

CLIMATE JUSTICE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE UNFCCC: THE EXAMPLE OF REDD

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It is now nearly a year since the failure of the Copenhagen conference to come to agreement on a binding post 2012 international climate deal. This failure has had two effects. Firstly, it has seen the creation of quasi-UN processes that exist alongside but formally outside the UN in which negotiations are conducted. Secondly, it has seen climate campaigners and particularly climate justice activists, who bring a more radical critique to the movement, seek alternative spaces outside UN negotiations in which to bring about the social change necessary to stop climate change. This production of alternative spaces, such as the climate justice conference in Bolivia in April, has been driven by the experience of participation in the United Nations climate change negotiations and particularly witnessing the dominance of the market and neo-liberal ideology within these negotiations. In this article we use the example of the negotiations on ending deforestation, called REDD in UN language, to show two things. Firstly, how the marketisation of the natural environment dominates as a 'climate solution' within UN processes. Secondly, the complexity of engaging with the UNFCCC for civil society, and particularly the climate justice movement. We offer observations on how this relationship is constantly developing particularly since Copenhagen, and consider the challenges involved in struggles for climate justice.

Post-Copenhagen

Whether 'climate justice' activists approached the Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP-15) with the impression that this was 'the last chance to save the planet' or with recognition that possibly 'no deal would be better than a bad deal,' the clear failure of the summit

compels political reflection. Post-Copenhagen, all climate justice activists, campaigners and advocates have to take stock of the site and strategies of this emerging and adolescent movement. From the perspective of climate justice, the Copenhagen summit was a failure both in whittling away the framework of ‘common but differentiated responsibility’ in the UNFCCC and in the failure of Northern¹ countries to commit to the binding emission reductions targets which are scientifically necessary (Rogelj *et al.* 2010). Clearly, it has not been possible to influence and determine mainstream institutional international agenda in favour of climate justice. There is absolutely no indication that the market mechanisms central to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) could instigate, or even be part of, the global systemic social, cultural and economic transformation which is necessary to confront the climate crisis. As such post-Copenhagen reflections draw out the analytical tensions that have been developing in climate justice movement debates around strategies of engagement and disengagement with institutional processes.

In this article we examine these polemics using debates around REDD² - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation – as an illustration of these tensions. We use REDD as an example for two reasons. Firstly the fate of the REDD negotiations reveals the domination of neo-liberal ideology within the UNFCCC, and the difficulty in articulating any mechanism for reducing carbon emissions within this space that does not also increase corporate power and expand the opportunities for market mechanisms. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, is the story of civil engagement with REDD which reveals the differing ways that groups engage with the UNFCCC, and

¹ In this article we use the terms ‘North’ and ‘South’ to what is more commonly referred to as the ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ world. However, we recognise the limitations of this framework, as the globalised world is increasingly ‘scrambled’ with pockets of economic privilege in the South, and the corollary of pockets of economic deprivation in the North.

² For the sake of simplicity we use the acronym ‘REDD’ to describe both REDD and its latest incarnation, REDD+. The ‘+’ indicates that current REDD scheme seek to address not only avoidance of negative carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, but also provide rewards for enhancing carbon storage capacity, such as through forest restoration, rehabilitation and afforestation/reforestation. (Campbell, 2009: 397). The + was added around two years into the REDD negotiations in 2009.

particularly how that relationship has changed in the light of the failure of Copenhagen. No doubt, as long as the UNFCCC exists it will be necessary to resist mechanisms such as market-based REDD schemes in which corporate interests dominate over the very urgent task of tackling global deforestation. However, now more than ever it is time for a new conception of power, one in which we don't assume that power is only exerted by those states engaged directly in the UNFCCC negotiations. Social movements must articulate in our own language the climate solutions that we want and in doing so we create our own power. The complexity of the engagement with the UNFCCC shows how movements for climate justice needs to be multifaceted and multi-scaled and, similarly, needs to conceptualise power and organisation as multifaceted and multi-scaled.

What is the Climate Justice Movement?

The climate justice movement claims to be the radical edge of the fight against climate change. The movement has evolved out of the environmental justice movement which highlighted the race and class-based discrimination implicit in environmental harms, particularly toxic waste dumps and nuclear facilities. It also grew out of the 'alter-globalisation' movements resisting corporate driven neo-liberal globalisation in the 1990s. A key moment for the climate justice movement was the formation of the Climate Justice Now! network at the UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Bali in 2007, which popularised the term 'climate justice' (Building Bridges Collective 2010: 27).

