron."[102] Robert* elaborated further that,

"since they have opened up a dialogue with this newsletter, they seem like they are approachable.

It seems like they are friendly. It has changed my attitude towards them."[103]

Other platforms to produce positive attitudes towards Chevron supplemented those

promotional materials as a means to heighten the perception of transparency. Archival research

and interviews demonstrate that the company continues to host town halls and open houses

because, as one Chevron employee said, "you can't talk about some place you've never been."[104]

Shenice Williams*, a health promoter in the city, explained that "they host town hall meetings

and discuss how they are keeping the environment clean."[105] Additionally, Trisha Banks*

explained how she served on the Refinery Community Advisory Committee for about 6-9 years.

She expressed that it was a good mechanism because "people are able to tell what's going on and

for people to give their input."[106] These outreach efforts demonstrate not only how the company

uses these transparency events to promote fixed discourses that elevate the company while

directly challenging resilience narratives of community organizations. Moreover, they exemplify

how the company has addressed calls for transparency and democratic participation by providing

platforms in which the community can feel involved.

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[101] http://richmondstandard.com
[102] Personal narrative with Robert Evans*. June 8th, 2015.
[103] Personal narrative with Robert Evans.* June 24th, 2015.
[104] Field note. Richmond Planning Commission Meeting. July 9th, 2014.
[105] Interview with Shenice Williams*. July 7th, 2017.
[106] Interview and personal narrative with Trisha Banks. August 1st, 2017.

Chevron's public relations and corporate social responsibility campaigns – which

germinated during the second stage and amplified during the third stage of corporate community

relations – range from community partnerships, sponsorship of community events and

organizations, astroturf organizations, promotional materials, and transparency events. All these

processes collectively engage with residents and serve to embed Chevron into the social

landscape and everyday life of Richmond residents. While residents and the city are dependent

upon Chevron for the economic goods and services they provide through taxes and these forms

of corporate spending, some residents and local government officials are wary of the influence

this has in the community. No one says it better than two-time consecutive Richmond major

Gayle McLaughlin who explained:

> Well, what Chevron tends to do is to provide money, contributions, grant money to
> certain non-profits to buy their support but it is a quid pro quo type of a thing. They have
> to allow Chevron to use their name and their non-profit's project that Chevron has funded
> in Chevron's propaganda. It is a not like a giving, you know, a generosity for the sake of
> generosity. They use it, they use the name of the non-profit, the non-profit directors have
> to do a press conference with the Chevron logo all over it, you know, and often their
> pictures are focused on Chevron's campaign materials that they put out to propagandize
> themselves as a good neighbor. We always love the... There are many non-profits we
> have in the city. Some of them refuse money from Chevron and they are the ones that
> have more of a political consciousness. Others, you know, non-profits are suffering these
> days, so it is not like I am angry that they are doing what they are doing but I am more
> angry at Chevron because they are using the type of the support they get, the little support
> that they give to get the support from these non-profits for Chevron's misinformation and
> portraying themselves as such a great neighbor to Richmond even though they explode
> every few years and they don't hire enough of our residents, and they are the largest
> greenhouse gas emitter in the state, and over decades, our community has had epidemic
> rates of cancer and asthma and heart disease, especially around the refinery. All the
> problems they have caused us somehow get diminished and they put themselves out there
> as some great benefactor of Richmond, but the fact is they have perks.[107]

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[107] Interview with Gayle McLaughlin. April 16th, 2016.

Conclusion

> *"Chevron is cornerstone of economy and, in my ways, the social environment. They are joined at the hip if they like it or not."*
> - Eric Zell, Richmond native and Chevron lobbyist[108]

> *"Thank you, Richmond, for recognizing the value of partnership."*
> - Chevron Richmond representative[109]

In this chapter, I argued that there are three distinct phases of corporate community

relations defined by multi-scalar tensions that impact local level interaction between the

company and the community. These three stages are marked by the dialectical relationship

between the Chevron Richmond and residents' perceptions of and reactions to the firm itself.

The hallmark of the company town phase is the happy-go-lucky corporate family in which white

employees and their families' lives revolved around the company on and off the clock. The

quelling of concerns championed for by social movement advocates through changed

employment practices and the proliferation of corporate sponsored programs and financing of

community education, events, and organizations – in addition to control over local government

which is covered in-depth in the next chapter – is indicative of the corporate bought town. These

practices that germinated during the corporate bought town stage continue to carry-on in the

circumscribed-collaboration town, but at an intensified rate. Furthermore, the telltale

characteristic of the circumscribed-collaboration town is the rise of apparent democratic

practices for stakeholder engagement including community benefits agreements, open houses,

and various committee and meeting participation. Together, these stages are emblematic of the

ways in which Chevron Richmond adapts its corporate community relations strategies in

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[108] Interview and personal narrative with Eric Zell. July 31st, 2017
[109] Fieldnote from Richmond Juneteenth Festival. June 20th, 2015. Judges for the parade included a Chevron representative. The representative from Chevron was the one who announced the winner of the parade. One of the announcers then granted Chevron Richmond with a certificate because of their sponsorship of the event throughout the years to which the representative responded with the statement above.

accordance to community opposition, whether it be residents' perceptions of the firm or organized activism against the facility itself.

The company town phase itself lacks in active campaigning efforts on behalf of Chevron to garner the 'social license to operate.' Ironically, the diversity of employment opportunities in the thriving industrial sector up to and during the war years helped bolster positive perceptions of Chevron. It was not until after deindustrialization when Chevron returned to being the largest private sector employer in the city did tensions start emerge in conjunction with the civil rights and environmental and environmental justice movements. Residents who were employed at the company, predominantly white, lived lives completely encapsulated by the refinery as work and play were all cultivated by the company in those early years. This paternalistic approach is characterized by the ways in which employees and residents are part of the Standard Oil family and Standard Oil is for families.

Company town sentiments by those whose families integrated into the Chevron family during the first stage not only linger regardless of lack of current benefits, but are also amplified during times of when pressure is placed on the firm. William Smith* reasons that "working class neighborhoods have affection for Chevron. They had worked for them."[110] Inequitable employment opportunities exposed amidst growing national fights for civil rights led to changed practices of who can be a part of the Standard Oil family. While women and people of color began working at the refinery, the hierarchical division of labor continued to separate predominantly people of color from whites. Unskilled, labor intensive positions with little to no room for upward mobility in the company were and remain to be the only or the predominant opportunities available to people of color.

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[110] Interview with William Smith*. June 26th, 2017.

It is during the second and third stages when Chevron ramps up efforts to explicitly elicit their social license to operate. The proliferation of "good neighbor" actions as a means to highlight the ways in which the company is providing and caring for surrounding communities arose in the second stage and have greatly expanded in the third. Two of the largest endeavors that began in this period were interventions in education – and, therefore employment – and sponsorships and donations for local community organizations. Educational and job training programs have continued throughout the decades, but the same issues still remain: people of color, the majority of Richmond and North Richmond, are not receiving jobs that allow for movement up in the company. Some residents like Helen Huang* felt that Chevron Richmond's efforts to change this issue is rather holistic: "Chevron doesn't employ enough people, but you don't have the people here. It ain't easy to hire undereducated people which is why they have invested in the education here."[111] What Helen is referring to, though, is the Richmond Promise program, a community-wide college scholarship fund and college success initiative, a program that city council had negotiated for during the 2014 Chevron Richmond Modernization Project and corresponding community benefits agreement. While it was the efforts of galvanized residents that advocated for Chevron to take responsibility, Chevron Richmond is granted positive perceptions and praise.

The amount of sponsorships and donations that Chevron provides for the city and North Richmond has grown considerably over the decades, leading to both positive and negative reactions from residents. Born-and-raised residents regardless of race or socio-economic background who have lived through the trials and tribulations of engaging with company view it through a more positive dependency lens. City Councilmember Jael Myrick, for example, explained:

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[111] Personal narrative and interview with Helen Huang* June 23rd, 2017.

You've got to look at it with an opportunity point of view with the things like their training programs. They are a player in the community that provides… They provide major funds in the community and they have the incentive to support community and reach out and invest.[112]

In fact, it was Myrick's work negotiating during the modernization project that the Richmond Promise Program was added to the community benefits agreement. This perception that the community can garner support for much needed resources and support from the company does not come without concern though.

Chevron's approach of funding and sponsoring various institutions throughout the city has cultivated a community fighting for a slice of the pie while only receiving the crumbs. While it is mainly residents who have moved to Richmond over the past decade or two that express the most discontent with Chevron and challenge the company wholeheartedly, long-term residents agree that all the increased spending to help with community and economic development from Chevron is a type of guilt money. William Smith*, a white activist resident, insists, "it is just pittance money, the cheap way to develop community relations."[113] Regardless of these perceptions, the majority of residents strike a hard balance of recognizing the dependency on the firm and how much their funding does for the community while chastising it for not addressing community issues appropriately. Trisha Banks* conveys that "People feel good about getting money, but it doesn't change anything. It's sad too because there is so much fighting for such a small slice of the pie."[114] Moreover, Brian Hunter* explicated in more depth the "many good things" that all the charitable contributions do for the city, but questions, "Chevron uses its money in a smart way. Is that corruption? That's the problem… people are grateful for the

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[112] Interview with Jael Myrick. July 15th, 2017.
[113] Interview with William Smith*. June 26th, 2017.
[114] Interview and personal narrative with Trisha Banks*. August 1st, 2017.

crumbs."[115] It is this fine line for which Chevron is "simultaneously a crutch and yet is

constantly vilified."[116]

This fine line is the trademark of the circumscribed-collaboration town. While the

strategies and tactics of increased corporate community relations of visibility through

sponsorships, donations, and organizations have continued to provide for the city and its

residents, Chevron's efforts are all determined and defined by the company itself. This is part of

the reason why residents express grievances about the company's corporate social responsibility,

because their efforts only reflect the company's attempts to promote their own self-image as a

good neighbor rather than affecting real change to drive community and economic development.

Residents from all backgrounds expressed that "the problem is that they have the wealth and they

choose who gets support and who doesn't"[117] and that "they target specific organizations and

people"[118] so that "the same entities get the same funding over and over again," [119] often larger

non-profits rather than small grassroots organizations.

Moreover, the fine line of the circumscribed-collaboration town extends to the increased

measures by Chevron Richmond for community and stakeholder engagement and participation.

