ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, HEALTH & WELLBEING
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Abstracts of presentations

Environmental Justice, Health and Wellbeing: Reflections on the Chinese Experience

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Since reform and opening up began in the late 1970s, China has made substantial progress in reducing income poverty. It is also well on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which encapsulate other dimensions of well-being, including several health-related indicators. At the same time, the very growth that has made these achievements possible is taking a high toll on the environment, threatening the sustainability of development and imposing high costs in terms of human health impacts over the long term. Inevitably, some regions and populations are more seriously affected by environmental degradation, and exposure to related health risks interacts in complex ways with other forms of vulnerability. This paper first considers how useful the framework of environmental justice is in considering the dynamic relationship between environment, health and wellbeing in China and where the important "fault lines" lie in this particular context. Through an analysis of related research and policy the author then attempts to evaluate 1) the extent to which an assessment of "environmental justice" in China is possible and 2) how effective current governance arrangements are in preventing and redressing environmental injustices. The paper draws on research conducted by members of the interdisciplinary Forum on Health, Environment and Development.

Health and Environmental Justice in Israel as Platform for Policy Change

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The article portrays the state of health and environmental justice in Israel, in relation to peripheral populations, and referring "*the right to a healthy and appropriate environment as a basic right*" as platform for reframe policy implementation.
Three main characteristics of the state of health and environmental justice in Israel:
1) The debilitated population – similar to research findings elsewhere, the affect of environmental conditions on health is uneven and is related to socio-economic status.
2) Lack of accessibility to decision making nodes as well as to basic services and infrastructure that are essential to ensure the health of the population and the availability of medical treatment;
3) Inherent inequality of the public health system due to governmental decisions.
The work, based on the grave findings, recommends the government to assign proper values to environmental-social and health issues in the evaluation of development plans. Among others, norms of environmental justice should be applied in cases that the absence of sufficing scientific evidence prevents the use of available tools to evaluate environmental and health risks, and Health Impact Assessments should applied similar to the environmental impact studies, undertaken by planning authorities before approving a building or development plan.

Developing insights on the role of 'expert- science' for addressing water quality in dynamic peri-urban environments: Case study, Delhi/Ghaziabad, India

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Deteriorating water quality has almost become an endemic feature of peri-urban environments, linked to the overbearing presence of pollutants in river bodies and groundwater, systemic failures of sewage disposal and treatment infrastructures, and the weak monitoring of industrial pollution. Polluted water is strongly linked with environmental degradation and has particularly serious implications for the livelihoods of poorer people who often lack access to safer alternatives. The disproportionately higher exposure of marginalized peri-urban citizens to poor water quality is thus understood as a central contributor to environmental injustice in peri-urban areas. Despite increasing recognition of these concerns by peri-urban researchers and academics, formal policy interventions are still largely understood as *techno-centric* often guided by a narrow set of actors, namely pollution control scientists, water engineers and urban planners. While the dependency of water quality restoration policies in India upon traditional forms of *expert* knowledge (i.e. namely regulatory science and engineering) is often pointed out in the literature, there is only *patchy* empirical evidence regarding the precise role of expert scientific communities and their relationship to policy making often omitting important questions from intellectual scrutiny. How does the dominant scientific paradigm around 'water quality' (i.e. exuded by national level scientific advisors) become influential in setting water quality priorities for peri-urban areas? Is there a mismatch between the language of the 'sciences' and the more 'experience-based' learning of poorer communities? What are the potential policy and research avenues for making expert advice more responsive towards the needs of the poor in the context of rapidly changing environments? The presentation is largely based on my doctoral research, drawing primarily from fieldwork and interviews carried out in Delhi and Ghaziabad, India.

Environmental injustice in disaster and conflict responses

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This paper addresses issues of disaster response and environmental justice by bringing examples from disaster and conflict affected Sri Lanka, Sudan and Malawi. Specifically, three central areas are examined in light of failures in disaster and conflict responses to humanitarian interventions, rehabilitation and development. The first area of review is the ignorance of community knowledge within the mainstream humanitarian responses. The second area is the lack of planning for waste disposal, and the possibility that this has created public health and environmental injustice locations. Third, the presentation examines issues faced by disaster and conflict affected communities, who are trying to develop after disasters and conflicts.

