

Social Movements for Climate Justice: from International NGOs to local communities

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ABSTRACT

The Ernst Strüngmann Forum will consider *'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.'* Following both the 2015 G7 summit and Paris climate conference, statements by the International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) which took the bulk of the world's attention – including from Avaaz and Greenpeace – left the impression that a viable deal was agreed upon, and that irrevocable steps toward economic decarbonisation were taken so as to potentially save the planet from catastrophic climate change. In contrast, one INGO, Friends of the Earth International, as well as most of what are considered 'Climate Justice' (CJ) movement components, condemned these two crucial instances of global governance. However, the CJ opposition made no difference whatsoever, because for world climate policy, the die has now been cast, leaving intact several dangerous features of the Paris strategy: no legally-binding responsibilities and no accountability mechanisms; inadequate stated aspirations for lowering global temperatures; no liabilities for past greenhouse gas emissions; and renewed opportunities to game the emissions-reduction system through state-subsidised carbon trading and offsets, now moving from the European Union and North America to the emerging markets. The CJ answer to this top-down INGO-endorsed policy regime – one overwhelmingly favourable to the United States, from where the strategy emanated – appears to be two-fold: an intensification of bottom-up strategies that aim to weaken GHG-emitting state and corporate targets through both direct action (disruptions) and financial divestment. Simultaneously, increasing attention is being drawn to the class, race, gender, national and North-South dimensions of climate injustices. But given the Paris deal, the CJ strategy to undo the damage will unfold at local and national scales – and surprisingly perhaps, to that end there may be merit to CJers utilising one of the framing narratives of ecological modernisation: natural capital accounting. Yet for the foreseeable future, the global balance of forces appears extremely adverse – especially with the decline of the Latin American centre-left regimes – and forceful change at that scale will require a decisive shift of orientation by INGOs towards the CJ approach. This is already beginning to become evident in the ways Greenpeace and 350.org have taken up direct action and divestment strategies, respectively, during this rapidly-closing window to address climate change and related ecosystem breakdowns effectively and *fairly*.

INTRODUCTION

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.

- Civicus *et al*, 'An open letter to our fellow activists across the globe: Building from below and beyond borders,' South Africa, 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), from the preface to *A relation of some yeares travaile begunne anno 1626, into Afrique and the greater Asia*

'*Ālea iacta est.*' On 10 January 49 BC, as he crossed the Rubicon River in Italy, Julius Caesar spoke of casting the die (rolling the dice), of a gamble that could not be reversed. That day he took a crucial step towards conquering Rome, one 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.' Climate policy gambles made at the June 2015 G7 Summit hosted by Angela Merkel in Elmau and later that year in Paris at the United Nations (UN) climate conference would, like Caesar, change the world – but not due to decisive action, but rather *the opposite* (Bond 2016). In both sites, the assembled world leaders' economic, geopolitical, technical, ideological and media powers were dedicated to an irreversible proposition: *marginal, market-driven changes augmented by a slight degree of state regulatory assistance will decarbonise the world's energy, land-transport and production systems, and also protect forests.* (Nothing of substance was offered at either summit to reduce contributions to climate change from air transport, shipping, the military, corporate agriculture, over-consumption and methane-intensive disposal sources.)

Global climate policy is now a very risky toss, indeed. After all, since Copenhagen's 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2009, the US State Department's chief climate negotiator, Todd Stern, successfully drove the UN negotiations away from four essential principles required in a future global governance regime, to achieve climate justice:

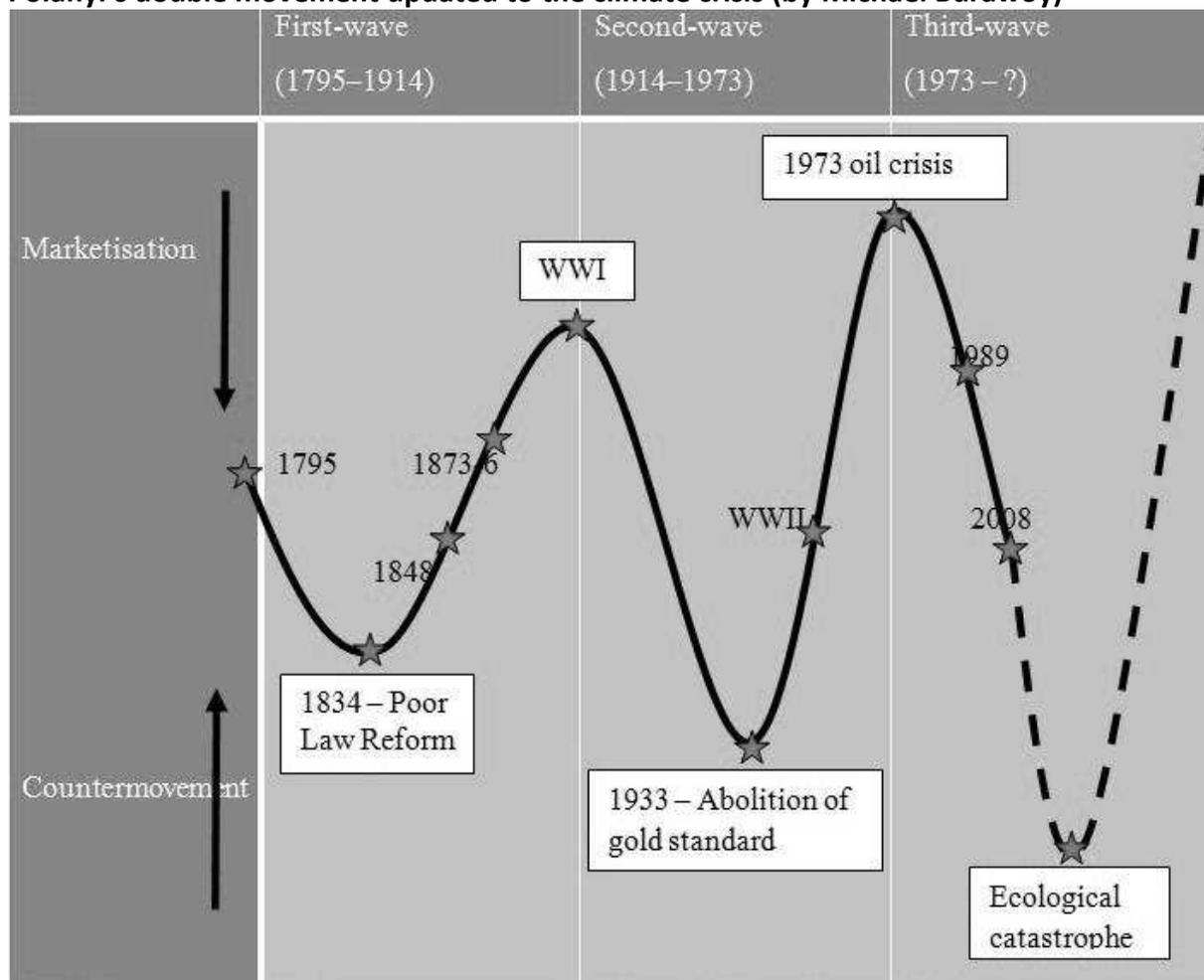
- ensuring emissions-cut commitments are sufficient to halt runaway climate change;
- making the cuts legally binding with accountability mechanisms;
- distributing the burden of cuts fairly based on responsibility for causing the crisis; and
- offering adequate financial compensation to repair weather-related 'loss and damage' that follow directly from that historic liability (Bond 2012a).

