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**“System change, not climate change” – Analyzing the
elements of counter-hegemonic climate justice
mobilization**

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Abstract

Climate justice combines threats of anthropogenic climate change with concerns about social justice and the larger impacts on people with fewer resources and disadvantaged populations. Adherents of the concept reject the unsustainable and unjust functionings of the global capitalist system and advocate for a socially just transition towards an ecological economy. The movement behind climate justice is engaged in a Gramscian counter-hegemonic struggle over how climate change should be understood and addressed. If the movement will be able to provoke radical changes in global climate governance will depend on its capability to mobilize an increasing amount of activists behind its cause.

This investigation distills the factors that influence the prospects for success for counter-hegemonic climate justice mobilization. These include framing processes that have allowed to unite a broad and heterogeneous group in a battle for a socially just and environmentally sustainable world, a hybrid, organizational structure that supports collective, contentious actions at multiple scales of governance, and favorable political conditions that create discursive opportunities to challenge the dominant discourse on how to undertake fighting climate change. While the climate justice movement has achieved important progress popularizing its alternative approach to climate change, future movement influence on global climate governance will depend on the ability to expand its coalition, while withstanding attempts of fragmentation through elite co-optation.

Keywords: climate justice movement, transnational social movements, global climate governance, eco-modernization, climate change

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Resumen

La justicia climática combina las amenazas del cambio climático antropogénico con las preocupaciones sobre la justicia social y los mayores impactos en las personas con menos recursos y poblaciones desfavorecidas. Los adeptos del concepto rechazan los funcionamientos insostenibles e injustos del sistema capitalista global y abogan por una transición socialmente justa hacia una economía ecológica. El movimiento detrás de la justicia climática está inmerso en una lucha contrahegemónica Gramsciana sobre cómo debe entenderse y abordarse el cambio climático. Si el movimiento será capaz de provocar cambios radicales en la gobernanza climática global dependerá de su capacidad para movilizar a una cantidad cada vez mayor de activistas detrás de su causa.

Esta investigación desgana los factores que influyen en las perspectivas de éxito de la movilización contra-hegemonica por la justicia climática. Estos incluyen un proceso de enmarcado (*framing process*) que ha permitido unir a un grupo amplio y heterogéneo en una batalla por un mundo socialmente justo y ambientalmente sostenible. Una estructura organizativa híbrida que favorece acciones colectivas y contenciosas en múltiples escalas de goberanza. Y condiciones políticas favorables que crean oportunidades discursivas para desafiar el discurso dominante sobre cómo emprender la lucha contra el cambio climático. Si bien el movimiento ha logrado importantes progresos popularizando su enfoque alternativo al cambio climático, la influencia del movimiento en el futuro sobre la gobernanza climática global dependerá de la capacidad de expandir su coalición, al tiempo que resiste los intentos de fragmentación a través de la cooptación de la élite.

Palabras clave: movimiento por la justicia climática, movimientos sociales transnacionales, gobernanza climática global, modernización ecológica, cambio climático

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List of abbreviations

CJ	<i>Climate Justice</i>
CJM	<i>Climate Justice Movement</i>
GJM	<i>Global Justice Movement</i>
Ibid.....	<i>in the same source</i>
IPCC	<i>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</i>
IRM.....	<i>Indigenous Rights Movement</i>
np	<i>no page</i>
SM	<i>Social Movements</i>
TNSM.....	<i>Transnational Social Movements</i>
UNFCCC.....	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
UN	<i>United Nations</i>
WSF.....	<i>World Social Forum</i>
WMO.....	<i>World Metereological Organization</i>
WTO.....	<i>World Trade Organization</i>

1. Introduction

“If there is to be a sustained progressive international movement in the twenty-first century it will probably coalesce around the climate justice movement” (Almeida 2019: 976).

The world is waking up to the threat of climate change. Following an array of alarming reports on the state of the global ecosystem, recent years have shown a steep increase in climate change activism (Taylor et. al 2019). Just in 2019, millions of worried citizens have taken to the streets to express their concern about what an international consortium of more than 11,000 has called a “climate emergency” (Ripple et. al 2020: np). As governments continue to fail to produce meaningful agreements on how to reduce carbon emission, an increasing amount of civil society groups have found an alternative in the radical approach of the climate justice movement (CJM).

The CJM has been a part of the wider climate change debate for a while. However, only recently have its message and demands seemed to gain more mainstream appeal (Almeida 2019). Climate justice (CJ) combines the threat of anthropogenic climate change with a critique of the unsustainable and unjust functionings of the global capitalist system. Against the dominant discourse of eco-modernization, it advocates for the democratization of energy sources and to rethinking the growth-based paradigm on which the global capitalist system is built on. “System change, not climate change” (Foran 2019: 415) summarizes the movement’s rejection of market-based approaches to climate change and instead argues for a socially just transition towards an ecological economy (Magdoff and Foster 2011).

Following Gramsci’s notions of hegemony and counter-hegemony, with its demands for fundamental changes in the distribution of money and power, the CJM constitutes a counter-hegemonic movement (Smith 2018). The term counter-hegemonic originates in the neo-Marxist ideology and describes those groups that seek to challenge the hegemonic geo-culture and fundamentally transform the world-system (Cox 1983; Smith et al. 2018).

Since its world-view clashes with the dominant logic of climate change governance, the movement first and foremost engages in an ideological struggle over how climate change should be understood and addressed. To eventually come into positions to change policy and alter power relations within climate governance, the movement needs to convince an

increasing amount of ordinary people to adapt a new way of thinking about fighting climate change. Applying a Marxist-lens, the study draws from social movement theory and world-system theory to portray the interactions of the CJM as a counter-hegemonic challenger to the hegemonic view on global climate governance.

The goal of the study is to portray the CJM as an actor within the climate change debate and analyze whether or not the movement is equipped to provoke radical change in global climate governance. Specific attention is paid to the anti-systemic ideology of the movement, as well as the particularities of the struggle that arise from being a counter-hegemonic movement. Consequently, the research question is the following: *Is the CJM equipped to provoke sustained, counter-hegemonic mobilization to affect global climate change governance?*

The first part of the investigation contains an analysis of the scientific literature on social movements and the world-system they engage in. It draws from the work of social movement scholars like Tarrow and McAdam, as well as Marxist, neo-Marxist, and world-system academics like Wallerstein, Cox, and Sclair. It involves definitions, characteristics, and a conceptualization of social movements within the discipline of international relations. Furthermore, the specific case of counter-hegemonic movements and their struggle within the world-system is explained (see 2).

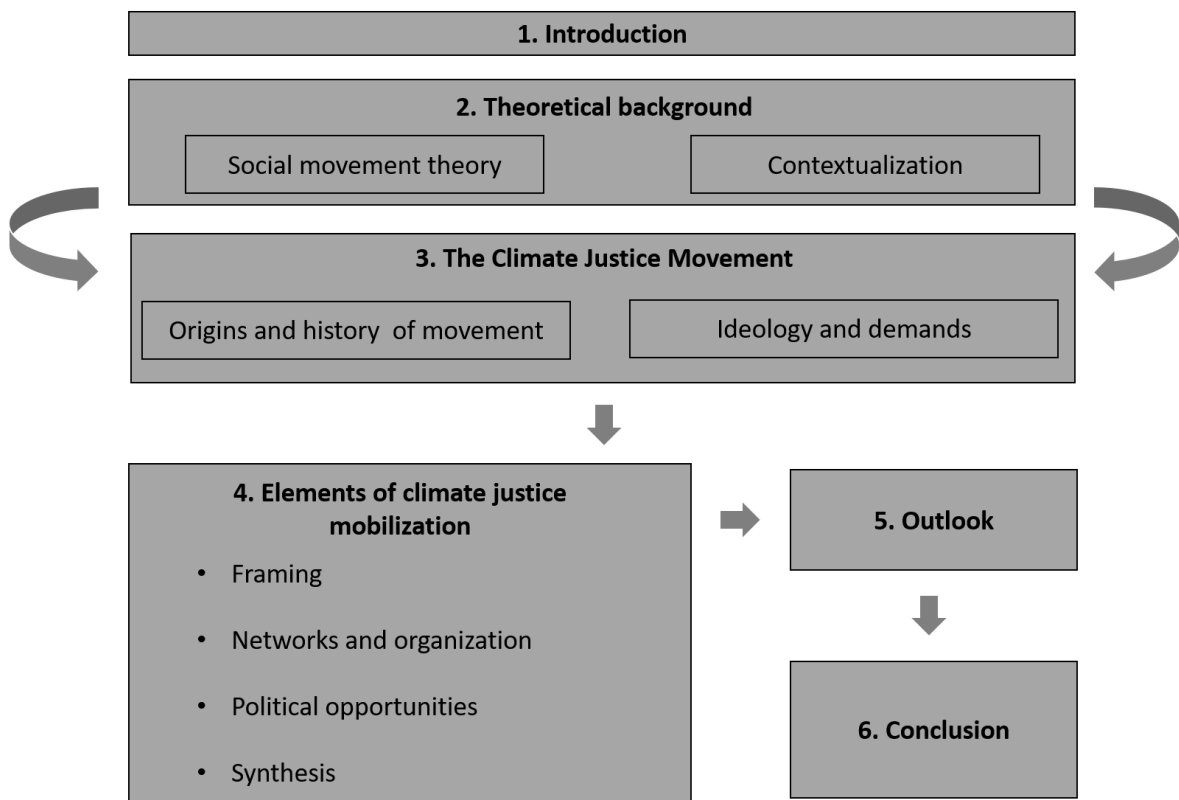


Figure 1: Structure of investigation

As a next step, the origin and history of the CJM are portrayed. Hereby, specific attention is paid to its role within the institutionalized climate change debate, as well as the recent rise in popularity of the concept of CJ. Subsequently, the ideology of CJ is examined. To understand the radicality of its demands, the claims of the movement are contrasted with the hegemonic narrative of conventional climate change governance (see 3).

In the analysis section, the investigation applies a framework by Tarrow to determine factors for sustained, counter-hegemonic movement mobilization. The framework covers internal properties as well as external, environmental conditions that factor into the success of movement appeal (see 4). After discussing the results, the outlook outlines some ideas and predictions over the future trajectory of the CJM (see 5).

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Social movements and transnational movements

The CJM is considered a transnational, counter-hegemonic social movement. Social movements are relatively long-term collective engagements in producing or guiding social change (Calhoun 2013). Davies and Peña (2019) have identified three common elements among all social movements:

- they are networked social phenomena, held together by different forms of cooperation, recognition, and principally, communication;
- they emerge and evolve relationally, exchanging material and symbolic resources with their environment; and
- they publicly appeal to political authorities, directly or indirectly.

Social movement scholar Sidney Tarrow regards social movements as a form of contentious politics. Contentious politics can be defined as the expression of citizens joining coalitions against more powerful elites and opponents. If this form of contentious politics is being coordinated and sustained to achieve social change, we speak of social movements (Tarrow 2011)¹. Nevertheless, the description of social movements in relationship with contentious politics only covers social movements that come from below. However, social movements

¹ Otherwise, one would speak of social protests.

include the entire political spectrum from reactionary, nationalist, fundamentalist, to democratic, liberalist, and counter-hegemonic movements (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018).

Social movements do not always have to fit classical collective actor formats with clear identities, interests, and organisational boundaries. There can be counter-hegemonic and exclusive (religious fundamentalism), pro-market and nationalist (Brexit), or pro-European and nativist social movements (many European right-wing movements) (Davies and Peña 2019). Social movements frequently form as a response to a “crisis of representation” (Mainwaring 2006: 19) which happens when citizens do not feel well represented by the political elites (Hutter et al. 2018). In this context, SMs frequently act as a “weapon of the weak” (Ibid: 325) as they seize demands that remain unanswered by political actors and articulate them in non-institutionalized channels of the public sphere.

In the last three decades, the number of *transnational social movements* (TNSM) has tripled (Smith and Wiest 2012)². TNSMs are composed of individual citizens, networks, and organizations that may target policies and actions of state actors, international organizations, or private actors (most frequently transnational companies). Like social movements, TNSMs are a coordinated and sustained form of contentious politics to evoke political change. In the case of TNSMs, however, the participants of a social movement organize themselves across borders and outside their national identities to advance thematically similar agendas and coordinate political activities throughout the world (Bennet 2012).

The emergence of transnational activism is linked to the phenomena of globalization. Globalization has not only led to an increase in cultural and social ties between citizens from different countries, but it has also created a new social stratum, the *transnational activist*. Transnational activists belong to groups who are rooted in national contexts but differ from their domestic counterparts. They engage in contentious political activities that go beyond the nation-state and involve them in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts (Tarrow 2012). Notably, transnational activism has been facilitated by the same technological advances that have fueled globalization (development of new ICT and transport technologies). Transnational activists often organize against the global issues created by economic globalization, such as climate devastation, financial crisis, and global migration (Smith et al. 2017).

² To allow for a more fluent reading, the terms “social movements” and “transnational social movements” are used synonymously in this investigation.

Social movements can be classified according to the nature of their goals, or degree of contentiousness. Depending on their goals, social movements orient towards different constituencies, face different levels of resistance, and apply different means to advance their agendas (Davies and Peña 2019). Realist movements generally seek to preserve the system and are oriented towards the interstate system. Rationalist movements seek to reform the system and are oriented towards international society. Counter-hegemonic movements aspire to transform the system and are oriented towards the world society (Ibid). They seek broad or sweeping changes in the social structure and its ideological foundation and are also sometimes referred to as revolutionary, anti-systemic, or transformative movements (Taylor 2000).

2.2 Elements of social movements

As mentioned before, social movements are a form of contentious politics that are coordinated and sustained to achieve social change, e.g. influence policy or alter power relations (Tarrow 2011). Challengers design movement campaigns to engage supporters in collective mobilization to provoke social change (see figure 2). When movements achieve attracting a large enough amount of supporters they can either force to change existing policy (public preference mechanism) or seek direct political power (political access mechanisms) (Nulman 2015).

