

5-2020

Biographical Availability in the Climate Movement

Nicole Cortes

California State University, Monterey Bay

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Community-Based Research Commons](#), [Environmental Studies Commons](#), [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), [Place and Environment Commons](#), [Politics and Social Change Commons](#), [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#), [Service Learning Commons](#), and the [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cortes, Nicole, "Biographical Availability in the Climate Movement" (2020). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 846.

https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/846

This Capstone Project (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Capstone Projects and Master's Theses at Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csumb.edu.

“Biographical Availability in the Climate Movement”

An Analysis of the Demographics in the Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties

Professor: Armando Arias

Capstone Advisor: Dr. Amanda Pullum

SBS 404S: Service-Learning Capstone

Spring Semester: Spring 2020

By Nicole Cortes

Track 1

<https://nicolecortes.weebly.com/>

California State University, Monterey Bay

Social and Behavioral Sciences, Sociology

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....3

Abstract.....4

Introduction.....5

Literature Review.....7

 Youth in climate change activism.....8

 Framing of the climate movement.....9

 Elder activism in the climate movement.....10

Theories.....11

Service-Learning Questions.....13

 Self and Social Awareness.....14

 Services and Social Responsibility.....15

 Community and Social Service.....16

 Multicultural Community Building and Civic Engagement.....17

 Role of Technology in Service.....18

Methodology.....19

Results.....20

Conclusion and Recommendations.....23

References.....25

Appendix.....27

Acknowledgments

What specifically influenced me to get familiar with concrete research was the faculty and staff from the Social and Behavioral Science department. The agency has helped demonstrate the major outcomes I've encountered throughout my time being an undergraduate at CSUMB. The professors I would like to especially thank are John Klein, Dr. Lewis, and Dr. Arias for their insight and tools that they bestowed on me in my courses.

Having Dr. Amanda Pullum as an advisor throughout this research process has certainly been inspiring, and I am overwhelmingly thankful to have worked with her. Because Dr. Pullum studies and works in my specific department, it has allowed her to guide me gracefully on the various paths I could follow to complete this research. I am truly grateful for the given opportunity to participate in capstone not only for the relationship with my mentor, but the experience to fail and to learn something that I am extremely passionate about.

Lastly, I would like to thank my Aunt Letty and Uncle Albert for giving me a chance to be a part of a loving family and home. It was from that opportunity that I was able to attain a somewhat sustainable adolescent life and endeavor to create a better future for myself and my future family. As much as they wouldn't like to acknowledge or take credit for the success I had reached with my educational goals, they are one of the main reasons I was motivated to continue in my education as well as future careers. I definitely wouldn't be where I am at today if it wasn't for their extending amounts of love and support. I truly am grateful for all the special individuals in my life who have helped me get to where I am today.

This capstone is dedicated in loving memory to my lifetime pets, Spottie and Ronald.

Abstract

The focus of this study was to understand how social movements against climate change include or engage with the age demographics. This study is a qualitative analysis by observing Monterey and Santa Cruz climate events and interviewing activists from local organizations. The individuals who participated in this study have shared their experience being involved in the climate organizations as well as their perception of the climate movement's impact. This research has been conducted to theorize and understand how youth climate movement frames the presentation of age and how that compares to the actual capacity of age in the movement. As for the main focus of the research, I was able to distinguish that there was a continuous outcome of an age gap between youth and older activism of the climate movement in the Monterey and Santa Cruz settings. Specific age groups can be identified between 13-23 years old within the youth and 48-80 years old within the older population. This study is important because it will bring awareness to the issue of climate change itself, provide possible solutions or ideas, and will be a foundation for further research on the social movement.

Introduction

Climate change is one of the predominant challenges that the world is facing today. What is not universally discussed are the very natures that have contributed to earth's changes. Over the past decades, humans have become one of the biggest geologic forces of the planet in addition to ice ages and plate tectonics. Human expansion on the earth's natural resources have caused a decrease in biodiversity and alteration of the planet's cycle. Claims provided by experts have led to reports that global climate change will enact large consequences for human society and global ecosystems. Scientists and activists urge that with entering this frightening period, individuals (as a contributor) should mobilize and take action on climate change issues to ensure a more sustainable future. During the 1960's and 70's, environmental legislation began to be infiltrated by acts such as the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act and the established "Earth Day" (Dunlap, R., & Catton Jr, W., 1979). Accordingly, groups began to collectively advocate for environmental justice and sustainable factors. Currently, the climate movement is wider than it has been with youth being the forefront of its activism. But they aren't doing it all alone.

