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Ecopopulism and Environmental Justice in Eastern and South Europe

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INTRODUCTION

I am dealing in this paper with the question of environmental and climate (in)justices in Eastern and South Europe (ESE). At first, I will refer the theoretical pillars of environmental justice and my statement is that there is an expanding sphere concerning environmentalism which has grounded the theory of climate justice. The environmental justice has been expanded to climate justice, because it increasingly addressed that the environmental and social conditions provide for individual and community needs and functioning and justice depends on the environmental conditions. It has been put forward here that populism could bring closer the importance of environmental and climate related disasters to the people's everyday lives and experience. In the next part of this paper the connection of climate justice and social problems in ESE has been analyzed. The investigation elaborated here is based on a very important initiative called Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities and Trade (EJOLT) and its Environmental Justice Atlas. I will focus on two main environmental and climate injustice caused challenges: the first one is the situation of the Roma communities in ESE, and the second one is the emerging case of fuel or energy poverty. It has been raised here that an elitist populist regime, for instance in Hungary, how can damage the case of environmental and climate justice with instituted biopower. I will conclude this paper that we need to (re)enhance the social nature of environmental problems and this will strengthen the environmental consciousness in ESE. The relating discourse of environmental and climate justice in ESE is need to be based on environmental identities constructed on ethnical and social solidarity. Finally, we should have a look on the biopolitical structure of modern State.

I. THEORIZING THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

1. Expanding Sphere

It will be argued here that there is a broadening and expanding discourse about the environmental justice. I will briefly analyze the main notions of the expanded concerns of environmental justice. The earliest approaches concerning environmental justice focused on the inequity in the distribution of environmental bads (Bryant–Mohai, 1992; Pellow, 2004 and 2007). From that standpoint “environmental injustice was about social injustice being manifest in a host of environmental risks and bads” (Schlosberg, 2013: 47). Bullard (2000) assumed that environmental justice as the core commitment that “all people and communities are entitled to equal protection of environmental and public health laws and regulations.”

These environmental problems are characterized as social injustices, which hurt not only the poor people but the communities of colour. From this standpoint, environmental injustice has been framed as eco-racism so the main explanatory focus of environmental problems was racism.² According to Mohai, Pellow and Roberts environmental racism is the result of what happens when people fear that their lives and

² Schlosberg puts it very clearly: “Environmental justice wasn’t simply about establishing the fact that more environmental bads and risks were being put on minority communities [...] The practice, and experience, of racism has been at the heart of environmental justice discourse in the United States [...]” (Schlosberg, 2013: 39.).

health are being disproportionately put at risk because of the color of their skin or the sound of their accent” (2009: 406.).³

Benjamin Chavis, then executive director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ, elaborated the term of environmental racism in the following way: “Environmental racism is racial discrimination in environmental policy making, the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of color from leadership of the ecology movements” (Bullard, 2000 cited by Mohai et al., 2009: 406.). Thus, environmental racism “refers to any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color” (Bullard, 1996 cited by Mohai et al., 2009: 406.).

Schlosberg points out “[...] equity was a key frame in the initial consideration of environmental injustice. That early focus on inequity quickly expanded to include a range of issues from the generally unequal nature of environmental protection to the distribution of a range of environmental goods as well as bads [...]” (Schlosberg, 2013: 38.). The three main directions where the concept of environmental justice has been expanded are the analysis of justice concerning environmental justice, the factors behind environmental injustices and the definition of environment.

Mohai et al. (2009) pointed out the main factors of environmental injustices. The first one is dealing with the economic considerations address both the impoverishment of impacted populations and the reasoning for industrial externalization of social and environmental costs. Their second point reveals that the industry and government seeks the path of least resistance to development, and poor and racial minority communities make easier targets. Finally, a distinct form of racism simply associates communities of colour with pollution (Schlosberg, 2013: 39.).

Apparently, there is another explanation about the context of environmental justice and therefor claims concerning environmental justice remain contentious. Mohai, Pellow and Roberts show this wave of environmental justice and state that early environmental movements ignored social justice and equality issues and “there is not a consensus among environmentalists on whether broadening environmentalism to include justice is always a good idea” (Mohai et al., 2009. 406.).

We can say that the discourse of race and ethnicity are “important aspects in understanding popular environmentalism, but they may not be central in every setting where environmental injustices are present” (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 5.). Martínez-Alier (2003) cautions against applying the “environmental racism” as a universal framework to all environmental injustices.

Nevertheless, there is a broadening environmental justice discourse which has absorbed several issues and has been applied a global level. It has been argued by Schlosberg that this discourse can be seen which extends beyond individual human beings and conceptualizes community level justice and justice beyond the human (2013:

³ Moreover, the approach of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been based on this framework and defined environmental justice as “The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Source: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

40). The concept of environmental justice has become a broad framework which contains “analyses of transportation, access to countryside and green space, land use and smart growth policy, water quality and distribution, energy development and jobs, brownfields refurbishment, and food justice” (Schlosberg, 2013: 40).

2. Environmental Justice as Climate Justice

According to Schlosberg (2013: 38.): “Climate change has pushed environmental justice to more broad considerations of both environment and justice.” We can say that climate justice has become one of the main concept of environmental justice. Several environmental problems which used to be environmental justice questions currently can be seen and interpreted in climate justice framework.

At first climate justice concerns applied existing distributive and social justice conception to the climate change (Schlosberg, 2013: 38.). This means that climate justice discourses focused on distributive fairness (Shue, 1993), historical responsibility and restorative justice (Agarwal–Nurain 1991), or a per capita equity approach to emission allowances (Singer 2004). Climate change has been interpreted as an environmental phenomenon of social injustices by several climate change movements.

