

PAPER ENVSGY03: Urban and Regional Political Ecology

DURATION: 3 Hours.

Please answer TWO questions only, ONE from Section A and ONE from Section B. All questions carry equal marks.

Answer only ONE of the following questions:

SECTION A

1. Environmental problems are not simply a reflection of policy or market failures but the manifestation of broader political and economic forces. Discuss this assertion.
2. Ecological distribution conflicts have been defined as conflicts over “the social, spatial and intertemporal patterns of access to the benefits obtainable from natural resources and from the environment as a life support system, including its ‘cleaning up’ properties” (Martinez Alier). Assess the usefulness of ‘environmental justice’ as a principle for resolving such conflicts.
3. Which significant actors, relationships and processes are relevant to an understanding of ‘environmental governance’.

SECTION B

4. Analyze the potential contradictions between the principles of ‘sustainable development’ and ‘distributive justice’ in relation to a specific ecological distribution conflict of your choice.
5. “Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.” (Hardin). Elaborate on this assumption by exploring its implications for environmental policy focusing on one example of your own choice.
6. Examine, in relation to examples of your choice, the conditions under which ecological distribution conflicts may give rise to the emergence of social movements.
7. Assess the respective merits of a) administrative rationalism and b) economic (market) rationalism as a basis for a policy response to ecological distribution conflicts, making reference to specific examples of your choice.
8. Political ecologists assume that environmental problems are socially constructed and that the elucidation of environmental conflicts requires the analysis of interwoven “natural” and “social” processes. Elaborate critically on this assumption focusing on an ecological distribution conflict of your choice.

END OF PAPER