This research has been conducted to theorize and understand how the youth climate movement frames the presentation of age and how that compares to the actual capacity of age in the movement. The focus of this study is to understand how social movements against climate change include or engage with the age demographics of these organizations and events. I interviewed three people over the age of 18 years old who have been involved in climate organizations in the Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. This study was important because it has shed light on the different aspects that the climate movement can be facing while providing possible solutions and ideas. This can be a based foundation for further research on social movements framing age groups.

Research Question

My research has been answered through the various research question:

In what ways do the youth climate movement in the Monterey and Santa Cruz counties frame the role of age compared to the actual outcome of age in the progress?

The study was guided through a grounded theory approach in order to develop a theory about understanding how the role that age can impact the climate movement and organizations. Specifically, I planned to identify how the climate change movement has included various age identities and their role to collectively mobilize. It has been noted that data is ever evolving, and outcomes may be different compared to other studies. Since this study is focused on the local organizations of the Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, it is noted that the population of the research are predominantly older individuals, as noticed in my ethnographic transcriptions. I have found that the older community has also engaged with the climate movement although they are not framed or identified in doing so in comparison to the youth group.

Although awareness and mobilization of the issue have been gradually increasing, there is still a lack of research on the climate movement in sociological areas of study. My interest in this capstone topic started when I took an Introduction to Environmental Science course at the California State University of Monterey Bay. By attending my courses' extracurricular activities, I was able to dive into more pressing matters. I had become more concerned about single-use plastic, air quality, and other environmental impacts. I acknowledge that there are still a group of people who don't believe that environmental effects and climate change are occurring or even exist. While they aren't concerned, other individuals worried about the state of our planet. With all of these matters playing a role, I knew that this was something I wanted to take on for my capstone research.

We cannot ignore the changes happening in our ecosystem any longer. Changes so increasingly alarming and real that it will be very difficult to overcome later. We as living beings survive off the resources the land provides us, and it is important that it is protected. Climate change is increasing and it's vital to act now to ensure, preserve, and protect not only human life and other living organisms, but the whole ecosystem itself. The circumstances don't just affect one specific group, this affects all of us.

Literature Review

The prominent themes that will be discussed throughout this paper are youth in climate change activism, framing strategies in social movements, and elder participation in the climate movement. These three themes were the constant variables I found throughout my research project since the beginning of collecting data during the UROC summer program of 2019 and continued throughout the school year of 2019-2020. Specifically, I was able to find these themes throughout observing climate strikes, organization meetings, and from interviews that I conducted with participants. In addition, sources from archives of articles and books concerning moments in the climate movement benefited in identifying themes and theoretical frameworks.

In the beginning of assessing the climate movement, the direction seemed to focus on a correlation between messages being framed in climate organization events, since there were multiple published articles on the distinction. But as the study progressed, there was a recognition of a constant gap between youth and older participants in the climate movement. With that, I decided to incorporate these matters within the literature and study. It is often addressed that the concern is not entirely based on climate change itself and on a civilizational collapse, but more addressing that the problem is taking human actions to solve crisis problems that affect them.

Youth in climate change activism

Youth have recognized the state of their future and responsibility as civilians to become active in the climate movement. Existential anxiety and the frustration of local governments not tackling the increasing effects of climate change has led younger individuals to fight for their future that they feel they have no control over. Focusing on the life process of committing to activism, Fisher found that youth climate activists connect their commitment to climate change relating to their own personal experiences with specific issues. Participants commit to the youth climate movement itself because they believe it welcomes them and embraces their ideals (Fisher, 2016, p. 243). However, it should be considered that there are different unspoken motives for individuals to partake in forms of social action. Similar to other social and environmental research, it is highlighted that there is tension and frustration between activists and political institutions. Recognizing youth concerns and challenges towards political interests, authors O'Brien et al. focus on youth dissent as expressed in climate activism. By revealing diverse methods for youth to express their dissent both outside and inside political operations, it is identified how they are disputing those political and powerful agencies that contribute to a non-viable future (O'Brien, et al., 2018, p.9).

