

Comparing Ecological Distribution Conflicts across regions and commodities

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According to Martínez-Alier et al (2016) and as shown in the Atlas of Environmental Justice (www.EJAtlas.org), there is an increasing number of ecological distribution conflicts around the world that are related to the changing metabolism of the economy in terms of growing flows of energy and materials. As Kapp (1950) wrote " the capitalist industrial system is a system of cost-shifting". These conflicts are rendered visible by environmental and/or agrarian justice movements through their different forms of mobilization and/or protest against the unequal distribution of costs and benefits of extractive processes. There is an increasing interest in the study of this sort of conflicts. However, these studies tend to be either in-depth case studies or focus on a limited number of cases (Robbins 2004). Further, comparisons between cases often focus on the results, and not necessarily on the processes that led to those results and the connections (and disconnections) that exist between different social groups in various geographical scales. Therefore, this session reflects on how the analysis of ecological distribution conflicts from action research and integrated approaches around the world can contribute to "Ecological Economics as Transformative Science". To do so, the different papers included in the panel explore and discuss such conflicts from a broader relational and comparative perspective. This perspective focuses on processes of constitution, connection, and disconnection between these conflicts; as well as trying to identify contradictions and possibilities for alliances between different environmental and agrarian justice movements, in and across different regions and commodities. This session will show some of the successes in achieving environmental and agrarian justice and local sustainability arising from such ecological conflicts. It will also highlight the tensions that have accompanied their emergence in relation to one another and to other organized movements. Their coherence in practice is far from assured (Hart 2006).

References

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