



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Geoforum

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/geoforum

Editorial

Globalizing environmental justice?



There is now a long and rich history of practice and theory commonly associated with the concept of environmental justice. Much of it has focused on the global North, and the US in particular, reflecting the origins of movements that carry the label and that have invoked the discourse of environmental justice (Cole and Foster, 2001; Agyeman, 2005; Bullard, 2005). These origins imply a key preoccupation with racial inequality due to the apparently unique history of the US in terms of civil rights struggles and an emphasis on a particular set of environmental problems, such as the location of hazardous waste sites. Nonetheless, environmental justice has increasingly served as a crucial rallying ground for social activism and political resistance beyond the US in parts of Latin America, Asia and South Africa, for example (Agyeman et al., 2003; Agyeman and Ogneva-Himmelberger, 2009; Holifield et al., 2009; Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1997; Martinez-Alier, 2002; McDonald, 2002; Carruthers, 2008).

Research on place-specific struggles over natural resources and environmental mobilizations suggest that 'the core issues at the heart of environmental justice struggles are universal' (Schroeder et al., 2008; cf. Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1999; Walker and Bulkeley, 2006). Justice provides local communities and environmental activists with an important vocabulary in their resistance against dispossession from customary land, opposition to polluting industries and struggles for a fair distribution of natural resource revenues. Even where resistance is not couched in justice terms, 'everyday' struggles and mobilizations over environmental degradation and natural resource exploitation are often about the distribution of environmental bads and goods, participation in decision making and recognition of particular group identities and histories, which constitute the classic concerns of environmental justice (Schlosberg, 2004, 2007). Environmental justice thus may provide a powerful lens through which to make sense of struggles over environments and natural resources worldwide, providing a link between Northern literature on environmental justice and research on southern environmentalisms (Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1997; Guha, 1999), and between the 'environmentalism of the poor' (Martinez-Alier, 2002), liberation ecology (Peet and Watts, 2004) and global political ecology (Peet et al., 2011a).

This special issue starts from the premise that environmental justice concerns may not only be universal(izing), but also increasingly operate at a global scale: creating international political communities and finding expression within 'global' institutions (Newell, 2006; Walker, 2009). Whilst not overlooking the tremendous diversity of meanings and struggles around environmental justice around the world, this claim refers to the growing adoption of discourses and strategies that are associated with, and in many ways derive from, environmental justice movements. Movements around water, food or climate increasingly adopt the language of

justice for example, raising explicitly concerns with historical ecological debts between and within nations, uneven ecological exchange and the social injustices that arise from the poorest being most vulnerable to the effects of problems to which they have contributed very little. Claims of environmental (in)justices are increasingly also deployed within transnational arenas dealing with the issues of trans-border trade and investment, for example, but with consequences for local environmental struggles and political ecologies. Practices of production, trade and regulation at one site increasingly connect with seemingly distant sites elsewhere through extended supply chains, technology diffusion and the internationalization of production. In so doing they transform the dynamics of inequality: reshaping or entrenching existing forms of inequality, and modifying the spaces available for the pursuit of justice (Newell, 2012). Though the significance of such connections is hardly novel and the history of colonialism could certainly be told in those terms, the point of departure here is the confluence of globalizing discourses of justice and corresponding institutional arrangements to which these claims are directed and which seek to address them, and a globalizing phase of contemporary capitalism which has reconfigured the geographies of environmental (in)justice (Fraser, 2009; Walker and Bulkeley, 2006).

In this light, there is a strong case for examining how questions of place-specific environmental justice relate to larger-scale political and economic processes through globalization and the expanding reach of global governance arrangements. It is also insightful to ask how the transnational deployment of claims of environmental (in)justices generates consequences for place-based environmental struggles as well as creating opportunities for occupying and influencing national and global political spaces in novel ways. The connections work in both directions: local issues and struggles are affected by larger-scale processes, but simultaneously influence the latter since the reputation and capital of global institutions is then invested in the success of interventions in particular locales over which they exercise only partial control and whereupon they are vulnerable to resistance and disruption (Newell and Bumpus, 2012). 'Local' and 'global', in this sense, are not given attributes of environmental claims, practices and issues, but rather are constituted through the scalar practices of particular actors and resulting processes (Neumann, 2009). It is only through these practices and processes that 'place-specific policies and practices can have consequences that cross national boundaries, affect multiple scales, and extend across global networks' (Holifield et al., 2009: 595).

This special issue proposes global environmental justice as a lens to make sense of place-specific environmental struggles in their relation to the sorts of broader political economic processes which are often identified as intensifying or accelerating the

production of environmental injustices. It does not pretend to provide a comprehensive account of worldwide mobilizations for environmental justice.¹ Instead, it seeks to show how practices of environmental (in)justice have changed in ways which may require innovative approaches to research and engagement. Though globalizing tendencies are uneven, environmental injustices are often produced and justice claims invoked in relation to the re-scaling of capital accumulation or the extension of political authority over new swathes of natural resources. They are often ultimately grounded in local and national realities and socio-ecological struggles, however. Each contribution to the issue will consequently explore how globalizing practices and processes impact upon specific environmental struggles to develop ways of understanding and explaining the ways in which those struggles are embedded with, and in turn shape, broader global processes.

