Abstract

The climate change movement in the Global North developed after years of scientific evidence accumulated on the topic. Even in those early years, however, it was members of environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) who ensured that policymakers would begin to act. As politicians around the globe became interested in addressing the problem, ENGOs and activists worked to push their national delegations to increase their commitments to reduce emissions. This was particularly true during the COPs, which also featured protests outside the conventions by those who demanded more action and those calling for climate justice. Climate justice was a call by the Global South and solidarity activists for equity, sustainability, and development in any policies as the international consensus around managing climate change included what climate justice activists called "false solutions" – policies that benefit corporations and do little to reduce the extraction of fossil fuels. Therefore, climate justice activists became increasingly hostile toward the COPs, which resulted in increased mobilization and non-violent civil disobedience. In addition to international campaigning, local and national activists mobilized their efforts to impact community and policy changes. This chapter explores some of those campaigns.

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Climate change movements in the Global North

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Introduction

The climate change movement, similar to the environmental movement as a whole, as pointed out in the introduction to this *Handbook,* is a heterogenous network of formal organizations, informal groups, and individuals working to address the issue of global warming and its various effects, caused by greenhouse gas emissions. The movement consists of organizations and campaigns that focus on a broad range of prognoses and diagnoses of climate change, often coming together to mount pressure on government and corporate actors.

The establishment of a climate change movement was gradual. When the scientific community first began seriously debating climate change, the complexity of the issue delayed activism. Scientific consensus began to form years prior to the first efforts of social movement actors to tackle the issue. However, it was partially the work of some environmentalists that led to the issue becoming a matter of political discussion, although this was not enough to secure much early action on the part of states. Even after the issue became a key topic among environmental scientists and an international summit was established to work toward a climate treaty, many environmental organizations ignored the issue due to its global scale and delayed effects. Despite the limited role activists played in these early years, it can be argued that prior activism – from the student movement to the environmental movement – created a “cognitive

praxis" to enable climate change to eventually become an issue political actors and the public could conceptualize and understand.

Later, in a context in which early political negotiations on climate change were often hampered by the United States and the United Kingdom, and the general public was becoming increasingly aware of the issue, environmental organizations began mobilizing around climate change. Environmentalists mobilized public concern and used their own expertise to push policymakers to increase their pledges during negotiations. The international negotiations, known as Conferences of the Parties (COPs), highlighted divisions among movement organizations concerning their stance on equity between the developed and greenhouse gas–emitting countries in the Global North and those in the Global South. "Climate justice" became the term used for advocating for the serious incorporation of the concerns of less-developed countries and their populations. Climate justice activists formed their own network due to their differences with other members of the climate change movement.

In addition to campaigns at the international level, which often targeted the sites of negotiations and increasingly included acts of civil disobedience and other forms of protest, climate change campaigns and organizations also addressed the policies and practices of the governments and populations of individual countries. In the case of Friends of the Earth and the UK, for example, such mobilization and the availability of dynamic political opportunities led to the enactment of the Climate Change Act 2008. In other cases, localized mobilization around climate change often focused on material sites of ongoing or growing greenhouse gas emissions, such as the Keystone XL oil pipeline and Heathrow Airport. More recently, there has been an upsurge in climate protests led by young, school-aged children and civil disobedience–oriented protesters, whose framing of the issue focuses on reshaping the future and avoiding extinction. This chapter expands on this very brief history of the different aspects of the climate change movement, with a focus on campaigns in the Global North.

Climate change as a political issue

Concerns about greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels, had been a topic of scientific debate for decades prior to mobilization on the issue (see Soroos, 2002; Zillman, 2009). Climate change featured as a minor component in wider investigations into environmental concerns and policy with government-backed research units helping further the scientific knowledge of global warming. By 1979, climate change became an issue pressing enough to demand a global scientific summit, the World Climate Conference, which was held in Geneva.