Unlike past environmental activism, the current climate movement has moved forward to including and presenting the youth community as the frontiers to address climate change. Lucas and Davison (2019) conclude that being aware of the issues at hand can have an effect of whether or not an individual develops particular values or beliefs in a subject. Similarly, this highlights the potential importance of lifelong learning for commitment and action that the role educators may play throughout the life course (Miettinen, 2000). On the other hand, the

challenge is to find ways to get youth engaged and empowered in social action. Through the development of the internet, youth are likely to engage with online activism because connection, action, and accessibility of the internet is present (Lombardo et al., 2002, p.307). Since the climate movement is represented on different technological outlets, they can then start mobilizing from online to their local institutions and outside activities.

Framing of the climate movement

In the beginning of exploring the climate movement in the Monterey and Santa Cruz areas, there were different constructions of information that were meticulously presented within these group meetings and events. To better understand how this method of approach functions in these settings, I began to look into the theoretical framework of framing. Framing describes the process in which claims are developed in order to connect, build, and extend to the targeted audience (Snow and Benford, 1986, p98). Within the field of sociology, framing theory has been utilized through multiple instances to understand and describe how messages are presented in collective mobilization. These maneuvers are accomplished in the climate movement where group constituents express both emotional and motivational factors that involve the individual (Benford, & Snow, 2000, p 613). The goals of framing include influencing a way of thinking, magnifying on the knowledge of the issue at hand, and building the dynamic between authority and associates. These practices can assist in understanding how social movements against climate change create the messages that they present to the public.

The process in how group members framed positive and negative outtakes on climate change has had an influence on their behaviors towards what action to take. Crain, Yalowitz, and Cherry (2013) designed a test study of a survey including both positive and negative framing

statements in the same setting to citizens of the U.S. The authors found that positive outtakes, such as the impacts of small behavioral changes within the movement, have taken interest. Because there are multiple representatives that play into the issues of environmental impact, it is difficult to pinpoint what should be looked at first and how to effectively measure these elements. Liu (2000) recommends the sciences and humanities to explore what is still premature environmental research. Similarly, Lester et al. calls attention to environmental mobilization and the deficiency of other research that has focused on single cross examination of elements. By including the identities of race, class, political mobilization and exogenous factors, the authors present general environmental subjects of framing.

Elder activism in the climate change movement

As this capstone study has progressed, there was a reoccurring outcome of an age gap of participants in the climate movement. Older participants express their rationale for being involved with the current movement because they had felt an amount of guilt by not participating in activism before and from contributing to the increase of climate change issues. Kleres and Wettergren (2017) have found that hope propels action while collective action generates hope and manages fear, though fear being more internalized than the feeling of hope. It is expressed that fear can be linked to lack of action in other literature, and the authors believe that fear can also be a motivating factor. These various types of emotions have an effect on an organization's strategies and motives to mobilize. It is essential that future analysis of emotional status and attitudes be explored to attain a complex insight of the different groups of climate social movements.

Through another aspect, McAdam explores the accounts in which individuals or groups take interests in activism and the allowance of them to participate in collective mobilization. The

conceptualization of biographical availability can overlook the personal attributes where older members are in a stage where they are not as occupied with family and job responsibilities like the populations of young and middle-aged groups. Elman (1995) found in his study of age-based mobilization in American politics that in regard to the socio-demographic of age, and especially its definition and measurement, there have always been problems for scholars. The theme that has occurred in this study is attributable to the fact that there hasn't been a sufficient number of scholarly works focused on older activists in social movements. With that in mind, this research project seeks to highlight that issue.

Theory

As stated before, when approaching to oversee the climate movement in Monterey and Santa Cruz, I began to focus the study on understanding how organizations against climate change and create the messages that they present to the public. The theory I began to associate with this process is framing. Based on the literature from Benford and Snow, framing describes the process in which claims are developed in order to connect, build, and extend to the targeted audience. How we communicate frames on climate change are essential for a greater participation of the social issue. But as the study progressed, there was a reoccurring recognition of a constant gap between youth and older participants in the climate movement.

