

Annual Review of Environment and Resources Transnational Social Movements: Environmentalist, Indigenous, and Agrarian Visions for Planetary Futures

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extractivism, international governance

Abstract

Environmental, Indigenous, and agrarian and food justice movements that mobilize across and beyond national borders are demanding recognition and participation in debates and policies that shape planetary futures. We review recent social movements that challenge agendas set by corporations, elites, states, conservative movements, and some international governance institutions. We pay particular attention to novel concepts that emerged from or were popularized by these movements, such as environmental justice, climate debt, Indigenous-led conservation, food sovereignty, agroecology, extractivism, and *Vivir Bien* (“Living Well”). Such concepts and agendas increasingly enter international governance spaces, influence global policy debates, build innovative institutions, and converge across class, geographic, and sectoral lines. Although they face daunting obstacles—particularly the free-market zealotry that dominates international policymaking and the agribusiness, mining, energy, and other corporate-philanthropic lobbies—the visions proffered by these movements offer new possibilities for creating a world that prioritizes the intrinsic value of nature and all its beings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article reviews recent research on environmentalist, Indigenous, and agrarian and food justice movements that mobilize across national borders to demand recognition and inclusion in debates and policies that shape planetary futures. We conceive of transnational social movements as generative spaces for novel concepts and new ways of organizing society, on local and global levels. They include formal organizations (e.g., La Vía Campesina or Extinction Rebellion) and polycentric collective struggles (1) that, although not organically linked internationally, influence each other across nation-state lines (e.g., the Climate Justice Movement, Indigenous rights campaigns).

The global agendas we review have emerged over the past four decades in a world grappling with the simultaneous and inseparable crises of climate change, food production, mass extinction, and economic inequality. Although the neoliberal era was marked by the ascendance of global governance and financial institutions and associated policies of shock therapy and structural adjustment, today's crises are driving new kinds of scientific and policy conversations. With climate change, for example, a clear scientific consensus is building that radical social transformations are required, along with an architecture for intergovernmental policy coordination. Furthermore, any transformative solution must respect global ecological limits and their constraints on human action as well as the social minima (2) required to meet the needs of nearly eight billion humans. The United Nations' (UN's) move from the Millennium Development Goals (organized around economic growth and poverty eradication) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (3, 4) mirrors the expansive aims of these nascent—and often, contentious—coalition-building processes and governance spaces.

Our approach moves beyond conventional scholarly depictions of social movements as collective action organizations that press their demands—whether local, national, or global—upon

La Vía Campesina:
“The Peasant Way,” a
movement with 182
member organizations
in 81 countries that
represent some
200,000,000 peasants
and rural workers

**Sustainable
Development Goals
(SDGs):**
17 interlinked global
goals for a sustainable
future that the United
Nations adopted in
2015, with a target
date of 2030

governance structures or corporations. Instead, we emphasize the ways that social movements produce knowledge and meanings (5) and envision, experiment with, propagate, and institutionalize alternative ways of organizing societies. In the case of the environmental, Indigenous, agrarian, and food justice movements highlighted here, these visions extend to human societies' relations with the nonhuman environment. Each of these transnational movements, grounded in the mobilization of a significant sector of humanity, articulates an ethical critique of neoliberal capitalism and so-called Davos cluster (6) institutions. In their public visioning and institution building, these movements offer frameworks for priorities, lifeways, values, and rights that confront the challenging transformations of the twenty-first century. Indeed, the same movements that once united in rejection of the institutions of neoliberal globalization are now intervening in global discourse to reshape planetary futures.

Recognizing that many social movements manifest both progressive and regressive features, we focus on those that resist and challenge agendas underwritten by corporations, elites, states, conservative movements, and certain international governance institutions. In addition, we analyze movements whose concepts have gained quantifiable momentum over the past 40 years and that have had demonstrable influences on international institutions and policymaking.

The four transnational movements described here have roots in profound long-term conflicts that did not begin with neoliberalism. Indigenous movements are challenging a subordination that began with multiple colonial expansions and continued through settler colonialism and waves of extractive plunder over centuries (7). Environmental and climate justice movements raise fundamental questions about the use and abuse of the natural world at multiple timescales. Movements of peasants, farmers, fishers, rural women, and pastoralists have long fought for control of their lands, livelihoods, and lifeways, a struggle intensified by their integration into circuits of agribusiness, chemical inputs, and seed commodification. Moreover, the struggles of the poor for quantitatively adequate and culturally appropriate food span the history of human inequality. These long-term contests have intensified as transnational capital, new forms of property claims, and accelerating technologies of extraction penetrate new economic sectors and geographic zones. Recently, these movements have put forward novel demands in transnational arenas—not so much as a continuation of their historic efforts but as potential solutions to urgent crises of the human community and the biosphere as a whole.

At a moment when an embryonic architecture of global cooperation confronts overlapping ecological and social crises, the social movements we highlight argue that planetary futures will be determined by “a struggle between models” (8). In the arena of food production, the transnational peasant alliance La Vía Campesina sees this struggle as a contest between high-input, profit-dominated models of agribusiness and small-producer-led agroecology projects that include nonmonetized forms of exchange. In this review, we apply the “struggle between models” framework to a range of social movements that are challenging entrenched colonial patterns and the endless economic expansion fueled by market- and finance-led engines. In their place, the movements described here promote alternative visions for the future that are grounded in diverse human and ecologically embedded lifeways (8).

We begin by describing a set of innovative concepts and ideals that transnational movements have proposed. Each contributes to establishing new paradigms for navigating between global ecological limits and social minima (2). We then show how these concepts have gained growing traction by reshaping policy debates and institutional formations, and generating new kinds of social movement alliances and convergences (9).

Davos cluster: entrenched institutions of the fossil fuel-industrial-financial-militarist-global governance complex, named for the Swiss ski resort that hosts the World Economic Forum

Climate justice: an approach to addressing climate change that emphasizes its disproportionate effects on low-income communities and people of color

Ecological debt:

industrialized countries' obligations to the Global South for looting its resources and devastating peoples' natural patrimony and livelihoods

Fossil fuel moratoria:

policy commitments to keep fossil fuels in the ground rather than extracting and burning them

Indigenous-led conservation:

the practice of preserving the integrity of ecosystems through Indigenous territorial rights, customary use, and stewardship

2. EMERGENT CONCEPTS: CONSTRUCTING NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

In this section, we consider seven new concepts that act as key frames for transnational social movement mobilization and analysis: environmental and climate justice (10), ecological debt, fossil fuel moratoria, and Indigenous-led conservation (11), extractivism/post-extractivism, *Vivir Bien*, and food sovereignty (12, 13). We chose these concepts for analysis because they have become especially widespread, influential, and generative. Google's N-gram tool provides data on the relative frequency with which particular words appear in its corpus of scanned publications. **Figure 1**, which employs N-gram data, suggests rapidly rising interest in the terms we selected. Several important and related concepts also receive mention here; however, we did not have space to treat them at length. These include agroecology (14, 15), Indigenous intellectual property (16), free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) (17), and the rights of nature (18). Notably, although some of the concepts we discuss, such as food sovereignty and ecological debt, originated in the realm of mainstream high politics, we find that grassroots and progressive social movements have appropriated and refashioned them in counterhegemonic terms (19).

