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Emerging Climate Justice Discourse: Perspectives of Grassroots Networks in the UK

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Yulia BARABANOVA

Abstract

This dissertation captures the emerging grassroots' discourse on climate justice as having potential to advance climate politics. The research is motivated by a concern about the intensifying climate crisis and the failure of the dominant climate politics fixated on carbon emissions and market-based logic to provide appropriate solutions. The study explores the discourse of two networks, Camp for Climate Action and Rising Tide, which have taken direct action on climate justice in the UK. To provide an empirically- rich and in-depth account of how grassroots networks conceptualize an alternative climate politics against the backdrop of the dominant discourse, this study adopts the theoretical lenses of post-politics and a multi-scalar justice combined with the methodological framework of critical discourse analysis.

The overarching argument of this dissertation is that grassroots' discourse on climate change reveals a constant struggle between reproduction of and resistance to the dominant discourse. Yet despite the tensions and contradictions, it is contended that it offers directions for an alternative climate politics that prioritizes community rather nation-state approach to climate change. Further, it encompasses multiple scales and sides of justice rather than a singular distributional logic, and seeks to re-socialize economic relations rather than rationalize them through the considerations of profit. It is concluded that such conceptualization constitutes a counter- discourse on climate politics that in many ways transcends the dominant discourse and offers distinctive forms of being, living and acting in common.

Keywords: climate justice, climate activism, grassroots networks, critical discourse analysis

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Introduction: Climate change politics and grassroots networks

Climate change has come to be the most pressing and overriding environmental concern of the 21st century (Ban 2008). Despite scientific controversies and climate skepticism, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) strongly affirmed in 2013 the gravity and human-induced nature of the changes in our climate:

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased [...] It is *extremely likely* that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century (IPCC 2013: 3, 12).

Climate change affects human and non-human populations unequally regardless of national borders, and political, social or economic systems in place. Yet the responses to climate change are often determined by these factors that in turn affect climate politics on various levels. Following Boykoff, climate change politics can be understood as “the management and contestations of policies, through social relations infused with power, authority and varying perspectives. ‘Politics’ involve proposals, ideas, intentions, decisions and behaviours, with a focus on processes that prop up, challenge, lurk behind, support and resist explicit actions” (Boykoff 2009: 3). The dominant politics of climate change rests upon scientific, apocalyptic and neoliberal discourses that foster narrow technological and market-based solutions and fail to address the fundamental issues of justice, equality, democracy and social reproduction (Building Bridges Collective 2010; Bullard and Müller 2012; Dawson 2010; Di Chiro 2008; Parr 2012; Vinthagen 2013). That is why climate politics and its underlying discourses has become the target for global social movement mobilizations under the name of Climate Justice at major official climate change-related events and beyond. By constructing an alternative discourse focused on justice and equality between and within countries, solidarity, commons and well-being, these movements challenge the dominant climate politics and discourses (Featherstone 2013; Smith

and Duncan 2012). The broader aim of their critique is bringing profound changes to society through linking up the causes of the climate, social, economic and financial crises that we are living through and showing the ways for profound social transformation. Therefore, to capture what promises to be a paradigmatic shift in the way we think about and address these interrelated issues, we need to study the discourse and practice of these civic actors, the forerunners of the coming changes. This is exactly what this dissertation sets out to do. To contribute to the growing body of literature on climate justice, I chose to focus on the discourse of two grassroots networks, Rising Tide and Camp for Climate Action, campaigning on climate in the UK. As Harcourt (2012) argues, the face of civic engagement has changed dramatically in the recent years:

Civic action is moving away from institutionalized campaigns and projects of the traditional meta movements. Today's civic action [...] is operating in fluid, much more complex ways of connecting, learning, sharing knowledge and strategic ways to move forward, in place and across places, based on a sense of possibility for new politics, aware that old politics, old economics, need to change (Harcourt 2012: 152).

To find out how grassroots networks approach this new politics, I developed the following overarching research question to guide this study: *How does grassroots discourse on climate justice conceptualize an alternative politics of climate change?* To answer this broad research question, I employ the methodological tools of critical discourse analysis (CDA) discussed in the chapter that follows. Answering this question requires a thorough examination of the particular meanings that grassroots networks attach to the concept of 'climate justice' on the one hand, and their vision on climate politics, on the other. The word 'alternative' in the research question suggests that the examination of grassroots' discourse has to be done in relation to the dominant one. In the context of this dissertation, the dominant discourse is embodied in climate politics of the UNFCCC process, particularly from the perspective of Western liberal democracies. The remainder of this chapter introduces the context in which the discourse of two grassroots networks has been developing, as

well as their key organizing principles. This introduction concludes with a brief outline of the content of subsequent chapters.

1.1 Climate activism in the UK

The broad picture of climate activism in the UK consists of various environmental NGOs (Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, WWF), campaign groups (Campaign against Climate Change, Stop Climate Chaos Coalition), and grassroots networks (Camp for Climate Action, RT, Plane Stupid, Climate Rush, Transition Towns, Tar Sands Network and many others), all of which contribute to the discourse on climate change and to various extents affect climate change politics (Doyle 2009). The roots of climate activism in the UK stretch back to the anti-roads, anti-GMO and anti-globalization protests led by such direct action networks such as Reclaim the Streets, Earth First!, and Dissent! back in the 1990s (Doherty *et al.* 2003; Plows 2008; Skrimshire 2008; Woodsworth 2008). At the same time, climate activism in the UK is embedded within the wider environmental movement whose relatively recent focus on climate change helped invigorate the movement and make environmental issues more prominent (Rootes 2009b; Woodsworth 2008). The major boost for climate activism occurred in the mid - 2000s when climate change became a key issue on the political agenda as a result of the alarming findings of the IPCC and the international scientific community as a whole, and thus attracted great attention from NGOs and grassroots activist networks.

The role of grassroots networks in the process of developing a distinct climate movement cannot be underestimated. Commentators (Monbiot 2007; Van der Zee 2011; Vidal 2008) and scholars (Doyle 2009; Plows 2008; Saunders and Price 2009; Skrimshire 2008; Woodsworth 2008) have noted how week-long camps and actions against polluters, organized by Camp for Climate Action (CfCA) together with other networks, have ignited and invigorated climate activism in the UK. Their tactics,

organizing principles and values are very much opposed to those of mainstream environmental NGOs (Doyle 2009). Specifically, it is the genuine resistance to engage with and emulate state and corporate structures that distinguishes such networks from their NGO counterparts. Besides this, the general trend of institutionalization of the environmental movement and the failure of NGOs to incorporate the perspectives of the affected communities point to the vital role of grassroots networks in current climate activism (Dawson 2010).

While the body of literature on climate justice has started growing rapidly in the last few years, climate activism in the UK, especially its grassroots, direct action strand is still to receive comprehensive scholarly attention (Schlembach 2011; Schlembach *et al.* 2012). The existing analysis to date covers different aspects of the movement: a doctoral dissertation by Woodsworth (2008) explores growth and retention of newcomers in CfCA and Rising Tide networks; several academic articles by a group of researches examine the knowledge claims of CfCA (Schlembach *et al.* 2012), the negotiation of various agendas within CfCA (Schlembach 2011), strategies and the role of grassroots networks in the environmental movement (Doyle 2009), tensions within the environmental movement (Pusey and Russell 2010), radicalism and reformism in CfCA (Saunders 2012), the definition of success of the general green protest movement (Plows 2008), utopic visions of CfCA (Saunders and Price 2009), and the limits and possibilities of climate activism (North 2011). There is currently no research that provides an in-depth analysis of the grassroots discourse on climate justice, except for the study by Russell (2012) which examines climate justice discourse from the perspective of the overall climate movement in the UK and international mobilizations in Copenhagen and Bolivia. This dissertation therefore seeks to fill this empirical gap by exploring the discourse of two UK grassroots networks presented in the next section.

1.2 Study focus: Camp for Climate Action and Rising Tide networks

Given the lack of comprehensive analysis of the grassroots networks' discourse and their pertinent role in advancing climate activism, I chose to focus this study on the most prominent networks on the UK grassroots climate activism scene – Camp for Climate Action (CfCA) and Rising Tide UK (RT). In what follows, I provide a brief outline of the history and organizing principles of the two networks whose discourse will be analyzed in this dissertation.

RT is an international network with fully autonomous branches in the UK, US, Australia, Finland, Mexico and Germany positioning itself as “an important bridge between the covert world of direct action groups and the formalized structure of local branches of national NGOs, providing a vital point of entry to the grassroots climate action movement” (RT 2011a)¹. The network started in 2000 as a coalition that formed to campaign on climate change at the UNFCCC meeting in The Hague. The first political statement written in the early 2000s had already called for fighting for ‘climate justice’ and against corporate solutions that did not address the problem making it a radical demand according to the activists themselves (Sydney pers.comm). At the center of the coalition was the UK network uniting activists from previous cycles of contention, in particular, activists of a disbanded Reclaim the Streets group (Woodsworth 2008). Organized non-hierarchically and using consensus decision-making principles, RT has focused on direct and creative action against the fossil fuel industry, corporations and banks. Among the key successes and contributions to the overall climate movement, RT highlights winning a campaign to make the Natural History Museum in London terminate its sponsorship contract with Shell², devising and introducing innovative tactics in the wider climate action movement and laying the foundations for climate activism in 2005 by supporting the establishment of CfCA (RT 2011a).

¹ Note that all activist materials cited throughout the dissertation can be located in Appendix 3, not in the bibliography. Such materials usually come from online sources, therefore page numbers are not provided.

² Specifically, Shell's sponsorship of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award

While the networks have experienced various levels of involvement of activists since 2001 with ups and downs in the numbers and the amount of energy in the group, the RT network comprised of several local groups, continues to exist on the British climate activism scene to this day. While local groups are autonomous in choosing targets and taking actions, a national decision-making process also exists which annually brings all groups together for a gathering to decide on key strategies for the coming year (pers.comm. Sydney).

In 2006 UK activists from various networks such as RT, the Dissent! network, anti-roads and anti-GM and G8 direct action groups organized CfCA, a network that was to become the key climate change group in the next four years and an event (involving squatting the land and a week-long camping) that gathered from 600 to several thousand people at different times. The idea of making the first Climate Camp with the elements of direct action and education came from Hori-zone eco-village held in 2005 in opposition to the G8 meeting in Gleneagles (Woodsworth 2008; Plows 2008). Unlike the previous summit-hopping mobilizations, Hori-zone attempted to create a living example of a sustainable convergence space with renewable energy, composting toilets, recycling and composting run by horizontal politics without leaders and hierarchies (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006; Saunders 2010). The issue of climate change had already at that time been on the activist and political agenda of the G8 (Saunders 2010). Therefore, CfCA network came into being with a special focus on climate change as a key mobilizing issue and an aim to create a broad climate change movement that would bring together environmental, anti-war, alternative ecological networks and others (Woodsworth 2008). Besides, it attempted to learn from previous struggles by creating actions, squatting on lands and setting up camps on their own terms rather than in a reactionary way characteristic of global justice movement protests (CfCA 2009a).

Its activity was focused first on once- a- year camping that was filled with positive actions as opposed to simply negating and resisting the authorities as was done during the G8 protests. Later on, the need for smaller direct actions held throughout the year in between the bigger camps that would not require the mammoth preparations of the annual camp was acknowledged. That is how various neighborhoods started taking actions locally on a regular basis. From 2006 to 2010 a total of four summer camps were held in various locations across the UK, along with a number of high profile actions (e.g. Climate Swoop). In 2010 it became clear that there were organizational and ideological issues in the network (an informal hierarchy, a desire for a more decentralized structure, discussions about the role of anti-capitalist politics and so on) that had taken their toll on the network. In the last statement announcing disbandment it was declared that CfCA was dissolving but only to find fresh tactics and improve its organizational methods under a new name (CfCA 2011). The skills, contacts and resources collected over the year at the CfCA were partly passed on to a new, initially London-based network that was named Climate Justice Collective (CJC), and partly to other networks. The name CJC reflects the new focus that evolved from climate activism to climate justice. This shifting focus will be discussed in more detail in the empirical chapters.

At the outset, CfCA adopted various organizing principles from a number of past movements. Functioning in affinity groups emulated anarchist movements in the Spanish civil war and the machno-vite movement in Ukraine (CfCA 2009a); rejection of any kind of dogma, pre-figurative politics are ascribed to have come from anarchism; consensus decision-making practices and the opposition to group hierarchy are said to be inspired by the feminist and indigenous circles and a particular 1970 feminist text “The Tyranny of Structurelessness” (CfCA 2009a); a ‘neighborhoods’ (representing geographical regions in most cases) division of the network that allowed local groups to feed their decisions to the central one was modeled after the 2001 Piqueteros Rebellion in Argentina (CfCA 2009a; Pusey and Russell 2010) . At the same time, practices such as affinity group organizing,

consensus decision-making and spokes councils are part of what Pickerill and Chatterton (2006) call ‘autonomous geographies’ stemming from an autonomist Marxist tradition. During the interviews as well as in online publications, networks’ participants used the words ‘anarchist’ and ‘autonomous’ interchangeably to refer to their organizing practices. Thus, CfCA (as well as RT) can be described as networks broadly embodying both anarchist and autonomist principles. Both networks are self-funded, i.e. through donations of the internal or external participants. The profile of participants is diverse in both networks. At the time of my fieldwork both female and male activists in various age categories (from 20 to 60+) and social backgrounds attended the meetings. While a few non-white participants took part in the actions, the majority of activists were white.

1.3 Overview of chapters

This dissertation is comprised of nine chapters. Chapter 2 locates this study in the critical discourse analysis research area and presents the methodological steps that guided this dissertation. After providing a definition of grassroots networks and a justification for focusing on these actors, I outline the data collection methods (interview, participant observation and document research) and detailed procedures used for the analysis of the data. The chapter concludes with reflections on the role of the researcher in the context of this study.

Chapter 3 presents a review of the debates in the literature and a theoretical framework adopted in this dissertation. To lay the foundation for the empirical chapters, it is structured along two axes. The first axis addresses the key elements of the dominant discourse on climate change, including the interface between science and policy, the role of neoliberal and ecological modernization discourses, major solutions and a focus on distributional justice, as viewed from the theoretical lens of the post-politics applied specifically to climate change (Swyngedouw 2013). It is argued that the post-political framework enables identifications of ways in which counter-discourse reproduces or entrenches the

dominant climate discourse. The second axis addresses the climate justice discourse pushed forward by global climate movements as a counter-discourse that seeks to challenge and resist the dominant climate discourse and politics. The major components of the counter-discourse are reviewed, and based on the articulations of justice at the fore of this discourse, the second theoretical lens of a multi-scalar justice (Fraser 2005) is proposed. It is argued that the combined theoretical approaches make it possible to gain a broad and rich understanding of how the counter-discourse on climate justice constructed by grassroots networks' conceptualizes the alternative climate change politics.

Chapter 4 introduces the empirical part of this dissertation by highlighting the notion of climate justice as a central thread running through grassroots networks' discourse and providing an empirically based definition of the term. It also draws attention to the presence of tensions in the activists' discourse in its relation to the dominant discourse addressed further in the dissertation. Through the in-depth diachronic analysis of actions taken by the networks and the surrounding context, Chapter 5 examines the dialectical relationship between the dominant and counter discourses, arguing that both reproduction of and resistance to, the dominant discourse is evident. Chapter 6 moves the discussion to the level of the international aspects of climate politics, such as the root causes of the problem, relationship between the global North and South, migration and accountability for the climate impacts. The findings suggest that although grassroots' discourse draws on the same concepts as the dominant one, it extends these concepts and/or imbues them with meanings that challenge the narrow dimensions of the prevailing climate politics. It also offers an understanding of climate change as a complex problem comprising various interrelated injustices that require going beyond the distributional responses. The multi-dimensional character of climate justice at the heart of the counter-discourse is further explored in Chapter 7. It also points out the evolution of the discourse in terms of linking climate justice not only to international issues but equally to UK matters through the articulations of the need for just transition and energy democracy. These

articulations reveal the importance of transferring control to the affected communities as a key way of addressing the multiple injustices. The empirical part of this dissertation concludes with Chapter 8 that marks an area in counter-discourse where discussions shift from climate-related problematic to the wider issues of economic exchange. It is argued that despite a number of tensions, the discourse displays attempts to refocus economic relations on the social and environmental aspects.

Chapter 9 wraps up this dissertation with a brief overview of key contributions to knowledge followed by a synthesis of its major empirical findings. The overarching argument of this dissertation is that grassroots' discourse on climate change reveals a constant struggle between reproduction of and resistance to the dominant discourse. Yet, despite the tensions and contradictions, it offers directions for an alternative climate politics that prioritizes a community rather than a nation-state approach, encompasses multiple scales of justices rather than a singular distributional logic, and re-socializes economic relations rather than rationalizing them through considerations of profit. The last sections of the chapter offer directions for future studies and a final look at the key message of this thesis.

2 Research design

This chapter outlines methods and tools employed in this dissertation to investigate to how grassroots discourse on climate justice conceptualizes an alternative politics of climate change. The chapter begins by locating this study in the tradition of critical discourse analysis and providing the rationale behind using a qualitative approach for answering the research questions. The introduction of grassroots networks is followed by a detailed description of the key methods of data collection used in this dissertation (interviews, documents and participant observation). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis process and the role of the researcher in a qualitative discourse analysis study.

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

In this study I focus on the discourse of grassroots networks in the UK. Discourse can be studied using multiple approaches, such as conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA), narrative analysis, and others. Each approach offers a specific definition of discourse and a particular focus, as well as some fundamental assumptions and principles. Broadly speaking, discourse can be regarded as involved in the creation of social identities, social relations, systems of knowledge and thus the reality (Rogers-Hayden *et al.* 2011). What all approaches to discourse analysis share is the recognition of the constructive role of language in the social processes. In the words of Fairclough (2003: 2), language is “an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language”. Viewed from this angle, to study discourse would mean to study language in use together with other semiotic forms, such as visual images or body language as expressed in ‘texts’ (Fairclough 2006). The level of engagement with linguistic means in a discourse study may vary depending on the particular approach chosen. For instance, one of the most commonly used approaches to discourse analysis

was developed by Michele Foucault in his works on the discourses of human sciences. While recognizing the role of language in discourse and the socially constructive properties of both language and discourse, his analysis is known for a very limited engagement with actual linguistic means of written and spoken texts. Instead, Foucault focused on types of discourse as rules for constituting areas of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and power (Fairclough 1992). In contrast, in Norman Fairclough's approach (which will be further discussed in this chapter), text and its linguistic components are the point of departure for discourse analysis and its integral part (Ibid.). Consequently, the level of abstraction in these two CDA approaches is different.

CDA as one of the types of discourse analysis specifically concentrates on the increasingly important role of language in social relations of power and domination, ideology, and in the negotiation of identities (Fairclough 2001b) with the aim of critically investigating these phenomena and contributing to radical social change (Wodak 2001). However, as notes Wodak, language is not seen as powerful on its own, but "it gains power by the use powerful people make of it" (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 88). Therefore, discourse as a way of representing the world through semiotic means including language, plays a key role in the consolidation of economic, political and other systems (Fairclough 2006) and in making them dominant or hegemonic. At the same time, counter-hegemonic and dissident discourses that circulate in society through social movements or academia challenge the dominant discourses and thus open the space for social change (Harvey 1996).

Furthermore, discourses "represent and narrate what has happened in the past and what is happening in the present, including why the previous systems have failed, and imagine and advocate possible alternatives for the future, possible economic (social, political, cultural) orders which might overcome existing problems and offer better futures" (Fairclough 2006: 24). Most successful and resilient discourses can be operationalized or enacted in new practices, new types of economic order

or new material realities (Fairclough 2006). Thus, given this constitutive role of discourse in shaping political systems and contributing to social change, this dissertation seeks to examine the role of particular discourses of grassroots networks in challenging the dominant discourse on climate change. The study of the discourse of particular groups and networks is often undertaken within the CDA tradition. According to Van Dijk, CDA is a “type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk 2001: 352). CDA is then a “method for examining social and cultural modifications that could be employed in protesting against the power and control of an elite group on other people” (Ahmadvand 2011: 68). Given that the overarching question of this dissertation presupposes examining the interaction between grassroots discourse and the dominant discourse on climate change, the CDA framework, with its emphasis on the analysis of domination and resistance to it, is particularly suitable for this research.

It should be noted that since CDA is a transdisciplinary approach rather than a concrete theory or method (Fairclough 2001a; Wodak 2007; Wodak and Meyer 2009b), and several approaches to conducting CDA are distinguishable in the literature, such as Fairclough’s treatment of discourse as social practice, van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model, Wodak’s sociological and historical approach to discourse, and Foucauldian analysis, among others. While the set of elements in each CDA approach may vary, the common goal of all approaches, according to Ahmadvand (2011: 89), is “representing the dialectic relationship between language, power, ideology, and the influential role that language plays in emanation of power and legitimizing social inequalities”. The absence of theoretical or methodological prescriptions in CDA suggests that the methodological tools are chosen in accordance with the aims and research questions of particular studies (Wodak 2007; Wodak and Meyer 2009b). CDA, like other types of discourse analysis (Hepburn and Potter 2007), relies on interviews as the key data source, but is certainly not limited to it. Observation and any kind of

existing written documents related to the research problem are also necessary for an in-depth analysis (Wodak 2007).

In this dissertation I chose to adopt Fairclough's approach to CDA which draws on Foucault's understanding of discourse as constructive of reality and Bakhtin's emphasis on intertextuality (Fairclough 1992). As noted earlier, Fairclough's approach is based on a close engagement with texts and actual practices which allows producing a very grounded and concrete analysis (Fairclough 1992). Given that climate politics has a clearly discursive nature (i.e. what do about climate change and how to do it is based on the written and spoken texts produced by various actors in specific contexts), I chose Fairclough's linguistically-oriented approach for this study. Following Fairclough (2006), I consider discourses as ways of representing a particular aspect of social life and abstract entities in the form of texts recurring over time in various social contexts. Discourses are enacted by various social agents, in the case of this research the agents in focus are grassroots networks that interact, discursively and not, with other agents.

Fairclough (2003) differentiates between three levels of abstraction within discourse analysis: the interrelation between social events, social practices and social structures³. Social events are expressed in texts in a broader sense of the word, i.e. going beyond written pieces to encompass oral speech, visual data, body language, sound and so on (ibid.; Fairclough 2006). Social practices are "articulations of different types of social element which are associated with a particular area of life", for instance organizational or teaching practices (Fairclough 2003: 25). Social structures, the most abstract entities in the discourse, define a potential or a set of possibilities. Examples of such structures are languages or an economic structure. Discourses thus can function through social events and are mediated by social practices. At the same time, discourses interact with various genres

³ These terms correspond to "text", "discursive practice" and "social practice" used in his earlier work (Fairclough 1992).

and styles. In Fairclough's definition (2006), genres are ways of interacting and producing social life in the semiotic mode, while discourses are ways of representing social life in different ways, and styles – ways of being. A combination of various genres, styles and discourses forms what Fairclough calls an order of discourse (Ibid.). The neoliberal global order is an example of such a social order, or an order of discourse in its semiotic form, that is characterized by the tendency to be dominant (Fairclough 2001a).

In order to perform CDA it is therefore necessary to oscillate between orders of discourse, texts, and social structures. This means that the analysis departs from examining texts on a micro-level through linguistic analysis (a detailed framework for this analysis is presented later in this chapter), proceeding to the exploration of social practices which surround texts (i.e. practices related to the production, distribution or consumption of texts), and ending with the macro-analysis of a wider social structure and orders of discourses comprising it. These three levels of analysis are integrated and a constant shifting of scales from micro to macro analysis is evident. Finally, an important focus in the adopted approach to discourse analysis pertinent for this research is on the tensions among competing discourses either attempting to become dominant or resisting the dominant discourses. These tensions and struggles between discourses are one of the factors that create social change (Fairclough 1992). In the context of my dissertation, I examine the discursive struggle between grassroots' discourse on climate change embodied in their discursive practices and texts, and the dominant discourse embodied in practices and texts surrounding the UNFCCC process that determines the direction of climate politics on various levels.

2.2 Defining grassroots networks

Before providing an in-depth account of the data collection and analysis process, it is necessary to briefly specify what is meant by the term 'grassroots networks' in this dissertation and give an

additional justification for this empirical focus. By grassroots networks I first of all mean loose networks of people in the UK from various professional and social backgrounds who choose to organize non-hierarchically to fight against climate change and organize various forms of direct action as tactical tool of such a fight. The use of the term ‘grassroots’ is justified from an empirical point of view, as the networks and individual participants refer to themselves in this way. To illustrate, RT (n.d.) network mentions the term in its online documents: "RT is a grassroots network of independent groups and individuals committed to taking action and building a movement against climate change ". The main title on CfCA’s website read “Camp for Climate Action is a fast growing, grassroots movement of diverse people taking action on climate change, the biggest threat our world has known”. In addition, this term is used consistently by activists in various written documents (website posts; press-releases, emails) and in oral communication.

The key feature of such networks, as articulated by activists themselves, is the ability “to take action individually from the bottom up” (pers.comm. Fe) without asking for permission or authorization from the government or any kind of authorities. The network structure of these groups suggests that they consist of loosely affiliated individuals, not tied to the networks by any membership schemes but through a voluntary engagement and desire to take action (RT n.d.). The type of action that networks commit to is ‘direct action’ carried out by the whole network or an affinity group. As defined by the Handbook of Direct Action circulating in grassroots networks, direct action is direct democracy and a way of collectively re-asserting control of our destinies. Direct action thus can take various forms, from blockades to sit-ins to banner drops to ‘ethical shoplifting’, and can involve breaking the law. To prepare such an action, activists split into so-called affinity groups who are composed of people “who know and trust each other” (RT 2007d). Time-wise, direct action can last from a few minutes to a few hours, depending on the reaction of authorities. In this dissertation direct actions that grassroots networks carry out are examined as important practices in which the

discourse is constructed and articulated. Together with other practices, such as organizing meetings, workshops, teach-ins and gatherings, direct actions are treated as units of analysis.

The two networks, CfCA and RT, are the biggest and the oldest groups, respectively, in the UK that have a radical analysis (Woodsworth 2008; Schlembach 2011) of the underlying causes of climate change and organize non-hierarchically. Both networks have been heavily involved in the most prominent national climate campaigns in recent years (for example, Heathrow and Kingsnorth) and also have repeatedly been mentioned as important actors in the UK climate movement by NGO activists whom I have interviewed (interviews with Charlie Kronick, Greenpeace, John Stewart, Hacan, Paul Brown), as well as in the media. Thus, the two networks were selected for the analysis due to their key role in the UK climate movement (Goodman 2011; Rootes 2012) and their potential for providing rich data for the analysis of the emerging climate justice discourse. It is important to note that in 2011 CfCA formally disbanded but following discussions and meetings, it finally ‘metamorphosed’ in 2012 into the Climate Justice Collective (CJC) based in London but also linked to other groups across the UK. I decided to include the actions of CJC in the analysis for the following reasons. First and foremost, I regarded the disbanding and metamorphosing of CfCA into CJC as an important discursive development within grassroots climate activism in the UK to be documented and analyzed. Including CJC in the analysis allowed me to trace the evolution of the discourse around climate change: from the early years of activism dominated by a scientific rhetoric to the more pronounced social justice critique to the articulation of a fully fledged climate justice discourse. Second, the new network gathered the core CfCA activists that I had already interviewed and retained the same organizing principles which made it methodologically possible to integrate it into the analysis.

Regarding the type of networks that I look at in my study, I chose to focus on radical grassroots networks campaigning on climate change as opposed to, for example, NGOs for a number of reasons. One of them lies in the considerable amount of scholarly attention to the conventional organizations of the NGO, and charity type in the UK (Doyle 2007; Rootes 2009b, 2009a). In contrast, grassroots initiatives that have sprung up in recent years and have been at the forefront of climate activism have been researched to a much lesser degree (Schlembach *et al.* 2012). More importantly, however, it is the nature of grassroots activism with its non-hierarchical way of organizing, contrasting repertoires of actions and a radical vision of the changes that need to be implemented in the society that interested me most. Scholars agree that grassroots initiatives concerning global and climate justice have a great mobilization potential and though they draw significantly on past social movements, are employing innovative techniques to bring about changes on both local and global levels (Plows 2008; Skrimshire 2008). To date, I have not found a thorough academic account of the emerging climate justice activism with a focus on discourse analysis, hence my interest in filling this research gap.

2.3 Data collection

Before providing the discussion of data collection methods used in this study, it is necessary to clarify what is considered data in the context of this dissertation. As it was pointed out in the previous section, critical discourse analysis does not have any specific prescriptions regarding data sources which means that traditional qualitative data from interviews, documents and participant observation have been widely used (Hepburn and Potter 2007; Wodak 2007). In his study of the globalization discourse and language of ‘new capitalism’, Fairclough relies on the study of semiosis which includes written and oral texts, visual images, and body language (Fairclough 2003, 2006). From the functional perspective, texts represent the world, enact social relations between

participants of social events and connect texts together, as well as link texts with the situational context (Fairclough 2003). Given the centrality of texts in discourse analysis (Ibid.), texts produced by specific actors are the suitable data sources to be analyzed and theorized. In this dissertation texts in a broad sense of the word (i.e. interview transcripts, documents, visual images, audio and video material) are the unit of analysis. The details of data collection and the analysis process are given in the next sections.

The data for this research was collected during a five-month field study in the UK and included 3 stages lasting from February to October 2010. The first stage of data collection started with desk research and pilot interviews on the issues of climate activism in the UK with a goal of identifying key figures in the networks and getting to know the immediate context in which the networks operated. The study of the context included examination of key policy developments regarding climate change in the UK, campaigns and actions taken by the networks and other actors, such as Greenpeace, Plane Stupid and Climate Rush, and media coverage of climate activism. The first stage also included getting physical access to the networks.

During the second stage of data collection (which also included some elements of analysis to be clarified later), I conducted participant observation within the networks and most of the interviews. This was an intensive period filled with interviews, actions, meetings, as well as an immense amount of written information flowing from the networks under study. Although my initial plan was to transcribe and code interviews as they occurred, this strategy did not completely work out due to the lack of time and the amount of information and activity to observe. However, between the second and third stages of data collection, I had a few weeks off the field. During this pause in the interviewing and participant observation process, I was able to go through the field notes and key interviews that were useful for refining the research focus and questions. Specifically, as a result of

this preliminary screening of the incoming data, I dropped initial research questions regarding potential securitization of climate change discourse (Buzan *et al.* 1998) that grassroots networks could be contributing to. This initial research focus, developed prior to the fieldwork through literature review, served as a point of departure rather than a rigid framework. Subsequent interviews and participant observation did not provide any empirical support for this focus; therefore it was dropped at the early stage of data collection.

The final stage also included interviews and observation but was guided by the empirically developed research questions that had emerged during the previous stages of interviewing and preliminary coding. Specifically, the new focus of the study included the concept of climate justice and resistance to the neoliberal agenda through direct action. Sections that follow discuss data collection techniques used at all stages of the process.

2.3.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is a method of data collection in qualitative research used to gain understanding of how a particular group of people work, interact, and make sense of the world around them (Delamont 2007). As a data collection method, participant observation has both advantages and disadvantages to be considered. On the one hand, a partial or complete immersion of a researcher into a particular setting is beneficial because it provides valuable insights on the contextual factors that influence a phenomenon under study, especially if it is closely connected to the interaction between people (Iacono *et al.* 2009). Such immersion is accompanied by continuous observation, documentation and reflection and results in a “thick description” of the setting and phenomena studied (Geertz 1973). On the other hand, participant observation is a subjective process potentially affected by two kinds of biases: the effects of the researcher’s presence on the behavior of the participants and the impact of the researcher’s own beliefs and experiences (DeWalt and DeWalt

1998; Iacono *et al.* 2009). While it is virtually impossible not to influence the participants during the observation, care should be taken to detect the degree and minimize such influence to the extent possible (Ibid.).

During my fieldwork I came across a few individuals within the networks who were suspicious about my presence at the initial stage of participant observation, and thus my presence might have inhibited their full participation in the meetings. Being aware of this fact, I made an effort to establish contact with such participants and answer their questions about the nature of my research. My perception was that my regular and discrete presence during the meetings, as well as interviews with key members of the network (which they knew about), helped reduce, if not eliminate, any initial suspicions or reservations that those individuals had. As I watched closely for any signs that my presence was cumbersome, I never noticed that the topic of the conversation was changed upon my arrival or that anyone tried to speak out of ear shot. The invitations to join the group for outings in a pub also confirmed my confidence in my relative acceptance by the networks.

Regarding the subjectivity bias, following Ratner (2002) I chose to acknowledge that the observation and interpretation of what I observed would be affected by my knowledge, ideas, and beliefs due to my own cultural filters. However, in order to keep it in check, I highlighted any interpretation that emerged through the observation and reflected on possible alternative interpretations, checking, where possible, the validity of such interpretations in the informal conversations or interviews. Besides, the fact that my major sources of data also included interviews and an extensive document analysis also played a role in the reduction of researcher's bias (Ratner 2002).

Getting access to the meetings and actions proved to be relatively easy, although there were differences in access to CfCA and RT networks. CfCA advertised widely their regular sessions on Twitter and on the email list and encouraged people to come and bring friends along. In contrast, at

the time I was conducting my fieldwork, RT stated on their website that the best way to join the group was by coming to their film night or a social event which takes place once a month. Thus, it took me longer to get access to RT than to CfCA. To shorten the waiting time for the next social event at RT, I found key informants in CfCA who helped me get in touch with people in RT. In general, participants in both networks agreed to interviews without hesitation with the exception of one or two persons but coming across the reluctance of some of them reminded me of the need to be constantly aware of how my presence affected the dynamic at the meetings and to reflect on it after each observation session.

To make sure the data was collected in a systematic way (Delamont 2007), I made an effort to carry out observations in various locations and situations. While the most common location for observation was at the networks' gathering places during the weekly meetings (held at a University campus and at a social center in London), other observation sessions included the national gathering of CfCA in Manchester, workshops, skillshares, action planning meetings, direct action blockades and social events/parties organized by activists as a separate occasion or right after the weekly meetings. The duration of observation varied depending on the type of event, starting from 2-2.5 hours at weekly meetings to 4-5 hours during action events and weekend long sessions during the national gathering.

For each observation session I tried to be explicitly aware (Spradley 1980) of as many details as possible: the setting, interactions between participants, profiles of activists present (gender, approximate age, styles), hand signals used during the meetings, distribution of roles, types of involvement and non-involvement in the discussions, as well as topics discussed, language and expressions used and so on. The difficulty was to register these details without making extensive notes on the spot. To make the observation unobtrusive to the extent possible, I decided to refrain

from taking notes if nobody else was doing it, since it could attract unnecessary attention and accentuate the suspicions of those individuals who were reluctant to my presence at the beginning. For this reason I took notes on the spot only when the atmosphere permitted, i.e. when a few activists were taking notes as well.

The activist meetings normally started with introduction from the people in the room and an explanation of hand signals. During that time I was able to introduce myself and my research briefly to get the group's consent for the observation and answer any questions that they had. With time, if I saw that all the people in the room had already met me at previous meetings, I skipped the part about my research. Since taking notes during the meetings, let alone actions, was not always possible, recording observations from memory was an important task to be completed as soon as the observation session was over. My field journal contained rough notes taken while commuting from the sessions and notes that have been reflected upon, edited and organized outside the field. A few days after the meeting, minutes would be circulated on the email list of the networks which helped to remember any particular aspects or situations and incorporate observations into the already processed field notes.

Apart from attending meetings and events, I found it useful to observe and make systematic records of the discussions on email lists of both networks. It should be noted that joining the email list of CfCA was not problematic as the list is open to anyone wishing to be added to it. With RT however, I had to ask for authorization from the London group to be added to the list. This took a few weeks as RT activists first circulated my email request on their list, apparently had an email discussion about it and then took a decision on a meeting. This resulted in a certain time lag in the observation of the two lists. My observations were recorded in two separate files: one for CfCA and one for RT. Both files had the same structure of a table with the following columns: Date, Sender, Subject, Purpose

and Notes. This way of observing the two email lists was useful for me to identify and keep a record of important discussions for a quick future reference, as well as to single out individuals who could be my potential interviewees. It also provided me with insights about particular questions for the activists who agreed to be interviewed. This email observation list was compiled for research purposes only and care was taken to keep it in a secure place with no one having access to it except myself. Also, on the grounds of security for the people involved in the group, no names from that list were used for subsequent quotations in this study so that the persons could not be identified.

Overall, participant observation was a particularly useful data source in my research. It provided me with valuable insight into the life and interactions of the radical grassroots networks. I was able to witness the process of choosing a target and a message or wording of the action, emergence of new ideas, preparation, implementation and evaluation of actions, mundane interactions, consensus decision-making process, as well as difficulties in accepting a particular decision. While observing I focused on several aspects. At the initial stages I took notice of the organizational process: arrangement of furniture, hand signals used; rituals and profiles of people present. Taking notice of who was present at the meetings and the nature of their involvement was helpful in identifying activists from other networks and groups, either as targets for interviews or, in the case of organizations, for the analysis of links between the networks. Furthermore, I was explicitly attentive to the language of the activists: for example, how an idea for action emerges and develops, how the messaging of an action is done, which wording is used and how it is justified. This was in fact the observation of discourse in the making. I also recorded any questions or issues that needed to be reflected on or pursued or tested in the interviews. Finally, I paid attention to the content of discussions, in particular, how the issue of climate change was treated, which other issues were profiled and which were not.

Since I was doing document analysis in parallel with observations and interviewing, it was also possible to trace how the networks reacted to contextual aspects (for example, campaigns or actions of other groups or a government decision on climate change). At the later stages of fieldwork, when I became familiar with the organizational peculiarities of activist meeting and knew most of the participants, my observation was focused on particular questions and reflections that emerged during interviewing or document analysis. I continued to attend all meetings that I could until I finished interviewing stage of data collection that will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Interviews

Interviews have been recognized not only as a key resource in social sciences that allows one to explore the nature of various social problems and phenomena, but also as a practice that “*pervades and produces our contemporary cultural experiences and knowledge of authentic personal, private selves*” (Rapley 2004: 15, original emphasis). Since discourse analysis can be described as a study of talk and text, it is then not surprising that interviewing is a central data source for a research using a discourse analysis approach. Interviewing as a tool in qualitative research is generally characterized as an interactional and collaboratively produced event in which both the interviewee and the interviewer monitor each other’s talk and react to it (Rapley 2004). Although some structure can be present in a qualitative interview, it is open-ended and mostly loosely or semi-structured, which allows for achieving depth and complexity superior to other methods, such as surveys, for example (Seale 2004). As it has been mentioned above, this study aims to analyze the discourse of climate activist networks which is constructed and articulated by the individuals who are part of the networks and by the networks as a whole. For this reason, interviewing is regarded in this research as *one* of the data sources and data collection techniques along with the analysis of documents and participant observation. Although interviews are used as data in this research, the discourse analysis approach suggests that the aim is

not to establish 'true' inner states of the interviewees or reveal beliefs or attitudes that they are not aware of (Taylor 2001b). Instead, the overall aim is to focus on the discourse that these individuals co-construct and contribute to through the use of language in a particular way in relation to the context of the issue and other texts that they produce as part of the networks. The focus on the discourse rather than people also determines the choice of sampling technique.

This is not to say, however, that sampling was done on an ad hoc basis. On the contrary, the sampling strategy was determined taking into account the particular features of the wider population from which the interviewees would be selected. Such features are the looseness of the networks in terms of membership and the absence of any kind of statistical information on the population, be it the total number of people involved, their gender, ages, status and so on. Since aiming for a representative sample was not practically possible, my strategy was to ensure a relevant range of interviewees (Byrne 2004) from both networks. This range was determined after initial encounters with the networks (which were themselves preceded by review of relevant literature and media). I included participants who were active within the networks (the degree of activeness being a subjective criterion, it was established through observation, word of mouth and by following closely the email lists); those who stayed quiet at the meetings but showed up regularly; participants who were mostly active online but did not participate in the meetings; participants of different ages and genders; participants who were known to be involved in several networks simultaneously.

Regarding the sample size, due to the lack of data regarding the wider population, I decided not to have a pre-determined number of people but to stop the interviewing process as soon as the following criteria were met. The first criterion was the data saturation indicated by the exhaustion of new themes or concepts coming up in the interviews. The second criterion was meeting the

requirement of covering a wide range of participants to the extent possible according to the features described above.

The overall number of interviews conducted was 34 including activists from grassroots networks, environmental commentators and NGO representatives (see Appendix 1 for the full list of interviewees). Interviewing actors not directly related to either CfCA or RT was useful for the following reasons. First, given the fluid character of the grassroots networks, it became evident at the early stage of fieldwork that some activists were engaging with two (or more) networks at the same time or used to be part of one of those networks until they joined another one. Such activists were thus included in the interviewing process because they could potentially provide an unexpected perspective on their former (or current) networks. In addition, by including informants from outside the studied networks, the bias stemming from the effects of the site on the researcher (Miles and Huberman 1994) was minimized. Second, including seemingly peripheral actors such as NGO representatives provided yet another outlook at grassroots networks and was useful in highlighting shared discourses and discursive strategies, as well of points of divergence between NGOs and grassroots networks. In essence, the interviews with non-members helped establish interdiscursivity (Fairclough 2006), i.e. discourses that are employed outside the networks by other actors.

At the initial stage of interviewing, a snowball sampling technique was primarily used to recruit interviewees. First interviewees were identified with the help of contacts in the Open University where I was a visiting student. After gaining physical access to the networks it was relatively easy to approach individual participants, other than those recommended by previous interviewees, with interview requests. Given the limitation of snowballing technique in terms of providing access to the participants with similar views and discursive repertoires as those who recommended them (Byrne 2004), purposeful sampling technique was necessary to ensure the range of views. This technique was

employed in the following way. Participant observation was useful for singling out potential interviewees with various degrees of involvement in the networks. Desk research conducted both prior to and during the field work it helped identify some prominent activists who had been profiled in the media and thus could provide a new perspective for the research. Before contacting them directly (at the meetings or by email), I first tried to find contacts who could introduce me to that person. The main reason for doing so was previous unsuccessful experience in sending interview requests by email to activists whom I have not met in person. In such cases I either received a refusal or the person would not answer at all. In contrast, approaching people directly after the meeting was helpful in recruiting interviewees. I usually briefly introduced myself and my research and asked if the person would be willing to be interviewed. To secure an informed consent, I would answer questions about the nature, goals and methods of my research and then we would make an appointment for the interview. Thus, a snowball sampling technique was used in parallel with purposeful sampling as dictated by the decision to cover the range of participants but also by the insights of initial data analysis.

On average interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour and most of them were conducted in person, either in parks, pubs or cafes or at activists' homes. Some of the interviewees were only able to communicate over Skype or telephone due to distance or time constraints but an effort was made to keep such interviews to a minimum.

As mentioned above, before the actual interview informed consent was secured. This involved stating briefly the goals of the research, answering any specific questions that the interviewee could have concerning the nature of my study or my university affiliation and asking the person for their consent to be recorded. All 34 interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis. I also inquired whether the interviewee could be quoted and if so, using his or her real name

or a pseudonym. The interviewees could also stay anonymous if they preferred. Some of the people were not sure about using their real name a pseudonym before they knew what questions would be asked. In this case I asked them about their decision after the interview while exchanging contact details, if this had not been done prior to the interview.

