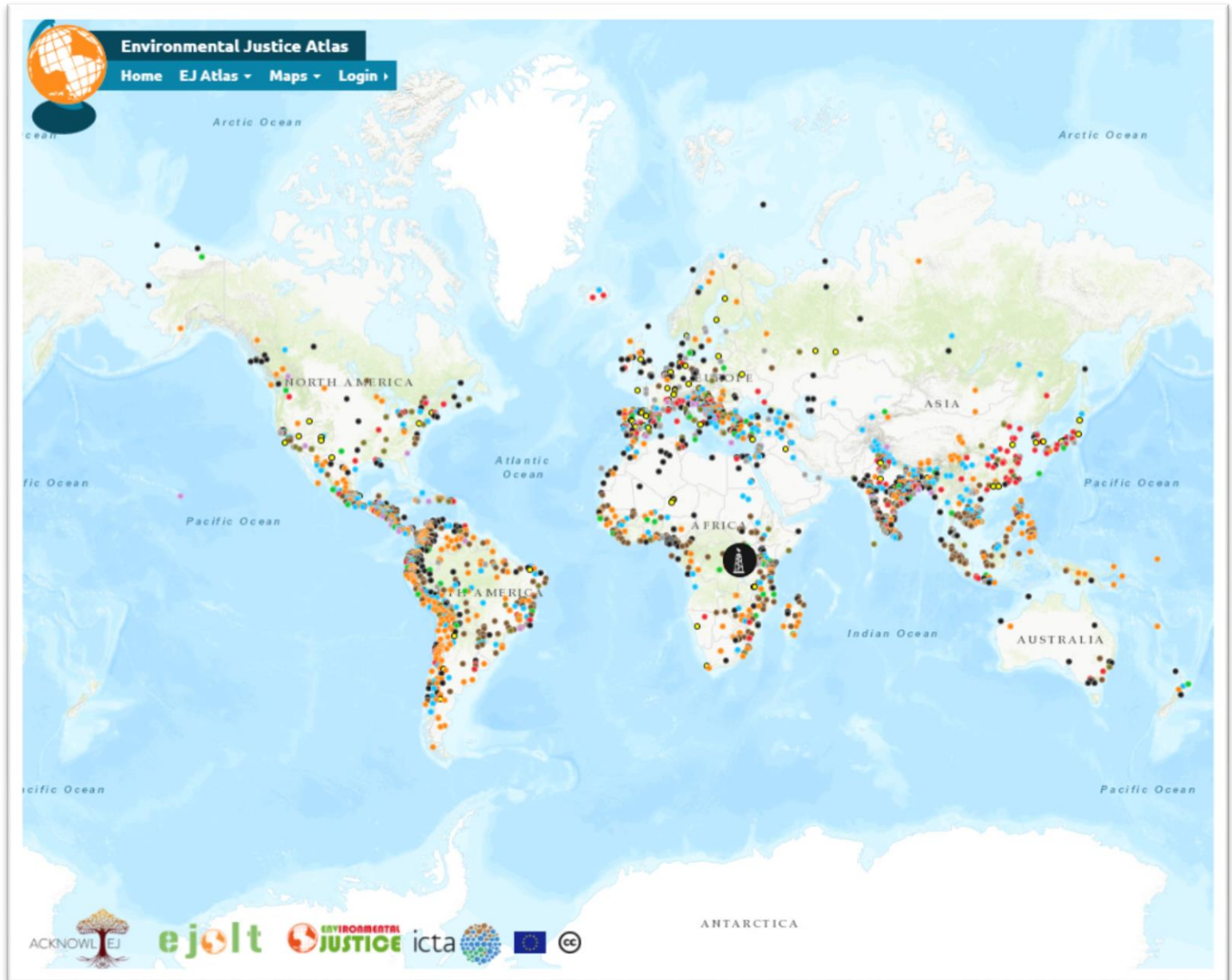


# Mapping environmental conflicts

## Rationale, process and challenges for creating the EJAtlas

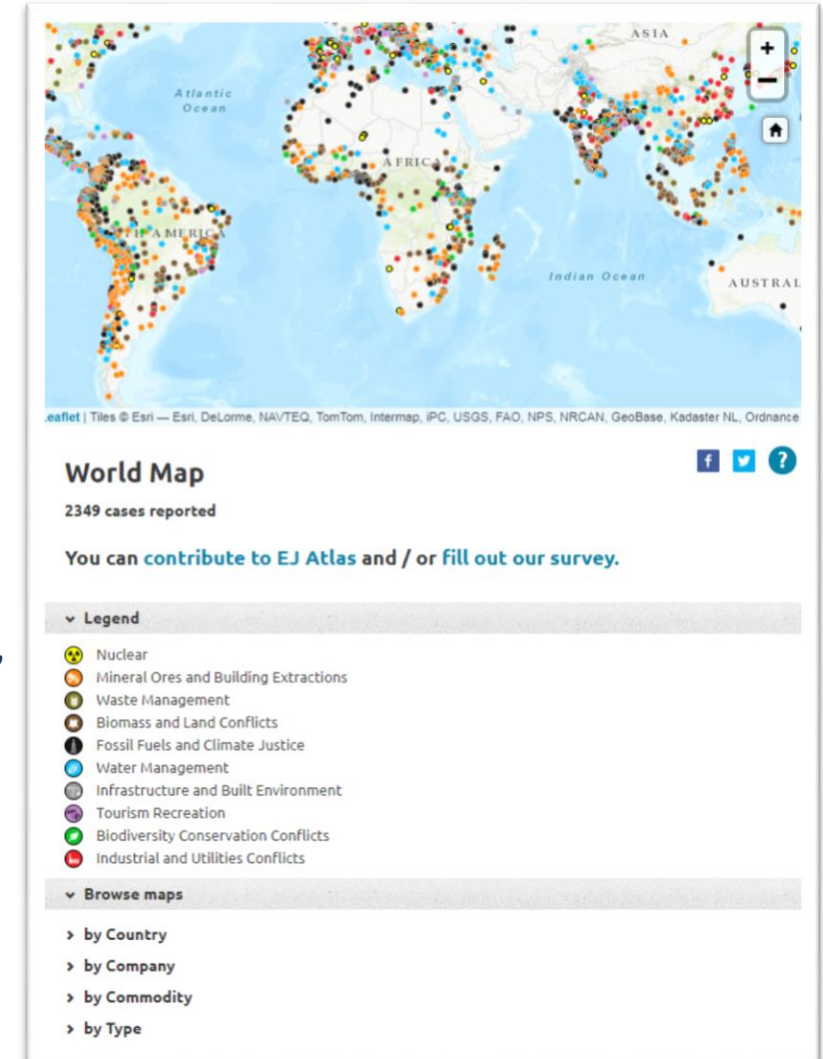
Daniela Del Bene & Yannick Deniau  
ENGAGER summer school  
ICTA, 05.06.2019  
[www.ejatlasinger.org](http://www.ejatlasinger.org)



- **Introduction: what is the EJatlas**
- **Rationale: why a global database on env conflicts**
- **Process: The construction of the EJatlas**
- **Challenges:**
  - co-design of the platform
  - data gathering
  - data systematizing
  - matching quantitative, qualitative and cartographic data
- **What can the EJAtlas say about energy poverty**

# The Global Atlas of Environmental Justice - EJatlas

- **Inventory of ‘standardized case studies’**
  - 2,800 socio-environmental conflicts (growing!)
- **Knowledge co-produced between academics and activists**
- **Vast compilation of linked databases**
  - A) Commodities involved, B) Project impacts, C) Mobilization forms, D) Actors involved, E) Outcomes ...
- **Use for Political Ecology:**
  - Single case research → comparative/statistic research





