University of Northern Colorado

Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC

2020

Aspects of Identity that Inform Black College Students' Experiences and Consideration of the Natural Environment

Joelle Jenkins
University of Northern Colorado, jenk1234@bears.unco.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digscholarship.unco.edu/mcnair

Part of the Environmental Studies Commons, Human Geography Commons, Nature and Society Relations Commons, and the Sociology Commons

Recommended Citation

Aspects of Identity that Inform Black College Students' Experiences and Consideration of the Natural Environment*

Joelle K. Jenkins 1, 2

JoelleJenkins26@gmail.com

Chelsie L. Romulo 1

Chelsie.Romulo@unco.edu

1. Department of Geography, GIS, and Sustainability, University of Northern Colorado
2. McNair Scholars Program, University of Northern Colorado

ABSTRACT

Previous researchers have questioned whether people of color show concern regarding nature. Some studies suggested they do not show concern, while others suggest they are just as or even more concerned than their white peers. These studies did not examine the reasons behind having an affinity for nature, which is a problem because they did not thoroughly explain and provide context to those affinities. This research explores preferences and thoughts relating to black undergraduate students' experiences in the natural environment. In this study, we propose a new paradigm to understand how one chooses to interact with the natural environment. Understanding the factors involved will strengthen the awareness of underrepresented groups' attitudes and perceptions toward natural surroundings through the use of an in-depth lens to advance the perspective of environmental attitudes. This study aims to answer the question: "How do elements of one's black identity inform their experiences with the environment, and *why* do they feel that way?" A thematic analysis of 10 interviews will take place to better answer this question. Anticipated topics include trends in knowledge, likes and dislikes, values and beliefs, and behavior related to identity and experience in natural settings. Preliminary findings from interviewees show that the word environment is associated with sustainability, and environmental justice is associated with environmental racism. This study is essential for addressing environmental issues in diverse communities because it allows voices to be heard so that they can be included in environmental decision-making.
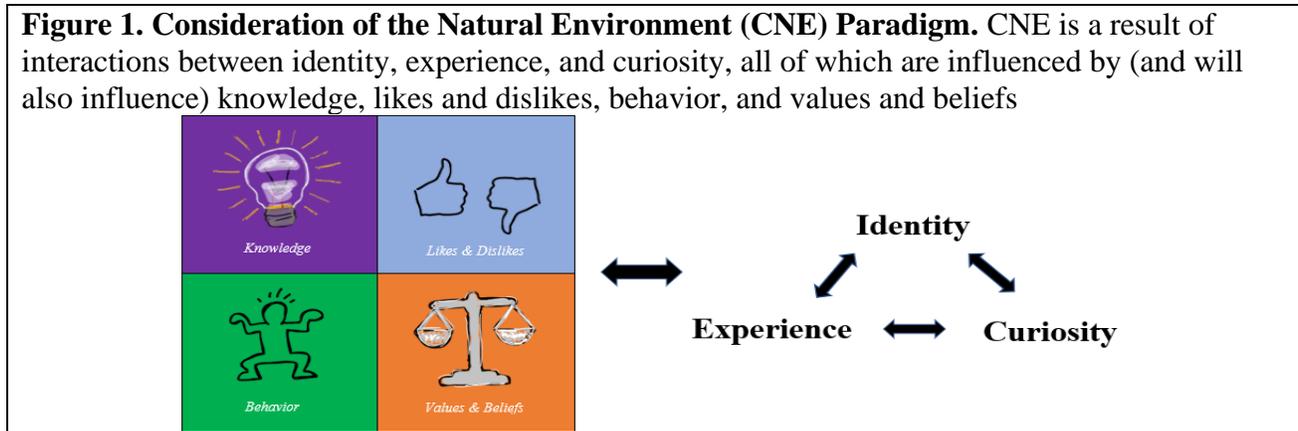
Keywords: natural environment, identity, experience, concern, affinity