Climate change made the theory of environmental justice a more problem based approach focused on understanding and articulating the crisis caused by climate change at global and local scale. Two main shifts framed the concept environmental justice and these, in my view, turned environmental to climate justice. On the one hand, Schlosberg is convinced that “the breadth of the understanding of environmental and climate justice here both includes and moves beyond local environmental conditions, to expand the environmental justice frame and engage broader conceptions of social and global justice” (Schlosberg, 2013: 47.). On the other hand, the disastrous damages and catastrophes caused by climate change turned the discourse of environmental justice to the local experiences, for instance the resilience of communities.⁴ So, the increasing vulnerability to climate change at global and local and the demand of adaptation in an altered climate formed the concept of climate justice.

The environmental justice has been expanded to climate justice, because it increasingly addressed that the environmental and social conditions “provide for individual and community needs and functioning” and justice depends on the environmental conditions (Schlosberg, 2013: 48.). Environmental justice movements in the United States promoted the case of environmental injustice at global level. Mohai, Pellow and Roberts pointed out that climate justice concerns have been evolved on right-based approach: “Much of the existing research on the internationalization of risks comes from legal scholars wrestling with problems of international and domestic law on the waste trade – specifically the legislation and treaties enacted to control these activities [...]. The legal literature centers mainly on one major pressing question: To what extent can domestic regulation and international agreements control or minimize the waste trade?” (Mohai et al., 2009: 419.). Nations who suffering from imported waste, the impact of climate change are communities from the Global South populated by deprived people. In a certain sense climate justice is a globalized concept of

⁴ “Environmental and climate justice activists and movements regularly address the actual material experience of changing environmental conditions, impacts on everyday life, and, crucially, the potential ways functioning and development are threatened.” (Schlosberg, 2013: 47.)

environmental justice and movements. For instance, shipping electronic waste creates a massive transfer of hazardous waste products from North to South (Mohai et al., 2009: 420.). We can say that climate justice refers to the injustice dilemmas caused and exacerbated by climate change. As Mohai, Pellow and Roberts argued (2009: 420.): “[c]limate change reflects and increases social inequality in a series of ways, including who suffers most its consequences, who caused the problem, who is expected to act, and who has the resources to do so” (IPCC, 2007; Kasperson–Kasperson, 2001). Climate justice can be understood not only in the context of individuals, but between states, race, ethnicity, class.

Posner and Weisbach reject “the claim that climate change policies should be based on corrective justice or on an effort to redistribute from rich to poor” (2010: 169). They argue that emissions permits should be allocated on a per capita basis causes several ethical problems: “Such an allocation is not easy to justify from the standpoint of any ethical theory, and efforts to insist on it may well derail a climate treaty, ensuring serious harms to poor people in poor nations.” (Posner–Weisbach, 2010: 169.). They suggest that wealthy people have moral obligations to help poor people in developed and developing country as well. As the impact of climate change increases the differences between the rich and poor, this obligation has been increased. They put that very interesting point that it is not necessary that this obligation should be carried out through climate change treaties.⁵ Posner and Weisbach are convinced that an effective climate treaty will likely generate a surplus which is distributed within the parties who should to join this treaty because it must be designed to make signatories better off (2010: 170.).

3. Environmental Justice and Populism: Repoliticization of the Discourse

John M. Meyer (2008) has identified and described two main discourses and characters concerning US environmental movements, which are *paternalism* and *populism*. Meyer is dealing with the characterization of US environmentalists and would like to know “how environmentalists view the people and correspondingly how the people view environmentalists” (2008: 221.). This is all about the relationship of environmentalists to the people or the method which shows the environmental movements deal with the people. Meyer uses Margaret Canovan (2005) observation of the vagueness of category of “*the people*”, in her book she argues that: “Calls to ‘give politics back to the people’ exploit the ambiguity according to which ‘the people’ is first understood by contrast with the power-holders (and therefore as something less than the population at large) and then expanded to wield the authority of the sovereign people as a whole” (2005: 5).

Based on Canovan’s view, Meyer puts it forward that populism can be understood as a contrast “between the interests and identity of ‘the people’ and those of the power holders”. On the other side paternalism elaborates “a unitary conception of the people and their true interests. Where such interests go unrecognised, ignorance, apathy, or egoism are typically diagnosed as the reason.” (Meyer, 2008: 220.). According to the paternalistic discourse: “We – the informed, engaged, public spirited – wish to protect you – the uninformed, apathetic, or egoistic – from the consequences of your

⁵ Posner and Weisbach justify their skepticism with the following point: “It is not clear, for example, how best to discharge duties to the poor when they are ruled by corrupt governments or when powerful nations threaten or coerce them with bad intent.” (2010: 17.).

environmentally destructive ways.” (Meyer, 2008: 221.). This is not necessarily the case of self-conscious, but the identity and elitist approach (experts, elite environmental NOGs) of the affected movements can be perceived as paternalistic, because of its administrative rationalism and scientific expertise. In contrast, populist environmentalism emphasizes the tensions and antagonism between the elites and grassroots, and based on the local initiatives. This can be seen as a kind of realist approach, because the populist form of environmentalism “does not demand the transformation of widely shared values or the overcoming of people’s false consciousness or identity. Rather than diagnose the problem as ignorance or apathy to be corrected by knowledgeable professionals, the problem is attributed to remote decision-makers unable or unwilling to account for local knowledge and everyday experience” (Meyer, 2008: 224.). From this standpoint, the core reason of the environmental catastrophe is not just egoism or self-interest, but the powerful elites and corporations whose financial interest can destroy the life of the ordinary people. In my sense, this is the repoliticization of environmental and climate justice discourse.