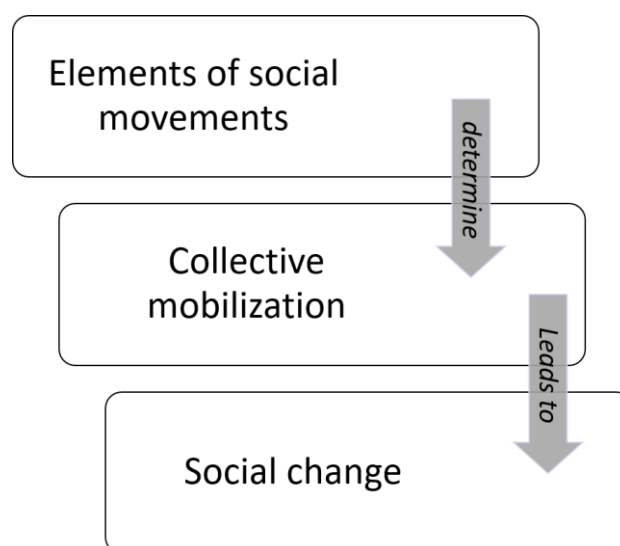


Figure 2: The trajectory of social movements

Tarrow (2011) identifies three intersecting elements of any social movement. None of these elements alone ensures the emergence or the outcomes of social movements. But put together, they describe the movement campaign and allow the opportunity to analyze the

probability of mobilization success. In the following chapter, the three elements of social movements are explained to understand how they affect collective mobilization, and ultimately, movement success.

Effective framing, identity construction and communicating to particular audiences

The first element of social movements is concerned with the way social movements communicate their claims and engage with their constituencies. Identity construction and framing help with the process of meaning-making for social movements and create movement solidarity even in the face of resistance.

One of the leading scholars in the field of framing is Snow, who defined framing as the construction of an interpretive scheme that simplifies and condenses the “world out there” (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). Framing allows social movements to attach characteristics to issues and people. It can be used to identify and define an issue worth fighting for, blame opponents, or demonstrate pathways to solutions. The goal of framing is to align individual and collective identities. Being a dynamic process that evolves, it becomes the task of any social movement to constantly build and interpret situations and integrate them into their specific framing processes (Snow 2004).

Successful framing of social illnesses and inequities transforms the consciousness of people and leads to cognitive liberation. According to Taylor (2000), cognitive liberation occurs when (a) the system that people once trusted loses legitimacy, (b) people who are ordinarily fatalistic begin to demand social change, and (c) people find and exercise a new sense of political efficacy (Taylor 2000).

To increase the number of their constituencies, movements frequently seek to connect the struggles of oppressed parts of the population. *Frame bridging* refers to the linking of frames that are ideologically aligned but structurally separated (della Porta and Parks 2014). An example would be geographically separated movements struggling with the grievances of *economic globalization*. The context and the way people are affected might differ. However, the source of grievances is the same, therefore their fights can be aligned. A popular method to establish a powerful and integrative narrative constitutes the approach of injustice framing. Injustice framing allows a movement to morally condemn an unjust situation and unleash a sensation of righteous anger towards the oppressors (Tarrow 2011).

The establishment of a successful frame for contentious movements is further aggravated by the efforts of counter-framing. Frames of contentious movements compete with counter-

frames created and defended by the authorities to maintain the status quo. Authorities typically enjoy crucial advantages over social movements in the field of framing as they dispose of greater cultural resources than social movements (e.g. state relation with the church and the media). Additionally, authorities can rely on cultural symbols that are well-established within society while contentious (and especially counter-hegemonic) movements often reject certain cultural symbols and values, seeking to challenge and change them (Ibid).

To act collectively and consistently over time, social movements depend on a sense of solidarity between members. The most effective way to evoke solidarity is to construct a shared identity. Identities can either be inherited (e.g. race/gender/sexual orientation) or constructed. When it is needed to construct an identity, movement leaders make use of myths that serve as lineaments of durable connections among movement participants (Tilly 2009). Constructing a shared identity between a diverse membership is a difficult task for movements. Disagreements about the identity of a movement can drain resources, shift the focus away from the core goals, or in the worst, case fragment the movement. Competing movement fractions may each regard themselves to be the authentic representative, producing competition over identity. In some cases, this has led the revolutionary and militant wings of a movement to narrow the scope of acceptable identity. As parts of the movement find themselves outside of that narrower identity definition, alliances break and the revolutionary wing accuses the moderates of *selling out* (Tarrow 2011).

Existence of organizational structures and networks that support popular mobilization

Like the previous element, networks and organizations of movements are concerned with the *internal capabilities* of movements that contribute to their success. Activists typically face an uphill battle in their struggle with authorities, which outperform them in terms of material resources. To become a powerful force for social change, movements need to develop their socio-organizational resources and tap into as many pools and networks of potential supporters as possible. Movements rely on their *social capital*. Social capital refers to the ability of movements to utilize their social relations and positions in their networks to access a variety of resources for their purposes (Edwards et al. 2018). The accumulated social capital makes up the mobilizing structures of social movements, which include infrastructures, social ties and networks, affinity groups, and coalitions that facilitate autonomous (that is, not state- or elite-controlled) communication and cooperation among activists (Smith and Wiest 2012; McAdam et al. 2012).

Movements emerge out of episodes of contention through interaction with authorities, allies, and third parties. Formal organizations of movement rise and fall, along with the waves of contention. What survives the specific episode of contention are the interpersonal relationships that have formed. These networks make up the actual foundation of movements (Tarrow 2011). Typically, movements start off as local networks, spread through the diffusion of contention, and ultimately either disappear or scale upward to national or transnational level. When they draw on existing social networks, social movement organizations can mobilize supporters rapidly and put pressure on opponents (Ibid).

Social movements are not based on networks alone though. Without some degree of formal organization, movements eventually lose momentum and fade away. Traditionally, movements have been either organized hierarchically or horizontally. Hierarchical organizational structures build infrastructures to coordinate contention and maintain interaction with allies, authorities, and supporters. Hierarchical movements tend to internalize their activists into organizations. As a consequence, they might not be flexible enough to reach out to the informal networks and communities of protest, therefore losing their capacity for disruption (Diani 2009). Horizontal organizational models allow for innovation, exchange, and action on all levels. They grew out of dissatisfaction with the steady institutionalization of mainstream organizations and the compromises they made. However, the resulting decentralized approach is prone to lacking coordination and frequently short-lived (Ibid).

The rise of the information age has transformed movement organizing. The spread of new communications technologies has allowed TNSMs to expand their reach across national borders. The emergence of wide-spread availability of internet and smartphones combined with social media platforms (e.g. Facebook), as well as free international messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Skype) have contributed to a significant increase of transnational movement network ties (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018). Due to the significantly lower costs of transnational organizing, previously marginalized people with fewer resources can participate in the political process and can make their voices heard (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018; Smith et al. 2017).

Social movements do not exist in a vacuum. They grow from and give birth to another, work in coalitions, and influence each other indirectly through their effects on the larger cultural and political environment. Activists define themselves, frame their issues, develop tactics, and establish organizations regarding what other collective actors have done. The influences

that social movements have on each other is called *social movement spillover*. Social movement spillover has integrated activists, world-views, ideas, tactics and methods for protests and organizing, and can ultimately lead to new, distinct movements. These effects can occur between movements that are contemporaries or across time (Hadden and Tarrow 2007).

Availability of political opportunities are present and constraints are low

The last element that contributes to collective mobilizations is the perception of political opportunities and threats. Compared to the first two elements, this aspect focuses on conditions *external* to the movement and serves as a helpful tool to find answers to the question of why contentious movements happen more frequently and are more successful in some periods than in others. On the opportunity side of things, contentious movements increase in strength when they gain access to external resources that make their success more likely. Threats, on the other hand, relate to the risks and costs of action or inaction in the face of an unjust situation. Contentious movements see their appeal increase when these threats grow stronger and start to endanger the values and interests of ordinary people (Tarrow 2011). Another aspect influencing the willingness of citizens to participate in contentious movements is the existence of repression by authorities. The application of repressive measures against contentious movement differs depending on the power dynamics within society and the political structure of the country. Authoritarian regimes, for example, are more likely to use violence against activists compared to liberal democracies (Sicotte and Brulle 2017).

The prospect of opportunities for social movements is strongly related to the public's approval of the objectives and methods of the movements. If public opinion is rather negative towards a movement, it becomes more difficult to attract new supporters. At the same time, authorities face fewer difficulties creating counter-frames aiming to negate the movement's credibility and validity. Frequently, authorities will latch onto the actions of the revolutionary wing of a movement, dramatize their actions, and frame the entire movement to be radical or extreme (Rootes and Nulman 2015).

The struggle between challengers and authorities, or the elite, is usually an asymmetrical battle. As a result of their historic dominance, elites dispose of cultural and material hegemony over their challengers. The strategies that elites employ to neutralize movements always aim to leave existing power relations intact. If possible, elites simply ignore the demands of challengers. However, when eventually movements draw too much attention to

be ignored, other methods are applied. Mechanisms can either be overt or direct, e.g. repression against activists. Or disguised and indirect through co-optation or counter-mobilizations (Smith et al. 2017).

Elites frequently use informal modes of mobilization to influence and contend non-elites (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018). In social movement theory, this approach is called co-optation. Co-optation describes the efforts of authorities to neutralize movements by mobilizing them into elite projects, providing symbolic access to decision processes, or otherwise deradicalizing the claims of movements (Smith and Wiest 2012). By engaging their critics in dialogue and organizational processes, elites seek to circumvent more confrontational actions and demands and create intra-movement disagreements over tactics and strategy. The disagreements frequently lead to a fragmentation of the movement into a moderate and revolutionary segment (Smith et al. 2017).

Author's illustration based on Tarrow (2011: p 121)

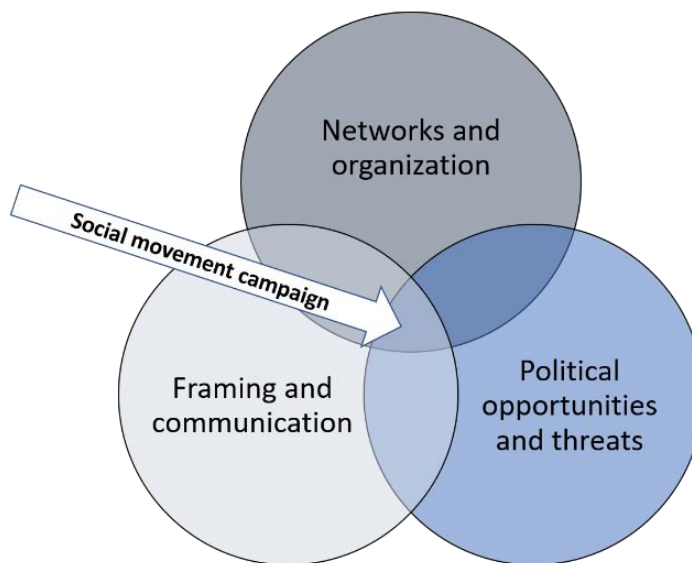


Figure 3: Elements of the social movement campaign

To sum up, social movements are more likely to produce successful campaigns when they build on and appropriate social networks and organizations, combine emotions and identities and frame them in a unifying manner while meeting political opportunities or lower constraints to activism (Tarrow 2011) (see figure 3). Later, in chapter 4, this investigation will apply Tarrow's intersecting elements to the case of the CJM to analyze its probability for future movement success.

2.3 Conceptualization

In the last chapters, the theoretical background of social movements and the elements that are most important for mobilization success were outlined. Following, the investigation will shift the focus to the roles of social movements within the international system and their influence on international policy.

2.3.1 Social movements in international relations theory

Social movement theory is an interdisciplinary study within the social sciences. It draws from various fields, most notably international relations theory, political science theory, and sociology (Císař 2015). Since the subject of the study constitutes a transnational social movement that seeks to influence international power relations and governance, the study predominantly analyzes the CJM through an IR-lens. To understand how the CJM is regarded within the international arena, it is important to know how the different IR schools regard the role of social movements.

Realism

The realist perspective leaves little room for consideration of actors beyond the state. For realists, states are the central actors, and power, interests, and military force matter more in international politics than ideas, norms, and ideology. Primacy is attributed to great powers, national interests, and foreign policy factors (Morgenthau 1948). Since non-state actors are not expected to change the behavior of states, realists deny the effects of movements on global governance (Davies and Peña 2019).

Liberal institutionalism

Unlike the realist school, institutionalism is less state-centric and attributes some importance in international politics to outside actors. The institutionalist view of social movements is deeply linked to the idea of a global civil society. The global civil society describes the space outside the realm of governments in which individuals and collective organizations, such as social movements, advance common interests. Within the theory of global governance, social movements are regarded as actors of a network of multi-actor, issue-driven relationships. Forming part of civil society, they act as representatives of certain constituencies or as brokers with established organizations (Baylis et al. 2017; Kelly 2007).

Environmental movements, for example, are valuable insofar as they highlight neglected issues and keep public attention alive when other events threaten to eclipse said issues from public consciousness. Due to their ties to scientists and their long engagement with particular issues, environmental NGOs become experts in their field and are frequently asked to advise governments or corporations on communicating environmental issues at hand (Rootes and Nulman 2015). Nevertheless, civil society actors are not regarded as agents of change with significant influence over state behavior. Most of all, they help to facilitate inter-state cooperation and reduce the global democratic deficit by making the voices of marginalized groups heard (Bennett 2012).

