

The Evolution of Environmental Justice and Trends: From Social Activism to Mainstream Movement

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Abstract

The concept of environmental justice has developed tremendously in the very short spell of its recent history. From its very humble beginnings in the United States of America, where it was borne out simply as a movement against environmental racism, it has evolved on to cover not just the protection of the right to all individuals to a healthy and safe environment but also now covers all other forms of social concerns. Recent concerns have broadened its scope to include other racial and ethnic groups and now also covers disparities associated with gender and age. The concept of environmental justice has also transcended the borders of the US to, Europe as a whole, Asia, and Africa, mutating into different forms and accommodating other similar concerns from continent to continent and taking into consideration peculiar social situation of the different localities where the concept has been used. This paper traces the journey of this concept and predicts that the scope of the environmental justice is bound to continue to grow in the future and forecasts that it would evolve and respond to new social concerns in different geographical locations

Keywords: Environmental Justice, social activism , natural resources

1. Introduction

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, culture, education or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and polices.¹ The basic premise of environmental justice is the notion that all people have an equal right to live in a healthy environment and correspondingly, that environmental harm should be equitably distributed amongst all social groups.² The concept of environmental justice is usually defined from the prism and social history of the person or country where the definition is emanating from. For instance the definition above from the United States is a reflection of its early beginnings in the country, where it was used to fight notions of discrimination, inequity, denial of benefits, and adverse effects to people of colour and other minority populations and more recently to low income populations.³

The characterisation of the concept in the United Kingdom is encapsulated in the definition offered by the Scottish Executive, which is based on a two-legged approach: The first is that deprived communities which may be more vulnerable to the pressures of poor environmental conditions, should not bear a disproportionate burden of negative environmental impact. The second is that all communities should have access to the information and to the means to participate in decisions that affect the quality of their local environment.⁴

In the African context, which considers access to resources as fundamental,⁵ Obiora defines environmental justice as:

The equitable distribution of environmental amenities, the rectification and retribution of environmental abuses, the restoration of nature, and the fair exchange of resources. Its main insight challenges the uneven allocation of environmental risks as well as the benefits of environmental protection, industrial production, and economic growth. Given its structural focus, the environmental justice struggle could be seen, not simply as an attack against environmental discrimination, but as a movement to rein in and subject corporate and bureaucratic decision making, as well as relevant market processes, to democratic scrutiny and accountability.⁶

In summary, environmental justice is based on the human right to a healthy and safe environment, a fair share of natural resources, the right not to suffer disproportionately from environmental policies, regulations and laws and reasonable access to environmental information combined with participation in environmental decision-

¹ Definition available at <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/eaqs/ej/index.html#faq1> (last accessed 11 January 2015)

² McLaren D. 'Environmental Space, Equity and Ecological Debt' in Agyeman, J. *et al.* (eds.) (2003), *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* UK: Earth scan

³ Ako, R. T. 'Nigeria's Land Use Act: An Anti-Thesis to Environmental Justice' (2009) 53, 2 *Journal of African Law* 289-304

⁴ National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) (2004) 'Meaningful Involvement and Fair Treatment of Tribal Environmental Regulatory Programs' 5

⁵ Beinart W. and McGregor J. (eds.) (2003) *Social History and African Environments*: James Curry p.2

⁶ Obiora, A. 'symbolic episodes in the quest for environmental justice' (1991) 21/2 *Human Rights Quarterly* 466 @ 477

making.¹

2. Origin of Environmental Justice

The concept of environmental justice itself is an ideological departure from the early practice of environmentalism, which seemed to favour the protection of ecology with little or scant reference to humanity. According to Obiora:

Many environmental initiatives were characterized by dramatic rescues of oil soaked birds, redwood trees etc. The focus betrayed the blind spot that was inclined more to favour championing the cause of endangered species at the expense of competing social interests... Ultimately, many faulted mainstream environmentalism for indulging the idiosyncrasies of the affluent instead of exposing inequity and injustice.²

With the birth and growth of the environmental justice movement which challenged the endangerment of people of colour and low income status, there was strong evidence that environmentalism has ventured beyond that initial preference for pure ecology to embrace more socio-economic and political causes. This brought environmentalism home to people of lesser affluence and partly responsible for the concept of environmental justice taking root in places like Africa as for once environmentalism preached a sermon that the people in these less affluent communities could relate with.