While the company has added opportunities for input by residents and local government officials

at large, final decisions are still in the hands of Chevron. Community organizations, concerned

residents, and effective government officials have been able to use points of leverage like the

Chevron Modernization Project to push for higher environmental health and safety and for

additional support for community and economic development, but ultimately, the extent of these

[115] Interview with Brian Hunter. July 13th, 2017.
[116] Fieldnote from City of Richmond Community Engagement Plan of Draft Strategic Action Plan community workshop for the Richmond Promise Program on June 8th, 2015. Quote from discussion with a concerned resident and meeting attendee.
[117] Interview with Brian Hunter*. July 13th, 2017.
[118] Interview and personal narrative with Davina Thompson*. June 19th, 2017.
[119] Interview and personal narrative with Anthony Armstrong*. July 18th, 20217.

were confined by what the company was willing to do, often by offering limited and restrictive support and resources. The refinery did, however, concede to organizing pressures to improve environmental health and safety by decreasing sulfur treatment capacity to half of what was originally requested, a physical cap on total refinery greenhouse gas emissions to baseline levels, no net increase in criteria air pollutant emissions and toxic air contaminants, and a stringent safety program, including community and county monitoring and reliability reviews, in addition to project components and design features that serve as mitigation measures (Ioffee and Bay Area News Group 2015).[120] Chevron Richmond, however, decides the extent to which they give and then flip the language of failure and inadequacy back on the city and take credit for the positive things in the CBA as their initiative even though they emerged from negotations with social movement actors. As such, Chevron representatives are able to promote collaboration while simultaneously censuring the city for implementation of their own curbed contributions like when a Chevron Richmond representative discussing the $90 million community benefits agreement with North Richmond residents exclaimed:

> We… I say that collaboratively… We were able to have the city recognize North Richmond. We, I mean us, have to continue to apply pressure on the city to make sure that the money and programs make their way here and are spent appropriately.[121]

It is with this that I argue that circumscribed collaboration encapsulates the ways that corporations employ stakeholder engagement and benefits, but on their own terms.

All in all and regardless of tensions, the degree to which Chevron is considered the city's saving grace rings strong across all racial and class lines and rings true today as it did during the Great Depression. Trisha Banks*, for example, communicated that:

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[120] Also covered in a presentation by Chevron Richmond entitled "Richmond Refinery Modernization Project Update" on May 28th, 2015. (https://cchealth.org/hazmat/hmc/pdf/2015-0717-HMC-presentation.pdf)
[121] Fieldnote from a North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council Meeting. August 13th, 2014.

It used to be a place where all the employees lived in Richmond or immediate surrounding areas. I would prefer that. It was good for families, good for the community. Lots of higher execs have lived in Richmond and promote that.[122]

Even though no one in Trisha's* family had directly benefited from employment or amenities provided by Chevron because of their race, she still believed that their impact provided strength for the community at large. It is these conceptions that Chevron Richmond capitalizes on throughout each stage of corporate community relations that enables them to elicit their social license to operate.

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[122] Interview and personal narrative with Trisha Banks*. August 1st, 2017.

CHAPTER 3

Transition Management vs. the Status Quo:
A White Privilege Duo

Introduction

> *"These people on City Council have more power over our lives than people in Washington"*[123]
> – Tricia Banks, born-and-raised Richmond resident

Environmental justice literature, as mentioned in other chapters, clearly demonstrates how vulnerable communities often lack the political power to defend themselves against environmental hazards in decision-making making processes. Richmond provides an interesting case study to explore political decision making in an environmental justice context for two reasons: 1) the petro-political strategies employed by Chevron to infiltrate and control city politics and 2) the multi-scalar environmental justice grassroots organizing fighting to reclaim and reorient local government. Petro-political strategies highlighted at the Chevron Richmond are both experimental and demonstrative of tactics utilized by large-scale, immobile industrial polluters at the local level to mediate community relations. Such investigations are crucial given that these practices are adopted and utilized across the globe at other petro-production sites. Additionally, it's vital to understand how the dialectical relationship between community organizing and corporate practices shifts when the local governance structure shifts from corporate confidants to civic-minded movement activists.

This chapter explores how varied environmental risk perception is linked with politicized racialization as demographic changes over time have influenced not only regional racial hierarchies, but also perceptions of exposure and political responses to contamination. Given the intersection of vulnerability in Richmond — minority majority, debt-ridden city with high rates

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[123] Interview and personal narrative with Trisha Banks. August 1st, 2017.

of unemployment, under-education, poverty — there exists a polarization between those who are politically active with the Richmond Progressive Alliance and those who are complacent as issues pertinent to the everyday such as making rent or paying for groceries take precedence over political action against Chevron and environmental injustices. While Richmond has been put on the map for its progressive politics by major journalists like Rachel Maddow and Bill Moyers and political leaders like Bernie Sanders, residents have a different opinion on the growing power that the RPA has over local government and decision-making. This chapter elucidates on the contradictions that emerge when newer, white, wealth residents fighting for social justice are seen as amplifying or neglecting social justice by long-term residents from different backgrounds.

Specifically exploring the political landscape of Richmond during the circumscribed collaboration phase of corporate community relations, this chapter explores changes in Chevron's corporate strategies for political influence and the rise of the Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA), a coalition of concerned residents and community organizations seeking to reclaim political control, especially after the 2012 Chevron Richmond explosion and fire galvanized residents more than ever before.

Theoretical Framework

While other chapters cover the basic theoretical tenants of environmental justice, this chapter focuses on theory that investigates the nuances of activism in these vulnerable communities. Specifically, this chapter aims to expand the environmental justice literature by theorizing the fracturing that occurs in communities when temporal racial histories are taken into account and when multi-scalar organizations are present. Moreover, by focusing on the active local level efforts of a corporation to take control of city government, this chapter also expands the environmental justice literature by demonstrating the tactics and strategies employed by

corporations at the micro-level to shift environmental risk perception and to garner influence over local decision-making processes.

Given that risk, risk communication, and risk perception are socially and culturally constructed (Wildavsky and Dake 1990; Beck 1992; Giddens 1990), inequality, vulnerability, exposure, and other sociopolitical factors such as power, status, alienation, and trust produce a 'societal inequality effect' (Oloffson and Rashid 2011) and an 'ethnicity effect' (Vaughan and Nordenstam 1991) that explains the variance in people's perceptions of environmental risk along racial and socio-economic lines where people of color and the poor perceive higher levels of risk (Flynn et al. 1994; Mohai and Bryant 1998; Jones 1998; Kalof et al. 2002). This is compounded by differential racialization and consequent politicization of different groups and how they seek to address and challenge environmental injustices, whether it be from targeting polluters in their own neighborhoods or focusing on global climate change (Cole and Foster 2001; Pulido 2002, 2006).

It is important to consider these differences in politicization when studying the proliferation of a new wave of environmental justice organizing focused on radical, systemic changes by directly challenging petro-capitalism. Many environmental justice organizations are seeking to create an ecological democracy, an alternative democratic model that incorporates interested and affected citizens into environmental decision-making and that does not systematically concentrate negative externalities (Agyeman et al. 2003; Mitchell 2006; Faber 1998). The struggle for ecological democracy represents the birth of a transformative environmental politics (Faber and O'Connor 1988; Dowie 1995) against socio-technical regimes like Chevron that have emerged "through the interaction between the actors and institutions involved in creating and reinforcing a particular technological system and [acquired] social

stability and resistance to change" (Foxon et al. 2009: 5; Kemp et al. 2007; Geels 2002). The maintenance of such petro-capital systems includes the control of political-decision making and governance through revolving door positions, political corruption, and corporate cronies that have also often lead to declining trust and civic engagement (Faber 1998; Pellow 2001). Transformative environmental politics have given rise to just transition movements that seek to radically change energy systems from fossil fuel to alternative sources and actively works to redress the structural issues that produce environmental and climate injustices (Bulkeley 2005; Bulkeley and Betsill 2013).

Challenging such regimes are forms of transition management, which is a systems-thinking, participatory policy-making, multi-scalar governance approach has the ability to steer and shape changes and functions of socio-technical regimes for long-term sustainability goals and for the realization of ecological democracy and a just transition (Adger 2001; Smith and Stirling 2010; Walker et al. 2004; Foxon et al. 2009). The growth of transition management depends on a 'transition arena' which is a 'a group of people that reach consensus with each other about the need and opportunity for systemic change, and co-ordinate amongst themselves to promote and develop an alternative' (van der Brugge and van Raak 2007: 33). I argue that the environmental justice movement in Richmond, specifically the Richmond Progressive Alliance and Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition, is a transition arena that has been working to achieving ecological democracy at the local level. While energy studies research has discussed and developed these theories, there have been calls for the expansion of and crucial need of social science research on the subject, better exploration of how these transitions are realized on the ground, and the clear definition of the linkages with the environmental justice movement (Sovacool 2014; Holland 2017).

Environmental justice social movement organizing focuses on increasing bridging capital (Aldrich 2012) between residents, organizations, and government bodies to achieve ecological democracy with participatory decision-making procedures where affected populations receive representation and recognition (Young 1990, 2000; Fraser 1997, 2000; Szreter 2002; Schlosberg 2004). Moreover, transition scholars have been pushing a capabilities approach that not only recognizes vulnerable populations' abilities to shape decisions, but also focuses on human agency rather than extent of vulnerability (Farbotko and Lazrus 2012; Holland 2008; Schlosberg 2012, 2013). Environmental justice organizing stresses the importance of building community capacity and cohesion by incorporating a range of movement goals to expand their constituency and facilitates community empowerment by engaging and equipping residents through inclusive grassroots organizing (Agyeman et al. 2003; Faber and McCarthy 2001). Furthermore, coalition building across multiple scales and across multiple groups within a community increases social interaction, enhances social capital, builds trust, fosters a sense of community and belonging, increases civic engagement and participation, and provides spaces for experimentation and innovation (Aldrich 2012; Folke et al. 2005; Putnam 2000; Dempsey et al. 2011).

The hopeful literatures surrounding resilience, transition, and justice highlight the successes that such movements have had, but often neglect to explore pitfalls and unintended consequences, or to be self-reflective. This chapter fills that gap by exploring community critiques of the progressive transition movement in Richmond to expose issues that emerge that have actually perpetuated some of the issues the movement is trying to challenge and that has further separated the community by driving tensions. Moreover, this literature often overlooks the impact that regional racial formation and consequential differential politicization on mobilization, place-making, and social cohesion, an issue that this chapter aims to address.

These social sources of resilience, transition, and justice are essential for communities

and cities to achieve resiliency, whether it be against environmental disasters or corporate control

over politics. This chapter will demonstrate how transition management has had an impact on

challenging corporate control of local government and on paving a path towards a just transition.

Additionally, this chapter challenges the celebratory nature of environmental justice and

resilience literatures by illuminating the ways in which such organizing can sometimes fracture

communities and breed mistrust and disdain of those groups.