The climate justice movement's analysis of the climate crisis is based on recognition that climate change is not simply anthropogenic, in that it is caused by an undifferentiated humanity, but that climate change is the product of specific modes of capitalistic production and distribution (Abramsky & de Angelis 2009: 1-14). Climate change reflects global discrepancies in power and access to resources globally between the majority and minority worlds. The difference between those who have caused the climate problem and thus need to take primary responsibility for mitigation and adaptation, and those who are most vulnerable to and

have least capacity to adapt to the effects of the crisis, is stark.³ Such an analysis informs the movement's position that the countries of the minority world need to take primary responsibility for immediately and drastically cutting their greenhouse gas emissions, calls for mitigation and adaptation funding and technology transfers as well as calls for reparations of 'climate debt'⁴ (e.g. Navarro 2009).

The climate justice movement rejects what it considers 'false solutions' to the climate crisis, primarily market solutions such as cap-and-trade carbon trading schemes (Lohmann 2006) as well as techno-fixes, such as geo-sequestration, carbon capture and storage (the infamous 'clean coal' technology), agrofuels (such as ethanol), nuclear power, biochar, large hydroelectricity projects (dams), biomass and spraying sulfates into the atmosphere to block the sun's rays. In contrast to such corporate, market and state-driven solutions, the movement advocates community-led responses to the climate crisis and the promotion of localised, community sovereignty over food, energy and other resources (KlimaForum 2009) as prerequisites for a justice global climate outcome. The People's Declaration coming out of KlimaForum, the global civil society counterpart to the Copenhagen COP, which has been signed by over 500 organisations strongly endorses this approach.

Whilst there is a broad political agreement on the above positions in the climate justice movement underlying these shared positions are a strong

3 The position adopted by large industrialising Southern countries, such as China and India, which amount to demanding the right to pursue the same greenhouse intensive and fossil fuel driven development paths as the North, add complexity to this argument. However, the positions adopted by China and India demonstrate how hegemonic ideas of economic development necessitating fossil fuel/carbon intensive development are in the statist framework. In contrast to this, movement has highlighted the need to develop alternative conception of 'development' and to move past the normative assumptions implicit in the 'development paradigm'.

4 The idea of a 'climate (or carbon) debt' recognises that countries of the North have much larger per capita emissions than countries in the South currently, and that the discrepancy is greater when historically emissions are included. The concept of 'climate debt' also recognises that countries of the North have economically profited from historically pursuing a greenhouse intensive development path, and that reparations for this 'debt' should be made. Reparations for the debt are supported both by arguments that due to the climatic impacts of this development trajectory, that it is now closed to countries from the South, and also that the carbon-intensive development path pursued by the North has created climate change. Thus countries for the North should be responsible for global climate change mitigation and adaptation costs.

diversity of views within the movements, especially in relation to the role of states and institutions in social change, as well as different theories of power and how social change happens. These tensions are particularly acute in debates about how to engage with the UNFCCC process, and, what is increasingly part of the UNFCCC, the market-based mechanisms playing a role of increasing prominence in global climate governance. As such, the climate justice movement operates both inside and outside the UNFCCC meetings. Networks such as Climate Justice Now, Friends of the Earth International and Third World Network seek to influence proceedings and, where interests converge, support the stance taken by countries of the Global South. Outside of the formal UN processes the climate justice movement has worked with incredible commitment and determination to create alternative political space for what is referred to as the 'people's agenda'. For example, KlimaForum featured 202 debates, 70 exhibitions, 43 films, 16 concerts over 12 days and produced a Declaration now supported by over 500 organisations. The World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth held in Cochabamba, which we discuss below, demonstrates this ongoing commitment to creating alternative spaces for international movement discussion, debate and information sharing. Whilst some states from the global South, notably Bolivia, have been supportive of such spaces (and instrumental in relation to the Cochabamba conference) these spaces to date have been at best ignored by the states and governments of the developed world and at worst demonised as terrorism, as was very recently seen in Denmark with the state endorsed extension of already highly discretionary police powers directly prior to the Copenhagen climate talks. In a bid to crush these alternative spaces, in Denmark meetings were tear-gassed and activists detained without charge (van der Zee & Watts 2009).

In this article we examine the relationship of the climate justice movement to both the UNFCCC processes and to other institutions and processes outside the UNFCCC which are playing an increasingly influential role in international climate governance and development of the carbon markets. We use debates around REDD as a case study through which we analyse the various tensions in these relationships playing out. We, the authors, are observing and engaging in these debates as activists rather than detached commentators. The material in this article is derived from our own experiences and the discussions that have shaped our understanding of the political and organisational terrain in

which we operate. As we speak from within the climate justice movement, we do not aim to present an impartial view of this terrain, but rather our perception of possible and necessary directions.

