



Special Issue: 'Seeing the (In)Justice of Sustainability: Visualizing Inequality at the Centre of Climate Change Communication'

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We know that environmental change due to massive global warming negatively influences the world's poorest and most-marginalized the most, as do the corporate and collective actions themselves that drive greenhouse gas emissions. With greater urgency, media scholarship – and practice – must now turn to the wicked problems associated with forms of human inequality that are sometimes linked to efforts to develop local and global sustainability: racialized gentrification of urban areas to form wetlands creates a forced migration of residents. The development of environmentally sound (and expensive) housing pushes out the poor. Mainstreamed media narratives of climate change activists elevate particular people and parts of the world over others. And yet such effects of sustainability are often invisible or missing from mediated discourses and arenas. As notions of sustainability become more normalized as key to our shared social futures, they can remain tied to long-standing issues of racialized environmentalism shaping government and corporate decisions, as well as individual and collective interpretations of curbing climate change. 'Climate change is the result of a legacy of extraction, of colonialism, of slavery', Elizabeth Yeampierre, co-chair of the Climate Justice Alliance, told PBS in the US in 2020. 'The truth is that the climate justice movement, people of color, indigenous people, have always worked multi-dimensionally because we have to be able to fight on so many different planes.' We share in this concern.

This special issue surrounds issues of sustainability and its effect (and potential for effect) on widening inequalities and does so through discussions on visual and digital communication, including, but not limited to, digital photography, data visualizations, augmented reality, novel apps, virtual reality, television and film, memes and social media images, and digital and broadcast journalism. Such interrogation highlights intersections of inequalities that complicate efforts and the very definitions of sustainability, while building theory that problematizes roles of visual narratives – and narrating – in the digital age, particularly as mainstream media focus on only specific aspects of sustainable future(s).



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Indeed, the term 'sustainability' itself suggests a maintaining of modern-day living conforms, consumption, and lived experiences and breeds, therefore, questions about the peculiarities of sustainability and how we 'see' them. Contributions with images are encouraged.

Articles for this special issue surrounding intersections of sustainability and increasing inequalities might include:

- Innovation of methods and modes of visually communicating inequalities of sustainability in journalism, entertainment, corporate communication, and VR.
- The use of GIS visualization to map and monitor unequal forms of sustainability initiatives within particular environments.
- Interpretation of sustainability discussions and supplementary visual evidence from graphics and data visualization through an approach of STS.
- Discussions around digital cultural studies and visuals in dominant and problematic representations of sustainable living.
- The elevation or exploration of 'environmentalism of the poor' through photojournalism or immersive mediums.
- Social media memes and communication that elevate the visual in discussions on sustainability and inequalities.
- Interrogation of racialized forms of gentrification in the name of 'sustainability'.
- Avenues of understanding through data science to highlight oppositional or subjugated positions and communities in forming solutions to environmental decline.
- Global perspectives on influences of cultural industries in seeing and communicating sustainable social futures that involve interests of justice.
- Examinations of emotional and immersive media to promote complication in understanding calls-to-action related to sustainable living.
- Examples and strategies for innovative technology use to form citizenry and/or community activism to resist oppressive natures of sustainable communication and capitalistic actions for the good of the climate.

Abstracts of no more than 500 words for consideration should be sent to Tori Zheng Cui at cuizheng84@gmail.com by 1 July 2021. Articles selected for peer-review will be due 1 October 2021, should be 7000 words, and should conform with Harvard Style. Questions can be directed to Tori Zheng Cui at cuizheng84@gmail.com.



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