Environmental justice is both a concept and social movement. The concept, which was borne out of the movement against environmental racism, emerged from the civil rights movement in the United States and an attempt to address the injustice of toxic industries being predominantly concentrated in areas of African American indigenous residents³. The concept has however grown in scope from its early beginnings and is now applied to a wider range of “serious social concerns” particularly related to communities that suffer from social inequity as a result of “environmental inequalities.”⁴

Also Environmental Justice movements have since grown and can be traced to various levels of developments across Asia, Africa, Europe and America. This paper will trace these widening in the application of the concept across different ethnic groups, countries, gender and generations and show how the concept has evolved from its early beginnings in the United States into a global movement.⁵

Environmental injustices are premised on three theoretical models:

- 1) The absence of political and economic power: This model suggests that communities suffer from environmental inequities because they lack political and economic power.⁶
- 2) Eco-racism: This model argues that minority group or countries are deliberately targeted for environmental injustices.⁷
- 3) Neighbourhood transition model – This is predicated on the basis of peculiar migratory dynamics of communities in the United States, that economics is the primary determinant for environmental injustices.⁸

3. The widening in scope and reasons

United States

Environmental justice is not really a novel concept. It is believed that the concept had existed as far back as around the time of Columbus in 1492. However the landmark 1987 United Church of Christ study ‘Toxic Waste and Race in the United States⁹’ which showed that certain predominantly communities of colour in Warren County, NC were at a disproportionate risk from commercial toxic waste pollution kick started certain events including

¹ Scottish Parliament, Available at: <http://scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/05/23091323/12>, (last accessed: January 5, 2015)

² Obiora A. Supra @ p. 465

³ Agyeman, J. *et al.* ‘Joined-up Thinking: Bringing Together Sustainability, Environmental Justice and Equity’ in Agyeman J, *et al* (eds.) 2003, *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* UK: Earth scan

⁴ Ako, R. T. Supra Note 3.

⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the origin and history of the concept see generally: Cole, Luke W. and Sheila R. Foster 2001. *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York, NY: New York University Press; Taylor, Dorceta E. 2000. *The Rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm: Injustice Framing and the Social Construction of Environmental Discourses.* American Behavioral Scientist 43: 508–80. Camacho, David E. (ed.) 1998. *Environmental Injustices, Political Struggles: Race, Class and the Environment. Durham,* NC: Duke University Press

⁶ Mbamalu G. *et al.* ‘Environmental Justice issues in Developing Countries and in the Niger Delta’ (Paper delivered at the international Conference on Infrastructure Development and the Environment, Abuja Nigeria 10-15 September 2006 @5

⁷ Bullard, R. ‘Solid waste Sites and Black Houston Community’, (1983) 53/2-3 Sociological Inquiry 273 at 273-88

⁸ Mbamalu G. *et al* Supra @ pg 5

⁹ Chavis, Benjamin Jr and Charles Lee (1987), *United Church of Christ Commission on Racial Justice, Toxic Waste and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Harzadous Waste Sites* New York, NY: United Church of Christ

demonstrations by some group of low income members of that predominantly black community and this symbolically gave birth to the modern concept of environmental justice.¹ This event also led to the coining of the term “environmental racism” by Benjamin Chavis.

In 1992, Lavell and Coyle² came to the conclusion that there was an unequal protection and enforcement of environmental laws by the United States Environment Protection Agency. There were allegations of lower penalties for environmental violations and slower clean up times in minority communities. This discovery further helped widen the scope and the remit of the environmental justice movement in the United States. In 1992, in response to pressure from the social movement and informed research by academics, environmental justice was incorporated for the first time as a basis for public policy. Due to calls for further laws on environmental equity, the EPA created the office of Environmental Justice. This was a major landmark development. In 1994, the environmental justice debate finally reached the white house leading to then President Clinton issuing Executive Order 12898: Federal actions to Address Environmental Justice in minority and low-income populations. This Order reinforced the then thirty-year-old Civil Rights Act of 1964 by requiring Federal Regulatory Agencies to make achieving environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate, disproportionate high and adverse human health and projects, policies and activities of minority and low income populations.³

Thus in its early history in the United States, environmental Justice tended to link race, class, gender and social justice concerns in tackling pollution of land mills and industrial sites, this expanded to areas such as environmental concerns relating to transportation, the health sector, housing and energy development. The concept also grew from a restricted notion of civil right movement into a mainstream concern, leading to its acceptability in other communities in Europe for example which didn't share the same racial problems like the United States. All these culminated in the change of government policy to accommodate the concept.