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have questioned whether people of color show concern for nature. Historical studies have suggested they do not show concern (Mohai and Bryant, 1998) while more recent research suggests they are just as or significantly more concerned than their white peers (Taylor, 2014; Macias, 2016; Taylor, 2018b; Elias, Dahmen, Morrison, Morrison, and Morris, 2019). It was assumed that location on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs or association with slavery predicted low environmental concern (Taylor, 1989; Elias). However, concern for nature or one's surroundings does not correlate with one's placement on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Taylor, 1989; Elias et al., 2019), socioeconomic status (Taylor, 1989; Elias et al., 2019), or racial identification (Mohai et al., 1998; Taylor, 2014; Macias, 2016; Elias et al., 2019). While different studies have explored the level of awareness, concern, connectedness, etc., relative to natural settings, not much information was provided as to why they felt a certain way toward nature or the environment where they resided. The aim of this qualitative research study is to explore how black undergraduate students' attitudes and thoughts are impacted by their experience with the natural environment and why that influences their consideration for such matters. The natural environment, in this case, will be defined as areas that appear to have little or no human development (i.e. mountains, forests, lakes). This research is relevant because not many studies have done in-depth or qualitative analyses on why people of color, specifically black people, care about the environment. It has been established that black people, in most cases, have an affinity for nature, but the "why" to this is not often looked at. The planet's health is continually exacerbated by human presence, and those in lower-income neighborhoods (which disproportionately are people of color) are impacted more by climate change (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014). If people of color are affected more by climate change, why is there a lack of representation in environmental, ecological, and climate-related fields? Education is known to be the best indicator of environmental concern (Taylor,1989), and examining black undergraduate students' experience in nature and how their knowledge has impacted this will contribute to a valuable body of knowledge necessary for further discussion in the black community. Strengthening the awareness of black individuals' attitudes and perceptions toward natural surroundings is also important because it will help people with different cultural and educational backgrounds get a better grasp of perspectives, other than their own, regarding where black students stand on such issues. This research will inform the way that we address the obstacles and effects of climate change.

The Consideration of the Natural Environment (CNE) Paradigm has been developed for this study to better understand which factors may influence how an individual perceives or interacts with natural settings. CNE is a result of interactions between identity, experience, and curiosity, all of which are controlled by (and will also influence) knowledge, likes and dislikes, behavior, and values and beliefs (see figure below). Since attitudes are harder to track, this will focus more on likes and dislikes, which is related to attitudes, as well as behavior. The purpose of CNE is to understand better different factors that makeup and interact with one's identity (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, etc.), resulting in a high or low affinity towards nature or natural spaces. This paradigm is used as an intersectional roadmap to explain those factors at an individual level. Not everyone within a racial or ethnic group is the same, so this provides more solidarity when bringing awareness to different groups' concerns or stance on topics regarding natural

environments. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Ecofeminism, Identity, and Attitude Theories will be used to explain this paradigm. This study intends to answer the question: "How do elements (i.e., gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, level of education, etc.) of one's Black identity inform their experiences with the natural environment, and *why* do they feel that way?"

Figure 1. Consideration of the Natural Environment (CNE) Paradigm. CNE is a result of interactions between identity, experience, and curiosity, all of which are influenced by (and will also influence) knowledge, likes and dislikes, behavior, and values and beliefs

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL IDENTITY

Using Attitudes and Behaviors to Measure Environmental Identity

Environmentally responsive behavior has been a prominent topic of discussion in the field of environmental sociology. Fixation on attitudes in previous research has been criticized because it is expected to exclude other components that influence social behavior, such as one's identity and sense of self (Stets et al., 2003). The Attitude Theory states that attitudes are influenced by intentions and values that drive one's behavior. At the same time, the Identity Theory declares that identity is equivalent to a set of meanings used to define one's sense of self — being a guide for behavior in varying situations (Stets et al., 2003). While these two theories are separate, they are believed to be strongly related to one another Stets et al. One's perception toward themselves is a huge component to consider when understanding an attitude and behavior toward an object. Instead of using attitudes as a key to draw meanings from behavior, utilizing the self-perception of someone increases the predictability of behavior (Stets et al., 2003). The main difference between these two theories is that the Identity Theory more so considers social structure as a tenet of behavior, taking in mind that the actor holds multiple identities (Stets et al., 2003). Conflict is recognized to be an activator of different identities one holds, allowing the hierarchical conceptualization of the self to be challenged (Stets et al., 2003). Identity prominence and identity salience symbolize the connection with self and the other identities occupied by a person where commitment represents society and the relationship with the outer world and those that are in it (Stets et al., 2003). Stets et al. (2003:420) recalled:

> Identity factors improve our power to predict behavior (compared to attitudes), because identity theory rests on the important sociological assumption that humans are embedded in a social structure in which behavior is chosen, not on the basis of discrete, personal

decisions, but on the basis of competing demands stemming from the many positions one assumes in society.

