

# Clear-Eyed Equity: Setting a Climate Equity and Justice Research Agenda

## One page research brief

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### **Proposed research agenda: Natural resource justice in mitigation**

A global climate policy that succeeded in limiting global average temperature rise to 1.5 or 2°C could nevertheless be severely unjust in its effects on those impacted by mitigation schemes. As global efforts to address climate change (hopefully) ramp up, it becomes increasingly necessary to be alert to such harmful impacts.

In particular, I think researchers need to pay further attention to the potential for mitigation policies to undermine, devalue or violate natural resource rights. Climate change results from the unjust overuse of certain natural resources (largely, fossil fuels and greenhouse gas sinks); but climate 'solutions' also threaten to engender, or enhance, injustice in control over and access to the natural world. Various mitigation policies assign new forms of value to natural resources (usually, economic value), commodifying them and creating new resource markets. Such markets can result in the dispossession of existing users as resource governance is privatized or recentralized (e.g. in the case of payment schemes for forest preservation). Similarly, roll out of renewable energy technologies will create new or increased demands for extractive resources (including lithium and rare earth minerals). These demands can have severe knock-on effects for the local and global environment and also confront us with the question of how the benefits and harms of such extraction will be distributed. In addition, some renewable energy options require large tracts of land (for, e.g., hydroelectric dams, bio-energy plantations or solar arrays), creating competition with other land-uses (such as agriculture) and threatening the displacement of local communities.

In short, the question is: given that global climate policy is going to have a momentous impact on who gets to control, define, access and benefit from natural resources worldwide – where do such impacts threaten injustice and what should be done about this?