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States of Just Transition: realizing climate justice through and against the state

Abstract
Possibilities for engendering sustainable and just futures are foundering in part because key resources are managed by elites through 'top down' environmental governance and management, and knowledge production regimes, largely committed to retaining the status quo, fail to pursue new ways of managing resource consumption and distribution. In this paper, we argue for an alternative climate justice agenda that is enabled through grassroots mobilisation in collaboration with state action. To do this we consider the state as a continued terrain of possibility for *positive* social, economic and environmental change, noting the imperative of historically attentive state-enabled redistribution along persistent axes of difference. In articulating an alternative understanding of the state, we emphasise the importance of social movements capable of cultivating networked militant particularisms that can be channeled through and beyond state governance processes. In order to ground these ideas, we provide two brief case studies, tracking food sovereignty and energy remunicipalization initiatives.

Climate change raises urgent questions about social justice (UNDP, 2007), such as how adaptation might exacerbate existing inequities and create new ones, and how voices from grassroots communities can be incorporated into just, democratic and workable transitions (Page, 2006). The possibilities for engendering sustainable and just futures founder, however, in part because key resources are managed by elites through top down environmental governance, and knowledge production regimes committed to retaining the status quo fail to pursue new ways of managing resource consumption and distribution. In addition, policy responses increasingly framed around discourses of security, marketisation and austerity perpetuate the production of scarcity and exacerbate resource dispossessions (O' Lear, 2016). Dominant neoliberal economic doctrine has also wrought profound damage to democratic practices, cultures, institutions and imaginaries. Political participation and the right to equality have been reduced to market freedom, the right to compete, and the making of rational consumer choices, while individual activity in the market has replaced shared political deliberation and rule (Brown, 2015).

These trends have been exemplified in governmental responses to climate change - represented by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, or Conference of Parties, [COP]) process - which have been framed primarily within the territorial logics of the nation-state as well as firmly within the parameters of neoliberal forms of global governance (e.g. OECD 2015). Although there have been recent attempts to begin to orchestrate climate related initiatives by non-state and sub-state actors to which we will return below (Chan *et al*, 2016; Hale, 2016), the institutions, strategies, practices and scales of action represented by twenty-one years of the UN process have been woefully inadequate in addressing changing climatic regimes, as illustrated by ever increasing greenhouse gas emissions (O'Lear, 2016). Further, persistent inequalities along axes of difference, within and between states, contribute to an uneven distribution of both climate change vulnerability and the ability to meaningfully influence climate futures (Derickson and MacKinnon, 2015).

Hence, the UNFCCC process is itself marked by a series of exclusions and inequalities concerning who are considered legitimate participants in the final decision-making process. The most economically and politically powerful states (such as the United States and China, and secondarily the G20) determine what is included in any 'agreement' that emerges from the COP. Moreover, the historical experiences of

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colonialism, development, and neoliberalism have bred a climate of distrust at the COP between the majority and minority world states, leading to ineffective negotiations that favour the powerful at the expense of the rest (Roberts and Parks, 2007).

Working largely outside the state, climate justice movements have been articulating a very different agenda to that evident in the COP process. In opposition to the COP, over 150 grassroots organisations from around the world converged on Paris, France in late 2015 to offer an alternative agenda with a more radical commitment to non-capitalist values, radical democratic forms of governance and representation, and a climate justice agenda framed around economic and social rights for all (Ortiz et al 2013; Klein 2014). In articulating a vision for climate justice, these movements offer a significant reorientation of contemporary philosophies of governance by emphasising place-based, environmentally sustainable approaches to resource management as well as the broader socio-economic formation that drives resource distribution.

Those social movements present in Paris clearly rejected fundamental elements of contemporary neoliberal state architecture and practice, and are also engaged around the world in direct conflicts with states over key environmental resources such as land (e.g. monoculture developments such as palm oil), water (e.g. mega-dam construction) and forests (e.g. displacement of indigenous people). However, such movements were in Paris to not only to confront the UN process with its own contradictions, but to press for climate justice demands on the state. What should we make of this apparently contradictory stance by movements toward the state as both the source of the problem, but also a key part of the solution?

Taking our lead from the praxis of social movements and contemporary activism around issues of energy remunicipalisation (Cumbers, 2012, 2016) and food sovereignty (La Via Campesina, 2009), we argue for a reinvigorated engagement with the possibilities of reconfiguring the state. In particular, we offer a conception of the state as a *process* embedded in a responsive architecture for solidarity and shared governance at a range of scales. We argue for a climate justice agenda that is enabled through grassroots mobilisation in collaboration with state action. Following on from the arguments and practices made by the various social movements we study and, in some cases collaborate with, we argue that another state is *possible, necessary, and insufficient* for engendering just social formations in the context of a changing climate.

To understand the state as a process is to recognize that it is constantly being reworked and remade in ways that shift the balance of power across institutions and scales with evolving implications for justice-oriented political responses. In the US, the national scale has often been seen as a crucial site for redistributive policies and environmental regulations and a bulwark against discriminatory and anti-labor policies. The state restructuring that characterized neoliberalization and the devolution of state power to lower scales of government took the form, on balance, of regulatory roll back. Under the Trump administration, however, the political power and promise of the urban scale is coming into a different sort of relief. As the US under Trump backs out of the Paris climate agreement, for example, cities and states are taking the lead on meeting the terms of the agreement[1]. Cities have also been important sites of resistance to other policy changes under Trump, such as immigration enforcement. The US case is one example of the shifting form and power distributions of various state formations and the way in which more or less social justice oriented state formations are conjuncturally specific. Following on from this conception of the state, in this piece we do not advocate for or attempt to distill an ideal-type of the state for which social movements ought to

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[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/american-cities-climate-standards.html?_r=0

advocate. Nor, indeed, do we propose a 'model' of social movement-state engagement applicable to all times and places. Instead, we argue for a conception of, and engagement with, the state that is conjuncturally and contextually situated (see Peck 2017).

