



UNCLOS framework of Ocean Governance: Ethical Dimensions.

Eduardo Marone (1) and Luis Marone (2)

(1) Center for Marine Studies, UFPR – IOI-TC-LAC – IAPG, PR, Brazil (edmarone@gmail.com), (2) Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales, UN Cuyo – Ecodes IADIZA – CONICET, Mdz, Argentina (lmarone@mendoza-conicet.gob.ar)

On this presentation, we intend to move from theoretical to applied (geo)ethics by analyzing the Ethical Dimensions of Ocean Governance embedded on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Much has been told in recent years about the need to consider applied (geo)ethics in the professional arena of Earth Sciences, and we here contribute some ideas regarding the current knowledge of theoretical ethics, aiming at helping to apply it properly while avoiding costly mistakes. Thus, we explore the ethical principles behind one of the most relevant gifts for the Oceans and society: the promotion of the “common heritage of mankind” concept inside UNCLOS. Their promoters were imbued of deep ethical roots, whichever the main ethical schools one might choose, from Ancient Greeks to modern days, from deontology to consequentialism or pragmatism. Those promoters can be considered one of those rare people earning the higher level and stage of ethical adequacy according to Kohlberg’s model. Furthermore, they made us aware that we need a solid scientific knowledge if we want to establish a proper Ocean Governance. Although this assertion might appear obvious for some academics, the use of scientific knowledge to obtain public support to governance programs associated to the exploitation and conservation of natural resources has been challenged recently in the context of the so-called crisis disciplines (e.g. ocean conservation, climate change). Although scientific knowledge is needed, however, it is not sufficient to ocean governance: it requires ethical compromises that ensure not just the well-being of humankind but also the wealth of all life forms and the systems that sustain them in good shape. This way future generations, and us, could have the opportunity of enjoying the Oceans and life by helping life in the broader sense.