The point of departure for this themed issue, therefore, is the need to think innovatively and in an interdisciplinary way about how to make sense of environmental justice issues as they relate to and are experienced by people all around the world. The concept of 'global environmental justice' serves as a lens to critically analyze ongoing economic, political and environmental transformations from multiple disciplinary viewpoints. It combines a focus on the globalizing production of environmental justices and injustices and the interest of international political economists in the workings of global networks and institutions with political ecologists' attention to the specificity of place-based socio-environmental struggles. It also engages debates in political philosophy about justice, particularly recent attention to non-western cultures and their implications for thought and practice on development (e.g. Sen, 2009) and the ways in which mobilizations by sub-altern groups, such as indigenous peoples for example, challenge liberal notions of collective action, citizenship and the pursuit of justice (Yashar, 2005).

This introduction develops a substantive framing for the contributions to the themed issue, including the research papers and critical reviews. It seeks to provide a brief justification of the analytical traction to be gained from applying a global environmental justice lens, one that brings together key concerns in environmental justice scholarship, political ecology, and international political economy. It develops the justification in three steps, asking first about the utility of 'justice', then about the specifically 'environmental' component of this, and finally asking what an emphasis on the 'global' adds to our understanding. Taken together, we argue, the three terms provide a powerful heuristic framework for understanding contemporary environmental politics and the political economy of natural resources.

Why 'justice'?

Whether it is 'climate justice', 'food justice' or 'water justice' the language of justice is omnipresent in environmental politics (Bond, 2012; Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010; Boelens et al., 2011). Many contemporary mobilizations over access to resources (such as seeds, forests or water) or objections to uneven exposure to environmental harms (e.g. climate change) employ justice as a discursive frame. The reference provides a useful vehicle for highlighting the justice component of environmental challenges as well as lending legitimacy to particular struggles. Similarly, transnational conventions and norms increasingly refer to justice, such as those dealing with

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+; Okereke and Dooley, 2009; Sikor, 2013a). Most recently, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) approved a new protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing in 2010 as a means to address the lack of access to benefits from biodiversity to date of many poorer stewards of natural resources (Martin et al., 2013).

Opposition to injustices and demands for justice lie at the heart of many place-based struggles around the world. Justice and ideas about justice are a critical element in material and discursive struggles about access to and control over resources (e.g., Berry, 1993; Fortmann, 1995; Peluso, 1996). Poor people's claims are not only about the distribution of environmental goods and bads, Martinez-Alier (2014) argues, but also about whose visions of the environment are recognized, who participates in environmental decision-making and democracy, and what kinds of values come to matter – all of which are central matters of justice. As important as distributive issues are, however, the claims made by actors in place-based struggles are also often about issues of participation and recognition, reflecting Fraser's call to think about justice in ways that extend beyond *distribution* to also include *recognition* and *representation* (Fraser, 1997).

The plurality of conceptions and practices of justice challenges research to critically interrogate assertions of (in)justices in environmental struggles. The specific claims made in concrete struggles are highly diverse, defying any attempt of defining them in uniform terms (cf. Schlosberg, 2004; Walker and Bulkeley, 2006). As social actors bring different notions of justice to bear upon issues of access to natural resources and exposure to environmental risk, the question arises of which types of actors are able to assert what kinds of claims given the historical circumstances they inherit and the contemporary political economy whose terrain they have to navigate. There is a need to critically examine assertions of (in)justice and trace how some assertions find support in public discourse as legitimate demands whereas others do not, or are rejected outright as illegitimate claims (Sen, 2009). The plurality of justice, in other words, directs analytical attention to environmental politics and power relations, as demonstrated by Movik (2014) and Upton (2014). Movik examines competing discursive constructions of water rights in debates surrounding South Africa's Water Allocation reform, while Upton looks at issues of representation and accountability within the global pastoralists' movement. The plurality of justice claims also opens up intriguing connections with normative reasoning in political philosophy as a way to distinguish legitimate notions of justice from mere assertions of self-interest – or to challenge the increasingly commonplace distinction between matters of distribution, participation and recognition, as Martin et al. (2014) point out.

Justice and the ability to provide it remains a constitutive element of the legitimacy of the modern nation state. For example, activists in the US have called on the federal government in support of struggles against unequal exposure to pollution (Williams, 1999). National governments from post-socialist Europe to postcolonial Latin America have recently transferred forest tenure to various excluded groups, justifying the transfer as a means of undoing historical injustices (Sikor et al., 2009; Larson et al., 2010). The South African state meanwhile has emerged as a key arena in struggles about water, as the vesting of allocative authority with the state has turned the state into a key site for competing claims of (in)justice (Movik, 2014). Likewise, Chhotray (2014) shows how the state's denial of legal entitlements to assistance critically shapes the 'relief relationship' between state and citizens in India. The relief relationship is based on moral concerns over the fate of people affected by super-cyclones and other disasters but not responsibilities enshrined in law. Mehta et al. (2014) go a step further by concluding that the Bolivian and Indian states have

¹ For interesting and innovative attempts to map environmental justice in this way see EJOLT (Environmental Justice Organisations, Liabilities and Trade, <http://www.ejolt.org/>) as well as the connected archive of mining conflicts compiled by OCMAL (Observatorio de Conflictos Mineros de América Latina, <http://www.conflictosmineros.net/>) and Map of Environmental Conflicts in Brazil (<http://www.conflictoambiental.icict.fiocruz.br/>).

abandoned their welfare missions with regard to access to safe and potable water in peri-urban spaces. These cases highlight once again the potential of states to operate both as ‘rights protector’ and ‘rights violator’, posing real dilemmas for activists framing justice claims in the sorts of rights language which implies or requires state enforcement or adjudication (Newell and Wheeler, 2006).

