

ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Mobilizing for justice

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Research on environmental conflicts and justice is largely focused on documenting how environmental pollution and damage tends to be located in areas inhabited by less powerful actors. Looking forward, understanding the ingredients for civic movements to achieve a solution that is acceptable to all is becoming increasingly important, particularly in times of diminishing resources for such mobilizations and increasing vested interests.

David Hess and Lacey Satcher from Vanderbilt University, United States, use inferential statistics and qualitative comparative analysis to identify patterns in what led environmentally driven mobilizations to a successful outcome. They use secondary databases (EJ Atlas and University of Michigan) to select and document 50 cases of local US

environmental justice mobilizations. The cases include mining, waste, power generation, infrastructure and pollution, such as DDT pesticide entering humans. The range of mobilization actions is diverse, and includes strikes, boycotts, lobbying and petitions. Although each case is complex, the authors find that, wherever possible, coalitions with local and regional governments were associated with more successful mobilizations. Other features which appeared particularly helpful were litigation, protest, gaining non-local attention and minimizing the industry's response to the mobilization.

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