

Introduction

Research Question

Theoretical Background

Reflections from Fieldwork



How does rational argument influence environmental justice work in participatory governance structures?



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Rationality

Reason is infinite and innate

Mind/Body duality

Truth gained through ability to reason, rather than our senses (which are fallible)

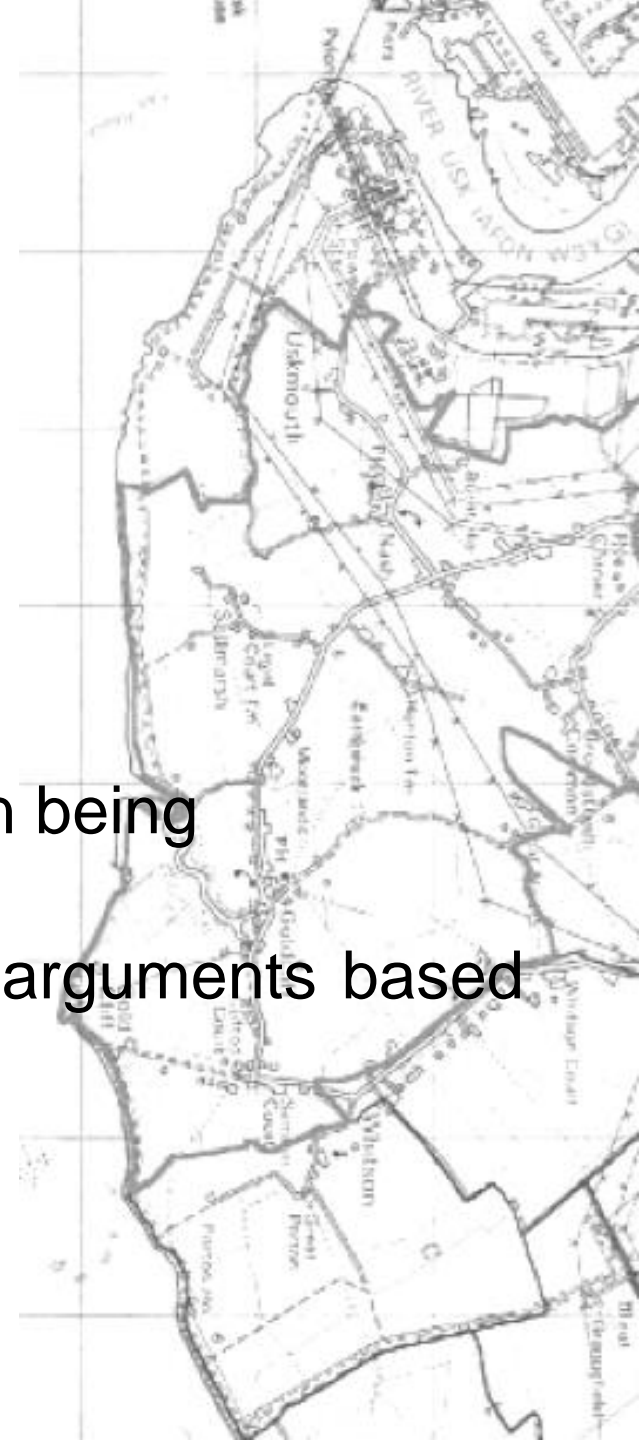


Rationalist assumptions

There is an objective truth

Mind, superior element of the human being

Logical arguments more valid than arguments based on experience



Twentieth Century Critics

Logic of domination linked to rationalism,
used to justify discriminatory practices

Key move away from traditional Enlightenment
rationalism, Habermas' theory of communicative
rationality

*It is naïve to think that we live in a world
Immediately and identically accessible to
all without intersubjective checking or
collaborative interpretation*



Communicative Rationality



‘Validity-claims’ agreed upon through discussion, reflection, defence of arguments, and through mutual agreement

Reasonable, justifiable argument between rational actors results in better political decisions

How do we decide what is rational argument?

Other factors persuasive?

If so, does this undermine the legitimacy of group decision-making?