We begin by making the case that climate justice politics should continue to contest and engage with state spaces to prosecute an alternative agenda. We argue that activists and critical geographers should consider the state as a continued terrain of possibility for *positive* social, economic and environmental change, noting the imperative of historically attentive state-enabled redistribution along persistent axes of difference, and emphasising the importance of social movements to be able to cultivate networked militant particularisms that can be channeled through and beyond state processes (Cumbers 2015). To ground these ideas we provide two brief case studies, tracking food sovereignty and energy remunicipalisation initiatives and conclude with comments on states of transition.

Our case studies are drawn from long-term and ongoing collaborative relationships with communities of practice in each location. Routledge has worked for fifteen years with social movements engaged in food sovereignty politics in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Food sovereignty as an idea, a practice and a demand is an instructive example of forms of engagement that work with, against, and outside the state (Wright 2010). Food sovereignty is the product of both local action and a global imaginary that has developed beyond the state, but has been articulated by social movements in their struggles against national governments and their agricultural policies. However, food sovereignty has tended to be most successful beyond the local scale when an engagement with the state has taken place. Cumbers is working with various NGOs, activist groups, trade unions and left platforms within the social democratic, green and left parties across Europe, including through the remunicipalisation process, to advance an agenda around more democratic and decentralized forms of public ownership (Cumbers 2016). This has recently involved advising the UK Labour Party leadership on more democratic ownership models (e.g. Labour Party 2017).

Climate Justice Action and State Action

Climate justice refers to a set of context-specific iterations that stress self-determination; the material access, use and control of particular resources; innovative livelihood knowledges; and the potential of collective organisation for more socially, economically and ecologically just futures (Bond, 2012). A range of antagonistic demands lie at the root of such elaborations that include leaving fossil fuels in the ground, reasserting peoples' and community control over the production of food and renewable energy, massively reducing over-consumption, particularly in the Global North, respecting indigenous and forest people's rights, and recognising the ecological and climate debt owed to the peoples in the Global South by the societies of the Global North necessitating the making of reparations (Chatterton *et al*, 2013).

In thinking through the practical politics of climate justice as articulated by social movements, we turn to the work of Erik Olin Wright (2010) *contra* John Holloway (2002; 2010). Holloway makes a powerful argument for a strategic anti-capitalist politics as an 'interstitial process', where alternatives create 'cracks' in the edifice of capitalism, in support of a broader argument against more traditional revolutionary strategies of rupturing capitalist social relations through state capture. We part company, however, with Holloway's rejection of the state as an arena for prosecuting social (and, by association, climate) justice when he argues that: "the state is not an adequate interstitial form simply because, as a form of social relations, it is part of the social synthesis that we are rejecting: the state is part of the cohesive suction of capital" (Holloway 2010, 63). While recognizing that the capitalist state is of course not neutral in its role in

maintaining capitalist social relations – indeed the COP process illustrates this well through the dominant market tropes that permeate its discourse – Holloway's approach to the state denies the complex, multi-scalar and diverse spatial forms that the state assumes in practice (although he does allude to this when he elsewhere talks of "many states supporting one capitalist society" (ibid).

Wright's formulation of strategies for social transformation offers a better scaffolding for appreciating the contingent and conjunctural form of the state and its possibilities for social contestation around a climate politics of transition. Wright argues that there are three strategies by which social transformation can occur: (1) ruptural strategies, which envision creating new institutions of social empowerment through direct political confrontation with the state whereby existing institutions are challenged and reshaped; (2) interstitial strategies, pursued by social movements amongst others, which necessitate building new forms of social empowerment *beyond the state*; and (3) symbiotic strategies, which require extending and deepening institutional (state) forms (e.g. through policy interventions) that enable popular social empowerment, i.e. a politics of collaboration with the state. Wright argues that while various strands of Left politics have pushed variously for one of these three strategies against the others, all three strategies are necessary for social transformation to occur.

In this formulation, the state is both a terrain of struggle *and* possibility, essential for transcending capitalism and implementing a climate justice agenda. This is because political critique is never only oppositional, but practiced in order to transform the constitutive elements of hegemonic power into new configurations (Mouffe, 2013). An engagement with institutions is still possible therefore, but not at the risk of what Antonio Gramsci termed 'hegemony through neutralisation' (Gramsci, 1971) whereby demands that challenge the hegemonic order are appropriated by the existing system in a way that neutralises their subversive potential. Rather, collaboration between social movements and the state are only an effective form of intervention when social, economic or political transformation become possible.

