The politics of climate change in the Caribbean: A sociological investigation into policy responses, public engagement and activism

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Abstract

Debate abounds over whether or not the lack of adequate political action on climate change can be explained by reference to a 'post-democratic' and 'post-political' consensus. While there has been scholarship that looks at neoliberalism and environmental concerns in the Caribbean, a region commonly represented as being particularly vulnerable to climate change, there is little that explores responses to climate change there sociologically, and in terms of debate around the post-political consensus.

This thesis, therefore, constitutes an ethnographic investigation into the politics of responses to climate change, concentrating on representations of public engagement, activism and policy responses, in three case-study sites in different contexts, all relevant to the Caribbean region as a whole. These are: 1) the regional context, focusing on climate change policies and responses in the Caribbean; 2) the international context, exploring policy-making, public engagement and social movement activism at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 16th Conference of Parties in Cancún, Mexico; and 3) the national context, examining the relationships between community engagement around conservation, development and the governance of protected areas, and climate change in Belize.

The contributions of the thesis are as follows. Firstly the research details the specific dynamics of tendencies towards neoliberal development, and hence depoliticisation, in responses to climate change in each of the case-study contexts. Nevertheless, the theory of the post-political is elaborated on where it is shown that these tendencies can be better understood with reference to the legacies of colonialism in the region, and the forms of development established and enforced in their wake. Hence, secondly, the research considers depoliticisation processes in the post-colonial contexts of the Caribbean, indicating that pressures towards neoliberal development shape responses to climate change there. Thirdly, the study adds texture to existing discussions by moving beyond overly monolithic theoretical accounts of post-politics, via a nuanced engagement with ethnographic data, to highlight the ambivalent dimensions of people's accounts, and the pragmatic actions they take in response. An evaluation of the latter reveals challenges to tendencies towards depoliticisation, as well as some of the tensions involved in trying to implement depoliticized responses. Finally, I demonstrate that different responses to climate change imply contrasting models of society, and human action. The data points towards there being an affinity between post-political and individualised, or 'unsociological' accounts of climate change.

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Inevitably there are those that I cannot mention here by name, for this page would risk eclipsing the thesis in length, but to all of those who have helped in various ways, I give the biggest of big ups!

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

^{o}C – Degrees Celsius

Antic@p – Anti-capitalist anti-COP network

CARICOM – Caribbean Community and Common Market

5Cs – Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

CfCA – Camp for Climate Action (also known as Climate Camp)

CJA – Climate Justice Action

CJM – Climate Justice Movement

CJN! – Climate Justice Now!

CO_2 – Carbon Dioxide

COP – Conference of Parties (of the UNFCCC)

COP15 – The 15th Conference of Parties in Copenhagen, Denmark

COP16 - The 16th Conference of Parties in Cancun, Mexico

COP17 – The 17th Conference of Parties in Durban, South Africa

COP18 – The 18th Conference of Parties in Doha, Qatar

COP19 - Conference of Parties in Warsaw, Poland

DEFRA – UK Government Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council, UK

GCM – General circulation model (contributing to global climate models)

GEF – Global Environmental Facility of the United Nations

GHG – Green House Gasses

IMF – International Monetary Fund

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

KF10 – Klimaforum10

LVC – La Via Campesina

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

PPM – Parts Per Million

REDD – Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

SIDS – Small Island Developing States

UKCIP – UK Climate Impacts Program

UN – United Nations

UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

US – United States of America

Chapter 1 | Introduction

'Climate change could have significant geopolitical impacts around the world, contributing to poverty, environmental degradation, and the further weakening of fragile governments. Climate change will contribute to food and water scarcity, will increase the spread of disease, and may spur or exacerbate mass migration.' (The Pentagon cited in Johnson 2010)

Climate change, though notoriously contested (Hulme 2009), is widely presented as constituting a profound threat to the contemporary conditions for human and non-human life, as the above prognosis from the Defence Department of the United States illustrates (see also Urry 2011 for instance). The relatively conservative (Wynne 2010), yet still startling, predictions emerging from the global scientific body charged with reporting on climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), confirm this (Wynne 2010; Yearley 2009). Hence an increasing range of commentators, from climatologists to economists (Urry 2011), have come to remark on the negative impacts that a changing climate entails.

In light of this prognosis, politicians from the Caribbean, which is a region considerably more at risk from the impacts of climate change than many others, and which is (broadly) the focus of this thesis, have called for a limit of 1.5^{o}C to the global warming associated with climate change. Even an increase of 2^{o}C in the global average temperature, which is the 'dangerous' limit to climate change most widely discussed in policy circles (Shaw 2011, 2013), modest though it may sound, would entail substantial disruption to contemporary social life. While the poverty of conceptualising climate change in such instrumentally reductionist terms, as a single, universal and quantifiable 'dangerous limit' (Shaw 2011, 2013), are discussed below, it is worth pointing out here that due to the lack of appropriate action, even 2^{o}C will be almost impossible to attain, and the even more catastrophic prospect of 4-6^{o}C of average global warming looms ever larger (Bond 2012b; Hamilton and Kasser 2009). Existing policy responses are therefore failing even in their own terms to meet the stated goals of abating climate change, a situation Lohmann (2010) refers to as a 'climate crisis'. An analysis of these policy-responses, and possible alternatives to them, is necessary in order to help understand why they have thus far failed.

Climate change, and the processes associated with causing it have become increasingly disputed by some. On the one hand, for example, activists calling for 'climate justice' camp out at United Nations meetings, blockade power stations, and the sites of extractive production globally, warning of 'carbon colonialism', or 'colo$_2$nialism', and highlighting, via notions of justice, the continuities between those who benefit from polluting policies and those who demand austerity in response to financial collapse, and the victims of both (Bond 2012b).[1] On the other hand, energy companies often supported national governments pursue the extraction of increasingly hard to reach resources, in previously off-limits areas such as national conservation parks. Sometimes the greater accessibility of these resources is itself a consequence of climate change, as is the case with the oil made available as a result of the Arctic sea ice melt. Finally, neoliberal models of development underpin these trends (Motta and Nilsen 2011). It is these connected themes of climate change, policy-making, public engagement, activism, conservation, and development, which are explored in this thesis, the primary focus and objectives of which are discussed further below. Drawing together these themes is the notion of 'post-politics' which I shall now briefly introduce.

I have been involved as an activist in various social movement activities, but it was my engagement in those which arose in the late 2000s, motivated by a concern with climate change (Bond 2012), that have shaped the intellectual, as well as political, trajectory of this project, a development discussed in more depth in Chapter 3. More particularly, it was in preparation for the counter-summit mobilisation for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen, as a participant in what has been termed the 'climate justice movement' (Bond 2012b; Mueller 2010; Pusey and Russell 2010; Russell 2012), that I was introduced via articles in movement publications Shift (Steven 2009) and Perspectives (Pusey and Russell 2010) to scholar Erik Swyngedouw's interpretation of contemporary climate change politics as being 'post-political'. The debates surrounding the use of this concept are discussed more fully in Chapter 2, but briefly, the theory of the post-political condition of climate change suggests that the aforementioned lack of adequate political action on climate change can be explained by reference to a 'post-democratic' and 'post-political'

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[1] The network No Dash For Gas's 'Reclaim the Power' in the UK is a very recent example. See http://www.nodashforgas.org.uk/.

[2] Approaches to climate change emerging from within economics are explored more fully in Chapter 2.

[3] The details of the case studies are outlined in more depth in Chapter 3.

[4] Discussions about the post-political are complicated slightly by when a distinction is not made between

consensus. This consensus rests on 'the perceived inevitability of capitalism and a market economy as the basic organisational structure of the social and economic order, for which there is no alternative' (Swyngedouw 2010: 215). Those adopting value positions outside of this frame 'are increasingly marginalized as either maverick hardliners or conservative bullies' (Swyngedouw 2010: 215).

The analysis of climate change in these terms was consistent with my encounters of those accounts which prioritised 'dealing with climate change' at the expense of considering the broader social and political relations which caused it. An example was the popular 2010 campaign entitled '10:10'. 10:10, inspired by the model of the 'Make Poverty History' campaign, which called for individual action to support carbon emission cuts of 10% in a year. Such calls struck me as being inherently depolitical because they failed to consider the social relations embedded in the emission of carbon in the first place, and thus narrowed the scope for pursuing more egalitarian forms of society in responding to climate change. In further exploring these ideas in my academic work, the reasons why I was drawn to the notion of post-politics perhaps become even clearer when contrasted with some of the existing social scientific engagements with climate change.

1. Context: a 'social science crisis'?

In my early encounters with academic discussions of climate change I was generally struck by the instrumentalism of much scholarship. Climate change was initially defined by the natural sciences, such as atmospheric chemistry, climatology, meteorology and geophysics (Demeritt 2001; Schneider 2009). Many social scientists apparently failed to engage with this science (Turnpenny 2009), and a substantial proportion of the kinds of social science I encountered which did engage with climate change tended to do so in instrumental ways, focussing on finding effective policy mechanisms or economic reforms, without questioning the underlying social structural causes of climate change. The range of existing social science on which climate change policy-making draws is sufficiently narrow that it leads Lohmann (2010) to suggest that there is a 'social science crisis' accompanying the 'climate crisis'.

Whereas the lack of a global policy regime to abate climate change was once blamed on ignorance of the physical causes and effects of climate change, Lohmann (2010) suggests that now, instead, it is the very carbon trading instruments which have been prioritised as the appropriate policy response

which are responsible for an on-going policy failure to abate climate change. One particular group of social scientists, neoclassical economists, have contributed far more to this market-based policy regime than others, at the cost of narrowing the scope for contributions from those who question 'the conceptual universe of the new neoliberal project of climate commodification and trading' (Lohmann 2010: 20).[2] While disciplines such as economics have been instrumental in shaping existing policy-responses to climate change, there is a general sense of anxiety among interested sociologists about the lack of sociological input (Grundmann and Stehr 2010; Shove 2010b; Urry 2011).

Echoing the work of environmental sociologist Buttel (2002), Lever-Tracy (2008) argues that the mainstream of the discipline of sociology neglected to engage with the topic of climate change partly because of the apparent reluctance of sociologists to engage with an area dominated by natural scientific explanations. Grundmann and Ster (2010: 901) while in agreement with this point, provide the alternative explanation that fruitful sociological engagements with climate change are unlikely to come in the format that the climate scientists, who dominate the discussion, seek. Instead, they suggest, climate scientists have become 'lay sociologists' themselves, building assumptions about human behaviour into their theories and models that professional sociologists would likely find unconvincing (Grundmann and Stehr 2010:901). The results of this are technocratic perspectives and policy advice (Grundman and Ster 2010).

More broadly, then, the nature of sociological claims, which are often highly equivocal, sensitive to the subtleties of human action, and not directly amenable to abstract models, mean that sociologists are not as widely listened to as, for instance, economists (Grundman and Stehr 2010; Shove 2010a; Urry 2011). Emphasising this point, Shove (2010a) has criticised what she terms the 'attitude-behaviour-choice' (ABC) policy-making model for its dependence on crude models of social action and social change. If those who seek to develop policies around climate change are not necessarily receptive to the kinds of contributions that sociologists can make (Shove 2010a), then a lack of sociological input in responses leaves policies often overlooking the social relations embedded within climate change (Shove 2010a, 2010b; Grundmann and Stehr 2010; Urry 2011; Webb 2012; Wynne 2010); they could therefore be described as being substantially 'unsociological'.

More recent contributions from with sociology have attempted to address the early neglect of sociologists from discussion of climate change however.

[2] Approaches to climate change emerging from within economics are explored more fully in Chapter 2.

