

Master in Political Ecology

Academic year: 2018-2019

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Instructor

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Objectives

The aim of this course is to debate and deepen knowledge on the links between environmental justice and environmental conflicts worldwide. We shall look how the original environmental justice movement in the US has expanded into a global discourse. We shall analyse today's global movement for environmental justice both in the North and South. Specific topics (water justice, climate justice, resistance to mining, waste disposal conflicts) will be covered. Students will be trained in the methodology for studying ecological distribution conflicts in the EJAtlas. Among the types of responses in environmental justice conflicts we will pay attention to those related to cultural and artistic manifestations. Last, we will examine the links between environmental justice and degrowth from the engaged perspective of the collaboration between activists and researchers.

Structure

The course is organised in eight sessions. First three lectures will be largely based on the EJAtlas (www.ejatl.org), a unique project of ICTA UAB which started in 2012. The EJAtlas reached 2500 conflict cases by July 2018 with data sheets of 5 to 6 pages. It is an instrument for research in comparative political ecology, and it supports the global movement for environmental justice.

Then, we will review the conceptual and methodological foundations of global environmental justice, we shall examine types of environmental justice struggles worldwide, and the outlook on cultural responses emerging in environmental justice conflicts, and possible alliances between EJ and the Degrowth movements. Two basic readings will be provided for each session. The readings will be discussed in class, so they must be read well in advance. While the readings provide materials to support the critical examination of topics in the course, a basic learning tool will be the applications in the EJAtlas and some supplementary forms to systematise information about cultural and artistic manifestations in environmental justice struggles.

Evaluation

1. Weekly task

Each week you will discuss the progress made in compiling information of a case study in the EJAtlas and the forms for examining cultural and artistic manifestations in the conflicts. This activity will not be graded but will help you monitor your progress, as well as to solve conceptual and technical problems.

2. Participation in class

Participation in class is encouraged, though it will not be evaluated or graded. At the beginning of each class we may start by asking some of you to shortly state what you took from the readings of the week, or what question you might have. Each week there will be different people responding to these questions. Please make sure that you are prepared, have done the reading, and are ready to respond when asked.

3. Final assignment

As a practical approach to the study of environmental justice conflicts you are required to fill in one case in the EJAtlas and a form to analyse the cultural and artistic manifestations analysed in the conflicts (min 5 per conflict), thereby learning about the causes of the conflicts, the social actors and their forms of mobilization, the companies involved, the visible or potential impacts of the projects causing the conflicts, and the outcomes. The results of this work will be shared by the class in the weekly discussion on progress. At the end of the course, each student will present a 1-page document (max) specifying the case introduced in the EJAtlas and the cultural and artistic manifestations analysed in the conflicts (min 5 per conflict). This work will represent 100% of the grade in this course.

Program outline

1. Origins of Environmental Justice in the USA in the 1980s.

Cases of "environmental racism" in the EJAtlas (e.g. Mossville, Louisiana and other cases in the USA; "Nego fugido" (Bahia) and others in Brazil). Coloniality, racism, environmental justice in the Americas (discussion of the article by Iokiñe Rodríguez and Mirna Liz Inturias, Conflict transformation in indigenous peoples' territories: doing environmental justice with a 'decolonial turn', 2018).

2. The EJAtlas in India. Origins of the notion of "environmentalism of the poor".

Ramachandra Guha and "The Unquiet Woods" 1989 - who takes the HANPP in the Himalayas?

Brototi Roy. A panorama of ecological distribution conflicts in India, based on the EJAtlas (article in *Ecología Política* 55, 2018).

3. Ecological distribution conflicts and ecologically unequal trade

Is China different? Ecological distribution conflicts in China. "Resigned activism"?

"Extractivism" and ecological distribution conflicts in Latin America. Ecologically unequal trade.

Biomass conflicts : a) tree plantations are not forests b) oil palm conflicts

4. Environmental Justice as an expanding framework: History, vocabulary, and theory

Origins and evolution of the environmental justice framework. Environmental justice notions developed by activists. The current battlefronts of the struggles for global environmental justice.

Schlosberg, D. (2013). Theorising environmental justice: the expanding sphere of a discourse. *Environmental Politics*, 22(1), 37-55.

Martinez-Alier J., Anguelovski I., Bond P., Del Bene D., Demaria F., Gerber J.-F., Greyl L., Haas W., Healy H., Marín-Burgos V., Ojo G., Porto M., Rijnhout L., Rodríguez-Labajos B., Spangenberg J., Temper L., Warlenius R. and I.Yáñez. 2014. Between activism and science: grassroots concepts for sustainability coined by Environmental Justice Organizations. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 21: 19-60.

5. Mining conflicts and environmental justice

Sources of perceived environmental injustice in mining conflicts. Mining conflicts in the emergence of a global environmental justice movements. The political dimension of anti-mining resistances.

Özkaynak, B., Rodríguez-Labajos, B., Aydın, C.İ., Yanez, I., Garibay, C., 2015. Towards environmental justice success in mining conflicts: An empirical investigation, EJOLT Report No. 14, 96 p.

Rodríguez-Labajos, B., Özkaynak, B. (2017). Environmental justice through the lens of mining conflicts. *Geoforum*, (84), 245-250.

6. Water justice and water-related conflicts worldwide (with guest lecturers: Daniela Del Bene, Irmak Ertör)

Classifying water conflicts. Water justice movements and institutional innovation
Conflicts over dams from an environmental justice perspective. Conflicts over artisanal fishing. Ocean grabbing, fishing justice and blue degrowth.

Rodríguez-Labajos, B., Martínez-Alier, J. (2015). Political ecology of water conflicts. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Water*, 2(5), 537-558.

Del Bene, D. Scheidel, A., Temper, L. 2018. More dams, more violence? A global analysis on resistances and repression around conflictive dams through co-produced knowledge. *Sustainability Science*, 13 (3): 617–633.

Ertör, I., Ortega-Cerdà, M. 2015. Political lessons from early warnings: Marine finfish aquaculture conflicts in Europe, *Marine Policy*, 51: 202-210.

7. Cultural and artistic manifestations in environmental justice struggles

The ubiquitous nature of cultural artefacts in environmental justice struggles. Types of cultural and artistic manifestations in water justice conflicts. Mediatized environmental conflict. Uses of artistic manifestations in transformations towards environmental justice.

Cultural Politics website - https://culturalpolitics.net/environmental_justice/art

Hutchins, B., Lester, L. 2015. Theorizing the enactment of mediatized environmental conflict. *International Communication Gazette* 77, 337 – 358.

Tavera Fenollosa, L., Johnston, H., 2015. Protest artifacts in the Mexican social movement sector: Reflections on the “stepchild” of cultural analysis, in: Almeida, P., Cordero Ulate, A. (Eds.), *Handbook of social movements across Latin America*. Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht, pp. 61–76.

8. The way forward: degrowth through the lens of environmental justice

Reasons for an alliance between environmental justice and degrowth. Critical differences between the environmental justice movements in the global South and the degrowth movements.

Martinez-Alier J. (2012), *Environmental Justice and Economic Degrowth: An Alliance between Two Movements*. *Capitalism, Nature, Society*, 23(1): 51-73.

Rodríguez-Labajos, B., Yanez, I., Bond, P., Greyl, L., Munguti, S., Ojo, G., Overbeek, W. (2018) Not so natural an alliance? Degrowth and environmental justice movements in the South. *Ecological Economics*. Submitted.