This is significant because references to justice often employ the notion of rights and entitlements, from civil rights-based environmental mobilizations in the US to the emergent rights agenda in international forestry (Sikor and Stahl, 2011). So-called ‘rights-based approaches’ have gained a prominent place in international development, water management, and most recently biodiversity conservation (cf. Scanlon et al., 2004; Campese et al., 2009; Hickey and Mitlin, 2009). ‘Rights talk’ has become attractive to an increasingly wide range of social and political actors, as claiming a right ‘is to register the strongest kind of claim for which our moral language provides’ (Jones, 1994: 49–50). Claims are strengthened further if they can be couched in the language of human right, lending them an essential status that must be respected universally. Nevertheless, rights agendas are only one kind of approach to justice and may not work as envisioned by their promoters, particularly in their individualistic and universalizing expressions (Yashar, 2005). In this issue, Mehta et al. (2014) and Blaikie and Muldavin (2014) provide critical perspectives on global rights agendas, highlighting the overpowering influence of local and national political economies in diluting the intended effects of rights claims. Mehta et al. (2014) find that the political economic dynamics that produce people’s exclusion from safe drinking water in peri-urban spaces of Bolivia and India also constrain the leverage of rights-based approaches for overcoming the exclusion. Blaikie and Muldavin (2014) suggest that procedural justice, particularly around ideas of participation, may have gained traction with international donors, but the actual implementation of ideas and procedures is largely shaped by national and local political economies which subvert this intent.

At the same time, the ascendance of justice as a discursive frame may also reflect multiplying kinds of environmental injustice as a result of a series of interrelated trends. The internationalization of production and technology, accelerated through the removal of trade barriers, brings powerful actors such as multinational companies and environmental NGOs into increasing contact with remote and often socially excluded groups whose resources were previously not accessible or exploitable, or were protected by the state. Resource frontiers have been expanded driven by a mixture of scarcity and opportunity as captured in the practice of ‘land grabs’ (White et al., 2012) and ‘green grabs’ (Fairhead et al., 2012). The pursuit of new sites of accumulation, driven by economic rationales or ecological imperatives (securing future supplies of land or water), generate very unequal distributions of access to, and control over, natural resources (Sachs and Santarius, 2005; Martinez-Alier et al., 2010), and uneven contributions and exposures to global environmental change (O’Rourke and Connolly, 2003; Srinivasan et al., 2008). They also create and exacerbate place-based conflicts where global actors become embroiled in local and national questions of cultural recognition and political self-determination (Newell, 2005, 2007). Conflicts are then as much about whose notions of justice and framings of environmental problems prevail as about competition over access to and control over material resources (Jasanoff and Martello, 2004; Fraser, 2009; Sikor et al., 2013a).

Analytically then it is important to examine environmental struggles in justice terms because environmental movements, state actors, business and international organizations employ the language of justice, and because their claims may increasingly reflect a reality in which environmental injustices have multiplied and their geographies been reconfigured. The focus on justice chal-

lenges researchers and activists alike to critically interrogate the invocations of justice (or lack thereof), relate justice claims to the specific political economic dynamics generating (in)justices, and ask about what kinds of justice are being asserted, by whom and for whom, particularly if justice claims assert a universal quality.

Why ‘environmental’?

What then is the specifically environmental component of justice? Often struggles that are labeled environmental are as much about the pursuit of specific social justice claims (Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1999; Rangan, 2004). So, for example, the struggle of the Ogoni people in Niger delta is as much about access to the revenues generated from the oil in their area as it is opposition to the environmental damage caused by oil spills (Okanta and Douglas, 2001). Struggles against the chemical industry in Louisiana are as much about human health concerns as the release of chemicals into the environment (Allen, 2003). In practice, most struggles are driven by, and articulate their claims in relation to, a number of grievances since people have different motivations for joining movements, and because the concrete problems confronted by people are typically multifaceted.

Another element of the question is to what extent claims of (in)justice regarding different natural resources and environmental qualities share similar grounds, or can really be said to be about the ‘environment’ per se as opposed to a particular socio-ecological regime. Even though justice framings have become increasingly important in advocacy on climate change, water, food and genetic resources, for example, the particular injustices that motivate mobilizations retain local peculiarities in their social and environmental constitution. The resulting mobilizations, and the processes giving rise to the injustices they address do not fit into a single and neat category of ‘environment’, therefore. There may be significant diversity in the demands asserted by various actors with regards to different kinds of natural resources or environmental qualities and services (Martin, 2013). Just as the historical settings and specific contexts in which environmental struggles take place are diverse, so too are the particular manifestations of the political economic processes producing injustices and shaping the possibilities for justice. Global capitalism is produced by and mediated through particular varieties of capitalism and refracted through alignments of state power and social forces that take on different forms (Panitch and Gindin, 2012). At the same time, framing issues in terms of environmental (in)justice allows mobilizations to transcend national borders and attract the attention of wider sets of activists and publics when a local issue gets re-framed as a matter of common interest or global public good. Mulvaney (2014) shows how activists successfully employed an environmental justice framing to link occupational hazards in the Global South with green policy in the U.S. Kumar (2014) also explores how activists assembled connections between local opposition to a mine in India’s Niyamgiri mountains and national and transnational mobilizations around a shared commitment to protect the mountains.