For each interview an interview guide (see Appendix 2) was prepared and/or adapted. This guide consisted in a cluster of questions covering the following topics: introductory questions about their personal experience in activism; questions on understanding of climate change issues; questions about the organization the person is involved in; questions on solutions to the climate change problem and visions of the future. Effort was made to use open-ended questions as much as possible and where appropriate, to echo activists' vocabulary to frame some of the questions. My approach to interviewing can be described as engaged and interactive (Rapley 2004), the goal of which was to give interviewees a chance to fully express their ideas in their own terms, keeping my intervention to the minimum but at the same time following up on the "markers" in the conversation and reacting verbally or non-verbally to what the person was saying. As I registered in my mind some concepts or ideas that needed to be expanded on, I returned to them after the interviewees had finished speaking and asked them to elaborate on those specific concepts that they had mentioned. It should be noted that the initial interview guide (Appendix 2) evolved considerably over the period of fieldwork to reflect any pertinent issues raised by previous interviewees that needed more explanation and/or testing and the themes emerging from participant observation and document analysis. During the second interviewing round that took place in September – October 2010, after I had transcribed and coded a few interviews from the first session, I deliberately pursued themes that were emerging in the data while also registering any new themes or questions. The decision to stop interviewing was taken when it became apparent that no new themes were emerging from the interviews and the list of potential participants available for interviews ran short. It should be noted however, despite the

fact that at a certain point of the fieldwork data saturation became apparent, it was still a subjective decision since the data flow fed by the new activities, events and changes in the context would continue indefinitely. It was thus necessary to draw the line at that point when no new themes emerged and concentrate entirely on the data analysis.

2.3.3 Documents

Besides the core data sources such as interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, with its focus on texts, critical discourse analysis incorporates the analysis of various documents with semiotic aspects produced by the actors under investigation. While the bulk of such materials is usually written text, any visual and audio documents can also be used as data (Fairclough 2001b). The following types of documents were collected in this study for analysis:

- Published press - releases and website articles/entries produced by grassroots networks;
- Minutes of the meetings available on activist' websites or archived on external sites;
- Posts on the forums and social networking sites;
- Emails on the activist list serves;
- Visual materials, such as flyers, posters, banners;
- Audio and video materials produced by grassroots themselves or by external actors;
- Media articles, including activist media and traditional media;
- Website archives.

In order to select documents that would become data for the analysis, the context of climate activism and grassroots networks campaigning on climate in the UK was delineated. To do so, initial desk research was launched prior to and during, the fieldwork. Desk research included several dimensions. First, I systematically reviewed media coverage concerning CfCA and RT networks, saving the most relevant pieces in folders on the computer, highlighting relevant events, actors or

incidents. Given the abundance of media, this task proved to be time-consuming and even overwhelming at times as the information was updated almost on a daily basis. The media that I looked at throughout my desk research can be roughly divided in the following categories: newspapers and magazines (The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Evening Standard etc); social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Crabgrass⁴); blogs, and radical activists media (Indymedia, Schneus). Although I did not collect this information with the aim of conducting media analysis, it was a necessary step that helped map out the immediate context of climate activism in the UK and identify the discourses of external actors for further analysis at later stages.

Second, I examined the content of the networks' own websites (focusing on actions coverage and representation), internal forums (a good source of discussions on activists' range of views on prognostic and diagnostic framing of climate change), as well as links to other groups and organizations. Finally, I went through the extensive video and audio archives of both networks (located on their websites, Youtube and Vimeo and other social networking websites), saving and making short notes on the most relevant videos. While a few relevant videos were transcribed to be coded at later stages, most of the videos were worked on from the recording, i.e. through repeated listening and coding to save time on the transcription.

Apart from providing contextual information about the networks, desk research was useful for capturing the construction of discourse around climate change by various actors, identifying the most active and informed persons for interviews and keeping track of networks' events, twists in discussions, as well as generating ideas about the future direction of my research.

⁴ Crabgrass is a social media developed by volunteers to assist radical groups and networks around the world by providing secure and free software for every day and action-specific interaction.

Given the volume of this contextual data, it was necessary to further select documents that would be analyzed comprehensively (see analysis outline in the next section). The core documents for further analysis were practically any materials produced by the grassroots networks themselves and available on their websites and list serves, as well as a few key documents originating from external sources (e.g. articles in the media about prominent direct actions carried out by the networks). Consecutive reading and re-reading of the selected materials combined with coding made it possible to identify key themes and further reduce the amount of documents for subsequent micro textual analysis. The next section lays out in full the procedures used in the analysis of documents, interviews and participant observation notes.

2.4 Coding and data analysis

As it has been noted in the sections above, the data analysis went in parallel with the data collection process. Although data analysis had an iterative and open-ended character (Taylor 2001b), it was also a systematic process with distinct stages and procedures. The guiding principle for all stages was to search for “patterns in language use, building on and referring back to the assumptions [...] about the nature of language, interaction and society and interrelations between them” (Ibid.: 39).

The initial stage of data analysis started shortly after the first interviews and participant observations sessions were conducted. Preparing each interview guide required going over the notes that I had made after the previous interview, listening to parts of the recording or, if the transcript was already available, re-reading it and highlighting questions that produced unexpected answers or brought to light new concepts. The process of transcribing also contained elements of analysis: while typing in questions and answers, I highlighted separate words or whole phrases and made short comments in the margins. These notes often led to new questions to pursue in the next interview or as indications

of what I needed to examine in specific documents. Thus, the first stage consisted in identifying emerging concepts and pursuing them in the data collection process.

The second stage of data analysis involved working with transcriptions of the interviews and any written material. Once an interview was transcribed, it was uploaded into the ATLAS Ti software, together with any text documents that were selected during desk research. I opted for ATLAS because it served as a convenient platform on which all written and visual documents could be stored, organized and manipulated, making it relatively easy to switch from layer to layer (for example to view all codes or quotes together or organized into categories and families). After initial reading of the transcript, I started coding the transcripts, applying both open and in vivo codes as I was reading the text line by line. Non-interview material (statements, press releases, blog posts etc) were coded in the same fashion.

The third stage involved re-reading and refining codes, as well as grouping them in categories according to the emerging themes. This stage of data analysis, although it takes limited space in this description, proved actually to be the most lengthy and labor-intensive. Writing short memos attached either to specific codes, quotes or pieces of documents, allowed me to record observations regarding any emerging patterns or inconsistencies in the data, and thus served as a basis for comparing and contrasting. Stages 1-3 were repeated with any new data that appeared during coding. Several rounds of coding resulted in the identification of several broad themes containing a group of categories. At this point I made a decision to select several themes that would be analyzed further with the help of linguistic analysis. The decision regarding the themes to pursue was made with two criteria in mind: the number of categories generated within the themes and the reliance on multiple data sources (i.e. the rationale behind this was to ensure that the generated categories were traceable in multiple data sources as a general requirement for triangulation).

The next stage of data analysis involved linguistic analysis of key selected texts within the selected themes. Following Fairclough (Fairclough 2001b, 2006), linguistic analysis included the following stages:

- **Analysis of whole-text language organization:** examination of the text structure; identification of genre of the text, styles drawn up and their characteristic features; intertextuality (texts/voices that are excluded and included, how they are textured in relation to each other); assumptions made and their types (existential, propositional, ideological etc);
- **Clauses combination:** semantic/grammatical relations between sentences and clauses (causal-reason, consequence, purpose; conditional, contrastive/concessive etc);
- **Clauses:** transitivity (transitive or intransitive verbs); voice (active, passive); mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative); modality (degrees of commitment to truth or necessity);
- **Words:** choice of vocabulary; semantic relations between words (synonymy, hyponymy etc.); denotative and connotative meaning; collocations (patterns of co-occurrence); figures of speech.

Furthermore, using the linguistic lens, I started identifying discursive strategies in the texts and the role they played in it. Discursive strategies can be defined as “more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices [...] adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim” (Wodak 2007: 207). At the stage of this linguistic analysis I also reviewed all the information concerning context (key political decision on climate change; prominent campaigns of other networks and environmental NGOs; scientific events on climate change and so on) in order to establish intertextuality and interdiscursivity expressed in texts on similar topics or using the same arguments (Fairclough 2006; Wodak 2007).

Having completed linguistic analysis, I returned to the themes and categories identified through coding and some observations in memos, and re-examined them in light of findings from the linguistic analysis. This led to expanding some old memos or writing new ones. Next, I started pulling together codes by creating network maps in Atlas organized by the emerging themes, for example “power issues”, “climate change as vehicle”, “justice” and so on. These maps contained codes (with attached quotations) that I arranged and re-arranged into groups while also trying to highlight any emerging links or sub-groups. This mapping exercise was extremely useful because of the possibility of viewing all codes and quotes on a specific theme brought together in one place, allowing for cross-examination and refinement. Mapping was followed by yet another round of coding, this time with a specific goal of enriching the existing codes (while also creating new ones along the way, of course) and checking for any previously unnoticed concepts or ideas. While I had already begun to formulate chapters in the early stages while writing memos, it was only after I had created several versions of conceptual maps that I started organizing the emerging patterns in the data in a coherent way into empirical chapters. Given the richness of discourse data and the practical impossibility to produce an exhaustive analysis of any given text or combination of texts (Fairclough 2003; Taylor 2001b), the decision concerning the end of analysis was based on my evaluation of the degree of coherence and completeness of the produced account in relation to the research question and the theoretical framework. This subjective decision regarding the end point and the assessment of quality of analysis raises issues of the researcher’s role in the process of data collection, analysis and final writing up. The next section concludes this chapter with the discussion of the abovementioned methodological issues.

2.5 Reflection on the research process and the researcher's role

Having presented the research design, it is now time to address the epistemological position adopted in this project and discuss the role of the researcher informed by the choice of such a position. Epistemologically, this research follows critical theory tradition with its underlying claim that the truth of reality cannot be established but the reality can only be interpreted through the particular lens of the researcher (Taylor 2001b). Such interpretation is bound to be partial and context - specific rather than full and universally applicable (Ibid.). The critical nature of CDA also suggests that the analysis seeks to “produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection” (Wodak and Meyer 2009a: 7).

The implication for the researcher is that self-reflexivity becomes key in conducting discourse analysis because it allows constant monitoring, acknowledging and addressing to the extent possible the influence of the researcher's identity on the research design in general, and data collection and analysis processes in particular. For this reason, I find it necessary to briefly outline the ways in which my identity is relevant for this project. First of all, although my initial research proposal was focused on environmental NGOs as the main actors, having discovered a growing number of grassroots initiatives springing up in the UK back in 2009, the focus of my study shifted to that latter group due to my genuine interest in community action and civic initiatives in the field of climate change. Second, the choice of discourse analysis as a broad methodological approach was partly determined by my previous education in and passion for languages and linguistic analysis, as well as the nature of research questions that I wanted to explore. While this motivation behind the study does not constitute any specific bias, it is a position to be acknowledged (Taylor 2001b) because it throws light on my identity as a person and a researcher.

The general characteristics of the networks in this study, such as a mixed gender, age, race and social status composition combined with the adherence to the principles of openness, non-discrimination, respect, equality and so on, permitted me to access the groups without being regarded as alien and intruding. This is to emphasize that these factors facilitated data collection rather than obstructed it.

Regarding the influence of the researcher's identity on the data analysis, it should be pointed out that my being a non-native English speaker might have affected the degree to which I could detect culture or language-specific references and thus it could have affected the interpretations that I made. This is indeed a limiting factor that is rather difficult to address, given that despite my more than a decade –long contact with the English language and culture, it is still not possible to know everything about it. However, I did try to mitigate this issue, for instance by studying the history of the social movement struggle in the UK or by following up on any new reference that I came across in the interview, documents or during participant observation.

The final point to discuss in this chapter is criteria for the evaluation of this research project. As noted by Taylor (2001a), this is a serious issue in discourse analysis studies and generally in qualitative research due to the difficulty of applying standard validity-reliability-replicability criteria to the works produced within this scientific tradition. Despite numerous attempts to develop such criteria, to this day none of them has been widely accepted, which puts the burden of justification and explanation on the researcher (Ibid.). Guided by the general principles of rigor and coherence required from an academic work, I have made an effort to make the study systematic and explicit in the way the data collection and analysis were organized, undertaken and described in this chapter and in the dissertation as a whole. The step-by-step data analysis presented in section 3.4 was modeled after the framework proposed by Fairclough (Fairclough 2001b, 2003, 2006). Fairclough's own research on the discourse on neoliberal globalization (2006) and the language of 'New Labour' (2001b) serve as a

good example of this analytical framework in action. The former work is especially relevant for this study given that it addresses the discourse of neoliberal globalization, while my research essentially explores the resistance to this dominant discourse.

Finally, to argue for the quality of interpretation, I relied on the triangulation as an approach which engages more than one form or method of data (Taylor 2001a). To be specific, before making any claims, I cross-examined the data from interviews, documents and participant observation to make sure that this particular claim was valid across these data sources. Triangulation also refers to the evaluation of findings from the perspective of the following contexts (Wodak and Meyer 2009a: 93): “(1) the immediate language- or text-internal co-text; (2) the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourse; (3) the extralinguistic (social) level, which is called ‘the context of situation’ and explained by middle-range theories; and (4) the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts”. Navigating through these contexts helped minimize the bias stemming from the researcher’s subjective perception of data (Ibid.).

To conclude, while this research located in the critical theory approach to social science is admittedly subjective in the way the data is selected, collected and processed, continuous self-reflection on the data and the researcher’s influence combined with clear and systematic procedures for all research stages helped reduce this bias and ensure the quality of the final work.

3 Theoretical framework on the political discourse of climate change

This chapter revisits the discussions in the literature concerning climate change politics and outlines a theoretical framework adopted in this dissertation to answer the overarching research question: *How does grassroots' counter-discourse on climate justice conceptualize an alternative politics of climate change?* As pointed out in Chapter 1, climate change politics and discourse encompasses various theoretical and practical dimensions reflected in the perspectives of the actors who engage in the construction of this discourse. While grassroots' discourse on climate change is the focal point of this study, in order to provide an in-depth account of this discourse, I juxtapose it with the dominant representation of climate change viewed diachronically and synchronically. As it will be shown in section 3.1 and onwards, the dominant discourse on climate change is mostly concerned with discussions of the greenhouse gas emissions reduction imperatives based on scientific prescriptions and often apocalyptic imagery, market-based and technological solutions to curb the emissions, and distributive justice related to the allocation of emission rights and abatement costs between the global North and the global South. It is proposed here to examine this dominant representation through the theoretical lens of post-politics as depoliticized and linked to the entrenchment of the neoliberal paradigm that stifles the emergence of a politicized discourse on climate change needed to address the problem. In contrast, the articulations of some climate networks display attempts to re-politicize the climate change discourse by foregrounding the notion of climate justice (Chatterton et al. 2012; Featherstone 2013). The second part of this chapter is thus concerned with (section 3.2) the contours of a counter-discourse constructed by global climate movements. With roots in the alter-globalization movement, climate justice discourse links climate change to the neoliberal logic that fosters unequal socio-economic relations between and within countries. Nancy Fraser's theoretical perspective on the

dimensions of social justice is proposed as a means of elucidating climate justice discourse. The chapter concludes with an outline of the gaps in the literature that this dissertation seeks to fill.

3.1 *The dominant discourse on climate change: emissions, market solutions and distributive justice*

The analysis of climate change discourse from the perspective of political actors serves as a good basis for sketching out the dominant discourse on climate politics against which the grassroots' discourse can be pitted. To summarize, the sections that follow demonstrate that the dominant discourse on climate change in the UK and the EU is concerned with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in a cost-effective manner while maintaining economic growth. Granted, this particular representation of climate change has nuances and variations in the political context but overall, it can be argued that it sufficiently reflects the contours of the dominant discourse. The sections that follow deconstruct this discourse further. The key argument that is constructed in the first part of this chapter is that the dominant discourse on climate change predicated upon the scientific consensus regarding the nature and extent of the phenomenon is constituted along the lines of the neoliberal and ecological modernization discourses. Therefore, this section will also include a discussion of neoliberalism and its specific relationship to climate politics through the promotion of market-based solutions to climate change on the national and international levels. The section begins with a brief outline of the ways in which climate change, initially a scientific problem, became prominent on the political agenda and was appropriated by the neoliberal discourse. The overall conclusion of the first part of this chapter is that the dominant discourse on climate change has a nation-state bias that excludes the consideration of non-state actors and obfuscates the issues of social injustices and inequalities with which climate change impacts are associated with.

3.1.1 Climate change: from science to politics/policy

Climate change as a problem that threatens life on Earth has evolved from being an exclusively scientific point of inquiry to becoming an overriding issue that transcends the domains of politics, economy and justice. Scientific inquiry into climate change and potential human influence on the process dates back to the early 19th century and is linked to the discovery of the insulating effect of the atmosphere by the French scientists Fourier and Pouillet which was later elaborated on by Tyndall and Langley; identification by the Swedish scientist Arrhenius of water vapor, carbon dioxide and methane as responsible for the insulation effect, and the first assessment of the impacts from the industrial fossil fuel combustion on climate change (Arrhenius 1997; Rodhe *et al.* 1997). Although scientific inquiry on climate change slowed down in the beginning of the 20th century, it was further pursued with a renewed interest and a focus on CO₂ emissions from the industrial sources as primarily linked to climate change. The works of Guy Steward Callendar, Roger Revelle, Gilbert Plass, and Charles David Keeling, among many others, contributed to the development of the climate change theory and its introduction to the public and political agenda. It is notable that in the first decades of scientific research, global warming was mostly viewed by scientists such as Arrhenius and Callendar as potentially beneficial for human kind in terms of agricultural production in previously unsuitable climates (Hulme 2008).

However, despite the decades of scientific research and findings, it was only in the late 1980s that the scientific assessments were recognized on the international political arena as a source of concern and a focus for policy. A number of reports aimed at politicians paved the way for this international recognition: the 1979 Charney Report that pointed out the importance of socioeconomic consequences in light of projected global warming; the 1981 assessment by the Council of Environmental Quality that called for United States leadership in demonstrating a commitment to

reduce the risks of global climate change given the country's high energy consumption; and the 1982 report by the Climate Research Committee of the Climate Board of the US NAS that was the first attempt to analyze in-depth the potential impacts of human-induced climate change on water supply, agriculture, sea levels and so on (Bolin 2007). Yet, despite a growing scientific consensus regarding the human-induced nature of climate change and its potential impacts voiced throughout the Villach conferences in 1980 - 1985, it was the proper political engagement that was still amiss. In the words of Bert Bolin, a major figure in the international scientific community, "an organ that provided an international meeting place for *scientists and politicians* to take responsibility for assessing the available knowledge concerning global climate change and its possible socio-economic implications was missing" (Bolin 2007: 39; original emphasis). Not least because of the efforts of Bolin and his fellow scientists to publicize the issue of climate change through publications in non-specialist circles and personal contacts with key political figures (Bodansky 2001), such an international forum finally saw light in 1988 with the creation of the IPCC. This forum became the nexus of science and politics on climate change as the scientific data collected by scientists was fed in directly to the policy-makers responsible for taking appropriate action. The adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 institutionalized this scientific and political alliance even further. From that point on, any policy action was justified by the growing scientific consensus over the nature and extent of the climate change problem. Concentrations of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere and the related projections of future temperature increases became the focal point of the conceptualization of climate change in the dominant discourse.

Margaret Thatcher's speech to the Royal Society in 1988 undoubtedly provided an extra leverage for the transposition of climate change from the scientific to the political agenda, even though the language she used to describe the scientific findings was still cautious: "We *are told* that a warming

effect of 1°C per decade *would* greatly exceed the capacity of our natural habitat to cope. Such warming *could* cause accelerated melting of glacial ice and a consequent increase in the sea level of several feet over the next century” (Thatcher 1988: n.p.; emphasis added). In contrast, just a year later, Thatcher’s representation of climate change takes an unexpectedly dramatic turn: the issue is described as an “insidious danger”, and “as menacing in its way as those more accustomed perils with which international diplomacy has concerned itself for centuries. It is the prospect of irretrievable damage to the atmosphere, to the oceans, to earth itself” (Thatcher 1989: n.p.). Moreover, the “problem of global climate change is one that affects us all and action will only be effective if it is taken at the international level” (Ibid.). Not only did such representation construct climate change as an entirely global issue thus diluting the responsibility and shifting the focus from the national level to the international (Carvalho 2005), but it also paved the way for the spread of an apocalyptic rhetoric (as related specifically to climate change) that would be picked up by the media and general public, as well as the political establishment. This use of the apocalyptic imagery side by side with the cited scientific data by a prominent political figure set the tone for future discussions around climate change and perhaps contributed to the conflation of alarmist rhetoric with the scientific claims. It should be noted however that the apocalyptic overtones in Thatcher’s speech were not unique in the sense that climate has always been linked to the cultural imageries of fear in the early-modern and modern eras (Hulme 2008). Besides, the gloom and doom rhetoric was also traceable in the construction of other environmental problems that became prominent back in the 1970s, not least due to works such as *Limits to Growth* or *Population Bomb* which painted an uncertain and dramatic picture of the future world.

Further, Thatcher’s 1989 speech can be considered as one of the first instances when climate change was framed according to the dominant economic discourse through its emphasis on the vital role of economic growth, industries and markets:

[F]irst we must have continued economic growth in order to generate the wealth required to pay for the protection of the environment. But it must be growth which does not plunder the planet today and leave our children to deal with the consequences tomorrow. And second, we must resist the simplistic tendency to blame modern multinational industry for the damage which is being done to the environment. Far from being the villains, it is on them that we rely to do the research and find the solutions. It is industry which will develop safe alternative chemicals for refrigerators and air-conditioning. It is industry which will devise bio-degradable plastics. It is industry which will find the means to treat pollutants and make nuclear waste safe [...] The market itself acts as a corrective the new products sell and those which caused environmental damage are disappearing from the shelves. (Thatcher 1989: no page).

This idea that environmental protection requires economic growth and that the market mechanism can efficiently deal with the problem can be traced back to the ecological modernization discourse that became prominent in the 1980s (Hajer 1997). As it will be shown in the coming sections, together neoliberal and ecological modernization discourses represent the dominant framing of climate change in the UK and beyond. At the same time, while the role of economy in relation to climate crisis is strongly emphasized in Thatcher's speech, the discussion of the genuine causes behind the rising emissions is entirely absent. In fact, Thatcher generalizes the causes by referring to all human beings as responsible: "the main threat to our environment is more and more people and their activities" (1989: n. p.). The existing economic or political order is thus not questioned, instead its legitimacy is reinforced (Carvalho 2005). It can be thus argued that Thatcher's speech was a landmark in the construction of the dominant climate change discourse: it brought together scientific claims and the apocalyptic rhetoric as applied to climate change on the one hand, and set the scene for framing the solutions to the problem in neoliberal terms, on the other. This discursive moment thus informed to a great extent further discourse on climate change: the dominant solutions proposed within the UNFCCC process (for the creation of which she was calling in this speech) would be framed along the lines of Thatcher's position on the role of economy and markets in dealing with environmental issues. The section that follows briefly examines

neoliberalism in order to lay the basis for discussion of the current dominant solutions to climate change as bearing the mark of this discourse.

3.1.2 Neoliberalism

While the roots of neoliberalism are found in classical liberalism, its current form has particular features that distinguish it from its predecessor (Turner 2007). Despite its clear historical roots, the term neoliberalism is one of the most ambiguous phenomena in the social sciences given the lack of a common understanding and definition of the concept. In agreement with (Ward and England 2007) and Springer (2012), five analytical frames of reference can be distinguished: neoliberalism as an ideological hegemonic project, as policy, as state form, as governmentality and as discourse. The analytical nature of these frames of reference suggests the existence of hybridized approaches, i.e. some scholars combine the features of the frames of reference while attempting to define neoliberalism and analyze its manifestations (Springer 2012). At the same time, a certain dichotomy exists between these approaches, as noted by Springer. Specifically, the dichotomy is evident between the ideological hegemony view of neoliberalism as belonging to the Marxian political economy perspective and governmentality as a poststructuralist conceptualization influenced by Foucauldian analysis, while policy and state form approaches fall somewhere in between. The discourse frame of reference suggested by Springer seeks to unite and reconcile this dichotomy by claiming that these approaches are not diametrically opposed but dialectically interrelated, not least because they have a shared concern for power relations. The discourse approach makes it possible to view neoliberalism as a “circuitous process of socio-spatial transformation” rather than a top-down or bottom-up phenomenon (Springer 2012: 133). The benefit of such understanding lies in the fact that discourse “encompasses material forms in state formation through policy and program, and via the subjectivation of individuals on the ground, even if this articulation still takes place through

discursive performatives” (Springer 2012: 143) which presents an integral approach to social relations.

Overall, neoliberalism can be regarded as a highly uneven, mutable and variegated phenomenon that encompasses context-specific practices, processes and discourses with a general aim of attaining ‘frictionless market rule’ through a variety of means (Peck 2010). This goal is based on the claims of the free market economic theory postulating that markets are self-regulating social structures capable of generating wealth and using resources efficiently, as well as guarantying individual freedom, should they not be constrained by the state through regulation or labor unions (Shaikh 2005).

Ever-changing combinations in time and space of processes, discourses and practices associated with neoliberalism point to the need for focusing on the concept of *neoliberalization* as reflecting its fluid character, rather on a monolithic and static meaning suggested by the term *neoliberalism*. In turn, the process of neoliberalization can be conceptualized as regulatory restructuring that has its roots in the past but at the same time signifies new features acquired:

...neoliberalization refers to a contradictory process of market-like rule, principally negotiated at the boundaries of the state, and occupying the ideological space defined by a (broadly) sympathetic critique of nineteenth-century laissez-faire and deep antipathies to collectivist, planned, and socialized modes of government, especially those associated with Keynesianism and developmentalism. “Neo,” in this formulation, can be taken to refer to the project's historical and ideological positioning *after* nineteenth-century liberalism... In a more processual sense, “neo” also denotes the repeated (necessity for) renewal and reinvention of a project that could never be fixed as a stable formula, and which has lurched through moments innovation, overreach, correction, and crisis (Peck 2010: 20).

Neoliberalization as a regulatory reorganization concerns primarily the relationship between economy and the state within which commodified and marketized forms of social life are imposed, extended and consolidated (Brenner *et al.* 2010). Concrete practices through which the supremacy of markets is established include for example deregulation, privatization of resources and assets

previously managed by the state, liberalization of trade across borders and reduction of welfare programs provided by the state, among many others. These practices are meant to ensure a competitive business climate supported by an appropriate legal framework that will enable individuals (including corporations) to create enterprises in order to generate wealth. Competition at all levels (individual, business and between countries) in conjunction with privatization of public assets and deregulation thus become key for attaining this goal since these practices presumably help “eliminate bureaucratic red tape, increase efficiency and productivity, improve quality, and reduce costs” (Harvey 2005: 65). These practices are not only valid for the economy but are also applied to the management of the environment.

As pointed out by Castree (2008), neoliberalism claims to be able to provide superior ecological stewardship of the environment through market rationality and private ownership of commonly owned resources - as opposed to ineffective government efforts - while simultaneously generating profit. The concrete practices through which a neoliberal logic interacts with the environment are then rebuilding governance, privatizing and enclosing common resources with the excuse of their more efficient management, and commodification of ecosystems through pricing (Heynen and Robbins 2005).

Finally, a brief overview of the key tenets of neoliberalism would not be complete without mentioning one of the key processes associated with the spread of neoliberal discourse and practice - globalization. The process of globalization is often defined as “an increase in the volume of cross-border economic interactions and resource flows, producing a qualitative shift in the relations between national economies and between nation-states” (Kotz 2002). From this perspective, globalization is an independent process occurring through the expansion of international trade. However, the role of neoliberalism in the process of globalization and vice versa cannot be

underestimated. According to Kotz (2002), globalization started well before World War I as demonstrated by the increased international trade during the colonial era and the emergence of transnational corporations, thus affecting the competitive structure of capitalism before neoliberalism came to play an important role. However the rise of neoliberal policies that began in the 1960s propelled globalization even further as evidenced from the cross-border flows of real and financial capital that grew rapidly from that point on (Ibid.). Thus, neoliberalism and the process of globalization are mutually reinforcing phenomena that define the current form of world capitalism often referred to as ‘neoliberal globalization’ to capture both the global character and the neoliberal features of the current form of capitalism.

While there are many issues associated with the spread neoliberal practices and globalization, the most pertinent for this thesis are those that relate to the interaction between processes of neoliberalization and the environment, and specifically, climate change. They will be thoroughly discussed in the next section.

3.1.3 Ecological modernization and neoliberal discourses

As discussed in the previous section, Margaret Thatcher’s speech to the UN General Assembly in 1989 had a long-term consequence for the dominant discourse on climate change (Carvalho 2005). Her framing of climate change as a global problem (based on the emerging scientific consensus) that diffused responsibility of specific actors, and the emphasis on the market as an appropriate solution not only reflected her neoliberal views but was also in line with the wider ecological modernization (EM) discourse that was becoming dominant in the OECD countries at that time (Hajer 1997). The EM discourse that emerged in the 1970s was both developing in parallel to the dominant neoliberal discourse and was significantly shaped by this discourse. While many scholars focus exclusively on how the solutions to this crisis have been intertwined with neoliberal discourses and

approaches (Brand 2009; Doyle and Chaturvedi 2010; Lohmann 2012), following Coffey and Marston (2013), I argue that it is important to recognize the intersection of neoliberal and EM discourses in the construction of the dominant climate change discourse.

Hajer defines EM as “the discourse that recognizes the structural character of the environmental problematic but none the less assumes that existing political, economic, and social institutions can internalize the care for the environment” (1997: 25). Internalizing the care for environment suggests that EM sees no conflict between the existing socio-economic system and the environmental crisis. On the contrary, it is based on the assumption that environment is compatible with the system and equally with the goal of economic growth, provided that the institutional governance is reformed or restructured as needed. Another key feature is that EM relies on technological innovation as an essential means of addressing environmental problems through particular managerial practices. For Hajer (1997) EM has similarities with neoliberalism concerning the need for restructuring the industrial economy, yet it is positioned by the author as a separate discourse that emerged in the 1970s as a result of the discursive struggles between governments, environmental movement and expert organizations. In fact, the emergence of the environmental problematic should be linked to the wider cultural critique of modern society that determines how problems are routinely addressed through scientific, technological and management means (Fischer and Hajer 1999). ‘Cultural’ in the context used by the authors refers to the anthropological definition of culture as ‘a way of life’. From this perspective, environmental problems are the result not only of a particular economic or political system but of “the implicit systems of meanings and frames that underpin the various institutional practices through which we conduct environmental politics” (Fisher and Hajer 1999: 6).

Recognizing the similarity between EM and neoliberal discourse as concerns their shared focus on market-driven approaches or public-private partnership for example, Pellizzoni (2011) argues that

there is an ontological discord between the two frameworks. This ontological discord is reflected in the diverging understanding of material reality as merging of separate natural and socio-technical dimensions: while EM, influenced by Beck's theory of risk, views the material world as impinging on human agency, neoliberalism endorses human agency with a capacity to manufacture this material reality. There is also little in common, according to Pellizzoni, between the two discourses in terms of EM's concept of ecological citizenship based on non- contractual and non-territorial obligations of justice and the need to address social and nature-related inequalities, and the role of inequality in the neoliberal discourse as vital for competition.

Thus, while EM and neoliberal discourses tend to share the preference for a techno-managerial approach to environmental problems, the two discourses also diverge in a number of dimensions pointed out above. The implication is that while it is easy to conflate the two frameworks, it is necessary to recognize their mutual influence on the construction of dominant solutions to climate change which was in many ways similar to the construction of other environmental issues under the influence of the wider cultural understandings of modern society.

3.1.4 The dominant solutions to climate change

Ever since the negotiation of the UNFCCC in 1992 advocated by key political figures such as Margaret Thatcher and climate scientists (e.g. Bert Bolin, James Hansen), approaches to solving climate change have been framed within the dominant neoliberal and EM discourses (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006; Bailey *et al.* 2011; Catney and Doyle 2011; Newell and Paterson 2009). The prevalent approaches are reflected in policy instruments under the Kyoto Protocol, the main policy tool to deal with climate change on the global level within the UNFCCC. These include International Emissions Trading, Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism. One feature that these approaches have in common is their market-based nature which makes it possible to establish a

price mechanism to ensure that polluters reduce emissions in a cost-effective way. According to Robert Stavins, one of the key economists behind the design of the Protocol, market-based instruments are preferable to regulatory measures because they “offer cost-effective alternatives, provide dynamic incentives for technological change and address concerns about distributional equity” (Stavins 1997: 302). The economic perspective was thus decisive in determining solutions to climate change on the international and national levels. The preference for this perspective can be explained by the wider economic processes of globalization and liberalization that have been occurring worldwide and the dominance of the ecological modernization discourse that prioritized a techno-managerial approach to solving environmental problems (Bailey *et al.* 2011). Alongside market-based instruments, technology-based ones (renewable energy and geoengineering) have been present in the dominant discourse on climate change (Giddens 2009).

Despite its widespread endorsement and acceptance on the national and international policy levels (von Malmberg and Strachan 2005), market-based approaches to climate change have been criticized from multiple perspectives. The overall critique is that carbon markets hardly help achieve sustainable development or emission reduction goals since they are part of “a continuous trajectory of capitalist dynamics, structuring human relations and the natural environment in familiar ways” (Böhm *et al.* 2012: 3). By familiar ways the authors mean the commodification of nature’s capacity to absorb carbon for the sake of creating new opportunities for capital accumulation and unlimited economic growth. Such commodification became possible with the spread of various financial instruments and services as part of the neoliberal framework (Lohmann 2012; Newell and Paterson 2009). As precursors of carbon markets, financial markets were able to essentially commodify any notional value, including environmental commons, such as water, land, genetic material, to be traded as commodities (Bond 2012). Turning carbon emissions into tradable commodities was then an extension of the neoliberal logic to another common resource – air. The result of carbon trading

becoming the ultimate solution to climate change is that the abstract character of carbon markets obscures the discussion of the historical roots of the problem, the significance of the place where emissions are produced and technologies used to reduce them (Lohmann 2008). Apart from the general critique of transposing neoliberal logic to the domain of climate change, specific criticisms of carbon markets include a spatial and temporal replacement of emissions rather than their actual reduction (Bond 2012), adverse effects on the indigenous population as a result of offsetting projects in the global South, concerns over distributional equity (Storm 2009) and the colonial character of projects implemented in the global South and fraudulent accounting methodologies (Bachram 2004), to name a few. Even though there have been calls for capping the markets and increasing the role of the state in climate change politics, such approaches remained squarely within the dominant EM discourse that favors technical solutions and economic growth (Giddens *et al.* 2009).

Although carbon trading and large scale renewable energy projects are currently the most accepted global-scale solution by the policy-makers, recently geoengineering, essentially a technocratic solution, started to be discussed on the policy level as a potential viable future solution to climate change. Geoengineering, understood as a manipulation of the global environment (Keith 2000) with the aim of reversing climate change, encompasses two main methods: solar radiation management (SRM) and carbon dioxide removal (CDR). The goal of SRM is to reflect light and heat back to the atmosphere through by for example, releasing aerosols into the stratosphere or increasing the brightness of marine clouds. In contrast, CRD is concerned with the removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere by afforestation, carbon capture devices or ocean fertilization, for instance. While some scholars argue that geoengineering is inherently neoliberal in its core belief in the power of entrepreneurs to innovate market solutions to any serious problem that will both address the problem and provide financial returns without having to genuinely reduce emissions and consequently economic growth (Buck 2012; Mirowski 2013), it would be incorrect to consider this

approach as an entirely neoliberal project for the following reason. Geoengineering has its roots in the weather control and climate modification techniques applied both in the USSR and the US in the 1950s and 1960s (Keith 2000; Buck 2012). Under the umbrella of atmospheric sciences, the projects included removal of the Arctic sea ice, a chemical control of evaporation (the USSR), and cloud seeding ventures in the US (Keith 2000). While the entrepreneurial and economic motives in the spirit of neoliberal capitalism can be discerned in the idea of producing rain to boost crop production in the US (Buck 2012), the Soviet Union's attempts around the same time to increase temperatures by warming Arctic seas suggest that it was a science-driven process aimed at gaining control over natural forces. Yet, given that a number of companies have been established specifically for the purpose of selling carbon offsets generated from oceans fertilization and that there has been pressure from the commercial sector to develop this technology on a large scale (Humphreys 2011), it is evident that this approach has already been to some extent appropriated by actors following a neoliberal logic.

Thus, this section has shown that the dominant approaches to solving climate change-market-based and technology-based mechanisms - are shaped by the neoliberal and ecological modernization discourse that prioritize cost-effectiveness, the possibility for growth and creation of new markets and a minimal intervention of the state.

3.1.5 Justice in the dominant climate discourse

After the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen in 2009 the notion of justice came to the forefront of the dominant climate change discourse in the form of 'climate justice'. This brief history of the term outlined later in this chapter (section 3.2.1) shows that climate justice has been primarily voiced by the civil society rather than policy-makers. Yet the notion of justice is inscribed in the dominant discourse as reflected in the principles of the UNFCCC (United Nations 1992):

The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

According to Schlosberg (2013), this formulation contains a number of competing notions of justice: while the equity is proclaimed a guiding principle, it conflicts with the “common but differentiated responsibility” and “capabilities” as it suggests that some countries due to historical emissions are more responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions than others, and conversely, some countries have less capacity to deal with the problem, and thus are expected to contribute less than others, regardless of the main equity principle. In other words, the egalitarian distributive justice reflected in the word ‘equity’ is opposed in the UNFCCC to the burden-sharing approach implied by the common but differentiated responsibility and capabilities (Vanderheiden 2013). Further in the text it is clearly stated that “the largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gases has originated in developed countries” (Article 3(1) United Nations 1992) which implies responsibility of the developed countries towards developing ones. However, in the absence of clear guidelines within the statement, this implied equity has been widely debated in the literature and policy circles (Baer *et al.* 2008; Caney 2006; Vanderheiden 2008). Developed countries, while recognizing their historical and present contribution to the emissions, do not agree that it is fair to relieve their developing counterparts of any obligations to reduce future emissions which are projected to be growing. In contrast, for developing countries the notion of fairness is related to the recognition of the industrialized countries’ contribution and benefit from past emissions, and consequently, developing countries should enjoy the same right to emit carbon as part of their development and growth.

Overall, from the very start of negotiations the policy discourse within the UNFCCC was concerned with the distributional aspects of justice on the following issues: the allocation of emission rights between the two groups of countries; the overall emission targets; the associated costs of meeting the

abatement and adaptation goals; and the liability arising from greenhouse gas emissions, i.e. who should be compensated from climate-related damage, how and on what basis (Baer 2011; Wiegandt 2001).

Since the COP-16 meeting in Cancun in 2010 the key discourses on climate justice within the negotiation process still revolve around the issues of historical responsibility for the emissions, cost sharing, vulnerability of certain countries in terms of climate change impacts and inter, as well as intrastate financial transfers (Audet 2013; Barrett 2013). A number of theoretical approaches to conceptualizing climate justice have been proposed, such as per capita equity (Jamieson 2001; Singer 2002), historical responsibility (Agarwal *et al.* 2002; Neumayer 2000), rights framework (Baer *et al.* 2008; Caney 2006), and capability approach (Holland 2008; Schlosberg 2012). The common feature of these approaches is their distributional orientation, i.e. they are concerned to various extents either with the transfer of technology or financial resources or rights to development which suggests a strong reliance on monetary valuations, such as related to calculation of emissions, sinks, costs and benefits analysis, and so on (De Lucia 2009).

Finally, while in the first years of the UNFCCC the focus was almost exclusively on the mitigation of climate change, it is now shifting more towards adaptation to the effects of climate change on the scale of nation states (Schlosberg 2012). The nation-state bias is important to note because it is one of the defining features of the dominant discourse linked to the overall structure of international relations. Regarding the focus on adaptation in the dominant climate policies, according to Pelling (2011), the problematic aspect of it is that it is often considered to be an entirely technological and non-political process. Increasingly, adaption and vulnerability from climate change are becoming central in the IPCC reports, and the vulnerability is regarded as a factor that can hinder sustainable development in nation-states (Ibid.). Vulnerability, defined by the IPCC in terms of susceptibility of a

system to the adverse climate impacts (IPCC 2001), is essentially a concept that focuses on the distributional dimension, in this case, climate change impacts and associated costs of adaptation or mitigation measures, particularly for the global South (UNFCCC 2007).

Overall, as it has been demonstrated in this section, the dominant discourse on climate change is concerned mainly with distributional justice on a nation-state basis as a means of dealing with vulnerability through adaption measures which in turn open a path for technological approaches to the problem. As discussed in previous sections, technological and managerial approach to climate change can be attributed to the wider neoliberal and ecological modernization discourses that have been shaping the dominant representation of the problem. This dominant discourse and practice has been considered by some scholars as contributing to the de-politicization of climate change and the entrenchment of the so-called post-political condition (Swyngedouw 2011b; Catney and Doyle 2011; Russell 2012). The next section discusses this critical theoretical perspective for analyzing the dominant discourse on climate change and the counter-discourse constructed by the grassroots networks.

3.1.6 The post-political condition and the dominant climate change discourse

The dominant discourse on climate change mapped out in the previous sections of this chapter has been viewed by Swyngedouw (2010, 2013) and other scholars (Catney and Doyle 2011; Russell 2012; Pusey and Russell 2010) as essentially non-political. The argument goes that the dominant climate politics has been constructed around the ongoing ‘fetishisation’ of CO₂ in the political, scientific and expert arenas (Swyngedouw 2010). This ‘fetishisation’, as expressed in the apocalyptic imaginations, reduces the climate change problem to curbing CO₂ emissions, and calls for the urgent actions. This results in the de-politicization of the climate change problem which puts it in the domain of techno-managerial decisions within the dominant neoliberal paradigm that treats CO₂ emissions as a

commodity (Ibid.). The broader implication of this, according to Swyngedouw, is that climate change becomes a key arena through which a post-political and post-democratic world order is configured and entrenched. By the post-political the author means “predominance of a managerial logic in all aspects of life, the reduction of the political to administration where decision-making is increasingly considered to be a question of expert knowledge and not of political position. It is accompanied by the diffusion of governance into a host of non-state or quasi-state institutional forms and actors, and fosters consensual understandings of political action and the particularization of political demands” (Swyngedouw 2010: 225).

The emergence of the post-political condition is associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1998 that signified a triumph of liberalism over communism, a final political act that would propel liberal ideals on the global scale, as suggested by Fukuyama in *The End of History* (Russell 2012). It is thus the condition that is characterized by the triumph of the neoliberal agenda in all spheres of life in the western world, and as far as environment is concerned, by the dominance of the ecological modernization discourse in the environmental politics. The term post-political has its roots in the radical philosophic literature influenced by Marxist and post-structuralist thought. The basic definition of the post-political by the key thinkers in this theoretical strand is the foreclosure of the proper political dimension and its reduction to a mere social administration based on consensus and inclusion (Mouffe 2005; Žižek 1999; Swyngedouw 2010; Rancière 2001). What constitutes the properly political is of course a debatable question. For Mouffe, the political relates to the antagonism and adversarial relations which she calls agonism:

While antagonism is a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies who do not share any common ground, agonism is a we/they relation where conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. They are adversaries not enemies (Mouffe 2005: 20).

