

Social Movements for Climate Justice during the Decline of Global Governance

From International NGOs to Local Communities

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Abstract

With political foresight, this Ernst Strüngmann Forum considered “how differences in framing environmental problems are driven by differences in normative and theoretical positions, as well as ways in which more inclusive framings might enable more societally relevant and impactful research and more concerted action/practice.” When this exercise began, the British electorate’s rejection of the European Union and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States appeared inconceivable. Indeed, both the mid-2015 G7 summit and December 2015 Paris climate conference left the impression that a viable global governance arrangement had been accomplished, and that irrevocable steps toward economic decarbonization were being taken that would potentially save the planet from catastrophic climate change. In opposition to this elite consensus, an international nongovernmental organization (INGO), Friends of the Earth International, along with many “climate justice” movement components, condemned these two crucial instances of global climate governance. The climate justice opposition, however, had no impact whatsoever because the die appeared to have been cast for world climate policy, leaving intact several dangerous features of the Paris strategy: no legally binding responsibilities or accountability mechanisms; inadequate stated aspirations for lowering global temperatures; no liabilities for past greenhouse gas emissions; renewed opportunities to game the emissions-reduction system through state-subsidized carbon trading and offsets, soon moving from the European Union and North America to the emerging markets led by China; and neglect of emissions from military, maritime, and aviation sources. In mid-2017, Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement. The climate justice answer to both Trump and the

top-down policy regime—one overwhelmingly favorable to the United States, from where the strategy emanated—appears to be twofold: an intensification of bottom-up strategies that aim to weaken the state of greenhouse-gas emissions and corporate targets through both direct action (disruptions) and financial divestment. Given that the Paris deal is now in question due to Trump’s promise to abrogate U.S. participation in the overarching United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the climate justice strategy appears prescient: to undo the damage at local and national scales. As the forces of “extractivism” (especially petroleum and coal mining) are empowered again by Trump, there may be merit to climate justice activists utilizing one of the framing narratives of a “neoliberal nature”: natural capital accounting (so as to argue that net losses make fossil fuel extraction economically irrational). For the foreseeable future, the global balance of forces appears extremely adverse—especially with the rise of rightwing populism and the decline of the Latin American center-left regimes—and no system-saving change appears possible at that scale. This could permit a decisive shift of orientation by INGOs toward the climate justice approach, especially because of the potential for unity against Trump at sites like Standing Rock. Evidence of this can be found in how Greenpeace and 350.org have taken up direct action and divestment strategies, respectively, to address climate change and related ecosystem breakdowns effectively and fairly during this rapidly closing window.

Introduction

We’re going to rescind all the job-destroying Obama executive actions including the Climate Action Plan.... We’re going to save the coal industry [and] Keystone Pipeline. We’re going to lift moratoriums on energy production in federal areas. We’re going to revoke policies that impose unwarranted restrictions on new drilling technologies.... We’re going to cancel the Paris Climate Agreement and stop all payments of U.S. tax dollars to UN global warming programs.
—Donald Trump (2016)

We are the poor cousins of the global jet set. We exist to challenge the status quo, but we trade in incremental change. Our actions are clearly not sufficient to address the mounting anger and demand for systemic political and economic transformation that we see in cities and communities around the world every day.
—Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah et al. (CIVICUS 2014)

Is the die cast, must at this one throw all thou hast gained be lost?
The Worlds a Lott’ry; He that drawes may win;
Who nothing ventur’s, looks for nothing
— Sir Thomas Herbert (1634)

Ālea iacta est. On January 10, 49 BC, as he crossed the Rubicon River in Italy, Julius Caesar spoke of casting the die (rolling the dice) in a gamble that could not be reversed. That day he took a crucial step toward conquering Rome, an act that would leave the world changed forever.

By 2015, the importance of addressing climate change was so clear that the same metaphor was invoked in the World Bank’s *Turn Down the Heat* series:

“The die is cast. If we do not act now, rising temperatures will endanger crops, freshwater reserves, energy security, and even our health.”

The following year, the presidency of Donald Trump and the British electorate’s rejection of the European Union appear to have cast the die for the demise of global governance, especially in relation to climate policy. With that comes the likelihood of runaway climate change. The political turn of 2016 sets the stage not only for similar right-wing populist movements gathering pace in other European countries, joining dangerous authoritarian leaders in Turkey and the Philippines, but also an excuse for worsening pollution from the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) bloc.

What can be done? Is the new political situation appropriate for renewed attention to social-movement resistance, especially in the form of climate justice?

After all, the elite strategy associated with climate policy gambles at the June 2015 G7 summit hosted by Angela Merkel in Elmau and, six months later in Paris, at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would, like Caesar, change the world. This, however, was not due to decisive action, but rather *the opposite*: failure to grapple with climate change as an existential crisis for humanity (Bond 2016). In both sites, the assembled world leaders’ economic, geopolitical, technical, ideological, and media powers were dedicated to what they presumed was an irreversible, logical proposition: marginal, market-driven changes augmented by a slight degree of state regulatory assistance will decarbonize the world’s energy, land-transport, and production systems as well as protect forests. (No one would deny that nothing of substance was offered at either summit to reduce climate change caused by air transport, shipping, the military, corporate agriculture, over-consumption, and methane-intensive disposal sources.) The self-confidence of those signing the Paris Climate Agreement was a reflection of how far from reality global climate governance had roamed, and how quickly they would be given an unprecedented reality check.

The flaws in the elites’ logic would lead to two reactions: (a) an initial leftist critique of the Paris Agreement’s reliance upon capitalism’s self-correction mechanisms, and hence the downplaying of climate justice; (b) a revival of climate change denial along with the rise of extreme petro-military complex power within the country most guilty of historic greenhouse gas pollution. Ironically, the United States is itself extremely divided as evident from its last presidential election: Trump won the presidency via electoral college, based on ca. 55,000 voters from four “swing states.” He lost, however, the popular vote by ca. three million votes, out of the 130 million votes cast. The same month, a poll by Yale and George Mason universities (Leiserowitz et al. 2017) found that 69% of U.S. registered voters endorsed the Paris Agreement (only 13% were opposed) and 78% supported taxes or regulations against greenhouse gas emissions (with 10% opposed). Thus, the grassroots will for “climate action”

was in place, even though it was not evident in presidential or congressional leadership.

Regardless of Trump's impact, global climate policy as determined in 2015 had become a very risky toss indeed. Starting at Copenhagen's 15th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2009, the U.S. State Department's chief climate negotiator, Todd Stern, successfully drove the UN negotiations away from the four essential principles required in a future global governance regime to achieve climate justice (Bond 2012b):

1. Ensure emissions-cut commitments are sufficient to halt runaway climate change.
2. Make the cuts legally binding with accountability mechanisms.
3. Distribute the burden of cuts fairly based on responsibility for causing the crisis.
4. Offer adequate financial compensation to repair weather-related "loss and damage" that occur directly because of that historic liability.

The Elmau goal was for "net zero carbon emissions" by 2100—50 years too late—and instead of full decarbonization, the G7 endorsed "net" strategies; these are based not on direct cuts but instead on offsets, emissions trading, reducing emissions through deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), and carbon sequestration (Reyes 2015). As for the rest of the world, including the high-pollution emerging markets (especially the BRICS), the so-called "bottom-up" pledge-and-review strategy that Stern imposed in Copenhagen was once again endorsed by the major new emitters. Six months after Elmau, at COP21, the "Intended Nationally Determined Contributions" (i.e., *voluntary* pledged cuts) agreed upon by Paris signatories were so low that even if achieved, they would collectively raise the temperature goal set for 2100 more than 3 degrees Celsius, thus catalyzing runaway climate change (Bond 2016).

Given the extreme dangers to civilization and Earth's species inherent in Trump's regressive stance and the Paris and Elmau gambles, the role of a civil society countermovement is vital and must prevail against both climate change denial and the Paris climate policy within the next decade at the latest. But how is this countermovement to emerge?

