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A Study of environmental organizations in puerto rico advocating for social and environmental justice**Carmen Collins***Department of Sociology & Anthropology, USA*

After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, we wanted to determine how the islanders viewed environmental organizations as part of an effort to understand the relationships between attitudes, institutions, and environmental and social justice issues. As a category 5 hurricane, Hurricane Maria was one of the strongest to hit Puerto Rico. Yet, the US mainstream media coverage of this and other environmental issues was lacking. From a total of 90 environmental organizations in Puerto Rico, we surveyed 19 that were active in the southwest of the island. We asked: (1) How do local people view environmental and social justice issues and (2) given their organizations' efforts to deal with these issues, what are their successes? To address these questions, we developed a survey in English and Spanish and conducted personal and online interviews with 30 relevant individuals. Their most successful outcomes included: (1) educating and creating greater awareness of environmental issues; (2) introducing environmental changes into their communities; and (3) becoming and surviving as economically sustainable organizations. The results inform our understanding between environmental organizations and social and environmental justice in Puerto Rico and more broadly, because the organizations surveyed are at the center of fighting climate change and achieving environmental justice.

Biography

Carmen Collins is a faculty member in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at Fordham University in New York City. She is passionate about exploring human behavior and cultural dynamics through research that examines social structures and their effects on individuals and communities. Carmen emphasizes the importance of diverse perspectives in her academic work, promoting a comprehensive understanding of societal issues. Dedicated to teaching and mentoring students, Carmen fosters critical thinking and encourages interdisciplinary approaches to social challenges. She actively engages in departmental initiatives and collaborates with colleagues to enhance research and community involvement. Her commitment to social justice and equity informs her scholarship, making her a valuable asset to her students and the university. Through her work, Carmen aims to deepen understanding of societal challenges and promote positive change, inspiring the next generation of thinkers and leaders in the field.