U.S. Empire and the Institutionalization of Environmental Knowledge

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Introduction

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is one of, if not the most widespread environmental policy tools used throughout the world. It is an umbrella term for procedural public policies that require state administrators to investigate, document, and publicly disclose the potential environmental impacts of proposed large-scale projects and actions. It was first legislated in the U.S. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and was later presented to the UN at the 1972 Conference on the Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden. Over the next two decades, EIA legislation spread across U.S. cities and states, as well as to dozens of other countries. But its use really took off after the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, when it became an official recommendation of the *Declaration on Environment and Development*, and one of the lending requirements for the World Bank and other Multilateral Development Banks. Currently, it is employed throughout most of the world, and is administered at scales of governance ranging from cities to nation states to supranational organizations. Clearly it represents a significant mechanism of governance, but mapping its relationship to capital, empire, and domination is complicated because, as I will show, EIA seems to function as a constant source of dialectical tension between the state, capital, and populations rendered governable through state-produced social difference.

The reason for focusing on NEPA and its mechanism of EIA is that their institutionalization has resulted in a complex state apparatus consisting of infrastructure, discourses, and practices that are dialectically entwined with shifts in dominant modes of governance, the stabilization and expansion of imperialist forms of global capitalism, and ongoing struggles for social and racial justice. EIA represents a point of entry into thinking more expansively about the institutional capacities as well as foreclosures that structure the ways in

which domination, empire, racial capitalism, and ecological destruction operate to produce new configurations of space. That is, the EIA apparatus is a site of dialectical contradiction that has produced fundamental shifts in the ways in which space is governed in relation to racially and political economically differentiated populations, and has thus become an inseparable component of modern racial capitalism. But as such, it is also a point of convergence within state apparatuses for unexpected political and geographical coalitions grounded in social justice struggles over the material production of space.

Conceptually, I consider EIA in two distinct but overlapping ways. First is the EIA process, which includes all of the administrative tasks related to the documentation and dissemination of the potential environmental impacts a proposed project or actions on various aspects of social and physical environments. This process has actors ranging from public administrators and elected government bodies, to environmental and social scientists, to professional planners and environmental specialists, to concerned members of affected communities such as local residents, business owners, workers, social justice organizations, etc. The other aspect of EIA referred to in this research is what I consider the nebulous EIA apparatus. This consists of the various institutional arrangements, public policies, administration and oversight organizations, public discourses, techno-scientific knowledges, legal apparatuses, financial tools, environmental industries, and social and environmental justice organizations, etc. that form the infrastructure and intersecting lines of power that flow through the EIA apparatus. The remainder of this paper is organized into three sections to historically situate the emergence of EIA, understand its mechanisms of governance, and then analyze it within the framework of racial capitalism.

The National Environmental Policy Act and Environmental Impact Assessment

Arguably one of the most significant pieces of U.S. legislation passed in the 20th century (Caldwell 1998; Bartlett and Kurian 1999), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) fundamentally changed the process for government funded infrastructure projects. NEPA brought together roughly 100 years of fragmented and often conflicting environmental legislation in the U.S. under an umbrella environmental policy that affects every federal government agency. It is a primarily a value and goal oriented policy that establishes a uniform set of environmental guiding principles that covers all government agencies. It consists of three parts: 1) a broad and vague statement that the government should "encourage a productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment" by placing a subjective value on activities and policies to preserve healthy environmental conditions; 2) the establishment of a central environmental agency within the executive branch, the Committee on Environmental Quality (CEQ), to oversee and report on the country's environmental quality; and 3) the requirement for environmental impact assessment, which is described as a procedural requirement for all government agencies to evaluate proposed actions for their potential impacts to the environment as part of the intra-governmental agency decision making process. Lynton Caldwell, one of the key authors of NEPA, describes EIA as the strategically pragmatic "action-forcing provision" (Caldwell 1998, 29) that substantiates the environmental goals outlined in the legislation. It was envisioned as the mechanism that would compel the percolation of NEPA's qualitative and ideological guidelines for environmental thinking throughout the corpus of federal agencies.

