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"ADVANCING DIVERSITY"

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## Special Issue:
# ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY

## Guest editor:
# DR JEAN-PAUL GAGNON

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COMMENTARY

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Deliberative Democracy and Environmental Rationality *by Stephen Elstub*

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# "ADVANCING DIVERSITY"


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### *Guest editor:* DR JEAN-PAUL GAGNON

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# Environmentalism & the Enhancement of the Public Sphere

By Dr Jean-Paul Gagnon

The argument that politics, or democracy more specifically, has been bolstered by the rise of environmental concerns from the 1960s onwards, is not novel herein. Although most commentators place the rise of environmentalism as a political concern starting in 1962 with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the heritage of environmental activism across numerous histories significantly predates Carson's work. One example that this particular discourse usually leaves out is the activism of indigenous peoples who have, depending on which case we look to, been public advocates for the care of natural environments. An arbitrarily chosen case comes from Brian Schofield's book entitled *Selling Your Father's Bones*. In this work about the Nimi'ipuu (or Nez Percé/e) Nation which used to call parts of what are now the illegitimate territories of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming home, we find the individual Hinmahtooyahlatkekt (colloquially known as Young Joseph or more problematically as Chief Joseph). He campaigned in the late 1800s and very early 1900s (died in 1904) for the preservation of natural environments for which the Nimi'ipuu and other close-by Nations carefully tended for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

But, a counter-argument to that point is that the *mainstreaming* of environmental activism in what is now known as North America and Europe for example did not pick up the attention it now has until popular works like *Silent Spring* began affecting broader publics. I, however, do reason that sustained indigenous and non-indigenous environmental activism

over generations before 1962 have greatly helped in this regard. Wherever its origins have sprung – environmental activism is now undeniably a global political movement. And this movement, or concern with environments (places of 'wilderness', 'wildlife', 'nature', and so on), has most probably driven a large swathe of individuals into this kind of political and democratic participation.

The contribution to this special issue that I would like to make in this article is an analytic presentation of how the movement of individuals concerned with the environment has been in certain cases manifesting politically. It is hoped that this evidence will go some way to clarify the sweeping heuristic argument that environmentalism equals a more numerical, engaged, or active citizenry, public, or society.

**Protesting International Organization Summits**

From international relations, political philosophy, and environmental sciences for example, we come to see that individuals across boundaries have been targeting large international organization summits with strikingly similar demands: clean air, clean water, bigger forests, protected marine environments, food sovereignty, anti-genetically modified foods and animals, fair trade, organic foods, and so forth. The fact that diverse individuals around the world and from different languages have been making these similar demands during international summits is important as that is a recent phenomenon.

The Battle in Seattle (1999 protest of the WTO), the trouble in Toronto (2010 protest of the G20), the rumble in Rio (2012 protest of the G20), the shaking of Chicago (2012 protest of the G8), the grumblings of Greece or the gratings of Germans (in reference to IMF, World Bank and WTO meetings) are just a few of the more colourful examples.

We can see the fragile Leviathan composed of a pluralism of hard to define *demoi* (or multiple ill-defined demos) coming, possibly unwarily, to protest

together against the hunting of wales or of baby seals for example. Japan and Canada have both been the target of a union of very diverse individuals from around the world protesting against the killings of these animals. We might extend this point to the protest of vegetarians against the eating of meat or animal products. Then again, the same argument can be made about transnational interventions by individuals for humanistic purposes as was witnessed during the flotilla for the relief of Palestinians. Are humanistic concerns separate to environmental ones?

**Environmentalism as a Political Topic through Scales of Government**

Should we look to local, local-regional, state or provincial or territory, confederate or federal, regional (international), continental, intercontinental, and or global systems of government and or governance, the presence of environmental concerns is often a constant. At the local level, from what is now known as South America to the confusingly defined mainland China to the illegitimately named Australia, individuals have been expressing their discontent and or concern over the environment. Villagers in the south of mainland China have, for example, been against release of industrial pollutants into nearby water sources: these are blamed for cancer clusters in certain rural areas. In another example, individuals in and or around the Greater Toronto Area in Canada had recently lobbied government to ban the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides: these were blamed for adverse health effects in humans, family pets, and the death or mutation of fauna and florae in sensitive ecological habitats.

*At the local-regional level we can see that individuals in Montana or Tasmania are talking with, or shouting at, each other over whether urban farmland or forests facing subdivision development should be preserved as natural habitats...*

At the local-regional level we can see that individuals in Montana or Tasmania are talking with, or shouting at, each other over whether urban farmland or forests facing subdivision development should be preserved as natural habitats; we can see that there are debates at that level of government over whether certain agricultural domains should be returned to the wild (such as the re-flooding of the marshlands in or around *Veta La Palma* just an hour and a half by car south-south west from Seville, Spain); and over whether 'natural corridors' should be developed so as to permit deer, Moose, elk, or other animals to traverse territory without risk of being hit by a vehicle, killed in a dam, or stressed to death by the harassment of a family pet.

Should we turn to state, provincial, or territorial politics, the debates over environmentalism grow larger in scale. The intensity, if not ferocity of the debates, however, are I think vigorous at all levels of government or governance. I've seen individuals argue passionately about the missing frogs of spring in Torontonian suburbs which were, as it was argued, killed by pesticides. This

passion matched if not surpassed that of peoples that I've seen arguing against international oil or gas pipelines or giant multinational ocean-based oil rigs.

Some examples from this level of government include the contentious issue of the Alberta tar sands in Canada (to keep sourcing or to stop sourcing oil seems to be the main question); the construction of an international port of call for large cruise ships in the south of Queensland, Australia, which could adversely affect the local marine environments; and the resistance of peoples living in the arbitrarily determined Pará region of Brazil to the Belo Monte or Kararaô Dam.

At the level of confederation, federation, union-state, nation-state, or other cognate identifier, there are of course many well-known environmental debates. The type of environmental concern differs from place to place, but their presence in union-state level politics remains. In Canada, the USA, Australia, Japan, mainland China, and Russia, for example, are the country-wide concerns over what to do with 'spent' nuclear material; in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, and Honduras are concerns over the rate of deforestation (so too in many central African countries); in Mexico, France, and South Africa there are concerns over agricultural and or industrial effluents running off into major river systems.

These types of concerns continue to scale upwards at ever 'higher' levels of government or governance. In regional (international) and continental governing systems (think ASEAN, the European Union or the African Union) individuals are protesting against genetically modified food crops; against the unsustainability of large-scale agriculture or fishing; against the harvesting of timber from 'virgin forests' (IKEA was recently lambasted for this shameful practice); against dumping toxic wastes in poorer countries and so forth. This trend continues through to global politics: indeed, many of the concerns expressed at the level of the EU or African Union are global concerns. Food sovereignty and equity; the protection of biodiversity; panic over species endangerment; concerns about overpopulation; and debates around

*The construction of the Belo Monte Dam in the amazon region of Brazil.*

urban pollution are but a few examples on the agenda. A good place to mine for details of such concerns are the minutes from the meetings of the United Nations General Assembly or the UNESCO General Assembly – in both lie the potential to conduct text-based longitudinal analyses of environmental discourse at the level of global governance.

From this one heuristic dimension, of looking to levels of government for the existence and nature of environmental concerns we can easily see that individuals throughout the world are politically engaged on environmental issues. Of course, in order to try to determine whether more individuals today are politically engaged over the environment than they were ten or twenty years ago, that would in part require a major trans-national longitudinal study. That is naturally beyond the scope of this article – but it is hoped that my words might go some way to furthering research of that type.

**Environmental Politics as Loci for Debate, Participation, and Awareness**

As can be read in other articles within this special issue, such as those by Stephen Elstub, Nicole Curato, Nicholas Rose, or Prabhat Datta, environmental politics seems to be a place wherein debate, participation, and awareness of 'facts' is necessary. This might have to do with the complexity of even the smallest (in scale) environmental questions. For example, is chemical pesticide X the actual cause of reptilian or amphibian mortality in the estuary next to suburb Y? A question of such simplicity does, under current scientific methods, often take years to answer. Now consider the even more complex question of whether automotive exhaust is responsible for the acidification of agricultural topsoils near major urban centres. Or what the effect of building a major international cruise ship port is going to have on nearby marine ecosystems?

Individuals need to be informed about how 'facts' are built by scientists, how these 'facts' are used by their opponents, how scientific arguments are misconstrued by politicians or reporters, and how the data that scientists rely on can be 'fudged' by corporations under, for example, investigation regarding ecosystem poisoning.

Individuals then also need to engage with each other on two important fronts: solutions to problems and normative visions for the future. One good example is whether or not to build a subdivision over a plot of forest bordering an existing subdivision. "People need places to live and should have rights to homes like everyone else" is an argument waged against "we have enough homes and should be looking to vertical living" and "the forest needs a voice as it is not heard in this debate." Therein is already the problem of deciding who gets a home; how the forest is to be represented; what vertical living means; and the power dialectic between affected individuals, business interests, and governmental interests. Just in this one example is already the clear evidence that long-term participation, dialogue, debate, discussion, and or deliberation are required by informed citizens to come to some resolution of environmental concerns. Therein is also the need to

formulate some basic threshold in debate or deliberation: we must move on from simply 'doing deliberation' to 'doing impressive deliberation' as argued by Stephen Elstub in an interview forthcoming for publication by the *Journal of Democratic Theory*.

There is too the argument that environmental politics has been drawing scientists much more into the public sphere. During the Cold War we could argue that the majority of 'public scientists' were nuclear experts. What we have today is a Green War that includes nuclear experts, but that also includes experts on seas, forests, skies, depths, food, health, sustainability, resource management, and so on. It is an explosion of experts into the public realm which might be a phenomenon tenuously labelled as the 'politicization of science'. (On the other side of things is the argument that scientists are forced to research on 'political' topics as this is where their funding will mostly come from).

**Conclusion**

Although the analytics of this article are heuristic-based, and certainly lacking in robust empirical evidence, there is value in this kind of opinion presentation. As Ulrich Beck argued at the end of his Hobhouse Memorial Lecture (15 February, 2006, London School of Economics), heuristic arguments act like street lamps. They shine a cone of light over a part of dark streetscape to reveal often interesting things for us to see. Now, these cones of light certainly might not help us to find the lost wallet we're searching for (a metaphor for failing to answer a specific practical research question), but then again, we might just find a hundred dollar bill lying about.

So although I cannot at this time prove that environmentalism has enhanced the public sphere and the use of democratic politics the world over, that was not the intent of this article. What I have meant to do here is, through my own opinions, present an analysis showing that environmentalism surely seems to have achieved the latter. Individuals throughout the world appear, hopefully not by crafty illusion, to be far more engaged politically and through democratic mechanisms, than ever before which I think is thanks to concerns over the environment.

Nevertheless, there is certainly scope to argue whether the environment is the actual catalyst for this political reaction. I think it is one of them. One catalyst bolstered by others like the internet, mobile communication devices, gross inequalities, violence, and governmental corruption among many others 'fire-starters'. Some catalysts facilitate an individual's ability to communicate. Some pester and annoy an individual until throwing her arms up in frustration and charging the irritant is the temporary reaction. Other catalysts can infuriate, inspire, or make curious an individual to so great an extent that the self in question decides to shift their personal paradigm towards more active political participation.

***Note:***

**** Dr. Jean-Paul Gagnon*** *is a social and political theorist with a Ph.D. in political science. He completed his doctorate at the Queensland University of Technology under the aegis of Australia's prestigious Endeavour Award.*

# The Politics of Environmental Protection

## Sustainable Development Implementation Gaps in China

By Sunny Lam

**Introduction**

By implementing the "Open Door Policy" since 1978, China has achieved tremendous economic growth and development. China has seen the largest human migration in history, leading to a rise in urban population from 191 million in 1980 to over 650 million in 2010—an increase driven largely by rural-to-urban migration (NBSC, 2011). However, China's economic growth has come at a heavy cost to the environment. Many scholars acknowledge that the Chinese have brought serious pollution-related health problems along with their rapid urbanisation (Ho and Kueh 2000; Qiu, 2008). For example, outdoor air pollution is associated with more than 400,000 premature deaths per year in China (HEI report, 2004). A 2006 survey (Zhang, 2006) of several thousand suppliers revealed that more than a quarter of municipal drinking water plants and more than half of private plants were not complying with monitoring requirements for water quality. Urbanisation is proceeding rapidly even though nearly half of China's major cities do not comply with health-based standards for drinking water (SEPA, 2007). In the Pearl River Delta region of Guangdong Province—which is a major destination for migrant workers —average full-dose coverage for migrant workers with environmental-related illness was estimated to be less than 60% (Lin et al, 2007).

Developing countries often lack well-developed mechanisms for implementing environmental management programs. China is no exception. Chinese leadership has focused most on ensuring the continuation of economic growth; it has largely ignored the environmental

consequences, leaving behind a legacy of pollution (Mol and Carter, 2006). The rule of law in China is still weak (Stern, 2010), and existing environmental laws and regulations are often ignored by local government leaders (Liu and Diamond, 2008). In recent years, the Chinese government has recognized these and other environmental challenges. One of its milestones was the eleventh Five-Year Plan, where Beijing has passed numerous laws and regulations and established an extensive central infrastructure for environmental protection. In keeping with its overall decentralization of authority for fiscal decision-making, the government continues to develop authority over environmental issues away from the centre, delegating enforcement of both central and local government regulations to local officials. In some cases, local governments have achieved remarkable results, but in most cases, environmental protection has continued to deteriorate. This paper attempts to answer how sustainable development implementation works in China and assesses the shortcomings of China's approach. It focuses on the meaning of sustainable development and explores the relationship between bureaucracy and business industry in the field of sustainable development in China. This essay mainly focuses on the political side of the issue, rather than the legal aspect, although I consider that they are equally important.

China, as an important developing country, cannot follow the footsteps of many other nations by continuing the practice of "pollute now and treat later". To achieve long-term economic growth, the country must find a road to sustainable development. China's environmental law enforcement system is based largely on internal protocols and longstanding practices at the national and local government levels. The general lack of publicly available documentation of enforcement practices and procedures increases the regulated community's feelings of unpredictability, unfairness, and helplessness concerning, in particular, law enforcement in the environmental sector in China. The objective of this paper is as follows:

- Explicating the scope and characteristics of China's increasingly multifaceted and acute environmental problems;
- Providing background on China's environmental law framework ;
- Discussing the barriers to the implementation of sustainable development in terms of the bureaucracy and market perspectives.

One fundamental research question for this paper is: What form of environmental implementation and monitoring structure can realistically support China's role as being the world's factory with its estimated annual GDP growth rate at 8% for the next 10 years? In order to answer this question, we have to understand the current barriers.

**Barriers to the implementation of sustainable development – the State Owned Enterprises (SOE) problem**

Although it appears that China is making progress toward the implementation of sustainable development on numerous fronts, not all of the efforts are going smoothly. Many plans have been created

to infuse sustainable development into China's national development, but only a limited number of these plans have been implemented and fully executed.

China has more than 158,000 state-owned enterprises (SOE), serving as the main source of state revenue and occupying a central position in the national economy as of the end of 2008. The Second National Economic Census conducted in 2008 revealed that of all the 208 trillion RMB total assets of the secondary and tertiary sectors (industrial and service sectors), 63 trillion – or 30% of the total – were held by SOEs. Production in China's enterprises, especially the state-owned

*China has more than 158,000 state-owned enterprises (SOE), serving as the main source of state revenue and occupying a central position in the national economy as of the end of 2008.*

ones, adjusts slowly to market demand. Many SOEs have old-fashioned production lines, which are the main source of pollution in many cities. Furthermore, environmental management strategies, such as command-and-control policies and the polluter-pays-principle cannot be effectively implemented in SOEs. In addition, the situation is further complicated by the fact that considerable power, especially in economic planning, is devolved to provincial governments. This process of decentralization intensifies the contradiction between the central state authority and local government due to more general claims for regional self-management and local decision-making power in the areas of the economy and environment. The integration of economic development and environmental protection is a major challenge.

***The problem of pollutant discharge fine***

The market-based approach uses economic incentives to make the polluter voluntarily reduce waste emissions and even to upgrade or change their production line (OECD, 1994). For example, a charge is imposed for discharging a pollutant or effluent into a body of water: this is the so-called "pollutant discharge fee". The Environmental Protection Bureau (EPB) is a local unit and is responsible for collecting discharge fees from polluters whose emissions/discharges exceed the standard permitted by the local office. But the amount of the fine in China is lower than the cost of installing pollution treatment facilities. This encourages enterprises to pay the fee rather than investing a large amount in pollution treatment facilities. The fines are too low compared to the production costs of industries: only about 0.1% of production costs in the machine-building and paper industries (Xiong, 1991). Furthermore, most of the pollutant discharge fees in China are recycled back to polluters to be used for pollution control or technological innovation. For example, the fund for environmental protection was obtained by a local SOE from the local EPB and parent company to instead upgrade its products by technological innovation. This encourages the formation of a coalition between the regulator (EPB) and the enterprise (SOE) to convince and influence the parent company of the latter and the EPB to provide additional funds for technological innovation of production. Another issue is that fees are only assessed on the basis of the most highly concentrated pollutants measured

rather than on the total volume of all pollutants discharged.

***SOE – Incoming tax machine for local government***

Many local governments emphases that the SOEs are the most important tax source for local governments. Therefore, many senior officials in the city and provincial government are more concerned about its business and profit. From my earlier research, a senior local government official clearly recognized that the most difficult cases involve charges levied on SOEs because nationally they are all part of the same governmental unit. Moreover, all SOE functions under different ministries at different levels of government, and city governments are not willing to see the implementation of environmental protection affecting economic activities that would reduce tax revenues and employment. Once they enforce environmental regulations, it will then affect business output and hence their tax income. As the revenue from the incoming tax far exceeds the pollution penalty, it is obvious that they are willing to receive more revenue from the tax rather than from the pollution penalty. Therefore, any disputes between the enterprise and the EPB are typically resolved in a way that favours economic considerations.

Many local officials are short-sighted by giving priority only to development, turning a blind eye to violation of environmental implementation by some SOEs. Government cadres must undergo mandatory yearly performance evaluations that are based heavily on local industrial output. Because officials' careers depend upon the efficient promotion of local industrial development, they pursue the goal with great vigour. Local leaders, therefore, have a strong incentive to boost the local economy in order to promote their career. Such economy-based competition would easily lead to short-term economic growth; however, it creates institutional lock-in where only urgent environmental matters are being addressed, while the long-term social development is missing. Any long-term cost-effectiveness of pollution reduction projects faces great challenges.

In fact, under some cases, some powerful SOEs disagree that environmental protection is the responsibility of polluters and manage to place the financial burden of pollution control onto the local government and claim that it is the government's responsibility. The costs of pollution are dispersed among a large number of individuals, but the benefits of discharging pollution are concentrated on a small number of enterprises (polluters). The unbalanced distribution of costs and benefits of and countermeasures presents barriers for the public to organize and take collective actions against environmental harm.

**Barriers to the implementation of sustainable development – the impact of decentralization**

Devolution of authority for environmental protection to local officials was formally enshrined in 1989. This decentralization process made local officials responsible for the environmental health of their regions in the same way they were responsible for grain production. In theory, the decentralization process

permits close coordination among all the relevant actors: local environmental officials, officials from economic and planning bureaus, the mayors, and the governors. However, local enforcement of national laws remains a significant challenge and they often encounter political and social obstacles.

