



The Ecopolitics Podcast – Episode 2.1: Introduction to Global Ecopolitics (TRANSCRIPT)

<https://www.ecopoliticspodcast.ca/episode-2-1-intro-to-global-ecopolitics/>

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INTRO: In this episode, Peter and Ryan give listeners a sneak peek at what's in store for Season 2 of The EcoPolitics Podcast!

[00:00:00] **Ryan M. Katz-Rosene:** In our first season, we were mostly focusing on some of the core themes and the broader study of environmental politics more broadly. And there was a little bit of a Canadian bent to it because most of our guests had some kind of Canadian connection and we did cover a lot of domestic content, but in this season, we are going global.

[00:00:25] **Peter Andrée:** Hello, welcome to the Ecopolitics Podcast, season two, Global Ecopolitics. This is a podcast for university students tackling some of the big questions in the field of global environmental politics. I'm Peter Andrée from Carleton university co-host of the show, along with Dr. Ryan Katz-Rosene from the University of Ottawa who's joining me for this introductory episode. How are you doing Ryan?

[00:00:50] **Ryan M. Katz-Rosene:** I'm doing really well, Peter, thank you so much for asking. I hope you're doing well too. And I'm very excited to be here for the second season because it speaks to how well the first season went. And so yes, for those who are listening, there is a whole other season, 16 episodes in fact, and if you haven't already heard those episodes, you really should check them out and the best place to do that is at our website, which is ecopoliticspodcast - all one word - .ca, ecopoliticspodcast.ca. And you can also hear the episodes on Spotify and Apple Podcasts or any podcast player of your choice.

[00:01:28] But we do recommend the website to our listeners because it has some additional features like bios and headshots of our guests that we interview. And we're also providing transcripts of the show on there and that includes video versions of the podcast with closed captioning available and that lets viewers see the captions live in real time while they're listening to the episode.

[00:01:50] And we also have some artwork on the website. If you have been following on your podcast player of choice, you may not be aware that our website features thought-provoking art prepared for each episode by our digital artist, Adam Gibbard. And he's done an amazing job of putting together these collages, stitching together these archival images that he's found, recoloring them and putting together these really innovative art pieces that speak to the themes that we're discussing in each episode. So I highly recommend people check that out.

[00:02:24] So in this season we're focusing on global ecopolitics. So I'm going to ask you, if you can share the main ways that this season differs from the first season?

[00:02:34] **Peter Andrée:** Sure, Ryan. Of course politics, environmental politics, is inherently transboundary - it's a little bit artificial to put it into the box of nation-states. So many issues that we're dealing with from climate change to biodiversity loss to persistent organic pollutants, are transboundary issues and states have to figure out how to work together to address many of these issues.

[00:02:58] So when I think about global ecopolitics, I'm thinking about it in two different ways. First, we're going to bring stories from around the world to our listeners. The stories that are taking place in other countries that might have quite different contexts and issues than what we're dealing with in Canada. The one that comes to mind is the case of elephant conservation and policies that support this in Botswana, which is one of our upcoming episodes. And we're going to look at them and figure out how people are - how the politics of those issues are playing out in those countries, and how they engage with other actors globally as they try and address those issues.

[00:03:36] Then, besides these stories from around the world, we're also going to have a lot of stories that are truly about the global scope of environmental issues, and many of them are going to focus on the politics of negotiating international or what's often called multilateral environmental policies, say the Paris Climate Accord or international conventions on protecting forests.

[00:03:58] Some of the themes that we brought forward in season one, I think are unique to Canada and yet, in some cases we will also be continuing some of those. And the example I'm thinking of is we had several stories that dealt with the place of indigenous people in relation to environmental politics.

[00:04:16] When I speak to colleagues in Europe, for example, I realize how blessed we are in Canada and in the Americas to have as colleagues and as people that we can connect with indigenous people who have been on this land and have very different understandings of what it means to live on the lands that we're all together occupying these days. And it brings a particular flavor, I think, to environmental politics in this country, how it's conceptualized and how we work on addressing them, then say in the European context. Those dynamics are also there on the international stage, where when we think about the world community of states, there's so many different perspectives on what is the nature of an environmental issue and how should you go about addressing it.

[00:04:58] So many unique circumstances where there's particular peoples, often indigenous peoples or others who are marginalized within states, and often bearing the brunt of environmental injustices - that was a theme that was there in season one and I think will continue in a global context in season two, specifically when it comes to questions of indigenous people and indigenous rights in the environment. We're going to be speaking to a couple of guests who are Maya indigenous people from Belize in South America about their struggles around maintaining land rights in the context of colonialism. We're also going

to have indigenous speakers from the United States that we'll be talking to about their perspectives on global ecopolitics.

[00:05:42] The other big theme that I would mention in - that I find fascinating and then I think it's really important for students to engage in this realm of global ecopolitics - is what we can broadly call North South relations. And I say very broadly because those categories - developed, and underdeveloped, or least developed, less developed - are all a bit problematic. Developed against whose scale? Who decides what developed is?

[00:06:06] They're also problematic because within the quote unquote, 'developing countries', you've got massive differences between countries that are highly industrialized. I think of a country like China or Korea, and then you have countries like Botswana, some of the African states, some smaller South American states that really have quite a low per capita income, and so depending on which measures you take, there's different ways of classifying different countries in the world and how they compare to one another. And those different positionalities all relate to very different perspectives on the environment.

[00:06:45] The final theme that I guess I touched on at the beginning and that I'm looking forward to speaking with some of our guests about, is this idea of multilateralism. It's maybe stating the obvious, but we don't have a world government. There is no global democracy. The best that we have, for better or worse, is the United Nations system, which is really a creature of the world states. It's the world's countries and their governments saying, 'Let's work together on some issues', by almost in a Federalist approach - the same that way that say the Federation of Canada works across its provinces - and that technically allows all of those states to have an equal voice in decisions made by the UN on various matters, including environment. Though in practice, the countries with more political or economic clout in one way or another tend to have greater say.