This chapter assesses the differences between two major civil society forces within climate activism, whose divergences are continually reproduced in global and local settings: (a) international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), which are part of the global governance regime, and (b) grassroots climate justice activists. Currently, both appear united against Trump's threat, but the more durable divisions between the market-oriented climate politics favored by INGOs and the need for direct, democratic intervention posited by climate justice activists will determine the viability of life on Earth.

The critical question is whether either or both forces will be able to muster the oppositional power necessary to reverse Trump's petro-military politics and the "marketization" of climate policy. Can *global* civil society generate

the countermovement required? If not, both the Trump withdrawal from climate governance and the gambles made in Elmau and Paris will likely result in an ecological catastrophe, whether because of climate change denialism or because world elites anticipate that corporate self-survival mechanisms will kick in. As scientists point out, however, the lag times from greenhouse gas emissions mean that market reactions will be too little, too late.

How might INGOs, climate justice activists, or some combination move the world economy and society off the current trajectory? As shown below, civil society forces currently appear bogged down in an interminable conflict over principles, analysis, strategies, tactics, and alliances (the “pasta” problem). The former include the most active Climate Action Network (CAN) members—Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Greenpeace—but also a notable self-exiled group from CAN, the environmental justice movement Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), which typically allies closely with grassroots movements. The INGOs, even Greenpeace, are much more open to alliances with politicians and, in some cases, corporations and green business federations. To complicate matters, the leaders of CAN’s U.S. chapter have embraced climate justice with gusto. The two most savvy INGOs, 350.org and Avaaz, have become known largely through highly creative social media campaigns, and some provide well-recognized, visionary leadership: Bill McKibben from 350.org, Kumi Naidoo from Greenpeace International (2009–2015), and Annie Leonard from Greenpeace U.S.A. Annie Leonard, for example, has probably been the most impactful in combining anti-racist and labor networks with climate justice.

By contrast, climate justice groups are committed to global critique while providing essentially local-level solutions, from militant strategies to “direct action” tactics described as “Blockadia” by their best-known proponent, Klein. To the extent that they tackle corporate power at its financial Achilles’ heel, they support the divestment strategy catalyzed by 350.org. Their strength, however, especially in the wake of Paris, is in the use of a disruptive repertoire to defend land, water, and air against polluters. The peak moment of Blockadia was probably the Standing Rock defense of North Dakota “Treaty Land” and water, which the Dakota people had won generations ago and yet was threatened by the Dakota Access Pipe Line (DAPL). By late 2016, opposition to DAPL was formidable and the Obama regime backed down. In February 2017, however, DAPL opponents were routed by the Trump regime and forced to leave the land.

Blockadia activists (depending upon circumstances) point out how the success of their local battles against oil, gas, coal, and major greenhouse gas emitters also benefits humankind and the planet. But the local climate activist movement is so broad—as witnessed in the diversity of signs that appeared at the 400,000-strong New York Peoples March on Climate in September 2014—that all manner of interventions qualify as climate activism. Klein (2014) is correct that “this changes everything.”

An authentic nomenclature for climate justice relies in part on the Climate Justice Now! network's 2007 launch at the Bali COP13, in opposition to CAN which was seen as too market oriented. There were five founding principles:

1. Reduce consumption.
2. Enable huge monetary transfers (funded by redirecting military budgets, innovative taxes, and debt cancellation) from North to South, based on historical responsibility and ecological debt, to cover adaptation and mitigation costs.
3. Leave fossil fuels in the ground and invest in energy efficiency using appropriate, safe, clean, and community-led renewable energy sources.
4. Enforce rights-based resource conservation that ensures indigenous land rights and promotes peoples' sovereignty over energy, forests, land, and water.
5. Ensure sustainable family farming, fishing, and peoples' food sovereignty.

By 2010, a conference of 35,000 people in Cochabamba, Bolivia, had developed these into concrete demands (in hundreds of pages of workshop reports), of which the following are of note:

- By 2017, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50%.
- Stabilize temperature rises to 1°C and 300 parts per million.
- Acknowledge the climate debt owed by developed countries.
- Achieve full respect for human rights and the inherent rights of indigenous people.
- Universal declaration of rights of Mother Earth to ensure harmony with nature.
- Establish an International Court of Climate Justice.
- Reject carbon markets and commodification of nature and forests through the REDD Programme.
- Promote measures that change consumption patterns in rich countries.
- End intellectual property rights for technologies useful for mitigating climate change.
- Payment of 6% of developed countries' GDP to address climate change.

Some high-profile climate advocates, such as Mary Robinson (a supporter of carbon trading), soon appropriated the concept of climate justice for use in a manner inconsistent with these demands. Other strategies for equity also came into dispute, such as "greenhouse gas development rights" and "contraction and convergence" approaches, which also advocated the sale of surpluses on the markets. Climate justice critics argue that such markets have the tendency to turn a ceiling into a floor. Other concepts such as "common but differentiated responsibilities" between national states and "converging per capita emissions" were much more in the spirit of climate justice, as defined

in Cochabamba. Most importantly, as Egardo Lander (2010) explained in his review of Cochabamba, the conference brought together the main contemporary struggles in a constructive fusion of interests: justice/equality, war/militarization, free trade, food sovereignty, agribusiness, peasants' rights, struggles against patriarchy, defense of indigenous peoples' rights, migration, the critique of the dominant Eurocentric/colonial patterns of knowledge, and struggles for democracy.

With the contested rise of climate justice narratives in mind, I wish to contribute to the debate about "how differences in framing environmental problems are driven by differences in normative and theoretical positions; and ways in which more inclusive framings might enable more societally relevant and impactful research and more concerted action/practice" (see Lele et al., this volume). The stereotypical premise is that the INGOs are pragmatic and hence correct in their normative approach: deal making within existing UNFCCC constraints. In contrast, climate justice groups are principled, radical, and unbending in their opposition to compromise on a matter as vital as climate change, and are increasingly unwilling to countenance the kinds of compromises that the December 2015 Paris UNFCCC COP 21 summit represented. This is a simple dichotomy, one that begins to break down somewhat upon closer examination (e.g., Greenpeace's direct actions).

In the field of climate politics, however, conditions are becoming so desperate that the more militant, localistic approach may be judged by future generations *as the more pragmatic step required for basic civilizational survival*, especially if the alternative is what can be termed "neoliberal nature," a conceptual framing implicitly adopted by both world elites and many INGOs. The reliance on market solutions is one of the main strategic impulses within what is sometimes termed the theory of ecological modernization, whose other features include technological innovations, efficiencies, and the management of externalities aimed at improving environmental outcomes in a rational manner (for a critical discussion, see Harvey 1996).

The basic thesis is that market imperfections (such as pollution) require market interventions to get the prices right. In what may be its most advanced form of such self-correction within neoliberal capitalism, Deutsche Bank's Pavan Sukhdev initiated "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (TEEB) within the UN Environment Program to "make nature's values visible" and thus "help decision makers recognize the wide range of benefits provided by ecosystems and biodiversity, demonstrate their values in economic terms and, where appropriate, capture those values in decision making." TEEB's search for optimal resource use emphasizes "low-hanging fruit" that can achieve the least costly form of market-facilitated environmental management.

Climate justice networks, by contrast, use contrary framings of environmental justice that are especially hostile to market strategies. To date, they have gathered insufficient strength to counter neoliberal nature advocates, beyond moralizing. One of the most important areas for this debate concerns

climate finance, ranging from carbon markets to the Green Climate Fund. As this chapter concludes, climate justice activists may be well advised to take on board *some* of the logic of neoliberal-nature INGOs, even on their own terms, so as to explore limits and confirm the futility of reforming a thoroughly corrupt structure. The more serious INGOs, such as FOEI and Greenpeace, have redoubled efforts to link global and local action, as confirmed by their 2015–16 promotion of local campaigns that incorporate direct action. In other words, the two different environmental narratives have not yet achieved a necessary interconnection to pursue dialectical tensions and perhaps resolutions.