One of the shared elements of justice claims that most often arises in environmental debates is the significance of inter-generational justice. This framing was explicit in the Brundtland report *Our Common Future* (1987) which conceived of sustainable development as being about the ability of current generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In climate justice struggles justice to future generations is a central mobilizing claim: holding the current generation of decision-makers and polluters to account now for failing to act and imposing on future generations risks and dangers for which they are not responsible (Page, 2006). Struggles around nuclear or toxic waste also highlight the legacies of pollution caused now for future generations as a basis for articulating

justice demands, as do warnings over the depletion of water resources and minerals or herders' global advocacy around environmental stewardship (Upton, 2014). Thus, alongside claims of 'justice to nature', concerns over the future effects of contemporary actions may set environmental justice apart from other justice claims.

Yet it is precisely this inter-generational dimension that has caused some political philosophers to question whether it is meaningful to apply the concept of justice to issues of environmental sustainability at all. Justice, the argument goes, is only about distributive issues within the current generation, whereas environmental sustainability is about concerns between generations. Preconditions for the latter can be determined scientifically and are therefore not subject to justice concerns (Vincent, 1998; Dobson, 1999). Forsyth (2014) counters this argument in his contribution to the themed issue, stressing the need to examine how environmental problems are identified, and how particular framings imply specific understandings of environmental justice. Defining problems such as climate change in particular ways shapes the pursuit of justice by defining unjust risks and proposing just solutions. Forsyth's argument builds on a vast body of literature on contested understandings of the 'environment' exploring questions of whose knowledge counts and whose and what environment is at stake (cf. Leach et al., 2010). It also speaks to critical findings in research on 'natural' disasters that stress their social construction, mediation by political economic forces, as well as people's differentiated experiences of them (Peet et al., 2011b). As environmental change is understood and experienced in socially differentiated ways, framings and governance interventions embody and reinforce particular understandings of (environmental) justice and the means by which it will be secured, as illustrated by the increasingly popular and contested concept of ecosystem services (Sikor, 2013b).

Yet even acknowledging the social construction and differentiated experience of environmental problems, the question remains how environmental justice may be different from other fields of justice due to the presence of biophysical dynamics over inter-generational time frames. Non-human agency may distinguish concerns with environmental justice from more general justice issues. For example, there are elements of risk and uncertainty to disasters which cannot be reduced to social constructions and political economic mediation. Biophysical dynamics may complicate easy attributions of responsibility and culpability, lending moral weight to certain claims to assistance on the basis of victimhood (Chhotray, 2014). Non-human nature brings in numerous actants within and beyond human society and across generations, such as in sentient ecologies (Anderson, 2002). Likewise the materiality of resources shapes questions of access and benefit depending on how 'cooperative' they are or amenable to exploitation as commodities (Bakker, 2003; Newell and Bumpus, 2012).

Thus, there is the need to examine the dynamics associated with specific environmental injustices and critically investigate the nature of environmental justice claims. The focus on *environmental* justice challenges researchers and activists to ask if and how specific struggles share similar grounds, unearth the discursive constructions of environment employed in these, explore how they reflect particular features of non-human nature, and examine how they privilege particular claims over others.

Why 'global'?

Growing self-awareness and understanding of the global interconnectedness of human and ecological relations provides new grounds for practices and claims of injustice where the actions of one group of social actors have repercussions on the well-being

and security of others. As we begin to appreciate the value of ecological resources embedded in everyday forms of economic exchange such as trade, new justice dimensions become apparent whether they relate to material throughout, embedded carbon, or 'virtual' water (Martinez-Alier et al., 2010; Zeitoun, 2013). Perceptions of the 'planetary character of the ecological crisis' (Peet et al., 2011b: 10) have justified particular applications of justice rooted in the principle of a single global community or current generation. Such applications become manifested in ideas about the 'common heritage of mankind' [sic] with regards to the oceans, Antarctica or rainforests or in notions of 'common but differentiated responsibility' in the climate regime (Okereke, 2010).

This attention to increasing human and ecological interconnectedness does not have to imply any naturalization or fetishization of the global, as highlighted by various contributions to this issue. Nor should it obscure the power relations at play. There is clearly a politics at work in framing responsibilities and rights as global or as falling within the purview of global institutions that seek to acquire for themselves a role in global planetary management (Sachs, 1993). Equally, environmental injustices and claims of justice, Robbins (2014) suggests, arise from locally specific practices due to the unevenness of capitalist development, and only become connected – or global – due to the assembling practices of the actors involved (cf. Holifield et al., 2009). This applies to the production of injustices as well as the politics of environmental justice. Claims of environmental (in)justice not only operate at a global scale but help to produce a global scale.