For the broader project in which this paper is situated, I am developing a historical materialist analysis of EIA to gain a better understanding of the ways in which its trajectory is

dialectically entwined with racial capital and environmental justice organizing. For the purposes

of this paper, I briefly situate its initial emergence in the context of the National Environmental

Policy Act of 1969. The congress member who introduced the NEPA legislation, Senator Henry

Jackson, promoted it as a necessary step in addressing what he termed, the "growing

environmental problems and *crises* the nation faces" (Jackson qtd. in Caldwell 1998, 1, emphasis

added). Indeed, NEPA was passed amid financial crises, widespread social unrest, and general

uncertainty about the future of U.S. capitalism. The mainstream popularity of Rachel Carson's

bestselling book, *Silent Spring*, which was published in 1962, helped to fuel a growing

mainstream environmentalism movement into a powerful political force whose precautionary—

and at times alarmist—messages threatened the stability of industrial capitalism. At the same

time, the U.S. was facing massive Vietnam War debt and a skyrocketing balance of payments,

which eventually led to the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the elimination of the gold

standard. Grouped with the ongoing sociopolitical pressure from the ongoing Civil Rights and

Anti-War Movements, the U.S. government was in need of major reforms. Thus, NEPA was the

capstone to a series of environmental laws and acts passed under the banner of President

Johnson's "Great Society." And it fits in line with the other policy measures enacted by the state

to help stabilize the social and fiscal crises facing the U.S. government such as the series of Civil

Rights Acts passed throughout the 1960s and the elimination of the gold standard in 1971.

Importantly, this series of government reforms help set into motion the slow and contradictory-

ridden decline of Keynesianism and the interventionist welfare state, and set the stage for the rise

of the neoliberal state. That is to say, the institutional arrangements that emerged from this state

restructuring resulted in dramatic shifts in the mechanisms and rationalities of governance, with

greater emphases placed on the role of bio- and techno-scientific information, the liberalizing of

global finance regimes, and the awareness that capitalism had entered an era whereby liberalized

racial logics would need continued revamping from the lingering remnants of (settler-)colonial

domination. In remainder of this paper, I take up these arguments about the institutionalization of

EIA in greater detail by looking at its governmental mechanisms and relationship to racial

capitalism and U.S. empire.

Environmental Impact Assessment and The Biopolitics of Place

The initial legislative aim for the EIA process was to aid in the internal decision making

process for proposed large-scale projects and legislative actions, from things such as building a

highway or a power plant to funding particular branches of scientific research. The institution or

organization proposing a project is responsible for conducting a highly structured, multi-step

environmental impact assessment to aid those requiring the EIA, whether they are a government

agency or financial institution, in making an informed decision about whether or not the potential

environmental impacts justify implementation of the proposed project or action. The outcome of

the EIA process is not a binding recommendation or decision about the proposed project or

action, and indeed decisions are often made in complete disregard to the EIA findings. Rather,

EIA is intended as an informational tool that increases transparency in the decision-making

process, and thus supports the principles of liberal democracy. So the task at hand is to

understand how this intention is materially rooted in the various contradictions that have arisen

from the specific ways in which EIA has been institutionalized. For example, within the U.S.,

because EIA is applied across the various branches of the federal government, and because it is

similarly legislated at different political scales, it has the effect of producing political ruptures by

creating tensions between state institutions with different political and jurisdictional agendas,

which in turn feed the possibilities for political organizing across different sets of geographical

and political alliances. Thus, I am interested in the state apparatuses and institutional arrangements that have emerged, as well as the shifting mechanisms of governance that are implicated within these apparatuses.

Another important institutional restructuring that has emerged alongside the EIA process is the incorporation of public feedback in the planning and decision making process. As a result of early court decisions in the U.S. and the precedents set by the Administrative Proceedure Act of 1946 and the Freedom of Information Act of 1966, most forms of EIA implemented throughout the world require full public disclosure of the impact assessment findings. This is often accompanied by public hearings or periods of open comment and feedback on both the preliminary scoping and final EIA findings. Thus, even though the legislative intention behind EIA was for it to be used as an *internal* decision making tool, the actual implementation of EIA in the U.S. resulted in the environmental review process becoming a major political opening for *external* pressure on, and scrutiny of, the governmental decision making process. Although public disclosure and feedback is not unique to the EIA process, for example, it has long been used in urban planning practice, it is significant because of the ways in which it is packaged with and institutionalized in the EIA process. So one of the defining features of EIA, in its myriad forms that have been implemented throughout the world, is that these public disclosure and feedback procedures have been kept intact. Thus, the EIS process has become a foothold for public participation, intervention, and litigation against a wide range of both public and private initiatives, which is well beyond the scope of its legislative origins.