A non-deterministic interpretation of the possibilities that inhere in states articulates with a strategic and relational ontology of the state offered by Jessop (2002) and Brenner (2004) in contrast to the overall structural coherence implied by Holloway. On-going processes of rescaling (Brenner 2004) to cope with the contradictions of capital accumulation are illustrative of the continuing tensions and fragility of state fixes. Although the state literature tends to be rather structuralist in its orientation, reflecting its origins in regulation school theory, it is useful for us here in emphasising the more fluid relations that underpin the functioning of the state and the implications for an alternative politics. By viewing the state in terms of an ensemble of institutional structures and practices, through which particular social groups attempt to develop their own politics and strategies, we can be attentive to the openings for progressive political mobilisations.

In particular, we can pose the question: what scalar forms and spatial practices could be co-opted and refashioned for a more radical form of climate justice politics? Attention here is drawn to local state spaces, especially within large cities where civil society groups and supportive state actors attempt to deploy both interstitial and symbiotic strategies in pursuit of low carbon transition projects also aimed at broader social empowerment. The growth of community gardening in marginalized urban areas (see Crossan et al 2016) represents an example of the former, whereas the movement against privatization and for remunicipalisation across the world speaks to the latter (Cumbers 2016). As Wright puts it: "Social emancipation must involve, in one way or another, engaging the state, using it to further processes of emancipatory social empowerment.' (Wright 2010, p.336)

From this perspective, the state remains a sphere for effective action in prosecuting a radical climate justice politics and still has the potential to be reconfigured for a more democratic and participatory politics (see also Cumbers, 2015). Evidence for this is available in the Latin American "pink tide", where, despite recent setbacks, social movements have made progress in challenging colonial structures and neoliberal discourses in recovering state spaces for projects of social and ecological justice (Escobar 2010). However, 'pink tide' countries such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina have became more dependent on extractive industries especially oil and gas (e.g. Bebbington and Humphreys-Bebbington, 2010; Yates and Bakker, 2014); while there have been certain erosions of indigenous rights in Ecuador (Radcliffe, 2012) and Bolivia (Sanchez-Lopez, 2015). Therefore, while state-civil society relations in some of these countries suggested possibilities for collective action and social mobilization through the state, what has characterized the *limits* of climate justice agendas – not least in Bolivia - has been the decreasing responsiveness of the state to social mobilization from below. We will return to this later in this paper.

Moreover, climate justice practices and alliances continue to struggle, however, with the persistent effect of intersectional forms of historically rooted socio-economic and cultural marginalization. For example, Derickson and MacKinnon (2015) draw our attention to the uneven distribution of climate change vulnerability and the uneven ability to meaningfully influence climate futures owing to persistent axes of social difference, particularly the inequities concerning the price of activism (painful, risky, difficult, costly) for the marginalised. Routledge's work in Jakarta with peasant groups illustrates the persistence of gendered marginalization in food sovereignty social movements.

An abiding concern for the imperative of confronting the socio-cultural and material form that the construction of difference takes, and its persistence *within* social justice-seeking movements informs, in part, our interest in keeping the state in the frame for climate futures. Social movements themselves have often been profoundly imperfect vehicles for resisting the reproduction of oppression along axes of difference. Acknowledging that the state is often complicit in, if not the primary vehicle for, the production of this dynamic, we follow Mouffe's (2013) lead here in advocating for a vision of the state that can accommodate ephemeral and non-essentializing coalitions that do not negate other subjectivities. Yet as we show below, the COP 22 agreement illustrates precisely how the current liberal state, and its refusal of the social, material and historical forms that the production of difference takes, is likewise inadequate to the task. For example, the COP 22 agreement language attempts to foreclose the possibility of solidarity across geographies along axes of difference like developed/developing or colonizer/colonized. This reaffirms our contention that another state is not only possible, but *necessary* yet *insufficient*. Critical here though, invoking Brenner (2004) again, we need an alternative geographical imaginary of the state which takes seriously the imperative for and possibility of state rescaling "from below" in which the state might be reconfigured to be more responsive to local or localized interventions while still providing the necessary architecture for coalition building across scales of governance and disparate geographies[2].

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[2] Recently, there have been some moves in this direction. At COP20 in Lima, Peru, the Peruvian government, in collaboration with the UNFCCC secretariat, launched the Non-state Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) as an online aggregator of climate action at all geographic scales (Chan *Et al*, 2016). At COP21, the French and Peruvian governments in partnership with the UNFCCC initiated a 'Lima-Paris Action Agenda' (LPAA) to try to orchestrate climate initiatives from non-state and sub-state actors, that included over seventy initiatives and over 10,000 commitments of actions by cities, companies,

Climate justice mobilisation: confrontation, creativity and collaboration

Moments of activist articulation such as occurred in Paris during the UNFCCC - drawn from ongoing processes of climate justice activism - are important for two reasons: (1) they challenge the post-political consensus of the COP process through direct political contestation that critiques the greenwashed capitalist solutions to climate change (see Chatterton *et al*, 2013); and (2) they offer alternative visions for how to achieve just transitions to climate futures. Concerning confrontational politics, climate justice activists have criticized the agreement that emerged from the UNFCCC.

For example, while the Paris Agreement aims to keep the global average temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the emission cuts contained in the agreement exclude aviation and shipping emissions, are based on *voluntary pledges*, require no emissions reductions from countries, and do not require these cuts to be re-examined until 2020. Further, the Paris agreement contains no mention of the words 'fossil fuel' (while governments spend an estimated US$5,300 billion per year on direct and indirect subsidies to fossil fuel industries), nor regulations to stop deforestation, ameliorate environmentally-destructive development, nor question the ineffectiveness of the free trade agenda - exemplified by carbon trading mechanisms - to reduce greenhouse gss (GHG) emissions. Finally, as Christoff (2016) notes, the agreement fails to include specific targets, dates or means of coordinated national financial contributions to ensure collectively agreed outcomes; and fails to address the 'emissions gap' between current pledges and a safer climate.