Davidson (2012), for example, suggests that utilizing Archer's work on reflexivity would improve many social theoretical models of climate change. Meanwhile, drawing together issues of mobility, oil scarcity, climate science and the recent financial crisis, Urry (2011) has argued for a 'post-carbon sociology'. Shove (2010b: 278), moreover, suggests that social theoretical contributions have been made to discussions of climate change, but that these have taken place outside the mainstream of the discipline.

Elsewhere social science contributions to climate change scholarship have centred on the validity of particular epistemological claims and their corresponding ontological basis (Demeritt 2006; Grundmann 2007; Hulme 2008c; Irwin 2001b; Shaw 2011; Urry 2011; White 2004; Yearley 2009). These contributions have, for instance, called into question the assumed impartiality of the claims-making processes which underpin discussions of climate change as well as the social processes underpinning climate science (Demeritt 2006; Grundmann 2007; Hulme 2009; Schneider 2009; Wynne 2010; Yearley 2009). Hulme (2009), for instance, provides a detailed overview of the science and policy processes that helped to propel climate change from a position of relative academic obscurity into a matter of global policy concern. Meanwhile, Shaw (2011, 2013) has explored the complex social processes which have helped establish the instrumentalist science-policy target of 2^{o}C as an acceptable 'dangerous limit' to warming. Other social scientists have also contributed to understandings of climate change by exploring media outputs (Boykoff and Boykoff 2007; Boykoff 2012); popular understandings (Carney et al. 2009; Ockwell, Whitmarsh, and O'Neill 2009; Pidgeon and Fischhoff 2011; Upham et al. 2009; Whitmarsh 2009; Whitmarsh et al. 2011); and social movement responses (for instance: Bond 2012b; Mason and Askins 2013; Russell 2012; and Saunders 2012; Schlembach, Lear, and Bowman 2012; Schlembach 2011). In sum, then, I seek to contribute to these accounts, but to do so in relation to the theoretical paradigm of post-politics. In addition to these scholarly and political motivations, my research has been strongly shaped by my personal connections to the Caribbean region, which is where I chose to conduct my fieldwork.

2. Climate change in the Caribbean

My motivation for conducting fieldwork in the Caribbean region stemed from the fact that my father was born on the small Caribbean island of St Kitts, where I still have family. The Caribbean is a region which, despite the considerable variety between the different states (Bishop 2012), has a number of distinctive

shared characteristics which render it particularly exposed to the potentially perilous threats of global climate change. These characteristics are both geophysical and social in character, and include: the location of densely populated urban areas on low-lying coastlines; a dependence on foreign exports; and a high frequency of hurricanes (McGregor, Dodman, and Barker 2009).

It should also be acknowledged that the industrialisation in the global North which gave rise to climate change and its harmful effects in the Caribbean, was fuelled by colonialism and the expropriation of wealth from the region by imperialist elites (Beckles and Shepherd 1993; Blackburn 1998; Bogues 2003). Furthermore, the enduring legacy of European colonialism, which was most prominent in the Caribbean from the 16th – 20th Century (Bhambra, 2007; Bogues, 2003; Said, 2003; Sayyid, 2003), has shaped the region's economic development, meaning that Caribbean governments have faced pressures to adopt restrictive neoliberal, social and economic policies due to their overdependence on highly conditional external aid (Beckles and Shepherd 1993; Motta and Nilsen 2011). In spite of these facts, the few engagements with the subject of climate change in the Caribbean region that do exist (Bishop and Payne 2012), tend not to involve reference to colonialism, or its modern-day counterpart, global neoliberal capitalism (Wood 2003). There is also very little written on climate change and colonialism more generally (Cupples 2012; Grove 2012a, 2012b are notable exceptions). Much of the work which does explore 'climates' in relation to colonialism in the Caribbean is historical, focussing on the relationships between imperialism and ecology (Carey, 2011; Grove, 1997; Vogel, 2011). There are few works, then, which consider climate change in the Caribbean in terms of the sociological or political relations engendered there.

This thesis therefore conducts a sociological analysis of ethnographic research findings to investigate the politics and ethics of responses to climate change in and around the Caribbean. The three specific contexts which formed the sites for ethnographic case-studies are: firstly, the Caribbean region, where I explored responses to climate change at the regional level; second, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 16th Conference of Parties in Cancún, Mexico where I engaged with activist responses to the COP; and thirdly, Belize where I explored the relationships between climate change and community engagement around conservation, development and the governance of protected areas. The detail of these cases, and the rationale for their selection, is discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

I should mention that during the course of my investigation I became increasingly sensitive to some of the complexities inherent in people's action. My involved ethnographic methodology enabled me to engage with some of this complexity, which gave rise to another area of focus for the thesis, the need to understand local actions in terms of the tension and ambivalence they frequently entail. This acknowledgement helped me to move beyond some of the abstract approaches, which will be detailed in the next chapter as being prominent in some accounts of the post-political. It is now necessary to clarify the primary focus and objectives the thesis.

3. Primary focus and objectives of the thesis

The research problem that this thesis addresses centers on the fact that there is at once a substantial increase in discussion about, and action in the name of, climate change, and yet by all accounts the climate crisis persists, possibly as a consequence of depoliticization. The implications of this state of affairs for the Caribbean region are profound and yet, as will become clearer, frequently overlooked in mainstream discussions of policy responses, such as the $2^{o}C$ limit to warming. Furthermore, much of the existing scholarly and popular discussion of climate change lacks an engagement with sociology. The kinds of social scientific accounts that dominate are those which treat climate change instrumentally, frequently neglecting the complexities of social action in practice.

In light of this research problem, the primary focus and objective of the thesis is to:

- To conduct a sociological exploration of responses to climate change, in and around the Caribbean, in terms of the extent to which they are proceeding in a post-political fashion

More specifically the research will:

- Examine the post-political thesis both sociologically and empirically by comparing responses to climate change across three case-study contexts[3]:
    1) Activist responses to the UNFCCC COP-16 climate change negotiations
    2) Responses to climate change at the regional level in the Caribbean

[3] The details of the case studies are outlined in more depth in Chapter 3.

3) Activities at the national level in the Caribbean country of Belize

- Contribute to the emerging sociology of climate change

- Consider the prospects for political, non-instrumental responses to climate change

The specific research questions and strategic approach undertaken to address this research problem are detailed in more depth in Chapter 3. In order to meet these objectives, however, the thesis is organised into eight chapters, which proceed as follows.

4. Thesis structure

Chapter 2 engages with the debates about the post-political and post-democratic condition of climate change. It uses these as a basis for explaining the underlying theoretical concerns of the thesis. The chapter considers how notions of the post-political have been taken up and discussed in the literature, where it has been suggested by some that the breadth of political action around climate change, including climate change activism, undermines the argument that there is such a thing as a 'fragile post-political consensus'. I make connections between colonialism, neoliberal development and post-politics as this is another area overlooked in existing discussions, yet key to my case-study contexts. In addition, the chapter engages with economics and ecological modernisation approaches which suggest evidence of post-political responses within social science itself. I further demonstrate the scope of the thesis contribution by highlighting the antipathies that I suggest exist between sociological and depoliticised accounts of climate change. The notion of ambivalence is discussed as being a feature of people's action, and which overly monolithic accounts of climate change politics are likely to miss.

Emerging from the discussion in the preceding chapter, my research questions are introduced in Chapter 3, as is the methodological approach undertaken in the thesis. I outline my qualitative sociological approach; the detail of my case-studies; the main research methods employed; and reflect on some of the ethical issues raised by my (privileged) position as an academic researcher conducting fieldwork in the Caribbean. My attempts to conduct research that challenges depoliticised approaches are also discussed.

The next three chapters present the empirical detail of the case-studies. They explore the concept of the post-political in relation to policy-making, engagement and activism in different contexts. In Chapter 4, responses to climate change in the Caribbean at the regional level are examined. The work of the prominent regional institution the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre is introduced, as are the main policy initiatives undertaken in the region to date. Technically focussed representations of climate change are shown to underpin depoliticised initiatives. In order to better understand and explain how and why seemingly post-political processes are dominant I suggest that the political history of colonialism in the region, and the region's relative economic and political marginalisation, must be considered. However, I go on to show that there is a degree of ambivalence and pragmatism involved in the positioning of the region's responses to climate change.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of my participatory-based engagement with civil society and activist responses to climate change at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 16th Conference of Parties (COP16) negotiations in Cancun, Mexico in 2010. I consider what an analysis of forms of activism and engagement at the COP16 can contribute to a discussion of the post-political condition of climate change. I explore how different actors in the field acted, and how they reflected on and accounted for their activities in light of some of the complexities, tensions and ambivalences involved in their practice. These challenges included: divisions between and within groups; the militarised policing of protest; and government tactics of divide and rule.

In the final case-study chapter, Chapter 6, I present my data on the Caribbean country Belize. While in Belize I attempted to focus on responses to climate change. It quickly became apparent, however, that climate change was not as high a priority as the conservation practices with which it is entangled. Indeed, activism, engagement and policy making in Belize were more overtly directed towards the latter than the former. Of greater significance to actors in Belize than climate change, then, were conservation, development and oil-drilling. I discuss the literature which suggests that there is a tendency towards neoliberal practices in conservation and development, paralleling claims made about the post-political processes and identified elsewhere. I also look at contrasting interpretations of public engagement held by NGO actors, and further problematize the role of NGOs in development, where NGO actors were involved in promoting market rationalities among indigenous Maya communities. Finally, I look at the conflicts that arose over proposed oil drilling in Belize as emblematic of tensions inherent to development and conservation activities.

Once again, I suggest that the history and development of Belize, particularly its status as a former British colony, strongly influence its current development options and constraints.

Chapter 7 consolidates and synthesises the empirical findings and analytical threads from across the literature review and three cases-study chapters. It draws together the detail and complexity encountered in the empirical investigations into the forms of climate change politics, and, in the case of Belize, conservation and development. All in all, the benefits and outcomes of conducting ethnographic fieldwork in different contexts are highlighted. Firstly, the extent to which responses to climate change in those cases could be described as depoliticised is discussed with reference to how climate change is framed in each instance. Secondly, I add texture to the more abstract theoretical discussions by providing an evaluation of the ambivalent and pragmatic dimensions of people's action. Adding to this analysis is, thirdly, a tentative discussion of the implications of the implicit sociological imaginaries of different approaches. Here the analysis suggests that the post-political consensus is somewhat a-sociological in character.

I then conclude the thesis by summarising my overall reflections on the thesis findings, by taking stock of some of the limitations of my study, and outlining the ways in which further research might build upon the groundwork undertaken here.

Chapter 2 | Towards a sociology of the post-politics of climate change

'*…there is no real alternative…*' (Thatcher, 1980 cited in Meeks, 2007: 2)

1. Introduction

In the introduction I outlined some of the broad ways in which social scientists have engaged with climate change, here I consider the arguments about the post-politics of climate change in more depth. The chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by outlining the case made by Erik Swyngedouw (2009, 2010) that discussion of climate change is dominated by a 'post-political consensus'. This analysis of contemporary climate change politics is one which this thesis will probe. A number of authors have responded to Swyngedouw's initial provocation, questioning the extent to which there is a post-political consensus. I next outline the contours of this debate in order to help situate my own approach. These existing discussions of post-politics tend to concentrate on activities in Western consumer societies however; hence I relate discussions of the post-political consensus to the specific contexts in which I conducted my fieldwork. I do this via an exploration of the links between depoliticisation, colonialism and neoliberal development. Understanding these links enables a richer reading of climate change politics in different, non-Western, contexts.

