

Diversifying the U.S. Climate Movement

Bridging the Culture Gap on Climate Change

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Executive Summary

The challenge of diversity

1. People of color are currently 40% of the U.S. population and poised to become the majority by 2042.
2. Politicians are increasingly paying attention to the growing electoral power of people of color.
3. People of color are grossly underrepresented in the environmental movement.
4. The most recent and comprehensive study on diversity and environmental organizations finds that people of color make up 16% of the staff and 17% of the boards of environmental organizations.
5. People of color are less civically engaged than Whites. They are less likely to contact their elected officials or vote than Whites.
6. They are also less likely to identify as environmentalists, donate to, volunteer or work for environmental organizations.

The benefits of diversity

1. When we talk about diversity, we are really talking about diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI).
 - a. Diversity refers to the existence of differences within a group of people.
 - b. Inclusion means the ability of different people to raise their perspectives authentically in a diverse group.
 - c. Equity refers to the fair distribution of power and benefits.
2. Diversity creates competitive advantages for environmental organizations, such as broader membership, more support for their agenda, access to grants and contributions, and a better reputation.
3. Companies that implement diversity initiatives outperform those that don't in terms of sales, productivity, and morale.
4. Diversity is critical for the environmental movement in order to stay relevant and impactful.

Perceptions of climate change

1. People of color in the U.S. are disproportionately impacted by climate change.
2. People of color bear the brunt of impacts from climate change, such as higher risk of heat deaths and asthma, home displacement from floods and storms, and the destruction of their culture and livelihoods from changes to ecosystems.
3. People of color express stronger belief in anthropogenic climate change and are more concerned than White people.
4. People of color overwhelmingly support government action on climate change.
5. Latinos say that the number one reason they do not contact their elected officials about climate change is "nobody ever asked me to."

Barriers of history, culture, and framing

1. History
 - a. The founders of the conservation movement were elite White men more interested in protecting wildlife than addressing social ills (such as civil rights, women's rights, or labor rights) and their agenda was often harmful to people of color.
 - b. Some of the founders were white supremacists who advocated for eugenics and anti-immigration laws.
 - c. The conservation movement's legacy of capitalism, patriarchy, and racism had a lasting effect on the environmental movement.

- d. Environmental organizations started becoming cognizant of their lack of diversity in the 1990s, but more progress has been made on gender than on race.
2. Culture
 - a. Environmental organizations often hire new employees by referrals and from the same networks, thereby replicating their existing culture in hiring decisions.
 - b. People of color experience discrimination in hiring and in the workplace, contributing to burnout.
 3. Framing
 - a. Climate change is often framed as an environmental issue, which automatically associates it with “White,” “out of touch,” and “elite.”
 - b. Climate change is framed as a scientific problem with technical solutions, and solutions such as “use solar panels” or “drive hybrid cars” are more relevant for White people.
 - c. Framing climate change as a justice issue, an extension of civil rights and the fight against systemic racism, could help galvanize the communities that are most affected by it.

Building a diverse and inclusive climate movement

1. Leadership
 - a. Make sure reasons for doing DEI are deep and authentic.
 - b. Get board and leadership buy-in for DEI.
 - c. Form a DEI committee.
 - d. Hire consultants to conduct a baseline DEI study and recommendations.
 - e. Allocate resources for a long-term DEI program that ramps up efforts.
 - f. Hire a DEI officer and give them budget, support staff, and oversight.
 - g. Integrate DEI into the mission and values of the organization.
 - h. Articulate vision, goals, strategies, milestones, tactics, metrics.
2. Education
 - a. Develop a DEI education program for leadership, staff, and volunteers.
 - b. Conduct DEI trainings and workshops for leadership, staff, and volunteers at conferences, staff retreats, and online.
 - c. Educate members about DEI and climate change.
 - d. Integrate DEI into performance reviews.
 - e. Integrate DEI into new staff orientation.
 - f. Integrate DEI into volunteer trainings.
3. Recruitment and retention
 - a. Conduct recruitment and retention analysis of the organization.
 - b. Create good jobs that pay competitively and offer benefits and stability.
 - c. Be transparent about job openings.
 - d. Actively recruit minority candidates by recruiting where minority candidates will find job openings, such as public job forums, people of color associations, historically black colleges, and people of color professional networks.
 - e. Mentor people of color within the organization.
 - f. Provide professional development opportunities for employees of color.
 - g. Promote talented employees of color.
 - h. Create affinity groups for minorities within the organization.
 - i. Create paid internships and recruit students of color.
4. Partnerships and collaboration
 - a. Incorporate an equity framework for all major projects and policy initiatives, to ensure positive social equity outcomes.

- b. Seek to collaborate with communities of color and organizations that work with them.
 - c. Engage people of color in policy creation and strategic direction.
 - d. Empower people of color to do advocacy in their communities.
 - e. Provide resources to partner organizations.
5. Outreach and engagement
- a. Create messaging to appeal to the concerns and perspectives of people of color.
 - b. Communicate perceptions of climate change by people of color.
 - c. Communicate DEI as a central CCL value.
 - d. Do outreach in communities of color.
 - e. Provide translations.
 - f. Promote outreach by people of color.
 - g. Facilitate conversation and networking between people of color.
 - h. Feature more people of color as leaders, activists, and volunteers.
6. Youth engagement
- a. Partner with organizations that work with diverse youth.
 - b. Provide programs for diverse youth.
 - c. Provide mentoring and support for diverse youth.
 - d. Conduct outreach at secondary and higher education institutions.
 - e. Provide paid internships to diverse youth.
 - f. Reduce costs for diverse youth to attend events and conferences.

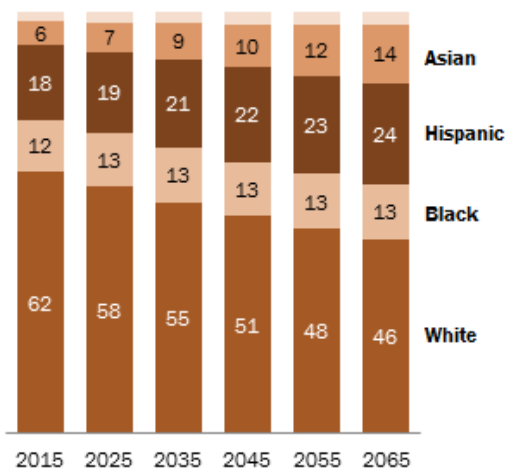
Introduction

We are at a turning point in the history of our species. For the first time, human beings have the power to profoundly change the processes on our planet that sustain life. We have the choice to continue using resources that leads to catastrophic consequences from climate change, or we can implement policies and measures that maintain a livable world. The United States is also at a turning point in that more people than ever before understand the implications of climate change, and more people now than before also support action on climate change. This is happening at a time when the U.S. is experiencing a profound demographic shift. People of color—Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and mixed-race people—are poised to become the majority in the U.S. by 2042. The U.S. environmental movement must grapple with these realities if it is to thrive and confront the challenges ahead. More urgently than ever, the movement needs to bring together people from different backgrounds and viewpoints to solve the greatest threat to humanity. By doing so we have the best hope of healing not only our broken planet but also the wounds of our racially divisive past.

The Challenge of Diversity

People of color are poised to reach 50% of the United States population by 2046 (see Figure 1), yet they continue to be underrepresented in environmental organizations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In many cities and states they are already the majority. A large portion of this population is below age 18, and as they age, they will increase their share of the electorate. Rather than being immigrants with language and cultural barriers, the majority of these young people of color will have been born in the United States and have an active interest in the problems of society (Progress 2050, 2015).

% of projected U.S. population



Note: 2015 numbers are estimates; numbers for other years are projected. Whites, blacks and Asians include only single-race non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race. Other races shown but not labeled.

Figure 1. Percentage of projected U.S. population by race. By 2055, the U.S. will have no racial or ethnic majority group. Pew Research Center, 2015.

Politicians are increasingly paying attention to the electoral power of people of color. In 1996, African Americans constituted 11.9% of the electorate, Latinos 6.1%, and Asian Americans 2.1%. By 2014 those figures were 12.5% for Blacks, 11.4% for Latinos, and 4.2% for Asians (Center for American Progress, 2015). In Florida, Latinos now constitute 20.2% of the voting population. In

Georgia, African Americans constituted 32% of the voting population and also voted at higher rates than non-Hispanic White voters in the 2012 election (Progress 2050, 2015). Ignoring or not appealing to these groups has negative consequences for political candidates.

However, despite being more than a third of the United States population, and 29% of the U.S. science and engineering workforce, people of color are grossly underrepresented in the environmental field (Taylor, 2014, 2018). A survey on diversity in environmental organizations conducted in 2018 by University of Michigan revealed that among 2,057 U.S. environmental nonprofits queried, people of color comprised on average 15% of the staff and 17% of the board members of the organizations that reported their diversity data (Taylor, 2018). This is an improvement from 2014, where only 13.9% of the staff and 8.6% of the board of environmental organizations were people of color (Taylor, 2014). Out of the 2,057 environmental organizations surveyed, only 3.9% of the organizations revealed data on racial diversity and only 14.5% of those engaged in some form of diversity, equity, and inclusion activity (Taylor, 2018). An earlier study found that the members and volunteers of these environmental organizations are predominantly White as well, though more recent data is lacking in this aspect (Zinger, Dalsemer, & Magargle, H., 1972, in Taylor, 2014).

Figure 2 illustrates the breakdown of racial composition of the boards and staff of environmental organizations in 2018.

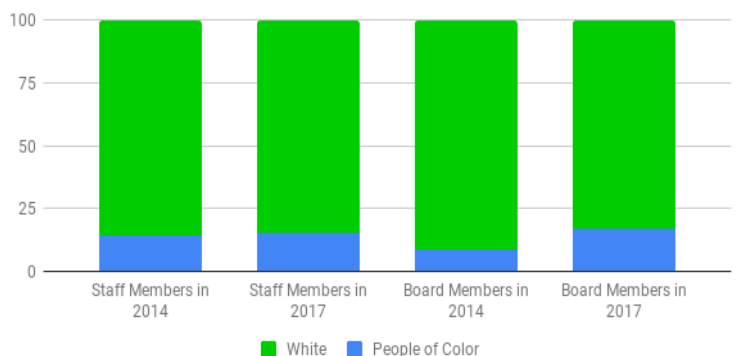


Figure 2. Percentage of people of color vs. Whites in U.S. environmental nonprofits. Taylor, 2018.

Partnerships and collaborations with organizations that serve people of color is another indicator of equity and inclusion, and environmental organizations did poorly in this aspect. Most of the environmental organizations surveyed reported that they collaborated with ethnic minority organizations rarely or not at all, even though they collaborated frequently with other groups in their networks (Taylor, 2014, pp. 84–87). These findings suggest that environmental organizations have difficulty working across racial lines. In addition, despite the professed interest in increasing diversity, only 40% of environmental NGOs and foundations indicated that they would likely or very likely to support activities to increase diversity in their organization (Taylor, 2014, p. 93). Study author Dorceta Taylor said of the state of diversity in environmental organizations:

If organizations are currently ignoring what is about 35% of the American population, and if they continue to do that, by the time we get to a point where most of the people in the U.S. are going to be people of color, they just won't have any expertise in recruiting, incorporating, collaborating, working with that particular workforce. You can't just turn a switch on overnight. This has to happen over time. (Toomey, 2018, para. 6)

While people of color constitute a growing portion of the electorate, evidence suggests that they are less civically engaged on climate change than Whites. They are less likely to self-identify as environmentalists, and less likely to donate to, volunteer, or work for environmental organizations (Schuldt & Pearson, 2015). This has contributed to the perception that people of color don't care about the environment and resulted in environmental organizations not prioritizing people of color in their outreach. In California, a state where people of color are the majority, a study in 2016 found that people of color were less likely to vote, contact an elected official, or engage in other ways politically than their White counterparts (Dobard et al., 2016). Similarly, the U.S. Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey Civic Engagement Supplement* found that while nearly one in six Whites had contacted or visited a public official in the prior year, fewer than one in ten blacks, and only about one in twenty Asian Americans and Latinos did the same (2015). Figure 3 shows political participation by race in 2014 (Dobard et al., 2016).