Although, in my view the main concepts of environmental and climate justice can be interpreted at the same time in a paternalist (environmental racism, justice of non-human beings) and populist (environmental and climate injustice as social injustice) way, but there is a need to re-conceptualize and reinforce the populist side. I am convinced that the disastrous effect of environmental and climate injustices should be emphasized. We should bring close the meaning of environmental and climate related disasters to the “people’s everyday lives and experiences” (Meyer, 2008: 225.). Actually, this is the exact claim which has been elaborated by toxics movements in the USA.

Szasz (1999) in his *EcoPopulism* is dealing with evolution of the local hazardous waste protest groups. It has been put forward by Szasz that these toxics movements are often characterized by the NIMBY, or “not in my backyard” phenomenon, but there is a core displacement and these organizations moved forward in radical environmental populism. Szasz described “how the movement expanded from hazardous waste to a host of other toxics issues. That expansion was accompanied by an increasingly comprehensive, totalizing critique of modern economic production and forms of political power.” (Szasz, 1999: 80.). The toxics movements cannot be characterized with a distinct ideological background, they use multiple political symbols and ideological legitimations.⁶ They have find the roots and tradition of the American agrarian populist movements, which has been based on the people “against the privilege and power of dominant, exploiting, selfish, and uncaring elites” (Szasz, 1999: 81.). This radical environmental populist attitude situated these in the landscape of American radicalism, on the other hand these movements can be distinguished from the political populist traditions and other environmentalist approaches. The new wave of toxics movements makes the agenda concerning the restructuring the relationship between the economy and society. In this sense, they emphasize the pollution prevention, mandatory recycling, mandatory source reduction, and outright bans on the production of harmful toxic materials and at the same time in accordance with these claims the radical democratization of politics (direct citizen representation in all decision-making,

⁶ „Some in the movement legitimate their radicalism by appropriating the symbols of the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence and its triad of inalienable rights, ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,’ and the Bill of Rights, and by emphasizing the radical, social movement aspects of the Revolution, such as the Boston Tea Party.” (Szasz, 1999: 81.)

empowerment of citizens and communities) (Szasz, 1999: 82.). From Szasz's standpoint, this ideological radicalization of local hazardous waste protest groups "make common cause with other social justice movements and to embrace a much broader progressive agenda" (Szasz, 1999: 82.). These movements interpret environmental justice in a populist way which I claimed in conjunctions with the main discourses and characters of the US environmental movements.

II. CLIMATE JUSTICE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN EASTERN AND SOUTH EUROPE

1. The Region and Climate Change

I will investigate here climate justice relationships of Eastern and South Europe (ESE). From political, geographical, economical and historical reasons this region can be analyzed according to very similar perspectives. Disasters, environmental and social impacts caused by climate change could be create a common system of challenges in ESE. ESE contains 17 states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine.

It has been investigated by Anders, Stagl, Auer, and Pavlik that in Central and Eastern Europe the mean annual temperature is projected to increase between 1 and 3 °C until the middle of the century and up to 5 °C by the end of the century (Anders et al., 2013: 24–24.) (*Figure 1.* illustrates the projected change in temperature for the middle of the 21th century).⁷ This temperature raising will cause several social and political problems across the region. It has been predicted that the "European warming will be higher than the global mean temperature increase [...] In the autumn and winter months the temperature change in North and Eastern Europe will be higher (up to 3 °C) compared to South Europe (1–1.5 °C)." (Anders et al., 2013:25).

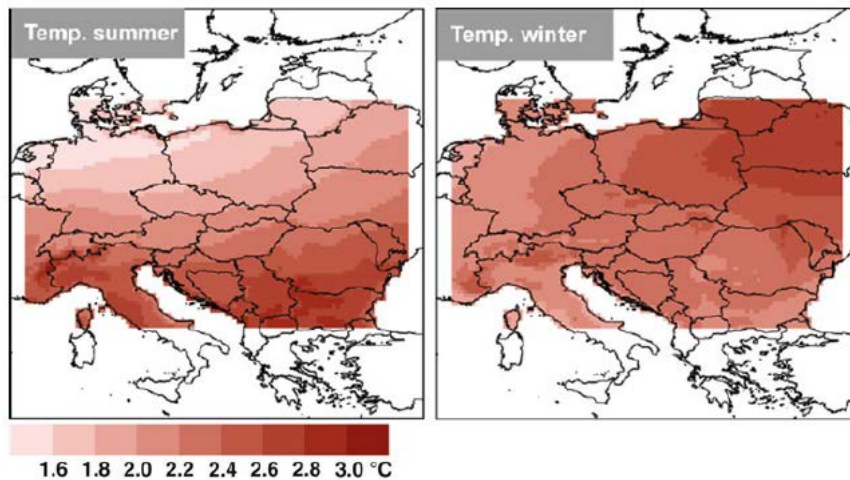


Figure 1. Change of simulated mean temperature in Central and Eastern Europe in winter and summer as the multi-model mean 2036–2065 relative to 1971–2000 for the A1B greenhouse gas emission scenario (Source: Anders et al., 2013: 25.)

⁷ This scenario has been taken different form European Global Climate Models produced in the European project ENSEMBLES (van der Linden–Mitchell, 2009).

They concluded that "[f]or all of Central and Eastern Europe a clear temperature rise is visible for the future which is projected to become more distinct at the end of the century. A general pattern is that the projected increase of temperature is highest during summer and lower during winter." (Anders et al., 2013: 26).

To deep understand the climate justice problems concerning the ESE it is necessary to show the relevant details about the climate change. The maps of Environmental Justice Atlas by Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities and Trade (EJOLT)⁸ highlight the spatial mal-distribution of climate change sources and its impacts. *Figure 2.* shows CO₂ emissions/capita and *Figure 3.* is dealing with the case of carbon debt.⁹ The climate debt has been defined at People's Summit in Bolivia in 2010, it means that "the overconsumption of the available capacity of the Earth's atmosphere and climate system to absorb greenhouse gases by the developed countries has run up a climate debt to developing countries and mother Earth" (UNFCCC 2010: 15). CO₂ Emissions/Capita and climate debt can be considered together, whereas positive figure constitutes a debt, while a negative is a claim (Warlenius, n.a.). One of the focus of EJOLT project is ecological debt, including climate debt, which is mainly based on carbon debt.