The Elmau goal was for 'net zero carbon emissions' by 2100 – *50 years too late* – and instead of full decarbonisation, the G7 endorsed 'net' strategies based on offsets, emissions

trading, ‘Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and Forest Degradation’ (REDD), and carbon sequestration, as noted below (Reyes 2015). As for the rest of the world, including the high-pollution emerging markets – e.g. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (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 later at the COP21, the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) – i.e. *voluntary* pledged cuts – agreed upon by Paris signatories will collectively raise the temperature for 2100 to above 3 degrees, likely catalysing runaway climate change (Bond 2016).

Given the extreme dangers to civilisation and planet Earth’s species if the Paris and Elmau gambles fail – as is overwhelmingly likely – it is vital that a civil society ‘counter-movement’ to world policy-makers emerge more forcefully and that such a movement prevails against the Paris climate policy within the next decade at the latest. This paper assesses the differences between two major civil society forces within climate activism, whose divergences are continually reproduced in global and local settings: International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) which are part of the global governance regime, on the one hand, and grassroots Climate Justice (CJ) activists on the other.

Polanyi’s double movement updated to the climate crisis (by Michael Burawoy)



The critical question for Earth's future is whether either or both will muster the oppositional power necessary to reverse the 'marketisation' of climate policy. Can *global* civil society generate the second part of Karl Polanyi's 'double movement,' corresponding to Michael Burawoy's (2013) update (albeit Western-centric yet still conceptually valuable)? If not, the gambles of Elmau and Paris will likely result in ecological catastrophe, in part because world elites anticipate that corporate self-survival mechanisms will kick in, but as scientists point out, greenhouse gas emissions lag times mean that market reactions are too little, too late.

How might INGOs or CJs or some combination move the world economy and society off the current trajectory? They currently appear bogged down in interminable conflict over analysis, strategies, tactics and alliances. The former include the most active Climate Action Network (CAN) members – Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Greenpeace (GP) – but also one 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. Two INGOs, 350.org and Avaaz, have become known largely through highly creative social media campaigning, and some – like 350.org's Bill McKibben and (until late 2015) Greenpeace International's Kumi Naidoo and Greenpeace USA's Annie Leonard – have well-recognised, visionary leadership.

The CJs are, in contrast, committed to local-level critique (and solutions), to militant strategies, and to 'direct action' tactics described by their best-known proponent, Naomi Klein, as 'Blockadia.' To the extent they tackle corporate power at its financial Achilles Heel, they support the divestment strategy catalysed by 350.org. But their strength, especially in the wake of Paris, is in the use of a disruptive repertoire to defend land, water and air against polluters. As much as they can (depending upon circumstances), they point out how the success of their local battles against oil, gas, coal and major greenhouse gas emitters will also benefit 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. For Klein (2014) is correct that 'This changes everything.'

However, an authentic CJ nomenclature relies in part upon 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:

- reduced consumption;
- huge financial transfers from North to South based on historical responsibility and ecological debt for adaptation and mitigation costs paid for by redirecting military budgets, innovative taxes and debt cancellation;
- leaving fossil fuels in the ground and investing in appropriate energy-efficiency and safe, clean and community-led renewable energy;
- rights-based resource conservation that enforces indigenous land rights and promotes peoples' sovereignty over energy, forests, land and water; and
- 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 these stand out:

- 50 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2017;
- stabilising temperature rises to 1°C 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 rights of Mother Earth to ensure harmony with nature;
- establishment of an International Court of Climate Justice;
- rejection of carbon markets and commodification of nature and forests through the REDD programme;
- promotion of measures that change the consumption patterns of rich countries;
- end of intellectual property rights for technologies useful for mitigating climate change; and
- payment of 6 per cent of developed countries' GDP to addressing climate change.

Although some high-profile climate advocates – such as Mary Robinson (a supporter of carbon trading) – soon appropriated the concept CJ for use in a manner inconsistent with these demands, the spirit of CJ in Cochabamba meant, as Edgardo Lander (2010) explained in his review, that:

[s]truggles for environmental or climate justice have managed to bring together most of the most important issues/struggles of the last decades: 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, as well as struggles for democracy. All these issues were debated in Cochabamba and, to some degree, present in the Cochabamba Peoples' Agreement.

This paper seeks to add to the Ernst Strüngmann Forum's Rethinking Environmentalism 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.'* The stereotypical premise here is that the INGOs are pragmatic and hence their normative approach is deal-making within existing United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) constraints, whereas in contrast, CJs 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).

However, in the field of climate politics, 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 civilisational maintenance*, especially if the alternative is what can be termed 'neoliberal nature' or 'ecological modernisation,' a conceptual framing implicitly adopted by both world elites and many INGOs. In what may be its most advanced

form, 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 recognise 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 emphasises 'low-hanging fruit' that can achieve the least costly form of market-facilitated environmental management.