To make this case, the structure of the argument is first aided if we personalize these complex issues by considering climate debates involving several colleagues from Durban, South Africa. This is an ethnography of social struggle vignettes, informed by the fact that personal positionality is vital to the framing narratives chosen by INGOs and climate justice groups. The perspectives of these four individuals, profiled below, to the wider story of climate narrative construction, along with their similar origins, political perspectives, and subsequent placements in an INGO, a national NGO, a community organization, and academia provide an opportunity to assess where the climate justice movement (principles, analysis, strategy, tactics, and alliances) has taken them in relation to the UNFCCC.

Thereafter, we will explore the wider terrain of neoliberal nature. There we find groups that adopt insider positions in relation to global power structures that broadly agree with the conceptual premises behind global incremental change—following market principles—as opposed to climate justice movements that work locally and reject market strategies. A subsequent consideration of vital issues like carbon trading and natural capital accounting clarifies the complexities, and general principles begin to emerge. These principles are not, however, easily reduced to a “sustainable development” rubric. They are more contradictory, as we will see.

Finally, by considering how climate policy analyses, strategies, tactics, and alliances emerge to lend themselves to this dichotomy, we see INGOs and climate justice activists in conflict over markets and technical solutions—or “false solutions” as climate justice activists would argue. This, in turn, allows us to reframe both INGO and grassroots climate justice argumentation. The rise of Trump makes the search for unity all the more urgent, but also more feasible if a world divestment movement picks up momentum.

For the lack of a better phrase, we might term the alternative “ecosocialism,” *respectful of the merits of valuing nature* (though not counting it for the sake of marketization), while at same time *confirming the role of decommodifying social movements, including those of indigenous people and ecofeminists, in nature’s stewardship*.

Vignettes of Paris Seen from Durban

Four Durban friends of mine (Figure 8.1) are worth introducing: Kumi Naidoo, Bobby Peek, Desmond D'Sa, and Ashwin Desai. The stories they tell about climate politics illustrate the main framing narratives, the structurally delimited locations they occupy at different scales, and the breakthrough potentials.

Naidoo was Greenpeace International's leader from 2009–2015 and now works continentally in Africa on diverse civil society strategies. He also has led South African civil society organizations, the international network CIVICUS, and various initiatives during the mid-2000s global anti-poverty mobilizations. He holds a doctorate in politics from Oxford and is respected by many world leaders.

Peek directs the NGO “groundWork” (working nationally in South Africa). He won the Goldman Prize in 1998 and has established himself as one of the world's leading environmental justice experts and practitioners.

Working primarily at the local level with the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, which he helped found with Peek in 1995, D'Sa has become the city's conscience on matters ranging from climate change to anti-drug, anti-gang, antipollution, and anti-privatization struggles underway in many neighborhoods, especially his toxin-saturated home base of Wentworth. D'Sa was also the recipient of the 2014 Goldman Prize.

Desai is a world-renowned sociologist. A professor at the University of Johannesburg, though mostly resident in Durban, his books on Gandhi, daily life in South African struggles, and sports racism are exceptionally well-read and furiously debated, since he finds every opportunity to slaughter holy cows, including his own traditions on the once-revolutionary left.

These extremely energetic, accomplished activists are about a decade's age apart, ranging from late 40s to late 50s. All of them grew up during apartheid



Figure 8.1 (a) Kumi Naidoo speaking to climate activists in KwaZulu-Natal, (b) Bobby Peek protesting against the BRICS in Durban, (c) Desmond D'Sa in front of a refinery in South Durban, and (d) Ashwin Desai at a book fair.

in Durban, within 20 kilometers of each other (in the suburbs of Chatsworth, Wentworth, Cato Manor, and the downtown Indian Quarter, respectively). They were influenced by highly principled anti-capitalist, anti-racist scholar-activists of the earlier generation, such as the late Fatima Meer and Dennis Brutus. They all fought against the Pretoria regime with exceptional courage. Since freedom was won in 1994, they have regularly come together against injustice, for example, at the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism in Durban and 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

At the Durban climate summit in December 2011, the four friends adopted insider-outsider approaches which included (a) high-profile roles in disruptive events (for which Naidoo and Peek were arrested) inside the lobby of the Durban convention center, (b) leadership of a 10,000-strong march by D'Sa, and (c) a ruthless, scathing critique of the whole process by Desai. With such similar backgrounds, they speak the same language of street-heat politics, they harbor fury at injustices big and small, and they possess enormous charisma that each draws upon regularly, extending from small strategy meetings to academic seminars to mass rallies. They are also regularly frustrated by power, so even when they win minor reforms, they immediately point out the bigger structural enemies they face.

Three of these friends, however, came together—and grew decisively (if temporarily) apart—in Paris in December 2015. Greenpeace International's leader, Naidoo endorsed the deal as “progress,” even while viewing the Paris Agreement as “one step on a long road and there are parts of it that frustrate and disappoint me....There's a yawning gap in this deal but it can be bridged by clean technology.” Like Greenpeace, the 42-million member clicktivist group Avaaz celebrated: “most importantly, [the Paris deal] sends a clear message to investors everywhere: sinking money into fossil fuels is a dead bet. Renewables are the profit center. Technology will bring us to 100% clean energy is the money-maker of the future.”

In contrast, Peek and D'Sa wholeheartedly denounced the Paris Agreement, as had Desai at the same summit four years earlier in Durban (in part because of the admittedly weak counter-summit organized by the other three plus this author; Bond 2012a). After the Durban COP17 concluded, Desai attacked “big name spectacle NGOs” which dominated the main protest march, including Greenpeace:

The local grassroots organizations were reduced to spectators, and were allowed only the occasional cameo appearance with most often a single line: “Amandla!” [Power!] The march delivered the Minister of International Relations and COP17 president Maita Nkoana-Mashabane to the masses gathered below. She used the opportunity to say how important civil society was and promised to study a memorandum. She was gracious and generous. I could see the NGOs on the truck preening themselves in the glow of this recognition and probably increased funding.

Actually, D'Sa was mightily pleased about the crowd he led to the convention center that day (December 3, 2011) against COP15: in comparative terms it was a very large march for Durban. This was due to the many visiting activists and unfortunately not because Durban residents turned out to participate. When it came to his two-week sojourn in Paris in December 2015, however, D'Sa voiced his appreciation for the civil society mobilizations outside for in the wake of 130 murders by Islamic extremists two weeks before, the inside was hermetically sealed:

The stark reality is that the people who have the potential to create great changes are being excluded from the process. Instead, an elite minority with access to the COP make decisions for the masses outside. This is quite ironic, as it seems to be the same model which has intensified the crisis. The leaders, who are elected by the people, together with the big corporations are in collaboration, halting the necessary measures needed to stop this runaway climate catastrophe.

For D'Sa, the essential problem was framed as one of participation, self-interest, and power relations. In Peek's recorded comments on the Paris Agreement's failings, the FOEI stance led him to express a North–South critique, namely:

...the draft agreement avoids recognition of the climate debt owed to the people of Africa. It sees the need for adaptation, but provides paltry resources. It absolves the imperial powers of any liability for loss and damage resulting from climate change.... We call on African governments to negotiate as if our lives mean something. If they cannot put a good deal on the table, we call on them to walk out of the Paris talks.

It was not to be. The African elites joined the world elites. They could have, instead, repeated the precedent of World Trade Organization summits in 1999 and 2003, when Africa's delegates walked out of those events to sabotage the neoliberal agenda. At the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, one African leader—Lumumba di Apeng from Sudan, who coordinated the G77 countries—unsuccessfully attempted a delegitimization strategy so as to gain more concessions.

