



Can Climate Activists' 'Movement Below' Transcend Negotiators' 'Paralysis Above'?

Patrick Bond

University of the Witwatersrand School of Governance (Johannesburg) and University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society (Durban)
pbond@mail.ngo.za



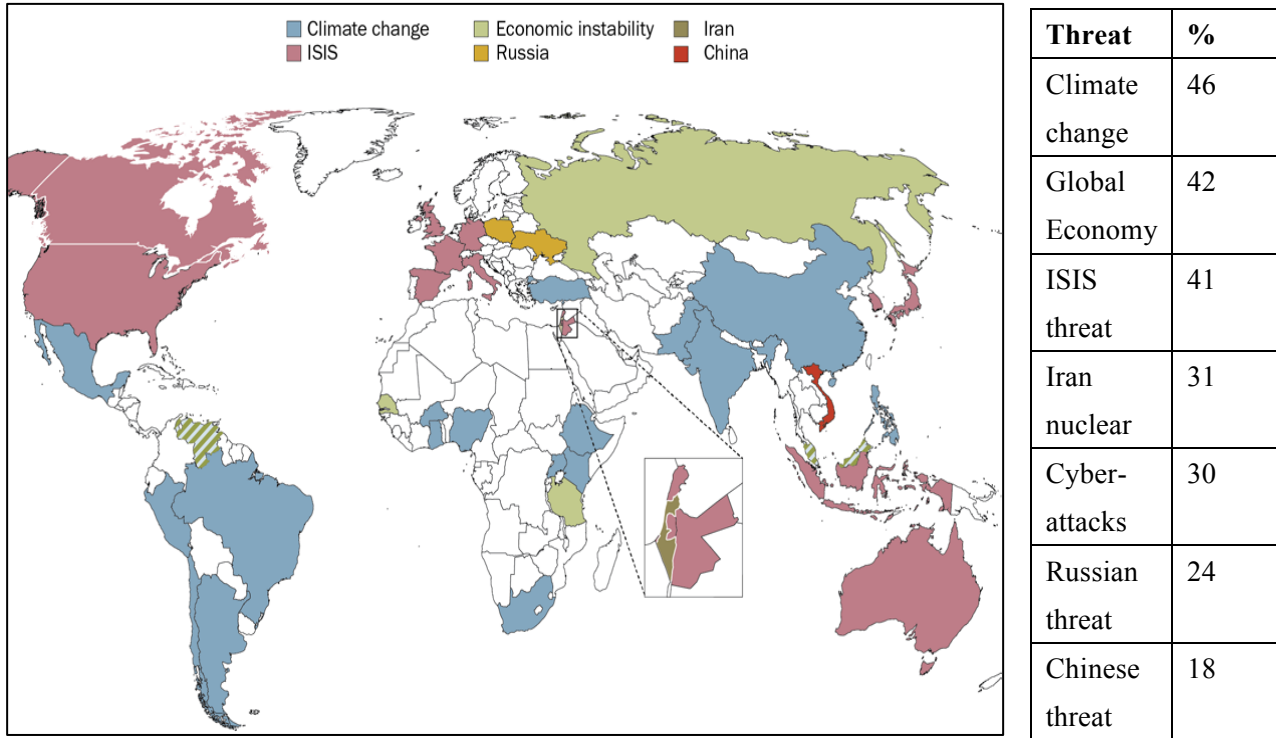
New articles in this journal are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 United States License.



This journal is published by the [University Library System, University of Pittsburgh](#) as part of its [D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program](#) and is cosponsored by the [University of Pittsburgh Press](#).

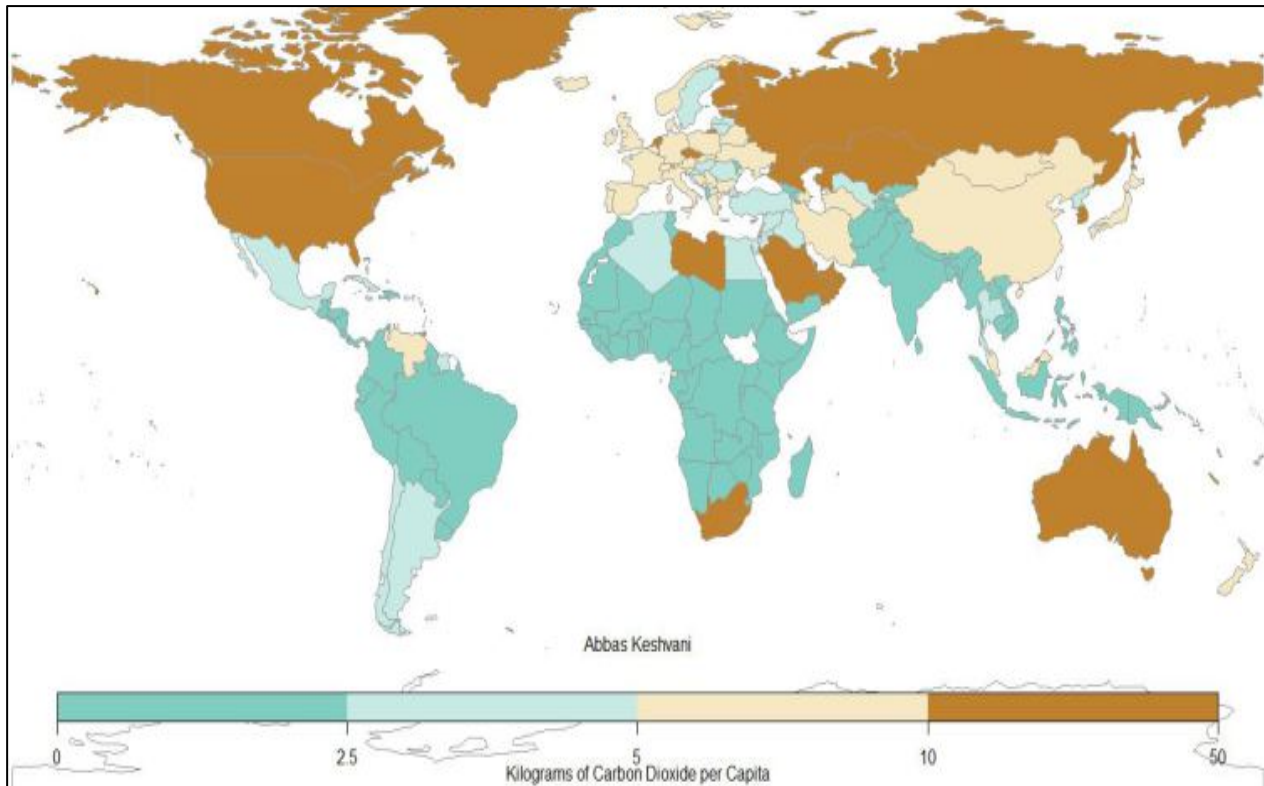
Do enough activists – and the societies that generate them – care about climate change to force United Nations (UN) negotiators to make the emissions cuts required to halt warming at 2 degrees? The July 2015 Pew Research Center survey of world awareness confirms that in a list also containing global economic instability and several contingent geopolitical factors, a near majority of the world public is ‘very concerned’ about climate change (Carle 2015). It is the leading global-scale worry in 2015, but opinion is unevenly distributed: the advanced capitalist societies most responsible for climate change are those which are least willing to acknowledge it as the main threat. They are the societies with the greatest capacity to pay a ‘climate debt’ for the ‘loss and damage’ associated with climate change. But their UN negotiators and politicians, mainly influenced by large corporations, are the most reluctant to discuss the North’s associated liabilities. Against this ‘paralysis above’ (to cite the subtitle of Bond 2012), is there opportunity for ‘movement below’, especially the kind of anti-systemic movement associated with the term ‘climate justice’?