So far, using contrary framings of environmental justice (especially hostility to market strategies), the CJ forces have gathered insufficient strength to counter neoliberal nature advocates, beyond moralising. One of the most important sites for this debate is climate finance, ranging from carbon markets to the Green Climate Fund. As this paper concludes, it may be well worth CJers taking on board *some* of the logic of ecologically-modernising INGOs, even on their own terms, so as to explore these limits and then confirm the futility of reforming a thoroughly corrupted structure. And the more serious INGOs such as FOEI and Greenpeace have also redoubled efforts at linking global and local, as confirmed by their 2015-16 promotion of local campaigns that incorporate direct action.

To make this case, the structure of the argument that follows is aided if, first, we personalise these complex issues by considering climate debates involving several of my closest Durban friends and colleagues. In that process, having witnessed how important positionality is to the framing narratives chosen by INGOs and CJ groups, then second, we can set out the wider terrain of neoliberal nature. There we find groups which adopt insider positions in relation to global power structures, broadly agreeing with the conceptual premises behind incremental change following market principles on the one hand, versus, on the other hand, CJ movements that work locally and reject market strategies. But by considering issues as vital as carbon trading and natural capital accounting, third and fourth respectively, the complexities become clearer and general principles begin to emerge. Fifth, these principles are not, however, easily reduced to a 'sustainable development' rubric – they are more contradictory, as we will see.

Sixth, finally, if we consider how climate policy analyses, strategies, tactics and alliances emerge to lend themselves to this dichotomy, we see INGOs and CJers in conflict over markets and technicist solutions – or 'false solutions' as CJers argue – and that in turn allows us to reframe both INGO and grassroots CJ argumentation in a way that might lead to a different outcome. For the lack of a better phrase, we might term the alternative 'eco-socialism', *respectful of the merits of valuing nature* (though not counting it for the sake of marketisation), at the same time *confirming the role of anti-market social movements – including those of indigenous people and eco-feminists – in nature's stewardship*.

THE IMMEDIATE TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE: VIGNETTES OF PARIS SEEN FROM DURBAN

Four Durban friends of mine are worth introducing (and returning to in the conclusion): 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.



- Kumi was Greenpeace International's leader from 2009-15 and now works continentally in Africa on diverse civil society strategies, having also led South African civil society organisations, the international network Civicus and various initiatives during the mid-2000s global anti-poverty mobilisations. He holds a doctorate from Oxford and is respected by many world leaders.
- Bobby directs the NGO 'groundWork' (working nationally in South Africa), having won the Goldman Prize in 1998 and establishing himself as one of the world's leading environmental justice experts and practitioners.
- Working mainly locally with the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance which he helped found (alongside Bobby) in 1995, Des has become the city's conscience on matters ranging from climate change to anti-drugs, anti-gangs, anti-pollution and anti-privatisation struggles underway in many neighbourhoods, especially his toxin-saturated home base of Wentworth. Des also won the Goldman Prize, in 2014.
- Ashwin is a world-renowned sociologist – a professor at the University of Johannesburg though mostly resident in Durban – whose dozen major books about 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. They grew up during apartheid 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. And since freedom here in 1994, they have regularly come together against injustice, e.g. 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 of December 2011, the four adopted insider-outsider approaches which included high-profile roles in disruptive events (for which Kumi and Bobby were arrested) inside the lobby of the Durban convention centre, leadership of a

10,000-strong march by Des, and ruthless, scathing critique of the whole process by Ashwin. With such similar backgrounds, they speak the same language of street-heat politics, they harbour fury at injustices big and small, and they each possess enormous charisma that each draws upon regularly, extending from small strategy meetings to academic seminars to mass rallies. And they are all regularly frustrated by power, so even when they win minor reforms they immediately point out the bigger structural enemies they face.

But three of my four friends came together – and grew decisively (if temporarily) apart – in Paris in December 2015. As Greenpeace International's leader, Kumi endorsed the deal as 'progress' although Paris was '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 centre. Technology to bring us to 100% clean energy is the money-maker of the future.'

In contrast, Bobby and Des wholeheartedly denounced Paris, as had Ashwin at the same summit four years earlier (in part because of the admittedly weak counter-summit organising by the other three plus this author) (Bond 2012b). After the Durban COP17 concluded, Ashwin attacked 'big name spectacle NGOs' which dominated the main protest march, including Greenpeace:

The local grassroots organisations 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, Des was mightily pleased about the crowd he led to the Convention Centre that day (3 December 2011) against the COP15: in comparative terms, it was a very large march for Durban – and the reason for that was that there were so many visiting activists, unfortunately, not because Durban communities brought out the thousands of participants. However, when it came to his two week sojourn in Paris in December 2015, Des appreciated the civil society mobilisations outside, since – 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 Des, the essential problem was framed as one of participation, self-interest and power relations. In Bobby's recorded comments on Paris failings, his connections to FOEI may have helped him express different reservations of a North-South nature, namely that the Paris deal

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.

The African elites joined the world elites, instead of repeating the precedent of World Trade Organisation summits in 1999 and 2003 (which they walked out of, in order to sabotage the neoliberal agenda), as well as the 2009 Copenhagen Accord when one African leader (Lumumba di Apeng, coordinating the G77 countries) unsuccessfully attempted a delegitimisation strategy so as to gain more concessions.

Amongst the larger INGOs, FOEI (2015) was the only one to condemn the deal – while also criticising 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 the COP21: 'There is nothing binding for states. National contributions lead us towards 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 non-binding nature of the deal and its signatories' inability to offer less than the emissions required to keep the temperature under 3 degrees – far off the 1.5 degrees limit that the delegates claimed to aspire to – but also because Hansen's favourite financial solution – a 'cap and dividend' carbon tax – was not contemplated. But even that mild-mannered idea (taxing externalities so as to 'make the polluter pay'), raises CJ concerns on two levels: whether small, marginal increases in carbon costs will generate the *radical* decarbonisation needed (because such taxes lead to marginal – not structural – changes and are passed to consumers in any case); and whether the commodification of pollution represents the adoption of the 'neoliberal nature' policy strategy often favoured by INGOs.