The Paris Agreement is also explicitly inattentive to the ways in which climate change is profoundly unevenly produced and experienced. Christoff notes: "[m]ajor emitters only committed to the agreement on their own terms and with little regard for the needs of small, vulnerable, and developing states or future generations" (2016: 782). The agreement excludes any acknowledgement of climate justice concerns and demands (see Chatterton *et al*, 2013) including the compensation and financial support - the climate debt - owed by those countries historically responsible for GHG emissions. The language of the Agreement argues that there is no basis upon which vulnerable developing countries can make claims for any compensation as a result of devastation caused by climate change.

As Temper and Gilbertson (2015) argue, however, while the COP 21 negotiations can be considered a failure, creative approaches to GHG emission reductions and more sustainable ways of living are being practiced outside of the UN framework. While there has been an increasing amount of sub- and non-state climate action over the past twenty years involving cities, the private sector and transnational coalitions (Bulkeley *et al*, 2014; Hale, 2016), what has so far been less acknowledged is the upsurge of climate justice practices taking place that are expressions of an eco-territorial turn in social mobilisation that is taking place around the world in response to resource inequalities and conflicts and the challenges of climate change (Combes, 2015).

Recent scholarly work on place has argued that notions of territory are critical in shaping the spatial imaginations of social movement actors because they produce opportunities for people to fashion collective identifications around common (placed) interests (Wills, 2013). Territory is understood both materially (concerning access, control, use and configuration of environmental resources such as land, soil, water and

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trade unions, civil society groups and states, all tracked through the NAZCA website (http://climateaction.unfccc.int/) (Hale, 2016).

physical infrastructures) and immaterially (concerning ideas, knowledges, beliefs and conceptions of the world) (Escobar, 2008). Territorial control of specific physical spaces by social movements is generating innovative understandings of democratic practice, understood by Zibechi (2012) as 'societies in movement', generating new types of knowledge, capacities and organisational forms.

Rather than a single coherent theory with an attendant unitary political subject, climate justice is multiple, both in terms of the varied approaches and interpretations of it, as well as the diverse sets of actors who practice it. The concept of climate justice has been elaborated by differently placed- and resourced- social movements in a range of iterations that include in the Bali Principles of Climate Justice, 2002; the Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading, 2004; the Klimaforum Declaration in Copenhagen in 2009 and the World People's Conference on Climate Change in Bolivia in 2010.

Social movements representing indigenous and historically marginalised communities, and articulating climate justice practices and demands, are recognised by many aid and development organisations as being important actors in the mitigation of risks associated with economic insecurities and the impacts of climate change upon poor and vulnerable populations (Roberts and Parks, 2007). Movements' climate justice practices and demands also implicitly call upon states to act to realise these practices and demands at the national scale.

Climate justice struggles comprise a complex and sometime contradictory set of practices that operationalize an understanding of another state that is *possible, necessary and insufficient.* They involve confrontational political action *against* the state; placed practices on the ground; the articulation of alternative global imaginaries through the fashioning of transversal collaborations between diverse constituencies *beyond* the state, and an engagement *with* the state. We track these processes through two case studies - food sovereignty and energy remunicipalisation, to argue that they pose place-based alternatives to existing state practices that can inform future policy outcomes in different forms of reconfigured state outcomes. However, such transformations remain works in progress.

Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty constitutes a key climate justice demand - articulated by nationally-based farmers' movements, international farmers' networks such as *La Via Campesina*, and protestors at global days of action such as those that took place at COP21. Indeed, peasant farmer movements and other civil societal actors mobilizing and making demands 'from below' in the Global South are amongst the key societal forces for food sovereignty (Giunta, 2014; Godek, 2015). Food sovereignty practices are frequently in those spaces where capitalism has not fully penetrated, and where everyday life practices generated by the necessities of survival under capitalism also provide the seeds for transforming capitalism's control over the food system (Figueroa, 2015).

Food sovereignty is frequently contrasted with food security. The latter is defined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation as a situation "when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-fs/en/). This definition has nothing to say about the political economy of food production, associated power relations or ecological sustainability (Patel, 2009).

While definitions of food sovereignty vary between organisations, and activist networks have changed over time and contain inconsistencies, common themes have emerged such as direct peasant participation in agrarian reform. As De Angelis (2017) notes, food sovereignty struggles are examples of commons governance: "social systems

at different scales of action within which resources are shared, and in which a community defines the terms of the sharing" (270). Food sovereignty means "autonomy and self-management of territory, biodiversity and commons governance of seeds and water (ibid: 283).

Food sovereignty provides the key organising frame for multiple place-based confrontations against government-sanctioned agribusiness interventions into the lifeworlds of traditional, peasant and indigenous peoples (Klein, 2014; Bond, 2015). For peasant farmers, struggles for food sovereignty frequently also involve struggles *against* displacement, environmental destruction, and neoliberal logics of economic growth frequently enacted by states. For example, in Bangladesh, landless peasants of the Bangladesh Krishok (farmer) Federation (BKF) occupy land and defend it against private and state interests in order to engage in food sovereignty practices (Routledge, 2015a).