2.1. Environmental and Climate Justice

Environmental justice began as a rallying cry in the United States in the late 1980s. As sociologist Robert Bullard observes,

Before the environmental justice movement burst onto the national scene, it was commonplace and a generally accepted norm by society, government, and industry that steering pollution to poor and people-of-color communities and away from affluent and white communities was no big deal. (20, p. 243)

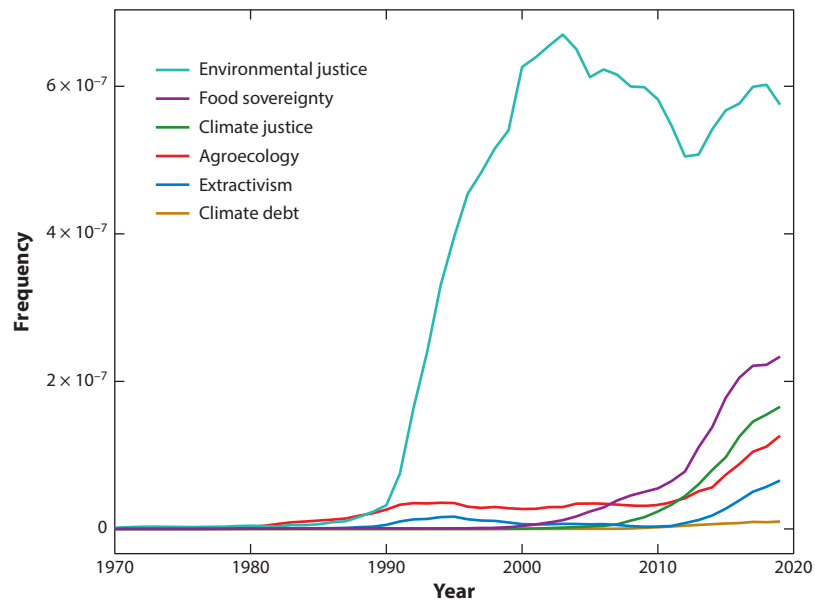


Figure 1

Use of key social movement terms (1970–2019). Figure generated using the ngramr and ggplot2 packages and R version 4.1.2.

Environmental justice activists contest the fact that black, brown, and Indigenous communities live with a disproportionate number of environmental burdens—polluting facilities, toxic waste sites, and bus depots (21–23)—while wealthy (and most often, white) neighborhoods enjoy greater access to environmental benefits—green spaces, bike lanes, farmers’ markets and waterfront promenades (24–26). These disparities result in higher temperatures, greater climate vulnerability, and myriad deleterious health consequences in poor and nonwhite communities. Early on, US environmental justice activists developed a broad-based definition of the environment as inclusive of all the ecological, economic and social resources and protections that are subject to racial and ethnic discrimination.

As the environmental justice frame spread across the globe, consistent and frequent interactions between activists fostered a rich mutuality of influence and intention. Accordingly, activists’ conceptions of justice and the environment are simultaneously steeped in—and transcend—local environmental conditions (22, 27). These conceptions increasingly focus on resetting the gross imbalances of the zero-sum equation that drives economic, ecological, and social crises (27) and imagining a world of reparative justice (21, 22).

Over the past several decades, environmental justice movements have increasingly emphasized climate justice, a term the US-based NGO CorpWatch introduced in a 1999 report titled, “Greenhouse Gangsters versus Climate Justice.” Rather than defining climate change in seemingly neutral, scientific terms, the report called for an approach that emphasizes its disproportionate effects on low-income communities and people of color (28). Climate justice thus reframes the climate crisis in terms of social justice and includes Indigenous, women’s, nonhumans’, and workers’ rights.

In 2000, environmental and social justice activists attending the UN Conference of the Parties climate talks formed the Rising Tide Coalition for Climate Justice (19). Two years later, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Bali precipitated another, more informal, global coalition of environmental and climate justice organizations, which collectively drafted the inclusive and far-reaching “Bali Principles of Climate Justice” (29). Establishing the foundational themes of the climate justice movement, this document stresses that “those hardest hit by climate change are the least responsible for the problem,” that affected communities should participate in climate policymaking, that corporations, governments, and other entities must be held accountable, and that transitions to a decarbonized energy system must be equitable (29).

Over the next few years, an international agenda for climate justice began to emerge, especially as carbon trading schemes became increasingly popular among national leaders in the Global North. In 2004, academics, NGOs, and grassroots organizations gathered in Michigan to draft “The Climate Justice Declaration.” The following year, a collaboration of academics and activists issued the “Durban (South Africa) Declaration on Carbon Trading,” denouncing carbon trading and offset schemes as false—and inequitable—“solutions” to climate change and pointing out their negative impacts on poor people and communities of color (30). These discussions gave rise to several global alliances devoted solely to climate justice, including Climate Justice Now!, the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance, and Climate Justice Action.

Although climate justice attracted Indigenous, marginalized, and other groups fighting for land, resources, and sovereignty, mainstream climate mobilizations remained focused on seemingly neutral technological solutions like those emphasized during UN climate talks. In 2009, however, widespread frustration with the outcome of the Copenhagen climate talks inspired both mainstream and grassroots activists to focus on social justice concerns and to rally behind campaigns targeting fossil fuel extraction. The climate justice framework not only appealed to Indigenous, land sovereignty-based groups, but also expanded the goals of environmental justice and reoriented the larger climate movement (31).

Extractivism: a model of development based on environmentally damaging extraction of raw materials for national and global markets

Food sovereignty: the right of peoples to healthy, ecologically sound, and culturally appropriate food and to define their own food and agriculture systems

Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC): communities’ collective right to be fully informed about—and to freely accept or reject—projects and policies that affect them

Rights of nature: recognition that natural entities—including species, rivers, ecosystems, and the biosphere—have inherent rights that can be defended in court

Environmental justice: opposes the uneven burden of environmental harms upon communities of color, demanding equitable access to economic, social, and environmental resources

Climate debt:

ecological debt due to historical imbalances in greenhouse gas emissions and disparate present and future impacts of climate change

At the same time, climate justice activists were growing increasingly frustrated by world leaders' refusal to agree even to the woefully inadequate climate agreements proposed by the UN. In 2010, Bolivian President Evo Morales hosted the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. Over 20,000 members of grassroots organizations and NGOs hailing from more than 120 countries, as well as representatives of 47 governments, convened to set a climate agenda that put justice front and center. Fired up by the conference, and equipped with a cohesive agenda for climate justice, attendees returned to their respective countries determined to change the outcome of the next set of climate talks. After 2010, use of the term climate justice accelerated substantially, as **Figure 1** shows. In Section 2.2, we analyze the mixed outcomes of this first World People's Conference. Here, we emphasize its role in developing a unified set of goals for activists across the world and in propelling the concept of climate justice into global discourse.

