



ENVIRONMENTAL

**REGULATING NON -
DISCRIMINATORY THE
DISTRIBUTION AND
CONSUMPTION OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

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I. Introduction

As the population grows the amount of resources we need to support that population also increases. Unfortunately, many natural resources are depleting which has caused tensions due to the fact that people have different opinions of what should happen with the natural resources we have left. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that in the last 60 years, at least 40% of intrastate conflicts have a link to natural resources. Since 1990, at least 18 violent conflicts have been fueled by the exploitation of natural resources. Natural resource consumption also has had a link to racism and inequality. In some countries, minorities don't get the resources they need or in some situations the increase in development and population has caused groups of people to be under threat. It's important to understand the problem at hand and find effective long-lasting solutions because the supply of natural resources will just keep dwindling and the effect of climate change will have an increased effect on the world's population.

II. Definition of Key Terms

a) Environmental Justice: The fair treatment and involvement of all people no matter their race, color, gender, financial situation, or nationality in protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to create a healthier environment and future in which all can live, learn and work. Keeping in mind development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental regulations, laws, and policies.

b) Natural Resource Conflicts: Disagreements and disputes caused by control, management or use of natural resources. These conflicts can happen because of uncoordinated planning, policies that are not followed by the public or not implemented well, bad communication and information sharing and much more.

c) Climate change: Climate change refers to the slow change of long-term seasonal patterns of weather by causing undesirable changes in the frequency, intensity and duration of certain weather events threatening wildlife, crops, ecosystems and generally everybody's lives. Climate change is caused by mainly human-induced activities such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. For the majority of SIDS climate change represents the biggest threat to their viability and existence.

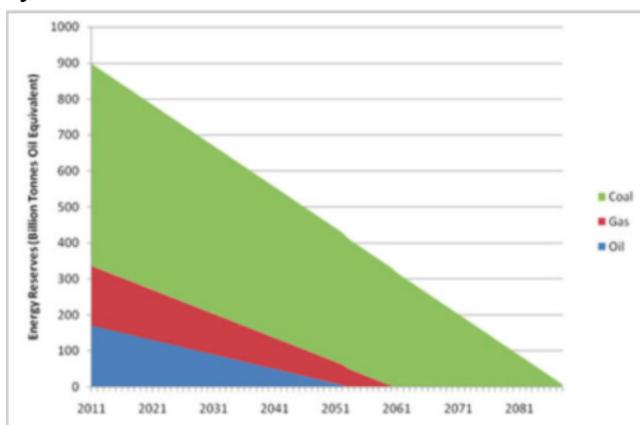
d) Natural Resources: Resources that exist in nature, without human-made influence, and are often exploited for economic gain.

e) **Racism:** discrimination and prejudice towards an ethnic or racial group by an individual, community or institution.

III. General Overview

a) What is Happening With the World's Natural Resources

Natural resources are extremely important for our society to function, but with the increase in population the demand for natural resources and energy has increased, thus depleting vital resources. So much so that it is predicted that by 2030 almost half the world's population possibly will struggle with getting fresh water. In terms of energy use in 2018 Energy consumption worldwide grew by 2.3%, which was driven by the robust and ever-growing economy. As we use up fossil fuels, we don't always take into full account how long they will last. It is predicted that oil will run out by 2052, gas will run out by 2060, and coal will run out by 2090.



b) Natural Resource Conflict

Natural resource conflict occurred at the local, regional, national and international levels. These conflicts are often caused because people have different ideals of how management of resources should be performed. This stems from competition for goods, property, power and economic benefit, but also parties believe that they need more resources or their interests, values or needs are under threat. Resource conflicts that are not monitored or attempts to manage conflicts do not work, they can turn into disputes. It is important to understand the difference between disputes and conflict. All disputes were caused by conflict but not all conflict develops into disputes.

With the increasing population and strain on the world's non-renewable natural resources

Many fragile states have many of the world's non-renewable and untapped natural resources. These countries are often at risk of resource conflicts where violence is at risk of being the following factor. In Terms of international disputes, These are often dealt with by the United Nations, European Union, African Union, and other regional bodies. The role of international actors in subnational disputes is unclear and the mandates created by the UN or regional bodies can be politically contested. Countries often are sensitive to the contravention of their sovereignty. It is also important to note that due to financial and security constraints lessen the possibility for intergovernmental bodies to be able to step in and mandate local disputes. When intervention and mediation to prevent and resolve natural disputes is not used, there are few people that can help deal with these things. When resolving a natural resource conflict it's important to understand precedent, local history and political economy.

In 2008 the [European Union \(EU\) and the United Nations \(UN\) started a partnership](#) to build capacities for natural resource, land and conflict management. This partnership was created to help prevent land and natural resources from contributing to violent conflicts by strategically implementing a multi-agency project focused on building the capacity of national stakeholders. The United Nations Interagency Framework Team manages this project which is financed by the European Union's Instrument for Stability which brings together UN agencies and departments to help improve management of natural resource management to prevent conflict and build peace. The partnership has created many practical guidance notes and training material on resource and land conflict, renewable resources and conflict, capacity building for natural resource managements and conflict prevention. This has also helped UN and EU field staff, UN headquarters and partner countries.