### **Narmada dams, India**

Major one displaced 320,000 people

In India, 65 million people uprooted by megaprojects

### **Mining in Tibet**

forced sedentarization, mining, infrastructures, dams

### **Chixoy Dam, Guatemala**

3,500 displaced

6,000 families affected

### **Brown coal mining in Saxony, Germany**

Villages displaced and heavy emissions

### **Plantations in Orang Rimba territories, Indonesia**

3,000 displaced  
600 km<sup>2</sup> deforested

### **Belo Monte dam, Brazil**

50,000 displaced

517 km<sup>2</sup> inundated

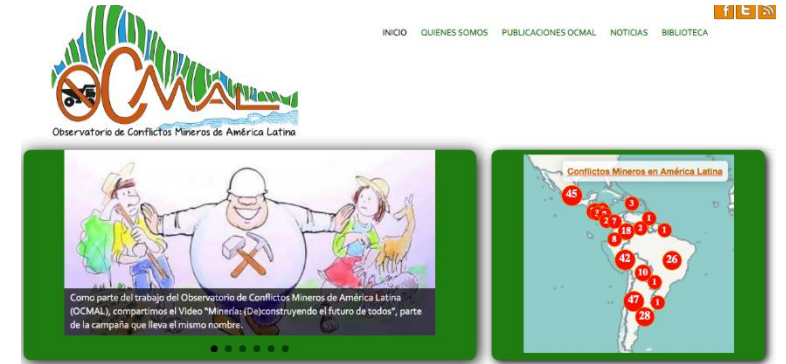
### **Oil and gas extraction, Nigeria**

Only in Ogoni territory, over 100,000 displaced

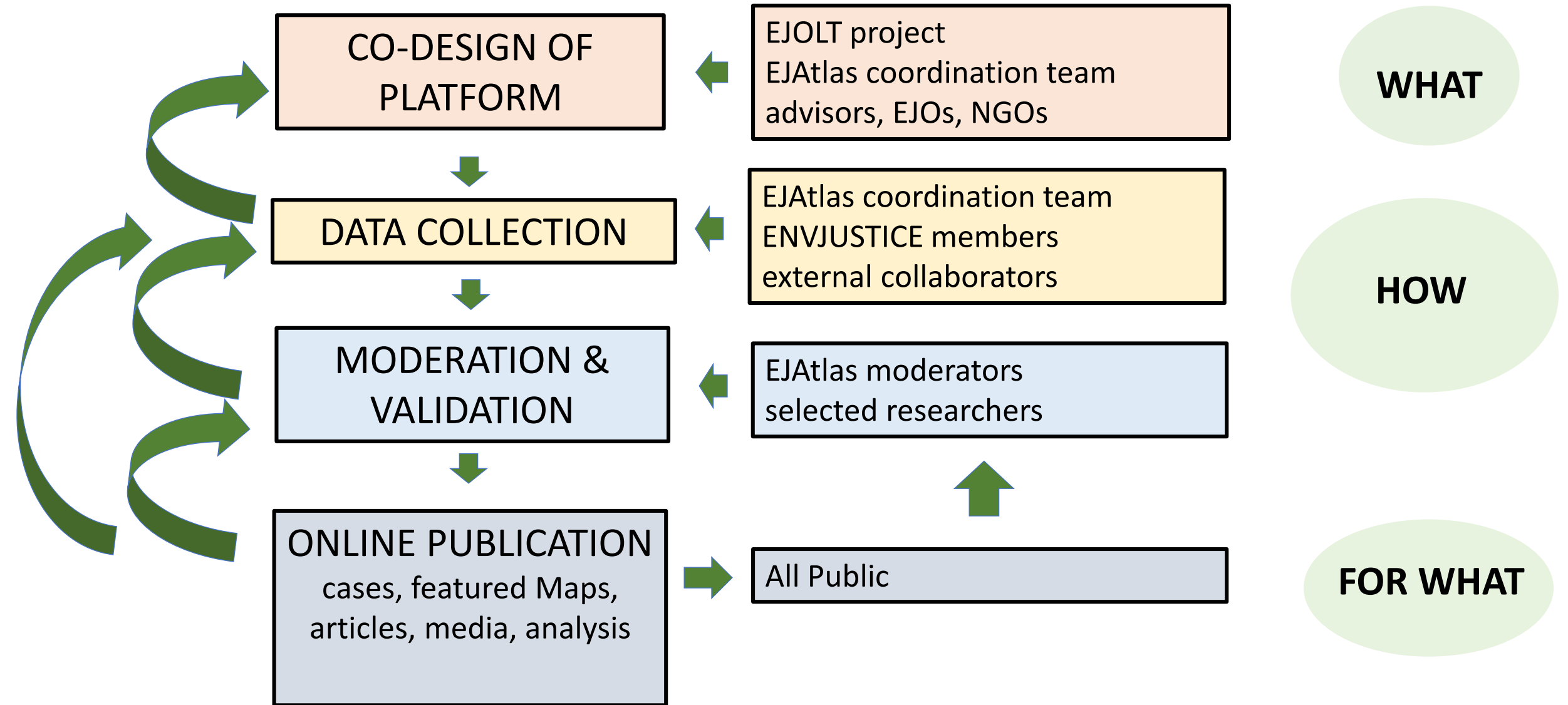


# Why a global database on socio-environmental conflicts

- There are national level and thematic databases, but not any global one
- Capitalist/extractivist economy is global (and so is corporate and financial capital)
- Socio-metabolic perspective: focus on the whole chain of extraction-processing-transportation-consumption and disposal
- Transnational/global solidarity, networking, research becomes key
- Privileged position of academia in accessing/processing data



# The construction of the EJAtlas



See (Temper & Del Bene, 2017) for more details

# Challenges

## Co-design of platform

### ✓ Definition of the **problem**

What is an environmental conflict? → *Environmental Justice perspective, Ecological Distribution Conflicts*

When does a conflict begin? → *First manifestation of dissent*

Who is in conflict with whom? → *Uneven power relations*

### ✓ Definition of the **unit of analysis**

- *single conflictive project (ex. coal power plant)*
- *an environmental issue (ex. floods in Jakarta)*
- *an protest initiative (ex. anti-GMO campaigns)*
- *a mobilization (ex. Ende Gelaende)*

### ✓ How **inclusive** and responsive to all expectations can you be in co-designing? All databases have limitations

# Challenges

## Data Collection

- ✓ What **sources** do we rely on and who has the **legitimacy** to enter a specific case?