Environmental justice has transcended the geographical boundaries of the United States and has moved away from issues of race and inequality to tackle other social concerns in different parts of the world.

United Kingdom

Environmental Justice in the United Kingdom is relatively new compared to the United States. According to Agyeman in 2000:

to many people in the UK, environmental justice is quite simply someone else's problem. To them, the words "environment" and "justice" do not sit easily together. At best, their combination evokes a memory of some distant news report or documentary of how communities of colour and poor communities in the US face a disproportionate toxic risk when compared to the white middle class communities and at worst the combination fails to register a signal.⁴

This trend has however changed in recent times as increasingly, environmental injustice has been shown to exist in Britain more deeply and frequently than previously assumed. According to Agyeman, it has been shown to be happening in many different ways from disproportionate pollution loadings to fuel poverty from transportation inequalities to lack of countryside because of rural racism, in response to this, calls for greater environmental justice has become louder. This has led to greater policy awareness for environmental justice in the UK.⁵

The Scottish Parliament has contributed to the growth of environmental justice in Britain. In February 2002, the then First Minister, Jack McConnell delivered a speech which, while accepting the fact that there was environmental injustice in Britain also openly acknowledged for the first time that there has been far little research in the United Kingdom into the social effects of environmental degradation.

the reality is that the people who have the most urgent environmental concern in Scotland are those who daily cope with the consequences of poor quality of life and live in a rotten environment, close to industrial pollution, plagued by vehicle emissions, streets filled with litter and walls covered in graffiti. It is true in Scotland and also true elsewhere in the world.

¹ McGurty, Eileen Maura 2007. *Transforming Environmentalism: Warren County, PCBs, and the Origins of Environmental Justice*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

² Lavelle, M. and Coyle, M. (eds.) (1992) 'Unequal Protection: The Racial Divide, Environmental Law' *National Law Journal* 15 (special supplement) 52-4

³ Environmental Justice: Rights and Means to a Healthy Environment for All, Special Briefing No 7, November 2001. Under the Bush's Administration however, the EPA attempted to remove race and class from special consideration in its definition of environmental justice. This move, ignited resentment from the public and the administration finally jettisoned the idea.

⁴ Agyeman J. (2000) 'Environmental Justice: From the Margins to the Main Stream?' *Town and County Planning Association Series* : London

⁵ Agyeman J and Bob Evans 'Just Sustainability ': The Emerging Discourse of Environmental Justice ' in Britain?' (2004) *The Geographical Journal*, Vol 170, No2, p. 155-164 @ 156

These are circumstances, which would not be acceptable to better off communities in our society, and those who have to endure such environments in which to bring up a family or grow old themselves are denied environmental justice.¹

The Scottish Ministers have also provided the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) with guidance and stress that SEPA should address environmental justice issues insofar as its functions permit.

India

The concept of environmental justice has been well accepted in India. Indeed this has meant that the protection of environmental rights and the recognition of the notion of sustainable development are very encouraging in India. The judiciary has been in the forefront of the growth of the concept by first of all widening the concept of the standing of a petitioner to sue and secondly giving wide and flexible interpretations to the laws of the country. It is for this reason that our analysis of the concept in India will focus on the analysis of some of the decisions that have come out of the Indian courts as they have contributed immensely to the growth of environmental justice in the country.

As some of the cases discussed below will show, the environmental justice agenda in India has been intimately linked to the development of an environmental dimension to human rights jurisprudence by the courts, notably the Indian Supreme court itself. This as mentioned earlier was made possible by the relaxation of the rule of *locus standi*, which made access to the court easier. First, it was possible for the courts to look at the matter before it from the point of view of an environmental problem solved rather than a dispute between two parties, secondly the rule took care of the many interests that went unrepresented because the common people who had no access to the courts were able to get representation.²

In Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of Uttar Pradesh³, decided by the Supreme Court of India, the petitioner alleged that the unauthorized mining in the Dehra Dun area adversely affected the ecology and environment. The Supreme Court upholding the right to live in a healthy environment issued an order stopping mining operations in the area, this is despite the fact that the mining company had invested huge resources into its operations in the area. For the court, the right to a healthy environment was tantamount to the right to life itself and it was superior to any commercial consideration.