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, for distinctions in scale politics and the degree of political pragmatism date back decades within environmentalism. Andrew Jamison's (2001) book *The Making of Green Knowledge* identified a distinct division between a mode of thinking and practice he termed 'green business' which 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.

In contrast, 'critical ecology movements' resist the greening of business by invoking environmental justice, demanding stronger laws and enforcement, and engaging in campaigns against corporations and states which despoil the environment. Jamison posited four types of environmentalism: civic work on campaigns and social ecology; professional interventions based upon science and law; militant direct action; and personal environmentalism, each of which has either reformist or revolutionary currents. Regardless, their politicisation of ecology runs counter to green business in virtually all issues and processes, as will be explored 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. In sector after sector, they continue to promote the notion that profit can be reconciled with environmental stewardship, e.g. in the Marseille-based World Water Council in which commercialisation of the most basic element of life is firmly promoted so as to achieve more efficient, sustainable management of the resource. These networks are dedicated to natural capital accounting (up to a point), Payment for Ecosystem Services, cleaner production, green products and environmental management systems.

A 2010 list of major environmental NGOs that work closely with the more enlightened businesses compiled by a *Greenbiz.com* reporter include the Carbon Trust (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 re-engineering).

But these relationships sometimes are extremely thorny, as when from 2007-10, the Sierra Club was given \$25 million by Chesapeake Energy and apparently as a result, its leader Carl Pope had the organisation endorse fracking as a 'bridge technology' to lower greenhouse gases, even though methane leakage means fracking is as bad 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 – though 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. The single most uncompromising website at which to follow critiques of environmental INGOs is <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/>

The macropolitical context is terribly important, Naomi Klein (2013) explains:

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 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 market-friendly strategy that continues to divide the environmental movement is carbon trading, and even though there were misgivings (e.g. the logic was based on the lowering of US sulphur dioxide emissions in Southern California, which were slower and less effective than command-and-control strategies adopted in Germany's Ruhr Valley during the early 1990s), large environmental INGOs endorsed the idea when presented with it as a deal-breaking demand by US vice president Al Gore at the 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 US Senate had already voted 95-0 against endorsing Kyoto and even though Gore won this critical concession, there was no change in attitude on Capitol Hill, so the US never ratified the Kyoto Protocol. Yet carbon markets later became one of the most important wedge issues dividing INGOs from the CJ 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 meant to have \$100 billion to spend, annually, on climate-saving projects. The fund's design team co-chair, the then South African Planning Minister, Trevor Manuel, argued alongside British economist Nick Stern in 2010 that up to half the CGF revenues would logically flow from carbon markets, whose annual trading volume had recently peaked in 2008 at \$140 billion (Bond 2012a).

The use of such 'market solutions to market problems' will, supporters argue, 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 those polluters who don't 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.

But these markets are in just as much chaos as any financial casino, at a time that faith in bankers – especially faith they can fairly manage climate-related funding – is badly shaken. In the US, the national Chicago voluntary carbon market (strongly promoted by Gore) died in late 2010, and regional markets crashed. The European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is the main site of carbon trading, and has been moribund since its 2006 and 2008 peaks, when the right to emit extra carbon cost around €30/tonne. The carbon price's recent low point was less than €3/tonne, in the wake of over-supply, various episodes of fraud and hacking, and declining interest in climate change following the 2008-09 Great Recession. For the Third World, a category of 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, but UN CDM credits cost less than €0.50 at present, and after 2012 the main emerging markets were no longer allowed to issue them.

Without an ever-lowering cap on emissions, the incentive to increase prices and raise trading volumes disappears. Worse, in this context 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. This is due not only to the demand deficit thanks to the COP negotiators' failure to mandate emissions cuts, but also because of the lax system the UN appears to have adopted. All manner of inappropriate projects appear to be gaining approval, especially in Africa. According to Professor David Victor, a leading carbon market analyst at Stanford University, as many as two-thirds of registered carbon emissions reductions do not constitute real cuts.

The failure of the market renewed concern about the 'privatisation of the air' amongst CJ activists – originally articulated by the Durban Group for Climate Justice (Lohmann 2006) and in the film by Annie Leonard (2009), *Story of Cap & Trade* – but most INGOs sought reforms not abolition of the carbon markets. As Gareth Bryant (2016, 12-13) reports,

Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF each adopted different strategies on the relationship between the carbon market and other policies. Friends of the Earth used support for alternative policies to challenge the market logic of the EU ETS... Greenpeace's emphasis was subtly different, not directly challenging the logic of carbon trading, but deprioritising the instrument in relation to other approaches. Greenpeace argued that a coherent climate and energy package would first look to maximise energy efficiency and second meet the resultant lower energy demand with policies encouraging the deployment of renewables. Only after the potential of efficiency and renewables policy had been exhausted should the 'remaining part of the required abatement ... be driven by a well-functioning EU emissions trading scheme.' WWF's approach was different again, using techno-political arguments on the interaction between carbon markets, investment and innovation to stress the complementarities of other policies in achieving the cost efficient emissions reduction goal of carbon markets.

At some point, the failure of carbon markets should be forcefully addressed by INGOs and their justification for ongoing futile reform advocacy reconsidered. But this is not the only aspect of neoliberal nature that splits global from local CJ activists; there are other 'false

solutions' to the climate and other environmental crises. Many more continue to emerge from private-sector Dr Strangeloves, some in alliance with the business-oriented INGOs, including:

- controversial forms of so-called 'cleaner energy' such as nuclear, 'clean coal', fracking shale gas, hydropower and hydrogen;
- biofuels, biomass, biochar; and
- other geoengineering gimmicks such as Carbon Capture and Storage, Genetically Modified trees and other biomas, 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 such as industrial-scale plastic-wrap for deserts.