Food sovereignty involves creative farming practices - such as agro-ecology (using ecological principles for agricultural production) and zero-budget natural farming (farming organically without using credit, chemicals, or purchasing inputs, pioneered by peasant farmers from the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha [Karnataka State Farmers' Association, KRRS] in South India in collaboration with Mr. Subhash Palekar). These practices attempt to enable peasant communities to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change by repairing the dynamic and interdependent processes that link society to nature through labor (La Via Campesina, 2009; Patel, 2009; Wittman, 2009; Rosset *et al.*, 2011). Such approaches to agriculture attempt to refashion how people respond to climate change challenges and how they relate to one another in more cooperative ways.

Practices of food sovereignty also draw upon multi-scalar imaginaries - ideas and practices that circulate through space and are constituted beyond the state. For example, one of the key actors in articulating international food sovereignty imaginaries has been *La Via Campesina* (the peasants' way, LVC), a convergence of multiple 'local' groups, projects and initiatives, in a variety of spatially extensive campaigns. Mass-based social movements from the Global South have driven this network, including the KRRS and BKF . Their opposition to dominant, state-led responses to climate change has combined a commitment to the importance of localised forms of agriculture as an alternative to carbon-intensive agri-business with a focus on translocal circuits of opposition to neo-liberalisation (Via Campesina, 2009; Routledge, 2015b). Most of LVC's movements are concerned in some way with reclaiming and transforming space, time and labour from capitalist valorisation processes. Within this global imaginary persist local, place-based knowledges, traditions, collective action and forms of solidarity that remain anti-capitalist and driven by climate justice concerns.

LVC itself is a transversal alliance between different peasant, women, indigenous, migrant and agricultural workers, from 164 local and national organisations across 73 countries spanning North and Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia (www.laviacampesina.org). Those place-based movements are fashioning alliances across different constituencies within their countries. For example, in Bangladesh, the largest farmers' movement in the country, the Bangladesh Krishok Federation (BKF) is a key proponent of food sovereignty and active member of LVC, has formed alliances with garment workers, indigenous people and migrant workers (Routledge, 2015a; 2015b). In addition to peasant farmers, food sovereignty practices also involve a diverse set of actors in both the South and North - from local food policy councils to non-governmental organisations to intergovernmental forums such as the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (Schiavoni, 2016).

Yet without governance structures, food sovereignty is not necessarily more just, or less prone to the many failures associated with contemporary state practices. Further, beyond the scale of the local, there is little evidence that a climate justice emancipatory

project can be 'scaled up' into a national socially transformative project except where a non-coercive engagement with the state has taken place. For example in Bangladesh, food sovereignty practices by the BKF tend to be limited to land occupation sites but these are precarious and face constant struggles *against* capital and the state. This is because since the early 1990's, the government of Bangladesh has implemented structural adjustment programmes, including trade liberalisation of agriculture, involving withdrawal of input subsidies, privatisation of fertiliser distribution and seed production, and elimination of rural rationing and price subsidies. These have increased farmers' indebtedness and landlessness as they struggle to secure the capital to pay for expensive agricultural inputs (Routledge 2015b).

However, such commons struggles are not a separate third sector beyond the state and capital. Rather, as De Angelis argues, "commons exist outside and inside states and capital" (2017: 102). What is clear in Bangladesh is that global imaginaries of food sovereignty require placed consolidation in depth in order to embed them in peasant farming practices (Desmarais, 2007), and this requires reclaiming the public realm for alternative and creative social, economic and environmental practices (Cumbers, 2015). If another state is possible, then it will need to be reconfigured away from its current neoliberal architectures in order for such global imaginaries to be placed more thoroughly in national contexts.

Where food sovereignty-informed government legislation has been adopted, it has done so in various ways. In Venezuela, Mali, Senegal, Nepal, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, food sovereignty has been adopted into national constitutions in some way (Beauregard, 2009). In Cuba the state has supported food sovereignty initiatives (Menser, 2014); and in the Dominican Republic, Peru, Argentina, Guatemala, Brazil, El Salvador, and Indonesia some food sovereignty-supporting legislation has occurred (Wittman, 2015). Policy adoption creates new arenas of social action, however, since the recognition of food sovereignty rights does not necessarily imply the implementation of that policy. For example, in Venezuela there are currently food shortages owing to the ongoing political crisis, in spite of official policies of food sovereignty.[3]

Moreover, state involvement in food sovereignty creates a contested terrain with a range of other actors (Fox, 2007). Context-specific historical processes *precede* the adoption of food sovereignty by states involving social structures; actors and institutions (Schiavoni, 2016). Hence, food sovereignty is a dynamic, ongoing and open-ended process of contestation and negotiation; and its implementation involves a diverse set of state and societal actors in interactive relations that can promote or constrain food sovereignty 'on the ground'.