History of the UNFCCC REDD Negotiations

Forest destruction is one of the key environmental problems in the world today. Cutting down forests releases greenhouse gas emissions, prevents forests from storing carbon on an ongoing basis, results in massive species loss, causes localised changes to weather patterns and destroys the livelihood and culture of forest dependent peoples. Yet, even though it has deleterious climate effects, deforestation in developing countries, where most occurs, was not included in the 1998 Kyoto Protocol. This was due to methodological concerns about measuring, monitoring and verifying emission reductions from avoided deforestation (Moutinho *et al.* 2005). The Marrakesh Accords allowed for reforestation programs to be included in the international UN offset scheme, the Clean Development Mechanism (UNFCCC 2002), but did not allow for the creation of carbon credits from avoided deforestation (Moutinho *et al.* 2005).

This changed in 2005 when Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, on behalf of the newly formed Coalition of Rainforest Nations (CRfN), proposed that deforestation emissions from developing countries be included in the post Kyoto climate deal commencing in 2012, and suggested a methodology for doing this (Governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica 2005). In simple terms the CRfN proposed that a national 'baseline' be used to determine current and projected future rates of deforestation. Developing forest nations would then be rewarded for the preservation of any forests that were originally included in the baseline. From the beginning the CRfN vigorously pushed market responses that enabled the trading of avoided deforestation carbon credits (Popham 2005). The head of the Coalition was a Columbia University business academic, Kevin Conrad, who had long had an interest in securing revenue for Papua New Guinea from carbon credits, although he

does not appear to have any background or experience in protecting or managing forests (Sessions 2005).⁵

The Bali Conference of Parties in 2007 established a REDD working group and tropical deforestation was included in the Bali Action Plan, foreshadowing its inclusion in the post Kyoto climate agreement (UNFCCC 2007). Officially the negotiations are inconclusive on whether deforestation will be funded through a market in carbon credits or through an alternative mechanism such as a fund that did not involve trading. A fund-based REDD scheme recognises that countries and communities of the South should be economically compensated for protecting their forests, that the money for such a fund should come from countries of the North (not carbon markets), and that the carbon saved from avoided deforestation projects could not be used as an 'offset' in Annex 1 countries. A fund-based approach was strongly supported by Brazil as well as by Columbia and Tuvalu (see Parker *et al.* 2009). However, the negotiations proceeded as they had started, dominated by the view that only the market for credits could raise sufficient funds for stopping rampant deforestation (*ibid.*).

Neo-liberal economic analysis in the influential Stern Report on Climate Change (Stern 2007), the Eliash Review on Forests and Climate (Eliash 2008) and, in the Australian context, the Garnaut Climate Change Review (Garnaut 2008) all argued that reducing emissions from deforestation was the cheapest emission reduction strategy. For this reason, proposals for a market-based REDD scheme have been warmly welcomed by developed country nations which had binding emissions reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol, and which were attracted to cheap international 'offsets' to minimise the need for domestic emission reductions (Wong 2009).

The marketisation of forests was not without its critics, however. As we explore in more depth below, certain non-government organisations and the climate justice movement were dismayed about the progress of the negotiations. At times the debates within the REDD working group on offsetting carbon reflected a general concern within member states about the use of market-based mechanisms in general, with some G77 countries becoming increasingly hostile to the North using the international carbon market to avoid their UNFCCC responsibilities (e.g. Third World

⁵ For a brief description of Kevin Conrad's role in CoRfN see Lang (2009).

Network 2009). In the intensity of the negotiations leading up to Copenhagen, however, the base of countries working together to oppose a market-based REDD scheme was eroded. Brazil, for example, had held out since 2007 against the market-based system, but weeks out from the Copenhagen meeting conceded that carbon credits could be used to fund avoided deforestation measures, so long as they were limited to 10% of overall emissions reductions of the developed country (Brasileiro & Cortes 2009).

REDD outcomes at Copenhagen were mixed. The draft text on REDD reached a stalemate on whether REDD is to be a market-based or a fund-based mechanisms and whether its scale of implementation is at the national or sub-national level (Dooley 2010). However, the conference endorsed an agreement on methodological approaches to REDD (*ibid.*). Whilst no formal agreement on REDD was achieved, REDD received more mentions than any other climate mitigation strategy in the controversial Copenhagen Accord.

The dominance of market mechanisms within the UNFCCC is testimony to the fact that international climate policy has been captured by an elite alliance of big business, commodities traders, financial firms, neoclassical economic theorists, and an influential group of middle-class environmentalists (Lohmann 2009). The UNFCCC has become a forum characterised by inequalities in representation, power imbalances, corporate influence, meetings behind closed doors, dismissals of proposals which are not market-orientated, powerful influences for corporate lobbyists and mainstream NGOs which constrains all debates to operate within a 'business as usual framework' (Building Bridges Collective 2010).