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism has contributed to today's understanding of social movements as a social phenomenon. Contrary to the generalizable theory formation of realists which are based on predetermined assumptions of international politics, the constructivist perspective holds that human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and collectively shared systems of meanings or identity. It is not only the distribution of material power, wealth, and geographical conditions that can explain state behavior but also ideas, identities, and norms. Furthermore, their focus on ideational factors shows that reality is not fixed, but rather subject to change (Katzenstein 1996). Wendt (1995) defines the world order structure as consisting of durable sets of expectations, shared understandings, and practices constituting and regulating the social relationships of actors across borders. In international relations, the constructivist school helps to explain why people join transnational movements and organize themselves across borders and outside their national identities.

Marxism

Unlike realists and liberals, Marxists reject the view of state conflict or cooperation and instead focus on the economic and material aspects as defining elements of international relations. Based on Marx's notion of *historical materialism*, Marxist IR-scholars view the international system as an integrated capitalist system in pursuit of capital accumulation (Gills 1987). The pursuit of economic growth and the need for constantly expanding markets make capitalism global in its reach. Historically, this has led to the imperial conquest and colonialization of the entire planet. Marxists are inherently critical with the state system and international organizations which are regarded as subservient to the dominant, capitalist

class and only reproduce and maintain an economic and political system that serves their interests (Baylis et al. 2017).

International institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and WTO, are seen as handmaidens of neoliberalist expansion (Baskin 2019; Tarrow 2012). They are regarded as facilitators of the transnational global capitalist class which has skewed state regulations and is responsible for economic and environmental despair all over the world (Williams 2007). One of the results of the neoliberal agenda is the disproportionate power and influence of corporations, especially compared to governments of developing countries.

For Marxists, social movements are the expression of civil society seeking a world alternative to established capitalist society (Císař 2015). Nation-states have little power over the rules of the game. Instead, the global elite is transnational in organization and influence. Therefore, to alter the basic structure of the system, challengers have to act and coordinate globally to challenge those in power. For Marxists, social movements constitute a key challenger to the global, capitalist elite and can play a decisive role in the transition to a new, non-capitalist global order (Cox 1983; Smith et al. 2018).

Neo-Marxists have developed and updated the Marxist theory to the context of the late 20th century. The most important contribution comes from Wallerstein and his *world-system theory*. The theory intends to establish a multidisciplinary, historical social science focusing on long-term processes able to explain the rise and fall of nations, income inequality, social unrest, and imperialism. The capitalist world economy which has been detrimental to a large portion of the world's population has led to a global division of labor, creation of an elite *core* and an exploited *periphery* (Wallerstein 2004).

2.3.2 Social movements in the world-system

As mentioned in the introduction, this investigation applies a Marxist, world-system lens to analyze the interactions of the CJM within the international system. The advantage of applying a world-system analysis is that it allows the opportunity to break out of the state-centric paradigms of the realist or idealist school of thought. It analyzes the modern capitalist economy in structural and historical terms which permits a better understanding of the nature of the prevailing world economic and political order. Additionally, world-system analysis can envisage a fundamental reordering of the world structure, which is the declared objective of counter-hegemonic movements (Smith and Wiest 2012). The next section provides further

theoretical background on the structure and power relations within the world-system. This helps to better understand the particularities of the struggle of counter-hegemonic challengers.

Transnational capital class, and neo-gramscianism

Scholars like Sklair (2016) and Robinson (2004) have further contributed to world-system theory by accounting for the role of globalization which has given rise to new actors on the global stage. In today's global political economy, sovereign nation-states are being subjugated by a transnational financial system and a corresponding transnational system of production. Integrating different countries and regions into a new global economy and society, economic globalization has unified the world into a single mode of production and a single global system. Global capital mobility has allowed the reorganization of production worldwide, allowing the maximization of profit-making opportunities. As a result, production systems have been fragmented and integrated externally into new globalized circuits of accumulation (Robinson 2004).

Capitalism's global expansion through economic globalization has created a new elite group that controls and benefits from the global system, the *transnational capital class* (TCC). The TCC is the global social stratum that controls supranational instruments of the global economy. It is the world bourgeoisie that exists unconstrained by national boundaries. Sklair (2016) defines four interlocking groups that make up the TCC:

- those who own and control the transnational companies (the corporate fraction)
- globalizing bureaucrats and politicians (the state fraction)
- globalizing professionals (the technical fraction)
- merchants and media (the consumerist fraction).

The TCC engages in activities at a variety of levels, including local, regional, national, and global politics. The idea of a TCC that controls the world-system is based on the assumption that in globalized societies, no anti-capitalist political party will be able to hold on to power. Accepting this premise allows observing the global political system as a whole instead of individual parts of the system (Ibid). The influence of elite interests has led international institutions to exclude groups that challenge market ideologies, a phenomenon known as *market epistemology* (Smith et al. 2017). This has not only led to the dominance of pro-

market, environmental civil society, it also preserves the illusion of democratic functioning and the appearance of legitimacy (Sicotte and Brulle 2017).

Gramscianism and cultural hegemony

The Marxist theory is complemented by the Gramscian notion of *cultural hegemony* which describes the role that capitalism holds as an ideology (Cox 1983). The ruling class manipulates the culture of society through coercive techniques of intellectual and cultural persuasion to justify the political, economic, and social status quo. This dominant ideology, or *geoculture*, defines what is seen to be *common sense* and aggravates the formulation and development of an alternative system to the capitalist order (Wallerstein 1991). Cultural hegemony is rarely invoked by force. Instead, elites rely on ideological apparatuses (religion, family, education) to create a tacit consent from society.

Instead of reducing hegemony to the powers of nation-states, the neo-Gramscian perspective developed by Cox broadens the domain of hegemony to today's international system. Cox describes a *transnational historic bloc* that has formed to exercise global hegemony and represent the interests of the TCC (Cox 1983). Supranational institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the World Bank defend and maintain the hegemony of the global capitalist order by normalizing and rationalizing the primacy of political economy based on capitalist logic and resulting inequalities (Ibid; Smith et al. 2018).

War of position and war of maneuver

The goal of any counter-hegemony is to eventually replace the historic bloc it was born in. To do so, counter-hegemonic movements must challenge the hegemonic discourse, and replace it with a new one. Gramsci's *war of position* describes a strategy in which the challenger increases the number of people through persuasion or propaganda, who share its view on the hegemonic order. It is a struggle for legitimacy or the battle over what passes for common sense in any given society (Gramsci 1971). In her influential work on the early environmental justice movement, Taylor states that counter-hegemonic movements seek to change the dominant paradigm within a society: "A paradigm refers to a body of ideas, major assumptions, concepts, propositions, values, and goals of a substantive area that influences the way people view the world, conduct scientific inquiry, and accept theoretical formulations" (Taylor 2000: 528). She makes the point that for a paradigm to be dominant, it is not necessary that a majority of members in society subscribe to it. In the current world-

system, it is dominant because it is held and defended by the most powerful groups in society and because it justifies and legitimates the institutions and practices of market economies.

Meanwhile, movements also engage in an overt, material struggle for governmental or state power. In this *war of maneuver*, movements seek to overthrow the current hegemony, either violently or democratically (Gramsci 1971). A major obstacle for counter-hegemonic movements resides in the fact that they must work from within a system they reject without becoming part of it (Magdoff and Foster 2011). Since counter-hegemonic movements question the fundamentals of the world-system, the very nature of existing states and institutions is therefore subject to contestation and reformulation. Typically, counter-hegemonic movements today are skeptical towards interstate institutions like the UN and seek to create alternative fora for movement exchange and interaction (Smith and Wiest 2012). Nevertheless, counter-hegemonic movements are frequently expected to provide solutions to issues that are created by the very system they seek to transform. But as they are also unable to leave the system independently, they are trapped in what Wallerstein (2004) calls *social prisons*.

3. The climate justice movement

After having outlined the theoretical background on social movements and their role within international relations, the next chapter moves to the subject of the study: the climate justice movement. As a first step, CJ and the movement behind the concept are briefly presented. After that, aiming to understand its position within global climate governance, the origins of the movement, as well as its role within the climate change debate is laid out. Following, the counter-hegemonic ideology and demands are outlined and contrasted with the hegemonic view on fighting climate change.

The CJM is a transnational movement that advocates for the just, equitable, and democratic transition to a post-carbon world to stop climate change (Schlosberg and Collins 2014). Its transnational activists organize themselves across borders and outside their national identities to jointly fight against the transnational issue of climate change along with the unequal burdens it places on different groups of people. CJ activism takes place at the national/local level (e.g. protests against polluting industries and companies), as well as at the international level (e.g. at UN conferences).

As the concept of CJ has gained more widespread recognition in recent years, different interpretations started to develop. For example, the UN Department of Economic and Social

Affairs has adopted a CJ interpretation that focuses on the right of developing nations to industrialize in a carbon-constrained world (Chatterton et al. 2013). The Mary Robinson Foundation focuses on the aspect of intergenerational equity³ and the moral imperative to leave future generations an inhabitable planet (Mary Robinson Foundation 2013). For others, CJ means that those least responsible for climate change should not bear its consequences (Boom et al. 2016). While the aforementioned interpretations cover some aspects, they fail to represent the entirety of the concept that is CJ. Chatterton et al. offer a good, broad definition:

“Climate justice refers to principles of democratic accountability and participation, ecological sustainability and social justice and their combined ability to provide solutions to climate change. Such a notion focuses on the interrelationships between, and addresses the root causes of, the social injustice, ecological destruction and economic domination perpetrated by the underlying logics of pro-growth capitalism (Chatterton et al. 2013: 5).”

Following Chatterton’s definition, CJ transcends the fight for lowering carbon emissions. It is a holistic, eco-sociological analysis of a global economy that has been detrimental to the environment and large segments of the global population.

The CJM is composed of a variety of activists from diverse backgrounds. Tokar (2014) speaks of three distinct, but complementary currents with varying focus’ that make up the movement. In the Global South, the discourse is shaped by indigenous rights and peasant movements and their claims for food sovereignty and special rights for indigenous lands (Claeys and Delgado Pugley 2017). In the US, CJ activists have traditionally been tied to civil rights and indigenous groups and their struggle against ecological racism (Schlosberg and Collins 2014). In Europe, the movement is strongly shaped by the anti-neoliberal discourse of global justice activists.

Originally, the CJM has been the result of the coalescence of the *global justice movement* (GJM) and activists from the *indigenous rights movements* (IRM) (Hadden 2014; Smith 2014; Tokar 2014). The fight for CJ has been heavily shaped by the input and analysis of these movements. The different backgrounds of activists have shaped its analysis, claims,

³ Intergenerational justice describes the idea that present generations have certain duties towards future generations. Climate change raises particularly pressing issues, such as which risks those living today are allowed to impose on future generations, and how available natural resources can be used without threatening the sustainable functioning of the planet’s ecosystems.

tactics, and framing methods. Many followers have either been former global justice (GJ) or indigenous rights (IR) activists or simultaneously regard themselves as such. Over the years, the two movements have joined forces with disillusioned, anti-capitalist environmentalists and have created a coalition of CJ activists. Due to their influence on the ideology and world-view of the CJM, the next segment briefly portrays the two movements.

Global justice movement

Beginning in the 1990s, the GJM collectively mobilized contentious activists under a shared opposition against the devastating effects of global neoliberalism which had resulted in growing poverty, inequalities within and between nations, and ecological degradation. Its followers comprise a diverse array of activists from the Global North and South, including human rights, labor, environmental, indigenous, peasant, and feminist movements who unite under a shared opposition to neoliberal economic globalization (Almeida 2019). The primary goal of the movement is to protect social citizenship and environmental rights, especially for marginalized members of society, and confront the deep inequality and poverty that exist globally (Baskin 2019).

It is important to note that the GJM, although often referred to as an *anti-globalization movement*, is only critical to the current form of economic globalization. In fact, it argues for a globalization from below, that is concerned with bringing about sufficient democratic control over states, markets, and corporations, as the only way to challenge the *top-down*-approach favored by developed nations. The movement advocates in favor of organizing modes along the lines of democratic socialism and emphasizes the need for international solidarity between Global North and South (Williams 2007).

In the early 2000s, the GJM was considered the most influential, counter-hegemonic, transnational movement. It became notorious for its unconventional and innovative use of direct-action forms of protests, which were mainly centered around events of commercial and financial institutions⁴. However, the aftermath of 9/11 and the ensuing US invasion of Iraq shifted the focus of many activists and the GJM evolved into an anti-war movement, a phenomenon known as *social movement spill-out* (Hadden and Tarrow 2007).

Indigenous Rights movement

⁴ Most notably the GJM managed to shut-down the WTO ministerial conference in Seattle in 1999, also known as *the Battle of Seattle* (Hadden and Tarrow 2007).

Globalization has rapidly accelerated the threat to the integrity of indigenous peoples as outside cultures, politics, and economic activities push into every corner of the world (Claeys and Delgado Pugley 2017). Throughout the world, indigenous peoples are experiencing injustices in the form of duplicitous development schemes, poverty, landlessness, dispossession, political and religious oppression, and genocide (Lauderdale 2008). To resist these forces, indigenous people's movements have formed as a political movement composed of indigenous groups seeking formal international recognition as a distinct social group, protection of recognized indigenous land, and recognition of the right of indigenous peoples to practice their cultural traditions and beliefs (Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change 2009). Because indigenous people share similar grievances over the effects of a globalized capitalist economy, they frequently build alliances with other marginalized groups, such as peasant farmers or (in the case of the US) black civil rights groups (Schlosberg and Collins 2014).

3.1 Climate justice within the climate change debate

The next chapter gives an overview of how the CJM has acted within the climate change debate. Hereby, specific attention is paid to the evolution of the movement, its relationship with mainstream environmentalist groups, and its stance towards the institutionalized climate debate.