It was mentioned in the introduction that part of the appeal of utilizing notions of depoliticisation was because I encountered a tendency towards instrumentalism in much of the social science coverage of climate change. To demonstrate this, in section 5 I assess examples of social scientific considerations of climate change which are more or less post-political. Following this discussion I suggest, in contrast, that certain features of sociology are inherently antithetical to depoliticised and instrumental approaches to climate change. A particular aspect of sociological scholarship which counters instrumentalism is where authors have called for sensitivity to some of the wider tensions and contradictions inherent in late modern social life, by deploying notions of ambivalence in their work. While the post-political condition will be shown to entail paradoxical qualities, here, I briefly consider these in relation to some of the sociological literature on ambivalence. Overall the discussion in this chapter highlights the scope for the empirical work that follows in later chapters to make an original contribution to these debates. I

begin, then, by identifying the main features of the post-political condition, as a theoretical position, and an empirical reality, as presented by Swyngedouw.

2. Outline: the post-political condition of climate change[4]

'*I believe we should reframe our responses to climate change as an imperative for growth rather than merely being a way of meeting our environmental commitments.*' (British Conservative Party MP William Hague in Jowit, 2012)

What is the post-political, or post-democratic, condition?

A particularly critical thesis on the paradoxical situation of the contemporary governance of climate change is proposed by 'critics of the post-political' (Catney and Doyle 2011: 191), such as Erik Swyngedouw (2010, 2013a, 2013b), whose influential work will be the focus of this first sub-section. Citing the work of political philosophers such as Mouffe, Ranciere, and Žižek, Swyngedouw makes the argument that ecological problems, of which climate change is perhaps the most stark example, have been attributed an unprecedented level of socio-political significance, within a socio-political context which is 'post-democratic' and 'post-political'.

Žižek's (2008: 34) understanding is as follows: ''post-political' politics is a politics which claims to leave behind old ideological struggles and, instead focus on expert management and administration'. Post-politics therefore relies on fear, rather than any big ideological cause, to mobilize people. For Swyngedouw (2010), the apparent urgency of the climate crisis has contributed to the emergence of a 'fragile consensus' about the nature of the problem and the possible responses to it. Underpinning this consensus is 'the perceived inevitability of capitalism and a market economy as the basic organisational structure of the social and economic order, for which there is no alternative' (Swyngedouw 2010: 215). Responses are based on a 'mode of governmentality […] structured around dialogical forms of consensus formation, technocratic management and problem-focused governance, sustained by populist discursive regimes' (Swyngedouw 2010: 215). In sum, post-politics involves the predominance of managerialism in all areas of social life, and a reduction of

[4] Discussions about the post-political are complicated slightly by when a distinction is not made between the post-political condition as an empirical reality, and the post-political as a theoretical discourse. I discuss this distinction in more depth below.

political questions to technical and administrative ones to be solved via the application of technical expertise rather than by political debate (Swyngedouw 2010: 225). Accompanying this are attempts to establish consensus around political action via forms of governance involving a range of non- or quasi-state institutional actors (Swyngedouw 2010: 225).

Swyngedouw (2010: 219) suggests that a post-political response to climate change dictates that: 'we have to change radically, but within the contours of the existing state of the situation … so that nothing really has to change.' The social and ecological problems caused by modernist capitalism are seen as external side effects rather than integral to the relations of liberal capitalist economies (Swyngedouw 2010: 225). Hence post-politics rests upon the idea that 'there-is-no-alternative' to neoliberal capitalism, which is held to be the pinnacle of human social development beyond which it is impossible, or undesirable, to pass. This sentiment is evident in the quote cited at the beginning of the chapter from then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) Margaret Thatcher. It is also evident in the work of scholars of neoliberalism such as Friedman and Friedman (1980), and seemingly echoes Fukuyama's (Fukuyama and Bloom 1989) claim that, with the fall of the Berlin wall, and the apparent end of communism, we have reached 'the end of history'. In terms of climate change then, post-politics is about the extent to which radically different models of society might, or might not, be represented as being possible or desirable by those orchestrating responses. Another prominent aspect of the post-political consensus is universalism.

The presentation of climate change as a universal human threat, involving a universal model of agency, occludes the potential antagonisms between people that are embedded in capitalist social relations (Swyngedouw 2010, 2013a, 2013b; Wynne 2010). Differences of interest, between rich and poor, or capitalists and workers, are hidden behind the populist narrative of 'universal humanity vs. climate change'. The unequal social relations of climate change, and the differential distribution of its impacts, are unacknowledged within this framing. Instead, politics is reduced to the negotiation of interests within the boundaries of a universal frame in the aim of producing an all-inclusive consensus. This model of government requires that dissent be managed away in favour of the manufacturing of consent (Catney and Doyle 2011). Additionally, it is the very elite who presided over the emergence of the climate crisis who are invoked to take action to deal with it, and for this reason environmental populism is held to be inherently reactionary (Swyngedouw 2010, 2013a, 2013b).

In suggesting that accompanying the post-political are a series of populist gestures, Swyngedouw's work draws on a notion of consensus taken from Rancière. The latter remarks on a paradox of '*post*-democracy' whereby forms of democratic action are limited, ostensibly in the very name of democracy (May 2008: 146). In other words, 'consensus is a contemporary attempt to end politics, to move beyond the struggle it involves. It envisions a seamless world with no room for disagreement or dissensus… [It] substitutes management for politics. Consensus centres itself on technological solutions to political problems' (May 2008: 146). The international scientific and governance bodies of the IPCC and UNFCCC are paradigmatic examples of attempts to forge consensual representations of climate change. Indeed the UNFCCC's Kyoto Protocol is, for Swyngedouw (2010: 227), an exemplar of the fact that '[p]ost-democratic institutional arrangements are the performative expression of a post-political condition'. It is worth briefly considering what is meant by the notion of post-democratic institutional arrangements, as, while these are mentioned in passing by Swyngedouw (2010), they are not considered in much depth there.

Post-politics into post-democracy

As indicated above, Swyngedouw pairs his deployment of the notion of post-politics alongside that of post-democracy. While Swyngedouw (2010) outlines aspects of post-politics in some depth, he does not deal with the notion of post-democracy as comprehensively. Crouch (2004) uses the notion of post-democracy in order to highlight what he sees as a trend dominating contemporary democratic societies whereby a narrow corporate elite is coming to have a disproportionate impact upon the workings of formal political governance structures. In other words, he suggests, there has been 'steady, consistent pressure for state policy to favour the interests of the wealthy – those who benefitted from the unrestricted operation of the capitalist economy rather than those who needed some protection from it' (Crouch 2004: vii). Such a situation is notably paradoxical, Crouch (2004: 1) suggests, because by some measures democracy could be said to be at its peak in contemporary times, with more states pursing open elections than ever before. Yet the prevailing models of *liberal* democracy being adopted are based on 'electoral participation as the main type of mass participation', extensive freedoms for business lobbies, and scant state interference with the capitalist economy (Crouch 2004: 3). Thus:

> while elections certainly exist and can change governments, public electoral debate is a tightly controlled spectacle, managed by rival teams

> of professionals expert in the techniques of persuasion, and considering a small range of issues selected by those teams. The mass of citizens plays a passive, quiescent, even apathetic part, responding only to the signals given them (Crouch 2004: 4).[5]

In part this situation has been brought about by a decline in the power of the working classes as an interest group, in conjunction with a rise in political significance of the globally operative corporate firm (Crouch 2004). With the rise of neoliberal governments, such as Thatcher's Britain, saw the beginnings of the reversal of the trend for the state to act as a force mitigating the excesses of capitalism via redistributive policies and a comprehensive welfare state (Crouch 2004). Instead the state's role is reconfigured so as to oversee and facilitate the transfer of public assets into the private sector.

Interestingly, in terms of the kinds of responses advocated, Crouch's (2004) use of the notion of politics is rather different to that mentioned previously in relation to post-politics. For Crouch, politics refers to formal, electoral party politics, where the rise of 'third-way' centrist agendas, as typified by New Labour, is most obvious. This formulation is interesting given the parallels drawn by Swyngedouw (2010) between the concepts of post-politics and post-democracy. In response to the trends towards post-democracy Crouch (2004) is reluctant to dismiss the formal political systems from which democracy has been evacuated. Instead, he suggests, a combination of a redressing of corporate power and dominance, the reform of political practice, and concerted citizen action.

Others, such as Blühdorn (2013), have developed the discussion of post-democracy in relation to environmental politics more generally. Whereas environmental values were once seen by some to offer a reinforcement of democracy, by implying a challenge to elites and calling for emancipatory outcomes, the 'post-ecologist turn' in environmental politics, discussed in more depth below, has recently, in line with Crouch (2004), been linked to much more pessimistic outlooks on the state of democracy in contemporary capitalist societies (Bluhdorn 2013: 17-18). It is suggested by Blühdorn (2013: 23) that recent optimism about the scope for deploying greater democracy in order to resolve ecological issues, such as climate change, is unfounded given the contention that the imperatives of *liberal* democracy, in particular, are anathema

[5] It is worth bearing these comments in mind in anticipation of a discussion later in this section about the predominantly passive role of publics in public engagement activities.

to principles of sustainability. This is, for instance, because liberal democracy prioritises individual freedom, and works on a more immediate timeframe, whereas ecologist beliefs suggest the intrinsic value of nature and tend to highlight the needs of future generations (Blühdorn 2013: 23). Hence perhaps the prospects for uniting democracy and ecology are somewhat limited, a point considered in more depth below.

Returning once more to Swyngedouw's claims about climate change an implication for climate change of the evisceration of democratic structures is that a new technically orientated focus is adopted. Meanwhile, Swyngedouw (2010: 217) argues that the supposedly consensual framing of climate change as an 'apocalyptic threat', requiring all people to unite irrespective of conflicting socio-political locations and interests, depends, on the disavowal of 'the political nature of matters of concern', and their displacement, via the deployment of scientific discourse, to matters of fact. In other words '*ought*' questions are turned into '*is*' questions. The threat of the coming apocalypse is invoked to make a case for the former being identified and dealt with via scientific measurement, and responded to using the technical expertise and crisis management strategies of national and global elites (Swyngedouw 2013a: 10).

As part of this narrative, according to Swyngedouw (2010: 222), the element carbon (CO_2) is fetishized and treated as an external enemy. The externalised entity of CO_2 is seen as the problem, rather than the highly unequal industrial processes of modern capitalism (Swyngedouw 2010: 222). In keeping with the idea that there-is-no-alternative, Swyngedouw (2010: 222) suggests that 'those [mechanisms] that produced the problem in the first place (commodification of nature – in this case CO_2)' are proposed as potential solutions. Hence there is a focus on carbon-emissions, or the (mal)functioning of carbon markets (Swyngedow 2013a: 13; see also Bond 2012 or Lohmann, 2008, 2010), at the expense of the social relations patterning the processes whereby carbon is released (Wynne 2010).

These markets and mechanisms all rest on an assumedly neutral 'scientific technocracy' (Swyngedouw 2010: 223). An example of this kind of approach at work would be the narrative around 2^oC as a 'dangerous' limit to global warming (Shaw 2011, 2013). Targets such as this feed into the popular science idea that there is a single, global tipping point beyond which climate change becomes dangerously 'unmanageable' because of natural feedback loops (Pearce 2007), and the idea that quantitative policy targets might be set, at the international level, to help governments keep climate change at a manageable level (Shaw 2011, 2013). Shaw (2011, 2013) highlights the

inherent instrumentalism to this kind of abstraction. Similarly, Pusey and Russell (2010) speak about the post-political implications of campaigning groups adopting instrumental and technocratic targets. The campaigning organisation 350.org's suggestion that '350ppm' parts-per-million of carbon in the atmosphere is 'the limit' which should not be breached globally is based on the same underlying scientific claims as the 2°C limit.