Background

> *"There are core groups of people who do the work and they are not always united. There are always those who are paying attention and those who are just existing."* [124]
> – Dakota Marshall*, born-and-raised Richmond resident

Grassroots organizing for environmental health and justice is a challenging feat,

especially in the wake of active corporate campaigns aimed at maintaining the status quo.

Scholars have long demonstrated that environmental justice communities are vulnerable

communities that corporations find to be the "least likely to resist" due to their low-income, high

poverty, under-educated standing (Cable and Shriver 1995: Gibbs 2002; Guana 2012). While the

decades old movement has proliferated to a global scale, grassroots organizers at the local level

are still challenged in their efforts to bring about social cohesion due to the very factors of

vulnerability that made their communities targets in the first place.

A seeming sense of complacency is to be expected in these communities just as it is

found among the working-class communities of color in Richmond. African American residents

like Shenice Williams* explain that people are "just trying to survive in this neighborhood.

People are struggling to just maintain."[125] Latinx residents, most who immigrated since the

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[124] Interview with Dakota Marshall*. June 23rd, 2017.
[125] Interview with Shenice Williams*. July 7th, 2017.

1980s, like Marisol and Pedro Gonzales* elaborate that they "haven't paid much attention…

because we're always very busy."[126] For many of the residents in Richmond, the everyday

struggle to make ends meet takes precedent over political action.

Environmental risk perception varied in Richmond depending on duration of time in city,

connections to Chevron, race and ethnicity, and socio-economic standing. Those grappling with

issues such as making rent and feeding the family often exhibited a willful ignorance to

environmental harm and exposure with language that discounted injury. Echoes that Chevron

"*maybe* causing health issues"[127] because "there is always the risk of pollution"[128] were

surprisingly consistent between working class communities of color in Richmond *and* white

middle-class residents with historical familial ties to refinery. Even in the case of families with

histories of asthma, these residents often associate their health issues to other contaminants in the

community, primarily exhaust from the freeways that border Richmond – a common conception

that Chevron Richmond itself perpetuates.[129]

Those with the highest risk perceptions were residents of North Richmond and those who

were politically active with environmental justice activism. Given that North Richmond sits

across the street from the refinery, it is no surprise that residents, both born-and-raised and new

to the community, expressed concern about emissions and health impacts. Robert Evans*, having

had grown up with severe asthma and recently diagnosed with lung cancer – the most common

cause of cancer in the county, expressed frustration that Chevron refuses to take responsibility or

acknowledge their role in producing the area's health problems regardless of air monitoring and

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[126] Interview with Marisol and Pedro Gonzalez*. July 12th, 2014.
[127] Interview and personal narrative with Davina Thompson*. June 19th, 2017.
[128] Personal narrative and interview with Helen Huang* June 23rd, 2017.
[129] Interview and personal narratives with Allison Stone* (July 30th, 2014) and Trisha Banks* (August 1st, 2017) and fieldnotes from city planning commission and city council meetings (July 9th, 10th, 22nd, and 29th, 2014).

the health disparities in the area.[130] The high rates of pulmonary disorders, prostate and lung

cancer, and asthma, especially in North Richmond, drive high risk perceptions as residents like

Greg Sampson* declare, "we gotta clean up because we are poisoned by Chevron every day."[131]

These health disparities are what prompted the growth and expansion of the local and regional

environmental justice movement in Richmond and North Richmond, starting with localized

efforts in the 80s to a broad sweeping multi-scalar and international convenings against Chevron

Richmond.

While environmental risk perception and beliefs about Chevron's impact on health are

varied amongst Richmond's population, there exists a ubiquitous consternation about industrial

accidents because "if something happens, boom."[132] While residents who were born-and-raised

in Richmond can recollect a history of industrial accidents including the 1989 and 1999

explosions and fires, the 2012 incident completely shifted community perceptions about the

dangers of living next to the industrial giant. The 2012 explosion and fire enlivened the

perception of a looming, even larger accident that could happen at any time, "especially if

[Chevron] [is] making the refinery bigger and dirtier."[133] Moreover, it galvanized residents

newer to the city as their experience in 2012 left them "scared to death."[134]

Many residents connected Chevron's industrial accidents and continued emissions to

their control over city government, especially since Chevron Richmond spent over $3 million in

the local election immediately following the 2012 fire. Such concerted efforts by Chevron to

maintain their hold over local decision-making bodies, compounded by the 2012 explosion,

initiated a mobilization of resistance for resilience to extend beyond those who were already

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[130] Interview and personal narrative with Robert Evans* on June 8th and June 24th, 2015.
[131] Personal narrative with Greg Sampson*. July 19th, 2014.
[132] Interview with Camila Rodrigues*. July 25th, 2014.
[133] Personal narrative with Elizabeth Caldwell* on July 16th, 2014.
[134] Fieldnote from North Richmond Community Workshop #2 on July 21st, 2015.

politically active in Richmond to residents at large. While everyday exposure was often

overlooked by residents, industrial accidents at the refinery have prompted a new wave of

involvement, spurring movement and coalition building across community organizations that has

attempted to increase social cohesion and self-determination in Richmond and North Richmond.

Consequently, the transition arena working to achieve an ecological democracy in Richmond

have been waging fights against global climate injustice.

Background

This chapter will explore the various ways in which Chevron and the Richmond

Progressive Alliance have aimed to control local politics, whether it be during elections for seats

on government bodies or through public meetings where decision-making about the city and

Chevron's operations are negotiated. Residents expressed the various ways in which they

believed Chevron had control over local politics over the decades, even more so during the first

stage of fieldwork which overlapped with the local election. In addition to the numerous "tricky

tactics" Chevron had employed during electioneering, Richmond residents and extra-local

environmental justice activists expressed concern over what they considered to a corrupt group

of Black EJ activists and local government officials, Black and white, who have been 'bought

out by Chevron.' Moreover, a coalition of concerned residents and community organizations

started the Richmond Progressive Alliance to be the political machine that directly challenged

Chevron for control over local government. The RPA, though, has been greatly criticized by

residents who feel that their own needs and concerns have been overlooked because of the

RPA's ideological agenda and political actions.

Chevron and the Political Landscape

Good Old Boy Network

> *"Politically there is a good ol' boy network. You have to know people. It consists of people like Nat Bates and that crew… There is a good ol' boy club around economics. Tom Butts is part of the Chevron family, an opportunist. Eric Zell is part of it as well."*[135]
> – Eduardo Martinez, Richmond city council member

Council member Bates, Mayor Butt, and Chevron consultant Zell are part of what residents consider a "good ol' boy network" that interconnects the city's political and economic power players with the corporation. It is this network that has enabled Chevron to embed directly into Richmond's political landscape as they had maintained control over city government through corporate collaborators in council, commission, and other city offices. "People are being bought and paid for by Chevron and they don't really take care of us… take care of our health because of that,"[136] voiced Sylvia White who has lived in Richmond for over sixty years. Multiple residents articulated this concern and discussed which commissioners and councilors they believed to be bought out by Chevron, what impact this had on the community and decision-making, and how the modernization decision would replicate the similar patterns of buy-outs they had seen time and time again. Residents' indications of who on these councils were bought rang true when it came to voting time.

Good old boys networks have long been understood as informal systems that retain power and money through insular communities, often theorized in terms of white male privilege (McDonald 2011; Moore 2008). In the case of Richmond, the good old boys network consists of people entangled with and promoting the corporate interests of Chevron through active intervention in local governance. While Chevron's holding of local government seats has long

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[135] Interview and personal narrative with Eduardo Martinez. June 29th, 2017.
[136] Interview with Sylvia White. July 21st, 2014.

been documented, the shift in corporate strategies in the third stage of corporate community relations needs to be explored more in-depth.

"By the 2000s, the city was run by a clique controlled by the police union with Chevron support,"[137] proclaimed Brian Hunter*, a political activist involved with the RPA. Residents and Brian alike aired concerns about the massive debt the city had amounted during the years in which "Chevron used to have the Chev 5, such a hold on city government,"[138] in addition to the ways in which these cronies would enable pass things favorable for the company, including proposals for changes at the facility.

This network extended throughout the business community from the unions, city council positions, and lobbyists. Of most recent concern to residents is Tom Butt who was elected Mayor in 2014. In the eyes of politically active residents, Tom Butt is an elite white male involved in networks connected with shady corporate practices associated with Chevron, especially as he prides himself on being on the only councilmember with a business in Richmond. Additionally, skepticism about Butt was accentuated in city council meetings covering the city's housing crisis as Butt opposed residents and other council members who were fighting for rent control and just cause eviction ordnances. Residents contended that Butt owned and rented a number of properties he acquired during the foreclosure crises in the city and was, therefore, attempting to protect measures then enable him to exploit vulnerable residents for high rent profits. Moreover, residents expressed grave concern about Butt's elite standing not only because he lives in Point Richmond, but he seemed to only represent the interests of wealthier, white residents of Point Richmond.

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[137] Interview with Brian Hunter*. July 13th, 2017.
[138] Fieldnote from "The Making of a Progressive City" event with Steve Early and Marvin Willis, hosted by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society on July 13th, 2017. Quote from Marvin Willis.

Given the rising platform and support of the Richmond Progressive Alliance that was also situated in Point Richmond, Tom Butt took a progressive stance to align his platform with the RPA to win the mayoral seat. Residents like Henry Clark described the growing issues they have had with Butt since he started serving on the city council in 1995:

> Tom Butt has a reputation for only being concerned for primarily white rich people in Point Richmond. Everyone knows that is where Tom is coming from. Tom Butt, even though he voted for the modernization project, even though he does some progressive things, to lay it out for you honestly, Tom Butt has always been viewed as pretty much a racist who is not concerned for anyone other than white people who live out in Point Richmond. That is the perception of Tom Butt since he has been on the City Council. He hasn't denied it.[139]

Moreover, residents who had voted for Butt because of his progressive platform expressed discontent over his actions as they believed it to be clear that Butt was not only collaborating with Chevron, but utilizing the good ol' boys network to improve his own business dealings.

In addition to having seats on local government, residents expressed great concern over the influence that Chevron's lobbyist had on local politics. While chastised for being a Chevron lobbyist by concerned residents and the RPA, Eric Zell, principal associate of his own government relations and public affairs consulting firm Zell & Associates, described himself as a consultant for Chevron who is a "facilitator" or "political therapist" between the firm and local government.[140] As a born-and-raised resident, Zell explained that he is a negotiator "working for win-win solutions that will be a benefit to the refinery and the community because Chevron still needs to bring benefits to the community."[141] In his efforts to "help [Chevron] be a better corporate citizen,"[142] Zell is actively involved in a network that residents and activists view as

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[139] Personal correspondence with Henry Clark. October 21st, 2014.
[140] Interview and personal narrative with Eric Zell. July 31st, 2017.
[141] Interview and personal narrative with Eric Zell. July 31st, 2017.
[142] Interview and personal narrative with Eric Zell. July 31st, 2017.

active good old boys network maintaining Chevron's status quo at the expense of the city's economic and ecological well-being.

