

Environmental Justice in Israel: Narrative Model of Geographical Injustice

Carmit Lubanov

The Environmental Justice is a newly thematic perception of environmentalism, and based on the last 4 years of environmental activity in Israel, could be reviewed on 3 levels of references: a) conceptual idea which links between the state of environment and social justice terms; b) socio-political reflection in which the population who suffering from environmental hazardous, in most cases, is political powerlessness; c) strategic policy platform towards sustainability.

Based on more than 50 cases of different aspects of environmental injustice cases that were examined, the main two features of environmental injustice in Israel¹ are: 1) The debilitated populations more exposed to environmental pollution are weaker ones, of various natures: due to status, ethnic and or geographic backgrounds; Environmental injustice is most acute in the Arab sector; 2) Lack of accessibility to decision making nodes as well as to basic services and infrastructure. These findings are most acute *in the periphery*.

The article would attempt to characterize environmental justice while consider the fundamental issues we have reviewed and will present the 'Narrative Model' of the Geography spectrum of the environmental justice based on few cases. The model will refer as well to the unique geographical scales of Israel in terms of natural resources, the imbalance between perception of different groups in the society regarding "fair share" of natural resources and their practical usage of those resources. The quarries issue will be examined² in this context, and other issues as civil society and conflicts³, socio-environmental responsibility for polluting plants, and methods of including weaker communities in the planning processes.

¹ The 1st and 2nd annual reports on Environmental (In) justice in Israel, 2005 and 2006 Ed: C., Lubanov.(ibid)

² Population growth and intensified density around urban focal points which characterize Israel in recent years creates a growing demand to construction materials. This intensifies the work undertaken by quarries especially in Israel's Northern District, resulting in severe damage to air quality and dust pollution throughout the quarrying process; the outcomes of mining and quarrying most severely affect the Arab settlements located in close proximity to the quarries.

³ We are witnessing a structured paradox, according to which there is growing willingness on behalf of the establishment to include individuals in the decision making process which will affect their own futures on the one hand, while on the other, blatant attempts are made to fence in the 'environmental power' accumulated by NGOs (most of the NGO's activate on the periphery).