Indeed, a few months after the Conference, climate change became an international political issue, but not as one may have expected. Just one month after taking office, the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher, attended the G7 Summit in Tokyo. On the eve of the summit, Thatcher remarked that "[we] should also be worried about the effect of constantly burning more coal and oil because that can create a band of carbon dioxide round the earth which could itself have very damaging ecological effects" (Moore, 2013: 448). Evidently, the issue was raised during the G7 meeting, as was acknowledged in the Summit Declaration (Nulman, 2015: 10), but it only formed a small part of the discussion, which was primary concerned with the increased price of oil, thus leading to a decision to reduce oil imports across the countries and to replace them with other sources. Ironically, the primary source of energy being advocated was coal.

It would take more than 10 years after the first World Climate Conference before an international conference working toward a treaty on climate change took place. This conference, the Second Climate Conference, was held in Geneva in the fall of 1990. In the decade in between, movement organizations had a mixed record in placing climate change on the agenda. Rafe Pomerance of Friends of the Earth was one of the first movement entrepreneurs on the issue, first bringing the issue to the attention of policymakers (see Rich, 2019: 13–14; Weart 2020) and later testifying before the US House Committee on Science and Technology that

government must act by funding further research, protecting low-lying coastal areas, and promoting energy efficiency and conservation (Pomerance, 1984 [2017]: 141–144).

However, most environmental movement organizations at that time failed to incorporate climate change into their activist work. The issue was daunting in scale and lacked the immediate impact that generated the publicity and public outrage of "backyard" issues such as Love Canal or Three Mile Island. For Friends of the Earth in the US, climate change's "insubstantiality made it difficult to rally the older activists" (Rich, 2019: 98). For the Sierra Club, the criteria of international campaigns were achievable goals around "clear and discrete" problems with regulatory solutions and increased public interest, as opposed to issues that were "too exotic" or "overly technical" (McCloskey, 1982 [2017]: 121–122). This left out climate change at that time. Pomerance himself left Friends of the Earth due to issues of making climate change an area of importance for the organization (Rich, 2019: 98). The pressures on environmental organizations in the US caused by the Reagan administration's destruction of environmental gains made climate change a second-tier issue.

While those early years of mild climate change activism played a small but important role in the politicization of the issue, some have argued that movements had made it cognitively easier to engage politicians and the public with the message of climate change that has since become well understood and accepted. Jamison (2010) argues that movements helped shape the context and knowledge base by which scientists and others were able to communicate their concerns about the climate. The environmental movement of the 1970s developed a "cognitive praxis" of holism that allowed for the systematic thinking needed to connect fossil fuel burning with future climate events and changes. Cognitive praxis is the interpretive framework developed by, used within, and espoused through social movements (Eyerman and Jameson, 1998: 19), and the modern environmental movement itself was arguably developed through the cognitive praxis of the student movements of the 1960s, which provided a space for critiquing the misuses of science and technology (Jamison, 2004: 67). Thus, movements facilitated climate science reaching the general public through the shared understanding of interconnectedness and the

importance of the natural world. Beyond the cognitive framework, the networks, resources, and skills of movement organizations and activists helped facilitate the dissemination of scientific knowledge regarding climate change to the public and to policymakers (see, e.g., Rich, 2019).

Early international climate change negotiations and activism

In 1988, the Canadian government sponsored the World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere, which attracted delegates from nearly 50 countries. The event called for the establishment of an international framework to deal with the issue alongside greater research and monitoring of climate change (Soroos, 2002: 126; Zillman, 2009). It closed with a call for a comprehensive and holistic international solution. The following year, an event to create a framework on "the law of the atmosphere" addressing climate change, along with acid rain and ozone depletion (Bodansky, 1994: 53), failed to come to a resolution because of the lack of US support (Macdonald and Smith, 1999–2000: 110). The US preferred to have more scientific evidence before entering negotiations (Bodansky, 1994: 54), though they later changed their position following pressure from other countries.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the UN in 1988 and tasked to

> prepare a comprehensive review and recommendations with respect to the state of knowledge of the science of climate change; the social and economic impact of climate change, and potential response strategies and elements for inclusion in a possible future international convention on climate.
>
> (Hecht, 2018: 102)

This was less powerful than the proposed global environmental organization backed by the International Court of Justice and a result of political maneuvering by the US and UK (Cass, 2006: 24–26).

