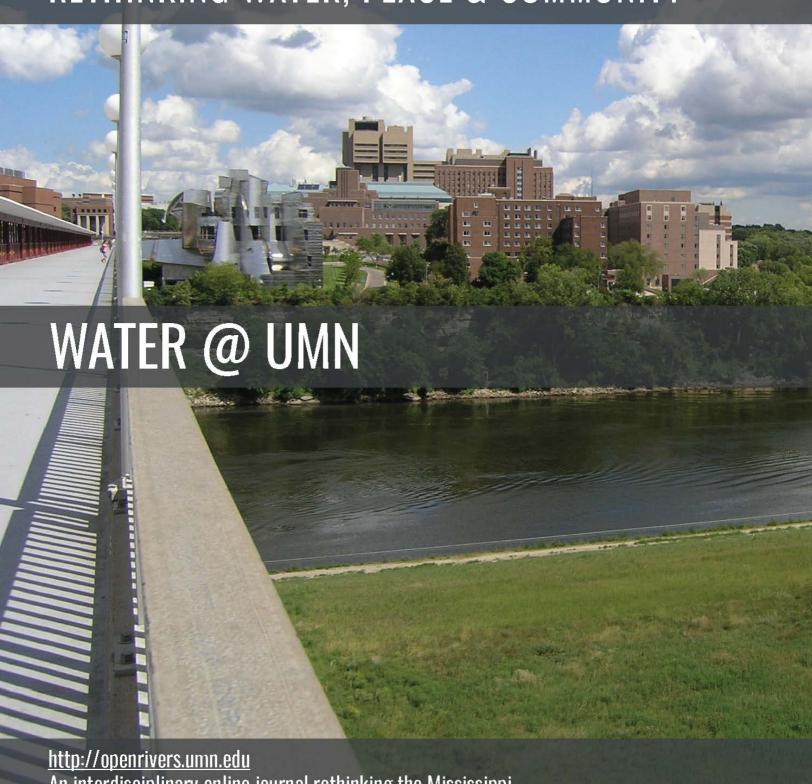
**OPEN RIVERS:** 

RETHINKING WATER, PLACE & COMMUNITY



An interdisciplinary online journal rethinking the Mississippi from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

ISSN 2471-190X

The cover image is of The East Bank of the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota and the Mississippi River from the Washington Avenue Bridge. Image courtesy of Patrick Nunnally.

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**OPEN RIVERS: ISSUE TEN: SPRING 2018** 

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## **FEATURE**

# STATES OF EMERGENCE/Y: COASTAL RESTORATION AND THE FUTURE OF LOUISIANA'S VIETNAMESE/AMERICAN COMMERCIAL FISHERFOLK By Simi Kang

"The current environmental situation that has given rise to [Louisiana's] coastal restoration programs is not limited to the ecological, geological, and hydrological processes that produce land loss. Humans make the decisions, they design the projects, and cope with the consequences. Indeed, the combined processes of coastal land loss and coastal restoration will create conditions impelling residents to adapt once more." (Colten 2017, 2)

"If [we cannot shrimp] you take away the only economic opportunity [we] have here." (Vietnamese commercial shrimper, LA SAFE meeting in Buras, LA, June 5, 2017)

Louisiana's commercial shrimping fleet is threatened day in and day out by oil spills,

a seasonal hypoxic dead zone, a flood of foreign imports, and, significant to all of these, the



Shrimp boat off Grand Isle, Louisiana. Image courtesy of Billy Metcalfe, (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

long-term institutional management of the coast's land, water, flora, and fauna. While all coastal entrepreneurs feel the strain of environmental and human-made crises, their consequences are borne more heavily by first-generation, 1.5-generation, [1] and second-generation Vietnamese/American[2] fisherfolk.[3] Language barriers, a lack of political representation, and cultural

differences make Vietnamese/American (and other Southeast Asian/American) fisherfolk more vulnerable to projects that, well intentioned though they may be, promise to change the material and cultural landscape of Louisiana's coast.