To obtain a better understanding of sustainable development and its implementation in China, we must not only appreciate the content of environmental laws, regulations, standards, and policies but also the responsibilities of authorities, and the capabilities and motivations of the EPBs. The environmental protection bureau structure should first be introduced.

Conventional decision-making in China follows a top-down model. At the national level, the State Environmental Protection Commission (SEPC) is the highest decision-making body on environmental policy in China. The SEPC meets quarterly and is chaired by a Vice Premier. The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) provides administrative support and serves as the secretariat to the SEPC. NEPA is required to report to both the State Council and the SPEC. The State Planning Commission (SPC) and the State Science and Technology Commission (SSTC) are also involved in the formulation of environmental policy. NEPA, in theory, has the same seniority or rank as other ministries under the State Council, but in reality it has less power. The main role of NEPA is to draft laws, devise standards, advise on environmental policy, and plan strategies, but it does not itself enforce environmental laws and regulations around the country. In fact, the implementation of environmental protection policy and management is carried out primarily at the municipal and county levels via local EPBs.

Below the national level, the environmental protection network includes 30 provincial, 366 municipal and 2,084 county agencies. Almost every province, municipality, and county in China has its own EPB or environmental protection office that ultimately reports to NEPA and local government. EPBs are embedded with the local governments. While they must follow the laws and regulations that emanate from the central government or from their local governments and participate in programs directed by SEPA, EPB officials' salaries and all other expenses are all determined by


*Zhang Ping is the current Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission*

the local governments. Because of this, EPB officials are particularly susceptible to pressure from senior officials within the local government. In some cases, local officials may pressure EPB officials to limit or ignore the fees because of concerns for social stability. It is complex and difficult to regulate state-owned enterprises that belong to more powerful organizations such as related economic departments or higher levels of government. Along with the decentralization of environmental decision-making to the local level, the environmental bureaucrats are delegated powers to police, monitor, assess, and levy fines upon the polluting enterprises who mostly are under the control of ministries in local government; this includes financial decisions and the appointment of the general-director of factories. As a result, local government plays a dual role as the owner of state-enterprise (polluter) and supervisor of the EPB (regulator).

As discussed above, environmental protection is dominated by economic and technical choices in which the trade-offs among issues are more complicated, and powerful local ministries frequently find themselves in conflict with EPBs. As a result, personal relationships between the regulator and the polluter are very important to environmental management in China because the dominance of state-owned enterprises and the complicated bureaucratic system allow negotiations and bargaining between them to play a very important role in sustainable development. One danger of this situation causes unbalanced relationship that affects the effectiveness of any environmental regulation implementation. The larger and more powerful the regulatory agency, the stronger the position it will have in the process of negotiation and bargaining. As a result, any activity that can increase the institutional strength of EPBs is welcomed by them. In contrast, bureaucrats usually reject actions that will limit economic growth and that in turn will affect the revenue of EPB. Therefore, bureaucratic judgment is the most important aspect in the implementation of environmental policy given this emphasis on the regulatory nature of sustainable development administration in China.

The above grim situation is further compounded by institutional constraints such as the limited problem-solving capacity of government institutions in environmental protection, underdeveloped infrastructure for supporting environmental policy formulation and legislation, restricted channels for public participation, and poorly developed mechanisms for mutual accommodation and support among the government agencies who share responsibilities for environmental protection. As a result, the gap between policy intents and actual environmental actions is almost inevitable and has become prevalent.

**Barriers to the implementation of sustainable development – the impact of rapidly changing pollution patterns**

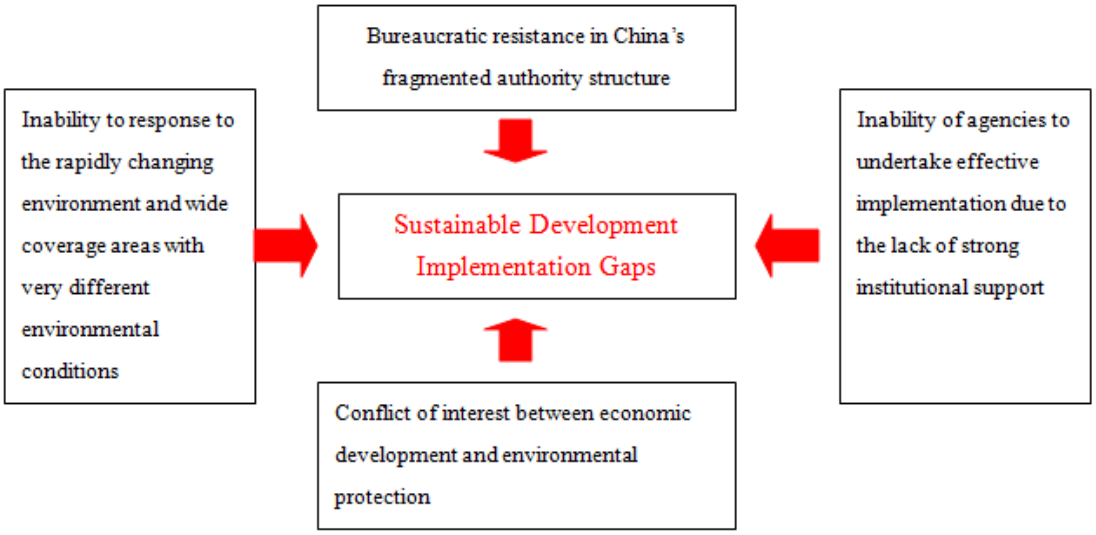
The phenomenon of 'implementation gap' in sustainable development is particularly pronounced and common in transitional economies. In newly and rapidly industrializing and urbanizing countries such as China, the structure and patterns of pollution are rapidly changing, so much so that broad

strategies designed decades or even years ago to tackle these problems quickly become obsolete. Two major problems occur in such rapidly changing environments. First, China is a large country covering a wide range of geographic situation and hence has very different environmental conditions. A central focus on selected area or pollutants might be helpful in some aspects, but overall it erodes the ability of different local EPBs to deal effectively in their own area. It certainly affects the effectiveness and flexibility of pollution control strategy. Second, the mentioned top-down allocated environmental goals make local governments meet specific targets but ignore other challenges including the balance between economic and social development. This perspective asserts that China's sustainable development has a gap between their orientation to policy problems and policy output. In other words, existing pollution control policies formulated in an earlier era, such as the urban emissions control strategy, have become inadequate as responses to the challenge at hand because the structure and characteristics of air pollution are rapidly undergoing, or have already undergone, a fundamental change.

**Conclusion**

Similar to all rapidly developing economies, China faces significant environmental challenges. In addition, China's system of environmental protection, which combines a well-defined formal structure and set of laws with an underdeveloped environmental bureaucratic apparatus and still developing set of behavioural norms, faces great obstacles in protecting its environment. Perhaps the greatest challenge that remains is that the evolution of China's legal regime is closely tied to sweeping changes in the political and administrative system. As discussed above, personal ties between local officials and enterprise managers, local leaders' concerns over layoffs and the potential for social instability, and

**Summary of China's sustainable development difficulty**



corruption all have undermined the efficacy of China's environmental implementation at the local level. Dramatic changes to China's existing political and administrative system will require protracted and concerted efforts by all members of Chinese society.

Looking to the future, the involvement of environmental NGOs could act as an alternative solution. Increased public participation, as well as environmental NGOs in the planning process, usually increases the likelihood that the public interest will be understood by governments, including, local environmental protection governance. The NGOs is a powerful force, attracting significant media attention and therefore may help overcome some of the weaknesses in environmental bureaucracy, putting pressure on officials to ensure that environmental laws are forced. Despite its essential interest in encouraging environmental NGOs to act as watchdogs at the local level, the Chinese government is concerned that it risks the development of organizations whose interests may not be aligned with those of the Communist Party. The fear for the central government is that these NGOs may use environmental issues as an excuse to push for broader political reform. For the consideration of social stability, the Chinese government is the primary force to ensure public interest, which usually blocks public participation in environmental governance. For the purpose of further research, it will be necessary to discuss the role and position that environmental NGOs play and their connectivity between the Chinese central government and their overseas counterparts.

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# Journal of Global Analysis


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# Deliberative Democracy and Environmental Rationality

By Dr Stephen Elstub

**Introduction**

The hegemony in environmental theory, has for sometime been, that environmental sustainability is most likely to be achieved through democracy. More recently, with the rise to prominence of deliberative democracy, within democratic theory and practice, the current hegemony in environmental theory is that not just any form of democracy will achieve environmental goals, but participation in public debate, as this will encourage participants to offer public reasons, commensurate with common goods like environmental sustainability. However, this connection must be empirically tested in deliberative decision-making. The empirical evidence linking deliberative democracy with sustainability is inconclusive. Significantly, most of the evidence that supports the link is from instances of unpartisan deliberation that is not linked to decision making. Essential to the idea of deliberative democracy is that it involves public debate that leads to binding decisions and, therefore, if instances of democratic deliberation do not culminate in more sustainable decisions then we must be sceptical as to whether environmental sustainability and deliberative democracy can be synthesised. In which case, we must conclude that there is nothing specifically environmental about democracy, deliberative or otherwise, because democracy is a set of procedures for making decisions, while environmental sustainability is a substantive issue. The empirical evidence is clearly inconclusive, and more is required, especially from instances of deliberative discussion that culminates in binding decisions.

Consequently, this article will review deliberative democracy in practice to investigate whether this instance leads to more environmentally rational preferences, amongst the participants, and more sustainable decisions. The case study is the Stanage Forum, the

purpose of which was to produce an effective Management Plan, through the participation of all key stakeholders, for the North Lees Estate, an area in the Peak District, a national park in the UK. It provides a suitable case study because the decision-making structure, in the Stanage Forum, approximates the norms of deliberative democracy, and environmental issues are at the heart of the conflicts in the North Lees Estate. This conflict derives from a tension between recreational use, cultural, economic and environment concerns, however, the Forum aims to build consensus upon a Management Plan, through facilitating the participation of the conflicting stakeholders in dialogue. This is not to say that this one case study can make amends for this lack of empirical research, only that such empirical studies are essential to a genuine understanding of deliberative democracy and its implications.

**Introducing the Stanage Forum**

The Peak District is a national park in the north of England in the UK. The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) has been devolved the power to manage the Peak District National Park. The PDNPA have opened up all their meetings to more direct participation from the public, and implemented several public participation initiatives. One such initiative is the Stanage Forum, the purpose of which was to produce an effective Management Plan, by involving stakeholders, for the North Lees Estate. This is an area in the Peak District National Park, six miles from the centre of Sheffield, a city located in South Yorkshire in the north of England. Stanage Edge is a cliff feature that is central to the North Lees Estate, hence the name of the Forum, and attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to appreciate its natural beauty, to climb, to walk, to cycle, to hang-glide, boulder, run, horse ride, and camp. The area is also internationally important for wildlife, as it provides a range of habitats and supports as dense a breeding population of rare wetland birds as anywhere else in the U.K. In addition the estate hosts a working farm and has several rural communities within it and nearby. As the estate is situated between two large cities, Sheffield and Manchester, there is also significant commuter traffic, as no motorway links these cities. This range of uses and features has meant that a tension between recreational use, cultural, economic and environmental concerns exists in the Estate. Nevertheless, the Stanage Forum aimed to build consensus upon a Management Plan.

Participants in the Stanage Forum were predominantly representatives from the local community and voluntary associations and were self-selecting. Nevertheless, prior to the commencement of the Forum, 'relevant actors' were identified and these associations were categorised into three broad groups of 'stakeholder': recreationalists, environmentalists, and locals (residents and business). In general the recreationalists' main concern was access and they sought the promotion of opportunities for the enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public, although in different ways and to different degrees. Therefore, the dominant goals for this stakeholder group were cost free and easy access by car and public transport,

unrestricted access to the whole estate, opportunities for recreational pursuits and convenience for local facilities. At the start of the Forum many of the recreationalists refused to accept that their access had any detrimental affect of the local ecology at all. The environmentalists' priorities were the conservation and enhancement of the local ecology. To achieve this it was thought necessary to restrict and control access to the estate. The locals were seeking to foster the economic and social well being of the local communities. This was by far the most divided stakeholder group. Much of the local economy is generated by the tourism of the area so many locals were loathed to restrict access. They also wanted to ensure convenient commuter links to the cities of Sheffield and Manchester. Locals also wanted to preserve the area as a nice place to live and limiting tourism was seen as important to achieve this. Although there are many commonalities of interests between the stakeholder groups, there are also clear tensions. Unrestricted access is incompatible with the preservation of the environment. Easy access by car is incompatible with farming, maintenance of the beauty of the estate, lack of pollution of the area, and the area being a nice place to live. Use for all recreational pursuits is incompatible with peacefulness, wilderness and environmental considerations of the area.


**The Stanage Forum's Decisions and Environmental Rationality**

Despite the fact that the Stanage Forum could have approximated the norms of deliberative democracy more closely, it is still an example of deliberative democracy in practice, as decision-making was based on free and open discussion aimed at consensus.

Consequently, if environmental theorists are right in suggesting that such a decision-making structure will generate environmentally rational preferences and decisions, then an analysis of the Stanage Forum's Management Plan will be a good test of this theory.

Consensus was not reached in the Forum, but there was deliberative compromise on the overall aims. The key aims of the Management Plan was to guarantee access to the estate for visitors including those with special needs, local residents, local business, commuters and people passing through; while ensuring that this access was compatible with the protection and enhancement of the ecology and the landscape. Therefore, proposals that did not ensure access would be incompatible with this aim and it is then immediately evident that the overall focus of the decisions did not reflect a particularly strong environmental rationality. Although the conservation of the ecology was a key priority, it was secondary to access to the area. The overall aim is to balance both of these, but in all circumstances that is unrealistic due to the inherent tensions between these aims, and the stakeholders associated with them. Consequently, the evidence here indicates that deliberative democracy will not inevitably lead to sustainability. One of the main reasons for this is deliberative democracy is unlikely to result in a consensus, so compromise and aggregation are required to make final decisions. Even if the compromise occurs under deliberatively democratic conditions, and the preferences that are aggregated are post-deliberative ones, experience from the Stanage Forum indicates that democratic deliberation will aid people in focusing on and accepting the common goods like sustainability, but this will still conflict with other common goods, such as access. Sustainability is then destined to be compromised with other goods, meaning that the most environmentally sustainable suggestions fail to be included in the final decisions.

In the Stanage Forum the most environmentally rational proposals did not receive majority support and in some instances environmental considerations were completely overridden. Measures that were proposed and discussed that had a strong environmental rationality, but did not make it into the Management Plan, included road closures and tolls, parking limits, speed limits, footpaths used to channel visitors away from sensitive areas and the active discouragement of hang-gliders from using a sensitive site during the breeding season. A key reason why these proposals were not adopted was that they restricted access to the estate too significantly. It seems that environmentally rational reasons will not necessarily be the most convincing in all circumstances. Another argument that was offered against the more radical environmental proposals, listed above, and that ultimately proved decisive, were that many of these measures would have a negative impact on the view, natural landscape and wilderness experience of the Estate. Although this argument was 'public' and proved persuasive, it was put forward by the recreationalists. It could therefore have been an argument that was instrumentally motivated to ensure access was not compromised to achieve sustainability. Therefore although deliberative democracy

encourages participants to offer public reasons, these can still be offered to justify instrumental ends, especially where there is an established majority in the forum as there was with recreationalists in the Stanage Forum. The experience of the Stanage Forum therefore supports, to a degree, that following instances of democratic deliberation between stakeholders, where participants enter the forum with strong opinions on an issue, public reasons can be produced to defend pre-deliberative self-interested preferences

*… the majority of measures included in the Management Plan, were a compromise between access and sustainability in favour of access and therefore tried to ensure access, but reduce its impact on the environment. Therefore there have been many objectives in the proposal to increase and integrate public transport, and to reduce the impact of access, but once again not to curtail access.*

rather than a 'generalisable interest' arising. Or at the very least that participants associate with the interpretation of the common good that most closely mirrors their initial interests. Consequently, the majority of measures included in the Management Plan, were a compromise between access and sustainability in favour of access and therefore tried to ensure access, but reduce its impact on the environment. Therefore there have been many objectives in the proposal to increase and integrate public transport, and to reduce the impact of access, but once again not to curtail access.

There is still evidence, from the Stanage Forum, of a link between deliberative democracy and environmental rationality. Although these decisions favour access over environmental sustainability many of these measures were still significant because they went directly against the original interests and preferences of many of the recreationalists, as set out in the first Forum. However, most of the recreationalists voted for these proposals following deliberation, which indicates that preference change, to take into account environmental issues, did occur due to the deliberative process. Therefore, although the participants in the Stanage Forum have not discarded their own interests in favour of environmental interests, they have at least realised, to a greater extent, how their interests and actions affect the environment and how their interests are connected to the environmental wellbeing of the area. There were some more radical proposals included in the Management Plan which favoured environmental concerns above access, which further indicates this to be the case. For example the use of off road four -wheel drive and motor bike was banned, and access of hang-gliders and para-gliders was restricted to locations that did not affect anticipated bird breeding sites. These decisions highlight a growing ecological rationality, as the hang-gliders had been loathed to restrict their access at all when the Forum began. The Management Plan also included the development of designated areas for nature conservation, where access would be permanently restricted. Localised temporary access restrictions and voluntary restriction on access to certain less visited areas during the bird breeding season were also included. These measures were significant,

because they demonstrate the change in preferences of the recreationalists, who were prepared to restrict their own access, at least to an extent in favour of environmental considerations following the debate in the Forums. Moreover, it shows that following the Forum debates they have acknowledged responsibility for environment damage and taken on the duty of environmental protection, which they were reluctant to do at the start of the process.

**Conclusion**

Despite this increasing awareness of environmental issues that deliberative democracy in the Stanage Forum produced, it seems apparent that in a deliberative democracy environmental values cannot be guaranteed to prevail. It is clear that although sustaining the ecology of the estate was seen as a common good, access to the estate was also seen as a common good, which indicates that there will often be more than one common good in any situation. A compromise between access and sustainability, more in favour of access, was the ultimate result. Although there is evidence to suggest that the Stanage Forum's participants' preferences have changed due to debate in the deliberative arena and that they have become more environmentally aware, this change is also limited as most participants were not willing to overly restrict their access.

However, much of this analysis depends on one's conception of sustainability, and it is not an objective concept or a fixed goal. Therefore the most important contribution that deliberative democracy could make to environmentalism, and the synthesis between these two theories, is enabling public debate on the varying and competing interpretations of sustainability in a given context. The Stanage Forum has, in varying degrees, approximated the norms of deliberative democracy, and enabled those with a stake in the North Lees Estate to do exactly this. The resulting vision of sustainability is one that aims to protect, preserve and enhance the local environment, but is also purely anthropocentric in that sustainability here also involves ensuring people get to enjoy this environment too. Although much more empirical evidence is needed to establish this, the Stanage Forum case does indicate that there is no necessary connection between deliberative democracy and environmental rationality and sustainable decisions, because the process cannot guarantee any outcome, even when environmental issues are on the agenda. People will not always find environmental arguments the most convincing. Environmental theorists are therefore asking deliberative democracy to do more than it can deliver, if they expect deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability to be synthesised in every context. Environmental theorists are therefore right to see deliberative democracy as the most justifiable decision-making mechanism, but not because it can guarantee sustainable outcomes.