From the public perspective, by January 1989, climate change was making headlines. *TIME* magazine had a "planet of the year" issue featuring an article on climate change (Lemonick, 1989; Dessler and Parson, 2010: 23–24), and opinion polls were showing that climate change had become an important public concern (Weart, 2004: 116–117). It was at this point that a social movement began to mobilize around the issue.

In 1989, dozens of environmental organizations met in Hanover, Germany, to discuss climate change (Weart, 2011: 72) and coordinate lobbying efforts for the Second World Climate Conference that would take place the following year (Lipschutz and McKendry, 2011: 375). With the lead from Greenpeace International and the Environmental Defense Fund, the meeting resulted in the establishment of a coordinated network called Climate Action Network (CAN) (Weart, 2011: 72). The network started off with 63 environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) from 22 countries in the Global North (Newell, 2000, 126; Rahman and Annie, 1994: 246) and was a body by which these organizations could discuss policy positions, share strategies, and develop common platforms to achieve the goal "to keep global warming as below 2°C as possible" (Lipschutz and McKendry, 2011: 375).

Attempts at lobbying policymakers to establish a strong framework for action at the Second World Climate Conference was not particularly successful. Intense debate among delegations led to the Ministerial Declaration failing to assign any specific targets, leaving only broad principles of equity and sustainability. A framework treaty was delayed until 1992, when national delegations would meet for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the Earth Summit (Nulman, 2015: 13–15).

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INC) was established by the UN General Assembly and tasked with holding meetings prior to the Earth Summit to prepare the framework that was due to be discussed. In preparation,

NGOs prepared draft texts that could be agreed on as the basis of negotiation (Bodansky, 1994: 62). At the INC meetings themselves, ENGO were formally incorporated in the process through a platform for NGOs to make a single, collective statement to the delegations (INC, 1991: 11), despite their internal disagreements (Rahman and Annie, 1994: 251–252).

Ultimately, NGOs were only given a symbolic role in the formal negotiations (Faulkner, 1994: 231), and even the draft texts provided by the NGOs prior to the meeting failed to result in a negotiating text being adopted (Bodansky, 1994: 62). Thus, NGOs had to do most of the work behind the scenes. Individual ENGOs attempted to influence the meetings by communicating with policymakers who were keen to speak with organizations that had expertise on the issue due to the scientific complexity of climate change (see Rahman and Annie, 1994: 251). In the end, this proved somewhat useful as "the most controversial issues were not even brought to the main forum of negotiations after consultations between the delegates and the NGOs" (ibid.).

CAN also attempted to influence the meetings through the publication of *ECO*, a daily newsletter that summarized the debates taking place and made suggestions from the perspective of the NGOs (ibid.: 249). *ECO* has been sustained throughout each year's negotiations and was "the most widely read source of information on the negotiations" (Dowdeswell and Kinley, 1994: 129; see also Betsill, 2008). Outside these formal spaces of negotiations, ENGOs were bringing climate change to the attention of the public, with Greenpeace publishing the book *Global Warming: The Greenpeace Report* and Friends of the Earth raising awareness through local groups across countries (Rahman and Annie, 1994: 245).

NGOs were pushing for commitments for rapid, effective, and meaningful reductions of greenhouse gases and that these commitments should be made by developed countries who had historically produced emissions. The latter demand seemed firmly rooted into the framework, but the former was rejected by the US and UK delegations, leading to an INC that was weak. In addition, flexibility mechanisms, which allow countries to offset emissions using carbon sinks such as forests or through investing in greenhouse gas–reduction projects in other countries, were

included in the INC (ibid: 266–269), though not all ENGOs were opposed to this, such as CAN Europe, a regional subnetwork of CAN (Chasek et al., 1998: 12).

The arms-length treatment of NGOs continued in the Earth Summit, an international conference that was meant to lead to government action on the issue of climate change. The Summit included 172 countries, over 115 heads of state or government, 9,000 members of the press, and thousands of NGOs (Adams, 2001: 80). The UNCED Secretariat helped organize a gathering of non-governmental organizations alongside the Summit, known as the Global Forum. The Forum "was a mixture of extensive NGO networking, street fair, trade show, political demonstration, and general events" (Parson et al., 2010). Here, 18,000 people participated in what some referred to as a counter-summit because, while it may have been helpful in coordinating NGO responses or generating publicity for the issue, it also served to remove the NGOs from the formal conference of government delegations where the real negotiations were taking place. This was not just a symbolic separation but a physical one as the Global Forum was established over 20 miles away from the Earth Summit (Nulman, 2015: 14; Parson et al., 2010).