Swyngedouw views the political as “the space for the enunciation and affirmation of difference, for the cultivation of dissensus and disagreement” (2013:7). Such view suggests that the proper political will entail the exclusion of certain options that are prioritized over others. For Žižek, the political occurs for example when a particular demand voiced at a protest or demonstration turns into a universal one, i.e. when it goes beyond a particular case to denote the opposition to those in power rather than the disagreement with a specific policy or decision (Žižek 1999). Finally, according to Rancière (2001: 32), the political is also expressed in “the modes of dissensual subjectification that reveal the difference of a society to itself”. The substitution of the contestation or conflict with a consensus and the impossibility of exclusion is thus a defining feature of the post-political condition, one that leads to ‘the end of politics’ and its substitution with the rule of technocrats (Rancière 2001; Žižek 2006). The post-political condition is associated specifically with liberalism in its various forms, which are defined by the rationalism and individualism that ignores the inherent pluralism of the society (Mouffe 2005). Thus, it follows from this theoretical perspective that climate change, as an issue that has been managed according to neoliberal logic (i.e. through commodification and market mechanisms) as the only appropriate and possible one, is simultaneously defined by the post-political condition and constitutive of it.

While the dominant discourse embodied in the UNFCCC process and apocalyptic representations fits easily with the post-political description, there are disagreements in the literature over the extent to which this entrenchment is characteristic of the overall climate discourse and the usefulness and novelty of the theoretical framework itself. Regarding the latter, it was argued in the earlier sections of this chapter that the particular apocalyptic and techno-managerial discourse around climate change is far from unique. In fact, other environmental problems that had been discursively prominent in the past – overpopulation, energy crisis, DDT and so on- have been framed in the similar vein. This is not to say that the neoliberal thinking has not shaped the environmental policy

and discourse around certain type of solutions, but according to McCarthy (2013), the argument is that it would not be correct to link post-politicization which is considered to have emerged since the early 1990s to climate change alone. Rather, the dominant climate change discourse is yet another example of how environmental problems have been constructed since the emergence of environmentalism in the 1960s. This construction has no doubt been influenced by neoliberalism but has also been closely linked to the wider processes in the society related to the rise of social movements, technological and scientific progress and so on (Hajer 1997). Even a more important critique in the context of this dissertation is that post-politicization is far from being universal or hegemonic as demonstrated by “substantial, significant, and ongoing struggles around the politics and politicization of climate change that are directly at odds” with Swyngedouw’s thesis regarding post-politics (McCarthy 2013: 23). Mobilizations on climate justice that will be discussed in the second part of this chapter are examples of such politicizing struggles in which movements challenge and resist the non-political framing of climate change and the underpinning neoliberal solutions through direct action (Chatterton *et al.* 2013; Featherstone 2013). Therefore, to claim that the post-political is pervasive and overwhelming is to deny such struggles significance and a radical potential (Goldstein 2013). Furthermore, these struggles are important because they demonstrate that what passes for strictly political can have multiple manifestations and logics (Featherstone and Korf 2012; McCarthy 2013). The second part of this chapter is thus devoted to discussing a counter-discourse on climate change and introducing an additional theoretical perspective. Such a theoretical framework will provide a fuller understanding of the grassroots discourse, making it possible to trace how grassroots discourse on climate change resists or reproduces the dominant representation and thus proposes an alternative direction for climate politics.

3.2 Climate justice: a counter-discourse on climate change

The climate justice discourse of various global movements and networks that have been mobilizing in Copenhagen and beyond has been recognized by scholars (Bond 2012; Chatterton *et al.* 2013; Featherstone 2013) as challenging the dominant climate policy discourse. As demonstrated in previous sections, the dominant discourse is centered on emission reductions through specific market-based instruments and following distributive justice logic coupled with the North/South dichotomy. Ever since the landmark speech by Thatcher in 1988, the dominant discourse on climate change has been driven by nation- state interests and forms of cooperation. Despite the formal possibility for NGOs to take part in the negotiation process, the issue of climate change has remained firmly grounded in the inter-state framework. The nation-state approach has obscured the multi-scalar nature of the problem and has deprived the non-state actors of the discursive power to shape discussions concerning climate politics and to reveal multiple understandings of what constitutes a just approach to climate change (Burnham *et al.* 2013b; Fisher 2012). Such an exclusive approach adopted within the dominant climate discourse generates resistance on behalf of non-state actors, and specifically social movements whose justice claims go beyond the distributional dimension but also raise the questions of recognition and political representation (Fisher 2012). The global grassroots mobilizations in Copenhagen in 2009 and a counter-summit in Cochabamba in 2010 that united thousands of non-state actors under the banner of climate justice are the reflection of a counter-discourse being formed to challenge the dominant discourse.

By counter-discourse I mean the discursive resistance of the actors who have been formerly ‘voiceless’ expressed through the act of speaking against the discourse that has been dominating and suppressing their views (Moussa and Scapp 1996). It is important to note that I deliberately do not use the term ‘counter-hegemonic’ discourse which is often applied in the analysis of climate justice

(Austen and Bedall 2010; Carroll 2010; Carroll and Ratner 2010; De Lucia 2009). The reason is that the term ‘counter-hegemony’ based on Antonio Gramsci’s conceptualizations brings in the struggles for hegemony between the dominant and oppressed groups directed at capturing state power and replacing the oppressive discourse with another kind of dominant discourse. Given that grassroots networks emphasize their anarchist and autonomous traditions that reject any form of domination and general distrust towards state (as pointed out in interviews and in RT (2011b) political statement, for example), I regard grassroots networks’ discourse as non-hegemonic rather than counter-hegemonic (Day 2005).

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. Having traced the history of the term climate justice, I locate the roots of this counter-discourse in the alter-globalization movement and particularly in its anarchist and autonomous currents. As it will be shown in section 3.2.3, this link is critical because the counter-discourse on climate justice draws significantly on antagonisms articulated by the alter-globalization movement. Section 3.2.4 provides a theoretical perspective suitable for the analysis of the emerging counter-discourse based on Nancy Fraser’s conceptualization of the dimensions of social justice that supersede the nation-state framework. The chapter concludes with an overview of the climate justice discourse literature.

3.2.1 Climate justice concept: a brief history

Climate justice discourse became prominent through the mobilizations during the COP-15 meeting in Copenhagen when thousands of people marched in the streets demanding “Social change, not climate change” and chanting “climate justice now!”. The alternative summit in Bolivia a year later was meant to strengthen and solidify this discourse further. Behind this emerging ‘movement from below’ (Bond 2012) are years of campaigning both on the international and national levels, and a variety of ideological positions, from reformism to radical anti-capitalism and environmentalism

(Reitan and Gibson 2012). Roberts and Parks (2009) claim that as a concept, climate justice first appeared in the academic works of Edith Brown Weiss and Henry Shue in the early 1990s. However, the term was popularized by the environmental justice movement in the US (Dawson 2010) and through the UN conferences in the late 1990s-early 2000s. Namely, the Indigenous Environmental Network was the first network to use the term from the movement perspective (Cox 2013). At the end of the 1990s an American NGO CorpWatch produced a report entitled *Greenhouse Gangsters vs Climate Justice* in an attempt to bridge climate change with global and local justice issues (Roberts and Parks 2009; Dawson 2010). CorpWatch took the issue further by organizing the First Climate Justice Summit in 2000 in The Hague. Several grassroots networks and community activists from around the world met in at the ‘alternative’ Summit running parallel to the COP-6 meeting. By demanding climate justice, participants in the Summit called for “solutions to the climate change problem that promote human rights, equity, labor rights and environmental justice globally and locally” (CorpWatch 2000: n.p.). This is where the full name of the RT network studied herein – Rising Tide for Climate Justice – originated. Climate justice was highlighted as a key priority for the network in its first political statement.

The UN meetings on climate change continued to be the rallying place of international NGOs, local and community activists campaigning on climate change. The first Declaration on Climate Justice that made an attempt to reconfigure the debate on climate change from greenhouse gases emissions to the environmental and human rights issue was drafted in Bali in 2002. It was signed by hundreds of organizations and networks. A few more declarations, incorporating the major points of Bali and Delhi declarations, as well as that of the 1991 Principles of Environmental Justice, appeared afterwards (Roberts and Parks 2009). The other important moments in the history of the climate justice concept were the COP-13 and COP-14 Conferences in Bali (2007) and Poznan (2008), and the establishment of transnational networks such as Climate Justice Now! (CJN!) in 2007 and

Climate Justice Action (CJA) in 2008. The origins of these two networks are important: CJN! as a network uniting radical groups that had been part of the alter-globalization movement emerged out of confrontation during COP13 in Bali with a moderate Climate Action Network (CAN) that was accused of monopolizing the civil society space within the UNFCCC negotiations and endorsing the dominant solutions to climate change (Bullard and Müller 2012). It is thus the reformist orientation of CAN reflected in the support of ecological modernization principles and market-based instruments in line with the dominant policy discourse that pushed some CAN members to create CJN! in 2007 (Reitan and Gibson 2012). In contrast, CJA participants did not have a history of participating in the UNFCCC summits, as the CJA was made up of relatively small networks and groups from Germany, Denmark and the UK with explicit anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian roots later joined by some partisan networks and NGOs from the global South (Ibid.). Yet some CJA members also took part in the alter-globalization movement that contested neoliberal capitalism as a root cause of economic and social injustices and ecological destruction all over the world (Goodman 2009). Finally, the landmark in the history of climate justice discourse is the COP -15 meeting in Copenhagen in 2009 as it is there that the discourse became prominent (Chatterton *et al.* 2013; Featherstone 2013) leading to the proclamation by some activists of the birth of a climate justice movement of movements. Before discussing the axes of the climate justice discourse it is thus necessary to review the key features of its predecessor, the alter-globalization movement.

3.2.2 Alter-globalization movement

The precursor of the climate justice movement has several widely used names in the literature, media and among activists themselves, such as the anti-globalization movement (Day 2005; Epstein 2001), alter-globalization (Hosseini 2006, 2010), movement of movements (Klein 2004; Mertes and Bello 2004), anti-capitalist movement (Müller 2006), global justice (Routledge 2009) and justice globalism

(Goodman 2009), among others. Each name highlights a different focus or character of the movement. Just as the names of the movement are diverse, so are its constituents: direct action networks organizing on the basis of non-hierarchy and consensual decision making, development and environmental NGOs, networks from the global North as well as global South, political parties, anarchists, environmentalists, feminists and other movements and actors have been involved on various levels (Cumbers *et al.* 2008).

In line with Della Porta and Diani's (2006) differentiation between social movement and social movement organizations, the global justice movement can be regarded as a huge network consisting of various formations, entities and organizations with diverging agendas and tactics but interrelated in their common goal of resisting neoliberal globalization. What unites these heterogeneous entities is their "opposition to the agenda of globalizing capital and the neoliberal ideology associated with it, which brings privatization, deregulation and unemployment to the global North, and structural adjustment programmes and increased impoverishment to the global South" (Day 2004: 728). The opposition to neoliberal capitalism as the system behind the economic, social and environmental injustices and inequalities between and within countries is thus an overarching discursive frame of the alter-globalization movement. To resist the hegemony of neoliberal ideology, the global justice movement channeled its energy in the opposition to various institutions that are in charge of implementing the neoliberal agenda in practice. These are the financial bodies such as the World Bank, IMF and WTO, as well as specific agreements – NAFTA, GATTs, - enacted by these institutions in collaboration with national governments. The opposition took the form of mass protests, some of which were marked by violence on the part of participants and police brutality (for a detailed account of major mobilizations see Curran (2006); Pleyers (2010)). However, a peaceful form of protest was also important: the organization of counter summits, namely World Social Forum that fostered a constructive dialogue of movement participants with the goal of imagining

and enacting alternatives to the current neoliberal order, as well as addressing movement-related issues. Overall, the goal of the alter-globalization movement has been to challenge the hegemony of neoliberal logic while also re-introducing the social and political questions to spheres dominated by the economic profit-maximizing motif, as well as modeling and encouraging an active civic participation in the decision-making process (Pleyers 2010).

The key features of the movement are its diversity in terms of the diverging backgrounds and ideological positions of the participants, the overall horizontal and decentralized organizing structure drawing on the anarchist praxis, and a common recognition of the systems of oppression embodied in neoliberal capitalism (Day 2005; Müller 2008; Strasinger 2010). While contestation of neoliberal capitalism is a shared goal of the movement participants, the construction of alternative visions of societal organization is also a significant part of the alter-globalization discourse. According to Gibson-Graham (2006), some of its strands (e.g. World Social Forum) are producing a new political discourse that aims at dislocating the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism through promoting a vision of a ‘diverse economy’ and re-socializing economic relations. ‘Diverse economy’ relates to an understanding that leaves space for forms of economic exchange not limited to the ones imposed by neoliberal capitalism, i.e. not only commodified forms (for profit and monetized, following the market logic) are recognized as contributing but also non-commodified ones. Non-commodified exchange, be it a transaction, a type of enterprise or labor, is governed by a logic other than that of the markets, i.e. it can be based on ethical or informal principles. Thus, the notion of diverse economy foregrounds the social aspect of economic relations, effectively re-socializing them. Re-socialization happens through concrete practices that the movement engages in, but also through constructing a new language of ‘community economy’ where non-commodified and non-monetized forms of exchanges are valued and supported (Ibid.).

Finally, one feature that is particularly pertinent for this thesis is the specific conception of justice put forward by the movement. Granted, it is virtually impossible to identify the universal conception that would apply to all the diverse groups making up the movement, nevertheless the contours of justice advocated by the movement in general can be sketched out. According to Nancy Fraser (2005), by linking local and national level problems to the transnational actors as responsible for these problems, the alter-globalization movement has challenged the state-territorial principle according to which justice claims are handled. Such an articulation is novel because it makes it possible to address injustices beyond the nation-state framework, capturing the nature of globalized injustices in which communities affected by some kind of injustice are not necessarily located on the territory of one state and are thus excluded from the “authorized contests over justice” (Fraser 2005: 8). This leads Fraser to suggest that the alter-globalization movement is transformative in orientation. Regarding the ‘transformative’ character of the movement, a distinction is made by Fraser between the affirmative and transformative approaches to tackling the issue of framing. Namely, the affirmative approach suggests accepting the principle of state-territoriality as the appropriate basis for deciding who is included or excluded from the contests over justice, which implies that the underlying logic of the existing order is not challenged. Moreover, this approach “insulates extra and non-territorial powers [such as corporations] from the reach of justice” (Fraser 2005: 13). It is then a reform-oriented approach which does not lead to any significant change in the status quo. In contrast, by contesting the appropriateness of the state-territorial principle in a globalizing world where injustices are no longer territorial, the alter-globalization movement offers a transformative approach that attempts to “reconstruct the meta-political foundations of justice for a globalizing world” (Ibid.: 15). Given the global nature of climate change as a problem that concerns the whole world as opposed to particular nation-states, the implication is that climate justice discourse continues this attempt to reframe the dominant conception of justice as a prerogative of the state.

Overall, the discourse of the alter-globalization movement is structured upon the resistance to neoliberal capitalism as the culprit for social, economic and environmental injustices locally and globally, the construction of alternatives to the dominant system and foregrounding the limits of the concept of justice commonly used within the dominant framework. What is left to address is the transition between the alter-globalization and climate justice movements.

According to Müller (2008), the bailouts of banks in 2008 signified in some way the death of free market capitalism and neoliberalism as we know it, leaving the global justice movement “without a hook, without an enemy, without a goal” and without a story (Ibid.: n.p.). The ‘death’ of neoliberalism, in the sense used by Müller, was more of a transformation and adjustment to the new realities. And the issue of climate change which has been on the international agenda for a decade was a perfect tool for neoliberalism to transform and restart itself, argued Müller (2008). For climate change it would inevitably mean a ‘green fix’ in the form of various carbon trading instruments intended to solve “the crisis of overaccumulation ... that has given us the current financial chaos, and ... the legitimization crisis that global authority has been suffering since the power of the story of ‘global terrorism’ began to wane” (Müller 2008: n.p.). That is why Tadzio Müller declared the ‘resurrection’ of the anti-capitalist politics of the global justice movement in the fight for climate justice (Müller 2008, 2010). Along similar lines, Reitan and Gibson (2012) argue that the issue of climate change brought by the wider environmental movement has galvanized the global justice movement and become its bellwether issue. The authors regard climate activism as ‘part and parcel’ of the global justice movement, yet with distinctive features that attest to the movement’s differences (Ibid.).

The physical moment of the resurrection of global justice, or the coming of age moment (Klein 2009; Reitan and Gibson 2012; White 2009), is considered to be the mobilization in Copenhagen in

2009. The UNFCCC summit in Copenhagen saw large - scale protests on the issue of climate change which gave some commentators the opportunity to compare it to the mobilizations in Seattle and/or link the emergence of climate justice to the global justice movement (Goodman 2009). Not all of the commentators were as optimistic as Tadzio Müller, however. Simons and Tonak (2010) argued that the mobilization in Copenhagen was generally a failure due to the inability of grassroots networks like CJA to resist NGO cooptation of the radical message and tactics, and the imposition of commodity-based solutions.

Whether or not the global justice movement was truly revived, it is in Copenhagen that the concept of climate justice became so prominent, with some activists believing that the event gave rise to the climate justice movement. While some networks such as RT UK had been using the term prior to the summit (Chase 2004), CJA and CJN! networks (that comprised smaller grassroots networks, such as CfCA and RT) brought it to the front and made it resonate worldwide. This made some scholars speak about climate justice as an empty signifier, i.e. devoid of any meaning (Austen and Bedall 2010), since it is widely used not only by radical grassroots networks but also governments and NGOs. It is therefore important to explore the particular meaning that grassroots networks assign to the concept of climate justice, as it is indicative of their preferred course of action in terms of social change and the direction of climate politics that they call for.

3.2.3 Climate justice discourse: climate debt, false solutions and neoliberal capitalism

Scholars (Chatterton *et al.* 2013; Fisher 2012; Austen and Bedall 2010) and activists (Building Bridges Collective 2010) note that climate justice as a concept and a perspective can have multiple meanings and preference for actions. While the empirical chapters of this dissertation will be focused on the discourse constructed by the specific grassroots networks in the UK, this section will outline the

broader contours of climate justice discourse embodied in the actions of CJN! and CJA networks, the key actors engaged in the construction of the counter-discourse on climate change in Europe and beyond (Russell 2012; Goodman 2011; Reitan and Gibson 2012). The climate justice discourse of these actors encompasses the following major themes: historical responsibility of the developed countries for the emissions and unequal socio-economic relations reflected in the concept of climate and ecological debt, the root causes of climate change in neoliberal capitalism (mostly CJA perspective), and rejection of market-based solutions to climate change (a shared perspective). These themes have been developed in various statements (CJA n.d.-b; CJN! 2008), activists' publications (*Dealing with Distractions: Confronting Green Capitalism in Copenhagen and Beyond*; *Space for Movement: Reflections from Bolivia on Climate Justice, Social Movements and the State*) and through the mobilizations in Copenhagen during the COP-15 meeting (2009) and the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (WPCCC) in Cochabamba in 2010.

The premises of climate justice discourse rest on the notion of historical responsibility and climate debt. The climate debt caused by developed countries through the industrialization is conceptualized by CJN! as two-fold:

For their excessive historical and current per person emissions – denying developing countries their fair share of atmospheric space – they have run up an “emissions debt” to developing countries; and For their disproportionate contribution to the effects of climate change – requiring developing countries to adapt to rising climate impacts and damage – they have run up an “adaptation debt” to developing countries. Together the sum of these debts – emissions debt and adaptation debt – constitutes their climate debt, which is part of a larger ecological, social and economic debt owed by the rich industrialized world to the poor majority (CJN! 2009?: n.p.).

However, the notion of climate and ecological debts also is underpinned by the wider idea that the global North has a history of exploitation of the global South through colonization and unequal

economic development. The historical responsibility is thus not limited to the emissions but captures the unequal social and economic relations between the two actors. This is evident from the CJA's call for the global day of direct action on October 12 as a symbolic date that marked the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus and the beginning of the colonization era and continued exploitation of the poor:

Today it is all of us, and the entire planet, who increasingly suffer the fate that some five centuries ago befell the indigenous of the Americas and their native lands. Then, it was the colonisers' mad search for the profit obtained from precious metals that drove them to wipe out entire cultures; today, it is capital's search for fossil fuels to drive its mad, never-ending expansion, that still wipes out entire cultures, and causes the climate crisis (CJA 2010: n.p.).

As a compensation for this historical injustice that made the countries of the global South vulnerable to climate change impacts and hinders their development, CJA! called for redressing the debt through technology and finance transfers from North to South, and by cutting emissions within developed countries according to the UNFCCC commitments that reflect the full measure of their historic and current excessive contribution to climate change (Ibid.). Two implications are worth pointing out here: first, the call for technology and financial transfers can be interpreted as a demand for distributional justice and in this sense, in line with the dominant discourse on climate change that treats the issue mainly in distributional terms (see section 3.1.5). On the other hand, even though based on the logic of fair distributions, the concept of climate debt according to Simons and Tonak (2010) implicitly supports the commodification of carbon and potentially promotes carbon trading as a mechanism for the reparations. However, this interpretation misses the key point behind the concept with which activists imbue it: financial reparations are far from being the goal; rather they are one of the material manifestations of the underlying symbolic meaning of climate debt as a historically unequal relationship between North and South, the rich and the poor, and their reproduction in climate change politics (Featherstone 2013). In the words of Nicola Bullard, a climate justice activist:

Ultimately, the only way that the debt can be repaid is by ensuring that the historic relations of inequality are broken once and for all and that no “new” debt will accumulate. This requires system change, both in the North and in the South (Bullard 2010: n.p.).

The second implications is that while the reparations are destined for the developing countries of the global South, the climate debt concept also extends to the “low-income communities in the industrialised North [who] have borne the toxic burden of this fossil fuel extraction, transportation and production” (CJN! 2009). Such extension of the concept connects with the environmental justice discourse framed around unequal distribution of environmental goods and bads in the United States. Further, the extension of the category implies that the concept of climate debt is based on the ‘all-affected principle’ (Fraser 2005) rather than on the geographical or territorial principle. The all-affected principle posits that “what turns a collection of people into fellow subjects of justice is not geographical proximity, but their co-imbrication in a common structural or institutional framework, which sets the ground rules which govern their social interaction, thereby shaping their perspective life possibilities, in patterns of advantage and disadvantage” (Fraser 2005: 13). In the case of climate debt this means that the marginalized communities physically located in the global North are also subjects of climate justice because they are affected by the underlying socio-economic system. Although CJA’s original analysis of the climate debt was more structured around historical inequalities and exploitation as evidenced from the focus of their statements, the term was nevertheless adopted by the network through the close cooperation with CJN! during the COP-15 mobilizations, as reflected in one of the goals of the network “to support reparations and the repayment of ecological debt to the global South by industrialised rich countries” (CJA n.d.-a). Along with the global South and marginalized communities in the North, the indigenous population features in climate justice discourse as a special subject of justice. The Indigenous Peoples’

Declaration (the main points of which were incorporated in the final statement) made during the PWCCC in Cochabamba demanded:

The recovery, revalidation and strengthening of our civilizations, identities, cultures and cosmovisions based on ancient and ancestral Indigenous knowledge and wisdom for the construction of alternative ways of life to the current “development model”, as a way to confront climate change (WPCCC 2010: n.p.).

This demand came as a reaction to the exclusion of the voices of indigenous communities from the UNFCCC process and as an affirmation of their rights to preserve traditional cultural knowledge and ways of life that are being destroyed by the dominant economic model (Ibid.). From this perspective, the justice they are calling for is that of cultural recognition that allows them to be considered as equal partners in shaping the solutions to climate change (Fraser 2000).

The second theme shared by the two networks in climate justice discourse is the rejection of so-called ‘false solutions’ defined as carbon offsetting, carbon trading for forests, agrofuels, trade liberalization and privatization pushed by governments, financial institutions and multinational corporations (CJN! 2007). In contrast, the genuine solutions include reduced consumption, financial transfers as discussed above, leaving fossil fuels in the ground and investing in community-led renewable energy, rights-based resource conservation, sustainable family farming and food sovereignty (Ibid.). In addition, traditional knowledge and ways of life are regarded as genuine solutions. This idea is well articulated in the Indigenous Peoples’ Declaration that calls “for the recovery, revalidation and strengthening of Indigenous Peoples’ technologies and knowledge, and for their incorporation into the research, design and implementation of climate change policies” (WPCCC 2010: n.p.) and is also present in the CJN!’s statement where the sustainable practices of indigenous peoples, fisher folk, and peasant communities are proposed to “be seen as offering the real solutions to climate change”(CJN! 2008). The concept of false solutions became central to climate justice discourse after the Durban Climate Justice Summit in 2004 when under the influence

of Carbon Trade Watch the participants of the summit produced the Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading. This declaration positioned carbon trading as exacerbating climate change and undermining other non-market based existing solutions (Goodman 2011).

While both CJN! and CJA use the term ‘false solutions’ in the same context, CJA often employs an additional adjective: “market-based solutions” which points to the link between climate change and neoliberal capitalism (CJA n.d.). In fact, the position on the role of capitalism is where the discourse of the two networks slightly diverges. Although CJN! recognized in the Poznan statement that stopping climate change will not be possible without addressing a “neo-liberal and corporate-based economy” (CJN! 2008), their critique of the current economic system is much more restrained than that of CJA. This can be explained by the backgrounds of the network members, i.e. many NGOs that split from the CAN network have a moderate stance on the issue of root causes of climate change being related to capitalism. Also, given that there are more than 700 organizations adhering to the principles of CJN!, it is natural that their ideological backgrounds would vary significantly and so having an explicit radical anti-capitalist focus could potentially alienate some of the actors. In contrast, CJA as a network with roots in anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian movements (Reitan and Gibson 2012) identified its ideological stance through the clear rejection of capitalism: “This is the system that is causing the climate crisis, and it has a name: capitalism” (CJA 2010). By refusing to separate climate crisis from the economic and financial crisis (Ibid.), CJA located the roots of all crises in the current political and economic system and framed climate justice as a struggle for social reproduction rather than an isolated environmental problem:

To struggle for climate justice, then, is to recognise that all these crises are linked; that the climate crisis is as much as social and economic crisis as it is an environmental disaster...Climate justice isn't about saving trees or polar bears – though we probably should do both. It is about empowering communities to take back power over their own lives. It is about leaving fossil fuels in the ground and creating socialised renewable energy systems; it is about food sovereignty against the domination of, and destruction caused, by industrial agribusiness; it is about

massively reducing working hours, and starting to live different lives; it is about reducing overproduction for overconsumption by elites in the North and the South. Climate justice, in short, is the struggle for a good life for us all (CJA 2010: n.p.).

Moreover, the CJA statement made a division between ‘us’ (grassroots social movements) and ‘them’ (government and corporations serving in the name of capital). In light of the post-political theoretical framework discussed in section 3.1.6, CJA clearly politicizes climate change by contesting the dominant framing of the problem that seeks to solve the problem according to the neoliberal capitalist logic and opposing the key actors behind this discourse.

Viewed together as contributing to the construction of a global climate justice counter-discourse, CJN! and CJA networks seek to develop an antagonistic climate change politics that contests the dominant policy discourse structured around market-based solutions and reinforcing unequal relations between the global North and global South (Chatterton *et al.* 2013; Featherstone 2013). While the existence, coherence and strength of a *global* climate justice discourse is highly questionable (Bullard and Müller 2012), the existence and significance of the local discourses as an expression of a climate micro-politics and their potential of influencing the macro-politics should not be underestimated (Goodman 2011). The next section highlights the theoretical perspective adopted here for analyzing the counter-discourse of specific grassroots networks through the lens of justice.

3.2.4 The scales of climate justice

The previous section has mapped the contours of a counter-discourse on climate change put forward by global movements. At the heart of this discourse lies the notion of justice referred to by the activists as ‘climate justice’. The core ideas of this notion of climate justice relate to historical responsibility and climate debt, the role of neoliberal capitalism and market-based solutions. The meanings behind these notions point to a multi-scalar framing of justice in the counter-discourse on

climate change. Nancy Fraser's theory of three-dimensional social justice in the globalized world is thus helpful in revealing the scales of climate justice (Fraser 2005). Understood as parity of participation, justice according to Fraser should include three dimensions, or scales: economic distribution, cultural recognition and political representation. The first scale is concerned with issues pertaining to the allocation of resources, i.e. how much redistribution is required and according to which distributive principle it should be carried out. The scale of cultural recognition relates to questions of identity, i.e. which kinds of issues require recognition and which do not. The issue of representation according to Fraser is concerned with a meta-frame issue encompassing the other dimensions, i.e. who are the relevant subjects for distribution and recognition and how are they determined (Ibid.). I argue here that Fraser's theorizing of social justice is applicable to climate justice as it reflects the notions of justice put forward by global climate movements. To illustrate with examples, the scale of distribution is evident in the discussion of climate debt and the need for financial transfer to the affected actors in light of unequal impacts of climate change on developed and developing countries. Although present in the climate justice discourse of climate movements, this scale is not central and is intertwined with the other two. Cultural recognition, as in the case of the indigenous populations and various communities who rely on traditional knowledge and practices which are currently not recognized in the dominant discourse, is the second analytical scale of justice discernible in the discourse. Finally, the third scale is representation which Fraser considers a political dimension. The political dimension is intertwined with the other two dimensions as it "tells us who is included, and who excluded, from the circle of those entitled to just distribution and reciprocal recognition" (Fraser 2005: 6). The political dimension is what the author calls the issue of 'framing', or the boundary-setting process that seeks to answer the question of "who" of justice. At the same time, the political dimension concerns the procedures related to the processes of contestation, i.e. the question of "how" (Ibid.). In climate justice discourse this scale is evident in the

discussions of the solutions to climate change being defined and determined by states and corporations as opposed to the affected communities. This is due to the prevailing nation-state framing in the international arena. By challenging the authority and legitimacy of the state-centered UNFCCC process and positioning social movements and communities as the appropriate actors for working out just solutions (CJA 2010), global climate movements question the who and the how of the dominant climate discourse. What they suggest is thus a radical re-arrangement on the level of representation that goes beyond the dominant logic centered on nation-states and corporations as the only decision-making actors. Instead, the movements seek to transfer the power to the communities as a way of regaining control over one's life and achieving justice (Ibid.). Thus, the counter-discourse on climate change shows a multi-scalar approach to justice which is currently missing in the dominant discourse structured around nation-states and distributional concerns (Burnham *et al.* 2013a).

3.3 Overview of climate justice studies

Before concluding this chapter it is necessary to briefly review the existing research on climate justice and the shortfalls that this dissertation seeks to address. Climate change discourse has been covered in the literature to various degrees. The works of Carvalho (2005), Doulton and Brown (2009), and Olausson (2009) examine discursive construction of climate change in the media. Giddens (2009), Bond (2012), Methmann (2010); Methmann *et al.* (2013) and De Lucia (2009) engage with politics and policy discourse on the international and national levels. While the dominant discourse on climate change in media and international politics are well covered in the literature, the analyses of the emerging climate justice discourse from the perspective of non-state actors and particularly grassroots networks and groups, have been limited to date. As Fisher (2012) argues, this gap in the literature on climate justice needs to be addressed by exploring the meaning behind climate justice beyond a nation-state scale, i.e. by looking at movements' conceptualizations of the term because it

uncovers the multiple meanings behind climate justice and thus multiple potential directions for action.

The accounts of Chatterton *et al.* (2013) and Featherstone (2013) focused on the translocal mobilizations in Copenhagen provide an insight on how the emerging climate justice framing allows for an antagonistic climate change politics that foregrounds the unequal social and environmental relations formed within the neoliberal logic, and develops a prefigurative and solidarity-oriented politics of climate change. While these accounts examine climate justice discourse synchronically, i.e. the temporal point is around the mobilizations in Copenhagen, the study by Russell (2012) examines diachronically the failure of the ‘radical climate movement’ in the UK to develop a genuinely radical praxis. Although Russell’s work analyzes the discourse of climate movements, his focus is on the overall movement as opposed to specific actors within this movement.

In fact, the focus on transnational mobilizing prevails in the current literature on climate justice. The works of Bond and Dorsey (2010); Bullard and Müller (2012); Dawson (2010); Reitan and Gibson (2012), among others, are some of the examples of studies with this focus. While transnational and translocal mobilizations are no doubt important for developing climate politics, the problematic side of this close engagement is that often there is no, or very limited differentiation between heterogeneous actors comprising this movement. As a result, the richness and diversity of grassroots discourse is not captured. Finally, the studies that do analyze discourse on climate change (for example, Russell 2012), or at least attempt to do so, display a very limited engagement with the methodological side of discourse analysis and thus fail to provide a textually-supported analysis.

Based on the identified gaps in the literature, this dissertation seeks to provide concrete, empirically-based account of how grassroots’ discourse is constructed through the interaction with the dominant discourse and counter-discourse on climate change. By employing the methodological tools of CDA

capable of producing a very meticulous analysis (Coffey and Marston 2013), this dissertation seeks to contribute to this growing body of literature on climate justice by engaging both synchronically and diachronically with the discursive construction of climate justice from the perspective of two actors within the wider movement contesting the dominant discourse. The theoretical and methodological frameworks adopted in this study will produce a rich and deep understanding of the counter-discourse and its complex interaction with the dominant discourse on climate politics.

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter has sought to review the debates in literature and present the theoretical approach adopted here for the analysis of grassroots discourse on the politics of climate change. The theoretical approach consists of two axes: the dominant discourse on climate change viewed through the lens of the theory of post-politics, and the counter-discourse examined through the theoretical lens of justice. It was argued in this chapter that the dominant discourse on climate change articulated in narrow scientific, apocalyptic, distributional and economic terms has a nation-state bias that excludes the voices of non-state actors who wish to participate in shaping solutions to the climate problem. This exclusion is resisted through an emergent counter-discourse on climate change articulated by global climate movements within which is embedded grassroots' discourse that will be explored in the empirical chapters. Counter-discourse is understood here as a discursive intervention of the actors whose voice is generally suppressed aimed at challenging and resisting this dominant discourse. The counter-discourse is thus considered as a practical engagement in political struggles (Moussa and Scapp 1996). Overall, by investigating to what extent grassroots networks draw on and reproduce the dominant discourse while simultaneously resisting and reframing it through the articulations generated by the counter-discourse, I attempt to reveal what the alternative climate politics as conceptualized by grassroots networks might look like. As pointed out in the previous

section, this research focus is warranted by the gap in the literature on the discourse of non-state, grassroots actors.

4 Climate justice: a counter-discourse? Introduction to empirical chapters

The goal of this chapter is to set the scene for the presentation and discussion of empirical findings of this dissertation from the perspective of grassroots discourse. It is comprised of two sections that trace back the origins of term ‘climate justice’ in networks’ discourse and highlights its key meanings that will be further unpacked in the rest of this dissertation.

The title of this introductory chapter reflects the central thread running through the discourse of grassroots networks analyzed in the empirical chapters that follow. As it will be argued in the subsequent chapters, climate justice has been the overarching concern and goal for grassroots networks, although the strength of the thread varied at different points in time. The question mark in the main title of this chapter is also meaningful as it indicates that while grassroots discourse gravitates towards being a counter-discourse in the sense of resisting and challenging the dominant climate discourse, the analysis has also revealed ways in which it reproduces the dominant discourse, making the counter orientation debatable. The empirical chapters thus explore this tension between the dominant and counter-discourses that marks grassroots networks’ conceptualization of climate change politics.

4.1 *Climate justice as an overarching concern*

Regarding the varying strength of the climate justice discourse, it should be noted that already at the early stage of networks’ activism the notion of justice was discernible in the discourse of both networks. For example, at the very first Climate Camp in 2006 climate justice was discussed at the workshops as part of “radical grassroots solutions” to climate change (CfCA 2006c). Likewise, RT started using the term from the very first days of its existence which is reflected in its first political statement dating back to the early 2000s. However, it is only in the pre- and post-Copenhagen period

that the use of the term 'climate justice' came to the fore of grassroots discourse. The term was popularized to a great extent through the work of the international grassroots network CJA. This network formed in the run-up to the Copenhagen summit with a broad goal of building "a global movement for climate justice that encourages urgent action to avoid catastrophic climate change" and "a total systemic transformation of our society" (CJA n.d.). Both CfCA and RT became members of the network which indicates the endorsement by the two networks of the statement produced by CJA, entitled "What does Climate Justice Mean in Europe". This and other statements were republished on the networks' websites. Moreover, CfCA took an active part in building of the CJA network back in 2009 by donating 10,000 pounds for the actions and by sending activists to participate in the preparation of the actions in Copenhagen (CfCA 2009p; 2009q). Together with CJA, CfCA organized a Reclaim Power action in Copenhagen that aimed at disrupting the conference in order to articulate a climate justice agenda based on 'real' solutions as opposed to the 'false' ones proposed by governments and corporations (CfCA 2009k). The emphasis on climate justice became even stronger after Copenhagen: In 2011 CfCA disbanded and transformed into Climate Justice Collective (CJC). By including 'climate justice' in the name of the new network, activists sent a strong message about the focus of their future actions. Overall, CJA, RT, CJC and CfCA are regarded here as sharing the counter-discourse on climate justice, hence the use of their materials for the analysis in this dissertation.

4.2 Defining climate justice

While the subsequent empirical chapters analyze grassroots discourse on climate justice in-depth from various angles, in general their usage of the term suggests a fusion of two concepts: environmental and social justice. The environmental justice idea is reflected in the way CJC highlights climate change as an environmental catastrophe "killing 300,000 people a year" and marked by an "unprecedented level of environmental destruction" (CJC n.d.). As CJC emphasizes,

people severely affected by these environmental consequences of climate change are those who did not cause it in the first place, hence “climate justice means that those who have caused climate change should take responsibility for stopping it” (CJC 2012b). The social justice component relates to the ‘systemic’ issues: a disregard of the needs of people and the domination of growth and profit in economic and social relations. To illustrate how such an understanding of climate justice is formulated, consider the following quote from the CJC ‘About Us’ statement:

To us, climate justice means both environmental and social justice. We do not believe that climate change is merely a result of misguided energy policies. Instead, we see both climate change and poverty as being rooted in the economic system based on the 'needs' of the market, private profit and endless economic growth, as opposed to the genuine needs of people and our planet (CJC n.d.).

As noted in the previous section, the RT network has been using the term ‘climate justice’ since the early 2000's, the first days of its existence, which played a key role in fostering the understanding of what true solutions should be like, according to their own assessment (RT 2011a). The concept of climate justice was explicitly articulated in RT’s political statements (RT 2002a; 2011b). Similarly to CfCA, RT’s understanding of climate justice is premised on bringing in environmental and social justice ‘under one banner’ (Sydney pers.comm.). The question that arises in the light of this shared understanding of climate justice that the networks display is: why is it necessary to have the term ‘climate justice’ at all?

As activist Michele explained, introducing a new term into the discourse was a conscious move that aimed at showing the connection between the environment and social justice but also in the attempt "to get away from climate change being just an environmental issue" (Michele pers.comm.). In fact, many activists felt strongly about climate change being so much *not* about the environment, as most NGOs and media would position it, and expressed a desire to take it 'out of the environmental box' (CfCA 2008b). For example, RT network is displeased when they are referred to as environmental

group in the media because" the group always describes itself as a 'climate justice direct action group' or similar, and is at great pains to say that climate change is an issue of social justice as well as of the environment" (RT 2005c). Along similar lines, just before the transformation into a new network, CfCA declared that "We don't believe, as many environmentalists do, that the climate crisis can be separated from, and treated in isolation from, the other crises facing humanity...The fight for climate justice is inseparable from the fight for social justice" (CfCA 2010m).

Thus, such emphasis on the social justice aspect of climate change points to the desire of grassroots networks to highlight the socio-political causes and implications of climate change and abstract it to some extent from the scientific, binary (North/South), technical and economic terms in which climate change has been articulated in the dominant discourse. The empirical chapters that follow reveal how this discourse is constructed and what the tensions involved are.

5 Locked in carbon consensus?

This chapter traces the formation of grassroots' discourse on climate justice diachronically through the examination of its dialectical relationship with the dominant discourse as reflected in networks' discursive framing of actions. By engaging the theoretical lens of the post-politics, it is argued here that grassroots' discourse has oscillated between reproduction of and resistance to the dominant discourse. This argument challenges the claims of some scholars (Schlembach *et al.* 2012; Pusey and Russell 2010; Russell 2012) who have argued that climate grassroots networks in the UK have been influenced by these post-political perspectives to the extent that they have failed to produce an antagonistic discourse on climate change. The post-politicization of climate networks argued by these scholars is reflected in the formation of so-called 'carbon consensus' that can be defined as elimination of any contestation over the true systemic causes of the climate change problem and fixation on the symptoms (CO₂ emissions) and technocratic solutions (renewables, geo-engineering and so on) as predicated by the wealth of scientific data. In fact, it is suggested (Pusey and Russell 2010; Russell 2012) that carbon consensus is a modified version of the liberal consensus characterized by "the exclusion of real difference, and the reduction of contestation to nothing but quantitative variations on a predetermined identity". Thus, carbon consensus is a result of placing scientific discourse at the centre of the problem that allows de-politicization of the issue and contributes to the creation of a post-political space (Ibid.). It is also accompanied by the construction of apocalyptic imagery, populism and the individualization of blame for the emissions.

The findings discussed in this chapter however suggest that the characterization of grassroots' discourse as post-political risks ignoring significant evidence that reveals the contestation of the

dominant discourse. By examining the messaging, visuals, context and targets of grassroots' action, as well as the internal discussions over the direction of the discourse and the political positions of the networks, this chapter sheds light on the intricacy of grassroots discourse on climate politics.

5.1 Emission targets and apocalyptic imagery

Given the central role of action in grassroots' identity and discourse, this section examines the use of emission targets and apocalyptic imagery in the early actions of CfCA. According to the 'mission' statement (and as emphasized in its full name – Camp for Climate Action), CfCA is an action-oriented group (CfCA2009b). Indeed, the word 'action' is used nine times in that statement accompanied by various modifiers, such as *individual* and *collective* action, *mass* action, *direct* action, *urgent* and *group* action. The concept of action in its various forms permeates CfCAs' discussions, documents, conversations and practices, marking it both as a goal of their activity and tactics to achieve the broader goal of stopping climate change. Taking action for climate change, from CfCA's perspective, is a direct response to the "empty government rhetoric and corporate spin" (CfCA 2009b). Taking part in direct action, no matter the scale, is a practical way of 'doing something'. Table 1 lists all major actions that CfCA has undertaken or participated in since the day of its birth in 2006. It also includes the most recent actions undertaken by Climate Justice Collective (CJC), the newly formed networked that grew out of CfCA in 2011.