Several very small INGOs with a decidedly CJ orientation – the ETC Group, EcoNexus, the African Biodiversity Network, Gaia and Biofuelwatch (2012) – confirm their opposition to 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".' As Kathy McAfee (2012) puts it, '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. Yet even when INGOs with a CJ orientation get involved in global technicist advocacy, debilitating problems emerge due to adverse power relations, as the GCF has already demonstrated. Sarah Bracking (2015) criticises *both* the mainstream INGOs and CJ participants who 'invested resources and energy into a process that distracts from other types of politics and issue framing' required to address climate finance:

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. Much less faith must be placed into the use of finance to prevent climate change, in the absence of real governance innovation, based on scientific knowledge to cut emissions. Public academics should arguably devote more research to analysing the actual projects, programmes and empirical effects of climate finance spending, in order to help the climate justice movement counter, with authoritative knowledge, the perverse ad hoc 'results and priority areas' established by the financial assemblage.

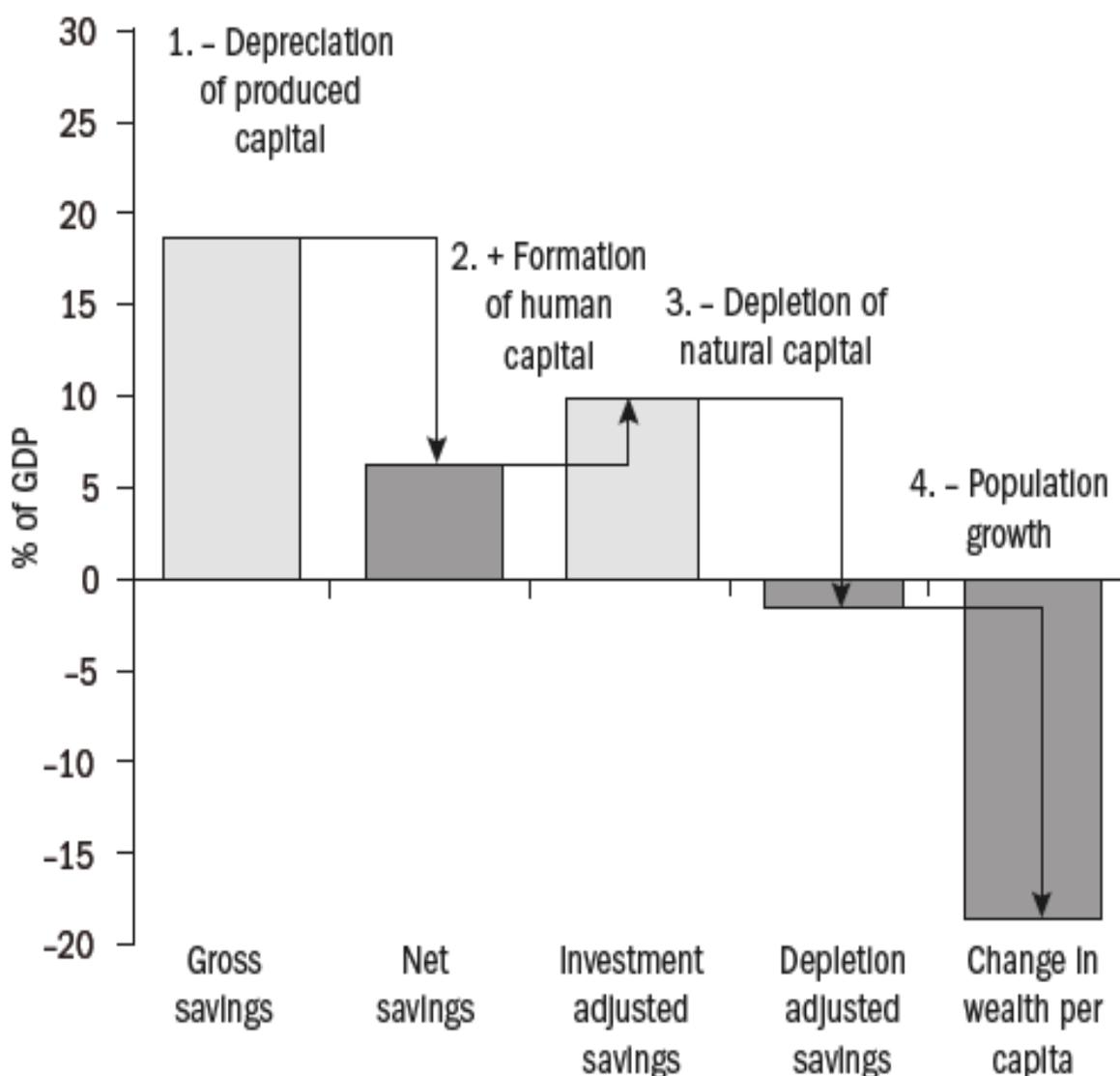
THE UNCERTAIN TERRAIN OF NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTING

There is just one case, however, in which a neoliberal nature strategy may have appeal to those with a CJ orientation: in contesting extraction of fossil fuels (and other raw materials)

from sites where it can be demonstrated that *economically* – not just in terms of pollution and environmental (including climate) damage, social dislocation and disrupted spiritual values – drilling for oil or coal does not make sense. The main economic argument is that by calculating natural resource depletion associated with extraction, and comparing to reinvestment made by the corporations which do the extraction, the overall impact is net negative.

So even though the World Bank has traditionally lined up in favour of extraction, including fossil fuels, several Bank staff in the WAVES group (Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services) annually calculate ‘adjusted net savings’ as an augmentation of national economic accounting, and the results are extremely disturbing. The Bank’s 2014 *Little Green Data Book* concedes that ‘88% of Sub-Saharan African countries were found to be depleting their wealth in 2010,’ with a 12% decline in per capita wealth that year attributed to the extraction of minerals, energy and forest products (natural capital) (World Bank, 2014, 8).

The World Bank ‘decomposes change in wealth per capita’, Sub-Saharan Africa, 2010



The 2015 *Little Green Data Book* provided updates of energy-related natural capital estimates. To illustrate stark environmental injustices, consider that (in 2010),

- Sub-Saharan African CO₂ emissions per person were 0.8 metric tonnes (and in South Africa, 9.1 tonnes due to coal dependency and a higher standard of living, and 4.9 tonnes for the world average).
- Fossil fuels were used for 65% of Africans' energy generation (94% in South Africa and 67% for the world).
- The continent's gross savings as a percent of Gross National Income (GNI) were 23.8% (14.7% in South Africa and 25.4% for the world).
- The depletion of energy sources was 5.7% of GNI (1.2% in South Africa and 2% for the world).
- Added to other savings-depleting factors such as wear-and-tear on equipment and minerals depletion, the adjusted net savings of Sub-Saharan Africans had dropped to just 6.7% (in South Africa, just 2.3%, and for the world, 11.1 (World Bank 2015, 12).

