

More than summit-hopping: Local transformative responses for climate justice

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Despite 25 years with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) spending immense time, money, and effort, the planet is still heading towards a considerably warmer future. With the entry of the Paris Agreement into force, the global policy momentum is building rapidly towards a low-carbon transition. Yet, voluntary mitigation pledges such as NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) do not amount to avoiding extremely severe human and non-human consequences. At a moment when international politics falls short of preventing a climate-challenged world, an alternative vision on climate change action is thriving outside the walls of formal negotiations. In an attempt to understand this contestation between the state and non-state actors and their competing framings, this contribution focuses on diversifying and competing framings of climate justice. In its broadest sense, climate justice refers to taking justice seriously in terms of inter- and intra-generational distribution, procedures, rights, and compensation for loss and damage. These dimensions, however, are often framed differently across a wide range of proponents including national institutions in the global South, academics, elite NGO groups, and grassroots organizations. A distinction and dialogue between these framings also help us to identify the changing strategies deployed by the incipient global climate justice movement and its interaction with local actors.

Stemming not from government bodies or elite NGOs, which seek to sustain their relevance in the global governance but are uncompromising with social movements, this approach utilizes climate justice as a political arsenal that connects various social justice struggles. In this regard, this latter framing of climate justice not only critiques the global economic-political power constellation but also market-based solutions, techno-fixes, exclusionary political processes, and state-centric approaches. In doing that, it also embraces gender equality, migrant rights struggles, rights of non-human nature, and *buen vivir*ⁱ as counter-hegemonic narratives. Between the first two reformist approaches and the latter radical politics of climate justice takes place what Herbert Docenaⁱⁱ calls "a global battle for hearts and souls."

A new inclusive research agenda putting equity and justice at the heart of the climate debate cannot but engage with the local, transformative actions which challenge the conduits of corporate and political power in specific places. This calls for a bold and non-compromising climate equity/justice research agenda that goes beyond CBDR (common but differentiated responsibilities) and allocation towards establishing climate justice both in retrospect through reparations but also in prospect through forging connections between the global and the local.

ⁱ *Buen vivir* refers to an indigeneous worldview synonymous with alternatives to development which refers to good life beyond developmentalism in a broad sense. The term is frequently used by social movements, and it has been popularized by appearing in Ecuadorian and Bolivian constitutions. see also Eduardo Gudynas. "Buen Vivir: Today's Tomorrow," *Development* 54, no. 4 (2011): 441-447.

ⁱⁱ Herbert Docena, "To Change the Heart and Soul: How Elites Contained the Climate Justice Movement," *The Bulletin*, no. 1210 (2016), <http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/1210.php>.