In addition to more in-house members to Chevron's elite white space are city council members who residents believe are "bought out by Chevron" to do the company's bidding and vote in the company's favor. Of most recent notoriety is Nat Bates, who has long been considered a Chevron corporate crony who has been on City Council for many terms. Residents echo the concerns like Elizabeth Caldwell conveyed, "I think [Chevron] practically owns Nat Bates outright" [143] because many believe, as Henry Clark said, "he has always been in the industry's pocket"[144] since he was first elected in 1967. Such speculation comes with good reason as Chevron spent more than $3 million to back Bates in the 2014 mayor's race, leading to Bates' face being showcased on city billboards and on numerous mailers sent to every Richmond resident. While residents chastise what they feel is flagrant corporate cronyism, Bates argues he is preserving the political representation of working-class African Americans – a population that has experienced an extraordinary 10% population decline in Richmond over the past decade.

Henry Clark, the first environmental justice activist in North Richmond who galvanized the community to fight against pollution and harm, has similarly been considered to be corrupted by Chevron. While Henry has never served on any seats in local government, it is his influence in the community that residents and local and extra-local community organizers have expressed concern about. Some residents expressed the tension that, "Henry Clark was a visionary in a way. He was helping address the black people challenges of the 21st century, but then [Chevron] started paying him through a foundation."[145]Additionally, Henry's support of the Chevron

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[143] Interview and personal narrative with Elizabeth Caldwell*. July 16th, 2014.
[144] Personal correspondence with Henry Clark. November 11th, 2014.
[145] Personal narrative with Robert Evans*. June 24th, 2015.

modernization project during the proposal period discussions in 2014 was seen as evidence that he "sold out" and "received money from Chevron."

It is with these corporate cronies, consultants, and seemingly coerced community members in high political positions that residents explain that Chevron has embedded the political landscape of Richmond. Chevron's direct intervention in local politics stems beyond these seats of power to various tactics that invade the everyday life of residents. With the growing lack of direct political power through corporate cronyism in Richmond, Chevron has increased "dirty tactics" as a way to influence the community.

<u>"Dirty Tactics"</u>

> I've developed a pretty powerful mistrust of Chevron. A lot of it comes from the way they try to control local politics and the very dirty tactics they use for doing stuff. My overall impression of their behavior suggests that they will lie and mislead anytime that they can get away with it.[146]
> – Elisabeth Caldwell, Richmond resident newcomer who is actively involved with the Richmond Progressive Alliance

"Totally bought and sold! A bunch of prostitutes around us! Totally disgusting! Bought and sold! It is sickening! They believe their own advertising. It is sickening!" exclaimed an enraged resident of the East Bay who had moved away from Richmond a year prior so that her daughter wouldn't have to breathe the fumes from the refinery.[147] Residents' unease grew as the city hall auditorium filled with people decking Chevron's 'Richmond Proud' regalia ranging from shirts to signs who were gifted food, drinks, bags, and t-shirts by the company in an adjacent room, just as they had done for all the other city meetings dealing with the modernization project. While one Richmond resident expressed that she was "concerned because about three-fourths of the people here were wrangled in by [Chevron],"[148] Stephanie Harvey

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[146] Interview with Elizabeth Caldwell. July 16th, 2014.
[147] Field notes. City Council Meeting on July 22nd, 2014
[148] Field Notes. City Commissioners Meeting. July 9th, 2014.

asserted that "that was Chevron's plot. To get a lot of people from the community who don't

work for them and sign up for public comment and take their slot."[149] Residents' perceptions of

Chevron's power over the political process is strong as one resident even expressed, "I am

amazed that this is even happening. I am surprised that Chevron hasn't found a way to not have

this happen,"[150] while referring to the public comment process. Though these concerns

demonstrate the growing concern of Chevron's possession of Richmond's political landscape,

other residents, particularly those involve with the Richmond Progressive Alliance, declare that

"[they] will not be threatened by corporate culture."[151]

> Stephanie Harvey further elaborated that:
>
> one of the most lethal things that Chevron does is introduce the talk, the dialogue. They twist the truth and they populate all the opponents with it. Chevron is giving them that rhetoric. They are easily manipulated. They pick people that are easily manipulated and have triggers.[152]

Chevron's rhetoric and discourse was echoed loud and clear throughout the public hearings as

both people who worked for Chevron and people thought to be bought out and manipulated by

Chevron parroted one another, expressing sentiments that depict Chevron as a safe neighbor and

backbone that provides the city with an abundance of money and jobs. These characterizations

ranged from overarching statements – like a refinery engineer who expressed that "Chevron is

part of the fabric of the community"[153] – to specific declarations that mapped onto their intense

public relations and modernization campaigns – like a bribed resident announcing, "as a resident,

I would feel a lot safer to have an oil refinery like Chevron modernize. It is just common

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149 Interview with Stephanie Harvey. July 14th, 2014.
150 Field Notes. City Council Meeting. July 22nd, 2014.
151 Field Notes. 2-year Anniversary Candle Light Vigil. August 6th, 2014.
152 Interview with Stephanie Harvey. July 14th, 2014.
153 Field Notes. City Commissioner Meeting. July 9th, 2014.

sense."[154] This tautology of Chevron's community economic identity is presented in the material they circulate and that carpet the city evokes a sense of Chevron's crucial standing the in community, creating a consciousness of dependency on Chevron.

As such, the reoccurrence of the not-so-veiled threat of Chevron leaving Richmond are heightened by these rosy pictures painted by Chevron employees and exploited residents. During the public comment periods, residents "bought" by Chevron echoed Chevron general manager Corey Judd's opening statement that the "extra conditions are unattainable to us. We want to continue paying taxes and hiring Richmond residents."[155] Public commenters sporting Chevron swag proclaimed that community groups and residents were "extorting" Chevron, "making Chevron run out of California with the extra conditions and Richmond will have to prepare for a huge economic crisis" or run to one of the "many other communities that would welcome the tax, money, and jobs that Chevron provides."[156] This perpetuation of dependency was echoed by the majority of the residents I interviewed – those who supported *and* opposed the modernization project – who explicated that Richmond would be poorer if Chevron left because of the economic support they provide the debt-ridden city, demonstrating how embedded the community economic identity is with residents.

Chevron has moved beyond "environmental blackmail" (Bullard 1992) because the mounting resistance and mobilization of environmental justice, environmental, and community groups against Chevron's pollution and political dominance. Though Chevron has yielded a strong grasp over city politics over the past century, their firm hold is slipping against the strength of community organizing. The company spent around $200 per Richmond resident, over $3 million, in the 2014 election – with billboards and mailers (including ones with recorded

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[154] Field Notes. City Commissioner Meeting. July 9th, 2014.
[155] Field notes. City Council Meeting. July 22nd, 2014.
[156] Field Notes. City Council Meeting. July 22nd, 2014.

campaign speeches) – in hopes of swinging the city council and planning commission to become majority bought by Chevron but lost to the Richmond Progressive Alliance slate that campaigned in numbers, on foot, and door-to-door. This increase in community opposition to the refinery over the past decades has led Chevron to embed itself into the community beyond political control through the mechanisms presented in chapter 4 during the circumscribed-collaboration stage of corporate community relations.

Richmond Progressive Alliance and the Political Landscape

In order to challenge both the potential environmental hazards generated by Chevron and the control over city politics that the company has maintained over the century it has been in operation, a group of concerned resident activists mobilized to take back control for and by the people by building on the legacy of environmental justice organizing in Richmond. Council member Gayle McLaughlin, one of the founding members of the Richmond Progressive Alliance and two-time mayor of Richmond explained;

> That was the problem for decades in Richmond. There were other groups that were trying to make progress but they hadn't gained... They did some really good things, but they were always stopped when it came to a vote on the City Council. They could only get so far and when they really wanted to push further to really accomplish what was needed, the votes weren't there so we realized that we could accomplish so much more if we had people sitting on that dais working directly, side by side, hearing the input, standing for the people's priorities versus for the corporations' priorities.[157]

In the fall of 2003, a group of 30 activist residents, including members of the West County Toxics Coalition and Communities for a Better Environment, started meeting together in one activist's living room to discuss how they could bring the city together. Together they founded the Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA), a local grassroots, non-partisan political group

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[157] Interview with Gayle McLaughlin. April 14th, 2016.

seeking to reclaim democracy in Richmond and remove the hold that Chevron has had on city decision-making.

Recognizing the lack of social capital and cohesion between residents and between different communities, the RPA aimed to develop a participatory democratic structure that would provide inclusionary spaces to engage and educate residents to not only increase civic engagement, but to increase social interaction and social capital. Moreover, the RPA wanted to strengthen ties between the various organizations working on a multitude of issues because they believed they were all linked together with the goal of making Richmond a better place. As such, they developed the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition (REJC) which is comprised of Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), California Nurses Association (CNA), 350 Bay Area, Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), and Urban Tilth. Missing from this coalition is the West County Toxics Coalition for reasons that weren't exposed during fieldwork or interviews, though later discussion of Henry Clark, founder of WCTC, illuminates some of the issues that may be cause to its absence. This broad-based, multi-scalar coalition brought together a large contingency of actors and organizations fighting different, but interconnected issues with a variety of resources, skills, and knowledge to the table. REJC itself, though, is more of an "on paper" coalition utilized for collective support of projects and policies and for collaboration, not an actively structured organization. By providing spaces for the community to participate, the RPA set the stage for bridging, bonding, and linking social capital (Aldrich 2012; Putnam 2000) that would increase residents' trust in each other, in community organizations, and, ultimately, local government.

While gearing up for their first election year in 2004, the RPA hosted a number of events so that residents and other community organizations would able to come together to actively participate in place-making – " a set of ideas about creating cities in ways that result in high-quality spaces where people naturally want to live, work, and play" (Kent 2008: 69). Some of these events include 1) *A Dialogue on Richmond*, the first RPA forum held on January 31st, 2004 and attended by over 100 people; 2) *Dennis Kucinich and "the other America tour,"* the second RPA forum held on February 23rd, 2014 included talks by Van Jones and Dennis Kusinich and was attended by over 500; due to a $35 million dollar deficit, the city was unable to host the city's highly regarded annual festivals like the Cinco de Mayo and Juneteenth festivals*,* but the RPA spearheaded the event to ensure cultural traditions were maintained; and *The Richmond People's Convention*, which was held on July 31st, 2004, and co-sponsored by a variety of community organizations that brought together over 300 people to vote for specific measures and rights that would serve as the RPA platform through a democratic participatory process of inclusionary input and representation.