2.2. Ecological and Climate Debt

Ecological debt is an “eye-opener” (32) that refers to the Global North industrialized countries' responsibility to the Global South for the looting and usufruct of its natural assets (oil, minerals, forests, biodiversity, marine and fluvial resources), the exploitation of its peoples, and the destruction, devastation, and contamination of their natural heritage and sources of livelihood (33). Ontologically, the concept disrupts “the standardizing market episteme of the development project, and its ‘global ecology’” (34, p. 259) and reverses the creditor–debtor relationship between North and South.

Although activists and scholars (10, 32) often attribute the phrase “ecological debt” to a 1992 report by Nicaraguan biologist María Luisa Robleto and Chilean economist Wilfredo Marcelo (35), there are several previous uses (36, 37). As early as 1989, Colombian President Virgilio Barco made an impassioned plea to fellow heads-of-state in the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation:

The industrialized countries have an ecological debt . . . For the sake of profits and growth, these countries destroyed most of their renewable natural resources without remediating at all the immense consequences and costs their lack of ecological consciousness had for all of humanity. (30, p. 30)

By the time of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (popularly dubbed the Earth Summit), ecological debt became a counterhegemonic rallying cry, invoked by civil society groups and by Cuba's Fidel Castro (39). Social movements and NGOs authored a Debt Treaty, which called for compensating the Global South for the planetary ecological debt of the North and for a systematic quantification of the debt and its components. Although the ethical framework of ecological debt was endorsed by the G-77 plus China South Summit in 2000, by the World Council of Churches, and by Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*, attempts to incorporate it into the global climate negotiations were rebuffed at the 2009 Copenhagen summit (40).

Nonetheless, the concept of ecological—or climate—debt continued to gain traction among activists, academics, and progressive institutions. At the 2010 World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Bolivia, attendees clarified five arenas in which climate debt must be paid: (a) emissions (to compensate for emitting a larger share of greenhouse gases), (b) development (or technology transfer), (c) adaptation (to compensate for the various kinds of suffering already wrought by climate change), (d) migration (developed countries should receive climate migrants in proportion to their historic responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions), and (e) debts owed to Mother Earth for the degradation of natural resources (41).

However, several obstacles prevent ecological or climate debt from being embraced as a normative concept. Most significantly, ongoing opposition from Global North governments prevents the idea's incorporation into global climate negotiations. In 2016, the Paris Agreement stepped back from the notion of “common but differentiated responsibility,” refusing to assign greater

obligations to wealthy, higher-emitting countries (6). The concept also remains imprecise: Is it a historical debt associated with accumulated environmental injustices, a generational debt owed to future inhabitants of the planet, or compensation for contemporary environmental harms? Must debtors pay for mitigation, restitution, or adaptation (42)? And should the debt be measured in dollar terms or in the division of emissions quotas?

To answer some of these questions, economists have proposed methodologies for quantifying the ecological or climate debt (32, 37). For instance, in 2020, the US Climate Action Network estimated that the United States' "fair share" of climate mitigation is equivalent to a 195% emissions reduction by 2030, which could partially be "paid" by assisting developing countries to reduce their emissions (43). Yet some critics raise moral objections to such calculations, citing the incommensurability of environmental losses and monetary compensation (44–47) as well as the near-certainty that states receiving compensation would fail to channel resources to affected populations. There are also conceptual questions about who pays—corporations or states (48), or impoverished states with high historical emissions? Should debt calculations include the complex range of environmental, economic, and ethical harms (42, 49) wrought by countries and corporations of the Global North?

Recently, the astronomical costs of the COVID-19 pandemic have renewed the popularity of so-called debt-for-nature swaps, which are sometimes portrayed as a version of climate debt collection. Debt-for-nature swaps go back to the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s, when certain Latin American countries agreed to invest in environmental conservation projects in exchange for reductions in their foreign debt (49).

However, studies show that such agreements relieve only a very small portion of a country's debt and often accomplish little in the way of conservation. Moreover, conservation projects frequently seize occupied lands, a practice known as green grabbing. Not only does this displace local people from the lands on which they live, but also it disrupts their subsistence practices and reinforces gender disparities and inequalities (50). In addition, the greenhouse gas-reducing projects established by debt-for-nature swaps are most often controlled by US or European-based NGOs, rather than national governments or local communities (49, 51). Ultimately, rather than promoting the concept of ecological debt described above, debt-for-nature swaps undermine its fundamental principles.

2.3. Fossil Fuel Moratoria and Indigenous-Led Conservation

Indigenous peoples have always rallied to defend their territories. In the late 1980s, however, Indigenous movements embraced environmentalism in a new way, especially in the Amazon Basin (52, 53). Indigenous communities presented themselves as bearers of ecological knowledge (something suddenly valued by outsiders building new environmental governance institutions), as stewards of land, and as participants in global environmental politics (53, 54). At the same time, they confronted mainstream environmentalists, for both speaking on their behalf and negotiating compromises regarding their lands. In 1990, the Coordination of Amazon Basin Indigenous Organizations convened a gathering with environmentalists in Iquitos, Peru, and argued for "the recognition and recomposition of indigenous territories" as a conservation strategy (55). At the gathering, participants formed an Indigenous and environmentalist alliance (55).

In the mid-1990s, Ecuador-based *Acción Ecológica* and Nigeria's Environmental Rights Action cofounded the Global South-based Oilwatch network. Ahead of the 1997 Kyoto climate talks, Oilwatch coordinated a declaration, signed by 200 organizations, that demanded "a moratorium on all new exploration for fossil fuel reserves in pristine and frontier areas" and "full recognition of the ecological debt . . . [in] all future climate negotiations" (56). This dovetailed with Greenpeace International's calculations that a carbon budget of permissible future emissions would prevent the

burning of any undiscovered fossil fuels lest they accelerate climate disruptions. After 2009, carbon budget-generated fossil fuel moratoria became central to climate science (57). Oilwatch and like-minded campaigns won an oil drilling moratorium in Costa Rica, and offshore oil moratoria in Belize, New Zealand, Ireland, and most US coastal waters. Such keep-it-in-the-ground strategies underlie progressive net zero policies and point to a bottom-up generated transition away from fossil fuels (58).