State management of Southeast Louisiana's natural resources is historically a part of the region's



Shrimp boats. Image courtesy of the author.

colonial project,[4] which has long required residents to make watery marshland inhabitable (Campanella 2006; Morris 2017). In its current iteration, management threatens to hit shrimpers hardest in the form of a science-oriented suite of coastal restoration projects called the Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast (also referred to as the master plan). As one of the fishery's most vulnerable communities, Vietnamese/American shrimpers stand to lose one of their major industries, and with it, the community's economic bedrock, when a proposed large-scale Mississippi freshwater and sediment diversion is introduced into the nation's most productive and abundant shrimp habitat.

Unlike other Gulf states, Louisiana's coast is made up of muddy marsh, which gives these organisms places to cycle through their adolescence relatively safe from other actors, including oil, before reaching maturity in open water. That the BP oil catastrophe (2010) completely suffocated this vibrant ecosystem, making shrimp smaller and less abundant, killing whole oyster beds, suffocating the birds and other fish species who rely on both, and strangling the region's fauna in the process, is still evident in every trip commercial fisherfolk take. In the last five years, each brown shrimp season has been worse than the last, oyster beds are increasingly taking on too much fresh water from harsher hurricane seasons, and the industry as a whole is suffering.

For the last two years, I have worked with several community-based organizations[5] that provide social and economic support to Southeast Louisiana's residents. In light of changing ecological, industry, and restoration outlooks, many of these organizations work together, partnering with NGOs, non-profits, and other



Capt. Bean, Port of New Orleans. Image courtesy of the author.

community-based organizations to advocate for coastal residents and entrepreneurs at the state and federal level. Throughout the course of my research, I attended local and national government meetings, public comment sessions, and outreach opportunities with commercial fisherfolk, their families, and owners of other fishing-dependent businesses like processing docks and fuel stations. This has allowed me to observe what it means for them to survive the onslaught of ecological, policy-based,

infrastructural, political, and cultural engineering they experience as both the state's first line of defense and concomitantly, its most vulnerable people. Using this first-hand knowledge and relying on the expertise of commercial fisherfolk, this article considers the political and cultural contexts of the master plan, then addresses local efforts to respond to and resist the extinction of not just an industry, but a way of life for Vietnamese/Americans in Southeast Louisiana.

# **DIVERTING DISASTER**

"People are in crisis. Economies are in crisis....For policy, any crisis in the productivity of radical contingency is a crisis in participation, which is to say, a crisis provoked by the wrong participation of the wrong(ed)." (Harney and Moten 2013, 81)

Immediately following the catastrophic effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (2005) on Louisiana's coast, the state passed Act 8.

This established the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), a state agency that partners with marine biologists, soil specialists,

#### PROGRESS ON THE GROUND

PROJECTS COMPLETED OR FUNDED FOR CONSTRUCTION

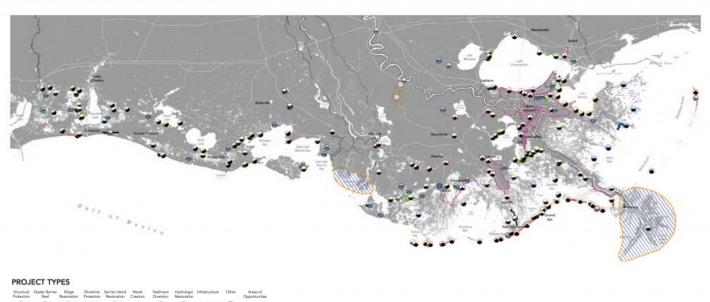


Figure 1. Projects completed or funded for construction as of the publishing of the 2017 Coastal Master Plan (CPRA 2017:ES-5).

and other scientists, non-governmental organizations, and industry heads to solicit and implement three types of restoration projects: structural, non-structural, and restoration. It has a dedicated budget largely comprised of federal- and state-allocated funds, and publicly releases a budget annually to identify how these funds are and will be directed. In creating this organization, Louisiana integrated hurricane protection and coastal restoration, formerly the purview of disparate local authorities and parish governments, under one agency. Tasked with developing a comprehensive, science-vetted plan to stop the coast from washing away, CPRA created the 50-year Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast which, "in its purest sense, is a list of projects that build or maintain land and reduce risk to our communities" (CPRA 2017:ES-2).