In addition to these events, the RPA hosts monthly general gatherings open to the public; canvasses door-to-door to speak and engage with residents directly; calls residents to speak with them directly; and attends as many community events as possible to increase connectivity and cohesion with residents. What emerged from these events was a collective narrative produced by the people, for the people and culminated in the RPA's first campaign ticket with the slogan:

> Another Richmond is possible. Let the recovery begin! We can put together the city we deserve. More democracy, financial recovery, environmental health and safety, social justice, joy and pride.[158]

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[158] Flyer on archives on Richmond Progressive Alliance Website. Accessed: http://richmondprogressivealliance.net/History.html

Gayle McLaughlin became the first RPA member to be elected into office when she became a

council member in 2004, then ran for mayor in 2006, getting nearly 40% of the vote (Richmond

County Clerk). Since the first election, the RPA has realized its goal of being "a grassroots

defense of democracy"[159] because RPA members have since secured positions on City Council,

the City Commission, and other various local government office positions. This use of inside-

outside strategies "creates opportunities for more coordination between community forces and

the apparatus of our local government against extreme energy interests"[160] and serves to

encourage more active civic engagement by marginalized communities and residents as a whole.

Moreover, while in office, members of the RPA aimed to restructure the way the city hall

operated to create more inclusive, participatory models including community input meetings that

provides spaces for inclusive participation so residents voices can be represented. Gayle

McLaughlin also expressed:

> One of our campaign strategies is to be at the city council meetings and to have candidates and supporters, even if they can't identify themselves as [RPA members], they can speak to the issues. I mean, that is very important. Our city council meetings are televised. We need people coming up to the public podium and participating in city council meetings.[161]

With RPA candidates in office over the past decade, the RPA and REJC have had a

number of successes to hold Chevron accountable for their environmental negligence and to

improve overall community conditions to foster greater social capital amongst residents. The city

of Richmond voted to sue Chevron in 2013 for what Gayle McLaughlin explains is "a

continuation of years of neglect, lax oversight, and corporate indifference to necessary safety

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[159] RPA Mike Parker, quoted from his piece Parker 2013.
[160] Quoting from anchor organizations Communities for a Better Environment and Asian Pacific Environmental Network at the Our Power Campaign Richmond Pilot Project page. Accessed: http://www.ourpowercampaign.org/org/apen-cbe/
[161] Interview with Gayle McLaughlin. April 14th, 2016.

inspection and repairs."[162] Chevron pleaded no contest to six criminal charges related to the 2012 fire, agreed to submit to additional oversight and probation for a few years, and pay $2 million in fines and restitution as part of a plea deal with state and county prosecutors. The RPA and REJC, CBE specifically, joined together to sue Chevron in 2008 to halt its Hydrogen and Energy Renewal Project due to an inadequate environmental impact report that abstained information crucial information like the type of oil that would be processed and how emissions would be affected.

Consequently, Chevron applied for a scaled-down version of the original project in 2011, now titled the Chevron Modernization Project, which the RPA and REJC approved only after Chevron accepted additional conditions for environmental health and safety like a reduction in emissions, local mitigation, and community monitoring of air pollution around the refinery border. Chevron initially tried to avoid the conditions with a community benefits agreement that increased by $30 million each of three meetings following the first city commissioner meeting. In the end, Chevron added a $90 million-dollar community benefits agreement with funds allocated for building the largest solar farm in the state, job training programs to hire residents for green economy jobs, an education scholarship fund, and a competitive community grants program.

This bleeding between grassroots activism and politics demonstrates how self-organizing social networks in a novel adaptive governance system can draw on various knowledge systems and experiences and increase social capital to develop of a common understanding and policies. From this incorporation of multiple actors into governance, transformative management can set goals and targets that can be achieved through democratic decision-making. The integration of

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[162] Democracy Now Interview with Gayle McLaughlin (when mayor), Andrés Soto (founding member of RPA, community organizer for Communities for a Better Environment, REJC), and Bill McKibben (activist, 350.org, RECJ). Accessed: http://www.democracynow.org/2013/8/6/chevron_to_pay_2_million_for

these grassroots mobilizations into local government demonstrates the growth in the trust in government, increase in recognition of residents in decision-making processes and procedures, and successful outcomes. The bridging and bonding powers of the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition and the RPA can be seen as adaptive governance, or new governance, defined as "a polycentric form of social coordination in which actions are coordinated voluntarily by individuals and organizations with self-organizing and self-enforcing capabilities" (Folke et al. 2005). The growth of the RPA and REJC is due to their efforts to increase community interaction and cohesion by collectively building a sense of belonging through place-making. These successes in electoral politics by winning seats in local government, fighting to hold Chevron accountable for environmental harm and exposure, and curbing Chevron's operations to protect the community from future disasters and continued exposure have put Richmond on the map for other communities seeking justice from extreme energy corporations.

Analysis

Changes in the RPA's Political Landscape

It is clear that the Richmond Progressive Alliance has had an immense impact on the political landscape of Richmond, putting it on the map for its strong stances against petro-capitalism and Wall Street. While the "transformation of the political structure started when people got involved,"[163] the people who got involved were from a subsect of the Richmond population – "male, pale, and stale."[164] As such, Richmond residents and the RPA itself has recognized that the coalition is a white progressive institution that does not reflect the community, causing the RPA to undergo restructuring to address such gaps in representation.

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[163] Fieldnote from "The Making of a Progressive City" event with Steve Early and Marvin Willis, hosted by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society on July 13th, 2017. Quote by Steve Early.
[164] Fieldnote from "The Making of a Progressive City" event with Steve Early and Marvin Willis, hosted by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society on July 13th, 2017. Quote from Steve Early.

There were many overlapping negative perceptions about the original organizing of the

RPA that compounded the fact that it was an elite white organization. Reflecting on their own

participation in the RPA efforts, residents conveyed that "it really was a culture of older white

retirees and a general whiteness of the group,"[165] and that "there is a generation gap. Lots of the

RPA looks like me."[166] These RPA-involved residents recognized that while they are the

minority in Richmond, they were the overwhelming majority of the composition of the RPA,

particularly in ranked positions. They also recognized that because they were white, wealthy, and

older, they weren't adequately representing, including, or promoting perspectives of average

Richmondites. While these active members of the RPA were self-reflective about their own

racial standing and its impacts on the make-up of the organization, they overlooked other many

other factors of their white privilege. The majority of these white members of the RPA explained

that they had moved to Richmond not only because of the progressive politics, but because they

had gotten "gentrified out" of other areas, specifically Oakland. The fact that these upper- and

middle-class, highly educated white liberal political members expressed gentrification as a factor

for their moving, they failed to acknowledge the impact they were having on in the city of

Richmond, also being severely impacted by gentrification. In fact, mayor Gayle McLaughlin

who became mayor less than 3 years after moving to Richmond, explained:

> People were drawn to come to Richmond because they had heard about the fire, we got national attention, because they knew we were fighting Chevron and we had made great gains and because they care about their values for justice and health and planetary survival. So, it was great to welcome all those people to Richmond.[167]

These politically active new residents of Richmond also concentrated in certain pockets

of Richmond, the areas of Richmond that have always been white and wealthy. Marvin Willis,

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[165] Interview with Brian Hunter*. July 13th, 2017.
[166] Interview with Molly Jones*. July 19th, 2017.
[167] Interview with Gayle McLaughlin. April 16th, 2016.

grassroots organizer and councilmember self-described as "from the ghetto" in Richmond,

explained that "RPA members are from the hills and Point Richmond. When I am in those

communities, those people don't really want to talk to me."[168] This disproportionality in

neighborhood representation is also compounded by concern in voting patterns as there has long

been a "low voter turnout, especially a low voter turnout in black community… It has divided

the city along race and class line… that could, and probably will be a big problem."[169] These

divides mirror the racial and class divisions that emerged throughout the area's history as

explained in chapter 3 where:

> the people who voted were in the Marina Bay, Point Richmond, and the Annex, which are all white and middle class. But North Richmond, Central, and the South Side barely even vote. The politics is horrible here in Richmond.[170]

Residents aired great concern about these issues with the RPA, showing great unease

about the mounting power that the group has over local politics. Such distain was strong,

especially in the black community that has struggled for representation and autonomy in

Richmond and North Richmond for over a century. Anthony Armstrong*, a Richmond reverend

who had attempted to gain a seat on city council in the decades past, exclaimed:

> Which candidates actually went to the schools here in Richmond? These so-called keepers of the city… I don't know these people! It just doesn't make sense that such a small minority have the majority of power. It's bad...There's a paternalism and a mindset that [the RPA] know what's best for people [they] can't even identify with.[171]

Moreover, Robert Evans* expressed the same sentiments about the RPA's control over North

Richmond even though it is unincorporated when he stated:

> Activism was grassroots, but it became bourgeois. People from outside keep coming in and telling us what will be done, what they think is best for us. It's a dominant power

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[168] Interview and personal narrative with Marvin Willis. July 13th, 2017.
[169] Personal correspondence with Henry Clark. November 12th, 2014.
[170] Interview and personal narrative with Marvin Willis. June 23rd, 2015.
[171] Interview and personal narrative with Anthony Armstrong*. July 18th, 2017.

over North Richmond. North Richmond still lacks proper development because it is black.[172]

The critique that RPA members are outsiders also conflicts with white and black born-and-raised residents who have lived through a long history of struggles, debates, and negotiations with Chevron. While Richmondities express a greater need to negotiate and work with Chevron Richmond to receive better community benefits for community and economic development, the RPA is seen is fighting them at all costs, even at a cost the community. Trisha Banks* emotionally expressed,

> The RPA… (rolls eyes, puts head back, grunts, and takes a deep breathe) They are stupid, no they are not stupid. They have an agenda and found a toehold here in Richmond. They have all moved here and they can get the hell out of here. If this was a city, an Emerald City, then their ideas would be on par, but we don't live in that city so we have to depend on people like Chevron. They used to work and live here… The movement [the RPA] represents is not the city [they] represent.[173]

Beyond representational issues around race and class, residents expressed representational issues in terms of their own needs, issues, and concerns. Residents express that the RPA is fighting hard for the wrong issues such as trying hard to be the first city with a soda tax or putting in bike lines that don't address the issues of systematic inequality that impede residents' ability to afford rent and groceries. In addition to fighting the wrong fight, residents expressed that they are "not too happy with the RPA. They are too fighty! They don't focus on bread and butter issues."[174]

This notion that the RPA was "too fighty" was repeated time and time again by residents, even by non-RPA city council members who felt that they were not being represented by the group. Jael Myrick, non-RPA city councilmember born-and-raised in Richmond, explained:

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[172] Interview and personal narrative with Robert Evans*. June 8th, 2015.
[173] Interview and personal narrative with Trisha Banks*. August 1st, 2017.
[174] Interview and personal narrative with Helen Huang*. June 23rd, 2017.

