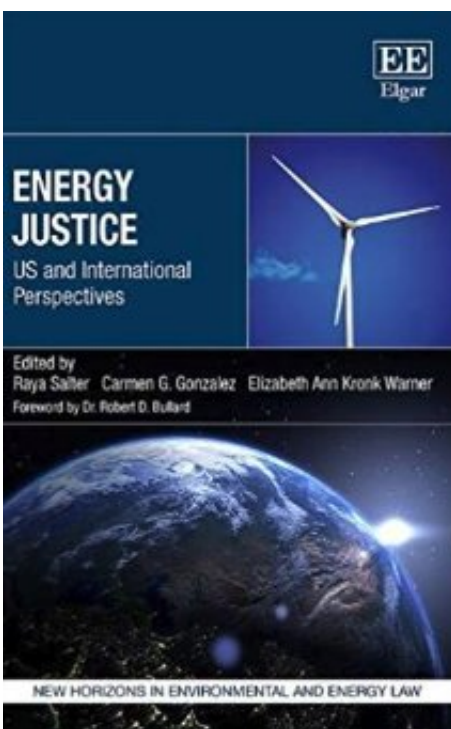


# New book examines energy justice, how policy affects those outside of decision makers, politicians

November 2 2018

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Credit: University of Kansas

The 2015 UN Paris Climate Accords brought energy regulation's role in climate change to the international forefront. And even though the United States has since withdrawn from the agreement, energy development decisions both here and abroad have consequences felt around the globe. A University of Kansas law professor has co-edited a

new book that is one of the first to examine energy justice, or how energy policy affects those beyond the decision makers.

"Energy Justice: International and U.S. Perspectives" examines recent energy decisions by both industrialized and developing nations, their effects and how future [energy policy](#), whether regarded as renewable, "green" or part of traditional sources, can be undertaken justly. The book was edited by Raya Salter, principal, Imagine Power LLC and adjunct professor at Fordham University School of Law; Carmen Gonzalez, professor of law at Seattle University School of Law, and Elizabeth Ann Kronk Warner, KU professor of law and director of the university's Tribal Law & Governance Center.

The book explores [climate change](#) and the intersection of environmental justice and energy. It explores the actions of industrialized nations such as the United States and the "Global North," and how their climate policies have contributed to greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, as well as their contributions to climate change solutions. Those are compared to the "Global South" or third world and developing nations, which historically haven't contributed as much to greenhouse gas emissions, but in many cases are rapidly developing and increasingly consuming such energy sources. The rights and responsibilities of each, the outcomes of past actions and recommendations for future policy for all such nations are examined.

"To my knowledge, this is one of the first books to look at the question of energy justice and what is being done around the world," Kronk Warner said. "We have authors from around the world who have contributed chapters, which I think provides a good global representation."

The authors point out that while transitioning away from fossil fuels is the "cornerstone of any climate change mitigation strategy," the problem

is much bigger than that. Developed nations have enacted policies to curb emissions and promote clean, renewable energy, but they must continue to do better. Meanwhile, the nations that have traditionally contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions cannot be simply prohibited from developing such sources. The book explores how such a focus would not allow nations to adapt to a climate that is already changing and how developing nations require energy infrastructure before they are practically able to adapt.

In the book's opening chapter, the editors outline the history and evolution of the concept of energy justice. Subsequent chapters address the intersection of energy and human rights, utility rate-making and energy justice, energy efficiency, equity and the American housing affordability gap; an environmental justice critique of biofuels; energy justice and democracy in practice; energy access on Native American reservations; sacrifice in the energy continuum and the green energy economy; and the future of energy justice. Uma Outka, professor of law at KU and an expert in energy and environmental law, contributes a chapter on fairness in the low-carbon shift. In the chapter, she looks to the environmental justice movement for how it can inform the current energy transition, situating justice concerns as central to new policymaking in this sphere.

"Energy Justice" places focus on energy policy, decisions, development and justice, but it is not a denunciation of any certain type of energy, Kronk Warner said. Rather, it is an exploration of current policy, its effects—especially on vulnerable populations—and how lessons from those decisions can help avoid missteps while ensuring a just energy future. It would be fundamentally unfair to tell developing nations or indigenous peoples, who often have substantial energy reserves on their lands, that they cannot develop their resources.

"You can still have natural resource development, you just want to be

thoughtful about how you accomplish that," Kronk Warner said. "I think it's vital to think of these developments ahead of time and how they will affect the future and how we should consider the impacts of our energy development on future generations."

The book arrives at an opportune time, as nations around the world work to adapt energy policy to mitigate climate change. And even though the Trump administration has withdrawn the United States from the Paris Climate Accords, it has repeatedly claimed it plans to make energy development a central part of its agenda. That can be done in an environmentally just way, Kronk Warner said.

"Energy Justice" will be beneficial to energy and environmental policymakers, both as a reference to efforts currently being made around the world and as a guide to making just future policies, the editors said. It can also be pertinent to legal scholars and academics seeking to learn more about the intersection of environmentalism and energy [justice](#) as well as those educating the next generation of environmental lawyers.

The editors and authors of "Energy Justice" bring a wide array of perspectives and expertise from law schools, private practice, [energy](#) studies institutes and government institutions in the United States, Canada, Qatar, Maldives, Kenya and the United Kingdom.

Provided by University of Kansas

Citation: New book examines energy justice, how policy affects those outside of decision makers, politicians (2018, November 2) retrieved 24 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-11-energy-justice-policy-affects-decision.html>

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