CPRA released its first master plan in 2007 and has revised and updated both the plan's projects and its short- and long-term goals every five years thereafter.

Over the lifetime of the plan, the authority has worked to grow its budget and resources in order to implement one of its key initiatives: a series of Mississippi River sediment diversions aimed at rebuilding land around the river's mouth in Louisiana's southeastern-most region, the Birdfoot Delta. According to CPRA, diversions are a direct response to over 80 years of land loss resulting from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) leveeing of the river following the Great Flood of 1927. In protecting New Orleans and other river-adjacent communities from future

#### PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE WORK

COMPLETED, ONGOING, AND FUTURE PROJECTS

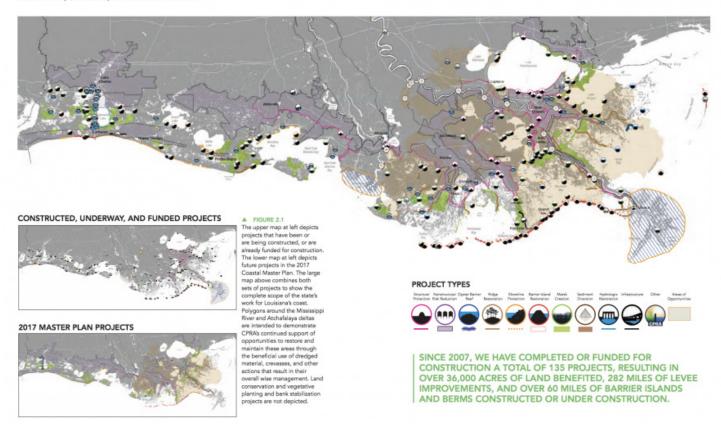


Figure 2. This map indicates which projects CPRA included in the 2017 Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast. Brown or tan areas indicate proposed sediment diversions, including in Mid-Barataria Bay, due south of Lake Pontchartrain (CPRA 2017:ES-15).

flooding, the Corps trained the Mississippi's land-building sediment away from the marsh that protected the region against gale-force winds and storm surge, instead sending it impotently over the continental shelf.

Now in its third revision, the master plan is laying the groundwork for two major diversions. Passed by the Louisiana State Legislature in the spring of 2017, this plan proposed the largest, most costly projects in the Authority's history, with sediment diversions in Mid-Barataria Bay (due south of New Orleans and to the delta's west) and Mid-Breton Sound (northeast across the delta from Barataria) representing a significant percentage of its resources. As written, these projects would "reconnect and re-establish the natural or deltaic sediment composition process between the Mississippi River and the [basins], as a long-term resilient, sustainable strategy...[that] is needed to reduce land loss rates and sustain wetlands injured by the [Deepwater Horizon] oil spill through the delivery of sediment, freshwater, and nutrients" (Gulf Engineers & Consultants 2018:1).

At present, Mid-Breton is in research and development, while Mid-Barataria has advanced to the permitting phase. In August of 2017, the USACE began the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

process for Mid-Barataria, conducting preliminary scoping meetings and soliciting public comments. While USACE originally planned for the EIS to take five years, Louisiana's Governor and CPRA successfully lobbied the federal government to speed the process along, arriving at a projected completion time of 2022. As the plan is currently designed, CPRA will use the natural flow of the river basin to determine when to open the diversion at what rate. Once the EIS is completed, CPRA plans to run the diversion primarily in the spring; as the river thaws up-stream, it will bring more sediment to the delta than at any other time of year. Spring, however, is when most of the Gulf's marine life is breeding and one catch in particular—brown shrimp, which, along with white shrimp, supplies 26 percent of the nation's demand—needs the brackish water along the coast to properly gestate and mature (Louisiana Sea Grant 1999). To introduce up to 75,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of sediment and fresh water into a habitat whose survival requires a mix of salt and fresh means that either whole species will suffocate (particularly oysters, which are fixed in place) or species like brown and white shrimp will be forced further into the Gulf, just beyond the reach of small skimmer boats that hug the coast.