Among the larger INGOs, FOEI (2015) was the only one to condemn the Paris deal, while also criticizing Avaaz for its collaboration (Bond 2016). As FOEI's Asad Rehman explained, in relation to paying for climate damage:

The political number mentioned for finance has no bearing on the scale of need. It's empty. The iceberg has struck, the ship is going down and the band is still playing to warm applause.

The rural advocacy movement Via Campesina, also possessing global consciousness and anti-imperialist sensibilities, was even more scathing about COP21:

There is nothing binding for states. National contributions lead us toward a global warming of over 3°C and multinationals are the main beneficiaries. It was essentially a media circus.

The world's best known climate scientist, James Hansen, called Paris, simply, "bullshit." This was not only because of the nonbinding nature of the agreement and its signatories' inability to offer less than the emissions required to keep the temperature rise under 3 degrees—far off the 1.5 degree limit that the delegates claimed to aspire to—but also because Hansen's favorite financial solution—a "cap and dividend" carbon tax—was not contemplated. Even that mild-mannered idea (taxing externalities so as to "make the polluter pay"), raises concerns for climate justice on two levels: (a) whether small, marginal increases in carbon costs are capable of generating the *radical* decarbonization needed (because such taxes lead to marginal, not structural, changes and are passed on to consumers in any case); and (b) whether the commodification of pollution represents the adoption of the neoliberal nature policy strategy often favored by INGOs. What, then, is neoliberal nature?

The Wider Terrain of Struggle: Neoliberal Nature

The very different climate framing narratives and the policy strategies that follow them do not represent a brand-new debate: distinctions in scale politics and the degree of political pragmatism date back decades within environmentalism. Andrew Jamison's 2001 contribution, *The Making of Green Knowledge*, identified a distinct division between the modes of thinking and practice he termed "green business" and "critical ecology movements." The former co-opted environmentalism into the nexus of capital accumulation and flexible regulatory regimes while deploying rhetoric of sustainable development and the "triple bottom line." The green business ontology is grounded in faith in science and technology, instrumental rationality, and market democracy (Jamison 2001).

In contrast, Jamison shows that "critical ecology movements" place emphasis upon the embeddedness of environmental processes with society, state, and market power relations. The various interest groups behind different types of environmental management strategies are highlighted. Their focus is on transformative strategies that also improve human interrelationships, especially tackling racism, sexism, and class power in search of environmental justice. These movements resist the greening of business, demand stronger laws and enforcement, and engage in campaigns against corporations and states which despoil the environment.

Jamison posited four types of environmentalisms: (a) civic work on campaigns and social ecology, (b) professional interventions based upon science and law, (c) militant direct action, and (d) personal environmentalism. Each of these has either reformist or revolutionary currents. Regardless, their politicization of ecology runs counter to green business in virtually all issues and processes, as will be explored further below.

Green business networks have been around for decades, and prominent ones today include the UN Global Compact, World Business Council on Sustainable Development, and World Forum on Natural Capital. Sector after sector, they continue to promote the notion that profit can be reconciled with environmental stewardship. The Marseille-based World Water Council, for example, promotes the commercialization of the most basic element of life, water, as a means to achieve more efficient, sustainable management of the resource. Such networks are dedicated to the strategies of “natural capital accounting” (up to a point, as we will see), payment for ecosystem services, cleaner production, green products, and environmental management systems.

A 2010 list of major environmental INGOs, compiled by a *Greenbiz.com* reporter, that work closely with the more enlightened businesses included the Carbon Trust (with a focus on product carbon footprinting), Ceres (the Global Reporting Initiative), the Clinton Climate Initiative (efficient buildings and waste), Conservation International (biodiversity conservation, product sourcing), EarthShare (workforce charities), Environmental Defense Fund (corporate reforms and efficiencies), GreenBlue (Sustainable Packaging Coalition, CleanGredients and Green2Green), The Nature Conservancy (fresh water, biodiversity, forestry, and land management), Rainforest Alliance (sustainable forestry, agriculture, and tourism), and Rocky Mountain Institute (green business reengineering).

These relationships, however, are sometimes extremely thorny, as when from 2007–2010, the Sierra Club was given USD 25 million by Chesapeake Energy. Apparently, as a result Sierra’s leader at the time, Carl Pope, allowed the organization to endorse fracking as a “bridge technology” to lower greenhouse gases, even though methane leakage means that fracking is as bad as, or worse than, coal.

Indeed, to unveil the true character of green business, investigative journalists at “Don’t Panic” taped Conservation International (CI) in 2011 blatantly offering Lockheed Martin (or so CI presumed, as the “firm” was represented by Don’t Panic undercover reporters) its “greenwashing” public relations support for a partnership rigged to cover up pollution, including the recycling of weaponry for future use.¹ The macro-political context is terribly important, explains Naomi Klein (2013):

The environmental movement had a series of dazzling victories in the late 60s and in the 70s where the whole legal framework for responding to pollution and to protecting wildlife came into law. It was just victory after victory after victory. And these were what came to be called “command-and-control” pieces of legislation. It was “don’t do that.” That substance is banned or tightly regulated. It was a top-down regulatory approach. And then it came to screeching halt when Reagan was elected. And he essentially waged war on the environmental

¹ The single most uncompromising website to follow critiques of environmental INGOs is <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/>

movement very openly. We started to see some of the language that is common among those deniers—to equate environmentalism with Communism and so on. As the Cold War dwindled, environmentalism became the next target, the next Communism. Now, the movement at that stage could have responded in one of the two ways. It could have fought back and defended the values it stood for at that point, and tried to resist the steamroller that was neoliberalism in its early days. Or it could have adapted itself to this new reality, and changed itself to fit the rise of corporatist government. And it did the latter.

One revealing example of a market-friendly strategy that continues to divide the environmental movement is carbon trading. Misgivings first arose about its pilot in the form of lowering U.S. sulfur dioxide emissions in Southern California, which were slower and less effective than the command-and-control strategies adopted in Germany’s Ruhr Valley during the early 1990s. Nevertheless, large environmental INGOs endorsed the idea when presented with it as a deal-breaking demand by U.S. vice president Al Gore at COP3 in Kyoto. Gore promised that Washington would sign the Kyoto Protocol if it included carbon markets as an escape hatch for companies that polluted too much and then desired the right to purchase other companies’ pollution permits. The U.S. Senate had already voted 95–0 against endorsing Kyoto.

Even though Gore won this critical concession, there was no change in attitude on Capitol Hill and the United States never ratified the Kyoto Protocol. Yet carbon markets later became one of the most important wedge issues dividing INGOs from the climate justice movement.

The Rocky Terrain of Carbon Markets and Other False Solutions

The overall point of carbon markets is that society can “price pollution” and simultaneously cut costs associated with mitigating greenhouse gases. Moreover, claim proponents, these markets are vital for funding not only innovative carbon-cutting projects in Africa but also for supplying a future guaranteed revenue stream to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which in turn is supposed to have \$100 billion to spend annually on climate-saving projects. GCF’s design team cochair, the then South African Planning Minister, Trevor Manuel, argued alongside British economist Nicholas Stern in 2010 that up to half of GCF revenues would logically flow from carbon markets, whose annual trading volume had recently peaked in 2008 at \$140 billion (Bond 2012b).

Supporters argue that the use of such “market solutions to market problems” will lower the business costs of transitioning to a post-carbon world. After a cap is placed on total emissions, the idea is that high-polluting corporations and governments can buy ever more costly carbon permits from polluters who do not need so many, or from those willing to part with the permits for a higher price than the profits they make in high-pollution production, energy-generation, agriculture, consumption, disposal or transport.

