

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

THINK-TANK: 1st - 2nd Dec 2016

Across the globe, environmental justice struggles over the right way to govern and use natural resources are increasing, and so is the attention being paid to studying and understanding these environmental conflicts. The Global Environmental Justice (GEJ) Group in DEV is a case in point, where empirical approaches to analyzing environmental justice struggles are being used to analyse a variety of issues in different locations, including water resources in the middle East, marine protected areas in India, indigenous territories in Latin America, forest governance in Laos and Burma, and nature conservation in East Africa.

However, there is a pressing need to make more explicit connections between some key bodies of research that are relevant to these struggles. Currently, for example, advances in environmental justice research have largely occurred in isolation from advances in environmental conflict transformation, development alternatives or sustainable transitions research.

In December 2016, researchers from the GEJ Group hosted a think tank in Norwich to explore the interface between Environmental Justice and Conflict Transformation. We welcomed researchers, activists and practitioners from across the world to share experiences and ideas. Our objective was to jointly explore how a transformative research agenda for environmental justice is being, or can be, developed and to explore ways in which we can develop further collaborations that can help advance an agenda of transformative research for global environmental justice.



Small group discussions at The Cellar House pub, Eaton, Norwich (Iokine Rodriguez)

THINK TANK OUTCOMES

We identified four key areas of work for future collaborations:

- Conceptual reframing of environmental justice theory to bring closer social and ecological dimensions (e.g. rights of nature), longer time frame of injustices (past, present and future), conflict transformation and theory of change.
- Breaking methodological boundaries with political rigour, in order for research to have a social impact.
- Education (universities as spaces for transformative change) and capacity building (at the community and government levels).
- Cross-learning for action through practice based research in conflicts.

We will seek cross-polarisation between existing Transformative Knowledge Networks (the Acknowledgement and Learning Projects).

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

- Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain
- Bogazici University, Turkey
- Colorado State University, USA
- Department of Environment, Entre Rios State Government, Argentina
- Grupo Confluencias, Latin America
- Kalpavriksh Environment Action Group, India
- Nur University, Bolivia
- Rhodes University, South Africa
- University of East Anglia, UK
- University of Florida, USA
- University of Johannesburg, South Africa
- University of Strathclyde, UK