Thanks to these campaigns, moratoria on fossil fuel extraction and the establishment of conservation projects are now more likely to include the official recognition of Indigenous territories. Latin American and Caribbean countries have led the world by formally committing one-fifth of their land to conservation. Although South America has lost nearly 30% of its wilderness area since the 1990s (59), nearly a quarter of the Amazon consists of protected natural areas like parks and biosphere reserves. One-fifth of those coincide with recognized Indigenous territories (60). Significantly, deforestation monitors increasingly acknowledge the global environmental service provided by Indigenous peoples and local communities in preserving forests even more effectively than state-protected areas (61), validating Indigenous movements' claims. Even state-recognized Indigenous territories, however, remain under threat. In Latin America, they are frequently cross-cut by oil, gas, and mineral leases, where the state owns subsoil property. In 2007, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa proposed to the international community that his country refrain from drilling oil in the 20% of its reserves beneath the Yasuní National Park, an Amazonian region with one of the world's highest levels of biodiversity that is also home to the Huaorani and related Indigenous peoples (62). Influenced by his Minister of Economy and Natural Resources, Alberto Acosta, who had ties to *Acción Ecológica*, the organization that popularized the concept of ecological debt, Correa demanded that in return for not extracting 850 million barrels of petroleum the developed countries pay \$3.6 billion over 13 years, one-half of the reserves' value based on the international oil price at the time. The Ecuadorian government's arguments invoked the ecological debt and the South's and North's differentiated responsibilities for environmental problems. It maintained that the payment would avoid the emission of 410 million tons of CO₂, the deforestation of a vast expanse of the Amazon, and finance renewable energy projects (hydro, geothermal, wind and solar). When the proposal failed to attract sufficient foreign backing, Correa reactivated oil development, prompting a fresh set of environmentalist and Indigenous-led conservation campaigns against fossil fuel extraction (63).

2.4. Extractivism and Post-Extractivism

Leftist critics have long assailed the extractive nature of colonialism in exploiting the resources of less developed countries to fuel industrialization and wealth accumulation in some parts of the world and intractable underdevelopment in others. In the 1990s, environmentalists and community leaders took critiques of extractive industries—mining, oil and natural gas extraction, monocrop tree plantations, and large-scale export agriculture—a step further, denouncing them for being environmentally damaging, socially disruptive, and contrary to Indigenous collective rights (64–66). Since then, extractivism has become short-hand for denoting uneven development based on the extraction and exploitation of natural and economic resources (13, 67).

In the mid-2000s, a “pink tide” swept Latin America, bringing leftist populists to power, many of whom were outspoken about the ecological and climate debt of the Global North. At the same time, the prices of commodities (including renationalized oil and gas) soared. With newfound and potential wealth, leftist governments expanded their extractivist projects. In keeping with redistributive principles, they used the income from these projects to improve public infrastructures and alleviate poverty. Such policies substantially benefited middle- and low-income households,

especially in urban areas. However, they did not mitigate the destruction of ecological resources, the theft and despoliation of Indigenous lands, or other threats to the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous and other rural communities.

Local and national governments have responded to persistent anti-extraction campaigns with violence and human rights violations. In the face of such repression, anti-extraction activists have allied with grassroots groups resisting racial violence and police killings as well as with struggles for LGBT+, Indigenous, workers', and women's rights (65, 68). In turn, these new alliances have expanded one another's visions for ecological and social change.

Beyond Latin America, extractivism endangers rural and Indigenous communities across the globe. In 2020, Temper et al. (69) studied 40 countries and identified 649 locally based environmental protests, including those opposing fossil fuel and low-carbon energy projects. Most of these, the study found, were Indigenous-led and rural-based. Moreover, fossil fuel projects generated as much conflict as low-carbon energy projects (such as hydropower and biomass). Although violence against protesters was "rife in almost all activities," a quarter of mobilizations succeeded in suspending the projects they opposed (69, p. 17). The study concluded that many of these campaigns, especially in Latin America, address local issues while asserting new visions for a post-extractive world, experimenting with collective landholding and cooperative agriculture (70).

2.5. *Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir, Suma Qamaña/Sumak Kawsay, and Mino-Mnaamodzawin*

Vivir Bien or *Buen Vivir* ("Living Well") is an ethical orientation that reframes economic life in terms of sufficiency instead of unbridled consumerism and accumulation, and insists on egalitarianism, plurinationality, community, solidarity, and harmony with the Earth. Its advocates—initially Indigenous movements from Andean South America (71, 72) and North America (who invoke the Anishinaabe idea *Mino-Mnaamodzawin*) (73)—contrast "Living Well" with Western, capitalist values.

Westerners accumulate wealth, while those who "live well" have culture, community, and an interactive relationship with nature. As Bolivia's Pact of Unity explained in its draft Mother Earth Law, *Vivir Bien* is an "alternative civilizational and cultural model to capitalism, modernity, and development" (74, p. 8). Within a historical narrative of conquest and revival of Indigenous peoples, words for life and living take on expansive definitions. The way of life suppressed by colonization, advocates argue, requires completeness of self, restoration of community, interpersonal justice, economic sufficiency, reciprocity, and harmony with nature.

In North America, *Mino-Mnaamodzawin* was always a transnational aspiration, rooted in the Anishinaabe, whose territories span Canada's and the United States' border. Arguing that Native peoples in both countries are sovereign nations, these advocates call for a specifically Indigenous environmental justice that can be enforced in their own territories (73).

In South America, "Living Well" entered state discourse with the anti-neoliberal pink tide governments in the 2000s. These activist leaders were backed by popular mobilizations opposing privatization, the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, and the rapacious extraction of natural resources. New Ecuadorian and Bolivian constitutions (approved in 2008 and 2009) named *Vivir Bien* or *Suma Qamaña* (in Bolivia) and the synonymous *Buen Vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay* (in Ecuador) as the core of the economic models. Ecuador's 2013 development plan, titled *Buen Vivir*, defines the term as "the way of life that permits happiness and the continuity of cultural and environmental diversity. . . It is not the search for opulence or infinite economic growth" (75, p. 13). These official endorsements spurred scholarly and activist conversations over the meaning

Vivir Bien/Buen

Vivir: The Indigenous ideal of "Living Well," which orients economic life around sufficiency (rather than accumulation), ecological harmony, and social cooperation

and implementation of the term. UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz proposed it as a way of rethinking development from an Indigenous perspective, glossed as “development with culture and identity” (76, p. 2).

In the countries that embraced *Vivir Bien*—Bolivia and Ecuador—the concept’s very imprecision and capaciousness, and its lack of metrics or absolute prohibitions, allowed it to become a single label attached to two incompatible visions. In government statements, it has become “an empty signifier for state-led development” (77, p. 355), including extractive industries and agribusiness, advertised using the slogan, “for Living Well” (78). Degrowth movements from the Global North have also taken up and promoted the concept. However, *Vivir Bien* activists criticize degrowth as a developed-country paradigm that does not adequately recognize challenges facing developing countries (79). For instance, popular green transitions in the Global North require further extraction of the Global South’s resources, such as the lithium, cobalt, and copper needed for electric vehicles. For Indigenous critics, invoking *Vivir Bien* involves an ethnoecological politics that rejects extraction as a continuation of colonialism.