Figure 3. Participation in political activities beyond voting by race among adult citizens. Dobard et al., 2016.

	White	Black	Asian American	Latino	CA	NATION
Contact public official*	16%	9%	6%	5%	12%	13%
Support campaign**	23%	18%	11%	11%	18%	16%
Attend political meeting**	15%	11%	7%	6%	12%	11%
Protest**	6%	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%
Consumer activism*	20%	7%	8%	7%	14%	13%

Barry Pollard, a community organizer and head of the San Diego nonprofit Urban Collaborative Project, said he thinks people of color are less likely to join the political process because “there is a lack of feeling like we have impact on the system” (Trageser, 2016). People need time, money, knowledge, and skills to be able to participate in civic activities, and low-income people of color often lack these resources. Older people and those with more wealth and education tend to participate more, among Blacks and Whites. Asian Americans and Latinos, however, participate less even after controlling for age and income, which suggests barriers like language and inadequate access to civic infrastructure may play a role (Dobard et al., 2016).

The disparity between people of color as an increasingly important electorate and their representation at environmental organizations make environmental organizations appear increasingly out of touch with the concerns of most Americans. It is no longer okay to say, “If they care, they will come.” Environmental organizations need to be proactive about transforming their cultures to become more inclusive in order to create a movement that is strong, diverse, and equitable. This report summarizes the barriers for civic engagement on climate change for people of color, their perceptions of climate change, and provides concrete steps that environmental organizations can take to improve their diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Benefits of Diversity

Definitions

The practice of increasing diversity and producing outcomes that overcome racial oppression are often referred to as diversity, inclusion, and equity. These terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they refer to different things. According to the D5 Coalition, diversity, inclusion and equity can be defined in the following ways:

Diversity: Refers to the existence of differences within a group of people. A workplace is considered diverse if it has individuals of different races, nationalities, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, and so on. However, the mere existence of difference does not mean that a group is tolerant, welcoming, or aware of how diversity contributes to tensions or synergy in the group. A group may have individuals who are from different ethnic groups, but they may feel like they have to conform to the dominant culture in order to be accepted. Or a workplace may have more women than men, but there are no women in positions of power and the women are still subject to sexism or sexual harassment. Diversity refers to the presence of differences, but it does not necessarily mean that a group is inclusive or equitable.

Inclusion: According to D5, inclusion means “the ability of diverse peoples to raise their perspectives authentically and for those voices to matter and affect decisions within majority-group settings.” Inclusion conveys acceptance, respect, and taking into account diverse perspectives and opinions. Rather than just the existence of people of color, inclusion refers to how people interact with those who are different from them. Inclusion is also problematic in that it implies that some people are “in” and others are “out” and that the in-group needs to invite others in. It assumes that there is an out-group to be included, which means that the in-group exists in a position of power relative to the out-group. A group that is inclusive is not necessarily diverse or equitable.

Equity: Finally, equity refers to the impact of group’s actions, where the outcomes are not correlated with race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, or ability. For example, because climate change disproportionately impacts the poor and the young, it is a problem of equity. When the leaders of environmental organizations are almost

exclusively white males with similar socio-economic backgrounds, they may not be cognizant of the impact of their decisions on the equity of those outcomes. Diversity in itself does not necessarily mean equity, as there is plenty of diversity in American society, but certain groups have more power and resources are distributed unequally to different groups. Growing equity requires the examination of systemic factors that have favored some groups more than others and actively countering those forces by tilting the balance in favor of disadvantaged groups.

Focusing on diversity, without transforming an organization’s culture into one of inclusion, or requiring that its work have equitable outcomes does more harm than good. Therefore, it is essential that an organization’s efforts to diversify its workforce and membership strive also to be inclusive and equitable.

Benefits

Having the support of a diverse group of people is essential if the environmental movement is to thrive into the future and overcome political barriers in a diverse and intersectional world. Not only is it strategic to have the support of what will become the majority of Americans, but environmental organizations stand to become irrelevant if they don’t. As Angela Park puts it, without the support of people of color, the environment risks being marginalized as a “White, upper-middle class, suburban, boutique-y” issue that doesn’t speak to the reality of the vast majority of people in the U.S. and around the world (2007, p. 42). Without people of diverse backgrounds leading and staffing environmental organizations, “outdated approaches, single viewpoints, and one way of being, thinking and doing will predominate and the movement will calcify” (Park, 2007, p. 42). Talented people who do not identify with the dominant culture will feel undervalued, unappreciated, burned out, and leave the organization or the movement all together (Park, 2007, p. 42). At a time when we need to unite around a common cause, these perceptions are very damaging in a movement already saddled with a history of being White, elite, and exclusive.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are especially important in relation to climate change, which affects everyone but especially people of color. Responding to climate change requires addressing the racial, economic, and social

inequalities of its consequences and solutions, as well as energizing those constituencies that are unjustly affected by climate change. Without the support of these constituencies, climate proposals will continue to languish in Congress, unable to gain the support needed to become policy. The proposals that do get passed will be seen as solutions from White people for White people, further marginalizing the people these policies were meant to help. As we have seen on issues such as civil rights and women's rights, the passion of people who see themselves as having the most at stake in the issue is what gives movements the critical mass needed to succeed. Madeline Janis said, "Environmental Justice groups have tremendous assets. Real people with huge passion. That is the most important resource of all, in any campaign: passionate people who are directly impacted who are bringing their wisdom to the table" (Park, 2009, p. 22).

Diversity and inclusion also create competitive advantages for environmental organizations seeking to become stronger and more effective. The benefits include:

- An empowering work culture where people feel comfortable being themselves and where they feel their contributions are valued;
- Being known as a fair and equitable employer, and therefore attracting and retaining more talent from a larger and more diverse pool;
- Winning more grants, donations, and contributions; attracting a diverse base of donors and thus increasing fundraising and development outcomes;
- More creativity, innovation, and better problem solving with more diverse perspectives and opinions.;
- Attracting volunteers from a broader base and membership that is more reflective of society;
- Better relationships with partners and communities of color;
- More opportunities for learning and growth with a diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and approaches (Herring and Henderson, 2014, pp.31-45).

Herring and Henderson, in *Diversifying Organizations*, used data from a national sample of for-profit business organizations (The National Organizations Survey) to show that diversity is associated with improved performance. They found that even after taking other organizational

characteristics into account, companies that have diversity training are more likely than those without diversity training to have more productivity, higher business performance, and to report that their employees believe procedures for determining promotions are fair and equitable (2014, p. 65). The results are statistically significant for both racial and gender diversity (2014, p. 43). They postulate that companies with greater diversity do better because a workplace that has people from various backgrounds increases opportunities for creativity, learning, and capitalizing on differences. In addition, when employees feel valued, they usually are more productive (2014, p. 45).

Beyond benefits for environmental organizations or for the environmental movement, the greatest benefit of diversity, equity, and inclusion are for the marginalized people themselves. By empowering people of color to be active agents on climate change, they can improve their communities, influence climate policy, and adapt to the changes ahead. They can take part in being volunteers and employees of environmental organizations, doing work that they feel called to do, without feeling out of place and their contributions marginalized. Elliott Payne (pseudonym), one of the interviewees for the Green 2.0 report, said:

What does it mean to me if we're more diverse, equitable, and inclusive? ... It means the world to me. It means a lot. It means that my kids can grow up in a place that's welcoming, and they can engage in all of their environmental, and nature and wildlife protection pursuits that they want to without being intimidated in questioning who they are. (Taylor, 2014, p. 146)

For people who have felt sidelined and helpless when it comes to pollution, diversity, equity, and inclusions means that they will have a seat at the table for the decisions that impact them.

Perceptions of Climate Change

Climate change is already having a devastating impact on people in North America, and people of color are at higher risk from health problems to loss of employment and physical displacement. For example, a 2008 study by The Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative found that heat-related deaths occur at 150-200% greater rate among African Americans than for non-Hispanic White Americans (Shepherd, 2013), and Latinos are three times more likely to die from asthma than other racial or ethnic groups in the United States, according to a study by the Environmental Defense Fund (Hennelly, 2014). One study found that in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, African Americans were more than twice as likely as Whites to have their homes totally destroyed or majorly damaged. Their financial problems were more acute and they were displaced from their homes, on average, for three months longer than Whites (Barnshaw & Trainor, 2007).

Despite the fact that people of color are the most affected by climate change, there is a persistent belief that they do not care about the issue. Traditional indicators of environmental concern—environmental group membership, visits to natural areas, and monetary contributions to environmental organizations—for example, created the impression that the environment was not a priority for people of color. These actions may, in fact, be indicators of affluence or metrics by which White people judge concern for the environment (Arp and Kenny, 1996). Studies show that over time and across varying periods of prosperity and economic stagnation, people of color have at least as much concern for the environment, if not more, than do Whites (Arp and Kenny, 1996; Jones and Rainey, 2006; Mohai and Bryant, 1998; Vaughan and Nordenstam, 1991).

The Pew Research Center, which has tracked Americans' prioritization of a range of issues since 2007, shows a widening gap between Whites and non-Whites who think global warming should be a "top priority" for the president and Congress. The percentage of non-White people who say that global warming should be a top

priority was 44% in 2014, whereas for Whites it was only 22%. Every time the Center has conducted this survey, a lower percentage of Whites have said global warming should be a top priority than non-Whites (Enten, 2014). (The Pew Research Center has not continued this comparison after 2014).

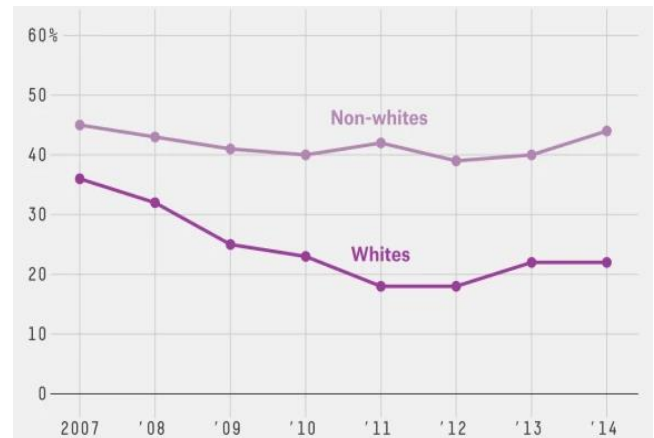


Figure 5. The racial gap on climate change. Percentage of Americans who think global warming should be a top priority for the president and Congress. Pew Research Center, 2014.

One of the most comprehensive surveys of perceptions of climate change based on race was conducted by the Yale Program for Climate Change Communication in 2008. The survey found that Hispanics, African Americans, and people of other non-White ethnicities were often the strongest supporters of climate and energy policies, even if they incurred greater costs (Leiserowitz & Akerlof, 2010). They found that all non-White groups exceeded Whites in responding positively to questions about whether global warming is happening, whether it is caused by human activities, and whether global warming should be a very high priority for the next president and Congress (see Figure 6). All non-White groups perceived the risks of global warming to themselves, their families, and their communities more than Whites. They also perceived the benefits of climate action to be greater than Whites, including "providing a better life for the next generation, improve people's health, and create jobs," while Whites were more likely to perceive drawbacks from climate action, such as "interfere with the free market, harm poor people more than it helps them, and cost jobs and harm our economy."

How worried are you about global warming?

	National average	Hispanics (13%)	Blacks (11%)	Other race/ethnicity (6%)	Whites (69%)
Very worried	17	28	18	26	13
Somewhat worried	46	48	41	39	47
Not very worried	24	17	33	25	24
Not at all worried	13	7	8	9	16

$n=2,148; \chi^2, p<0.001$

How big of an effort should the United States make to reduce global warming?