Figure 1: Priority threats, 2015: Percentages ‘very concerned’ about global problems

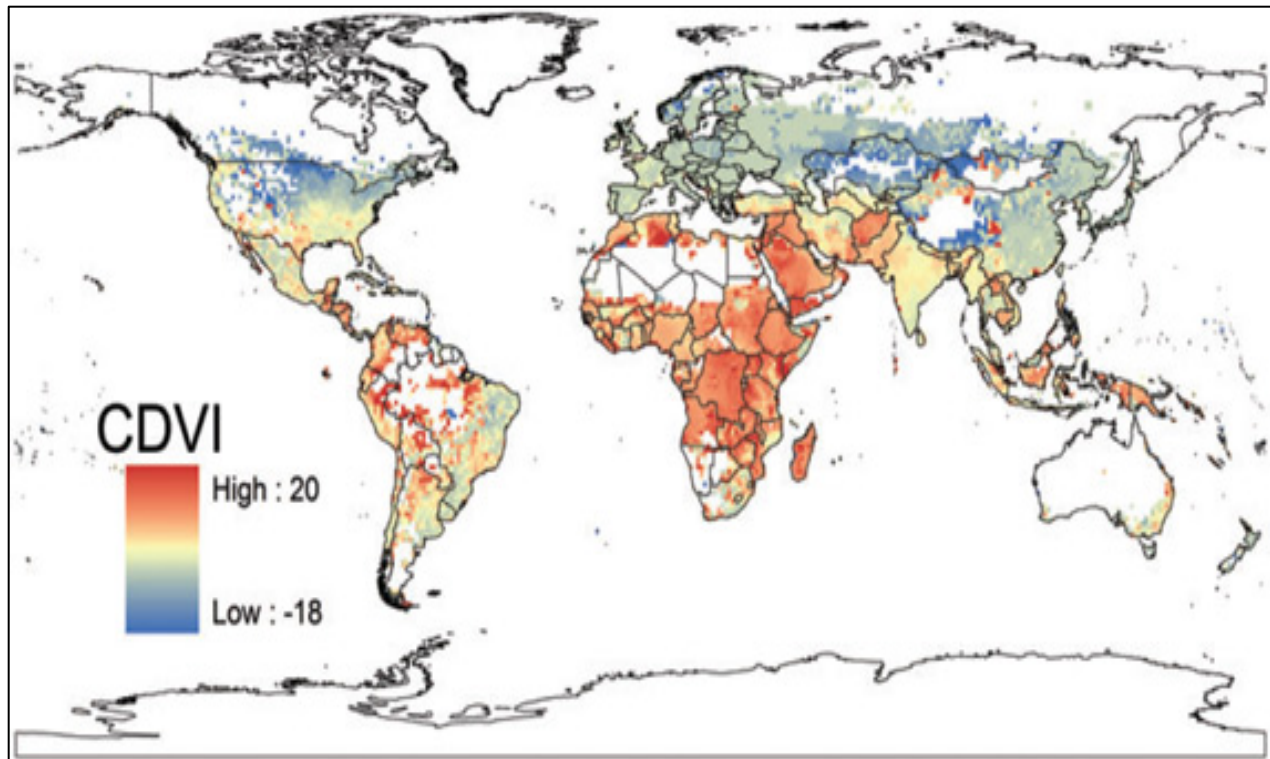


Source: Carle 2015.

Figure 2: Who caused climate change? Per capita emissions



Source: Keshvani 2013

Figure 3: Who loses from climate change? Climate Demography Vulnerability Index

Source: Samson 2011

G7 Leaders Disappoint Most Observers (even Global Capitalist Media)

In mid-2015, the failure to come to grips with the urgency of cutting emissions was obvious, leading even the most pro-establishment periodicals to condemn the G7 leaders after their summit in Elmau, Bavaria. Their declaration to de-carbonize the world economy by 2100 appears at least five decades too late, according to even *The Economist* (2015):

no fossil-fuel-burning power station will be closed down in the immediate future as a result of this declaration. The goal will not make any difference to the countries' environmental policies, since they are mostly consistent with this long-range goal anyway. Where they are not (some countries are increasing coal use, for example) they will not be reined in because of the new promises... the G7's climate effort raises as many questions as it answers. The group seems to have rejected proposals for more demanding targets, such as decarbonisation by 2050.