2.6. Food Sovereignty

Since the mid-1990s, food sovereignty has inspired and generated dynamic social movements, and more than a dozen countries enshrined it in legal norms aimed at transforming food and agriculture systems (80). The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) is a broad coalition that integrates peasants, farmers, pastoralists, fishers, environmentalists, Indigenous peoples, and human rights activists who lobby in Rome at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The largest IPC member is La Vía Campesina, a transnational agrarian movement that alone claims a global membership of two hundred million (81). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (see below), which La Vía Campesina vigorously advocated, accords food sovereignty international legal recognition (82).

Food sovereignty is also the objective of innumerable local and grassroots initiatives in diverse world regions. As a policy prescription, measures intended to enhance food sovereignty run the gamut from conventional protectionism to state-sponsored policy initiatives, such as public procurement rules that facilitate small-farmer provisioning of nearby public-sector institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons, elder housing), to decentralized, innovative forms of linking small farmers and consumers, such as local markets, community-supported agriculture projects, and labeling or certification schemes (83). In many places, food sovereignty efforts eschew state involvement altogether and seek to implement new kinds of economic relations and production models at the community or regional level.

As with ecological debt, social movements appropriated and refashioned food sovereignty, which initially appeared in the realm of high politics. The phrase originated not with La Vía Campesina in the mid-1990s, as numerous scholarly and activist writings mistakenly maintain, but with Mexican government programs more than ten years before (84).

Related ideas circulated during the 1980s and early 1990s among agrarian movements, particularly in Central America and Europe. The frequently cited canonical definition is from the 2007 Nyéléni Declaration, issued at a forum in Sélingué, Mali, attended by more than 500 delegates from over 80 countries, representing rural organizations as well as the World March of Women, Friends of the Earth International, and other NGOs and social movements: “food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (85, pp. 8–9).

A more developed vision of “Six Pillars of Food Sovereignty” is in the Declaration’s appendix. This indicates that food sovereignty (*a*) centers people, including those who are hungry, marginalized, and in conflict zones, and rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity; (*b*) values the peasants and small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, forest dwellers, Indigenous peoples, and agricultural and fisheries workers who grow, harvest, and process food and rejects actions that threaten their livelihoods; (*c*) localizes food systems and brings food providers and consumers closer, involving them in decision-making on food issues, and resists governance structures and agreements that promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade; (*d*) gives local producers control over territory, land, water, seeds, livestock, and fish; (*e*) builds food providers’ knowledge and supports organizations that conserve, develop, and manage localized production, harvesting, and research and that pass this wisdom to future generations; and (*f*) works in harmony with nature in diverse, low-input agroecological production and harvesting methods that maximize the contribution of ecosystems and improve resilience and adaptation that heal and cool the planet (85).

For a long time, understandings of food sovereignty among scholars, policymakers, and activists were largely aspirational and, at times, contradictory and vague. A major advance came with two conferences in 2013 and 2014 in the United States and the Netherlands, where a large group of scholars and agrarian activists charted several more concrete approaches (84). A “second generation” of food sovereignty implementation emphasizes urban-rural linkages, democratizing innovations, resilience over efficiency, and agroecology (86). Subsequent historical analyses described how food transformed from a local commons, embedded in webs of social relations, to a transnational commodity and how academic research tends to emphasize the latter (87). Critics lambasted food sovereignty implementation efforts for propagating a “problematic discourse that essentializes indigenous and peasant people as inherently ecological and opposed to capitalism” (88, p. 265) but also showed how food sovereignty and participatory organic certification movements enact prefigurative politics and become “a prism for seeking a broader vision of ecocultural change” (83, p. 134).

The interconnected concepts enumerated above—and the movements that deploy them—both describe and model new kinds of human and nonhuman relationships. Through participatory and inclusive processes, they offer a path toward a post-exploitative world that prioritizes the inherent value of nature and all the beings contained within it. However they have been taken up and circulated in larger contexts, the influence of these concepts—and the struggles generating them—on international institutions is undeniable (see **Table 1**).

3. FORMAL INSTITUTION BUILDING AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Over the past three decades, transnational social movements have demanded, created, and claimed a variety of new spaces and formal institutions of international governance. Examples include the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples’ Mechanism of the FAO’s Committee on World Food Security, and the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. In examining these cases, we are less concerned with the types of institutionalization that scholars of transnational (and other) social movements typically analyze, such as co-optation or absorption into political parties, than we are with movements’ efforts to carve out and utilize these new international governance spaces.

These spaces serve as moral and institutional counterweights to the largely neoliberal economic governance institutions that were ascendant in the 1990s and 2000s: the World Trade

Table 1 Transnational movement-backed concepts and their global influence^a

Movement category	Concepts	Transnational collaborations/arenas	Knowledge production	Global governance arenas
Environmental/climate justice	Climate justice, ecological debt, climate debt, carbon budget, fossil fuel moratorium, rights of nature	Indigenous Environmental Network, Oilwatch, World Peoples' Summit on Climate Change, International Tribunal for the Rights of Nature and Mother Earth	Environmental justice research, planetary boundaries research, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, United Nations Special Rapporteur (UNSR) on human rights and environment	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Earth summits/World Summit on Sustainable Development
Indigenous	Indigenous territorial rights; <i>Vivir Bien</i> ; Indigenous-led conservation; biodiversity; free, prior and informed consent	World Congress of Indigenous Peoples, UN Permanent Forum, regional Indigenous organizations	Indigenous mapping research, biodiversity and Indigenous territory research, UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UNSR on Indigenous rights	UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Inter-American Human Rights System, International Labour Organization (Convention 169)
Peasant and agrarian/food justice	Food sovereignty, agrarian reform, agroecology, agricultural technologies, intellectual property of seeds, biodiversity, nutrition	La Vía Campesina, International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, Nyéléni Forum, Asian Peasant Coalition, International Forum on Agroecology	UNSR on the right to food; International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development; La Vía Campesina agroecology schools and peasant universities	UN Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Summit, UN Food Systems Summit, UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas

^aThis table is illustrative of the social movements, concepts, and governance spaces we discuss in our review. It is not meant to offer a comprehensive list of those we include or those that currently exist.

Organization, international financial institutions, the World Economic Forum, and the G7 and G20 summits. In this section, we trace how international organizations propagate and institutionalize the concepts gestated by grassroots movements.