The main theory that I have applied to this capstone study is the conceptualization of "biographical availability," which takes into consideration individuals potential to join high risk activism due to the possible flexibility of time they have in their schedules or the situation in which they are occupied with their daily lives. Biographical availability has been amplified by McAdam, which explores the accounts in which individuals or groups take interests in activism and the allowance of them to participate in collective mobilization. The stress on the distinction

between high risk and low risk activism is important due to the fact that a movement can accumulate great or subtle possibilities of lost cost that can be endured by their activists.

This theoretical framework is a key variable into understanding how the youth climate movement frames the presentation of age and how that compares to the actual capacity of age in the movement in the local Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. Although young people have been set as frontiers to tackling climate change issues, it should be taken into consideration their availability to do so. Young activism can be deemed to be a positive illustration of engagement to the climate mobilization, though their potential daily lives of partaking in education, transitioning from adolescence, and engagement with family matters can deter their role in the climate movement. Even if the individuals desire to completely engage with the climate movement, their other activities can make it difficult for them to dedicate themselves fully to collectively mobilizing.

Since this study is focused on the local organizations in the Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, it is noted that the population of the research is predominantly older individuals, as noticed in my ethnographic transcriptions. The older community has also engaged with the climate movement, although they are not framed or identified in doing so in comparison to the youth group. These factors could be because older individuals are in a stage where they are not as occupied with family and job responsibilities, unlike the populations of young and middle-aged groups. Due to these observed themes, this study focused on the demographics of older and younger activism in the climate movement by participating and examining local meetings and events and engaging with those involved with these settings. By applying the theoretical framework of biographical availability, I hope to demonstrate that the youth are not the only population to be heavily involved with the climate movement, but to highlight the circumstances

that contribute and influence these groups to activism.

Instructional Assignments Chart- 5 Learning Questions

During the course of my years as an undergraduate at CSUMB, I've had the opportunity to participate in engaging with my communities in Monterey neighborhoods. Even before attending post-secondary education, being engaged with the community I reside in has been an essential aspect of my life and has helped me to gain a greater understanding of the social conditions that I am continuously being surrounded by. With that, I have strived to continue to keep that momentum with me no matter where I went and what I encountered in life. Even with it being a required feature at CSUMB, I am pleased and honored to attend an institution that pushes other colleagues and myself to actively learn and benefit in civic engagement. From being involved with different organizations and groups on campus to engaging with local cities through service learning, I have been able to interact with individuals and experience collectiveness not only from sharing a part of myself but from having the privilege of having others reciprocate that with me.

Specifically, in my path as a service learner, my lower division course participation involved aiding Everyone's Harvest host the Marina Farmer's Market on morning weekends. For my upper division, I began collaborating with my institution's very own Return of the Natives, which was somewhat correlated to my capstone topic by restoring native plants during the weekend public events. With that being said, this aspect of my capstone seeks to highlight those outcomes and reflections I've accumulated to better understand the importance of service-learning influences. I will be cross examining my experiences with the following five service-

learning themes: social and social awareness, services and social responsibility, community and social justice, multicultural community building and civic engagement, and the role of technology in service.

Self and Social Awareness

As a 22-year-old female, I have yet to experience things that are yet to come, but that doesn't mean I haven't gained familiarity with my characteristics of diversity. From the age of being 8 days old, I had already experienced the hardship of growing up in a broken home. Because my mother was mentally and physically abusive to my older sisters and I, we were placed in the foster care system and were sent to live with my aunt and uncle for 3 years. Due to these circumstances, I still felt fortunate enough to live with close relatives unlike others in the system that might have had it differently. Although I encountered things no kid should ever have to experience, I did not let those set of obstacles define me and hold me back from the person I wanted to be. From a young age, I encountered life very independently. I used my energy to choose paths I knew that would benefit my future. I strived to excel as a student and got involved with various extracurricular activities. Being born and raised in Southern California, not only did I feel like I could be the person I am now, but there was a part of my life that I still felt the need to pay roots to my Mexican American culture and catholic background.