In Nepal - one of fifteen countries that have food sovereignty-informed legislation adopted by their governments (Schiavoni, 2016) - the adoption of food sovereignty into the country's constitution has come about through mobilisation by the All Nepal Peasants Federation (ANPF), an umbrella association of Nepali peasants formed in 1951, and through its engagement with/against/beyond the state. The ANPF is the largest peasant federation in Nepal comprising an alliance of 23 national level producers' organisations. It has been active in confronting state-driven neoliberal policies in Nepal and struggling for peasants' rights, land reform, and climate justice within Nepal (see http://www.anpfa.org.np). ANPF has advocated food sovereignty as a local and national agricultural practice being a member of the National Food Sovereignty Network in Nepal. As an active member in LVC in Asia, as well as regional alliances such as the Asian Peasants Coalition; and the South Asian Peasants Coalition, the ANPF has worked

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[3] Thanks to Tom Perreault for pointing this out.

closely alongside movements beyond the state such as the BKF to develop food sovereignty imaginaries and agendas (Routledge and Cumbers, 2009). However, the ANPF also has strong ties with one of the principal political parties in Nepal, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN [UML]). The CPN (UML) was one of seven political parties involved in the *Jana Andolan* (people's movement) that overthrew the royal regime in Nepal during 2006 (Routledge, 2010) and has been the governing party in Nepal during the last decade.

The ANPF worked with the state to press for food sovereignty nationally and interlinked it with the people's movement, organising a nationwide campaign to include food sovereignty in the fundamental rights section of the draft Constitution. The ongoing engagement between the ANPF and the CPN (UML) was utilised in order for food sovereignty demands to be included in negotiations between the seven party alliance when deciding upon the contents of the new Republic's draft Constitution. This culminated in the incorporation of food sovereignty in the interim Constitution of Nepal in 2015, under Article 18 (3) 3 that deals with the fundamental rights of the Nepali people.[4]

Since the mid 1980's, however, there has been an ideological shift in Nepal to economic liberalisation and market-led approaches to development, according to the conditions of donor aid and IMF structural adjustment programmes, through deregulating capital and labour markets, removing price controls, and liberalising trade (Rankin, 2004). While the CPN (UML) advocates land reform and the transfer of wealth to the poorest in Nepali society it has also advocated a liberal democracy that presupposes that there should be competing parties, a free market, private property, and an independent judiciary. Basic rights (e.g. freedom of speech and assembly, the rule of law) and facilities are guaranteed by the state and a leading role in the economy is given to private enterprise. Indeed there has been increasing privatization of state enterprises (Gellner, 2005; 2007).

Further, ANPF's affiliation to the CPN (UML) and this forecloses significant criticism of and opposition to the latter's policies when it has formed the ruling party in Nepal. At the time of writing, food sovereignty remains a constitutionally stated policy aim rather than a reality on the ground. Even where national food sovereignty policies have been implemented - such as in Venezuela since 1999 - despite public reinvestment in food and agriculture; citizen mobilisation and participation in food politics; state-supported food distribution programmes; and redistribution of arable land through agrarian reforms, constructing secure and sustainable domestic food supplies are still far from being secured (Schiavoni, 2016). Indeed, at the time of writing over 70% of the country's food is imported and food shortages are occurring owing to the ongoing political crisis.[5]

Indeed, there is not a singular unified vision of food sovereignty between or within countries (Schiavoni, 2016). For example, within Venezuela state-supported food sovereignty practices exist alongside food practices that are based in the industrial food system, although there has been a decentralisation of food governance into community hands; in Bolivia, food sovereignty has meant state control over food systems vis a vis foreign governments and international institutions with little devolution of control to community level; while in Ecuador, food sovereignty has meant a state consolidation project to simplify and adjudicate between different visions of food sovereignty (McKay *et al*, 2014). In all three countries, food sovereignty amounts to little more than symbolic

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[4] see:http://www.inseconline.org/linkedfile/Bill%20Of%20Constitution%202015%20Sept.pdf
[5] Thanks to Tom Perreault for pointing this out

state politics that allows the governments in question to oppose themselves to transnational corporations and foreign state actors.[6]

There are multiple, overlapping and competing projects on the ground that diverge from LVC's official articulation of food sovereignty (Schiavoni, 2016) that are the product of local historical practices, cultural memory and identity, and political opportunities (Shattuck *et al*, 2015). Further, state efforts to support food sovereignty frequently necessitate structural reforms to enable the redistribution of power to facilitate local autonomy over defining, managing and controlling food and agricultural systems, not least because food sovereignty policies can serve to strengthen the state vis-a-vis local communities (Edelman, 2014).

The interplay between food security and food sovereignty to ensure public health, sustainability and autonomy will need to work both through the state in collaboration with certain state actors and also in antagonism with others (Schiavoni, 2016). Moreover, given the above, food sovereignty implies a reformulation of the Westphalian vision of the sovereignty of nation-states without fully jettisoning it. Multiple notions of sovereignty will be required that compete and cooperate with one another (McMichael, 2009), since different groups within a state have differing visions of what food sovereignty might look like in practice.

We suggest, then, a relational dynamic between movements and the state that enables food sovereignty with as much of its commons character intact that continually contests state appropriation of the process of food sovereignty. Such a dynamic would also require increasing responsiveness of the state to movement demands, enabling popular democratic participation in food sovereignty. For example, in Bologna, Italy *Campi Aperti* consists of a network of farmers and consumers markets that forms part of the *Genuino Clandestino* food sovereignty network. Food prices, quality standards, and scale of operations are all decided at producer/consumer assemblies - a form of commons that engages with the state. *Campi Aperti* has maintained autonomy concerning self-management, yet maintains a working relation with the council complying with basic laws regulating markets (De Angelis, 2017, 294-302).

