Politics of global climate change and social justice

a critique of market injustice and unsustainability

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cartoons by Zapiro
Durban’s COP17
Conference of Polluters
28 Nov-9 Dec 2011
International Convention Centre
Durban’s Conference of Polluters (COP17) what will happen from 28 Nov until 9 Dec?

UNFCCC negotiations

UN & Durban officials want only ‘civilised’ society in (closed) Exhibition Centre

‘C17’ civ soc unity at public alternative summit: Durban University of Technology
World Summit on Sustainable Development
Johannesburg, 31 August 2002: 30,000 protested
UN ‘type-two partnerships’, privatisation of water, emissions trading, neoliberalism
A TIMETABLE TO REDUCE EMISSIONS?! ..NOT UNTIL THERE'S MORE EVIDENCE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE!
UNFCCC structural problem: national self-interest at UN COPs
A GIFT FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD!
‘global governance’ solutions to world crises?
recent record: repeated *top-down failures*

- last solution: 1987 Montreal Protocol on CFCs (ozone hole)

but since then:
- dominant **neoliberals** (1990s), **neoconservatives** (2000s)
- **World Bank, IMF Annual Meetings:** trivial reforms
  (Chinese voting power rising a few %, African stagnant)
- ‘Post-Washington Consensus’: **Stiglitz fired**, 1999
- **UN Millennium Development Goal rhetoric**, 2000
- **WTO Doha Agenda 2001:** failure
- **Monterrey Financing for Development summit**, 2002,
  then **G20 global financial reregulation**, 2008-09: failure
- **renewed wars** in Central Asia, Middle East, N.Africa
- **UN Security Council reform attempts** failed, 2005
- **G8 aid promises** (especially for Africa) broken, 2005
- **Kyoto Protocol on climate:** Copenhagen Accord tragedy
Copenhagen COP15 crash, December 2009

on last day, backroom deal by Barack Obama (USA), Jacob Zuma (SA), Lula da Silva (Brazil), Manmohan Singh (India), Wen Jiabao (China) designed to *avoid needed emissions cuts*; instead, business-as-usual for *fossil-fuel capital, heavy industry, transport sector and overconsumers*
lead US climate negotiator Todd Stern, on demand for recognising climate debt?

'The sense of guilt or culpability or reparations – I just categorically reject that'

Stern thus rejects core principle: ‘polluter pays’

is Stern welcome in Durban?

WikiLeaks revealed (Feb ‘10) Stern/Pershing bribery and bullying:

Ethiopia, Maldives, Bolivia, Ecuador

Maldives cabinet gets $50m in US aid = U-turn, to support Copenhagen

Ethiopian tyrant Meles Zenawi: UN Advisory Group on Finance cochair halved AU’s 2009 demands for climate debt
Cancun COP 16 revived market fix

in theory, yes, as a ‘castle in the sky’...
but in reality relying upon carbon markets is like building that castle atop quicksand – given the market’s corruption, fraud, thievery, stagnation and speculation
what is ‘climate justice’?
core principles from Rights of Mother Earth
coreference, Cochabamba, Bolivia (April 2010)

• 50 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2017
• stabilising temperature rises to 1C and 300 Parts Per Million
• acknowledging the climate debt owed by developed countries

• full respect for Human Rights and the inherent rights of indigenous people
• universal declaration of Mother Earth rights to ensure harmony with nature
• establishment of an International Court of Climate Justice

• rejection of carbon markets, and REDD’s commodified nature and forests

• promotion of change in consumption patterns of developed countries
• end of intellectual property rights for climate technologies
• payment of 6 percent of developed countries’ GDP for climate change
concept of ‘ecological debt’ now recognised in serious research

The debt of nations and the distribution of ecological impacts from human activities

U. Thara Srinivasan\textsuperscript{ab}, Susan P. Carey\textsuperscript{c}, Eric Hallstein\textsuperscript{d}, Paul A. T. Higgins\textsuperscript{de}, Amber C. Kerr\textsuperscript{d}, Laura E. Koteen\textsuperscript{d}, Adam B. Smith\textsuperscript{d}, Reg Watson\textsuperscript{f}, John Harte\textsuperscript{cd}, and Richard B. Norgaard\textsuperscript{d}