# **EXPERTISE AND ERASURE**

"When you pose a problem, you present a problem." (Ahmed, February 17, 2014)

Brown shrimp are the lifeblood of small-scale commercial shrimpers who can only work in state waters, the narrow, three-mile strip of ocean that functions as Louisiana's aquatic buffer zone. These are also some of the most tenuous ecosystems in the state, where the oil catches and sticks and hulls are destroyed by abandoned drilling equipment; where the cypress and mangroves are dying or dead, and island after island has ceded to the ocean, no longer there for birds to rest on

their long journey south. It is also where, like so many other vulnerable places, the workforce is overwhelmingly low-income members of underserved communities with little political or economic capital.

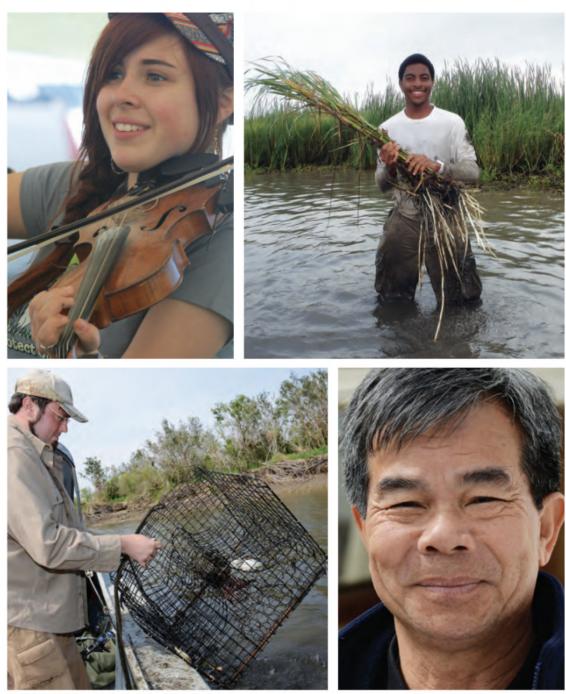
Vietnamese/American fisherfolk are a critical portion of this workforce, comprising almost 40 percent of the commercial shrimp fishery (Louisiana Sea Grant 2015:5). Most were

shrimpers in Việt Nam prior to the forced diaspora that followed the Fall of Sài Gòn in 1975. After their forced flight and resettlement in Louisiana, Vietnamese shrimpers transferred their skills to the Gulf, where they have become a driving force of the local economy over the last three decades. Like Cajun and other shrimpers in Louisiana, Vietnamese/American fisherfolk's knowledge of the industry and its relation to the land, water, and other species upon which it relies is generations deep, or as many will say, in their blood. In this way, the community's attachment to the industry is not solely labor- or income-centric, but a critical part of their relationship to personal histories and knowledges that deeply attach to the place wherein they animate both: Southeast Louisiana.

Popular storytelling often depicts commercial fishing as exploitative, pitting fishermen against initiatives meant to preserve and foster marine ecosystems. In truth, however, their social, cultural, and economic reliance upon the region require vulnerable commercial fisherfolk to act as the region's stewards. Each time they haul up a net, add gear to their boat, file their taxes, or start a college fund, Vietnamese/American fisherfolk are thinking about entire ecosystems, from the plankton to the pelicans, that make their industry possible.