The Earth Summit became the vehicle for countries to sign up to the UNFCCC, which only included a general commitment to stabilize emissions at 1990 levels by 2000. The general commitment was not specific enough to make the Convention legally binding, again a product of US disagreement (Little, 1995). Nevertheless, the UNFCCC provided the framework for negotiating stronger commitments in the future.

Conference of the Parties

Following the Earth Summit, a series of negotiations to create a legislative framework that would prevent or reduce global warming was announced. These were the Conferences of the Parties, with the first conference (COP1) taking place in Berlin in 1995. There, many ENGOs supported the position of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which advanced a draft protocol calling on certain rich and middle-income countries to cut CO_2 emissions to 20% below 1990

levels by 2005 (Nulman, 2015: 15). Enough countries disagreed with the proposal that the NGOs had to sit down alongside a group of 72 countries to redraft the policy known as the Green Paper. In the end, however, the influence of key states and their opposition to making significant changes in their emissions, especially in an asymmetric way relative to their political opponents, overshadowed the work of the NGOs. They decried the final outcome, the Berlin Mandate, as "'soft' at best" (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, n.d.).

In an attempt to increase their impact at the COPs, environmental organizations and other NGOs formed into networks such as the KILMAFORUM '95 during COP1 and the Kiko Forum organized for COP3 in Kyoto, Japan. These networks facilitated communication between the NGOs as well as communicating to the general public, especially via the news media (Muller-Kreanner, n.d.). The Kiko Forum was initiated a year before COP3 and grew from a network of 46 organizations to 225 by the time of the negotiations. This network organized demonstrations, a petition, and hundreds of public workshops. NGO participation in the Kyoto Protocol was dominated by ENGOs from the Global North, with large delegations from some of the largest ENGOs such as World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth (Betsill, 2008: 46). Many ENGOs continued to coordinate their efforts under the CAN umbrella, which regionalized its collective lobbying efforts into eight sections: Africa, Australia, Central and Eastern Europe, Europe/United Kingdom, Latin America, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the United States/Canada. As a network, CAN had four objectives for an agreement made at COP3: reducing greenhouse gas emissions 20% below 1990 levels by 2005 for industrialized countries, strong review and compliance mechanisms, not including emissions trading as a mechanism to meeting reduction commitments, and not including sinks that absorb emissions to offset reductions (ibid: 46–47).

As access to the negotiations for ENGOs was limited, some had to engage in subterfuge to try to achieve these results. There are reports of searching through rubbish bins to find documents and lurking in hallways to overhear the conversations of delegates (ibid: 47–49).

What leverage the ENGOs did have largely came from their expertise on the issue while government delegates had little specific knowledge.

The COP3 negotiations led to the creation of the Kyoto Protocol, a compromise position between the US and the EU that was only arrived at in the final hours of an additional, unscheduled day of negotiations (ibid: 45). The Protocol's first commitment was an aggregate 5.2% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (based on 1990 levels) by 2012, with individual targets for each country. This was a far cry from what CAN had called for when they supported a 20% reduction by 2005 as outlined in the AOSIS proposal. Largely, ENGOs failed to influence the overall outcome of the negotiations but did have some impact on the positions taken by certain national delegations (Rahman and Annie, 1994; Corell and Betsill, 2001: 98; Betsill, 2008: 60–61).

The Kyoto Protocol only came into effect in 2005 after being ratified by Russia in the last months of 2004. Organizations such as the WWF and Greenpeace worked hard to push for Russia to ratify, but the decision was only made after substantial political concessions were granted by the international community (Tipton, 2008; Henry and Sundstrom, 2007). By 2007, the Protocol was already looking weak as Japan and Canada both expressed concerns about the targets. NGOs began to address these concerns and provide these countries with the political motivations to stay in the agreement. In addition, new climate movement organizations and networks, such as the Global Call for Climate Action (TckTckTck) and the Climate Justice Network, formed (Nulman, 2015: 18–19).