Added *Time* (2015) magazine,

The results were disappointing... The G7 announced an ‘ambitious’ plan to phase out all fossil fuels worldwide by 2100. Unfortunately, they didn’t make any concrete plans to scale back their own conventional fuel consumption. That’s a big deal when 59 percent of historic global carbon dioxide emissions – meaning the greenhouse gases already warming the atmosphere – comes from these seven nations.

Oxfam, usually more optimistic about elite reforms, complained, ‘This lukewarm summit result will only make the fight harder, if not impossible.’ An expert from the Council on Foreign Relations (2015) explained the logic, in which Washington’s laggard position defeated slightly more ambitious European countries:

The United States has long pressed for a shift away from binding emissions reduction commitments and toward a mix of nationally grounded emission-cutting efforts and binding international commitments to transparency and verification. European countries have often taken the other side, emphasizing the importance of binding targets (or at least policies) for cutting emissions. Now it looks like the big developed countries are on the same page as the United States.

An even tougher critique was mounted by Oscar Reyes (2015) of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. The G7 pledge of ‘net zero’ carbon emissions by 2100 can be negated by recourse to ‘false solutions.’ Such strategies include the scientifically dubious Carbon Capture and Storage to store CO₂ underground near power plants, shooting sulfur particles into the air to physically block sunrays, dropping iron filings into the ocean to create algae blooms, and planting timber plantations to sequester CO₂. Serious watchdogs – the ETC group, ActionAid and Biofuelwatch – requested the G7 to reverse their energy ministers’ endorsement of these Dr. Strangelove strategies, but their power is negligible.

As a result, climate *injustice* prevails in the relationships between world awareness, emissions culpability, and climate change vulnerabilities. Whereas climate debt payments from Global North to South could assist in aiding survival and perhaps ecological restoration, the failure so far to put ‘polluter pays’ reparations on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agenda is just one of the frustrations of the existing multilateral climate management failure. One specific example was the way in which Ecuador’s Yasuni National Park ‘leave the oil in the soil’ climate debt proposal (made originally by Accion Ecologica and indigenous groups) was diverted into a carbon market strategy by the liberal German

development minister in collaboration with President Rafael Correa in 2013, resulting in their failure to raise sufficient funding to justify not drilling. Hence in 2014 Chinese oil prospecting began in earnest, even in pristine sites whose territory includes previously uncontacted indigenous people.

Trading Carbon Instead of Paying the Climate Debt

One of the central tenets of climate justice, especially since the term was used by the Durban Group for Climate Justice in 2004, has been opposition to the UNFCCC's Kyoto Protocol strategy of carbon trading. Kyoto undergirds the process of emissions cut-backs with various kinds of carbon markets, reflecting the aim of maximising efficiency. The market-related ordering of the emissions-cutting process will be amplified at the Paris UNFCCC summit in December 2015, as a result of revived emissions markets in several countries. President Barack Obama re-introduced the 'cap and trade' strategy as part of national climate policy in the United States in August 2015, for example, in spite of its failure to date not only in the Chicago Climate Exchange which was forced to close in 2010, but in the main test site, the European Union (EU). In the wake of the 90 percent crash in EU carbon market prices between the 2008 peak (€29) and the 2013 trough (down to €2.81/ton), and similar crashes in the UN's own Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) carbon market, a comeback will be difficult.

European and United Nations turnover had plummeted from a peak of \$140 billion in 2008 to \$130 billion in 2011, \$84 billion in 2012, and \$53 billion in 2013, even as new carbon markets began popping up (Reuters 2014). But after dipping to below \$50 billion in 2014, volume on the global market is predicted by industry experts to recover in 2015 to \$77 billion (worth 8 Gigatons of CO₂ equivalents) thanks to higher European prices and increased U.S. coverage of emissions, extending to transport fuels and natural gas (Nichols 2015). However, geographically extreme uneven development characterizes the markets in part because of the different regulatory regimes. Since 2013 there have been new markets introduced in California, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Quebec, Korea and China, while Australia's 2012 scheme was discontinued in 2014 due to the conservative government's opposition. The price per ton of carbon also differs markedly, with early 2015 rates still at best only a third of the 2006 European Union peak: California around \$12, Korea around \$9, Europe around \$7.3, China at \$3-7 in different cities, the U.S. northeast Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative's voluntary scheme at \$5, New Zealand at \$4 and Kazakhstan at \$2. The market for CDMs collapsed nearly entirely to U.S.\$0.20/ton.

Carbon trading remains the elites' default option for climate management in spite of the fact that the sites in which carbon trading is today strongest or advancing fastest – the EU, California and China – are also those in which extreme market failure in financial markets (and related real estate) repeatedly threatened these countries' national economies over the past fifteen years, starting with the 2000 dot.com crisis and 2007 sub-prime mortgage failure in California, enveloping the EU since Iceland crashed in 2007, and coming to China in mid-2015 when more than \$3 trillion in paper wealth evaporated in a massive 3-week long stock market crash. Not only China, but at least two others in the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) bloc – Brazil and South Africa – appear ready to gamble on these markets.

Revealing the geographical diffusion of financialized nature, those BRICS countries whose elites might have done more to leapfrog carbon-intensive accumulation strategies (or at least not repeat the most ecologically disastrous strategies of western industrialization) witnessed backsliding. Along with Japan, Australia and Canada, in 2012 Russia also dropped out of the Kyoto Protocol and, along with South Africa remained in the top-ten per capita GHG emitters. South Africa celebrated its hosting of the Durban UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2011 by committing to build three new coal-fired power plants, including one – Medupi – that received the World Bank's largest-ever project loan in 2010 (\$3.75 billion). Meanwhile, China became the world's leading GHG emitter in absolute terms. To address the prolific emissions, three BRICS then established or announced future promotion of carbon markets and offsets as strategies to deal with their prolific emissions: China's seven urban carbon markets, as South Africa and Brazil committed to doing so. In the same current can be found Chile, Mexico, Thailand, Turkey and Eastern Europe.