The populism of the post-political is also enacted through forms of stakeholder participation or extra-state participatory governance, resting on the assumption that 'the people know best', albeit when supported by supposedly neutral scientific and technical expertise (Swyngedouw 2010: 223). It is often claimed that people should participate directly in developing solutions to climate change. In this context, policy-making is reduced to a form of management where difficulties and problems are to be administered by technical means (Swyngedouw 2010: 225). With respect to public participation the:

> post-democratic constitution reconfigures the act of governing to a stakeholder-based arrangement of multi-scalar governance in which the traditional state operates institutionally together with experts, NGOs and other 'responsible' partners (while 'irresponsible' partners are excluded). They operate with a generally accepted consensus of a global and largely (neo)liberal capitalism, the right of individual choice, an ecological awareness and the necessity to continue this, to sustain the state of the situation. Discussion and dispute are tolerated, even encouraged, in so far as the general frame is not contested (Swyngedouw 2010: 227).

All of this involves troubling implications for public and stakeholder management and engagement, which are often cited as potential remedies to instrumentalist and technocratic trends in policy-making (Einsiedel 2000; Few, Brown, and Thompkins 2007; Horlick-Jones, Rowe, and Walls 2007; Wynne 2008). The 'deficit model' of public engagement, discussed in more depth below, is indeed analogous to the form of governance described above (Horlik-Jones et al. 2007; Wynne 2008). Both the problems with this form of governance, and the sociological limits to the claimed neutrality of the consensus are discussed further later in this chapter.

In contrast to post-politics, Swyngedouw (2010: 225) refers to the 'proper political' as being a realm in which 'the inherent antagonisms and heterogeneities that cut through the social' are recognized. In other words, then, in opposition to what Swyngedouw (2013b) calls non-political politics, it is held

that *political* politics, to use perhaps a slightly confusing term, would involve some form of substantive contestation and antagonism between avowedly different interest groups. 'Proper political choice' constitutes, therefore, 'the agonistic confrontation of competing visions of a different socio-ecological order' (Swyngedouw 2010: 226). So the 'political' refers to a space where different, contested and particular demands might be debated or explored. Such exploration would necessary involve a conflictual confrontation between different social constituencies encompassing the difficulties and problems that this might entail in practice. Specific examples of specific activities and practices that might veer closer to one end of the political-post-political spectrum than another are discussed below. Indeed one of the aims of the thesis as a whole is to explore the possibilities for the politicization of environmental struggles. Having sketched out the theoretical framework of the post-political condition, I shall now explore ways in which these ideas have been taken up by other scholars.

3. Further exploring the post-political and post-democratic condition

The conceptual framework outlined above, particularly coherently by Swyngedouw (2010), has captured the imaginations of a range of actors, including scholars and social movement activists, some of whom have sought to identify tensions in the argument and points for further debate. While many authors are sympathetic to, or largely in agreement with, the main thrust of the above claims, they have in various ways sought to apply or interrogate the notion of the post-political with regards to the conditions and practices in specific contexts.

Post-politics, activism and consensus

Working in the context of public participation in planning processes for renewable energies in the UK, Aitken (2012: 212) found that: 'there is little public debate concerning… [the] framing or the assumptions underpinning climate policy'. This is because these policies have capitalist models of growth and development embedded within them, making it hard for publics to meaningfully object. Accordingly: '[t]he dominance of narrow, modernist framings of climate change serves to shut down debate and alternative framings are largely excluded from public and policy discourse' (Aitken 2012: 226). As well as constituting an example of an apparently post-political framing of climate

change, Aitken's approach can be understood in relation to the deficit model of public engagement. 'Public opinion – where this takes the form of public opposition – is not valued as an opportunity to reflect and incorporate different points of view and sources of knowledge, but instead is discredited and treated as an obstacle to the globally important goal of climate change mitigation' (Aitken 2012: 225). Goeminne (2012: 4) makes a similar argument and suggests that climate change denial can be understood, in part, as a reaction against the closing down of legitimate spaces for contestation over adequate responses to climate change, and as a product of attempts to depoliticise it (Goeminne 2012).

Interestingly, a range of authors whilst in agreement with aspects of Swyngedouw's critique, question the extent of *consensus* around post-political trends. The impacts of the financial crisis in the United States undermined support for the technocratic policies that are supposed to be a key feature of the post-political, McCarthy (2012) suggests for example. McCarthy (2013: 22) agrees with elements of Swyngedouw's argument; notably that 'a consensus regarding the continuation of capitalism and the liberal state certainly dominates, at the very least, in formal policy circles and the mass media, and that the architects of that consensus, at least, strive mightily to foreclose the possibility of precisely those sorts of politics'. McCarthy (2012: 23) also points out, however, that there are many locations, such as in the US, where not even the scientific expertise or consensus is accepted. Swyngedouw's points are indeed more geared towards the EU and UK setting within which he works. Hence perhaps Swyngedouw is somewhat susceptible to the charge of of euro-centrism in his analysis, a point considered in more depth below.

McCarthy (2013: 19) also remarks that, 'as a description and analysis of the (entire?) contemporary world, ''the post-political'' often strikes me as potentially analytically flat, totalizing, and inadequate'. He identifies continuities between the allegedly novel post-political condition, and much earlier forms of depoliticisation evident in environmental politics and governance. Some of these earlier attempts failed precisely because 'every moment of environmental governance was shot through with politics all along, and that most of the people involved or affected recognized it and acted accordingly using whatever avenues and tactics were available to them' (McCarthy 2013: 21). This emphasis on the pragmatic ways in which people deal with the challenges they face is perhaps a key amendment to Swyngedouw's argument. McCarthy's highlighting of the limits to the 'wholesale success' of the suppression of deep political debate, shifts the emphasis and enables us to recognise that not

everyone necessarily 'buys-into' the post-political consensus in practice. McCarthy (2013: 21) points out, though, that '[t]his is not to suggest that everyone is always fully aware or supportive of the critiques of capitalism that might be implicit in their particular environmental concerns or politics; that is clearly not the case.' McCarthy (2013: 24) is also somewhat sceptical of the notion of 'proper' politics on which the motion of post-politics rests. Rather than 'produce a universal, schematic account of what constitutes 'the properly political'', McCarthy (2013: 24) points out the 'many, often indirect and surprising, ways in which politics unfold'.

In a similar vein Bulkeley and Betsill (2013: 149) refer to the 'fractured landscape' of the city whereby there is no single homogenous or dominant regime for climate change governance. While North (2010: 585) and Urry (2011: 91) point to the range of alternative conceptions of livelihood and economy extant as representing challenges to capitalist models of economic development (also McCarthy 2013: 23). Chatterton et al. (2013: 608) contend, for instance, that Swyngedouw's argument risks being reductive as it 'fails to engage' 'with the ways in which contestation to climate change exceeds, unsettles and undermines attempts to contain contestation within the nation' (Chatterton et al 2013: 608).

The idea that the activities of climate change activists constitutes evidence of a contestation of potentially depoliticised representations of climate change is partly complicated by the fact that the notion of a post-political consensus around climate change was itself internalized by some climate justice activists in their mobilizations in Copenhagen and beyond, as evidenced in articles published in movement publications (for instance Pusey and Russell 2010 and Steven, 2009). Writing as participants in attempts to politicise climate change at the COP15 in Copenhagen, Pusey and Russell (2010) also considered the possibility that climate justice activism might provide an opportunity to transgress the post-political. Again, though, it should be noted that there is often agreement from these authors with other aspects of the post-political hypothesis, such as the claim that mainstream politics has populist tendencies, or that market capitalism is presupposed in mainstream responses.

Related to the above, Blühdorn (2006) links the recent activities of social movements, or at least the academic debate around them, to the aforementioned processes of depoliticization. His analysis suggests that some of the optimism, over social movements' capacities to challenge a decline in political interest and civic engagement, is unfounded (Blühdorn 2006: 25). As Blühdorn (2006) notes, protest is substantially fragmented and competitive, with

considerable numbers of people who do not subscribe to the values of social movements. Other research supports this analysis.

Saunders (2012) identified a reformist tendency within the Camp for Climate Action (known colloquially as Climate Camp or CfCA) that contributed to its demise. Likewise, Schlembach et al. (2012: 811), in evaluating the strategies of participants in the CfCA, identified a predisposition towards individualised and ‘‘scientised’, ‘post-political’ forms of politics’ which came in to conflict with other less depoliticsed understandings and forms of action. In this sense, they suggest that ‘activism has at times taken a post-political turn’ (Schlembach et al. 2012: 823). Pusey and Russell (2010) also warn against undue optimism in spite of what was the largest ever European protest about climate change, at the COP15 in Copenhagen. They identified apolitical tendencies, towards carbon fetishism, and technical solutions within many areas of climate change activism (Pusey and Russell 2010). In light of this, it is unsurprising that Baer and Reuter (2011: 2) argue that more ethnographic research is needed to better understand differences and commonalities among climate movements.

Post-politics and eco-politics

While climate change is arguably one particularly paradigmatic example of eco-politics (Kenis and Lievens 2014; Swyngedouw 2010), it is possible to move beyond the case of climate change per se and consider the notion of post-politics in relation, more generally, to environmental politics or ecological politics (eco-politics for short) more broadly. While there are significant variations in the specific constitution of forms of eco-politics, broadly speaking, the ‘ecologist project’ (Blühdorn 2011: 41) is most easily identified as coalescing around a progressive agenda emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s advocated by participants in the new social movements (Blühdorn 2006; Day 2005). The ecologist critique was centred on highlighting and seeking to challenge what were deemed to be the profoundly unsustainable practices of modern industrial societies. Ecologists were thus keen to establish environmental issues on the political agenda (Blühdorn 2011: 37).

In spite of these aims, it has been suggested by Blühdorn (2011) and others (Kenis and Lievens 2014, for instance) that in practice, attempts to highlight the unsustainable character of modernity have been at once been internalised in modern societies, and via sustainability agendas, while simultaneously neutered of their radical implications, because these

sustainability agendas serve to maintain largely unsustainable social practices (Blühdorn 2011: 42). Hence, Kenis and Lievens (2014) claim that environmental politics more generally, of which climate change could be considered to be one example, have become not only mainstreamed, but also depoliticised. Day (2005: 74-6) similarly, has commented on the depoliticisation of mainstream ecology whereby, he argues, the radical challenge of the green movement and the realisation that capitalist society is responsible for considerable ecological degradation has seemingly been sidestepped by neoliberal capitalism. Such insights suggest that caution should be taken in overestimating the potential of political activism to challenge the post-political consensus. If it is possible to identify a trend towards the depoliticisation of eco-politics, then this raises questions about what kinds of political activity might constitute political eco-politics, in contrast to post-political eco-politics.

Post-political eco-politics

Some of the examples discussed above provide a contrast between political eco-politics and post-political eco-politics. To clarify, political projects can be characterised as those that are directly antagonistic, in that they do not seek consensus around the kind of action required in response to ecological degradation; they include scope for disagreement and the acknowledgement of differential interests; as well as for substantive discussion about the kinds of futures engendered in different responses. Examples would include the radical direct action taken by participants in radical eco-political movements (Day 2005), and attempts to challenge the perceived inevitability of a capitalist response to climate change (Pusey and Russell 2010).

In contrast then, post-political projects are those that seek to establish consensus; foreclose the scope for disagreement; and which project market-based solutions as inevitable in 'greening' capitalism. The kinds of public engagement around energy policy mentioned in Aitken (2012) would be one example of post-political activity. Additionally, Pusey and Russell (2010) work discusses distinctions between more or less antagonistic and consensual forms of eco-politics around climate change. Examples they discuss include the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, which they see as representing 'the *sine qua non*' of the post-political tradition; as well as the CfCA, whose potential for genuinely political engagement they identify as being more ambiguous (Pusey and Russell 2010). Elsewhere, Schlembach et al. (2012) note the contestation within the CfCA between, on the one hand, those actors who utilized a conceptual

framework either directly or indirectly referencing depoliticisation, and on the other, those actors who attempted to utilize the kind of consensual, scientistic representation of climate change identified by Swyngedouw (2010) as being characteristic of the post-political. In order to facilitate the post-politics of eco-politics, there has arguably been a re-framing of the latter. I shall now explore this in more depth.

