Equity, Justice, Democracy: A Clean Energy Future that Benefits All

2021-2022 Kleinman Center Visiting Scholar Lecture Presentation
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Presented By:
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You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.  

- Angela Davis
Coke cans, hairspray and dolphins...?
Equity

democracy

JUSTICE

LIBERATION
POWER TO THE PEOPLE

PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION FOR PROGRESS
WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY?

*Racial Equity* refers to what a genuinely non-racist society would look like. In a racially equitable society, the distribution of society’s benefits and burdens *would not be skewed by race*. 
Atlanta – A Tale of Two Cities

• Black people represent at least 80% of the population along or below I-20, while more than 60% of the six northern NPUs’ populations are white.

• Over 90% of job centers are found north of Highway I-20
% of Non-White Population
While the city is diverse, it is not spatially diverse. The non-white population is heavily concentrated in the south and west portions of the city. Source: Neighborhood Nexus

- 6% to 25%
- 28% to 44%
- 50% to 63%
- 65% to 82%
- 86% to 100%

% of Units Where Cost of Rent is 30% or More of Renter Income
- 72.7% to <87.9%
- 40.9% to <53.9%
- 62.4% to <72.7%
- 53.9% to <62.4%
- 9.6% to <17.5%

% Population with Less than a High School
- 24% to 41.5%
- 3% to <9.6%
- 17.5% to <24%
- 9.6% to <17.5%
- 0 to <3%

% of the Population in Poverty
- 41.2% to 71%
- 32.9% to <41.2%
- 10.4% to <19.2%
- 1.9% to <10.4%
- 19.2% to <32.9%

Median Wage Hour
- 1980: $22
- 1990: $28
- 2000: $30
- 2014: $30

Housing Occupancy in Atlanta
Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate
- Renter Occupied
- Vacant
- Owner Occupied

% Population without Health Insurance Coverage
- 25.5% to <41.7%
- 20.5% to <25.5%
- 16.7% to <23.8%
- 10.3% to <16.7%
- 0.3% to <10.3%

Teen Birthrate per 1,000 Births (2008-2012)
- 202.5 to 269.1
- 166.1 to <202.5
- 123.3 to <166.1
- 84.5 to <114.3
- 0 to <48.5
Environmental Racism Is Nothing New

Race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil.

56% of the population near toxic waste sites are people of color.

People of color:
- Have been seen 95% of their claims against polluters denied by the EPA.
- Have 38% higher nitrogen-dioxide exposure.
- Are 2x more likely to live without potable water and modern sanitation.
Structural racism is the racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.
Hotter temperatures disproportionately affect redlined districts

In many urban areas, the hottest parts of the city tend to be in areas that were historically “redlined,” meaning banks and mortgage lenders considered it risky to invest in those neighborhoods. Two examples are Richmond, VA, and Baltimore.

Graphic: Renée Rigdon, CNN
From Redlining to Restorative Justice
Anti-Black racism and energy insecurity go hand in hand in America

By Sharonda Williams-Tack | Feb 21 2021
WHY EQUITY MATTERS

Equity is a proactive, strategic approach that accounts for differences in opportunities and burdens, as well as needs, in order to achieve true equality for all.

OpenSource Leadership Strategies
Racial Equity in energy is top of mind for a reason

3.6x
The median energy burden of low-income households in Atlanta is 3.6 times higher than that of non-low-income households.

2.6x
The median energy burden of low-income multifamily households in Atlanta is 2.6 times higher than that of multifamily households.

33%
The median energy burden of Black households in Atlanta is 33% higher than that of non-Hispanic white households.

Low-income, Black, Hispanic, and Native American households all face dramatically higher energy burdens.
What is Just Energy?

Just Energy is the frame to advance energy equity - the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of our energy production and consumption.

Be stewards of God’s creation: Work with companies and governments for clean, renewable energy through a just and equitable transition.
Why Energy Justice?

Energy decisions are made with marginalized communities in mind.
What is Energy Justice?

Summary: Energy justice refers to the goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those historically harmed by the energy system (“frontline communities”). Energy justice explicitly centers the concerns of marginalized communities and aims to make energy more accessible, affordable, clean, and democratically managed for all communities. The practitioner and academic approaches to energy justice emphasize these process-related and distributive justice concerns.

The Initiative for Energy Justice provides law and policy resources to advocates and policymakers to advance local and state shifts to equitable clean energy.

Initiative for Energy Justice | iejusa.org
The Emerging Potential of Microgrids in the Transition to 100% Renewable Energy Systems

Figure 1 - The Emerging Potential of Microgrids in the Transition to 100% Renewable Energy Systems
Building Power

Engage: bring together community-based organizations and public institutions to demonstrate a process of collaboration with first and most impacted populations.

Educate: host community conversations to discuss where energy comes from, why choices matter, how to save $$

Organize: build power with impacted communities and resident leaders

Act: mobilize advocates and community to take their seat at the table with utilities and elected officials to make energy and utility programs and policy more equitable!
Advancing Equity in Utility Regulation

Future Electric Utility Regulation Report No. 12

October 2021

Chandra Farley, Partnership for Southern Equity
John Howat and Jennifer Bosco, National Consumer Law Center
Nidhi Thakar and Jake Wise, Portland General Electric
Jean Su, Center for Biological Diversity
Project Manager and Technical Editor:
Lisa Schwartz, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Diagram 2: The Goals of Energy Justice
Energy Democracy is a way to frame the struggle of working people, low-income communities, and communities of color, and their allies, to take control of energy resources and decision-making from the corporate energy establishment and use those resources to empower their communities.
Atlanta community resilience project seeks to become model for energy equity

By Sophia Wu

October 11, 2021
The Good Energy Project is connecting the transformational power of Black women to the movement for clean energy.

www.goodenergyproject.org

@goodenergy_project
Energy Equity . . .

Energy Justice . . .

Energy Democracy . . .

is a way, not a what.
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