During the 1980s, in response to the environmental discrimination of African-American, Hispanic and indigenous communities in the USA, the environmental justice movement adopted a social and civil rights approach. Although, it was largely a substitute of 'race' for 'class', the process of justice is achieved through class action suits. This creates an issue in the conflict and disaster affected developing world as the structures of justice are different from the West.

In non-Western developing countries, the environmental justice movement emerged as a response to injustice experienced by colonisation and unplanned development. The Bhoomi Sena Movement in 1970s and Narmada Dam Protests in 1980s in India and Environmental Justice Networking Forum in South Africa in 1990s are some examples of these responses. Unlike the USA, these are examples of class issues and do not have race as the driving force. At the same time, religious and moral frameworks such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Gandhi's non-violent movement are beyond legal frameworks that communities follow.

Based on these different understandings of environmental justice in Western and non-Western countries, this paper proposes the following recommendations:

- Environmental justice can only be part of the response to disaster and conflict, if justice is facilitated by the humanitarian actors.
- Local communities have to be equal partners in planning and delivering responses.
- Use local resources and traditional methods to respond to emergencies, recognising that communities are the first responders.
- Government responses must emphasise service infrastructure such as sanitation rather than individual infrastructure such as housing.

Reframing Risk: Comparative Framings of Asbestos and Disease

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This paper explores the manner in which different countries have dealt with asbestos issues at the level of national policy level. It seeks to explore how scientific, political, technological and governance processes intersect though a theoretical analysis of dominant and alternative framings. Using case study examples of activist mobilization from South Africa, India and the UK, this paper demonstrates that considerable variation occurs in terms of how countries understand and deal with asbestos environmental and health issues. The ways in which these framings, both dominant and alternative, use and contest different interpretations of science and bring other considerations to bear in relation to technical expertise is shown to be country and context specific. Finally, the paper argues that dominant and alternative framings create differential participatory opportunities for asbestos victims, and that this results in different practices of democracy as their voices get traction in policy processes.

What does Extractive Justice mean for Moderate Variants of Post-Neoliberal Resource Governance? Comparative Perspectives in Brazil and Chile

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The notion of social justice has emerged as a central element of claims by leftist governments in power across the region. With the growing disenchantment on neoliberalism as an economic model, Latin American governments have typically been categorised in many ways and forms to reflect the political changes. Equally, the rise of the left coincided with the commodity boom, which has given the state elites more policy autonomy not only to alter their economic trajectory but also to argue, at least discursively in the public sphere, of a more inclusive politics. Brazil and Chile offer cases of moderate versions of politico-economic models reflecting the recalibration of the developmental role of the state whilst recognising the indispensable role of the private sector in the globalised international economy. Within this context, this paper explores how far we can genuinely claim that a post-neoliberal political economy is being constructed, in the cases of Brazil and Chile, and what this means for claims of democratic citizenship. In highly institutionalised policy settings where natural resources play a central role, the notion of 'extractive justice' becomes a useful analytical tool to understand how democracy and development projects by leftist governments are intricately connected. My argument is that the Brazilian and Chilean development models of resource extraction in the post-dictatorship period exhibit *political continuity and change* where historical/institutional legacies and international constraints by the global international economy are imposed. The model and its concomitant contradictions have consequences on democratic practices and institutions in terms of (a) who gets to access decision-making, (b) how far economic elites in extractive industries are made accountable to mitigation and compensation, and (c) whether the traditional link between the state, party, and labour unions have been altered.

Promoting Environmental Justice through Citizen Science

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Issues of environmental equality affect the lives of many people living in the UK and appear to be even more pronounced in London. Noisy neighbourhoods and poor air quality threaten quality of life: people living in densely populated areas, next to busy streets or manufacturing are most at risk

Over the last three years, LSx has built on its 2004 report 'Environmental Justice in London'. We have worked in particular with a community suffering from a noisy scrap yard and busy roads. We established a citizen science approach, enabled and empowered the volunteers in the community to gain knowledge on how to apply easily accessible and replicable methods in air quality monitoring and surveying. We then set up partnerships to work directly with residents in order to tackle these.

This paper identifies the project outcomes: mechanism of engagement with the community (we used social marketing techniques), information gathering process (citizen science which referred to available data) and developing community empowerment in order to stimulate and crystallise the effective links with local and regional policy. It also identifies how the Big Society can include elements of citizen science to support a communities approach to the complex challenges of the 21st century.