**Note:**

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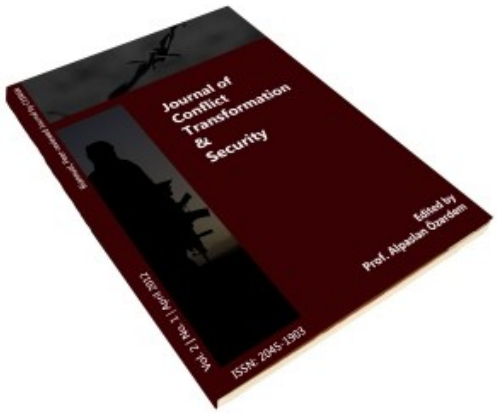


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# ENVIRONMENT AND DEMOCRACY

## By Dr Brad Purcell

Freedom to choose is the basis for current democratic systems and here exists two uncertainties: 1) whose freedom? And 2) whose choice? If it were my freedom and my choice, I would return the current capitalist, democratic society into a state of anarchy, in the true definition of the ideal. Anarchy was hijacked by democracy to infer a state of disorder due to the absence or non-recognition of authority and power. True, anarchy may not confer authority and power, but it does not promote disorder. In an anarchistic state, the disorder would come from the democrats, whom the anarchists would whole-heartedly welcome into their society. Anarchistic ideals pose a significant threat to democracy and capitalism if they ever gained momentum because power in anarchy is shared amongst the people. It is not surprising that democrats suppressed it through propaganda. The most pace anarchy ever gained was within high-strung punk rock songs, where the artists were trying to inform listeners that superpowers held their world on puppet strings.

Our social edifice is set to feedback into itself through a series of 'can do' and 'can't do' processes that contradict their aims and perpetuate their need. The legislation that governs or constrains society is all written in a schizophrenic fashion within and between tiers of government. The feds want one thing whilst the states want the opposite, and local governments react, distribute and enact the avalanche of motions. Each government represents different communities and different lifestyles and work for their common good, and sometimes those of their neighbours. They keep the rich people rich, the bad

people confined and the good people in an often-monotonous daily ritual whilst the rest look for a nice patch of dirt under the bridge.

That is the degrading depressing delusion of democracy. Whilst searching my thesaurus for definitions and words to grasp the concept, I found terms like equality, egalitarianism, classlessness and fairness ring hollow. There are enormous divisions of class in democracy. Whilst politicians increase their salaries, some of their very citizens are living and dying on the streets.

*Everyone is talking about environmental climate change but they seem to be missing the holistic picture. As resources become scarce, chaos will draw nearer and be assisted by floods, fires, segregated social systems, looting, warfare, plagues and unavailability of primary and secondary resources.*

In a similar search for synonyms of anarchy, disorder, chaos, lawlessness, mayhem, mobocracy and ochlocracy also were not consistent with the ideology. When I think of anarchy, I find myself muttering words like environmentally sustainable Buddhist nirvana, and all of the synonyms currently used for democracy. And there lies my hypocrisy whilst I wear shoes and cook with a glass of red over a gas burner. Perhaps democracy is the best system for governance after all.

Meanwhile the democratic society outside is about to implode. Another earthquake. Another wildfire. Another bomb exploding in the name of a Godly desire. Consistent warfare without warrant is clearly having its toll on people. The life of the bombed is worthless, and yours too because people died to bring you your fuel. There is no escape. The iGeneration know this and it is obvious in their demeanour. Are we all only lemmings working in a production line?

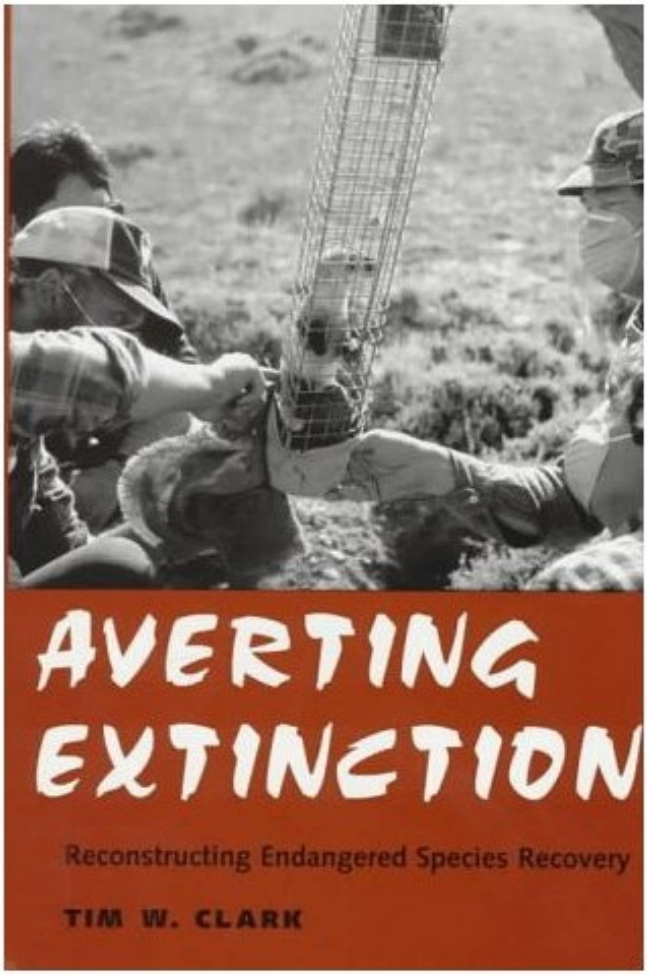
What I really want to know is if the political, economic or natural climate will change first? Everyone is talking about environmental climate change but they seem to be missing the holistic picture. As resources become scarce, chaos will draw nearer and be assisted by floods, fires, segregated social systems, looting, warfare, plagues and unavailability of primary and secondary resources. Is our past our future? The Oscar Award winning repeats from Hollywood indicate that the replay button has already been pressed.

Aspects of life on earth also are hard to comprehend. Like the part where we spend millions on the idea we will all move to Mars once we destroy Earth. In reality we would probably be lucky to get seven people to Mars, let alone 100. I am still confused as to how Noah could house one male and one female of every species during a proverbial 40-day flood on his ark, when scientists are still discovering new species today!

One day, however, we may need to migrate beyond our beginnings. Away from the perfect world God created in seven days, to another that she didn't quite perfect. How will we survive on Mars anyway? We know there are no resources so we will have to take them

with us, if we have any left. Besides, I thought the point of emigration was for a 'better' life?

Emigration occurs for three basic reasons. One - the emigrants are not accepted by their society. Two - the emigrants are not accepting of their society. And three - the emigrants do not have enough resources to survive in their society. This happens frequently in wild-living populations of animals, usually because they live shorter lives and are wholly constrained by resource availability. Unfortunately for wild animals, grass for prey does not always come packed for convenience and prey of predators can still run away.




Effects of emigration are tied to the three areas that the climate is changing. The political climate and the economic climate are the superficial margins most relevant to reasons one and two above. Where religious oppression, greed and poverty intertwine to form a democracy. The natural climate is related to the third reason yet it is the most important because it forms the basis of politics and economics. Leaders need to lead through both times of need and times of greed, rather than being dragged by false promises used to gain votes. Actions speak louder than words.

The economic climate is driven by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures that form political agendas. If GDP figures are high then the support for the government are too. If Net Domestic Product (NDP) figures were used instead of GDP, humans may have a more enlightened perspective of our impacts on Earth and no government would ever be voted into power again! Low NDP figures would likely cause global economies to crash due to amplified inflation. Perhaps the word 'product' should be exchanged with the word 'power' ... The terms 'Gross Domestic Power' and 'Net Domestic Power' alter the concept of economy completely yet are more representative of economic ideologies.

The disposition of power is a totally different ballgame yet again. Most people live within a democracy where their voices are kind of heard. When it comes to the crunch of daily rituals, people are employed by organisations run by autonomous bureaucrats, governed by often-contradictory policies. Professor Clark from Yale University wrote extensively about the

'Bureaucratic Management Orthodoxy' in *Averting Extinction: Reconstructing Endangered Species Recovery*. In a nutshell, it is an inflexible, inefficient, uncreative, and unresponsive system that stifles the spontaneity, freedom and self-realisation of their employees. The bureaucrats enjoy autonomy because they know best, and it is easier to tell their staff what to do rather than ask them to vote on the options.

Decision-making processes are instantly compromised when the power is provided to the autocrats. Employees are kept in a cone of silence and forced to accept ends of which they do not approve. Clark suggested that although employees may be well meaning and technically competent, high order managers require 'hard-ball' political skills because the lifestyles of staff are at stake. Luckily for those making decisions, democracy provides a protective shield of loopholes to escape responsibilities with a pay out scheme.

The problem is that staff enacting decisions are closer to the local issues, whilst the power brokers are closer to the regional or national issues. That does not mean it is fair to ask employees to perform tasks that are: a) against their principles/morals/ethics; b) inconsistent with relevant legislation; or c) in conflict with other areas for management. According to the decision makers, however, the job has to be done.

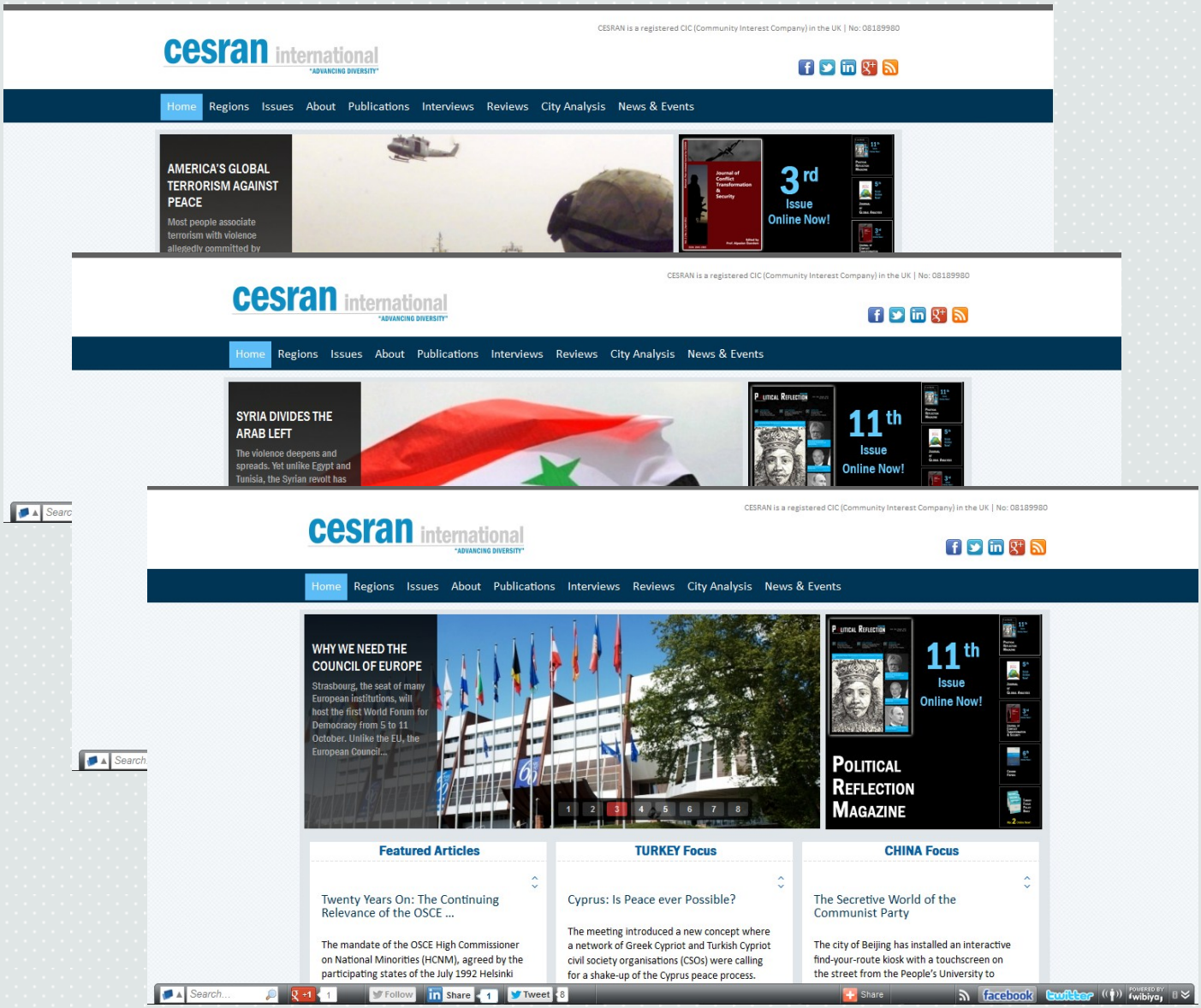
What becomes of democracy in this instance? It has subverted back to a dictatorship. Employees feel helpless because their protests commonly fall on deaf ears. Bureaucrats meanwhile resist democratic control because in their position they are insulated from democratic life. Can we humans decide democratically how to manage the environment? Well, we kind of have, but the bureaucratic processes to protect it supersede the physical protection processes. Should we vote for the person that wants to save the environment for our future? Or the person that wants to use the environment for short-term economic gain? The answer lies in your hands.

Kevin Rudd, Australia's previous Prime Minister, was dislodged from his position due to the proposed introduction of a new tax for mining companies. In the media it was misconstrued as a threat to the Australian economy. In hindsight, it was beneficial for Australians because the excess money was to be returned to the population, rather than landing in the pockets of the mining magnates. Perhaps the democrats did not sell the idea to the public properly. Or maybe the bureaucrats sold it perfectly according to their plans. We will probably never know.

If we lived in an anarchistic state, however, none of this would matter. Theoretically there would not be a fight for power or status. There would be a harmonious and peaceful existence between man and Earth. I think that's not only what humans want, it is what we need.

**Note:**

* **Dr Brad Purcell** is a Wildlife Ecologist with the Western University of Sydney. He is best known for his doctoral research on dingoes in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, NSW.

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# Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice Requires Democratic Food Systems

By Nicholas Rose

There is a strong sense of *déjà vu* in the late Northern summer of 2012. The worst droughts in living memory have devastated corn and soybean crops in the United States and Canada; and extreme heat is damaging wheat yields in the breadbaskets of Russia and Ukraine. With increasing volumes of grain diverted to meet government-mandated targets for biofuel production, commodity traders are bidding up futures contracts. As in 2008, the result will be sharply rising food prices and another phase of the ongoing global food crisis, with all the intensified human suffering and political upheaval that this entails.

There is a tendency amongst both academic and popular commentators alike to resort to naturalistic metaphors such as 'a perfect storm' and 'tsunami' to describe such phenomena. This language obscures more than it reveals. Every element of the global food crisis, including anthropogenic climate change, has its origins in human systems and decisions. In particular, the triumph of neoliberalism in the early 1990s saw the ideological promotion of a marketised and privatised conception of 'food security', which had its institutional expressions in the policies of structural adjustment and free trade in the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organisation, respectively. While these global governance institutions claimed to be delivering food security for all via the market, experience suggests that the principal beneficiaries of their policies have been agri-food corporations and financial intermediaries.

According to the marketised conception of food security, countries in the global South should abandon the goal of domestic food self-sufficiency via the national production of grains, in favour of export specialisation according to the doctrine of comparative advantage (Patnaik 2010: 95-6). National systems of procurement and price controls were accordingly dismantled, and with them domestic grain stocks fell sharply, leading to a majority of countries in the South being heavily dependent on food imports by 2008 (*ibid*). The poorest sectors of those societies were rendered severely vulnerable to price fluctuations on global markets (McMichael 2010: 62).

As in other spheres of human life, the most clearly apparent legacy of the era of neoliberal capitalism in food and

agriculture is sharply rising inequality (Duménil and Lévy 2001: 578; Harvey 2005; Guthman 2011: 62). It is no exaggeration to categorise the global food system as oligarchic, even plutocratic, with a small number of giant transnational corporations controlling the sectors of research and development, proprietary seed, agri-chemicals, grain trading, meat packing, food processing and, increasingly, retailing, to the detriment of most producers and consumers alike (Patel 2007: 12-15). The system is designed to meet the needs of corporations for profit and capital accumulation, with the goals of human health and ecosystem integrity being secondary or tertiary considerations. As proof, we need only cite a few statistics.

First, despite the fact that the world produces sufficient food for 11 billion people, close to 1 billion are malnourished (Bello 2011). Secondly, the rapid worldwide proliferation of the junk and fast food industries has resulted in a global obesity pandemic, now affecting in excess of 400 million people (Swinburn et al 2011). Thirdly, as much as 75% of all food produced in industrial countries is wasted (Stuart 2009). Finally, the corporate-controlled, industrialised food system is quite likely the single largest contributor to global warming, not to mention a whole suite of other environmental disasters associated with the proliferation of 'green deserts' (Altieri 1999: 20; UN 2005; Böhm and Brei 2008; Altieri and Pengue 2006; Patel 2007: 189-191). That the governments of the leading capitalist countries can continue to tout a system that has become so perversely dysfunctional as the best we are capable of is testament to the dogged irrationality of their faith in free markets and free trade. And of their wholesale capitulation to the lobbying might of 'Big Food' (Nestle 2002: viii, 5; Swinburn 2011).

On one level, the plutocratic global food system faces a crisis of legitimacy, as the perversity of its operation, and the extent of its dysfunctionality, becomes more widely known. A crisis of legitimacy does not, however, translate into a systemic crisis, as long as the circuits of production and consumption can continue to be closed, enabling the system to expand and capital accumulation to persist. On another level, the system is confronted by a series of 'accelerating biophysical contradictions' (Weis 2010) which have the very real capacity to undermine its continued conditions of existence.

The origins of these biophysical contradictions can be traced to the institutionalisation by neoclassical economics of the practice of cost externalisation, in which 'nature' is treated, not as a factor of production that must be paid and accounted for like labour or rent or inputs, but as a 'free gift' (Patel 2010: 43-4; Albritton 2009: 28; Moore 2008: 56). Taken to its logical conclusion, this means that there is no limit in free market doctrine as to how far social goods, such as water, soil and air quality, can decline (McMurty 1997: 648). Contemporary orthodox economics, in its 'life-blind accounting', effectively obscures from view virtually the entirety of the foundations which makes 'economic' activity possible in the first place (McMurty 2003: 386).

These externalities constitute 'a vast series of implicit subsidies to cheap industrial food' which, combined with the large explicit subsidies funnelled to corporate agri-business in the US and Europe, greatly enhance the competitiveness of the globalising capitalist food system *vis-à-vis* 'more labour-intensive agricultural systems (Weis 2010: 316). However, while some externalities, such as the costs of dietary related ill-health, can effectively be socialised, there are several others which cannot. These include 'soil erosion and salinization'; the drawdown of global freshwater supplies; biodiversity and 'ecosystem services' loss; the contribution of industrialised agriculture to climate change; and 'the intractable dependence of industrial methods upon a finite resource base, particularly fossilised biomass' (Weis 2010: 316). This dependence is such that the industrialised food system now requires ten calories of fossil fuels to produce one calorie of food (Heinberg 2011; Martenson 2011). Such a ratio at once reveals the extreme fragility of the system as a whole in an era of declining cheap oil, and the necessity of politicising debates regarding the transition to a 'low-carbon economy' in order to overcome the inequalities inherent in 'capitalist configurations of scarcity' (Bridge 2011: 316-321; Panayotakis 2011).

The conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is that industrialising capitalist agriculture finds itself at a serious impasse; and yet its promoters in Northern governments apparently find themselves capable only of urging its continuation and expansion because their worldview is so constrained by orthodox economics, and the vested interests of large corporations, that they cannot see any alternative. Further, the 'long waves' of capitalist expansion over centuries have in turn rested on a series of agricultural revolutions, beginning with the first English agricultural revolution of the 'long seventeenth century'; succeeded by the second English agricultural revolution of the nineteenth century, and most recently the industrialisation of agriculture, led by the USA, in the twentieth (Moore 2010: 403). These revolutions have played this enabling role by bringing about, through a combination of outright 'plunder' (in the form of the dispossession of indigenous

peoples of their land and resources) and technologically-driven productivity gains, an 'ecological surplus', with 'cheap food' at its centre, that has managed to restrain the cost of labour relative to other factors of production, and so enable sustained profitability (Gutham 2011: 54; Moore 2010: 392-3).

The trouble is that as capitalist industrial agriculture encounters its biophysical contradictions in the form of a series of planetary boundaries and a steadily widening 'ecological rift' between humanity and nature (Foster et al 2011: 76-79; Rockstrom et al 2009), and as the global capitalist system as a whole now appears to be stagnating and entering a period of crisis, no new agricultural revolution, and thus no new 'ecological surplus', is in sight. Large hopes have been, and continue to be, placed in genetically modified organisms, but the evidence to date reveals a disappointing 'failure to yield' (Sherman 2009). The current era of cheap food may be drawing to a close, thus elevating the current crisis into a truly systemic, 'epochal' one, and intensifying the uncertainties and risks of the decades ahead (Moore 2010: 398).

Responses to these dynamics are diverging. On the one hand, the major capitalist powers and their allies are, as noted, seeking to advance the 'free markets' and 'free trade' agenda to the benefits of their corporations and exporters, in the name of a particular conception of 'food security'.

Secondly, some states (e.g. Arab oil states, China, Korea) are leading players in a 'global land-grab' to shore up their own domestic food security (Rosset 2011: 21). Corporations and hedge funds are also major actors in one instance of ongoing processes of 'accumulation by dispossession' undertaken in the name of the putative 'green economy' (Harvey 2003: 71-73, 139-145; GRAIN 2011: 139; Guthman 2011: 63-4). In the case of corporate and financial actors, the motivation for what are euphemistically termed 'large-scale land acquisitions' is typically not food security, but the production of biofuels through crops such as jatropha (a flowering plant which typically produces the physic nut) and sugar cane.

Thirdly, other states (Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Cuba, Mali, and Nepal for example) are charting a different path, focusing on decentralising and democratising their food systems according to the principles of food sovereignty (Schiavonia and Camacaro 2009). The roots of food sovereignty lie in debates within the global peasant and family farmer movement, *La Via Campesina*, in the lead-up to the 1996 World Food Summit. Like food security, it has several different articulations, but they all revolve around the apex of food as a basic human need and right; and of the right of peoples, especially peasant and family farmers, to self-determination and autonomy. The central message is that while industrialised, capitalist agriculture has exhausted its progressive potentialities and has now become overwhelmingly destructive in social and environmental terms, the path of smaller-scale, more localised, more labour-intensive and bio-diverse agriculture and food systems offers the possibility of genuinely sustainable and socially just futures. As one proponent puts it, whereas small farmers

have a 'food-producing vocation' and represent a 'model of life', industrial agriculture has an 'export-producing vocation' and is a 'model of death' (Rosset 2010: 190-191).

In concrete policy and practical terms, as observed for example in the 2008 *Food Sovereignty Law* of Ecuador, we can distil three central pillars of food sovereignty. The first is redistributive agrarian reform: breaking up large estates held by rich and often absent landowners, and distributing them amongst poor and landless families, to grow food for themselves and for local markets. Such agrarian reform, it should be remembered, has historically been central to self-sustaining economic development and improved living standards around the world. The second pillar is a prioritisation on the principles of agro-ecology. Agro-ecology, conceived as 'the application of ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agro-ecosystems', is a method of agricultural practice that eschews the uncritical embrace of corporate-led 'high' technology and large-scale mechanisation, in favour of a reliance on building and sustaining local human capacity and peer-based exchanges of knowledge (Altieri 2010: 121).

The third pillar of food sovereignty is the establishment of localised and regional food distribution systems, with closer relations between primary producers and end consumers. The aim here is to internalise more of the social and environmental costs of the food system, achieving better returns for farmers, improving access to healthy food for consumers, and healing the ecological rift by re-connecting people with the source of their food.

Together, these pillars represent a pathway to a democratic food system. In transitioning away from the destructive oligarchy and plutocracy of market-led industrialised agriculture and agri-food regimes, the democratisation of food systems is a pre-condition to making them sustainable, fair and resilient. Many regions in North America have years of experience with democratic governance of their food systems via Food Policy Councils, and these models are now being embraced and adapted elsewhere (Food First 2009). At the global level, the reformed Committee on World Food Security offers the possibility of a more inclusive space for policy formation; and *La Via Campesina* have articulated a powerful framework for the protection of peasant and family farmers in their draft Declaration on Peasants' Rights (La Via Campesina 2009). The food sovereignty movement has momentum: can it shift the power of vested interests?

**Notes:**

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# Environmentalism for Democracy: Catalyst or Inhibitor?

By James Wong

Does environmentalism strengthen or weaken democracy? This question is worth pondering for two reasons. First, in contemporary democracies, the environment has always been a salient issue on the political agenda. Second, in a democratic process, people are supposed to remain free to prioritise values other than the environment.

Think about cases in which people support the building of additional airport runways (for economic development), or in which they reject the ban on plastic shopping bags (for convenience or maintaining the status quo). Therefore, democracy can, in principle, deliver decisions which are contrary to environmentalism, and it appears that upholding environmentalism requires us to sacrifice democracy.

**Putting democracy and environmentalism together**

The above assertion is correct insofar as democracy and environmentalism can *never* be compatible, and this ultimately depends on how we understand both concepts. Despite its many definitions,

democracy is widely recognised as a procedure for collective decision-making. Similarly to a computer system, a decision procedure consists of three components – input, process and output. Minimally, democracy requires that (1) such a procedure accepts all logically possible individual opinions as inputs (or 'pluralism'); and that (2) these inputs be processed by a mechanism which does not overrule any consensus among individuals (or 'consensus preservation').

Arguably, the two conditions are necessary for democracy. 'Pluralism' realises the principle of democratic inclusiveness, where no input should be rejected from consideration unless they are self-contradictory (or they are themselves logically inconsistent). 'Consensus preservation', on the other hand, specifies that democracy should *at least* respect and preserve any unanimous opinions. Suppose a group of council members who are to decide democratically whether plastic shopping bags should be banned. If *all* of them accept the ban, then such acceptance follows for the collective decision. Conversely, if *all* of them reject the ban, then the collective decision is rejection instead.

Likewise, no matter how environmentalism may be defined, essentially it requires that the protection of the environment be prioritised. This implies that certain human activities, such as those which are detrimental to the environment, must be restricted in order to achieve the desired goal of environmental protection. For example, if consuming plastic bags endangers the environment, then, generally speaking, such behaviour is not considered justified from the perspective of environmentalism.

What does environmentalism mean for collective decision-making? One straight-forward answer is that it constrains the range of decision *outputs* such that alternatives which are detrimental to the environment should not be included. For example, if building additional airport runways creates tremendous pollutions and contributes significantly to carbon emissions (as a result of increased air traffic), then, according to environmentalism, this policy should not be accepted as a desirable output. In other words, environmentalism represents the condition that decision outputs should be green (or 'green decisions').

It is not difficult to think of a situation in which environmentalism (in the above sense) is inconsistent with democracy. Suppose, according to environmentalism, that plastic bags should be banned. Suppose also that a group of decision-makers unanimously agree *not* to ban plastic bags. If democracy requires both the conditions of 'pluralism' and 'consensus preservation', then, in this case, the condition of 'green decisions' cannot be met. This is because, by 'pluralism', the opinions of all decision-makers are accepted as valid inputs into the democratic process; and by 'consensus preservation', since all decision-makers choose not to ban plastic bags, the same alternative is also collectively chosen. Therefore, the collective decision will be rejecting the ban, but this contradicts the condition of 'green outcomes'.

**Modifying democracy for environmentalism**

Here, we notice that democracy does not always deliver decision outputs, such as electoral results and policy outcomes, which are consistent with environmentalism. In order to ensure that environmentalism is realised in collective decisions, it is necessary that we modify the above, despite this minimal conception of democracy. This can be achieved by relaxing either the condition of 'pluralism' or 'consensus preservation'.

*democracy does not always deliver decision outputs, such as electoral results and policy outcomes, which are consistent with environmentalism.*

**First proposal: Relaxing 'pluralism'**

There are generally two approaches to relaxing 'pluralism'. The first one is 'eco-filtering', meaning that any individual opinions which are inconsistent with environmentalism ('non-green opinions') are rejected from the outset, or filtered away, such that they cannot enter the decision-making process as inputs. In this way, all remaining individual opinions are consistent with environmentalism ('green opinions'), and hence collective decisions will not be contrary to environmentalism. 'Eco-filtering' can be justified on the grounds of many normative theories, such as eco-centrism and ethical extensionism as in environmental ethics.

Consider a group of ten council members deciding whether or not to ban plastic bags. If there are respectively four and six members who reject and accept the ban, then, by 'eco-filtering', the opinions of those four members will be dismissed such that only the opinions of the other six members will be accepted as inputs. As a result, the collective decision must be accepting the ban, which is consistent with environmentalism. Yet, certain individual opinions have to be excluded, which violates the condition of 'pluralism'.

The level of democratic inclusiveness is further reduced when there is a majority of members rejecting the ban. For instance, when there are six members rejecting the ban and four members accepting it, 'eco-filtering' will require that the opinions of the majority be dismissed. This does not only infringe 'pluralism' but it is also contrary to our usual understanding of democracy. Such a problem becomes even more salient when all members reject the ban whilst no member accepts the ban. In this way, by 'eco-filtering', all individual opinions are excluded, and hence no collective decision will be produced (not to mention a *green* decision).

The second approach to relaxing 'pluralism' is 'eco-transformation'. As the name implies, it involves a 'transformation' process which turns any individual opinions from non-green to green. Similarly to 'eco-filtering', 'eco-transformation' aims at ensuring that only inputs which are consistent with environmentalism are accepted as inputs for decision-making. This can be achieved by persuading decision-makers to abandon any opinions which

are non-green and to adopt green opinions based on, say, normative grounds which are consistent with environmentalism. A variety of communication mechanisms may be used for this purpose, such as deliberation, education and publicity.

Suppose, originally, all ten council members are sceptical about the ban on plastic bags. After discussions with government officials and environmental groups, they are convinced that the ban is not only justifiable but also feasible and effective, and thus they change their views from rejecting the ban (non-green opinions) to accepting the ban (green opinions). 'Eco-transformation' may also take place when government and/or environmental groups advocate(s) the ban on plastic bags through media and campaigns in the hope of formulating a green discourse which may alter the opinions of the council members.

At first sight, 'eco-transformation' does not compromise democracy since decision-makers are still free to choose whether to take up the green opinions. The council members may or may not change their views after deliberation/ education/publicity, but even if none of them are willing to accept the ban, their opinions are in no sense discarded as in 'eco-filtering'. In this case, however, the collective decision is non-green, because 'eco-transformation' is complete only if there are sufficient green opinions as inputs. Therefore, in order to realise environmentalism through 'eco-transformation', several combinations of individual opinions, such as a unanimous rejection of the ban on plastic bags, must not be accepted, unless they are transformed to other combinations with more green opinions. This hampers the level of democratic inclusiveness.

**Second proposal: Relaxing 'consensus preservation'**

To relax 'consensus preservation', we modify the way the decision procedure responds to the accepted individual opinions so as to generate green decisions. There are at least two approaches, namely, 'eco-authoritarianism' and 'environmental rights'.

As the name suggests, 'eco-authoritarianism' prescribes and imposes a green alternative as the collective decision, regardless of whether the accepted inputs are green or not. In other words, if it turns out that all accepted individual opinions are non-green, then these opinions will be overruled, and hence the collective decisions will be consistent with environmentalism.

'Eco-authoritarianism' can be achieved by assigning a dictator independent of the original group of decision-makers, and this dictator has the power of superseding any non-green individual opinions with green opinions. For example, if all members of a provincial government unanimously agree to build an additional runway in one of its airports, this combination of democratic inputs may be overturned by an institution which can exercise decision power 'from above' within a hierarchy, such as the national government, and which holds the view that the additional runway should not be built. This is more likely to be realised in autocratic or centralised regimes or organisations.

It is easy to spot a problem for ensuring green decisions through 'eco-authoritarianism'. As seen from the example above, although the non-green opinions of the provincial government members are accepted as inputs, these inputs are eventually disregarded by the decision procedure. This clearly does not satisfy the minimal condition of democratic responsiveness. On the other hand, we may also relax 'consensus preservation' by introducing certain provisions of rights in laws or constitutions, regarded as 'environmental rights'. Unlike 'eco-authoritarianism', 'environmental rights' do not restrict the decision power of decision-makers but the range of collective decisions which are deemed permissible. In this way, no non-green *individual opinions* are overruled, but if these opinions become *collective decisions*, according to 'environmental rights', these decisions will be struck down. Such a notion of rights is often based on the view that all humans are entitled to certain environmental conditions which are fundamental to their well-being and should not be compromised or sacrificed.

'Environmental rights' can be exercised through an independent process which reviews the collective decisions concerned, such as the institution of judicial review in many contemporary democracies. Suppose the provincial government decides to build the additional airport runway. If citizens find this decision inappropriate in the way that the additional runway would infringe the well-being, and hence the fundamental rights, of themselves, they may resort to judicial review in order to turn the decision from non-green to green. The final result, of course, depends on whether the court judges the runway project to be a violation of 'environmental rights' as in the constitution.

Again, it is not difficult to see that, by biasing towards collective decisions which are consistent with environmentalism, 'environmental rights' do not treat both green and non-green opinions equally. In other words, it fails to satisfy the neutrality requirement of democratic responsiveness – all decision alternatives should be granted equal weighting in the decision-making process.

**Conclusion: Environmentalism is weakening democracy**

To realise environmentalism in collective decision-making, we need to, at least, ensure that the collective decisions are always consistent with environmentalism or green-ism. However, decision-makers may not be sufficiently 'green-minded' such that their opinions are not in line with environmentalism, and in that case, collective decisions may not be green. Therefore, green decisions can be guaranteed only if we relax the two minimal conditions of democracy, i.e., 'pluralism' and 'consensus preservation'. But such relaxation does come with a price: it either weakens the level of democratic inclusiveness or the degree of democratic responsiveness.

**Note:**

* **James Wong** is a PhD student at the London School of Economics. A large part of his research to date has looked at deliberative democracy especially in regards to environmental decision making.

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# PROTECTING URBAN ENVIRONMENTS: ROLE OF LOCAL BODIES IN INDIA

By Prof. Prabhat Kumar Datta

The need for protecting natural environments was realized by human beings in the earliest phases of human history as is evident from certain ancient texts. In India, for example, the voice for protecting environments was heard in the hermitage of the old saints who lived in forests. But the fact remains that it was industrial revolution which brought the issue into the limelight as it started causing far greater damage to natural environments. It was naturalist John Evelin who complained about the 'hellish and dismal' cloud over London in 1661 as a result of air pollution from coal-burning. The current concerted global concern for protecting environments as an integral part of the agenda of sustainable development for mankind is a relatively recent event in the sense that the Stockholm Conference followed by Rio Summit highlighted the issue and its disastrous effects on human life.

Urban centers are more prone to environmental degradation because urbanization and industrialization go hand in hand. Globally speaking, the journey of urbanization began in the West; although we find traces of the emergence of urban centers in ancient India and elsewhere (such as in mainland China and non-indigenous Japan). At around 6000 years ago, farming villages bordering the Mesopotamian river valleys grew into the world's first cities. These urban centers probably felt the sting of pollution which was a problem of many kinds that continued through, for example, the western part of the world. Needless to say, the last few decades

have witnessed large scale urbanization the world over. We might argue this, in Popperesque fashion, to be but a continuation of history.

The present century is regarded as the century of urbanization in developing countries. It has been calculated that 80 per cent of the urban increase in the next two decades will occur in developing countries. It is argued that as a result of this, the world's urban environmental problems will shift towards developing countries in the sense that the expansion of cities would bring with it different kinds of pollution which will trigger environmental degradation. As Asia is the largest habitat for urban populations in developing countries it has to draw up effective plans and formulate appropriate strategies to face this challenge.

It may be mentioned that the introduction of externally induced Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in almost all Asian countries including India has worsened the situation because it seeks to achieve growth in poorer countries through their integration in the world economy. This opens up endogenous markets to developed capitalist countries. SAPs enable the latter to make intensive use of the natural resources of the former for commerce. In its report on the study of environmental relations in three countries, Ivory Coast, Mexico and Thailand, World Wide for Nature noted in 1992 that 'the development strategies pursued by them created high levels of environmental degradation and generated unnecessary waste and loss of natural wealth.'[1]

Against this backdrop, my article examines how Indian urban local government is responding to the new challenge of protecting environments. It needs to be mentioned that in urban areas, environmental questions in developing countries have to be viewed from two dimensions: namely natural environments and community environments. However, until 1976 there was no constitutional requirement in India to protect and improve environments. India was a participant in the Stockholm Conference where it was decided that all the participating countries would take steps to enact necessary legislation if required. This was the backdrop against which the Forty Second Constitutional Amendment inserted a new Article (48A) in the Constitution of India which runs thus:

"The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wild life of the country."

This amendment also required all the citizens of India to protect and improve natural environments including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife as well as to have compassion for all living creatures. Significantly, this amendment lists urban forestry, the protection of urban environments and the promotion of ecological aspects as functions of urban local bodies. Thus this amendment is very comprehensive and seeks to deal with the issue by involving not only the state but also the citizens who have to bear the brunt of it. This double edged strategy adopted in a Parliamentary Act speaks of the serious concern of the Indian people about the protection of environments in general and urban environments in particular. Thus protection of environments is now a

mandatory agenda of the Indian state backed by parliamentary legislation. While this makes for a good beginning, one can only expect results when public laws like Article 48A are supported by necessary administrative and political actions.

It is significant to mention here that the Indian judiciary has been playing a very positive and active role in this regard. The apex court in the country has explained that the right to life guaranteed by the Constitution includes the right to enjoy unpolluted air and water. The apex court ruled in another case that environmental issues were to be given utmost priority by the courts in India. It has been observed in another decision by the state level highest court that the right to life encompasses within its ambit the protection and preservation of environments, ecological balance, freedom from air and water pollution, and the sanitation of natural environments without which life cannot be enjoyed.[2]

India's urban local governance received a new lease of life in 1992 following a landmark constitutional amendment, namely, the Seventy Fourth Constitutional Amendment. This Amendment is historic in the sense that it defines urban local self-governing institutions as the institutions of self government and identifies the basic function of the local government as an instrument of planning for economic development and social justice. The detailed functions of the local government have been laid down in the schedule attached to this amendment. The 12th Schedule in the amendment lists matters like urban forestry, protection of environments and the promotion of ecological aspects as one of the key functions of these local bodies. It is now widely held that only the provision of urban infrastructures is not enough for the development of sustainable cities. There has to be new concern for urban environmental management coupled with the understanding of linkages between infrastructures, productivity and environmental health. The

perspective of the architects of the Amendment about environments is reflected in other entries in the schedule, which focus on public health, sanitation, conservancy, solid waste management, slum improvement and so on. An example of this can be seen in the next paragraph.