	National average	Hispanics (13%)	Blacks (11%)	Other race/ethnicity (6%)	Whites (69%)
A large-scale effort, even if it has large economic costs	34	41	43	37	31
A medium-scale effort, even if moderate economic cost ¹	40	38	41	45	40
A small-scale effort, even if it has small economic costs	17	13	9	8	19
No effort	9	9	6	11	10

$n=2,099; \chi^2, p<0.001$

¹Item wording: A medium-scale effort, even if it has moderate economic costs.

Figure 6. Worry about climate change and support for government action by race. Leiserowitz & Akerlof, 2010.

More recent surveys of the perceptions of climate change by race have similar results. A 2014 national probability survey found that 71% of Hispanic Americans and 57% of Black Americans indicated that they were very or somewhat concerned about climate change, compared to 43% of White Americans (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera, 2014). In 2016, a survey using nationally representative data from the 2010 General Social Survey found that people of color in the United States perceive greater risks for threats posed by climate change and nuclear power generation than Whites, even when controlled for age, gender, household income, education, political views, and rural/urban place of residence (Macias, 2016). People of color also expressed more concern about these two topics than they did for more localized issues, such as air pollution from industry and transportation (Macias, 2016). The researchers found that people with higher household income tended to perceive less risk from climate change, while those with higher educational attainment tended to perceive more risk (Macias, 2016). Another study found that across all opinion metrics, perceptions of climate change by people of color were less politically polarized than those of Whites and were unaffected by exposure to different ways of framing the issue (as “global warming” versus “climate change”). Moreover, they were less likely to self-identify as environmentalists compared to Whites, despite expressing positive belief that global warming was

happening, caused by humans, and supporting regulating greenhouse gases at levels comparable to Whites (Schuldt & Pearson, 2015).

Marina Fang (2013) in “Why Minorities Care More About Climate Change,” provided three possible explanations for why

research consistently finds that people of color are more concerned about climate change than Whites. These are:

- Political affiliation: People of color overwhelmingly voted Democratic in recent elections, and Democrats are much more likely to support climate policies than Republicans. However, Pearson et al. (2017) found that the perceptions on climate change were much less divided by party lines for people of color than for Whites. They expressed support for climate action regardless of which political party they belonged to.
- Environmental justice: People of color are disproportionately affected by the negative consequences of climate change. A 2011 report from the NAACP entitled “Coal Blooded: Putting Profits Before People,” found that among the nearly six million Americans living within three miles of a coal plant, 39% are people of color – a figure that is higher than the 36% proportion of people of color in the total U.S. population. The report also found that 78% of all African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant (Wilson et al, 2011). African Americans are also more likely to suffer physical displacement, economic insecurity, violence, and criminalization due to disruptions caused by climate change (Weber & Peek, 2012).
- Global effects: Many people of color in the United States have families abroad in countries acutely affected by climate change. In 2017, more than 18 million people around the world were displaced by climate-related disasters, most

of whom lived in Asia and Africa (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2018). The ties of people of color in the United States to people in countries severely impacted by climate change heightens their sense of urgency on the issue.

These studies show that there is enormous opportunity for engaging people of color on climate action. They understand its risks, are very concerned, and ready to take action. But people of color are not a monolithic group, and differences in response to climate change exist as a result of different backgrounds, cultures, and belief systems. We now turn to each of these groups on their perceptions of climate change.

African Americans

African Americans constitute 13% of the U.S. population and on average emit nearly 20% less greenhouse gases per capita than Whites, and nearly 18% less than all Americans, yet they are significantly more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than non-Hispanic Whites (Hoerner and Robinson, 2008). According to The Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative, heat-related deaths occur at a 150–200% higher rate among African Americans than for non-Hispanic White Americans (Shepherd, 2013). African Americans are more likely to live in cities, which are hotter than suburban and rural areas and have poorer air quality. Asthma, which is exacerbated by heat and pollutants, affects African Americans at a 36% higher rate of incidence than Whites (Shepherd, 2013). They are also more vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and storms. A 2009 study of African Americans living along the Gulf Coast showed that a significant percentage of African Americans lived below the poverty level and were highly vulnerable to natural disasters (Islam et al., 2009). African Americans who are left homeless or jobless in the wake of natural disasters are often criminalized, as witnessed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (Weber & Peek, 2012).

African Americans also consistently report higher levels of belief in and concern about climate change. A 2014 nationally representative survey of U.S. adults found that 62% of African Americans reported being personally affected by extreme weather, versus 51% for the general American public (Speiser & Krygsman, 2014). Moreover, a greater percentage of African Americans attributed increased severity of allergies (59%) and breathing

problems (56%) to climate change than did the broader U.S. public (49% and 46%, respectively) (Pearson and Schuldt, 2017). Their perceptions of climate change also seem to remain stable over time rather than fluctuate in response to acute hazards. For example, African Americans' concern about climate change in 2000 and 2010 were almost the same, despite Hurricane Katrina disproportionately affecting a large number of African Americans in 2005 (Macias, 2016).

African Americans have a deep history of civic engagement, so mobilizing them on climate change could be game-changing for the movement. In the nineteenth century, African American abolitionists fought slavery as well as the use of arsenic in tobacco fields (Gelobter et al., 2005). The Civil Rights movement of the twentieth century set the template for other social movements that came after it. Even though modern environmentalists frequently use the strategies developed by Civil Rights activists, they trace their legacy less to Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X than to Theodore Roosevelt and Aldo Leopold. The tight-knit quality of many African American communities has helped them mobilize quickly in response to crises, as was often seen during the Civil Rights movement and more recently in the Black Lives Matter movement. This type of community infrastructure and trust is a tremendous asset that can be used to fight environmental injustices as well (Silveira, 2001).

Due to challenges African Americans experience in mainstream environmental organizations, some have started their own conservation and environmental justice organizations. Some of these leaders are actually former employees of traditional environmental groups who tried to change those older institutions from within but couldn't make much headway (Mock, 2017). For example, Outdoor Afro started in 2009 as an organization connecting African Americans who value the outdoors. Today it is a national non-profit organization with leadership networks in thirty states. "For groups like Outdoor Afro, diversity is part of their DNA, not an ad hoc committee," says Brenton Mock:

They're not saying to the traditional environmental movement, 'You need to include us.' They're saying that the traditional green groups have neither a monopoly nor a copyright on what constitutes environmentalism. These populations have always been a part of nature's

narrative, whether old, white conservationists have acknowledged them or not. They are, in fact, nature's most natural defenders, because they know viscerally what it means to be endangered. (Mock, 2017)

Another African American organization that now devotes programmatic attention to environmental justice is the NAACP, one of the nation's oldest and most respected civil rights organizations. It established the Environmental and Climate Justice Program in 2009 in recognition that environmental and climate justice are civil rights issues. It states on its website, "race – even more than class – is the number one indicator for the placement of toxic facilities in this country. And communities of color and low-income communities are often the hardest hit by climate change" (NAACP "Environmental & Climate Justice", 2018, para. 3).

When Jacqueline Patterson took on the role of Environmental and Climate Justice Program director for the NAACP at the inception of the program, there was little mainstream interest in the issue. But now, Patterson says interest in her work is so fevered that her work is literally endless. "The sheer volume has mushroomed to such an extent that if I never go to sleep I might be able to get to all the various requests" (2017). There is growing recognition among mainstream environmental organizations as well as environmental justice organizations that policies that benefit African Americans also provide the most benefit for all Americans (Hoerner J. & Robinson N., 2008).

Latinos

Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population, and surveys conducted on this group show that Latinos overwhelmingly favor government action to fight climate change. "Of the issues we've polled, the only other national issue Latinos feel more intensely about is immigration reform. Action on climate change is a very high priority for Latinos--regardless of age, income, party affiliation or where they live," said Matt Barreto, professor of political science at the University of Washington and co-founder of Latino Decisions (Latino Decisions, 2014, para. 6). In a 2013 survey conducted by

Natural Resources Defense Council, nine out of ten Latino voters surveyed said it was important for the U.S. government to address global warming and climate change; and 80% favored presidential action to fight carbon pollution that causes it. The survey interviewed 805 Latinos in the U.S. from November 25th to December 4, 2013 (Latino Decisions, 2014, para. 4).

Asked about their concern about climate change, Latinos frequently cited family and health concerns. Many respondents said they want to "protect the planet for their children and future generations." Some said they were concerned over health-effects of a worsening environment, and others said they were concerned for their families in foreign countries (Latino Decisions, 2013, p.3). Many Latinos have immigrated from or have family from countries that are already severely impacted by climate change. Those familial and ancestral ties help Latinos hold a global perspective when it comes to climate change. When asked if they thought about these concerns in terms of themselves, their families, community, country, entire world, or something else, the most common response was out of a concern for the "entire world" (Latino Decisions, 2014). "We should be thinking of climate and the environment as a core Latino issue," said Barreto (Barboza, 2014, para. 10).

The Yale Program on Climate Communication conducted a study on Latino perceptions of climate change in 2017 among Spanish-speaking Latinos, English-speaking Latinos, and non-Latinos. Using levels of concern from "Global Warming's Six Americas," they found that twice as many Spanish-speaking Latinos (37%) and 29% of English-speaking Latinos said they were "alarmed" about climate change compared to 18% of non-Latinos. When combined with those who identified as "concerned" about global warming, about three in four Spanish-speaking Latinos (77%) are either "alarmed" or "concerned" as are two in three English-speaking Latinos (66%). In comparison, only half of non-Latinos (50%) are either "alarmed" or "concerned" (Leiserowitz et al., 2018). At the other end of the spectrum, one in ten non-Latinos are "dismissive," about the importance of climate change compared to 6% of English-speaking Latinos and only 1% of Spanish-speaking Latinos (Leiserowitz et al., 2018).

The study also examined political engagement on climate change among alarmed Spanish-speaking Latinos, English-speaking Latinos, and non-Latinos. Similar percentages of alarmed non-Latinos (74%), English-speaking Latinos (75%), and Spanish-speaking Latinos (79%) said they currently participate in, or would participate in, a campaign to convince elected officials to take action to reduce global warming. However, while approximately equal proportions of alarmed non-Latinos (30%) and English-speaking Latinos (28%) would “definitely” join a campaign, more than half (51%) of alarmed Spanish-speaking Latinos say they would definitely join a campaign (Leiserowitz et al., 2018). Despite the willingness of many alarmed Latinos to join a campaign to reduce global warming, six in ten alarmed English-speaking Latinos (63%) and nearly three in four alarmed Spanish-speaking Latinos (72%) said they have never been contacted by an organization working to reduce global warming (see Figure 7) (Leiserowitz et al., 2018).

reasons (Leiserowitz et al., 2018). Notably, one in three alarmed Spanish-speaking Latinos (33%) said they might attract unwanted attention from immigration authorities, compared with about one in ten alarmed English-speaking Latinos (11%) and alarmed non-Latinos (9%) (Leiserowitz et al., 2018).

Percent who “somewhat” or “strongly” agree...	Alarmed non-Latinos %	Alarmed English-Language Latinos %	Alarmed Spanish-Language Latinos %
Nobody has ever asked me to	61	68	78
It wouldn't make any difference	55	42	48
I don't know which elected officials to contact	48	50	72
I wouldn't know what to say	43	40	43
I am not an activist	36	30	54
I would feel uncomfortable	31	38	51
I'm too busy	30	30	50
It's too much effort	28	36	60
I don't need to because I'm already taking other actions	20	23	36
People will criticize or make fun of me	12	14	34
I don't think it's important	11	13	31
I might attract unwanted attention from immigration authorities	9	11	33

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding contacting elected officials about global warming?
May, 2017

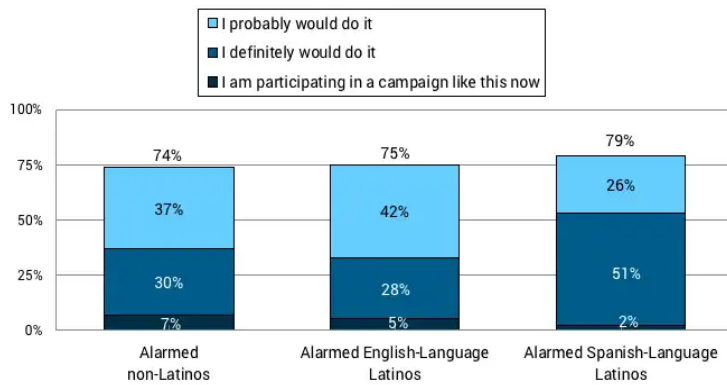


Figure 8. Barriers to contacting elected officials about global warming among alarmed Latinos. Leiserowitz et al., 2018.