Growing up, I had come to terms that my upbringing could affect my personal relationships and my mental health overall. Sometime in my lifetime, I would like to receive physiological help in order to create a better environment for myself and the people who come into my life. My privileges would be that I had access to higher education, even with the barrier of being a low- income first generation student. I understand that being heterosexual, I do not

face the oppression and hate that the LGBTQ+ community have received. Physically, I am fortunate enough to be healthy and able-bodied. I am able to have both basic cognitive and social skills. Attaining both features have guided and pushed me through my endeavors and journey.

Services and Social Responsibility

During my time contributing to service with Return of the Natives, the community within the organization was immensely accepting and passionate about what they stood for. Entering the dynamic of the program, I had prepared myself to make the most of my experience and do the best I could do for the program and for those who were involved at the time. It wasn't considered how dreadful or tedious it could be because I was genuinely eager to be a part of something new. I believe that helped the short-term wellbeing of the situation. The relationships created were different yet meaningful. I began getting comfortable with other service learners and volunteers by engaging in conversation, collaborating on planned activities, and learning when to take action and step back. For the volunteers and service learners, the impact of those actions made the unity of the assembly more lighthearted and memorable. We collectively met up in time, gathered the utilities for the event, and discussed strategies and plans together. The concept of contributing to the wellbeing of the environment around us, the campus itself and its surrounding cities, felt rewarding.

The Return of the Natives purpose is to involve students and people to be closer to nature through hands-on experiences in community based on habitat restoration and environmental education. The most effective characteristics of the organization was that it was easily accessible and that it appealed to environmental action, which is the core of my capstone study. I learned that those who were involved with the return of the natives, either continued to volunteer or

achieved a position within the program. and drew upon being compassionate and socially responsible. What the research taught about “service” is that there is a compassion and social responsibility that is involved with environmental justice and it grows with just starting to be involved.

Community and Social Justice

While conducting my service learning with Return of the Natives, I was able to celebrate the spirit of outdoor adventure while collaborating with local residents and students. The program incorporated students of all ages and the community in native habitat restoration in Monterey County. Some of the programs that supported the organization's mission were taking part in greenhouse work, class visits and class field trips, public planting events, and tabling at the farmers market. Specifically, service learners took action in these events by setting up materials, leading class activities, and engaging with students. No one was excluded from volunteering with the return of the natives. Groups varied from elementary students, high school students, other groups and clubs from CSUMB, and families and locals of Monterey. The concern wasn't about people involved but rather coming together to restore and protect natural areas in the Monterey Bay Area.

One event in particular that I consistently attended was the weekend public events. Volunteers and groups collaborated on removing invasive plants, planting, maintaining fences and signs, and picked up bags full of trash to renew our parks. Collectively we observed species and birds at the site. Some notable observations included planting native oaks, grasses, and shrubs. The community was educating and advocating for our local ecosystem. Return of the Natives partnerships included the Bureau of Land Management on Fort Ord National Monument,

California State Parks at the Carmel River Lagoon and Fort Ord Dunes State Park, and The City of Salinas on the Creeks of Salinas. Overall, these collaborations are essential to environmental justice because they benefit sustainable human rights and protection of communities.

Multicultural Community Building and Civic Engagement

In the beginning of my service with Return of the Natives, I was somewhat familiar with the agency because I had gained interest in the group during my freshman year at CSUMB. It wasn't until the start of this current fall semester that I set about fully indulging myself within the program. Since the orientation, I felt very certain and comfortable that volunteering for the organization was going to provide me with a different perception of contributing to the environment and bettering my community. I wanted to commit to social awareness and assistance to restoring habitats on public lands. As a participant for Return of the Natives, I took action by tabling and conversing with other volunteers about the agenda of public events and helping them fill out their forms. Not only that, but I was being exposed to different types of plants and the most effective ways to place them. It became a tool to instruct other volunteers to do the same.