In 2001, in pursuance of the Habitat Agenda adopted in Istanbul in 1996, the Government of India launched what is known as the Good Urban Governance Campaign. The Campaign includes inter alia the following elements which have great significance for urban environments:

a. create community awareness on cost-effective technologies and to bridge the gap between technology and community;
b. identify local bodies who have produced practices that work at city levels;
c. encourage cities to prepare annual environmental status reports through multi-stakeholders' consultation processes;
d. laws/rules/regulations specific to cities should try to facilitate effective implementation strategies;
e. participatory mechanisms should be structured in a way that gives them legal entity and administrative power;
f. and care has to be taken for the proper management of solid waste.

The biggest threat that urban natural environments face is pollution which has assumed alarming proportions due to a number of factors, namely, the reluctance on the part of the industrialists and other offenders to employ pollution control, poor maintenance of automobiles and the use of low quality fuel, overcrowding and congestion, dearth of effective legislation, administrative laxity, and the lack of awareness about the significance of environments in human life. As most of these problems are serious and deep-seated it seems that local governments which are not very strong in countries like India (despite constitutional sanction) are not competent to confront the issue effectively. The union-state, its constituent units and local government outfits should work together to meet these challenges. This kind of partnership can go a long way to creating the necessary objective conditions for effective action in respect to the protection of natural environments – especially in urban setting.

In India, another aspect of environmentalism, namely, the management of community environments is a critical issue because of the existence of slums where living conditions are shockingly bad. While slum development has for long been an agenda of the Indian state, the fact remains that the sprawling slums and sub -human living conditions of the inhabitants therein continues. Slum development and shoring up the capacity for slums to care for community environments is still a matter of great concern. Some recent initiatives of the Government of India for improving the infrastructures in slums and improving the livelihood of the slum population focus on community participation. In order to enlist community participation, attempts have been made to create and support community structures. It is necessary to make use of these structures for improving environments in the

community. But the problem remains that there is a lack of awareness about the need for healthy environments – especially in populations which face the real possibility of starvation or preventable sickness leading to death.

While environmental degradation in and around slums is aided and abetted by illiteracy and ignorance, local governments have failed to make a significant dent in this matter presumably because environmental concerns are still not part of the larger agenda of poverty amelioration at the level of the local government. A study on the dynamics of community environmental management in India's West Bengal slums has indicated that there are certain structural constraints on the improvement of environmental practices in slums. These include unemployment, extreme poverty, large heterogonous communities, absence of tenurial rights in slums, and the absence of external support organizations among other matters. From the community side, the major constraints to better environmental management practices include the absence of communal exchange networks, weak community-based cooperative institutions, unequal division of labour within households, non-participation of women in decision-making processes, presence of vested interests, and the relatively short duration of stay by individuals in slums. The author of that West Bengal study suggests that the pressing requirement for sustainable environmental improvement at the community level is the provision of basic services and the enhancement of livelihood opportunities through a bottom up process of community organization building.[3]

While the above suggestion is meaningful, it needs to be followed up by the introduction of new training modules in the training curriculum for locally elected representatives in order to sensitize them about the need for effective environmental management at the community level. Individuals in slums cannot often work regularly because the unsanitary conditions in the slums make them sick. They have right to life guaranteed by the Constitution. The State and the citizens of the country are duty bound to ensure that individuals in slums can enjoy their life. I reason that advantaged individuals have to teach them and help them practice how to lead a good life with concern for the environments. We need a new crop of local governors in urban India which is tuned to the idea of protecting environments as a part of good urban governance. They should be familiar with new environmental practices the world over and should be able to adapt them to their own local situations.

**Notes**

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1. David Reed ( Ed.) *Structural Adjustment, Environment, and Sustainable Development*, Earthscan, London

2. Rajiv Dhawan, 'The Wealth of Nations Revisited' *Seminar,* m August ( 2000)

3. Chandan *SenGupta, '* Dynamics of Community Environmental Management in Howrah Slums', *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 22, 1999

# REVISITING THE POLITICS OF THE EARTH

By Dr Nicole Curato

**Introduction**

This year marks the fifteenth year since the first publication of John Dryzek's *Politics of the Earth* (Oxford University Press, 1997; third edition forthcoming). Much has changed since then but much has also remained the same.

Much, for example, has changed as far as the study of environmental politics is concerned. Dryzek's work was pioneering in making sense of the earth's politics using a discourse approach. The book traced the evolution of four main environmental discourses – survivalism, environmental problem solving, sustainability and green radicalism – which included their contestations, overlaps and impact on institutional sites of decision-making and public consciousness. Today, it is not uncommon for researchers to use discourse as unit of analysis. Maurie Cohen, for example, has observed that consumption is moving away from the margins to the centre of ecological discourse, from being framed as a demographic issue of developing countries with rampant population growth to placing accountability on resource-intensive lifestyles of wealthier nations.

Some use this approach to map the process of environmental policymaking. Berger et al have conducted a study on sustainable development and ecological modernization's influence in environmental policy making in industrialised countries and the role that power and influence play in that process. Discourse analysis has also provided certain necessary checks for environmentalists themselves. There has been a growing acknowledgment that EcoSpeak has lost its innocence, especially when its rhetorical strategies and simplified dichotomies are unpacked and its implications to knowledge production and collective action are analysed.

**Why discourse analysis matters**

More broadly, however, the *Politics of the Earth* has made a compelling case as to why discourse matters. Theoretically,

it has made a clear argument for problematizing the ontology of nature – that nature itself is a contested term. It is not part of a reality that is simply out there to be found but a historicised, culturally-invented and constantly negotiated concept. Dryzek finds that the ontology of some discourses recognise the existence of ecosystems, others focus on its materiality (nothing more than brute matter), while some understand it to be a self-correcting entity governed by particular logics. All of these ways of understanding nature is linguistically-embedded, enabling subjects to put together different pieces of information to form a coherent narrative. It is this very process of constructing assumptions and storylines that facilitate policy debates and inform collective problem-solving. Theorists making a similar point include Donna Haraway who considers nature as a cultural artefact and Bruno Latour who challenges the dogmatic scientism of experts that claim to have authoritative understanding of the subject.

Methodologically, Dryzek's approach has provided a reasonable analytical framework in conducting systematic discourse analysis. Although it has emerged as one of the trendiest research methods in sociology, media and cultural studies, there has been a relative shortage of prescribed methodological procedures in conducting discourse analysis. Perhaps this is because laying down a methodological outline itself deviates from discourse analysis's spirit of celebrating the plurality and dynamism of linguistic representation. Another reason could be related to the seemingly taken for granted presupposition that discourse analysis is necessarily historical and genealogical in the Foucauldian sense, therefore, researchers using this methodology are automatically committing to these strategies of data gathering analysis.

Dryzek's work presents a reasonable research strategy. While his approach is indeed historical, he develops a set of "questions to ask about discourses" which facilitates a systematic, rigorous and theoretically-informed approach in tracing and comparing the evolution of environmental discourses. His questions relate to issues of ontology, assumptions about natural relationships, agents and their motives as well as key metaphors and devices. With such an approach, Dryzek was able to map the decline of "industrialism" as a discourse which pertains to the view that material well-being is promoted through the growth in quantity of goods and services provided by industrialisation to the emergence of a wide range of contesting and overlapping environmental (though not exclusively environmentalist) discourses which has influenced policy, governance and popular understandings in varying degrees.

Politically, discourse analysis reveals the deliberative rationality of particular worldviews. It lends insight into the extent to which political discussions and decision-making are democratic, inclusive, public-spirited, transparent and consequential. For deliberative democrats, a standard for a "good" discourse relates to its ability for self-correction or revision of original preferences should new evidence or more reasonable arguments surface. It is precisely because discourses are not static but are continuously evolving that

such allows them to change through discussions in the public sphere, whether conducted face-to-face or through mediating technologies. Dryzek and Stevenson's more recent work on earth systems governance has provided some indication on how some international forums tackling climate change have provided avenues that host inclusive and authentic deliberations on environmental issues while there are those that remain driven by self-interested bargaining and tit-for-tat negotiations, if not outright coercion.

It is the aim of normative theorists and practitioners of deliberation to make these sites more transparent, deliberative and responsive to the broader discourses in the public sphere. Dryzek takes the position that it is better for a discursive field such as environmental politics to welcome a plurality of discourses and be a part of its critical engagement, rather than have a field where there is a single dominant, if not hegemonic discourse which has not faced any sustained critical scrutiny. This latter is the case, for example, of the global financial markets before the crisis, where alternative views had not been meaningfully considered, thereby creating serious implications for the governance (or the lack of it) of financial markets. It is through contestation that discourses continue to evolve and imagine possibilities for the future.

**The more things change, the more they remain the same?**

Indeed, a lot has changed as far as research on environmental discourses is concerned but much has also remained the same in practice. While environmental politics has been a site for vibrant contestation of discourses, engagement continues to be predominantly adversarial rather than deliberative. The US is a good example of this observation where, in spite of its vibrant civil society and creative environmental campaigns, it remains trapped in zero-sum conflicts between economic and environmental interests. Such zero-sum ontology only serves to limit the discursive field, deterring agents from exploring possibilities for problem-solving based on cooperation and inter-subjective agreement. It has been argued that basic governance and policy structures (including hostile party systems and antagonistic relationships between business mainstream and other stakeholders) continue to play an important role in creating sites for constructive and meaningful conversation among different discourses. In this context, it appears that ecological discourses need to broaden their reach and aim to re-constitute institutions established by an industrial society.

**Note:**

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# Progress, Democracy and Pollution:
## China's Ecological Armageddon

By Antony Ou

*Faith in progress is a superstition.*
*-- Heresies, John Gray*

**Idea of Progress as a Myth**

In the broadest sense, the Idea of Progress is a belief that technological, scientific, socio-political advancement will eventually improve the quality of life, happiness, and well-being of one's society. In the West, it is a concept which can be traced back to ancient Greece, ancient Rome and Early Christian times. It is an overwhelming and recurring theme in intellectual movements like the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. In his book *History of the Idea of Progress*, Robert Nisbet has summarised the five core premises of the Idea of Progress:

1. Value of the past,
2. Nobility of Western civilization,
3. Worth of economic/technological growth,
4. Faith in reason and scientific/scholarly knowledge obtained through reason,
5. Intrinsic importance and worth of life on earth.[1]

Thinkers such as Voltaire, Immanuel Kant, Adam Ferguson, John Stuart Mills, and Herbert Spencer had all identified Progress as an unquestionable prerequisite of human advancement. To offer one example, since the late 19th century Marxism was one of the dominant forces of the Idea of Progress. Although scholars, governments and the general public in the West have subsequently challenged the Idea of Progress, Chinese intellectuals embraced the idea and implemented it since the late 19th century. As Metzger puts, "… the Western promise of material progress was welcomed not by people with just the normal human desire for rising living standards but by people for whom this very question of 'the people's livelihood' was philosophically of the utmost importance."[2] Cheng Kuan-ying (1842-1923) and Kang Yowei (1858-1927) were the notable scholars who militantly supported such idea. This can be seen, for instance, when Cheng Kuan-ying

two mountains. Yu Gong and his family, as the story goes, then lived happily ever after.

This Chinese version of the "*Übermensch*" was an ancient idol for Mao's China.[5] That passage from *Lie Zi* had been the most cited story, quoted by Chairman Mao Zedong, his party members and citizens. It was an ancient fairy tale justifying a secular myth. The moral behind the story was not only about individual self-determination. It also praised the selflessness, self-reliance, faith and honesty of the Chinese communist society.[6] More importantly, the moral of the story was a political tool to justify the party slogan that "Man can conquer nature" (人定勝天). Chinese citizens, according to Mao and his Party, had to learn from Yu Gong by gathering every power, resource, and ounce of energy to conquer every challenge. Specifically, nature, like mountains, can be altered, corrected and modified to suit the needs of the communist society. In other words, Heaven can be conquered by the "general will" of the Chinese proletariat.

Mao envisaged that science and technology were the most essential tools for the advancement of the human condition in socialist China, from an agrarian economy to state communism under the process of rapid industrialisation and collectivisation. Together with the "progressive" guidance and governance of the enlightened CCP leaders, the "Chinese" can conquer nature and perfect the socialist state. "Relying on a highly personal system of moral suasion with few environmental regulations and no codified environmental laws," the ecological system of China had been deteriorated by poorly-educated peasants under the rule of Mao.[7] The Great Leap Forward (1958-1959) was the most extreme illustration of the blind faith in Progress.

To catch up to superpowers like the Soviet Union, the UK and the US, Mao thought that China must undergo intensive industrialisation by collective organisation within 15 years. "With 11 million tons of steel next year and 17 million tons the year after, the world will be shaken. If we can reach 40 million tons in five years, we may possibly catch up with Great Britain in seven years. Add another eight years and we will catch up with the US."[8] This could be interpreted as a counter-hegemonic response, but the consequences were devastating.

Mao's plan was a campaign isolated from the rest of the world, which caused widespread famine. It led to tens of millions of deaths or imprisonments and the Chinese economy was almost completely ruined. In the autumn of 1958 alone,

proclaimed that western technology could achieve the human condition desired in China and even achieve the utopia that Confucian sages envisaged.[3] Such Sinocentric optimism, as a response to the humiliations of Western imperialism, prevailed during the era of the Republic of China (1912-1949) and was extensively implemented after Mao Zedong's communist China. From 1949 onwards, the political agenda has always been scientific and economic progress in different forms. The Idea of Progress has become the very basis of the legitimacy of Chinese Communist Party.

Other sceptics, such as John Gray, insist that although there might be some advancement in certain areas (such as dentistry), the faith of progress is obviously a mythical construction of human beings.[4] Scientific and technological optimism is the wishful thinking of intellectuals who do not acknowledge the situation that science and technology do not entail rational socio-political arrangements and judgments. More often, the blind faith of Progress leads to human and ecological disasters as shown in this essay. Moreover, if we think of one of the extreme forms of the Idea of Progress, i.e. Social Darwinism, which has led to the expansion of imperialism and international exploitation, we might need to take a step back and reflect or even condemn any possible visions brought forward by the Idea of Progress.

In this essay, I attempt to illustrate how this Idea of Progress has endangered the ecological system of China since 1949. Then, I will explicate how the prevalence of Progress becomes the sole pillar of legitimacy for the central government. The essay then argues that, due to the legitimacy of Progress, the ecological system of China has become irreversibly disastrous in the 21st century. The conclusion states that when the belief of Progress is bankrupted by the environmental degradation and economic downturn, the legitimacy of the non-democratic regime will be vigorously and inevitably shaken.

**Story of Yu Gong: The Chinese "*Übermensch*" that Conquers Nature**

One of the Taoist Classics *Lie Zi* records the tale of Yu Gong (which literally means "foolish old man"). Yu Gong was both, in this telling, a ninety-year old man and a determined person. The story goes that his family home was blocked by two huge mountains, which caused Yu Gong and his family great inconvenience. Yu Gong made up his mind and persuaded his family to move the mountains away, despite the disagreement of his wife, saying that the inconvenience had existed through generations. The family started to work on the very next day with simple tools. They encountered enormous hardship and difficulties but the work never stopped.

One day, a so-called wise man said to Yu Gong, "you are too old for this. How could you possibly move the two mountains?" He replied, "I might soon die, yet, my sons will continue my work. They will have children, and they can continue my work as well. My family will grow, but the mountains will become smaller. With such determination, one day, we will move the mountains." Yu Gong's determination had eventually reached the Heavens and two demi-gods were sent to remove the

China's peoples had created 10,700,000 tons of worthless "steel" by melting many farming tools and utensils.[9] Worse still, countrywide deforestation became extremely severe, which led to erosion, sedimentation, desertification, changes in microclimate, loss of animal habitats and arable land.[10] Wood, instead of the more common coal, had been the major source of energy for steel smelting. Enthusiastic peasants in China fanatically cut down trees for such a purpose. For example, and despite certain statistical difficulties, Shapiro concluded that "at least 10 percent of China's forests were cut down within a few short months during the Leap".[11]

The Leap was not the only socio-political mass movement that led to the environmental degradation of China: the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) also created irreversible ecological shocks. Millions of "educated youth" were sent to rural areas, receiving the "re-education of farmers." As a result of this railroads, tunnels, and bridges were built for the development of China's Southwest. This in turn caused severe air and water pollution.[12]

**Myth of Progress Prevails as a Substitution for Democracy**

The Open Door Policy was an economic policy adopted since 1978 by Deng Xiaopeng, which promoted a capitalistic system. It was a gradual economic and political process, opening up China to the outside world. It was also a fundamental shift of domestic and foreign policies from Mao's. Instead of continuing Mao's militant faith in collectivisation and statist industrialisation, Deng believed in market forces and privatisation. However, Deng never gave up the faith in Progress either, as he famously proclaimed that "only development makes hard sense." Economic progress was the first priority for post-Mao China. Deng and his party encouraged vast amounts of foreign investment and manufacturing exports from the rest of the world. Quite possibly as a result of this, China is now the fastest growing economy and the second largest economy of the world, with an ostensibly sustainable economic growth rate that has been steadily maintained over the past 30 years.

Because of this the myth of Progress prevails only in a different form. By "letting some people to get rich first," according to Deng, the benefits would, sooner or later, spread to people around the country (was he buying into the trickle-down theory of early neoliberalism?). By producing the economic and social class of the "new rich," people's grievances would subside. In other words, economic progress becomes the utmost priority of the CCP and so the regime must sustain "reasonable growth" in order to strengthen its legitimacy of government and governance. Consequently, economic progress substitutes for democracy as the only source of governmental legitimacy, authority and confidence.

The enlarging income gap, structural corruption, social problems and human rights deprivation are all trade-offs for this economic development, while environmental disasters are another "necessary cost." No country has encountered the magnitude of China's environmental challenges in the 20th and

21st centuries. In the book *China's Ecological Winter,* Zheng Yi has provided a comprehensive review of Chinese pollution.[13] Here are some examples: more than 30% of fresh water in China is now considered undrinkable by the CCP. This affects over 500 million people as they are now unable to gain access to clean and safe water. Environmental pollution of various kinds have caused a wide range of diseases that include: respiratory problems, cardiovascular damage, heavy metal poisoning, and cancer. According to the Ministry of Health, cancer has become China's leading cause of death and this is a direct result of the rampant pollution within China. Environmental pollution has also increased the level of social instability throughout the country in the 21st century. Riots and social conflicts are only going to increase in the foreseeable future as long as the local Chinese authorities continue to condone irresponsible but preventable toxic landfills and industrial waste dumping. To offer a picture of the magnitude of mainland China's social turbulence, recent figures in 2012 have posited that there have been more than 100,000 protests throughout the country in this year alone.[14]

The CCP has apparently recognised the problem. In 2007, the Scientific Development Project, the current official state policy, emphasised the importance of sustainable development, social welfare, and increasing the quality of democracy, in order to construct the ultimate goal of a "Harmonious Society." However, the problems are so huge and immanent that this state policy can never be satisfactorily implemented in local levels.[15] If the state has not yet fully recognised and reconsidered its blind faith in Progress, the environmental problems its policies has caused can never be alleviated.

**Conclusion**

Scientific and technological progress, which people believe has led to economic advancement and thus the well-being of China, is simply a fiction. Instead, the overwhelming evidence of environmental degradation shows that the by-products of such progress have ironically led to destroying Chinese people's well-being.