Table 1. Chronology of CfCA Actions

Action Title	Goal	Key messages and slogans
Camp at Drax; Reclaim Power, 2006	Shutting down a power station that is a major CO2 emitter and polluter.	"Drax is the biggest carbon emitter in Europe"; "Clean energy right now!"
Camp at Heathrow, 2007	Helping local residents stop the building of a third runway; fighting growth in the use of private jets	"Stop airport expansion!", "highlight contradiction between the government's rhetoric on stopping climate change and its plans to expand airports"
Camp at Kingsnorth, 2008	Stopping construction of a new coal plant by E ON at Heathrow	"No new coal!", "Coal is the dirtiest fuel there is"

e.on f.off, 2008	Opposing construction of new coal-fired power stations	“Building Kingsnorth would lock us into multi-million carbon emissions for decades to come, undermining any other efforts we may make to reduce our overall emissions”.
G20 in the city, 2009	Targeting the underlying cause of climate change, airport expansion and coal power stations: political and economic system	“Nature doesn’t do bailouts”, “economic growth is consuming the earth- reduce CO2”; “capitalism means war”; “social change not climate change”; “G20 aims for human survival: get real about carbon, get the science, reduce CO2 now!”
6 Blackheath London, 2009	Challenging false solutions to climate change; demonstrating how the same disastrous reasoning that caused the economic recession is responsible for continuously rising emissions	“Nature doesn’t do bailouts”, “capitalism is crisis”; “more nature –less capitalism”; “tar sands oil is bloody oil”
Occupying Vestas Factory 2009	Demanding taking Vestas factories into public ownership, under workers management	“Vestas Workers - Solidarity in Occupation. Save Green Jobs,” Re-instate all workers, Invest in developing wind-power in Britain Retool the Vestas plant to produce for Off-Shore Wind Generation
Great Climate Swoop at Ratcliffe, 2009	Opposing coal-fired power stations	Capitalism is crisis bloc; “climate change kills-shut down Ratcliffe “; “social change not climate change”; “Nothing has done more to cause climate change than burning coal. To survive we have to stop burning it!”
Copenhagen, 2009	Taking over UN talks to transform it to a People’s Summit for Climate Justice	“System change, not climate change”, “No more business as usual, no more false solutions!” disrupt the sessions and use the space to talk about our agenda, an agenda from below, an agenda of climate justice, of real solutions against their false ones”; “to reclaim power over our own future”
Bp fortnight of shame, 2010	Keeping BP out of the tar sands	Stop Shell’s tar sands hell; tar sands oil is blood oil BP sponsors climate chaos; Canadian tar sands – global climate crime; the single most destructive project on earth/a pipeline to climate chaos/the quickest route to runaway climate change
RBS, 2010	Opposing banks and financial institutions part of capitalist system	“No new coal, no tar sands extraction”; RBS use our cash to fund climate chaos; don’t steal people s land for biomass; RBS respect indigenous rights no Enbridge pipeline; In order for our species to survive we need to move

		beyond capitalism by radically transforming human social relations.
Crude awakening, 2010	Stopping oil industry	If we don't move on from oil, we don't have a chance of avoiding catastrophic climate chaos
The Big Six Energy Bash, May 2012	Disrupting CEO's of six biggest energy companies;	"People not profit", "climate justice", "energy democracy"

Each action had a specific goal and messages that were included in the table. The goals were either explicitly identified in the press releases and action materials, or they were extracted from the internal communications of activists (email lists, social media and/or interviews). The key messages originate from the same sources as the goals. The aim of this table was to see how the demands of grassroots networks, as reflected in messaging and identification of goals and targets, have been formulated and to what extent the justification of their demands involves reference to or reliance on scientific arguments and prescriptions regarding climate change. The indicators of these in the analysis was the use of various emission targets, reference to tipping points and temperature thresholds as set by scientific sources, or employing apocalyptic metaphors and/or imagery to communicate a message about climate change.

As far as targets are concerned, Table 1 demonstrates that a bit more than half of all actions focused on interrupting operations of power stations, airports, oil refineries or oil companies, i.e. enterprises that generate huge amount of CO₂ emissions. Targets that did not have a direct link with either the fossil fuel industry or CO₂ emissions of large enterprises in the UK focused on economic actors (G20 in the City, Blackheath, Vestas) or international issues (COP-15 meeting in Copenhagen, Canadian tar sands). Goal-wise, actions mostly aimed at 'shutting down' or 'stopping' particular infrastructures, i.e. targeted actors that had a physical presence in the UK and whose operations could be disrupted. However, along with physical actors, abstract targets such as "political and economic system", "world's governments" and "capitalism" were 'opposed' through the direct

actions. It is also notable that these abstract targets started to appear from the year 2009, whereas physical targets had been present throughout the existence of CfCA. This is also reflected in the messaging: along with slogans that mention CO₂ reductions, a number of slogans focusing on ‘systemic’ changes, ‘climate justice’ and ‘reclaiming power’ had appeared since 2009. As it will be discussed later in this chapter, the year 2009 is thus significant for these discursive changes that started to become apparent in grassroots’ actions. Given that the table format can only provide a snapshot of actions and general discursive trends, it is necessary to examine these actions and trends in detail. Due to the number of actions undertaken and space limitation of this dissertation, a discussion of selected key actions will be presented in this and other sections of this chapter.

Camp for Climate Action at Drax Power Station

The first Climate Camp took place at Drax power station in 2006. The power station was primarily chosen as a target due to its emissions profile, as the following quote illustrates: “Drax power station is the biggest emitter of CO₂ in the UK. There are hundreds of countries in the world that produce less CO₂ than Drax does, so it is a major polluter” (CineRebelde n.d.). Also, the effect these emissions have on climate worldwide was important:

“As Drax shareholders rake in the profits, the rest of us tremble as we wake up to the effects of the 21 million tons of carbon released by Drax each year. If we carry on at this rate in the next few years we will have emitted enough CO₂ to cross the dreaded 2-degree temperature threshold. Predictions at this point include the Greenland ice sheet collapsing and sea levels rising, water shortages in many parts of the world, the extinction of the polar bear, and most worrying of all runaway climate chaos” (CfCA 2006a) .

This quote epitomizes the argument advanced by Swyngedouw (2013) and others (Pusey and Russell 2010; Russell 2012) regarding the over-reliance on scientific arguments and apocalyptic imagery. The indicators of scientific rhetoric are the references to a 2-degree temperature threshold and an estimation of carbon emitted (21 million tons). While carbon is positioned as the source of potential danger, the use of the personal pronoun ‘we’ in relations to the emissions implies that everyone takes part in their production and thus is responsible for the emissions. Even though ‘shareholders’ who profit from their investment in the power station are differentiated from ‘the rest of us’ in the first sentence, the blame is shared between everyone, as the use of ‘we’ in the next sentence indicates. There is no direct references to scientists in the last sentence, however the word ‘predictions’ employed to point out sea levels rising, extinctions of polar bears and so on, implies scientific sources of such predictions. The apocalyptic imagery of climate change is rendered here through the use of verbs, nouns and adjectives associated with fear, destruction and lack of control: ‘tremble’, ‘dreaded’, ‘worrying’, ‘runaway’, ‘collapsing’, ‘shortages’, and ‘chaos’. The apocalyptic imagery is also supported visually (Fig.1. below) through the image of a power station half submerged in the sea used in the promotional flyer of the Drax CfCA.

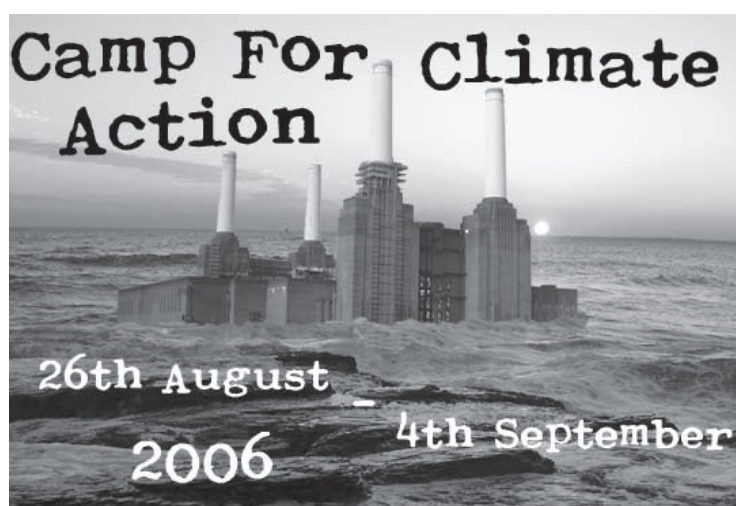


Fig. 1. Drax CfCA Flyer.
Source: CFCA (2006d)

However, even though the emissions argument dominated the justification of actions, from the very beginning (i.e. since 2006 when the network was formed) CfCA made it clear that it was after much wider effects than merely a reduction in the emissions. The first statements produced by the network paved the way for what became their focus in a later stage relating climate change to the issues of power and politics and the need for radical systemic changes. Consider for example the following quotes:

“Reclaim Power is a day where people will take action to move away from an economy based on fossil fuels and towards a society based on co-operation and local solutions”.

“Drax is a large part of a system which has to change - system where profit and power are valued over sustainability and co-operation. By challenging it, we challenge our whole way of life” (CfCA 2006b).

“Is our future to be war, famine, hurricanes, droughts and floods? Or can we create a new society based on co-operation and local solutions, a new world in the ruins of the old?” (Ibid.).

In the first quote, economy and society are treated as two separate entities functioning independently from each other, with one relying on fossil fuels and the other – on cooperation of people and local solutions. Such decoupling serves to highlight the commitment (the verb ‘will’ indicates a high degree of commitment) to ‘humanize’ the economy, i.e. putting societal values before economic ones, unlike the current system. In the quote that follows additional features of the two entities are highlighted: profit and power (together with fossil fuels) of the economy are contrasted with sustainability and co-operation (and local solutions) of the society. The use of the modal verb “have to” signals the strong necessity of the change which is based on the statement that Drax is “a large part of the system”. In the final sentence of the second quote the use of the pronoun ‘it’ in “by challenging it”, has a double meaning: on the one hand, it is a coal-fired power station that is challenged, on the

other hand, it is the whole system based on power, profit and fossil fuels that is challenged through the proposed direct action.

In the last quote scientifically predicted consequences of climate change, such as hurricanes, droughts and floods, are attached to the ‘old world’, while the possibility of a ‘new world’ based on ‘co-operation’ and ‘local solutions’ is asserted. Both sentences are interrogative but the position and the structure of the second sentence is meant to provide an answer to the first one. This is achieved through the strong commitment to truth by means of a modality marker ‘can’ (Fairclough 2003). Modality expressed in the verb ‘can’ and reinforced by personal pronoun ‘we’ helps support the attainability of such a world and emphasizes people’s contribution to its creation.

Thus, the analysis of the action against Drax power station reveals that although scientific and apocalyptic scenarios were dominant, they were accompanied by a critique of current societal organization. As noted by Schlembach (2011) and Schlembach *et al.* (2012), throughout its history CfCA remained a contested space where the scientific arguments coexisted with more radical demands targeted at the links between climate change and the economic system. The evocation of carbon emissions and their disastrous consequences continued in the actions following Drax that targeted other major polluters, such Heathrow airport: “Aviation is the fastest growing cause of climate change, already accounting for 13 per cent of UK emissions” and “Nowhere in the UK is there a larger source of CO₂ emissions. Most countries emit less greenhouse gases than Heathrow's planes” (CfCA 2007d).

However, just as it was in the case of Drax camp, these arguments were accompanied by other, more complex ones emphasizing the need for the overhaul of society. For example, already in 2007 CfCA laid out its perspectives on science and climate change in a document entitled “Our views on the symptoms, science and solutions to climate change”. According to this document, climate change

has two aspects that are important for activists: environmental and social. While the environmental aspect was articulated in the scientific terms (global average temperature increases and timeframes for action), social aspect had an implicit critique of current societal organization: “The world is geared towards the extraction of profit, and increasing economic growth, and not lives of dignity for all” (CfCA 2007a). The use of the passive voice (the world is geared) together with the generic term “world” in this quote obfuscates the agent who pursues extraction of profit and economic growth as opposed to “dignity for all”. Such obfuscation reveals a cautiousness towards naming explicitly the ‘enemy’ that the network seeks to confront.

Despite such a cautious approach exhibited in the early stages of CfCA’s activism, the changes in how discourse was framed could be detected in the visual representations of the current (at that time) situation. The flyer advertising CfCA in 2007 (see fig. 2. below) did not have the apocalyptic imagery, unlike the previous year’s flyer (compare with fig.1. above). While the 2006 flyer portrayed a grim picture of a flooded power station devoid of human presence, the 2007 flyer had a more optimistic message to convey. A group of people on the left are pulling a plug to symbolize disconnecting from the ‘old world’ associated with consumption of energy and those on the right are pulling wind-turbines in, suggesting that the ‘new world’ is powered by renewable energy. Silhouettes of men and women manually setting up the turbines represent collective action in which everyone is involved, implying that changes indeed come from everyone’s direct participation, hence the slogan the ‘time to act is now’ is used in the last sentence. In contrast with the bleak grey and white colors of the first flyer (fig. 2), the colors used in the 2007 flyer are vivid blue, green and a bit of yellow which emphasizes the optimistic message expressed in the flyer. The only trace of previous apocalyptic rhetoric is the phrase ‘We have less than 10 years to radically reduce our carbon emissions to avoid catastrophic climate change’ at the center of the flyer. However, the catastrophic

representation is totally absent from the picture, making the overall message sound like an affirmative and constructive vision rather than a bleak scenario.

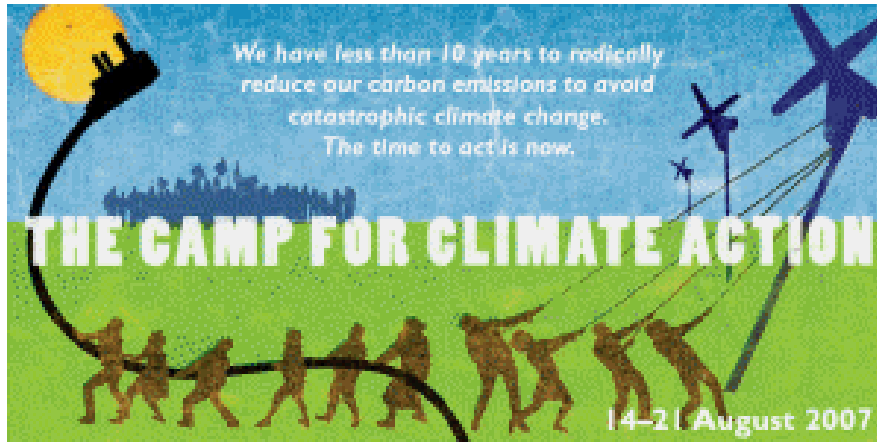


Fig. 2. Heathrow CfCA Flyer

Source: (Shroomstudio n.d.)

Overall, it has been argued in this section that in the early stages of climate activism emission reduction targets and apocalyptic imagery reproduced the themes and framing of the dominant discourse on climate change. At the same time, it has been shown that the signs of a counter-discourse focused on the broader causes and effects of climate change were already discernible in the actions of CfCA.

5.1.1 “We are armed...only with peer-reviewed science”

Besides the emissions targets and apocalyptic imagery, the dominant discourse is linked to the extensive use of scientific rhetoric. This feature, according to some critics, is also characteristic of grassroots’ discourse (Russell 2012; Schlembach *et al.* 2012). The basic argument about climate change used by grassroots is that there is a scientific consensus regarding the human induced nature of the phenomenon and the scale of the threat that it represents. As seen from the quotes that follow, the scientific consensus means for them the agreement of a large number of scientists that

the causes of climate change are anthropocentric and are the direct result of greenhouse gas emissions:

“So everyone agrees there is a huge problem. There are 2,000 climate scientists studying the causes and impacts. Scientific organizations have produced repeated calls for action- one in 1997 was signed by 1,500 scientists including 110 Nobel prize winners” (RT 2001a) and “It is absolute scientific fact that the changes we are making to the concentrations of different gases will affect the way the atmosphere behaves. The only area of debate is how serious the impacts are likely to be” (RT 2001b). Clearly, by emphasizing the weight of scientific opinion, the need for action is justified by the activists and the articulations are in line with the dominant discourse.

While the urgency and legitimacy of actions is reinforced by the back-up of an objective authority, the reasons why grassroots use scientific rhetoric vary. In the words of Rebecca, “...it’s [science is] credible, it’s authoritative, it’s not the emotional rambling of the environmentalists, it’s factual, totally unassailable scientific fact” (pers.comm.). This quote suggests that science provides a rational justification for action based on ‘facts’. By the same token, one CfCA activists suggested on the online discussion forum that “It seems important to set up a sound scientific basis for actions. It will give confidence in what we are doing and deflect any accusations of irresponsibility or extremism” (CfCA 2010h). The activists thus seek legitimacy from science in order not to be labeled as extremists.

The other CfCA activist added that “scientific credibility would also give us a much better chance of expanding our movement - for example, by helping to draw in and then radicalise the quiet millions who signed postcards and petitions for Copenhagen, only to be let down by the whole sorry process”(Ibid.). As these quotes demonstrate, scientific rhetoric is used not only to legitimize an action and not to be taken for extremists but also to attract new people into the movement, people

who were disappointed by the failures of climate negotiations but firmly convinced by the scientific prescriptions regarding climate change. Such arguments point to the instrumental use of science for grassroots rather than attempts to comply with science *per se* (Schlembach *et al.* 2012).

Furthermore, despite extensive use of this rhetoric in earlier actions, activists demonstrate an awareness of the downside of over-relying on science. The question of emissions targets was debated in CfCA in the online discussion forum. Certain activists advocated for CfCA to develop its own emission reduction targets based on the available science and shut down any infrastructural objects that violate these targets through direct action (CfCA 2010i). Although such a proposal on behalf of a climate camper could be interpreted as a 'scientization' of climate change (Bowman 2010), the fact that the proposal was challenged by other activists, as it will be demonstrated in quotes below, and never actually adopted by the network, suggests that the strategy within CfCA was not homogeneous but contested. This proposal generated objections from other campers, such as this one:

...targets shouldn't be numerical, '10% this or 90% that'. Accepting these numerical targets, however drastic, suggest that we demand 'x%' adaptation within the confines of the existing system - "if only capitalism is 40% less bad!". Yet the reality is that if it is the system that is ultimately responsible, then no percentage of adaptation will resolve the crisis. It would be preferable to recognize that most science indicates a morbid direction for our ecosystem, and the scale of the crisis, and then demand a complete overhaul of the social and productive relationships that are driving this crisis. The latter is a political solution, the former is an 'apolitical' demand open to appropriation by business and government (CfCA 2010i).

As it can be seen from the quote, the activist makes a clear distinction between a political and apolitical type of action and relates the use of scientific targets to the process of de-politicization that aims to mask the systemic causes of the crisis.

This response was supported by another activist who disagreed that the networks' actions should be legitimized through science:

This reinforces the myth that science is some unarguable and neutral force, when clearly it isn't. Justifying our actions in this way also has a depoliticizing effect. We come armed with more than peer reviewed science.... or at least we should be! By which I mean armed with an analysis of this society, the way it is run, who benefits and the effects it has on the rest of us and the planet (CfCA 2010i).

These examples illustrate that the scientific framing of the climate problem was challenged and contested within grassroots networks and the need for politicization of the issue was indeed discussed and put forward (through making more explicit messages in the actions), even though naturally not everyone agreed with it in the network. Moreover, while internal criticism of the use of scientific discourse surfaced in 2010 after the email hacking scandal at the University of East Anglia that threw a shadow of doubt over the IPCC scientists, a critical attitude to science and scientists has been present in grassroots' discourse since the first years of climate activism. A good illustration of this argument is the briefing paper produced by climate campers in 2007, entitled *Climate Change: The British State's Scientific Response*. This paper sought to expose some controversial aspects of climate science in the UK, such as provision of expertise for military purposes, elitism of key climate research institutions, and the close ties between researchers, universities and the fossil fuel industry (CfCA 2007b). This example suggests that from the very beginning, despite the use of emission targets and related scientific prescriptions in the actions, grassroots networks did not blindly rely on science as the main justification for climate action. Grassroots critiques show that they actually distinguished between "good" and "bad" science and challenged the penetration of corporate interests into research agenda and researchers' potential dependence on governments or corporations. Such a critical attitude of the science of climate change supports the argument that uncritical reproduction of scientific rhetoric within the networks was always contested and resisted.

In addition to internal critique of the overreliance on scientific discourse, criticism also came from external sources. For instance, John Archer from Shift magazine warned that using science too much can implicitly encourage green authoritarian solutions from the state, such as personal carbon

rationing quotas for instance, instead of dealing with the systemic causes of climate change (Archer 2007). Archer also noted that “it is rarely considered necessary to know which scientists and which studies are being cited” (Ibid.: n.p.).

So what expert or scientific sources do grassroots use when speaking about climate change? Table 2 lists most commonly cited (by grassroots networks) documents or reports that deal in one way or another with the science of climate change. First of all, unsurprisingly, it is the IPCC assessment report that is used as the main reference point regarding the science of climate change. Given the amount of media and public attention that the IPCC received thanks to the Nobel Peace Prize and the scale of research, the activists use it as the mainstay of the scientific arguments. The IPCC report allowed activists to speak about “scientific consensus”, especially in situations where the existence or scale of climate change was doubted. This report is used to explain the basics of climate science to the lay public, including the expected impacts of climate change. Even in light of the email hacking scandal, the IPCC as an institution and the reports that it produced remain legitimate and reliable source of scientific evidence.

Table 2. Documents Used as Scientific/Expert Evidence

Name	Author/Organization	Year
Synthesis report of IPCC 4th assessment report	IPCC	2007
Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change	Book based on Symposium proceedings	2006
Contraction & Convergence: UK carbon emissions and the implications for UK air traffic	Tyndall Center	2006
Living within the Carbon Budget	Tyndall Center	2006
The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change	Nicolas Stern	2006
Climate Change and the greenhouse effect	Hadley Center for Climate Prediction and Research	2005

The second most trusted scientific source for grassroots seems to be the Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research in the UK. Namely, their report entitled *Living within the Carbon Budget*, among others, is referenced in the links of the climate science section (Ibid.). This report, commissioned and funded by the Friends of the Earth and the Cooperative Bank, stemmed from the goal of examining whether “it is possible to live within a carbon budget whilst allowing the economy to grow and people to maintain high quality lifestyles not dissimilar to today’s” (Bows *et al.* 2006b: 7). Such formulation of the objective of this policy report clearly demonstrates the direction of the analysis undertaken. To highlight some points of the report, all sectors of the economy are required to be brought under a carbon tax or an emissions trading scheme, the latter one is even envisaged to be developed into an “economy-wide personal carbon trading scheme” (Ibid.). Such conclusions obviously run counter to grassroots’ ideas about solutions to the climate crisis (see the section on techno-fixes in chapter 7) but the report is nevertheless used as a source of scientific evidence (it is referenced in the CfCA document *The Science of Climate Change*). The reason for this is possibly the fact that the report argues for drastic emissions reduction needed (90% by 2050) and goes further in the amount of reduction than any other scientific sources thus far. At the same time, the report argues that the current aviation growth is unsustainable which at the time of the Heathrow campaign was quite handy for the activists campaigning against building a new runway.

Another example of using a policy document as a scientific reference is the Tyndall Center report *Contraction and Convergence: UK Carbon emissions and the Implications for UK Air Traffic* that activists were carrying during a march at Heathrow in 2007 (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. CfCA Protesters at 2007 Heathrow Camp

Photo credit: Kristian Buus

The report, although based on scientific predictions, is a policy document (Archer 2007) evaluating the UK's carbon emissions targets in relation to the acknowledged model. This means that by using this document climate campers were implicitly supporting a certain political solution advocated in this report (Ibid.). To be more specific, one key message of the report was to demonstrate that “Aviation growth must be curbed until sufficient steps are taken to ensure fuel efficiency gains balance growth in activity, or until there is widespread use of alternative fuels that significantly reduce the industry's carbon emissions” (Bows *et al.* 2006a: 2). Thus, in accordance with the recommendation of the report, the UK government should either make a political decision of stopping airport expansion or find an appropriate technical solution, for example, increasing passenger load factors to 90% through integrated ticketing arrangements. Apparently, what resonated most with activists was the recommendation of curbing airport expansion as it echoed their own slogans, such as “Stop Airport Expansion” (Heathrow campaign). Therefore, despite a somewhat misleading message on the banner (Fig. 3 above), CfCA was in fact advocating a political option

which turned out to be supported by a leading research center. From this perspective, compliance with science was not a goal in itself, as Schlembach *et al.* (2012) argue, but a convenient and timely tool that added weight to their essentially political demands, even though it largely reproduced the dominant discourse.

Furthermore, given that CfCA from the very beginning subscribed to the anarchist principles that challenged state solutions in any form, the network has been criticized for the choice of speakers at the workshops because they advocated for lobbying the government rather than a radical overhaul of the society (Charsley 2010). The inclusions of speakers such as environmental commentators and journalists Mark Lynas and George Monbiot, and “particular intellectual figureheads”, such as James Hansen or Al Gore, has been regarded as having a de-politicizing effect on the issues that campers campaigned on (Schlembach *et al.* 2012). These figureheads, except perhaps for James Hansen from NASA, have in reality nothing to do with the scientific field *per se*.

What this engagement of prominent public figures suggests is that, just like when referring to scientists, the activists seek to demonstrate that their arguments cannot be rejected because they are supported by hard data and people who have a certain authority among the general public. Apparently, there is an obvious mismatch between activists’ reliance on ‘hard’ scientific data on climate change and their choice of experts who are supposed to back this data up with the weight of their expertise and proper credentials. However, this mismatch actually shows that the reference to science is done for emotive, attention-grabbing purposes and as a way of emphasizing the credibility of their claims, rather than as having a goal of complying with science, as some critiques have argued (Schlembach *et al.* 2012). In addition, as I have demonstrated above, the scientific arguments articulated by organizations like the Tyndall Center for Climate Change, are also timely as they fit the

criticism and demands that grassroots put forward in their actions. This brings us to the importance of context in the discourse which is discussed in the next section.

5.1.2 Context of actions against polluters

It is argued in this section that the socio-political context in which an action takes place is meaningful for the analysis because it throws light on the factors that determined the choice of targets for the action and consequently, its discursive framing. For instance, Michelle noted that there were various reasons why climate campers tried to stop operation of a coal-fired power plant: “At the time we thought that we wanted to stop emissions right then because people are dying from climate change all over the world, every hour [...], and then the other side of things was kind of wanting to stop new coal from growing in the UK and wanting to discourage RWE in investing in new coal and showing that there’s gonna be resistance to it if they do” (Michele pers.comm.).

It is obvious from this quote that the actual reduction of emissions from a coal-fired power station was important for activists, even though the amount reduced was not significant. This drive to reduce emissions no matter the amount reveals the reproduction of the dominant science-driven discourse that fixated on carbon emissions. On the other hand, as Michelle indicated, the pragmatic reason for targeting coal was discouraging the investment and stopping the renewal of coal-fired power stations which at the time of the campaign was on the agenda of the government. The fact that the activist referred to pending governmental decision as a justification for the action suggests that contextual factors did play a role in the choice of targets for the direct action and thus affected grassroots’ discourse. While this example sheds light on the national context at the time of actions against coal, it is also necessary to consider the broader context in which climate activism operated.

First of all, the years 2006-2008 saw an unprecedented amount of media coverage on climate change (Boykoff 2008; Doultou and Brown 2009; Hulme 2008) as key climate related events unfolded: publishing of the 4th IPCC Assessment Report in 2007; a number of films and books on the dangers of climate change, including the release of Al Gore's *The Inconvenient Truth*; the Nobel Peace Prize given to the IPCC and Al Gore; and key statements by political leaders on climate change, as well as a number of extreme weather events worldwide. Table 3 below gives a snapshot of key climate-related discursive events and texts that appeared in the years 2006-2011 on the international and national scenes. Naturally, the table presents only a fraction of discursive events that occurred at the peak of climate activism in the UK, whereas climate change has been on the public agenda since the 1980's (Boykoff *et al.* 2009). These events and texts portrayed climate change in alarmist and apocalyptic terms and made use of the scientific evidence to justify this particular rhetoric (Hulme 2008; Risbey 2008). It is then no surprising that grassroots networks relied heavily on scientific predictions and apocalyptic imagery as part of the justification for taking action.

Table 3. Key Climate-related Events and Decisions

Year	Publications and Decisions	Conferences and Meetings	Events and Campaigns
2004	Forty Signs of Rain (K. Robinson)	COP10 meeting in Buenos Aires	The Day After Tomorrow (film)
	State of Fear (M. Crichton)	Bonn Climate Change Conference	
2005		Durban Group for Climate Justice formed	
	Draft Climate Change Bill (Friends of the Earth)	G8 meeting in Gleneagles, Climate Change on the agenda	Big Ask Campaign (Friends of the Earth)
	Kyoto Protocol takes effect		UK Plane Stupid network established (grassroots campaigning on climate change)
2006	Understanding and Responding to Climate Change (Sciences Academies' statement)		
	"Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change";	COP 12 meeting	"An Inconvenient Truth" (documentary);
	UK Government Energy Review promotes Nuclear power as solution to climate change		New Climate Law Announced in the UK (UK Government)
			Camp for Climate Action

	<p>The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth is Fighting Back – and How we Can Still Save Humanity (J. Lovelock)</p> <p>UK Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act</p> <p>Burning Ice- Art and Climate Change (Buckland et al)</p>		<p>Established</p> <p>ExxonMobil CEO acknowledges danger of climate change</p>
	<p>2007 IPCC 4th Assessment Report ;</p> <p>Draft Climate Change Bill (UK Government)</p> <p>Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet (M. Lynas)</p> <p>Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming (B. Lomborg)</p> <p>With speed and violence: why scientists fear tipping points in climate change (F. Pearce)</p> <p>The Suicidal Planet: How to Prevent Global Climate Catastrophe (Hillman, Fawcett and Rajan)</p>	<p>COP13 meeting, Bali</p> <p>Climate Justice Now! founded during COP13 meeting</p>	<p>IPCC and Al Gore win the Nobel Peace Prize;</p> <p>“The 11th Hour” (feature film documentary);</p> <p>“Arctic Tale”;</p> <p>“Great Global Warming Swindle”</p> <p>Live Earth Concert (BBC1)</p> <p>Drowned Worlds Photo Exhibition</p> <p>Picture of stranded polar bears goes viral on the Internet (published by Canadian Ice Service)</p> <p>Greenpeace Protesters scaled Kingsnorth Power Station</p> <p>Arctic Ice Sheet reached all-time low</p>
	<p>2008 UK Climate Change Act</p> <p>White Paper on Nuclear Power positions nuclear as a solution to cc</p>	<p>COP14 meeting in Poznan, Poland</p>	<p>Greenpeace activists found not guilty in Kingsnorth Power station case</p> <p>Keeling Projects states increase in global carbon emissions to 380 ppm</p>
	<p>2009 Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity (M. Hulme)</p> <p>Climate Change Reconsidered Report (Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change)</p> <p>Global Climate Change Impacts</p>	<p>COP 15 of the UNFCCC in Copenhagen</p> <p>World Climate Conference-3 in Geneva</p> <p>Climate Justice Action formed prior to COP15 meeting</p>	<p>“The Age of Stupid” (drama-documentary-animation)</p> <p>Climatic Research Unit email controversy</p> <p>Scotland’s Climate Bill sets Unprecedented reduction targets</p> <p>Greenpeace activists climbed Houses of Parliament to protest</p>

2010	in the United States Climate Change: Picturing the Science (Schmidt and Wolfe)		against climate change The Wave demonstration (London) March for Climate Justice (Copenhagen) 10:10 Campaign (The Guardian)
	Advancing the Science of Climate Change Report (US National Academy of Sciences)	World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Bolivia	NASA reports warmest decade on record
	Eearth (book by B. McKibben)	COP 16 meeting in Cancun	Climate of Change (documentary)
2011	IEA warns of approaching a point of no return	COP 17 meeting in Durban, South Africa	Obama makes no mention of climate change in State of the Union Speech

Secondly, in the UK national context climate change has been an issue for campaigning organizations such as Greenpeace, Oxfam and Friends of the Earth for more than a decade. Namely, Greenpeace's high-profile campaign against coal-fired power stations in the UK received wide media coverage when several activists faced trial for their 2007 scaling of the Kingsnorth power station, which later became the target of CfCA. Other actions against coal included occupation of the Ffos-y-fran coal mine construction site by local activists, stopping of a coal freighter by Greenpeace, and a six month occupation of an open cast mining site in Scotland by Mainshell Solidarity Camp, among others. Therefore, the focus on coal as well as the discursive strategies employed were not unique to CfCA but were influenced by these actions of other actors on the UK environmental direct action scene.

Finally, the choice of targets for actions was also affected by political decisions surrounding targets such as Kingsnorth and Heathrow. In the case of coal-fired power stations there was a number of pending governmental decisions at the time of anti-coal campaigns. Among such decisions were for example E. On's application for permission to construct a new plant in Kingsnorth in 2006, as well as planning permissions for several other coal fired power stations and the government's decision to

introduce carbon capture and storage for coal-fired power stations (BBC 2009; Carrington 2009). These decisions generated a wave of statements, protests and actions by environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, WWF, and grassroots campaigners (Ibid.). Although the involvement of other groups was important for grassroots, the political implications of future decisions were central. As one of the activists, Connor O'Brian, explained on Climate radio (Climate Radio 2008), "Kingsnorth was picked because it was such a significant target, 'cause now is the moment really when coal becomes a major issue. By stopping Kingsnorth we will have a huge knock-on effect on six to eight coal-fired power stations that the government is planning to build".

The opposition to aviation in the UK that involved CfCA at Heathrow in 2007, as well as a number of actions and stunts by Plane Stupid and Greenpeace, was also linked to the political context: from 2003 the UK's government started revealing plans for the expansion of air transport capacity in the next decades (Dunn 2006). The plans included the construction of a third runway at Heathrow and a new runway at Stansted airports.

To sum it up, the context surrounding grassroots' actions focused on carbon emitters and scientific rhetoric and included several dimensions: a massive surge in climate-related publications and events on the international and national scenes; a number of campaigns and actions against sources of carbon emissions carried out by high-profile environmental organizations, such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace; and pending governmental decisions concerning the future of coal and the aviation industry in the UK. All these factors affected the way grassroots networks chose their targets and discursively framed their messaging. Yet it is also notable that apart from these factors, the rationale behind this particular discursive framing was the intention to give voice to ordinary people and demonstrate the power of 'grassroots resistance', independently from NGOs or scientists. Consider, for example, how activist Connor O'Brian put it: "So you've got large NGOs and the

other side of the coin when people are engaged in civil disobedience and being purely from grassroots shows that it's not just a few scientists or largest NGOs who care about this issue, it's just ordinary and every-day people who are coming down and say "look, we don't want it to happen" and what we are doing is demonstrating to the corporations and government that there is massive grassroots resistance to these plans" (Climate Radio 2008).

As it has been demonstrated in this section, although the explosion of scientific evidence on climate change did affect CfCA's discourse, it was also a specific political context, resonance with the focus of other environmental groups and the intention to empower ordinary people that played a major role in the discursive framing of actions against carbon emitters.

5.1.3 From emissions to the systemic causes

What emerged from the interviews with grassroots activists is that their perception of CO₂ emissions as major causes of climate change and the deeper, underlying causes of the climate crisis have significantly changed over the years. The early days of climate activism, as shown in previous sections, were marked by discussions of and opposition to the coal and aviation industries as the main contributors to climate change through emissions of carbon. This understanding gradually evolved into a focus on deeper causes of the problem, extending beyond particular energy sources. Consider, for example, how Margaret puts it: *"I think in the beginning I thought we had to stop using fossil fuels and find alternative energy sources but I think I moved on to see the whole economic and political system has got to change [...] I just feel the whole system is not an equitable one, not just a matter of energy, there needs to be social justice, the system we have doesn't give that."* (Margaret Smith pers.comm.). It is evident that for Margaret, the notion of climate change came to be linked to the issues of equity and justice in the political and economic spheres rather than a technical issue of energy production and distribution.

This evolution in the understanding of climate change and its causes is also expressed on the macro level, i.e. in the way the messaging and targets of the actions taken by CfCA have changed over the years. As illustrated in the section above, CO₂ emissions reduction was indeed a major thread in most of the actions taken by CfCA. It is especially obvious in the first three years of action (see table 1 in section 5.1). Later, however, the targets and the messaging started changing: attacks were directed not at the CO₂ emitters but at the actors who were rather indirectly involved in climate change, such as banks, financial institutions and energy companies. They were chosen to reflect the links between climate change and the economic system that contributes to it (CfCA 2010a).

These later actions aimed at pointing to the root causes of climate change embodied in the current economic and political systems, while the rest of the actions were against an industry or actor associated with the production of CO₂ emissions. If we look at these actions diachronically, the ones targeting ‘the system’ started at nearly the same period of time – the year 2009-2010. These years are discursively marked by two important global events: the G20 meeting in April 2009 in London and the COP-15 meeting in Copenhagen. In light of financial and economic crises, dedicating several actions to targeting the economic system was a pragmatic decision that fully reflected the major concerns and issues dealt with in the global arena.

However, this is not to say that carbon reduction arguments totally disappeared. Slogans such as “Economic growth is consuming the earth- reduce CO₂” or “G20 aims for human survival: get real about carbon, get the science, reduce CO₂ now!” (G20 action 2009) demonstrate that scientific rhetoric was still evident, albeit no longer central. Unfolding financial crisis and the COP-15 meeting in Copenhagen undoubtedly provided an opportunity for grassroots to put forward their systemic critique that has until then been overshadowed by the emission reduction arguments resonating with the dominant discourse. Financial and economic crises pushed climate change down on the political

agenda but at the same time, groups campaigning on climate started linking climate change to the economic system, specifically neoliberal economic policies. To demonstrate how the critique of the economic system became prominent in grassroots' discourse, let us consider how a specific action was conceived and discursively framed.

In 2010 CfCA made a decision to target Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) in its headquarters in Edinburgh. The process of deciding on where the camp should take place, messaging and tactics is a good example to illustrate the point about scientific arguments becoming secondary to the activists. The decision to focus on RBS was taken during the national meeting in Lewes on April 17-18, 2010. The decision-making process involved brainstorming and group discussion to identify several key targets. Through various exercises, such as 'temperature check'⁵, fish bowl⁶, and debates, the list of possible targets was first narrowed down to four, including actions against aviation, coal, BP and tar sands as one focus, and RBS. These four targets were eventually narrowed down to two: coal and RBS. Despite the fact that some scholars saw this action as mostly affected by scientific rhetoric (Schlembach *et al.* 2012) since the document entitled "Why RBS" mentioned the bank's investment in the fossil fuels in the very first paragraph, the reasons for this choice have little to do with scientific discourse *per se*. In fact, the most important aspects that affected the decision were the following.

Resonance with a current situation, or as some activists put it "tapping into a strong public sentiment" was one of the criteria for the choice of target (CfCA 2010b). In the times of recession many activists felt it was important that the target was linked to the current financial crisis. For this reason (not exclusively, though), a possible action against BP was strongly doubted. Additionally, the

⁵ An exercise and a prioritization tool aimed at revealing the spectrum of opinions in the group for a particular question or action

⁶ A variation of a spokes council exercise used to arrive at a consensus in large groups whereby the each group sits behind a spokesperson who communicates directly with other spokes, checking back with his/her group if necessary

political context, i.e. such as absence of any major pending governmental decisions on coal or aviation as opposed to the earlier actions, was highlighted. The absence of such decisions meant that there would be no potential victories should the carbon emitters be targeted again. Finally, resonance with the public, specifically with their indignation with certain issues such as bailing out banks, was noted to be important for activists because it could “channel that discontent” (CfCA 2010b).

Next, the possibility of linking several issues to the target played a role. It stemmed from the desire to bring together several issues such as climate justice, fossil fuels, and capitalism to demonstrate their interrelatedness. RBS was such a target that would tie in “workers’ issues”, and allow criticism over the misuse of public money because “RBS is funding bad things, taking away your money from good things: health, education” (CfCA 2010b). Furthermore, novelty and “opening up a new political space” were important factors in choosing the target. There were a few concerns among the activists that certain actions, such as the one against BP and tar sands, were already covered by NGOs, therefore, they were not worth venturing into: “what can we bring to this that isn't covered by NGOs” (CfCA 2010b). Finally, the availability of physical targets to organize direct action was considered. For instance, in the case of RBS, its headquarters located in woodland area up in Edinburgh could be a physical target given that CfCA had a history of setting up an actual camp next to its targets (Ibid.).

As these examples demonstrate, the factors considered by activists in choosing the target were pragmatic in the sense that they were based on the assessment of the current context – political, economic, and the disposition of the public rather than on the amount of CO₂ emissions produced by the potential target. On the subsequent gatherings in London (May 16, 2010) and Manchester (May 28-29) concrete messages of the upcoming climate camp against RBS were discussed and endorsed. It was decided that “RBS invests in fossil fuels” would be the overarching message that

would “encompass everything: RBS covers financial, fossil fuels covers environmental” aspect (CfCA 2010c) and could be used as “a hook to talk about loads of other stuff” (CfCA 2010q). Moreover, a list of related issues, or “subheadings” of the main message, was agreed upon (Camp for Climate Action 2010c; field notes). These included capitalism (“using the banks as a leverage point to dismantle capitalism”), radical economics (proposing alternatives to the current financial system), coal (RBS finances Drax, coal resistance in Scotland), indigenous peoples’ rights (links to financing tar sands in Canada that affect these peoples), misuse of public money and workers’ rights (austerity measures against the background of bank bailouts). Thus, as stated above, the scientific arguments were in fact the least important for activists, as their main goal was to have a target that would link up various critiques of the current financial and political system while also resonating with the economic crisis, austerity and public anger.

5.1.4 “We just need to break a post-political consensus”

The importance of non-carbon related arguments in the grassroots discourse is also reflected in the way the network tried to develop a political statement that would lay out their key positions on the issue of climate politics. The goal of the statement was to replace the ‘What Unites Us’ section on CfCA’s website that was written in the first year of network’s existence. The political statement writing process started in 2010 during the national gathering in Bristol and involved two groups of activists working in parallel on two versions of the statement (CfCA 2010d). The need for two versions was justified by the diverging points of departure: while version 1 “was founded on a desire to have an explicit expression of our anti-capitalist politics”, version 2 sought to be “accessible and readable” building on the previous statement that had been through the consensus process (Ibid.). Once written and presented at the national gathering in Bristol, both versions were forwarded for discussion at regional gatherings and posted on the email list and the online forum. The process of adopting one of the versions at subsequent national gatherings proved to be challenging as

consensus could not be reached, even though both statements got positive feedback at the gathering in Bristol (Ibid.). As a result, neither of the versions was adopted as a political statement of CfCA, marking the absence of a unified position on the one hand, and difficulties in overcoming disagreement through consensual process, on the other. However, despite the failure to finalize this document, the process and discussions surrounding the political statement is meaningful for demonstrating a range of discursive positions articulated within the network.