The issue that has provided shared grievances for environmentalists from all over the world is climate change. Earth-system researchers date the beginnings of the human-caused global threat to ecosystems back to the industrial revolution and speeding up after 1945 (Baskin 2019). Today's dominant issue first emerged at the end of the 1980s. At that time, climate scientists and activists started paying attention to the issue of global warming and the role of greenhouse gas emissions, pushing countries, and international organizations for action⁵. In 1988, the United Nations (UN) created the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to provide a forum for scientific discussions and produce periodic assessments of the state of the global climate. In its first report, the IPCC confirmed the human-caused increase of atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases, resulting in global warming. The report facilitated the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC remains the principal forum for the institutionalized climate

⁵ Already in the 1970s, the issue of ecological urgency related to the finiteness of resources and the carrying-capacity of the planet gained wide reach attention. Especially the 1972 UN Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, and the publishing of *The limits of Growth* by the Club of Rome were influential in starting a debate on global, ecological issues (Falk 2009).

change debate with a stated goal to “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (UN 1992: 9).

The dominant approach to climate change

The CJM entered the climate change debate as an alternative to the dominant discourse and practices of international institutions and state governments to approach climate change. It represents the perspective of the Global South⁶ which differs substantially from the dominant Euro-Atlantic schools of thought (Tokar 2014). Within global climate governance, the counterpart to the CJM is represented by what DeLucia (2009) calls the *United Nations Climate Regime*. The term refers to the body of institutions that seeks to defend the prevailing view on climate change. The regime is comprised of the climate regime proper (UNFCCC, the Paris Climate Agreement, and related organs and bodies), but also of other UN agencies and institutions such as UNEP, UNDP, World Bank, etc.. The modus operandi of the institutionalized debate to confront climate change is to negotiate (typically non-binding) multilateral agreements on carbon emission reductions.

The dominant discourse on climate change governance that UN officials and state actors adhere to is based on the theory of *eco-modernization*. Eco-modernists seek to integrate environmental costs into the market logic by putting a price on aspects of the production that are particularly harmful to the environment (Falk 2009). The approach typically produces technocratic, market-based, top-down solutions that are appealing to the general public since they do not require fundamental changes in behavior or power structures (Smith et al. 2017). One example would be *cap-and-trade*-market schemes for carbon emission. Cap-and-trade means to agree on a limit on the allowable level of greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and corporations and then have the users and producers of oil, coal, and natural gas buy, sell, and trade their allowance to emit a given amount of carbon dioxide. The mechanism is supposed to stimulate technological innovation to increase carbon efficiency due to the resulting increase in the price of oil, coal, and natural gas and trade (Magdoff and Foster 2011).

Climate change is frequently regarded as a technical challenge for the capitalist system to overcome. Future human ingenuity is believed to eventually solve the problem. Capitalism is portrayed as the only system that incentivizes technological innovation so that humanity

⁶ Understood as all peoples with a common experience of exploitation, alienation, and marginalization is the victim of this devastation (Bullard and Müller 2012).

can “invent” itself out of the crisis (Ecomodernist Manifesto 2015). Already, futuristic geoengineering methods are discussed at UNFCCC events. Geo-engineering describes large-scale intervention in the earth's climate system to reduce global warming (e.g. solar radiation management⁷). For the time being, as these technologies are still developing, eco-modernists rely upon “bridge fuels” derived from fracking and biodiesel, which are seen as greener alternatives to carbon and oil (Baskin 2019).

The Climate Justice Movement in the 2000s

In its first years of existence, CJ activists were trying to find their space within the climate change discourse. In the 2000s, activists were predominantly indigenous rights advocates from the Global South who sought to introduce a justice dimension into the institutionalized climate debate. In that time, CJ activists were fairly moderate *inside activists* (Hadden 2015). Their main objective was to lobby governments and influential NGOs to implement adaptation and mitigation strategies that would take into account their struggles (Tokar 2014).

In 2002, a collective of indigenous rights groups around *Friends of the Earth International*, *Indigenous Environmental Network*, *North America*, and *Third World Network* came together to produce the *Bali Principles for Climate Justice* (Bali Principles 2002). Attempting to unify the dispersed struggles of indigenous groups around the world, the principles laid out a shared understanding of CJ to kickstart a global movement (Tokar 2014). In 2004, CJ organizations convened in South Africa, to draft the Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading which criticized the market-based *cap-and-trade* approach to carbon emission reduction which policy-makers in the US and the EU had favored in the run-up before the ratification of the Kyoto protocol (Ibid).

Copenhagen summit

Towards the end of the 2000s, the CJM started attracting more former GJ activists to join its cause. The presence was felt as the movement grew more contentious and adapted more direct-action methods. The 2009 climate summit in Copenhagen (COP 15) is considered a crucial moment for the future trajectory of the movement (Hadden 2015; Tokar 2014; Chatterton et al. 2013). Influenced by the aftermath of the financial crisis and aided by intense pressure from the US government, the summit failed to produce a significant

⁷ Solar radiation management attempts to offset the effects of greenhouse gases by causing the Earth to absorb less solar radiation.

agreement that would substantially reduce carbon emissions. Instead, negotiators fell back to little ambitious carbon emission trading mechanisms. The disappointing outcome of a highly awaited conference laid bare a division between a moderate and contentious segment of the greater climate change activist scene.

While more moderate activists were disappointed about the results but attempted to contain anger and frustration, the increasingly radical CJ section chose to directly confront and attack the UN process (Hadden 2015). Under the slogan “system change, not climate change“ (La Via Campesina 2010), contentious activists accused the UN and state officials of selling out climate goals for the interests of global elites⁸. Among CJ activists, the feeling that real change would not be found within the realms of institutionalized channels grew. This perception was further confirmed as movement participation at the event was limited, while corporations had access to lobby their claims within the event (Climate Justice Now! 2010). As a result, up to 100,000 demonstrators took to the streets of Copenhagen to make their voices heard where they were met with police force (van de Zeer and Batty 2009).

The results of COP15 left the CJM alienated from the institutionalized climate change debate. State officials outright rejected their demands, while moderate environmentalist groups were focused to produce a meaningful climate agreement to replace the Kyoto protocols. The absence of CJ theory within the institutionalized debate on climate change is symbolized by the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015, which relegated any language on historic responsibility, human rights, intergenerational equity, and gender empowerment – all key principles of CJ – to the preamble (UN 2015). The Agreement itself was groundbreaking, yet contradictory. With over 195 signatories, it achieved beyond what was considered politically possible. However, in terms of mitigation, it stopped far short of what is necessary to stop dangerous climate change. Current mitigation pledges are estimated to result in an increase in global warming of roughly three degrees, with insufficient finance to implement those pledges (Boom et al. 2016).

Being denied access to the formal political arena, in the following years CJ activists focused on building a decentralized, grassroots network of semiautonomous, coordinated units to

⁸ “Government and corporate elites here in Copenhagen made no attempt to satisfy the expectations of the world. False solutions and corporations completely co-opted the United Nations process. The global elite would like to privatize the atmosphere through carbon markets; carve up the remaining forests, bush and grasslands of the world through the violation of Indigenous Peoples’ rights and land-grabbing; promote high-risk technologies to restructure the climate; (...) and complete the enclosure and privatisation of the commons.” (Climate Justice Now! 2010).

exert simultaneous influence on multiple sites of environmental governance (Tormos-Aponte and García-López 2018). By taking the fight *back to the streets*, the movement returned to its origins of local environmental justice fights involving protest and civil disobedience. Some examples of local CJ struggles that attracted widespread public attention include the *Standing Rock*⁹ protests in the US and *Hambi bleibt*¹⁰ in Germany.

Looming climate crisis and surge of climate justice protests

Starting in 2018, a new dynamic in climate activism set in. In the past four years (2015–2018), the world has seen the warmest documented mean global temperatures on record (WMO 2019). In 2019 alone there have been many instances that drew media attention to the effects of climate change. From raging fires in the Amazon rainforest, Australia, and Siberia to new reports on melting arctic ice caps and unprecedented sea level rises. While more people become aware of the urgency of the threat that climate change poses to humanity, scientific reports continue to argue for the urgent necessity to abandon *business-as-usual methods* and the need for more drastic measures. For example, the 2018 IPCC special report *Global Warming 1.5 °C* argues that current pathways reflecting the mitigation ambitions as submitted under the Paris Agreement would fall considerably short in relation to limiting global warming to 1.5°C (IPCC 2018).

With each report outlining more drastic environmental impacts and a shorter time frame to decarbonize and avert the most severe consequences of the looming climate crisis, numbers of climate protests have steadily risen (Almeida 2019). Especially young activists have taken to the streets in a series of global demonstrations, demanding radical change in global climate governance. The *Greta-Effect* has politicized and sensitized a new generation of young activists for the issue of climate change. Many argue that previous generations have denied their right to a healthy life for the sake of economic growth and demand *intergenerational equity* (Sengupta 2019). CJ gained further momentum in 2019, as the recently formed Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for the Future started promoting hundreds of actions across the globe (Almeida 2019).

9 The Dakota Access Pipeline protests or Standing Rock protests were indigenous rights protests that began in early 2016. Mobilization started in reaction to the approved construction of an oil pipeline through the native land of the Standing Rock tribe and surrounding communities, which constitutes a threat to the region's drinking water, as well as to the water supply used to irrigate surrounding farmlands.

10 „Hambi bleibt“ refers to the slogan of German environmentalists who had been successfully occupying an ancient woodland in West Germany to stop it being torn up for open-cast coal mining. See: <https://hambachforest.org/>

After another year of dramatic reports on the global climate, the movement renewed its demands at the UNFCCC climate summit (COP 25) in Madrid (Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice 2019). Soberingly, the summit revealed that government officials are still not willing to engage with the ideas and demands of the movement. No new measures to cut emissions that would be needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees were agreed on. Furthermore, holding major contributors responsible, putting an end to *off-set*-mechanisms like carbon trading and other CJ demands were ignored (Ibid). Instead, negotiations focused on narrow, technical details like article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which leaves the door open for countries to *double-count* the certified emission reduction credits that some countries had already obtained under the Kyoto protocol. Against the insufficient efforts of state governments to significantly reduce their emissions, in September 2019 an estimated 2 million people demanded “*system change, not climate change*” (Taylor et. al 2019) at the Global Climate Strike, making CJ one of the most extensive social movements on the planet. Summing up, the CJM has formed as a result of the coalescence of GJ and IR activists as an alternative to the dominant discourse and practices of international institutions and state governments to approach climate change. The movement evolved from a niche group of advocates from the Global South to global popularity. Especially towards the end of the 2010s, large-scale mobilization primarily fueled by young climate activists has led to a new momentum for the movement.

3.2 A counter-hegemonic movement

After having outlined the origins and trajectory of the CJM, the following chapter situates the CJM as a counter-hegemonic movement that seeks to change the structure of the world-system. To do so, one must understand what CJ stands for, in which ways the ideas of the movement contrast with the hegemonic view on climate change, who their opponents are, and how the movement seeks to challenge their hegemony.

3.2.1 Hegemony and counter-hegemony within the climate change debate

Understanding the anti-systemic notion of the concept of CJ and to avoid confusing it with popular, narrower interpretations that have come into use in recent years, it helps to look at the context in which it originated. As mentioned earlier, the CJM formed at the turn of the last century as a coalescence of activists from the IRM and the GJM. At that time, both movements formed part of a progressive, transnational social movement network that has increasingly been coming together in multi-issue coalitions in the last 20 years. *The World*

Social Forum (WSF) was especially influential in creating so-called *counter-hegemonic alliances* (Smith 2014). Under the slogan *Another World is Possible*, the WSF offered a space for advocates of a counter-hegemonic globalization that denounces the neoliberal agenda as promoted by the leaders of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos (Smith 2014). The WSF was groundbreaking as it offered an official platform for progressives to create transnational and cross-sectoral alliances in response to the challenges created by the global, neoliberal economic order (Smith and Wiest 2012).

After years of interaction and exchange around environmental and other global issues at the WSF and at other spaces¹¹, the network advanced new critical analyses of global problems and their possible solutions. The focus of this counter-hegemonic *group of Porto Alegre* (Wallerstein 2014)¹² lies on the systemic causes of multiple and interconnected global problems—that is, global capitalism and its logic of perpetual accumulation or growth. (Smith 2014). The concept of CJ developed through the interactions and exchange between activists within this progressive network of movements as a counter-model to the dominant market-based approach to climate change as perpetrated by the elites. In Gramscian terms, it represents the counter-hegemonic narrative of how climate change should be understood and approached.

As mentioned earlier (see 3), CJ regards the capitalist economic system as the underlying reason for climate change and global injustices. To provoke radical change, the system needs to fundamentally change. Because of this analysis, the CJM is engaged in a Gramscian struggle for hegemony with the holder in power of the world-system. The movement engages in a war of position when it seeks to reshape public opinion over how climate change should be understood and addressed. At the same time, it also engages in a war of maneuver when it seeks to come into positions of power to alter existing environmental policy. Both struggles are connected and crucial to transform the current system, however, this investigation focuses primarily on the ideological struggle of the CJM.

The sustainable development historical bloc

The ruling class manipulates the culture of society through coercive techniques to justify the political, economic, and social status quo. It creates and defends a dominant ideology that

¹¹ Other spaces such as UN global conferences, or the Cochabamba Conference in 2010.

¹² Named after the location of the first World Social Forum (WSF) held in 2001 in Porto Alegre. The WSF which can be seen as a counter-event to the World Economic Forum Davos (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018).

defines what is seen to be *common sense* and aggravates the formulation and development of an alternative system to the capitalist order (Wallerstein 1991) (see 2.3.2). In the case of fighting climate change, the ruling class is represented by states and the TCC (or the elite) since they are the ones who control the inter-state institutions in which the international climate change debate takes place (Smith et al. 2016). Following Gramsci's theory on hegemony and counter-hegemony, the current approach to climate change of eco-modernization constitutes an effort of the elite to maintain control over what constitutes common-sense solutions to climate change and to defend it against demands for radical change.