Even if scientific and technological progress actually advances economic well-being, the latter in its current forms can never be steadily progressed with in the long run. Economic downturn happens. Without narrowing the income gap between the rich and poor, governments, which solely rely on economic growth, are absolutely in danger because disappointments and grievances due to economic recessions would gradually shake the very core of the regime. In other words, economic progress cannot be the only element that wins the "hearts and minds" of the people. Democratic and liberal values such as freedom of speech, assembly and press, representativeness, accountability, transparency with minimal corruption, are keys to any sustainable governments in the 21st century.

Nationalism, consequently, becomes the ultimate political tool of the authoritarian regime which it uses to salvage its legitimacy. By adopting the same old tricks invented in the late 19th century by the "imperialists," riots and conflicts from different villages and cities might

be appeased for some moment by diverting the passions of individuals therein to the fabricated villainy of Japan, the South China/West Philippine Sea and the US. However, nationalism is a double-edged sword: on one hand, it resumes the loyalty and inclusiveness of "imagined communities"; on the other hand, people gather and begin to question the problems of the regime. Because of this, new kinds of "consciousness" are emerging as individuals in China gradually come to realize their true enemy.

If the state cannot sustain its economic growth, compounded by intractable environmental problems, and governed by a non-democratic regime, the belief of Progress is the only sedative left before the dawn of Armageddon.

**Notes:**

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Douban: http://www.douban.com/people/ouantony/
Sina Weibo: http://t.sina.com.cn/ouantony

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# Ecological Modernisation and the Challenge to Democracy

By Ruth Lightbody

To environmentalists, the contemporary liberal democratic state still looks like an ecological failure. Green issues are rarely prioritised within national or global politics, as self interest still dominates - meaning environmental aims often take a backseat to the goals of economic wealth and industrial modernisation. Consequently, many environmentalists have argued that liberal democratic states cannot achieve environmental sustainability. In contrast, this article highlights the importance of working within the current system of liberal democracy in order to improve ecological practice. The article suggests that ecological modernisation (EM) offers the means of 'taming' capitalism and is best suited to working from within a liberal democratic state. In order to encapsulate the potential of EM, methods of deliberative democracy must also be utilized, as this article finds that they can counter the disadvantages of liberal democracy, identified by environmentalists.

**Liberal Democracy**

Liberal democracy has been accused, by environmental scholars and others, of being incompatible with green issues. This is due to economic growth; the pursuit of private interest, and the social injustice that liberal societies promote. Due to the presence of capitalism, liberal democracies have a major part of their economy conducted by individuals or privately owned firms operating to gain profit. The increasing consumption and production sector, familiar to developed liberal states is placing unsustainable pressure on the world's finite resources. Consequently calls have been made by environmentalists to place limitations on the continuous industrial and modernisation processes occurring in liberal democratic capitalist states, but many argue that democratic components

of liberal democratic states are too weak and ineffectual to achieve this.

With limited levels of access to democracy open to the public, citizens are pulled between the contrary forces of individual freedom and the common good. Freedom of choice, although core to the liberal ideal, is often detrimental to the environment. What is attractive for the individual does not necessarily work toward the common good. This is to some extent because environmentally good practice is often expensive and inconvenient. Social choice is instead, calculated by pre-determined self interest rather than through discussion and understanding. More often than not, people are uneducated regarding the impact of their actions, or they feel they themselves are powerless to make a difference due to social exclusions surrounding the democratic process.

Centralised governments and nation states make decisions regarding local matters and international issues but the direct impact of these actions is rarely felt by the decision makers. Furthermore, those who make decisions regarding environmental policies are arguably under qualified. It is has been suggested that the decision-making process should include experts in the field, but also those who are affected by the decisions. Due to these fundamental failings, many environmentalists argue that liberal democracy and sustainability are incompatible. However, others suggest that these flaws could be remedied if environmental issues were open to public discussion and deliberation. Indeed, deliberative democracy, which places public discussion central to decision-making, has evolved in response to the failings of liberal democracy.

**EM and Democracy**

So in what form can the environmental movement attempt to tame capitalist liberal democracy? EM offers many adjustments which are viable for industrialised nations to adopt with little impact to their economy; which is undoubtedly a benefit in today's economic climate. Furthermore, EM can be initiated without a massive overhaul of political and social infrastructures which makes it more obtainable, and therefore less utopian, than some of the more radical alternatives advocated by green theorists. Instead, EM theorists propose the possibilities of further development of capitalist liberal democracy through means of political, social and economic modernisation in order to tackle ecological issues. Economists argue that an 'equilibrium' could be sought which would produce a 'positive sum' game as opposed to the existing 'negative or zero sum' game. This means that environmental solutions need not impede on economic growth and the lifestyle of people. However, EM can best achieve these aims if combined with deliberative democracy.

The central normative claim of deliberative democracy is that political decision-making should be 'talk-centric' rather than 'vote-centric', although this does not necessarily rule out voting. Instead the 'give and take' of rational argument between a wide variety of participants, in a deliberative setting, should facilitate collective decision-making. This can include methods such as; citizen's juries, public hearings and mini-publics. Deliberative democrats

believe that the ability to discuss issues freely and on an equal footing is necessary to cultivate and develop ideas. Citizens will be free to communicate their own ideas while being challenged by conflicting perspectives and alternative opinions. Through this, individuals will be able to acknowledge their own shortcomings and the fallibility of their own perspectives and judgments. The strength of this reflection is that it creates an enlarged mentality which increases respect between fellow citizens and encourages a greater openness to others points of view. The surge of interest on this subject from a green perspective highlights the dissatisfaction with the current system.

Ecological modernisation comes in two forms: weak and strong. Weak, or 'techno corporatist', EM theorists believes market mechanisms and technological innovation are sufficient solutions to ecological degradation. Weak EM promotes modernisation and innovation as key to the future, citing technological advancements as the answer to sustainability by achieving effective structures of production. This theory has been heavily criticised for invoking a system that can only be adopted by developed, industrialised and rich countries, which applies entirely technocratic solutions to environmental issues and fails to tackle social issues. For the purpose of this article, due to these insurmountable deficiencies of weak EM I will be concentrating solely on strong EM.

Strong or 'reflexive' EM is a more adaptable and realistic form of EM. It is agreed that technical innovation and economic growth is necessary but not sufficient for curbing environmental degradation. Instead, fundamental structural changes to the political and economic systems are needed. Political structural changes must be implemented, such as reflexivity and democratisation of policy making, in order to achieve a sustainable environment. This can be achieved in a number of ways but importantly, deliberative democracy can contribute significantly.

First, policy development can promote environmental protection while encouraging innovation and further research. Systemic realisation of EM requires a proactive, interventionist state supporting a well-developed culture of environmental policy innovation. Significant public investment and subsidies are needed in order to achieve economic benefits and environmental sustainability. This includes further research as well as greater understanding of what policies are trying to achieve.

Deliberative democratic methods could offer a means in which to achieve constructive discussion, and provide a sphere where these EM targets can be set out. This can be done through meetings of experts and lay citizens in order to establish the issues that are closest to people's hearts, but also to swap ideas and innovations between nation states. Some EM theorists have suggested standardising global ecological policy and exchanging technological advancements between countries. In today's globalised economy, nations must remain competitive and governments are under pressure to 'keep up' with global leaders. This competitive edge provides

the necessary urgency for new policy initiatives. Furthermore, it makes it imperative for governments to provide the funds for research and development in the ecological field, or run the risk of being left behind. EM proposes that more will be achieved if new advancements are shared through open and transparent means of communication, between nations, which is where deliberative democracy can contribute. This in turn can assist developing countries in becoming competitive in today's market without causing the same ecological destruction as the current industrialised countries have done and, in many ways, continue to do.

The second goal of EM theory is the promotion of political modernisation, through which a new strategy of state organised reflexivity will be achieved. Strong policy sectors will enable a reflexive use of environmental information in policy development and implementation. This would mean environmental policy can shift and adapt to counter negative side effects or anticipate outcomes. This means that the state can progress from 'traditional' to 'modern' society while monitoring and controlling the means and not just the ends. Governments are required to reshape, steer and set targets but will ultimately allow experts to decide how best to achieve these targets themselves. Experts will be ready to advise on issues but to also review decisions at later dates to ensure the policy that is made is the right one.

The reflexivity that effective deliberation initiates is said to improve the epistemic value of democracy because it draws from a broad information base. Decisions regarding policy changes, as well as the best action to deter pollutants and degradation must be considered not just by economists, but by politicians, environmentalists, moralists, agriculturalists, and affected lay citizens. Deliberation is vital in this instance due to its ability to encourage reflection and feedback on potentially damaging practices. The review stage of the decision-making process can create a system where governments are not penalised for changing its mind and following a different course, post deliberation.

A third key goal of EM includes internalising costs of ecological damage. This encompasses economic modernisation and requires changing tax systems as well as incorporating more experts into policy making decisions. Monetary accountability would be engineered by internalising existing external costs, such as pollution and environmental destruction. This would be done through taxes or penalties; a system which has already been infiltrated into policy making in many countries in the EU in the form of 'green taxes'.

By attaching a monetary value to products, actions and choices, consumers and industries are more aware of the environmental implications of their behaviour and are thus more likely to act in a greener fashion. This would encapsulate the cost/benefit analysis in a way that people and businesses could relate to. Degradation of the environment must be seen as negative for economic growth; not just a side effect of it. The responsibility of setting taxes obviously falls to individual governments but can be deliberated over at national and transnational levels. The incorporation of umbrella politics, which would hold

entire countries accountable for offences such as environmental destruction, can be improved by globalised deliberation. Greater levels of integration and consensus between nations will undoubtedly lead to less conflict and competition.

However, the danger of wide scale deliberation is its inability to respond to pressing issues or abide by an efficient decision-making process. This is a problem, as environmentalists will agree; time is short in terms of environmental issues. Therefore it is beneficial to have a representative government that is willing to set the agenda; make tough decisions and implement the policies needed to tackle environmental instability. It is invaluable for citizens to be able to interact directly with governments and be involved with the policy formation process, but the efficiency of such a system is unfeasible. Ultimately, governments are essential for steering ecological and economic decisions and must be responsible for taking action and making decisions. In this way they can be held accountable and they can respond to a wide variety of opinions. To this end, transparency is of vital importance, as it must be understood that decisions being made at supranational levels bear some resemblance to the wishes of the people of the nation state. This is why deliberative methods are vital at all levels, but should be incorporated within a liberal democratic system, rather than seen as a replacement of it.

**Conclusion**

In its current state, liberal democracy can be considered incompatible with the needs of the planet. The promotion of economic growth and the continued modernisation process is unsustainable. Liberal democracy promotes a system where there are few incentives for citizens or governments to prioritise the environment over the economy. However, the institutionalisation of EM would introduce significant changes to these processes without excessively disrupting economic growth and individual's lives. EM offers an adaptable and reflexive form of democratic transformation which prioritises the environment and uses innovative measures to control the environmentally damaging practices of capitalism.

While EM's reflexive qualities can be used to monitor the environmental and economic progress of ecologically modernising policies and initiatives, deliberative democracy can be employed by providing an inclusive setting where lay citizens, experts and government officials can come together and discuss policy and decision making. The moralising effect of deliberation, due to the need to justify ones opinions, will work well with ecological goals. Yet, deliberation should be used as a tool or resource for democracy rather than something to replace it. Working within the current form of democracy means these changes can be implemented without delay and is the most realistic way to further environmental aims. Deliberation, in conjunction with EM, offers some exciting possibilities which propose both innovative and pragmatic solutions in the challenge to tame capitalism's unsustainable impact on the environment.

**Note:**

* **Ruth Lightbody** is a PhD student at the University of the West of Scotland.

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# JAPAN AND THE ISSUE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

By Dr Michael Vaughan

PROLOGUE

"Cheap and reliable electricity are essential for supporting prosperous and decent livelihoods. Japanese society cannot function if we stop or try to do without nuclear power generation, which has supplied 30 per cent of our electricity."

**PRIME MINISTER YOSHIHIKO NODA**

*Statement made on 8 June 2012*
*Source: International Herald Tribune*

Japan can expect a shortage of 8,500 MW this summer (2012).[1] Japan's electricity consumption was estimated in 2011 as being 859.7 billion kWh.[2] As a resource poor country, however, Japan needs to import 84% of its energy requirements. In 2010, Japan generated 1,080 billion kWh gross, 27% from coal, 27% from gas, 27% from nuclear, 9% from oil and 7% from hydro. Final consumption was 965 billion kWh, or about 7,500 kWh per capita.[3]

Energy experts in Japan have proposed three nuclear-generated energy options to the Noda Government:

- Zero nuclear power as soon as possible
- A 15% share of electricity by 2030
- A 20% to 25% share by 2030, compared to almost 30% before the Fukushima disaster

Under pressure from business interests that are worried about stable electricity supply, Prime Minister Noda has been thought to be leaning toward the 15% option, which would require all of Japan's 50 reactors to resume operation before gradually closing older units.[4]

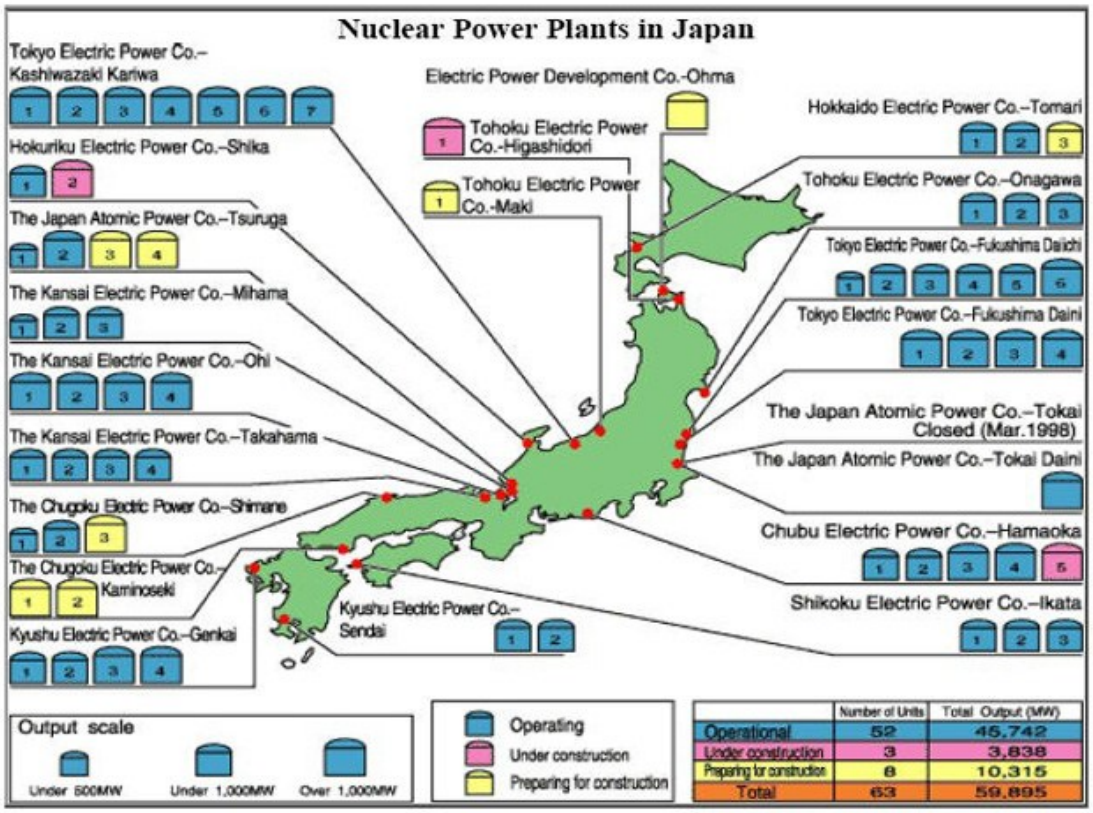
In terms of criticism of Japan's nuclear energy policies over the years are the views of the highly respected Japanese Nobel Literature Laureate, Kenzaburo Oe. He says that


20,000 Japanese Protestors in Anti-Nuclear Power Demonstration Of 23 June 2012 held near Prime Minister's Official Residence

1994 Nobel Laureate For Literature, Kenzaburo Oe, Descendant From A Prominent Samurai Family

following World War Two, the nation's government and media worked together to promote a pro-nuclear agenda. He says that Matsutaro Shoriki, the media tycoon who owned one of Japan's largest circulating newspapers, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, worked with one time Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone to publicize the benefits of nuclear power.[5]

The above map provides details of Japan's network of nuclear reactors and their generating capacity.[6]



The following four statistical Tables illustrate

- Japan's level of electricity consumption compared to other leading nations;
- its electric energy per capita of population;
- its electricity consumption in terms of Gross Domestic Product and consumption per capita in comparison to the world's largest consumer the United States;
- its energy consumption in terms of population and type of fuel used to generate electricity.[7]

On the basis of the data in Table Two, it is clear that, of the countries selected for analysis, the highest users of fossil fuels are the UK (79.3% of capacity); USA (71.2% of capacity); Japan (66.6% of capacity); Germany (60.2% of capacity); and France (9.5% of capacity.) The highest users of nuclear power generation are France (76.5% of capacity); Japan (23.6% of capacity); Germany (23.4% of capacity); USA (19.2% of capacity); and UK (13.5% of capacity.) The highest users of renewable energy are France (13.0% of capacity); Germany (11.3% of capacity);

Table 1: Electricity Consumption 2008

| Country | Population (Millions) | GDP (US$ Billions) | Rank | Electricity Consumption GWh/yr | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **China** | 1,339 | $7,992 | 2 | 3,444,108 | 2 |
| **India** | 1,166 | $3,304 | 4 | 860,723 | 5 |
| **USA** | 307 | $14,440 | 1 | 4,401,698 | 1 |
| **Indonesia** | 240 | $917 | 15 | 149,437 | 20 |
| **Russia** | 140 | $2,271 | 6 | 1,022,726 | 4 |
| **Japan** | 127 | $4,340 | 3 | 1,083,142 | 3 |
| **Germany** | 82 | $2,925 | 5 | 617,132 | 7 |

Table 2: Electric Energy per Capita 2008 (kWh/Person) & form of Generation

| Country | Total Population | Fossil | Nuclear | RE-Bio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **USA** | 14,270 | 10,162 | 2,746 | 224 |
| **Japan** | 8,507 | 5,669 | 2,010 | 682 |
| **France** | 8,984 | 853 | 6,872 | 1,168 |
| **Germany** | 7,693 | 4,635 | 1,804 | 873 |
| **UK** | 6,392 | 5,069 | 860 | 266 |

Notes: RE-Bio includes hydro power, wind power, solar electricity and geothermal energy.
Source: Electricity Information 2009 IEA/OECD.

Japan (8.0% of capacity); UK (4.2% of capacity); and USA (1.6% of capacity.)

As can be seen from this Table, Japan ,Germany and Russia have the highest electricity consumption levels of those countries selected for analysis – all of which are at least half, or somewhat higher than half, of the United States' consumption per head of population of 14,338 GWh per year (based on data from 2008.)

Since the devastating melt-down at Fukushima (where caesium -137 is being measured in terms of 40% of the levels escaping from Chernobyl[8] 25 years earlier in April 1986), the matter of electricity generation by nuclear reactors in Japan is no longer just a commercial/ technological question.