The benefits of the public events were being able to provide food and shelter to the local creatures that lived in those communities. By removing over 500 to 1,000 pounds of trash, it prevented pollution from flowing to essential water resources and sanctuaries. For the volunteers, it placed us in a space to get connected with nature and benefit our mental and physical well-being with being active outside. Being surrounded with like-minded individuals, we continually set a plan to effectively load up supplies, setup at the restoration site, and complete the projects and cleanup. All of the hard work we did with Return of the Natives contributed to the ecstatic

feeling of taking action to environmental justice. I began feeling connected with something I deeply cared about.

Role of Technology in Service

The use of technology was heavily implemented throughout my experience with Return of the Natives. My event coordinator, Eessa Vanderpek, distinctively used email as a form of contacting those who had interest in completing their service learning with the agency. From then on, volunteers were notified of what was expected of you and events that were coming up. Participants were included in a Google Slides that presented different ways we could volunteer with the return of the natives. The slides included sign-up sheets and contact information that we might have needed. After signing up with public events, I was sent an emailed reminder the day before that included specific details about what we would be doing and who would be involved in that specific event.

Due to the circumstances that the COVID-19 pandemic had brought, the plan for the rest of my service learning was to transition it to being remote. Like other institutions and organizations, Return of the Natives needed to find other options for volunteers to engage with learning outcomes that correlated with the mission of the program. With that, the coordinator shared a Google Doc with us to which we could contribute a list of project ideas. Some of the project ideas included making a wildflower poster, plants brochure, bird skull poster, and many more. To register for one, we were asked to sign up for a Zoom or in office meeting during the week using the google spreadsheet emailed to us. Shortly after, we were informed that the service-learning hours have been waived for all of the courses and that we wouldn't need to continue volunteering with them. I was pretty devastated by the fact that I had already put in so

much time into the service and I was so close to finishing. Although I will still be left with a feeling of incompleteness, I understand that the issue at hand is bigger than what I could have achieved. I am still thankful for the opportunity to have a part of Return of the Natives.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study, combining observations of public events and interviews with relevant activists, in order to understand age-based mobilization in the local climate organizations. I have conducted interviews with people of at least 18 years old who are engaged in environmental or climate groups in the Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. After identifying a potential interviewee participant, I had used the recruitment tool to contact the participant via email or phone. I had also sent a study information sheet via email and asked the participant to review it before agreeing to an interview. Both of these documents have been created through Microsoft word. Semi-structured interviews with climate activists were conducted to collect data on how the climate change movement has included various age identities and their role to collectively mobilize.

At the beginning of the interview, I obtained verbal confirmation that the participant read the study information sheet, offered to answer any questions about it that they may have had, and asked the participant to verbally agree to the terms and conditions of the study and what it can hold. The only personally identifiable information that I had collected about the interviewee was their name and contact information. The interview had been audio recorded, and the recordings were used only for transcription purposes. Both the interviewee and the organization had been assigned pseudonyms following the interviews, and the audio recording of the interviews were deleted after they had been transcribed. Anonymized transcripts may be retained for future research studies. Confidentiality of their identifying records was secured during research using

campus-approved, secure file storage methods such as Google Drive, with access limited to only the research team. I had coded and analyzed the data by hand and with NVivo software. The data was analyzed using iterations of open and closed coding. Open coding had allowed me to identify themes that were reoccurring throughout the conducted study. I had read all transcripts and notes, looking for recurring or important ideas. Then, I used closed coding by reading all the data again, looking specifically for the themes I had identified previously.

Results

After observing climate change events and conducting interviews with participants, I was able to identify several key patterns that were reoccurring. I observed activists using methods of motivational framing through negative and positive messages. Messages concerning the future/state of the planet and those who live in it. This may mean that groups in the movement are tackling climate change in both positive and negative approaches in regard to the multiple issues of the climate.

Speakers and members at climate change events introduced themselves as residents from Monterey/Santa Cruz County. Participants explained how being local residents influenced their involvement in climate change organizing and promoting events (i.e Youth Climate Strike in Santa Cruz). Additionally, I heard a few examples of motivational framing, the main phrase being “Small steps, big changes,” which is meant to ensure that the members/participants can contribute to the fight against climate change by making changes in their daily lives. This structure corresponds to framing literature in how we communicate the positive frames as well as the negatives of climate change and how both are essential for a greater participation of the social issue. The positive outtakes such as the impacts that small behavioral changes to participate in acting have been prominent in engaging with those inside and outside the group.