I am on a council dominated by the RPA, so we work together. We are not opponents… They are more concerned with ideology than the everyday. They are more about making a statement than actually doing things that help the community and its residents… They aren't trying to protect people. They like to fight and they don't care about the outcome of the fight. They think you are corrupted if you don't say the strongest standpoint... RPA is that person, sometimes good but sometimes there is no need to fight and people get dragged in… they are more concerned with the fight.

Residents echoed Myrick when explaining that it was "irresponsible to focus on issues that don't deal with issues Richmond residents deal with" because the "RPA is too ideological and doesn't meet the needs of the community."[175] Many residents attribute this dramatic and excessive fighting with the belief that many of the RPA political representatives are career politicians only seeking to advance their own careers. With former RPA mayor Gayle McLaughlin running for California Lieutenant Governor in 2018 and RPA councilmember Jovanka Beckles running for California State Assembly in 2018, residents feel that "Richmond is a vehicle for them, a petri dish for their own ideological agenda."[176]

The RPA has reflected on these representational issues and have sought to re-structure and organized to ameliorate their gaps. The RPA recognized that the Latinx population, though the largest majority in the city, wasn't adequately represented or participating as much as other groups in the city, so they started sending out newsletters in Spanish explaining the city's political climate and how to get involved. The Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition also worked to provide increased accessibility and participation of residents in decision-making processes by providing transportation and translation services, which increased civic engagement by populations traditionally denied through exclusionary practices. With the different coalition members aiming the efforts in areas of concentrated vulnerability with marginalized populations like North Richmond and Iron Triangle, Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition and RPA are

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[175] Interview and personal narrative with Eric Zell. July 31st, 2017.
[176] Interview and personal narrative with Eric Zell. July 31st, 2017.

able to connect residents with resources they need to address immediate needs and concerns,

build social capital between residents and communities.

Moreover, "the RPA is going through a transition"[177] to structure itself to better represent

the city of Richmond. A number of movement leaders are stepping down from the RPA steering

committee to make way for younger people of color and women. Discussing this restructuring,

mayor McLaughin remarked:

> We saw that we needed more... We had always been trying to get more people of color, you know, a majority people of color in our RPA leadership. You know, we have had people come and go. We did a major restructuring over the last year, year and a half, and now we do have a steering committee that is now in its majority people of color and its majority young people. It has a majority women [sic]. We have infused our values into our implementation and into our structural work. It has been a long hard process, but we have had made great gains in every area in terms of seating council members and in terms of RPA structure and RPA manifestation of itself as a really important organization and in terms of the movement city wide.

While RPA members explained that this was a swift transition already successfully achieved,

residents still feel that the aforementioned issues remain. One rank-and-file member of the RPA

expressed that, based on her experience running a social justice non-profit in Boston that dealt

with similar issues, it "took ten years before it was genuinely led by people of color because it is

hard to build lasting alliances."[178]

The RPA has been able to secure a strong hold on Richmond's local government and has

had a tremendous impact on the efforts to hold Chevron accountable for environmental health

and safety in addition to other good neighbor issues like taxes. While these efforts for climate

justice on behalf of the RPA has secured increased mitigation for and protection against pollution

from the firm, the RPA still has work to do to better represent the residents of Richmond and the

issues that impact their everyday life.

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[177] Interview and personal narrative with Eduardo Martinez. June 29th, 2017.
[178] Interview with Molly Jones*. July 19th, 2017.

Similarities in Tactics

> *"We have got a lot of character assassinations going on."*[179]
> – Henry Clark, native residents and environmental justice organization coordinator

During the circumscribed collaboration town stage of corporate community relations, it is clear that the main instruments for self-determination and resilience that are promoted are gaining control of local government and negotiating with Chevron Richmond. During times of important decision-making like the local elections and the modernization project proposal period, character assassinations were utilized by both environmental organizations and Chevron Richmond to delegitimize people who were actively aiming to influence outcomes.

Chevron Richmond, with its copious resources, became notorious for its character assassinations over the years, especially during hotbed decision times. Amidst the "constant barrage of self-serving publicity"[180] that Chevron sends to every Richmond resident, Chevron also "wrote some of the nastiest hit pieces you have ever seen."[181] A number of residents, both those who support and those who opposed the RPA, expressed great concern about these processes. Residents clearly expounded that "if [Chevron] do[es]n't like a candidate, they will stick private investigators on them to see what dirt they can dig up and publish."[182] Moreover, Alison Stone*, a resident staunchly opposed to the RPA, conveyed worry about Chevron's actions as:

> there were some hit campaigns about the mayor that she had filed for bankruptcy and she hadn't paid back her student loans or something and then that she had had mental health issues and I was like, okay, now we are getting a little funky here, you know, because how do you know about mental health stuff because that is protected by HIPAA. I don't understand.

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[179] Personal correspondence with Henry Clark. October 21st, 2014.
[180] Interview with William Smith*. June 23rd, 2017.
[181] Interview and personal narrative with Anthony Armstrong*. July 18th, 2017.
[182] Interview and personal narrative with Elisabeth Caldwell*. July 16th, 2014.

While all residents agreed that Chevron had gone too far in its efforts to derail the RPA through these character assassination campaigns, some residents, including a council member who was a subject of these actions, expressed that they were "really impressed. Every week, they came out with ones. They were so clever. You really got to give it to their PR extravagance."[183]

While the RPA has stood its ground in its efforts to reclaim control of local politics, regardless of the concerted efforts of Chevron, some residents still worry that Chevron's "bullying" would prevent good community advocates from running for office and for speaking out about against the company. Elisabeth Caldwell* elaborated:

> And I am concerned about their influence on city politics. I am concerned about not just their direct ability to influence specific issues related to them like they are working on right now but also about the fact that they make it very, very unappealing and scary for anyone good to run for local office. I mean who wants to run for city council when you know that Chevron is going to set private investigators on you? Honestly, after that meeting the other night, I thought to myself, "wow, I just put myself on public record speaking against these people." And I doubt they're taking names of everyone who spoke at the meeting, but it is something to think about when see how they go after people. It is certainly something you would think about in a big way if you are going to run for office. I worry that it is going to be hard to get good people to do the work for the city.[184]

The bullying, though, is not necessarily only perpetrated by Chevron, but it is something that residents believe the RPA is guilt of as well. There is an agreement across the board – residents, community organizers, local government, and the Chevron consultant – that Chevron can contribute more through negotiations. However, any actor in direct conversation or negotiation with Chevron was viewed as corrupt or as traitors working against the interests of the community – ironic given the aforementioned issues about the RPA not advocating for the community. The three main cases of RPA "bullying" involved an environmental justice community organizer, a non-RPA city council member, and the Chevron consultant.

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[183] Interview and personal narrative with Eduardo Martinez. June 29th, 2017.
[184] Interview and personal narrative with Elisabeth Caldwell*. July 16th, 2014.

As previously discussed, Dr. Henry Clark has been viewed as corrupted by the company because he was in support of the modernization project. This is despite the fact that, as he explained, they – the organizations comprising the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition, including the RPA – had negotiated a better deal with Chevron than the original project and that it was historically the best deal the city had received. It was Dr. Clark's long history of bargaining with the corporation that informed his worry that Chevron would conceded some of the secured environmental and health benefits, as Chevron had done in the past. Moreover, the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition un-invited Dr. Clark from the Our Power Convening conference because of their belief he was corrupted. Eric Zell, the Chevron lobbyist explained similar issues as Dr. Clark, but to an elevated sense because he actively engages with Chevron. Of most concern came from councilmember Jael Myrick who explained that mayor Gayle McLaughlin and the RPA would target him if he didn't comply with what they wanted, that the RPA threatened to kick him off the city council, and he had to back down from his own positions on pertinent issues because "there were political repercussions."[185] Such active arm-pulling and not-so-veiled threats by the RPA to maintain their newfound stronghold over local government inhibits residents, government personnel, and community organizers who disagree with some of the actions and decisions of the RPA from being able to express their point of view and concerns, thereby short-circuiting the democratic form of place-making that the RPA itself promotes.

These character assassinations were often dialectical, a sort of call and response, as each side would have to address the spread of (mis)information. On one hand, Chevron retorted to the RPA's contestations with community economic identity (Bell and York 2010) campaigns that promoted themselves as environmentally sound, socially justice-minded good neighbors, and providers for the community that they helped build, in addition to positioning themselves as

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[185] Interview and personal narrative with Jael Myrick. July 15th, 2017.

experts. On the other, RPA members disputed Chevron's smear campaigns through grassroots efforts that elaborated the RPA platform that "a better Richmond is possible" and that they were part of a democratic movement to improve the lives and environment for residents of Richmond.

The individual actors who were targeted by the RPA like Clark, Zell, and Myrick explained that they were used politically and were stuck "in the middle being hit by arrows going both ways"[186] since they felt like arbiters between the firm and the city trying to negotiate for improvements for the city and its residents. Clark, Zell, and Myrick expressed that there was a lack of community understanding from where these born-and-raised residents were coming from given their histories with Chevron compared to the extralocal actors and newcomer RPA members. Because the RPA "bullied" and used character assassination techniques, same as ones used by Chevron, the ability for the diverse cross section of Richmond residents to come to the table for open communication and dialogue for how to best approach negotiations with the petro-firm were lacking. While the RPA utilizes a *right to the city* framework for residents to reclaim autonomy and self-determination to (re)create a just city, Richmondites who are seeking the same goals get barred, overlooked, and chastised because of their attempts to work with the Chevron in terms of negotiating.

While the actions by Chevron are characteristic of corporate behavior, those taken by the RPA and extralocal environmental justice organizations demonstrate consequential issues that movement organizing should self-reflect on. The finger pointing and chastising of active members of the community by the RPA exemplifies residents' critiques that the RPA believes that their narrative is only one legitimate community perspective and that anyone who does not agree must be bought off or illegitimate. This myth or destructive lens that any particular group can legitimately claim to speak for the entire community or best address the needs of the

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[186] Interview and personal narrative with Eric Zell. July 31st, 2017.

community leads to tensions that prevent communication that would enable the community to come together and to make decisions together. While there has been a push to negotiate with Chevron, there needs to be a push for negotiation between community organizations and government personnel who are representing the parts of the Richmond and North Richmond population that are overlooked.