On the online forum of the CfCA a few threads were dedicated to the discussion of the statement and ways of working it out. One of the participants active on the forum made an interesting point regarding the desired content of the statement: “We don’t need to write a manifesto, we just need to break the post-political consensus and express an antagonism, as well as being accessible enough for people who haven’t articulated that antagonism” (CfCA 2010e). The use of the term “post-political” in this medium is indicative of activists’ awareness about the discussions in the literature regarding the ‘carbon consensus’, but even more so of their actual conscious attempt to resist the post-political condition in practice through developing this political statement and signing up to other statements, such as for instance PGA (CfCA 2010f). Regarding the content of this external statement, it is focused on challenging capitalism as the root cause of societal crises. As pointed out by activists, signing up to the external statements is a way of making the political stance of the network explicit and “expressing antagonism with capitalism to remain effective” (Ibid.).

As to the message that the activist who made this comment was getting across, it is evident from his other posts that breaking the post-political consensus and expressing antagonism refers specifically to “articulating an antagonism with state and capital” that would help express “a radical climate justice agenda” (CfCA 2010e). According to the activist, the difficulty in choosing between the two drafts of the CfCA political statement lies in the fact that they are “trying to articulate an intersection

of two centrism (climate or capital) without creating a dualism where one is seen as more important than the other” (Ibid.). This tension was also articulated in the question asked at the Bristol national gathering: “Are we a movement against climate change or against capitalism?” (CfCA 2010g). The distinction between the two centrism, as pointed out by some activists, is that the focus on climate signifies adherence to the environmental movement, which in theory might ignore repressive behavior as long as it does not cause climate change (CfCA 2010e). In contrast, the broader focus on capital and state indicates a stance against any form of oppression and allows alliances with movements fighting the same targets while not specifically concerned with climate (Ibid.). In fact, the debates over the two statements embody the clash of two discourses: the counter-discourse reflected in the first statement that starts with declaring capitalism as “a catastrophe for life on Earth” and “the root cause of the current climatic, social and economic crises”, and the dominant discourse reproduced in the second version stating that “[g]lobal climate change, caused by human activities, is happening, threatening the lives and livelihoods of billions of people and the existence of millions of species” and calling for emissions reduction to avert the catastrophe (CfCA 2010d).

The fact that CfCA did not manage to adopt either of the versions of the political statement indicates that both discourses, i.e. focused on centrality of climate change versus capitalism, were pertinent for the activists and were actively negotiated and contested in the network. The lack of clear ‘victory’ of one of the discourses thus points to the need to consider grassroots’ understanding of the root causes of climate change as having two dimensions, or layers that represent the dominant and counter-discourses at the same time.

5.2 Climate change as a reason to argue for a radical political reform

The previous sections of this chapter focused on the actions taken by CfCA, although it should be noted that RT activists also took active part in most of those actions, especially the annual week-long

camps. Although I consider the two networks as sharing the discourse on climate change, given RT's longer history, in this chapter their actions are addressed in turn. The RT network has existed on the UK activist scene since the early 2000s. At that time an exclusive focus on climate change and climate justice adopted by the network was unique. The current RT network takes pride in this fact emphasizing in the press-releases that it was the first climate justice group in the UK (RT 2008d; internal communication). RT was also instrumental in kick-starting CfCA (Woodsworth 2008), it is then not surprising that the two networks have had similar targets and have supported each other's actions (pers.comm. Rebecca, Sidney).

Their actions have had the following aims: exposing 'greenwashing' of companies and false solutions, confronting fossil fuel industries, and participating in the days of action jointly organized with other networks, including major CfCAs. RT thus always had very tangible physical targets, such as BP and Shell, for example. The main mission of the network is well-articulated by activist Sydney (pers.comm.): "if I had to put words to our mission, it's to dismantle the fossil fuel empire [...] that's what we like to achieve, that's a life time goal and it's not something we will do on our own but that's smth we would like to see in the world - dismantling the fossil fuel empire". Activist Rebecca (pers.comm.) clarifies what dismantling fossil fuel empire means in practice "taking away the oil industry's social license to operate" and that "we think the oil industry should end, we don't think we should stop expansion, all these companies and all these extractions in the entire world should stop altogether".

Throughout its history, RT has been consistent in confronting the fossil fuel industry (RT 2010d) as a generic enemy that is at the heart of climate crisis. Specifically, it is the corporations and fossil fuel companies assisted by the government that are in the firing line of RT actions (Ibid.). However, RT's justification for action against the 'fossil fuel Empire' was never based solely on the argument that

fossil fuels contribute to climate change which is threatening life on earth. In the first political statement (RT 2002a) , the rationale behind action had two components: effects on climate, suggesting technical emission reduction aspects of the problem, and social injustice produced as a result of unequal economic relations between and within countries.

The articulation of technical aspects of climate change was based on the scientific rhetoric that prescribed urgent cuts in emissions, as revealed in the quote below: “We need to make a minimum of 60% reductions in carbon emissions now, as proposed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In fact, we need to go beyond the IPCC recommendations to achieve cuts of 90% in coming years. We acknowledge the magnitude of these changes, but are convinced that only cuts of this kind can hope to stabilise the climate” (Ibid.). Third person pronoun ‘we’ is used throughout the statement to refer to the position of RT’s members and as it is the case in the quoted paragraph, it is also a reference to the society as a whole which includes all its members in a collective identity. The effect achieved by switching between the two types of ‘we’ is the emphasis on the relevance of climate change for individuals and the society. At the same time, it also implies that the responsibility for climate change and for the emissions in particular is shared between everyone.

The other actors present in the statement are “corporate and other elite interests” that pursued “economic globalization” that disregards the issues of equity and justice and “is triggering ever-faster climate change” (RT 2002a). Globalization is thus articulated as an entity rather than a process directed by concrete agents. Such nominalization, common to the discourse of ‘new capitalism’ (Fairclough 2003), does not however aim at obfuscating the human agency and the responsibility of specific actors because these actors are clearly indicated and named elsewhere in the statement: the northern countries, ‘the biggest polluters’, the WTO and the World Bank (Ibid.). The fact that passive voice construction and nominalizations are used in the reference to economic globalization

might indicate in fact the incorporation of this global discourse ‘as is’, i.e. RT might have directly transplanted it from the texts on globalization.

It is notable that apocalyptic scenario of climate-related events was totally absent in the statement. Instead, the importance of the social justice perspective that RT advocated was amplified through emphasis on the need to ensure “[e]qual access to, and responsibility for, common global resources amongst all peoples”, the recognition of the rights of refugees whether climate-related or not, and the central role of those “most severely affected” by crisis in defining solutions (RT 2002a). Thus, the first political statement displays a clear emphasis on social justice implications of climate change which is only briefly justified by scientific knowledge. Additionally, climate change was *not* portrayed using an apocalyptic imagery at that point.

The social justice perspective articulated in the first RT statement became even more salient in its recently updated statement (2011). A distinct change between the two statements is that any mentioning of the IPCC reduction target is removed from the current version (RT 2011b), as well as the discussion of Kyoto protocol targets. The only implicit reference to the science is in a brief acknowledgement that the “atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases must be reduced as dramatically and quickly as possible”. Note that the passive voice construction together with a modal verb ‘must’ in this quote help avoid mentioning the agent who prescribes ‘dramatic reduction’. This way the emphasis on the authority science is avoided, which can be explained by the network’s conscious attempt to avoid the ‘science bandwagon’ (Rebecca pers.comm.). Instead, the section on climate justice is significantly expanded in the new statement.

The data from the interviews testifies to the marginality of scientific rhetoric in the RT discourse. For example, according to Sidney, dismantling the fossil fuel empire is needed not necessarily because of climate change *per se* but as a move towards a simpler and more rewarding lifestyle. A simpler lifestyle

would then mean “*localization of how we live and our society, how we produce our food, how we produce our things ... we would be a lot more reliant on ourselves ... it would lead to a world of greater well being, potentially not material well being in terms of things but in terms of a more rewarding lifestyle where you were involved in creating things that were part of your life*” (Sidney pers.comm.). For Sidney, fighting against the fossil fuel industry that actually feeds the consumption and the unsustainable lifestyle is a way of bringing political changes that will lead to the simplification of life and a radical overhaul of the society: “*so it's not necessarily the climate change, climate change is a useful argument **to try and create a political change**. And yeah, if climate change wasn't happening, I would find some other reason that was very useful to argue for radical political reform*” (Ibid.).

This idea echoes CfCA's statement that climate change is a “referendum on what kind of world we want” (CfCA 2007a) and has important implications as to how the discourse is actually framed: climate change, figuratively speaking, is a vehicle for bringing deeper structural changes to the society and the current systems (political, economic, financial, energy systems, etc.). Therefore, in order to get the system changed, activists choose a current resonant frame in the society (catastrophic climate change and emissions from fossil fuels as the main factor of it) and use it extensively in their actions by particularly stressing the scientific evidence to legitimate their claims. As Rebecca (pers.comm.) noted in her interview, for the first time “it [climate movement] had the science to back it up in a way that previously environmental issues maybe hadn't, so we, a lot of environmental groups, said it's not us saying it... it's not us saying, it's the scientists. They are the credible authorities; we are just the mouthpiece what people are shouting about”.

On the other hand, Rebecca emphasized in her interview that unlike other climate groups that used science to legitimize their position and use it as a way of getting climate change to the center of the debates, RT managed to stay away from the “science bandwagon” because they “always had the

sense that you don't need a quantifiable reason to make these changes, ... the testimony of people in this other world and the sense of deep, deep injustice that we feel is very good reason enough" and that "no matter if it's the scientists or people at Niger Delta who are telling us that they are suffering the impacts of the oil industry, their claims are just as important as scientists claims and we are happy to go on either." (Rebecca pers.comm.). This actually shows that RT, although fully aware of the benefits of using scientific consensus on climate change as a tool, has also remained true to its original idea (expressed in the first political statement) that it is the injustices that are the justification for taking direct action in the first place.

5.2.1 Coalescence of discourses

While political statements are important documents that clearly articulate the discursive position of the network, the actions taken are no less indicative of the discourse of the group. The themes of exploitation of resources and people, human rights and links between oil and wars were salient in RT's early actions. British Petroleum (BP) has been one of the long-term targets for RT. For instance, in 2003 RT staged a Carnival against Oil Wars and Climate Chaos outside the hall where BP was holding its Annual General Meeting. As the title of the action suggests, the rationale behind the action was the involvement of BP in "oil wars" and contribution to "climate chaos". The reference to war took central place in the discursive framing of the action resonating with the anti-war demonstrations against the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. RT accused BP of 'triggering conflict', of being "knee deep in this war, just like Shell, Exxon, Total" (RT 2011c). The war theme was also supported visually (fig. 4 below). The picture used in the action shows a gasoline pump releasing drops of oil that turn into bombs falling on the civilian buildings. The message of the picture is unequivocal: the oil is equated with arms, war, and destruction of peaceful communities (as implied by the minaret-like shape of the building on the picture). BP's colorful logo in the background points to the presumable "author" of the attack. As mentioned in the background document, BP is the

personification of a “shallow, brutal, racist, unnatural, destructive profit-driven world” for RT. It is worth noting that apart from portraying the world that BP represents, RT took the chance in this action to highlight ‘the visions of the world’ they wanted to live in. Such visions included ‘an end to oil’, ‘communities owning and running their renewable energy supplies’, and ‘resistance and diversity’ (Ibid.). The notion of community autonomy addressed in the quote is important because it is prominent in grassroots discourse on renewables (see Chapter 7).



Fig. 4. Action against BP. RT's Banner

Source: RT (2011c)

It is notable that climate change is absent from the visual representation in this action and is only mentioned twice in the text: once in the title (“Climate Chaos”) and once in the following sentence: “it’s time to join the dots between oil, war, capitalism and the way they’re knocking the world’s climate off its axis” (RT 2011c). This suggests that climate change was not (yet) the main discursive focus but an extra issue in the list of BP’s ‘crimes’. By mentioning in the text ‘BP’s record’ in Colombia, West Papua, Alaska and Azerbaijan, another theme, that of environmental destruction,

loss of land and damage to the livelihoods of farmers and the social relationships of indigenous populations is brought to the forefront. These themes accompany most of the actions against the fossil fuel industry throughout RT history, although its relative discursive weight varies. They are in fact the articulations of social and environmental justice.

Just a year later, in 2004, the issue of ‘climate chaos’ started to take central discursive place in the actions. To give an example, RT organized a critical mass bike ride (full title of the action: Carnival and Kritical Mass Tour of the G8’s Top Climate Criminals) during the European Social Forum in London. The futuristic theme of the action portrayed London in 2050 as a city submerged by the rising sea levels (see fig. 5 below), hence the dress code consisting of rubbers rings, snorkels, fish and mermaid costumes suggested to the participants (RT 2004a) . Climate change was thus articulated through the apocalyptic imagery that had been circulating in the wider public discourse (see discussion of context above).

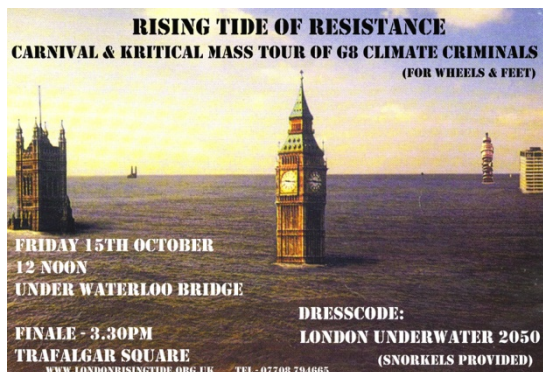


Fig. 5. 2004 Critical Mass Flyer, RT

Source: Indymedia UK (2004)

As suggested by the title of the action, the target was ‘climate criminals’ embodied in the G8 countries. Their ‘climate crimes’, pointed out in a leaflet, encompassed denial of climate change, yearly CO2 emissions from oil exploration, environmental and human rights abuses at the pipeline construction projects, and misuse of public funds, among others (Indymedia UK 2004). The goal of the action was to symbolically ‘charge the climate criminals and bring them to justice’ as a necessary

step to “to dismantle capitalism and Big Oil, and build up sustainable, socially just alternatives” (Ibid.). It was in fact one of the first uses of the criminal justice frame that would be incorporated into the climate justice discourse on later stages (discussed in detail in Chapter 6).

What was important in this action was the coalescence of discourses upon which climate justice discourse was gradually constructed. Specifically, the merging of two distinct discourses, that of resistance to capitalism and that of climate change, can be observed in this action. Given that climate change discourse has been covered above, in what follows, the resistance to capitalism discourse is discussed.

The action clearly drew discursively on the anti-capitalist mobilizations that were taking place globally against the G8 and certain financial institutions. This is evident from the direct links to the anti-capitalist movement: the action was positioned as “part of the many grassroots events sprouting up all around the European Social Forum” (RT 2004a) which is a branch of the World Social Forum, a platform bringing together various anti-capitalist movements. At the same time, the action aimed to anticipate the upcoming G8 meeting in Scotland in 2005, i.e. the common target of anti-capitalist mobilizations. The genre of the action- carnival- was not accidental because it was considered a ‘signature’ type of action of the global anti-capitalist movement used at major mobilizations (Tancons 2011). In fact, carnival was not “merely a cultural practice” but a tool for reversing “the status quo as a means to mediate between opposite ends of the social spectrum and to create a shared, if fleeting, space to live side by side” (Ibid.). In this specific action, the subversive powers of the carnivalesque are used by activists to emancipate themselves from the dominant discourse and reclaim the public spaces to demonstrate the counter-discourse, that of resistance and rebellion.

What was different from the anti-capitalist discourse though, was that climate change was at that point in time positioned as the main driving force behind the action and resistance to capitalism was complementary to the fight against climate change, as the following quotes demonstrate: “We are here to protest against the government and corporate creators of climate chaos – and celebrate in carnival style our vision of a world where we’ve phased out not just fossil fuels, but capitalism as well” and “Today, we’re unmasking some of the worst climate criminals at large in this oil capital” (Indymedia UK 2004). The phrase “oil capital” is indicative of coalescence of discourses at work since it combines the environmental movement’s ‘enemy’ and that of the anti-capitalist one.

Over the years, unlike CfCA whose targets shifted from major polluters to actors only indirectly contributing to climate change (i.e. banks and financial institutions), RT’s targets remained virtually unchanged- their focus on the ‘fossil fuel empire’ can be traced in almost any action taken. In June 2012 RT together with activists from other networks targeted Shell AGM in London. As evident from the press release, the destructive effects of fossil fuels on climate is a common justification that partly draws on the ‘six degree temperature rise’, extreme weather, and melting of glaciers (RT 2012a). However, these arguments occupy very limited space in the current discourse, compared to others. Namely, half of the press release is focused on the physical impacts on the local populations of tar sands that are being developed by Shell, such as these: “Not only are indigenous livelihoods and futures being destroyed, but communities on land where tar sands extraction has been imposed are experiencing disturbingly high rates of rare forms of cancer and auto-immune diseases” (Ibid.). The use of the passive voice construction “has been imposed” emphasizes the violation of communities’ rights for being involved in the decision-making process regarding their lands.

The testimonies of four community representatives are given through direct quotation in the press release, which puts heavy emphasis on the issues of health, culture and pollution affecting people as a

result of the extractions. For instance, in the following quote, the term “extinction” refers to human beings rather than to animals or plants, as is usually the case in an environmental discourse: “Aamjiwnaang is the first community in the world to experience birth ratios of 2 girls to 1 boy due to endocrine disruption from the pollution. This is the first step towards extinction” (Ibid.).

The use of the term ‘extinction’ signals the prominence of human perspective in the discourse on climate. This suggests that climate change propelled by the extraction of fossil fuels is articulated as a danger to human beings rather than polar bears or any other species, in contrast to the environmental and media discourse that used the flag species to demonstrate the effects of climate change. This anthropocentric perspective is supported visually through the subversion of Shell’s logo with the image of a human skull (fig. 6 below).



Fig. 6. Shell AGM Action 2012

Source: RT UK/ Rikkiindymedia (2012)

In addition to wearing masks with the subvert logo, activists were dressed in long black gowns with hoods making an unmistakable association with death that was presumably inflicted by the fossil fuel giant Shell. In fact, the accusation of death is not only symbolic as in this particular action but is also based on real allegations around Shell’s involvement in the death of local activists in Nigeria.

Specifically, RT claims that Shell is complicit in the execution by the military government of Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 other Nigerian activists in 1995 for opposing the “devastation of their homeland by oil companies, especially Shell” (RT 2012b).

Thus, analysis of RT’s actions reveals the following. First, the discursive position on climate change evolved in the following way: in 2003 while climate change was used as one of the justifications for action, links between fossil fuels and war, as well as social and environmental justice arguments prevailed in the framing of the action. Next, in 2004, climate change as a theme started to occupy the central place in the discursive framing of the actions and was linked to the anti-capitalist discourse. Additionally, climate change rhetoric took the apocalyptic turn, resonating with the growing public and media discourses on climate change. The discourse of the subsequent actions against the fossil fuel empire was marked by these early developments, i.e. merging of anti-capitalist, dominant (climate change as apocalypse), social (poverty, loss of land and inequality brought by oil and gas explorations), and environmental justice discourses (soil, water pollution, loss of biodiversity in the areas exploited by fossil fuel projects) into one discourse under the title of climate justice. The current actions of RT (2012) demonstrate that while emissions contributing to climate change are part of the justifications of targeting a specific fossil fuel company, the main emphasis has shifted back to the effects of oil extraction on the communities, their health, culture and livelihoods. The discourse of environmental and social justice thus prevails over the scientific rhetoric. Thus, the struggle between two discourses, the dominant and counter-discourse, is also discernible in the action of RT from a diachronic perspective.

5.3 Conclusions

The chapter examined the dialectic relations between the dominant and counter-discourses diachronically and through the theoretical lens of post-politics. Through the analysis of the goals

and messaging of the actions, I have demonstrated that scientific rhetoric was conspicuous in how the networks articulated the climate change problem. The signs of the so-called post-political condition and carbon consensus – the use of scientific rhetoric and the apocalyptic imagery to argue for stopping climate change – are certainly traceable in the discourse of the activists. However, in contrast to the claims of some scholars (Schlembach *et al.* 2012; Pusey and Russell 2010; Russell 2012) who argued that such framing of the issue has contributed to the de-politicization of climate change politics and to the entrenchment of the post-political framework by grassroots networks, I have shown that the analysis reveals the oscillation between the reproduction of and resistance to the dominant discourse. The reproduction of the dominant discourse can be linked to the fact that the use of scientific rhetoric in the actions peaked at a particular moment in time (in the years 2006-2008) when climate science was in the spotlight; however, it steadily declined afterwards. At the same time, even when the scientific arguments and demands were conspicuous in the actions of grassroots networks, there were accompanied by other arguments that sought to expose the social and political nature of climate change problems. Thus, grassroots have always foregrounded the links between climate change and their social and political roots which has been intended to run counter to the dominant discourse. As time passed, the links were consciously exposed even more in the actions through the choice of targets, for example.

Furthermore, having found that activists' scientific references do not always have true scientific origin (i.e. policy document referred to as 'science' or some commentators granted the role of scientists), I made an argument in this chapter that scientific rhetoric was used by grassroots as a tool for various purposes: to attract new participants into the movement, to grab the attention of the general public or simply because these 'scientific' sources were handy for grassroots in terms of voicing their own demands or concerns. In relation to the scientific rhetoric, it has been argued that grassroots networks differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' science and show a certain mistrust of

particular climate research institutions and researchers due to links with the industry and for other reasons.

Next, it was shown in this chapter that grassroots activists have been aware of the fact that overplaying scientific arguments results in de-politicization of climate change. To remedy that, they have made efforts to develop political statements in which the antagonism between a ‘radical climate justice agenda’ and the existing political and economic systems would be foregrounded. It was also argued that the contours of this climate justice agenda already appeared in the early years of climate activism reflected in the coalescence of various discourses.

Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that grassroots’ discourse on climate change struggles to counter the dominant discourse in various dimensions while at the same time shows clear and conscious attempts to do so. Given these patterns of resistance revealed through the analysis, characterizing it as being locked in the carbon consensus and post-politics means ignoring these important patterns that point to the crucial role of justice in grassroots networks. Chapters that follow further examine the identified tensions from different angles.

6 International dimension of climate change politics

This chapter examines how the international dimension of climate change politics is addressed in the counter-discourse on climate justice. As noted in chapter 3, climate change is commonly regarded as an issue of dichotomous relations between the global North and global South encompassing the matters of historical responsibility for carbon emissions, distribution of climate impacts and solutions to the problem. Focusing specifically on the first two matters, it is argued in this chapter that the counter-discourse constructed by grassroots networks reproduces the bi-polar structure of the debates but at the same time attempts to shift it towards a more complex understanding of justice by emphasizing the inequalities beyond the nation-state framework. In addition, while distributional justice claims are present in the discourse, an emphasis on the political scale of justice prevails.

6.1 *The root causes and responsibility*

The dominant politics of climate change, as discussed in Chapter 3, are tied to the concept of historical responsibility of the global North for carbon emissions and the recognition of unequal climate change impacts for the countries of the global South. What emerged from the data is that with regard to causes of climate change on the global level, grassroots networks' counter - discourse is structured around a broader notion of 'root causes' of climate change. This notion has three layers that are engaged separately or sometimes simultaneously depending on the specific contexts: first, it is the responsibility of the global North mostly evident in discussions around policy issues or events such as COP meetings; second it is the current economic system referred to as capitalism or neoliberal globalization that surfaces at the activist gatherings, meetings, i.e. mostly on the internal level, although it can also be found in the statements; and third is the fossil fuel industry layer that

gets engaged in the context of direct actions. The latter two have been partially discussed in previous chapter in the example of the clash between the dominant and counter-discourses (section 5.1.4).

Starting with the first layer, although the language in which it is articulated (historical responsibility, emission targets, global North/South dichotomy) mirrors the dominant discourse on climate change, it draws not only on the responsibility of the global North for carbon emissions but even more so, on the disparities produced through unequal historical economic relations, as illustrated by the RT's 'About Us' statement: "Climate change is a direct result of the economic domination of Northern interests and transnational corporations. We call for 'climate justice' through solutions that address structural inequalities and recognise the historical responsibility of the rich nations for the problem (RT n.d.). Along the same lines, CfCA reproduced on their website the CJA statement on climate justice in the European context proclaiming that 'the historical legacy of European expansion/colonialism is a root cause of the current geopolitical inequalities, in which the global North is consuming the global South' (CfCA 2009r). It is notable that the global South is positioned in the statement as transcending the geographical boundaries to include any group of people affected by "the relationships of capital and domination" (Ibid.). The idea is then to extend the notion of climate justice and responsibility to the marginalized populations in developed countries in order to unite their struggles with those of the developing world. Such nuance in meaning of the 'global South' attempts to break the North/South dichotomy characteristic of the dominant discourse and confirms that the concept of historical responsibility in the counter-discourse relates primarily to the responsibility for creating and sustaining the inequalities rather than the historical emissions. As it will be argued further in this dissertation (section 7.1), the North/South dichotomy is also transcended by the counter-discourse through foregrounding the notion of 'elites' in relation to the poor and marginalized, regardless of the geographical location.

Closely linked to historical responsibility is the layer that reveals capitalism as the root cause of climate change, partly touched upon in chapter 5. The economic domination mentioned in the quotes above is tied to the global capitalism and its predication on growth as exemplified in the RT and CfCA statements:

Capitalism is the root cause of the current climatic, social and economic crises and cannot be their solution (CFCA 2010d).

Rising Tide believes that the roots of the climate crisis lie in the current global economic system and its endless pursuit of economic growth at all costs (RT 2011b).

However, despite unanimous agreement that capitalism is the root cause of climate change and the injustices associated with it, an in-depth analysis of capitalism is conspicuously absent in both networks. Or rather, it is limited to the issues of economic growth, profit motive, pervasiveness of market logic and over-consumption. Lack of deeper analysis of capitalism, class and social relations mediated by it is what generated tensions within Climate Camp over the years (Shift Magazine and Dysophia 2010). Also, it emerged in the interviews that while some activists were reluctant to use the term capitalism because they were not sure what it really meant, others thought that taking an explicit anti-capitalist position could inhibit the movement's growth, as expressed by Anna (pers.comm.): "these labels [capitalism or neoliberalism] sometimes prove to create more boundaries than open doors". As a result, the system, a more neutral synonym, is commonly used to denote the root causes of climate change.

Finally, the third layer of the root causes concept is salient in discussions of the fossil fuel industry. As noted by Sydney (pers.comm.), "Scientifically the root causes of climate change are the burning of fossil fuels and the cutting down of huge swathes of rain forest". In fact, most of the actions taken by RT have involved confrontation with a fossil fuel company or were closely related to fossil fuels. While such framing reduces climate change to the emissions of carbon and thus reproduces the dominant discourse, the impacts of fossil fuel industry are never discussed in isolation from the

injustices that it entails. The layers are often articulated all together (often pitted against each other as in the example of CfCA's political statement in Chapter 5) which demonstrates their interconnectedness and a complex understanding of climate change, as opposed to being tied only to the carbon emissions.

What is absent in the networks' discourse on the North/South relations and climate change is the deeper analysis of the North/South categories themselves and specific distinctions within them. The absence of such analysis and discussions within the networks points to the acceptance by the activists of the unitary framing of the North and the South that the dominant discourse favors. Such unitary framing obscures a variety of possible locally - grounded understandings of climate change and justice. As one of the southern activists engaged with Climate Camp explained to me in an interview, one of the problems he experiences within the movements of the North is that the activists from the European countries largely shape climate justice discourse giving it a distinct Eurocentric perspective. This means that the discourse is constructed using the notions and paradigms inherent to the North and not to the South. In the words of Kofi (pers.comm.), "it is the Europeans at the forefront who are determining the languages, they are designing the terms, and the paradigms and so on and so forth, if you want to be involved in climate justice, you have to learn the language of the Europeans and learn their concepts and interact in European perspective - that is eurocentrism within the climate justice movement". To overcome this Eurocentric perspective that Kofi identified, it is necessary to establish a dialogue between the activists from the global North and global South that would allow incorporating the discourses of climate change and justice constructed by both actors.

Overall, the layered character of the notion of climate change causes suggests that grassroots networks' counter-discourse does not fully reproduce the dominant discourse focused exclusively on the North/South dichotomy. Rather, it seeks to expose the complexity of climate change issues and

contest the dominant discourse from multiple perspectives. RT's statement linking climate justice and anti-cuts campaigning serves as a good example of how the layers are brought together: "the root causes of corporate greed, mindless obsession with economic growth, oppression of the poor by the rich and powerful, are all the same" (RT 2010a). What ties these layers together is the thread of global inequality between and within countries that can only be fully addressed through a justice approach. The concept of ecological debt discussed in the next section support this argument further.

6.2 Ecological debt

In Chapter 3 it was argued that the concept of climate debt closely related to the historical responsibility of the global North is at the heart of the counter-discourse on climate justice. This notion has also been present in the discourse of grassroots networks from the early days of climate activism, albeit under different wording. In the first political statement RT was already calling for equitable solutions to climate change that would ensure "repayment of the ecological debt of the north to the south" (RT 2002a). The ecological debt is further defined in the statement as follows:

Ecological debt is caused by the extraction, use and destruction of southern resources such as fossil fuels, minerals, forests, marine & genetic resources. These resources are usually exported to the north under unequal terms of trade, typically to pay back third world debt. Northern industrialised countries have an obligation to help repair and reverse the damage caused to the biosphere (RT 2002a).

What is evident from the definition is that the notion of debt is not linked to carbon emissions as it is currently in the statements of CJN! for example (CJN! 2009?). Instead, the ecological debt is a wider notion that encompasses any environmental destruction caused by developed countries through unequal economic relations. Likewise, in the recently updated statement RT acknowledges the ecological *and* social debts of wealthy industrialized countries to the people of the global South

(RT 2011b). The social debt is thus a result of the ecological destruction as it “generates huge social damage whereby local communities are exploited physically, politically, economically, culturally and emotionally” (Ibid.). While the term climate debt started penetrating the discourse of grassroots networks especially after the Copenhagen and Cochabamba mobilizations where it was at the center of debates, the findings suggest that first, the notion of debt has originally been part of their discourse and thus has preceded the notion of climate debt; and second, the notion of ecological debt continues to have a wider and more radical meaning because it exposes a range of inequalities that developed countries are facing in contrast to the narrow emissions-based meaning climate debt proposes.

Further, the notion of climate debt is often criticized for being explicitly about financial reparations rather than structural changes in the relations between North and South, which opens “a dangerous door to increased green capitalist investment in the Global South” (Simons and Tonak 2010: n.p.). However the findings suggest that grassroots networks’ position regarding financial reparations has evolved over the last decade. In the early stages of climate activism, while financial reparations were not explicit, they could be deduced based on the language used in the statements. To illustrate this argument, consider two quotes from the RT statements made at different times. In the 2002 mission statement RT UK declared that the ecological debt must be repaid to reverse the damage. In contrast, in its most recent statement (2011b) RT emphasizes that the most important way of redressing the debt is not financial: “Repair to the biosphere, and to the communities where such extraction has taken place, **cannot be delivered** simply **by payments of money**. It will require the **wresting of wealth and resources** from elites **in popular control**. Particularly, land and resources need to be returned to the control of communities in the global south and indigenous peoples” (RT 2011b, emphasis added).

This shows that activists' discourse around ecological debt goes way beyond the narrow focus of financial reparations as it now calls for the transfer of power to the affected countries and to the communities rather than any specific financial compensation. Additionally, RT considers necessary the “[r]edress of the ecological and social debts of the North to the South and from elites to popular control, enabling communities to rebuild themselves and restore their environments” (Ibid.). This quote demonstrates a call for the empowerment of communities and signals a discursive shift from the idea of the North's intervention to rebuild the damage done in the South to that of self-determination and control of the developing world which fits well with the grassroots networks' discourse on transferring the power, as it will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

This is, however, not to say that grassroots networks totally reject any financial reparations to the South. As the 2009 post-Copenhagen statement suggests, RT and CfCA endorse the Climate Justice Now! statement, according to which “huge financial transfers from North to South, based on the repayment of climate debts and subject to democratic control. The costs of adaptation and mitigation should be paid for by redirecting military budgets, progressive and innovative taxes, and debt cancellation” (RT 2010b; CJN 2009). However, grassroots networks emphasize that any financial reparations should be subject to the “democratic control” of the affected communities and should not come through institutions like the World Bank or IMF since they are considered to be tools of neoliberal agenda (CJN 2009). To give another example, back in 2001 RT was already exposing the World Bank's huge investments in fossil fuel projects that run counter to its mission within the UNFCCC process to finance alternative energy and energy efficiency projects (RT 2001d).

Furthermore, revisions to the current economic relationships within the developed countries are also seen as a way of redressing ecological and social debt. Such revisions imply greater self-sufficiency of the **developed** countries, as illustrated in the quote below:

“I guess the best way we can address that debt is by becoming more self-sufficient, and countries being less inclined to import stuff at the expense of others. A classic example would be the famines in parts of Africa during the 80s where the NGOs and charities and stuff were collecting money to send food to Ethiopia while we were still importing food for animal feed throughout Europe from Ethiopia” (Ben pers.comm.). This idea has been echoed repeatedly by the activists who believe that developed countries should produce their own food and not outsource other types of production to the South.

Thus, it has been argued in this section that the notion of ecological debt has preceded that of climate debt and has deeper implications for the counter-discourse. Instead of a narrow focus on the inequality in the emissions or climate change impacts, ecological debt exposes a range of injustices that has affected the global South. The term has also acquired a new dimension, i.e. in addition to the ecological one, the social debt is pointed out, which helps direct the counter-discourse towards social and environmental justice. Further, the notion of ecological debt in grassroots networks' discourse reveals two dimensions of justice, participation and reparations, that are interwoven: activists insist that the debt should be repaid in non-financial terms through the transfer of power and resources to the communities to ensure their autonomy and self-sufficiency, while at the same time any financial transfers for climate change mitigation and adaptation should be done by bypassing the international financial institutions that operate according to the neoliberal logic and are implicated in the support of the fossil fuel industry. Lastly, the self-sufficiency of developed countries is positioned as necessary and contributing to redressing the debt.

6.3 "No borders, no nations, stop deportations!"

Apart from the root causes and ecological debt, the international dimension of climate politics in grassroots networks' discourse also includes an issue of migration. Back in 2002 in its first political

statement RT declared that "We need to recognise the plight and the rights of refugees fleeing from the effects of climate change, economic collapse or wars, which always have inequality and exploitation at their core" (RT 2002a). It is notable in this quote that it is not only climate-caused migration that the activists are concerned about but also about migration as a result of wars or economic failures.

In the most current statement (2011) the freedom of migration is still recognized as an integral part of climate justice, even though the wording has slightly changed. Namely, 'refugees' are now termed as 'displaced people' and instead of naming various categories (climate, economic or war refugees), RT brings them together in one group and calls for abolishing migration controls: "Freedom of movement and an end to migration controls. Current and future support for all displaced people, and for those who attempt to create a better and safer life for themselves and their families by crossing international borders" (RT 2011b). The problematic aspect of the term 'climate refugees' is that it singles out climate a particular group of people into a separate category (as opposed to environmental, economic, war refugees and so on), and thus it narrows down the scope of the problem. Moreover, the label 'climate refugees' masks the underlying cause of this status, implying that such people are merely victims of nonhuman nature which obfuscates the interrelatedness of the problems and injustices (Building Bridges Collective 2010). At the same time, as evidenced in the reports from the Cochabamba conference in 2010 made by RT and activists from other networks, there is a growing understanding among the networks that including climate refugee as another category institutionalizes the injustice and removes the political antagonism from the notion of climate-related injustices (Ayya 2010⁷). Instead of extending restricting categories, grassroots networks call for the extension of rights to move for everyone: "Rather than campaigning for a

⁷ Ayya is the name of the blog created by activists from RT, No Borders, Trapeze Popular Education Collective and CJA to report on their participation in the panel on migration at the World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights in Cochabamba in 2010. The detailed record can be found in the Activist Materials Consulted, under Other Groups section.

further category of people which can then be arbitrarily applied by those in power, we must demand Freedom to Stay and Freedom of Movement for All” (Ayya 2010). A similar idea was pointed out by Climate campers who took part in the discussion of migration at the Cochabamba conference in 2010: "...the most important thing to come out for us was a sense that people in the room really understood that borders, nation-states and the categorisations of human beings are another construct of the system." (CfCA 2010o).

Furthermore, in light of recent anti-aviation campaigns, climate groups have been accused of calling for the curbing of air travel, restriction of freedom and strengthening migration controls in light of the climate change problem (O'Neill 2007; Shift Magazine 2008b). However, this accusation neglects a number of actions taken by grassroots climate activists that demonstrated the importance stopping migration controls. For example, the picture below (fig. 7) depicts a mass action in Copenhagen in 2009 that aimed to denounce the existing migration controls in Europe regardless of the migrant category. Hundreds of activists, including those from CfCA and RT, marched in the streets chanting "No borders, no nations, stop deportations!".



Fig. 7. Action against Migration Controls. Copenhagen 2009
Source: Maunoury (2009)

This action was pulled together by several networks, including CJA, No-Borders, CfCA UK and others with the aim of highlighting “the increasing links between climate change, militarism and displacement of peoples from the Global South” (CfCA 2009o). Moreover, two years earlier, in 2007, No Borders network’s camp took place right after Heathrow Climate Camp was over and the cross-over between the two networks was visible not only in sharing the infrastructure and the participation of the same people (Shift Magazine 2008a) but also in the fact that Climate Camp held a migration-related action against a budget airline XL that was engaged in the deportations of migrants to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Several activists occupied the airline's offices while the others were leafleting the company's employees about the links between climate change, flights and lives of refugees. As a result of the action, the airline shortly pulled out from providing deportation services at Gatwick airport.

In the CfCA's press release of the action it was explained that ‘environmental refugees outnumber all other kinds combined, and climate change will make that get a lot worse’. It is interesting that the rich countries were positioned as having the responsibility to protect the poor due to their superior welfare: “We in the wealthy countries have welfare to protect us from climate chaos, but the world’s poorest have nothing to help them except us taking responsibility” (CfCA 2007c). It was also pointed out that the wealthy countries' current emissions were potentially threatening: “Our carbon emissions threaten to take the essentials of life from the poor of the world; it makes a mockery of our concern about aid and debt relief” (CfCA 2007c).

To illustrate other aspects of grassroots networks’ position on migration, it is useful to consider the CJA statement on climate justice and the section on migration, in particular. In this statement the concept of historical responsibility discussed in previous sections covers not only emissions and injustices generated by the structural inequalities but also migration: “The historical development of

capital accumulation, colonialism and carbon emissions, means that Europe has a unique responsibility to act in solidarity with those who are displaced" (CfCA 2009r). Also, by highlighting the contradiction of the free movement of capital and the actual restrictions on the movement of people, activists once again emphasize the systemic roots of the injustice: "In our free market system only those with certain papers such as an EU passport and capital and commodities are free to move around the world" (Ibid.). It is thus a direct contestation of the key principle of neoliberal globalization concerning the free movement limited to capital and goods. At the same time, what is notable in the discourse of migration for grassroots is the fact that along with the freedom to move for all and a 'borderless world' (CfCA 2009o), they also call for the possibility for people to stay in their home lands: "As well as fighting for the conditions for people to be able to stay in their homes and communities, we must also defend the principle of freedom of movement for all as one key aspect of climate justice" (CfCA 2009r). This idea echoes with the calls for community autonomy that will be discussed further in the coming chapters.

As an activist from No Borders network pointed out, challenging migration is much more than a human rights issue, as it goes beyond the suffering of the displaced: "Flows of people are managed and controlled in the national interest, and for economic benefit. To speak out against migration controls also challenges the huge injustice which exploits people and resources around the world for the benefit of few" (Shift Magazine 2008a: n.p.). This argument brings in the spotlight the nature of nation-states' dimension in the politics of climate change. Specifically, the role of the nation-state in solving the climate problem and injustices associated with and beyond it is questioned by the grassroots networks. As a subheading used in the position paper on migration by Ayya (2010) suggested, "Nation States Cannot Solve the Problem of Climate Change". The idea underpinning this statement is the uselessness of the state-territorial approach in tackling global and borderless injustices: "In the same way that the straight lines that divide so much of the world were drawn by

European statesmen to divide colonial possessions; the infrastructure that makes up a state has been designed and developed by the rich and powerful for the benefit of their own class. All countries are ‘imagined communities,’... [t]his imagined community was created as a means to control the poor, to divide working people from their natural allies of other exploited people from across the globe”. This idea of the nation- state being seen as a source of injustices that needs to be abandoned is what Fraser (2005) called a transformative approach to justice. Such approach, based on the realization of the borderless character of injustices, seeks to supersede the outdated state-centered system of international relations and consequently, its system of delivering justice. Climate injustice that is affecting countries and communities regardless of the territorial principle is then a powerful argument that supports this call for rethinking traditional approaches to justice. It is concerned with the “who” of justice, i.e. a boundary-setting process that determines who is excluded and included to the justice claims. For grassroots networks, the exclusion of certain groups of people from attaining justice is related to the outdated nation-based approach. Therefore, for them ensuring justice “means a rejection of nationalism and the false division between citizens and non-citizens” (Ayya 2010).

This section has argued that the opposition to migration is another way of challenging and reframing the dominant discourse. Reframing is evident in the use of such terms as ‘displaced’ instead of ‘refugees’ to encompass all migration –affected groups of people as opposed to singling out climate refugees which effectively normalizes movement of people and equalizes their rights with the nationals of the countries where they move. It also challenges the attempts to depoliticize climate injustice as inflicted by climate-related events rather than the system of economic and political relations. Unlike the discourse on migration perpetuated by national governments and international policies that uses climate change as a pretext for enhanced border controls and security, grassroots discourse calls for the opposite: highlighting yet another victim of the unfair systemic economic,

social and political relations represented by all those people who are displaced for climate-related or other reasons. By doing so, the notion of historical responsibility of developed countries is discursively extended in the counter-discourse to migration-related injustices. Further, the counter-discourse challenges the idea that the nation-state is an appropriate framework for dealing with justice. On the contrary, it is positioned as the source of injustice in itself. In line with Fraser (2005), this constitutes a transformative approach that seeks to challenge the status quo in the way justice is delivered. Finally, not only do grassroots stand for freedom of movement but they also call for dealing with the causes of migration in the first place so that such people are capable of living a decent life in their native lands. This demand evokes the calls discussed earlier in this chapter for returning the lands to the communities, and giving them the decision-making power and autonomy to be able to rebuild their lives.

6.4 Climate crimes = ecocide?

One of the metaphors that has gained traction in the counter-discourse on climate justice is 'climate crime' or its equivalents, 'environmental crime' and 'climate criminal'. This metaphor is employed in various contexts but mostly applied to the fossil-fuel industry or banks that finance fossil fuel projects globally. As it will be discussed below, the grounds for accusing these actors of crimes are not only environmental and emissions-related but also connected to human rights. The argument here is that it is the latter consideration that seeks to eventually transform the metaphor into a tangible demand to be operationalized through criminal justice procedures.