Civil Society Engagement with REDD

Measures to limit the emissions from deforestation have been a highly contested part of the UNFCCC negotiations as there are complex layers of environmental, resource and cultural issues in confronting the causes and social implications of forest destruction. The overlapping social, economic and environmental aspects of the REDD debate have led to the negotiations being characterised, in the view of two commentators, 'by an extremely high participation of concerned parties' (Alvarado & Wertz-Kanounnikoff 2007: 5). These parties have not, however, had the

same interests and have all engaged with the negotiations in different ways.

Conservation organizations, for example, have been most enthusiastic about the possibilities that REDD offers for forest preservation, even in a market-based offset form. For many of these groups REDD was seen as an opportunity to pursue conservation outcomes that also had beneficial effects for mitigating the impacts of climate change. As such many conservation organisations have not simply been vocal supporters for REDD, they have also sought to broker REDD agreement, manage REDD programmes and profit from forest carbon markets. Group such as the World Wide Fund for Nature, The Nature Conservancy, and Flora and Fauna International are all working on offset projects with governments in majority world rainforest nations such as Indonesia and Bolivia.

This support for carbon markets from sections of civil society has led to harsh criticism, particularly for groups in the majority world (Mann and Surya 2009). Most controversial has been the collaboration between conservation NGOs and large polluters to establish forest offset projects (Hari 2010). For example the Noel Kempff project in Bolivia, a collaboration of the The Nature Conservancy and British Petroleum, has been found to have grossly overestimated the amount of emissions saved and simply led to logging in adjacent forests (Greenpeace 2009). In line with their active participation in REDD projects, large environment NGOs work within the UNFCCC on 'methodological issues', such as mechanisms for accounting for forest carbon and necessary legal structures (Harvey *et al.* 2010). Other conservation groups and networks have engaged with the UNFCCC to ensure that biodiversity and forest protection outcomes are met, for example, in dealing with definitional problems such as whether plantations should be considered forests (Ecosystems Climate Alliance 2009).

However, environmental groups grounded in a climate justice analysis, such as Friends of the Earth International and World Rainforest Movement, from early in the negotiations condemned the use of market-based offsets (Hall 2008; World Rainforest Movement 2007). They argued that offsets are unjust as they allow minority world countries to appear as if they are taking action on climate change, whilst avoiding reducing emissions domestically and thus provide a mechanism to legitimate countries delaying urgent climate action (Bohm & Dabhi

2009; Bullock, Childs & Picken 2009). In relation to REDD a key concern was that as ‘offsets’ do not reduce carbon emissions overall, but simply geographically displace them. So REDD projects do not represent real, measurable and quantifiable emission reductions, and such an offset mechanism would allow aggregate emissions to increase.⁶ Additionally, there were key concerns that the definition of ‘forests’ used in REDD could allow palm oil and paper and pulp plantations to claim REDD credits with disastrous results for forest and biodiversity protection (Sasaki & Putz, 2009; Long 2009; Creagh 2010). Questions about how to properly monitor, report and verify the carbon accounting and other project details associated with REDD projects is a similarly complex and unresolved area. These questions are extremely pertinent as there are increasing claims that additionality is unlikely or questionable for a significant number of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects approved by the CDM Board (Schneider 2009).

Between the support amongst some conservation NGOs for REDD and the concerns of the climate justice movement, Indigenous People’s organisations have been actively engaging in debates around REDD to highlight the potential social risks to the rights of Indigenous and forest-dependant communities (Griffiths 2009). Some indigenous groups have actively opposed the existence of forest carbon trading schemes in any form. However, the general approach from networks such as the International Indigenous People’s Forum on Climate Change has been to ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly the right to free informed and prior consent, are included in the REDD text (Tauli-Corpuz & Baer, 2010: 13).

The risks of REDD to Indigenous Peoples are high given that globally forests are home to 350 million people, 60 million Indigenous Peoples are wholly dependent on forests and 1.6 billion people depend on forests to varying degrees for their livelihood (Eliash 2009). The Eliash Review notes that 90% of those living on less than \$1 a day depend on forests to

⁶ This is a key anxiety in all debates around REDD, particularly how to ensure ‘permanence’ of emission reductions, that is, how to ensure that forest left standing remain left standing and are not threatened by drought, fires or illegal logging, how to prevent ‘leakage’; how to make sure that the logging does not simply move from a REDD protected area to another site either nationally or internationally not covered by a REDD regime; and, ‘additionality’, making sure that forests protected due to REDD are additional to what would have been protected and not logged under a business as usual scenario.

some extent for their livelihoods and that generally forest communities are 'poor and politically, economically marginalised and lack ownership rights' (Eliasch 2009; Wells & Brands, 2009).⁷ The Forest Peoples Programme report *Seeing REDD* highlights concerns that REDD could spark a massive land grab, dispossess communities from traditional lands and see communities losing their livelihoods (Griffiths 2009). The International Forum of Indigenous Peoples' on Climate Change (IFIPCC) stated 'REDD will not benefit Indigenous Peoples, but in fact, will result in more violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights...[U]nder REDD states and carbon traders will take more control over our forests' (IFIPCC 2007). Forest carbon trading schemes vest ownership of forest carbon in governments and carbon traders, and exclude communities without tenurial rights. Radical grassroots Indigenous rights groups such as the Indigenous Environment network have staunchly opposed REDD describing it as 'CO₂lonialism of forests' (IEN 2009).