It is probably the most worrisome and angering matter on the minds of Japanese citizens. They see the government as having substantially failed in its duty to protect the public interest. A recent Nikkei poll found that, far from regaining support, the Cabinet of Prime Minister Noda has reached a frightening disapproval level of 63%.

Apart from decisions made by the Noda government on the matter of nuclear energy generation in Japan, much will depend on the principal Opposition party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). During the 2011 nationwide local elections, LDP candidates said very little about the 54 nuclear reactors that were built during their 53 years in office. Such pointed silence could have been related

Table 3: Electricity Consumption 2008 (In terms of Gross Domestic Product & Population)

| Country | Population (Millions) | GDP (US$ Billions) | Electricity Consumption GWh/yr |
|---|---|---|---|
| **USA** | 307 | $14,440 | 4,401,698 |
| **China** | 1,339 | $7,992 | 3,444,108 |
| **Japan** | 127 | $4,340 | 1,083,142 |
| **India** | 1,166 | $3,304 | 860,723 |
| **Germany** | 82 | $2,925 | 617,132 |

Table 4: Sizes of Electricity Consumption Levels (As Compared to USA)

| COUNTRY | GDP PER HEAD OF POPULATION | ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION PER HEAD OF POPULATION GWh PER YEAR | PERCENTAGE COMPARISON WITH USA LEVELS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **China** | $5,968 | 2.57 | 0.02% |
| **Japan** | $34,173 | 8,528.7 | 59.48% |
| **India** | $2,834 | 738.2 | 5.15% |
| **Germany** | $35,677 | 7,526.0 | 52.49% |
| **Russia** | $16,221 | 7,305.2 | 50.95% |

**Japanese Question Reliance on Nuclear Power, Handling of Fukushima Crisis**

| *Should use of nuclear power in Japan be...* | 2011 % | 2012 % | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reduced | 44 | 70 | *+26* |
| Maintained | 46 | 25 | *-21* |
| Increased | 8 | 4 | *-4* |
| Don't know | 2 | 1 | *-1* |
| *Approval of government's handling of Fukushima crisis* | | | |
| Approve | 25 | 17 | *-8* |
| Disapprove | 69 | 80 | *+11* |
| Don't know | 6 | 3 | *-3* |

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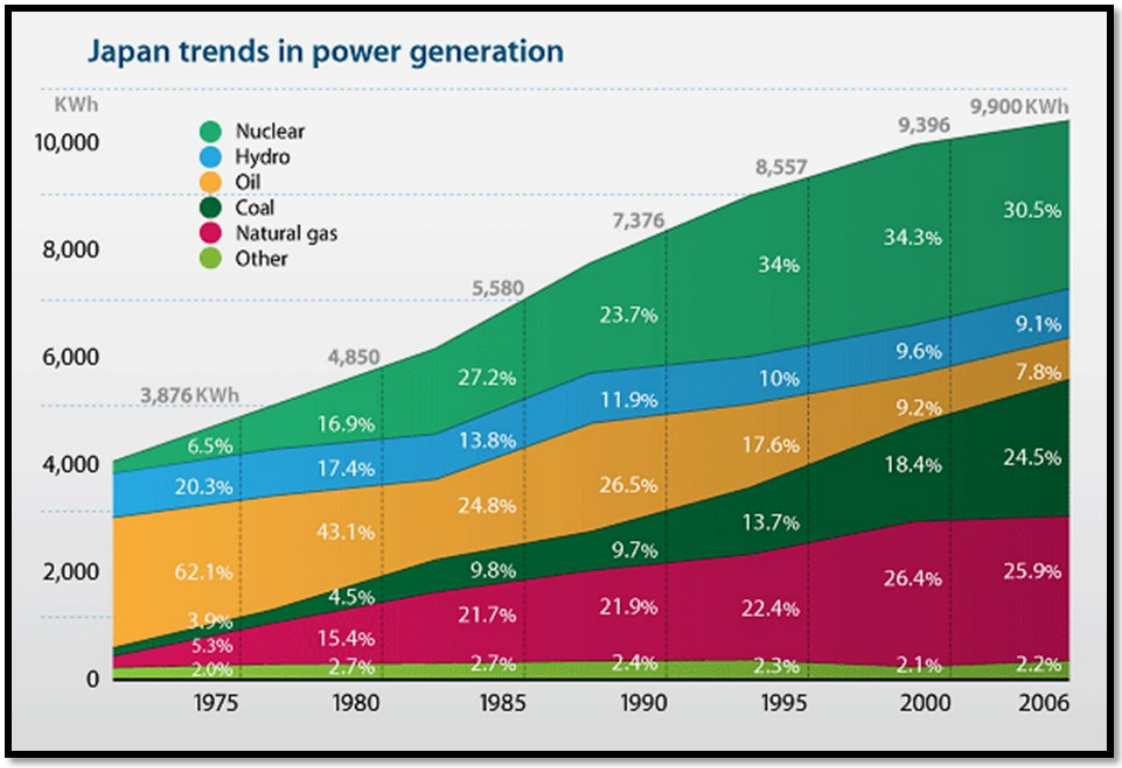
to the fact that the LDP has received sizeable donations from Japan's major nuclear plant makers – Toshiba, Hitachi and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.[9]

For the time being, the matter of which forms of energy to retain and which forms to put aside will be determined by the unit cost of electricity production. In 2010, the cost of one kWh by **nuclear generation** was 8.9 Yen; for **coal**, the cost was 9.5 Yen; for **LNG** is was 10.7 Yen; whilst for **oil,** it was 36.0 Yen. Applying those figures broadly to the 859.7 billion kWh of electricity consumed in Japan in 2010, nuclear generated electricity was **1.06 times cheaper than coal** (costing 816.7 billion Yen or US$ 10.4 billion); **12 times cheaper than LNG** (costing 9,198.8 billion Yen or US$ 117.3 billion); and **40 times cheaper than oil** (30,949.2 billion Yen or US$394.6 billion.)[10]

The irony is that, whilst nuclear generated electricity is the cheapest to produce, in the wake of the Fukushima disaster, it also carries the greatest dangers.

Political feeling in Japan is running high over the nuclear energy issue. At eight



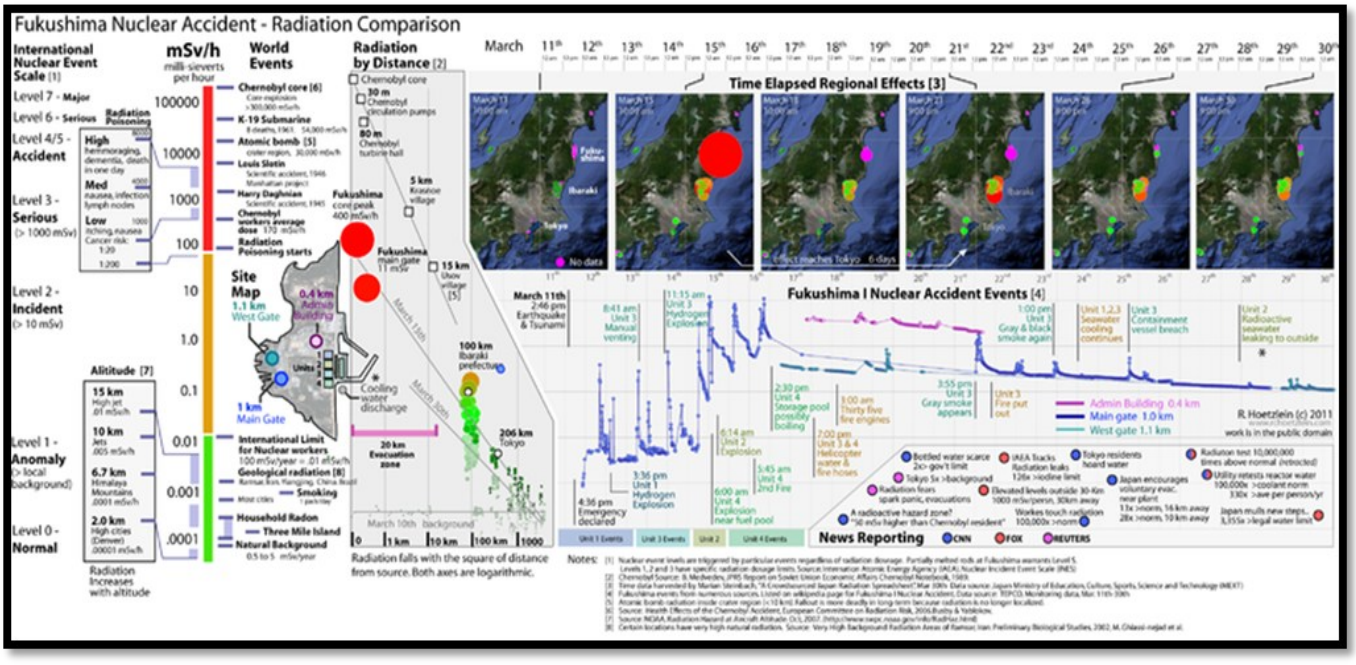
Nuclear Plant Disaster In Japan

public meetings held to solicit people's views on the three policy options [See above p. 2], 70% of speakers supported the zero per cent option by 2030. The eight hearings were held between 14 July and 29 July.[11] Public dissatisfaction with proposed government actions spilled over on Sunday 29 July 2012 with some 20,000 protestors assembling outside the Diet. The protestors broke through the police barriers, causing law enforcers to bring in reinforcements and to dispatch armoured buses to guard the main gate. NHK, the national broadcasting company, described the protests as an *"uncharacteristic show of political activism among the Japanese."* A series of demonstrations has not led, as yet, to any major policy changes.[12]

Still, there have been some movements towards alternative energy sources, even though these, on closer inspection, are somewhat at the margins. Japan is set to build its largest solar power plant costing 27 billion Yen (US$344 million). The plant in Kagoshima City in southern Japan is expected to supply 78,000 MWh of energy every year.[13] Japan currently has 5 GW of installed solar capacity and is aiming for 28GW of renewable solar energy by 2020 and 53GW by 2030. The Kagoshima City project is expected to be completed by Autumn 2013.[14] Such levels of renewable, clean energy are not, however, of sufficiently high levels as to make drastic inroads into Japan's current energy generation and consumption.

Levels of 5 million kW (5 GW), 28 million kW (28 GW) and 53 million kW (53 GW)-

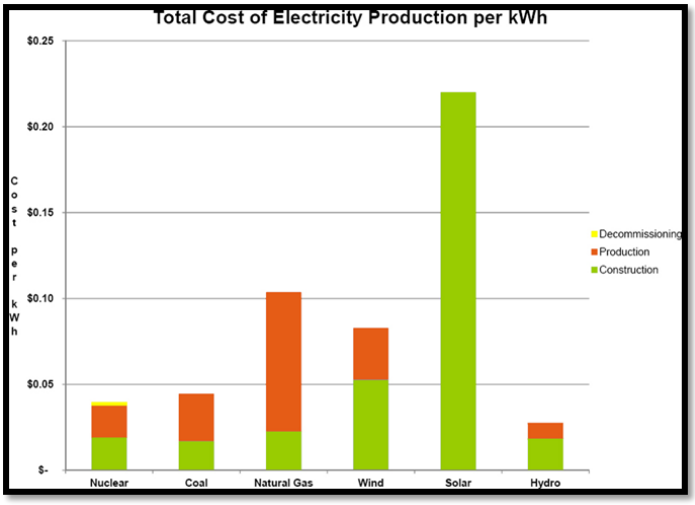
Fukushima Nuclear Disaster - Radiation Comparisons




"Uncharacteristic" Protest By Demonstrators In Japan Who Want An End To Nuclear Reactors For Electricity Generation

given that Japan's total electricity consumption in 2011 was estimated to be 859.7 billion kW – when placed in perspective, amount to 5.8 millionths of 1 percent; 3.25 ten thousandths of 1 percent; and 6.16 ten thousandths of 1 per cent – in terms of estimated electrical consumption for the whole of Japan in 2011. Still, 5 million kW will supply **278 average homes** a year; 28 million kW will supply **1,556 average homes** a year; and 53 million kW will supply **2,944 average homes** a year – a not inconsiderable outcome.

Such figures pale into insignificance, though, when weighed up against Japan's potential capacity for large-scale electricity generation from renewable energy sources, *given the necessary political will and policy application.* Japan is capable of generating 222 GW from wind turbines; 70 GW from geothermal plants; 26.5 GW from additional hydro capacity; and 4.8 GW from solar energy – a total amounting to 323.3 GW of power, or 115% of Japan's 2010 level of 282 GW of total installed electricity, the third largest in the world, ranking behind only the United States and China. The potential is there. It requires, however, a bold change of policy and planning – change which would be greatly welcomed by the Japanese public but would be more difficult to get adopted by conservative, change-resistant lawmakers and their well-entrenched policy advisors within their parties and within officialdom.




Nonetheless, in April 2012, the Noda Government approved feed-in-tariffs (FIT) that are expected to spur investment by guaranteeing higher returns for renewable than for conventional energy. From July 2012, utilities were required to buy electricity from renewable energy providers at a rate of 42 yen (US$0.52) per kilowatt hour (kWh) for solar energy; 23 yen (US$0.29)/kWh for wind power; and 30 to 35 yen (US$0.37 to US$0.43)/kWh for small scale hydro power. These preferential rates will apply for 10 to 20 years, depending on the energy source. Many of Japan's largest corporations, from steel mills and car makers to ceramics and electronics makers, are developing renewable technologies, often incorporating solar and wind power features into their offices and factories.[15]

Germany raised the proportion of renewable energy generation from 5% in

1990 to 20% by 2010. *"If Japan has the motivation, it can do this, too,"* said Sei Kato, Deputy Director of the Environment Ministry's Low Carbon Society Promotion Office. *"We have the technological know-how. Japan can do anything that Germany can."* Real change in Japan is slow. Giant solar arrays and wind farms cannot be built quickly and powerful utilities that spent billions on nuclear energy are lobbying to protect their interests.[16]

Nevertheless, probability studies into establishing 100% renewable energy provision in Japan have been carried out and their findings, if accurate, are immensely important. GENI, the Global Energy Network Institute, in August 2012, noted that renewable energy could be as high as 1,581 GW to 1,612 GW a year in Japan by 2020, adopting a Feed-In-Tariff+Technological Innovation+Subsidy Scenario – this figure being 1.8 to 1.9 times greater than the 858.5 GW consumed by Japan in 2011. The four sources for such electricity generation were listed as wind power, solar power, geothermal power and hydropower. [17]

The following Table illustrates the projected possible levels of renewable energy generation as estimated by GENI in August 2012.

On the basis of these estimates and given the designated scenario, it is possible for Japan, using four clean, safe, renewable energy sources, to generate almost double its 2011 electricity needs in just eight years following 2012.

The central issue, though, remains more political, than technological. The Noda Government has taken some tentative steps by introducing its Feed-In-Tariffs. The outcome will hinge upon what occurs in the Diet. DPJ effectiveness as a government was badly damaged by the Ozawa break-away group ("People's Livelihoods First")[18] of July 2012. Former Party leader and funds dispenser, Ichiro Ozawa, failed to prevent passage of the consumption tax legislation in the Lower House and took 49 defectors with him when he walked out of the Party for which he helped to secure victory in 2009.

Having opposed the much-disliked consumption tax increase, Ozawa will take up the popular anti-nuclear cause as well. His new group does not yet seem to have sufficient numbers to remove the DPJ's parliamentary majority in the Lower House or yet to bring on a vote of no-confidence. If joined by the principal opposition parties the LDP and New Komeito and by more DPJ defectors

Yearly Electricity Generation Using Renewable Sources Estimates By 2020

| Installed Capacity (million kW) | Scenario - FIT+Technological Innovation+Subsidy |
|---|---|
| **Wind Power** | 1,500 |
| **Solar Power** | 69-100 |
| **Geothermal** | 4.6 |
| **Hydropower** | 7.4 |
| **TOTAL** | 1,581 – 1,612 |

*Estimation Source: Ministry of Environment Research*

(hostile to the Noda Government's decision to re-start two nuclear reactors), such a vote could succeed, precipitating a dissolution of the House and a General Election. While Ozawa is open to Coalitions with others, no Party with any serious electoral prospects wants to join him. Public expectations of Ozawa's new Party are very low, with an *Asahi Shimbun* poll showing that 78% of voters expect very little from *"The Destroyer",* as Ozawa is ruefully known. He himself has much impeding electoral baggage to carry, having been discredited in the public eye through his recent trial for DPJ funds misappropriation. Although initially acquitted for "lack of evidence", this short-lived victory for Ozawa is presently under a cloud, a successful appeal having been lodged by the prosecution. He must therefore face a Court of Law once again, with all of the attendant bad publicity. There is also the ominous possibility of a conviction and a humiliating jail sentence, spelling complete ruination of a once very powerful political figure, no longer able to shape affairs to suit himself. [19]


Angry Demonstrators Demanding An End To Nuclear Energy And The Adoption Of Clean, Safe Renewable Energy Sources

**Notes:**

* **Dr Michael Vaughan** is a sessional teacher for classes in Australian politics and Asian Politics. He sits on the King's College Council. Dr Vaughan has pronounced research interests in China and her regional cognates.

1. Manta Badkar & Gregory White, "If History Proves Correct, Japan May Be Ready To Stomach Its Imminent Power Shortage" *Business Insider* 4 April 2011.
2. 1 kilowatt (kWh) is a unit of energy equal to 1,000 watt hours or 3.6 mega joules. 1 Megawatt (MW) is equal to 1 million watts or, 1,000 kilowatt hours every hour
3. See "Nuclear Power In Japan", *World Nuclear Association* July 2012 http://www.world-nuclear.org/imfo/inf79.html Accessed 1 August 2012.
4. Linda Sieg, "Noda's Nuclear Energy Policy Will Be Tested In Yamaguchi Election", *Japan Today* , 26 July 2012
5. Adam Westlake, "Nobel–Winning Kenzaburo Oe Alleges Government, Media Collusion Promoted Nuclear Power", *The Japan Daily Press*, 31 July 2012.
6. Anthony Hall, "Fukushima Daiichi: From Nuclear Power Plant To Nuclear Weapon", *Global Research*, 13 June 2012.

