

## Justice and Climate Action: Resilient Communities in Asia

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Discussions of climate justice, whether global or local, are most often drawn to salient or violent conflicts over the use of natural resources and the environment. This talk instead problematizes environmental conservation projects which are largely welcomed by all parties but yet contain less visible justice issues. Especially when conservation initiatives are packaged as “foreign aid” in the Global South, questions of justice tend to be overlooked. By introducing cases from Laos and Cambodia, I argue that hidden injustices tend to occur in such interventions when the recipient society has insufficient organizational capacity to negotiate and plan conservation policies. This is largely due to the focus on injecting Western-model environmental institutions into the recipient central government, with little effort made to nurture communities at the local level. It is here that social scientists can contribute. Since the replication of models from elsewhere is doomed to fail, justice and climate action need to be addressed in the context of each location. I conclude by considering how the identification and deployment of local conditions can generate success through the case of communal reforestation in disaster affected regions of Japan.