NIMBY- not in my back yard

GROSS, M. ORANIM ACADEMIC COLLEGE, ISRAEL
LAWRENCE, M., RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE, USA
Aspects of environmental justice

- Distribution of environmental risks
- Access to resources
- Access to information and decision making

environmental justice
The problem:

The distribution of the environmental evils between different sectors of the population is unequal.
Research Goal:

The perceptions of students’ environmental justice issues across the two institutions.

How do undergraduate students in Israel and the United States respond to authentic environmental justice case stories?
research questions:

1. What are undergraduate students’ beliefs about environmental justice?
2. To what extent do the students view environmental justice as a priority within their respective nations and internationally?
3. To what extent do students recognize NIMBY as a problem of environmental/social justice?
4. To what extent do students understand the complexity of NIMBY (variety of fields and complex implications in local and global level)?
5. Did students use any of the key words/phrases: environmental justice, intersectionality, NIMBY, social justice?
Case stories - The Israeli story

In 1991, the community organized to fight against the plan to establish the new central bus station in Tel Aviv.
The tiny Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians Reservation in Utah is targeted to "temporarily" store 40,000 tons of commercial radioactive waste (nearly the total amount that presently exists in the U.S.) next to the two-dozen tribal members who live on the small reservation, and the tribal members organize to fight against the storage proposal.
The study unit plan:

A. First meeting:
   1. We asked students if they have ever heard the term “NIMBY” before and to give an example.
   2. Students were asked to read, take notes and reflect on 4 questions about the case story from the other country.
   3. Students, in groups of 2-4 reached consensus and recorded their answer to each of the following questions:

   - Solution - What suggestions would make to resolve the issue?
   - Consequences - Are there any unintended consequences to possible solutions, if so, what are they?
   - Knowledge – What additional knowledge would you like about the case?
research lesson implementation

5. This is repeated for the case story from their country.
6. We asked students to give their own definition to NIMBY

B. Next meeting:

Open discussion, Students shared whole class their thoughts/opinions/questions about the two case stories and created their consensus definition to NIMBY
Table 1: Participating Respondents from Each Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School and Country</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oranim Academic College, Israel</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island College, United States</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Definition of NIMBY by the Israeli students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre / post</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Characterization / Focus</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Post       | 70         | Objective- cause: The stronger side utilizes the power and harms the weak (environmental and health) | • Phenomenon of “dirty laundry” transfer to another place when in this place these people find it difficult to deal and go against [AV]  
• Situation where the industry is moving from populated areas and more resistant to weak populated areas [AP] |
| Post       | 10         | Objective-result The environmental damage itself | • Thing that causing environmental damage surrounding this population [MT]  
• Thing / human / object / material invader place that does not belong to him, any nuisance which is causing environmental damage surrounding this population [SM] |
| Post       | 20         | Subjective: I don’t want.... | • A hazard we had not like to have in our environment [HP]  
• Something that we would not like in our immediate environment. [HV] |
Definition of **NIMBY** by all Israeli students, after open discussion

**NIMBY** is a *vocal* resistance to negative change in *my* yard, resulting from *exploiting* the weakness of another population due to *egoism* and *disclaimer* of the environmental and social consequences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Student Groups</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
<th>Knowledge Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (USA)/3 (Israel)</td>
<td>Recycle or detoxify the waste</td>
<td>waste may relocate, possible damage to new environment. Damage workers recycling</td>
<td>Possible negative effects on land, animals, people. More information about regulations (laws). Is it possible? Is it possible to use alternative energy and to avoid any toxic waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (USA) 4 (Israel) 1 (Israel)</td>
<td>Move/store elsewhere; Disperse in some areas To collect and launch into space</td>
<td>May not find another site for the waste possible damage to the new environment.</td>
<td>Review laws, what else tribe can do. Geographic information on potential places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (USA) 2 (Israel)</td>
<td>move Indigenous people</td>
<td>Tribal resistance Does not solve the problem of pollution</td>
<td>Understanding the needs of the population and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Israel)</td>
<td>Stimulate public awareness with Public tours show what happens</td>
<td>There will be no room for waste because everyone will object Spending and Invasion of privacy tribe</td>
<td>How much does it really cares about people outside the reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Israel)</td>
<td>Legislation that will limit</td>
<td>Should enforce the law</td>
<td>Economic impact on the companies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
conclusions

1. Students can develop the concept of NIMBY and define it through their critical analyses of authentic environmental justice case stories.

2. There is a significant pedagogical implication regarding the “My” in NIMBY.

3. The research lesson did engage students
   - To think critically about authentic issues involving environmental justice
   - To develop a multi-perspective understanding of the complexity of these issues
next steps

1. Continue the coding of the data from the students’ responses.
2. Analyze the complicity
3. Evaluate the research lesson design, components, questions and case stories.
4. Implement the research lesson again to expand the number of respondents from both institutions.