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“It’s getting hot in here”: Climate Change and Tensions Surrounding Environmental Injustice for Minority and Low-Income Communities

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Symone Gaskin

“It’s getting hot in here”: Climate Change and Tensions Surrounding Environmental Injustice for Minority and Low-Income Communities.

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Our current climate crisis presents the perfect opportunity to address other social ills that reflect environmental injustice. The purpose of this research was to explore if, when, and how climate change disproportionately impacts minority communities. A thematic analysis was developed through the creation of a literature review matrix comprised of twenty academic and practitioner articles. This thematic analysis uncovered four key themes: implications in the workplace, the housing market, the economy, and the standard of health. Consequently, confirming the disenfranchisement of marginalized groups in relation to the environment, this research uncovered the long-lasting effects of systemic racism as an important variable in environmental justice. In addition to these findings, strong parallels were identified by examining the Environmental Justice Framework developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to illustrate their salience across various communities of color or marginalization. These are further demonstrated in the analysis by seeing the remnant and long-lasting effects of Jim Crow Laws, slavery, and disparity particularly found in the traditional U.S. South. One of which is within the state of Georgia.

The observation of these standards or criteria not only aids in recognizing how local Georgian communities measure up but gives a frame of reference for the policy and best practices to remedy injustice. Based on these findings and how it is impacting Georgia residents there are several recommendations one can posit for future policies or legislation. We must demand the development of equitable infrastructure and the increased use of sustainable materials. Reconfiguring sustainability into an economically beneficial initiative would have tremendous implications for the collective good during

this climate crisis. The legislature and policies needed to incite this action must be supported by environmental literacy not only for policymakers but the citizens they serve.