Given this deep knowledge and attachment to place, commercial shrimpers—among many other coastal stakeholders including Indigenous Elders and other community leaders—are natural experts in the water, land, flora, and fauna of coastal Louisiana. While the diversion and master plan writ large rhetorically emphasize the value of coastal communities (see Figure 3, below), CPRA regularly disregards community needs and knowledge in its solicitation, research and design,

and implementation processes. This is not simply because representatives reject or otherwise refuse to acknowledge community knowledge, however; in South Louisiana politics, so many decisions rely on a close consideration of oil and tourism revenue. In this way, dollars—not people—make a place. For example, the fact that CPRA is now trying to undo federal land and water management projects that effectively killed a large swath of Southeast Louisiana speaks not to their concern for the people who live there—people who have, over a few generations, been forced to adapt to that resource starvation to survive as fishers, hunters and trappers, and coastal residents—but to the fact that the area is now so degraded that New Orleans, the region's main attraction, has lost its storm buffer. What's more, when asked about the efforts the state is making to identify the possibly irreparable effects the diversion might have on shrimp, oysters, and other marine species and by extension, mitigate the impact to shrimpers and other fisherfolk, CPRA officials say that the former is too difficult to predict and so the latter is equally impossible to address. With this understanding of CPRA's approach to project design and implementation, two things become clear: one, Louisiana's residents must be more resilient than the land they live on and, two, for the state to adequately control and re-design coastal Louisiana, it must carve up the coast in a different way. Through the master plan, CPRA has reduced coastal Louisiana to a series of projects, budgets, timelines, and lobbying efforts. As the state both rhetorically and materially dissolves through a scientific re-imagining of space as discreet problems and attendant solutions, so too does the very notion of a region of people, families, and communities. Look at Figures 1 and 2 (above) long enough and you realize that something truly telling is missing from CPRA's landscape: people.



Photos courtesy of Louisiana Sea Grant
While coastal Louisiana provides the state, region, and nation with important natural resources,
here the greatest assets are not oil and gas, fisheries, or sugar cane, but the people.

Figure 3. A collage of photos representing coastal Louisiana residents, with a caption reading: "While coastal Louisiana provides the state, region, and nation with important natural resources, here the greatest assets are not oil and gas, fisheries, or sugar cane, but the people." The inclusion of these images and the accompanying caption in the 2017 Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast is an example of how CPRA identifies coastal communities as both an asset and a justification for the way it implements restoration projects (CPRA 2017:ES-3).

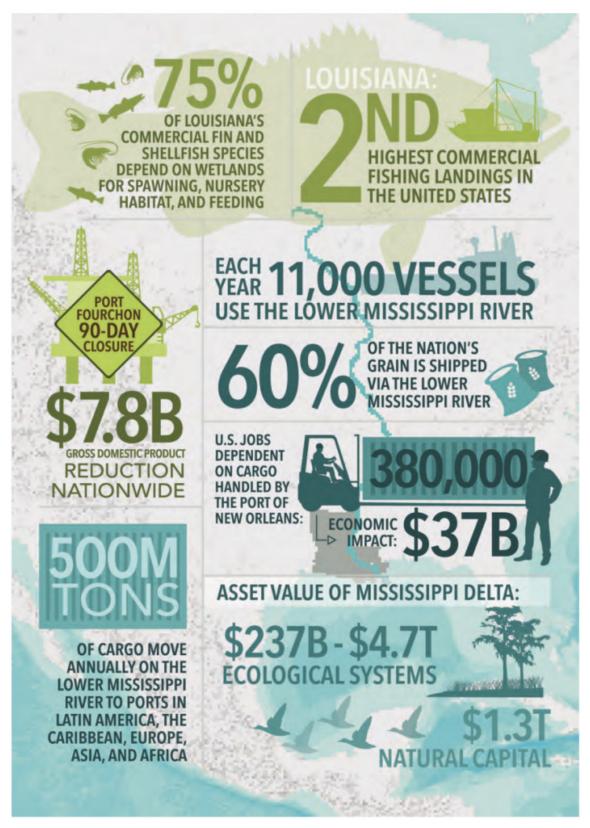


Figure 4. This infographic is captioned: "Together, the Louisiana coast and the Mississippi River create billions in economic value" in the master plan. Here, we see that while people matter in the prior image, it is in fact the economic value of the region that is central to CPRA's decision-making processes.