⁸ Web: <https://ejatlas.org/>

⁹ EJOLT refers the definition of carbon debt: „There, the carbon debt of country A is defined as (a) over-emission of CO₂ by country A over time with respect to a sustainable level; i.e. emission levels that overshoot the absorption capacity of the atmosphere and are thus causing ecological impact in other countries and ecosystems beyond national jurisdiction; (b) over-emission of CO₂ by country A over time at the expense of the equitable rights to the absorption capacity of the atmosphere of other countries or individuals." (Warlenius, n.a.: 2.). This concept of carbon debt has been elaborated by Eric Paredis (2008).

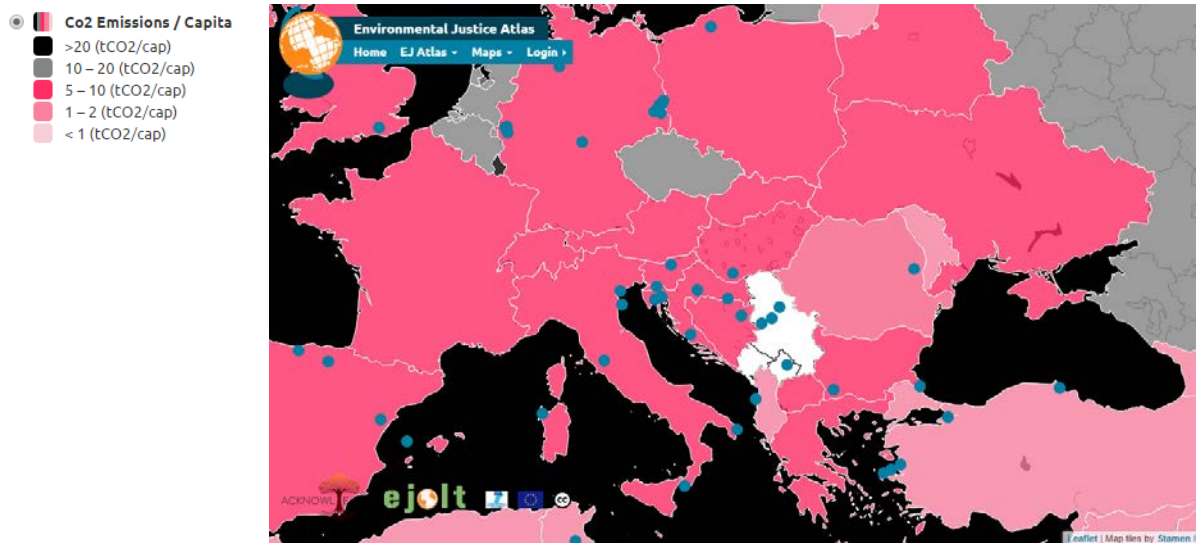


Figure 2. CO₂ Emissions/Capita in Eastern and South Europe

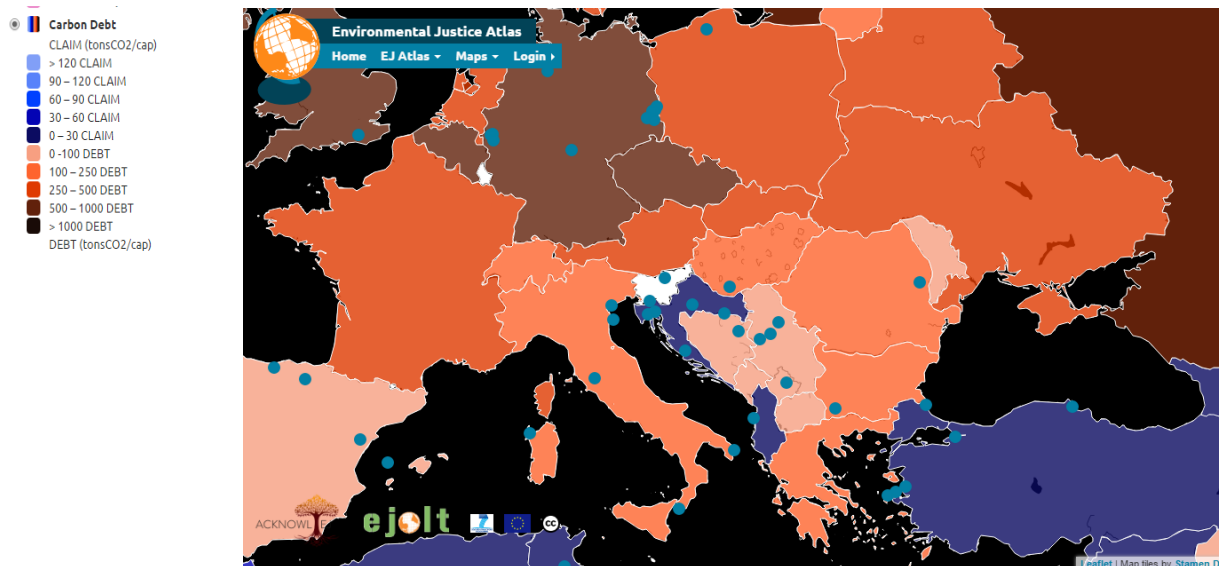


Figure 3. Carbon Debt in Eastern and South Europe

From these perspectives, we can say that ESE has relatively moderate CO₂ emissions/capita results, at the same time this region has a high carbon debt capacity which means huge risks in the light of climate justice injustices.