Sklair (2019) describes how already in the 1990s when it became increasingly difficult to ignore the reality of climate change, the elite adapted the approach of eco-modernization to fend off demands for systemic change. As environmentalists started to grow more assertive, raising questions about the limits to economic growth based on environmental grounds (Wanner 2015), a *sustainable development historical bloc*¹³ emerged to maintain discursive hegemony. Rejecting the notion of a singular ecological crisis that would call capitalist production and consumption as a whole into serious question, it advocated the idea that climate change should be understood as a series of manageable, environmental problems that can be solved with sustainable development projects and corporate social responsibility (Sklair 2019). Put differently, the solution to fighting climate change does not lie in post-capitalist society but a greener, more enlightened, capitalist society (Docena 2016).

The eco-modernization approach constitutes the result of a Gramscian passive revolution¹⁴, whereby the dominant sustainable development discourse, subsumed by capitalist hegemony, diverts attention from the social and political dimensions of sustainability and issues of social and international justice (Wanner 2015). Docena (2016) argues that by reforming the capitalist system to a greener or more equitable version of itself and channeling limited advantages to challenging groups, "they undermined radicals' capacity to convince people to diagnose their suffering as the inevitable result of capitalism and to see themselves as members of antagonistic classes whose interests are always incompatible with the dominant classes". The passive revolution ultimately led to a fragmentation of the wider

¹³ Based on the notion of Cox' "transnational historic bloc".

¹⁴ For Gramsci, a 'passive revolution' occurs in an 'organic crisis' when counter-hegemonic challenges to the dominant capitalist order are co-opted and neutralised through changes and concessions which re-establish the consent in that order. Gramsci (1971) called this process the 'absorption of the antithesis' (110).

climate change movement into a revolutionary and reformist segment (see events at COP 15 in chapter 3.2).

3.2.2 The ideology behind climate justice

After having described how the elite is using the hegemonic interpretation of climate change to defend against anti-systemic challengers, the following chapter illustrates in detail the counter-hegemonic concept of CJ. To replace the *sustainable historic bloc*, the CJM needs to formulate a powerful critique of the current system and provide an alternative capable of changing the hegemonic order. Particular attention is paid to its anti-systemic notions, how its solutions to climate change deviate from the dominant approach of eco-modernization, and why activists believe that reformist approaches that leave intact power relations will not be sufficient to address climate change.

The second contradiction of capitalism

CJ rejects the hegemonic approach of eco-modernization. The climate crisis needs to be seen in relation to the socio-economic organization of society and cannot be treated separately. CJ holds that our current economic system is incompatible with real ecological sustainability. It is therefore not enough to reform the current system, the goal must be to transform it.

The concept of CJ is based on Marxist and ecology theory. The theory that resembles the CJ world-view most is eco-Marxism or democratic eco-socialism¹⁵. Eco-socialism unites aspects of socialism with green politics, ecology, and anti-globalization. One of the key tenets of eco-socialism is that ecology alone lacks the capacity to fully unpack the ever-changing economic and political climate in the world and the power structures that underline it. The eco-socialist analysis attributes a theoretical foundation to the claims that fundamental changes in the distribution of money and power are needed to achieve climate change (Sicotte and Brulle 2017).

The Marxist theory holds that humans and nature are the two principle foundations in the creation of wealth, therefore capitalists seek to gain control of both. The same force (capitalism) that subjugates the proletariat is also the one that subjugates and destroys the earth (Magdoff and Foster 2011). As this exploitative relationship has been going on,

¹⁵ Since the fundamental difference between eco-socialism and eco-marxism resides in their differing ideas about the transition from a capitalist society while their critique of the current system remains the same, the terms will be used interchangeably in this segment.

capitalism's modes of production have led to environmental degradation and resource exhaustion. Since capitalist production inadvertently destroys one of the principles of its wealth creation (nature), scholars have come to talk about *the second contradiction of capitalism* (Correia 2007).

To be able to keep growing, global capitalism has created societies of mass consumerism with the help of advertising. Within a market economy, goods are not produced to meet needs but rather to be exchanged for money. Market actors are incentivized to persuade others to buy for the sake of buying, resulting in societies of mass consumerism and resource depletion. As a result, the world is currently consuming 1.5 times the earth's sustainable resources every year. On top of that, practices that capitalism produces, such as planned obsolescence of products further aggravate the situation (Licata 2019).

The underlying logic of capitalism, i.e. competition, and short-term orientation, force individual decision-makers to act against the interest of the environment. Business owners consider the short-term future in their operations. This is the way they must function because of unpredictable business conditions and demands from their shareholders who are predominantly looking for short-term returns (Magdoff and Foster 2011). Therefore, it makes perfect sense to not account for the natural limits to their activities or the needs of future generations. In other words, ecological destruction is built into the inner nature and logic of the present. Eco-socialist scholar Löwy argues that the fatal incompatibility of capitalism with environmental preservation resides in "the conflict between the micro rationality of the capitalist market, with its short-sighted calculation of profit and loss, and the macro-rationality of collective action for the common good" (Löwy 2018: np). Actions that compromise the well-being of today's and future generations are not taken because the people responsible are morally deficient, but because the institutional logic of the system forces them to.

Ecological debt and the role of neoliberal globalization

Neo-liberal globalization is seen as the logical result of capitalism's necessity to expand and had become inevitable to overcome the accumulation crisis of global capitalism of the 1970s. For critiques, it is regarded as a method to steal from citizens of developing countries by removing access to the resources that are necessary for their survival (Wall 2005). CJ activists argue that climate change is the result of a social metabolism that has fueled the development of countries of the Global North while displacing large shares of environmental

burdens onto countries of the Global South (Hornborg 2009)¹⁶. The Global South, understood as all peoples with a common experience of exploitation, alienation, and marginalization, is the victim of this devastation (Bullard and Müller 2012). Developed countries have accumulated an *ecological debt* as a result of the historical legacy of uneven use of fossil fuels and exploitation of raw materials, offshoring, and export of waste. CJ, therefore, calls for developed countries to recognize their historical responsibility for climate change (Friman and Strandberg 2014).

Neoliberal globalization is often seen as a modern version of imperialism. Eco-socialists argue that economic interest abroad is the principal driver of armed conflict. Under this perspective, the U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan followed the same pattern, and are related to U.S. attempts to control the main world sources of oil and gas. In the last two decades, the focus has shifted to Africa where foreign commercial interests exploit resources after signing contracts with autocratic governments, resulting in a situation of foreign economic exploitation combined with a depletion of resources (Magdoff and Foster 2011).

Environmental racism and displacement of environmental burdens

CJ laments the geographical and generational displacement of environmental burdens during the process of extraction, procession, and commercialization of energy sources like carbon or petroleum. Here, the benefits stay with a few while the environmental costs are displaced and carried by the poor who have the least political resources to resist. This is because they occupy the most fragile lands, lack resources to protect themselves from climate disasters, and are the most vulnerable to crop failures due to floods or droughts. At the same time, it is the poor who have historically contributed the least amount to climate change (Falk 2009; Wapner 2019).

The geographical displacement of environmental burdens not only happens across borders from developed countries to developing countries, but also within countries. In the 1980s, US civil rights and indigenous rights groups started advocating for indigenous, Latino, and African-American communities, criticizing their disproportionate exposure to a wide variety of environmental hazards. At the time, three out of five African-Americans lived in close proximity to toxic waste sites, highlighting the racial biases in policy-making (Tokar 2014). The coalition coined the term *environmental racism*. Environmental racism refers to “any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or

¹⁶.Hornborg (2009) calls this the *zero-sum-game* of development.

unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color” (Bullard 1994: 451).

The role of indigenous peoples

CJ emphasizes the importance of indigenous struggles in the fight against climate change. Indigenous peoples are uniquely threatened by the effects of climate change due to their substantive reliance on the interrelatedness of nature (Claeys and Delgado Pugley 2017). The relationship to their native land is rooted in culture and a spirituality that encompasses all aspects of daily life, therefore a deteriorating environment affects their culture, health, and economy earlier and more severely than other groups (Whyte 2017).

Indigenous people (especially in South America) are considered the *socio-ecological vanguard of humanity* (Löwy 2018a). Their communities are frequently at the front-lines of CJ battles and their fight in defense of the Amazon forest is of utmost importance for the future climate of the planet. While the international community has only recently started to discuss its consequences, indigenous communities have long been adapting to climate change-induced changes in their environments. Because of the diverse geographical areas they inhabit and their millennia of experience in collecting and applying local environmental information to help their communities plan for, and better manage, the risks and impacts of the natural variability and extremes of climate, indigenous peoples can contribute with their experiences with the effects of and potential solutions to climate change (Ibid). One example of indigenous knowledge is the concept of *buen vivir*. It describes a holistic concept that stands for a way of life that is community-centric and ecologically-balanced. Most notably, *buenvivir* rejects the growth-based notion of development and advocates a legal standing for the natural environment (Baskin 2019).

Put together, the four pillars (see figure 4) described summarize the world-view behind the concept of CJ and explains why adherents of the concept reject the dominant approach of eco-modernization.

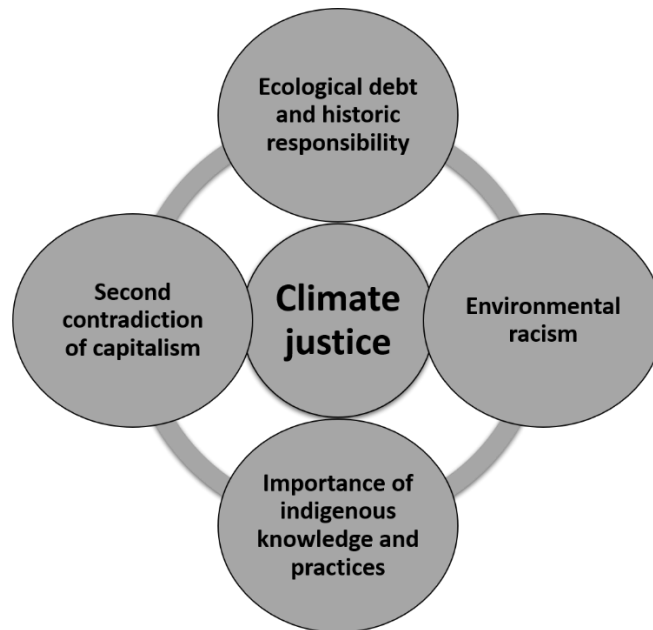


Figure 4: The four pillars of climate justice ideology

3.2.3 The false solutions of the hegemonic view on climate change

After illustrating the ideology on which the concept of CJ is based, the next chapter demonstrates the movement's stance on the dominant mechanisms within the global climate governance.

To convince more ordinary citizens of the necessity to change the way we think about and approach climate change, the CJM has developed a critique of the current mechanisms in place which are portrayed as *false solutions* (People's Demands 2018). The mechanisms of the dominant approach primarily include (non-binding) multilateral agreements to reduce carbon emissions, investments in alternative bridge fuels, geo-engineering solutions, and market-based mechanisms like cap-and-trade for carbon emission (Baskin 2019).

CJ activists argue that climate change will not be managed by making capitalist practices greener, nor does it help to place a Promethean belief in future technologies or geoengineering to help mitigate climate change. These technologies do not exist yet and distract from implementing real solutions to climate change. Current mechanisms are considered false because they are inefficient at reducing carbon emissions and they place a disproportionate burden on those that are least responsible for the climate crisis. Or as Baer puts it: "How can we expect the system that created the problem to solve the problem?" (Baer 2016: np).

Eco-modernist solutions are not effective

The most obvious critique is that the business-as-usual methods simply have not worked to reduce carbon emissions. The idea of green capitalism and its promise of a harmonious future between eternal consumption and ecological well-being already entered the climate debate a while ago. Moderate environmentalists have lobbied for multilateral agreements on carbon markets and investments in green energy for years. However, the signs of global unsustainability can be seen everywhere (Dauvergne 2017). Despite alleged stepping up of climate mitigation by national governments, there was a global increase of 1.6% in 2017 and 2.7% in 2018 (Dennis and Moody 2018).

Eco-modernist solutions either try to make processes more energy-efficient or they actively look for alternative energy resources that can fuel the capitalist production machinery. However, more efficiency does not necessarily translate to fewer emissions. Already in the 19th century, William Stanley Jevon discovered that increases in efficiency with which a resource is used also leads to a subsequent increase in the rate of consumption of that resource due to increased demand (Jevons 1866). The latest prominent example of this Jevon-paradox is seen in the increase of energy-efficient SUVs in Europe. As cars have become more energy-efficient, consumers have shifted to buying larger cars that, due to their higher weight, cancel out the efficiency improvement (Polimeni 2008). Critiques of green capitalism consequently argue that more eco-products can just mean more consumption, waste, and corporate profits.

Another popular solution are cap-and-trade schemes for limiting carbon emissions. By attempting to commodify the atmosphere, eco-modernists make the false and dangerous assumption that the laws of nature are subordinate to the laws of capitalism (Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice 2019). In practice, cap-and-trade has not led to carbon dioxide emission reductions where it has been introduced (IER 2009). This is in part because limits are rarely set low enough to make a real difference. Frequently, it provides financial incentives for corporations with lower emission rates to trade their permits to larger corporations. In California, this mechanism has actually led large, polluting companies to increasing their emissions (Song 2009). One of the main results of carbon trading has been enormous profits for some corporations and the creation of a subprime carbon market (Magdoff and Foster 2011).