These markets, however, are in just as much chaos as any financial casino, at a time when faith in bankers—especially confidence they can fairly manage climate-related funding—is badly shaken. In the United States, the national Chicago voluntary carbon market (strongly promoted by Gore) ceased to exist in late 2010 and regional markets crashed. The European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS)—the main site of carbon trading—has been moribund since its 2006 and 2008 peaks, when the right to emit extra carbon cost around €30 per ton. Carbon pricing's recent low point was less than €3/ton in the wake of oversupply, various episodes of fraud and hacking, and declining interest in climate change following the 2008–2009 Great Recession.

By 2017, prices remained low and the World Bank (2017) calculated the 2016 global carbon trade at just \$32 billion. Of the 15% of world CO₂ equivalent emissions that are covered by either carbon trading or a tax, only a quarter carries a price above \$10/ton. The Canadian, Californian, Japanese, and New Zealand carbon trading systems are rare exceptions, with prices ranging from \$11–14 per ton. The countries with a carbon price above \$25 per ton have achieved this by taxation, not carbon trading: Sweden \$126; Switzerland and Liechtenstein \$84; Finland \$66; Norway \$52; France \$33; and Denmark \$25.

A category of UN-authorized Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects was created to allow wealthier countries to engage in emissions reductions initiatives in poor and middle-income countries as a way of eliding direct emissions reductions. Like the global oversupply of carbon credits, however, the price of CDM credits fell to less than €0.50, and to lower supply, the main emerging markets (especially China, India, and Brazil) were no longer allowed to issue them after 2012. China then started eight pilot carbon-trading projects at the local and provincial level, with highly volatile prices which ranged in 2017 from €8/ton in Beijing down to just €0.50/ton in Chongqing. Reflecting the extreme volatility in Chinese financial markets (including stock market crashes in mid-2015 and early 2016), the Shenzhen carbon market fell from a Chinese high of €9.5/ton in early 2013 to just €3.5/ton by mid-2016. These prices are woefully short of making a dent in climate change. According to Joseph Stiglitz and Nicolas Stern's report to the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition (Stiglitz and Stern 2017), at least \$40–80/tCO₂ by 2020 and \$50–100/tCO₂ by 2030 are needed to lower the rate of emissions to keep below the 2 degree temperature increase targeted at Paris.

Without an ever-lowering cap on emissions, the incentive to increase prices and raise trading volumes does not exist. The overall context remains one of economic stagnation, financial volatility, and shrinking demand for emissions reduction credits. The world faces increasing sources of carbon credit supply in an already glutted market, thanks to the COP negotiators' failure to mandate binding emissions cuts. But another factor remains behind the lax system that the UN, the EU, and other regulatory bodies appear to have adopted. All manner of inappropriate projects appear to be gaining approval, especially in Africa (Bond et al. 2012). As California's carbon market was renewed in 2017,

a new round of complaints arose from activists about the scheme's implicit environmental racism (insofar as polluting industries in neighborhoods with predominantly racial minority populations continue emissions because of their purchase of carbon credits).

The carbon market's failures have renewed concern about the "privatization of the air" among climate justice activists. This fear was originally articulated by the Durban Group for Climate Justice (Lohmann 2006) and in the 2009 film by Annie Leonard, *Story of Cap and Trade* (Leonard 2009). Again, aside from FOEI, the INGOs sought reforms, not abolition, of the carbon markets; Greenpeace deprioritized the EU ETS, but the WWF strongly endorsed such markets along with investment in renewables and innovation (Bryant 2016:12–13).

At some point, weaknesses in the carbon trading strategy should be forcefully addressed by INGOs and their justification for ongoing futile reform advocacy reconsidered. This, however, is not the only aspect of neoliberal nature that splits global from local climate justice activists. There are other "false solutions" to the climate and other environmental crises, and many more continue to emerge from the private sector, some in alliance with the business-oriented INGOs, for example:

- controversial forms of so-called "cleaner energy," such as nuclear, "clean coal," fracking shale gas, hydropower, and hydrogen;
- biofuels, biomass, and biochar; and
- geoengineering gimmicks, such as carbon capture and storage; genetically modified trees and other biomass; sulfates in the air to shut out the sun; iron filings in the sea to create algae blooms; artificial microbes to convert plant biomass into fuels, chemicals, and products; and large-scale solar reflection (e.g., industrial-scale plastic-wrap for deserts).

Many of these technical-fix strategies violate the precautionary principle, create land-grab pressure, have excessive capital costs, require increased energy, are unproven in the technological sense, and are years if not decades from implementation. While promoting some obvious technological improvements, such as renewable energy and transport efficiencies, several very small INGOs with a decidedly climate justice orientation (e.g., the ETC Group et al. 2010) confirm their opposition to the more extreme false solutions:

The shift from petroleum to biomass is, in fact, worsening climate change, increasing deforestation and biodiversity loss, degrading soils and depleting water supplies. Further, the new "bio-based" economy threatens livelihoods, especially in the Global South where it encourages "land grabs."

In McAfee's (2012) view, compensating the poor and other land users for practices that maintain healthy, service-producing ecosystems may be an important part of strategies for sustainable and equitable development. Serious problems arise, however, when such compensation schemes are framed as markets.

If the “net” emissions reduction strategy is not questioned, not only will carbon trading and offsets potentially revive (with all their intrinsic problems unresolved), but a panoply of false solutions will be funded by the GCF. Even when INGOs with a climate justice orientation get involved in global technical advocacy, debilitating problems emerge due to adverse power relations, as the GCF has already demonstrated. Sarah Bracking criticizes *both* the mainstream INGOs and climate justice participants in the GCF who “invested resources and energy into a process that distracts from other types of politics and issue framing” required to address climate finance (Bracking 2015):

The promise of incremental reform became privileged over strategic withdrawal [from the GCF process], structural change and the insistence on effective government regulation. Representatives of the climate justice movement fought to give substantive weight to the initial radical framings, only for them to be captured in financial logics.

The Uncertain Terrain of Natural Capital Accounting

There is just one case of a neoliberal nature strategy that may have appeal to those with a climate justice orientation: contesting the extraction of fossil fuels (and other raw materials). This can easily be done for sites where it can be demonstrated that drilling for oil or coal does not make sense *economically* and not just in terms of pollution and environmental (including climate) damage, social dislocation, and disrupted spiritual values that are normally the basis for opposition. The main economic argument is that by calculating natural resource depletion associated with extraction, and comparing the outflow of those values with the inflow of retained profits and reinvestment made by the corporations which do the extraction, the overall impact is net negative.

Even though the World Bank has traditionally endorsed extraction (e.g., of fossil fuels), several Bank staff in the group studying Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) annually calculate “adjusted net savings” as an augmentation of national economic accounting. This follows the resignation letter of ecological economics founder Herman Daly (1996), in which he scolded the Bank for its failure to comprehend natural capital. WAVES’ results are extremely disturbing. For example, the Bank’s 2014 *Little Green Data Book* conceded that “88% of Sub-Saharan African countries were found to be depleting their wealth in 2010,” with a 12% decline in Africans’ per capita wealth that year attributed to the extraction of minerals, energy, and forest products (natural capital) (World Bank 2014:8).