Participatory Governance

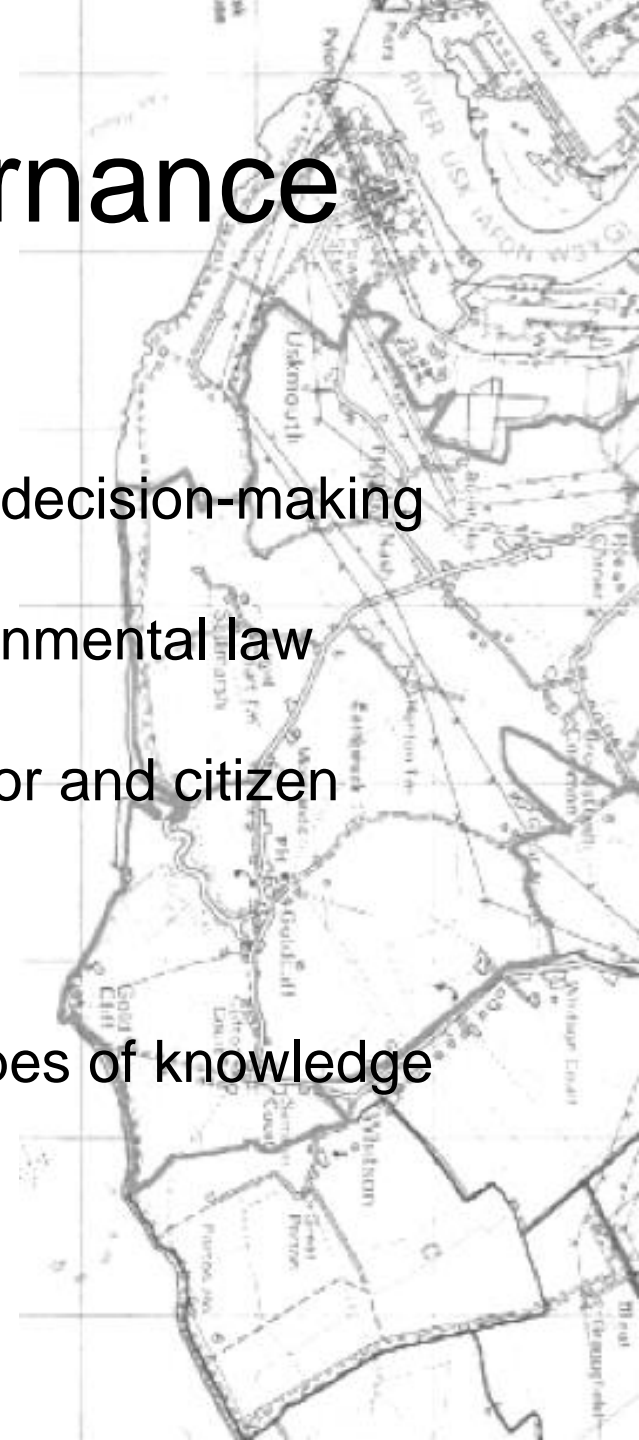
Increased public participation leads to better decision-making

Participatory governance prominent in environmental law

Dual role of the individual; self-interested actor and citizen

Public participation grounds governance

Criticised for excluding certain voices and types of knowledge



Environmental Justice

Environmental justice has its roots in the US

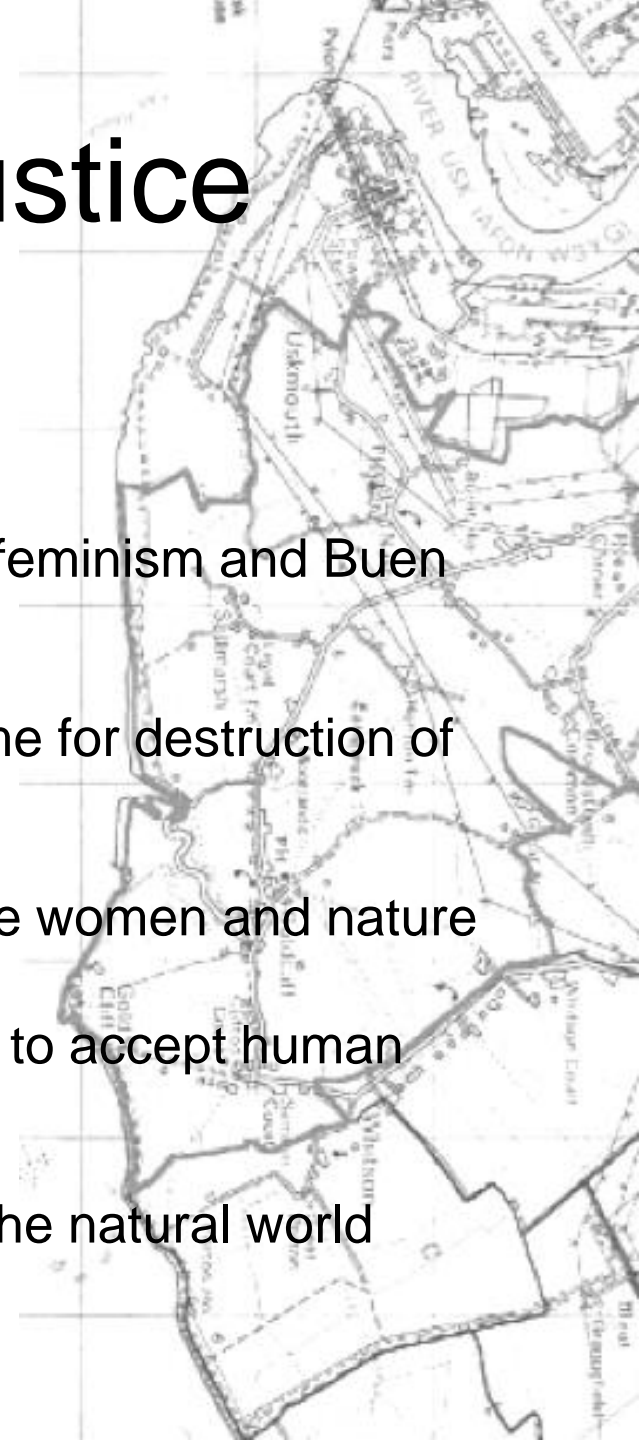
Environmental justice critics of rationality: Ecofeminism and Buen Vivir

Buen Vivir - rationalist idea of progress to blame for destruction of the environment

Ecofeminism – rationalist dualisms subordinate women and nature

Grosz - mind/body dualism stems from refusal to accept human mortality

Distinction between mind and body devalues the natural world



What does this tell us about the research question?