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As human impacts to the environment accelerate, disparities in the distribution of damages between rich and poor nations mount. Globally, environmental change is dramatically affecting the flow of ecosystem services, but the distribution of ecological damages and their driving forces has not been estimated. Here, we conservatively estimate the environmental costs of human activities over 1961-2000 in six major categories (climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, agricultural intensification and expansion, deforestation, overfishing, and mangrove conversion), quantitatively connecting costs borne by poor, middle-income, and rich nations to specific activities by each of those groups. Adjusting impact valuations for different standards of living across the groups as commonly practiced, we find striking imbalances. Climate change and ozone depletion impacts predicted for low-income nations have been overwhelmingly driven by emissions from the other two groups, a pattern also observed for overfishing damages indirectly driven by the consumption of fishery products. Indeed, through disproportionate emissions of greenhouse gases alone, the rich group may have imposed climate damages on the poor group greater than the latter’s current foreign debt. Our analysis provides \textit{prima facie} evidence for an uneven distribution pattern of damages across income groups. Moreover, our estimates of each group’s share in various damaging activities are independent from controversies in environmental valuation methods. In a world increasingly connected ecologically and economically, our analysis is thus an early step toward reframing issues of environmental responsibility, development, and globalization in accordance with ecological costs.
who owes? who caused climate change?
GHG/capita by country, 1950-2000

Canada
USA
EU
Australia
Russia
who loses from climate change?
a ‘Climate Demography Vulnerability Index’

main losers:
Central America, central South America, the Arabian Peninsula, Southeast Asia and much of Africa

Geographic disparities and moral hazards in the predicted impacts of climate change on human populations

J. Samson, D. Berteaux, B. J. McGill and M. M. Humphries
instead of paying its climate debt, US plays pollution markets

DATE: December 12, 1991
TO: Distribution
FR: Lawrence H. Summers

... I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that... I've always thought that under-populated countries in Africa are vastly UNDER-polluted.  (emphasis added)

(World Bank chief economist Larry Summers, later US Treasury Secretary and Obama’s economic manager – full memo: www.whirledbank.org)
Should the World Bank be lead climate financier?

Robert Zoellick

- fossil fuel loans: $6.3 billion in 2009-10 year, up from $1.6 bn in 2006-07;
- commodity export dogma;
- resource curse financing;
- carbon trading promotion;
- Robert Zoellick qualifications:
  - WB prez after Wolfowitz was fired
  - Goldman Sachs int'l banker, 2006-7
  - US State Dep’t #2, 2005-6
  - US Trade Rep to WTO, 2001-5
  - Bush’s Florida vote-counter, 2000
  - Enron ‘senior political advisor’, 1999
  - neocon Project for a New American Century founder, 1998 (‘invade Iraq’)
  - Fannie Mae #2, 1993-9
  - US Treasury: Deputy Assistant Secretary during S&L crash, 1980s

full critique: http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za
carbon trading gimmick:
US vice-president Al Gore (later a carbon trader) pushed for Kyoto to include emissions markets, in exchange for Washington’s promised support ... promise soon broken

Gore: ‘The European Union has adopted this US innovation and is making it work effectively there.’
(An Inconvenient Truth, p. 252)
impossible to finance renewable energy with such low carbon prices

does EU carbon trading ‘work effectively’?

impossible to finance renewable energy with such low carbon prices
carbon markets as ‘privatisation of the air’: a gimmick for the North to avoid emissions cuts - but now exhausted?

• ‘The concept is in wide disrepute... Obama dropped all mention of cap and trade from his current budget... Why did cap and trade die? The short answer is that it was done in by the weak economy, the Wall Street meltdown, determined industry opposition and its own complexity’ – New York Times, 26 March 2010

• adds US Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Washington), ‘Enron scandal and rocky start to a carbon credits trading system in Europe that has been subject to dizzying price fluctuations and widespread fraud.’

