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Looking Within: Finding an Environmental Justice and Global Citizenship Lens (Introduction)

Karen Druffel

Framingham State University

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Introduction

Karen Druffel

Twenty papers were presented at the 11th Global Conference on Environmental Justice and Global Citizenship at Mansfield College, Oxford University in Oxford, England over several days in July 2012. The conference is arranged each year through the Inter-Disciplinary.Net, a knowledge-creating network of scholars and practitioners in various disciplines who share their approaches to a common global problem. Recent studies in group behaviour, such as those by economist Scott Page, suggest problems involving complex systems require cognitive diversity. Studies in organisation systems suggest innovation and creative solutions often arise from the overlap of knowledge boundaries, which can occur within interdisciplinary teams. The 11th Global Conference on Environmental Justice and Global Citizenship was truly interdisciplinary, as it engaged scholars and practitioners in philosophy, law, education, business, health care, ecology and government.

An interdisciplinary approach can lead to new ways to use existing models, or suggest entirely new models to address those aspects of complex problems for which existing models are not effective. The chapters in the present volume include those that view the problems of environmental justice through the lens of an old model, as well as those papers that highlight the limitations or failures of existing models, and those that propose new models. The chapters are further organised as three parts. The first and second part present chapters that use existing models to understand problems of environmental justice and global citizenship. Chapters in the third part highlight the limitations of existing models or suggest new models for these problems.

Chapters in Part 1 examine problems of environmental justice and global citizenship using philosophical models of agency, individual rights and social justice. We begin with an examination of individual duty to protect the environment based upon a Kantian moral framework provided by Bradford S. Hadaway in 'Kantian Virtue and the Excessive Demands Problem in Environmental Justice.' In the second chapter, 'Is Environmental Justice Possible within the Framework of Liberalism?' we shift from Kant to Descartes. George N. Politis argues that because two dominant political theories, liberal capitalism and Marxist socialism, embrace as their roots the Cartesian imperative of human domination of nature, neither is likely to support the goals of environmental justice. Mark Ryan suggests political failure to effect environmental justice reflects the media's inability to adequately inform the public to support rational decisions, as presented in 'The Precautionary Principle, Libertarianism and Paternalism.' Colin W. Maguire provides the fourth chapter in Part 1, 'American Stewardship: A Path Already Laid.' Maguire suggests American conservative principles based upon

Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau can be consistent with goals of sustainability and environmental conservation.

The last three chapters in Part 1 extend Rousseau's social contract to include nonhuman participants in the environment. Bronwyn Lay calls for an ontological shift away from anthropocentrism as a condition for future strategies in 'Battle with Habitat: The Natural Contract and Vital Materiality Take a Walk with Environmental Peacebuilding through the Wadi Fukin Valley.' Jorge M. Valdez defends an extension of social justice to all inhabitants of the natural world in 'An Ecological Theory of Justice.' Part 1 ends with an ardent defence of one underappreciated class of inhabitants, the kingdom Fungi, in Alison Pouliot's 'Environmental Justice for Unregarded Others: Human Responsibility for a Forgotten Kingdom in World Conservation and Agriculture.'

In Part 2, authors look to institutions and professions of law, education and health care, for models to understand environmental justice and global citizenship. Two chapters consider environmental law in terms of legal protection of the rights of indigenous people. John Pearson begins the section with an example from Canada in his paper 'Old Problem, New Solution: Protection of Environments Critical to Indigenous Cultures through International Human Rights Law.' He frames environmental damage resulting from extracting crude oil from the 'tar sands' in Alberta, Canada as a violation of human rights. Human rights provisions in national and international law are sources of new alternatives to protect water and wildlife. In the second chapter, 'Environmental Justice for Indigenous People in the Post-Pinochet Chile,' Rodrigo Céspedes describes a 'legal revolution' in which concepts from international law, including the use of ethnographers as expert witnesses are used by indigenous people to pursue environmental justice.