On the one hand, this public intervention into the EIA process has enabled communities and public interest groups to delay or stop thousands of proposed projects from being implemented, largely due to procedural missteps or the inadequacy of EIA findings. But on the

other hand, this aspect of EIA has resulted in the further institutionalization and

bureaucratization of the review process, foreclosing some of the possibilities for organizing

around the EIA process because of the costly, techno-scientific, and highly bureaucratic process

required for juridical intervention. Interestingly, this institutionalization has taken on unexpected

forms, such as the National Green Tribunals (NGT) established in India in 2010, which are

specialized high courts designed to expedite environmental justice and land dispute cases. A

cursory survey of recent NGT cases suggests that the court is trending toward decisions

supporting the claims of environmental justice advocates and small landholders, and calling out

obvious abuses of the EIA process such as staged public hearings and local government

corruption. As my research for this project develops, I will be looking at these types of

institutional arrangements as case studies to better understand their implications for the

theoretical and practical implications of the continuing development of EIA as a site for social

and environmental justice political organizing.

These shifts in institutional arrangements brought about by EIA also have important

implications for the mechanisms of governance that flow out of the EIA process. In particular is

the emphasis placed on various types of knowledge and information as a key component of state

centered decision-making, which in turn creates new roles for knowledge-power as a structural

facet of the social production and reorganization of space. There are numerous ways in which

information and knowledge enter into the EIA process, such as the ways that environments are

understood, determining how affected populations are delineated, and in the ways that impacts

are determined, measured and valued. For example, because EIA institutes a public feedback

mechanism, it is inherently open to the assertion of multiple understandings and articulations of

what qualities constitute the environment, from those eco-physical characteristics of the

biosphere and ecosystems to the various aspects of social systems that shape human interactions like housing, transportation, and policing.

Collectively, this application of knowledge in the political process of decision-making falls under the general rubric of what I consider a "biopolitics of place", in reference to the use of various forms of "biopolitics" as a mechanism for governing, and thus politicizing, geographically differentiated populations. By biopolitics, I am referring simultaneously to the technologies of power that Michel Foucault expounds in his Lectures at the Collège de France in the 1970s (Foucault 2003; 2008), as well as the "political efforts to reconcile biological facts and popular values—notably ethical values—in the formulation of public policies" (Caldwell 1973, 24) that Lynton Caldwell, one of the primary authors of NEPA and the EIA process. Foreshadowing Foucault's use of the term biopolitics, Caldwell recognized the growing importance of, and impending shifts that would result from, the application of bio- and techno-scientific knowledges within political and ethical frameworks to address the impacts of such knowledge and technologies on society. He advocates for the application of this knowledge through the mechanisms of public policy and education to combat the lack of a demonstrable readiness of people to guide public policy through "verifiable knowledge in a search for policies equal to the problems" (Caldwell 1973, p. 27). In developing NEPA and the EIA process, Caldwell helped to congeal his theory of biopolitics as a particular mechanism for developing environmental—or geographically situated—knowledges within the political decision-making process over how those environments and geographies are produced.

As a biopolitics of place, EIA functions by figuring knowledge of environments and their dependent populations as structural components in the reshaping of those environments through the liberal calculus of cost-benefit analysis, economic rationality, and environmental/health risk,

or aspects of what Foucault (2008) refers to as governmentality as the means to biopolitical ends.

EIA becomes a state sanctioned framework for knowing and delimiting populations as variously

"impacted" through spatialized configurations of difference. As such, it reconfigures the

operation of power through new political subjectivities that emanate from the environmentally

racist conditions that maintain or erode the chances for sociospatially differentiated populations

to face premature death (Gilmore 2007, 248). This is all to say, lines of difference such as

proximity, race, culture, employment, citizenship, class, etc., all constitute the ways in which

populations are understood and biopolitically managed by the state within the EIA decision-

making process. And thus, EIA becomes the site of convergence for new political formations

with their own counter-articulations for the production of space.

