

Transportation, Climate Justice, Human Rights

Future Interstate Study
Transportation Research Board
Miami Beach Listening Session
March 27, 2017
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**US HUMAN RIGHTS
NETWORK**



@USHRN



ushrnetwork

About USHRN:

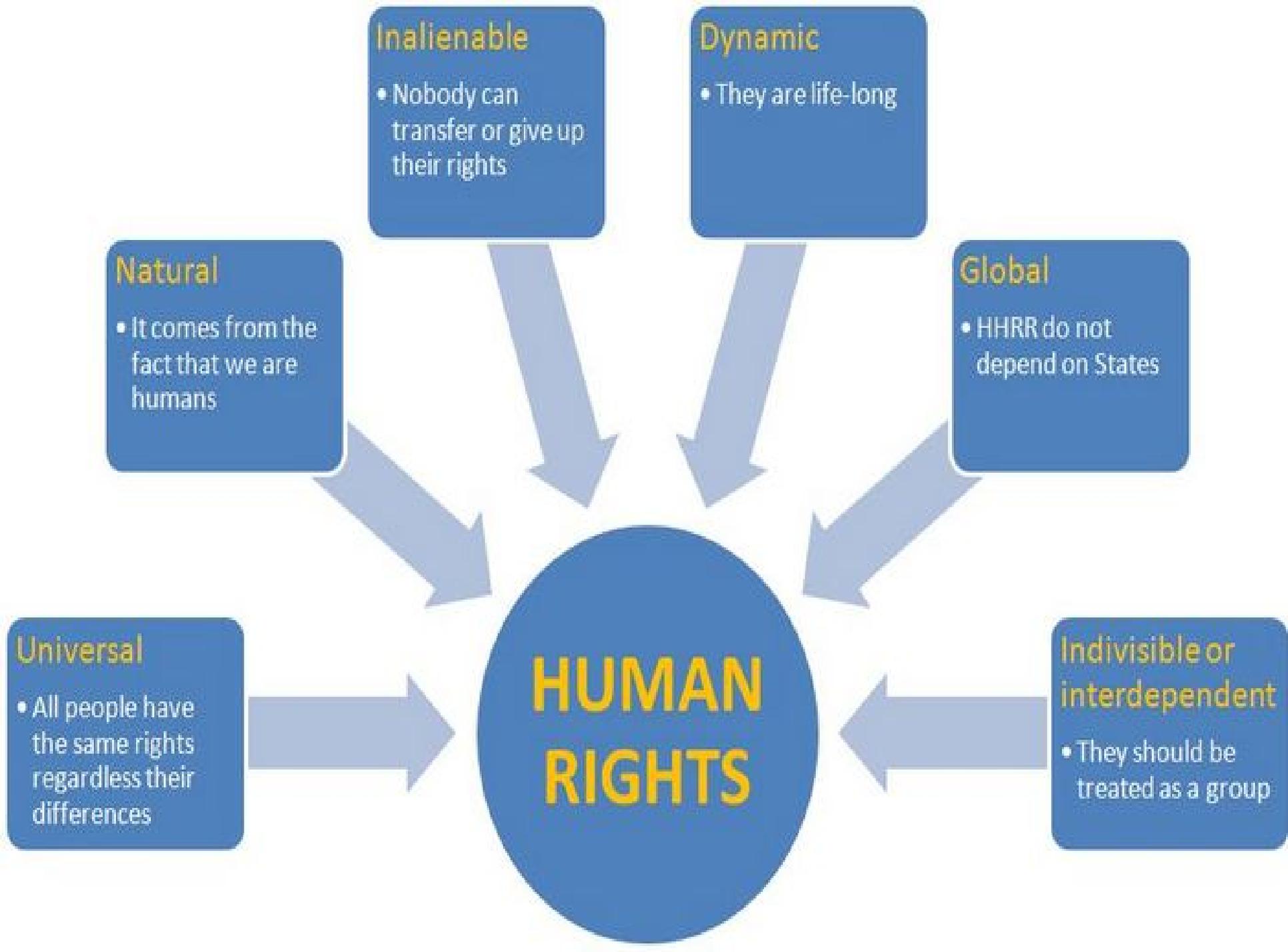
The US Human Rights Network is a national network of organizations and individuals working to strengthen a human rights movement and culture within the United States led by the people most directly impacted by human rights violations. USHRN works to realize human rights by:

- Engaging, connecting and mobilizing communities to uphold and defend human rights and hold government accountable
- Building the capacity and leadership of grassroots groups
- Facilitating effective collective action to secure the long-term structural change to achieve justice and fully realize human rights
- Raising the visibility of local human rights concerns nationally, and internationally



Human Rights

- Human Rights Human rights are the **basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled**, as recognized and protected by the core international human rights instruments (treaties, etc.).
- They encompass **civil and political rights**, such as the rights to life, liberty and freedom of expression, to worship, to own property, and to be treated equally before the law.
- They also include **economic, social and cultural rights**, such as the rights to family, to education, to culture, to health, to subsistence, to residence and movement, and to inviolability (sacredness of home) of the home.
- These rights are **universal and fundamental**, and states have the duty to ensure their realization.
- International human rights law has established several mechanisms to monitor compliance with and ensure observance of human rights.





Climate Justice

- The impacts of climate change threaten the most basic human rights.
- Climate Justice recognizes and addresses that those least responsible for climate change experience its greatest impacts.
- Climate Justice is an ethical issue rooted in moral actions and consequences.
- “Justice” must be the basis of genuine, systematic and transformative solutions that tackle the real causes of climate change.
- Climate Justice is a **vision** to lessen and dissolve the unequal burdens created by climate change.

Transportation & the Climate Crisis

- **FACT:** Transportation is a significant source of US greenhouse gas emissions.
- **FACT:** The largest sources of transportation GHGs are passenger cars, light duty trucks, motor cycles which together make up 63% of transportation global warming emissions.
- **FACT:** Motor vehicle pollution also contributes to the formation of acid rain and adds to the greenhouse gases that cause climate change.
- **FACT:** The pollutants in vehicle emissions are known to damage lung tissue, and can lead to and aggravate respiratory diseases, such as asthma.
- **FACT:** To truly address climate change, we need to understand how our past & current policies have reinforced climate change and inequity.

Structural Discrimination/Oppression

A system in which **public policies (laws), institutional practices, cultural representations, and other (social) norms** work in various, often reinforcing ways to **perpetuate racial group inequity**.

- Subtle **racialized patterns in policies and practices** permeate the political, economic, and sociocultural structures of America.
- Generate **differences in well-being** between people of color and whites.
- Maintain the existing **racial hierarchy** even as they adapt with the times or accommodate new racial/ ethnic groups.
- This **contemporary manifestation of racism** in America can be called “structural racism.”

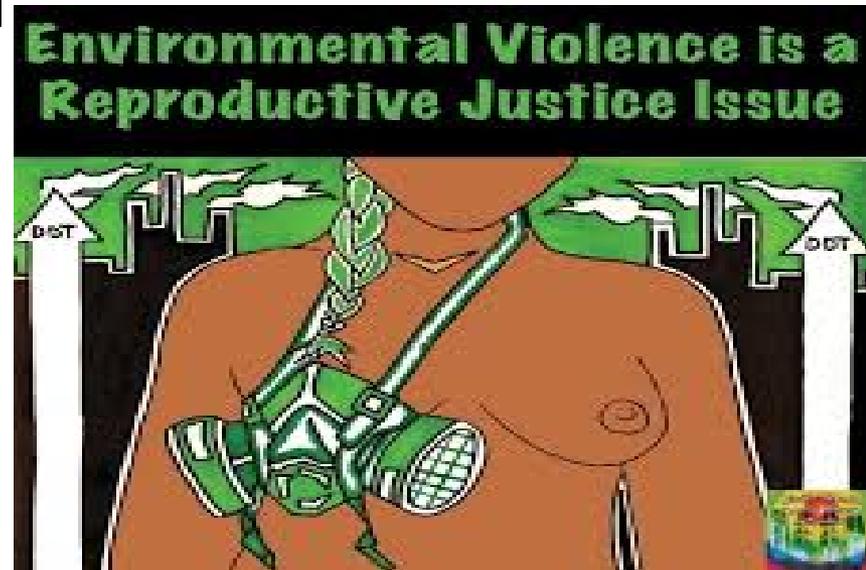
It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed **privileges associated with “whiteness”** and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time.