The social costs of climate change mitigation

Market-based solutions are not only inefficient, but they also create negative social impacts that are most felt in the Global South. This is because the conventional discourse on

sustainability fails to acknowledge the distributive, political, and cultural dimensions of global environmental problems (Hornborg 2009). CJ argues that the problem of climate change lays bare “the greatest market failure of all times” (Benjamin 2008) as those who produce the most emissions generally do not pay for the consequences. The advent of renewable, *green energy* (e.g. biodiesel) has demonstrated this particular injustice. While at first sight, it makes sense to invest in alternative energy sources, the agricultural land required to grow crops for biofuel stands in direct competition with food resulting in detrimental effects on the poorest people of the world (Falk 2009).

Mechanisms that function on the basis of increasing the overall price of energy sources, such as cap-and-trade or carbon taxes, also disproportionately affect the poor. This is because energy demand is highly inelastic, meaning that a higher price does not significantly reduce the number of people heating their house or driving their cars. As lower-income consumers tend to spend a higher percentage on energy costs, they are therefore more affected. The German *Klimapaket* is a good example of market-based mechanisms that are both inefficient as well as socially unjust. In September 2019, the cabinet committee responsible for Germany’s adherence to its climate agreement till 2030 published its set of measures consisting of, among other things, a tax on carbon emissions for companies, price reduction for public transportation, and an increase in commuter allowances. The results were widely criticized for two reasons. First, the proposed tax on carbon emission was too low to provide incentives for companies to shift to greener practices. Second, the tax on carbon had a regressive effect on income distribution, effectively resulting in a wealth transfer from poor to rich (Bach et al. 2019).

Overall, the proposed solutions of eco-modernization constitute an “environmentalism for the rich” (Dauvergne 2017) that guarantees not to interfere with the economic interest of the global elite and does little to substantially curb emissions. Even worse, its false solutions deflect attention away from those responsible of climate devastation, the transnational capital class (Sklair 2016). Furthermore, it attributes a false legitimacy to the idea that something meaningful is being done, when, in fact, the world is way off track in keeping global temperature rise below 2 degrees.

3.2.4 Just solutions to climate change

After illustrating the reasons why the CJM believes that the solutions that the dominant approach produces are false, the next chapter illustrates the alternatives the movement provides to confront the climate emergency.

The struggle for a long-term vision of an ecologically sustainable and socially just planet requires buying time and fighting for concrete and urgent reforms in the near term. The ideological struggle over the meaning of climate change (*the war of positions*) also includes the formulation of immediate, political demands. To eventually engage in a political struggle for power, the CJM needs to confront the incumbent legislators with *real* or *just* solutions as opposed to their *false* and *unjust* solutions.

The issue that any counter-hegemonic challengers face is deciding which mechanisms and channels will be effective to bring it closer to its ultimate goal of system transformation. Having to promote solutions within an economic system that it rejects, the CJM is trapped in Wallerstein's "social prison" (Wallerstein 2004: 22). On one hand, the movement needs to offer pragmatic solutions that are effective in fighting climate change immediately and alleviate some of the grievances of false solutions to climate change mitigation. On the other hand, these solutions cannot use mechanisms that would reinforce the legitimacy of the system it rejects, leaving the movement vulnerable to co-optation.

Instead, the solutions need to be part of a process to a growing anti-systemic opposition, and not reinforce *sustainable capitalism*. To find answers to which mechanism will be effective for its long-term goal of radical change and which will simply reinforce the existing system, André Gorz's differentiation between *reformist reforms* and *non-reformist reforms* can be helpful. The difference resides in the fact that the first avoid changes in the basic structure of the existing social system, while the latter provoke permanent changes in the social alignment of power (Gorz 1973). In this sense, a short-term change like the implementation of a Green New Deal can be worth advocating as long as it entails changes in the power structures like the nationalization of the energy industry, or through community management and ownership of clean energy. However, in practice, it is frequently still difficult to differentiate between the two types of reforms.

In December 2018, the *People's Demands for Climate Justice*, signed by 292,000 individuals and 366 organizations, called upon government delegates at COP24 to endorse a number of real solutions to the climate crisis that are "just, feasible, and essential" (People's Demands 2018). These solutions include:

- Transform energy systems away from corporate-controlled fossil fuels to a clean, safe system that empowers people and communities.
- Support ecological restoration to recover natural sinks, and stop all projects that are extremely destructive of Earth's natural capacity to absorb greenhouse gases.

- Support global efforts for a just and equitable transition that enables energy democracy, creates new job opportunities, encourages distributed renewable energy, and protects workers and communities most affected by extractive economies.
- Respect and enable non-corporate, community-led climate solutions that recognize the traditional knowledge, practices, wisdom, and resilience of indigenous peoples and local communities, and protect rights over their lands and territories.
- Ensure participatory and transparent assessment of all proposed climate technologies and reject barriers to technology access and transfer such as intellectual property rights (Ibid).

3.3 Summary

The CJM represents a transnational social movement that advocates for radical changes in global climate governance. Born out of the intersection of counter-hegemonic progressive movements, known as the *group of Porto Alegre*, the movement has formed a diverse coalition of indigenous activists, global justice activists, and more recently, youth climate activists. The concept of CJ embodies the counter-hegemonic pendant to the hegemonic discourse of eco-modernization. It lays both ecological destruction and social injustices at the feet of the global capitalist production system. It argues that capitalism is inherently incompatible with real ecological sustainability. Consequently, the market-based solutions that governments rely on to confront climate change can neither be efficient, nor just. Instead, it proposes radical and immediate changes within global climate governance. These changes do not only entail the immediate transition to regenerative economies, but also civil ownership and democratic participation over energy sources.

So far, this investigation has outlined the history of the CJM within the climate change debate and contextualized its struggle against the hegemonic view on fighting climate change. While in its first years of existence the movement has primarily been sidelined by the mainstream debate due to its radical demands, interest in the concept of CJ has increased in recent years. This is best represented by the contentious, large-scale climate demonstrations of 2018 and 2019. The next chapter analyzes which factors of the social movement campaign have contributed to this rise and whether there is reason to believe that it can maintain contention to ultimately become a force that can influence global climate governance.

4. Elements of climate justice mobilization

So far, this investigation has portrayed the origins of the movement and the role of the counter-hegemonic concept of CJ within a climate change debate that is dominated by a paradigm of eco-modernization.

Ultimately, the goal of the CJM is to provoke radical changes in global climate governance towards just solutions. To do so, it needs to attract large enough numbers of supporters to force national and international legislators to engage with their demands. In the following chapter, this investigation evaluates whether the CJM is equipped to attract an increasing number of supporters to maintain and expand counter-hegemonic mobilization in the future.

Method

As described in chapter 2.2, Tarrow's framework of intersecting elements for movement success determines the factors that contribute to the success of movement campaigns. In the following chapter, the study applies Tarrow's framework to evaluate the social movement campaign of the CJM. Tarrow (2011) includes the following elements:

- Effective framing and communicating of claims to particular audiences
- Existence of favorable organizational structures and networks that support popular mobilization
- Availability of political opportunities are present and constraints are low.

While Tarrow (2011) designed its framework for all types of social movements, it is important to remember that the CJM constitutes a counter-hegemonic movement and has to design its movement campaign accordingly. Counter-hegemonic movements differ from reformist and realist movements in that they are oriented towards different constituencies, face different levels of resistance, and apply different means to advance their agendas (Davies and Peña 2019).

In order to account for these particularities, the analysis draws from previous work on the interaction of social movements within the world system. Important contributions include: Smith and Wiests' *Social Movements in the World-System* (2012), Smith's *Counter-Hegemonic Networks and the Transformation of Global Climate Politics: Rethinking Movement-State Relations* (2014), and Foran's *System Change, Not Climate Change: Radical Social Transformation in the Twenty-First Century* (2019). Their results help to

analyze and evaluate prospects for movement success, while keeping in mind the counter-hegemonic nature of the struggle.

The three elements for movement success can be divided into internal and external conditions. Framing and organizational resources describe the internal capabilities a movement can directly influence, while the political opportunities describe external elements for movement success. The study lays out the internal composition (or the preconditions) of the movement before explaining the changing political environment in which the CJM acts. Here, specific attention is paid to how the system defends itself against the counter-hegemonic challenger.

4.1 Effective framing and communicating

An important element for movement success is concerned with the ability of activists to frame or communicate their claims effectively to particular audiences (Smith and Wiest 2012). Effective framing is crucial for counter-hegemonic movements as they seek to challenge expectations, norms, and belief systems that have been established and defended by elites.

The injustice frame

The fight for climate change is first and foremost an ideological one. In Gramscian terms, the CJM needs to engage in a *war of position* over the meaning of climate change. The movement needs to articulate a powerful counter-narrative against the hegemonic, eco-modernist discourse, in which climate change is portrayed as a technical challenge to overcome. The goal of its framing work is to transform the consciousness of people in respect to the issue of climate change. It must provoke a cognitive liberation among ordinary people that the way in which the global community is approaching climate change is neither just, nor effective (Taylor 2000).

Both Chatterton et al. (2013) and Hadden (2015) argue that the movements' master frame as it stands today, crystallized around the influential Copenhagen summit. Although CJ as a concept had already existed years before, it was the frustrating experiences of COP 15 that triggered a split between a hegemonic, climate change section and a counter-hegemonic, CJ section. Around that time, activists started to take a more confrontational stance and rejected the technical language associated with conventional environmental advocacy groups. "(T)he Copenhagen climate conference itself demonstrated that real solutions, as opposed to false,

market-based solutions, will not be adopted until we overcome the existing unjust political and economic system” (Climate Justice Now! 2010).

The CJM employs an injustice frame. Climate change is not portrayed as a technical, or environmental issue, but a moral issue (Hadden 2015). Like moderates, CJ activists agree that anthropogenic climate change will lead to catastrophic events and should be addressed urgently. However, the diagnostic and prognostics of the issue differ strongly. While the CJM sees the root cause of climate change not “merely in humankind, but in *capitalist* humankind, and therefore the solution in an end to this system“ (della Porta and Parks 2014: np.), moderates accept the existence of a global capitalist system and seek to encourage changes in it to mitigate climate change.

An important part of its framing efforts resides in defining clear antagonists who are responsible for the injustices suffered. The links between climate change, capitalism, and uneven global geometries of power are highlighted, always arguing that there are clear opponents who are responsible and that stand in the way of meaningful change (Chatterton et al. 2013). Or as stated in the *Bali principles for Climate Justice*:

“Whereas climate change is being caused primarily by industrialized nations and transnational corporations; Whereas the multilateral development banks, transnational corporations and Northern governments, particularly the United States, have compromised the democratic nature of the United Nations as it attempts to address the problem (...)”

(Bali principles 2002: np).

The CJM makes use of antagonist framing because it is a powerful tool to question, disarticulate, and rearticulate the hegemonic discourse. Attributing blame for the situation allows the movement to contrast its vision with the dominant discourse on climate change and lays bare its inconsistencies (LeQuesne 2016).

Forging a coalition for climate justice

By establishing climate change as a symptom of a broader systemic problem, CJ purposely connects the ideologies of activists with an environmental focus with those that focus on social injustices. Smith (2014) describes it as a “coming together of new constellations of challengers to the dominant order uniting (...) around demands for radical social change, if not for a fundamental transformation of the world economic and political system“ (Smith 2014: 2). In other words, it forms a red-green alliance. It argues towards environmentalists

that the battle against climate change is inevitably related to the fight for justice and that a change in the political and economic system is the only way to bring about real sustainability. Towards justice and human rights activists, it makes the case that the struggle for justice of the 21st century will revolve around the all-encompassing threat of climate change (Chatterton et al. 2013).

To fit a variety of activists under the umbrella of CJ, the CJM is working with rather generic idioms like justice, equity, and democracy instead of a specific ideology (Foran 2019). This *frame bridging* has allowed to build a broad coalition of progressives with structurally unconnected, but ideologically congruent, struggles. By portraying the fight for CJ as a fight against a common exploiter, the movement creates so-called *chains of equivalence* (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Recognizing that different groups each have their own distinct relation to the existing hegemony with individual experiences and interests, CJ framing seeks to connect seemingly unrelated struggles and mobilize them around an agenda of equivalence. This way, the struggles of land appropriation of indigenous rights leaders from the Global South are directly linked to those of European ecologists. Nowadays, a coalition of indigenous activists, feminists, anarchists, socialists, communists, racial justice activists, land rights activists, radical environmentalists, and labor rights activists has come together under one banner (della Porta and Parks 2014).

The problem associated with uniting an ideologically, geographically, and socio-economically heterogeneous group resides in the fact that there might be differences which strategies and methods to choose. Along the same lines, heterogeneous groups require careful and deliberate framing work to evoke solidarity between members (Tilly 2009). Forging movement solidarity is an ongoing process. As the movement starts to attract more activists under its banner, it will need to find new ways to create a shared identity between activists. Foran underlines the importance of cultivating prefigurative cultures, e.g. working in ways that reflect the world that activists want to create. As activists practice the future that they wish to see, they have the potential to generate *political cultures of creation* (Foran 2019). Political cultures of creation are created by the interactions of ideologies, idioms, networks, emotions, and lived experiences. Grosse (2019) reports about grassroots activist groups in Santa Barbara, California that cultivated a *climate justice culture of creation* based on four key values: relationships, accessibility, intersectionality, and community. This allowed for growing a diverse, broad-based movement that organizes collectively against climate injustice and the political status quo.

To conclude, the CJM employs an injustice frame that portrays climate change as a moral issue caused by an antagonist capitalist elite. It makes use of frame bridging techniques to attract a broad coalition of progressive activists under its banner. To confront the issues associated with coordinating a heterogeneous activist group, the movement makes use of chains of equivalences, as well as political cultures of creation, to create a collective identity and forge solidarity between activists.

4.2 Existence of favorable organizational structures

The injustice frame has united a coalition of progressive activists under the banner of CJ to challenge the hegemonic discourse of eco-modernization. However, the movement can only be successful if it also disposes of adequate organizational structures to coordinate activism.