Recognition and respect for the human rights of children, as well as for children's ability to effect change, are central to the chapter 'While We Are Talking about Environmental Justice, Let's Give Children a Voice.' The author, Peter Andersen, asks how primary education can prepare and empower children to become 'environmental change agents.' Educational systems must facilitate development of knowledge and skills required to effect environmental justice. Andersen identifies several barriers in the current model to achieving these objectives, among them the 'traditional model of intergenerational influence.' In the next chapter with an educational perspective, 'Educating for Interdisciplinary Response to Environmental Issues,' authors Thomas Matyók and Cathryne L. Schmitz propose the structure of academic departments by discipline cannot adequately address complex environmental problems. Problems related to complex systems require 'inter-disciplinarity'; their chapter offers an inter-disciplinary academic model that fosters more creative solutions to complex, multifaceted problems. An academic inter-discipline approach to environmental justice is found in 'Green Friends: A Look at US Business Use of Social Media to Communicate Environmental Responsibility,' which I wrote with co-author, T. Bridgett Perry-

Galvin. We describe an undergraduate study of how several information technology businesses use social media to communicate environmental and social responsibility. The chapter provides one example of integrating ethics and corporate responsibility into a business education programme. Knowledge about environmental and social justice is created and shared outside the traditional academic sphere, as well. The last chapter in Part 2 presents results from five qualitative case studies of health care agencies in Australia, which indicate how environmental justice has been integrated to health care practice and policy. ‘Promoting Health, Social and Environmental Justice in the Context of Health Care’ by Rebecca Patrick and Teresa Capetola provides examples of the integration of environmental sustainability, justice and health in regional and urban health care in the practices of Victoria health care agencies.

Part 3 assesses the limitations of existing models to address current problems of environmental and social justice, and the destructive consequences of these failures. This part begins with several examples of specific failures and their dire environmental consequences. It ends with suggestions for new models that promise some solutions to these complex problems. ‘Corruption Deforestation and Environmental Injustice: The Case of Indonesia,’ by Fiona Downs and Luca Tacconi, describes the failures in the political system that led to destruction of Indonesian forests in 2010-2011, and its effects on local populations. Adebola Babatunde Ekanola discusses the obligation to support socio-economic fairness at individual, national and international levels in his chapter, ‘Environmental Injustice, Socio-Economic Injustice and the Crises in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria: The Roles of Multinational Oil Corporations, Government and Global Citizens.’ Global citizens are reminded they influence these goals through individual consumer and financial choices.

The authors of ‘Environmental Justice under Our Skin? Socio-Stratifying Human Biomonitoring Results of Adolescents Living Near an Industrial Hotspot in Flanders, Belgium’ echo the relationship between environmental justice and social justice. Bert Morrens, Liesbeth Bruckers, Ilse Loots, Elly Den Hond, Vera Nelen, Nik Van Larebeke, Isabelle Sioen, Greet Schoeters and Willy Baeyens describe the inter-relationship between the effect of environmental pollutants on humans and social stratification, and analyse its implications for evaluating environmental health risks. Ingrid M. Hoofd examines the conflict between humanism and environmental justice in ‘The Climate Change Issue: Beyond the “True” or “Not True.”’ Hoofd suggests Western institutions like traditional news media hobble individuals’ abilities to understand and evaluate environmental questions.

The last three chapter in Part 3 propose new approaches to environmental justice and global citizenship. Hossain Seraj and Philip R. Walsh use a life cycle assessment approach to compare biofuels from corn and from algae to petroleum products in terms of economic, social and environmental effects. ‘The Case for Algae Biofuels: A Comparative Study of the Social, Environmental and Economic

Sustainability Impacts of Biofuel Use in Air Transportation Using a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) Approach' finds although algae biofuels are not yet economically sustainable, their advantages in other areas support the need for continuing technical innovation. In 'The Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Concept: Sustainability for Small Islands State,' Mohammed Khalil Elahee proposes a methodology used to address vulnerability of an island economy dependent upon tourism and exports. The chapter reflects studies conducted at the University of Mauritius in 2008.

By far the majority of chapter address environmental justice in terms of global citizenship. The last chapter, 'The Position of National Minorities Perceived through the Authorisations of the Local Ombudsman in Republic of Serbia' by Aleksandar Grujić and Orzen Uzelac describes how Serbia's legal system has adopted the institution of ombudsman to protect minority rights. The Republic of Serbia comprises two regions which are relatively autonomous, which requires the ombudsman must function at local, regional and national levels.