Even a reformulated state will remain a Gramscian "arena of complex, strategic relations between political and social spheres" (McKay *et al,* 2014: 1179). In the context of multiple contemporary crises (of climate change, food security, finance and fuel) that are witnessing the ongoing corporate assault on land resources and labour, a reconfigured state has a critical role to play in ensuring access to and control of land and its productive resources (McKay, *et al*, 2014), *providing* it is held to account by ongoing grassroots mobilisation by social movements.

The German Energiwende and Energy Remunicipalisation

As part of its celebrated Energiwende (energy transition in English) – the process of transition away from nuclear and fossil fuels towards renewable sources of energy – Germany has undergone a significant process of *rekommunalisierung* or remunicipalisation (Becker et al 2015). Since 2000 there has been a massive reversal of privatisation, with over 100 contracts for energy distribution networks or service delivery returned to the public sector (Hall 2012). Behind this process is a combination of public dissatisfaction with poor service delivery, fused with a more radical grassroots mobilisation by green and left groups against dominant energy practices by the state and the four large privatized energy corporations (EON, RWE, Vateenfall and EnBW). The process of remunicipalisation can be read as a set of mobilisations *against* the neoliberal state (see

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[6] Thanks to Tom Perrault for pointing this out.

Paul forthcoming) whilst simultaneously pushing for a different, more democratic state that can better address climate justice issues.

As a climate justice struggle, the remunicipalisation process encapsulates all four political processes identified above. In the first instance, there has been a considerable (and largely successful) contestation of dominant energy practices, characterized on the one hand by a long and continuing set of mobilisations and direct actions against nuclear and coal-fired power stations in favour of local renewable alternatives. Linked to this has been the upsurge in citizen initiatives and campaigns that have mobilized broad alliances to confront established state actors wedded to privatized models of energy delivery in favour of public and community owned models of renewable energy delivery (Fei and Rinehart 2014). Hamburg has become something of a *cause celebre* following a grassroots citizens' campaign, which won a referendum vote to take back the city's electricity grid from the Swedish energy utility Vattenfall. The initiative will also buy back the city's gas and district heating system by 2019. But these campaigns have been nationwide, stretching across the country, from some of the largest cities (e.g. Berlin, Bremen, Bremen, Dresden and well as Hamburg) to rural areas such as the Bodensee and Black Forest in southern Germany. Although these have had mixed results – in the case of Berlin the public referendum to return the grid to public ownership failed because of the low turnout - they have generated momentum for citizens groups to push the local state towards more radical projects around social and environmental justice (Halmer and Hauenschild 2014). While the fossil fuel lobby and entrenched carbon interests remain strong, particularly in northern Germany, where an alliance of trade unions, social democrats and private utility companies, these grassroots struggles have undoubtedly helped to shift state practices decisively award from privatisation and big energy towards a more democratic and decentralized politics of transition.

Second, the remunicipalisation trend is also linked to Germany's Energiwende.; the country's ambitious climate change amelioration targets, allied to a shift away from nuclear power. Itself a reflection of effective mobilisation and activism by grassroots greens and left groups over since the 1970s, the Energiwende represents a new global imaginary which has provided space at the local level for policy makers and activists to challenge the power of the large privatized utilities through remunicipalisation and has tied to growing demands for the transition in terms of energy democracy (see Mueller 2013, Paul forthcoming). Recognising that fulfilling Germany's CO2 targets will require investment of somewhere between €25 and €42 billion in infrastructure renewal alone, local activists and state actors across political divides have recognized the need for new forms of public and community ownership to achieve a more just transition that transfers power away from big energy and top-down state processes (Mueller 2013, Cumbers 2016).

Third, such campaigns have demonstrated the importance of a transversal politics where new grassroots initiatives can bring together disaffected consumer and resident groups, alienated by the neoliberal process of privatization and its impact upon every day public services with left and green activists to create new discourses that challenges the mainstream marketised approaches to transition. In Hamburg, for example the coalition around remunicipalisation developed a new citizen's initiative that effectively generated a new collective demand on putting control and ownership of the energy sector back into the hands of the public, under the label Unser Netz (Our Network). Similarly, in Berlin, the Energitisch (literally translated as Energy Table) was an effective mobilizing device for a broad debate about a more democratic and radical energy politics whereby fuel poverty was tackled alongside demands for energy democracy in a more radical approach to post-carbon transition.

Finally, at the local level, a range of creative practices are evident in the way citizens, local and regional state actors are forging new forms of public and collective ownership. Since 2005, 72 new local public energy companies have been created (Wagner and Berlo 2015) with considerable diversity and innovation in the forms of ownership constructed. These range from new local state run entities such as Hamburg *Energie*, to the creation of smaller scale rural cooperatives – *Genossenschaft* – with local public finance and support, to regional scale collaborative cross-municipal organisations such as Hochsauerland Energie GmbH, involving four smaller towns in North Rhine-Westphalia, and the Regionalwerk Bodensee, involving seven municipalities along Germany's southern border with Switzerland. Creativity is also demonstrated in new forms of hybrid public ownership that combined local state ownership with resident cooperatives in some places; a good example being the town of Wolfhagen in Hessen where the local energy company is 25% owned by a community cooperative.