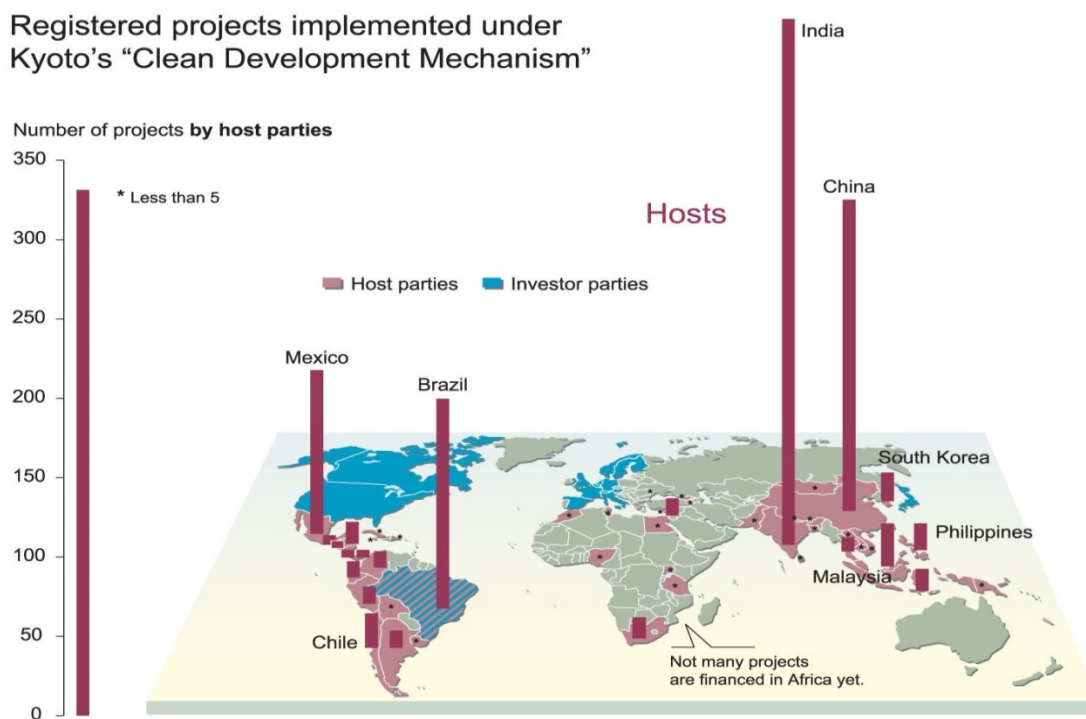
China, India, Brazil and South Africa had already enjoyed disproportionate access to the CDM until the rules changed in 2012 (CDM Pipeline 2013). By then the price of CDM credits had sunk so low there was little point in any case and nearly three quarters of subsequent CDMs “may not represent real emissions reductions,” according to Carbon Market Watch (2013: 1), while “The environmental integrity of the other Kyoto offsetting mechanism Joint Implementation is even more questionable with over 90 percent of offsets issued by Russia and Ukraine with very limited transparency and no international oversight.” In the meantime, as Naomi Klein (2014: 189) pointed out, two BRICS had become notorious for gaming the CDM:

The most embarrassing controversy for defenders of this model involves coolant factories in India and China that emit the highly potent greenhouse gas HFC-23 as a by-product. By installing relatively inexpensive equipment to destroy the gas (with a plasma torch, for example) rather than venting it into the air, these factories – most of which produce gases

used for air-conditioning and refrigeration – have generated tens of millions of dollars in emission credits every year. The scheme is so lucrative, in fact, that it has triggered a series of perverse incentives: in some cases, companies can earn twice as much by destroying an unintentional by-product as they can from making their primary product, which is itself emissions intensive.

This is not surprising, according to Bryant, Dabhi and Böhm (2015: 36), given that the CDM “discourse is used to legitimize the inclusion of developing countries in the international climate regime; an essential component of a spatial fix which seeks to accommodate the demands of Northern capital for flexibility and promote new business opportunities for project developers and carbon traders.” Similar problems of system integrity plague the seven Chinese carbon markets, according to the Carbon Tax Center (2015): “authorities face high hurdles in program design, information provision and political acceptability if the eventual national program is to put an effective ‘price on carbon’ and actually constrain and reduce emissions.” Within China, there is growing unease with carbon markets. At the Chinese Academy of Marxism, for example, Yu Bin (2014) argues that along with Intellectual Property, emissions commodification is vital to understanding the way capital has emerged under conditions of global crisis.

Figure 5. The Clean Development Mechanism: BRICS-Dominated Southern Carbon Trade



Source: http://www.climaticoanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/38-sol_cdm-projects_0391.jpg

From Global Crises to Global Movements

The attraction of carbon trading in the new markets, no matter its failure in the old, is logical when seen within a triple context: a longer-term capitalist crisis which has raised financial sector power within an ever-more frenetic and geographically ambitious system; the financial markets' sophistication in establishing new routes for capital across space, through time, and into non-market spheres; and the mainstream ideological orientation to solving every market-related problem with a market solution, which even advocates of a Post-Washington Consensus and Keynesian economic policies share (Krugman 2009). Interestingly, even Paul Krugman (2013) had second thoughts, for after reading formerly pro-trading environmental economist William Nordhaus' (2013) *Climate Casino*, he remarked, "the message I took from this book was that direct action to regulate emissions from electricity generation would be a surprisingly good substitute for carbon pricing."