The existence of these risks for Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities is now widely recognised by organisations opposed to REDD, such as Friends of the Earth (Hall 2008), and even by organisations that are actively promoting REDD projects, including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN 2010), the UN-REDD programme (UN-REDD 2009) and the Eliash Review (Eliash 2008). Other groups have adopted a position of seeing REDD as a 'double edged sword' which could be potentially detrimental or beneficial to Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities, depending upon its mode of implementation (Fenton 2010). The dilemmas associated with both strategies of engagement and disengagement are highlighted by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples:

Many Indigenous Peoples who have been influencing the REDD Plus negotiations believe that while there are many risks and perils in REDD if implemented the wrong way, it is still important to be engaged in the process because this is an area

⁷ Many of the official documents on REDD consider local community timber harvesting and agricultural practices, especially what is described as 'slash and burn' agriculture, key drivers of deforestation. Whilst, the impacts of these practices on forests need to be acknowledged, they pale in comparison to the forest impacts from the key drivers of deforestations: industrial logging, land conversion of timber and palm oil plantations.

where the direct link between rights and climate change solutions is very obvious. The main slogan carried by the Indigenous Peoples caucus is “No Rights no REDD”. Unless rights and equity are integrated in the design, implementation and monitoring of REDD Plus it is bound to fail.

They have their own agency and in the face of all the problems they face, their options range from non-participation to active participation or engagement. In the case of REDD, there are those who are actively engaged in helping shape the design and there are those who are mainly involved in critiquing REDD. Both approaches are useful and this is the operationalization of the right to self-determination (Tauli-Corpuz & Baer 2010: 16).

Reflection on results in relation to Indigenous Peoples' rights at the Copenhagen Summit was mixed. In 2008 at the UNFCCC meeting in Poznan, the Indigenous Peoples' caucus walked out of the negotiations because of Australia, New Zealand and Canada's resistance to inclusion of UNDRIP (the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) in the REDD text (Lang 2008). One year later in Copenhagen this position had altered and reference is now made to the UNDRIP. The draft REDD text formulated at Copenhagen is the only UNFCCC text which includes language on rights, and this is mainly due to the work of Indigenous Peoples (Tauli-Corpuz & Baer, 2010). However, the draft text simply 'notes' the UNDRIP but does not consider itself bound by it, which, as the IIPFCC comments, remains an inadequate recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights (ibid.). Thus, whilst there were significant lobbying gains made to incorporate safeguards into the UNFCCC text, these remain limited.

In the Wake of Copenhagen: the Rise of Private REDD Governance

Since Copenhagen the relationship between REDD and civil society has become increasingly antagonistic because of the nature of the decision making spaces and the exclusion of civil society participation from key decisions. The UNFCCC is no longer the key site of REDD decision making power. In the absence of a multilateral treaty on REDD, organisations such as the World Bank are pursuing REDD agreements, bi-lateral REDD agreements are being signed and on-the-ground

'demonstration activities' being pursued. All envisage a 'phased approach' to REDD: firstly funds are supplied to developing countries which then enable carbon markets to develop in the latter states. The Paris-Oslo initiatives (also known as the Interim REDD Partnership) similarly adopt a staged approach. NGO groups have been highly critical of the lack of opportunities for civil society participation in these non-UNFCCC processes. The Paris-Oslo meetings are invitation only and rushed timelines have made any meaningful consultation impossible. The phenomenon of norms being developed in closed, backroom decision-making spaces dominated by the interests of Northern countries is not new. The process which led to the highly contentious Copenhagen Accord, was similarly dominated by back-room, secretive decision-making between a select group of Northern and Southern states, primarily Brazil, India, China, South Africa and the United States.

The rise of private governance has also accentuated fears that the multilateral UNFCCC process is being superseded. Whilst any international REDD agreement will require a multilateral internationally-binding treaty, the rise of private REDD governance raises very real concerns that the norms and values informing such an agreement and the applicable safeguards will be determined in these 'private' spaces, and that an eventual multilateral agreement will simply reflect what is already 'facts on the ground'. For example, whilst officially no UNFCCC decision has been made about whether REDD will be fund- or market-based, the fact that massive investment is preparing REDD-readiness for market-based schemes under the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the Paris-Oslo initiatives, has *de facto* confirmed the decision that REDD will be funded by carbon markets. Further, the environmental and social safeguards under such programs are much less than the safeguard text civil society lobbying was able to insert into the draft UNFCCC treaty text. For example, the FCPF is bound by the World Bank Operation Policy on Indigenous Peoples which requires 'free prior informed *consultation*' (World Bank 2005), rather than the insistence on free prior informed *consent* in the UNDRIP (United Nations General Assembly 2007). As such there are concerns that even the slight progress civil society engagement in the UNFCCC process was able to achieve, such as minimal Indigenous Peoples' safeguards in the draft treaty text, may be eroded.