Every year's international negotiations were met with protests of some form or another calling for greater action to be taken and to remove aspects of the policy that activists believed were commodifying the environment or preventing real decarbonization from occurring. Following the Kyoto Protocol, which set emissions targets through 2012, these protests increased, particularly as the next wave of negotiations was cooling to the idea of significant targets, and some countries were failing to meet their targets set in the Kyoto Protocol. The next step beyond Kyoto was to be discussed at COP15 in Copenhagen. These decisions were meant to

provide commitments for the period following 2012, and activists geared up to impact the negotiations. Between 20,000 and 30,000 NGO observers participated in the COP, the largest number of any Conference of the Parties to date (Fisher, 2010: 12; also see Climate Action Network, 2009b). Even more people gathered outside the negotiations to demonstrate the lack of progress on mitigating climate change. Between 60,000 and 100,000 protesters demonstrated for "system change, not climate change" (Nulman, 2015: 20), putting pressure on the NGO observers inside the negotiations, with Friends of the Earth International, Avaaz, and TckTckTck having their observer statuses revoked (Fisher, 2010: 15). Some have argued that the mobilization outside the hall was central to the passage of the Copenhagen Accord (Rietig, 2011), which, while still deemed weak by many, was stronger than nothing.

The Copenhagen Accord was a non-binding statement endorsing a continuation of the Kyoto Protocol, acknowledging the importance of preventing an increase in global temperatures of 2° Celsius and agreeing to establish new emission targets at a later date, failing to set out targets itself. While protest efforts had waned until 2015, large NGOs continued to attend the COPs to push for change. Progress was slow, and commitments were weak. Wealthy countries had even failed to provide poor countries with the funding to adapt to climate change at COP19 in 2013, provoking NGOs such as WWF, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace to walk out of the conference (Nulman, 2015: 20).

The next set of targets were set to be agreed at COP 21 in Paris in 2015. Two weeks prior to the conference, terrorist attacks occurred in Paris, causing martial law to be imposed on the city and a state of emergency ban on demonstrations. Climate movement organizations had been planning to make the demonstrations in Paris the largest ever for any COP, expecting 200,000 participants. Despite the restrictions, thousands still participated in physical and symbolic protests such as covering the area where marchers were to demonstrate with more than 20,000 shoes (Orr, 2016: 26)

Climate justice

The early phases of international negotiations to deal with climate change featured a division across national delegations that was to some extent replicated across NGOs. Specifically, NGOs and delegates from the Global North differed in their approach to addressing the problem relative to their Global South counterparts. For those in the Global South, equity, sustainability, and development were all crucial components of the conversation around climate change. Countries in the Global North had been historically the ones emitting the most greenhouse gases; their populations continue to contribute a larger proportion of greenhouse gas emissions per capita through their lifestyles and consumption patterns; in addition, countries in the Global North have more wealth to offset the damage done by climate change. This tension was noticeable during INC meetings where NGOs from the Global South, although under-represented in the process, pushed for initiatives around global equity – arguing against the concept of joint implementation, against the proposed financial mechanism for the subsequent treaty, and in favor of per capita entitlements (for more, see Rahman and Annie, 1994). The voices that were calling for such a just transition rooted in equity labelled this perspective "climate justice".

Further differences emerged in 1997 when the first international network on climate change, Climate Action Network, advocated the "minor, incremental emissions reductions augmented by carbon trading related offsets" (Bond, 2011). Climate justice activists were making much stronger demands, such as calls for 50% greenhouse gas emissions cuts by 2020, and opposed carbon trading (Bond, 2011). It was not only NGOs from the Global South that took the climate justice position. For example, the US-based organization CorpWatch was also an early climate justice organization. Established in 1996 to address issues of corporate accountability, the organization published a report entitled "Greenhouse Gangsters vs. Climate Justice", in which they defined climate justice as "holding fossil fuel corporations accountable for the central role they play in contributing to global warming" using solutions that would not "fall hardest on low income communities, communities of color, or the workers" (Bruno et al.,

1999: 3). This was one of the first acknowledged uses of the concept, and it followed from the idea of the environmental justice movement that looked at the intersections between environmental problems and inequalities (Tokar, 2013). For CorpWatch, corporations and the elites proposed "false solutions" to the climate change problem.