Through the process of identity, individual agency is necessary for influencing environmentally responsive behavior (Stets et al., 2003).

Connecting Gender and Race to Environmental Identity

Earlier studies hypothesized that due to the historical effects of slavery, blacks have a harder time creating a relationship with the land. "…through slavery, blacks learned in pain that their association with the land was a source of misery and humiliation, not of peace and fulfillment" (Taylor 1989:185).

Research studies over the past few decades have analyzed the relationship between blacks and whites' involvement with the environment, hypothesizing that there is a clear distinction in attitudes and concerns toward such matters (Taylor, 1989; Taylor, 2014; Mohai et al., 1998). Taylor (1989) found that throughout history, it was harder to keep track of blacks' involvement with the environment due to several limitations that led to skewed research findings. For example, during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, many studies found that blacks had lower levels of environmental concern, although they were restricted from going to certain places (Taylor, 1989). "It was almost farcical and hypocritical to ask blacks about their concern and support for the environment at a time when the visible and invisible signs barring entry and participation into related areas had just been removed or were still hanging on environmental institutions," (Taylor 1989: 189). Taylor (1989) stated that the civil rights movement had taken on mature styles of social movement before the environmental movement. She also noted that blacks tended to be more engaged in voluntary organizations with a social, political, and religious emphasis, with the church being the location of focus (Taylor, 1989; Taylor, 2014; Schlosberg et al., 2014). Elias et al. (2019) also found a positive correlation between religiosity and pro-environmental orientations among African Americans, yet a negative relationship with Anglos and Hispanics. A national report published by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice focused on parallels between toxic waste facility siting, disposal, and race in the United States in response to the General Accounting Office's (GAO) logic describing common characteristics examined for hazardous waste siting (United Church of Christ, 1987; Taylor, 2014; Schlosberg, 2014; Bell et al., 2016). Based on racial and economic data, findings show that most Black populations were commonly found near PCB landfills along with lower-income families of all races combined (United States General Accounting Office, 1983; Taylor, 2014; Schlosberg et al., 2014; Bell et al., 2016). The GAO argued that federal site location standards for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) requirements met PCB landfill standards because of the topography, hydrology, soil conditions, lot size, isolation from populated areas, easy access to the landfill, and locations where PCB spills have previously occurred, *not* race (United States General Accounting Office, 1983). Afterward, the United Church of Christ (1987) found that race was the most significant variable associated with hazardous waste facilities seen at the local and national level.

While blacks were believed to show little to no concern regarding the environment, other research findings suggest that blacks and other groups, such as Latinx/Hispanic, and Native American individuals, either cared just as much or significantly more than their white counterparts (Mohai et al., 1998; Elias et al., 2019; Macias, 2016; Taylor, 2014; Taylor, 2018b).

Non-white or lower-income communities are perceived to be very environmentally active due to the disparities they endure throughout their day to day lives (Taylor, 2014; Schlosberg et al., 2014; Macias, 2016; Elias et al., 2019). Such disparities like disproportionate siting of hazardous waste facilities resulted in higher amounts of air pollution, toxicant bioaccumulation, ecological destruction, human health issues, etc. (Taylor, 2014; Schlosberg et al., 2014).

Schlosberg et al., (2014) stated that the environmental justice movement combined the idea of environmental sustainability (the ability to meet the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the needs of future generations) and the physical environment with the expectation of social justice. Although environmental regulations are persistent across neighborhoods with varying characteristics, lower-income or non-white areas have been known to attract polluting industries because operating costs are lower, and fines are less likely to be disbursed (Rinquist, 1998; Taylor, 2014). Issues such as climate change have been understood as environmental injustices because individuals found in these communities pollute far less than the industries that find their way in (Park et al., 2013, Schlosberg et al., 2014; Taylor, 2014; Spears, 2019). Park et al. (2013:5) stated that "environmental privilege exists where environmental injustice occurs." "African Americans and Climate Change: An Unequal Burden," a report released by the Black Congressional Caucus, found several correlations between climate change and environmental injustice (Schlosberg et al., 2014). Economic hardship and intensified heat waves developing from increased air pollution in African American communities resulting in high rates of heatstroke are just a few, to say the least (Schlosberg et al., 2014). Schlosberg et al. (2014) stated that once the needs of climate change are met, then environmental justice will be fulfilled.