As for the main focus of the research, I was able to distinguish that there was a continuous outcome of an age gap between youth and older activism of the climate movement in the Monterey and Santa Cruz settings. Specific age groups can be identified between 13-23 years old within the youth and 48-80 years old within the older population. It should be noted that this age classification doesn't account for all participants who have shown up for climate events. I found that youth tend to be engaged in wider events such as "climate strikes" and older participants are more committed with climate group meetings on a weekly basis. For example, there was a large number of youth activists at events such as the Otter Strike at CSUMB, Salinas Youth Strike, and the Santa Cruz Youth Climate Strike. Older activists have attended both of those climate strikes, along with their own climate meetings/events. This observation can highlight that older groups have more lineage and range to attend both matters than youth activists.

It is interesting to see youth rise in collectively collaborating in their own climate groups like the Sunrise Movement and many others. Older individuals have progressively been engaged with their established groups, such as Citizens Climate Lobby and Citizens for Just Water, who have had previous chapters in their reign. When speaking with youth at the local climate events, they had addressed that they are more likely to participate within the climate movement from their institutions and by the influence from their peers who have also accumulated a concern for the climate. With youth being engaged, I did see that they were still joined with their family members for support whether it be mental, emotional, or physical. This is relative to biographical availability in a sense that youth's daily lives of partaking in education, transitions in adolescence, and engagement with family matters can affect their role in the climate movement. Even if the individuals desire to completely engage with the climate movement is essential to

them, their associated attributes can make it difficult for them to dedicate themselves fully to collectively mobilizing.

For this study, I was able to interview older individuals who have become members in their own climate organizations. What surprised me the most from the interviewees, was that they began to be interested and engaged with the climate movement from having been retired and/or was able to achieve high executive positions within their chapters. An example of this matter was when I interviewed an older activist, Margo (74). She states, “Well, I co-founded the chapter (CCL) in 2014, but I think I joined the national organization in 2013.” I had asked what her reasoning for being involved with the climate movement and she explains, “Well, I wanted to learn what the issues were. What the science was behind climate change. And then the more I learned, the more concerned I got about the situation that we’re facing.” This statement supports that career or credentials were a starting block on how participants began to approach the concerned social issue. Alison (65), another interviewee explains, “I had an internship with green waste for a year when I was stationed on campus. I hardly went into the office. Then I graduated, I still had the internship. But when a position did open, I applied for it and I was hired.” This data reflects the framework of biographical availability because it is demonstrated that that older individuals are in a stage where their activism of interests is included in more accessible matters because they are not as occupied with other socio-economical responsibilities, unlike younger age groups.

Sociologists who study social movements have debated the effectiveness of biographical availability. The theoretical framework clearly benefits this study in understanding how social movements against climate change include or engage with the age demographics. There is some form of bias, due to that myself being part of the younger demographic as well as being

concerned for the climate. What was similar between youth and older individuals to take part in the climate movement is the fear of the state of their future and for the many generations to come. With that being said, this aspect didn't hinder my method because I engaged with both younger and older activists. With the progressing advancements within technology, I saw both parties engage in self-promotion and advocacy through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and their own created websites. When asked about who should get involved in the climate movement and what role should they have it, I received the same answer: "Everyone." From all the events I have observed, it has been and should be addressed that the climate issue overall is a generational problem, especially since it's affecting the youth and their future.

Conclusion

Although young people have been framed as the frontiers to tackling climate change issues, it should be taken into consideration their availability to do so. Young activism can be deemed as a positive illustration of engagement within climate mobilization because it is not so often for youth to advocate in something that specifically affects them and their future. Youth are still learning how to make sense of the world around them and how to balance their daily lives of school, family, and their social circles. So, in regard to climate activism, they can't do it alone and haven't been. The older community has also been actively engaged with the climate movement even though they have not been highlighted in doing so in comparison to the youth group. These factors could be because older individuals don't have the responsibility of building their careers and families any longer than they did at a younger age. If both parties believe that everyone should be concerned and active in the climate movement, then what the solution I would suggest is for a start in collaboration with both youth and older climate groups. This has