Environmental Justice: Radical Epistemologies and the Institutionalization of

Environmental Justice

The foregrounding of knowledge that results from the EIA process opens the door to

political struggles over the production and use of environmental knowledges within state

apparatuses. By environmental knowledges, I am referring to things such as the definition of "the

environment," what constitutes environmental impacts, and the *value* assigned to environmental

impacts, where the concept of value itself represents a diverse set of epistemological conceptions

of outcomes, uses, or impacts. In practice, these struggles over state sanctioned environmental

knowledges have led to opportunities for non-state actors to rearticulate political struggles over

the production of space through radical epistemological approaches to the environment. These

radical epistemologies conceive of the environment as the entirety of that which sustains life, or

leads to premature death, both in terms of the physical and social qualities of human

environments. In some regards these ways of understanding the environment exceed the

environmentalist intentions of NEPA's architects, whose focus was primarily on the human impacts on ecosystems (Caldwell 1998), yet part of the novelty of the EIA process is that its structure seems to encourage these types of epistemological ruptures within the mechanisms of state centered decision-making. By looking at the dialectical relationship between EIA and environmental justice, both as radical and institutionalized sets of knowledges and practices, I argue that the EIA apparatus is an active site of contradiction where epistemological rupture weaves through and against the capitalist racial state. At times, EIA is a fruitful site of resistance to capitalist forms of development because it enables the articulation of non- and anti-capitalistic values through its framework of environmental knowledge. But at the same time, the EIA apparatus is able to synthesize these oppositional forces and rearticulate them as state sanctioned forms of "antiracist" knowledge that work support the capitalist racial state and U.S. empire. And yet despite this, I contend that EIA remains an important site of contradiction and struggle because of the possibilities it produces for radical environmental justice organizing across geopolitical space and scales.

Through the EIA process, NEPA established a malleable framework for state sanctioned understandings of the environment. It calls for the interdisciplinary and integrative use of both the physical and social sciences, with the key recognition that the content of those sciences would change over time, resulting in uncertainty and change in the bases of environmental planning and decision-making (Caldwell 1998, 56). But the legitimacy of the EIA process, and hence that of the state, is heavily dependent on the comprehensiveness and robustness of the scientific inquiry used to test the environmental assumptions underlying proposed projects or actions. Therefore, it is in the interest of state actors to utilize a robust set of scientific approaches to qualify their findings and to reveal selective biases toward different aspects of the

environment. However, the environmental knowledges that undergird these scientific approaches to impact assessment are prone to ontological and epistemological ruptures. This is especially the case because of the public feedback mechanisms institutionalized within the EIA process that allow for environmental claims to be made against the state from outside the institutional boundaries of dominant scientific communities such as those within universities, private consultancies, and other state funded institutions.

I contend that the most significant epistemological rupture within state sanctioned understandings of the environment came as a result of political mobilizations for environmental justice based on the ontological claim of environmental racism. Environmental justice activism brought to the fore the ontological position that environmental conditions are geographically inextricable from the production of racially differentiated space through processes of uneven capitalist development (Pulido 2000). These claims worked within a national context to shift the focus of both the practice and official state discourses about the racialized dimensions of environmental issues and state practices more broadly. In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 (E.O. 12898), officially institutionalizing environmental justice as a priority for all government agencies. This move represented a significant victory for environmental justice activists, but it also signaled the ways in which racial capitalism was reorienting itself around projects of what Jodi Melamed (2011) calls "neoliberal multiculturalism" to describe the phase of racial capitalism in which official antiracisms became linked to forms of "neoliberal sovereignty," which I argue are represented by the EIA apparatus. Before getting too far ahead of myself, it is worth providing some background on the environmental justice movement and the ways in which its radical epistemologies fit into the EIA process.

The environmental justice framework emerged in the 1980s out of a social justice movement to uncover and remedy human health and quality of life impacts in politically, racially, and economically marginalized communities due to the uneven distribution of environmental harms and benefits, a claim that was termed environmental racism (Cole and Foster 2001). It can trace its lineage to the Civil Rights Movement organizing that took place in the U.S. from the 1950s through the 1970s, and to the environmentalism and anti-toxics movements that started in the 1950s and continued into the late 1970s (Cole and Foster 2001). Movement leaders from the former combined their experience in direct-action and mainstream political organizing with critiques of the social and economic structures underpinning racial segregation and oppression, to effectively mobilize communities of color in struggles against the environmental problems affecting their neighborhoods (Bullard 1993; Taylor 2000; Cole and Foster 2001; Keil 2003). These communities articulated their struggle for environmental justice primarily through discourses of structural racism and patriarchy, and emphasized uneven impacts to communities that were largely ignored by the mainstream, white middle-class environmentalism movement. Joining in this struggle were some of the more radical organizers and scholars from the anti-toxics branch of the mainstream environmentalism movement. Their analyses can be grossly generalized as identifying corporate power, and the structuring of the global political economy through the production of surplus value, as the driving forces behind the uneven production of toxics (Cole and Foster 2001). The convergence of these two environmental justice camps in the 1980s led to the establishment of a coherent environmental justice framework that claimed uneven environmental conditions were a product of environmental racism structured through the (capitalist) political economy. What eventually emerged was an environmental justice framework that takes seriously the objective of social