That measure of adjusted net savings is probably the most genuine measure available of changes in wealth incorporating nature, and Sub-Saharan Africans had the world's second most dramatic loss between gross and adjusted savings. 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 GNI. In contrast, resource-rich wealthy countries – including Canada, the United States, Australia and Norway – witness sufficient reinvestment by (home-based) corporations, that their natural capital depletion was outweighed by new physical capital, leaving a net positive outcome.

Why might CJ groups dedicated to decommodification of life tolerate such counting exercises, given that their premise is the monetary valuation of natural resources? After all, argues one powerful critic of natural capital accounting, Sian Sullivan (a colleague at the Manchester Leverhulme Centre for the Study of Value), in addition to concern about marketisation that inexorably follows the monetisation of natural values, there are

broader implications of conjuring 'nature' in the form of the socio-economic 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...

Some of these developments may indeed promote redistributive possibilities, whereby people (normally in the global south) now seen as maintaining vital ecosystem services for sustaining the global economy are paid for doing so. Some may also effect conservation outcomes. However, given the neoliberal and plutonomic tendencies noted above, which transfer public resources to the private sector and reinforce the influence of the wealthy on economic conditions, it is very unclear how making nature even more

legible as capital will counter, rather than intensify, the massive vested interests pulling the world towards greater inequity and environmental volatility.

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.' (Sullivan 2013)

This is a fruitful and long overdue discussion (given that in 1996 David Harvey issued a similar challenge, as recalled in the conclusion). In a parallel debate, Paul Robbins and Sarah Moore (2015) ask whether, 'Amidst – and despite – its deep-seated rejection of technocratic fixes, can political ecology reconcile itself with ecomodernism?' and 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 would negate most existing forms of extractivism).

What CJ-informed opponents of natural capital accounting have most trouble in criticising, ultimately, is the need to punish polluters by considering the formal monetary liabilities – or some approximation since nature is priceless – so that reparations to environment and affected peoples is sufficiently financed, and 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 UK House of Lords. Similar arguments should be made against the MNCs most responsible for what the UN calls loss and damage due to climate change. Ideally, over time, this strategy would develop as 'fine-and-ban,' so that as 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, and naturally CJ 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) on the one hand, and on the other pricing nature for market-making (a fee). As Vandava 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 – the only one I can come up with – of a potential rapprochement between INGO and CJ framing strategies, emphasising technicist analysis in the ecological modernisation tradition 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 nevertheless, 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.'

In sum, natural capital accounting is potentially one bridge narrative between INGOs and CJ, 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 has posited. 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? 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 CJ narrative shapers and strategists would immediately point to the phrase 'sustainable development.' The 1987 Gro Harlem Brundtland Commission definition is still worth returning to for not only does it contain the intergenerational requirement so well known 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.' Consider, as well, her next two subclauses in the definition, which first observe 'the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given', hence generating grounds for social justice advocacy; and second, 'the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs', which repudiates pro-growth assumptions of those many 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 a 1987 United Nations Commission and 1992 Rio Earth Summit. But soon, co-opted by corporations during the 1990s, sustainability was downgraded in favour of neoliberal ideologues' advocacy of export-led growth and the commodification of nature. It poked its head up once again at a 2002 UN earth summit in Johannesburg, which unfortunately fused the UN's strategy with privatisers, carbon traders and mega-corporations supporting its Global Compact. Then, finding 'Green Economy' rhetoric, biodiversity offsetting and market-centric climate change policy as fertile soil at the 2012 Rio Summit, sustainability again flowered but now with a much more direct relationship to neoliberal nature (Büscher *et al* 2014). For the 2015-30 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 The Rules [2015]).

But even if this weak version of the sustainability narrative is contested by CJ critics – and also still attacked by the most pollution-intensive fractions of capital – there is no

questioning the problem of rampant socio-environmental unsustainability as the world hits what the Club of Rome (1972) had long warned would be ‘planetary boundaries.’ The most serious threat is running out 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 CFCs by 1996 – but leaving atmospheric aerosols as a danger), crises in the biogeochemical nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, other resource input constraints, chemical pollution, freshwater adulteration and evaporation, and shortages of arable land. As Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster (2011, 12) remark,

Staying within each of these boundaries is considered essential to maintaining the relatively benign climate and environmental conditions that have existed during the last 12,000 years (the Holocene epoch). The sustainable boundaries in three of these systems – climate change, biodiversity, and human interference with the nitrogen cycle (part of the biogeochemical flow boundary) – have already been crossed, representing extreme rifts in the Earth system.

So for those in INGOs and CJ grassroots 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 Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins (1999) (for a critique see Tanuro 2014). But as Ariel Salleh (2010) argues, a serious consideration of externalised costs should include at least three kinds of surplus extractions, both economic and thermodynamic, never comprehensively incorporated by reformers: 1) the social debt to inadequately paid workers; 2) an embodied debt to women family caregivers and 3) an ecological debt drawn on nature at large. The more conservative INGOs have simply ignored the logical trajectory of ‘polluter pays’ externalisation in the sense that Salleh points out.

In contrast to this weak form of sustainability are concepts of the left, stressing sustainability as achieved through distributional equity, non-materialist values and a critique (and transcendence) of the capitalist mode of production. They include 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 [2014]) along with the Andean indigenous peoples’ versions of *buen vivir* (living well) and allied ideas (Council of Canadians *et al*, 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); and eco-socialism (Kovel 2007). Strategies for transitioning to genuinely sustainable societies and economies are also hotly debated (Swilling and Anneke 2012; Scoones, Leach and Newell 2015).