already been enacted with groups such as Citizens Climate Lobby and Citizens for Just Water. They have addressed that they are planning to begin targeting younger members starting from high school and going into the colleges because they are the more vocal and will go out and network. I would have liked to have interviewed younger individuals that were part of the local climate activism in order to provide some insight on their perspective of age roles in the movement and what they can do to extend to other age groups in the same activism. Because there are multiple representatives that play into the issues of environmental impact, it is difficult to pinpoint what should be looked at first and how to effectively measure these elements. This has been a reoccurring matter throughout environmental research and analysis, in which it seems authors themselves do not provide any instruments to overcome these issues presented, but rather a call for more progression. This concept has been a drawback of my own research, due to that while examining environmental social movements, it has been difficult to highlight one specific aspect of contributors.

References

- Amenta, E., & Zyglidopoulos, Y. (1991). It Happened Here: Political Opportunity, the New Institutionalism, and the Townsend Movement. *American Sociological Review*, 56(2), 250-265.
- Benford, R., & Snow, D. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 611-639. [29]
- Dickinson, J., Crain, R., Yalowitz, S., & Cherry, T. (2013). How Framing Climate Change Influences Citizen Scientists' Intentions to Do Something About It. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 44(3), 145-158. [14]
- Dunlap, R. E., & Catton Jr, W. R. (1979). *Environmental sociology*. Annual review of sociology, 5(1), 243-273. [31]
- Elman, Cheryl. (1995). An Age-Based Mobilisation: The Emergence of Old Age in American Politics. *Ageing and Society*. 15. 299-324.
- Fisher, S. R. (2016). Life trajectories of youth committing to climate activism. *Environmental Education Research*, 22(2), 229-247. [19]
- Kleres, J., & Wettergren, Å. (2017). Fear, hope, anger, and guilt in climate activism. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(5), 507–519. [13]
- Lester, J., Allen, D., & Kelly, H. (2001). *Environmental Injustice In The U.S.* New York: Routledge. 1-188. [189]

- Liu, F. (2000). *Environmental justice analysis: Theories, methods, and practice*. CRC Press.1-321. [321]
- Lombardo, C., Zakus, D., & Skinner, H. (2002). Youth social action: Building a global latticework through information and communication technologies. *Health Promotion International, 17*(4), 363-371.
- Lucas, C. H., & Davison, A. (2019). Not ‘getting on the bandwagon’: When climate change is a matter of unconcern. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space, 2*(1), 129–149. [21]
- Miettinen, R. 2000. “The Concept of Experiential Learning and John Dewey's Theory of Reflective Thought and Action.” *International Journal of Lifelong Education 19* (1): 54–72.
- McAdam, D. (1986). Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer. *American Journal of Sociology, 92*(1), 64-90.
- O'brien, K., Selboe, E., & Hayward, B. M. (2018). Exploring youth activism on climate change. *Ecology and Society, 23*(3).
- Scott R. Fisher (2016) Life trajectories of youth committing to climate activism. *Environmental Education Research, 22*:2, 229-247.
- Snow, D., Rochford, E., Worden, S., & Benford, R. (1986). Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation. *American Sociological Review 51*(4), 464-481. [18]

Appendix A

Interview Questionnaire conducted for consolation with climate movement members in the Monterey and Santa Cruz areas.

1. What is your age?
2. Which environmental or climate organization(s) are you part of?
3. How long have you been involved in the climate movement?
4. What is your role in these groups?
 - a. Why did they start to participate?
 - b. How did they start to participate?
5. How many times participated in a social action? Which?
6. When did you become aware of climate change being an issue?
7. What are the actions that you take in your role in the movement?
8. What are the methods and goals your organization(s) use to educate others about climate change?
9. What are some obstacles that your organization has faced regarding educating the public about climate change?
10. What differences have you seen between younger and older climate activists?
11. Do you think that younger and older activists should have different roles in the climate movement? (Please explain)
12. Why is the climate movement important to you?
13. Is there anything else about age and the climate movement that you would like me to know?
14. Is there anyone else you think I should interview?

- If so, would you prefer to contact them, or can you share their contact information with me?
- (If they share contact information) May I tell this person that you recommended them?