justice requires thinking about environmental justice in terms of scholarship and praxis that counter-articulates various modes of social justice struggle in opposition to the historically and geographically specific modes of dominance that structure society, such as racism, sexism, and capitalism (Hall 1980; Gilmore 2002; Pellow and Brulle 2005; Kurtz 2009; Pellow 2009).

In contrast with the dominant ecological understandings of the environment, the environmental justice framework presents a radically different way of understanding the environment through the lens of structural racism and the political economy that proved to be just as contentious as it was politically powerful. In the first half of the 1990s, a number of scholars began interrogating environmental justice claims and challenged its basis of environmental racism. They employed a variety of quantitative methodologies to empirically "prove" that claims of environmental racism were merely the spatialized outcomes of market forces, civic participation, and static notions of class difference, and not a result of "racist" practices (Pulido 1996; cf. Been 1992; Been 1994; Anderton et al. 1994; Cutter 1995). In a recuperative intervention, Laura Pulido (2000) rearticulated the environmental justice framework with social justice as its objective, and environmental racism as its *de facto* structural basis rather than a value-free question (see also Bullard 1990; Bullard 2001; Pulido 1998). She also maintains the importance of understanding racism in terms of the shifting forms of domination produced by and supportive of spatial practices rooted in forms of difference that are fundamental to the maintenance of the capitalist racial state.

Throughout these debates over the theoretical basis of environmental justice scholarship, environmental justice activists were successfully deploying these theoretical positions in locally, regionally, and nationally organized struggles for environmental justice over issues such as healthy working, living, and learning environments; access to clean air and water; housing

access; indigenous land rights; clean and accessible public transportation and public spaces; prison conditions and policing practices; and other forms of spatially situated social and economic justice. Through grassroots organizing and juridical challenges to siting decisions, which often came through the EIA process, environmental justice activists were able to gain state recognition of epistemologies that saw the environment not just in terms of its ecological functions, but also in terms of the myriad ways that environments enable or inhibit the racialized and gendered terrains of social reproduction (Pulido and Peña 1998). Thus, the structural mechanisms and infrastructures of EIA provided an institutional capacity and site of convergence for mobilizing resistance to environmentally racist practices and then incorporating environmentally antiracist knowledges into the state logics of environmental decision-making.

By the time Bill Clinton signed E.O. 12898 in 1994, these shifts in state logics had already begun to sediment, as the EPA and other federal and state agencies were already implementing, if unevenly and inconsistently, internal policies for assessing impacts to racially and culturally differentiated communities. And because of the public disclosure function of EIA and the legal protections from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the goal of preventing overt forms of distributive discrimination was already coded into the policies of the EPA and other federal agencies. So then the question remains as to why Clinton felt it necessary to pass an executive order whose function in many was already outmoded by existing juridical and procedural precedent. What Bill Clinton's executive order did was it brought into public focus, and thus rendered as *de jure*, the previously *de facto* practices and tacit understandings about the need for official representational antiracism within state institutions. That is, to maintain the legitimacy of liberal democracy in the face of growing resistance from organizing around issues such as environmental racism, state institutions needed to adopt mechanisms for including and

considering culturally, racially, and political economically differentiated populations. It acknowledges the various forms of critique environmental justice advocates raised against the state and capitalism by acknowledging the spatial inequalities of environmental racism. But it then diffuses the more radical critiques of systemic racism by insisting on a particular vision of environmental justice premised on racially and liberally democratic principles of recognition, inclusion, participation, and disclosure as sufficiently aspirational for continued capitalist growth.