2. The Nature of Climate Injustice in ESE

According to the EJOLT Environmental Justice Atlas the number of environmental justice problems has increasingly grown in ESE¹⁰ and some of them have a direct relationship with climate change (*Figure 4.*). However, the climate related problems are not on the political agenda in this region.



Figure 4. Environmental Justice Related Cases from ESE (Source: <https://ejatlas.org/>)

After the regime changes a new chapter has begun in the environmental history of the post-communist region. It has been proven by the collapse of communist regimes that there is a huge environmental and social bomb caused by the environmental irresponsibility. Unfortunately, the environmental and social systems have not been improved by the new liberal and capitalist systems. The core problems with democracy in this region are in conjunction with the environmental, climate and social problems. In my point of view there is a strong connection between the social and climate (or environmental) injustices. Moreover, the social problems appear in environmental contexts and the victims do not realize the environmental nature of these challenges for instance fuel poverty.

Therefore, this region has not only huge carbon or ecological debt potential, but the risk of vulnerability caused by climate change is also relatively high in ESE compared to other parts of Europe (*Figure 5.*).

¹⁰ 181 climate justice related cases have been reported in the EJOLT database up to 17th March 2017 (source: <https://ejatlas.org/>).

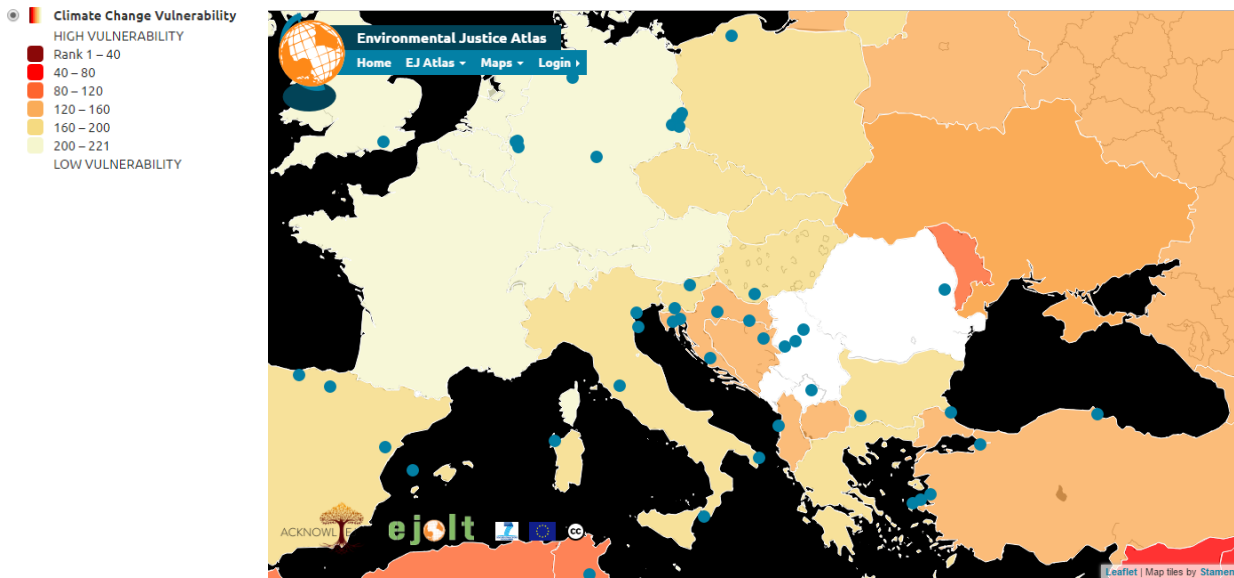


Figure 5. *Climate Change Vulnerability in Eastern and South Europe*

In my view, this reflect in two main climate related injustices. The first one defeat the most vulnerable sociocultural groups in this region which is Roma community. The second one is relating to the lower (and upper) middle class group and called energy poverty.

3. The Theoretical Aspects of Environmental/Climate Justice in ESE

Environmental justice movement was said to be “a post-materialist movement supported largely by young, white, middle-class citizens” (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 5.). This approach has mistakenly led a common-sense perception that low-income and socially excluded groups are not interested in and even more care less about the environment than their middle-class, majority counterparts. Doherty and Doyle (2006) argued that there are three major frames in transnational environmentalism: post-colonial, post-materialist, and post-industrial environmentalisms. Martínez-Alier (2003) pointed out the “environmentalism of the poor” which combining elements of post-colonial and post-industrial environmentalist approaches and address the preservation of traditional ecological knowledge and the struggle for environmental justice. In ESE, there both post-colonial and post-industrial aspects can be find in the environmental critique concerning environmental justice (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 5.). Nevertheless, there is a confluence of environmental activism and lessons learned from the US civil rights-based environmental activism which “has fundamentally shifted the discourse on environmental harms toward a more intrinsic or inherent valuation of humans and nature and points to previously untapped possibilities for integration” (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 6.). The environmental and climate justice discourse has been influenced by this phenomenon and it is obvious that anti-racism and environmentalism go hand in hand. I totally understand with the approach of Harper, Steger and Filčák who based their theory on Ladányi and Szelényi’s analysis of post-socialist patterns of social exclusion (2006) and argue “that in the case of Roma in CEE, spaces inhabited by low-income Roma have come to be ‘racialized’ during the post-

socialist era, intensifying patterns of environmental exclusion along ethnic lines” (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 6.).