Latinos are a diverse group that speak different languages, come from different countries, and have different political party affiliations. Despite these differences, their views are fairly similar on climate change, suggesting great potential for engagement. Research on motivations for concern on climate change suggest that Latinos resonate strongly with values that emphasize social harmony, respect, and concern for the welfare of one’s family and community (Holloway, Waldrip, & Ickes, 2009). Trust could be a barrier to political engagement, as many Latinos have negative experiences with government, in the United States as well as their country of origin (Speiser & Krygsman, 2014).

Asian Americans

Though comprising only 6% of the U.S. population, Asian Americans are the fastest growing minority group in America, and the one with the highest education and income levels. They also show the highest levels of concern for climate change and support for policies aimed at mitigating climate change of all racial and ethnic



How willing or unwilling would you be to join a campaign to convince elected officials to take action to reduce global warming?
May, 2017



Figure 7. Willingness by Latinos to join a campaign to reduce global warming among the alarmed. Leiserowitz et al., 2018.

When asked about barriers to contacting elected officials about global warming, all three groups that identified as alarmed marked “nobody has ever asked me to” as the top reason (see Figure 8). Spanish-speaking Latinos said, “I don’t know which elected officials to contact” as the second most frequent response, and “it’s too much effort” as the third. English-speaking Latinos cited “I don’t know which elected officials to contact,” and “it wouldn’t make a difference” as the second and third most popular

subgroups (Speiser & Krygsman, 2014). In the Yale 2010 study, 65% of Asians said they were worried or somewhat worried about global warming, compared to 76% of Latinos, 59% of African Americans, and 60% of Whites. Asians were the most likely to say that global warming is caused by human activities, ahead of all other groups. Asians also responded in favor of a carbon tax, carbon trade, and policies to support renewable energy more than any other group (Leiserowitz and Akerlof, 2010). A 2016 National Asian American Survey found that more than three-quarters (76%) of Asian Americans supported “setting stricter emission limits on power plants in order to address climate change” compared to 64% of adults nationwide (Ramakrishnan & Lee, 2016). Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are also significantly more likely than the national average to prioritize environmental protection over economic growth. In the 2012 National Asian American Survey, 60% of Asian Americans prioritized environmental protection over economic growth, compared to the national average of 41% (Ramakrishnan & Lee, 2012).

Like Latinos, Asian Americans also resonate with caring for future generations and ties to the global community as reasons to act on climate change. “We care about our families and opportunities for our children, and we see the environment as part of that,” said Parin Shah, leader of Asian Pacific Environmental Network’s communications and policy work (Chang, 2014). Many Asian Americans are immigrants or descendants of immigrants from Asian countries severely impacted by climate change. A study by Climate Central found that ten of the top twelve most at-risk countries from climate change are in Asia: China, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, United States, Philippines, Egypt, Brazil, Thailand, and Myanmar. More than 145 million people in China and 48 million people in Vietnam live in areas that will be covered by sea-level rise by the end of the century (Strauss, Kulp, & Leverman, 2015).

Native Americans

Native Americans are 1.6% of the American population, but they are a powerful voice on climate change and environmental justice. As people that still rely on subsistence ways of living, Native Americans have often been the first to experience the effects of climate change and the most affected. “Populations such as ours that

have a close relationship with nature, that still have traditional practices off the land and waterways, are experiencing these real effects, from Alaska to many of our tribal people here in the lower 48,” said Tom Goldtooth (Navajo/Dakota), executive director of the Indigenous Environmental Network (Hilleary, 2017, para. 3).

The consequences of climate change have been devastating for many indigenous communities in the U.S. In Alaska, where winter temperatures have warmed by 6^o F, their homes have fallen into the sea as a result of eroding shorelines, their wild food sources have dwindled or migrated, and unreliable sea ice has made travel (by dog sled or snowmobile) precarious or impossible, cutting communities off from one another and restricting movement. More than thirty Native villages are either in the process of or in need of relocating their entire village, but due to high costs and land restraints, many tribes are unable to relocate to safer areas (US EPA, 2017). In the lower forty-eight, mild winters in the Midwest have led to an increase in deer ticks and other disease-carrying parasites, decimating Minnesota’s moose population, which Native Americans use as a source of sustenance (Marcotty, 2017). In the Northwest, where Native tribes subsist on salmon, climate change has affected migration patterns and the health of the fish stock (Brodbeck, 2017). On the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, an entire indigenous community—Isle de Jean Charles—is relocating because of sea level rise (Lim, 2017). In the Southwest, communities are devastated by wildfires, fifteen-plus-year droughts, siltation and desertification, and more. In July 2010 a flash flood left the Hopi First Mesa without potable water or sewage, and they were forced to spend more than \$900,000 to repair their infrastructure. “If you’re asking where climate is most impacting tribes, the simple answer is everywhere,” said Garrit Voggeser, director of the National Wildlife Federation’s Tribal Partnership program (Hilleary, 2014, para. 7).

Native Americans have also borne the brunt of the burden from fossil fuel development, from extraction to transportation, refining and waste disposal. Whenever fossil fuel development comes in conflict with Native American tribes, their rights are almost always violated. The proposed Keystone XL pipeline, if built, would go through 1,179 miles from southern Alberta to the Gulf of Mexico, cutting across the territories of numerous tribes from the Dene and Creek Nations to the Omaha, Ho-

chunk, and Panka tribes, contaminating their drinking water and destroying sacred sites (Boos, 2015). Under President Trump, secretary of the interior Ryan Zinke signed orders promoting coal, gas, and renewable energy extraction on federal and tribal lands. Said Tom Goldtooth:

When we have a U.S. administration that is a denier of science and the facts, we have a serious problem that violates our treaty rights to fish and hunt and gather. These aren't just rights that we negotiated in treaties with the United States. These are inherent rights. (Hilleary, 2014, "Shift in US policy," para. 2)

Even solutions to climate change often have negative consequences for Native American communities. Nuclear energy, which is lauded as an important alternative to fossil fuels, produces toxic radioactive waste which the government tries to store on tribal land. In 1987, the office of the Nuclear Waste Negotiator, created by Congress, sent letters to every federally recognized tribe in the country offering hundreds of thousands and even millions of dollars to tribal council governments in exchange for storing nuclear waste on tribal lands. Most of the tribes refused, but a few were coaxed into accepting the waste, including the Goshute Indians Reservation in Tooele County, Utah (Kamps, 2001). Over 77,000 tons of nuclear waste has been stored at the Skull Valley Goshute reservation in Utah. In "Carbon Pricing: A Critical Perspective for Community Resistance," indigenous leaders share the perspective that "carbon pricing is a false solution that does NOT keep fossil fuels in the ground," and "token revenues distributed to environmental justice communities from carbon trading or carbon pricing can never compensate for the destruction wrought by the extraction and pollution that is the source of that revenue" (Gilberton, 2017, p. 4). Indigenous climate leaders have called on their communities to resist carbon pricing as a solution to climate change.

Despite their vulnerability, Native Americans are not powerless bystanders in the fight against climate change. They have led the People's Climate Movement in organizing protests, marches, and actions against fossil fuel development. They have resisted the Dakota Access Pipeline, fracking, and other forms of fossil fuel extraction on their lands. Faith Spotted Eagle, a member of the

Yankton Sioux Nation, became the first Native American to win an electoral vote for president after her leadership in opposing the Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil pipelines (Pearce, 2016). Native Americans participate in international treaties and negotiations around climate change, and they are passionate and effective advocates for human rights, future generations, and all life. Tom Goldtooth said in his "Statement Against Toxic Nuclear Colonialism":

The four elements of fire, water, earth and air that sustain all Life are being destroyed and misused by the modern world. Because of our relationship with our lands, waters and natural surroundings which has sustained us since time immemorial, we carry the knowledge and ideas that the world needs today. We know how to live with this land: we have done so for thousands of years. We are a powerful spiritual people. It is this spiritual connection to Mother Earth, Father Sky, and all Creation that is lacking in the rest of the world. (Goldtooth, 2009, para. 20)

Without the voices and dedication of indigenous communities, many environmental campaigns would not be as urgent or compelling.

Barriers of History, Culture, and Framing

History

The environmental movement's challenges with diversity is not merely a reflection of institutional racism in the broader society, but a product of the movement's own exclusive beginnings. The environmental movement sprang from the conservation movement which began in the second half of the nineteenth century as people became concerned with deforestation and the extirpation of passenger pigeons, buffalo, and other wildlife that were formerly abundant in North America. The principal architects of the conservation movement, individuals like Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and John Muir, were elite, White, wealthy men who wanted to preserve their hunting, fishing, and hiking grounds so that people like themselves could have access to outdoor recreation. Roosevelt, George Bird Grinnell, and Pinchot grew up in the same elite, east coast social circles, went to Ivy League universities, and belonged to similar organizations. They recruited for their efforts their friends, colleagues, and family members from similar backgrounds (Taylor, 2016, p. 385). These early environmental organizations—the Boone and Crockett Club, Sierra Club, and Audubon Society—were social clubs for wealthy people who enjoyed the outdoors as much as activist organizations with a political agenda (Taylor, 2016, p. 387). Many of them excluded membership from women, people of color, and those they considered belonging to an inferior social-economic class. From the outset, the founders of the conservation movement were disconnected from the dominant social issues of their time. As beneficiaries of capitalism, institutional racism, and patriarchy, they were not interested in addressing social inequalities like slavery, the oppression of women, and the abuse of labor, issues at the forefront for social progressives of that era. They were mainly concerned with bird and game protection, rural beautification, access to outdoor recreation, and wilderness preservation for the enjoyment of the elite (Taylor, 2016, p. 394). In fact, much of the political agenda that they advocated for was

harmful to Native Americans and people of color. For example:

- They established reservation lands which had belonged to Native Americans and restricted their access and use of them;
- They designated private reserves and country clubs that excluded the poor and non-Whites from using the land;
- They criminalized people for subsistence activities, turning them into squatters and poachers;
- They willfully annexed land from Latinos and incited violence on those who resisted.
- They dispossessed land promised to newly emancipated Black citizens after the Civil War—and from many Native American tribes—to make room for new national parks and monuments. (Taylor, 2016, pp.10-19)

These early conservationists viewed nature as the antidote to the ills of civilization—an escape from air pollution, squalor, crowding, and other problems of the city. As Dr. Dorceta Taylor put it, “Conservationism and Preservationism did not arise from popular grassroots discontent and grievance; rather, they arose because a peculiar set of business, recreation interests, and political opportunities converged” (Taylor, 2016, p.391). Because the principal architects of the conservation movement were businessmen or came from the same social-economic class as the elites of industry, they made sure that their agenda to preserve America's finest natural treasures did not hamper the agenda of industry to profit (Taylor, 2016, p.392). The economic and political capital of the founders helped to establish the conservation movement as a powerful tool for the interests of wealthy White men.

For some conservationists, love of wilderness was conflated with belief in the superiority and supremacy of the White race. Madison Grant, an American lawyer, writer, and zoologist who founded the first organizations dedicated to preserving American bison and the California redwoods, is better known for his book of white supremacy, *The Passing of the Great Race, or The Racial Basis of European History* (Purdy, 2015). Grant maintained that Nordics were a natural aristocracy in

danger of disappearing in a world overpopulated by inferior races. His descriptions of the “noble moose, mountain goat, and redwood tree” led his biographer Jonathan Spiro to conclude that he saw them as symbols for a threatened, declining aristocracy (Purdy, 2015). Theodore Roosevelt praised *The Passing of the Great Race* as “a capital book; in purpose, in vision, in grasp of the facts our people most need to realize,” and Henry Fairfield Osborn, who headed the New York Zoological Society, wrote a forward to the book. Adolf Hitler called the book “my Bible,” and it continues to be read by the ultra-right today (Purdy, 2015, para. 4).