• fraud now includes VAT, double-sales, hacking
crits of EU Emissions Trading Scheme

• “ETS has done nothing to curb emissions . . . [and] is a highly regressive tax falling mostly on poor people . . . Enhances the market power of generators. Have policy goals been achieved? Prices up, emissions up, profits up . . . so, not really. . . All generation-based utilities – winners. Coal and nuclear-based generators – biggest winners. Hedge funds and energy traders – even bigger winners. Losers . . . ahem . . . Consumers!” - Peter Atherton powerpoint, Citigroup, January 2007

• Emissions trading “would make money for some very large corporations, but don’t believe for a minute that this charade would do much about global warming . . . old-fashioned rent-seeking . . . making money by gaming the regulatory process.” - Wall Street Journal, 3 March 2007
more carbon trade critiques

• “It isn’t working . . . a grossly inefficient way of cutting emissions in the developing world . . . A shell game . . . $3 billion to some of the worst carbon polluters in the developing world.” - *Newsweek*, 12 March 2007


• “Truth about Kyoto: Huge profits, little carbon saved ... Abuse and incompetence in fight against global warming... The inconvenient truth about the carbon offset industry” - *Guardian*, 2 June 2007

• Kyoto has produced “no demonstrable reductions in emissions or even in anticipated emissions growth” - Gwyn Prins and Steve Rayner, 2007
how does carbon trading look in the South?

Plantar’s ‘green desert’ timber plantation

alien-invasive trees grow 10 years, then die and become charcoal for pig-iron, for Brazilian auto industry

Clean Development Mechanism case studies
Mt Elgon (Uganda) villagers stand amid corn planted on what the government says is national park, but which they claim has belonged to them for generations. To plant the corn, the villagers chopped down trees planted by the Dutch FACE Foundation as part of a carbon trading project.
Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation

REDD-type projects have already caused land grabs, killings, violent evictions and forced displacement, violations of human rights, threats to cultural survival, militarization and servitude

- Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network
Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation

CJ critiques of REDD reforms:
- no chance of getting full Indigenous rights (e.g. free, prior and informed consent)
- no chance to keep REDD out of carbon markets & offsets
- no chance to win on definitional issues (plantations)
- highly divisive within indigenous peoples, Africa (e.g. Wangari Maathai is supporter)
Durban, South Africa: $15 million CDM pilot

Bisasar Road conversion of methane-to-electricity at environmentally-racist toxic dump

Africa’s largest landfill placed in black residential suburb (Clare Estate) by apartheid; municipality refused to close it thanks to World Bank 2002 investment hype: Prototype Carbon Fund credits

Sajida Khan’s family home
Sajida Khan (1952-2007) though felled by cancer from dump, she had co-hosted ‘Durban Group for Climate Justice’ (2004) and her challenge to Bisasar methane flaring temporarily rebuffed World Bank in 2005 project went ahead in 2008-09 and currently CDM is paid just €14/tonne
in sum, eight fatal flaws of carbon trading

- inventing **property right to pollute** is effectively ‘privatizing air’, a moral dilemma given **unprecedented inequality**;
- GHGs have **non-linear impact, not reducible to commodity exchange** (a tonne of CO2 produced at ‘X’ not same as a tonne reduced at ‘Y’);
- corporations most guilty of pollution, and World Bank (most responsible for fossil fuel financing), are **market’s driving forces**;
- many offsets – e.g. monocultural timber plantations, forest ‘protection’, landfill methane-electricity – **devastate local communities and ecologies**;
- **price of carbon in these markets is haywire**, not least due to corruption, fraud and theft – with no prospect of regulation;
- dangerous potential for markets to become multi-trillion dollar **speculative bubbles**, similar to other exotic financial instruments;
- encourages small **incremental shifts**, distracting us from big changes needed across economy, energy, transport, consumption, disposal;
- ‘**market solutions for market failure**’ is not an appropriate ideology after the world’s worst-ever financial market failure.
California as leading site of struggle

- Point Carbon (Reuters) forecast that AB32’s CA market could grow from $1.7 billion (2012) to $10 billion in 2016 (today global market is stagnant at $140 billion)
- Prices forecast to rise from $10 to $18/ton from 2012-16
- For at least 25% of cuts, CA grants massive offset allowances and free (2012-2015) permits
- Sites like Chiapas forests – still Zapatista-controlled – will be new terrain of battle, along with Brazil, Indonesia
- Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (CRPE) won Feb 2011 lawsuit v. CARB: carbon trading not the only way!
- Mobilization for Climate Justice-West, Friends of the Earth (SF), Center for Biological Diversity, Movement Generation and Grassroots Global Justice networks
California AB32 after CBE/CRPE win

...any delay in the January start date could throw a wrench into the financial planning of hundreds of companies. “There’s some uncertainty around when this program is going to start and maybe if it will ever start,” said Graeme Martin, a Shell Energy official.