Agreements and treaties have been long lasting solutions in many cases of natural resource conflict, including the Indus Water treaty, which was signed in 1960. The treaty was signed between India and Pakistan due to the fact that there was concern over the use of the waters of the Indus River. The treaty fixed the problem and has survived several Indo-Pakistani wars, plus it has provided open discussion between the two countries. There are many other national and local treaties and agreements around the world. The discussion about natural resources between core political groups can actually be very beneficial. Due to the fact that discussion about natural resources can lead to dialogue over shared economic benefits. Investing in more sustainable energy technologies such as, hydro, wind, thermal, solar and biomass could possibly help prevent and lessen tensions surrounding natural resources.

C) The Effect of War and Conflict on Natural Resources depletion

War and Conflict can cause serious loss of natural resources. Wars in countries such as Colombia, Afghanistan or Iraq have caused tremendous amounts of natural resource loss.

Deforestation rates have reached an astounding 95% in parts of Afghanistan. Forests also have become hotspots for cover and refuge of rebel groups in Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Due to this illegal logging, massive poaching and illegal mining has occurred and has become an immense threat to wildlife and forest conservation.

D) Racism in the Distribution and Consumption of Natural Resources

The term environmental racism refers to actions or policies by public or private actors that disproportionately harm persons of color or disadvantaged racial groups. The term was coined with the 1987 United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice report “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States,” which documented that hazardous waste facilities were far more likely to be sited in African American or Latino communities than in those primarily populated by whites, controlling for economic class. This and other empirical studies of the disparate impact of environmental policies and practices are credited with inspiring the environmental justice movement in the United States. While originally concerned only with domestic polluting facility siting decisions, it now refers to a wide variety of environmental harms that disproportionately impact persons and peoples on the basis of race or color, both domestically and internationally.

In terms of natural resource distribution and consumption, there is often inequality surrounding this. For example in America people of color, especially black American, are more at risk of lead poisoning because they are disproportionately more likely to live in impoverished neighborhoods. An example of this is Flint, Michigan’s water crisis. Lead poisoning has caused these communities to tend to suffer from permanent cognitive and physical impairments and disabilities that include; tooth decay, miscarriages, autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In many countries indigenous people are under threat because of natural resource consumption. For example in Brazil 98% of the indigenous people live in the Amazon. These people are under huge threat because so much of the Amazon is being burnt down. In 2019, the amount of forest fires went up by 77% from the previous year. Most of the land being burnt is for pasture and cultivation. Brazil’s National Space Institute, has estimated that 3,553 fires are burning 148 indigenous territories and regions in Brazil.

IV. Major Parties Involved and their Views

a) United States of America

Racism surrounding the distribution and consumption of natural resources is extremely prevalent in America. Black American are more likely to have lead in their water due to the fact which can cause many health complications. Native American also are battling to keep their lands from being exploited for natural resources consumption.

B) Brazil: In Brazil 98% of the indugiunas people live in the Amazon, and as the Amazon burns these native people are coming down with it. Brazil's National Space Institute, has estimated that 3,553 fires are burning 148 indugiunos territories and regions in Brazil.

C) Afghanistan: Decades of conflict have had a huge impact on people, the economy and the environment in Afghanistan. There are many different conflicts going on in the country at different scales and intensities. A lot of the disputes are caused by management of land and natural resources such as water, timber and minerals. These disputes often worsen ethical, political and regional divisions.

D) Democratic Republic of Congo: The world's worst conflict since World War II happens to be in Congo. The Great war of Africa was almost entirely fought in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Congo is rich with minerals and has great climate and fertile soil, yet is rated low on the UN Human Development Index. The country is riddled with past political and military problems which have had direct roots with natural resource exploitation. The government's main focus is to make money off their natural resources, but unfortunately has put the development of Congo to the back burner.

E) South Sudan: South Sudan is riddled with conflicts, which have been linked to the control over natural resources. Water and oil have predicted internal and external conflicts. Pasture and water especially in the dry season is one of the major cases of conflict between pastoral and farming communities. The continued conflict in this country hinders the development of sustainable management of its natural resources, which threatens the livelihoods of more than 40 million people. The county also suffers from effects of climate change causing increased amounts of droughts and floods.

V. Relevant United Nations Documents

[Security Council 8372nd meeting, October 16, 2018](#)

The security council meeting goes over natural resources as a route of conflict

[Security Council Resolution 1625, September 14, 2005](#)

This resolution goes over how the security council can prevent conflict, by looking at strategies of sustainable development.

VI. Questions to Consider

- How can disputes over the use, extraction, and ownership of natural resources be prevented?
- How can racism surrounding natural resources distribution be lessened or eradicated?
- How can natural resources be managed so that conflicts do not happen?
- How can conflicts caused by climate change be prevented?
- Why are conflicts being caused by natural resources?
- Can investing in more sustainable energy lessen the amount of conflicts caused by natural resources?
- Why is it important to conserve and manage the world's natural resources?

VII. Conclusion

As our world's natural resources decrease and the effect of climate change on our society increases it is important to understand how natural resources affect society, and how they can cause conflict. It's crucial to find long lasting solutions to preventing conflicts started by natural resources, less inequality in natural resource distributions, and protecting populations who are being affected by exploitation of natural resources. Solutions to consider might include treaties, open discussions and the investment of more clean energy sources including hydro, wind, thermal, solar and biomass. Consider looking at organizations including European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) Partnership on Land, Natural Resources and Conflict Prevention and treaties that have had long lasting success like the Indus Water Treaty.

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