Others involved in the management of natural resources were also interested in the management of the human gene pool. In a 1909 report to Roosevelt’s National Conservation Commission, Yale professor Irving Fisher recommended preventing “paupers” and physically unhealthy people from reproducing, as well as replenishing the country with Northern European stock to prevent “race suicide” (Purdy, 2015, para. 6). Gifford Pinchot, who established the American Forestry Service under Theodore Roosevelt, was a delegate to the first and second International Eugenics Congress in 1912 and 1921, and a member of the advisory council of the American Eugenics Society from 1925 to 1935. These organizations helped pass the Immigration Act of 1924, which restricted immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and Africa and banned migrants from the Middle East and Asia (Purdy, 2015). William Vogt, who warned of the dangers of pesticides in his 1948 work “Road to Survival,” urged governments to offer cash to the poor for sterilization, in order to have “a favorable selective influence” on the human species (Purdy, 2015, para. 11).

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, and one who prided himself on not being part of the management elite like Roosevelt and Pinchot, was also not immune to racism and prejudice. In his writings of a journey from the upper Midwest to the Gulf of Mexico, he commented on the laziness of “sambos” and the “dirty and irregular life” of Indians in the Merced River valley, near Yosemite (Purdy, 2015, para. 8). In *Our National Parks*, a 1901 essay collection written to promote parks tourism, Muir was more concerned about the abusive treatment of bears than about the Native Americans killed and driven from their homes in order to create the national parks that he loved (Purdy, 2015, para. 8). This legacy of racism had a profound impact on the Sierra Club and the

environmental movement in general. When the Sierra Club conducted a poll in 1972, asking members whether the Sierra Club should “concern itself with the conservation problems of such special groups as the urban poor and ethnic minorities,” 40% of respondents said they were strongly opposed, and only 15% were supportive (Purdy, 2015, para. 14).

The conservation movement’s legacy of capitalism, patriarchy, and racism had a lasting effect on the environmental movement, which had begun with the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* in 1962, and officially with the first Earth Day in 1970. No longer only concerned with the preservation of the wilderness and management of natural resources, the environmental movement took on pesticide use, air pollution, toxic waste, nuclear energy, and other problems that beset the poor as well as the wealthy, the urban as well as the rural. It recognized that communities of color suffered a greater proportion of environmental ills than White suburban communities. It utilized grassroots advocacy and mobilized frontline communities as means to creating change. However, a gap began to develop between the emerging grassroots environmental movement and the “mainstream” environmental organizations founded during the conservation movement. The latter had power and influence as insiders among decision makers in national politics, and they often sought to exclude groups seen as embracing an anti-corporate, anti-government agenda.

Case in point is the Group of 10, a group consisting of the executive directors of ten mainstream environmental organizations convened by Robert Allen, executive director of the Kendall Foundation, for the purpose of collaborating on an environmental agenda after Ronald Reagan took office. It included leaders from the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Friends of the Earth, Environmental Policy Institute, the Izaak Walton League, the Wilderness Society, the Environmental Defense Fund, and The National Wildlife Federation. All of the organizations invited to this exclusive group met regularly with members of Congress and corporate representatives. Groups that advocated action against polluters, whalers, the military, and corporations were excluded, including Environmental Action and Greenpeace. It also excluded apolitical groups like World Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy (Dowie, 1996, p. 69).

Over the next ten years, the Group of 10 branded itself as a coalition of the leading environmental organizations in the nation. It met quarterly for a few years and conducted some joint projects together. The first was a 1986 report called “An Environmental Agenda for the Future,” which described the vision of the coalition. Echoing the now outdated eugenics movement, the report identified human overpopulation as the root cause of environmental problems, and recommended “formal population policies,” good science, and resource management as solutions (Dowie, 1996, p. 72). By overpopulation it is likely they meant overpopulation by people of color rather than White people. The report shied away from making suggestions that would impose limitations on industry or expand the reach of the government into the private sector.

As the membership and budgets of the Group of 10 more than doubled during the Reagan era, people of color were often perceived as not being interested in environmental issues and therefore not worth engaging. A 1972 study of 1,500 environmental volunteers nationwide found that 98% of them were White (Zinger, Dalsemer, & Magargle, H., 1972, in Taylor, 2014). The National Recreation Survey (conducted in 1960) found that Whites were more likely to go camping, hiking, skiing, swimming, etc., in public parks, forests, and wilderness areas than people of color, without acknowledging that there are often economic and cultural barriers for people of color to pursue those activities (Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, 1962 in Taylor, 2014, p. 28). In 1988, Sierra Club’s national population committee chair, John Tanton, wrote in a letter to a right-leaning foundation, “What will happen when [the White population] goes into minority status, and the groups that comprise the new coalition majorities don’t share the same [environmental] values?” Tanton went on to found the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which the Southern Poverty Law Center branded a hate group (Mock, 2017, para. 15).

Environmental organizations started to be more cognizant of race and environmental justice issues in the 1990s. One catalyst was Earth Day 1990, when several environmental justice activists and organizations sent a letter to the heads of the nation’s largest environmental nongovernmental organizations accusing them of racial bias in their hiring and in their campaigns (Taylor, 2014, p. 32). They referenced an informal poll conducted in 1990 finding that only 14 (1.9%) of the 745 employees of the

Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Sierra Club were people of color (*New York Times*, 1990, in Taylor, 2014, p. 32). In defense, the organizations contended that they had so few minorities on their staff because of a lack of qualified applicants. But according to one Sierra Club member, the president of the organization acknowledged, “Yes, we are racists,” and then decided to do something about the situation. Sierra Club started an environmental justice program, changed their hiring practices to recruit minorities, and started diversity trainings with their staff. Other organizations decided to follow suit and make diversity and the concerns of minorities more of a priority in their campaigns (Taylor, 2014, p. 169).

Since that time, DEI in environmental organizations has improved, but progress has been slow overall. Between 2008 and 2018, diversity in the staff of environmental organizations increased from 12% to about 16% (Taylor, 2017). Many DEI initiatives have been implemented in the last ten years. Marcelo Bonta, founder of the Center for Diversity and the Environment, recalls that there used to be hardly any DEI initiatives at environmental organizations but now there are so many and there is so much demand that there are not enough consultants and diversity managers to do the work (Bonta, 2018). However, more progress has been made on gender diversity than racial diversity, and while more minorities are on the staff of environmental organizations, few of them are in leadership positions (Taylor, 2014). Nevertheless, the progress and the attention paid to DEI now are very encouraging. In the next section I will address the cultural barriers that continue to make diversity a challenge.

Culture

Culture poses a major barrier for people of color seeking to enter environmental organizations. When an organization is predominantly one race (as well as class and educational background), the individuals of the dominant group reinforce their culture through speech, behavior, and ways of thinking, while marginalizing other ways of being. In recruiting practices, environmental organizations often prefer candidates from networks that they are familiar with, such as word-of-mouth and informal networks, which makes it difficult for ethnic minorities, the working class, or anyone outside of

traditional environmental networks to find out about job openings and apply for those jobs (Taylor 2014, p. 175). These kinds of internal hiring practices introduce bias that allow race and class to affect hiring decisions (Taylor, 2014).

Dr. Dorceta Taylor, at the University of Michigan School of Sustainability believes that the lack of diversity at environmental organizations is not just a question of resources, but of priorities (Spanne, 2014, “Bottom up and top down,” para. 3). She says, environmental groups struggle to effectively recruit and retain talented people of color that “don’t fit a certain mold,” while corporations tend to be better at supporting new employees and creating a structure to help their success and advancement. “Corporate recruiters seek out the best students, whereas environmental organizations tend to wait for the stars to come to them,” she says. At the University of Michigan School for Sustainability, she notices that students in the MBA program are swiftly recruited by companies that offer them internships, which often turn into jobs after graduation. Whereas the students in the environmental studies program have to fight to get their foot in the door, and even if they get an internship, they are not likely to be hired. “With environmental organizations,” she says, “there is so much insider culture you have to break through ... it makes it challenging for anyone who is not a member of that club” (Spanne, 2014, “Bottom up and top down,” para. 4).

In addition to the barriers they face in entering environmental careers, people of color suffer from employment discrimination in a general sense. Research on discrimination in the workplace found that when employees are given comparable resumes from Whites and minority applicants, employers are less likely to interview or offer jobs to minority applicants. A general Accounting Office audit study found that Black and Latino candidates with equal credentials received 25% fewer job interviews and 34% fewer job offers in comparison to Whites. Whites are also more likely to be offered higher salaries and higher status positions compared to their minority counterparts (Herring and Henderson, 2014, p. 97).

People of color also experience hardships in the work environment that White people don’t deal with, such as racist remarks, microaggressions, and not getting their ideas taken seriously. Marcelo Bonta recalls being called a

“little oriental” by a coworker when he worked at an environmental organization in the 1990s. His ideas were sometimes dismissed by his boss until a White colleague suggested the same thing (2018). A White interviewee for Green 2.0 reported that when he said the same thing as a minority colleague at his environmental organization, people paid attention, as if “it has that sugar-whiteness coating, ‘It’s good, it’s good. We gotta listen to this guy!’” (Taylor, 2014, p. 165).

Social isolation and cultural differences also make it challenging for people of color to feel comfortable in environmental organizations. Jacob Maxwell explained:

A lot of times the talent is hired but not retained. It’s because organizations don’t know how to welcome these people; they are culturally different or they are racially different, or they are ethnically different. And because of that they [the environmental organizations] don’t do a good job in the care and maintenance of them. (Taylor, 2014, p. 162)

Zoe Edmon spoke about how her discomfort and efforts to try to fit into a mainstream environmental organization she worked for overwhelmed her and led her to quit her job. She said:

At the organization that I mentioned that was mainstream there were few people of color and I quit that job... In my last couple of weeks there I started dressing in a way that I never felt comfortable dressing and I cut my hair in a way that I wasn’t comfortable wearing... That I could be in a group of my people and it would not have been so noticed and pointed out and I just felt like I was on stage or offering a performance just because I was different... It’s carrying that level of difference and that level of noticing takes a lot of energy... It’s an emotional experience that I think it’s hard to understand unless you’ve been through it and that affects your ability to participate in the group. (Taylor, 2014, p. 161)

Overcoming the cultural barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion means making serious investments in education, recruitment, outreach, and engagement. However, environmental organizations have been reluctant to make these investments, hampering their ability to seriously address DEI. In Green 2.0’s 2014 report, only 2.8% of the

conservation and preservation organizations surveyed had a diversity manager, 14.9% said they provided funds to facilitate diversity efforts, and 27.4% said they hold diversity training and staff meetings to discuss diversity (Taylor, 2014, p. 135). Environmental organizations that do have a lot of diversity, which includes many environmental justice organizations, are poorly funded and therefore have little capacity to hire more people of color (Taylor, 2014).

Framing

As environmental issues have expanded to air pollution, toxic waste, climate change, and others, stereotypes of tree-huggers, liberals, and White people who care more about nature than human beings dominate people's imagination of environmentalists, images that people of color don't identify with, even if they care about the environment. Elliott Payne (pseudonym) related that though people of color often don't consider themselves environmentalists, "[they] are, and have been [environmentalists], and will continue to do environmentalism and conservation, they may not always call it that, it may just be part of what we do and how we approach the work, but we're doing it" (Taylor, 2014, p. 146). This framing that people have to be environmentalists to do environmental work reflects a White-oriented approach to environmental work that obscures the contributions people of color make to the cause.