Environmental justice advocacy in the US based extensively on the civil rights movement and was linked to bottom-up, community-based activism. In contrast to the US situation, in the UK environmental movement are led by environmental organizations with a highly-educated staff and international expertise (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 6.). These are the main ways to constructing and theorizing environmental justice. We can understand with their conclusion which is relating to Central and Eastern Europe but can be generalized concerning the ESE region: “These possibilities could be expressed in CEE through the integration of environmental protection and social inclusion. To date, attempts at such policy integration or activist alliances have been rare; post-socialist policies addressing the conditions of Roma communities have been framed through an ethnic lens as ‘Roma issues’, resulting in an ethicized policy silo [...]. For mobilizations to be effective, activists in CEE must develop a vocabulary for addressing environmental injustices that is analytically applicable and strategically effective in the context of the European Union and especially at the local and national level [...]” (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 7.).

Summarizing, we need a common and well-established discourse concerning environmental injustices which is overlapping between environmental and social inclusion concerns. This new approach is needed to be based on identity politics which creates ethnic identities and moving steps forward to environmental identities.

4. Roma Population and Climate Justice: From “Roma-issue” to Climate Discourse

The environmental injustices concerning Roma people originated in the environmental transition following 1989, when the low-income Roma population in this region have borne the brunt of the post-socialist economic transformation. The Roma minority has mainly suffering from the following environmental problems and injustices: unequal access to sewage or wastewater treatment; unequal access to household water; unequal access to green space and playgrounds; waste management and illegal dumping by outsiders as well as residents; energy, including household energy efficiency and access to fuel for heating and cooking; poor housing quality, which relates back to energy efficiency, access to public infrastructure, and human health. The harmful effect of climate change (problems with drinking water; floods; heat waves) will affect disproportionately the Roma minority and will cause very similar environmental and climate injustices theorized as eco-racism. Without a common climate governance structures in ESE the massive climate and social injustices will cause incalculable damages.

It has been pointed out by Tamara Steger that the state of the Roma communities and refugees demonstrates the urgency of an environmental justice agenda in ECE (Steger, 2007: 19.). From her standpoint, the environmental and climate justices questions concerning Roma people have been investigated in the social justice and racist framework: “While it is widely known that the Roma experience racial prejudice and discrimination, more attention is needed on how this is reflected in their living conditions and manifested as health problems through the distribution of environmental benefits and harms [...] While Roma take on a disproportionate share of the burden of environmental harms, they are frequently denied the benefits such as access to water and other natural resources.” (Steger, 2007: 19.).

The social discrimination towards the Roma community has led geographical segregation which means that they have been incarcerated to the most polluted or high environmental risk areas. Roma communities have insufficient access to environmental good (such as clean water, sewage treatment) (*Table 1.*). Environmental and climate injustices contribute to devastating social conditions of these people, who do have an equal procedural and environmental rights incorporated by the constitutions ESE countries as non-Roma people. There is a huge tension between Roma and non-Roma people concerning the environmental the prevailing constitutional environmental rights sphere.¹¹

	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Romania	Slovak Republic
Running water	45	4	34	65	32
Toilet in the dwelling	75	15	46	65	44
Sewage treatment	51	6	63	62	46
Bathroom in the dwelling	70	12	41	66	37

Table 1. Percent of Roma population living in households without access to facilities in the dwelling (2002) (Source: Steger, 2007: 20.).

There is another side of the social and environmental discrimination of Roma communities, “poorly insulated housing and the widespread use of dilapidated woodstoves waste residents’ energy resources and also contribute to respiratory ailments in the winter months” (Steger, 2007: 20.) and it is very common that in these segregated areas the people heat with household and other waste which contributes the formation of smog.

These environmental burdens endured disproportionately by the Roma people will be increased because of the constantly occurring impact of climate change (Steger, 2007: 21.). This will influence the otherwise disappointing health records of the Roma communities.

In my view, the main problem in this field is that there is no a shared environmental identity or identity politics in the Roma communities. Harper, Steger and Filčák have pointed out that “Roma in CEE are rarely perceived as ‘environmental subjects’ by themselves or others although struggles for access to housing and public infrastructure have played a critical role in grassroots organizing in many Roma communities.” (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 7.). Nevertheless, this is a huge challenge because on the one hand “since 1989 there has been a push from both Romani activists and the Hungarian state [...] to identify and organize Roma as an ethnic group and to target policies towards them”, on the other hand “many activists and politicians fear that ‘ethicizing’ political issues of Roma communities marginalizes those issues and promotes stereotypes, but without targeted programs, there is little incentive for members of the majority group to consult or include minorities” (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 11.). There is a basic need to create a coalition from environmentalist and Roma civil rights activists which can address the racial side of environmental injustices without enhancing stereotypes and creating an environmental discursive or geographical ghetto (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 11.). Otherwise, Roma communities will bear the brunt of environmental and climate inequalities, because they are unable to mobilize social, political, economic resources (Pellow, 2001).

¹¹ According to the relationship between the procedural and connotational environmental rights please find more assumptions: Antal, 2014.

5. Energy Poverty

In my concern, energy or fuel poverty is phenomenon which represents environmental and climate injustices not only in the marginalized social groups but in the middle class: not all low-income households are fuel poor and there are fuel poor households that do not belong to the lowest income percentiles (Waddams Prince et al., 2006). The energy or fuel poverty is referring the expanding sphere of environmental and climate injustices. According to Tirado and Üрге-Vorsatz “[t]he concept of fuel poverty can be located in the broad frame of the lack of or inadequate access to energy services, which refers to the lack access, mostly in developing countries to quality energy services as those provided, for instance, by electricity” (2010: 4.). Fuel or energy poverty is about the quality and affordability of energy services, energy efficiency. It means the inability to afford adequate energy services for the household. A proposed definition of fuel poverty by Brenda Boardman who stated that this is an “inability to obtain adequate energy services for 10% of a household income” (1991: 201.). This definition has been criticized because the lack of scientific rationality of the mentioned 10%. Tirado and Üрге-Vorsatz refer that fuel or energy poverty is a concept to be framed in more general considerations about poverty and deprivation (2010: 4.). Nowadays, fuel or energy poverty is getting more and more political importance, not just because of the climate change, but the energy bills and vulnerable customers.