With such creative options flowering – albeit in sometimes reformist mode harking back to indigenous conservation, mere accounting reforms and the slowing (not ending) of capitalism – genuine sustainability does ultimately depend on the nature of the critique of

unsustainability. Perhaps the most popular systemic analysis comes from Annie Leonard's (2007) *Story of Stuff* film and book which link the spectrum of extraction, production, distribution, consumption and disposal. Klein's (2014) *This Changes Everything* puts the onus on capitalism for climate change. But expressed most bluntly, Martinez-Alier and Jochen Spangenberg (2012) explain 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 DUELLING 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 CJ community organisation, and academia (albeit with Kumi having moved from Greenpeace to Dar es Salaam in early 2016 to set up an African Civil Society Centre) – identify common framings for addressing climate change, given the huge wedge between them that was opened up in the COP process, especially at the COP21 in 2015? The answer remains ambiguous.

At first blush, there is one factor dating to the anti-apartheid struggle that draws them all together: a deep respect for mass action. And that is where one of Kumi'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 (Appendix) – gives me some hope that on the one hand, there is underlying humility in the current generation of INGO leaders. And on the other there is a profound organic intelligence on the part of local CJers, with the potential to take their perspective onto what appears to be hostile terrain: natural capital accounting.

So first, here Kumi et al explain why CJ and similar grassroots forces *are holding the INGOs to account*, in an extraordinarily frank and refreshing confessional:

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 organisations. 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 criticise 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. (Civicus 2014)

It is that cringe-worthy honesty that opens the door to alliances with CJ groups which want, as Kumi et al put it, to 'challenge the business as usual approach. Prioritise a local community meeting rather than the big glitzy conferences where outcomes are pre-determined.' To be sure, cynics (like Ashwin) would point out that the glitzy Elmau and Paris conferences – where such unsatisfactory outcomes were predetermined – gained the endorsement of Greenpeace under Kumi's leadership. And it is true that Bobby and Des are preparing (as I write this paper) community meetings that will intensify multiple Blockadias

in South Durban, attempting to halt neighbourhood-destroying truck and ship traffic (partly on grounds of climate change) and calling for divestment from the firms involved (with Ashwin sniping, most often with exceptional insight, from the sidelines).

But it is also true that Kumi's time at Greenpeace was marked by a revival of both militant leadership (e.g. his heroic disruption attempt in the Arctic) and decentralisation of resources to the South, and that Greenpeace US under Annie Leonard's lead has fused monkey-wrenching with social and racial justice advocacy for the first time. So while it is patently obvious that the carbon trading strategy countenanced by Greenpeace (and promoted enthusiastically by WWF) is going nowhere, the impact of Greenpeace 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 2009-10 US congressional lobbying for cap&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 action grow more vibrant, the more the frustrations rise about the slow pace of state and corporate decarbonisation.

If some of the INGO visionaries are potentially aware of the limitations of their structural location, the potential to address this contradiction more broadly should be considered. 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 (disclosure – two of my PhD students) 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 – the AMI tends towards mild-mannered reforms. The dispute recorded in Maguwu *et al* (2016) duelling op-ed articles in March 2016 is one example of the INGO-CJ tensions noted above. Another is that a reform network of capital and the state, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), witnessed a 2016 legitimacy challenge from the (INGO) 'Publish What You Pay' movement of Soros-funded NGOs (some of which have grassroots CJ connections) because EITI imposed a 'civil society' representative in their decision-making processes through a dubious process. In other words, more connectivities between these differently-located and philosophically-divergent types of civil society – INGOs and CJers – may unearth the frictions, and I believe it is incumbent now upon the better-resourced INGOs to take up the challenge made by Civicus *et al* (2014) to provide not just auto-critique but new modes of operation sensitive to the (often more radical) grassroots agenda.

That means, second, a complementary move by CJ groups might be considered, both to scale up their critique so they can offer concrete *global scale* analysis and start networking properly, and then 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 CJ activists must become more forward-looking, and hence must

deal in the material and institutional issues of how to organise 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, localised, 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 recognises how environmental and social justice must be sought by a rational ordering of activities at different scales.

In turn, I believe, the CJ movement organisations – often suffering from excessive localism (or expressed more positively, ‘militant particularism’, as Harvey calls it) – should attempt to more decisively link up 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, as Harvey (1996, 401) also 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 noncoopted and nonperverted version of the theses of ecological modernisation. 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 radicalise the ecological modernisation discourse.

To radicalise ecological modernization requires that CJ not boycott but instead engage, and search out ways to avoid what Erik Swyngedouw terms a ‘post-political’ quagmire when it comes to combatting climate change and the corporations and states behind it. Both Bryant and Bracking favourably cite Swyngedouw’s (2010) critique of climate governance, in which carbon markets and the CGF 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.’ It is here, to return to Andrew Jamison, that a typology of the dichotomy between green business and critical ecology leads to a third option that transcends even environmental justice: ‘eco-socialism’ (a term I have inserted into Jameson’s rubric – but it is only a semantic intervention):

Dialectics of environmentalisms and eco-socialism (adapted from Jameson 2001)

terrain	green business	critical ecologies	eco-socialism
type of agency	TNCs, states and global agencies	environmentalists and green NGOs	hybrid red-green networks
forms of action	commercial, brokerage	popularisation, resistance	exemplary mobilisation
ideal of ‘science’	theoretical, expert	factual, lay	situated, contextual
knowledge sources	disciplines	traditions	experiences
competencies	professional	personal	synthetic

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 CJ) resist, drawing upon concepts of environmental justice. But the battle of environmentalists and green NGOs against TNCs, 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 legitimation (such as in the carbon trading and CJF examples) – come into direct cultural conflict with the repertoire of resistance tactics utilised by the CJ activists. The eco-socialist project, in contrast, has to advance to the stage of what Jamison terms ‘exemplary mobilisation.’

Intellectual buttressing remains crucial, and hence the ideal articulation of ‘science’ is also worth pursuing. The ‘theoretical, expert’ inputs – no matter how flawed in reality – used by ecological-modernisation promoters working from a green business standpoint, contrast with the factual and lay languages of activists. Can we build upon the second by defying the first, and achieving 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 eco-social justice, and the transcendental experiences of the eco-socialist project. As for the terrain of competencies, the green-business suits claim professionalism; the critical ecologists invoke personal commitment; and eco-socialists strive for a synthetic understanding of personal, professional and, above all, political.