The adjusted net savings measure is the most ambitious attempt to comprehend changes in wealth incorporating nature. Sub-Saharan Africans had the world’s second most dramatic loss between gross and adjusted savings (Figure 8.2). For North Africa and the Middle East, gross savings were 27.9%, but adjusted savings were 8.1% thanks mainly to energy depletion being 12.4% of

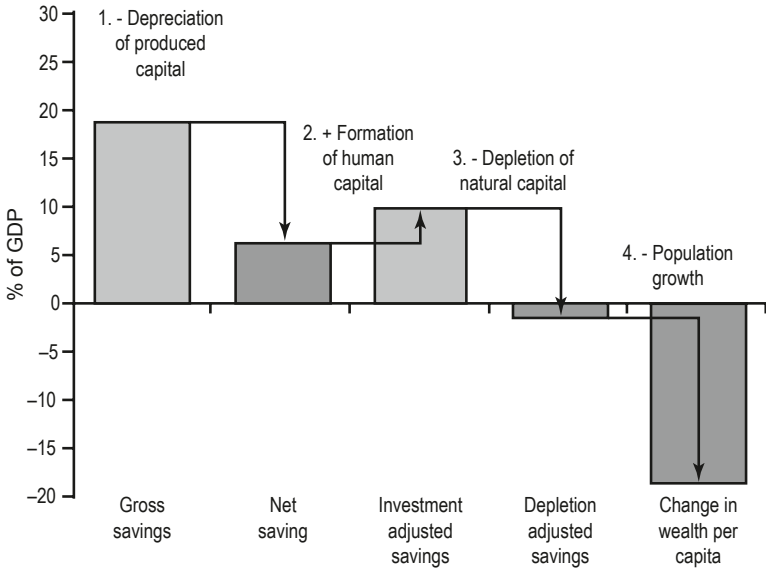


Figure 8.2 Decomposing change in wealth per capita, Sub-Saharan Africa, 2010. Source: World Bank, Wealth database 2014.

gross national income. In contrast, resource-rich wealthy countries (including Canada, the United States, Australia, and Norway) witness sufficient reinvestment by (home-based) corporations, such that their natural capital depletion was outweighed by new physical capital, leaving a net positive outcome (World Bank 2015:12).

Why might climate justice groups dedicated to decommodification of life tolerate such counting exercises, given that they are premised in the monetary valuation of natural resources? After all, in addition to concern about marketization that inexorably follows the monetization of natural values, Sian Sullivan (2013), one powerful critic of natural capital accounting, argues that there are

broader implications of conjuring “nature” in the form of the socioeconomic construct of money. Layer upon layer of abstraction lie between the connected breathing entities comprising aspects of “biodiversity,” for example, and their selective calculation as “units” that can constitute “ecosystem service” work and be factored into “natural capital accounts.” Once visible as these units, however, “nature” can be put to work as a value-generating asset, just like any other unit of capital. It can become a new source of monetary income (e.g., through Payments for Ecosystem Services and REDD+ carbon credits), and be leveraged as new forms of value-generating capital asset...Indeed, it seems strange, if not delusional, to expect that affirmations of the current economic paradigm will solve these related crises. To invoke Einstein, “we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

This is a fruitful and long overdue discussion. In a parallel debate, Robbins and Moore (2015) ask: “Amidst—and despite—its deep-seated rejection of technocratic fixes, can political ecology reconcile itself with ecomodernism?” In the sense, the term includes monetary valuation of nature. They answer cautiously in the affirmative: “We suggest that we join together to render ecomodern political ecology a therapeutic empirical project. Rather than become entrenched in an ongoing battle over the dysfunction of the other group’s phobic attachments, then, we would instead explicitly engage them, working together to pose specific questions, open to productive exploration” (one of which might be whether natural capital accounting can be deployed to negate most existing forms of extractivism in Africa).

What climate justice-informed opponents of natural capital accounting have most trouble in criticizing is the need to punish polluters by considering formal monetary liabilities—or some approximation since nature is priceless—so that reparation payments to environment and affected peoples are sufficiently financed, and in the process an incentive is generated not to pollute in future. This is the reason to make at least a rough monetary case for “ecological debt” payments in courts of law.

For example, of Nigeria’s \$11.5 billion claim against Shell for a 2011 oil spill, more than half is meant to compensate fisherfolk. The liability owed to silicosis-afflicted mineworker victims of Anglo-American and other gold mining houses has begun to reach payment stage. The South African firms Gencor and Cape PLC had to pay \$65 million a decade ago to settle South African asbestos lawsuits after they lost their last appeal in the U.K. House of Lords. Similar arguments should be made against the multinational corporations most responsible for what the United Nations terms loss and damage due to climate change. Ideally, over time, this strategy would develop as “fine-and-ban,” so that when a corporation makes an egregious error, it is fined punitively for the damage done, and then sent packing.

To be sure, there is a danger that if “fine-and-ban” is not the local state policy, then natural capital accounting will lead, instead, to a “fee” for pollution, with the damage continuing, alongside ongoing payment. That would be the result if a formal market emerged, such as the EU ETS. Naturally, climate justice activists, beginning with the Durban Group for Climate Justice, firmly rejected these in 2004. The distinction should thus be clear between valuing nature for ecological debt payment purposes (a fine-and-ban) and pricing nature for market making (a fee). As Vandana Shiva put it in a 2014 South African talk: “We should use natural capital as a red light to destruction, not as a green light” (Bond 2014).

The “red light” strategy is an example of a potential rapprochement between INGO and climate justice framing strategies, emphasizing technical analysis as well as being useful to anti-extractivist campaigners who want an economic argument against fossil fuel depletion. The “*differences in normative and theoretical positions*” remain, but use of natural capital accounting against

extractivism offers one example of “*more inclusive framings [that] might enable more societally relevant and impactful research and more concerted action/practice*” (Lele et al., this volume).

In sum, natural capital accounting is potentially one narrative that might bridge INGOs and climate justice groups, especially in making the economic argument to “leave the oil in the soil, coal in the hole, tar sands in the land, and fracking shale gas under the grass,” as Joan Martinez-Alier posited (Martinez-Alier 2014). Instead of extracting such resources when they demonstrably lead to much lower adjusted savings, is there scope for a different narrative that compels a climate debt to be paid to those who suffer climate change and who are also residents of fossil fuel reserve sites? This has been one route taken by Oilwatch members to justify national leaders in places like Ecuador (the Yasuni case) and Nigeria (Ogoniland) to leave fossil fuels untouched (Bond 2012b).

To arrive at that narrative requires one more detour through the philosophies of environmental management: sustainable development.

The Scorched Earth of Sustainable Development Narratives

If there is an alternative worldview to neoliberal nature, most INGO and climate justice narrative shapers and strategists would immediately point to the phrase “sustainable development.” The 1987 United Nations Commission, led by Gro Harlem Brundtland, offers a definition still worth returning to (Brundtland Report 1987). Not only does it contain the intergenerational requirement expressed in the first clause of her definition:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

the following subclauses observe first “the concept of ‘needs,’ in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given,” thus generating grounds for social justice advocacy. Second, “the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs” repudiates pro-growth assumptions of those who use the words sustainable development in public relations greenwashing.

The idea gained popularity in 1972 with the first Earth Summit in Stockholm and in *The Limits to Growth* (Club of Rome 1972), culminating in the Brundtland Commission and 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Soon, however, sustainability was co-opted by corporations during the 1990s and downgraded in favor of neoliberal ideologues’ advocacy of export-led growth and the commodification of nature. Sustainability was raised once again at a 2002 UN Earth Summit in Johannesburg, which unfortunately fused the UN’s strategy with the for-profit agendas of privatizers, carbon traders, and mega-corporations which supported the UN Global Compact (which was mostly a fund-raising exercise

for a beleaguered institution). Then, in 2012, at the next Rio Earth Summit, sustainability was fused with “green economy” rhetoric, biodiversity offsetting, and market-centric climate change policy. Sustainability had again flowered, but now with a much more direct relationship to neoliberal nature (Büscher et al. 2014). For the 2015–2030 period, sustainable development goals are now the mantra of the UN and many other multilateral agencies, in spite of extensive critique of the realities they elide, such as by the scholar–activist network TheRules.org (2015).