Alternative arguments stated that blacks are not involved in environmental movements because it is a distraction from their socioeconomic positionality. In other words, because blacks cannot fulfill their basic needs, they are more focused on survival and cannot afford to be concerned about their surroundings (Taylor, 1989). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a theory used to describe human motivation based on one's capability to fulfill different types of needs. These needs involve 1) basic needs, 2) psychological needs, and 3) self-fulfillment needs (Bell et al., 2016; Elias et al., 2019). Following these are additional necessities for knowledge and understanding along with aesthetic satisfaction (Bell et al., 2016). Basic needs include physiological (air, water, food and nutrients, and sexual gratification) and safety (financial and physical security) demands whereas psychological needs include belongingness and love (friend love, familial love, romantic love, and a sense of community) and esteem (mastery and achievement) demands (Bell et al., 2016; Elias et al., 2019). Lastly, self-fulfillment includes self-actualization (maximization of interests) demands (Bell et al., 2016; Elias et al., 2019). Abraham Maslow argued that this idea is "fixed and universal across cultures" (Bell et al. 2016:52). In terms of the environment, Taylor (1989) stated that this theory presumes that once basic needs are met, luxury items, such as environmental issues, can be cared for. Because the middle and upper class have their basic material needs met, they can focus more on aesthetic (environmental) needs (Taylor, 1989). Taylor (1989:184) noted:

> In other words, the lower class has typically experienced only poor physical conditions so they are less aware that they live, work, and play in polluted, overcrowded conditions. Conversely, the middle and upper classes are more likely to have experienced pleasant residential work and recreational environs and are more concerned about the physical environment.

Relative deprivation, a shortage of resources that prevent one from sustaining their lifestyle, is considered to be the determining factor for environmental concern (Taylor, 1989). While it is believed to be sequential, other claims speculate that needs are not hierarchical because humans tend to act on whichever need is least met or has the biggest threat (if something can be done about it) (Bell et al., 2016; Elias et al., 2019). Elias et al. (2019) found that common knowledge upholds the belief that people of color tend to focus on "survival" concerns rather than environmental concerns. Discoveries also found that Anglo, middle-class communities are often the target audience of climate change campaigns for this very reason (Elias et al., 2019).Taylor (1989) contended that there was an insufficient amount of evidence showing the correlation between one's socioeconomic status and ability to be concerned for their environment.

Throughout history, women have been portrayed to be innately more connected to nature. Women are presumed to be more involved with the preservation of nature, while men are believed to be more invested in the transformation of nature (Bell and Ashwood, 2016). Hierarchies, placing men on top, came about once gender roles were organized, associating women with servile behavior and savagery (Bell et al., 2016). Well-known individuals such as Edmund Burke or Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel believed that women had no other purpose outside of maintaining their household and tending to men's needs. They claimed that women were not capable of contributing to science because they were animalistic creatures not considered to be apart of the highest order (Bell et al., 2016). Many saw such demeaning social and environmental implications and patriarchal presumptions as problematic (Bell et al., 2016). These assumptions led to the development of ecofeminism. According to Bell et al. (2016), ecofeminism is a theory that examines the link between authority over women and authority over the environment. Ecofeminist perspectives do *not* blame men for environmental issues, for anyone can be an ecofeminist (Bell et al., 2016). The purpose of ecofeminism is ". . . to highlight the environmental consequences for both women and men of patriarchal social structures and patterns of thinking, which both women and men bring into being" (Bell et al. 2016:217). Bell et al. (2016) declared that it is essential to study ecofeminism because it provides a different type of thought, allowing us to recognize different perspectives to strengthen our theoretical and moral understanding of the world. Controversies over ecofeminism are still common today. One common issue includes positive versus negative connotations of women and their connectedness to nature. Writers argue that the relationship between women and nature should more so be celebrated and embraced because things such as reproduction, sensitivity to emotions, etc. are believed to be inherently good (Bell et al., 2016). Others argue that this "feminine principle" "perpetuates the dichotomy between men and women as well as the negative stereotypes of women as irrational, as controlled by their bodies, and as best suited for the domestic realm" (Bell et al. 2016:217). Some ecofeminists believe that the promotion of women and their connection to nature is an ideologically dangerous strategy because normalizing these values to veer away from the negative connotations associated with women and nature (Bell et al., 2016). Promoting the relatedness between women and nature is also believed to be ecologically problematic and sexist because the idea of "Mother Earth" is used to minimize the significance of environmental issues (Bell et al., 2016). For example, when oil was spilled by Exxon in Prince William Sound, Alaska, Charles Sitter, the senior vice president of Exxon, used Mother Nature as an excuse to avoid addressing the environmental degradation caused by this corporation (Bell et al., 2016). Sitter stated, "I want to point out that water in the Sound replaces itself every twenty days. The Sound flushes itself out every twenty days. Mother Nature cleans up and does

quite a cleaning job" (Bell et al. 2016:213). Deborah Slicer proposed that support of women and nature is "ecofeminine" rather than "ecofeminist" (Bell et al., 2016).