Climate justice movements have been much more clearly antagonistic to engaging with these decision-making spaces than they have been to the

UNFCCC. This antagonism is based on a highly critical view of the role being played by international financial institutions such as the World Bank in climate finance. These institutions have a history of funding projects that are environmentally and socially destructive and they continue to fund fossil fuel development. Further, these institutions are seen as lacking in any sort of democratic legitimacy (Orenstein 2010). Some sections of the climate justice movement are adopting a 'harm minimization' approach, and still feel the need to engage in these spaces to ensure the least-worst outcome in terms of social and environmental safeguards. However, it has been more possible for more radical sections of the climate justice movement to reject the legitimacy of these spaces and refuse to participate.

From Copenhagen to Cochabamba

The harshest criticism of the Copenhagen Accord from the UN member states at Copenhagen came from the ALBA⁸ countries. In the immediate aftermath the Copenhagen conference Bolivian President Morales announced his country would host an alternative Conference of Parties, the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in April 2010. He envisioned that this conference would enable the formulation of more radical solutions to climate change. Around 35,000 climate justice activists from 142 countries attended the conference, with almost one third from Bolivia itself.⁹

While in many ways the structure of the conference reflected UNFCCC processes, with numerous working groups and lengthy negotiations based on the production of texts, the direct engagement of radical social movements, indigenous groups and many people from across Bolivian society was far removed from the realities of the UNFCCC (Building

⁸ ALBA is the acronym of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of the Americas. It is an alternative political and economic bloc. Members include Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

⁹ Approximately 10,000 of the participants came from outside of Bolivia, and the majority of participants came from Latin America as well as a substantial number from North America. Europe and Asia were poorly represented in part because of the disruptions caused to international flights by the Iceland volcanic eruption. Government representatives from 48 countries also attended. Presumably the cost (financial and carbon) of international flights also excluded many participants especially from Africa, Asia, Oceania and Europe.

Bridges Collective 2010). As conference participant Kylie Benton-Connell notes, 'the Cochabamba conference implicitly constructed an 'inside' around the interests of those who were systematically forced to the 'outside' of Copenhagen' The convergence produced the 'The Cochabamba Protocol: People's Agreement on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth' (World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth 2010) as well as a separate Indigenous Peoples' statement. The politics and recommendations of the People's Agreement were presented to the intersessional meeting of the UNFCCC in Bonn in the submission made by Bolivia (Plurinational State of Bolivia 2010).

Perhaps needless to say, the 'People's Agreement' was all but ignored by the other participants in the UNFCCC. But it did enable the climate justice movement to formulate key demands and positions. REDD was no exception. The Bolivian government originally provided a draft text on forests that was supportive of REDD schemes, but this was completely overturned by the other participants of the forest working group (Building Bridges Collective 2010: 31). Working group discussions on the issue of REDD had commenced months before the actual conference, via email lists, and then were consolidated at a pre-conference meeting where 500 representatives from six Bolivian grassroots organisations gathered. The drafts were synthesised by a government appointed moderator before being debated by working groups consisting of interested members of the over 30,000 conference attendees. REDD was completely rejected as a mechanism for effectively reducing deforestation.

This position of REDD is reflected in the Bolivian UNFCCC submission. The submission states categorically that 'we condemn market mechanisms such as REDD'. Instead, the submission calls for developed country parties to establish a multilateral fund-based mechanism to 'provide adequate, predictable and sustained financing' for voluntary and rights-based avoided deforestation strategies (Plurinational State of Bolivia 2010). The submission explicitly rejects offset mechanisms and stresses that all measures must 'respect and promote the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' including full recognition and implementation of the UNDRIP. The proposal is based on the language of 'carbon debt' following on from the 2009 Bolivian government proposal to the UN to use climate debt as an alternative mechanism for setting both emissions reduction targets and

compensation levels from Northern to Southern countries (Navarro, 2009). For the Indigenous groups present at Cochabamba, the demands shifted from 'no rights, no REDD' to 'rights before REDD', effectively grounding land rights as the key issue in the terrain of struggle. Post Cochabamba, the terminology of REDD for the climate justice movement no longer refers to a range of forest climate mitigation strategies, but the term REDD has become synonymous with the inclusion of avoided deforestation in international carbon trading markets. The movement feels that a new vocabulary needs to be created to talk about positive approaches for much needed forest/carbon solutions.