Whereas environmental movements once seemed to express a compelling case for disenchantment with the unsustainable social relations of industrial modernity, the prevailing developmental trajectory of advanced modern societies is instead decidedly consumer capitalist, depoliticised, technocratic and neoliberal (Blühdorn 2013: 17). The ecologist critique that these movements proposed, which is conceptualised broadly as a critique of modernity per se, was accompanied by visions for substantially different forms of society that were hoped to be more fulfilling (Blühdorn 2013: 19). In the process of the mainstreaming of the sustainability agenda, however, these radical critiques have been 'reframed' so that whereas once more fulfilling societies were pursued as a normative goal, now ecological questions are reformulated in predominantly economic, managerial or scientific terms (Bluhdorn 2011: 36). As Kenis and Lievens (2014: 13) write, 'political and economic elites have appropriated and even recuperated environmental concerns of genuine environmental movements, but in so doing fundamentally transformed these concerns'. It is thus that post-political responses have become dominant, with eco-political environmental concerns being reframed as economic and technological issues.

The institutionalization of the German Greens, and the quasi-corporate structures adopted by big green NGOs such as Greenpeace, are said to be examples of the transformation of green politics from 'engaging in a politics of contestation… radical disagreement, and developing visionary alternatives to their integration into stakeholder-based negotiation arrangements aimed at delivering a negotiated policy' (Swyngedouw 2010: 228). The incorporation of carbon counting metrics into the routine marketing of unsustainable industries, such as car manufacture, is another example of this.

To be sure, then, it is suggested that where once greens offered a significant challenge to the unsustainable practices of modern societies, recent developments in ecological politics have involved the reframing of the challenge in post-political terms. Paradoxically, it is partly due to the successes in the 'mainstreaming' issues of ecological concern, once the preserve of radical green movements, that some of the wind has been taken out of the sails of

green politics. The paradoxical, or contradictory, continued pursuit of what are widely recognised to be unsustainable practices is thus labelled the 'politics of unsustainability', part of what Blühdorn (2013: 20) terms post-ecologist politics. In addition, the politics of unsustainability requires 'simulation' strategies, whereby 'modern societies portray themselves as having fully recognised the seriousness and urgency of the sustainability crisis, as having a clear understanding of what remedial action is required and as commanding the political will and ability to implement it' (Blühdorn 2013: 20). Examples include: the narratives of ecological modernisation and the models of 'sustainable development' associated with it (Blühdorn 2013: 21).

Post-politics, participation and engagement

Related to the discussion of the apparently limited role for various 'activist publics' to challenge depolitical responses to climate change are discussions about how participation is utilized to facilitate post-democracy. It is suggested by some that forms of participatory politics which were pioneered by New Social Movements (NSMs) have since been appropriated by neoliberal governments (Blühdorn 2013: 31). These seemingly non-hierarchal, decentralised forms of engagement have served to disperse political responsibility and obscure accountability.

To reiterate, as is suggested to be the case with the theory of the post-political condition, Blühdorn (2013: 21) suggests that the means through which the 'politics of unsustainability' is sustained, involves inclusive and participatory forms of governance, with NGOs, academics, public institutions, and international bodies all involved in perpetuating the strategies of simulation. In this sense, post-ecologist politics is inherently contradictory in character because the post-democratic, depoliticised, technocratic forms of governance accompanying it are not an exception or deviation from the governance of unsustainability, but they are crucial to its legitimacy and functioning (Blühdorn 2013). Further parallels can be drawn between post-democratic governance and what have been labelled 'deficit models' of public participation in science.

It is widely held in advanced capitalist societies that engagement practices might help to address the democratic deficit and increase the legitimacy of various public institutions (Barnett et al. 2012; Durant 2011; Thorpe and Gregory 2010). Science and Technology Studies (STS) scholars, such as Wynne (1993, 2002, 2006, 2007), and Irwin (2001) have warned, however, that much engagement is underpinned by a problematic form of

participation described as the ‘deficit model’. The deficit model is said to be based on a version of science and public engagement that treats lay publics as relatively ignorant and hence in need of education about the technical dimensions of particular policies or developments. A problem with this form of ‘engagement’ is that primacy is afforded to scientific and technical expertise at the expense of wider value concerns; the engagement agenda is set by technical or scientific experts. With regards to climate change, for instance, it was mentioned previously that the natural sciences natural sciences have dominated the definition of (Urry 2011), and hence shaped responses to, climate change, which is subsequently often understood as a largely scientific and technical problem. There has been little scholarship, however, which addresses both the politics of climate change and deficit forms of engagement.

The problematizing of engagement is not limited to the UK context. A related body of literature suggests that the role of development NGOs in facilitating community participation with development projects can contribute to forms of neo-colonialist rule (Davis 2006). In relation to neoliberal forms of development, NGOs and other non-state actors, such as the World Bank, have pursued the rhetoric and practices of partnership and participation with communities, ostensibly in efforts to challenge ineffective and corrupt state governments (Davis 2006; Jasanoff, 1997; Mitlin and Patel, 2005; D’Cruz and Satterthwaite, 2005). Davis (2006: 76) has pointed out that the World Bank has gained access to previously out-of-reach communities via these processes which are problematic because they co-opt community groups into the agendas of neoliberal donor organisations. To the extent that these development NGOs emphasise consensus and partnership with neoliberal development practices, and a focus on technical solutions to development issues, they could be seen to be diverting attention away from broader political discussions about the forms that development could and should take, in other words they are contributing to depoliticisation.

In sum, then, there are a number of ways in which the theory of the post-political condition has begun to be explored in relation to specific instances of social movement activism, and participation. Most of the discussion so far has been conducted in relation to Western advanced capitalist contexts however. I would suggest that these discussions should also be considered with regards to the social relations of colonialism, and the ways in which their continued legacy impacts on the contemporary social and political relations of climate change.

4. Post-political development, colonialism and modernity

It was mentioned earlier that much of the discussion of the post-political and post-democratic condition has predominantly been explored in relation to Western European (McCarthy 2012), 'advanced modern societies' (Blühdorn 2013). While works such as Bulkeley and Betsill (2013), North (2010), and Kythreotis (2011), have engaged with different empirical contexts, notably the urban, local, global South, and international respectively. Few works have emerged which explore the 'developing world' context, apart from Catney and Doyle (2011) whose work I discuss here, and none focus on the Caribbean region in particular. There is considerable scope for exploring post-political, neoliberal models of development, in the post-colonial context of Caribbean societies, which is the aim of this thesis.

In an analysis that is sensitive to the different, frequently neglected, timescales of sustainability,[6] Catney and Doyle (2011) found that the models of 'green welfare' and sustainable development advocated by 'post-materialists'[7], in rich, global North countries imply depoliticized models of citizenship (Catney and Doyle 2011: 184). This 'post-politics of the future', bound up in discussions of sustainable development, is based on three models of citizenship. First is the figure of the 'past citizen', to whom a 'debt of the past' is owed for the historical legacy of carbon-intensive activities (Catney and Doyle 2011: 181). These historical legacies are often obscured in discussions of sustainability, however, because 1990-a date by which point Western industrialisation was already very far advanced-is usually established as the 'baseline' for measuring 'sustainability' (Catney and Doyle 2011: 181). Secondly, it is the 'citizen of the present', particularly in the global South, who must correct the debts of the past, by pursuing 'low-carbon development' practices for example, while paving the way for, the third; the post-political, 'future citizen' (Catney and Doyle 2011: 181). Hence, post-materialist versions of sustainability prioritise the conditions of the 'haves' at the expense of the 'have nots' because they rely on notions of intergenerational justice, and future generations, at the expense of the immediate material needs of present generations (Catney and Doyle 2011: 182).

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[6] The past debts causing current ecological harm are frequently neglected in popular discussions of sustainability, especially where recent dates are taken to be the baseline against which sustainability is measured. The UK's Climate Change Act for instance seeks to reduce emissions to 1990s-levels. By the 1990s, however, industrial capitalism had already significantly impacted on the environment.

[7] In contrast to materialist values, which constituted a core concern with economic and physical security, post-materialism refers to the rise in concerns with 'belonging and self-expression' that Inglehart (2008) sees as becoming increasingly prominent among *Western* publics. The rise of the environmental movement is claimed to be an example of this shift.

While this may seem progressive in advanced consumer capitalist societies, in the global South context considerably more people are struggling over the basic needs for survival and hence are not afforded the luxury of worrying about future generations (Catney and Doyle 2011: 182).

Catney and Doyle (2011) also suggest that 'the domestic sphere of the global South is where post-political environmental discourses are most effective' because of the neoliberal restructuring of domestic governance arrangements (Catney and Doyle 2011: 184). It is via the policies of development institutions, and global South NGOs, together in 'consortiums', which operate according to a troubling post-political rationale, that post-materialist versions of environmental protection come to be enacted in the construction of populist, ''consensual' institutional arrangements', which further extend neoliberalism (Catney and Doyle 2011: 182-3). The historical relations of colonialism, and the environmental debts owed to Southern countries by Northern countries are largely neglected in these post-materialist and post-industrialist discourses (Catney and Doyle 2011: 176). It is in this context that alternative perspectives on the governance of the state in the global South are marginalized by the depoliticized concepts of sustainability prominent in the global North (Catney and Doyle 2011: 180). Likewise, Bachram (2004: 6), sees climate change policies as being utilized to facilitate new forms of colonialism in the global South, what she terms 'carbon colonialism'.

As mentioned above, post-politics also neglects the contrasting features of the contexts within which action on climate change is unfolding because it flattens difference in favour of an allegedly global, universalised imaginary of 'humanity in general'. Understandings of the emission of GHGs as a universally equivalent, politically-neutral activity, collapses global structural inequalities, in favour of presuming that 'we are all', or at least *should all be*, equally networked into, and responsible for, the emissions resulting from neoliberal capitalist production and consumption. Indeed Swyngedouw (2013: 11) notes that:

> What is of course radically disavowed in [depoliticized] pronouncements is the fact that many people in many places of the world already live in the socio-ecological catastrophe. The ecological Armageddon is already a reality. While the elites nurture an apocalyptic dystopia that can nonetheless be avoided (for them), the majority of the world already lives ''within the collapse of civilization'' .... The Apocalypse is indeed a combined and uneven one, both in time and across space.

Cupples (2012: 13) claims, therefore, that:

> [d]ominant approaches to climate change are clearly a key part of the neocolonial global order, in which the deaths of third world inhabitants in disasters are more acceptable, more justifiable, than the future potential deaths of first world people who haven't been born yet.

A recognition of the connections between colonialism and underdevelopment is, however, somewhat implicit in the articulation of notions of 'climate justice' and 'climate debt' which have featured in critiques of mainstream response to climate change. These terms are meant to highlight the historically uneven release of emissions, as part of the unfolding of industrialisation and the differential distribution of the perceived benefits of modernity (Agyeman, Bulkeley, and Nochur 2007; Bond 2012b; Brand et al. 2009; Mueller 2010; Russell, Pusey, and Sealey-Huggins 2011). Hence the once nascent climate justice movement attempted to reframe climate change not as an environmental issue, but rather as an issue of social justice inseparably bound to more general social and political relations (see for instance Brand et al. 2009; or Chatterton et al. 2013).