Over the past few decades, it has been proven many times that women tend to show more concern for the environment (Bryson, McPhillips, and Robinson, 2001; Norgaard and York, 2005; McCright and Xiao, 2014; Taylor, 2014; Bell et al., 2016). McCright et al. (2014) examined gender differences in safety concerns, risk perception, and institutional trust. Data supported the hypotheses that women are more concerned than men about health-related environmental issues and have a higher risk perception involving local and global environmentally related problems and health issues (Bryson et al., 2001; Norgaard et al., 2005; McCright et al., 2014; Taylor, 2014). McCright et al. (2014) also found that women were more likely to be involved in private environmental behaviors such as recycling or being more energy-efficient, whereas both men and women acted on public environmental behaviors such as signing a petition. Institutional trust revealed zero correlation between gender and environmental concern (McCright et al., 2014). Norgaard et al. (2005) established that men were more likely to administer health and environmental risks on others in comparison to women. Environmental degradation and sexism are heavily associated with one another (Norgaard and York, 2005). Bell et al. (2016) found that through manipulation, ideas of masculinity were used to control men. This was seen in the coal mining industry. Although the job market for coal mining has decreased significantly, this industry has created a culture connecting masculinity to coal, making it harder for men to engage in local environmental justice movements (Bell et al., 2016). Bell et al. (2016) also stated that men were deterred from these movements because women primarily took the lead, which left them with no sense of belonging (Bell et al., 2016). "Because the mainstream movement against coal adheres to motherhood and the pro-coal industry adheres to masculinity, it makes it hard for men to join in the fight and stop extraction" (Bell et al. 2016:215).

Socially dominated groups were observed to have a greater connection with nature (Bell et al., 2016). While the idea of environmental justice is recognized to have been established in the United States, environmental and climate justice movements are frequent around the world, not central to one place (Spears, 2019). Bryson et al. (2001) examined the inequalities concerning the parental care and labor of Black women located in lower-income smelter towns around Australia. While lead affects all, children were the primary focus of this study. Landrigan, Rauh, and Galvez (2010:179) stated, "Children are especially vulnerable to the health impacts of environmental injustice. Children's unique, age-related patterns of exposure and their developmentally define windows of susceptibility magnify the impacts of environmental injustice." As the pollution from smelter factories became more of an issue, state health authorities made smelting a private problem by suggesting families keep their house clean and parents supervise their kids at all times or the health of their children could be irreparable (Bryson et al., 2001). Bryson et al. (2001) found that fathers are expected to care about their children while mothers are expected to both care *about* and care *for* their children. Mothers were used to diverting the attention of smelt factories polluting the environment. If they were not doing all they could to maintain their environment, they were labeled bad mothers (Bryson et al., 2001).

Using Education to Determine Environmental Concern and Behavior

Education, rather than one's ability to show concern, is one of the best socioeconomic predictors of concern for the environment (Taylor, 1989; Macias, 2016). Taylor (2018b), examined college students' landscape preferences and connection with nature to assess further how minority college students reflect on and think about natural surroundings. Previous research studies have argued that blacks are detached from nature due to the fear of naturally undisturbed settings stemming from the fear of wildlands (Taylor, 2018b). Overall, black students, like white and other minority groups, preferred naturalistic landscapes over urbanized settings (Taylor, 2018b). When black students think of natural settings, characteristics such as trees, forests, or plants are recalled instead of components of an urbanized environment (i.e., commercial buildings, roads, etc.) (Taylor, 2018b).

METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Design

The purpose of this research study is to answer the question: "How does one's black identity inform their experiences with the environment?" To answer this, additional things need to be further explained: "What was your first experience with the natural environment?", "What are your recent experiences in nature?" and "Do you have concerns about the natural environment? If so, what are they?" To address these research question(s), a qualitative research study will be conducted.