# STICKY RESILIENCE

"I'm sick and tired of people saying 'y'all are so resilient;' resilient means you can do something to me. No! I'm not resilient. I have a right not to be resilient." (Washington, August 25, 2015)

The story goes that to survive along the Gulf, one must be resilient. To be resilient, then, one must bear anything as it comes; if the entire ecosystem of Barataria Bay changes because of the diversion, then so too must fisherfolk. If brown shrimp are suffocated or pushed beyond state lines, it is the job of fisherfolk, not the state, to mitigate that loss. Look at CPRA's maps again, and you see how surviving against the odds effectively erases whole communities; if they are resilient, they do not need the master plan. By relying on residents' resilience, CPRA both excises their vulnerability and gives the state the freedom to worry about more important things like building land.

While resilience silences every one of Louisiana's coastal residents, the way it is deployed against Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian fisherfolk is particularly damning. Under the harsh conditions they currently face, this community is in many ways trapped in the very industry they love. This is true because:

- First, the majority of other blue-collar industries in the Gulf, from oil work to shipbuilding, have English-only training and entrance exams, effectively barring all for whom English is not a first language;
- Second, because boat insurance is equivalent to almost a third of their take-home pay, most boat owners cannot afford it. This prohibits captains from using their boats for tourism or other income-generating endeavors and makes it impossible to secure loans (banks require proof of insurance); and

 Finally, small-scale shrimpers cannot earn enough liquid capital to expand their operations into federal waters, where the shrimp will be pushed when fresh water inundates the area.

In these ways, then, the state *forces* Southeast Asian and Southeast Asian American fisherfolk to continue fishing in the Gulf—one of the most vulnerable places in the nation—and calls them resilient for surviving ever more punishing economic, political, and environmental conditions.

That Vietnamese/American fisherfolks' survival tactics have been written into policy—thus normalizing resilience such that it is their socio-legal duty—shows that rather than creating new coastal futures, the state is instead using the coast as it always has: as critical space for producing infrastructure that protects tourism, shipping, oil, and other assets to the detriment of every human and marine community, home, boat, and processing dock in the way. That so many of these in-the-way peoples are Indigenous, refugee, and im/migrant[6] points to the insidious ways they have been made vulnerable by political decision making that, ironically, requires that same vulnerability to function.

# **EMERGENCE/Y**

"Who is going to use the land they build if we aren't here no more? [If the shrimp disappear] we will disappear." (Vietnamese commercial shrimper, LA SAFE meeting in Buras, LA, June 5, 2017)

After the 2017 Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast was approved, CPRA began the process to approve the Mid-Barataria Bay diversion. Later that year, USACE began laying the groundwork to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the project, which they believed could take up to five years (until 2022). Before USACE could begin the process, Louisiana's Governor, John Bel Edwards, declared a state of emergency for coastal Louisiana on April 19, 2017. In the official document, the governor urged Congress to fast-track five projects in the master plan, including the diversion, because "Louisiana and its citizens have suffered tremendously as a result of catastrophic coastal land and wetlands loss, and the threat of continued land loss to Louisiana's working coast threatens the viability of residential, agricultural, energy, and industrial development" (CPRA 2017). After a month without federal reply, the state of emergency expired. Keeping to its extended schedule, USACE began the EIS process three months later by conducting scoping meetings to solicit scoping comments, or comments intended to identify the positive and negative attributes of the project, from the public.

Over 200 commercial fisherfolk, many Southeast Asian/American, submitted comments, including the following:

"I have a skimmer boat and fish inshore. If the diversion comes. It'll bring too much freshwater into the lake where I shrimp. Too much freshwater will push the brown shrimp out further into the Gulf and my boat is not big enough to go outside state lines. Right now, I can't make my existing boat bigger because shrimpers just aren't making any money. If the diversion comes then I'll have to stop shrimping and then I'll be out of a job." (Pheap Phon)

"If the diversion happens, my job will be affected. I am a deckhand on a shrimp boat. If the owner of the boat does not go shrimping, I cannot go shrimping. I have no skill sets besides shrimping, that's why I want to continue shrimping. I am too old to learn new skills; my English is very limited so it will be hard to do anything else." (Phung Phu)