Credit: Aspen Institute 2004, Structural Racism and Community Building

Impacts of Structured Discrimination: Environmental Racism → EJ Communities

Refers to the:

- **disproportionate impact** of environmental hazards on **communities of color** or low socio-economic status.
- **unequal lack of protection** against toxic waste or chemical pollution exposure.
- **exclusion** of these communities from environmental **decisions** affecting their communities.



Recommendation- Level 1

1) Reduce passenger car transportation emissions through Interstate Highway policy and planning.

Example: Highways that facilitate and/or reward mass transit, multiple passenger vehicles and public transportation.

- Special/designated lanes
- Easy on and off ramping to highway
- Discounts on tolls and fees



Recommendation- Level 2

2) Acknowledge the duty for highway planning and construction to assist in climate-based disaster recovery or proactively combat climate change.

Example: Highway systems built to work in climate based disaster (easy to use counter-flow; heavy rain; wind).

Example: Highway systems built to reduce GHG emissions (Solar or wind only energy highway equipment, signage, rest stops, interstate solar farms owned by the public.)



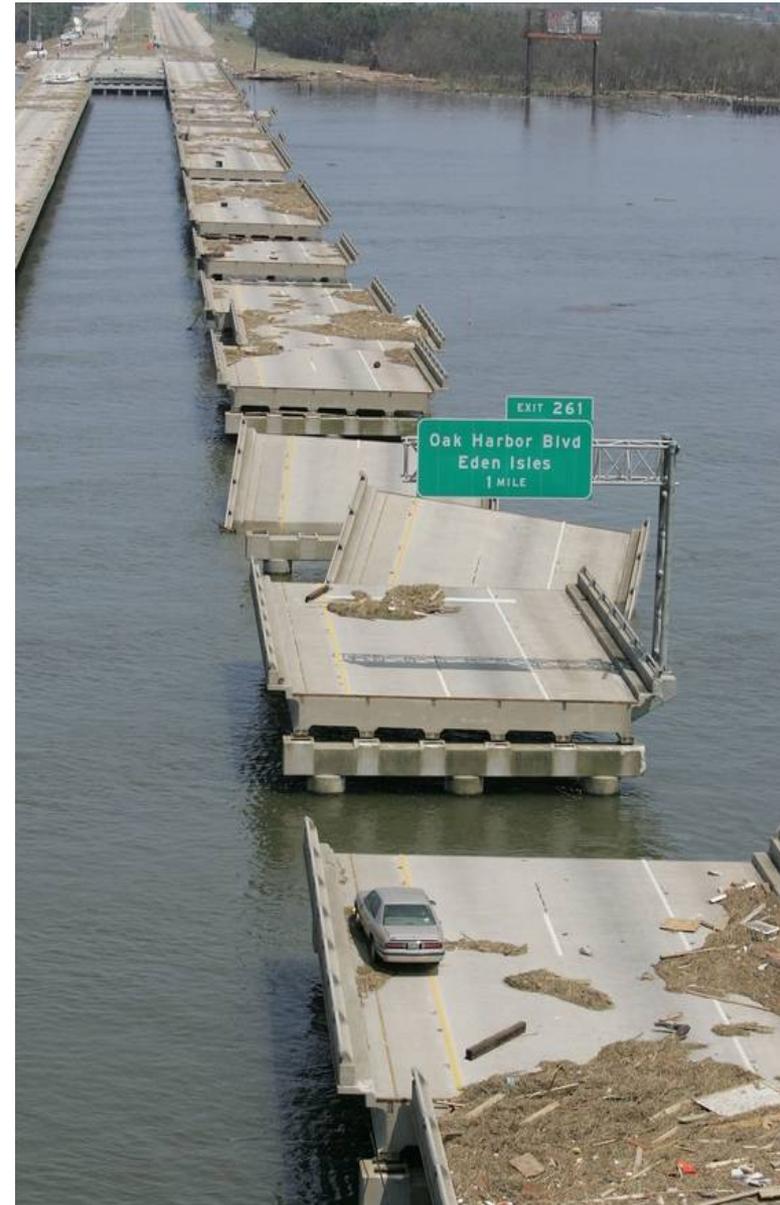
Recommendation – Level 3

3) Actively challenge policies that produce/maintain economic and climate inequity.