3.1. Indigenous Institution Building

Indigenous peoples have been leaders in formal institution building at the global and regional levels (89). Numerous Indigenous caucuses, UN conferences, and international working groups have convened within and alongside bodies such as the Rio Earth Summit (1992) and the UN Commission on Human Rights (1982–2006). Through these bodies and their own independent networking, the transnational Indigenous movement conceptualized and produced the emerging regime of Indigenous rights norms (90), most clearly articulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Although officially drafted by the UN's Working Group, the Declaration is

the product of years of work by many Indian and other indigenous leaders, who have held their own meetings year after year in Geneva.... Indigenous representatives by the hundreds have reviewed, revised, criticized, debated and added to the Declaration over the course of about ten years. (91, p. 37)

As the first international human rights instrument to be designed by the people whose rights it protects (92), the Declaration inverted scholarly understandings of how international norms are created and spread (93). After protracted consideration, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration by a 144 to 4 vote in 2007. (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States all voted against it but reversed their negative stances in the following years.) The 16-member Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, founded in 2006 and half designated by governments and half by Indigenous peoples' organizations, creates an annual dialogue among Indigenous peoples, governments, and intergovernmental bodies.

The Declaration's principles include a non-separatist definition of self-determination, rights to territory and autonomy, protection of environment and culture, and participation in decisions that affect the rightsholders (94). Although formally nonbinding, the Declaration is the heart of a rapidly developing international Indigenous rights regime (95). This system builds on the UN-centered international human rights regime, regional human rights systems in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and a proliferation of "soft law" mechanisms and institutional standards: nonbinding guidelines, norms, and protocols adopted by international financial institutions (like the World Bank), para-state institutions, human rights monitoring organizations, and private corporations (92).

By articulating their visions in legalistic terms, and simultaneously pressing their demands on disparate institutions, Indigenous rights campaigners were able to persuade diverse institutional actors to at least formally accept new standards such as free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) (17). The Inter-American Human Rights System, taking the lead among regional human rights bodies, has incorporated FPIC into its jurisprudence in a series of decisions. These decisions, binding on most of the hemisphere, include FPIC as an aspect of Indigenous and tribal peoples' rights to consultation [under International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169] and to collective property (under the American Convention on Human Rights) (96–98). The ILO's Committee of Experts, the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have each produced legal opinions that buttress or widen the applicability of FPIC. A variety of transnational commercial organizations, from the International Finance Corporation to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, have come to acknowledge FPIC, illustrating the momentum that such standards can develop. Nonetheless, formal—or even legally binding—norms are insufficient to ensure a change in practice, and numerous studies attest to the uneven, politicized, and sometimes fraudulent character of FPIC processes (99–101). The jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court on Human Rights guides national courts (100), and even when state compliance was inconsistent it still yielded an "undeniable . . . positive impact on the victims' situation and on the general recognition of territorial rights" (102, p. 247). This was the case even when states failed to comply with Court rulings (103, 104).

3.2. Convergence of Indigenous, Agrarian, and Environmental Movements

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit, where Indigenous and environmental movements each organized parallel summits alongside the meeting of government representatives, was a harbinger of greater civil society presence in global governance, and particularly in UN institutions. Although the UN convened 150 global conferences prior to 1990, the post-Cold War summits on environment, food, women, race, human rights, Indigenous peoples, and social development became stages for NGOs and social movements to press their demands and lobby governments. UN agencies newly engaged civil society, with the latter having a different definition and level of influence depending on the arena involved (105). More recently, so-called affected populations and their movements have gained more space in global governance, although their strategic impact is debated (106). The

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP): adopted in 2018, enshrines in international law human rights for peasants and other rural people, including rights to land and to food sovereignty

intergovernmental summits also prompted movements to self-organize across borders, whether through new global organizations, preparatory and alternative summits, or novel transnational networks.

The FAO is perhaps the international agency that has attended most closely to the voices of peasant and grassroots food producers. The 1996 World Food Summit marked a point of inflection in this relationship, as the NGO Forum's statement "Profit for Few or Food for All?" advanced an agenda for future FAO work, including the concepts of food sovereignty and the human right to food, and centering sustainable agriculture. Rural organizations formed the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty and began a formal partnership with the FAO in 2003. The world food crisis of 2007–2008—marked by food riots in more than 30 countries—propelled food and agriculture issues to the top of the agendas of international governance institutions. In 2009, the FAO's Committee on World Food Security underwent a profound reform aimed at becoming

the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings. (107, p. xviii)

In practice, this meant that the CFS's new Civil Society Mechanism (renamed the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism in 2018) became a vibrant forum for agrarian and environmental movements to challenge government and agribusiness representatives and to put forward proposals for alternative models in areas that include agricultural technologies, intellectual property of seeds, and nutrition, among others (107–109).

According to outside and inside observers, these movement organizations and demands have become increasingly influential on the FAO Secretariat. The reformed CFS stakeholder participation model, however, which tends to view all stakeholder voices as equally meritorious and deserving, also provided space for a well-resourced, pro-corporate Private Sector Mechanism that coordinates constant pushback from proponents of conventional, industrial agriculture. This tension played out in FAO discussions about drafting the UN SDGs, where it resulted in weak compromises (110). Similarly, in global development and trade institutions, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, the transnational social movements advocating for alternative models either reject any engagement (81) or remain fundamentally at odds with the vision of food production promoted by intransigent agribusiness interests.

3.3. Advancing Human Rights, Climate Justice, and Labor Agendas at the United Nations and Beyond

Transnational agrarian movements have increasingly made their voices heard in other UN bodies and agencies in addition to the FAO, notably the Human Rights Council (which replaced the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2006). The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food—one of the Council's "mandates" or "special procedures"—is a position created in 2000 and since held by four independent experts that act as a voice for overcoming hunger, transforming food systems, and for the interests of small-scale agriculturalists, pastoralists, fishers, and other producers. For 17 years, La Vía Campesina and other movements representing these sectors lobbied in Geneva to have the UN adopt a new international legal instrument on the rights of peasants.

In 2018, after six years of negotiations, the Council and then the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) (111, 112). Importantly, Bolivia, which chaired the negotiations, suspended UN rules that required ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) accreditation for civil society participation, thus facilitating the vocal, active presence of grassroots organizations

of peasants, pastoralists, nomads, fishers, plantation workers, and rural women (113). As occurred with the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see above), the rightsholders—peasants, small farmers, and others—contributed significantly to authoring a new international legal instrument that applied to them.