But rationality and even efficiency do not appear to be the decisive forces in multilateral climate policy. Instead we are better locating the carbon markets and other emissions trading and offset strategies as vehicles for displacing over-accumulated capital, during a period of extended crisis. Still, even if the new markets get off the ground, the contradictions become extreme: frequent estimates of a \$3 trillion carbon market by 2020—and even one (from the lead Merrill Lynch trader) of \$30 trillion (Kanter 2007)—were overblown, as the peak year so far was 2008 at \$140 billion. With China's seven pilot projects launched in 2014 ostensibly covering 700 million tons of CO₂ emissions (and \$135 million in 2014 deals), renewed estimates are being made of a \$3.5 trillion market there by 2020 (Responding to Climate Change 2013). But in China like everywhere else, financial markets over-extended themselves geographically as investment portfolios diversified into distant, risky areas and sectors. Global and national financial governance proved inadequate, leading to bloated and then busted asset values ranging from subprime housing mortgages to illegitimate emissions credits. And another round lies ahead.

What the period after 2008 showed, once again, is that geopolitical tensions emerge over which sites would be most vulnerable to suffer devalorization of over-accumulated capital, i.e., which regions or countries would bear the brunt of the deep financial sector and real economic downturns. The geopolitical context during the 2000s featured a sole military superpower, one oriented to neoconservative imperialism (especially in relation to U.S. energy needs and hence in-built climate-change denialism) but mitigated somewhat by a global class politics of neoliberalism. This arrangement evolved since 2010, what with BRICS becoming the most coherent emerging-market network. But as Lula da Silva, Jacob Zuma, Manmohan Singh and Wen Jiabao showed in 2009, they were perfectly willing to agree to a Copenhagen Accord that served Northern—and elite Southern—interests: GHG emissions without constraint. That deal's

non-binding, voluntary approach would raise world temperatures by 4 degrees C by 2100, even conservative scientists conceded (Bond 2012), and the U.S.-China deal in October 2014 continued the fiction that both countries could ratchet down emissions in time to avoid runaway climate change. Competition in emissions laxity is the only way to describe the COPs under present circumstances, in which delegates arrive at summits in carbon-intensive countries—Mexico in 2010, South Africa in 2011, Qatar in 2012, Poland in 2013 and Peru in 2014—and where the UNFCCC secretariat is led by a carbon trader (Christiana Figueres). Paris will be no different.

Further 'neoliberalized nature' dangers emerge in this context. Remarkd Ariel Salleh (2010: 215), "The current financial and climate crises are consciousness-raising opportunities all round, but green new deals designed to revive the faltering international system will delay fundamental change." In the same spirit, Samir Amin (2010), Africa's leading political economist, offers this argument about economic theory applied to ecology:

Capture of ecology by vulgar ideology operates on two levels: on the one hand by reducing measurement of use value to an 'improved' measurement of exchange value, and on the other by integrating the ecological challenge with the ideology of 'consensus.' Both these manoeuvres undermine the clear realization that ecology and capitalism are, by their nature, in opposition.

But the complications implicit in correlating crisis-ridden capitalism to commodifying climate crisis are profound. As Harvey (2006: 96) warns:

[T]he spatio-temporality required to represent energy flows through ecological systems accurately, for example, may not be compatible with that of financial flows through global markets. Understanding the spatio-temporal rhythms of capital accumulation requires a quite different framework to that required to understand global climate change.

The increased commodification of nature runs under such constraints of uncertainty into various limits, Harvey (2010) is quick to point out, in part because spatio-temporal rhythms of crazed financial markets now drive global-scale public policy, even when it comes to addressing the crucial problem of global climate change. For this reason, as Klein (2014) puts it, *This Changes Everything*. However, of the two main branches within global and local climate activism – CAN and Avaaz on the one hand and climate justice on the other – only the latter addresses the matter with the sufficiently critical politics required to break through regarding both the world's main concerns: climate change and global economic vulnerability.

COP21 as Game Changer, or Heart Breaker?

The fork in the road appeared in literal form by June 2015. First, tacking right, Avaaz (2015a)—with its 41-million strong clicktivist team, and backed by CAN—suggested that the appropriate political strategy was to praise the world elites notwithstanding the failures of both emissions-cut ambition and the carbon market strategy:

Many told us it was a pipe dream, but the G7 Summit of leading world powers just committed to getting the global economy off fossil fuels forever!!! Even the normally cynical media is raving that this is a huge deal. And it's one giant step closer to a huge win at the Paris summit in December – where the entire world could unite behind the same goal of a world without fossil fuels – the only way to save us all from catastrophic climate change... Our work is far from done, but it's a day to celebrate – click here to read more and say congratulations to everyone else in this incredibly wonderful community!!

Likewise a Greenpeace (2015) press release by international climate politics officer Martin Kaiser announced, “Elmau delivered.” Also, from Greenpeace U.S. Energy Campaign director Kelly Mitchell, “Leaders at the G7 meeting have put forward a powerful call to move the global economy away from fossil fuels and toward a renewable energy future. Heading into the Paris climate meeting this year, it's a significant step toward securing a commitment to 100% renewable energy by 2050.”

The strategy that logically follows such back-slapping pronouncements is to *legitimize* the Paris negotiators. As Avaaz (2015b) announced in July 2015, that means holding a major march *before* the Paris summit with the intent of raising expectations that a sufficiently strong deal would be possible:

We have just 5 months left until the Paris Summit, the meeting that can determine the fate of the world's efforts to fight climate change. It might seem like a long time—it's not. We have 5 months to get our leaders to that meeting, give them a plan, and hold them accountable. It's us vs. the oil companies and fatalism.

We can win, we must, but we need to throw everything we have at December's summit. With pledges of just a few dollars/euros/pounds we'll be able to massively scale up our work—we'll only process the donations if we hit our goal. For the world we dream of, let's make it happen.