And that dialectic tension, ultimately, will allow us to draw out ‘*differences in framing environmental problems,*’ because they do come from quite substantive ‘*differences in normative and theoretical positions.*’ In exploring the tensions in positionality between INGOs and CJ, 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.*’ But this is surely a matter of debate through praxis in the months and years ahead.

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APPENDIX: INGOs reach out

An open letter to our fellow activists across the globe: Building from below and beyond borders

August 6, 2014

Dear friend,

Six decades after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, creating a global covenant affirming the fact that ‘all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights,’ the vision lies in tatters, made worthless by the ever-increasing chasm between haves and have-nots.

Today our world is polarised into the 1% who control the world’s resources and the 99% who are on the receiving end of an unprecedented pillage of people’s labour, their lands and livelihoods. The confluence of disasters and crises (including climate change, poverty, inequality, wars) has brought our planet and the human species to the edge of a precipice.

Around the world, ordinary people are losing trust in the global governance system. They have little faith in elected governments and public institutions. They do not believe that big corporations tell them the truth. They see the international intergovernmental system as irrelevant at best and ineffectual at worst. They experience it as a system established to regulate the rules that are beholden to powerful predatory economic and political elites.

Yet still they dream of equality and rights. Indeed, beyond dreaming, many actively fight for it in their daily lives. Across all continents, people rise up on the streets, in slums and villages and towns and cities, in protest to demand jobs and decent education and health for their communities.

They have done so to end corruption, they have marched to demand participation in the decisions that affect their lives and they have risen to demand basic services like water and sanitation. At the very heart of their struggle lies their refusal to accept the glaring inequality that sits at the heart of the new world order.

Sadly, those of us who work in civil society organisations nationally and globally have come to be identified as part of the problem. 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.

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 organisations. 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 criticise 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.

We cannot ignore these questions any longer.

We need a meaningful commitment to a set of global organising principles and a model for the world we want. These must include:

1. Insisting that the voices and actions of people are at the heart of our work. Our primary accountability cannot be to donors. Instead it must be to everyone that is or has been on the losing end of globalisation and inequality and to the generation that will inherit a catastrophic future.
2. Consciously constructing our organisations around women and men of diverse ideological identities to fight corporatism within our own ranks. This means re-balancing power dynamics towards the less resourced sections of civil society and away from large international civil society organisations. It also means recognising the power and importance of informal networks and associations. Our resources and might matter, but so too, does the wisdom of the street.
3. Lay the foundations to build global people-to-people solidarity from below and a united front of active citizens. Without organised peoples' movements' support, the institutions we build will lack understanding of the very people we claim to serve. Without a radical re-think of the way we organise, global campaigns will be denied the support they require to consolidate the new societies that we all wish to build.
4. Promote and protect media, civic and democratic space for citizens to self-organise, express themselves and take action.

This criticism of ourselves does not suggest that global civil society organisations and the people who work within them on a daily basis are not engaged in crucial and strategic work. Nor are we suggesting that your work should replace the work of protesters. We critique as people who respect the gains that have been won by global activists, and who also understand that our success has sometimes taken us away from listening to and understanding the needs of our core constituencies.

We offer this critique because we have watched with increasing anxiety as civil society has been co-opted by processes in which we are outwitted and out manoeuvred.

We critique because we recognise that we have less and less power within the international system that determines the rules of the development game. This means that when big meetings happen to discuss the future of our planet, they do so without any meaningful involvement of the voices of real people.

The UN focus towards 2015 on averting climate chaos, sustainable development goals and trade reform offers a global platform to consciously build people's power from the bottom-up, and across borders. If we have the people's will with us, we can build a broad united front of social movements, labour, faith-based and CSO alliances. These frameworks matter because they determine the rules that affect our future generations.

In this context we invite you:

- To reflect on the significance of this call for the organisations you serve. It means passing it on, discussing it with colleagues, partners, allies and friends, debating it, defending it or rejecting it, but engaging with it regardless.
- Set the path for a radical re-haul of civil society in order to get back to our roots and organise to build people's power and define a future based on local initiatives and organising.

- Challenge the business as usual approach. Prioritise a local community meeting rather than the big glitzy conferences where outcomes are pre-determined. Demand diversity in these conferences if you attend.
- Share your views on this statement at <http://blogs.civicus.org/civicus/>

In the days leading up to International Civil Society Week, 19-25 November 2014, hundreds of activists from around the world, including youth, from a wide range of backgrounds, will meet in South Africa to discuss these issues, build solidarity and design actions. A draft manifesto and programme of action will be presented to the delegates taking part in the CIVICUS World Assembly on 24 November 2014 and we hope to emerge with a popularly-accepted and pragmatic programme of action.

Together we can radically and pragmatically transform our policies, practices and relationships to match the imagination and expectation of the billions around the world that are currently voicing their discontent. To continue in the manner we have done thus far would be irresponsible and represent this generation's lost opportunity.

We welcome a frank and brutally honest dialogue. Time is running out. The space that humanity finds itself in today requires us to stop patting ourselves on the back and to urgently do something to avert the impending long-term disaster. We need to tell the truth. We need to come up with solutions. And then, we need to act.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed, in a personal capacity, at Rustlers Valley, South Africa, by

Dhananjayan Srisankarajah, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Irūngū Houghton, Society for International Development

Jay Naidoo, Earthrise Trust

Jenny Hodgson, Global Fund for Community Foundations

Liv Tørres, Norwegian People's Aid

Mark Heywood, Section27

Michael O'Brien-Onyeka, Greenpeace Africa

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Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

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Kumi Naidoo, Greenpeace International

Magnus Walan, Diakonia

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Netsanet Belay, Amnesty International

Nnimmo Bassey, Health of Mother Earth Foundation

Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, Chair of CIVICUS Board of Directors

Sharan Burrow, International Trade Union Confederation

Sheela Patel, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers

Uygar Özesmi, CIVICUS Board of Directors

Vuyiseka Dubula, Sonke Gender Justice

Winnie Byanyima, Oxfam International

Ziad Abdel Samad, Arab NGO Network for Development

<http://blogs.civicus.org/civicus/2014/08/06/an-open-letter-to-our-fellow-activists-across-the-globe-building-from-below-and-beyond-borders/>