Air Resources Board Chairwoman Mary D. Nichols told the conference that “our ability to move forward is threatened as a result of litigation. We don’t know how it will turn out.... Some segments of the community, who define themselves as environmental justice groups, just hate cap-and-trade” because they believe it would not cut pollution in their communities. “We have to be open to the possibility there could be other approaches and that we could achieve [carbon] reductions in a different way...”

- Los Angeles Times, 18 April 2011
genuine legislative alternative missing

• genuine climate bills would strengthen decisive command-and-control regulatory mandates for national Environmental Protection Agency, public utility boards and planning commissions

• serious legislation would mandate for profound economic transformation so as to generate (and fund) new production, consumption, transport, energy and disposal systems

• adverse balance of forces everywhere – California too – leaves legislation with private offsets, carbon trading, regulatory neutering (US EPA) and massive subsidies for oil, coal, nuclear and corporate agriculture
CJ movement: *leave the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole, the tarsand in the land, and the fracking shale-gas in our earth’s ass*

- Canada: Alberta anti-tarsands green and indigenous activists, and Quebecers versus shale-gas
- British *Climate Camp* (*Crude Awakening* block Coryton oil refinery, 2010 – MI5 spy couldn’t crack it)
- Australian *Rising Tide* regularly block Newcastle coal exports
- Norwegian environmentalists and Attac win against state oil company in Lofoten region, 2011
Climate Justice Now!SA opposes emissions, privatised electricity, Eskom coal and nuclear, carbon trading: demands conservation/renewables and electricity-as-a-right to avoid this danger:
introducing: Durban Group for Climate Justice

- October 2004 initiative
- supported by Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Sweden
- driven by grassroots activists in India, Brazil, Thailand, South Africa, etc.
- largest signatory: Friends of the Earth International
- key sites: The Cornerhouse, FERN, SEEN, CarbonTrade Watch, CDM Watch, Dartmouth Univ Environmental Studies, UKZN Centre for Civil Society
Can global warming be mitigated by carbon trading?

With climate change posing perhaps the gravest threat to humanity in coming decades, and with free market economics still hegemonic, it is little wonder so much effort has gone into creating a carbon market, no matter how much evidence has recently emerged about its flaws.

South Africa, a revealing pilot site, has initiated carbon trading projects with adverse economic, environmental and social impacts. South Africa pollutes at a rate twenty times higher than even the United States of America, measured by CO₂ emissions generated by each GDP dollar per person, so the idea of trading for carbon reductions is seductive – and potentially lucrative. Current state policy is supportive and a former environment minister is a market promoter, alongside the World Bank, the Dutch government and big oil companies.

Editors Patrick Bond, Rehana Dada and Graham Erion of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the TransNational Institute have assembled this cutting-edge collection to highlight the urgent situation.

‘The most destructive effect of the carbon offset trade is that it allows us to believe we can carry on polluting. This crucially-needed book provides ample evidence of the trade’s other dangers to “beneficiaries”, with case studies of fraud, accounting tricks and maltreatment of people and the environment.’

George Monbiot, Guardian columnist and author of Heat

‘As representatives of people’s movements and independent organisations, we reject the claim that carbon trading will halt the climate crisis. This crisis has been caused more than anything else by the mining of fossil fuels and the release of their carbon to the oceans, air, soil and living things. This excessive burning of fossil fuels is now jeopardising Earth’s ability to maintain a liveable climate.’

‘Climate Justice Now! The Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading’

Order your copy from
http://www.ukznpress.co.za
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Climate Change, Carbon Trading and Civil Society

Negative Returns on South African Investments

Edited by
Patrick Bond, Rehana Dada and Graham Erion
The Story of Stuff Project presents
The Story of Cap & Trade
Why you can't solve a problem with the thinking that created it
storyofcapandtrade.org

The Story of Stuff

Climate Justice Now!

Atmospheric CO₂ Concentration (ppm)

390
370
350


We're here
387 ppm

350 ppm
We need to be here

Cap N' Giveaway

Now with offsetting!