To some extent awareness of increasing interconnectedness has developed through the global organization of science and knowledge about environmental change, leading to the creation of global narratives about processes of environmental change (Buttel and Taylor, 1992; Forsyth, 2003; Leach et al., 2010; Hulme, 2009). Climate change and other discourses affirm the 'centrality of expert knowledges' (Peet et al., 2011b: 10), as reflected in the global organization of expertise through bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) or the creation of global 'rosters of experts': 'epistemic communities' (Haas, 1990) conferred a privileged and powerful position in global environmental decision-making. Despite the attention given to equity and other justice issues (for example in the latest IPCC Fifth Assessment Report), the central role attributed to particular scientific disciplines raises concerns about the implicit privileging of some ways of knowing over others in knowledge production about the anthropocene (Sikor et al., 2013a). The ascendancy of discursive power concentrated around a few organizations has profound implications for the generation of knowledge about environmental issues, raising issues of 'cognitive justice' in the sense of whose knowledge counts: who participates in agenda-setting and to whom are the creators and disseminators of knowledge accountable for the effects of their knowledge (Visvanathan, 2005; Forsyth and Sikor, 2013).

Partly in response to the development of epistemic communities and movements mobilizing around global environmental narratives, there has been an enormous proliferation in global governance institutions concerned with the environment. From the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 onwards, global-level institutions have come to exercise oversight over resources key to the livelihoods of the world's poor whether it be water, seeds, 'biodiversity' or, most recently, forests. They have come to establish a 'particular sort of environmental rule or governmentality' (Peet et al., 2011b: 11) through forms of environmental neo-liberalism (Goldman, 2005; Heynen et al., 2007). This has taken the form of new forms of private governance that have emerged such as certification schemes for agricultural produce and community forest management which displaces the central role of the state (Li, 2007; Sikor et al., 2013b). Moves to commodify

and financialize nature or 'selling nature to save it' (McAfee, 1999) in which global institutions broker deals, assure quality and issue pollution or conservation rights (as in carbon trading and REDD respectively) are also indicative of environmental neo-liberalism. While many governance arrangements include provisions for addressing some aspects of justice through appeal or redress mechanisms, there are concerns about the conceptualization and operationalization of justice in such global rule making (Martin et al., 2014; Zeitoun, 2013). These concerns also apply to global and regional trade and investment treaties (such as the EU and NAFTA), even where they have created new arenas for claiming rights and articulating environmental justice claims (Newell, 2007).

Another manifestation of globalization, however, is transnational forms of mobilization which go beyond site or sector specific mobilizing. Some transnational mobilizations link actors and claims across movements (labor, gender, human rights and environmental movements) and sites of decision-making (Icaza et al., 2010; Kumar, 2014). The movements often invoke the language of justice together with emphases on rights (rights to water, to food) or the interests of particular groups (forest dwellers, indigenous groups, etc.) (e.g. Borrás et al., 2008; Newell, 2008; Sikor and Stahl, 2011). In this way, they may establish environmental justice as an emergent 'global brand' available to environmental activists worldwide, as Agyeman (2014) argues in his contribution to the issue. Nonetheless, the question remains of whether environmental justice offers a framing that is applicable to various sites, given the conflicts between different conceptualizations, as indicated by Mulvaney (2014) or when, as Mehta et al. (2014) suggest, the overpowering influence of local and national political economies may prevent environmental justice from becoming part of a global discourse that effectively challenges injustices. Thus the 'global' in environmental justice emerges through the very practices and processes that create and contest environmental (in)justices.

Globalizing environmental justice

It is our impression that the practice of environmental (in)justice has changed in ways which require innovation in the way we seek to account for it and engage with it. There is an urgent need to interrogate the universalizing and globalizing tendencies of environmental justice struggles and examine the concrete scale-making practices and political economic processes which generate environmental (in)justices and underlie environmental struggles.

The changing practice of environmental justice and injustice requires a conscious effort to develop research across disciplinary boundaries. Firstly, these globalizing practices and processes require environmental justice scholars and political ecologists to engage with specialists in global environmental politics and international political economy. Those who devote most attention to site or resource specific environmental justice struggles need to develop ways of understanding and explaining the ways in which those struggles are embedded with, and in turn shape broader global processes. At the same time, analyses of global environmental politics and governance will benefit from greater attention to the local specificity and historical contingency of struggles over resources as they feed into and are influenced by emerging transnational conventions, treaties, organizations, and networks (Newell and Bumpus, 2012).

Secondly, political ecologists and environmental justice scholars may also derive mutual benefits from further substantive exchange. Political ecology scholarship is often associated with southern contexts, despite key contributions on the global North (e.g. McCarthy, 2002; Robbins, 2007). Conversely, much environmental justice scholarship continues to be shaped by the experi-

ences of the global North, despite interest in global movements for climate justice, food justice (e.g., Agyeman et al., 2003; Schlosberg, 2004) and a growing body of scholarship concerned with mobilizations for environmental justice in the global South (e.g., Carruthers, 2008; McDonald, 2002; Walker and Bulkeley, 2006; Walker, 2011). Encounters between political ecologists and environmental justice scholars are still rare, even though the former have begun to explore the use of environmental justice conceptions by activists and its utility as an analytical lens (e.g., Schroeder et al., 2008). This themed issue seeks to show how both approaches can be brought into meaningful dialogue with one other and with scholars studying transnational environmental politics and governance.