Even if this weak version of the sustainability narrative is contested by climate justice critics—and attacked by the most pollution-intensive fractions of capital—there is no questioning the problem of rampant socioenvironmental unsustainability as the world hits what the Club of Rome (1972) had long warned would be “planetary boundaries.” The most serious threat is exhaustion of the carrying capacity for greenhouse gases that cause climate change, and in turn, ocean acidification. There are others: biodiversity loss, stratospheric ozone depletion (abated by the 1987 Montreal Protocol that phased out chlorofluorocarbons by 1996 but leaving atmospheric aerosols as a danger), oceanic degradation and acidification, crises in the biogeochemical nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, other resource input constraints, chemical pollution, freshwater adulteration and evaporation, and shortages of arable land (Mace et al. 2014; Magdoff and Foster 2011; Steffen et al. 2015). So for those in INGOs and climate justice grassroot groups genuinely concerned with global environmental sustainability, the next question is whether the logic of capitalism can generate repairs for the intrinsic damage being done during the “Capitalocene” (Moore 2013)? Seeking sustainability, many INGOs believe in a “green capitalism” strategy based on arguments by Gore (2009) and Hawken et al. (1999) (for a critique see Tanuro 2014). Yet as Ariel Salleh (2010) argues, a serious consideration of externalized costs should include at least three kinds of surplus extractions, both economic and thermodynamic, never comprehensively incorporated by reformers: (a) the social debt to inadequately paid workers, (b) an embodied debt to women family caregivers, and (c) an ecological debt drawn on nature at large. The more conservative INGOs have simply ignored the logical trajectory of “polluter pays” externalization in the sense pointed out by Salleh.

Concepts of the left dissent from this weak form of sustainability, stressing sustainability as achieved through distributional equity, nonmaterialist values, and a critique (and transcendence) of the capitalist mode of production are:

- The environmental justice vision that African-American activists in North Carolina began to articulate in the 1980s (Bullard 2000).
- “Anti-extractivism” and the “rights of nature” articulated by Ecuadorean and Bolivian activists and constitutions, even if not in public policy as pointed out by Accion Ecologica Colectivo Miradas criticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo (2014).

- Andean indigenous peoples' versions of *buen vivir* (living well) and allied ideas (Biggs 2011).
- “Degrowth” (*décroissance*) (Latouche 2004).
- Post-GDP “well-being” national accounting (Fioramonti 2014), such as Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness which emphasises sufficiency
- “The commons” (Linebaugh 2008).
- Ecosocialism (Kovel 2007).
- Strategies for transitioning to genuinely sustainable societies and economies, also hotly debated (see Scoones et al. 2015; Swilling and Annecke 2012).

With such creative options flowering—albeit in a sometimes reformist mode harking back to indigenous conservation, mere accounting reforms, and the slowing (not ending) of capitalism—genuine sustainability ultimately depends on the nature of the critique of unsustainability. Perhaps the most popular systemic analysis comes from Annie Leonard’s *Story of Stuff* film and book (Leonard et al. 2007), which link the spectrum of extraction, production, distribution, consumption, and disposal. In her book, *This Changes Everything*, Klein (2014) puts the onus on capitalism for climate change. Martinez-Alier and Spangenberg (2012) express most bluntly what is truly at stake:

Unsustainable development is not a *market failure* to be fixed but a *market system failure*: expecting results from the market that it cannot deliver, like long-term thinking, environmental consciousness, and social responsibility.

Conclusion: From Dueling Narratives to Practical Fusions

Returning to Durban, here is a revealing question: Can Kumi Naidoo, Bobby Peek, Desmond D’Sa, and Ashwin Desai—ensconced as they are in an INGO, a local NGO, a climate justice community organization, and academia (albeit with Naidoo having moved from Greenpeace to Johannesburg in 2016 to set up the Africans Rising civil society network)—identify common framings for addressing climate change, given the huge wedge between them that opened up during the COP process, especially at COP21 in 2015? The answer remains ambiguous.

At first blush, one factor dating back to the anti-apartheid struggle draws them all together: a deep respect for mass democratic action. That is where one of Naidoo’s most important recent statements—made in mid-2014 with dozens of other INGO leaders and strategists at his Rustler’s Valley eco-ranch in South Africa—provides hope: On one hand, there is underlying humility in the current generation of INGO leaders. On the other, there is a profound organic intelligence on the part of local climate justice activists who have the potential to take their perspective onto what initially appears to be the extremely hostile terrain of natural capital accounting.

Naidoo and more than thirty others explain why climate justice and similar grassroots forces *are holding the INGOs to account*, in an extraordinarily frank and refreshing confessional (CIVICUS 2014):

A new and increasingly connected generation of women and men activists across the globe question how much of our energy is trapped in the internal bureaucracy and the comfort of our brands and organizations. They move quickly, often without the kinds of structures that slow us down. In doing so, they challenge how much time we—you and I—spend in elite conferences and tracking policy cycles that have little or no outcomes for the poor. They criticize how much we look up to those in power rather than see the world through the eyes of our own people. Many of them, sometimes rightfully, feel we have become just another layer of the system and development industry that perpetuates injustice.

It is that cringeworthy honesty that opens the door to alliances with climate justice groups which want, as Naidoo et al. put it, to “challenge the business-as-usual approach. Prioritize a local community meeting rather than the big glitzy conferences where outcomes are predetermined.” To be sure, cynics (like Desai) would point out that the glitzy Elmau and Paris conferences, where such unsatisfactory outcomes were predetermined, gained the endorsement of Greenpeace under Naidoo’s leadership. It is also true that Peek and D’Sa continually prepare community activists to intensify multiple Blockadias in South Durban in their attempts to halt neighborhood-destroying truck and ship traffic (partly on grounds of climate change), calling for divestment from the firms involved (with Desai sniping, most often with exceptional insight, from the sidelines).

Yet it is also true that Naidoo’s time at Greenpeace was marked by a revival of both militant leadership (e.g., his heroic disruption attempt in the Arctic) and decentralization of resources to the South, and that Greenpeace U.S. under Annie Leonard’s lead has fused traditional monkey-wrenching with social and racial justice advocacy for the first time. Linkages of women, Muslims, Latinos, African-Americans, immigrants, indigenous Native Americans, other minorities, the LGBTQ community, poor people, trade unionists, environmentalists, and social justice activists are increasingly common as a result, offering a “social self-defense” which activist Jeremy Brecher (2017) identifies in his survey of anti-Trump struggles at the time of the inauguration.

Trump’s decades’ worth of extreme real estate corruption, property gambles, debt defaults and full-fledged bankruptcies, refusals to pay suppliers, and tax chiseling have reportedly attracted more than 4,000 lawsuits (Penzenstadler and Kelly 2016). One high-profile suit Trump is opposing was filed by lawyers on behalf of 21 young Americans (9–20 years of age) on the grounds that his policies (like Obama’s) threaten their future.

Regardless of how courts address climate challenges, by attacking Trump’s policies and projects, climate justice and other climate activists can find unprecedented unity. Trump’s plan is to build filthy Keynesian infrastructure

(fossil-fuel pipelines, airports, roads, and bridges), cancel international climate obligations, retract shale gas restrictions and the ban on the Keystone oil pipeline, encourage drilling, defund renewable energy and public transport, as well as to destroy the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (Trump 2016). His choices for the main climate-related Cabinet positions left no room for doubt: former ExxonMobil chief executive Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State, Scott Pruitt as EPA Director (based on his Oklahoma career attacking the EPA), and former Texas governor Rick Perry as Secretary of Energy. As the leader of ExxonMobil, Tillerson was not only a major contributor to climate policy inertia for several decades, his recent contract for a massive \$500 billion Siberian oil drill earned him the Russian “Order of Friendship” from Vladimir Putin in 2013. A year later, the deal was postponed due to sanctions following Putin’s invasion of the Crimea, and tightened sanctions in mid-2017 make the project’s revival unlikely.