The UNDROP establishes new standards for individual and collective rights to land and natural resources, and to seeds, biodiversity, and food sovereignty, as well as to social security for rural workers, who as part of the informal sector are usually denied that right. UNDROP spells out the obligations of states and international governance institutions to ensure peasants' participation in policymaking processes that affect their communities. Implementation of UNDROP provisions, however, faces daunting obstacles, considering the weight of powerful agribusiness and other Davos cluster corporate-philanthropic lobbies in international policymaking. The continuing influence of these interests was evident at the September 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, called by UN Secretary General António Guterres as part of the Decade of Action to advance the UN's ambitious SDGs, which are supposed to be achieved by 2030 (114). The involvement of the elite World Economic Forum in organizing the event, and the appointment of Dr. Agnes Kalibata—the President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, largely funded by the Gates Foundation—to lead it signaled a breakdown in grassroots–UN dialogue in this area. After issuing a critical position paper in 2020, La Vía Campesina spearheaded a grassroots boycott of the Food Systems Summit and convened an alternate gathering in July 2021 (115–117). Boycott supporters denounced “multistakeholder initiatives” as a disguised form of corporate capture that “greenwashes” giant transnational corporations, allows them to dominate policymaking, and stymies genuine progress (118).

Global climate negotiations, conducted under the aegis of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, have far-reaching implications for energy, the economy, and land use. The rigorously intergovernmental talks have long attracted NGO interventions, parallel summits, and protests. This has enabled international networking among movements, sometimes effective lobbying of state negotiators (119), and the circulation of novel concepts such as ecological debt and climate justice. Many observers have concluded, however, that outside voices are disenfranchised and heavily policed (120), and the texts produced by climate negotiators (unlike many of the other examples we describe here) indicate a decreasing presence of movement-generated concepts (6).

One exceptional intervention was the Bolivian government's convening of a separate World People's Summit on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Tiquipaya, Cochabamba, in 2010. Although this gathering of 20,000 movement participants had limited influence on the Cancún summit that followed, it highlighted the international push for recognizing the rights of nature, including the planetary ecosystem, glossed as Pachamama or Mother Earth. The Tiquipaya gathering drafted a declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth and sponsored the International Tribunal for the Rights of Nature and Mother Earth (121). This unofficial court, which has convened a half-dozen sessions as of 2021, conducts investigations, holds public hearings, and writes judgements on the model of the Russell Tribunals, the first of which convened a panel of intellectual notables to investigate US war crimes in Vietnam. Meanwhile, the UN has convened annual international dialogues on Harmony with Nature (122), and recognition of rights of nature continues to evolve at the international and national level (123, 124).

Twenty-first century campaigns for the formal recognition of workers' rights at different scales have also catalyzed new grassroots organizing networks. In particular, domestic workers have long struggled to organize despite their dispersed and atomized workplaces. They fight for equality of rights with other workers, inclusion in the trade union movement, and their specific needs as a mostly female workforce. By pressing governments for common labor standards—and in some places, public funding for caring labor—domestic workers reimagine the focus of labor

organizing away from the employer and toward public entities they hope to influence (125). In the United States, where they are explicitly excluded from the protections of the National Labor Relations Act, activists achieved passage of domestic workers' bills of rights in ten states and two major cities. Supported by human rights organizations and the International Trade Union Confederation, organizers formed the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN) and pressed for an ILO convention (126). The IDWN applied the formula of articulating joint demands, using formalistic procedures (such as an ILO questionnaire to governments) as organizing targets, and self-representation in international fora to shape ILO Convention 189, the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, adopted in 2011.

4. THE DYNAMICS OF CONVERGENCE AND ALLIANCE

Worsening, mutually constitutive crises around food, energy, environment, climate, finance, and COVID-19 mark today's global political terrain. The emergence of novel concepts, such as those discussed above, reflects and dynamizes existing alliances. These new frames also point to coalitions that should be forged but are not actually present in global social justice struggles. Alliances may be vertical (linking transnational, national, and subnational organizations in the same movement), horizontal (international and regional), and cross-movement (for example, between agrarian and environmental, women's or climate justice movements). Scholars have analyzed cross-movement collaborations in terms of "spillover," "diffusion," "boundary-spanning," or "convergence" (127, 128).

Several older sectoral alliances have strengthened and newer ones have emerged, including environmental and climate justice movements, the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (129), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (130), the World March of Women (131), and the IPC (81), some of which are discussed above. These enjoy varying degrees of global political influence. The environmental justice movements are among the most politically active and widespread globally, even if most eschew an antisystemic stance and focus on immediate local environmental issues (132).

Social movements also exert influence by creating new fields of knowledge, demanding and developing alternative technologies (such as organic food or renewable energy), and shifting scientific debates in collaboration with experts (4, 133). These engagements link grassroots movements to transnational epistemic communities of professional technical experts (53). As engagements between Indigenous and agrarian movements, on the one hand, and conservation biologists, agricultural scientists, and human rights lawyers, on the other, illustrate, such collaborations enable movement-produced models to orient arenas of law and policy. At times, movements produce their own intellectuals who are barely distinguishable in the depth of their knowledge from the credentialed "experts" in recognized epistemic communities (112).

Multiclass coalitional politics have implications for collective action. Alliances experience ebbs and flows with changing political opportunities and threats. Agrarian movements, for example, often find that once peasants satisfy their land hunger, they demobilize and movements wane. But today's multicrisis conjuncture has sustained some of the old alliances and invigorated new ones.

La Vía Campesina is a movement of movements internally differentiated along class and ideological lines. It has persisted for three decades and maintained its global influence. During its first two decades, it earned widespread recognition as a leader in the struggle against the World Trade Organization and neoliberal globalization. La Vía Campesina tried to keep land on the development and social justice agenda, although with fewer concrete gains (134). It promoted agroecology and agroecological schools as a strategic glue that coheres a broad coalition of forces opposing the industrial food system (135). Although this effort has not been without problems

on the ground (136), one of its notable successes is the mainstreaming of agroecology in global governance institutions.

In the aftermath of the 2008 world food crisis, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (137), sponsored by intergovernmental agencies ranging from the FAO to the World Bank, synthesized knowledge around all aspects of food production and consumption and incorporated approaches from radical social movements, including the endorsement of participatory plant breeding and their concerns about the increasing use of food crops for fodder and biofuels (15). In 2015, however, reflecting an ongoing division between political and technical understandings of agroecology (136, 138), grassroots organizers gathered in the International Forum on Agroecology to craft the Nyéléni Declaration (different from the 2007 Food Sovereignty Declaration of the same name) and define their vision of agroecology, grounded in collective rights, holistic integration with ecology, political autonomy, and social transformation (139, 140). In 2019, the CFS's High-Level Panel of Experts put agroecology at the center of the "profound transformation" necessary for sustainability and "to achieve food security and nutrition" for all (141, p. 13), although critics charged that its report "watered down" not only the radical agroecology that social movements advanced but also its own policy recommendations (142, p. 11).

During the past decade, longtime cross-movement convergences have deepened. The global food sovereignty alliance is both a politically coherent movement and a coalition of multiple movements from across sectors, classes, and thematic campaigns (81). These kinds of persistent, multiclass coalitions have been analyzed from several different angles. Some studies emphasize constituent movements' different models of alternative food systems—food sovereignty, food justice (134), food democracy (143), or food security. Others point to movements' ideological orientations. Liberal-progressive, social democratic, and democratic socialist orientations dominate the global food sovereignty alliance, although anarchist (144, 145) and orthodox Marxist tendencies are also significant. The People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty, for example, includes groups in the Asian Peasant Coalition, many of which are close to Maoist movements (81).