In contrast, one of the main climate justice networks, Friends of the Earth International (2015), announced a few days later that it would promote *local* home-based protests on 28-29 November and instead join mass mobilizations *after* the summit. The point of this chronology was to regain momentum after the certain disastrous COP21. Their communique is worth citing at length:

Some organisations, such as Avaaz, are pushing for the big Paris mobilisation to happen on November 29. However, there was an inclusive global process and we collectively decided to present the mobilisations as a package: with decentralised actions on November 28 and 29 and a big mobilisation in Paris on December 12.

Why is Avaaz pushing November 29? Their narrative continues to promote the idea that by simply calling on leaders to act on climate, they will. That's why they only want to mobilise before the COP. Our narrative is that the leaders will not save us until we have built a powerful movement that overcomes the vested interests and forces governments to act. That's why we believe people should have the last word. That is why we have advocated for a centralised moment in Paris on December 12.

FoEI, U.S.-based environmental justice organisations, and others are very concerned with the use of the name and imagery of the 'Peoples' Climate March' (PCM) for our mobilisations this year, as is being spearheaded by Avaaz. Firstly, PCM is too closely associated with some northern organisations. It ignores the mobilisations and important work going on in the rest of the world, especially the south.

Secondly, despite the hard work of thousands of U.S. justice organisations who mobilised people in the communities, Avaaz claimed much of the credit for mobilising 400,000 people. It is likely the same could happen again this year. Avaaz has used its 'success' to dominate climate framing since then, with emails such as '5 months to save the world' or the celebration of G-7 ending fossil fuels only in 2100!! Many of our groups and allies have spent considerable effort rebuilding an alternative and more empowering narrative since Copenhagen that *people* will deliver the transformation, not political leaders. We are concerned that all the climate justice narratives could be undone if Paris is too closely associated with the approach of New York PCM.

Thirdly, we have to be very clear about our peoples' demands for Paris on energy, food, justice and jobs. We have to move beyond marches simply calling for 'climate action', as this is perfectly acceptable to elites since it doesn't challenge their business as usual, doesn't deepen our movements and ultimately lacks the ambition and urgency needed to deliver climate justice.

Likewise, on the vital matter of a preferred march date, 350.org's May Boeve (2015) announced, "when the talks wrap up, we're planning a big action in Paris on December 12th to make sure the people—not the politicians—have the last word." The climate justice critique of climate action was that if society does not dramatically change the balance of forces and applaud activists who engage in much more militant modes of engagement, then global climate malgovernance will continue. Civil disobedience has been breaking out in all sorts of 'Blockadia' spaces, and in many cases Avaaz's online petitions help to raise consciousness. But for its overall campaigning, the need to link these discrete campaigns is enormous.

On September 20 2014, that potential was signaled and climate activists were heartened by the 'PCM'—the mass march Avaaz helped organize, with an estimated 400,000 people participating. To be sure, Avaaz's messaging was confused, for example with unfortunate New York subway advertisements, putting 'hipsters and bankers in the same boat march.' But the next day, the Flood Wall Street protest targeted corporations for a few hours with more than 100 civil disobedience arrests. Still, for Paris, Avaaz and CAN appear intent on repeating ineffectual strategies of prior summits, simply raising expectations and engaging in pre-COP or during-COP set-piece marches, and then no doubt offering feigned disappointment at the result with the call to "do better next year."

In contrast, instead of legitimizing the Paris negotiators, the climate justice movement had worked hard to develop a broad-based 'Coalition Climat21' network premised on vigorous, diverse forms of critique. At the main strategy meeting at the Tunis World Social Forum in March 2015, the climate activists present seemed ready for progressive ideology, analysis, strategy, tactics and alliances. Up to 400 people jammed a university auditorium over the course of the two days, mixing French, English and Arabic. The initial signs were upbeat. Christophe Aguiton, one of Attac's founders, opened the event: 'In the room are Climate Justice Now!, Climate Action Network, international unions, the faith community, and the newer actors in the global movement, especially 350.org and Avaaz. We have had a massive New York City march and some other inspiring recent experiences in the Basque country and with the Belgium Climate Express.'

Still, he explained, 'We won't talk content because in the same room, there are some who are moderate, some who are radical – so we will stress mobilization, because we all agree, without mobilization we won't save the climate.' This unity-seeking-minus-politics was reminiscent of a process four years in Durban, South Africa (Bond 2012). But the French movements have been mobilizing much more impressively, with plans for decentralized November 28-29 protests aimed at municipalities; a Brussels-Paris activist train; a 'run for life' with 1000 people running 4km each from northern Sweden to Paris; a long march from Italy to

France starting in September; and the 'Alternatiba' alternatives project with 200 participating villages from the Basque country up to Brussels which will culminate on September 26-27.

Yet the local context sounds as difficult in 2015 as it was in South Africa in 2011. As Malika Peyraut from Friends of the Earth-France pointed out, national climate policy is 'inconsistent and unambitious' and the country's politics are increasingly chaotic, what with the rise of the far right to 25% support in municipal elections. Worse, French society will be distracted by regional elections from December 6-12, and with national elections in 2017, 'there is a high risk of co-optation,' she warned. No politicians should have their faces near these mobilizations, suggested Mariana Paoli of Christian Aid (reporting from a working group), as COP21 protesters needed to avoid the celebrity-chasing character of the big New York march.