Positionality Statement

The primary researcher is an undergraduate student involved with environmental organizations on campus, also studying environmental and sustainability studies, biology, and Africana studies. Furthermore, the researcher is dedicated to both environmental justice and ensuring that underrepresented communities also take part in decision making concerning environmental issues such as climate change. The researcher also identifies as a black woman. As an African American Woman at a Historically White College and University (HWCU), she has experience in both creating and being a part of safe spaces for African Americans on campus. In other words, people subconsciously respond differently to those they can identify with. For this study, it is essential to eliminate the possibility of stereotype threat and note as many genuine responses as possible. Observing the racial influences on experience in the natural environment and working to integrate social disparities into environmental issues, further understanding of factors that contribute to non-white students' affinity toward the natural environment need to be explored.

Quality Control

This research will be taking place at the Marcus Garvey Cultural Center (MGCC) to provide participants a safe location to share their thoughts without fear of reprisal or judgment. The trustworthiness of this research will be ensured through accurate, detailed reporting of procedures. After interviews have been completed and transcribed, transcriptions will be shown to participants to confirm credibility and establish trustworthiness.

Sample & Data Set

The sample source will consist of five to ten college students who identify with the Black /African Diaspora at the University of Northern Colorado. A variety of participants will be recruited through the Marcus Garvey Cultural Center (MGCC).

Tools & Procedures

Materials used during this research were audio recording devices, Temi Transcription Services, and NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The Zoom H1 Recorder was essential for picking up precise responses during the one on one interview sessions with participants. Once the recordings were all downloaded on a computer, which these interviews were kept confidential, Temi, a highly rated transcribing service, was used to decipher the interviews in a timely manner. Nvivo qualitative data analysis software will be used for analyzing rich text-based information to draw themes from.

One on one interviews with participants will be semi-structured. Throughout January, February, and March, ten 45 to 60-minute interview sessions will take place at the MGCC. A research assistant will not be necessary for data collection. Consent forms were provided to participants *before* the interviews being run. To maintain confidentiality, audio-recorded data and transcriptions were double-locked on a personal device (one passcode to unlock the device and a second passcode to unlock the recordings and storage folder(s)). After receiving the informed consent, participants were given the option to voluntarily participate or decline participation and be notified that their continued participation is voluntary.

Dealing with Data

The above-mentioned data was double-locked on a computer. The Research Advisor has access to the consent forms, which will be retained for three years. After the interviews have taken place and have been transcribed, the process of thematic coding (in vivo coding) was used to draw common themes and subthemes found in the interviews based on participant experience.

FINDINGS

Participant Responses and Significance to CNE:

*"I think that a lot of Black people are like, okay, look, **the environment's dying, but we're getting shot by the police. We can't solve both of these issues at the same time** [...] As Black people we need to be united [...]." – Participant 1*

Significance: Her CNE is strongly influenced by her knowledge, belief and value system, along with her identity due to different experiences in and out of the Black community related to injustices she faces the United States. She went on to talk about how in order to spark an affinity for nature in the Black community, we must fight for everyone's rights—not just Black men.

*"I say this all the time. **Our ancestors lived off the land, they understood the land, they rotated crops in the land, they worked with the land**. We were able to do so much and learn so much with the land [...] **And I feel like we [Black people] get too materialistic**." – Participant 3*

Significance: Familial (and personal) values and beliefs, knowledge, and likes and dislikes mainly impacted this participant's CNE, as she reflected on both the past and the present, emphasizing how it was paramount for getting in touch with our roots and not letting technology or things that reinforce an individualistic mindset distract us from progress within the community.

*"And it's not like it's a personal—like I personally need to take care of the environment. **I see it more as like we all need to do our part, and the more we do our individual part, the more we'll influence the majority to do their part as well**." – Participant 6*

Significance: Her CNE is robustly affected by behavior, values and beliefs, and knowledge because of her experience with nature while being actively involved in the fields of environmental and climate justice.

*"I remember in sixth grade when I was in Burkina Faso Ouagadougou, we went on this huge recycling trip because recycling was so big in that country and it was amazing. [...] **When you're taught that and exposed to that, I think from a younger age, you just immediately have more empathy before, I think, we are conditioned by society on how we're supposed to act and how boys are not supposed to show emotion or care**." – Participant 9*

Significance: Growing up in different nations and seeing the differences in how they prioritize education and the environment, experience, identity, values and beliefs, as well as knowledge have greatly shaped his CNE.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Figure 2. Word cloud that represents the number of times a topic theme was brought up during interview sessions. Size of the word represents the frequency it was brought up.