"I do not agree with [the Mid-Barataria sediment diversion] for many reasons. My father will not make enough money to pay for our family. He is the worker of our family, meaning he is the only one who is paying for our financial bills and education for my brother and me. My mother cannot speak English, she stays home and takes care of the house and her children...If you decide to release the fresh water, keep in mind all the lives you would make more difficult and all the hard work you would put down the drain...Please don't release the fresh water. It [will] create a gruesome impact in our lives and many others who have worked extremely hard for the lives that we currently have [today]." (Lili Tran)

"I am an older fisherman and if there are no shrimp then I will be out of a job. If the government would help me with making my boat bigger so that I could go out further [into federal waters to follow the shrimp,] then that would be a good thing. I'm open to getting a grant or a loan. I would even open a new

business if I had help. I've lived many places, but I like Southeast LA the best." (Chhiet Lat)

Here, it is clear that commercial shrimpers experience their boats not just as material sites for producing capital—the system of which is skewed toward the top and rarely adequately or evenly compensates them for their labor—but as future-securing enterprises. Rather than being concerned about the shrimp per se, these deckhands and captains are worried about how, in CPRA's hands, the shrimp control their families' futures.

What the above comments make clear is that the barriers against Vietnamese/American shrimpers learning skills other than shrimping are not merely economic, but deeply social and political. They produce the consequences this story began with a disappearing coast within which its most vulnerable people—its experts and stewards—are disappearing. This disappearance is deliberate, maintaining a power imbalance that keeps Vietnamese/American commercial fisherfolk always in a position of lack. In this way, the Mid-Barataria Bay diversion and its likely impacts are not simply a fisherfolk problem; it is specifically a Southeast Asian/American fisherfolk problem.

# PERPETUAL RESILIENCE

"Once refugees outlive their narrative usefulness they become disposable." (Patel and Tang, June 20, 2016)

In Southeast Louisiana, it is a matter of course that residents will adapt. Adaptation is most often demanded of the state's most underserved and underrepresented communities, who cope with the consequences of government-mandated projects that re-shape, create, and dissolve the land and water upon which they rely. As people who have been forced to bear the burden of U.S.-sanctioned violences for generations, Vietnamese/American fisherfolks' intimacies with adaptation and resilience are well documented, often by scholars and journalists who deploy racialized public health and sociological language, laying the groundwork for CPRA's own "resilience requirement" (Le and Nguyen 2013; Li et al. 2010; VanLandingham 2017). The consequences of Mid-Barataria Bay sediment diversion will be overwhelming for Vietnamese/American fisherfolk. Those who do not develop the language and technical skills to enter other industries will be left behind, struggling to support themselves or requiring a great deal of support from already under-resourced peers and family. The likelihood

of forced displacement—moving from one's home against one's will—will only engender more distrust of a nation that, over and over again, claims its own injury in relation to the war that already forced them to leave many homes (Nguyen 2012; Ong 1999; Um et al. 2012). As detailed above, the diversion as it is planned is the result of preserving capital accumulation (oil, tourism) over privileging community survival. It excludes residents whose first language is not English from full participation in private and public life, excluding them from secure presents and futures. What's more, it refuses local, experiential knowledge of culture, ecology, and place in favor of "hard" science.

But the diversion will happen. In late January, 2018, the Trump administration agreed to accelerate the permitting process for the EIS from five to two years (Stole 2018). More recently, CPRA representatives told a roomful of fishermen that they must stop talking about "if," shifting the conversation to "when." With an understanding

of how the master plan dispossesses Vietnamese/ American and other shrimpers who steward and rely on state waters, community-based organizations have used this moment to craft collaborative responses to the plan. Given that their work to uplift fisherfolks' place- and ecology-specific expertise has failed to materially change CPRA's approach to the diversion, these organizations are moving forward with their own independent programming. Community leaders hope that implementing new coastal education models for youth, testing industry-specific loans and grants, and creating other novel programming will provide a percentage of the support their constituents need to weather such definitive state erasure.