How does rational argument influence processes of participatory environmental governance?

Participatory environmental governance shaped by these assumptions:

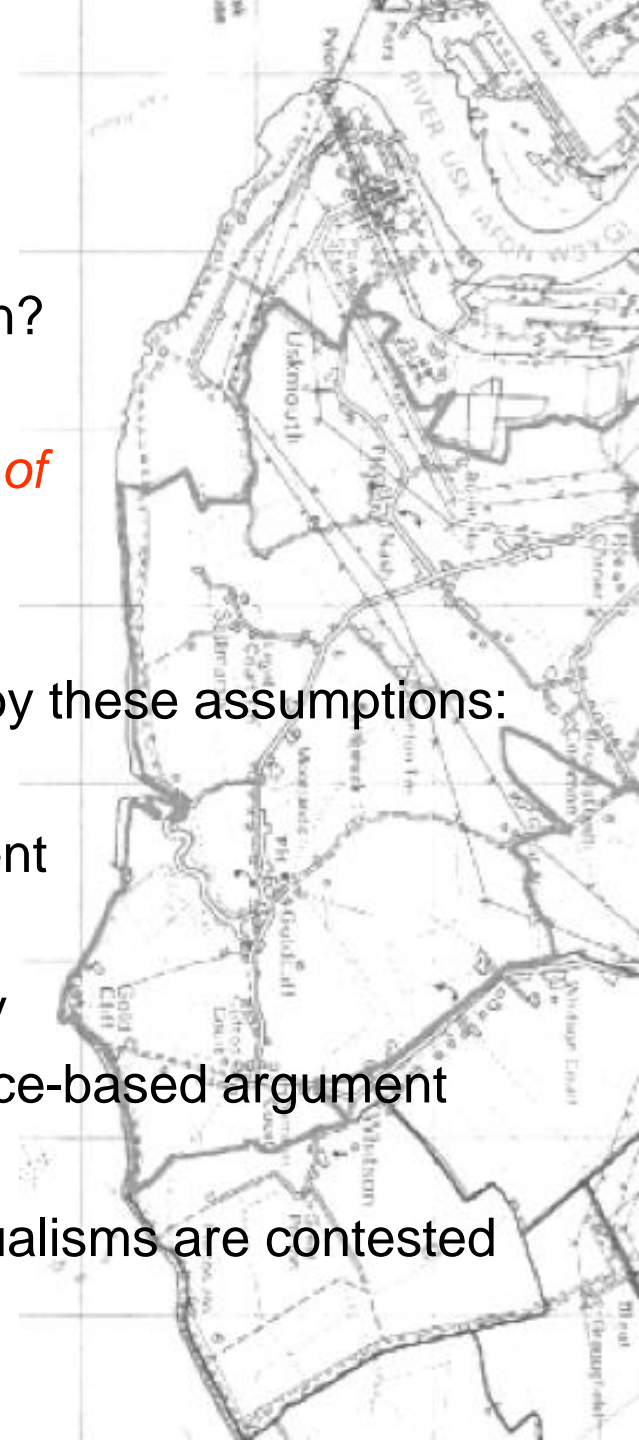
Actors driven by reasonable, justifiable argument

There is an objective truth

The mind is superior, and separate to, the body

Logical argument more effective than experience-based argument

Shaped by rationalist dualisms; a space where dualisms are contested





Fieldwork

Participant Observation

Interviews

Document Analysis




The Public Inquiry

Inspector and assistant inspector, proposing side; objectors; legal teams; expert witnesses; residents

Court-like, formal in style

Not a group decision-making process



Emotion as the opposite of Reason
Reasonable, justifiable argument
Local knowledge and expertise

A landscape photograph showing a dirt road winding through a field of tall green grass. In the background, several high-voltage power line towers are visible against a cloudy, overcast sky. The scene is captured from a low angle, emphasizing the height of the power lines and the expanse of the field.

The Resident

I find this inquiry awesome...

The Chief Witness

Yes, it does happen...

The Queen's Counsel

Have you actually read...

You know that, don't you Mr B...

A landscape photograph featuring a dirt road that curves through a field of tall, green grass. In the background, several high-voltage power line towers are visible against a cloudy, overcast sky. The overall scene suggests a rural or undeveloped area.

The formal space of the inquiry

Equality of arms

Unconscious beliefs

A landscape photograph showing a dirt path winding through a field of tall green grass. In the background, several high-voltage power line towers are visible against a cloudy, overcast sky. The path leads towards the towers, which are silhouetted against the grey clouds.

Resident

Can I ask what time you visited?

Inspector

Approximately 2.30pm

Resident

So, close to the shift change then

Thank you for listening

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