[00:07:36] And so there's a whole political dynamics around how to achieve global consensus on addressing issues, whether it's climate change or ozone depletion or any of the other issues. And there's fascinating stories to be told there because on the one hand, in those international negotiations, you often have a lowest common denominator outcome - what can everybody just agree to? And yet you also see international negotiations that manage to raise the bar globally and push the community of states to achieve results that they maybe didn't think they could achieve. And there are examples of those kinds of international agreements, specifically I'm thinking about the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances from the early 1990s that actually tried to address a global environmental issue and to all accounts has been reasonably successful at doing that. So we've got several shows with guests that are going to help us unpack that question of multilateralism and what it means for ecopolitics.

[00:08:39] There you go, Ryan, I guess I had a lot of my mind today thinking about season two. I'd love to hear some of the themes that you're looking forward to unpacking over this coming season.

[00:08:50] **Ryan M. Katz-Rosene:** Yeah, you did such a fantastic job of contextualizing all of the themes that we'll be looking at. So I don't have that much more to add to the discussion, but I will mention two things that I'm looking forward to about this season as a whole.

[00:09:02] I had mentioned earlier that our last season did have a little bit of a Canadian flavor to it. And one of the things I am looking forward to in this season as we scale up to the global is the subtle ways that tends to change the nature of the discussion in the classroom, in particular, where you and I will be using these podcasts and discussing them with students.

[00:09:25] And one thing I've noticed - I don't know if you find this as well, Peter - but when we talk about global environmental politics that the students arrive at their informed opinions a little bit more organically and you had spoken during your comments about how just different the world is, the diversity of approaches and the diversity of forms of politics that exist around the world, and I think that has the effect of kind of opening up the discussion when we're talking about global environmental politics as compared to domestic politics.

[00:09:54] I don't know if you see that, but the other thing, Peter, that I'm quite excited about or maybe the theme that I'm most excited about - and I had mentioned this in the last season as well because we did talk about it in a domestic context - but we're going global this series and so the discussion about the growth environment debate, I had mentioned I'm doing a research project on this, a multi-year research project, looking at discourses of the growth environment debate. So we know we have some differing opinions out there within the environmental studies community, within the environmental politics scholarship quite frankly, about what the real relationship is, what is the true relationship between economic growth and the environment?

[00:10:38] And that has pretty stark implications for policy. We have numerous states and certainly corporate interests that are seeking ways to achieve what they call 'green growth'. And we also have a body of scholarship, a growing body of scholarship, that's very critical of that idea that self-describes itself as a degrowth perspective. And we will also talk about the emerging idea of agrowth, a position that's a little bit more agnostic on this question of what growth and what the relationship is between these nodes.

[00:11:12] Peter, I'm obviously very excited about the second season and just wanted to let people know, let listeners know, that we have a really fantastic lineup of speakers. We will be talking about a number of really important themes in the study of global environmental politics. So we are having an episode that is specifically looking at theory and method in the study of global ecopolitics. We'll be talking about global environmental agreements and multilateral agreements, as you pointed out. You also mentioned indigenous environmental rights from a sort of a global and transnational perspective. And along those lines, we're going to be speaking to someone about environmental social movements and these questions of environmental justice.

[00:11:56] We have an episode on ecological imperialism and North South relations. We're also - I don't think you mentioned this, Peter - but we're going to talk to an expert on urban

sustainability and some of the networks that we're seeing emerging between these quote unquote 'global cities' and efforts to collaborate between large metropolises around the world on sustainable initiatives. And then there's going to be a discussion about net zero agriculture and what that means in different contexts. And of course, lots more.

[00:12:28] Peter, I think I'm going to wrap this up unless you have any final things to add to the discussion.

[00:12:35] **Peter Andrée:** I'm just really looking forward to the conversations that we're going to have, Ryan. I have to say that while this podcast series has been to all accounts, what we're hearing from the students is they're really appreciating the diversity of voices. But I got to tell you, as one of the people who gets to do these conversations along with you, I am really appreciating the conversations that we're having with people and really looking forward to having that expand well beyond Canada's borders to all parts of the world and put our ear out there and see the amazing stuff that's going on.

[00:13:05] Because while with environmental politics there's a lot of challenging things going on - we're at a bit of a critical time, crisis, emergency, is the kind of language that people are using these days - but I also feel like we're at a time of great hope where there's so many people in so many sectors working together to start tackling these issues and it's truly exciting to talk to the kinds of guests that we have on this show and learn firsthand about what some of those efforts are.

[00:13:32] **Ryan M. Katz-Rosene:** I share that excitement, so that makes two of us. And I want to thank you, Peter, for collaborating on this project. And also we should probably thank our funding partners. This podcast is not free to put together and the University of Ottawa and Carleton University are the institutions that made it all come together. And so we want to thank them for providing the funds that allowed the Global Ecopolitics Podcast to come together.

[00:13:55] And of course we have to thank our listeners out there, not just our students, but we have a growing following of listeners who are following along and listening as the episodes come out, so thank you so much. You can also follow us along on social media. We're on Twitter @EcoPoliticsP, that's our handle, so EcoPolitics capital 'P'. And do get in touch, let us know what you think and let's continue the discussion.

[00:14:21] So finally, I want to say a big thank you to our producer Nicole Bedford, and to Kika Mueller for preparing the transcripts and captioning. And also to Adam Ashby Gibbard for all the digital work that he's been doing and his support with the artwork.

[00:14:37] So that's it, Peter, we'll chat next time. Have a good one. .