Global environmental justice may also offer new opportunities for collaboration and exchange between engaged scholars and critical activists. It serves as an invitation to engaged scholars for new forms of analysis and to critical activists for new types of action. Attention to global environmental justice in theory and practice thus may offer a platform for engaged scholars and critical activists to learn from one another and support each other's causes. Engaged research can make important contributions to the practice of global environmental justice through critical analysis. Yet the plurality of justice claims and the inequities of globalized knowledge production simultaneously challenge scholars to reflect on their own positionality in relation to the movements they study and whose goals they seek to advance.

Acknowledgements

We have incurred numerous intellectual debts in pulling this special issue together and developing a program of work on the theme of global environmental justice. Above all, we thank the members of the Global Environmental Justice group at the School of International Development of the University of East Anglia. The group has been very generous in sharing their thoughts, particularly the question of whether and how global environmental justice can become a productive lens to guide research and engagement with practice. We also thank the contributors to this volume and the other participants at our workshop in July 2010. We have learned a lot from all of you (and recognize that the learning isn't over yet!). Finally, we thank Scott Prudham for the editorial support on the themed issue – and setting a fine example of engaged scholarship.

References

- Agyeman, J., 2005. *Sustainable Communities and the Challenge of Environmental Justice*. New York University Press, New York.
- Agyeman, J., 2014. Global environmental justice or *Le droit au monde*? *Geoforum* 54, 236–238.
- Agyeman, J., Ognéva-Himmelberger, Y. (Eds.), 2009. *Environmental Justice and Sustainability in the Former Soviet Union (Urban and Industrial Environments)*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Agyeman, J., Bullard, R.D., Evans, B. (Eds.), 2003. *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*. Earthscan, London.
- Allen, B., 2003. *Uneasy Alchemy: Citizens and Experts in Louisiana's Chemical Corridor Disputes*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Anderson, D.G., 2002. *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia: The Number One Reindeer Brigade*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Bakker, K., 2003. *An Uncooperative Commodity: Privatizing Water in England and Wales*. OUP, Oxford.
- Berry, S., 1993. *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI.
- Blaikie, P., Muldavin, J., 2014. Environmental justice? The story of two projects. *Geoforum* 54, 226–229.
- Boelens, R., Cremers, L., Zwartveen, M. (Eds.), 2011. *Justicia Hídrica. Acumulación, Conflicto y Acción Social*. Peruvian Institute for Studies, Editorial Fund PUCP, Lima.
- Bond, P., 2012. *Politics of Climate Justice: Paralysis Above, Movement Below*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Scottsville.
- Borrás, S.M., Edelman, M., Kay, C. (Eds.), 2008. *Transnational agrarian movements: origins and politics, campaigns and impact*. *Spec. Iss. J. Agrarian Change* 8(2–3).