Framing climate change as an environmental issue has reinforced its image as a "White" issue, an abstract problem concerning future generations for people with the luxury to not deal with more immediate concerns. This obscures the reality that climate change is deeply intertwined with social justice, and its consequences are disproportionately borne by the poor and people of color. While the disappearance of an endangered species may not affect marginalized communities much, droughts, floods, and vector-borne diseases immediately and deeply impact disadvantaged communities. Framing climate change as a justice issue, an extension of civil rights and the fight against systemic racism, could help galvanize the communities that are most affected by it.

Another problem is that the solutions to climate change are often geared at White, middle-class people. Suggestions to drive less, turn down thermostats, and buy

less stuff are more relevant for middle-class people with a high consumption lifestyle. For poor people who already use less energy and take public transportation, such suggestions sound condescending and useless. Other popular solutions, such as solar panels, electric cars, and other technology upgrades are often beyond the reach of low-income households. Framing climate change as a scientific problem with technical solutions disempowers people of color and reinforces the perception that it is a "White" issue for people who can afford to care about it.

Communities of color using minimal energy to run their households do not need advice on how to reduce their carbon footprint. However, empowering them to speak out against environmental injustices and be civically engaged on issues that matter to their community could help. They may not be able to buy electric cars, but they can vote, resist fossil fuel development in their community, and complain about industries that pollute their neighborhoods. Disadvantaged communities often lack the skills and the confidence to organize around issues that they care about, and that's where environmental organizations with data, expertise, and connections can help them address climate change or any issue that impacts their community.

Framing climate change as a global issue may not appeal to disadvantaged communities that have pressing local concerns, but saying minorities only care about local issues also marginalizes them as uninterested in global issues. Many people of color come from countries and have family in countries where global warming is a day-to-day concern, and many people of color care deeply about wildlife or the global community. Elliott Payne describes a conversation he had with a former boss:

At a past organization I told my boss, we did wildlife conservation, and I said you know we should start working with communities of color, I even said I have some relationships, I can follow up with them and see where they land on it.... My boss said, 'Oh, we don't do environmental justice.' [My]... reaction... first of all, why not? Second of all... he didn't perceive the complexity of what people of color are interested in and support. He just thought people of color — a lot do support environmental justice, and we support a lot of other things as well. (Taylor, 2014, p. 161)

Contrary to the stereotype that people of color only care about local issues, in surveys about minority perceptions of climate change, people of color overwhelmingly say that the global community is a top reason for their concern (Leiserowitz et al., 2018; Macias, 2014).

While ample research shows that people of color are concerned about climate change and support climate action, research is still needed around the barriers to climate action and the complex social factors that influence how people perceive climate change. Given the demographic shift underway in the United States, such research may be very useful in trying to create a collective response to climate change.

Building a Diverse and Inclusive Climate Movement

Environmental organizations have made tremendous progress in the last decade on diversity, equity, and inclusion; however, it still has much farther to go. We need to do a much better job of framing climate change as a social justice issue and engaging people of color to join the climate movement. Integrating diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI) is a process that requires experimentation and learning from mistakes. The good news is that there is plenty of expertise in this area from other sectors and from environmental leaders themselves.

Many of the experts consulted for this report say that DEI needs to be an authentic effort in order for it to succeed. “If you don’t do it authentically,” says Queta González, director of the Center for Diversity and the Environment, “just don’t do it” (Gewin, 2016, “Systemic change,” para. 6). Merely hiring more people of color so that the staff looks more diverse does not work and may, in fact, do harm instead of good. “Diversity is oftentimes treated as the silver-bullet solution, as in, ‘Get the right people in the room, and then all your problems are fixed,’” says Nellis Kennedy-Howard (personal communication, September 21, 2018), equity director of Sierra Club. She says, “focusing on racial diversity, diversity for diversity’s sake, results in people being harmed and tokenized because of their identities.” Instead of focusing on diversity, Kennedy-Howard recommends focusing on improving equity, justice, and inclusion, and a more diverse organization will result.

Organizations that successfully attract and retain diverse staff and develop cross-cultural relationships are clear about their goals, transparent, accept feedback, and are authentic. They are able to answer the question: Why does diversity matter to us? And make that answer central to the organization’s mission and strategy. “When you commit to do this, you have to go all in,” says Gonzalez. “I see a lot of organizations put a toe in the water and try to recruit for diversity but do nothing to

create an inclusive environment, but if new hires walk into a space where they don’t feel welcome, the situation is set up for failure” (Gewin, 2016, “Changing culture,” para. 1).

This section focuses on how environmental organizations can incorporate DEI into leadership, education, recruitment and retention, partnerships, outreach, and engagement.

Leadership

Any effort that involves changes to the operation of the whole organization and interactions between all staff need to have the buy-in and engagement of the leadership. This means not just the executive director, but the board of directors and those with power to support or block the work need to make DEI a top priority. Michael Brune, Executive Director at Sierra Club, was central in moving the Sierra Club toward greater inclusion and equity by being vocal and committing significant resources to DEI. “To succeed in standing up to those who don’t care what happens to our planet, we need the help of everyone who does,” he said. “The environmental movement, and the Sierra Club, can and should recognize and welcome the participation of the people most affected by injustice, environmental or otherwise” (Brune, 2014, “Read the comments,” para. 9). Brune has received pushback from members of his organization who don’t feel that social justice is at the heart of the Sierra Club’s mission, but he has persisted, alienating some members and drawing praise from others (Brune, 2014).

Building DEI into the organization’s mission and strategy is the foundation for strong and sustainable organizational change. This means articulating why DEI is important and relating it to the organization’s goals and mission. It is not enough to rely on the rationale that “it’s the right thing to do,” said Angela Park, “which gets easily pushed aside in the face of seemingly more pressing organizational priorities” (2007, p. 46). DEI has to be seen as “mission critical” (Park, 2007, p. 45). When members of the organization understand why DEI matters, they are much more likely to support it and perhaps feel pride in their organization’s commitment to justice.

Communicating a strong commitment to DEI means putting the message in places where people will see it highlighted. Earthjustice, the nation’s premier

environmental law organization, displays the following mission statement prominently on its website:

As our name indicates, we are driven by a passion for justice—for people and for the environment, by a belief that we can accomplish more in genuine partnership with others, and by a commitment to excellence and strategic action.

Our pursuit of diversity and inclusion recognizes that environmental burdens and benefits are not distributed equitably and we seek to address these historic and current disparities so that each of us can realize and enjoy a healthy, rich and inspiring world.

In order to more fully accomplish our mission and live our values, we strive to make our commitment to diversity and inclusion evident in our organizational structure, policies, board of directors, staff, donors, goals, and vision. We welcome people of all backgrounds and seek to foster a culture of respect, openness, learning, integrity, honesty—and a sense of fun.

Our passion for justice calls on us to be inclusive, transparent, and fair in all that we do. Our commitment to working in partnerships compels us to build relationships where all partners are valued, heard, respected, and empowered. Our drive for excellence leads us to learn from a broad range of perspectives and talents. Our desire for savvy and strategic approaches benefits from a multitude of cultural and life experiences and communities.

In short, we believe a commitment to enhance and steadily increase diversity and inclusion at Earthjustice flows directly from our core values and is essential to achieve our mission. (2018)

Such a clear and powerful statement sends a signal to donors, supporters, and clients that DEI is central to the Earthjustice’s mission.

Another requirement for successful DEI integration is having dedicated staff at a high level in the organization with expertise in the matter. Earthjustice has a Vice President of DEI; at the Nature Conservancy, they call her the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. These

organizations also provide their DEI directors with support staff and a budget. Sometimes organizations try to save money by appointing people in other roles to serve on a diversity committee. When people of color, LGBTQ or other minorities are tapped for that role, they are often asked to do it on top of their regular work, and that feels both tokenizing and dishonoring. Voluntary committees can be a useful way to start the conversation on DEI and explore strategies, but making real progress requires dedicated staff.

In *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations*, experts identified six critical factors that make a diversity initiative successful:

1. Adequate and stable funding
2. Adequate staffing and committed leadership
3. Adequate organizational buy-in
4. Ability to communicate across race, class, gender, and cultural lines
5. Institutionalizing diversity, equity, inclusion goals
6. Translate diversity training into action.

Commitment from leadership and stable funding ensures that DEI doesn’t get treated as a short-term project (Taylor, 2014). Changing organizational culture, values, and practices takes a long time, so anything less than a full, long-term commitment will not be successful. Initiatives that focus on decreasing managerial bias through diversity training and providing feedback on evaluations are least effective in increasing minorities in management ranks, while establishing organizational responsibility for diversity and being accountable to federal affirmative action laws have better results when combined with education, evaluations, networking, and mentoring (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006 in Taylor, 2014, p. 42).

Education

Diversity is not just about having people of color in the organization, but fostering a culture of respect, inclusion, and appreciation for differences. “The biggest mistake that organizations make when it comes to DEI is trying to diversity for the organization but not creating a culture where people of color can thrive,” said Marcelo Bonta in our interview (2018). Creating culture change requires strategic and sustained education, as well as practicing inclusivity by fostering dialogue about DEI. Education can be conducted in a variety of formats: trainings, reading

materials, discussions, and workshops. Organizations should begin with an assessment that measures where employees are on diversity measures, both in terms of numbers and cultural competency, and then use that baseline to design an educational program to acquire the needed skills. They can seek help with education by hiring consultants, hiring a diversity officer with expertise on the subject, talking to other organizations involved in DEI, or forming a committee to explore available resources.

When Nellis Kennedy-Howard became DEI director at Sierra Club, she made education a central part of the organization's DEI strategy. In 2017, the organization hosted the largest educational event to ever happen at the Sierra Club--"Growing for Change," a two-day anti-oppression workshop that all staff were required to attend. Almost 700 staff and 150 volunteers participated in thirteen workshops across the country over the course of a year. "Getting 850 people in a room to try to have a conversation about equity and justice isn't very fruitful," she said, "but we know that if you break it down and you design an impactful curriculum, it can be incredibly powerful for people to go to workshops that say have 65 people in them" (2018). At every workshop four facilitators in addition to staff facilitated the conversations. "We don't call it a training," says Nellis Kennedy-Howard, "it's a workshop. It's an experience, a conversation. We don't believe that training is a solution, but the practice and continued conversation around the skills that we're hoping people can develop is absolutely critical." In 2018 the organization adapted the curriculum of "Growing for Change" for online use so that more staff and volunteers can go through it. "Focusing on the culture, rather than the demographics is what creates long-lasting transformational change," she said (2018).

Workshops like "Growing for Change" are a way for staff to be immersed in DEI learning, but it needs to be reinforced and built upon through continuing education and professional development. Participants are often learning to overcome a lifetime of biases and privileges, and they need time to absorb teachings, practice new behaviors, and learn from mistakes. Care needs to be taken to provide a safe and structured environment for talking about these difficult issues. It is helpful to have a plan in case any adverse circumstances come up (Kennedy-Howard, 2018). Opportunities such as lunch-and-learns, conversations with peers about DEI, and performance reviews can reinforce and integrate

learnings into the culture of the organization. In addition, collecting data on DEI on a regular basis is important as a way to gauge progress (D5 Coalition, 2015).

In addition to promoting dialogue about race and sharing best practices, organizations also need repercussions for discriminatory behaviors when they occur, and rewards for actions that promote equity and inclusion. Individuals should be encouraged to speak out when episodes of discrimination occur and when there are steps taken to address it in a fair and sensitive manner. Integrating DEI into performance evaluations can help create a sense of accountability, knowing there are consequences for bad behavior (Herring and Henderson 2014, p. 106).