Elsewhere, in critical development studies it is frequently acknowledged that the forms of development presupposed by Western governments generally assume neoliberal, consumer-capitalist, global North societies as the models against which 'less' developed countries are measured (Bhambra 2007; Motta and Nilsen 2011; de Sousa Santos 2005a, 2005b). de Sousa Santos (2006: vii), for instance, describes neoliberal globalization as being 'undoubtedly the dominant and hegemonic form of globalization. It 'aims, on the one hand, to de-socialize capital, freeing it from the social and political bonds that in the past guaranteed some social distribution; on the other hand it works to subject society as a whole to the law of market value, under the presupposition the all social activity is better organized when it is organized under the aegis of the market' (de Sousa Santos 2006: vii). According to Beasley-Murray (2006: 5), operating in Third World countries in the past 20 years, the institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have promoted the implementation of 'technocratic administration in place of political antagonism'. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that some of the responses to climate change being institutionalised in government policies in both the global North and South do indeed engender neoliberal models of development. I now outline further how climate change policy responses can be connected to neoliberal development in post-colonial contexts.

The establishment of various carbon trading schemes (CTS) have been described as a commodification of the 'commons' (Newell and Bumpus 2012; Thornes and Randalls 2007), because they extend the reach of capital to areas previously exempt. These schemes often rely on the notion of 'offsetting' to facilitate the sale of 'carbon credits', or permits to pollute, from those people who pollute 'excessively' to those who do not. Often the former are in advanced capitalist societies, while the latter are in so-called developing countries.

Likewise, the marketisation and trading of carbon features in another prominent example, the Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) scheme. REDD builds on similar schemes such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and European Union Carbon Trading Schemes (CTS). The basic principle of such schemes is that countries with forests can claim 'carbon credits' if they can successfully demonstrate that they have avoided deforestation or degradation in those forests. The carbon credits are bought by polluters, and circulated on markets such as the CTS. The scheme has been widely criticised for the extent to which it is open to abuse, as well as for:

a) involving the commodification of the atmosphere (Thornes and Randalls 2007); and requiring the technical assessment of forests in terms of their carbon content, and hence also their (carbon) market value;

b) the limitations of carbon trading schemes, which underpin REDD, including unstable carbon markets (Bond, 2012a, 2012b; Böhm et al., 2012; Lohmann, 2012) in essence enabling polluters to continue polluting and yet claim credits for forests that were already there (Ghazoul et al. 2010; Morgan 2010);

c) undermining local indigenous people's traditional uses of forests, by reformulating them in accordance with private property relations, and excluding or alienating local people in order to enforce REDD (Tienhaara 2012);

d) cases where virgin forest is replaced by 'more (carbon) efficient' mono-crop plantations (Grandia 2007).

In short, it is claimed that REDD privatizes what were commonly owned forests in order to 'protect' them, often displacing indigenous peoples in the process, though generating large profits for those who come to 'manage' the forests

(Mueller, 2010; Various Authors, 2010). In so far as these responses broaden the (problematic) socio-political relations that helped to cause climate change, while also enacting populist forms of governance and fetishizing the element carbon, they support the claim that many solutions to climate change presuppose continued forms of capitalist late modernity adhering to the assertion that 'there-is-no-alternative'. These mechanisms also suggest that Blühdorn (2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011, 2013) notion of 'simulation' is appropriate here.

The point is that there is an overwhelming trend towards neoliberalism in the enforcement of development and climate change policies, which can legitimately be described as post-political. This point can be taken a step further to note that such forms of development could not be enforced were it not for the shaping of contemporary social and political relations by the history of colonialism (Bhambra 2007; Fanon 1995; Lewis 1983; Motta and Nilsen 2011; Sayyid 2003); many of the countries in which neoliberal development is promoted are indeed in relatively disadvantageous positions because of the uneven distribution of the impacts of colonialism.

According to Bogues (2003: 1-2) '…the overarching framework for modernity's emergence was the rise of racial slavery, colonialism, and new forms of empires; … conceptions of 'rational-self-interested subjects' were embedded in a philosophical anthropology of bourgeois Enlightenment and Eurocentrism'. Modernist depoliticised responses to climate change which are reliant on instrumental scientific knowledge and expertise build on colonialist structures of thought then. Bouges (2003: 5) continues, '[h]istorically embedded inside the major categories of Western political thought are the conceptions of 'civilization' and the unpreparedness of the colonized for self-rule' (Bouges 2003: 5). Such conceptions reflect the idea, deemed to be a key part of the post-political condition, that governance needs to be conducted by elites and experts, whose expert status can garner the support of 'the people' or wider populous. Moreover, Bhambra (2007) is critical of the fact that much social scientific theory itself fails to address the histories of imperialism and colonialism which were fundamental to the emergence of modernity, and to the self-image of Europe as being at the forefront of this process.

In summary, existing discussions of climate change politics tend to mention development but do not directly address colonialism (with the notable exceptions of Bachram, 2004; Cupples, 2012; Forsyth and Young, 2007; and Grove, 2012). There is scope to link the arguments around 'the political' to those around the legacies of colonialism in neoliberal development, which is what this

thesis will do. Looking at the post-colonial context of the Caribbean will provide scope for exploring the possible relationships between the impacts of neoliberal development and dimensions of post-politics, which are neglected in existing discussions. Having explored arguments about the post-politics of climate change directly, and having shown how the concept might be linked to post-colonial contexts, I now move on to look at how other social scientific approaches to climate change might be considered in terms of the post-political condition.

5. Post-political social science

It is important to recognise that on-going approaches to studying climate change within the social sciences can themselves be understood in relation to the post-political condition. I shall now interrogate tendencies within approaches towards climate change in the social sciences. I begin with a look at social science which could be seen to be depoliticised or technocratic. Three main examples are considered: firstly literature from the 'sustainability sciences'; secondly, economics; and thirdly 'ecological modernisation'. I then explore the affinity between the post-political condition, and 'unsociological' understandings of climate change.

i) Sustainability science

According to Swyngedouw (2010: 226), the collaboration of 'enlightened technocrats (economists, public opinion specialists…)' is essential for the functioning of forms of administrative, post-democratic governance given the latter's reliance on technical expertise. There is, it is claimed, evidence of technocratic, depoliticised responses to climate change within the social science literature itself. Furthermore, Blühdorn (2011: 44) suggests that 'mainstream sustainability research' is not very well-placed to investigate the kinds of tendencies in the 'governance of unsustainability' that he identifies because that research base is largely concerned with trying to identify objective empirical indicators of sustainability. Mainstream sustainability research can be grouped together under the label of 'sustainability science' which is a relatively new sub-discipline which attempts to merge the social and natural sciences (Brand and Jax 2007; Komiyama and Takeuchi 2006). Notions of 'vulnerability' and 'resilience' along with the concept of 'adaptation' (Adger, Arnell, and Thompkins 2005), are key concepts in this area (Brand and Jax 2007), and the related field of 'adaptation science' (Schipper and Burton 2009).

Attempts to operationalize these concepts often make recourse to general and descriptive principles, such as 'effectiveness' (Adger et al. 2005; Füssel, 2007), 'legitimacy', and 'adaptive capacity' (Gupta et al. 2010), though the elusiveness of such principles is also sometimes acknowledged (Adger et al. 2005). Bishop (2012) is doubtful that concepts such as vulnerability can ever be measured objectively and scientifically in the ways in which some authors aspire to, as there are substantive elements and broad historical contingencies to vulnerability which are unquantifiable. This constitutes an intrinsic problem of such instrumental approaches (Bishop 2012: 950). The apparent appeal of adopting such objective definitions, though, is that it lends methodological rigour (Bishop 2012: 950), and hence scientific authority, to accounts.[8]

Related attempts to define 'successful adaptation' (Adger et al. 2005) or 'adaptive capacity' (Gupta et al. 2010), in objective terms risk marginalising substantive value discussions in favour of trying to find ways to measure and manage climate change (Blühdorn 2013: 21). In contrast to approaches which focus on the structural causes of climate change, the focus on 'adaptation' (Adger et al. 2009; Bouwer and Aerts 2006; Schipper and Burton 2009), for instance, seems rather optimistic about the possibilities of responding to climate change given current social and political trajectories (Swyngedouw 2013a). The idea that capitalist societies can develop the resources to adapt to climate change contributes to the managerialist focus of responses because it does not engage with the claim that there is something inherent to capitalist society that might make it unable to deal with ecological problems. This kind of social science forms part of what Hulme (2008a) refers to as attempts to 'conquer' the climate by using technical knowledge to 'manage' climate change (via 'techno-fixes' such as (Fauset 2008) geo-engineering or technological adaptations (Hulme 2008b). It attempts to make social science useful via contributions to policy-making processes (Gupta et al. 2010 and Few et al., 2007).

Even where significant structural social change is acknowledged as necessary, the boundaries of that change are frequently circumscribed, as in the following example. In his book entitled 'The Politics of Climate Change', Giddens 2009: 4 his emphasis) laments the fact that '*we have no politics of climate change*'. Somewhat paradoxically, however, this pronouncement is articulated in a register which is entirely in keeping with depoliticised representations of climate change. On the one hand, for instance, he advocates a bigger role for markets whilst on the other, he simultaneously discounts the

[8] The use of the notion of vulnerability in relation to the Caribbean is discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

kinds of radical political imaginaries which question the capacity for the existing institutions of capitalist parliamentary democracy to 'manage' climate change equitably.

Part of the explanation as to why some social scientists' engagement with climate change has been conducted in a vein that could be interpreted as post-political is because these social scientists work in line with definitions of climate change shaped largely by the natural sciences who have been much more influential in policy-making and research-agenda-setting bodies, such as the IPCC and UNFCCC (Blühdorn, 2011; Grundmann and Stehr, 2010; Hoppe, 2008; Scholz, 2008; Yearley, 2009). The exclusion of the social sciences from initial definitions of climate change can be linked to the preference for objectivist and technical responses in policy-making circles (Hulme 2008a; Shove 2010a). More recently, although social scientists are increasingly engaging with climate change (Yearley 2009), they are not all necessarily being heard, and some are heard more than others (Shove 2010a); with natural scientific claims holding considerably more sway than social scientific ones (Lohmann 2010; Scerri 2009). Mainstream economics approaches to climate change seem to be more popular than many other social sciences yet they are another example of an approach that could be critiqued for the extent to which it depoliticises climate change.

ii) 'Economics imperialism'

A number of commentators have suggested that economics is the most prominent of the social sciences to be involved with climate change (Lohmann 2010; Shaw 2011; Turnpenny 2009; Urry 2011). Shaw (2011: 58), for example, highlights the role of cost-benefit-analysis metrics in attempts to determine economically meaningful and acceptable levels of global warming. In addition, one of the best-publicised social scientific reports on climate change was 'The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review', often referred to as the 'Stern Review' (Stern 2007). The main thrust of the Stern Review is that economists should acknowledge that the future costs of dealing with climate change are higher than those of dealing with it now (Stern 2007). In this sense the economics of the report attempted to claim climate change as the largest ever market failure (Skovgaard, 2012: 4). Urry (2011) suggests that the Stern Review is an example of 'economics imperialism', the colonization of climate change by the discipline.

According to Skovgaard (2012: 4) the ‘climate change as market failure’ representation took root in practice in finance ministries where many officials are trained in neo-classical economics. Skovgaard (2012) found that this common training generated a stronger sense of commonality between finance officials from different countries than with officials from within ministries in their own countries. It also helped them to perceive of market mechanisms and carbon pricing as relevant policy-options, particularly where the continued pursuit of economic growth is prioritised (Skovgaard 2012).

Economistic approaches to climate change have also been critiqued in a similar vein to the sustainability sciences ones mentioned above, in terms of the extent to which they attempt to find a universally objective measure for climate change, in financial terms (Hulme, 2009: 116). Mainstream economics has also been critiqued to the extent to which it is suggested that economic growth should be pursued as an optimum outcome of the functioning of markets (Foster 2002a, 2002b, 2009; Lohmann 2010; Stern 2007). The assumption of constant economic growth is part of the idea that ‘there-is-no-alternative’ to capitalism, which was identified above as being a feature of the post-political consensus.