- Bullard, R.D., 2005. *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Buttel, F.H., Taylor, P.J., 1992. Environmental sociology and global environmental change: a critical assessment. *Soc. Nat. Resour.* 5, 211–230.
- Campese, J., Sunderland, T., Greiber, T., Oviedo, G. (Eds.), 2009. *Rights-based Approaches: Exploring Issues and Opportunities for Conservation*. CIFOR and IUCN, Bogor.
- Carruthers, D. (Ed.), 2008. *Environmental Justice in Latin America*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Chhotray, V., 2014. Disaster relief and the Indian state: lessons for just citizenship. *Geoforum* 54, 217–225.
- Cole, L., Foster, S., 2001. *From the Ground up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York University Press, New York.
- Dobson, A., 1999. *Justice and the Environment: Conceptions of Environmental Sustainability and Theories of Distributive Justice*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Fairhead, J., Leach, M., Scoones, I., 2012. Green grabbing: a new appropriation of nature? *Spec. Iss. J. Peasant Stud.* 39 (2).
- Forsyth, T., 2003. *Critical Political Ecology: The Politics of Environmental Science*. Routledge, London.
- Forsyth, T., 2014. Climate justice is not just ice. *Geoforum* 54, 230–232.
- Forsyth, T., Sikor, T., 2013. Forests, development, and the globalization of justice. *Geogr. J.* 179 (2), 114–121.
- Fortmann, L., 1995. Talking claims: discursive strategies in contesting property. *World Dev.* 23 (6), 1053–1063.
- Fraser, N., 1997. *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the Post-Socialist Condition*. Routledge, London.
- Fraser, N., 2009. *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Goldman, M., 2005. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CO.
- Gottlieb, R., Joshi, A., 2010. *Food Justice*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Guha, R., 1999. *Environmentalism: A Global History*. Longman, London.
- Guha, R., Martinez-Alier, J., 1997. *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North & South*. Earthscan, London.
- Guha, R., Martinez-Alier, J., 1999. Political ecology, the environmentalism of the poor and the global movement for environmental justice. *Kurswechsel* 3, 27–40.
- Haas, P., 1990. Obtaining international environmental protection through epistemic consensus. *Millen.: J. Int. Stud.* 19 (3), 347–363.
- Heynen, N., McCarthy, J., Prudham, S., Robbins, P. (Eds.), 2007. *Neoliberal Environments: False Promises and Unnatural Consequences*. Routledge, London.
- Hickey, S., Mitlin, D. (Eds.), 2009. *Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Exploring the Potential and Pitfalls*. Kumarian Press, Sterling, VA.
- Holifield, R., Porter, M., Walker, G. (Eds.), 2009. *Spaces of environmental justice: frameworks for critical engagement*. *Spec. Iss. Antipode* 41(4).
- Hulme, M., 2009. *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Icaza, R., Newell, P., Saguier, M., 2010. Citizenship and trade governance in the Americas. In: Gaventa, J., Tandon, R. (Eds.), *Globalizing Citizens: New Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*. Zed Books, London, pp. 163–183.
- Jasanoff, S., Martello, M.L. (Eds.), 2004. *Earthly Politics: Local and Global in Environmental Governance*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Jones, P., 1994. *Rights Issues in Political Theory Series*. MacMillan, Basingstoke.
- Kumar, K., 2014. The sacred mountain: confronting global capital at Niyamgiri. *Geoforum* 54, 196–206.
- Larson, A.M., Barry, D., Dahal, G.R., Colfer, C.J.P. (Eds.), 2010. *Forests for People: Community Rights and Forest Tenure Reform*. Earthscan, London.
- Leach, M., Scoones, I., Stirling, A., 2010. *Dynamic Sustainabilities: Technology, Environment, Social Justice*. Earthscan, London.
- Li, T.M., 2007. Practices of assemblage and community forest management. *Econ. Soc.* 36, 263–293.
- Martin, A. (Ed.), 2013. *Global environmental in/justice, in practice: introduction*. *Geogr. J.* 179(2), 98–104.
- Martin, A., McGuire, S., Sullivan, S., 2013. Global environmental justice and biodiversity conservation. *Geogr. J.* 179 (2), 122–131.
- Martin, A., Gross-Camp, N., Kebede, B., McGuire, S., Munyarukaza, J., 2014. Whose environmental justice? Exploring local and global perspectives in a payments for ecosystem services scheme in Rwanda. *Geoforum* 54, 167–177.
- Martinez-Alier, J., 2002. *Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
- Martinez-Alier, J., 2014. The environmentalism of the poor. *Geoforum* 54, 239–241.
- Martinez-Alier, J., Kallis, G., Veuthey, S., Walter, M., Temper, L., 2010. Social metabolism, ecological distribution conflicts, and valuation languages. *Ecol. Econ.* 70 (2), 153–158.
- McAfee, K., 1999. Selling nature to save it? Biodiversity and green developmentalism. *Environ. Plan.: Soc. Space* 17, 133–154.
- McCarthy, J., 2002. First world political ecology: lessons from the wise use movement. *Environ. Plan.* 34, 1281–1302.
- McDonald, D. (Ed.), 2002. *Environmental Justice in South Africa*. Ohio University Press; University of Cape Town Press, Athens, OH; Cape Town.
- Mehta, L., Allouche, J., Nicol, A., Walnycki, A., 2014. Global environmental justice and the right to water: the case of peri-urban Cochabamba and Delhi. *Geoforum* 54, 158–166.
- Movik, S., 2014. A fair share? Perceptions of justice in South Africa's water allocation reform policy. *Geoforum* 54, 187–195.
- Mulvaney, D., 2014. Are green jobs just jobs? Cadmium narratives in the life cycle of Photovoltaics. *Geoforum* 54, 178–186.
- Neumann, Roderick P. (Ed.), 2009. *Political ecology: theorizing scale*. *Spec. Iss. Prog. Hum. Geogr.* 33(3).
- Newell, P., 2005. Race, class and the global politics of environmental inequality. *Glob. Environ. Polit.* 5 (3), 70–93.
- Newell, P., 2006. Environmental justice movements: taking stock, moving forward. *Environ. Polit.* 15 (4), 656–660.
- Newell, P., 2007. Trade and environmental justice in Latin America. *New Polit. Econ.* 12 (2), 237–259.
- Newell, P., 2008. Trade and biotechnology in Latin America: democratization, contestation and the politics of mobilization. *J. Agrarian Change* 8 (2–3), 345–376.
- Newell, P., 2012. *Globalization and the Environment: Capitalism, Ecology and Power*. Polity, Cambridge.
- Newell, P., Bumpus, A., 2012. The global political ecology of the CDM. *Glob. Environ. Polit.* 12 (4), 49–68.
- Newell, P., Wheeler, J. (Eds.), 2006. *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*. Zed Books, London.
- Okanta, I., Douglas, O., 2001. *Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human Rights and Oil in the Niger Delta*. Sierra Club, New York.
- Okereke, C., 2010. *Global Justice and Neoliberal Environmental Governance: Sustainable Development, Ethics and International Co-operation*. Routledge, London.
- Okereke, C., Dooley, K., 2009. Principles of justice in proposals and policy approaches to avoided deforestation: towards a post-Kyoto climate agreement. *Glob. Environ. Change* 20, 82–95.
- O'Rourke, D., Connolly, S., 2003. Just oil? The distribution of environmental and social impacts of oil production and consumption. *Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour.* 28, 587–617.
- Page, E., 2006. *Climate Change, Justice and Future Generations*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
- Panitch, L., Gindin, S., 2012. *The Making of Global Capitalism*. Verso, London.
- Peet, R., Watts, M. (Eds.), 2004. *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*, second ed. Routledge, London.
- Peet, R., Robbins, P., Watts, M. (Eds.), 2011a. *Global Political Ecology*. Routledge, London and New York.
- Peet, R., Robbins, P., Watts, M., 2011b. Global nature. In: Peet, R., Robbins, P., Watts, M. (Eds.), *Global Political Ecology*. Routledge, London and New York, pp. 1–47.
- Peluso, N.L., 1996. Fruit trees and family trees in an anthropogenic forest: ethics of access, property zones, and environmental change in Indonesia. *Comparat. Stud. Soc. Hist.* 28, 510–548.
- Rangan, H., 2004. From Chipko to Uttaranchal: the environment of protest and development in the Indian Himalaya. In: Peet, R., Watts, M. (Eds.), *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*, second ed. Routledge, London, pp. 371–393.
- Robbins, P., 2007. *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Temple University Press.
- Robbins, P., 2014. Cries along the chain of accumulation. *Geoforum* 54, 233–235.
- Sachs, W. (Ed.), 1993. *Global Ecology: A New Arena of Political Conflict*. Zed Books, London.
- Sachs, W., Santarius, T. (Eds.), 2005. *Fair Future: Resource Conflicts, Security and Global Justice*. Zed Books, London.
- Scanlon, J., Cassar, A., Nemes, N., 2004. *Water as a Human Right?* IUCN, Gland.
- Schlosberg, D., 2004. Reconciling environmental justice: global movements and political theories. *Environ. Polit.* 13 (3), 517–540.
- Schlosberg, D., 2007. *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements and Nature*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Schroeder, R., St. Martin, K., Wilson, B., Sen, D. (Eds.), 2008. *Third world environmental justice*. *Spec. Iss. Soc. Nat. Resour.* 21(7).
- Sen, A., 2009. *The Idea of justice*. Allen Lane, London.
- Sikor, T., 2013a. REDD+: the justice effects of technical design. In: Sikor, T. (Ed.), *The Justices and Injustices of Ecosystem Services*. Earthscan, London, pp. 46–68.
- Sikor, T. (Ed.), 2013b. *The Justices and Injustices of Ecosystem Services*. Earthscan, London.
- Sikor, T., Stahl, J. (Eds.), 2011. *Forests and People: Property, Governance, and Human Rights*. Earthscan, London.
- Sikor, T., Stahl, J., Dorondel, S., 2009. Negotiating post-socialist property and state: struggles over forests in Albania and Romania. *Develop. Change* 40 (1), 171–193.
- Sikor, T., Fisher, J., Few, R., Martin, A., Zeitoun, M., 2013a. The justices and injustices of ecosystem services. In: Sikor, T. (Ed.), *The Justices and Injustices of Ecosystem Services*. Earthscan, London, pp. 187–200.
- Sikor, T., Auld, G., Bebbington, A.J., Benjaminsen, T.A., Gentry, B.S., Hunsberger, C., Izac, A.-M., Margulis, M., Plieninger, T., Schroeder, H., Upton, C., 2013b. *Global land governance: from territory to flow?* *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sustain.* 5, 522–527.
- Srinivasan, U.T., Carey, S.P., Hallstein, E., Higgins, P.A.T., Kerr, A.C., Koteen, L.E., Smith, A.B., Watson, R., Harte, J., Norgaard, R.B., 2008. The debt of nations and the distribution of ecological impacts from human activities. *PNAS* 105 (5), 1768–1773.
- Upton, C., 2014. The new politics of pastoralism: identity, justice and global activism. *Geoforum* 54, 207–216.
- Vincent, A., 1998. Is environmental justice a misnomer? In: Boucher, D., Kelly, P. (Eds.), *Social Justice: from Hume to Walzer*. Routledge, London, pp. 120–140.

