

Researching Topic #11 – CLIMATE AND SOCIETAL IMPACTS – UNEQUAL IMPACTS
WITHIN THE U.S., by race and class [last revised 3/12/2021]

This prompt offers two kinds of help:

- A brief overview of the kinds of questions you might wish to explore as you study how climate change is likely to affect the food supply;
- A suggested strategy for how to search the literature as you prepare to write your paper.

OVERVIEW – CLIMATE – UNEQUAL IMPACTS WITHIN THE U.S.

Social inequality has been, and continues to be, a core concern in Sociology. At first, in the “classical” era, discussions of inequality focused on class, on wealth and income, and all the things that are functions of class – housing, education, food security, health. Subsequently, discussions of inequality expanded to include race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality.

The scope of discussion of social inequality was then further expanded to include *environmental* inequality (unequal exposure to toxic hazards, for example).

Under the general heading of “climate justice,” a new subset of environmental inequality/ environmental justice studies focuses on the already observed and the predicted future unequal impacts of climate change. Some examples you may consider: class and race differences in the impacts of heat waves, powerful storms or flooding.

Your research should look at two aspects of climate justice: mostly, (1) observed and predicted unequal impacts; (2) concern that certain proposed solutions – e.g., carbon markets; cap and trade – are likely to perpetuate, even worsen, existing inequalities.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR SEARCHING THE LITERATURE

I recommend the following sequence for searching the literature:

- 1 Start with a search of the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**;
- 2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com);
- 3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine;
- 4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**.
(NOTE that I do not suggest using Wikipedia.)

1 Search the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**

(NOTE: There are many excellent reports one can consult. You will find a lot of repetition, so you do not need to consult every source. Here I start with a handful of the most recent reports, followed by a more complete list.)

These publications should, in most cases, supply you with all you need:

IPCC's most recent full set of reports:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

EPA: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society_.html

U.S. Global Change Research Program:

<https://science2017.globalchange.gov/> (the science)

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> (the impacts)

American Meteorological Society:

www.ametsoc.net/sotc2017/StateoftheClimate2017_lowres.pdf

A more complete list of best scientific and governmental sources:

International

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
World Meteorological Organization

Agencies of the U.S. federal government

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
U.S. Global Change Research Program

Scientific bodies – U.S.

National Academic of Sciences
Climate Change at the National Academies (climatechange@nas.edu)
National Science Foundation

Other professional bodies – American Meteorological Society

2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)

(NOTE: Narrow and focus your search by using several phrases in quotes – such as “climate change”. For example, if you are searching for how climate change will increase the frequency of extreme weather events, don’t just enter “climate change,” search, instead for” “climate change” AND “extreme weather events”)

Search terms to use (you may certainly choose others):

“climate change” AND x, where x can be:

Environmental justice
 Climate justice
 Unequal impacts Race
 ethnicity
 Income
 class

(NOTE: For some citations you find on Google Scholar, you can directly download the PDF. For other citations, you may be able to find and download PDFs if your University library offers on line access to academic journals.)

3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine

Use the same search terms to do a general search on Google or another search engine. This will bring up information more recent than you find on scholar.google.com (it takes several years for research to be published in academic journals).

4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**

New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian

On line sources

Climate Central
 GRIST
 Society of Environmental Journalists
 The Daily Climate
 Climate Nexus
 InsideClimate News
 DeSmogBlog
 Skepticalscience.com
 Yale 350

(NOTE about on line sources: You will run into a lot of denialist disinformation on the internet, on websites, on blogs, on youtube. FYI, skepticalscience.com has a comprehensive list of denialist talking points (and refutations of those talking points). See, for example: <https://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php>)

Finally, here are some good citations to help you get started:

“SOCIAL VULNERABILITY: SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE, PART 1,”

<https://www.globalchange.gov/content/social-science-perspectives-climate-change-workshop>

“Tribal Cultures Underwater — and Falling Through Thin Ice,” <https://therevelator.org/tribal-cultures-thin-ice/>

“The Brutal Racial Politics of Climate Change and Pollution,” <https://ips-dc.org/the-brutal-racial-politics-of-climate-change-and-pollution/>

“‘I don’t want to die’: As the country bakes, studies show poor city neighborhoods are often much hotter than wealthy ones,” https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/i-dont-want-to-die-as-the-country-bakes-studies-show-poor-city-neighborhoods-are-often-much-hotter-than-wealthy-ones/2018/09/02/21dcf796-abd8-11e8-b1da-ff7faa680710_story.html?utm_term=.0e1477ae3f99

“Climate Change Will Hit Southern Poor Hardest, U.S. Economic Analysis Shows,” <http://www.climatecentral.org/news/climate-change-economic-damage-us-21582>

“As the rich move away from disaster zones, the poor are left behind,” <https://grist.org/article/as-the-rich-move-away-from-disaster-zones-the-poor-are-left-behind/>

“As if U.S. inequality wasn’t bad enough, climate change is making it worse,” <https://grist.org/article/as-if-u-s-inequality-wasnt-bad-enough-climate-change-is-making-it-worse/>

More good sources, added March, 2021

<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063720333>

California's Fourth Climate Assessment, "Climate Justice Report,"

<https://resourceslegacyfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Climate-Justice-Report-4CCCA-v.4-00455673xA1C15.pdf>