A grassroots approach to climate change activism

The experience of COP 15 in Copenhagen resulted in the recognition that real solutions to climate change will not be found within the realms of UN institutions. In order to advance genuine solutions and to avoid co-optation efforts, the CJM depends on alternative channels to advance its agenda¹⁷. When the climate change movement split into a moderate climate change section and a radical CJ section, the movement started to build a global, decentralized, grassroots network of activists (della Porta and Parks 2014). Against the hegemonic approach of multilateral agreements, international carbon markets, and large-scale geoengineering, the CJ approach is pursued through much more direct and local channels (Hadden 2015). The movement regards local protests, e.g. against the construction of an oil pipeline through indigenous land as equally important to lobbying governments to reduce their overall emissions.

The organizational structure of the movement reflects the grassroots approach to activism. Unlike the hierarchical and homogenous, progressive movements of the 20th century, the CJM represents a hybrid structure in which activists typically work on more than one issue, and are part of a network of activist groups (Smith 2014). Tarrow (2011) describes hybrid movements as follows:

“(W)hile umbrella organizations at the summit offer general guidance, financial support, and the use of their “name brands,” decentralized units at the base can absorb or create

¹⁷ „We will take our struggle forward not just in climate talks, but on the ground and in the streets, to promote genuine solutions (...)“ (Climate Justice Now! 2010)

networks of trust that are free to develop their own programs and engage in forms of action appropriate to their settings.” (: 139)

In the face of exclusion from institutional channels and recognizing the multi-sited, multi-actor, and multidimensional nature of environmental problems, the CJM pursues a strategy of *polycentric struggles*. CJ groups mobilize multiple strands of activist groups from the global North and South, and organize as a decentralized network of semiautonomous, coordinated units (Ibid). The approach allows for collective action repertoires in multiple scales of governance, ranging from the local to the global (Tormos-Aponte and García-López 2018).

The strategy has been facilitated by the nowadays widespread availability of cell-phones and internet connection which has led to a rapprochement between geographically dispersed strains within the movement. Global contestation networks like *Fridays For Future* and pressure groups like *350.org* connect individuals, organizations, and movements that would otherwise not be linked (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018). It allows activists to engage in local activism (e.g. protesting against the erection of a local carbon plant) while occasionally connecting globally to advocate systemic change (e.g. at global protest days during Climate summits).

The flexible and horizontal structure has allowed for spillover effects between activists from different traditions and backgrounds. In fact, the CJM itself can be regarded as the result of spillover effects between GJ and IRM activists. Both movements have contributed their accumulated social capital to what is nowadays known as the CJM. Building on the social capital of those previous movements, the movement disposes of an impressive organizational memory in terms of tactics, institutional experience, and problem analysis thanks to spillover effects between the different strands of activists (Edwards et al. 2018; McAdam et al. 2012).

For example, former GJ activists have shaped the prognostic frame of the CJM with their detailed analysis of the role of capitalism in global climate change. CJ also makes use of a repertoire of innovative, direct-action tactics that GJ activists had cultivated to raise awareness. Indigenous rights and rural peasant activists, on the other hand, have helped to further the understanding of how neoliberal globalization in accord with climate change affects population groups differently (Hadden 2014). Nowadays, ecological debt and environmental racism are key pillars of the CJ concept. Furthermore, novel human-nature

relationships concepts like *buen vivir*, have contributed to a vision of what a counter-model to the growth-based, exploitative logic of capitalism could look like.

The organizational structure of the CJM responds to the broad coalition of activists it unites as a result of its framing efforts. Choosing a global, grassroots approach to activism has two principal advantages. It grants the movement to engage with its opponents outside of institutionalized channels and allows for collective action repertoires in multiple scales of governance. At the same time, it allows for social spillover between different groups of activists which contributes to the overall social capital of the movement. According to Almeida, the organizational efforts of the CJM have endowed it with “a global infrastructure and template to coordinate a new international organization for confronting neoliberal forms of globalization” (Almeida 2019: 976).

4.3 Availability of political opportunities

So far, this investigation has focused on the internal capabilities of the CJM to attract and organize collective mobilization. Next, the focus shifts to the external conditions that influence sustained counter-hegemonic mobilization. Political opportunities and the previously mentioned internal elements for movement success are highly interdependent. For example, the likelihood that framing efforts find resonance in the wider public depends on the perceived opportunities and threats for contentious politics (Smith and Wiest 2012).

The perception of political opportunities and threats influences the willingness of citizens to participate in contentious movements. Political opportunities refer to the vulnerability of political targets, splits among elites, or the existence of new powerful allies that make the emergence of contentious movements more likely (Tarrow 2011). Divisions between elites can create moments of instability of the system which tend to benefit counter-hegemonic movements. Movements can exploit windows of opportunities by seeking to mobilize new publics and to reach constituencies not previously engaged in critical global policy debates (Smith et al. 2017).

4.3.1 Growing saliency of radical positions

The success of a movement is highly dependent on whether or not the cause it fights for is supported by the public at large. Contentious movements especially see their appeal increase when threats grow stronger and start to endanger the values and interests of ordinary people (Tarrow 2011).

According to Almeida, the threat of climate change offers large opportunities for collective mobilization, as it relates to people's actual physical well-being and long-term health and provides strong negative incentives for activism (Almeida 2018). Although it is clear, and in fact one of the key tenets of CJ, that climate change affects people differently, in the end, it poses a real threat to every human on earth. The universality of the issue of climate change transcends nationalities, socio-economic classes, and even generations. While the effects of climate change might not constitute an immediate, existential threat to citizens of the Global North, they do already have to live with the consequences of inaction in their daily lives. Increased pollution in cities, mass dying of natural ecosystems, or migration from citizens of affected regions represent only some of the ripple effects of climate inaction (IPCC 2018). Even if the effects are still too small to be directly perceived, at the very least, their children, or grandchildren will have to live with the dire consequences.

As more people become aware of the threat of climate change, it does not necessarily mean that a new generation of activists will support the radical positions of CJ. Citizens who have historically been beneficiaries of the global economic system, like middle-class citizens of the Global North, are typically less inclined to sympathize with counter-hegemonic narratives. Nevertheless, the mass-scale protests of 2018 and 2019 have shown a contrary trend. Almeida (2019) argues that climate change might be a threat so all-encompassing that it has the potential to mobilize previously unimaginable diverse social strata across the planet for counter-hegemonic mobilization. As scientific reports continue to underline the necessity for radical changes, the radical propositions of CJ become more salient among segments of society that have traditionally not been at the forefront of progressive battles.

Inconsistencies within the hegemonic narrative

After a year of massive climate demonstrations, many activists had expected governments to finally step up efforts for climate mitigation at COP 25 in Madrid. This did not happen. Government officials from the U.S., EU, Australia, Canada, and others historically most responsible for the climate crisis, remained united in their efforts to block any attempts to advance solutions that would significantly reduce carbon emissions. Instead, summit participants noticed a push for technofix solutions, like geo-engineering, aimed to deflect questions about the inefficiency of current carbon reductions methods (Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice 2019). As state officials continue to disregard the warnings of scientists for the need to immediately and drastically reduce emissions, it becomes

increasingly clear to the public what groups like the CJM have been advocating for a while, i.e. the current climate governance regime is not producing results (Bargués-Pedreny 2019).

Among climate activists, the optimism after signing the Paris Agreement has vanished and the narrative of market-based, business-as-usual methods has come under question (UNICEF 2019). To many, state and UN officials appear out of touch with reality, unable or unwilling to escape their ivory tower thinking. The large gap between the reality of the climate emergency and the bare minimum that governments pieced together at the negotiations was summarized by a climate policy specialist at the Union of Concerned Scientists: “Never have I seen the almost total disconnection we’ve seen here (...) in Madrid between what the science requires and the people of the world demand, and what the climate negotiators are delivering” (Jordans 2019: np).

The events of recent years have eroded much of the trust the public placed in global climate governance. This perception even increased as governments appear to be divided over how to address climate change. In recent years, a group of reactionary, nationalist governments has started to challenge the dominant discourse of eco-modernism. The division became clear at COP 25 in Madrid. While most developed countries seemingly attempted to address civil society concerns for an expansion of mitigation efforts, a coalition of governments made clear that they would not accept any new measures that would curtail their right to extraction (Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice 2019).

On one hand, most European countries and China continue to defend the eco-modernist approach to climate change by arguing in favor of adhering or even extending current multilateral agreements and larger investments in alternative energy sources. On the other hand, a coalition of neo-extractivist governments led by the US and Brazil reject institutional overreach and give preference to their national extractive industries (Zaitchik 2019). As the division between eco-modernists and neo-extractivist governments further aggravates negotiations, climate activists become increasingly disillusioned about the process. The UNFCCC appears to join other international fora that are being sidelined and delegitimized by the unilateralism of crucial nation-states (Farrand 2019).

As governments continue to display a division over how to act on climate change, while an increasing number of people feels threatened by the looming climate emergency, the hegemonic discourse starts to appear insensible, unrealistic, or illegitimate. As more people start to question the legitimacy of the current approach to fighting climate change, so-called *discursive opportunities* open up for alternative positions (Smith and Wiest 2012) (see figure

5). Counter-hegemonic challengers like the CJM can exploit these opportunities by emphasizing the incongruencies of the current system and highlighting their alternatives (Rootes and Nulman 2015).

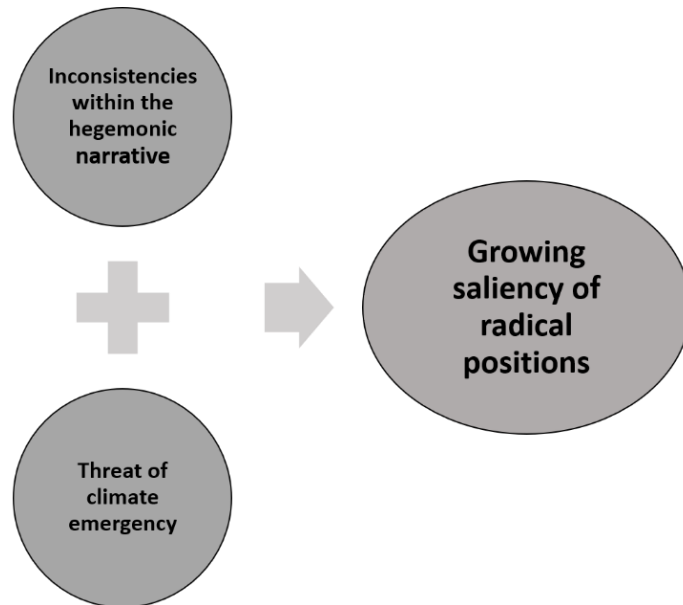


Figure 5: Discursive opportunities for CJM

The recent rise in popularity of the CJ concept among the members of the youth climate movement exemplifies both the eroding trust in the conventional climate debate, as well as the growing saliency of radical positions to climate change mitigation. Young people have been at the forefront of the recent surge in climate protests. The principal motivation for activism resides in the fact that deteriorating environmental conditions disproportionately affect younger generations (Wahlström et al. 2019). Among these groups, the concept of CJ meets open doors. Thoroughly frustrated with the insufficient actions taken in recent years, young activists are critical towards the institutionalized climate change debate and its business-as-usual tools (O'Brien; Selboe, Hayward 2018). Not surprisingly, many young climate activists have been advocating the propositions for deep, societal transformation the CJM proposes at events, such as the Global Climate Strike (Wahlström et al. 2019). As governments continue to ignore demands for drastic reductions in emissions, young activists can become a major source for CJ activism in the future.

4.3.2 Elite-response – Co-opting the movement

Political opportunities for counter-hegemonic movements are shaped by the capabilities and actions of elites to defend themselves against the challenger. As the number of ordinary

citizens who support the demands of CJ grows, so do attempts by the system to limit its influence and appeal. The CJM poses a threat to the interests of the elite because it focuses on the systemic causes of multiple and interconnected global problems that are all caused by global capitalism and its logic of perpetual accumulation or growth (Smith 2014). In other words, achieving CJ goes hand in hand with fighting the global capitalist system. While there are disagreements over climate change mitigation methods, it is important to note that governments around the world remain united in their disdain towards the radical social changes the movement proposes.

To limit the threat of a growing, anti-systemic challenger, the concept of CJ has become a target of elite appropriation. Co-optation efforts seek to create a division between reformist and revolutionary activists (Smith and Wiest 2012). To understand how the system deradicalizes demands for change, it helps to look back at how the *sustainable development historic bloc* successfully co-opted the early climate change movement by promoting the notion of *sustainability* (Sklair 2019). As described in chapter 3.2.1, the bloc emerged around a time in which the hegemonic discourse on the existence and urgency of climate change had started to come under question. By integrating some demands for more sustainability into the dominant discourse, more radical voices within the larger environmental movement could be silenced (Smith and Wiest 2012).

Similar to the way eco-modernists have adopted the term sustainability, today the UN¹⁸ and other larger, pro-market NGOs have adopted the term climate justice, *cherry picking* the aspects that do not challenge the basic logic of capitalist accumulation or drastically alter power relation (Hadden 2015). DeVito (2009) argues that by adopting the justice narrative, the United Nations Climate Regime seeks the “renegotiation and (re)solidification of consent and hegemony, aimed at the reconfiguration of capitalism under conditions of ecological/climate crisis“ (:231). Just like the sustainable development narrative helped solidify the hegemonic narrative of a new form of capitalism that is compatible with climate change, the concept of CJ is being instrumentalized to do the same.