The climate critique of Trump is also the basis for divestment, for example, of firms associated with Trump’s cabinet and top officials (Goldman Sachs bank, ExxonMobil oil, Koch Industries oil, Lockheed Martin military, Pfizer drugs, General Dynamics military, Wells Fargo bank, Amway beauty, and Breitbart media). A broader world divestment movement would build on conceptual tools that have been around for years and that immediately came to life after Trump’s election (Bond 2017):

- A decade earlier, Joseph Stiglitz argued that “unless producers in America face the full cost of their emissions, Europe, Japan, and all the countries of the world should impose trade sanctions against the U.S.”
- Journalist Naomi Klein reacted to Trump’s election: “We need to start demanding economic sanctions in the face of this treaty-shedding lawlessness.”
- Representing French business, conservative ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy threatened, “I will demand that Europe put in place a carbon tax at its border, a tax of 1–3% for all products coming from the U.S. if the U.S. doesn’t apply environmental rules that we are imposing on our companies.”
- The *New York Times* quoted a leading Mexican official at the UNFCCC COP22 summit in Marrakesh: “A carbon tariff against the U.S. is an option for us,” a stance echoed by a Canadian official.

Some INGOs are already playing a major role in these crucial battles. Even as it became obvious that the carbon trading strategy countenanced by Greenpeace had failed, the impact of the group’s attacks on Shell Oil was formidable in 2015, far outweighing the failed EU ETS reforms in strategic importance. Any institutional cost-benefit analysis of the INGOs’ emissions market advocacy (e.g., the astonishing \$200 million spent during 2009–2010 on U.S. congressional lobbying for cap-and-trade legislation) would logically place Blockadia strategies far ahead in the benefits category although not without considerable

costs (Shell's legal threats against Greenpeace plus the Portland court's fines for blocking its bridge access in mid-2015, for instance). Similarly, 350.org's commitments to direct action grow more vibrant the more the frustrations rise about the slow pace of state and corporate decarbonization. In late 2016, this was evident at the Standing Rock showdown where several INGOs assisted Native Americans in fighting (and initially defeating) the DAPL in a manner suffused with respect and local ownership. (Partly as a result, the framing of "water protectors" rather than climate warriors was emphasized.)

Some INGO visionaries are aware of the limitations of their structural location. For example, African anti-extractive activists, ranging from faith-movement progressives to ActionAid, have responded vigorously to challenges made by Farai Maguwu and Christelle Terreblanche to the "Alternative Mining Indaba" (AMI), held every February in Cape Town to coincide with the African Mining Indaba of major corporate and state attendees. Instead of being resolutely committed to fighting mining—especially coal, which is increasingly destructive across a range of constituencies—AMI tends toward mild-mannered reforms. The dispute recorded in Maguwu and Terreblanche (2016)—including several dueling op-ed articles in March 2016 in the main African ezine, *Pambazuka*—is one example of the INGO-climate justice tensions noted above.

Another example is a reform network of capital and the state, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). In 2016, EITI witnessed a legitimacy challenge from the (INGO) "Publish What You Pay" movement of Soros-funded NGOs (some of which have grassroots climate justice connections) when EITI imposed a "civil society" representative in their decision-making processes through a dubious process.

In other words, more connections between these differently located and philosophically divergent types of civil society—INGOs and climate justice activists—may unearth further frictions. I believe it is incumbent now upon the better-resourced INGOs to take up the challenge made by CIVICUS (2014) to provide not just auto-critique but new modes of operation sensitive to the (often more radical) grassroots agenda.

This means a complementary move by climate justice groups might be considered, both to scale up their critique so they can offer concrete *global scale* analysis and start networking properly, and to gather sufficient confidence to take on INGO rhetoric, much of which was learned in struggles within the system. This is the argument made by one of the world's leading contemporary historical materialists, David Harvey (1996:400–401), who insists that climate justice activists must become more forward-looking and

deal in the material and institutional issues of how to organize production and distribution in general, how to confront the realities of global power politics and how to displace the hegemonic powers of capitalism not simply with dispersed, autonomous, localized, and essentially communitarian solutions (apologists for which can be found on both right and left ends of the political

spectrum), but with a rather more complex politics that recognizes how environmental and social justice must be sought by a rational ordering of activities at different scales.

In turn, I believe, the climate justice movement organizations, which often suffer from excessive localism (or expressed more positively, “militant particularism,” as Harvey calls it), should attempt to link up more decisively with each other, take the broadest terrain as their mandate (including cultural and spiritual features of ecological and social life), and seek to rationally reorder the space economy in a way that directly confronts capitalism’s neoliberal discourses. In addition, Harvey (1996:401) suggests:

The reinsertion of “rational ordering” indicates that such a movement will have no option, as it broadens out from its militant particularist base, but to reclaim for itself a nonco-opted and non-perverted version of the theses of ecological modernization. On the one hand that means subsuming the highly geographically differentiated desire for cultural autonomy and dispersion, for the proliferation of tradition and difference within a more global politics, but on the other hand making the quest for environmental and social justice central rather than peripheral concerns. For that to happen, the environmental justice movement has to radicalize the ecological modernization discourse.

To radicalize ecological modernization, climate justice groups should not boycott the neoliberal nature thesis but instead engage and search out ways to avoid a “post-political” quagmire (Swyngedouw 2010) when it comes to combating climate change and the corporations and states behind it. Both Bryant (2016) and Bracking (2015) cite the critique of climate governance in Swyngedouw (2010), in which carbon markets and the Consumer Goods Forum represent “the predominance of a managerial logic in all aspects of life [and] the reduction of the political to administration where decision making is increasingly considered to be a question of expert knowledge and not of political position.”

To return to Andrew Jamison, a typology of the dichotomy between green business and critical ecology leads to a third option (Table 8.1) that transcends even environmental justice: ecosocialism (a term that I have inserted into Jamison’s rubric, but it is only a semantic intervention). In the first row, Jamison concedes that green business can sometimes, perhaps often, co-opt environmentalism into the nexus of capital accumulation, using concepts of sustainable development, a problem observed above. The critical ecology movements (including climate justice) resist, drawing upon concepts of environmental justice. The battle of environmentalists and green NGOs against transnational corporations, states, and global agencies will not succeed without a dialectical advance to the next stage: hybrid red-green networks. As for emblematic forms of action, the commercial, brokerage functions of green business—often with INGO legitimization (such as in the carbon trading and climate justice examples)—come into direct cultural conflict with the repertoire of resistance

Table 8.1 Dialectics of environmentalisms and ecosocialism (adapted from Jamison 2001).

Terrain	Green business	Critical ecologies	Ecosocialism
Type of agency	Transnational corporations, states, and global agencies	Environmentalists and green NGOs	Hybrid red-green networks
Forms of action	Commercial, brokerage	Popularization, resistance	Exemplary mobilization
Ideal of “science”	Theoretical, expert	Factual, lay	Situated, contextual
Knowledge sources	Disciplines	Traditions	Experiences
Competencies	Professional	Personal	Synthetic

tactics utilized by climate justice activists. The ecosocialist project, in contrast, has to advance to the stage of what Jamison terms “exemplary mobilization.”

Intellectual buttressing remains crucial; hence the ideal articulation of “science” is also worth pursuing. The “theoretical expert” inputs, no matter how flawed in reality, that are used by ecological-modernization promoters working from a green business standpoint, contrast with the factual and lay languages of activists. Can we build on the second by defying the first to achieve a situated, contextual science, such as in the natural capital controversy? The knowledge sources that undergird such efforts are typically divided into the technical disciplines of green business, the political traditions of ecosocial justice, and the transcendental experiences of the ecosocialist project. As for the terrain of competencies, the green-business suits claim professionalism; the critical ecologists invoke personal commitment; and ecosocialists strive for a synthetic understanding of the personal, professional, and, above all, political.

Ultimately this dialectic tension will allow us to draw out “*differences in framing environmental problems*” because they derive from quite substantive “*differences in normative and theoretical positions.*” Exploring the tensions in positionality between INGOs and climate justice, it is extremely difficult, yet perhaps not impossible, to identify “*ways in which more inclusive framings might enable more societally relevant and impactful research and more concerted action/practice*” (Lele et al., this volume). This will surely be a matter of debate through praxis in the months and years ahead.

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