EPILOGUE

"We are here to oppose nuclear power, which is simply too dangerous ... [Noda] isn't listening to us. He only listens to companies and Yonekura. "

STATEMENT BY **HIROKO YAMADA** A PARTICIPANT IN THE 19 JULY 2012 DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE JAPAN'S PARLIAMENT BY 20,000 ANGRY CITIZENS

7. All these Statistics relate to the year 2008 and are based on data published in *The CIA Fact Book 2009*
8. The Chernobyl Disaster released into the surrounding environment 30 to 40 times the radiation caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At 40% of such radiation, the Fukushima meltdowns released 12 to 16 times the radiation caused by the bombings. The worst radioactive element is caesium-137 which has a half-life of fully 30 years.
9. "LDP Must Reflect On Nuclear Power Generation" *Japan Press Weekly* 13-19 April 2011 [Translated from the Japanese.]
10. For unit costs per kWh in 2010, see "Nuclear Power In Japan", *World Nuclear Association,* July 2012 www.world-nuclear.org/info/imf79.html Accessed 2 August 2012.
11. "Majority At Public Hearings Want Nuclear-Free Japan", *The Asahi Shimbun,* 30 July 2012.
12. See *Market Watch*, 31 July 2012.
13. An average household uses 18,000 kW a year, meaning that the Kagoshima City project, when completed, will fuel 4,333 households every year, given an output of 78,000,000 kW (78,000 MWh).
14. Priyanka Shrestha, "Japan Set To Build Its Largest Solar Plant", *Energy Live News*, 1 August 2012.
15. Elaine Kurtenbach and Mari Yamaguchi, "Crisis-Hit Japan Mulls Shift To Renewable Energy", *The Seattle Times,* 3 May 2012.
16. Ibid.
17. Takatoshi Kojima, "How Is 100% Renewable Energy In Japan Possible By 2020?", *Global Energy Network Institute*, August 2012 – URL www.scribd.com/.../How-is-100-renewable-energy-possible-in-Japan Accessed 15 August 2012. See also *CIA Fact Book July 2012*, for 2011 Japan Electricity Consumption.
18. Political rivals and opponents have cuttingly said a more appropriate name for Ozawa's new party might be "Put Elections First." DPJ Foreign Minister Gemba has said that Ozawa must have badly miscalculated if he thought he could win an election simply by opposing tax increases and nuclear power generation. The Japanese people, the Foreign Minister went on to say, were not fools and suggested that voters would not be beguiled by Ozawa's pursuit of popularity whilst masking his own self-interest.
19. Aurelia George Mulgan, "Can Ichiro Ozawa Repeat History In Japan?", *East Asia Forum*, 3 July 2012.
20. This reference is to **Hiromasa Yonekura**, currently Chairman of the Board of **Sumitomo Chemicals** (which he joined 52 years ago in 1960) a massive corporation employing 27,828 workers which had a net income in 2009 of 14.7 billion Yen or US$188 million. Since May 2010, Mr Yonekura has also been **Chairman of the Japan Business Federation (the Nippon Keidanren)** which is the most powerful business lobby group in Japan. Keidanren, which cites the development of the Japanese economy as its principal objective, represents 1,281 companies and other business organizations, which include such corporate giants as **All Nippon Airways**, **Toyota, Toshiba, Marubeni** and **Da-Ichi Life**. It used to make substantial political donations to the Liberal Democratic Party but has ceased such donations since the election of the Democratic Party of Japan government. Following the March 2011 Tsunami and shut-down of nuclear reactors, the Keidanren **called for the re-start of the reactors**, though a small number of business leaders dissociated themselves from this call.

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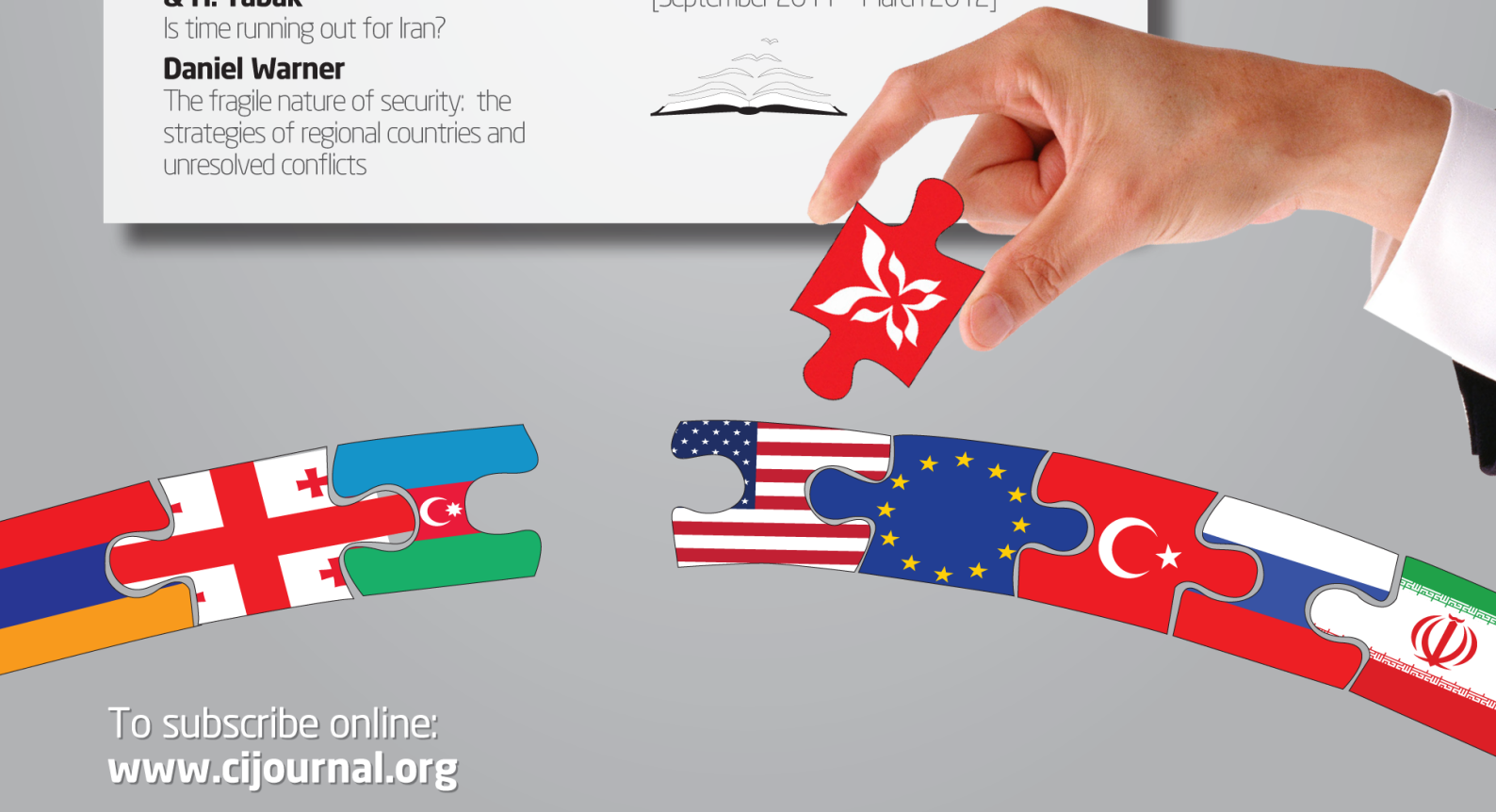

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# The End of War: Truth or Fiction?

Antony Ou in response to Dr Jean-Paul Gagnon's article 'The End of War?' in *Political Reflection*, 2 (4): 30-33.

In Volume 2 Issue 4 of *Political Reflection*, Dr Jean-Paul Gagnon wrote a mind-provoking feature article on whether there will be the end of war in the near future. Therein he contended that cosmopolitanism is a possible moral force for global citizens to check any kind of power abuse by their governments, private industries, and themselves. It will be a spreading trend of improving the quality of democracy across the world, at sub-national, national and international levels. Wars, therefore, are constantly checked and condemned by global citizens. The two World Wars, the wars in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were atrocities that cannot be compared with wars nowadays such as the wars in Iraq, Libya, and the Falkland Islands, in terms of scale and brutality. This conversation, due to space restrictions, did not look to ethnic cleansing or genocide as these differ to "conventional war" (see Michael Mann's separation of war and ethnic cleansing in *The Dark Side of Democracy*). Gagnon argues that the global citizenry "will keep us firmly away from the total wars and blitzkriegs of the 20th century. War, as it was once known, is thankfully dead - war is dead."

As a modern just war theory supporter, Antony Ou agrees with the moral stance of Gagnon. There is something to be said that the global citizenry is a powerful and convincing moral force when arguing about wars. However, when moral theories encounter Realpolitik, the former is silenced. Too often, human beings build their mistakes on already erroneous and shaken platforms. The greed for power and the intensity of hatred prevail. Wars have not been stopped in many parts of the world; weapons are deadlier; and national sentiments of hatred towards "outside" enemies are increasingly evident. Ou's question remains: Is the notion "war is dead" a realistic goal, or is it a fiction invented by moral philosophers?

In the following dialogue, Ou will ask for the clarification of concepts, and more

importantly, the plausibility of implementing the "unfinished project" of the global citizenry. Gagnon provides his responses to these questions. This dialectic approach traces back to the times of Plato and Confucius. The purpose of these dialectics is nothing more than to attract and open up further dialogues and debates on the nature and possibility of ending one of the most devastating human inventions: war.

***Antony Ou:*** You have attempted to distinguish between traditional war and new kinds of wars in the post-Cold War era. The former is unchecked by citizens around the world for their use of unlimited violence, such as the two World Wars. The latter, on the other hand, does not share "the massive scale brutality of total war". Instead, new potential wars are increasingly checked by mass media, citizens and intellectuals throughout the world. Therefore, by arguing new wars in the 21st century are limited by the moral force of the global citizenry, you reason that the old kind of war is dead. You pronounce "it is a cautious statement of hope, of trying to establish definitive change in the way humans conduct violence to each other, and is a foray into the possibilities of global citizenship."

However, I would like to make a counter-proposition: that war can hardly end as long as political and economic interests are at stake among nation states, triggered by greed and lust for more power. Sometimes the process is catalysed by wrong calculation and irrationality. As you have argued, your work is not "predictive" but "a statement of hope". But for how long can such "wishful thinking" be possibly realised?

Total wars among superpowers might be gone in these now two decades of post-Cold War politics. However, traditional brutal wars continue to exist in different parts of Africa and the Middle East, as you have rightly pointed out in your essay. In the name of war on terror and international security, the "American Imperialist" has successfully overthrown the Taliban regime and Saddam Hussein. Such military actions and regime changes were not invented by George W. Bush, but it has been "an integral part of US foreign policy for more than one hundred years." How can we be sure by the mere increase of awareness of the global citizenry that the American foreign policy of regime change can be morally and practically unjustified in the near future? How can we be sure the majority of "global citizens" who are uneducated citizens but easily manipulated by national sentiments, suddenly or gradually become liberal-democratic-moral crusaders who condemn unjust wars in other foreign countries? In other words, I strongly doubt that wars, both brutal and less brutal ones, will become extinct in the future. The question mark of the essay title "The End of War" might rightly symbolise all of my doubts.

***Jean-Paul Gagnon:*** There is a lot in that so I will try to address your points in order. First, your counter-proposition: contest, difference, and oppositions will I think be with humans and their constructs for as long as we occupy this evolved form of flesh and being. And I think contest, difference and opposition is important. But, there are ways of understanding the aforementioned and approaching them through agonism – not antagonism. We must work through peace and not violence. This is a concept very well captured by Chantal Mouffe and

Ernesto Laclau's 'friendly-enemies' which was elaborated upon by Ed Wingenbach (*Institutionalizing Agonistic Democracy*) and William E Connolly among others.

To embody and action this agonism in the affairs of states, nations, associations, and individuals throughout the world will take education, practice, and time. This addresses your other points on how the global collection of demoi, often uneducated about agonism and its expectations, can live up to the desires set out in my article. I think many in this world, although possibly not knowing the word agonism, understand the need and value of peace. And there are certainly significant and growing majority opinions in many states across this world – held by individuals – that any imperialism, not just the one spurred on by the frightening US war-machine, is wrong. This relates to the point I tried to make in "Global Leviathan Rising" that there are the beginnings of what I hope will become a very impressive global democracy society, a Leviathan of democracy, that will be able to resist even the most dastardly imperial state. I spoke at some length about this with Noam Chomsky – his opinion will be published in my forthcoming book *Thinkers in Conversation*.

*People are deeply internalized by the belief that there are always external threats - the external Others that would jeopardize their national security and prosperity.*

***Antony Ou:*** One might argue that we are now living in the post-Cold War era, where people celebrate the triumph of the market instead of having wars against their real or imagined enemies. However, the Cold War mind-set has not perished as you have also pointed out in the footnote of your essay. Instead, chauvinistic comments and national sentiments are so obvious in the media of heavyweights like Greater China, India and Russia. People are deeply internalized by the belief that there are always external threats— the external Others that would jeopardize their national security and prosperity. There might not be clear-cut evidence showing that there are arm races among states, but there are new weapon collections in arsenals of these superpowers in the name of national security. For instance, mainland China has been increasing its expenses on its navy over the past few years because of the South China Sea controversy. The recent controversy of Diaoyu Island/Senkaku Islands between China and Japan has triggered hatred and heated discussions of war between the two states. India's Agni-5 was launched successfully in April this year, blessed by the Prime Minister, saying that it was a milestone of India's for growing to becoming one of the superpowers. In these senses, I doubt the "traditional" kind of wars would disappear, at least in the near future. My question is: Will superpowers that survived and developed after the Cold War (like mainland China, India and Russia) become sources of "traditional wars" in the near future? By glorifying the national pasts and their "modern scientific development", can these peoples be genuinely convinced and undergo a "paradigm shift" by adopting the ideas of global citizenry?

***Jean-Paul Gagnon:*** First, I don't think we have enough understanding of what the billions of individuals in this world think,

fear, or wish for. I'm not convinced that the dominant outlook of these individuals is as you presented above. That being said, I make no claims that the outlook I am advocating is any clearer or better documented. In sociology, social theory, economics theory, and political philosophy, there is a lot to be said about the globalisation of citizenship and the transnational, international, and subnational pushes, jolts, or sometimes sustained democratization efforts happening in many diverse places. I think we might simply be reading different literature – to offer anything beyond a superficial answer I would have to conduct extensive analyses. But to give my abductive inclination – I think contemporary real-politik is also much more focused on soft-power. This is especially so in regards to Beijing policy: the PRC has built a reputation and continues to try to maintain that veneer. Going back to the barbarity of total war would be inconceivable and would damage every bit of legitimacy worked for by Beijing thus far.

There is another point in that. We have learned through history that occupation in media saturated environments is effectively impossible. So land or resource grabs would, if they happened, most likely not spark total war but rather intense, violent guerrilla style or 'Libya-style' military intervention backed by very tough international sanctions. No country in this world today can handle that. It might be partly due to the nature of the contemporary economy that we can say that since polities are so interconnected through capital, and trying to together capture elusive transnational money (where the majority of the world's financial wealth appears to be), they simply do not have the resources to do what was done in the 1940s for example.

Finally, it is not for the Politburo in Beijing, Putin and his acolytes in Moscow, or the more hawkish elites in India to undergo a paradigm shift. The shift is happening from within the only legitimate power base in existence today: the 7 billion or more individuals alive, the hundreds of billions or more individuals that lived before us, and the inconceivable number of people that are still to live. There is no polity that can resist the totalizing power of an educated, remembering, uncertain, peace-loving, and autocrat-phobic, post-foundational plurality. War has no value – violence kills democracy. How can we not be moving beyond this?

***Antony Ou:*** There are nations, like Palestine or Kurdistan, that desperately aspire to build states. By adopting and internalizing the concept of "old sovereigntism", they are satisfied and content with what they own within their territories without any foreign intervention. Such sovereigntism is contrary to what I understand international "perpetual peace" to be. However, this is often what indigenous minorities and people of peripheral states fight for. Does the concept of nation-state have any residual values in the 21st century? And should the "unfinished project" of a global citizenry be "on hold" for the sake of "self-determination" and "old sovereigntism"?

***Jean-Paul Gagnon:*** I think we need to be clear that self-determination, the creation of new nation-states, and bounding nations within what might be considered more "traditional" understandings of sovereignty are not in any sense

contrarian to peace. Although Michael Mann has, I think, a point that it is at these times that we are at *greater risk* of seeing ethnic violence. I have argued elsewhere that if the allowing for nations to have their own states happened more in history much less blood would have been spilt. We are still reeling from the effects of empire. It will take time for the wounds created by idiotic flag planting and proclamations in the name of 'so and so' over peoples who already 'owned' the land to heal. There is no need for the ever strengthening associations of the plurality of individuals throughout this globe, possibly definable as a global citizenry, to stand at odds to a sovereign Palestine unless this or another new state wanted to make war or violence as its means or end goal.

***Antony Ou:*** How shall we operate the constant check and balance regarding the power of nation states? Are you suggesting besides promoting global citizenship across the world, we should also begin to construct an international institution, namely a "world state" by legitimising and monopolizing the use of force? What are the moral possibilities as well as moral dangers of implementing such project?

***Jean-Paul Gagnon:*** I am not advocating a world-state. I am an advocate of highly inclusive, capacious, uncertain, and dynamic global democratic governance which I see as a project under constant improvement. Nation-states, depending on how one defines this concept today, are already under complex layers of checks and balances. We only have to look to the roughly 70% of this world's surfaces, depths, and heights. These are all "common zones" or "international spaces". They are regulated by many different sets of international laws, Conventions, regulations, Resolutions, and options. In the parts of the world that are claimed by nation-states or union-states (as I prefer to term them), or the other roughly 30%, there are too national, subnational, and supranational laws binding the behaviour of polities. This form of control is, I think, only going to get more legitimate as democrats (individuals) and their associations continue to challenge power, autocracy, and namely, the majority of forms of violence.

***Antony Ou:*** To a certain degree, the proclamation of "the end of war" is misleading. Besides the reasons that I have laid out so far, I suspect that we might both agree that there are possible military interventions, legitimised by UN resolutions, that should be morally justified. There are plausible and even hypothetical "just wars" (according to Richard Norman, they are "moral tragedies"), in the context of "international anarchy", and every state should have the "responsibility to protect" their neighbouring countries, as advocated by the UN since 2005. When a country suffers from any crimes against humanity, there should be "humanitarian interventions", enforced by legitimate arm forces. Therefore, even if global citizenry prevails in the near future, war never ends, since atrocities exist in different parts of the world. Even if there is a "world government" monopolizing the use of force, and military conflicts change from state conflicts to "punitive expedition" launched by a "benevolent" world government, war never ends.

***Jean-Paul Gagnon:*** As I wrote in the article to which you are speaking, I have

not included forceful "just interventions" as "war". I was specifically talking about the "total wars" as were known in the 20th century and then commented upon the fact that these types of wars have been, and continue to, decline. I am also under the firm hope, and I do see trends to this length, that different forms of violence – ethnic cleansing, genocide, paramilitary political combat, guerrilla warfare, organized crime, and small arms or weapons attack – are too diminishing across all continents.

I think that if violence must be used, it should only be done to achieve a very specific legal aim – and one that was decided in a robust, inclusive and democratic manner. The example I had used during the (still on-going) Libya crisis was that a tactical force involving a plurality of opponents to the Gaddafi regime should have tried to kidnap, or capture, the dictator to bring him before the International Courts of Justice. Maybe this was tried under "top-secret" operations. I am uncomfortable recommending assassination as I think blood begets blood. We need to be cleverer. I don't have the answers – I am not sure anyone does although I desperately hope we can find some soon. But I think there is something to be said about ensuring "just intervention" really aims to protect civilians, to deny civil war, and to capture the despisable rulers who create such a regime that requires other states or citizens to try to protect the oppressed.

**Notes:**

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1. pp.30-33.
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3. p.32.
4. Kinzer, Stephen. (2006). Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq. Times Book, New York.
5. Gagnon, JP. (2012). "Global Leviathan Rising: The Emergence of a Transnational Demoi's Corporeal Form," *Political Reflection* 3 (3): 11-14.
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7. p.33, footnote no.5.
8. Antony Ou's dialogue with Indian nationalists on Agni-5: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pkMqTeL3N0 For further elaboration of his criticism, see Agni-5: the national firework of India: http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/antony-ou/agni-5-national-firework-of-india.
9. For Gagnon's moral stance of just war theory, specifically on the intervention of Libya, please see Gaddafi and Libya – a case for just intervention?: http://www.opendemocracy.net/jean-paul-gagnon/gaddafi-and-libya-%E2%80%93-case-for-just-intervention.
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