Recruitment and Retention

Since most environmental organizations are predominantly White, recruiting and retaining people of color as employees (and volunteers) is a special challenge. Recruiting diverse talent means not just finding the most qualified applicants, but also seeking out people of color for the perspective that they can bring to the organization; however, many environmental organizations utilize internal hiring practices that create racial bias. Asking employees to recommend applicants, or going to the same networks and professional organizations, result in new hires who are similar to those already in the organization. Dr. Dorceta Taylor found that environmental organizations were least likely to utilize methods for recruiting applicants such as national searches, recruiting from minority-serving colleges and universities, recruiting at minority environmental professional associations or meetings, use of unemployment or temporary agencies, recruiting at job fairs, or hiring those who walk into the office to find out about jobs. Yet these are some of the channels through which an employer is most likely to find minority applicants (Taylor, 2014, p. 66). Equitable hiring means being transparent about job openings and broadening the pool of applicants as much as possible. According to Michael Watson in "How charities can recruit diverse employees" (2007), "Recruiting diverse talent is not a passive activity. Nonprofit groups have to be willing to move beyond traditional hiring sources and learn to recruit in different places and use different technology." This includes developing relationships with professional organizations that people of color belong to, post positions on websites, newspapers, and other vehicles

that reach minorities, and require search firms provide diverse slates of candidates for every opening.

Environmental organizations often recruit from volunteers and interns, and for many people of color, these experiences are difficult to afford. Volunteering in the form of board membership, attending meetings, services contributed to programs, organizing other volunteers and many other things often come with uncompensated out-of-pocket costs, not to mention the time required. Volunteers who do more and give more are obviously considered stronger candidates for employment, but many volunteers who would like to do more and could be very effective are not able to do so due to financial barriers. One volunteer board member of an environmental organization said that he had to step down because the travel costs, airplane tickets, and hotels in exotic locations became too much (Taylor, 2014, p. 166).

In addition to volunteering, internships provide even more opportunities for mentorship, networking, and proving oneself to potential employers, but in environmental organizations, these opportunities are frequently unpaid. The result is that only students who have the privilege of working without pay are able to get these internships. These opportunities may also require people to relocate, which many people cannot do due to financial restrictions or family obligations. Employers tend to like working with people who are like themselves, and if most of the staff of environmental organizations are White, then the bias is toward hiring interns who are also White and come from the same social class.

Even if a person of color is able to volunteer, intern, and qualify themselves for staff positions, sometimes the jobs themselves are not tenable. Entry-level positions may be part time, without benefits, and paid so low that the employees cannot afford to live where they work. These jobs are also often for a limited term period so there is no job security. This again is disadvantageous to people who do not have other sources of income. Like all people, people of color value attractive positions and opportunities for professional development (plus it's just good labor practice). If working at Starbucks provides better pay and benefits than working at an environmental organization, then talented potential employees may have to work at Starbucks.

Once they are in the organization, employees need opportunities for development and advancement, to feel like their opinions are valued and they can be comfortable being themselves. There is plenty of evidence that White people tend to be promoted and receive raises more often than their non-White counterparts, who are left feeling devalued and resentful (Gee, 2018; James, 2000; Krivkovich et al., 2017). Mentoring and helping people of color to advance in an organization could improve their retainment and renew their dedication to the work.

Affinity groups—spaces for women, people of color, young people, or other minority groups to gather—have been shown to help retention. Being among others like yourself helps you feel less alone and provides moral support for challenges that the dominant population may not understand. Rachel Langstone, who graduated from a prestigious liberal arts college and has a doctorate from a highly ranked university, said that when she worked in environmental organizations:

I was incredibly alone, I had nobody to talk to. I couldn't get support, I looked for it, tried to find it, and it's very, very difficult because people inside the agencies and organizations are afraid to provide support. I finally found a professor of color and it was a huge turning point... in my life because I got the kind of moral support that I needed to be able to make it through. (Taylor, 2014, p. 164)

Being part of a group of people of color or having a mentor can be hugely helpful for minority employees to navigate the challenges of being a minority in an environmental organization.

Efforts can also be made to cultivate the pipeline by partnering with secondary and higher education institutions to help young people of color into environmental careers. The Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program at University of California, Santa Cruz, for example, recruits undergraduate students of color for a multi-summer program that includes an eight-week, intensive summer course integrating conservation design, leadership and research experiences, and research and practice internships with nationally recognized conservation organizations and agencies. Scholars are mentored in applying for jobs and graduate school and provided with ongoing support. They are also paid a

\$4,000 stipend each summer and become part of the national Doris Duke Conservation Scholars network for life. Another organization, the Center for Diversity and the Environment, provides annual conferences on diversity and the environment and regional networking groups where environmental professionals of color can find each other. Being proactive to find and cultivate people early in their careers can have huge payoffs, instead of waiting for

Ways to recruit and retain people of color in the workforce:

- Declare the intention to seek a diverse workforce.
- Cultivate a pro-diversity reputation.
- Make job openings transparent and recruit where people of color are likely to find the job.
- Promote people of color within the organization.
- Offer opportunities for employees to keep their skills current.
- Offer jobs that have stability and security.
- Provide benefits such as onsite childcare, flexible hours, healthcare, and competitive pay.
- Mentor people of color and provide opportunities for them to learn from each other.

From *Diversifying Organizations*, Herring & Henderson, 2014.

them to come to you.

A remarkable example of a corporation that used diversity to completely change its recruitment and retention is the fast food restaurant chain Denny's. In the early 1990s, Denny's was hit by a series of discrimination lawsuits that it eventually settled for \$54.4 million (Labaton, 1994). Prior to that, thousands of Black customers across the nation were systematically refused service, forced to wait longer than their White counterparts, or required to pay more for their food and service. Denny's also discriminated against African Americans as employees and franchisees. In 1993, there was only one African American owned Denny's franchise out of more than 1,000 in the nation and there were no minority supplier contracts.

Denny's realized the error of their ways and completely turned around how they approached diversity. The company implemented a four-fold approach:

- Educate and train the workforce, at all levels, to value and manage diversity.
- Systematically eliminate all structures that impede inclusion and create structures that foster diversity.
- Monitor, measure, and report results on a regular basis to highest levels of the organization.
- Tie reward and recognition systems to diversity progress.

In a few years, it trained all 70,000 Denny's companies and franchise employees, both management and non-management, in diversity competencies. All Denny's managers were required to participate in a full-day of diversity training. Diversity was also incorporated into performance evaluations and tied to annual merit increases. Denny's became one of the top ten leaders in corporate diversity ranked by *Fortune* magazine in its annual ranking of America's 50 Best Companies for Minorities. As a result of their efforts, more than 45% of Denny's employees are minorities; 44% of Denny's senior management team is made up of minorities or women, and 46% of their board of directors are minorities or women. African Americans own 57 Denny's restaurants, and African American businesses account for the majority of Denny's minority contracts (Herring and Henderson 2014, p.60).

Recruiting and retaining employees of color in environmental organizations is a goal that requires intentional effort and active awareness in the ways that bias persists in recruiting practices. Herring and Henderson in *Diversifying Organizations* (2014) puts it well:

We need to redouble affirmative action efforts, activities undertaken specifically to identify, recruit, promote, or retain qualified members of disadvantaged minority groups in order to overcome the results of past discrimination. Simply removing existing impediments is not sufficient for changing the relative positions of various groups. To be truly effective in altering the unequal distribution of life chances, it is essential that employers take specific steps to remedy the consequences of discrimination. (p. 106)

Partnerships and Collaborations

Environmental organizations need to work with organizations that represent people of color if they want to engage communities of color on climate change. In the 2014 study by Green 2.0, 60% of the conservation and preservation organizations surveyed said they collaborated with ethnic minority groups in the past three years seldom or not at all (Taylor, 2014, p. 61). On climate change, an issue which is often dealt with in the realm of federal policy and international negotiations, it is easy to isolate oneself in the Washington bubble and forget that people of color are constituents and the organizations that represent them strategic partners. As Sally Kohn (2014) explained:

For decades, there have effectively been two strands within the environmental movement in the United States and worldwide. One is focused on policy. The other is focused on organizing and action. The former emphasizes pressing conservation and energy law reforms. The latter concentrates on stopping incinerators and mountain-top removal mining and other local environmental fights. One is fairly top-down and predominantly white-led. The other is mainly bottom-up and rooted in communities of color. One gets at least 85% of all U.S. foundation funding. The other gets the crumbs—and I bet you can guess which. (para. 2)

At the other end of the spectrum, some environmental organizations get so excited about working with communities of color that they fail to do their homework and are not prepared for what working with communities of color involves. Marcelo Bonta, Founder of the Center for Diversity and the Environment, said in his interview:

An organization will come into a community of color looking to work with them, but come with a dominant attitude, like, 'Hey, we're environmentalists, we know best,' and not recognizing that other cultures have other ways of doing things. The result is that they offend and hurt the community they were trying to help. (2018)

He recommended that even if your organization is committed to diversity and equity, start by understanding these communities and building a relationship first. That involves coming with an attitude of humility and compassion and asking questions before offering solutions and making requests. Dylan Houghton (pseudonym), member of a community organization, said that many environmental organizations call his group only when they want something: "They would only call us and say we need 100 of your members to sign off on this.... And so obviously that's very off-putting to advocates and the community itself who might feel sort of used" (Taylor, 2014, p. 149). Communities of color have their own pressing concerns and projects that they are working on, so even if you're working on the same issue, learn how they are approaching it and support them.

Many environmental justice organizations working at the local level want to scale up or have access to higher level decision makers and environmental organizations that are mainly working at the national or state level can help them bridge the gap. "We understand the impact of carbon, but we're clear that to clean up communities, we can't work on carbon alone," said Cecil Corbin-Mark of West Harlem Environmental Action. "Environmental justice activists are fighting the full array of pollutants that are hazardous to human health. Strategies to reduce carbon emissions must be developed in the context of existing efforts to fight for public health and environmental safety, and at a minimum, should not undermine that work" (Park, 2009, p. 14). By approaching partnerships with respect and humility, environmental organizations working on climate change can gain more than just the good will of environmental justice activists, they can gain valuable partners who know how to mobilize their communities and bring new perspectives and solutions.

Angela Park, in "Everybody's Movement" (2009), found that communities of color want information and tools to be more effective. They need access to scientific data and economic analysis, which they cannot afford to hire experts to do. They want technology and technical expertise, and connections to experts in organizations and places of power so that they can advance their agenda. Environmental organizations need to understand that these communities know what needs to be done, and often just need support to get it done. What they don't

need are outside organizations telling them what to do (p. 30).

A good example of collaboration between an environmental organization and a community of color is a group in Portland called Tualatin River Keepers, and their partnership with Adelante Mujeres (Bonta, 2018). Tualatin Riverkeepers worked in a watershed with a huge Latino population, and they wanted to engage this population on their river conservation work. Tualatin Riverkeepers learned that Adelante Mujeres had a leadership program to support Latina entrepreneurs, and they offered to provide environmental education to those participants. Tualatin Riverkeepers also introduced Adelante Mujeres to a funder. Instead of the typical process where the funder gives money to the environmental organization, which then gives a portion of it to the community organization to do the work, Tualatin Riverkeepers gave most of the money to Adelante Mujeres and facilitated a direct connection with the funder. They promoted Adelante Mujeres and did not take credit for their work. Through this relationship, Tualatin Riverkeepers built credibility and goodwill with Adelante Mujeres, which was happy to work with them on river protection (Bonta, 2018).

When it comes to climate change, organizations that represent people of color can provide valuable perspectives on proposed solutions. When this does not happen, those communities may end up opposing policies meant to help them, due to lack of communication or failure to take their concerns into account. This happened during the Washington State carbon pricing ballot initiative in 2016. Environmental justice communities opposed the measure because they felt that it shortchanged low income communities and the initiative failed at the ballot. Instead of assuming that they have all the answers, environmental organizations might ask, what are the equity issues that need to be considered in our proposal? Who benefits if it gets implemented? If it is a carbon fee and dividend, who gets the dividend and who pays the price? “White privilege is when White people get in the room and make important decisions for the rest of folks,” said Marcelo Bonta. “With people of color at the table, you may get solutions you haven’t considered before that are going to serve a broader set of folks, you’ll get innovation, and you’ll get their buy-in and support because they were part of the decision-making.” The more that you can bring different communities and

perspectives to the table, and include their voices early in the process, the less likely you are to make a simple mistake and save yourself a lot of trouble later on (Bonta, 2018).