Behind that excellent principle lies a practical reality: there are *no* reliable state allies of climate justice at present and indeed there really are *no* high-profile progressives working within the COPs. This is a huge problem for UN reformers because it leaves them without a policy jam-maker inside to accompany activist tree-shaking outside. The UN head of the COP process is an oft-compromised carbon trader: Christiana Figueres. Although once there were heroic delegates badgering the COP process, they are all gone:

- Lumumba Di-Aping led the G77 countries at the Copenhagen COP15 – where in a dramatic accusation aimed at the Global North, he named climate a coming holocaust requiring millions of coffins for Africa – and so was lauded outside and despised inside, but then was redeployed to constructing the new state of South Sudan;
- President Mohamed Nasheed from the Maldives – also a high-profile critic at Copenhagen – was first a victim of U.S. State Department's cables (revealed by Wikileaks) which documented how his government agreed to a February 2010 \$50 million bribe to support the Copenhagen Accord (just as Washington and the EU agreed that the 'Alliance of Small Island States countries 'could be our best allies' given their need for financing') and was then couped by right-wingers in 2012 and, earlier this month, was illegitimately jailed for a dozen years;
- Bolivia's UN Ambassador Pablo Solon was booted from his country's delegation after the 2010 Cancun COP16, where, solo, he had bravely tried to block the awful deal there, and not even the Latin American governments most hated by Washington – Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua – supported him thanks to Northern bullying;
- In any case a jungle road-building controversy (TIPNIS) soon divided Evo Morales' supporters, and in 2013 the COP's progressive leadership void grew wide after the death of Hugo Chavez and the battle by Rafael Correa against green-indigenous-feminist critics

- for his decision that year to drill for oil in the Yasuni Amazon (after having once proposed an innovative climate debt downpayment to avoid its extraction); and
- Filipino Climate Commissioner Yeb Saño had a dramatic 2013 role in Warsaw condemning COP19 inaction after his hometown was demolished by Super Typhoon Haiyan, but he was evicted by a more conservative environment ministry (apparently under Washington's thumb) just before the Lima COP in 2014.

The message from these COP experiences is unmistakable: if you support climate justice, going inside is suicide. It is for this reason that the original protest narrative suggestions that CAN's Mark Raven proposed here were generally seen as too reformist. Acknowledging the obvious – “People losing faith in the broken system, corporations sabotaging change” and “We need a just transition” – his network then offered these as favored headline memes: “Showdown in 2015 leads to a vision of just transition to fossil-free world” and “Paris is where the world decides to end fossil fuel age.”

Yet with *no real prospects of reform*, the more militant activists were dissatisfied. Nnimmo Bassey from Oilwatch International was adamant, “We need not merely a just transition, but an *immediate* transition: keep the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole, the tar sands in the land and the fracking shale gas under the grass.” That, after all, is what grassroots activists are mobilising for. Added long-time climate justice strategist Nicola Bullard: “This narrative is too optimistic especially in terms of what will surely be seen as a failed COP21.” Bullard was a Focus on the Global South leader at the 2007 Bali COP13 when Climate Justice Now! was formed based on five 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.

Just as valid today, these principles were further fleshed out at the April 2010 World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Bolivia, to include emissions

cut targets—45% below 1990 levels in the advanced capitalist economies by 2020—plus a climate tribunal and the decommissioning of destructive carbon markets which have proven incapable of fair, rational and non-corrupt trading. Dating to well before the CJN! split from CAN in Bali, that latter fantasy—letting bankers determine the fate of the planet by privatizing the air—remains one of the main dividing lines between the two ideologies: climate justice or climate action.

In sum, while the elites are paralyzed, there is movement below. But it is bifurcated. The narrative divergence between climate action and climate justice does not boil down to merely the choice of a Paris march date and the signal sent in the process. Back in Tunis, ActionAid's Teresa Anderson had reported back from a Narrative Working Group on lessons from Copenhagen: "Don't tell a lie that Paris will fix the climate. People were arrested in Copenhagen for this lie. No unrealistic expectations – but we need to give people hope that there is a purpose to the mobilization." Most important, she reminded, "There is Global North historical responsibility, and those who are most vulnerable have done the least to cause the problem." This is vital because in Durban, UN delegates began the process of ending the 'common but differentiated responsibility' clause. As a result, finding ways to ensure climate 'loss & damage' invoices are both issued and paid is more difficult. The UN's Green Climate Fund is a decisive write-off in that respect, with nowhere near the \$100 billion annually promised for 2020 and beyond by then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Also, continued Anderson, given the tendency of Third World nationalists to posture on this point, 'Elites in both North and South are to blame, so it's not a matter of pure geographical injustice. It's the economic system that is driving climate change.' Looking at more optimistic messaging, she concluded the report-back: 'Powerful positive actions are in play. We are life—fossil fuels are death. Paris is a moment to build movements, to show we are powerful and will fight into 2016 and beyond to solve the climate crisis. It takes roots to weather the storm ahead.' Responding, said former Bolivian negotiator Solon, "I think we need a clearer narrative: let's stop an agreement that's going to burn the climate. We already know that agreement exists. If China peaks emissions only by 2030 or if we accept Obama's offer to China, we all burn. The Paris agreement will be worse than the draft we've seen. The point is not to put pressure for something better. It's to stop a bad deal. We are against carbon markets, geoengineering and the emissions targets."

These are the fault lines. One of the lead scholars of global climate justice, John Foran (2015), predicts the Paris COP21 outcome: "we are on course to lock in a genocidally inadequate, woefully underfunded, non-binding set of pledges whose deadlines are laughably too late already." But instead of paralysis above, he argues for movement below:

We will need to be very creative to defeat our enemies: the largest corporations in the world, the global political elite, and the systems whose levers they believe they control: capitalism and a make-belief brand of democracy... Can we not imagine a different ending to COP21? The COP operates by voting in the sense that one or more countries *can* block an outcome, at least in theory. I believe that the movement should be seeking ways to bring this about.

Indeed perhaps the clearest Tunis meeting message for the COP21 came from veteran strategist Pat Mooney of the ET group, describing to the mass meeting what he wanted to see in Paris: “It should start like New York and end like Seattle. Shut the thing down.” Back in 2009, just weeks before he died, this was what Dennis Brutus—the mentor of so many South African and international progressives—also advised: “Seattle Copenhagen!” The UN Paris summit also needs that kind of shock doctrine, so that from an activist cyclone a much clearer path can emerge towards climate justice in the months and years ahead.