Again in Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar⁴, the court ruled that, “right to life ...includes the right to enjoyment of pollution free water and air for full enjoyment of life”.⁵

In Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. Union of India (Doon Valley Limestone Quarrying Case-II)⁶ the supreme court of India directed that all fresh quarrying in the Himalayan Region of the Dehra Dun District should cease. Subsequently, the mines were ordered to shut down based on the report of the Committee appointed by the court to look into the matter. The companies operating the mines thereafter submitted a scheme for limestone quarrying to the Committee, which was again rejected, thereafter the companies challenged the decision of the committee to the Supreme Court. The Court was asked to determine the conflict between the environmental consequences of the commercial exploitation and the economic benefits of the activity. The Court was of the opinion that the environmental considerations outweighed the economic benefits of the projects and therefore upheld the decision of the Committee.

Likewise, in M.C. Mehta v. Union of India⁷ a public interest case was brought against the government administrators as well as tanneries whose effluent polluted the River Ganga. The petitioner applied for a writ of mandamus restraining the respondents from letting out the trade effluents into the River Ganga until they put up necessary treatment plants for treating the effluents in order to arrest the pollution of the river. The company in their defence argued that they lacked physical facilities, technical competence and funds to install adequate treatment facilities. While some of the tanneries pleaded for time to install pre-treatment plants. The court held that it was the fundamental duty of the state to protect and improve the quality of the environment. The court held also that any tannery, which cannot set up a primary treatment plant, cannot be permitted to continue to be in existence particularly as possible impacts of continued effluent discharge into the River Ganga would outweigh the inconveniences caused to the management and the labour employed by the companies on account of closure of the tanneries.

In MK Sharma v. Bharat Electric Employees Union⁸, the court directed the Bharat Electric Company to

¹ Scottish Parliament, supra Note 7

² Justice Kirpal, B.N , ‘Developments in India Relating to Environmental Justice’ Available at www.unep.org/law/Symposium/Documents/Country.../INDIA%20.doc (last accessed on January 14, 2014)

³ Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of Uttar Pradesh AIR (1985) SC 652

⁴ Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar AIR (1991) SC 420

⁵ See also Mathur v. Union of India (1996) 1 SCC 119, where the court came to a similar conclusion

⁶ Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. Union of India (Doon Valley Limestone Quarrying Case- II), AIR (1985) SC 652

⁷ M.C. Mehta v. Union of India, (1996) 4 SCC 351

⁸ MK Sharma v. Bharat Electric Employees Union (1987) SCALE 1049

comply with the safety rules strictly to prevent hardship to the employees ensuing from harmful X ray radiation.

In summary, it is widely acknowledged that India is progressive in the enforcement of environmental rights and ensuring environmental justice. It has however been argued in some quarters though that the courts are more receptive to issues that affect 'certain social and value preferences (for instance, the right to clean environment rather than the right to livelihood) resulting in deep restrictions of participation which is one of the fundamental tenets of environmental justice.¹

Nigeria

In Nigeria like in most African countries, the environmental justice debate has been focused on the equitable distribution of environmental amenities and resources. The debate has mainly been predicated on the allocation of environmental risks and resources in the oil rich Niger Delta region, which suffer most of the environmental degradation that occur from the exploitation of oil. It seeks to ensure that the oil companies should be subject to scrutiny and accountability for their actions, which cause environmental harm to the inhabitants of the area. In a wider sense, it is also a subplot in the quest for resource control by the indigenes of the Niger Delta.

The protection of environmental rights in Nigeria was initially not very bright, perhaps due to the country's dependence on oil as its main economic resource and the desperation of the Nigerian judiciary to protect the country's livelihood². For instance in *Allan Irou v. Shell BP*³ the judge declined to grant an injunction in favor of the plaintiff whose land, fish pond and creek had been polluted by the activities of Shell because in the courts opinion, nothing should be done to disturb the trading in petroleum which is the main source of the country's income.

