

Sharing Natural Resources in Times of Climate Change: Justice, Culture and Natural Resource Governance

Convenors:

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Abstract:

Natural resource governance is a topic of growing interest, both in academia and in politics. Access to fertile land and clean water, energy security, mineral extraction rights and the demands of sustainable development in an age of global climate change, population growth and general environmental degeneration will trigger and intensify conflict over natural resources across and within national borders. These pressure points ultimately call for a critical re-assessment of existing and evolving principles of international natural resource governance, as well as ideas concerning the normative foundation and the distribution of rights to natural resources.

Within the fields of political theory, international relations, development studies and applied ethics a host of research projects investigate the issue of resource rights, both in terms of their normative content and in terms of their distribution. There is a growing literature on topics such as rights to water and other key resources, basic rights to ecosystem services, and the relationship between resource rights and other rights, such as territorial and property rights. Moreover, the question of who should legitimately hold which resource rights, and whether cultural groups or states should have the right to autonomously decide how to use (or not use) certain resources is hotly debated.

The workshop will bring together experts working on these issues, in order to explore key questions such as, who can legitimately claim control over which natural resources? Are there any egalitarian global resource rights? Do natural resources escape the logic of full private ownership? What is the relationship between resource rights and territorial rights?

Which role (if any) should concerns for cultural and political self-determination play within an account of global (and possibly intergenerational) resource justice? If we are concerned with global and intergenerational resource justice, which models of resource management should we favour at the global level? In investigating these questions the workshop will attempt to bring together several overlapping debates within the literature, and thereby advance the debate on resource rights and their just distribution.

Outline of the topic:

There is an urgent need to find just or equitable ways of sharing access to natural resources, especially in the context of anthropogenic climate change, rapid environmental degeneration and resource scarcity. The workshop proposes to study the normative foundations of rights over natural resources, their proper distribution, and the challenge of balancing local claims over resources with the imperatives of global and intergenerational justice. It aims to clarify the normative content and structure of resource rights; to investigate how resource rights stand in relation to other rights such as territorial rights or property rights; and to investigate the validity of particular normative claims to resources in the context of discussions on global justice, climate justice and arguments about cultural self-determination.

To determine the substance of resource rights, and how they relate to other rights, is no easy task. On the one hand, resource rights seem to be a bundle of rights, which include different aspects such as the right to access, the right to alienate and the right to use, to name but a few. Should these various rights be allocated to the same agents, or across a variety of agents? On the other hand, resource rights are often identified with either territorial rights or property rights, and there is work to be done in clarifying their relationship with those categories. Moreover, the question which agent should control a particular stock of natural resources is rendered controversial by the fact that different communities conceive of and value resources in different ways, and may not even agree that some goods ought to be recognised as natural resources in the first place. The proposed workshop will also deal with the complicated interrelationship of concerns for cultural autonomy, territorial rights and global justice. Understanding the tensions between these normative concerns can help us both to better grasp their role in creating and possibly resolving conflict over natural resources, and to facilitate the formulation of national and

international principles for sustainable natural resource management. The workshop will also assess competing visions for natural resource governance. International law endorses a principle of 'permanent sovereignty' over natural resources on the part of individual nation-states, but from the point of view of natural resource justice is state control a desirable end, or part of the problem? If it should be partially or wholly eroded, what alternative institutions or principles should govern natural resource use at the trans-national level?

The aim of this workshop is to advance academic debate on these issues by providing a forum for constructive interdisciplinary debate. Given the increasing attention paid to issues of natural resource justice in recent years, the ECPR Joint Sessions represents an excellent opportunity for building a network of interested scholars and initiating collaborative research endeavours. This workshop will be the first Joint Sessions workshop on resource rights and it will hopefully foster investigation into the normative and political issues associated with control over natural resources. The convenors also intend that selected papers submitted will form the basis for a special issue on rights over natural resources.

Relation to Existing Research

The proposed workshop feeds into a growing literature on the challenges of defining and distributing resource rights, focusing on the difficult assessment of various normative claims with respect to control over natural resources (Mazor 2009; Nine 2012; Kolers 2009). In recent years a range of scholars have set out to devise clear normative principles for defining and distributing resource rights. In this literature resource rights are often treated as a derivative of territorial rights (Moore 2012; Nine 2008; 2012; Meisels 2005; Miller 2011). However, the exact relationship between resource rights and territorial rights often remains obscure.

Others have argued that the natural resources of the Earth should be seen as something we all own in common (Risse 2012; Vallentyne and Steiner 2000a; 2000b), while another group of theorists argues for a globally equal distribution of natural resource rights (Casal 2011; Beitz 1979; Barry 1982; Steiner 1999). Hence debate exists not only over the normative difference between resource rights and other rights, such as territorial rights, but also concerning the scope and site of resource rights and their just distribution (Pogge 1994;

Mazor 2010; Armstrong forthcoming). It is amidst these different lines of normative debate that the workshop seeks to carve out the key issues and advance the debate.

The workshop convenors welcome normative papers on the above-mentioned issues of the normative content of resource rights and their distribution, but also papers which critically unpack some of the existing tensions in global natural resource governance, especially with respect to competing normative tropes in international agreements and declarations, such as the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity or the 1962 UN Resolution on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources (Eckersley 2007). In these documents, awareness of the global problem of environmental change and its global solution is shown, alongside a defence of national resource sovereignty which might just possibly be part of the problem rather than the solution. This raises questions concerning the relationship of concerns for cultural and political autonomy, and concerns for justice and sustainability (Armstrong 2010; Miller 2008; Moore 1998; Nine 2010).

Thus the workshop will on the one hand engage with the growing literature on territorial rights and resource rights, and on the other hand critically challenge existing norms and principles concerning control over natural resources, by applying the debate over cosmopolitan, egalitarian, nationalist, statist and culturalist principles of justice to the institutions of actual resource governance. It will take up key questions of resource governance and attempt to advance the debate on both the normative conceptualization of resource rights and the moral and political justification of claims to natural resources and specific resource governance schemes. Moreover, the workshop convenors encourage papers exploring the consequences of viewing resources as the fragile results of complex ecosystemic processes for established accounts of resource justice (Schuppert 2012).

Participants

The workshop invites contributions from academics at any stage of their career and from PhD students. The broad framing of the workshop topic will encourage dialogue between researchers in political theory, international relations, environmental politics, public policy, philosophy and development studies.

Type of Papers

The workshop convenors welcome papers from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, from political theory and international relations to environmental politics and global governance studies. The workshop will primarily address normative questions. However, these normative questions can be addressed in a range of different ways. Thus, the convenors aim for a balance of purely theoretical papers, empirically driven papers and papers dealing with normative questions as applied to the existing resource governance system.

Convenors

Chris Armstrong is a Reader in Politics at the University of Southampton, and is currently a British Academy Research Fellow working on natural resources and global justice. He is the author of *Global Distributive Justice* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) as well as many papers on global justice and natural resources.

Fabian Schuppert is a research fellow in the Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities at Queen's University Belfast. Fabian's research investigates normative issues in natural resource governance. Fabian has published on resource rights, ecosystem management and problems in global justice.

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