In 2000, the year after they published that report, CorpWatch and other organizations from around the world converged at the first Climate Justice Summit, which coincided with the COP6 held in The Hague (Warlenius, 2018: 36), demonstrating how wide ranging and well networked the movement had become. Approximately 500 activists from around the world participated in that Summit (Chawla, 2009). Discussions were held by the climate justice activists, but the Climate Justice Summit also enabled protests, which occurred inside and outside the official negotiations. Having presented fake conference passes, some activists stormed into a closed negotiating session. Others, equipped with a banner reading "Carbon Trading: Profits ✓ Progress X", got into the main conference area and put the banner on display for all the delegates to see. Two women even entered a press conference with a lead US negotiator and threw a cream pie in his face (Whitehead, 2014; Loong, 2000). Meanwhile, inside the negotiations, other NGOs such as WWF, Greenpeace International, and Climate Action Network South Asia distanced themselves from these actions as they were busy trying to assert whatever political capital they had to affect the final wording of policy documents and delegation positions (Loong, 2000: 19). That summit in 2000 "was a turning point for [climate justice's] prominence in the climate change movement" (Whitehead, 2014).

CorpWatch was also part of a consortium of 28 environmental, civil rights, and environmental justice organizations based in the United States. These organizations included the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, the Black Leadership Forum, and Communities for a Better Environment. The consortium was called the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative (EJCCI), and in 2001, they developed the "10 Principles for Just Climate Change Policies in the US" (Newton, 2009: 102–103).

1 Stop cooking the planet

2 Protect and empower vulnerable individuals and communities

3 Ensure just transition for workers and communities

4 Require community participation

5 Global problems need global solutions

6 The US must lead

7 Stop exploration for fossil fuels

8 Monitor domestic and international carbon markets

9 Caution in the face of uncertainty

10 Protect future generations

The following year, the United Nations organized a World Summit on Sustainable Development which was held in Johannesburg. Prior to this, they held a final preparatory meeting in Bali, where NGOs also got together and developed the Bali Principles of Climate Justice, which sought to push for climate justice to be incorporated into any international agreement that would be discussed in the World Summit. Crafted by organizations that included CorpWatch, Greenpeace International, Third World Network, and the Indigenous Environmental Network (Pezzullo and Cox, 2018: 292), the Bali Principles of Climate Justice echoed the Environmental Justice Principles that were developed in 1991 at the People of Color Environmental Justice Leadership Summit in Washington, DC, and transposed them onto issues of climate change. The Bali Principles further articulated the meaning of climate justice by specifically affirming Indigenous rights and democratic responsibilities of states and curtailing corporate power within the context of policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Bali Principles also brought up the notion of the ecological debt that was owed by the Global North and transnational corporations to the Global South. This was the debt of benefiting from the environmental

destruction that has negatively impacted the Global South. Some have argued that the Bali Principles of Climate Justice were crucial in reframing climate change for the general public from an issue that was purely scientific and technical to one that was rooted in human rights and ethics (Agyeman et al., 2007: 119). The Bali Principles of Climate Justice were adopted at the 2002 Earth Summit and endorsed by 14 organizations from different parts of the world. The introduction to the document called on the international community to participate in the Climate Justice Summit held in New Delhi in parallel with the COP8 meeting.

At COP8, details of the Kyoto Protocol were being negotiated at the UNFCCC, and activists organized a coalition of groups under the umbrella Indian Climate Justice Forum. This was a space not just for development and environmental organizations, but for ordinary men and women in India to have their voices heard. In total, the Forum had over 1,500 participants from over 20 countries and 17 states in India. Protests were organized, including the largest climate justice protest in history up to that point, which, despite being unpermitted, included more than 5,000 demonstrators (Khastagir, 2002).

At the end of COP8, no new emissions reductions were proposed, but the conference ended with the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, which meagerly stated that “Parties have a right to, and should, promote sustainable development”. The movement countered this declaration with one of their own. The Delhi Climate Justice Declaration placed the poor and marginalized at the front and center while rejecting market-based approaches, concluding with the line “Our World is Not for Sale!”