The German example illustrates the possibilities for climate justice mobilisation both against existing neoliberal institutional practices but also through new forms of state organisation at the level of local state spaces, but it also illustrates how the country's energy politics remain fraught with, and open to contestation by vested interests in fossil fuel lobby who are also able to exert power through the state apparatus. Notably, in Hamburg the continued opposition by the ruling Social Democrats and the local energy trade unions (both of whom still have strong vested interests in coal-based power plants and close ties with Vattenfall) have been a block on subsequent attempts to create a more integrated renewable energy policy. For example, the new public company established to operate the grid by ruling social democrats is not integrated with Hamburg *Energie*, posing potential problems for creating more holistic energy policies that also address energy efficiency, carbon reduction and fuel poverty issues. Political coalitions of fossil fuel interests at local and regional levels can also mobilise to block progressive national policy agendas, most notably in the recent success of the regional government of Nord-Rhein-Westfalen - Germany's most populous region) and a major coal and steel employer – to stymie new energy efficiency measures at the federal level.

Such cases illustrate the continued importance of mobilisation through the different levels and layers of state spaces as well as the more open and contingent nature of the state itself, even under conditions of neoliberal hegemony and austerity. New state spaces can be created for alternative projects as well as for neoliberal-driven ones (Brenner 2004). But there is also another important lesson to be taken here concerning public engagement and participation if we are to challenge neoliberal hegemony and develop alternative forms of politics. Germany's remunicipalisation movement demonstrates the potential for a more transversal politics in the way battles over essential and even mundane public services have the power to mobilise citizens beyond the usual suspects into the movement for low carbon transition and the battle against climate change.

States of Just Transition

Writing about the radical Left in Latin America, Emir Sader (2011) has argued that there has been serious failure to address questions of political strategy by the Left and this characterises much of anti-capitalist and some climate justice politics. The autonomist politics favoured by some groups and organisations has not enabled a reorganisation of mass forces in order to fashion new liberatory political action and construct alternative forms of political power. Instead, he argues, such autonomist projects have refused to confront the question of power at all (other than stating in rather wishful terms that the world can be changed without taking power (Holloway, 2010).

In this sense Gramsci's notion of a 'war of position' - that recognises the inseparability of the social, economic and political spheres - remains pertinent, rethinking the entangled relations between a radical civil society, the economy and the state in an ongoing struggle for hegemony in order to bring about social-ecological transformation (see also Wright, 2010; De Angelis, 2017). This also means that any engagement with institutions must always ensure that challenges to the hegemonic order are not appropriated by the existing system in a way that neutralises their subversive potential. Rather, such an engagement only makes sense when progressive social transformation can take place. The state might play the role of a mediating space between the local and the international; that draws from the creative practices at many local levels as well as the alternative global imaginaries to bring about social, economic and environmental justice (Cumbers, 2015). Thus our emphasis on the role of the state as a governing body with potential for historical memory and the capacity for redistribution that we consider to be a crucial *precursor* to any embrace of equality drives our interest in the state. Having said this, we also argue that social transformation cannot and should not wait upon the state to act. Indeed, across the planet there is an ongoing crisis of growing economic inequality and legitimacy of political representation engendered by neoliberalism. As a result grassroots struggles from below remain a critical force that, through the creation of alternatives and through confrontational collective action can bring the state into a space of engagement and negotiation rather than domination.

Informed by this praxis, as well as by case studies from our own scholarship we have argued for the importance of ongoing antagonistic climate justice mobilisations against corporate capitalism and the neoliberal state (see Chatterton et al 2013), but also for a reconfigured state as a possible terrain of social transformation. We have not proposed a 'model' for such a reconfigured state since we do not believe that this is how social change unfolds. A transformation of the state occurs processually through processes and practices of social and political struggle (De Angelis, 2017). A consideration of the state as a terrain of possibility of social transformation through examples of food sovereignty and energy remunicipalisation has enabled us to consider the forms and scales of state collaboration that have enabled some forms of progressive action that has empowered communities and addressed sustainable (post-carbon) activities. As a terrain of possibility, the state is a space for both engagement and contestation by social movements.

This is evidenced in the UK by the success of radical activist formations in shifting the politics of the opposition Labour Party under the Corbyn leadership in a radical and progressive direction around key areas such as public ownership, energy democracy and climate change (see: https://labourenergy.org/) with the real possibility of influencing future state policy. For example, in a recent speech to a Labour Party conference event,[7] Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, John McDonnell argued for the recognition of the (UK) state as a set of institutions and (largely) dominant social relations. Drawing upon his experiences in the Greater London Council in the UK in the 1980's, McDonnell argued that these relations can be transformed to engender both greater democratic participation in the state by civil society *and* an increasing responsiveness of the state to civil society concerns.

Therefore, climate justice action must attempt to create a different set of relations between the state and social movements that seek to generate more participatory, deliberative, non-hierarchical sets of relations between states, citizens and communities. This will require the 'scaling-up' or spatial extension of local experiments in

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[7] https://www.facebook.com/novaramedia/videos/1709036545804172/

reconfiguring these relations when the possibilities arise, and through developing concerted social movement action across geographical scales that can make these possibilities (and large-scale state transformation) possible.

Ultimately, the distribution of, access to, and control over resources is a crucial analytic for assessing the prospect of climate justice, calling attention to the way in which such distributions both produce and are produced along persistent axes of difference (including class, indigeneity, and race). This will need to happen across scales, and will involve confrontational politics and creative alternative practices that develop commons beyond the reaches of capital relations and which draw upon radical global imaginaries, *and* an engagement with the state, in order to rescale such practices and imaginaries to progressive social transformation.

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