Other factors like the inordinate amount of time it takes to get judgments in Nigeria, the cost of litigation, undue reliance of the courts on complex technical rules and the interpretation of the concept of *locus standi* by the courts have hindered access to justice, including environmental justice in Nigeria.⁴

Recently however, there has been a remarkable shift in the reasoning of Nigerian judges as they have come to recognize environmental rights of the citizens. For instance in the case of *Gbemre v Shell*⁵ the plaintiff filed a suit on behalf of himself and Iwherakan community against Shell, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the Attorney General of the Federation to end gas flaring in the community, the plaintiff argued that gas flaring violated their right to enjoy a healthy environment as provided by Article 24 of the African Charter and the constitutional guarantee of the right to life and dignity of persons. The High Court decided that the alleged gas flaring in the community affected the inhabitants right to a healthy environment as articulated under the African Charter. The court also affirmed that the constitutionally guaranteed rights to life and dignity of persons invariably includes the right to clean, poison free and healthy environment and actions of the defendants in continuing gas flaring was a violation of these rights.⁶

In another case *Ijaw Aborigines of Bayelsa State v. Shell I*⁷ the plaintiffs sought an order of the Federal High Court to enforce the payment of US\$1.5 billion that Nigeria's Parliament ordered the company to pay as damages for pollution caused to the plaintiffs. The Court held that Shell was bound to pay the sum and ordered the company to deposit the judgment sum of US\$1.5 billion with the Central Bank of Nigeria in the name of the Chief Registrar of the Federal High Court. The defendant has appealed the judgment and the substantive matter is yet to be decided by the appellate court. However the most important thing is that the court of first instance has recognized the oil communities' rights to clean, pollution free environment.

Thus there are strong indications that the Nigerian courts now better protect environmental rights. According to Frynas⁸, the recent decisions by the courts in cases such as *Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited v. Councillor F. Farah and 7 others*⁹ *Edise & Others v. William International Limited*¹⁰, *Elf (Nigeria) Limited v. Sillo*¹¹ and *Shell Development Company Ltd v Tiebo*¹² are evidences of this change in attitude by the

¹ L. Rajamani, Public Interest Environmental Litigation in India: Exploring Issues of Access, Participation, Equity, Effectiveness and Sustainability, (2007) 19 *Journal of Environmental Law* 3, 293-321

² Ako R.T., supra note 3

³ *Allan Irou v. Shell BP* Suit No. W/89/91 Warri HC/26/91

⁴ See generally Okogbule, N.S. 'Access to Justice and Human Rights Protection in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects' (2005) *International Journal on Human Rights*, Volume 3, p.95-113

⁵ *Gbemre v Shell*, Suit No, FHC/B/C/153 delivered on 14 November, 2005

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *Ijaw Aborigines of Bayelsa State v. Shell I*, unreported, Judgment delivered by Justice Okechukwu Okeke, Federal High Court Port Harcourt, Rivers State on 24 February 2006

⁸ Frynas J. 'Legal Change in Africa: Evidence from Oil- Related Litigation in Nigeria' (1999) 43 *Journal of African Law* 2, 121-150

⁹ *Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited v. Councillor F. Farah and 7 others* (1995) 3 NWLR pt 382 pg148

¹⁰ *Edise & Others v. William International Limited* (1986) 11 CA 187

¹¹ *Elf (Nigeria) Limited v. Sillo* (1994) 6 NWLR pt 350

¹² *Shell Development Company Ltd v Tiebo* (1996) 4 NWLR pt 445 pg. 657

Nigerian courts.

South Africa

In South Africa where the then state policy of apartheid led to huge divides in the quality of the environment for the different races in the country, the issue of race has played a strong role in the environmental justice movement in that country as government's environmental policy was seen as a tool of racial oppression.

Under the then apartheid government, thousands of black South Africans were forcefully ejected from their ancestral lands to make way for game parks and a lot of money was spent on preserving wildlife and wildflowers where the black majority were without adequate food, shelter and clean water. In short, according to David McDonald, flora and fauna were often considered more important than the majority of the country's population¹. Under apartheid South Africa, certain industries like mining were virtually immune to environmental regulation and workers who were mainly black Africans suffered environmental harm.

The liberalization of South African politics provided an opportunity for the re-thinking of environmental issues and a number of activists started to challenge the policies of the past, this campaign gave rise to the birth of environmental justice movement in the country.