Campaigns for local and national climate change policies

While some organizations campaigned for greater efforts to be made in curbing climate change and making a more just transition within the international negotiations, others were working hard to influence national and local policies. To explore this further, we will take the campaigns in the

United Kingdom as examples. In the UK, local campaigns included attempts at stopping an airport expansion, getting organizations to divest from fossil fuel companies, and forcing policy makers to enact their own emissions targets above and beyond those demanded through international negotiations.

One campaign by the climate change movement in the UK included involvement in a local struggle against airport expansion. Heathrow Airport, the largest airport in the country, was looking to expand by adding a third runway. Due to a range of concerns including aviation emissions, national organizations and local groups formed a network to campaign to stop the expansion project, which would have made Heathrow Airport the single largest greenhouse gas emitter in the UK (Nulman, 2015: 33). Local activists against noise pollution were joined by direct action–oriented climate change protesters, and while the different segments did not always see eye to eye, working together helped bridge the ideological gaps between the more anti-capitalist climate campaigners and the local community. By taking advantage of dynamic political opportunities, together, the campaigners were successfully able to fend off the Conservative-led government from approving the airport's expansion (Nulman, 2015), at least at the time of writing.

A divestment campaign was created by 350.org and others who came together to form a campaigning organization called Fossil Free, which began by pressuring local government pension funds to freeze any new investments into fossil fuels and divest from fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds. In 2015, two national Friends of the Earth groups, Platform, 350.org, and Community Reinvest joined forces to produce a report that detailed how such UK pension schemes were funding the fossil fuel industry. The report noted that £14 billion of local government pension funds were being invested in fossil fuel corporations, and it called on councils to divest from these companies and reinvest in renewable energy, public transport, and social housing. Along with local activist groups, Fossil Free was able to use protests, petitions, and publicity to get the Environment Agency Pension Fund, the Waltham Forest Pension Fund,

and the South Yorkshire Pension Fund to announce their divestment plans within two years of the report being published (Lander, 2017: 9).

Before Fossil Fuel was pushing businesses and local councils to divest, Friends of the Earth had launched a campaign to get the UK government to push through national legislation calling on 80% emissions reductions in the UK by 2050. This campaign was known as the Big Ask Campaign, and Friends of the Earth called on its local groups to campaign on the issue while on the national level, the organization lobbied the main political parties, pushing them to a adopt the policy. Activists on the ground were asked to get members of the public to sign postcards calling on their Member of Parliament to sign up to support the policy. Their campaign coincided with an attempt by the center-right Conservative Party, under the leadership of David Cameron, to rebrand away from its "nasty party" image by adopting green positions. The public pressure and the political expedience led the Conservative Party to adopt the climate change policy, generating political competition on the issue. Soon, the Labour government was pressured into adopting the legislation so as not to be outflanked by the traditionally less environmentally friendly Conservatives. The Big Ask campaign featured protests, petitions, and publicity stunts in which other campaigning groups, including a network of over 100 organizations called Stop Climate Chaos, participated. The campaign was also supported by a number of environmentally conscious Members of Parliament as well as celebrities such as Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke, who became a Friends of the Earth spokesman on the issue (Nulman, 2015).

These examples demonstrate the multi-level and organizational networking and campaigning that occurs within the climate movement. From the local to the national level, a variety of campaigning groups networked together or supported each other's campaigns to drive reforms in an effort to mitigate climate change.

For larger organizations, their efforts were spread across international-level policy change as well as local and national policy changes. We can look at the WWF as one example that managed to campaign on issues across international and local campaigns. WWF, a conservation organization working in 100 countries with support of over five million members,

could be found in the halls of the UNFCCC, but it was also playing a role in calling for mayors of cities in the US to make changes in their jurisdictions. Together with the ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, the National League of Cities, and the US Green Building Council, they formed the Resilient Communities for America campaign in 2013 (ICLEA, n.d.).