The apparent dominance of economics among social scientific accounts of climate change leads Lohmann (2010: 135) to call for greater criticism of the discipline, as well as an expanded role for other social sciences such as sociology and political science (see also Urry 2011). According to Lohmann (2010), and backed-up by research elsewhere (Jamison 2010), the institutions supporting social science research have contributed to a situation where the scope for debate about climate change research is narrowed to such an extent that: ‘most social scientists involved in global warming issues, like many environmentalists, operate within the conceptual universe of the new neoliberal project of climate commodification and trading’ (Lohmann 2010: 149).

Economic valuations are a key contributor to the predominant approach to trying to manage responses to climate change via a process being labelled by some as ‘financialization’ (Lohmann 2012; Pike and Pollard 2010; Sullivan 2013; Swyngedouw 2010b). Pike and Pollard (2009: 29) define financialization as ‘shorthand for the growing influence of capital markets, their intermediaries, and processes in contemporary economic and political life’; while Grove (2012: 149) describes it as: ‘processes by which diverse domains of life are reorganized around principles of risk management, accounting, and financial speculation’.

According to Lohmann (2012: 87), financialization, in the case of carbon markets, engenders cosy relationships between states, markets and corporate

actors, as regulation is loosened, and because of the dependence of those making regulation on the opinions of actors who are themselves profiting from the trade. An effect of the financialization of responses to climate change, therefore, is that the interests of the financial sector come to overtake those in whose name these financial instruments are created and traded. Economic and financial representations of the world are entirely fallible, however. A number of authors are therefore keen to point out the uncertainty produced by prioritising the needs of the finance sector, which has a bad track record in terms of financial speculation and risk assessment as exemplified by the recent financial collapse (Grove 2012: 148; Harvey, 2009; Lohmann 2012). The extent to which these kinds of representation of climate change are in the ascendency is indicated by the fact that market mechanisms, such as REDD, are the main proposed policy framework for achieving emissions reductions under the UNFCCC process (Murtola, Spoelstra and Böhm 2012).[9]

iii) Ecological modernisation

Alongside more orthodox economics, another dominant social science paradigm for interpreting social-environmental relations is through the lens of 'ecological modernisation' (EM) (see, for instance, Mol, 1999; Toke, 2001; Mol and Spaargaren, 2005; Revell, 2005; White, 2006). 'EM has both descriptive and prescriptive dimensions; it denotes both a theory of unplanned social change and a political programme of action' (Revell 2005: 345; see also Mol and Spaargaren 2005). EM is considerably more optimistic about the potential, within capitalism, for an adequate response to the ecological harm caused by capitalism. Protagonists of EM claim that 'economic growth and environmental protection could in fact be mutually supportive' (Revell 2005: 345; see also Hayward, 1994; Mol 1999; or Toke 2001). EM is to be pursued via the construction of 'better policy' and 'better markets'. Again implying that 'there-is-no-alternative', EM offers solutions to environmental problems that do not require fundamental change in the practices of modern societies[10] (Blühdorn 2006: 29; Revell 2005). EM also exemplifies the technocratism of the post-political, for 'science and technology are seen as the principle institutions in finding solutions to environmental problems' (Revell 2005: 346). Efforts at pricing the capacities of the atmosphere to absorb carbon through the

[9] This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

[10] There is some debate as to whether this aspect of EM applies solely to Western capitalist societies, or whether it extends to developing and undeveloped nations (see Mol 1999).

establishment of carbon markets can be understood in these terms (Bumpus and Liverman 2008; Lohmann 2008; Randalls 2011; Thornes and Randalls 2007; Tickell 2008).

The context within which many social scientists are working is one where finding solutions to climate change is a priority of many research councils (Hoppe 2008; Pielke 2009; Scholz 2008). The international scientific authority on climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has previously been criticised for failing to foster the development of practical solutions (for instance Shackley 1997:78). These pressures on social scientists to make themselves useful via 'impact agendas' and marketable 'outputs' should not be underestimated (Blühdorn 2011: 45). Indeed, further shaping this context has been the rise of neoliberalism within the university and the promotion of entrepreneurialism and commercialism within the academy (Felt, 2009; Harvie, 2000, 2006; Jamison, 2010; Sealey-Huggins and Pusey, 2013). In fact, an increasingly popular presentation of climate change is as an *opportunity* (Hulme, 2008c: 12), whether that is technological (National Geographic 2009), academic (Urry 2008; Yearley 2009), socio-political (Adger et al. 2009) or economic (Foster 2009; McGarr 2005; Stern 2007).

The sustainability-science, economics, and EM approaches considered above have had such a poor record in terms of advancing more sustainable societies that they lead Blühdorn (2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2011, 2013) to suggest that they are a key part of the depoliticisation inherent to a form of 'post-ecologist politics'. The theory of post-ecologist politics suggests that Western capitalist societies have fundamentally failed to appreciate the scale of the challenge to their unsustainability that ecological politics once engendered (Blühdorn 2011). Hence Blühdorn (2011: 38) has suggested that ecological modernisation, and the mainstreaming of sustainability in academia in the form of sustainability science has 'thoroughly depoliticised' any potentially radical critique.

To sum up, firstly it should be noted that the post-political entails, and encourages, through market-based schemes for instance, certain kinds of 'subjectivity', or ways of being socially and individually. Secondly, it should also be noted that the kinds of approach discussed in the preceding section, such as economics, tend not to focus their attention on 'the social' as part of their attempts at explanation (Urry 2011), or that when they do the models of society are substantially 'unsociological' in character. It is for this reason that an analysis of the relationship between sociologies of climate change, and the post-political and post-democratic condition, is necessary.

6. A sociological contribution

> '*…and so they are casting their problems on 'society'. And who is 'society'? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families*'
>
> (Margaret Thatcher Foundation cited on BBC 2013)[11]

The social is political: an under-explored affinity between sociology and the political

I would suggest that an aspect of the post-political that is as yet underexplored in discussions, but which I shall investigate in this thesis, is an affinity between depoliticised accounts and unsociological ones. In order to provide the background for this suggestion, I shall now consider how sociological treatments of climate change may help to develop interpretations of post-politics.

Related to the analysis that the governance of climate change focuses on responses which do not challenge the profound unsustainability of capitalist forms of social organisation, a number of authors with sociological sensibilities have identified the 'individualisation' of responses as being a recurrent theme (Scerri 2009; Shove 2010a, 2010b; Urry 2011; Wolf, Brown, and Conway 2009). When responses to climate change take place, they are often underpinned by unacknowledged normative assumptions about the ontological characteristics of social relations (Wynne 2010). These models of society, or 'lay sociologies', are in many ways problematic (Wynne 2008), especially when based on notions of 'utility maximizing individuals' (Shove 2010) or rationally choosing economic actors (such as 'homo economicus') (Paavola, 2008; Urry 2010a, 2010b). According to Shove (2010a: 278) much 'climate change policy proceeds on the basis of an extraordinarily limited understanding of the social world and is, for the most part, untouched by theoretical debate of any kind at all'. In these 'Attitude-Behaviour-Change' (ABC) models of policy-making which dominate

[11] While there has been some confusion over the exact wording of this phrase, the sentiment behind it, promoting moral individualism and a sense of individual-over and above collective-responsibility (BBC 2013), remains the same. Stating that society was an abstract concept, to be sure, prioritises an individualised model of the social, and neuters the important sociological claim that there is an ontologically distinct or analytically valid level of 'the social' to which causal power can be attributed (Kilminster 2002; Outhwaite 2006).

contemporary sustainability policy, the social is often understood in the *unsociological* sense of being merely an aggregate of individuals whose attitudes must be changed so as to encourage better behaviour (Shove 2010a). The deficit model of engagement with citizens located as consumers is likely to be the form that the ABC engenders then (Shove 2010a). Hence much of the advice about what action should be taken in response to climate change is then provided in individualistic terms.

Webb (2012) does a very good job of highlighting the problematic models of society integral to UK government climate change policies. Webb (2012) points out that the technologies of behaviour change are poorly equipped to acknowledge the (sociological) complexities and contradictions inherent in contemporary society. These technologies are instead based on insufficiently sociological-or individualised-understandings of behaviour (Webb 2012). Examples include the UK government's 'Act On CO2' or 'Every Action Counts' campaigns, and the '10:10' campaign (Ereaut and Segnit 2006). Targeting individuals in this way frames the collective problem of climate change as being a matter of personal responsibility (Butler 2010; Ereaut and Segnit 2006; Middlemiss 2010; Phillips 2000; Randalls 2010; Scerri 2009; Webb 2012). This is problematic because the processes causing climate change, embedded as they are in structural relations of power, constitute more than just the aggregate actions of individuals (Butler 2010; Middlemiss 2010; Scerri 2009; Urry 2008a, 2011). Hence, Webb's (2012: 122) conclusion that '[s]hort-term, instrumental economic values thus dominate the climate change debate'. These dominant technocratic approaches are also likely to be self-defeating because of their neglect of social relations (Webb 2012: 109).

The fact that climate change policies always have embedded within them implicit and explicit (normative) claims about the form society does, and should, take (Carolan, 2008; Grundmann, 2007) leads Wynne (2010: 291) to call into question the 'intensely scientific primary framing' of climate change, as well as the 'intensely economistic imagination and framing of the appropriate responses', such as carbon-trading policies. Scientists involved in these processes are involved in the co-production (Jasanoff 2004 in Wynne 2010) of their science in accordance with (contested) assumptions about the needs and capacities of policy-makers. These assumptions, therefore, constitute models of society which are embedded in the social practice of climate science.

Again, then, the extent to which climate change is represented as being a universal threat (Swyngedouw 2010), requiring better administrative and technical management, in terms of the parts-per-million of GHGs, it is rendered

as not only depoliticized, but also and '*desocialised*', or unsociological, because it does not take into account the social relations patterning both the causes of and responses to climate change. Indeed the suggested populism of the post-political, rests upon ideas of a unified, global populous needing to unite in support of the technical governance of elites against the common enemy; carbon (Swyngedouw 2013). This idea is inherently unsociological because it involves the disavowal of social relations in favour of a monolithic image of humanity in general. It also neglects the contrasting features of the contexts within which action on climate change is unfolding because it flattens difference in favour of a claimed global, universalised account. I would suggest, therefore, that sociology is well-placed to explore the imagined, or summoned, social relations embedded in accounts of climate change (Shove 2010a; Urry 2011; Wynne 2010).

The prominence of such ways of thinking in terms of 'the individual' is related to the rise of advanced- (Rose 1996 in Butler, 2010), or neo-, liberal modes of governance (Outhwaite 2006; Schostak and Schostak 2008). Indeed, as Blühdorn (2013: 25 his emphasis) points out, the very structures of modern representative democracy assume a model of the '*autonomous identical individual*', which is perhaps impossible to locate in practice. Elsewhere Blühdorn (2006: 28) connects overly individual-centred models of social action to depoliticised trends in contemporary society. He suggests that 'the sociological category of the (idealist) *autonomous* subject' has made way for a definition of individuals in economic terms, more specifically in terms of a '*consumer* profile' (Blühdorn 2006: 29). The latter must be built through consumerism and participation in the market. Neoliberalism, therefore, functions best through processes of individualisation that downplay reference to interdependence (Harvey 2005). The parliamentary pioneer of neoliberalism in the UK cited above, the late Margaret Thatcher, was a key actor in efforts to refocus responsibility at the level of the individual (Harvey 2005).[12] Her policies, furthered by successive neoliberal governments, required and encouraged people to think of themselves and each other as solitary economic units (Fisher 2009; Harvey 2005; Klein 2007). Market capitalist societies, then, require consumers to participate in these markets (May 2012). In contrast to such individualism, sociologists have even identified the ways in which contemporary

[12] A sentiment echoed recently by the London Mayor Boris Johnson in his similarly inaccurate declaration that sociologists had no place in helping to explain the urban disorder of summer 2011 (Cooper and Nicholls 2011).

forms of individuality are the result of particular socio-historical processes (Blühdorn 2013: 26; Elias, 2001: 33).