A watershed moment for diversity and the climate movement was the 2014 People’s Climate March in New York. Over 400,000 people participated in the march, by far the largest environmental march in history, and people of color played a prominent role in the planning of and participation in the event. The idea for the march was conceived by the Climate Justice Alliance, a coalition of grassroots environmental justice groups, and 350.org, a climate organization founded by Bill McKibben and others, when they decided to make a statement at the U.N. Climate Summit in New York in September 2014 (Kohn, 2014). From the beginning, the organizers felt that inclusion and equity should be a central part of the People’s Climate Movement. “The Climate Justice Alliance members didn’t just get a seat at the table, they set the table. Re-imagined it, even,” said Kohn. The groups used the Jemez principles (see Figure 9) to collaborate with and engage frontline communities—communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income communities—who would take their place at the front of the march to lead the demonstration. After hard back-and-forth negotiations, the frontline leaders from the communities directly affected by climate change became the official spokespeople for the climate march, not the executive director of 350.org or Leonardo DiCaprio, who participated in the march. Through the People’s Climate Movement, hundreds of grassroots and environmental justice organizations came together with mainstream groups to work on climate change. The People’s Climate Movement set a new precedent where frontline communities made the decisions and were the stars of the show, and the predominantly White organizations played supporting roles.

Summary of The Jemez Principles

Be Inclusive: Include all people in decision-making and assure that all people have an equitable share of the wealth and the work of this world. Work to build that kind of inclusiveness into our own movement in order to develop alternative policies and institutions.

Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing: Reach out into new constituencies, and to reach within all levels of leadership

and membership base of the organizations that are already involved in our network.

Let People Speak for Themselves: Be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard.

Work Together in Solidarity and Mutuality: Consciously act in solidarity, mutuality and support each other's work. Incorporate the goals and values of other groups with our own work, in order to build strong relationships.

Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves: Treat each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level, in this country and across borders. Include clarity about decision-making, sharing strategies, and resource distribution.

Commitment to Self-Transformation: Move from Individualism to Community Centeredness. Embody justice, be peace, be community.

Figure 9. Jemez Principles for democratic organizing. Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. (1996, December). Retrieved from <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf>

Outreach and Engagement

Environmental organizations sometimes have millions of supporters and volunteers who are powerful drivers for change. But if these supporters and volunteer activists continue to be an elite club of White liberals, climate change will continue to be marginalized as an elite issue. Because of the racism and exclusion in the history of the environmental movement, environmental organizations have catch up to do. They cannot simply wait for people of color to come to them. Creating a more inclusive environment where different people feel welcome, reframing climate change with an equity and justice lens, and reaching out to communities of color in their spaces would help gain the trust and support people of color need to participate.

Approaching people of color in their spaces tends to be a first step. If we currently approach college environmental studies departments and environmental clubs, which are typically full of White people, we can approach the African American Studies department or the multicultural student organizations. In addition to meeting people at Unitarian churches, which have a

strong reputation for environmental stewardship, we could go to the predominantly Black congregations, or the Korean Christian congregations. We have to stop assuming that these people are less interested in the environment than the bird watchers club or the rotary society.

When we do approach these groups, we need to approach them in a spirit of humility and collaboration. Whitney Tome, executive director of Green 2.0, emphasized that “you need to come without an agenda” (personal communication, 2019). Around climate change, the message is often, “this is the best solution” (or the solution that will most likely pass) and “this is the way you do advocacy.” That approach may be valuable once they have asked for those skills, but it is problematic for getting people to be part of a solution. Many organizations that work with communities of color are working on solutions that feel right for them, so asking people to divert attention to your solution without trying to understand their needs or concerns first comes off as patronizing. And even if you know that your solution or your method is a good one, the community that you're trying to engage may have a different approach that you haven't tried before, or a more effective one.

When people feel like they are heard and regarded, they are more likely to be supportive. Marcelo Bonta said: “Probably the most unsuccessful way of doing the work is going into a group and saying, ‘This is how you do it: Now go do it, and I'll support you in doing that.’ The most successful way is of co-creating. Sometimes, I know in my head what would be best for an organization, but I know it's not going to be successful if I say, ‘I know what you need. Do it this way.’” He describes engaging people as a dance where both parties feel like they are contributing, taking turns leading as well as listening. By asking questions about what they want and what they think is useful, requesting feedback on suggestions, and modifying recommendations based on feedback empowers people to feel a part of the solution (Bonta, 2018).

An inclusive policy-making process would be one where stakeholders from diverse communities are brought to the table throughout the process. The stakeholders have the opportunity to voice their concerns, the effects on their community, and propose recommendations. Everyone feels ownership of the process and the final

product is not a surprise to anyone. Communication efforts are geared toward a diverse audience and easy to understand. Marcelo Bonta said in his interview:

We need to be able to address and tailor our relationship-building to the different communities we're trying to work with and get support from. The answer when it comes to climate policy is always going to be engaging with a broader group of folks, which means communities of color. If we, as a climate change movement, can work with, support, partner with, and co-create with communities of color, we can be successful at moving forward any climate change policy. (2018)

Rather than coming in with a solution, seek to understand the problems they have and how you can help them solve their problems.

Environmental organizations may feel like there is a right way to do advocacy, and people just need to learn and apply those techniques. But communities of color may have strategies that work with their community that you don't use with White communities. If you want them to make phone calls, and the community you want to engage is primarily Spanish speaking, how do they go about making their voices heard? If you ask people to write emails and get on conference calls, what if they don't have computers? Are there ways that you could do the same things with mobile phones or in person? People of color are often very connected to their communities, and they know how to get the word out and what appeals to their communities better than you, so you will need to learn as well as teach.

Finally, frame the climate message in a way that resonates with people of color. Adrienne Brown, a writer and activist organizer in Detroit, said: "You have to frame environmental issues in a way that makes sense for us and relates to the issues we care about. But you will have to get closer to us and to the work we're doing in order to make that happen. We're talking about racism — meet us there" (Brown, 2005, para. 12). For people of color who deal with racism on a daily basis, how do you relate that to climate change? First, by pointing out the disproportionate impact that climate change will have on people of color, or how, when people of color are displaced by climate-fueled disasters, they are the most at

risk of becoming impoverished or incarcerated. Climate change exacerbates problems such as the criminalization of black people for petty crimes, police violence, housing discrimination, and limits opportunities for their children. Even if they care about climate change as its own issue, hearing that you understand and are interested in their problems helps to build trust.

Be clear and appealing. "It's not written anywhere that everything recycled has to look used and cost twice as much," said Adrienne Brown. "Lose that sage color scheme and price your wares to Target" (Brown, 2005, para. 12). Communicate in a different language or simplify your language. Instead of saying, "non-point source pollution," talk about clean water; instead of saying, "biodiversity," mention animals and plants (Bonta and Jordan, 2008, p. 23). Instead of showing White climate scientists, who are the individuals that these communities look up to? Who are their heroes and celebrities? Always talking about climate change in terms of charts and technology doesn't even help to attract White people. We need more stories of how climate change impacts people that they can relate to.

Choose the right messenger. You would not send a Democrat to talk to a Republican group, so who is going to generate trust among the people that you want to reach? Maybe instead of meetings in a public venue, these people prefer to discuss community issues at potlucks at one of their members' homes. Maybe some of them work in the evenings, so an early morning meeting is more appropriate than an evening meeting, or having fewer smaller meetings so that there are more options for people to attend. And what about childcare for those who want to attend meetings but cannot afford a babysitter? Seeking to understand the barriers for each particular community shows that you care about them as people.

We need to not just reach out to people of color but also learn how to reach out to people of color. Just going in thinking that we have the answers and others should get on board will not serve our cause. We need to do our homework about these communities and build trust before building an agenda.

Youth Engagement

The current generation of young people in America is the most diverse generation in history. According to a report

from the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, the Millennial generation (those born between 1982 and 1992) are 44% minority and America's largest generation at 75 million strong (Frey, 2018). Like people of color more generally, young people are strongly concerned about climate change and want to do something about it. In the 2017 Millennial Impact Report, Millennials ranked climate change fourth among social issues that they cared about the most, only slightly behind civil rights, employment, and healthcare (Feldman, 2017). In a 2018 study by Alliance for Market Solutions, 75% of Millennials said that we should try to stop or slow climate change. Engaging this group would have a huge impact on any social agenda as well as advance multiple DEI goals, including recruitment and retention, partnerships and collaborations, and outreach and engagement.

Many organizations today offer special programs aimed at diversifying the environmental workforce by educating and engaging youth of color. The Ocean Conservancy, for example, started the Roger Arlinger Young Marine Conservation Diversity Fellowship to attract young people of color to work on ocean issues. EcologyPlus, a program of the Ecological Society of America, works to connect college students of color and early career scientists with career opportunities and a community of peers. The Nature Conservancy LEAF program offers urban youth both career development and a hands-on environmental stewardship experience. LEAF interns work with mentors and scientists to gain work and life skills in conservation and sustainability. There's also the Greening Youth Foundation which works with diverse, underserved and underrepresented children, youth, and young adults to develop and nurture environmental stewardship. GYF's programs engages children from local communities in sustainability programs that include conservation, urban agriculture, and landscape management. These types of mentored experiences are a key component to producing lifelong conservation supporters. Dr. Dorceta Taylor at University of Michigan organized the New Horizons in Conservation Conference in April 2018, which brought together 220 students of color with professionals at environmental nonprofits to celebrate and assess diversity in conservation.

Organizations that focus on climate change are also tapping into the energy and conviction of young people for climate action. The Climate Reality Project, started by

Vice President Al Gore to train volunteers as climate educators, started chapters at college campuses in 2018. The Environmental Defense Fund helps students find careers in sustainability management through their Climate Corps fellowship program. Fellows are placed in leading organizations to identify customized energy management solutions, paid \$1250 a week, and reimbursed for attending the Energy Solutions Exchange (network) event.

Perhaps frustrated by the failure of mainstream environmental organizations to work with young people, young people themselves have started organizations focused on climate change. Our Climate, Sunrise Movement, and Zero Hour have added huge numbers of young people to their ranks through the savvy use of social media, lobbying, and direct action to draw attention to the impact that climate change has on their generation. Another organization, Our Children's Trust, is suing the U.S. government on behalf of 21 youths who claim that climate change endangers their generation's rights to a healthy environment. Organizations that invest in attracting and engaging young people set in motion a positive feedback loop where they attract more young people to join the organization, whereas those who don't find it even harder to attract and retain young people. Many of the mainstream environmental organizations today have an aging membership and risk literally dying out if they do not add young people to their ranks.

Conclusion

While the environmental movement itself has greatly expanded in scope to issues beyond conservation, environmental organizations are still behind other industries in their representation of people of color. A handful of environmental organizations, like the Sierra Club, Earthjustice, and 350.org, are deeply engaged with DEI, but environmental organizations overall have a long way to becoming more diverse and inclusive. With climate change dominating the agenda, we simply cannot afford to not engage people of color on this issue in which they have a lot at stake. As people of color become the majority of the United States population, environmental organizations risk becoming irrelevant by not engaging and supporting this demographic to work together with White people on climate change.

The good news is that people of color do not need to be convinced that they should care about climate change. Climate change exacerbates the whole host of issues communities of color already grapple with, from higher asthma rates to housing vulnerability. Barriers to engagement include over a century of racism in environmental organizations,

discriminatory hiring practices, and barriers of culture and framing. But environmental organizations also have many resources at their disposal. They can learn lessons from universities, the private sector, and government on DEI, and a growing field of consultants and organizations dedicated to DEI are ready to help.

We cannot rely on a White majority to solve climate change; we need everybody, especially those most affected. Whether it was the civil rights movement, the women's movement, or the LGBTQ movement, social change has always depended on the passion and involvement of those who have the most at stake. Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion is an achievable and necessary goal for a movement that wants to heal our planet and our society.

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Diversifying the U.S. Climate Movement

Bridging the Culture Gap on Climate Change

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