Tirado and Üрге-Vorsatz put is clear that “[c]onsidering the three factors often considered in the analysis of fuel poverty (energy prices, household income and energy performance of the residential stock), there are concerns about the incidence of this particular type of deprivation in CEE countries” (2010: 5.). In more general this is an emerging environmental and climate change caused deprivation in ESE. First of all, after the regime change in this region the stat-owed energy monopolies have been privatized. The acceptance of concept of the full-cost recovery tariffs and liberalized energy markets caused higher energy prices. The region countries’ GDP per capita income is lower than the EU’s average. Moreover, “the high energy consumption of the average residential unit is a consequence of the long time subsidized energy prices and the lack of basic energy efficiency requirements” (Tirado–Üрге-Vorsatz, 2010: 5–6.).¹²

According to Buzar these tendencies caused that homes have become “prisons” for households unable to properly heat their living space (2007a). He has developed (2007b) three different models of “geographies” of fuel or energy poverty models concerning ESE and former Soviet Union (fSU) (*Figure 6.*)

¹² Tirado and Üрге-Vorsatz adds to this that “fuel poverty has been also linked to the inability of the region’s post- 1989 democratic governments to provide an adequate level of social protection and to develop adequate policy frameworks for improving the thermal efficiency of the residential stock occupied by the lower income households” (2010: 6.).

Insular geography	Potential geography	Pervasive geography
Central Europe, Baltics	Central Asia, Caucasus, Russia	Balkans, fSU republics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential energy provided at long-run marginal costs - Energy sectors operate under market principles - Energy affordability problems concentrated among specific social groups - Wide range of policy tools for energy efficiency investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Below cost-pricing for residential energy - Energy sectors not fully marketised - Widespread non-payment for energy services - Inadequate frameworks for energy efficiency investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy pricing approaching long-run marginal cost - Regulation of energy sectors still struggling with leftover of Communist policies - Widespread energy affordability problems - Inadequate framework for energy efficiency investment

Figure 6. The geographies of fuel poverty in ESE and the fSU (Source: Bullard, 2007b: 73., cited by Tirado-Ürge-Vorsatz, 2010: 6.)

On the one hand, there are not any standardized measurement frameworks for energy poverty and no consistent systems for data gathering and there is a little political discourse about these inequalities. On the other hand, fuel or energy poverty has become an emerging discourse of environmental or climate justice, even though the concept has not created a new structural identity or political subjects. The social groups affected by the various levels of fuel or energy poverty are multicolored and are struggling the different aspects of fuel or energy poverty. There is no group solidarity within the affected groups.

6. Environmental and Climate Justice under Elitist Populist Regimes

It has been elaborated here, that the populism could enhance and underpin the environmental and climate justice discourse and bring closer the meaning of environmental and climate related disasters to the people's everyday lives and experiences. Although, not all kinds of populism, moreover there are several populist tendencies which can be very dangerous in conjunction with the case of environmental and climate justice. In my opinion, this is the situation in the populist regimes in ESE region (especially in Hungary).

I have been dealing with characterization of contemporary populism in ESE (mainly in Hungary) and I have elaborated a political theoretical framework to analyze the emerging phenomenon of elitist populism (Antal, 2017). In Hungary, the Orbán's regime cannot be characterized by pure populism: on one hand, it has elitist characteristics, on the other hand – if we identify populism as some kind of repoliticisation – the regime is considerably anti-populist. This paradox comes from the fact that not all of the political theoretical pillars behind the Orbán's regime are populist. According to my interpretation (Antal, 2017: 9–13.), the (populist) political theory of the governing party alliance (Fidesz-KDNP) is based on three main pillars. (1) The first one is the concept of *the Political*, as elaborated by Carl Schmitt. Schmitt (2005, 2007) describes the depoliticization tendencies caused by liberal democracies; he also argues that the bureaucratic nature of liberalism promotes law instead of politics. (2) The second pillar is *leader democracy* (Weber, 2004), which argues that the political leader, who is creative and charismatic, has a strong political responsibility. (3) The third pillar is *political constitutionalism*, which is a counter-theory of legal or liberal constitutionalism and points out that the political institutions (parliaments and governments) cannot be restricted by legal institutions, above all judges or constitutional courts (Bellamy, 2007).

In the three mentioned political theories, populism and elitism have merged which has created an *elitist populism* regime: the various notions and approaches of populism has influenced these three concepts in different ways. While leader democracy is a pure elitist theory, political constitutionalism has strong populist elements, and the political theory of Carl Schmitt has a Janus face, because in the middle of this theory stands sovereignty, this is not popular sovereignty, but the sovereignty of the state – the sovereign state decides on the exception, enemies and friends.

The elitist character of a populist regime is neither undiscovered nor unprecedented in the literature. For instance, Enyedi Zsolt (2016) emphasized the merging of populism and elitism: through the Hungarian example his study “investigates how elitism can be integrated into an overall populist appeal”. Investigating the extreme right-wing discourses in Italy and Germany, Manuela Caiani and Donatella della Porta (2010) have discovered that there are some “tensions in the conceptualization of ‘populism’ when applied to the extreme right (...). On the one hand, there is a hierarchical (elitist) and exclusive conception of the people, according to which the extreme right identifies itself as with the people (‘we’ are the people, the people are ‘sovereign’) but allocates to itself the task of protecting a passive people. Within an elitarian vision of the society, the ‘pure’ people are in fact presented as unable to (re)act politically, and in need of a ‘guide’ (explicitly indicated in the right itself). The extreme right discourse on the people is not only elitist, but also exclusivist, as not only corrupt political elites but also other groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, political adversaries, supranational actors) are excluded from it.” (Caiani–Della Porta 2010: 19).