Example: Highway contracting based in a federal public works program, not public/private bids for the lowest price.

Example: Highway construction using sustainable/non-extractive materials.

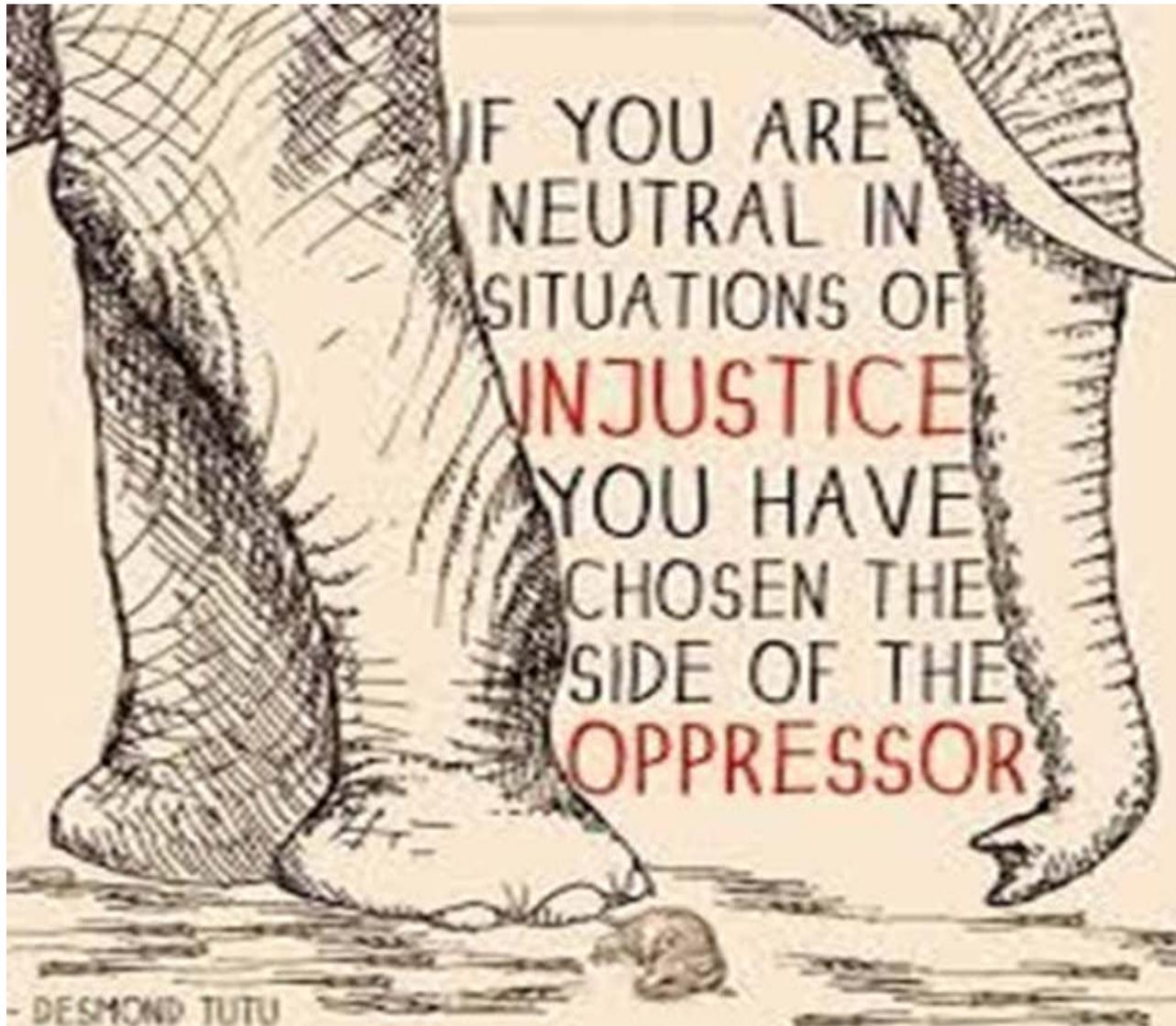
Example: Highway assessments and construction that does not burden overburdened communities or threaten natural resources.





**supporting
oppression**

**confronting
oppression**



Thank You!

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