Recent climate mobilization around the world

A relatively recent wave of mobilization around the issue of climate change has hit the world head on in the last few years. From Indigenous communities protecting their lands from the fossil fuel industry to global strikes by students worried about the world they will inherit to campaigns recognizing that climate change may lead to extinction, movements have mobilized, particularly due to the failures of international negotiations and stagnant policy change.

In 2016 in the United States, following the precedent of the XL Pipeline protests of 2012, environmental and Indigenous activists gathered at camps near a location where a crude oil transport was being constructed, known as the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). Thousands had gathered to demonstrate against the risks of the pipeline to the health of the nearby Indigenous communities, the destruction of their land, and the continuation of the use of fossil fuels. The #NoDAPL movement had to withstand brutal treatment from private security and generated enough pressure to force President Obama and his administration to delay the project in order to undertake an impact assessment, leading to further delays that some perceived would financially ruin the project. A decision was made not to allow the project to continue on the route originally planned, but that decision was reversed soon after Donald Trump took office (see Whyte, 2017), providing further evidence of the importance of dynamic political opportunities for such victories.

In 2018, a 15-year-old Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg, refused to go to school until the Swedish general elections as a protest of climate inaction. This triggered others to join her, leading to school strikes that spread across many countries. A day of climate strikes by school-

aged children was declared for 15 March 2019, and on that day, an estimated 1.6 million students across over 120 countries went on strike from school in protest. These strikes sometimes became regular occurrences, when students would either leave early or not attend school on Friday in support of the strikes, often gathering together to hold demonstrations. These became referred to as Fridays for Future or Climate Strikes (Jung et al., 2020).

In 2018 in the United Kingdom, activists formed an organization called Extinction Rebellion (XR), which framed the issue of climate change as leading to human extinction and thereby called on people to engage in non-violent civil disobedience that would lead to arrests in an attempt to force policy change before it was too late. In particular, the organization called on the government to act by communicating the urgency of the ecological emergency, reaching net-zero emissions by 2025, and following the decisions of a government-created Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice.

Local XR chapters were formed, and within them, small affinity groups of activists were organized to take actions of civil disobedience that would create enough disruption to push through policy change. Mass actions were planned on strategic days when people could be mobilized for substantial amounts of time, and demonstrations were planned primarily in London, where they would have the most strategic disruptive impact on government and businesses while also providing the news media an easy opportunity to cover the action. These protests, coupled with the Climate Strikes, pushed the UK government, under the leadership of Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May, to declare a climate emergency, but at the time of writing, the demands of XR have not been met. XR continued to push for their demands during the COVID-19 lockdowns, holding local socially distanced protests.

Conclusion

A movement that was slow to begin mobilizing, in part due to the delayed impacts of climate change, is now acting with urgency to address a potentially existential crisis. Scientists and

activists alike believe policymakers have failed to develop effective national and international mechanisms for curbing greenhouse gas emissions, and data continues to suggest that we have gone past key thresholds that indicate that the world will no longer be in a position to prevent significant harms from climate change. Indeed, when compared with various climate models, our position at the time of writing suggests that we are on the trajectory predicted by the models with more worrying consequences.

In 2009, many climate activists framed the Copenhagen COP as the international community's last chance to mitigate climate change. The mobilization for that conference often framed the prognosis as dire and urgent. Having failed to attain the desired results, that language briefly subsided. The most recent wave of protests reignited the call for urgent action and describes climate change as an extinction-level event. As I write, fires continue to blaze on the West Coast of the United States, having already burned millions of acres, causing air quality to dip to dangerous levels across Oregon, Washington, and California; five tropical cyclones are presently in the Atlantic Ocean at the same time – a phenomenon only recorded once before; a 70-square-kilometer glacier has broken off an ice sheet in Greenland. Activists have increasingly used record-breaking temperatures and extreme weather events to highlight the growing risks that climate change poses, especially as such events are increasing in frequency.

While these events occur, the world is also facing a pandemic, which makes predicting the trajectory of the climate change movement particularly difficult. However, COVID-19 has not prevented climate change protests and widespread civil disobedience from taking place. It is possible that if protest actions continue to grow, they can disincentivize governments in key countries such as the United States from sitting on their hands. This would enable the world to take substantial steps toward minimizing the damage of climate change and working toward adapting to the changes we can no longer prevent.

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