Scholarly and activist analyses that treat these movements of movements as undifferentiated or homogeneous fail to acknowledge how their multiclass, coalitional character generates tensions. In climate change global advocacy, for example, rival coalitions such as the older Climate Action Network International, with a focus on mitigation, and the Climate Justice Network!, which calls for a just transition and reparations, vie for support (146). A proliferation of other transnational networks—some durable and others short-lived—has staged high-profile actions at international climate conferences, fossil fuel industry sites, and financial institutions. These include Climate Justice Action, Rising Tide, Extinction Rebellion, System Change Not Climate Change, and the Climate Justice Alliance (147). Although united in their sense of alarm and urgency, the differences between these movements are not trivial or easily bridged.

The conjunction of environmental and climate crises, the rise of right-wing populism, and the COVID-19 pandemic suggest alliances within and between sectors and classes that ought to exist but do not, especially at the transnational level. Labor in the global food system—farm, packing-house, restaurant, supermarket, and delivery workers—received heightened scrutiny during the pandemic as supply chains appeared increasingly fragile and unjust. The pandemic highlighted a persistent blind spot about labor among transnational movement alliances of all kinds (148, 149). The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations participates in the IPC, but that does not automatically make the food sovereignty movement fully responsive to labor issues. Democratically representative and politically robust alliances require a labor pillar, but bringing labor in can produce tensions, as when calls for closing coal mines divide environmentalists and workers (150). Farmworkers' class-based

demands for higher wages and cheaper food may not be in the interest of small and medium-size farmers who rely on migrant wage workers (151). The 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on methane's outsized role in climate change could affect future alliances of organized pastoralists with food sovereignty and climate justice movements. Dairy farmers in several countries, for example, are up in arms against methane regulation and represent livestock producers as a homogeneous sector suffering discrimination. Whether small pastoralists and their movements will be able to differentiate themselves from big industrial livestock producers remains to be seen.

If most transnational movements arise in response to dynamics of global capitalism, we must ask whether a positive future is possible within capitalism. Many environmental justice campaigns respond to harms to local communities or specific sectors. They lack both an antisystemic politics that is sufficiently "anticapitalist and trans-environmental" and an "eco-socialist" vision (132, p. 120). Some question whether transnational environmental justice movements are truly global (152). Bringing "trans-agrarian" and anticapitalist agrarian movements into coalitions that are already "anticapitalist and trans-environmental" will highlight how responses to today's multiple crises always implicate the rural world (153). Movements may aim at "smashing capitalism," "taming capitalism," "resisting capitalism," or "escaping capitalism," but all share a common objective of "eroding capitalism" (154). This heuristic typology facilitates mapping potential and actual alliance convergences and cleavages. The challenge for movements is not to doggedly adhere to one or another type, but to combine forces from all approaches. The urgent empirical question is not whether degrowth or eco-socialist alternatives gain traction (132, 144), but whether these will unite or divide movements and alliances.

5. CONCLUSION

Even as world leaders and economic elites work to assuage public concerns over climate change by finessing milquetoast accords, small-scale farmers, Indigenous communities, domestic workers, low-income urban residents, and others are rising to demand an end to false solutions and extreme inequality. Promoting game-changing concepts like climate justice, ecological debt, Indigenous-led conservation, and food sovereignty, these activists challenge the exploitative legacies of colonialism and imagine new alternatives to market-based capitalism. Their multiple visions, born as critiques of market dominance, offer an antidote to "the pervasive failure in industrial, modern societies to imagine desirable ways of living" beyond fossil fuels, environmental destruction, and perpetual economic expansion (6, p. 674). Crucially, these movements can neither be studied as isolated entities nor do they operate in discrete silos. Rather, their agendas, goals, and influences converge on multiple levels. Scholars of social movements—transnational or not—must situate their subjects within broader political fields that include allied and competing movements, state and supranational institutions, scientific and policy experts, and the environmental and economic forces that facilitate or constrain their advance.

The strength of these dynamic relationships and concepts is evident in the influences that grassroots social movements have had on international institutions. In particular, the UN's adoption of agendas put forward by Indigenous, agrarian, and environmental rights activists signals the power (and persistence) of these grassroots coalitions. At times they also achieve a potentially longer-lasting influence by inserting their models and conceptual frameworks into scientific and policy conversations and debates. Should the multiple ecological and human crises of the twenty-first century propel climate, biodiversity, deforestation, and universal food provision to the core of global governance, movement-generated ideas stand as the best—and most sustainable—solutions.

At the same time, it is important not to overestimate the power of ideas alone. The interstate system is dominated by governments that have long prioritized economic expansion and military and geopolitical competition. Transnational (and other) corporations—and the banks that finance them—pay lip service to green ideas while their short-term accounting and commitment to boosting shareholder value propel them toward environmental catastrophes, the main costs of which are being and will be borne by others. Powerful interests, and the lobbies that serve them, work ceaselessly to maintain that status quo, even if it means widespread and irreversible ecological destruction. Despite the urgency of crises and the articulation of alternative paradigms to resolve them, movements' efforts to propagate their ideas will have to be matched by a struggle for the power to implement them.

SUMMARY POINTS

1. Grassroots groups are generating new ideas that are simultaneously local and global and that encompass multiple, cross-cutting issues.
2. These groups increasingly form multi-class, multi-sector, and mutually influential coalitions.
3. Working interactively with human rights and scientific experts, movements articulate their practices as reproducible models.
4. The struggle between promarket and proenvironment models is both a power struggle over control and a struggle over which practices offer real solutions to current global crises.
5. Grassroots movements contest market-based “solutions” to climate change for adhering to the same kinds of repressive practices that have trampled on their rights and destroyed the Earth and its climate.
6. Indigenous, agrarian, and environmental justice social movements have demanded, created, and claimed a variety of new spaces and formal institutions of international governance.

FUTURE ISSUES

1. What types of social movement frames facilitate broad, cross-sector coalitions?
2. What alliances will strengthen the influence of transnational social movements in global governance institutions?
3. How will movements—especially rural and urban—combine forces and forge alliances that accommodate a range of views and interests?
4. What strategies will reinforce those global governance institutions that might address planetary crises?
5. How can transnational movements of historically disempowered people wage asymmetrical struggles against powerful corporations, states, and global governance institutions?
6. How can studies of social movements better understand movements' influence on and through scientific and policy networks?

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

C.B.-J. discloses that he worked for Greenpeace USA and Project Underground, an environmental human rights organization, from 1998 to 2001. The other authors are not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.

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