The relationship between the elitist populist regimes and the case of environmental and climate justice is very controversial. Elitist populism despite its populist roots does not put any emphasis on social justice question. In this sense, there is no discursive space dealing with justice questions in the framework of environmentalism. These regimes damage the constitutional bases of environmental democracy and the environmental policy destroying the autonomy of environmental NGOs, neglecting the environmental procedural rights (Antal, 2015). As it has been showed in this study, there are more and more environmental injustice cases in ESE region, especially in the field of energy policy. According to the extension of Paks Nuclear Power Plant (Antal, 2015: 12.) the last few years showed in Hungary that the energy policy is a fundamental area of environmental justice. The preparation of the significant related energy policy decisions, planning and determining the future, has been carried out without real social dialogue. In January 2014, because of secret negotiations between the Hungarian and Russian parties, the Orbán’s Government agreed to take out a EUR 10 billion state loan with Russia. The decisions were taken without any social participation. The situation is serious because the Hungarian Government imposes a huge financial, social and environmental burden not only on the present society, but also the future generations. This is one of the greatest environmental and climate injustice case in the Hungarian history.

III. CONCLUSIONS: ECOPOPULISM AND BIOPOWER

1. Environmental Identity and Solidarity

According to my concept elaborated in this paper, we need to (re)enhance the social nature of environmental problems and this will strengthen the environmental consciousness in ESE. Access to information and social participation can evolve the mentioned environmental consciousness which is indispensable in the context of environmental justice. We need to find the right solution between the under- and over-ethicized frameworks concerning the ethnical problems caused by environmental and climate injustices. This means broadening racial and ethnic minority groups' participation in ecological activities can play an important role in transforming ecological attitudes and promoting social inclusion (Mohai, 1990).

I am convinced that the discourse of environmental and climate justice in ESE is should be based on environmental identities constructed on ethnical and social solidarity. "Environmental justice reflects a growing wave of environmentalism as people seek justice in the distribution of environmental benefits and harms. Fundamental to this process is not only the application of distributive and procedural notions of justice, but a widening discourse on what constitutes an environmentalist and environmentalism. Further research on environmental justice [...] need to explore the opportunities and barriers to an emergent environmental identity amongst the Roma, and their capacity to generate 'new vocabulary' around that identity." (Harper–Steger–Filčák, 2009: 25.)

2. New Justice Discourse: Environmental Justice from Populist Perspective

In my view one of the main causes responsible for the failure of the case of environmental and climate justice in ESE is that the environmental justice movements concerned and restricted themselves one issue and avoided becoming involved with other social justice challenges. The examples of waste movements in the USA can show the ecopopulist direction. According to Szasz "waste/toxics movement's development has taken it in quite another direction. Its leading organizations explicitly identify the movement with what they depict as a long and proud history of social struggles in America, with the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the antiwar and New Left movements of the 1960s, and the women's movement" (1999: 150.).

I am convinced that there is a basic need to create vertical and horizontal solidarity structures in ESE societies. Without a broader social change agenda, the environmental and climate justice movements cannot achieve success. This requires the reinterpretation of environmental and climate justice challenges in a populist way and the first step could be the mentioned goal concerning to (re)enhance the social nature of environmental problems. As the situation elaborated by Szasz shows: "Toxic victims are, typically, poor or working people of modest means. Their environmental problems are inseparable from their economic condition. People are more likely to live near polluted industrial sites if they live in financially strapped communities. Some are exposed to toxics in the workplace, as well as at home. [...] Issues of race and racism have had to be dealt with because toxics production and disposal takes place to a disproportionate degree in or near communities of the working poor and of people of color." (1999: 151.).

All the environmental and climate injustices have been based on social deprivation and social injustices have environmental and climate implications. This could be the core message if the populist view of justice. This is one of the main experience of environmental justice movements in the USA: "...environmentalism is a social justice issue that must necessarily forge solidarity with all the other great social causes of the day" (Szasz, 1999: 152.).

3. Environmental and Climate Injustices as Consequences of Biopower

A transition in modernity has been identified by Michel Foucault (1990, 2003), by which the State increasingly took as its task the care and regulation of biological, human life itself (O'Donoghue, 2015). In terms of Foucault, biopower "distribut[es] the living in the domain of value and utility [...] has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor" (1990: 144.). Such a biopower begins with the modern State. According to Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2005) the sovereign power is itself already biopolitical. Agamben stated that "the emergence of the technology of biopower signifies, not a break in the history of Western politics, but the expansion of the existing biopolitical imperative of the State, as bare life moves from the periphery to the center of the State's concerns, entering in modernity into the political order as the exception increasingly becomes the rule" (O'Donoghue, 2015). Agamben puts it forward that modern State places the biological life (bare life) at the center of its calculations.

In my point of view that biopower of the modern State has a huge impact on environmental and climate justice (Leonardi 2012), because the implications of environmentalism relating to the sovereignty of modern State. According to Lemke: "Agamben outlines this hidden foundation of sovereignty through a figure he derives from archaic Roman law: homo sacer. This is a person whom one could kill with impunity, since he was banned from the politico-legal community and reduced to the status of his physical existence. For Agamben, this obscure figure represents the other side of the logic of sovereignty. »Bare life«, which is considered to be marginal and seems to be furthest from the political, proves to be the solid basis of a political body, which makes the life and death of a human being the object of a sovereign decision." (2011: 54–55.).

In ESE region, we can say that the Roma communities and people affected by energy poverty are the modern "homines sacri". Making and supporting the case of environmental and climate justice can be achieved by the biopower of the State. On the other hand, for instance the biopower of a nationalist populist regime could be catastrophic.

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