The metaphor has been used in actions against fossil fuel companies, such as BP, Shell, Exxon Mobile and others. In particular, the tar sands project in Canada has consistently been used as an example of a 'climate crime' for its detrimental environmental consequences (Fig.8. below). Why the

companies are designated as ‘climate criminals’ is well summarized in the quote from RT’s action against the oil companies:

Apart from massive CO₂ emissions, the oil industry has been responsible for massive scale deforestation, local mortal diseases in oil field areas, ecological disasters, overriding indigenous rights and more human rights violations. All in the name of their profit (RT 2010e).



Fig. 8. RT Protest against BP

Source: Jones (2010)

The concept of ‘climate crime’ also encompasses impacts on humans whose livelihoods and rights to a safe and clean environment are undermined by the extraction, as pointed out in the quote below:

"The effects tar sands are having on local First Nations communities are devastating. The tar sands development in Alberta covers an area the size of England, with toxic tailing ponds so huge they are visible from space, leaking poisons into the local water supply" (RT 2010c).

As noted above, the metaphor 'climate crime' is used by activists to connect the oil companies' activities to human rights abuses of which they were accused recently or in the past. In fact, almost every major action against oil giants such as BP or Shell had a reference to human rights violations. For instance, in their actions against Shell and its ‘climate crimes’, RT often reminds the public about the company's alleged link to the killing of environmental activists in Nigeria: " The hanging of Ken

Saro-Wiwa and his Ogoni colleagues – whose only crime was to speak out for environmental and social justice – caused shock and outrage around the world. But whatever we might like to think, the human rights abuses perpetrated by Shell continue to this day. Shell's routine payments to armed militants exacerbate armed conflict, and oil spills and gas flaring continue to devastate the fragile environment of the Niger Delta and the lives of the people who live there" (RT 2011g).

These examples demonstrate that grassroots networks engage a human rights perspective to claim that fossil fuel projects cause human suffering and thus make it a humanistic problem, i.e. a problem requiring preservation of dignity as postulated by the universal human rights' declaration (Nicholson and Chong 2011). The human rights framing is thus strategically engaged in the counter-discourse to amplify the environmental and social justice claims that have been made in relation to climate change. There is reason to argue that this coalescence of claims is going to the next stage, i.e. transforming into claims for bringing climate justice into the domain of criminal justice.

To illustrate that the crime-related rhetoric does aim at considering damage to the environment through the lenses of criminal justice, consider the action taken by CfCA in 2010. "Bloody Oil-Drum 'Em Out" action took place at the doorstep of The World National Oil Companies Congress in London and involved staging a mock court hearing of the alleged crimes of oil executives. The hearing was given the name of People's Court which helped discursively oppose the top oil officials and their companies with the ordinary people. People's Court drew up an extensive list of crimes committed by the oil executive in the name of profit, starting from environmental destruction to waging wars, embezzlement, and triggering migration and fraud, among others. The last charge was 'ecocide', defined as "damage, destruction and loss of whole ecosystems by extracting oil" (Campbell 2010).

The concept of ecocide is currently being pushed forward by environmental lawyer Polly Higgins who introduced a demand to the UN Council to recognize ecocide as the 5th crime against peace on a par with genocide. The definition of ecocide she proposes is the following: "The extensive destruction, damage to or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that the peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished" (Higgins *et al.* 2013).

According to Higgins, sentencing in case of an ecocide will result in punishment, deterrence or reparations (Eradicating Ecocide n.d.). Thus, the concept of ecocide has explicit restorative justice implications. To organize the Bloody Oil – Drum 'Em Out action, CfCA activists adopted Polly Higgins' model ecocide indictment and actually consulted with her on the questions of wording and staging the People's Court trial (CfCA 2010p). This action demonstrated how activists brought the crime-related metaphors to the conceptual level through staging a mock trial and thus making a symbolic step in the direction of legalizing the persecution of corporations for committing similar offences. The wigs worn by activists and the wording of the indictment read out by the 'judge' in front of the 'jury' recreated the atmosphere of a tribunal on the analogy with a human rights court.

It should also be noted that the action took place just a few months after the end of the Cochabamba conference that called for the creation of an International Climate and Environmental Justice Tribunal that would have "the legal capacity to prevent, judge and penalize States, industries and people that by commission or omission contaminate and provoke climate change" (WPCCC 2010). Overall, such an extensive use of the crime lexis and the actual attributes of court and judicial process in relation to climate change might signal a new discursive strategy that grassroots networks are employing. Specifically, what they seem to be doing is calling for the criminalization of climate

justice discourse and of certain actors (fossil fuel industries and banks) that are directly or indirectly implicated in contributing to climate change.

The use of criminal justice rhetoric in the grassroots' actions thus indicates a new path being taken by counter-discourse on climate justice discourse. As noted by Mares (2010), environmental degradation resulting from specific human activities has mostly been viewed as causing economic damage through the loss of land productivity or destructions of ecosystems, for example. Due to this economic view of the environment, most judicial systems lack criminal justice procedures in the event of large scale damages; therefore punishment for such damages rarely goes beyond monetary compensations. The call for criminalizing environmental degradation is then an attempt to position environment and climate change specifically, as an essential condition for human security and well-being and not as a resource pool for the economy.

Overall, engaging a human rights perspective that calls for the creation of a separate tribunal widens the scope of the counter-discourse, showing that resistance to the dominant discourse on climate change involves coalescing various justice claims as opposed to only contesting the emission targets and technical solutions. On the one hand, this discursive move can be regarded as an attempt to enforce accountability for the climate-damaging activities of corporations or industries and obtain reparations for the affected parties. The problematic aspect of this framing is that it is at odds with the anarchist principles of autonomy and rejections of state intervention and authority that grassroots networks claim to follow. For if their demands for criminal justice procedures are to be implemented, the involvement of state through the judiciary system is unavoidable. But to determine to which extent this discursive move contradicts grassroots ideological position, a deeper engagement with the anarchist theories and practice and its manifestation in networks' discourse is needed. It is thus a potential direction for future research.

Looking at the criminal justice demand from another perspective, it can be argued that given a practical impossibility of proving the link between certain activities and climate impacts, the goal of this discursive framing is more likely to be linked to exerting political pressure on the states and the international community in light of stalled negotiations and the lack of a binding legal framework (Lin 2012; Nicholson and Chong 2011).

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter has examined how the counter-discourse on climate justice engages with the international dimension of climate change politics. First, it has been argued that the root causes of climate change are conceptualized in the counter-discourse as comprising three layers (North/South dichotomy with a focus on communities, economic system, and fossil fuel industry) connected through the thread of global inequality. In contrast to the focus on the North-South relations with regards to the historical responsibility over emissions in the dominant discourse, grassroots networks' conceptualization engaging various justice claims seeks to expose the complexity of the climate change issue and shift the emphasis from the responsibility for emissions to the responsibility for inequalities. A currently missing element in the discourse of the activists is the incorporation of grounded understandings of climate justice as produced by the activists from the global South.

Second, the concepts of ecological and social debts articulated by the networks seek to refocus climate change politics and steer it in the direction of reparative and procedural justice. However, while the financial reparations to the affected countries and communities are welcomed in the counter-discourse, their transfer is envisaged through by-passing the institutions connected to the dominant framing. An even more important form of redressing the debt foregrounded in the counter-discourse is through non-financial channels, i.e. returning the land and resources in the communities.

Third, the notion of historical responsibility of the global North is extended in the counter-discourse to cover the displacement of people affected by climatic *and* non-climatic causes (e.g. war, economic situation). The calls for freedom of migration run counter to the dominant discourse concerned with the management of the climate refugee flows and the nation-state framework that is engaged to deal with the issue.

Fourth, it has been argued that in addition to the environmental and social justice frameworks, the counter-discourse has started to incorporate a human rights perspective which links climate change with the criminal justice discourse. This discursive move is regarded to be an additional means of exerting political pressure on states and the international community. At the same time, it also signals attempts to reframe climate change as a humanistic issue rather than a problem of environmental resources subject to economic rationality. Based on the findings presented in this chapter, it can be concluded that while counter-discourse draws on the same concepts as the dominant one (e.g. historical responsibility, debt, North/South etc.), it imbues them with opposing meanings that challenge the narrow dimensions of climate change politics. Instead, it offers a complex understanding of climate change as inseparable from a variety of injustices that require measures going beyond the distribution of financial resources.

7 Confronting false and endorsing true solutions

As noted in earlier chapters, the dominant discourse on climate change is characterized by a de-politicized approach to the problem (Swyngedouw 2009) that focuses exclusively on carbon emissions and thus promotes technical and managerial solutions. This section demonstrates how this approach is actively contested by grassroots networks through rejecting what they call “false solutions” and foregrounding decentralized community-run renewable energy projects, just transition processes and energy democracy as the ‘true’ solutions. In the first part of the chapter the concept of false solutions is presented. The findings suggest that this concept plays an important role in the counter-discourse on climate justice as it serves to emphasize the market-based nature of the dominant solutions and the close ties between government and corporations in promoting such solutions. The concept of false solutions is thus used by the networks to articulate the antagonism between the elite (government and corporations or the rich) and people, and foreground the necessary transfer of power from these actors to the communities. The second part of this chapter dealing with the notion of true solutions reveals how this transfer of power is envisaged in the counter-discourse: renewable energy plays a key role in a just transition towards energy democracy. Overall, it is argued in this chapter that the concepts of false and true solutions articulated by grassroots networks contribute to the construction of the counter-discourse that challenges the approaches to climate crisis within the dominant discourse and foreground the social and environmental justice implications of the dominant framing. Yet the tensions identified in this chapter point to areas where the counter-discourse struggles to contest the dominant discourse. Finally, it is argued here that the concepts of false and true solutions reveal the multi-dimensional character of climate justice in the counter-discourse that includes claims about unequal distribution of negative impacts of some technological projects (e.g. CDM and nuclear), the injustices associated

with cultural misrecognition (the case of indigenous knowledge) and political misrepresentation (indigenous people and renewable energy).

7.1 False solutions

The concept of false solutions that is central to the counter-discourse on climate justice has been present in grassroots' discourse since the early years of climate activism. Based on the analysis of activists' texts, the false solutions that grassroots oppose can be grouped in the categories presented in Table 4 below. As the table illustrates, two major categories are the so-called techno-fixes and various kinds of financial instruments that will be examined in detail in the sections that follow.

Table 4. Examples of False Solutions

Techno fixes	Financial fixes
Geo-engineering (Carbon capture and storage, Ocean fertilization) Agro-fuels Genetic modification Large hydro Nuclear power Car technology (electric, hydrogen, fuel cells)	Carbon trading: REDD CDM Joint Implementation projects Carbon sinks Carbon offsetting schemes Carbon rationing

Back in 2002, before climate change was on the agenda of most grassroots groups, RT highlighted false solutions that the network opposes: “nuclear energy, large dams and other large-scale, hi-tech projects” and “Emissions trading, carbon sinks, the 'Clean Development Mechanism', 'Joint Implementation' and other false solutions being used as a way to escape responsibility for emissions reductions” (RT 2002a). Failure to reduce emissions is positioned here as the ultimate reason for being considered a false solution. However, as the example of carbon trading given in the same statement demonstrates, it is not the sole reason for rejection. First, carbon trading is called “colonialism with a modern face” (Ibid.) in the statement, suggesting that the inequalities in access to resources between developed and developing countries are replicated in the dominant solutions to

climate change. Second, by using the words “strategy” and “designed” and “appropriate”, RT suggests that carbon trading is intentionally profit-oriented: “A key element of carbon trading is the carbon sink, which is a strategy designed to appropriate indigenous lands” (Ibid.). Further, as the verb ‘dump’ indicates, this solution is false as it is imposed on certain communities against their will: “These are false solutions which are being dumped on marginalised communities, thus widening the gap between rich and poor” (Ibid.). The next sentence of the same quote extends the notion of marginalized and poor communities to the countries of the South, while “rich countries and companies” apparently refers to the actors from the North: “They [false solutions] create the illusion that southern countries are benefiting, while masking the fact that it is rich countries and companies which are profiting from access to emissions permits and control of new southern markets. People are being cheated in the name of sustainable development” (RT 2002a).

Once again, the intentionality of the injustice produced as a result of carbon trading is emphasized through the use of such phrases as “an illusion of benefiting” and “masking the fact”, coupled with verbs “profiting” and “cheated”. From the opposition of ‘poor’, ‘marginalized communities’, ‘southern countries’ versus ‘rich’, ‘rich countries and companies’ it follows that the actors of the global North are implicated as responsible. This juxtaposition of North against South echoes the dominant discourse on climate change reflected in the UNFCCC discussions about the historical responsibility and the unequal distribution of climate impacts, but RT clearly takes the side of the victims. Thus, RT’s first political statement shows that the notion of justice was already salient in the articulations around the concept of false solutions at the early stages of climate activism.

In the recently updated political statement of RT (2011b), false solutions became more prominent as they rank first among the issues discussed, which suggests that this idea has gained in importance since the time of the first statement in 2002. The wording of the concept has also evolved. Alongside

the original term (false solutions), RT is now using “market-based solutions” (RT 2007b), “business-led solutions”, “corporate-friendly and state-sponsored solutions”, or “green capitalist approaches” (RT 2011b), all of which refer to the same concept of unacceptable solutions. The change of wording shows that RT links the unacceptability of certain solutions to their market-based nature on the one hand, and on the other to the close alliance between corporations and state as the agents who put the solutions forward.

Regarding the close ties between the state and corporations, also referred to as ‘elites’, these actors (another synonym for ‘state’ is ‘government’) are contrasted with ‘ordinary people’ and communities: “Corporations working in collusion with government elites are at the heart of the exploitation of communities of ordinary people everywhere” (RT 2011b). At the same time, the term ‘elite’ is applied not only in reference to government but also to designate a “global elite”, or “world’s elite” and the poor and marginalized who suffer from the actions of these elites. Consider for example how RT related climate justice to the inequality between rich and poor: “[C]limate change is as much an issue of social justice as of the environment. That means it is a problem caused by and profited from by the world's elites, with its effects felt most powerfully by those with the least power and wealth” (RT 2004c). Likewise, in the recent political statement RT calls for “wresting of wealth and resources away from elites into popular control” (RT 2011b).

This antagonism between Elites and People is used by grassroots to argue that the solutions offered within the dominant discourse are not fit to address the climate change problem. The reasons for the mistrust in government lie in the limitations of the current political system and the tight links with business. These arguments are well expressed by RT in the statement on the adoption of PGA Hallmarks: “We can’t trust governments to bring in needed changes - mostly because they can’t, because they’re in the pockets of big business, because politicians want to get re-elected and don’t

want to lose votes with huge new taxes or caps on flights for example, and mostly because what we believe is the root cause of the problem - economic growth - they see as a key goal” (RT 2007b).

That is why the current discussions about false solutions are linked in grassroots discourse to the transfer of power and the role of communities, as suggested by activist John and reflected in one of the Climate Camp statements: “We need to empower people and communities rather than corporations. So corporate solutions don’t really work. Business as usual doesn’t work. What works is giving... transferring power to people and communities. Because it’s the business-led development which has caused the problem. And the business approach to the problem is simply seeing it as a technological problem” (Sinha pers.comm.), and “Our current system of representative democracy is a charade, and cannot respond to the scale of this challenge. Solutions must come from people themselves, in order not just to preserve the world we know, but to create a better one” (CfCA 2010d).

In fact, taking control of decision-making processes and of one’s life is a leitmotif in grassroots’ discourse on climate justice. RT provided a good explanation of how it works for them: “we choose not to give up our power or transfer our responsibility to someone else - we try to make those changes that we believe need to happen for and by ourselves. And we try to do it using methods that pave the way for the different kind of world we want to bring about, rather than ones that reinforce the current order” (RT 2007b).

Thus, as climate activism matured, the notion of false solutions served not only to emphasize the market character of the proposed solutions and close ties between government and corporations and ‘elites’ but also to articulate the antagonism between these actors and the people and communities, and to foreground the transfer of power as a necessary step and part of the solution to the problem.

The sections that follow support this argument with the empirical evidence from the grassroots' actions against specific types of false solutions.

7.1.1 Techno-fixes

Building on the previous section, this part examines how the notion of “techno-fixes” is discursively constructed by the grassroots networks. While there is no straightforward definition of this category, its meaning for the networks can be gathered through the analysis of the context in which it is used and collocations that accompany the term in grassroots' texts.

In the new RT statement, techno-fixes are explicitly identified as large scale geo-engineering, industrial agrofuels, genetic modification and nuclear power (Table 4 in previous section). Additionally, various car technologies are mentioned in other texts (RT 2008a). The word “techno-fixes” is commonly collocated with “business as usual”, as for instance in these quotes: “Everywhere corporations are seeking the elusive elixir which allows us to continue business as usual” (Ibid.) and “These projects are mostly funded by oil companies which have a strong interest in encouraging "business as usual" (RT 2001a).

The use of the idiom ‘business as usual’ emphasizes that the technical solutions will bring no significant changes, i.e. will keep the status quo in the current economic system. Moreover, keeping the status quo is intentional because ‘corporations are seeking the elixir’ and “have a strong interest in encouraging” solutions that do not bring constructive changes. The metaphor “elixir” used as a synonym for techno-fixes alludes to the alchemy that sought to create the elixir of life but never succeeded. Furthermore, the agency, expressed in corporations and oil companies, is important here because it suggests that these specific actors are pushing false solutions on the agenda. Elsewhere in the texts these actors (together with government) are designated as the culprits for the climate crisis.

Thus, by identifying the same actors as a cause of a problem and an agent generating solutions to it, grassroots discursively challenge and undermine the potential of solutions proposed by these actors.

While some types of techno-fixes were criticized in the written texts, resistance to techno-fixes such as carbon capture and storage and nuclear power for example was incorporated into actions that targeted fossil fuel companies. In 2008 a number of actions against “climate criminals” and “false solutions” were carried out by RT groups all over the UK. London RT targeted E.ON offices for “exploiting the idea of a future Carbon Capture and Storage system to justify building a new coal-fired power station at Kingsnorth” (RT 2008b). Such formulation of the reason for taking action against the company sought to highlight E.ON’s manipulation: by using the adjective “future” with carbon capture technology it is suggested that the system is not currently operational, yet the company uses it to legitimize the construction of a new power station that will be run on the old technology. The argument of the current unavailability of carbon capture and storage (CCS) is salient in other texts, where the technology is termed as having only “a remote prospect” to be implemented (RT 2008c) and is an “unproven pipedream technology that won’t be available for 20 years at the earliest” (Jones 2008). Such doubts in the availability of CCS technology are borrowed by grassroots networks from the discussions circulating in the media (Monbiot 2008) and in UK political circles (e.g. 2008 report of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee on carbon capture and storage). The argument against CCS is also based on the claim that the technology leads to the increased input of coal and consequently, exacerbates negative environmental consequences: “CCS requires up to 40% more coal per unit of electricity than coal generation without CCS. So more coal needs to be burnt; increasing the overall pollution caused. It also neglects to address the wider problems of over consumption or deal with coal’s other social and environmental impacts” (RT 2008b).

Another example of a techno-fix but criticized for different reasons is the rejection of agrofuels, also known under the name of biofuels. It is notable that agrofuels are regarded as a false solution by grassroots networks, whereas in the dominant discourse industrial biofuels are part of sustainable renewable solutions (Giddens 2009). During 2008 CfCA at Kingsnorth the agrofuels depot in Essex and the agribusiness company Cargill in Surrey (fig. 9 below) became targets of the activists from CfCA and Action Against Agrofuels. As the banner from the action against Cargill suggests (fig. 9 below), the protestors chose to focus on the impacts of agrofuels on food production and distribution as the main argument against this “techno-fix”.



Fig. 9. Climate Activists Blockade Cargill Europe Office

Source: Action against Agrofuels 2008

However, in the accompanying press release and leaflet, the link between agrofuels and climate change was established as an extra reason for targeting the company: “Cargill is using the boom in agrofuels to expand soya, palm oil and sugar plantations, displacing communities, food crops and destroying ecosystems. Destroying rainforests and other bio-diverse ecosystems, including healthy soils, is one of the quickest ways of heating the planet. This is why we are blockading the Cargill office two days before the official start of the Climate Camp at Kingsnorth” (Action against Agrofuels 2008). Although the link to climate change was explicit in the press release, the overall

emphasis in the action was on the social and environmental impacts of the technology, such as “land grabbing”, meaning communities’ dispossession of lands for the sake of growing monoculture crops, deforestation and rising food prices that exacerbate hunger in particular regions (Ibid.). Agrofuels are thus positioned as a cause of social and environmental injustice rather than an issue of carbon emissions. By citing the voices of the people affected by the spread of agrofuels as a new commodity in Brazil, Paraguay and Papua New Guinea, activists implicitly evoke the all-affected principle of justice (Fraser 2005) in order to highlight the injustice caused by the multinational that escapes the jurisdiction of a nation-state. They are thus contesting the institutional framework reflected in the free trade agreement that allows this injustice to happen. However, the call on government to ‘halt policies that promote agrofuels’, ‘end free-trade food and agricultural policies’ and enact ‘policies that support food sovereignty’ (Ibid.) makes the contestation of the overarching framework controversial because on the one hand, given grassroots’ adherence to the anarchist principles and rejection of lobbying, such demand can be interpreted as reformative and not challenging the status quo. Yet, in this particular case it should be taken into account that the actions against agrofuels were carried out together with other groups which could influence the wording of the key messages. In fact, the analysis of other agrofuels-related texts connected to either RT or CfCA revealed that the arguments and wording used could be traced back to the group called BiofuelWatch, a major group in the UK that campaigns on agrofuels by producing reports and organizing actions. On the other hand, the call for food sovereignty defined by activists as ‘people’s right to food first’ can be regarded as a radical demand since it will require a major transformation in the systems of production and consumption to ensure “small-scale, biodiverse, organic farming, instead of energy-intensive agriculture” (Ibid.). Thus, the example of agrofuels as techno-fixes demonstrates the tensions within the counter-discourse that activists seek to construct: their counter-arguments aimed at challenging the dominant

discourse on solutions to climate change fail to completely disengage from this dominant discourse fixated on the emissions and specific policies.

Another tension in the counter - discourse is related to the issue of scale. ‘Small-scale’ in the quote above corresponds to the notion of ‘local’ and ‘community’ and it is in fact a key point of ‘true solutions’ for grassroots that incorporates the possibility of control and autonomy totally absent in the dominant discourse on climate change solutions. The fact that during the first CfCA in Drax in 2006 a “small-scale biodiesel” was used as part of sustainable energy sources (RT 2006a) suggests that scale is an important aspect in the definition of a true versus false solution. However, it should be recognized that grassroots’ discourse on local, small-scale and community-controlled systems is based on particular assumptions regarding scale and community. First, it is assumed that small-scale is inherently better than a large-scale. According to Born and Purcell, this is the “local trap” into which many activists and researchers tend to fall: assigning an inherent quality to the local or small-scale projects while in reality scale is socially constructed and therefore, “[no] scale can have an external extent, function or quality” (Born and Purcell 2006: 196) . What makes a project sustainable is then the goal or the agenda of those who operate the project, rather than the scale on which it is done (Ibid.). Secondly, a similar assumption is made by grassroots when they advocate for community control as insurance for better management and/or sustainability. In reality though, communities might be susceptible to the same problems of domination, exploitation, the profit motive and so on. These two assumptions regarding true solutions demonstrate grassroots’ idealistic outlook and perhaps a lack of real experience of dealing or working with the communities on the ground.

The final example of arguments against techno-fixes is the case of nuclear power, which is debated in the dominant discourse as a potential solution to climate change. Nuclear discourse is one of the

long-lasting discourses on the UK public and political agendas that passed through stages of support, resistance, rejection and revival since its emergence in the 1950s. In the years 2006-2008 the UK government made a U-turn on its previous decision of rejecting nuclear as an energy source by reframing it as a viable, low-cost solution to climate change (Bickerstaff *et al.* 2008; Doyle 2011). Such reframing was in line with the neoliberal agenda that dictated solutions to climate crisis and energy security (Doyle 2011). Historically, civil society's resistance to nuclear was based on the arguments of high costs, safety, especially in light of grave accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, and the danger of nuclear arms proliferation.

Let us consider the current arguments that grassroots used against this type of “techno-fix”. Due to the nuclear accident at Fukushima in 2010, safety arguments regained ground and made it possible to present the UK's government decision to renew the nuclear build as ridiculous “[w]hile other countries at least put a moratorium on new nuclear, or even make plans to phase out nuclear energy completely” (RT 2011d). Drawing on this safety discourse used by previous cycles of social movements (e.g. CND, Greenpeace and FoE) shows that contextual factors, such as a recent accident, are used to rearticulate the discourse. The link to the nuclear arms proliferation discourse is also present in the grassroots' arguments, although it does not take a central place but is a supporting argument that recognizes that nuclear power is “inextricably linked to the most destructive weapons on the face of the earth” and is “a by-product of nuclear arms, not the other way around” (RT 2005b).

However, a more pronounced argument that grassroots networks put forward sought to refute governments' framing of nuclear power as a low-carbon energy source that would allow the UK to meet its carbon emissions reduction targets. During a discussion on CfCA radio it was argued that “it [nuclear power] is certainly not carbon neutral, it's an extremely intensive industrial process to get

uranium ore out of the ground” (Dissident Island Radio 2009a). This argument about carbon emissions resulting from the extraction of uranium can be considered as being in line with the logic of the dominant discourse that focuses on carbon emissions. Yet, similar to the example of agrofuels, grassroots networks present a range of arguments that address social and environmental justice issues as opposed to being fixated only on the climate impacts. To give an example, in the action against a new nuclear site RT argues that uranium mining has adverse environmental and social impacts as mining “destroys huge landscapes and local communities living there” (RT 2011d). Similarly to the arguments against agrofuels, the evocation of “local communities” whose lives could be affected is important here because it confirms the centrality of concerns for social justice to grassroots networks, specifically distributional justice (i.e. some communities located next to the site will be unjustly impacted). Further, not only distributional injustice but also the political dimension of justice comes to the fore when activists highlight the exclusion of local communities from the decision-making process that has taken place: “the government has effectively deprived local communities from having a say in the planning process for new nuclear and other major infrastructure projects thus dumping a crucial cornerstone of local democracy” (RT 2011d). As it will be shown later in this chapter, communities’ access to decision-making and control of energy production is crucial for grassroots’ understanding of climate justice.

Overall, the representation of nuclear power as a techno-fix draws on the previous anti-nuclear discourse articulated in the UK by the civil society. At the same time, in order to refute the government’s discourse reframing nuclear power as a cost effective and low-carbon solution to climate change, grassroots networks present data that effectively challenges government’s claims. Although activists’ arguments do address carbon emissions, it is only one in a range of arguments that grassroots employ: social and environmental impacts as well as civic participation, costs and dangers of nuclear arms are an equally important part of their argumentation against nuclear power.

From this perspective, the framing of nuclear power as a solution is effectively resisted and challenged by grassroots networks through the assemblage of counter-arguments that go well beyond a fixation on carbon.

7.1.2 Financial fixes

Apart from techno-fixes, grassroots actively oppose financial solutions to climate change, referred to here as financial fixes. Such financial fixes include instruments adopted within the UNFCCC framework such as carbon trading, offsetting, carbon rationing, and carbon sinks projects, among others; therefore this is an area where the clash between the dominant and counter-discourses is most evident. The financial solutions to climate change are rejected by grassroots for a number of reasons. Among these reasons, failure to reduce emissions may seem of key importance for the networks, given their claims that carbon trading and similar mechanisms do not “address climate change” but are “organized around keeping the wheels on the fossil fuel industry as long as possible and making it seem politically excusable to go ahead with new carbon-intensive infrastructure” (CfCA n.d.). However, the analysis of texts dealing with the financial solutions reveals that grassroots put emphasis on a combination of negative social and environmental impacts rather than exclusively on the emissions reduction argument.

Tree plantation projects located in the global South and adopted within the CDM as a means of absorbing carbon emissions is a discursive terrain where grassroots counter-discourse on climate justice is revealed through a number of claims. It is notable that for grassroots financial fixes are tied to the relationship between North and South based on exploitation and inequality, as implied in the following quote regarding the inclusion of sinks in the Kyoto Protocol:

Unless local opposition prevents them from doing so, most of these plantations will be implemented in the South, where trees grow much faster than in the North, thus

being more "efficient" for carbon sequestration. At the same time, they will be much cheaper than in industrialized countries --where labour and land are more expensive-- and will receive all the necessary support from Southern governments --including repression of local opposition-- desperate to accept any investment which may leave some --however little-- money in the country (RT 2004b).

In the first sentence of this excerpt the dominant discourse on carbon climate change is reproduced, as the efficiency of tree growing in the South is quoted to be the reason for locating tree plantations there. The structure of the second sentence continues to reproduce the dominant discourse, while simultaneously incorporating the counter-discourse, separating the two by the dashes. The counter-discourse seeks to expose the true meaning of efficiency for the northern governments as being cheap labor and land costs and a lack of strong civil society that would be able to effectively oppose such projects. Such a structure helps convey the idea that the South is being exploited by the North, as not only will it not be properly compensated ('however little money') but also will have to deal with social unrest ('repression of local opposition'). Furthermore, monoculture plantations used as carbon sinks are not acceptable for grassroots because they dispossess local populations of lands and resources:

In the South, those lands are already occupied by people, who depend on them for their subsistence. Those people's lands are therefore now under the threat of appropriation to make way to plantations (RT 2004b).

The contestation of the dominant discourse is also visible in the way the terminology used in the Kyoto Protocol for the CDM projects is subverted: the carbon sinks, the official name of the plantations sequestering carbon emissions, are transformed in the counter-discourse into "carbon garbage dumps" implying that developed countries exploit these areas to outsource pollution they create which will be detrimental for the local environment:

The areas to be occupied by these carbon garbage dumps host much of the world's biodiversity, much of which could be wiped out by large-scale monoculture plantations. At the same time, these would deplete water resources and result in dramatic changes in the soils where they are implemented (Ibid.).

Using the countries of the South as “carbon garbage dumps” is what makes activists call such approaches “carbon colonialism”, “modern-day colonialism” or “neo-colonialism” (CfCA 2009f; RT 2011b; RT 2006b; RT 2002a). In the words of Kevin, “a lot of those projects that they are doing, those carbon offsets in the global South are having horrific impacts on marginalized communities...This is essentially carbon colonialism, it’s abusing those communities, expecting them to make more emissions reductions so that we can keep on polluting here” (CfCA 2009f). The reference to colonialism here brings in the global justice discourse of anti-capitalist networks that fought against unfair trade agreements that continued colonial practices of exploitation but this time through financial means of neoliberalism. The personal pronoun “we” stands for the global North, the developed countries but also consumers in these countries. The global South is represented by “marginalized communities” who are being exploited by the North. Among such marginalized communities are the indigenous populations. By partially reproducing the Indigenous People’s statement made during the COP meeting in Bonn in 2001 on their website, RT highlighted another theme of the counter-discourse, that of exclusion of indigenous people from the negotiation process. It is thus the political dimension of justice that is foregrounded. At the same time, these communities suffer not only because of appropriation of lands and exclusion in the decision-making process but also because their ways of life, traditional cultural practices and spiritual values are undermined by CDM projects concerned only with the “carbon sequestration capacity” (RT 2004b). This argument equally reveals a dimension of justice that counter-discourse is concerned about: that of cultural recognition.

Similarly to RT, CfCA demonstrates how a self-sufficient local economy suffers from the impacts of carbon trading with the example of Bhilangana dam in India where the CDM - approved large hydroelectric project threatens the local population through diverting river water. As a result, the

local population does not get enough water for the traditional irrigation channels to support their agriculture. It is interesting that activists refer to that local irrigation system as “ingenious, extremely low-carbon system of agriculture”, “a uniquely sustainable modern technology” and even “the villagers’ piece of the solution to climate change” (CfCA n.d.). In other words, the traditional way of growing food using irrigation channels is considered a modern climate change solution rather than a technology still in place due to the underdevelopment of the region. It is thus recognition of the traditional knowledge and a call for its valuation. This reframing helps challenge the CDM project as a solution put forward by the dominant discourse.

It is notable that in this example CfCA represents two voices, that of local communities and of the hydropower company which “has hired consultants to argue that their dam will result in fewer carbon emissions than would have been the case if it had not been built” (CfCA n.d.). Despite the fact that a hydro power station could potentially reduce emissions, CfCA takes the side of the local community and supports their traditional irrigation methods because the emissions saved will be sold as carbon emissions rights “to polluting companies in Europe” (Ibid.). Thus, the social justice argument clearly takes precedence over emissions reduction, contrary to the post-political thesis (Swyngedouw 2009; Russell 2012) that positions climate activists as fixated on carbon. At the same time, by presenting the Bhilangana dam as a typical example of carbon trading project grassroots emphasize that the real solutions to climate change should be local in scale and benefit the community in the first place. This also gives an idea of what a sustainable technology would be like for grassroots networks: community-run, and with low environmental impact, based on knowledge gathered and transmitted through the centuries.

Furthermore, financial fixes are also criticized by grassroots on the grounds of being based on flawed market mechanisms: “Important decisions, discussions and demands about climate change are being

swept aside in favour of ‘leaving it to the market,’ despite the fact that it’s a market whose parameters and rules have been largely determined by some of the biggest polluters around, teaming up with the same financiers responsible for the ‘structured investment vehicles’ and ‘credit derivative swaps’ that have brought economies crashing down. They say markets, we say democracy” (CfCA n.d.). “Structured investment vehicles” and “credit derivative swaps” are markers of the financial crisis discourse where market mechanisms are criticized for being artificial means of generating profit for the few rather than creating any benefits for large numbers of people. Evoking this discourse in relation to carbon trading seeks to draw parallels between the two types of markets and suggests the common logic that they share will inevitably lead to failure in carbon trading. The fact that democracy is juxtaposed with markets shows that for grassroots the self-regulated market is essentially undemocratic because it does not allow any discussion or “leaves no role for civil society” (RT 2002b). Hence the statement of one of the activists that “we want to make those changes ourselves, we want democratic institutions that enable us, communities, to make our own solutions” (CfCA 2009f).

The other flaw of carbon trading, as grassroots emphasize, is the lack of control and monitoring over the transactions due to the complexity of the global market itself and absence of accounting institutions. This will lead to uncontrolled cheating, especially in countries with high corruption levels (Ibid.). On the other hand, there is a lack of trustworthy methodology for measuring emissions and reductions in the atmosphere, let alone the fact that emissions saved as a result of technical innovation and emissions sequestered in sinks are not the same (RT 2002b).

As Table 5 below demonstrates, grassroots consider carbon trading a financial fix because of its social and environmental impacts and technical flaws:

Table 5. Arguments against Financial Solutions

Social and Environmental Impacts	Technical flaws
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Foster unequal relations between countries (colonialism) -Undermines local culture, economy and knowledge -Excludes people from decision-making -Privatizes common resources -Adversely affects soil, water, biodiversity -Does not eliminate fossil fuel use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Emissions reductions are avoided in the North -Polluters' involvement is prone to fraud and unaccountability -Lack of methodology to measure emissions reduction correctly

It has been argued in this section that while the argument concerning emissions reductions is present in grassroots' discourse, other arguments based on social and environmental impacts of “financial fixes” are what is central to the counter-discourse that they construct. The findings suggest that the counter-discourse revolves around a multi-dimensional notion of justice that includes claims about unequal distribution of negative impacts from carbon sequestration projects, the injustices associated with cultural misrecognition of the traditional indigenous knowledge, and the political injustice reflected in the exclusion of these actors from the decision-making process. Sections that follow present the notion of true solutions that underpins the counter-discourse of grassroots networks.

7.2 True solutions

While opposition to the false solutions put forward within the dominant discourse on climate change is a key priority of the counter-discourse that grassroots networks construct, foregrounding the true solutions is an integral part of their discourse. In fact, the broad concept of climate justice encompassing renewable energy, energy democracy (access to and community control of energy sources), and just transition to a low-carbon and community-controlled economy, stands for the true solutions. The central thread that connects these solutions is that they must be “defined by those most severely affected” and must “foster local autonomy and self-sufficiency” (2011b). As it will be discussed in the sections that follow, emphasis on the direct involvement of the people affected by

climate change or by any projects dealing with climate reveals the salience in the counter-discourse of the political scale of justice (Fraser 2005) that operates on the basis of the all-affected principle. The findings also suggest that although the dominant discourse on climate change draws on concepts such as low-carbon economy, just transition, decentralization and renewable energy, grassroots networks imbue these concepts with different meanings and thus they result in different trajectories for action.

7.2.1 Renewables

Renewable energy is a terrain on which the dominant and counter - discourse on climate change intersect and diverge at the same time. In both discourses, renewable energy is considered as one of the sustainable technological solutions to climate change. The diverging point is that in the dominant discourse, renewable energy is preferred because it can potentially change the technological base of the current economic system towards a cleaner and healthier environment and decrease the associated costs without radically transforming the underlying social or economic base. Therefore, it fits perfectly with the ecological modernization and neoliberal discourses that are driven by the rational economic logic seeking to continue economic growth and generate profit through making necessary technological advances. In contrast, the counter-discourse departs from the social implications of renewable energy related to the power and control that this source of energy might offer to the communities (in addition to being environmentally clean) which can potentially shake the foundations of the current economic and political system.

This idea was first articulated in 2007 at the CfCA workshop on renewable energy. According to the summarized notes, “Renewables are only as good as they seem if the people where they are developed are either the ones doing the developing or are heavily involved. Decentralisation is preferable to mega-projects and open access to good technologies in an open-source manner is a

very significant factor in getting power to the people” (Jones 2007). Note that the word decentralization in the quote above denotes a type of ownership that will allow “lessening of corporate involvement in energy systems [that] causes a reduction in political power associated with energy provision” (Ibid.). While decentralization is equally favored by the neoliberal governance, in the counter-discourse decentralization means the reduction of both government and corporate involvement. Activists’ concern is that corporations that are currently controlling the fossil fuel energy will eventually get hold of this technology by appropriating lands, particularly in the global South where the renewable energy potential is high: “there’s gonna be a gold rush to take control of all the best wind sites of the world and the same is true for all over renewable energy technologies, that’s why it’s very important that we use this time that is still available for making sure that transition to renewable energy not only happens but happens in the right way and by the people who should do it, by the people who live in the areas where renewable energies actually exist” (Childoflewin 2007). Also, the words ‘open access’ and ‘open-source manner’ (see the first quote above) as an important factor in getting power to people are salient here because they imply the need for transparency and accessibility in the use of technology, as opposed to the restrictive expert governance underpinning the dominant discourse. The word ‘people’ used in every sentence of this quote implies that the actors who are to use this technology are not experts.

Thus, renewables, although a technical solution, are not rejected by grassroots or qualified as technofixes because they allow, at least in theory, the local communities to be in charge of their energy needs which implies a transformation in how the energy is managed and distributed and thus inevitably in the production and consumption patterns as well.

Overall, what is important in the counter-discourse regarding renewables is that in the calls for renewable energy the networks put emphasis not so much on the environmental aspect (emissions

reduction), let alone the economic aspect, but on how these systems should be controlled and managed, i.e. the aspect of power and justice. Such emphasis supports the argument made in chapter 4 that grassroots networks see climate change not through the environmental lens but through the lens of social justice. This vision implies a radical transformation of the socio-economic system and this is what distinguishes the counter-discourse on climate justice from the dominant one drawing on similar concepts. This radical transformation is partially operationalized in the concepts of just transition and energy democracy that are discussed in turn in the final sections of this chapter.

7.2.2 Just transition

In the RT Coalition for Climate Justice Political Statement the concept of 'just transition' is positioned as one of the central aspects of climate justice. CfCA activists articulated the same idea on their discussion forum: "We know we need to radically challenge and alter relationships towards each other and our planet to realise climate justice; a description for this process has been called just transition" (CfCA 2010n). At the same time, the dominant discourse on climate change is also increasingly framed around the transition to low-carbon and sustainable economy (Audet 2012). Like the renewable energy, just transition is thus another discursive terrain contested by the dominant and counter-discourses. The term 'just transition' was coined in the 1990s by Tony Mazzocchi from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) in relation to the fund for energy workers who lost their jobs due to industry closures (Trade Union Congress 2008). The report by the Canadian Labor Congress defined the concept of just transition through the notions of *fairness* of treatment of workers in the event of factory closure; provision of *alternative employment*; *compensation* when the re-employment is not possible; *sustainable production* and *provision of programs*, or plans, for transition in the light of environmental change (Canadian Labor Congress 2000). Overall, as critics have noted (Lewis *et al.* 2004), the concept of just transition articulated by the labor movement was reformist in

nature because its main objective was to pass a national legislation, i.e. put pressure on the existing political structure in order to secure benefits for workers instead of radically transforming the system of production and consumption.

Presumably inspired by *the Greenhouse Criminals vs Climate Justice* publication that linked climate justice and just transition for the first time, the RT network incorporated the definition of just transition into their first political statement almost verbatim: “A Just Transition to renewable energy sources, i.e. a transition which doesn't fall hardest on low income communities, communities of colour or low income employees of industries reliant on fossil fuels” (RT 2002a).

In its most recent political statement (2011b), RT expanded the definition of the concept by arguing for “a just, rapid transition away from the burning of fossil fuels”, hence the call for “leaving fossil fuels in the ground” and rejection of new explorations and extractions (Ibid.). This addition implies the need for switching to the renewable energy sources and making sure that no communities are negatively affected along the way. In this sense, the meaning of just transition for grassroots networks is the same as for the labor movement that came up with this concept. The difference is that the labor movement considered the future closure of the fossil fuel industry as an imminent result of the environmental change, i.e. something that communities of workers, industries and governments should prepare for. In contrast, for climate activists this change is not happening soon enough because of the vested industries of corporations but it is something that they actively call for. However, it would be wrong to argue that just transition for grassroots is only about clean energy sources because in the 2011 political statement **'a just transition to renewable energy sources'** (see above the quote from the 2002 political statement) was substituted with **'low carbon, low consumption economy that is focused on well-being, not profit'** (RT 2011b). This reframing evokes the dominant discourse on the transition to the low-carbon economy reflected in a

number of policy documents and statements, for example (OECD 2010). As noted by Audet (2012), the dominant discourse exhibits a technocratic framing of the term seeking to present transition as a positive driver for economic growth and creation of green jobs. Yet, while RT uses the same terms, the key focus of just transition in the counter-discourse is on the transformation of the economy, or what they call the “System”, from profit-oriented to needs-oriented and thus the rejection of the growth imperative. The expansion of the focus from ‘energy sources’ to the ‘economy’ in the RT’s political statement (2011) signifies a holistic approach aiming to cover the whole spectrum of the problems rather than an isolated part of it.

Regarding the interaction with the labor movement discourse on just transition, the real difference in the meaning of the concept lies in the attitude to power. Namely, grassroots emphasize that "[t]o build truly just solutions, we must also dismantle the systems of oppression that permeate our culture and ourselves" and importantly, the just solutions must be necessarily "community-led" (RT 2011b). By 'dismantling the systems of oppression' activists mean fighting domination inherent to the hierarchical systems that the society is comprised of: "...when we create change through direct action and organising without leaders, we demonstrate that we don't need governments or corporations in order to survive and thrive" (RT 2011b).