The first meaningful milestone in the development of environmental justice in South Africa is the 1992 conference organized by Earth Life South Africa, which gave birth to the Environmental Justice Networking Forum. This forum helped coordinate the activities of environmental activists and organizations interested in environmental justice. In 1994, the ANC was elected into government and one of their mantra at the time was that "poverty and environmental degradation have been closely linked". The ANC made it clear that environmental injustices were to be addressed as part of the Party's post-apartheid reconstruction and development mandate².

All these different milestones have led to the success of the environmental justice campaign in South Africa. The environmental justice campaign in South Africa so far has centred mainly on the issue of land tenure, ownership of natural resources, environmental health and pollution.

4. The future of Environmental Justice

The Scope and application of the concept of environmental justice has continued to widen and this trend is bound to continue into the coming years. Currently, environmental justice is often limited to geographical areas and this limitation ensures that the concept fails to take into account of injustices over larger areas and across wider social spectrums.

It is expected that environmental justice will leave the confines of national boundaries and seek to address economic inequalities on a more global scale. Presently, the issues being tackled have geographical boundaries but this limit will soon cease to exist. For instance, damages caused by air pollution and flooding which might affect neighbouring countries will have to be addressed in the future.

Also the ills of environmental injustice will most likely be looked at from a more intergenerational perspective. Most times Injustices from environmental degeneration do not only affect the present generation but also future generations are likely to suffer the consequences. For example people in African countries and future generations are likely to be badly affected by climatic change caused by fossil fuel burning which is being caused predominantly by people in non African countries and previous generations³.

5. Conclusion

Indeed the scope of environmental justice has developed tremendously in the very short spell of its recent history⁴. From its very humble beginnings in the United States of America, where it was borne out simply as a movement against environmental racism targeting African American neighbourhoods, it has evolved on to cover not just the protection of the right to all individuals to a healthy and safe environment but also now covers all other forms of social concerns. It seeks to guarantee the fair and equitable distribution of natural resources⁵, and also stretched to cover the right of all individuals not to suffer disproportionately from environmental policies, regulations and laws. It now also guarantees the reasonable access to environmental information for all and ensures the active participation for all in environmental decision-making.⁶

Environmental justice movement is no longer just championed only by civil right movements in the United States of America, fighting against racial discrimination, but now a number of NGOs and academics have

¹ Mc Donald, David A. (2002), *Environmental Justice in South Africa*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press pg. 2

² ibid

³ Boyle, A and Anderson, M, (1996) *Human Rights Approaches to Environmental Protection*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pg. 313

⁴ Some scholars have expressed concern that because environmental justice grew up in relation to and even in service of a specific social movement, environmental justice has been limited in scope. See generally Swyngedow E and Haynen N, 'Urban Political Ecology, Justice and Policies of Scale', *Antinode* 35: 898-918

⁵ This is the basis of the environmental justice movement in Africa. See generally, Obiora A, *Supra*

⁶ Scottish Parliament, see note 7

joined the fray ensuring its wider reach and acceptance and thereby forcing governments all over the world to embrace the concept as part of their state policy.¹

In its early history environmental justice was concerned primarily with toxic and hazardous waste impacts in low income and communities of colour, it has since expanded to inequities covering such areas as transportation, health, housing, energy and water. Recent concerns have broadened in scope to include other racial and ethnic groups and now also covers disparities associated with gender and age.²

The concept of environmental justice has also transcended the borders of the US to, Europe as a whole, Asia, and Africa, as our discussions have shown, mutating into different forms and accommodating other similar concerns from continent to continent and taking into consideration peculiar social situation of the different localities where the concept has been used. The concept is said to be now trans localized.³ According to Sze, the field of environmental justice is now firmly entrenched in several different academic disciplines and has also gone global.⁴

The scope of the concept is bound to continue to grow in the future, evolving and responding to new social concerns in different geographical locations.

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² See the following: Ikporuko Chris O. (2004) Petroleum Fiscal Federalism and Environmental Justice in Nigeria, *Space and Polity* 8 321-54; Hooks, G. and Chad L. Smith 2004. 'The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans.' *American Sociological Review* 69: 558-75; Allen, B. L. (2003). 'Uneasy Alchemy: Citizens and Experts in Louisiana's Chemical Corridor Disputes'. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Peeples, J. A. and Kevin M. D. (2006). 'The Truth of the Matter: Motherhood, Community and Environmental Justice.' *Women's Studies in Communication* 29: 59-87.

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