The Bolivian submission translates climate justice demands into the official UNFCCC language and vocabulary, which facilitates the engagement of climate justice demands in that process. To many, the endorsement and adoption of climate justice agenda and methodology by the Bolivian government is a significant step in the maturation of the movement. However, the role of Bolivia seeking to engage an autonomous movement has also highlighted tensions between aspects of the climate justice movements that come from an anti-authoritarian and anti-state perspective¹⁰ and those that are more pragmatically engaging with the statist framework. This more pragmatic engagement leads to proposals such as fund-based schemes for deforestation which will be administered by nation states or multilateral institutions. Other tendencies within the climate justice movement are highly critical of the states and multilateral institutions that would administer these funds, because of their flawed past and present approaches to dealing with deforestation, and with state accountability more generally. The Bolivian agreement also both assumes and proposes a model whereby social movement are engaged, even embedded within the state, an engagement which is reflected, not unproblematically, in current Bolivian political practice. As such it presents a challenge to the climate justice movement globally about maintaining its autonomy whilst working collaboratively with state allies.

There have been two threads to climate justice post-Cochabamba approaches to UNFCCC engagement. One response, in support of the Bolivian submission, represents a politics of continued engagement with

¹⁰ See Building Bridges Collective (2010) and Mueller (2010).

UNFCCC processes and the desire to bring the language of climate justice to those official spaces. The alternative response, grounded in reflections on the development of a UNFCCC mechanism to deal with deforestation, has led some other parts of the movement to question not only the outcomes of these negotiations, but the negotiations themselves. Groups and communities that have campaigned for decades against deforestation, whether that was through international legal processes such as the UNFCCC or through direct, community or nationally-based action, are now quite openly hostile to the REDD mechanism that once seemed to provide an opportunity to recognise the value of forests.¹¹ Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities have long valued forests and developed ways of existing sustainably within and around forests, but recognise that these conceptions of value are not reflected within the constraints of a deeply neo-liberalised UN.

Ideas of Power and Politics

These tensions between engagement and non-engagement with UN institutional processes are acute. These debates represent a change in thinking about the relationship to institutions in the global movements. As climate justice activist Tadzio Mueller (2010) says: ‘Where a crass anti-institutionalism used to reign in the alter-globalisation movements – which, to be clear, was entirely appropriate to the situation, as the international financial institutions are one which lack any democratic legitimacy – today we encounter openness, questions, and new connections’. We suggest that these tensions illustrate that the movements for climate justice need to be multifaceted and multi-scaled and, similarly, to conceptualise power as multifaceted and multi-scaled.

For the climate justice movement, engagement with the UNFCCC is a resistance campaign mounted to prevent the most damaging mechanisms and policies from being endorsed and implemented. This is a resistance campaign that we are at best managing to stall the progression of policy, which allows space for alternatives such as the carbon debt proposal tabled by the Bolivian government to be heard and gain support.

¹¹ See for example WALHI's position expressed in Mann and Surya (2009). WALHI is the largest Indonesian environmental NGO and have been campaigning on deforestation, illegal logging and palm oil expansion for over a decade.

Organisations like the Third World Network are working with the Group of 77 and China, and elements of Climate Justice Now! are working with the African Block and ALBA nations, to shift the power dynamic within the negotiations. The ambition is to consolidate Southern nations as a powerful negotiating block that will not be the victim of institutionalised bullying masked by the seemingly harmless face of international diplomacy. This work is incredibly slow, requiring painful attention to detail. It is also necessary to prevent an international climate change agreement that legitimizes continued systemic inequality and expansion of markets that privatise and commodify public goods. While some will dismiss this as being abstract idealism, in real terms it means that people lose legal rights and ownership over land and resources that are vital to their self-determination and survival. For as long as the UNFCCC exists, this work is necessary.

However, by engaging in the UN we are forced to operate within their language, their paradigm, their vision of solutions that is completely dominated by “national interest” rather than international justice and human rights. National interest across the globe, but particularly in the Global North, justifies the perpetuation of the economic growth paradigm at the behest of the lobby force of the fossil fuel and heavy industry, and this now also includes the carbon trading and agro-industry. Resistance campaigning within the UNFCCC is a very difficult campaign strategy, where it is easy to lose sight of the long term goals as day to day activists become mired in UNFCCC-isms and what has been, and particularly in the lead up to Copenhagen, a seemingly endless negotiating process. We have largely found our involvement in the UNFCCC disempowering and demoralising because the UNFCCC continues to operate in a seemingly parallel universe.