- ✓ What can we **visibilize** and what not? when to make it visible, when to disclose?
- ✓ Shall we make explicit the **identity** of collaborators or not? Where are the limits of transparency when it comes to sensitive contexts?
- ✓ How to build **trust** and engage hundreds of people to send information?
- ✓ How to **keep data safe**, comply with privacy policy, protect data from hackers, maintain website and programming?
- ✓ How to make **Co-production & 'Extended peer community'** really horizontal (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1997), and avoid academic extractivism?



# Challenges

## Data systematization

- ✓ How to deal with **complexity** and **subjectivity**? (See categories of type of conflict, commodities, forms of mobilization, actors, etc.)
- ✓ How to take advantage from or combine **different databases** (i.e. OCMAL, Land Matrix, Global Forest Watch, etc)
- ✓ How to ensure robustness, cross check and double check in **moderation** and validation of data?
- ✓ How to avoid “**epistemic extractivism**” (Grosfoguel, 2016) and narrate a conflictive context fairly?

# Challenges

## Matching quantitative, qualitative and cartographic data

- ✓ Where to georeference/locate a conflict? (at project site, where mobilisation happens, where impacts are felt?)
  - ✓ How to include the spacial dimension of a conflict/territorial dispute?
  - ✓ How to represent complex infrastructure on a map, such as pipelines, roads, industrial parks (i.e. Indian industrial corridors, IIRSA, etc; limitation of having only points)
  - ✓ Spacial relation between conflictive projects, at what scale will it become more visible? (i.e. dams and mining sites)
  - ✓ How detailed can a global map be? (local, regional, global scale)
- Transport infrastructure configures social metabolism and makes it visible on the ground



Thank you!

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