This chapter summarizes some of these claims and, ultimately, demonstrates that environmental education might include environmental justice as central to environmental problem solving. First, I describe the concept of environmental justice and related terms and the social science research literature that supports them. A fuller understanding of environmental and environmental justice requirements attention to the political-economic systems that negatively impact both natural environments and marginalized social groups, as well as attention to some of the theory of what constitutes justice. As Brulle and Pellow (2006) stated in a recent review of the literature, "[t]he politics of the distribution of the fruits of economic production is overlaid with the politics of the distribution of environmental pollution, producing environmental injustice" (p. 108–109). Second, I examine the education
and environmental education research literature regarding educating for environmental justice. A review shows that, although there is some mention of equity and justice, rarely does the environmental education research literature go beyond mere mention.

What Is Environmental Justice?

A number of terms have been used in the literature and by social movement actors, including environmental justice, environmental racism, and environmental inequality. Environmental racism represented the first, and still salient, way of understanding certain relationships between environmental exposure and social factors. Beginning in the 1980s, research began to show that environmental hazards were disproportionately located in, or disproportionately affected, racialized communities—primarily black, Hispanic, or Native American (Cole & Foster, 2001). The research began to extend the conclusions to other forms of social inequality, such as gender. Gender causes other variations, with women often more impacted by some forms of environmental risk, including chemical exposures during pregnancy, but also relative to their position as caregivers (Sallade, 2009), whereas working class men face occupational safety environmental hazards. These patterns were evident in other nations, such as the United Kingdom (Bulkeley & Walker, 2005), Canada (Agyeman et al., 2009), and globally (Hussay, 2006) as well.

The term environmental justice quickly developed into the predominant way of expressing environmental-related societal inequalities. As Pellow (2000) defines it, "An environmental injustice occurs when a particular group... is burdened with environmental hazards" (p. 582). For some time, the US research focus was on delineating whether race or class issues were the primary causes of environmental burdens. In a recent summary, Grover (2005) suggested that while some environmental justice activists may have labeled such issues as an "environmental injustice," it has been associated with "justice." It is, however, this very construction of "the environment" that environmental justice activists have challenged. For example, urban activists may rally around conservation with overall quality of life issues that include adequate housing and safe neighborhoods or may advocate lead remediation or pollution issues as health rather than environmental matters. Safety and security were key "environmental" issues for Detroit children (Wals, 1996). Some children’s experience of "nature" is limited to ground-level pollution, lead exposure, cockroaches, and mold (Strife & Downey, 2005). To some degree, the mainstream environmental movement has acceded to this trend, but it still faces criticism for lack of partnership with new constituencies and on non-"nature" issues (Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Sandler & Peruzzo, 2007). Beyond the particulars of what constitutes an "environmental issue" and beyond the injustices of distribution of hazards, environmental justice activists and scholars have also expanded their attention to the social and political processes in operation.

It takes very little effort to show that all is not equal, even in a democratic society. Most think that goods should be equitably distributed and that inequitable distribution is unfair. This is called distributive or substantive justice. Income, safe housing, effective police, safety from toxic exposure, and adequate food are examples of social goods. They may be considered fairly distributed on the basis of several different types of criteria, for example, equality (e.g., a hard work gets you a higher income), need (e.g., all should have enough food), equity (e.g., everyone gets a vote), or a variety of other measures. Much of the environmental justice research focus has been on cases of distributive injustice, primarily those linked with environmental inequality correlates with demographic variables. Explanations of these distributional disparities also overlap (Mohai, Pellow, & Roberts, 2009). Some explanations focus on systemic discrimination, say of racialized communities or poorer communities and neighborhoods as "sacrifice areas" (Hooks & Smith, 2004). Economic class oriented explanations focus on market dynamics alone, such as the lower costs associated with lower environmental standards in marginalized communities or reduced public resistance to undesirable land uses. Sociopolitical factors focus on political or social processes that result in uneven distribution.

The last explanation considers a second aspect of environmental justice, Procedural or participatory justice remedies inequities in engagement and participation in social or political processes (Hillman,
The relationship between the environment and education is a complex one, involving economic, social, and cultural factors. The environmental movement has raised awareness about the interconnections between human activities and the natural world, leading to a reevaluation of the role of education in fostering sustainability.

In his book "Eco-justjce?" (2005), David A. McLaren argues that education is a crucial element in the struggle against environmental degradation. He contends that education can contribute to the development of a more equitable and just society, where the needs of future generations are taken into account.

Similarly, McLaren's work is echoed in the context of bioregion conservation, as discussed by Harriet Bowers in her book "Eco-justjce?" (2005). Bowers suggests that education can play a key role in promoting sustainable practices and empowering communities to protect their local ecosystems.

Philosophers like Wenden (1976) have also highlighted the importance of education in the context of justice. Wenden's "unequal justice" concept emphasizes the need for education to address the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, which is a fundamental challenge for contemporary societies.

The interrelationship between economic, social, and environmental factors is a central theme in the work of E. F. Schumacher (1973), whose ideas on "small is beautiful" have been influential in promoting sustainable development.

In "Industrial society and its future" (1973), Schumacher argues that the prevailing economic and technological systems are causing a crisis of overproduction and misrecognition, which he sees as the root cause of environmental degradation.

Similarly, postmodernists like Mauro (1987) have argued that the traditional notion of progress is outdated and needs to be replaced with a more holistic approach to development.

The "Gamer girl" (2006) has also been influential in the field of education, highlighting the importance of technology in the learning process.

In conclusion, the relationship between the environment and education is a multifaceted one, involving economic, social, and cultural factors. By promoting sustainable practices and empowering communities, education can play a key role in promoting a more equitable and just society.

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...students. The framing of climate change as an environmental crisis has been a key aspect of environmental education and policy formulation in recent decades. This perspective has been critiqued for its narrow focus on scientific and technological solutions, often at the expense of addressing systemic inequalities and power dynamics. A decolonizing approach to environmental education, as advocated by authors like Michelle Scott and Lee (2010), seeks to address these limitations by incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems and fostering a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of the natural and social worlds.

Decolonizing education approaches, such as those proposed by Lisa H. Simpson (2004) and Ricardo Umana (2007), emphasize the importance of place-based learning and intercultural pedagogies. These methods aim to develop a curriculum that is culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of diverse communities. For example, the work of Hekuru, N. (2007) on teaching Indigenous knowledge systems in schools provides valuable insights into how environmental education can be adapted to local contexts.

Moreover, the role of transformative communities in shaping environmental policies is highlighted by authors like D. Wane, I. A., and K. Kaza (2010). These communities, characterized by a commitment to sustainability and social justice, serve as models for collective action and collective resistance against environmental degradation. By examining the political and epistemological dimensions of environmental education, these authors challenge the traditional roles of educators and learners, advocating for a more active and engaged approach to learning.

In conclusion, the field of environmental education is continuously evolving, with a growing recognition of the importance of intercultural approaches, place-based learning, and community-based initiatives. These developments reflect a shift away from top-down approaches to environmental stewardship and towards more participatory and inclusive models of education and policy-making. As environmental challenges become more pressing, it is imperative that educators, policymakers, and communities work together to develop innovative strategies that address the complex interplay between human and environmental systems.