

Externalisation – onto the poor

Externalisation means that many of the costs of capitalism are offloaded onto workers, communities and the environment. The most obvious and common way that **externalisation** works is that people get paid very low wages and cannot afford basic living expenses.

Another example of **externalisation** is that many heavy industries pollute and spoil the environment. They pollute the air, the land and the water which makes people sick and even die. Many industries do not make sure that the air is kept clean or that their waste is managed because this costs a lot of money. Instead they offload those costs onto poorer communities, workers, public taxpayers' money, and the environment.

For example, many mine workers get permanently sick from working in dangerous conditions. Then they go home where their families have to take care of them, not the industry that caused it. Mines pollute the water. This 'acid mine drainage' poisons the rivers, kills the plants and creatures that live in it, and makes the people and cattle sick.



The three e's

Environmental justice – people living well with each other and the earth.

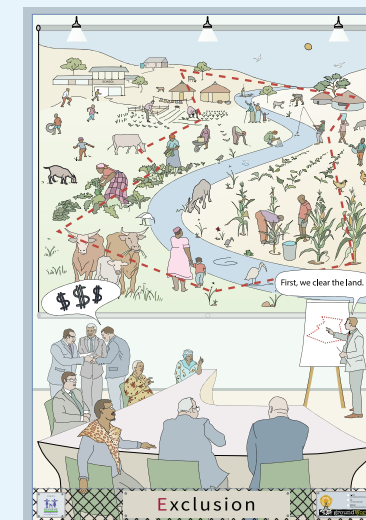
Environmental injustice – people cannot and do not live well with each other and the earth; a few people have power over others to profit for themselves.

Capitalism and the three e's

Capitalism causes environmental injustices. It is a system that takes resources like land, gold, coal and oil and turns them into profit for a few rich people. The bosses and owners want to make big profits and so they exploit the resources, the people and their environments. There are three ways or mechanisms which bring about environmental injustices.

We call these the three e's and they are:

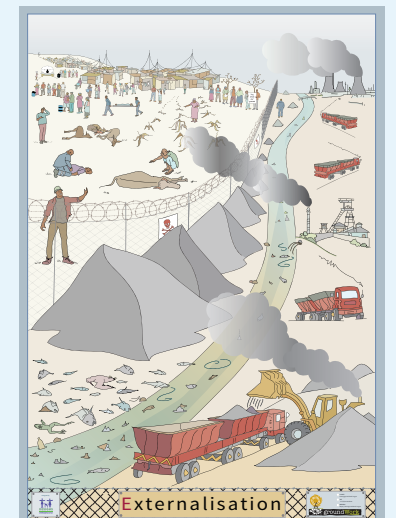
Exclusion



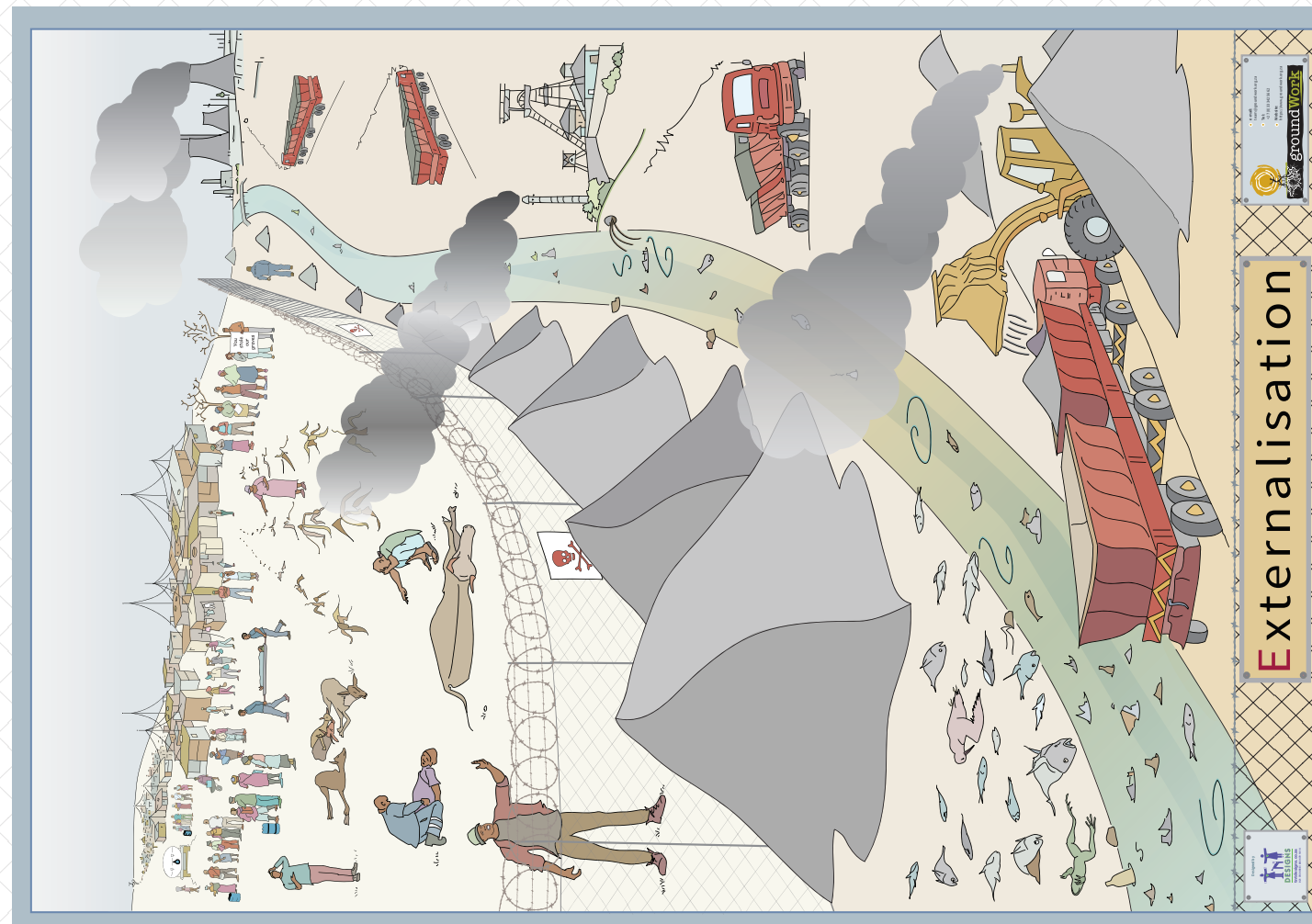
Enclosure



Externalisation



These three mechanisms are very useful for us to see how capitalism works and how it brings about inequality and environmental injustice.





Exclusion – from making decisions

Government and big business make important decisions about things that affect ordinary people's lives every day. They make decisions about important issues like housing, mining, where factories can be built, how much electricity costs and how much water big farmers can take from rivers. These serious issues affect ordinary people, especially poor people, but they are kept out when decisions are made – they are **excluded** from making the decisions.

Sometimes government and business consult ordinary people in communities (often called public participation processes), but the big decisions and plans about mining licences, housing, air quality, etc. are really made by 'important' people. For example, if a company wants to open a coal mine in an area, they do not first go to the people who live there and speak about it with them. If a petroleum company wants to set up a refinery that causes pollution in the air, they do not speak to the residents in that community about it first.

Enclosure – of natural and human resources

If you **enclose** something you close it in and fence it off so that other people cannot use it. Land was one of the first things to be closed off in South Africa by the settlers. The common land the people had used for their cattle, sheep and goats and to grow food on was taken over. Their way of life was changed. The land was made the private property of the settlers.

The mining companies **enclose** areas with valuable materials like coal, gold and diamonds so only they can profit from it. They leave the land wounded with pollution when these valuable resources run out. Some companies enclose land and grow a single crop over a huge area, like timber plantations or sugar cane. This is called monocropping. Afterwards the once fertile land is barren and useless for growing food. Sometimes government and big businesses also privatise (**enclose**) public services that were previously free, like water. Because of these enclosures, people need money to survive, and workers have no option but to find work if they can. In this way the workers are trapped by the system. Very often this means that they have to work under bad conditions and for little money.