- Visvanathan, S., 2005. Knowledge, justice and democracy. In: Leach, M., Scoones, I., Wynne, B. (Eds.), *Science and Citizens*. Zed Books, London, pp. 83–97.
- Walker, G., 2009. Globalising environmental justice: the geography and politics of frame contextualisation and evolution. *Glob. Soc. Policy* 9 (3), 355–382.
- Walker, G., 2011. *Environmental Justice*. Routledge, London.
- Walker, G., Bulkeley, H. (Eds.), 2006. Geographies of environmental justice. *Spec. Iss. Geoforum* 37(5).
- White, B., Borras Jr., S.M., Hall, R., Scoones, I., Wolford, W. (Eds.), 2012. The new enclosures: critical perspectives on corporate land deals. *Spec. Iss. J. Peasant Stud.* 39(3–4).
- Williams, R., 1999. Environmental injustice in America and its politics of scale. *Polit. Geogr.* 18 (1), 49–73.
- Yashar, D., 2005. *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Post-Liberal Challenge*. CUP, Cambridge.
- Zeitoun, M., 2013. Global environmental justice and international transboundary waters: an initial exploration. *Geogr. J.* 179 (2), 141–149.

Thomas Sikor
School of International Development, University of East Anglia, Norwich
NR4 7TJ, UK
E-mail address: t.sikor@uea.ac.uk

Peter Newell
Department of International Relations, University of Sussex, Brighton,
East Sussex BN1 9SN, UK
E-mail addresses: P.J.Newell@sussex.ac.uk

Received 21 January 2014
Received in revised form 28 March 2014

Available online 15 May 2014