Conceptualising 'resistance politics' in the UNFCCC as the sole terrain of struggle available to the climate justice movement is based on an impoverished concept of 'power'. A concept of power 'as something which a small minority (the "powerful") "have" and that others (the "powerless") "lack" dictates that participation in such projects is the only way that they will exert influence' and draws NGOs and other groups to participate in institutions whose framework and whose vocabulary necessarily limits social movement demands. Moreover, as Hildyard *et al.* (1997) argue, such a have/have not conception of power gives rise to a limited view of politics:

On this view, politics consists of the comings and goings of "the powerful" and has little or nothing to do with the everyday actions and interactions of ordinary people. What goes on in the household or in the workplace is of relevance only if it prompts discussion within the "corridors of power" where the "real world" is to be found. And it is only by entering into that "real world" that social movements have any real hope of achieving change. Within that framework, "ordinary" people seeking to address an injustice have a limited number of options available to them (Hildyard *et al.* 1997).

They argue that strategies of 'speaking truth to power' in an attempt to influence decision making within institutional structures, 'rarely achieve more than small incremental change' whilst running the 'risk of reproducing the very structures of power.' More fundamentally, Hildyard *et al.* point out that such a 'have/have not' conception of power is inadequate, and ironically a conception 'to which the "powerful" have never subscribed'. They highlight that:

Industry and governments, for example, reveal a persistent and pragmatic preoccupation with grassroots resistance and the opinions of ordinary people. While they are also concerned to win over members of the public, fear of the irate crowd is never far from its collective mind. Never taking its power for granted, the last thing that they assume is that the rest of us are "powerless". On the contrary, they are acutely aware of having to act against a constant background of opposition and of the need to manage that opposition.

This recognition of the power in localised and grounded climate adaptation and mitigation strategies as well as localised resistances to the neo-liberal agenda, we suggest, is crucial to the future directions of the climate justice movement. So, to date, the power of these alternative climate justice spaces to instigate global system transformation is marginal, yet it is the space where the climate justice movement determines its own language and agenda.

This ability for the movement to articulate its own positions and to develop its own vocabulary is one of the key achievements of the Cochabamba conference. However, the 'official' response from Cochabamba, to channel the Conference's climate justice position into Bolivia's UNFCCC submission with the aim of influencing UNFCCC to

become more climate justice and less market-orientated, still assumes the movement can only be successful through engaging with these spaces.

There are also spaces outside of the UNFCCC, in the horizontal relationships of solidarity between localised grassroots resistance to the carbon market, to fossil fuel extraction and to deforestation, where the climate justice movement can focus. Such resistance struggles are literally everywhere in the Global South because, in the absence of formalised agreement on the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, the overwhelming support for market-based mechanisms is already fuelling speculation of future carbon commodities, notably forested lands across the Global South. The impact of this is already felt in parts of the world with the forced displacement of forest communities in Africa and fraudulent triple-allocation of forests in logging licences and voluntary carbon credits in Asia. So it is equally if not more necessary that the climate justice fight includes protection of these invaluable social and ecological resources and the environmental and human rights of the communities that 'own' them. These resistance struggles require the solidarity of the global climate justice movement. It is an absolutely vital space to build understanding and solidarity for each of these localised struggles, and to affirm the global climate justice agenda in which our localised struggles and campaigns can sit. In short these are the spaces where we learn how to be a movement.

Conclusion

Transnational solidarity between situated resistance struggles provides a hopeful avenue for future climate justice movement development. Climate justice has always had its roots in the local manifestations of the systemic inequity that has resulted in climate change and, as such, is nothing other than local resistance, resilience building and transformation, created in the unique cultural, political context but tied to the common global articulation of the need for transformation. If part of the paradigm shift is decentralisation, we need sovereignty building at all facets of life at the local level. This is called 'peoples sovereignty' and, in its simplest form, means that all peoples have the right to determine their sustainable use of resources around them to live a dignified life. It is inexorably about democracy. It is about understanding our local campaigns and struggles as part of a wider global systemic movement,

and recognising that our success is bound to that of other localised campaigns and struggles for energy, land, water and food sovereignty.

If we think that climate change, and more significantly climate justice, necessitates global systemic transformation, then our localised campaigning must be embedded in that international climate justice transformation agenda, be multi-scaled but founded by grassroots and localised solutions. To continue to build the climate justice movement we have to take these shared international climate justice agenda (principles, understanding, commitment to global systemic change) to synergise the localised campaigning. Instead of having numerous small bright stars of resilience and transformation dotted in isolation across the earth, we have a decentralised grassroots global transformation. It is in networking and co-ordinating between these localised struggles and localised alternatives that we see great potential for a global climate justice movement. The struggle for climate justice needs to engage both at the global and the local scale. The globalisation of these local struggles into a common movement, acting in solidarity, holds great promise for climate justice grounded in principles of autonomy and self-determination.

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