Conclusion

> *"Chevron is being more discrete… Chevron finally understood that money could only go so far. Trying to figure out new approach to their community relations."[187]*
> – Eduardo Martinez, councilmember

> *"For those involved, Richmond is united. For those who are not, it is not. There are dividing lines all over."[188]*
> – Marvin Willis, councilmember

This chapter has looked deeply into the political landscape in Richmond that has emerged during the third stage of corporate community relations, the circumscribed collaboration town. Chevron Richmond has "learned their lesson and has kicked up the PR machine by spotlighting investments in the community"[189] since they lost control of local government through direct corporate cronyism. Critiques and worry about Chevron's influence remain because of their old boys network and of their continued attempts as "buying" powerful local actors. The rise of the Richmond Progressive Alliance is to thank for the reclaiming of local government to the hands of the community, but not without severe criticism by residents who feel they are not represented or having their needs met.

This chapter re-examines progressive environmental justice activism rather than to purely celebrating the successes of such movements in order to demonstrate how negative outcomes can

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[187] Personal narrative and interview with Eduardo Martinez. June 29th, 2017
[188] Personal narrative and interview with Marvin Willis. July 14th, 2017.
[189] Fieldnote from "The Making of a Progressive City" event with Steve Early and Marvin Willis, hosted by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society on July 13th, 2017. Quote from Richmond city councilmember Ben Choi.

emerge out of the best intentions. On one hand, environmental justice literature and social movement organizing have recently been promoting a capabilities approach that highlights the power and fortitude that social movement actors have in shaping new futures and challenging existing regimes (Schlosberg 2013; Holifield et al. 2009; Walker 2009). On the other hand, this chapter demonstrates that these calls for genuine recognition to have marginalized populations' voices heard and utilized in changing the status quo has yet to be entirely realized. These questions and tensions that re-evaluate environmental justice are crucial as the movement continues to expand and garner more power and critical environmental justice is intended to do just that.

Critical environmental justice studies questions "the degree to which scholars should place emphasis on one or more social categories of difference (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, species, etc.) versus a focus on multiple forms of inequality," but intersectionality and the overwhelming salience of race should be central in critical environmental studies (Pellow 2017). This chapter demonstrates how racial formation and consequential differential politicization impact the progressive environmental justice activism. The ways in which various populations respond and react the social and environmental injustices they are affected by is paramount in understanding social movement mobilization and actions and calls attention to how divisive and diverse environmental justice "communities" really are.

This investigation into the political landscape of Richmond demonstrates that it remains an elite white space as Chevron's corporate influence, though arguably minimized, continues and the RPA's dominance reflects white progressive ideologies. Character assassinations by both Chevron and the RPA have exacerbated tensions between local actors and various local and extralocal environmental justice organizations. Moreover, the ascendancy of the RPA over local

politics with a singular narrative and compounded by aggressive actions has left Richmond

residents fractured. Local activist Stephanie Harvey explained that:

> not recognizing that there are different types of people in our community and that we all have different viewpoints… the struggle is to unite people even with the different viewpoints knowing that we all have one objective and that's, I think, where the dynamics and support and environmental justice is slipping. You have some people who are trying to win this battle at all costs, not realizing that there are some things that we lose along the way. We just have to get together and see what we are willing to lose… trying to get all these different people to try to still stay in solidarity, I think, is become, is a new challenge that, I think, is coming up.[190]

Now that the RPA, as a form of transition management seeking ecological democracy,

has not only taken back control of local politics and has had some success with holding Chevron

accountable for environmental health and safety, it is imperative that local and extralocal

environmental justice organizing seeking a just transition evaluate its own actions and the

consequences that have emerged. The RPA has already begun to restructure itself in the hopes of

reflecting the population it seeks to serve, hopefully leading to better representation for fights for

the everyday struggles for Richmond residents.

More so, it is being promoted that "Richmond is a reproducible model. The RPA is going

to other cities to educate them on how to implement their own progressive parties."[191] As this

progressive model is becoming part of a broader movement across the United States, it becomes

that much more crucial that the RPA addresses the critiques that Richmond residents have of its

operations to prevent the continuation of elite white spaces.

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[190] Interview and personal narrative with Stephanie Harvey. July 30th, 2014.
[191] Fieldnote from "The Making of a Progressive City" event with Steve Early and Marvin Willis, hosted by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society on July 13th, 2017. Quote from Richmond city councilmember Marvin Willis.

CONCLUSION

The media coverage of the 2012 explosions and fire put Richmond on the map for more than housing one of the country's oldest and largest oil refineries, but for a rising tide of hotbed progressive politics challenging Chevron Richmond, climate injustice, and petro-capitalism at large. The surge of "glocalized" collective activism and intersectional scholarship that "looks both ways" at fenceline and global impacts (Di Chiro 2011; Walker 2009) recognizes climate justice as part of wider systemic processes and demands for fairness and protection of basic needs and rights that have built off of social movement organizing from decades prior.

Oil and gas companies have ramped up corporate social responsibility practices, including increased stakeholder engagement, to ensure that they can continue their operations while maintaining high profit margins in the face of such resistance. Democratic interventions have also proliferated as petro-capitalists contend with the democratic formation of transformative environmental and social politics and governance (Klein 2014). The strong organizational capacity of the climate justice movement, like that seen with the Richmond Progressive Alliance and the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition, has the potential to "create governments capable of standing up to the economic and political forces of [petro-]capitalism and hold governments everywhere to their commitment" (Foran 2017: 19).

Now, with the rise of communities committed to creating fossil-fuel-free, sustainable, equitable local economies, is the ideal time to critically analyze petro-capital's role in the social production of space – and how it has been produced over time – and to explore the underlying mechanisms and processes for which this socio-spatial restructuring can be achieved (Huber 2017; Bridge et al. 2013; Calvert 2016). This dissertation sought to do just that while accounting for the community history that has produced a grossly uneven landscape.

Summary

This dissertation redefined multi-disciplinary studies on social justice in terms of petro-capitalism. By exploring the spatial memories and lived experiences of residents of Richmond and North Richmond, California, this dissertation explores how a petro-capital corporation is entangled with the production of space, specifically elucidating on the racialization of space and the spatialization of race (Lipsitz 2011) and the politics of space and the spatialization of politics (Roy 2011). I have shown that the dialectical relationship between corporate social responsibility and community organizing in a new era of corporate practices that incorporate stakeholder engagement have equipped community groups with points of leverage to shift industrial polluter operations and corporate activities. Moreover, I have demonstrated that rich racial histories influence the ways that the different populations that compose a "community" are politicized, thereby, showcasing tensions that emerge within and across the "community" and community organizations. The cross-section of theoretical lineages on social justice from environmental sociology, urban sociology, the sociology of race and ethnicity, critical race theory, critical geography, and energy studies are utilized to understand how processes of injustice and resistance unfolded and how they have culminated with an oil giant help institute a just transition away from a fossil fuel economy. The chapters through this dissertation focus on specific aspects of petro-capitalism as they unfold at the local level, other than chapter 2 which describes the methodologies used for data collection and analysis.

Chapter three explored the uneven racialized landscape of Richmond and North Richmond, focusing specifically on the role that Chevron Richmond played in shaping stratification spatially, socially, and politically. While the area experienced the archetypical racist processes that shaped cities across the United States like redlining and residential steering, this

chapter brings to light the ways in which corporations have an active hand in both community development and racial formation. I highlight the symbolic and physical boundaries that continue to segregate Richmond in addition to using Chevron Richmond's Hilltop Mall development as a case study for demonstrating how corporations have an active hand in racialized community development. Moreover, I argue that North Richmond, the unincorporated, predominantly African American neighborhood that shares its borders with the refinery, is an internal colony for the exploitation of petro-capitalists.

Chapter four explores the shifts in corporate community relations from a company town to a company bought town to a circumscribed collaboration town. Specifically, it investigates how community history plays a crucial role in how these emergent corporate modalities operate and came to be in the first place. A thorough investigation of these three stages of corporate community relations demonstrates how these practices aim to prevent reputational damage, improve public relations, quell resistance, and elicit the company's 'social license to operate' (Burke 1999; Zoller and Tener 2010) all the while being dialectically influenced by community organizing. Moreover, it traces how Chevron Richmond utilizes its community economic identity (Bell and York 2010) through these practices to influence community perception of the firm while challenging social movement organizing against the firm's operations.

Chapter 5 examines how long standing corporate capture of local government has been challenged by social movement actors seeking to reclaim control over local government. The dialectical relationship between corporate actions and social movement organizing is covered with focus on the political landscape, demonstrating some similarities between tactics utilized by both Chevron Richmond and the Richmond Progressive Alliance. While highlighting the successes that this movement has had, this chapter also expounds on the contradictions that have

emerged with the proliferation of progressive politics in Richmond. Residents critique the movement for being elite, white, and elderly, propagated by "outsiders" fighting a fight bigger than the community at the community's expense. Ultimately, I argue that Richmond, a minority-majority city, is impacted by a white privilege duo – the refinery and the Richmond Progressive Alliance – that has largely excluded Richmondities from decision- and place-making.

Contributions

The chapters in this dissertation explore the community history that has unfolded in Richmond and North Richmond over the past one-hundred-and-seventeen years to understand the role that Chevron Richmond played in shaping local lived experiences. It does so by asking 1) how does the evolution of entanglements between the state, firm, and community emerge through corporate community relations and 2) how do these entanglements influence race relations, community development, and community organizing?

Throughout this dissertation, I interrogated the complexities of oil relations that emerged and evolved through an entrenched and entangled socio-spatial landscape in which residents, local government, and the petro-capital firm itself were dependent upon one another. As such, this dissertation showcases the co-constitutive relationship between Chevron Richmond, community organizing, and residents that "simultaneously reflect[s], reinforce[s], and transform[s] existing institutional and governance arrangements" by investigating the "consensual and conflictual relationships between different actors and the unequal distribution of power within and among social groups and interests" (Rutherford and Coutard 2014: 1369).

Utilizing a mixed method, multi-disciplinary approach, this dissertation 1) uncovered what is lost in current analyses that oversimplify corporate-stakeholder interactions, 2) challenges current representations of environmental justice communities as a collective monolith

by demonstrating the fracturing that emerges when CSR promotes active, "democratic" negotiation, 3) provides a timely critique of progressive politics aligned with a just transition and corresponding policy implications, 4) explores the possibilities and contradictions that emerge in a new era of corporate social responsibility centered on democratic intervention/participation including (but not limited to) issues around co-optation, and 5) heralds the possibility of community power over corporations and industrial practices.