The hierarchical organization is in fact a point of divergence between the labor movement and grassroots climate networks. As one of the activists put it on a London CfCA meeting, "there are very good people in the unions but as institutions they're on the other side let's face it" (CfCA 2010r). The quote suggests that the main problem with trade unions as representatives of the labor movement is their institutionalized character that involves leadership, structure and hierarchy. Grassroots activists, in contrast, informed by anarchism, position themselves as loose networks of people organizing without leaders and not having any binding institution-like structures to inform

their actions, beliefs or strategies. Moreover, just transition in the labor movement discourse required engagement both with governments and industries, as well as being driven by the workers themselves. As O'Driscoll (2011) notes, the lack of confrontation with government, corporations and industries is the problematic point in the labor movement's interpretation of just transition. In contrast, the counter-discourse of grassroots networks emphasizes that the communities themselves should be in control of decisions regarding their energy sources, management and distribution, production and consumption in their communities. This 'taking back the power' scenario thus contests the role of corporations or centralized industries. To illustrate this idea with an example, consider the following quote of a CfCA activist who believes that supporting workers must only be done on condition that the workers radically change their own workplace: "...I would struggle to support workers in a car factory continue to make more car parts that continues the cycles of consumption. Supporting the workers **to take control** of the factor[y] and **put their skills** to better use **through setting up of co-operatives and community businesses which empower them**, then definitely" (CfCA 2010n; emphasis added).

From the historical point of view, the idea of workers taking initiative and transferring their skills to sustainable production is not new or impossible as the case of Lucas Aerospace factory demonstrated. Back in 1975, in response to the threat of redundancy the workers of Lucas Aerospace developed elaborate plans of converting mostly defense-related production to a socially useful and environmentally-conscious one. The short-list of possible projects that could be implemented given the current skills of the workers and the available technology was quite progressive for the 1970s as it included small wind turbines, kidney machines for hospitals, solar collecting devices, bio-gas and micro-hydro among other ideas (Räthzel *et al.* 2010). Another important aspect of this case is that the so-called Lucas Plan was put together on the initiative of the engineers and workers of the company as opposed to being put forward by the management or any

other third party. Similar workers' plans demanding the consideration of environmental factors were drawn around the same time by the employees of other companies such as Vickers, Rolls-Royce, Chrysler and GEC Trafford (Randall and Hampton 2011). Thus, the idea of workers-led just transition has historical grounds in the UK. However, the problematic aspect to this idea is that the relationship between trade unions that represent the workers and environmental activists do not always favor a productive engagement.

It is worthwhile to note that the relationships between grassroots networks and trade unions in the UK have generally been tense. For example, tensions arose when CfCA targeted Kingsnorth coal power station in 2008. Without going into details, it suffices to say that coal industry trade unions considered CfCA's action as a direct attack against the miners because the calls for abandoning coal disregarded the needs of mining communities at the expense of climate change (Douglas 2008). To establish dialogue and clarify the reasons behind the action, CfCA had to write an open letter to the miners in which the idea of just transition was pointed out (Ibid.).

After this incident with miners, CfCA made efforts to better incorporate the just transition concept into their practice. For example, prior to the action against Ratcliffe power station, CfCA got in touch with the workers of the station to secure their support. To do so, activists clarified that for them just transition meant workers' taking power and control over their industries: "We believe in the idea of a worker-led just transition: this means that we want to see workers in high-polluting industries take control of their workplaces to develop plans to convert their productive capacity and make their workplaces sustainable" (CfCA 2009l).

The discussion about the need for just transition evolved in CfCA from being narrowly applied to the workers of the fossil fuel industry (CfCA 2008b) to more inclusive strategy of encompassing any communities in the struggle (CfCA 2010n). To illustrate with an example, in 2010 the proposal

entitled "Community Struggle for Just Transition" was put forward on CfCA's discussion forum. The proposal advocated engaging with communities whether they are linked to the production of carbon or not, in order to assist those communities with just transition struggles as opposed to the previous strategy of descending on the communities with direct action and leaving shortly after (CfCA 2010n). The proposal sought to add a community struggle for just transition as a fifth aim, to establish a national working group to provide resources for activists and a rapid response network for supporting "specific local sites of struggle at key moments in which a temporary influx of energy and solidarity would be crucial" (CfCA 2010n). Although this proposal was not adopted on the network level just like the workers-led transition idea in 2008, it signaled an intention to shift CfCA's engagement strategies from direct action in a swooped area to a more long-term and profound engagement with local community struggles. At the same time, this proposal highlighted that the concept of just transition has been broadened by activists to include not just workers of fossil fuel industries (as it is advocated by the labor movement) but also any community that is struggling against the systemic issues. The all-affected principle is thus evident here similarly to the extension of categories such as the global South (to include any communities that have been exploited regardless of the geographical location) and refugees discussed in the previous chapter.

7.2.3 Vestas action

*Vestas we've got news for you
This is our families future too
It's our power - nationalise it
Better let the workers organise it!*

'Boys on the Balcony' song by Seize the Day 2009 (Visiontv 2009)

A more specific example of how climate activists take on the issue of 'just transition' was the Vestas action that bridged the issues of production of renewable energy technology and workers' rights. Vestas, a Denmark-based multinational company, was the only factory in the UK to produce wind-turbine blades. In 2009 the factory management announced closure of the enterprise that would lead

to the loss of over 600 jobs. After Workers Climate Action (WCA) descended on the Isle of Wight where the factory was located and convinced the workers to resist closure, the workers of the factory decided to occupy their workplace calling on the UK government for nationalization in the name of saving green jobs. It should be noted that WCA started as a working group within CfCA with a remit to unite the forces of workers, trade unions and environmentalists and later moved to be a separate network. The occupation was followed by pickets involving local community members and climate activists from all over the UK coming to support the struggle, including the occupation of the second Vestas factory in East Cowes by climate campers (CfCA 2009m). However, despite protests the closure of the factory could not be stopped.

Not only did WCA instigate the protest, but the main network, CfCA, took an active part in supporting the Vestas factory campaign in August 2009 (fig.10. below). CfCA's main argument was that the factory played a huge role in the local economy but also in fighting climate change on the national level as it was the source of 'green jobs' and a contribution to the 'sustainable future' (CfCA 2009m; 2009n).



Fig. 10. CfCA's Solidarity with Vestas Workers
Source: (Jones 2009)

CfCA activists formed a working group that went to occupy the second Vestas factory and assisted workers blockading the factory by breaking through the police lines and bringing food supplies. RT also had a solidarity action held by the Bristol branch. Overall, this campaign helped grassroots activists bridge the climate change issue with economic crisis and job cuts and draw some of the workers of the factory into activism. While there was general support in CfCA for participating in this campaign, some of the climate activists found it problematic to support the Vestas workers' demands calling on the government to nationalize the factory (as also reflected in the quote from the song at the beginning of the section). As the critics pointed out (Anarchist Federation 2010), this demand contradicted CfCA's position on distrust of government-led solutions and avoidance of lobbying techniques. The Vestas action thus highlights a tension in the counter-discourse between the necessity of producing renewable energy technology and keeping green jobs, on the one hand, and the fact that the company that produces it is a multinational business concerned about profits, is based on hierarchy and maltreats the workers, on the other hand. Consider how one of the workers describes Vestas in an open letter:

...it [the company] tried to squeeze the last drop of work out of everyone, sapping them dry. Long hours in a highly stressful environment and fear of RSI amongst other conditions have given it a very high staff turnover. ... The workers have been given an offer of a pitiful redundancy payout for all their years of conscientious labour, and this has not even been confirmed in writing. This is classic of these multinationals (Worker's Climate Action 2009).

Regardless of these facts, elsewhere in the letter the worker notes that "What we desperately need from everybody is continued pressure on both the government and Vestas to retool this factory and keep it in operation", which suggests that workers' ultimate goal is to maintain the status quo for the sake of preserving jobs.

Similarly, CfCA issued a statement in which the first demand of the occupation was to "Take Vestas factories into public ownership, under workers management" (CfCA 2009m). Thus, returning to the tension pointed out above, activists supported the workers in their call for nationalization but the phrase "under workers management" is extremely important here because it suggests that 'just transition' for activists is about reclaiming control over the workplace in order to transform it into a sustainable and community-controlled production site. While the fact that the factory was producing renewable energy technology was important for the activists, they were conscious of the nature of the company's interests: making a profit. As one CfCA activists put it:

One thing that Vestas shows is that you can produce wind turbines but these same people still operate for their profit margins. You can't really expect them to take environment into consideration, and they treat people with such contempt. And so **this is about asserting** that yes, we want green energy and the growth of green energy but **we want that under workers' control** and we want these blades from Southampton, Newport to end up where they belong. And stopping them [management from selling turbines] is about asserting that these blades and the production here don't belong to Vestas management anymore, they belong to the workers and the communities that have fought for them" (Dissident Island 2009c; emphasis added).

As it can be seen from the quote, the threat to the production of 'green energy' is not the ultimate reason for activists to oppose Vestas closure. The modality expressed in the verbs and expressions such as 'assert', 'want under control' and 'belong' attributed to workers reveals a high degree of obligation and determination for taking action but also that the reasons for the action has to do with the current *lack* of workers' control over their own labor.

Critics claimed that the demands for just transition on behalf of grassroots are "fully compatible with the restructuring of neoliberalism as 'green capitalism' because they essentially call for the creation of green jobs and green economy based on the same principle of growth and profit" (Pusey and Russell 2010: n.p.; Russell 2012). While the authors rightly spot the tension in the counter-

discourse expressed in the partial reproduction of the dominant discourse through the use of the terms ‘green jobs’ and ‘sustainable future’ (Gordon Brown's ‘100,000 Green New Deal Jobs’ is a good example of how the term is used in the dominant discourse), the findings suggest that grassroots’ discourse goes beyond the narrow definition of just transition of the dominant discourse. Specifically, being aware of the neoliberal strategy to restart accumulation through a crisis, grassroots networks challenge the idea of creating green jobs merely for the sake of continuing the economic growth or quick fixing the climate change problem. Just transition for them, as shown in this section, is *a process of transferring the power from government and/or corporations to the communities* who would then collectively decide on the issues of consumption and production. Therefore, the meaning of the concept for activist has broad emancipating implications that are becoming increasingly prominent as climate activism matures in the UK. Namely, the most recent campaign on Energy Democracy that will be discussed in the next section is a reflection of how the meaning of just transition has evolved in the activists' discourse from the calls for keeping a renewable energy production facility alive (the Vestas’ case) to the demands for decentralization and community control over energy and beyond.

7.2.4 Energy democracy now!



Fig. 11. CJC Big Six Energy Bash Action
Source: CJC (2012f)

The theme of community control over energy discussed in the previous sections took a new turn in grassroots discourse when a novel (for grassroots networks in the UK) demand for energy democracy (Fig. 11 above) was voiced during the first mass action of CJC in May 2012. The mass action entitled The Big Six Energy Bash was organized by CJC and supported by RT, Occupy London and a number of other networks with the aim of confronting major energy companies and government officials at the UK Energy Summit.

The action was organized around four blocks-Dirty Energy, Housing, Robin Hood and Fossil-Free Future Blocs -destined to vary in tactics and profile of people taking action. What is apparent in the description of the blocs (Fig. 12 below) is that all but one bloc had a reference to the notions of 'taking back power' or transferring 'control' to the people and communities as an issue of fairness and democracy, especially the Robin Hood Bloc.

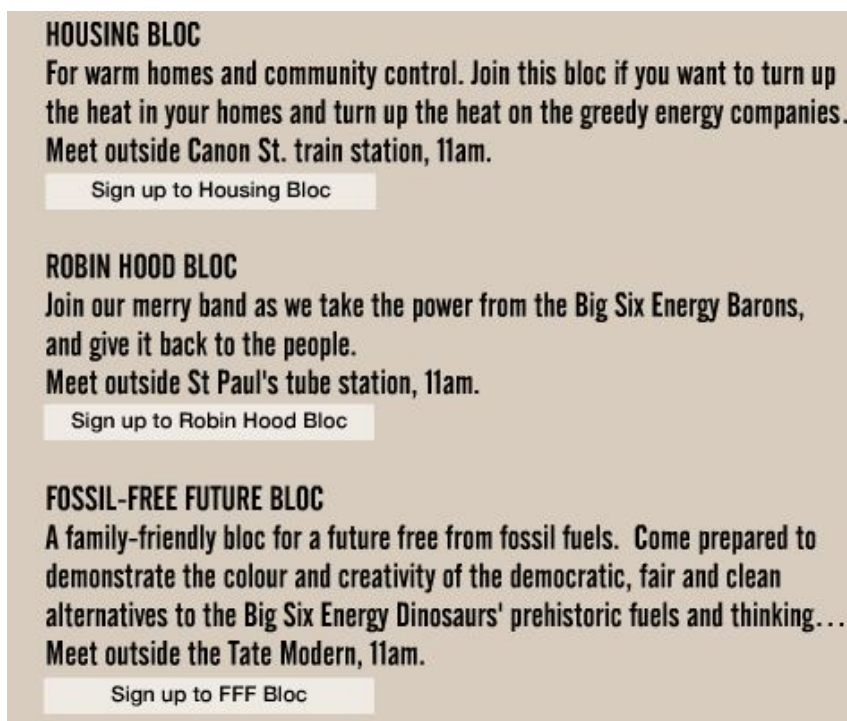


Fig. 12. Big Six Energy Bash Blocs
 Source: CJC (2012b)

In the press release prior to the action, it was announced that the Robin Hood bloc would be set up as a "focus on the energy monopoly of the Big Six energy providers which control 99% of domestic energy in the UK. Using Robin Hood iconography it will call for 'Taking the power back' and putting 'People before profit'" (CJC 2012b). It is notable that apart from the powerful Robin Hood imagery that evokes a fight against nobility and the rich, activists also used the reference to the contemporary struggle between rich elites and 'people' – the 99% and 1% metaphor of the Occupy movement: "This conference is a classic 1% stitch up. It is corporate elites, including the government, conspiring to keep the status quo of high energy prices, soaring profits, growing climate instability and disaster capitalism" (CJC 2012c).

Further, the demand for energy democracy essentially positioned access to energy as a basic human need and as "a right, not a commodity" (CJC 2012a). By targeting the Energy Summit, activists challenged the monopoly of UK energy companies to decide "how energy is sourced, produced and priced" (Fuel Poverty Action 2012). Not only control by corporations was challenged in this action but also the government was positioned as part of the corporate elite: "This conference is all about the people who should NOT be making decisions about our energy. It is about corporate elites, of which the government is now just one, colluding to make money, impose austerity, keep control and retain their privilege" (CJC 2012a). The government and corporate control over energy was thus pitted by the activists against community-control which is in fact the core meaning of the energy democracy concept. Moreover, activists provided a concrete example of how a community-controlled renewable energy system already works in the UK in the form of energy co-ops in place in Bristol and Brixton (Potts 2012; CJC 2012a). In the examples of Bristol and Brixton energy co-ops, the energy is provisioned and managed by members of the community who own shares in these not-for-profit energy enterprises. Each member has one vote regardless of the number of shares owned, and the profit generated by the co-op is reinvested in community.

Two crucial implications can be drawn for the counter-discourse on climate justice from the analysis of the The Big Six Energy Bash action. First, climate change although featured in the justification for the action in terms of intensifying extreme weather events was at the background rather than at the fore. Instead, the primary emphasis was placed on the one hand on the access to energy being a basic right, and on the other, on the denial of this right through government and corporations' commodification and a total control over the energy system. Second, while back in 2007 renewable energy and community control were discussed as related primarily to communities in the global South, the action taken by CJC demonstrates that these concerns over unequal access and control are starting to be grounded in the UK context through the issues of energy prices and corporate control. What grassroots networks achieve is foregrounding that climate justice is no longer a vague issue that concerns distant communities in the developing countries and the nation-state framework for solving it, but a localizable and contestable problem for the UK. In the words of CJC:

This type of collective action is not based on dialogue with Big Energy but, rather, on threatening their power and on reminding them, and ourselves, of our own. Actions like the Bash have the potential to shift the debate towards more radical understandings of energy. What's more, the act of coming together and physically pushing against state and corporate power raises new, empowering, possibilities for resistance (CJC 2012e).

This quote thus demonstrates that energy democracy in the context of the UK is regarded by grassroots networks as an issue of power and resistance as well as a potential catalyst for deeper changes in the way energy is perceived. Importantly, this action thus reframes a technical and environmental issue of energy provision as inherently linked to the issue of democracy, justice and rights strengthening the overall counter-discourse on climate justice.

7.3 Conclusions of the chapter

This chapter has discussed how the technical and managerial approach to climate change characteristics of the dominant discourse is contested by grassroots' counter-discourse through opposition to "false solutions" and by foregrounding the 'true' ones. It was found that false solutions embodied in techno-fixes (e.g. agrofuels, carbon sequestration, nuclear power) and financial fixes (e.g. carbon trading) are rejected for a number of reasons by the activists. While the failure to reduce carbon emissions is one which can be interpreted as a reiteration of the dominant discourse, the emissions argument is outweighed by the social and environmental justice concerns related to the false solutions. Namely, the unequal economic relations between the countries of the global North and South as well as between the elites and the poor, undermining of local culture and traditions, ousting of communities from land and adverse effects on biodiversity, water and soil as a result of large-scale technological projects are noted. Combined with the mistrust in government for its ties with corporate actors and a lack of capability for communities to decide on their energy sources, technical and financial approaches advocated by the dominant discourse are firmly rejected by the grassroots networks. Instead, small-scale and community-run renewable projects as well as 'just transition' processes and 'energy democracy' are viewed as true solutions. The findings suggest that the concepts of 'just transition' and 'energy democracy' constitute the core of the counter-discourse on climate justice and demonstrate how this discourse is evolving to include not only the international dimension (i.e. relations between the global North and the global South) but also issues pertinent for the UK context. Finally, this chapter has argued that the concepts of false and true solutions reveal the multi-dimensional character of climate justice as a counter-discourse comprising claims about the unequal distribution of environmental harms, cultural misrecognition and political misrepresentation. The central thread of the discourse is that addressing these injustices requires

challenging the existing power structures and shifting the power directly to the communities affected by the injustices.

8 Navigating a commodified world

The previous chapters have examined grassroots discourse as closely tied to the theme of climate change: the scientific framing of the issue, the particular solutions proposed to deal with it, and the international dimension of the problem, have been discussed. It has been argued so far that climate change is articulated by grassroots networks as a matter of a multi-scalar justice (that of distribution, recognition and representation) in contrast to the dominant discourse that delineates the problem in technical and managerial terms related to the nation-state framework. This chapter identifies an area in the networks' discourse where discussions spill over the problematic of climate change and touch upon the wider issues of economic exchange as an important node that needs to change. This is where the link with the alter-globalization discourse that preceded climate justice discourse becomes most apparent.

In an attempt to construct a new political discourse, the alter-globalization discourse sought to articulate a multitude of alternatives to the dominant neoliberal order available in various struggles without replicating its alienating market mechanisms and commodified economic exchange (De Angelis 2003). Emphasizing the power of cooperative social relations based on mutual enrichment, dignity and respect was necessary for achieving this goal, as noted by De Angelis. Given the historical roots of climate activism in the alter-globalization struggles, and that the dominant discourse on climate change (see Chapter 3) is premised upon the incorporation of neoliberal practices into the politics of climate change, the contestation of these practices is equally crucial for the construction of the counter-discourse on climate justice. The goal of this chapter is thus to investigate how grassroots' discourse on climate change navigates through the pervasive commodified economic relations, what the tensions involved are and how the non-commodified

practice that grassroots networks engage in or foreground, contributes to challenging and resisting the dominant discourse.

As Williams (2005) has argued, commodified exchange is understood here as a monetized exchange of goods or services for the sake of generating profit. In contrast, non-commodified exchanges can be further divided into monetized not-for-profit exchanges characteristic of the public sector where the profit motive is absent but monetary transactions do take place, and non-monetized ones where the exchange of goods or services takes place without any monetary compensation (e.g. volunteering or community service). It is argued in the sections that follow that while commodified exchange is generally rejected within the grassroots networks, it is still acceptable provided that the commodified exchange is linked to environmental or ethical considerations. Such acceptance can be considered as a reproduction of the dominant discourse that seeks to reconcile environment with profit making, yet it is argued that it can also be viewed as an attempt to re-socialize economic relations (Gibson-Graham 2006). Re-socialization is further identified in the promotion of alternative enterprises that do not prioritize profit (co-ops and credit unions), in the practice of non-paid collective labor and in foregrounding the commons.

8.1 Commodified exchange

As noted in Chapter 6, although the terms ‘capitalism’ and ‘neoliberal globalization’ are sometimes used in relation to the economic arrangement that they try to resist, the word ‘System’ is a more acceptable way of designating the enemy. The context in which ‘System’ is employed invokes practices such as privatization, commodification and financialization, ascribed to neoliberal capitalism (Harvey 2005). This section explores the role of commodified exchange in the counter-discourse.

In general, commodified exchange is something that grassroots networks seek to eradicate in their own circles. A good illustration of that is the incident that happened in CfCA in 2009 involving an attempt to produce and sell the network's merchandise. One of the activists designed and produced T-shirts with the CfCA logo on them for sale on the outreach events, and the money raised was supposed to be used for network purposes. This initiative stirred heated debates in CfCA regarding the commodification of the network and the movement as a whole. The problem with this initiative, according to Emily, was the penetration of market principles into an organization that seeks to challenge these principles in the first place: "It wasn't freely given if there was need, ...if you didn't have money, you couldn't pay for the t-shirt, t-shirt had a set price, and the profit made from the t-shirt by the t-shirt making company who printed it have suddenly, it's like a small part of production and consumption had entered the camp and people were very, very angry" (Emily pers.comm.).

Emily highlighted the reason for which the T-shirt designer was under fire. Namely, it is the commodified exchange involving a profit motive and monetary transactions that was unacceptable to the climate campers. The emulation of buyer-seller relationships characteristic of the 'System' appears to be in conflict with the principles adopted in CfCA.

In his article criticizing the merchandise incident activist Neil Page noted that by selling the merchandise Climate Camp also commodified the relations between people because of the implicit assumption made in the process that "expressing your affinity with other people and gaining a sense of social belonging can be done through buying stuff" (Page 2009). Rejection of any kind of commodified exchange is thus a matter of embodying the critique of the System and prefiguring social relations for the society that they seek to build. This raises the question of whether commodified exchange is unacceptable only within the network or if it applies to any commodified

exchange. As the examples that follow demonstrate, commodified exchange can be acceptable outside the network provided that it is justifiable on social and/or environmental grounds.

Farmer's markets

In 2009 CfCA set up a mini farmer's market during the Great Climate Swoop on the European Climate Exchange as a symbolic alternative to the carbon markets. While the farmer's market was a metaphoric antithesis to the carbon markets that were at the heart of the action, it is worth analyzing the messages with which this symbolic action was imbued. At the stall the activists were giving away locally produced vegetables and home-made cakes (see fig. 13 below).



Fig. 13. CFCA Market Stall. April 2009

Photo credits: Kristian Buuus

By offering a farmer's market as an alternative to carbon markets, activists conveyed a message that not all markets are rejected and consequently not all monetized and for-profit exchange is unacceptable. A number of assumptions around the farmer's market can be discerned in the example used by Climate Camp. First, farmer's markets as a form of retail provision, unlike carbon markets, have a long history (McEachern *et al.* 2010) and can be regarded as a natural evolution of trade rather than an artificial creation linked specifically to capitalism or another ideology. Second, farmer's markets are associated with locally produced food and merchandise sold by the producers themselves as

opposed to chain supermarkets that are part of big corporations which often act as middleman (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000). It is thus assumed that the profit generated goes directly to the producer and helps support his livelihood. Next, locally produced goods are preferable because the transportation costs are minimal and thus the carbon footprint is lower. At the same time, the concept of 'local' is associated with the discourse of authenticity and quality of goods produced by the local farmers as opposed to the industrial overseas production (Ibid.). According to Pilgeram (2010), farmer's markets are simultaneously "the face" of sustainable agriculture and a challenge to and a critique of, the industrial agriculture under capitalism. Thus, by juxtaposing carbon and farmer's markets, the activists not only stress the contrast between the artificial financial market and the 'natural' farmer's market but also tap into the growing discourse on the sustainability of food production from the perspectives of health, ethics and environment (Ibid.).

Further, the visual representation of a farmer's market (fig.13) amid the action against carbon trading is meaningful for the analysis. The fresh carrots, lettuce and bread are displayed in baskets; a jar of honey or jam next to the bread basket has a white cloth cover on top resembling home-made preserves; cakes are also presented on trays without any packaging on top. All these details aim to challenge the corporate retail chain and help recreate an authentic farmer's stall, where products are home-made or home grown, natural, i.e. without preservatives, and presumably ecological as they are grown on a small-scale and are not packaged. There is thus an implicit assumption about the environmental friendliness of the products sold. Even the big retailers themselves have started using packaging that either visually or textually recreates the image of a farm in a marketing attempt to make claims about local and environmentally-friendly nature and authenticity of their products (Zukin 2008).

Also, this ‘alternative’ representation is indivisible from the nostalgic or reactionary representation of a farmer’s market (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000). The symbols of nostalgia for the rural, authentic life here are the costumes of the activists and décor details: old-fashioned hats, checkered shirts and table cloth, woven baskets and waistcoats that evoke the rustic imagery of the countryside England. Such nostalgic representation is reactionary (Ibid.) because it evokes parochialism or even nationalism but at the same time, it is affirmative of a certain identity and a sense of community threatened by the current system of multinational corporations.

Finally, the face-to-face contact between the buyer and the farmer allows for creating social ties and establishing personal relations, as opposed to the alienating experience of shopping in a supermarket. Such interaction between the buyer and the farmer is instrumental for rebuilding the local food systems. It also has an environmental education perspective because consumers learn about the benefits of eating seasonal produce, while farmers are encouraged to grow a greater variety of foods (Pilgeram 2010). In other words, by promoting farmer’s markets grassroots foreground a form of monetized exchange that has always existed but has been to some extent undermined in the current ‘System’ by the spread of fixed retailers.

Overall, as Gibson-Graham (2006) suggests, accepting farmer’s markets is a sign of re-socializing economic relations in the way that the interdependence of economic subjects, local produce and environment are recognized and valued. This re-socialization is important because it fosters economic relations based on ethical considerations (buying local instead of something shipped from overseas to support the producer, even if the product is more expensive) and thus is contrary to the logic of profit inscribed in the ordinary commodified forms of relations. Grassroots’ representation of the farmer’s market thus points to the acceptance of this type of commodified exchange on the

assumptions of its environmental and social benefits. The same logic is traceable in the example of relations with a retail company LUSH and banking discussed below.

Funding from LUSH

LUSH is a retail company that sells fresh handmade beauty products in more than 40 countries around the world. “Fresh” and “handmade” mean that the products are made by hand and contain minimum amount of preservatives. Other core values of LUSH have clear environmental considerations: no packaging is used for the products; no animal testing is involved including the suppliers of key ingredients; only vegetarian ingredients with clearly stated origin (LUSH n.d.). In addition, the company has carried out a number of awareness-raising campaigns on human rights, ethical and environmental issues in their stores across the world and has a “charity pot” that supports community and grassroots activism through funding. Such close attention to environmental issues can be regarded as both part of the brand image that differentiates LUSH from other similar companies on the market, and as based on a genuine care for the environment. Yet, despite these values and actions, it is still a profit-oriented company that is inherently interested in increasing the consumption of its products, and thus can be qualified as promoting ‘green consumerism’. In this case, is the engagement with LUSH a sign of failing to resist the dominant discourse that welcomes green consumerism and green growth? Or rather, as in the example of farmer’s markets above, does it indicate a call for incorporating environmental and ethical considerations into commodified exchange in order to re-socialize them? Let us see how grassroots networks justify this relationship.

At the national gathering in London in December 2008 grants from “rich people like Lush” were discussed as viable financing option for the network (CfCA 2008a). It was even reported that the co-founder of Lush had sent “Happy Hippy Shower Gel” to the campers during CfCA in summer 2009 (Bryant and Kirby 2009). Likewise, London branch of RT received funding from the Charity Pot in 2011 (RT 2011a; RT 2011f). As activist Sydney explained, RT resisted applying for LUSH funding

for a long time because of the green consumerism implications but the networks' position has evolved over the years:

As time passed I think the group started to see most funding sources as problematic – is it better to take money from a group of rich individuals? Or ask for it via a donate button, rather than asking individuals to move away from the computer screen and get involved? Additionally funding for direct action is hard to come by and LUSH had funded such actions in the past. Lastly the group felt like LUSH was actually trying, it didn't feel like greenwash as they were trying to reduce their environmental impact [...] Yes LUSH is a company trying to make a profit but as far as we could see it was the best out there, and it was prepared to put its money where its mouth was and fund groups taking direct action (Sydney pers.comm.).

It is evident from the quote that the decision to apply for funding was related both to the reconsideration of funding options and to the recognition of company's environmental consideration as genuine. Regarding the first reason, while it is an important issue for discussion, I cannot analyze it further due to the insufficient amount of data on this particular topic. As for the second reason, the last sentence of the quote indicates that company's history of funding of the grassroots and community action projects is a sufficient proof for RT that LUSH goes beyond the green rhetoric, i.e. its actions are based on environmental and ethical values rather being a marketing strategy. Therefore, even though the company engages in commodified for-profit exchange, its environmental and ethical values reflected in a concrete practice (funding of external groups) resonate with grassroots' counter-discourse and their desire to re-socialize economic relations. The last example in this section examines this issue from a different sector.

Banking

Banks are the institution through which a significant part of commodified exchange in the current system is channeled. This section analyzes the attempts of grassroots to target banks as partially responsible for climate change and the tensions associated with it. The actions that grassroots networks took were against specific banks but the idea behind it was the critique of the whole banking sector: "The Camp for Climate Action isn't focusing on RBS this summer because we want

everyone to bank with Barclays instead. RBS is just an excellent example of everything that's wrong with "mainstream" economics. Our actions against them should be just one part of a wider effort to bring high finance down to earth" (CfCA 2010k).

The main argument against banks is their investment in fossil fuel industries that makes the extraction possible: "RBS is the UK bank the most heavily involved in providing the most loans to oil companies that are extracting tar sands and in doing so trashing the climate and destroying Indigenous Communities" (CfCA 2010l). As seen from the quote, it is not only the effect on climate that is important for grassroots but also how indigenous communities are affected by the extraction. The environmental argument is thus bridged with the social justice one.

Furthermore, alongside with the goal of delegitimizing banks' sponsorship of fossil fuels, activists highlight the stakes of the public in banks: "Since the financial crisis, RBS has received billions of pounds of public money to keep it afloat, to the point where it is now 84% owned by the UK public. Communities in the UK are now facing years of cuts to health, education and social services as a result of bailing out the irresponsible bankers. And now they are using our money to prop up the E.ONs and the Shells of this world" (CfCA 2010l).

It is worth noting that in the last quote activists refer to the "communities" as well (compare to the quote above mentioning indigenous communities) but this time these are the communities "at home", i.e. people in the UK who are going to be affected by the cuts in public spending. Thus the issues of climate change, environmental destruction for distant communities and social spending implications for people in the UK are discursively linked by grassroots to the banks and financing of fossil fuels. Similarly to the demands for community control over energy in the UK discussed in the previous chapter, it helps localize climate change through linking the issues of public money to the investments into dirty energy sources that exacerbate the problem.

However, despite this attack on banks, there is an indication that grassroots networks are not against banking as such or the commodified exchange that it contributes to, but against a certain type of investment that banks engage in. In fact, activists do not suggest dismantling the banks as they do in the case of fossil fuel companies, but argue that it is necessary to reconstruct these financial institutions to better serve the needs of people and communities. The example of an action against Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) illustrates this point. On September 1, 2009, as part of the CfCA at Blackheath, activists held an action against the RBS bank. Equipped with banners that read “Under new ownership” and “Ethical renovation in progress” and dressed as construction workers, they blocked the entrance to the RBS bank in Central London (CfCA 2009g). The objective was to shame RBS for investing in carbon intensive projects. The messages on the banners are significant because they both highlight the problem and suggest a particular direction for change that activists would welcome. While “Under new ownership” does not specify the type of ownership that grassroots are hinting at, it is clearly an articulation of a discontent with the current private type which directs the investment decisions and affects the accountability. Consider the following quotes of spokespersons Bryony Taylor and Oli Sumerling who said that “[w]e’re here to say that the banks, especially RBS, need to be fundamentally reconstructed to put sustainability at the top of their agenda” and “[w]e need to transform RBS into the ‘Royal Bank of Sustainability’” (Ibid.). The reference to sustainability reproduces the dominant discourse that sees the development of green energy sources as the ultimate solution for the environmental problems without the need for any major paradigmatic shifts. Likewise, activists’ suggestion to transform RBS implies that the investment in fossil fuel projects such as tar sands or coal should stop, and on the other, that it should be directed into renewable energy sources since renewables are regarded as part of the solution to the climate change problem. The underlying economic and political structure is thus not questioned.

Furthermore, the use of the term ‘renovation’ on the other banner (“Ethical Renovation in Progress”) indicates that grassroots networks do not regard the concept of banking as problematic *per se*, but how this process is managed and what it is based on does cause anger and opposition. The call for ethical considerations to be incorporated into the banking sector connects well with what Gibson-Graham (2006) term ‘resocializing’ of economic relations, i.e. aligning any economic decisions not with priorities of profit making but with ethical discussions within the communities that are affected by these decisions, be it communities at home, or the distant or global communities (as in the example of indigenous communities used in this section). By articulating the need for ethical ‘renovation’, grassroots networks highlight the absence of an ethical praxis in the economy and the sociality.

To sum it up, this section has shown that instead of arguing for ‘dismantling’ banks, grassroots suggest that these financial institutions should be reconstructed to become ethical and sustainable in their investment. This implies that commodified exchange embodied in the banking sector is not rejected *per se*; it is acceptable provided that ethical considerations regarding investment decisions take precedence over the profit motive. While such a position can be regarded as the reproduction of the dominant discourse that reconciles economic growth and profit with environmental protection, it can also be viewed as challenging the dominant paradigm through foregrounding the sociality of economic relations and ethics in economic decisions which constitutes a call for re-socializing the economy. Such re-socializing allows for constructing an alternative political discourse since the economy is not viewed as a sum of calculable, disembodied, rational, and incontestable indicators but as an outcome of discussions based on ethical and social considerations, and thus inevitably contestation, within the concerned communities regarding the direction and content of economy (Gibson-Graham 2006).

8.2 *Alternative and not-for-profit monetized exchange*

The previous sections argued that while commodified exchange within the grassroots networks is not acceptable, its legitimacy outside the network is not disputed. Instead, what they foreground in their actions is the need to re-socialize economic relations by incorporating ethical and environmental concerns into them. Such incorporation is possible in alternative enterprises that do not prioritize profit and have a different organizing principle. In the newspaper prepared for the climate camp event in Edinburgh such alternative types of enterprise that could potentially replace “unethical” corporate banks are highlighted (CfCA 2010k). They are various forms of co-ops and credit unions that permit participants to decide collectively how to spend or invest the surplus money based on the needs of people involved as opposed to the profit motive of banks:

Credit Unions: democratically run bodies where **everyone has an equal say** on the size of interest rates, fees and services. Just like with the workers’ co-ops, and unlike a corporate bank, these financial co-ops are not legally obliged to place **profit-making** for shareholders above all other considerations (CfCA 2010k; emphasis added).

What these ‘positive alternatives’ to banks suggest is that loans and interest rates are not totally rejected on the grounds of being present in the ‘System’. Instead, they are acceptable to grassroots, provided that the people who have a stake in them can decide on their terms and conditions. It is then based on the assumption that the shareholders will not have the same profit motive but would act out of their needs or community needs first. Profit then is not excluded but rather is not prioritized, in contrast to the ‘unethical’ banks. Besides, unlike the ‘unethical’ banks, credit unions function on a membership basis rather than on ownership of shares. Credit unions and co-ops, as it was shown above, are radically different in their logic of operation and they exist alongside the conventional financial institutions. By encouraging joining co-ops (Climate Camp newspaper also profiled housing, student and farmer’s co-ops) and credit unions, grassroots essentially call for the multiplication of these alternatives that would eventually shake the conventional structures. Thus,

similar to the previous example with the idea of renovating banks, promoting alternative banking such as credit unions and co-ops demonstrates that grassroots networks foreground enterprises operating according to a logic different to the market one, enterprises that are based on ethical considerations rather than profit and that are agreed up on by the people affected by the existence of such enterprises, i.e. based on the all-affected principle.

It is also evident from the discussion of the banking system that the main problem with banks for grassroots is the lack of ‘democratic control’ over the investment process of the ordinary bank account holders: “a big problem here is that banks are an undemocratic way of investing the money we make” (CfCA 2010k). The implication here is that banks should be controlled by the account holder, “the people”, as opposed to being guided by the shareholders who are seeking profit for themselves. Thus profit and growth are opposed to the needs of people: “...the entire system – based on profit and endless growth rather than people’s real needs and desires - is at fault” (Ibid.). Additionally, not only does the way banking system is organized not help “working people to get on with their day-to-day lives”, but it also causes “ecological damage, over-use of natural resources and climate change” (Ibid.).

Another example of an alternative enterprise in which profit is acceptable is worker’s cooperatives. To illustrate this idea, the example of the Brukman textile factory in Argentina given by CfCA in the *Never Mind the Bankers* newspaper is useful. The factory was taken over by the workers and converted into a co-op under workers’ management. The profit generated from the work of the co-op goes directly to the workers who own the enterprise; it is divided equally and is used to help people “get on with their day-to-day lives” instead of being invested “in a faceless company” (CfCA 2010k: 15). What is emphasized here is the fact that workers have an equal status and rights in a co-op since they collectively own the enterprise, i.e. it is the workplace democracy that governs the relationship

between the participants of the co-op and the commitment for redistributive justice (de Peuter and Dyer-Witherford 2010). Such a way of governing allows everyone to influence the content of the work and exercise a direct control over the decision-making process. Thus, profit is acceptable as long as it is appropriated directly by the workers who produced it. Overall, by highlighting co-operatives as a possible and acceptable way of organizing an enterprise, CfCA foregrounds alternative ways of organization and distribution of surplus (i.e. profit) that exists within the dominant paradigm but are not valued or widespread.

Further, in addition to the alternative forms of enterprise, a not-for-profit monetized exchange (Williams 2005) tends to be acceptable to the networks. For example, RT, just like CfCA, normally resists selling stuff via website or even publicizing other organizations' or networks merchandise on their own website. However, shortly after 2006 Climate Camp in Drax, RT publicized the sale of a DVD about Climate Camp in Drax. The film was produced together with other groups.

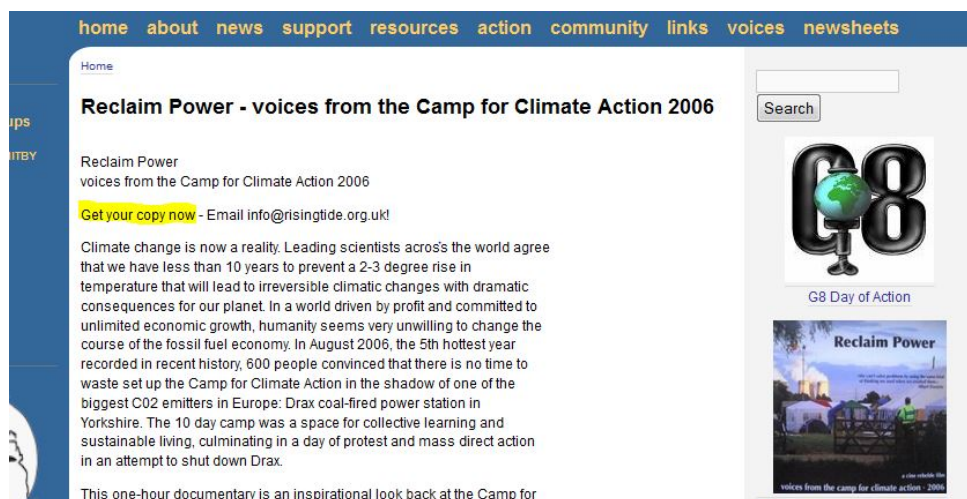


Fig. 14. Reclaim Power DVD

Source: RT (2007e)

Although there was no indication of the DVD price on the RT website, in order to get a copy, one had to email RT, Climate Camp or the production company (fig.14 above). The direct link for purchasing the film on the third-party website was also given. The film was produced by an external

media collective with the cooperation of RT and CfCA, and thus it was implicitly related to both networks. This example indicates that there are cases when a monetized exchange is not seen as contributing to commodification, and therefore is acceptable to grassroots networks. To understand in what case this is possible, it is necessary to consider the agency (who was in charge of the sale) and how the price was negotiated.

Starting with the agency, a third-party group, Cinerebelde, was in charge of selling the DVD. Cinerebelde is a media collective that produces and distributes films about and for social movements. On its website the collective clearly stated that it is a non-profit group, therefore the money from the sale of products is channeled into production, distribution and translation of films about social struggles (Cinerebelde n.d.). Based on that information it can be concluded that Cinerebelde is close to CfCA and RT in its principles of working (non-for-profit and for the benefit of social movements). Figure 15 below demonstrates how the DVD was priced.

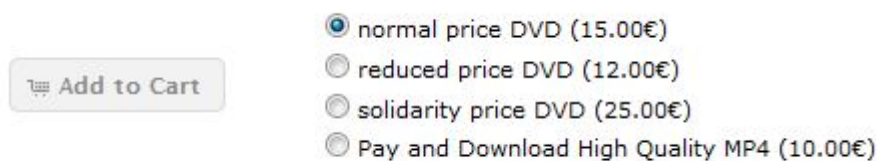


Fig. 15. Reclaim Power DVD Pricing

Source: Cinerebelde n.d.

Unlike a normal marketplace where a product is offered for a fixed price, this DVD had four pricing options and that it was up to the buyer to decide. Such pricing is socially sensitive because it acknowledges the difference in the financial situation of potential buyers: reduced price for those who have some financial constraints and a ‘solidarity price’ for those who felt like supporting the collective through paying extra. As a result, the element of compelling a buyer through a fixed price is mitigated by creating a range of options (in this case the difference between the lowest and highest is 250% which is quite substantial).

This variation of monetized exchange defies another characteristic of commodified exchange, commonly criticized by the activists – the alienation of individuals. The price range is sympathetic to the other, i.e. the buyer is not a de-personified subject assessed by only its ability to pay. Rather his/her needs are taken into consideration (the price carries information, and the price range therefore is also telling). Furthermore, the price range provides an opportunity to show care ('solidarity price') and support a cause (consider Page's appeal for contributing to the "life and wellbeing of the camp"). Therefore, instead of alienating buyers, the exchange evokes relationships of "affinity and community" discussed above.

The implication of this example is that the monetized exchange is acceptable for grassroots, as long as it follows a different logic to that of the commodified exchange. The latter is regulated by the logic of supply and demand, whereas in the case of the former, the commensurability of the product is established according to informal principles, i.e. the disposition of a buyer to financially support (or not) the media collective by buying the DVD or downloading the film. This example of a not-for-profit monetized exchange is in fact an alternative that grassroots implicitly support by enacting it within their networks. Such alternatives, as notes Williams (2005), can be regarded as practices that have always existed alongside the commodified forms of exchange but have been suppressed and considered outside the economic sphere. What grassroots achieve through engaging in these practices is then bringing those forms forward and recognizing them as legitimate forms of economic exchange.