However, there are rarely perfect answers when capitalism and colonialism have been writing the story of a place for generations. What is implied but never made explicit in Colten's assertion that "Humans make the decisions, they design the projects, and cope with the consequences" is that for each action, the "humans"—decision-maker, project designer, and consequence coper—are vastly different. And here is the crux of the issue: the complexities of individuals' and communities' experiences of success and struggle are flattened and dismissed by state agencies whose relationship to place is one of management rather than stewardship. Instead of listening to the experts those whose very lives rely on maintaining and cultivating the coast in spite of human-made disaster—state and federal actors push ever forward in a battle not toward a more secure future for all. but for state revenue. By making land stable, oil

can consistently be transported on the region's highways and refined near its small towns; New Orleans retains its land buffer and can withstand the next 100-year storm; barge traffic flows in and out of South Louisiana, maintaining its place as a critical node of transnational trade.

Restoration re-makes place and space to solve a set of problems the state itself produced. In always seeking to manage, control, and create hierarchies of value—for ecologies, industries, and communities—Louisiana and CPRA redesign not only the region's current, but future possibilities. As some of the region's most economically and ecologically vulnerable peoples, Vietnamese/ American fisherfolk have, as Patel and Tang gesture to above, become disposable. This happens in large part because of the double bind of resilience: while they are actively being resilient to a myriad of violences and circumstances, policymakers require fisherfolk to indefinitely maintain resilience. As such, Vietnamese/ American fisherfolk at once pose a problem for and offer a solution to CPRA: those who survive can and must continue to do so. If they do not succeed, that is a communal failure, not a state one.

For CPRA to undertake the true work of helping the coast survive, they would need to cede political power and economic resources to the people, the true experts of the coast. If they quit calling an exorcism a survival and let those who have always been made to survive actually try to do so, maybe the coast could call itself home again.

## **Footnotes**

- [1] Refugees born in Southeast Asia and who fled to the U.S. as young children sometimes identify as between first- and second-generation, or 1.5.
- [2] I use the composite term Vietnamese/America with a slash to indicate the myriad generations—first, 1.5, or those born in Viet Nam but arriving in the U.S. as children, and second—of peoples of Vietnamese heritage who work in the industry. Many first-generation fisherfolk prefer to call themselves "Vietnamese" or "Asian" over "Vietnamese American," a designation that sometimes feels more appropriate for later generations (who often vacillate between all three).
- [3] I use the gender-neutral term "fisherfolk" when writing about the commercial fishing industry as a whole to acknowledge that it extends beyond the discreet spaces of fishing boats and processing docks to the home and family, the members of whom directly contribute to its economic and cultural success. As such, commercial shrimping relies on the labor of all genders.
- [4] New Orleans is currently hosting a year's worth of public programming to celebrate its Tri-centennial as a city; among other things, this points to a failure to acknowledge that the space New Orleans occupies is extant, un-ceded Chikasaw land. While this programming acknowledges the city's economic contributions to the U.S. as a primary port, it largely fails to acknowledge that this also made New Orleans a central axis for the exchange of enslaved African and Caribbean peoples, a site of passage for Asian immigrant laborers, and the transit of bodies across French and Spanish colonies and, more recently, a place of resettlement for peoples made refugees of U.S. military engagements the world over, from Southeast Asia to Eastern Africa.
- [5] While these organizations allowed me to observe and participate in their work during my research period, the views expressed herein are mine alone.
- [6] I use the composite im/migrant to index the fraught relationship between migration and immigration in and to the U.S., particularly their contested and overlapping social and legal expectations, requirements, and lived experiences.

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## **About the Author**

Simi Kang is a scholar, artist, educator, and community advocate who engages Asian American collaborative resistance as a site for imagining ecologically and economically just futures. Simi works with Vietnamese and Vietnamese American fisherfolk to understand how state policy impacts their communities at the intersection of resistance, resilience, and displacement. She is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in the Feminist Studies program at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Her work has appeared in *The Asian American Literary Review, Kartika Review, Hyphen Magazine, Jaggery: A DesiLit Arts and Literature Journal, Gravy Quarterly,* and *Gastronomica*.