This dissertation is rooted in and helps the emerging field of critical environmental justice by employing an interdisciplinary, multi-method approach that seeks to "bridge and blur the boundaries and borders between the academy and community, theory and practice, analysis and action" (Pellow 2016: 5). By bringing in theoretical debates from environmental sociology, urban sociology, the anthropology of oil, critical race theory, critical geography, and energy studies, this dissertation fuses together these overlapping conversations to construct a theoretical narrative that accounts for socio-cultural, political, economic, and temporal, and scalar (re)productions of place. In cities like Richmond, environmental justice groups have become direct agents in neighborhood revitalization. Community leaders and organizers and active residents have organized in order to enhance the environmental quality and livability of their place on their own terms. While these successes are to be celebrated, this dissertation has explored the contradictions and tensions that have emerged in such a setting and have exposed how organizing can have the opposite of the intended actions.

Implications for Theory

This dissertation has made a number of contributions to literatures across fields and subfields that have been utilized in addition to stressing the importance of interdisciplinarity. While a number of the theories utilized are strong on their own, this dissertation demonstrates

how bridging across fields and subfields can heighten the power of these theories by expanding on their analytical power.

Rooted in environmental justice theory, this dissertation links critical race theory and critical geography with these two sociological subfields to demonstrate the centrality of race in issues of social, environmental, and health injustices. This interdisciplinary approach accentuates theories like regional racial formation by integrating them with environmental justice theories to establish how community history shapes spectrum of actors within a community, thereby exposing the myth of the monolithic community. Such an approach exemplifies how a deeper investigation into the historical formation of racial formation in crucial for understanding the political activism and the variance of people who are (in)active in environmental justice efforts and the broad range of ways that people process and respond to injustices.

Environmental justice has been considered the conceptual link between human rights and the environment, but it is lacking in its investigation of corporate social responsibility (Monsma 2006). Environmental justice communities are no longer the "paths of least resistance," therefore, the costs of *not* doing more in frontline communities have become too high for corporations. Given the shifts in corporate social responsibility and of political decision-making practices that have led to increased stakeholder engagement, this dissertation illustrates the emergent forms of engagement between corporations, local governments, and residents including community benefits and good neighbor agreements. These investigations question whether corporations are coopting environmental justice or not, leading to the conclusion that social movement actors' leverage over corporations have increased, but are still constrained by the corporations. This notion is the theoretical conception "circumscribed collaboration" that I have coined in this dissertation.

This dissertation also exposes direct actions and strategies utilized by corporations at the local level and highlights what residents call and what theoretically can be called "dependency tactics," actions employed by corporate actors that target different populations' specific vulnerabilities in a way to benefit said communities in order to for the corporation to garner more support. The ways that corporations use "dependency tactics" to further divide the community in attempts to break down community mobilization is what I call the "corporate crowbar." Such nuanced exploration to corporate behavior is vital for contemporary environmental justice studies.

Moreover, the integration of critical geography and critical race theory with environmental justice scholarship has helped in the investigation of the success and pitfalls of progressive environmental justice movement organizing. This interdisciplinary has illustrated how community history in terms of racial formation has a direct outcome for movement organizing as populations experience different racializing processes and, consequently, differential politicization. The way that this dissertation has exposed how differential politicization indicates that, beyond the myth of the monolith community, there are a number of tensions that emerge between and across social movement organizations and residents that need to be highlighted more in the literature. Schisms concerning the choice of social movement strategies, the choice of political participation, and the choice of leadership need to be explored more thoroughly in future projects as this dissertation exposed the contradictions and tensions that emerge in such a context.

Together, these contributions help expand the contemporary subfield of critical environmental justice in a number of ways. These theoretical contributions also directly link with

a number of the implications these have on environmental justice movement organizing in practice.

Implications for Practice

Scholarship has informed environmental justice organizing but not as much as environmental justice organizing has informed scholarship. The theoretical contributions of this dissertation consequently provide the foundation for a number of suggestions for the future of environmental justice organizing, including advice for local governments that are increasingly involved with social movement organizing.

Grassroots activism has always been from the community and for the community, but this dissertation reveals that grassroots activism – regardless of being from the community – can create and exacerbate community divisions and reinforce hierarchies in which marginalized voices continued to be silenced, muted, or ignored. The shifting conceptions of justice across subfields and disciplines, as explored in the introduction, demonstrate the centrality of *real* representation and *real* recognition in realizing justice. In order to do so, grassroots activism needs to be open all members of an affected community – including those who movement actors disagreement – and find ways to hear the voices of residents who are unable to participate in the movement because of structural and systemic inequalities. One approach to doing this is conducting interviews or circulating surveys to get input from these populations to get a better grasp of people's ideas and issues to ensure that movement is encapsulating the needs and concerns of those not actively involved. Moreover, in terms of representation and leadership, we see that the Richmond Progressive Alliance is currently undergoing restructuring so that it is run by more people of color and women. Akin to representative sampling, it is important that social movement organizations reflect the communities that they serve.

As for interactions with corporations with the rise of stakeholder engagement practices, it is imperative for dialogue to occur across and between all parties: residents, community organizers and organizations, local government personnel, and corporate representatives. Any act that closes off participation from these parties prohibits justice from being achieved as it continues to deny populations from their rights to voice their concerns. When community organizations do not agree with one another, it becomes that much more important to sit down and discuss the issues they have with each other's decisions so that they can move forward *together* as a collective against the structural and systemic powers that have continued to oppress and marginalize them.

Another way for community organizations to have a collective front and increase the leverage they have over corporate actors is the data produced through community-based participatory research. CBPR is a research model in which community organizations and activists are involved at every stage of the process, from developing research questions to collecting and analyzing data (Cordner et al. 2012). Because community organizations and activists are considered collaborators, they are active agents in the production and utilization of knowledge and science rather than passive subjects (Minkler et al. 2008). As such, this contemporary research model equips social movement actors not only with data they can utilize to fight against environmental injustices, but educate them on scientific language, expand skill sets, and increase community and organizational capacity building (Balazs and Morello-Frosch 2013).

Additionally, these partnerships have and have the potential to develop tools for civic or citizen science, community-driven research and science that transforms daily lived experience into novel data forms (Corburn 2005). Grassroots tools are developed through CBPR

partnerships with the aim to be reproduced and utilized in communities across the globe without need of academic partnership so that communities can generate and produce their own data to challenge industrial polluters and regulations. Moreover, when community organizations and activists are active in generating "street science," they can expand existing data sets and regulations with local knowledge that is often missing from governmental and academic work (Corburn 2005). These research models in which academics and community organizations and activists collaborate through each stage of the research process increases credibility of community knowledge, revalues novel forms of information and data, and democratizes science, inquiry, and decision-making processes.

These community monitoring and data producing tools, often low-cost, directly challenge industry science in order to illustrate the true extent of exposure (Ottinger and Cohen 2011). 26 Frontline communities have utilized these tools to provide data of exposure experience to challenge local, state, and national regulations. For example, African-American residents in the Louisiana Petro-Chemical Corridor have utilized community-based air toxics monitoring with sampling "buckets" to prove that local air quality was poor, and to challenge Shell Chemical, eventually leading to the community's relocation (Ottinger 2010). An additional collaboration with the Louisiana Bucket Brigade utilized grassroots balloon mapping to map the 2010 Gulf of Mexico Gulf Oil Spill at a higher resolution and more local level than the national government was releasing and, therefore, depicted the true extent and impact of the spill than the government and corporation was communicating (Wylie et al. 2012). These citizen science and CBPR models demonstrate not only the democratizing power such methodologies have in enabling citizens to produce knowledge, but also how these forms of knowledge are challenging petro-industrial science and captured governance structures.

The Future

While this dissertation work will not continue, the issues covered in this dissertation will. The impacts of climate change will intensify. America's quest for energy independence will continue to utilize deleterious practices, extract dirtier oil, and retrofit existing facilities to properly handle these coeval oil supplies. Glocal climate justice activism will persist in its efforts to curb petro-capitalism and achieve just transitions in locales across the globe.

What is pertinent from this dissertation in regard to these motions are the two exportable models that are being developed in Richmond: one model centered on corporate actions to mitigate and quell community concern so that petro-producing facilities can continue to operate at high capacities and the other centered on reclamation and self-determination of local governance to foster a local, livable sustainable economy.

Circumscribed collaboration, as discussed in chapter 4, demonstrates a model of corporate community relation in which corporations actively seek a social license to operate through GNAs, CBAs, and increased stakeholder engagement. Henry Clark explained that Andrea Bailey, Chevron Richmond's community engagement manager, had expressed that what Chevron Richmond has been doing in Richmond is serving as a model for their community relations strategies at other locales where the corporation operates like in Nigeria and Ecuador. Given that the company's campaigns in Richmond are and will be employed in other spaces, this dissertation explored the ways in which the company is challenged, perceived, and reacted to by residents and local government. Moreover, it demonstrates that residents and activists alike are seeking to utilize the company's stakeholder engagement strategies as sites of negotiation while trying to find leverage against the company. While the temporal data collection was in part designed to capture the roll of and implementation of the Chevron modernization project $90

million CBA, such processes are slow to unfold. It is crucial that scholars and social movement actors continue to monitor the actions of corporations. This is especially the case in this instance as measures in the CBA are setting the foundation for the city's just transition with the development of the solar farm amongst others.

Beyond the CBA, the other strategies that Chevron is employing in a circumscribed collaboration area should also be cautioned and monitored for their impact on community, especially influences on racial formation. Chevron continues to impact community and economic development because of the amount of land it owns in and around Richmond. Chevron has donated parcels of its properties to the city for various projects including the aforementioned solar farm and the Point Molate redevelopment. Historically, we have seen Chevron utilize its land for its profits and the protection of white members of the company, as with the Hilltop project. We see this extension with "green gentrification" (Gould and Lewis 2016; Wolch et al. 2015) unfolding as Chevron is contributing to (re)creation of Richmond as a green, progressive haven. Part of the modernization project CBA included Chevron's funding of bike lakes, community gardens, and widespread tree planting. The Point Molate development project that connects with the Bay Trail will likely heighten this as there are plans to build luxury apartment complexes and businesses like the small-batch breweries that have opened nearby. The progressive just transition movement prompted by the Richmond Progressive Alliance should also continue to monitor the impacts of "green gentrification" as it can exacerbate the very issues they are seeking to eradicate.

The Richmond Progressive Alliance itself has been prompted as a model for cities to replicate so that progressive actors can take control of government. As previously mentioned in other chapters and in the implication sections of this conclusion, the RPA needs to be self-

reflexive about its own operations, strategies, and political decisions. The future of transformative environmental politics needs to take serious stock of representation, recognition, and restoration if it hopes to truly achieve the justice it is seeking. With this dissertation arguing that we, as academics and activists, need reorient our understanding of social justice in terms of petro-capitalism, movements seeking to overcome petro-capitalism need to ensure that they provide democratic processes to the full extent to ensure such transformations are deeply just.

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