Frequent topics mentioned by most participants during the interviews include recycling, education, disparities, and sustainability. For example, in terms of education, most participants stated that simply having access to more information related to conservation or even on Blacks and the environment can be a huge step for getting the Black community involved with nature. Additionally, those who identified with the LGBTQIA+ community were more likely to partake in a plant-based diet (50%), volunteer or donate to an environmental, conservation, or wildlife preservation organization (75%), or have values and beliefs that aligned with pro-environmental behavior (75%) which is an indicator of a higher CNE in comparison to other participants.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

While this research is more concerned about the saturation of data, sample size in a way could be seen as a limitation especially because identities can vary and there was no way that the sample size, I had addressed every identity that could be found within the Black community. Next, geographic location is a huge limitation. With Colorado being one of the states that have natural landscapes being more accessible than, say New York, perspectives of Black college students may or may not be different than those here. Lastly, there could be something that I left out when putting together the CNE paradigm. Overall, it is paramount to include intersectional identities in research related to environmental concern and behavior because aspects of identity are not solely racial. This will give us more insight on how identity plays a role in having a high or low concern/affinity towards natural environments. This is a growing field, and we need to combat issues that inhibit the progress of social and environmental fields, such as environmental racism, misrepresentation, or a lack of intersectionality.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Appendix A.	
Key Term	**Definition**
Environmental Identity	"The set of environmentally relevant self-meanings that one projects and sustains" (Stets and Biga, 2003:417).
Environmental Attitudes	"A psychological tendency expressed by evaluative responses to the natural environment with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Milfont and Duckitt 2010:80).
Environmental Concern	"A belief, stance, and the degree of concern an individual holds towards the environment" (Aman, Harun, and Hussein 2012:149).

Environmental Justice	"The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (EPA Region 7, 2010).
Environmental Injustice	"The disproportionate exposure of communities of color and the poor to pollution, and its concomitant effects on health and environment, as well as the unequal environmental protection and environmental quality provided through laws, regulations, governmental programs, enforcement, and policies" (Mantaay, 2002).
Environmental Privilege	"The economic, political, and cultural power that some groups enjoy, which enables them exclusive access to coveted environmental amenities such as forests, parks, mountains, rivers, coastal property, open lands, and elite neighborhoods," (Park and Pellow 2013:4).

References

Bell, Michael M., and Loka L. Ashwood. 2016. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Elias, Troy, Nicole S. Dahmen, Daniel D. Morrison, Deborah Morrison, and David L. Morris II. 2019. "Understanding Climate Change Perceptions and Attitudes Across Racial/Ethnic Groups." *Howard Journal of Communications* 30(1): 38-56.

Macias, Thomas. 2016. "Ecological Assimilation: Race, Ethnicity, and the Inverted Gap of Environmental Concern. *Society & Natural Resources* 29(1): 3-19.

McCright, Aaron M., and Xiao Chenyang. 2014. "Gender and Environmental Concern: Insights from Recent Work and for Future Research." *Society & Natural Resources* 27(10): 1109-1113.

Mohai, Paul, and Bunyan Bryant. 1998. "Is There a "Race" Effect on Concern for Environmental Quality?" *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 62(4): 475-505.

Taylor, Dorceta E. 1989. "Blacks and the Environment: Towards and Explanation of the Concern and Action Gap Between Blacks and Whites." *Environment and Behavior* 21(2):175-205.

Taylor, Dorceta E. 2018. "Enhancing Racial Diversity in the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences." *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences* 8(4):379-384.

Taylor, Dorceta E. 2018. "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Connectedness to Nature and Landscape Preferences Among College Students." *Environmental Justice* 11(3): 118-136.

Taylor, Dorceta, E. 2014. *Toxic Communities.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Park, Lisa, S.H., and David N. Pellow. (2013). *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants Vs. the Environment in America's Eden.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Schlosberg, David, and Lisette B. Collins. 2014. "From Environmental to Climate Justice: Climate Change and the Discourse of Environmental Justice." *Advanced Review* 5:359-374.

Stets, Jan E., and Chris F. Biga. 2003. "Bringing Identity Theory into Environmental Sociology." *Sociological Theory* 21(4): 398-423