Executive Order 12898 attaches environmental justice, as a form of official antiracism, to the broader project of modeling racial liberalism as a universalized component of U.S. style capitalism, at the same post-1992 Rio Conference moment that EIA was becoming a universal model for environmental policy. By establishing sets of guidelines, procedures, and a juridical framework through which racialized environmental knowledge is produced, disseminated, and brought to public scrutiny, the EIA process, amended by E.O. 12898, effectively governmentalizes environmental justice activism and becomes a site for the reorientation of racialized spatial practices. State-sanctioned forms of environmental antiracism further entrench the ways in which racial liberalism is entwined in the universalizing discourse of U.S. capitalist modernity (Melamed 2011) by foregrounding the representational aspects of racial justice while brushing aside the forms of environmental racism most inextricably tethered to global capitalism and contemporary forms of racial domination. Environmental justice thus became politically viable at the local scale and within the national context while simultaneously naturalizing the "offshoring" of environmentally racist practices and the masking of other forms of environmental racism such as policing practices and access to housing. Both of these maneuvers are possible because EIA's biopolitical mechanisms are shrouded in official antiracisms,

allowing "market forces," free trade, and environmental techno-science to become the primary knowledge systems informing state decisions.

Environmental impact assessment thus forms a basis for the ascendance of a sort of U.S. environmental imperialism through its universalizing lens of environmental techno-science and liberal antiracism as rationalizing principles for its biopolitical mechanisms for managing space and racialized populations. It allows for the abstraction of racialized material difference and to a certain degree, the masking of imperialist relations through its formalized environmental knowledge systems and liberal public participation mechanisms. The effect is that uneven capitalist development projects and property relations are provided with a foothold in the form of environmental policy. Despite this, however, the implementation of EIA is always grounded in, and dependent on, locally situated knowledges and institutional capacities arising from both state and non-state actors. Thus, just because the mechanisms facilitating the spread and implementation of EIA are linked to the structures of global capitalism and U.S. empire, its institutional apparatuses are not necessarily fixed in service of those forces. Indeed, the universalizing tendencies of EIA as global knowledge and governance system might help to reveal some of the ruptures within the imperialist logics of global capitalism exactly because it makes legible the similar forms of oppression and domination that emanate from the EIA apparatus.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have presented an initial sketch of the theoretical framework and arguments that make up my broader project of a geographical history and analysis of the EIA apparatus. The ultimate objective for this research is to develop a dialectical analysis of the capacities and limitations emerging from the establishment of EIA policies throughout the world

in terms of the contradictory projects of rendering space governable through the logics of racial

capital on the one hand, and of ongoing struggles for social and environmental justice on the

other. In addition to developing these arguments in greater detail, a major component of the

larger project will be using several U.S. based case studies of EIA in practice to look at the

material conditions of environmental justice struggle as a means for understanding the durability

and evolution of EIA policies. I will also develop a sort of intellectual biography of Lynton

Caldwell, one of the first environmental policy theorists and a primary author of NEPA and the

EIA process. The intellectual biography will help me to trace the development of EIA as a

biopolitical mechanism and to understand the shifting role of environmental policy in relation to

U.S. empire.

Finally, I will look at the role of EIA in its transnational context by using archival

research to chart the global diffusion of EIA through three distinct but overlapping institutional

arrangements: supranational governance organizations and international treaties; national

governments; and transnational environmental justice and anti-/alter-globalization networks.

Shifting focus to the global deployment of EIA raises questions about the role of US-led policy

transfers and attendant imperialistic military and economic tactics on the one hand, and the

consistent reluctance of the U.S. government to enter into global governance arrangements, let

alone environmental treaties, on the other. To shed light on this apparent contradiction, I will

investigate the historically and geographically contingent emergence of policies and state

institutions structured around EIA following three major UN conferences focused on the

environment that took place in Stockholm (1972) and Rio de Janiero (1992 and 2012). By

looking at proceedings from the UN conferences and that of other supranational institutions (e.g.

World Bank and IMF), resulting state policies, EIA related court decisions, and documentation

from EIA-enabled struggles against capitalist development projects, I will study specific trends

in the international institutionalization of EIA that shed light on the shifting processes and

structures that both enable and limit transnational environmental justice strategies. In particular, I

will see whether there are similar patterns as those seen in the U.S. context, where the

introduction of EIA as a technology of governance brings with it new and contradictory

institutional arrangements and political capacities. Part of this task is to uncover the patterns of

state restructuring and the emergence of new forms of statecraft that complicate preconceived

notions of neoliberalization and empire by empirically tracing the deployment and

implementation of EIA through changing institutional arrangements beyond U.S. borders (Peck

2003).

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