So how does the system integrate CJ into its logic? As mentioned in chapter 3.2, mainstream actors have started to use watered-down versions of CJ which typically refer to redistribution, compensation, and right to development (de Lucia 2009). These narrow interpretations are integratable into the eco-modernist logic as they allow for some equity, while still maintaining or even increasing production and economic growth. What are not

¹⁸ See: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/climate-justice/> [Accessed: 28/04/2020]

integratable are aspects of CJ that significantly challenge power relations, or oppose growth-based logics. For example, taking power out of the hands of energy companies and putting into the hands of local communities has not been embraced by state officials. The same holds for the proposition to rethink human-nature relationships (e.g. *buen vivir*) which would liberate nature from being a mere means of production (Smith et al. 2017).

Just like eco-modernism represents a greener version than its industrial predecessor, a climate change regime that acknowledges the formal need for financial and technological transfer to developing countries under the slogan of CJ can be regarded as an improvement. Under this perspective, it is easy to imagine how some activists would settle for these advances instead of pushing for radical changes in the economic and political structure.

North-South division

Co-optation efforts are most successful when movements are heterogeneous and display diverging priorities (Chatterton et al. 2013). Institutionalized debates on climate change have often pitted the interest of civil society actors from the industrialized Global North against the developing Global South. For example, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs has adopted an interpretation that focuses on the right of developing nations to industrialize in a carbon-constrained world (Ibid). This eco-modernist interpretation of CJ pits the demands of the movement to leave fossil fuel in the ground against the interests of countries from the Global South to *catch up* to developing countries. The danger for the CJM is that activists from the Global North (especially those that are more concerned about the environment than global justice) might opt to take concessions from the elite that promotes drastic carbon emission reductions. If common goals and strategies are not articulated effectively, the CJM runs the danger of splitting over parochialism and chauvinism (Chatterton et al. 2013).

Conversely, the latest wave of youth climate activism has given reason to fear that the concept might be equated with *intergenerational equity*. To an increasing amount CJ has been used divorced from the international context in which it was born. Frequently, the term is being used stripped of its specific principles and demands. *Extinction Rebellion*, an organization that sits at the forefront of the latest wave of climate activism in the Global North, has already been criticized for not accounting for the way that privilege protects some groups from the impacts of climate change. Concerns have been raised that their approach lacks an understanding of the root causes and impacts of climate change. Similarly, their

tactics of engaging with law enforcement have been criticized for failing to account for racial biases (Gayle 2019).

At the same time, CJ activists face different levels of repression in their national contexts. In the Global South, elites of developing countries often see their interests aligned with those of resource-extracting corporations. As a result, CJ activists have been killed, imprisoned, or executed for coming into opposition with ruling elites (Sicotte and Brulle 2017). Because of this type of repression, tactics of nonviolent civil disobedience that is common in the Global North are many times too dangerous to be carried out. By ignoring race, class, and inequality dimensions of climate change, new organizations run the danger of becoming a new version of an *environmentalism of the rich*, e.g. a *climate justice for the rich*.

Summing up, for the CJM, the current political context represents a double-edged sword in its struggle to bring about radical change in global climate governance.

On one hand, the growing threat of the climate emergency together with the widening division between eco-modernist and neo-extractivist governments has laid bare the inconsistencies of the hegemonic discourse. This has resulted in a growing saliency for radical approaches to climate change among ordinary citizens. The CJ discourse has benefitted from these discursive opportunities and penetrated new segments of the population.

On the other hand, the institutionalized arena remains closed for alternative approaches to climate change. Furthermore, Trump's *America First*-approach and Bolsonaro's dispute with international leaders to not interfere with Brazil's national sovereignty over the Amazon fires puts into question the future of already existing, multilateral cooperation efforts to combat climate change, leaving the goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels more illusory than ever (Boadle and Eisenhammer 2019; IPCC 2018).

At the same time, the reconfiguration of the climate change debate has led to an increase in repression and co-optation efforts. To confront the threat of an anti-systemic challenger, the elite seeks to fragment the movement into a reformist and a revolutionary movement. It also makes use of the diverging priorities and interests between activists from the North and the South, leading to friction within the movement.

4.4 Synthesis

Taken together, the three elements determine the prospects for sustained, counter-hegemonic mobilization under the banner of CJ. Both internal and external factors create relatively

favorable conditions to expect further movement success. The CJM employs an injustice master frame which portrays the fight against climate change as a moral issue that transcends the mere goal of reducing carbon emissions. To unite a broad and heterogeneous group in a battle for a socially just and environmentally sustainable global society, the movement uses frame bridging and chains of equivalences to connect the dispersed struggles of the victims of climate change effects. The framing efforts have helped to create a global, grassroots network of decentralized, polycentric struggles that allows for collective, contentious actions under the banner of CJ at multiple scales of governance, ranging from the local to the global. New activists can tap into already existing mobilizing structures and take advantage of organizational memory due to pre-existing movement efforts.

While the CJM has established itself as a radical alternative within the climate change debate, new opportunities have arisen in recent years. The lack of an adequate response to the increase in climate activism together with the widening division between eco-modernist and neo-extractivist governments has created discursive opportunities for the CJM to challenge the dominant discourse on how to address climate change. As the universal and urgent threat continues to go unaddressed by governments, the saliency of radical alternatives along the lines of what CJ proposes has increased. This has already led to a significant increase of CJ protests among young climate activists.

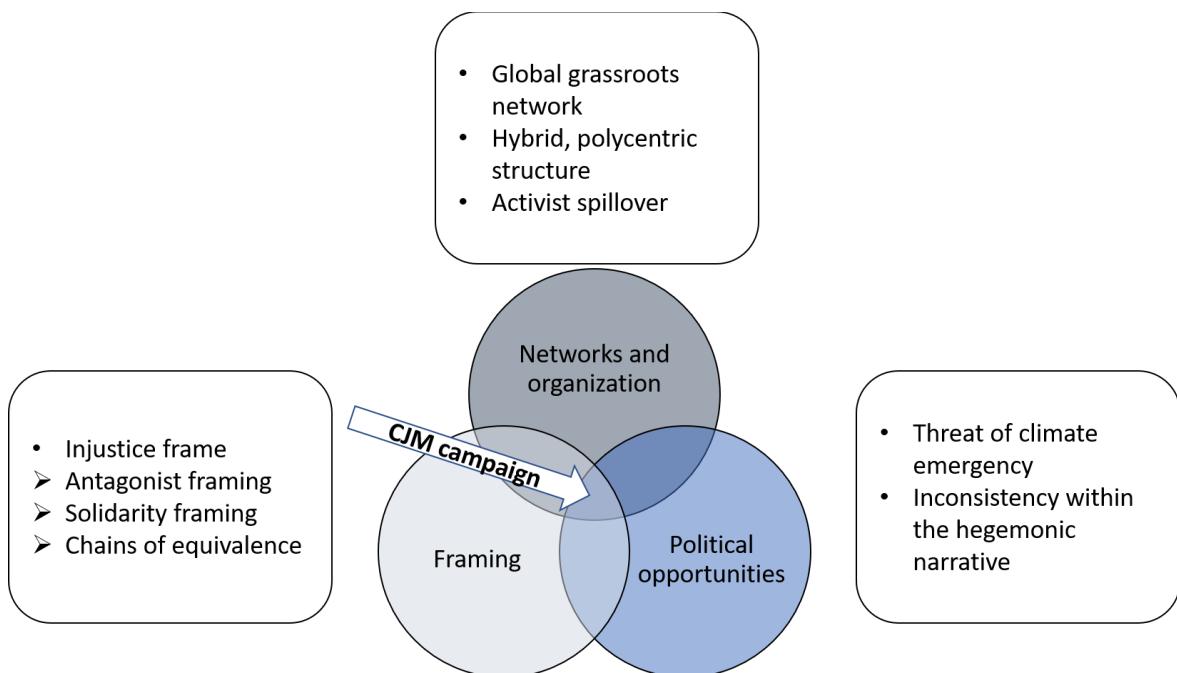


Figure 6: Factors for movement success

Recent years have seen an increase in CJ activism. However, due to its increased popularity, the concept has already become the target of elite appropriation. Moving forward, the CJM will see further attempts of fragmentation by having wedges driven between the different segments of the movement. To maintain the system-critique essence of the movement, the CJM needs to find ways to increase intra-movement solidarity. At the same time, it is worrisome that the split between elites led to a resurgence of right-wing, nationalist, and neo-extractivist governments. As a result, the movement will have to adapt to an increase in hostility as the inter-state arena has tilted even further away from *real* solutions to climate change

Becoming a potent actor within climate governance will depend on expanding its progressive coalition. To do so requires winning-over new segments of the population into its way of thinking, as seen with the climate youth movement. Almeida (2019) argues that “(t)he increasing intensity of climate change as an existential threat does create relatively more favourable conditions for international unity (...)” (: 976). The renewed urgency of the issue paired with the perceived inability of conventional environmental governance to confront the issue, as well as an increased acceptance for unconventional solutions, has already made more people receptive to the movement’s demands for radical social change. As more ordinary people start losing trust in the hegemonic discourse, windows of opportunity open to reshape what is regarded as common-sense responses to climate change.

The CJM has built an efficient organization to form a counter-hegemonic coalition that has made progress to advance and popularize its agenda. However, the movement will continue to be engaged in a struggle with an elite that will continually seek to fragment the movement and limit its appeal to defend its interests. In order to become a force within global climate governance, and ultimately influence policy, the movement needs to continuously take advantage of discursive opportunities and attack the widespread belief that there can be no alternative to the current system of eco-modernization. At the same time, the struggle for CJ needs to be presented as one that is appealing and important to large sectors of the population without losing its anti-systemic essence.

5. Outlook

Moving forward, the CJM will build on the advances of recent years and continue to engage in an ideological struggle over the meaning and methods of climate change mitigation. In

the outlook, this investigation briefly touches upon some of the future strategic decisions of the movement.

A political vision

So far, the CJM has refrained from seeking out direct, political access to advance its agenda. Entering the political arena entails the danger of *institutional isomorphism* as the bureaucratic structures can become iron cages that divert movements from their emancipatory agendas (Smith and Wiest 2012). However, eventually, the CJM will need to get into positions where it can influence policy directly. Consequently, the idea of a global *climate justice party* has been discussed fervently among the global Left. Such a movement party would comprise coalitions of activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the electoral arena (Kitschelt 2006). Foran (2019) believes that a political arm could leverage the strength and power of the *movement of movements* as activists would be able to “support each other and link themselves together to find and co-create the pathways to the future we want” (:416).

One of the issues associated with creating a political body is to formulate a vision of a just society that represents the diverse struggles of CJ activists all over the world. Whereas there is relative unity concerning the deficiencies of the current system, the proposition of a new system is much more difficult. One possible version could be Baer’s (2016) proposition of a democratic eco-socialism as the new world-system. Inspired by Chase-Dunn’s notion of global democracy, this new world-system would need to be built on the following principles:

- an economy oriented to meeting basic social needs
- a high degree of social equality
- public ownership of the means of production
- representative and participatory democracy
- environmental sustainability

Baer’s vision could be complemented with indigenous approaches to development and human-nature relationships, like *Buen Vivir*, *Rights of Mother Earth*, and *Food Sovereignty*. Said concepts have already been popular with activists because they provide an alternative to the logic of growth-oriented market models and emphasize the interconnectedness of humans to their nature (Claeys and Delgado Pugley 2017; Indigenous Peoples’ Global Summit on Climate Change 2009).

The eco-socialist vision, though, can only be regarded as a long-term struggle of the movement. In the short-term, CJ advocates a more equitable fight against climate change. This includes holding national governments accountable to international climate agreements, advocating to phase out fossil fuels and biofuels, and transitioning from an extractive to a regenerative economy. Furthermore, CJ activists advocate free public transportation networks to limit the influence of automobile and fossil fuel companies in the democratic process and to end all military operations at home and elsewhere (Foran 2019).

At the same time, other voices argue for the need to come together outside of UN-institutions and political parties. To advance their critical discourse, Smith and Wiest (2012) argue in favor of autonomous fora like the World Social Forum to expand the focus of movement energies outside formal intergovernmental processes. Similarly, in his last essay, the late Samir Amin (2018) argued for the necessity to create a new Internationale of progressive forces. Against the dual threat of a globally organized capitalist elite that is turning more authoritarian and reactionary, global progressives need to overcome fragmentation and bundle their forces. The findings of this investigation have shown that the CJM has the potential to play an important role to unify the globally dispersed struggles to fight for a new world-system.

6. Conclusion

This investigation has portrayed the CJM as an agent of counter-hegemonic mobilization within the debate on climate change. Analyzing the recent rise in popularity of the concept of CJ, the study both portrayed the particularities of the movement that have benefited its appeal, as well as analyzed prospects for sustained movement success. The CJM has emerged as the primary counterpart to the institutionalized, eco-modernist approach to climate change. Its recent popularization can be attributed to a combination of factors that function together.

First, by effectively framing climate change not as a technical issue to overcome, but rather as a moral issue resulting from the unjust conditions created by a global capitalist political economy, the movement has created a powerful counter-narrative capable of unifying diverse social strata across the planet for counter-hegemonic mobilization. Secondly, a global, grassroots infrastructure of connected CJ struggles has endowed the movement with the necessary organizational resources to coordinate large-scale, collective mobilization. Third, the current political context of a divided transnational climate regime has cast doubts

over the hegemonic discourse of eco-modernization and opened discursive opportunities for alternative methods to confront climate change. Taken together, these factors have allowed the CJM to penetrate formerly unengaged layers of society and expand the counter-hegemonic alliance.

Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether the movement will be able to maintain its anti-systemic agenda. As elites realize the increasing numbers of ordinary people starting to embrace demands for radical social change, they will engage in efforts to limit the influence of the movement. Authorities are already seeking to fragment the movement by co-opting the concept of CJ in ways that are not threatening to the current system. To eventually become a force within global climate governance, the CJM needs to further expand its coalition while resisting attempts of their opponents to fragment its unity.

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