References

- ActionAid. 2015. "Caught in the Net." London, June. Available: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/caught_in_the_net_actionaid.pdf. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Amin, Samir. 2010. "The Battlefields Chosen by Contemporary Imperialism." *MRZine*, 2 February. Available: <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2010/amin070210.html>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Avaaz. 2015a. "VICTORY! Seriously, G7 Says Goodbye to Fossil Fuels!" Email from Ricken Patel. London. 12 June.
- Avaaz. 2015b. "5 Months to Save the World." Email from Ricken Patel. London. 12 July.
- Boeve, May. 2015. "The Time for Feeling Powerless in the Face of Climate Chaos is Over." Email from 350.org. 17 August.
- Bond, Patrick. 2012, *Politics of Climate Justice*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Bremmer, Ian. 2015. "Here Are 5 Reasons the G7 Summit Was a Disappointment." *Time*, 12 June. Available: <http://time.com/3918982/g7-summit-obama-united-states-isis-russia/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Bryant, Gareth, Siddhartha Dabhi and Steffen Böhm. 2015. "'Fixing' the Climate Crisis: Capital, States and Carbon Offsetting in India." Forthcoming in *Environment and Planning A*.
- Carbon Market Watch. 2013. "Policy Brief – The Elephant in the Room: International Offsets in EU's 2020 Climate Legislation." Brussels, 18 October. Available: <http://carbonmarketwatch.org/the-elephant-in-the-room-international-offsets-in-eus-2020-climate-legislation/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Carbon Tax Centre. 2015. "What about China?" Washington, DC. Available: <http://www.carbontax.org/what-about-china/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Carle, Jill. 2015. "Climate Change Seen as Top Global Threat." Pew Research Centre. 14 July. Washington, DC. Available: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/07/14/climate-change-seen-as-top-global-threat/> Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Euractive. 2015. "NGOs unsure of Lukewarm G7 Climate Deal." 9 June. Available: <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/sustainable-dev/ngos-unsure-lukewarm-g7-climate-deal-315218>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Foran, John. 2015. "Just Say 'No' to the Paris COP A Possible Way to Win Something for Climate Justice." Unpublished manuscript, University of California-Santa Barbara, 17 August.

- Friends of the Earth International. 2015. "Call to Action! Mobilising around COP21 - What, Where, When?" Email from Dipti Bhatnagar. Maputo. 12 August 2015.
- Greenpeace. 2015. "Greenpeace Responds to Climate Progress at Today's G7 Meeting." Amsterdam, 12 June. Available: <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/media-center/news-releases/Greenpeace-Responds-to-Climate-Progress-at-Todays-G7-Meeting/>. Accessed 12 June 2015.
- Harvey, David. 2006. *Spaces of Global Capitalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, David. 2010. *The Enigma of Capital*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kanter, James. 2007. "In London's Financial World, Carbon Trading is the New Big Thing." *New York Times*, 6 July. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/06/business/worldbusiness/06carbon.html>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Keshvani, Abbas. 2013. "CO2 emissions per dollar of GDP." *Coolstatsblog*, 25 September. Available: <http://coolstatsblog.com/2013/09/25/co2-emissions-per-dollar/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Klein, Naomi. 2014. *This Changes Everything*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Krugman, Paul. 2009. "Unhelpful Hansen." *New York Times*, 7 December. At: <http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/07/unhelpful-hansen/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Krugman, Paul. 2013. "Gambling with Civilization." *New York Review of Books*, 7 November. Available: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/nov/07/climate-change-gambling-civilization/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Levi, Michael. 2015. "What Matters (and What Doesn't) in the G7 Climate Declaration." *Asia Times*, 12 June. Available: <http://atimes.com/2015/06/what-matters-and-what-doesnt-in-the-g7-climate-declaration/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Nichols, William. 2015. "Global Carbon Market Value to Hit €70bn this Year." *BusinessGreen*, 6 January. Available: <http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/analysis/2388683/global-carbon-market-value-to-hit-eur70bn-this-year>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Nordhaus, William. 2013. *The Climate Casino*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Responding to Climate Change. 2013. "World's Carbon Markets now Cover 20% of Emissions." 2 December. Acc <http://www.rtcc.org/2013/12/02/worlds-carbon-markets-now-cover-20-of-emissions/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Reyes, Oscar. 2015. "Leaders' Declaration G7 Summit (Climate Section) Annotated." Washington, DC, Institute for Policy Studies. 9 June. Available: <http://genius.com/G7-leaders-declaration-g7-summit-climate-section-annotated/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.

- Salleh, Ariel. 2010. "From Metabolic Rift to Metabolic Value: Reflections on Environmental Sociology & the Alternative Globalization Movement." *Organization and Environment* 23(2).
- Samson, J., D. Berteaux, B.J.McGill and M.M. Humphries. 2011. "Geographic Disparities and Moral Hazards in the Predicted Impacts of Climate Change on Human Populations." *Global Ecology and Biogeography*. 20(4), pp. 532–544.
- The Economist*. 2015. "Sort Of: Why the G7 is Talking about Decarbonisation." 10 June. Available: <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21653964-why-g7-talking-about-decarbonisation-sort>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- United Nations Environment Program. 2013. "CDM Pipeline Overview." New York. Available: <http://www.cdmpipeline.org/>. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Van Renssen, Sonja. 2015. "Policy Watch: Carbon Market Rescue." *Nature Climate Change* 5, pp.297–299. Available: DOI:10.1038/nclimate2588. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- World Bank. 2015. "Carbon Pricing is Expanding." World Bank, Washington, DC. 26 May. At: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2015/06/02/090224b082ee87a1/3_0/Rendered/PDF/Carbon0pricing0e0released0late02015.pdf. Accessed 17 August 2015.
- Yu Bin, 2014, 余斌.新帝国主义的两大租权[J].社会科学辑刊, 2014, 1, pp.96-99,Available: <http://www.cnki.com.cn/Article/CJFDTotal-SHKK201401019.htm>. Accessed 17 August 2015.