A related example is embodied in one of the main principles of CfCA according to which any food product or service delivered on the premises of the camp during an event is totally non-profit and donation – based. The donations can be of two types – suggested and non-specified. In both types the person can use the services or products without paying anything, while with the former he or she

is given an orientation as to what the donation would cover (in terms of the cost of the service/product). In a regular marketplace, price carries information as to how much the seller is ready to sell for (supposedly taking into consideration the other sellers' reservation price and other conditions). With the suggested donation, a part of the function of the price is maintained through providing information as to the actual estimated production cost. The difference from the marketplace is that pricing within the network is considered restrictive and thus anti-social, breaking the horizontal structure they try to create; therefore grassroots choose a donation option to avoid limiting access to goods or services.

8.3 Non-monetized exchange

According to Williams (2005), non-monetized exchange such as non-paid community or voluntary work is an integral part of non-commodified economic activities. It is an explicit recognition of wage labor as only one among the variety of labor forms that exist and contribute to the economy. For grassroots activists labor within their networks has a special meaning. Stuart Jordan, one of the participants of CfCA and Worker's Climate Action, summarized CfCAs' position concerning labor in the following way:

The Camp gives you a chance to experience an alternative to the world of wage labour and commodity markets. The things we consume at camp (the tent space, sanitation, food etc.) are to a large extent products of our collective labour. We do not grow the veg or weave the tent fabric (for this we rely on the capitalist market place) but for the duration of Camp the work is collectively shared and the product of that work is held in common. We do not operate a money economy or buy and sell these products. We are not given money in exchange for the time we spend "working". Our daily needs are satisfied by the collective work of the community (Jordan 2010: n.p.).

The multiple use of the word 'collective' in Jordan's quote emphasizes that labor for the activists within the network is an activity that prioritizes the common rather than individual effort and benefit. This makes it possible to see labor relations not through the prism of market relations, but

rather as human relations. Labor-in-the-community is humanized and opposed to the commodified exchange of labor-for-wage. Thus "labor" (in the community) is understood as based on relationship of mutual aid and solidarity rather than market-based.

At the annual climate camps collective labor was an inseparable part of the discourse and practice, even though the focus was very often on taking direct action. Installing tents, marquees and compost toilets, greywater systems, sometimes wind turbines, delineating common areas, - all these activities required the participation of all who came to take part. The ultimate goal was to demonstrate what they could achieve by working together voluntarily on a non-paid basis. Once the camp was set, the tasks of cooking food, caring for the kids and engaging with visitors, taking care of the tranquility and entertainment were also shared between the participants. Fruits and vegetables were sourced from wholesale markets that gave the produce for free due to its "unmarketable" appearance. Just like vegetables and fruits, some of the food came from a practice called skipping – collecting food from supermarkets that would be thrown away due to close expiry dates. In the words of Anna (pers.comm.), doing all these things was important because: "we tell people it's up to us, not as an individual, not you in your work alone, it's up to us, the community, as a movement to change this, to push for a change". Participating in the Camps was then not only practicing the labor-in-the community but also a practice that prefigures future economic relations.

Such a statement implies that "labor-in-the-community" is seen as a form of social platform where human relations are formed and thrive. On the contrary, "labor-for-wage" is understood as anti-human force, which commodifies relationships, compels and alienates people by reducing them to their sheer ability to pay and their capacity to work. Consider the words of Neil Page: "...in our society we have become so fragmented and alienated from one another, that for many people it is inconceivable that you could have a genuine connection with another human being without paying

for the privilege” (Page 2009). That is why collective and nonpaid labor is regarded as a way to overcome the alienation and rebuild the social relations damaged by the pervasiveness of a commodified exchange. In the words of Jordan, “As we work together, human relations are formed quite easily and we have a new appreciation of each other as striving towards a common end: the life and wellbeing of the camp. We no longer relate to each other via the commodities we buy and sell in the market place, the cash in our pockets and the sale of our capacity to work. We relate directly as human beings, reliant on each other for our sustenance” (Jordan 2010). This is yet another piece of evidence of the attempt to resocialize economic relations that grassroots networks undertake. An important part of this collective labor is the horizontal organizing structure adopted within the networks that facilitates working in common but also prefigures a desirable mode of organizing in the wider society. In the words of Sidney (pers.comm.), “The very existence of the group itself and its way of operating and keeping that going is keeping the way of operating I’d like to see in the future societies work under non-hierarchical decision- making”. There are no leaders to assign tasks or take decisions, so social interaction occurs in a level playing field where everyone is equal and decisions are made in cooperation and through consensus. The horizontal structure is politically meaningful for them because it “allows participants equal ownership over and responsibility for a process. Whilst tasks can be divided, they are not delegated down to others and significant decisions must be reached via consensus because it is a rejection of leadership” (Charsley 2010: 21). By practicing and promoting a horizontal structure based on consensus decision-making, grassroots thus challenge the current hierarchical system of political representation and simultaneously demonstrate an alternative by their own example.

Collective and nonpaid labor at CfCA based on the horizontal organizing structure is thus the most important manifestation of the grassroots’ preference for alternative labor forms in their vision of economy. By putting these free labor activities at the center of CfCA’s philosophy of doing things,

activists mark them as practices that they want to see as part of their community lives. Indeed, many participants see it as ‘modeling the future society’ (interview with Rebecca, Anna, Michele, Sydney). Consider for instance how Agi speaks about CfCAs and its role: “CfCA has been good at modeling social and environmental differences, it shows how temporarily and only in a partial way we can live more sustainably and more democratically. And that's amazing, that's been how CfCA has been so innovative, it's not only been a protest, it's not only been a political big P in terms of issues but also a model of future alternatives” (Anna pers.comm.). What is evident from Anna's quote is that foregrounding nonpaid labor is seen as a political statement in itself that seeks not only to challenge the dominant system but also demonstrate an existing practice that enables transformation of the economic relations in a democratic way.

8.4 Back to commons

The earth was made a common treasury

For everyone to share

All things in common

All people one

We come in peace

The order came to cut them down

Excerpt from the Digger's song used by CfCA at Blackheath; written by Leon Rosselson

To conclude the discussion of commodified and non-commodified forms of exchange in the counter-discourse, this section explores the notion of commons articulated by grassroots networks. For De Angelis (2003) commons are forms of direct access to social wealth not mediated by competitive market relations but created and managed by the communities, local or distant but organized on the basis of mutual aid and solidarity. According to Gibson-Graham, commons are inseparable from the communities and the ethical decision making that guides their management:

Whether to deplete, maintain, or grow the commons is a major focus of ethical decision making. Such an ethical practice of commons management is part of what defines and constitutes a community. It creates and reproduces the “common substance” of the community while at the same time making a space for raising and

answering the perennial question of who belongs and is therefore entitled to rights of decision (2006: 97)

Thus commons can also designate social relations within a community involving doing things in common (Linebaugh 2009). From this perspective, the labor during the Climate Camp can be regarded as the process of commoning as well. While the original notion of commons refers to the destruction of collective land through enclosures by landlords in the 16th-18th centuries as an inherent part of what Marx called the process of primitive accumulation, today commons encompass not only ecological resources, such as land, water, minerals, air and so on, but also digital software, creations of the human mind, public services and the genomes of plants, animals and humans (de Peuter and Dyer-Witherford 2010; Gibson - Graham 2006). Today the struggle for commons is directed against the neoliberal capitalism that is wired for privatization whether full or partial (through different schemes of voluntary participation of private and public actors for example) of resources that are held in common.

Privatization of commons means the exclusion of certain groups of people from using them and this is what grassroots networks oppose: “The point for us that is important is that it [commons] is a place of public access that was communally owned, although there might have been a technical ownership of the land, people have a real right to use it for their self-sufficiency and their self-sustainability” (Dissident Island Radio 2009b). The long-term history of this concept is also significant to this understanding of commons. As Ollie pointed out, managing and using commons is a practice that has been around for a very long time and it needs to be re-cultivated:

We want to go back to the times when land and atmosphere were held in common and nobody had a right to destroy it because it's there for everyone, it's there to be communally used as long as it's used responsibly and that was the system that worked for hundreds and hundreds of years, much longer in fact than capitalism in its present form will survive. And it's hopefully a form that we can go back to and

obviously it depends on people getting together to make it happen (Dissident Island Radio 2009b).

What Ollie refers to in this quote is the practice of commoning in 16th century England when day laborers and cottagers worked the land on the basis of mutual aid cooperation and protection, even though the land did not belong to them officially (Linebaugh 2009). From the perspective of commons, the most symbolic Climate camp was the one held at Blackheath Common in 2009. Blackheath is a suburb of London that lies in Greenwich and Lewisham parishes. The choice of this site was in itself a historical reference to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, one of the most prominent popular uprisings against the ruling classes in British history that took place on the heath of this area. It was also the site of the protest against unfair taxation in 1450 (Abbott 2009). Thus, Blackheath Common, "steeped in history and overlooking the city" (CfCA 2009h), was meant to make links between the current financial crisis and climate change as it is located "at the doorstep of the economic and political systems that are fuelling catastrophic climate change" (CfCA 2009i). At the same time, the location of the camp at Blackheath conveyed a message about the access to land as an essential part of the access to global commons, therefore it was an act of discursive contestation, reclaiming the commons from the enclosure as it was done hundreds of years ago. Apart from the act of land occupation to set up the camp, this was also highlighted through the song tribute to the Digger's movement that fought against land enclosures in the 17th century. The Digger's song (the original title is World Turned Upside Down, according to Black 2009) cited at the beginning of this section was performed by Campers at Blackheath and a year earlier by Climate Caravan at Kingsnorth CfCA. The lyrics of the song resonated with CfCA's aims of building a grassroots resistance to the elites, challenging the System based on profit motives and property rights:

*In 1649
To St George's Hill
A ragged band they called the Diggers
Came to show the people's will*

*They defied the landlords
They defied the laws
They were the dispossessed
Reclaiming what was theirs*

The lyrics also echo the network's commitment to self-organization, mutual aid and common benefit:

*We come to work the land in common
And to make the waste land grow
This earth divided
We will make whole
So it can be
A common treasury for all.*

An important example of how working in common is realized within the networks is a project that emerged out of the Heathrow climate camp in 2007. While most of Climate camps were temporary events that lasted up to a week, the camp at Heathrow laid a foundation for a long-term community project entitled Grow Heathrow. In 2010 CfCA activists together with Plane Stupid and Climate Rush spotted abandoned greenhouses in Sipson village. They decided to squat the abandoned plot in order to set up a Transition Town or at least a community center that would be a place for locals to grow food, meet up, hold workshops and social activities. Within two years of the camp in Heathrow, the plot turned into a thriving community garden and a convergence space for grassroots networks. CfCA activists kept supporting the initiative by engaging in Grow Heathrow working weekends, workshops and by holding national gatherings at the plot. It has become an example of CfCA's direct participation in reclaiming the land and helping participants turn it into a model sustainable living project involving both activists and local people, i.e. creating a common space through the collective effort.

Thus, squatting land to set up camps or sustainable communities is an important manifestation of how grassroots foreground the issue of common resources and challenge the privatization of these

resources. By drawing on a historically significant and symbolic discourse of struggles for commons and demonstrating how the commons are used sustainably and for the benefit of the communities, through collective labor as opposed to wage labor, activist networks make a political statement that challenges the dominant discourse fixated on accumulation and private ownership while at the same time constructing alternatives to it. What is evident from the examples of commons foregrounded in this section is that they transcend the issue of climate change, i.e. reclaiming the physical space or doing things in common is not done because of climate change per se but as a way of contesting broader issues, specifically the control over resources by certain actors (government or corporations) and particular forms of social relations that such control entails (individualized and non-communal).

8.5 Conclusions of the chapter

This chapter has examined how grassroots' counter-discourse balances between reproducing the dominant discourse as concerns the commodified exchange and resisting it through foregrounding non-commodified economic practices. The findings suggest that the networks confront commodified forms of exchange in their own circles as a way of prefiguring desired economic relations and resisting the commodification of relations within the network. At the same time, commodified forms of exchange outside the networks are not rejected provided that the environmental and/or ethical concerns (such as prioritizing sustainability in bank investments or establishing relations between buyer and seller based on ethics) are taken into account. It has been argued that while such conditional acceptance of commodified exchange can be interpreted as the reproduction of the dominant discourse that seeks to incorporate concerns for the environment while still being profit and growth-oriented, it can also be viewed as an attempt to re-socialize economic relations (Gibson-Graham 2006). Re-socialization means that economic relations are viewed not as based on calculable, rational and disembodied indicators, but on informal relationships

prioritizing the well-being of the actors involved rather than profit. The signs of re-socializing are further found in the non-commodified forms of economic exchange that grassroots networks foreground: democratically-run co-operatives that collectively decide on the conditions of work and principles of equitable redistribution of profit; non-waged labor seeking to increase the collective well-being; and commons defended and sustained by the efforts of the communities. By recognizing the existence of, practicing and/or promoting such alternatives, grassroots position them as visible, legitimate and desirable forms of non-commodified economic exchange. It is therefore argued that despite the identified tensions, grassroots' counter-discourse displays an attempt to refocus the economic relations "on the needs of people rather than profit and growth" and "on shared access to common wealth rather than private gain" (CfCA 2010k) which points to the overall contestation rather than reproduction of the dominant discourse.

9 Climate justice: towards an alternative climate politics

Inspired by large-scale mobilizations on the climate change in the UK and beyond and the pre- and post COP-15 meeting in 2009, this dissertation sought to capture the emerging discourse constructed by grassroots networks offering an alternative reading of the intensifying climate crisis and ways for dealing with it. From an empirical point of view, the focus on grassroots actors is justified by a relatively limited scholarly coverage, as compared to the analysis of the international negotiations or NGO's activities on climate change. As for the focus on the discourse, as opposed to for example a social movement perspective, it is the recognized power of discourse to structure and reshape reality combined with my personal interest in language that influenced the choice of the study focus. Moreover, while the body of literature on climate activism has been growing in recent years and several works touch upon the emerging climate justice movement, few of them focus specifically on grassroots actors and none of them engages with analysis of discourse as such. This dissertation sought to fill this methodological and empirical shortfall by providing an in-depth examination of the discourse of two major grassroots climate activist networks in the UK drawing on a coherent analytical framework informed by critical discourse analysis. While the focus on two networks does not permit generalizability to the overall climate movement, the advantage of such engaging the actors of only two networks is that it ensures the necessary depth and detail enhancing the understanding of climate politics from the perspective of climate activists.

The rest of this concluding chapter is structured as follows. A short overview of the key contributions of this dissertation is presented in the next section, followed by a synthesis of the key empirical findings in section 9.2. Based on the summary of the findings, directions for an alternative climate politics (section 9.3) and future research (section 9.4) are discussed. The chapter concludes with a broad picture of this dissertation sketched out in section 9.5.

9.1 *Contributions to knowledge*

Contributions to knowledge made in this research should be examined against the backdrop of the theoretical, methodological and empirical gaps in the literature on climate politics and justice that this dissertation sought to fill. As pointed out in Chapter 3, the current body of research is skewed towards almost an exclusive focus on transnational mobilizations on climate justice around the UNFCCC process and the broad array of actors involved in such mobilizations. While grassroots networks are often part of transnational organizing, this broad approach fails to differentiate between heterogeneous actors (grassroots networks versus NGOs for example) and capture the specificities of their discourses. With regards to discourse, despite a discursive nature of climate change politics, there is a considerable shortfall in the literature in terms of studies that would engage in climate justice discourse per se; instead, activism and social movement theory perspectives seem to be dominating the analyses. Moreover, the limited corpus of works that claims to address the dimension of discourse does so in a fragmentary rather than comprehensive way. By adopting a synchronic and diachronic research focus on specific networks campaigning on climate justice, this dissertation provided a comprehensive account of grassroots networks discourse and practice beyond major UNFCCC mobilizations. The theoretical framework combining post-political and justice lens offered a fresh theoretical perspective in contrast to the wide-spread social movement theory focus. Finally, adopting a linguistically-oriented form of critical discourse analysis as a methodological framework allowed producing a fine-grained analysis that offers rich and deep understanding of grassroots' discourse on climate change. The major findings outlined in the sections that follow constitute the key empirical contributions of this dissertation.

As for practical contributions, it is my hope that this dissertation will be useful for grassroots networks themselves as a point of reflection and discussion regarding their actual relationship with the dominant discourse and the development of an alternative climate politics. The practical tasks of

planning and taking direct action, growing the movement, communicating with external and internal actors, and resisting police repression and/or surveillance can be overwhelming and time-consuming realities that grassroots networks deal with on an everyday basis. As a result, their own positive and challenging contributions, discursive or tangible, to the construction of an alternative vision of climate politics can be easily overlooked. The intention of this thesis is then to bring their contributions to light not only for stimulating debates within academia but also within the networks themselves, in order to valorize their discourse and emphasize its performative power. Moreover, following Gibson-Graham and Roelvnik (2010), I view academic research as a performative practice and as a form of activism in itself that contributes to bringing new realities into being.

9.2 *Dominant and counter-discourses: key findings*

The goal of this section is to revisit the empirical findings of this research in light of the overarching research question: how does grassroots' discourse on climate justice conceptualize the alternative politics of climate change? The empirical chapters of this thesis sought to provide an answer to this question, albeit from different angles. As demonstrated in chapter 3, the dominant discourse articulates climate change in scientific, dichotomous (North/South relations), economic and technical terms. Scholars (Swyngedouw 2009; Pusey and Russell 2010; Russell 2012) have argued that such a conceptualization of climate change fosters a post-political carbon consensus that effectively de-politicizes the issue. De-politicization, according to these critics, helps to sustain the status quo of the current neoliberal economic and political system through technical and managerial solutions. Thus, these solutions do not affect the fundamental systemic flaws responsible for the climate crisis, and even exacerbate it. Moreover, these same critics assert further that social movements are also directly implicated in entrenching this post-political consensus since their campaigns and actions

reiterate the dominant discourse with its narrow focus on scientific and technological aspects of the problem rather than the political issues underlying it (Ibid.).

In contrast, the findings presented across the empirical chapters of this dissertation suggest that while the post-political influence is discernible, overall grassroots' discourse offers a complex conceptualization of climate change transcending the dominant discourse in a number of ways. It views climate change primarily as an issue of unequal social and economic relations and justice that has a multi-scalar and multi-sided character. Figure 16 presents a schematic representation of both discourses. In this section I will briefly highlight some of the key aspects of the discourses and their interaction, while the implications for an alternative climate politics will be further discussed in the section that follows (reflected in the points highlighted in blue in fig. 16).

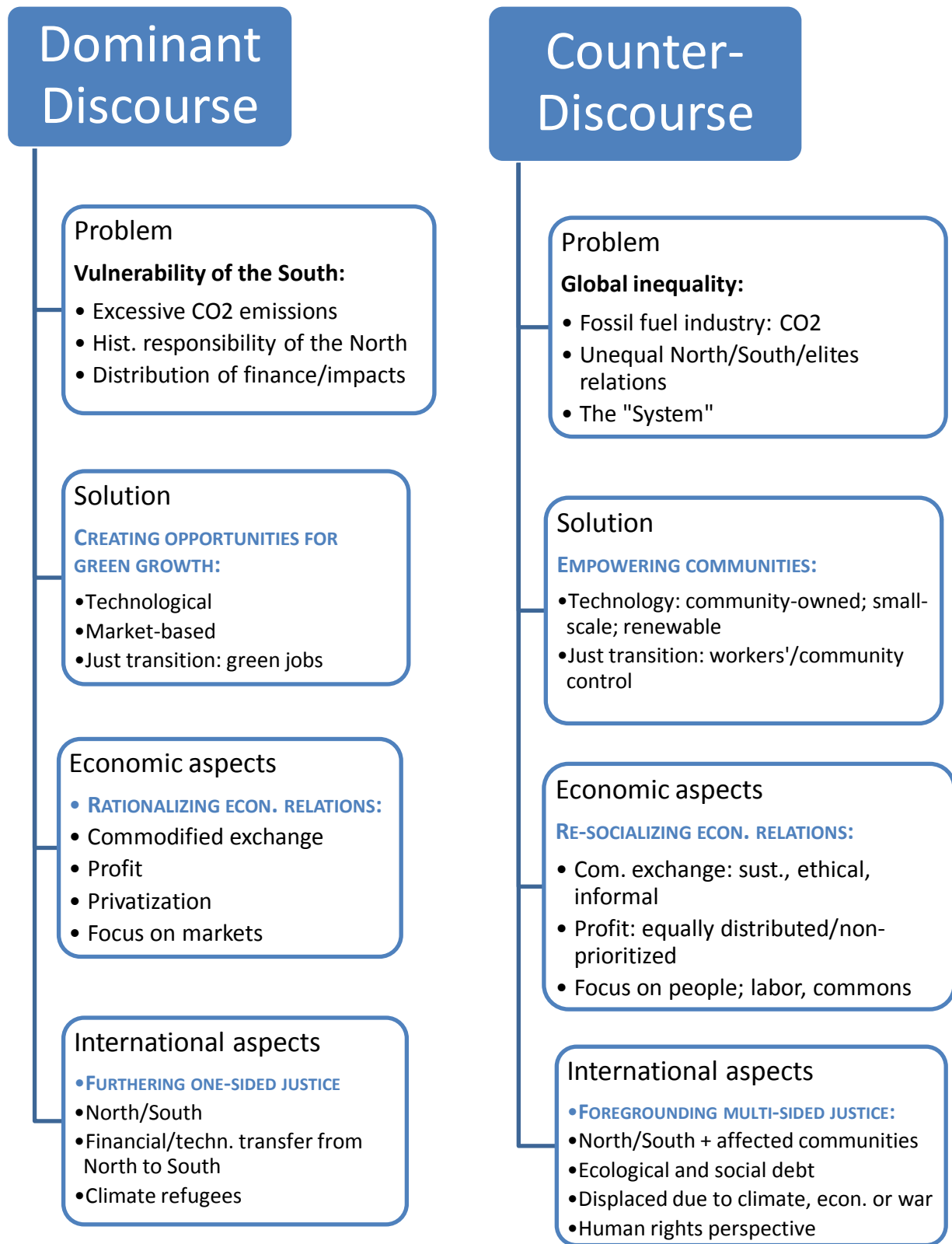


Fig. 16 Key Aspects of the Discourses

As figure 16 demonstrates, the dominant and counter-discourse overlap and diverge on a number of points across four main components of the discourses: Problem Definition; Solution(s); Economic Aspects; and International Aspects. In general, the overlapping points mark the areas where the counter-discourse fully or partially reproduces the dominant one, whereas the diverging points signify the extension or reframing of the dominant discourse as a means of contesting and transcending it.

Starting with the identification of the problem, similarly to the dominant discourse, climate change is viewed in the counter-discourse as a matter of carbon emissions primarily in the global North. As discussed in Chapter 5, the focus on carbon emissions is closely linked with scientific rhetoric and apocalyptic imagery and is an indicator of the reproduction of the dominant discourse. Whilst scientific rhetoric and apocalyptic imagery were indeed employed in various actions and statements of grassroots networks, their usage was shown to be tied to a particular timeframe and context. Specifically, the abundant use of scientific arguments around greenhouse gas emissions peaked in the years 2006-2008, at the time when climate science was at the top of political and public agendas. These years were marked by the IPCC's alarming findings regarding the link between CO₂ emissions and changing climate, a number of high-profile international conferences and summits (UNFCCC), statements by top officials, and by the emergence of some influential cultural representations of imminent disaster. In addition, a number of governmental decisions over the future of coal and aviation expansion were pending during that time. Therefore, the use of scientific and apocalyptic rhetoric by grassroots networks was context- and time- sensitive and had a particular goal: to legitimize actions against the 'enemy' and create an emotional response in the public by appealing to the scientific findings. In addition to the emissions argument, grassroots' conceptualization of climate change is tied to the historically unequal economic and social relations (from colonialism to neoliberal trade agreements) between the North and the South, as well as the elites and the poor, that

are at the heart of the climate problem. These unequal relations are the result of what they refer to as the System, i.e. neoliberal capitalism. Thus, the problem of climate change in the counter-discourse comprises several interrelated layers. In contrast, the dominant discourse identifies the problem as limited to the excessive carbon emissions generated in the process of production and consumption. The historical responsibility of the North for past emissions is acknowledged and the way to redress it is through a more equal distribution of carbon emissions allowances and adaptation means in the face of vulnerability of the South.

In terms of solutions to the problem (fig.16), both discourses regard technology as contributing to resolving the problem. However, as discussed in Chapter 7, grassroots' discourse on climate change emphasizes that technological solutions are renewable, small-scale and more importantly community-owned and controlled. This is one point where the counter-discourse diverges from the dominant one. A total rejection of market-based solution in any form is the second one. The final diverging point is related to the concept of just transition: grassroots discourse foregrounds the need for workers' or community control in the process of switching from the fossil-fueled technologies, whereas the dominant one is mostly concerned with greening polluting industries as a means of addressing climate change and providing green jobs without any transformational changes in power and elite control. The dominant discourse is thus directed towards creating opportunities for green growth. Overall, what is important in grassroots framing of solutions to climate change is not the technological aspect of the alternatives that they advocate, but the fact that true solutions provide autonomy for communities in controlling energy production and distribution. Thus climate change in this context is framed as an issue for which the solutions should not only be 'clean' in their environmental impact but should primarily be managed locally in a decentralized and autonomous fashion.

Progressing to the economic aspects (fig. 16), it was revealed in Chapter 8 that commodified economic exchange (understood as a monetary exchange for profit) is not rejected in the grassroots' discourse on climate politics, provided that it prioritizes sustainability and/or ethical and informal buyer/seller relations. Similarly, profit is acceptable for the networks on the condition that it is equally distributed and benefits the people directly involved in its generation. While the dominant discourse prioritizes markets and associated rationalized relations, the counter-discourse is people-oriented, i.e. it is the well-being of people that comes to the fore in commodified or non-commodified exchanges. Further, labor relations and commons are where the counter-discourse diverges from the dominant framing. Specifically, these two aspects foreground non-commodified forms of exchange that are centered on collective work for the common purpose and well-being, eschewing any monetary reward or benefit. This is the form of the exchange that they practice within the networks and assert as a model for future socio-economic relations. The economic aspects of climate politics are thus where the two discourses intersect and diverge at the same time.

Finally, in the international aspects of climate politics the counter-discourse reframes and extends the key concepts on which the dominant discourse draws (fig. 16). The extension of the dominant neoliberal discourse is evident in the way the notion of the global South goes beyond the geographical definition to include marginalized communities within developed countries as subjects of (in)justice which asserts that the climate problem is not only about the North/South dichotomy. This draws attention to the inequalities between and within the countries (in terms of elites and the poor discussed earlier) which is usually ignored in the dominant discourse on climate change. Also, it makes communities actors on the international stage, thus challenging the nation-state framework of negotiations in the dominant process. While financial and technology transfers are envisaged as means of bridging the unequal conditions between the North and the South in the UNFCCC process, the counter-discourse stresses the need for non-financial ways of redressing ecological and

social debts. The latter terms are the examples of the discursive reframing of the responsibility of the North from narrow emissions-related obligations to the obligation to deal with the ecological and social consequences of the historical domination and exploitation of the South. Related to the ecological and social debt is the displacement of people which is not limited to the climatic reasons in the counter-discourse but encompasses the right of all migrants to move free regardless of the cause. Lastly, the application of the human rights perspective and the call for criminalizing damages to climate reframe climate change as a humanistic problem rather than an environmental issue with an underlying economic rationality.

Thus, the key findings revisited in this section demonstrate that the counter-discourse on climate justice oscillates between the reproduction and contestation of the dominant discourse making it difficult to categorize it as fully influenced by the so-called carbon consensus. Instead, it is suggested here that the conceptualization of climate change in the grassroots' discourse is complex and should not be dismissed as post-political, rather it can be justifiably categorized as an alternative, counter, or oppositional discourse. While geared for a conscious contestation of the dominant framing, however, this counter-discourse is thus still fraught with tensions and contradictions. Yet there are still sufficient grounds for discerning the contours of and directions for an alternative politics of climate change. The next section develops this further.

9.3 Directions for an alternative climate politics

Building on the findings discussed above, this section focuses on concrete directions in the construction of an alternative climate politics. A lot of grassroots' energy is centered on confronting the dominant discourse through direct action or otherwise; this leaves very little time for developing concrete steps for asserting and realizing desired goals. Yet, I am responding to the call of Gibson-Graham and Roelvnik "to read the potentially positive futures, barely visible in the present order of

things” as a necessary step for imagining “how to strengthen and move them along” (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2010: 342). Certain directions for climate politics are thus garnered from the counter-discourse and discussed below.

9.3.1 Foregrounding multi-sided justice

The first direction of alternative climate politics that emerged from this research is related to justice. While climate justice is the overarching term and the focal point of the counter-discourse, its meaning emerged from the contestation of injustices linked to environmental degradation (as a result of the fossil fuel industry activities), cultural misrecognition (trampling of indigenous people’s rights and cultural traditions), economic maldistribution (between/within countries and communities) and political misrepresentation (lack of access to decision-making). Through a variety of direct actions, grassroots networks revealed these injustices emphasizing the claims of the affected groups, regardless of whether it is a state or a small community, and thus making them the subject of justice. Such recognition based on the all-affected principle as opposed to the jurisdiction of a particular state, is a transformative approach to climate justice (Fraser 2005) because it highlights a discrepancy between, on the one hand, a borderless or globalized character of injustices and their causes and on the other, the limits of the current nation-state framework for pursuing justice.

The calls to criminalize damage to the climate, discussed in Chapter 6, are a concrete step that can potentially assign responsibility for any actions or policies that contribute to climate change. Related to this point is another implication: making climate, which is an integral part of the environment, open to criminal justice procedures implies that the environment is valued not for just economic reasons but for its value to humanity as a whole. Such framing of climate change radically rearticulates the interrelationship between environment and society.

It should be noted, however, that criminalizing damage to the climate through legislative procedures contradicts the anarchist principles that grassroots tend to follow. Namely, it suggests enforcement through coercion of the state that emphasizes state power. As some critics have argued (Watson 2010), criminalizing damage to the climate can potentially lead to the enforcement of authoritarian measures, applied not only to corporations but also to individuals. In this respect, it is evident that some grassroots notions of justice are corrective and prevail over the anarchist principles of autonomy and non-engagement with the state.

Climate justice in the counter-discourse thus has a multi-sided character that simultaneously concerns various spheres of human life. Not only scales of justices can be identified in grassroots discourse (such as distribution, recognition and participation as Fraser's (2005) theoretical framework suggests) but also human rights and criminal justice perspective is evident. To incorporate the latter, I chose to use the term 'multi-sided' as an extension of Fraser's multi-scalar notion of justice. Overall, the wider message that can be gathered from grassroots' conceptualization of justice is that addressing climate change means tackling these injustices together rather than in isolation, i.e. not only as an issue of pollution, carbon emissions or unequal distribution. And importantly, grassroots discourse asserts, as it will be demonstrated in the next section, that the way to achieve such comprehensive approach to justice includes empowering communities affected by injustices.

9.3.2 Empowering communities

Closely linked to the issue of injustices discussed in the previous section is the empowerment of communities through a transfer of power. This is a central direction for the alternative climate politics that emerged from the analysis of the counter-discourse. While addressing multiple injustices needs to be approached comprehensively as noted above, it also needs to involve communities in the process, according to the grassroots networks. This direction can be regarded as originating from networks' own organizing principles based on informal relations, non-hierarchy, consensus and

doing things in common. Such forms of organizing without leaders or decision-making centers to which other groups are subjugated defies the logic of corporate management boards or governmental decision-making bodies; it allows people affected by a certain problem to collectively decide on how to address it. Grassroots networks apply these principles of self-organization and self-determination that foster community control not only to themselves but also to wider communities and issues. Namely, as it was revealed in Chapter 7, the concept of energy democracy incorporates this idea of community empowerment: production and distribution of renewable energy is regarded as a matter of community decision-making and control for the networks. This aspect is important because it demonstrates that climate activists, despite being often located in the environmental movement, go far beyond mere environmental claims in their discourse. Such an approach calls for transferring the power currently held by government and corporations directly to the communities who are often excluded from participation in determining what Fraser (2005: 16) calls “meta-discourses that determine the authoritative division of political space”. In keeping with Fraser’s notion of a transformative approach to justice (Fraser 1995), this means that by seeking to assert the right of communities to determine themselves how energy is produced, controlled and managed, the networks are discursively transforming the whole basis of the decision-making process from being monopolized by the government and/or corporations to being managed in common using consensual rather than coercive mechanisms. Practicing consensual decision-making is thus a prefiguration of this mode of taking decisions that they would like to see applied widely.

Likewise, it was demonstrated in Chapter 7 that just transition for grassroots networks is a process of transferring power from government and/or corporations directly to the communities. Just transition in this case means collectively deciding within the community issues of consumption and production, as well as transformation of fossil-fuel based industries, as opposed to seeking

compensation through legal process or merely accepting new 'green' employment. Such a vision of collective decision-making implies the autonomy and control of workers and communities.

Furthermore, community control as an inherent part of climate politics in the counter-discourse is also applied to the international level. In Chapter 6 it was shown how the concept of ecological debt employed by the networks articulates the need for transferring decision-making power and resources back to the indigenous peoples and communities of the global South to ensure their autonomy and self-sufficiency, as well as a means for rebuilding their communities and environment. In this respect, we can observe the extension of the anarchist principles of self-organization and self-determination as a means of empowering the wider community and international levels, as well as being the indicator of outgrowing the environment-bound grievances for which previous movements have been criticized.

However, the problematic aspect of this direction is that it does not address the issue of possible domination within the local system, i.e. it is assumed that community self-management is necessarily benign and non-oppressive, which is not necessarily the case (Cavanagh and Mander 2004). It is in a way an idealistic view of community also based on the assumption that a small scale is inherently more sustainable than others. While these assumptions are due to the lack of practical experience with communities, it is the overall message that grassroots networks try to convey that is important here. In essence, community control reflects a call for the participation in all aspects of life as noted by the theories of justice (Schlosberg 2007; Fraser 2005). Yet whilst Schlosberg (2007) views participation as an access to decision-making on various levels, for grassroots networks participation is *being* the decision-makers themselves.

9.3.3 Re-socializing economic relations

The last direction for alternative politics of climate change that can be discerned in the counter-discourse relates to the discussion of commodified and non-commodified forms of economic exchange (Chapter 8). As such, this direction is a reassertion of the argument that climate change is an issue that goes beyond the environmental problematic and likewise, climate politics is inseparable from social and economic phenomena that affect the life of people. Economic exchange is such phenomenon.

As argued in Chapter 8, grassroots networks exhibit implicit attempts to re-socialize economic exchange, whether it is commodified or non-commodified. Re-socializing means viewing economic relations not as a sum of calculable, disembodied, rational, and incontestable indicators but as the outcome of discussions based on ethical and social considerations, and thus subject to contestation and discussions within the concerned communities (Gibson-Graham 2006). Re-socializing is particularly evident in foregrounding certain forms of non-commodified economic exchange by grassroots networks. Non-commodified forms of exchange are those that defy the logic of profit inscribed in the neoliberal economy. Instead, non-commodified forms of exchange are focused on aspects of solidarity, mutual aid, and sharing (Gibson-Graham 2006; White and Williams 2012). A concrete example of such forms of exchange (this and other examples are discussed in detail in Chapter 8) is the unpaid labor that is integral to grassroots networks in this study. By rejecting payment for work done within and for the networks, activists emphasize the human relations aspect of labor. These relations are motivated by communal goals and by the intention of sharing that make it possible to establish a connection between individuals. Sharing burdens and fruits of labor is an internalized strategy in the networks. This strategy also applies to how resources are managed in the society: grassroots networks advocate for returning shared access to common resources such as land,

water, energy and so on, as it was in the past. In this respect, shared access or are unpaid labor are not revolutionary or novel practices. They can be considered as re-articulations of the anti - enclosures movements that defied privatization of public lands. Unpaid labor has always existed in the economy without being recognized as significant in the current economic system (Gibson-Graham 2006; Williams 2004). According to White and Williams (2012), non-commodified practices, such as those put forward by grassroots networks, are grounded in the anarchist visions of employment and organization and are deeply rooted in contemporary society. What grassroots networks achieve through engaging in these practices is bringing those forms forward and recognizing them as legitimate and desirable forms of economic exchange. Adopting such forms of exchange is a statement in itself which points to the diversity of economic relations in the current system and at the same time, shows a desire to transform the economy from being profit-oriented to being oriented towards common well-being, i.e. foregrounding the sociality inherent to economic relations.

9.4 Directions for future research

Having outlined the key contributions of this dissertation, as well as the implications of major findings, what remains to be discussed is how this research could be built upon and extended. First, the recent grassroots mobilizations worldwide on the issues of environment, social justice and economic crisis, as well as the growing articulations of climate justice in relation to the politics of climate change, make the analysis of climate justice discourse an important area of study for the years to come. While this study has provided a perspective of grassroots networks on the basis of two UK-based actors, the methodological and theoretical frameworks developed here can be applied to similar analysis conducted for other actors such as NGOs, government bodies, international organizations etc. Combining the perspectives of various non-state actors globally is another possible

direction for future studies that would make it possible to examine the competing understandings and discourses of climate justice and exploring paths for resolving climate crises as suggested by these actors. Specifically, studying the discourse of climate justice (as opposed to the current accounts of activism and movement issues) from the emerging transnational movement is a promising direction for further research. Along the same lines, a comparative perspective could be engaged by analyzing the discourse of Northern-based networks, movements and organizations campaigning on climate justice and their Southern counterparts. How do the articulations of the actors from the global South resonate with those of the Northern-based movements and networks and what are their points of divergence and convergence? Given the diversity of climate justice discourses in the global South (Kartha 2011), there is a strong need for future research in this area. On the other hand, adopting a non-dichotomous perspective that grassroots' networks advocate for in this study might lead to a research program that is concerned with a shared discourse of communities connected not geographically but rather thematically (resistance of oil development for example).

Another possible direction for research is by examining the following questions: To what extent does the counter-discourse impact climate-related policy and practice, and the dominant discourse in general? How can the strategies and practices used by grassroots movements to resist the dominant climate discourse be applied to other spheres? In what way does the counter-discourse on climate justice affect civil society and foster the visions of an alternative societal organization? Tapping into practices that the grassroots movement participants engage in *outside* their movement praxis is another potential research focus that could reveal how activities such as for example composting, volunteering for a community project, participating in a local exchange system or in a housing co-op scheme inform and direct their discourse, tactics and activist strategies, and vice-versa, how the movement strategies and tactics spill over to everyday life.

Finally, the anarchist thread, partially unraveled in this dissertation concerning the anarchist-inspired ideas regarding modes of organization, rejection of domination, decentralization and so on, could become a focus of a separate study. This would require a deeper engagement with various anarchist currents and theoretical perspectives. Such a study could follow the call of White and Williams (2012) who advocate for engaging with the anarchist theory to “unleash our economic imaginations” in an attempt to move towards a post-neoliberal future.

9.5 Concluding remarks

This dissertation has examined the emerging climate justice discourse from the perspective of grassroots climate activist networks in the UK. I have used the term counter-discourse to highlight that it has been constructed in opposition and resistance to the dominant discourse drawing on particular approaches and solutions to climate change that, according to grassroots networks, fail to address the problem. The findings suggest that climate change is an area of discursive struggle in which contestation and reproduction of the dominant discourse occur at the same time. While it might be tempting from a critical point of view to focus on the aspects that depoliticize the politics of climate change and thus undermine the significance of the discursive struggles, my intention was to provide a broader picture that accounts both for the strengths and weaknesses of the counter-discourse. And doing so is helpful for discerning the ways in which grassroots’ conceptualization of climate politics can show alternative directions prioritizing the community rather than the nation-state approach, encompassing multiple scales and sides of justice rather than following a distributional logic, and re-socializing economic relations rather than rationalizing them through the considerations of profit. Not only does such conceptualization encourage antagonistic climate change politics (Chatterton *et al.* 2012), but also suggests that climate change politics goes far beyond the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and technical ways of dealing with it, offering alternative forms of being, living and acting in common. And for them to become more tangible,

widespread and acceptable, we need to notice and recognize them; analyzing the discourse in which they occur is hopefully a step forward in this direction.

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Appendix I: Interviewee list

Name	Affiliation
Wiz	Plane Stupid
Liam	CfCA
Phil Thornhill	Campaign Against Climate Change (CaCC)
Howard Balmer	Plane Stupid
Rosie	Plane Stupid
Josh	Plane Stupid
Paul Brown	The Guardian correspondent for environment
John Sinha	CfCA, CaCC
Blake Lee Harwood	Former Greenpeace director
John Stewart	HACAN
Fe	CfCA
Tony	RT
Tamsin Omond	CfCA, Climate Rush
Ruth	CfCA
Charlie Kronick	Greenpeace
Michelle	CfCA
Tim Dalinian Jones	CfCA, RT, Election Meltdown
Chris	CfCA
Anna	CfCA
Jonathan Stevenson	CfCA
Rob	CfCA, RT
Lewis	CfCA
Sidney	RT
Jane	RT
Mary	CfCA
Florette	CfCA, Seeds for Change
Margaret Smith	RT
Freetoplay	RT
Ben	CfCA
Juliet	CfCA
James	RT
Rowar Watson	CfCA
Wendy	CfCA
Kofi	CfCA

Appendix 2: Interview guide

I. General introductory questions

Tell me how you got involved with CfCA	
What actions have you participated in? What was your experience? (what worked, what didn't and why)	
What is the most important thing about CfCA for you? why?	

II. Questions on construction of climate change discourse

<i>What is a problem with climate change?</i>	
<i>How does it compare to other environmental issues?</i>	
<i>How should it be addressed? By who?</i>	
<i>What are the root causes of climate change?</i>	
<i>How does CfCA signing compare to other social and environmental campaigns? Anything unique about it?</i>	
<i>What is the role of grassroots in fighting climate change?</i>	

III Questions about CfCA

<i>What has been the most prominent Camps' campaign on climate? why?</i>	
<i>What is the role of CfCA in the climate movement in the UK?</i>	
<i>How does CfCA organize itself? (financial management, taking care of website, twitter, legal actions)</i>	
<i>Who started CfCA? Who are the key individuals within the camp?</i>	
<i>What has changed in CfCA since 2006 when it was started? How do you evaluate the changes?</i>	
<i>How is it different or similar to RT group?</i>	
<i>What is new about CfCA in terms of approach to CfCA signing? Or in terms of organizational structure? Impact?</i>	

IV Vision of society

<i>What are the things that don't work in the society today? What are the things that work and should be preserved?</i>	
<i>What are the main features of a new society that you would like to see/ build?</i>	
<i>CfCA mentions capitalism as the root of the problem. What is it in capitalism that doesn't work?</i>	
<i>How is that aspect incorporated into actions?(opposing capitalism)</i>	
<i>What is the alternative vision?(political, ideological, social, economic)</i>	
<i>What should be done to achieve it? By who?</i>	
<i>What's the role of individual in your vision of society? Government? Business?</i>	

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