If neoliberal economics is a natural ally to post-political ways of understanding the world, then some sociological approaches, with their sensitivity to the influence of social structures (Outhwaite 2006), are likely to be somewhat antithetical to the kinds of instrumental and technocratic thinking encompassed in the post-political. The reverse is also implied, then, that there is an affinity between post-political and unsociological, individualised accounts. Whereas depoliticisation processes universalise the particularities of capitalism, critical sociology, of the kind that Zygmunt Bauman pursues for instance, points out that things could always be 'other' to how they are currently (Davis 2008, 2011). Questioning the current state of things, can generate a much needed sensitivity to the roles of context and history in shaping present conditions (Kilminster 2002; Mills 1970). Recognition that the current organisation of society is not fixed, but is rather the result of specific social processes (Bauman 1976; Elias 2001; Outhwaite 2006) can be used to critically interrogate different imaginaries of the social that prevail at a given time. The claim that 'things could always be different' to how they are currently has been referred to by some as a utopian streak within sociology, and has been deployed to challenge instances of conservative 'naturalising of the social', or the taking of current conditions for granted (Bauman 1976; Davis 2011; Mills 1970). In short, acknowledging that the present social form is only one of many possibilities represents a direct challenge to post-political claims that 'there-is-no-alternative'.

An example of where sociology can be deployed is in order to make explicit some of the assumptions made about the ontological characteristics of social groups, or various publics. A number of authors have explored the assumptions made about the characteristics of publics who are engaging in science, for example (Wynne, 2007), and by extension the science with which they are engaging (Wynne 2008). Barnett et al. (2012: 37), in relation to renewable energies for example, consider 'the interdependencies between the principles and practices of engagement and the nature of the imagined publics with whom engagement is being undertaken'. They demonstrate, via their analysis of attitudes towards public participation, that there are models of the characteristics of publics embedded within different constructions of engagement (Barnett et al. 2012). Key to their analysis is the argument that engagement itself to some extent *produces* the publics which are imagined (Barnett et al. 2012: 39). Hence their contention that 'imagined publics shape

motives for, and preferred mechanisms of, engagement' (Barenett et al. 2012: 46).

Relatedly, Mensy (2009), in reflecting on the 'public sociology' debate (Beck 2005; Burawoy 2006; Holmwood 2007; Scott 2005; Vaughn 2005), considers four commonly taken positions with respect to quite what it is that sociologists know that wider publics or non-sociologists might not. Lay people always employ models of the social in their attempts to negotiate the world (cf Mensy 2009), irrespective of whether these are more or less sociological models. These findings suggest that there is indeed scope for an analysis of the implicit assumptions made about society, or models of society, by actors acting in response to climate change. I would also suggest that, via an exploration of how publics and other actors are discussed in responses to climate change, it is possible to discern what the models, or imagined characteristics, of, not just publics (Barnett et al. 2012), but of society in general. Moreover, the models of society, or 'social imaginaries' (cf. Tester 2012), implicitly embedded in accounts of climate change could productively be considered in light of sociological treatments of social-individual relations (such as Bauman, 2001; Elias, 2001; Giddens, 1979; Outhwaite, 2006, 2009: 1032; Purkis, 2004; Layder, 1997; Shove, 2010b) in order to interrogate and potentially reimagine models of agency and social change with respect to climate change.

In addition to an analysis of the various assumptions made about the characteristics of society which are implicit in responses to climate change, a sociological sensitivity to ambivalence can help to add another layer of subtlety to accounts of climate change politics. It is to a discussion of these I shall now turn.

Ambivalence, paradox and post-politics

There is a general sense of ambivalence that remains a defining feature of much of the science and technology studies (STS) dialogue about public participation mentioned earlier in this chapter. Meanwhile Wynne (2010) has been keen to point out the inherently ambiguous character of climate science knowledge, and, by extension, various publics' engagement with it. It should be noted, for instance, that participation partly emerged as a response to public ambivalence about risky scientific and technological processes and products (Irwin 2001b; Kerr and Cunningham-Burley 2000). Much of the work on the lay-expert divide has been part of a search for solutions to ambivalence via rationality, (for instance Kerr, Cunningham-Burley, and Tutton 2007a:56),

because of the on-going reservations and dilemmas about involving publics in science.

At the same time, the forms of governance upon which the post-political or post-democratic condition rests are suggested to entail paradoxical qualities (Blühdorn 2013: 31; Swyngedouw 2010). They at once appear to acknowledge the significance of ecological problems, yet they do so without fundamentally altering the relations that give rise to these problems in the first place (Blühdorn 2013; Swyngedouw 2010). As Blühdorn (2013: 32) suggests, however, 'more work is required to theoretically refine and empirically substantiate' the detail of this. I would suggest that this idea of paradox can be usefully developed in light of sociological discussions of ambivalence, in order to avoid an overly totalising representation of the post-political, and in order to better understand the paradoxical situations in which people find themselves acting in practice.

Following the loss of the certainty of the project of modernity once heralded, social theorists such as Bauman (1991) and Smart (1999) have commented on the condition of ambivalence that they suggest now pervades the contemporary social world. Smart (1999: 4) proposes that a better understanding of ambivalence:

> requires a detailed analysis of the various ways in which ambivalence receives expression in, and impacts upon, the lives of different groups and classes of people, an analysis which needs to include, amongst other things, a consideration of the ways in which the dis-ordering and re-ordering consequences of the surrender of more and more areas of social life to the vagaries of the market, and associated forms of economic reorganization, are lived and experienced positively by some and negatively by others, in, and as, ambivalence.

In Smart's (1999) formulation ambivalence is wedded to the uneven impacts of processes of marketization. Indeed it is partly the very pursuit of order and certainty of modernity which is self-undermining to the extent to which it produces disorder and uncertainty (Smart 1999: 30). Smart (1999: 5) cites Levine's parallel argument that ambiguity is necessary as a 'counter to the dominance and, by implication excesses of 'positive science' and the 'hegemony of rationalized institutions'. In part, ambivalence stems from the decline in certainty of particular moral orders (Smart 1999: 152), and the 'adiaphorization' (cf Bauman in Davis 2008: 26-27) of the contemporary world, that is, the removal of different value questions from action. For Weber the 'prevailing conditions of disenchantment, rationalization and discipline, [were]

conditions which rendered social relations impersonal and thereby increasingly inaccessible to ethical interpretation' (Smart 1999: 3). So depersonalisation and disenchantment were begot by economic and bureaucratic rationalization. The post-political is itself arguably aligned to the forms of (instrumental) rationality upon which modernist certainty, encountered as faith in the application of science and technology, depended.

In practice, some social scientists have deployed the concept of ambivalence in their empirical studies, albeit in the different area of explorations of the contested roles of publics and professionals in scientific work (Kerr et al. 2007a; Kerr and Cunningham-Burley 2000; Tutton 2007). Insofar as ambivalence might facilitate reflexivity, and guard against absolutism and exploitation, and enable doubts about modern scientific trends, however, ambivalence has been portrayed by some social scientists as a cause for celebration, rather than a problem to be rectified (Kerr at al. 2007: 57). As such it is therefore hoped that ambivalence might operate as a force for democratization, challenging the rational management and technical expertise (Kerr et al. 2007).

Lorenz-Meyer (2001), in her study of intergenerational ambivalence, meanwhile, usefully provides the following definition of ambivalence on the level of the individual as 'generated through opposed orientation and interpretation patterns and demands that are constituted in social practice'. Lorenz-Meyer (2001) suggests that social scientists should explore ambivalence in terms of its 'simultaneously working opposing forces', as well as the 'institutional and individual strategies of dealing with them'. Elsewhere Tutton (2007: 175), in his analysis of people's positioning in discourses of participation, draws on the work of Beck to define ambivalence in terms of uncertainty and doubt, as well as distrust. These accounts of ambivalence tend to highlight the role of individual reflexivity, as well as the structural factors shaping action.

Kerr et al. (2007) draw on Bauman's (1991) work on ambivalence and ethics to question the extent to which ambivalence might function as a force for democratization, or facilitation of what Giddens refers to as 'institutional reflexivity'. While they do not provide a specific definition of ambivalence, their work implies that ambivalence can be perceived in people's 'accounts of contradictory cultural values, and disjunctures between these values and the social avenues for their realization' (Kerr at al. 2007: 57). Here ambivalence is characterised as being to do with paradox and uncertainty (Kerr at al. 2007: 54). Often attempts are made in professional settings to 'manage' ambivalence away (Kerr et al. 2007: 56). Kerr et al (2007: 56) found in their analysis,

however, that people frequently act within individualised contexts which limit their potential for reflexivity. Instead the 'emphasis [is] upon risk calculus, political solutions and reason' (Kerr et al. 2007: 56). Hence, 'solutions to ambivalence through rationality' are often sought, where 'ambivalence [is] often managed away' (Kerr et al. 2007 56-57) in a context where 'technical knowledge is uniquely privileged'.

The notion of ambivalence can provide a framework for 'understanding, analysis and explanation…beyond the scope of rational-choice explanations' (Smesler cited by Lorenz-Meyer 2001: 1), 'in contexts of interdependence where actors feel 'locked in' by personal or institutional commitments and constraints' (Lorenz-Meyer 2001: 1). In spite of this potential, existing explorations of people's engagement with climate change have tended not to explore ambivalence, however. I suggest, then, there is considerable scope for considering the extent to which ambivalence is evident in responses, and for exploring the relationship of that ambivalence to post-politics. Drawing on these applications of the concept, then, my understanding of ambivalence highlights the qualities of tension, complex and perhaps irreconcilable conflicting feelings, uncertainty, doubt, and distrust, in other words the inherent 'messiness', in people's reflexive accounts. This will add to our understanding of the sociological complexity of the dynamics particular contexts where people are acting in response to climate change.

Conclusion

To recap, at the beginning of this chapter I highlighted the argument made by Swyngedouw (2010) that there is a fragile post-political and post-democratic consensus that dominates the framing of climate change and responses to it. In the sections which followed I demonstrated that there is on-going debate, however, about the direction of responses to climate change in terms of Swyngedouw's thesis. Hence the research problem outlined in Chapter 1.

A range of authors have demonstrated some of the ways in which it is possible to interrogate the notion of the post-political in terms of actually existing responses to climate change. Those who have engaged empirically with the idea of the post-political have added texture to the specifics of Swyngedouw's claims, either reinforcing or challenging the main thrust of the argument. By for instance, problematizing the idea that it is possible to have such a wide range of political engagement around climate change and for it be depoliticised (North 2010; Urry 2011). Following this, I identified further areas where consideration

of the concept of post-politics can be explored in practice, such as with regards to public engagement and activism. The next section of the chapter helped to provide background for the specific contribution that my research makes to this discussion in terms of colonialism and development., both prominent features of action in the Caribbean.

In section 5 of this chapter I showed that certain approaches, such as mainstream economics, seem to reproduce post-politics in their scholarly treatments of climate change. In contrast, a sociology which focuses on how social relations are embedded in climate change has the potential to surpass the post-political framing. Yet the sociological literature on the social relations of climate change tends not to engage directly with the notion of post-politics. My thesis also aims to contribute to the sociological literature on climate change in terms of highlighting some of the tensions, ambivalences and complexities involved in how different actors in the field deal with the constraints on their activities. In the next chapter I shall clarify the research objectives and research questions in relation to the methodological approach employed in order to respond to these questions.

Chapter 3 | Researching the post-political condition: in search of a political methodology

'*The ways in which we know and represent the world are inseparable from the ways in which we choose to live in it*' (Jasanoff 2004:3)

1. Introduction

In this chapter I outline the methodological approach and research methods of this study. Firstly, I, in light of discussion in the preceding chapter I recap the research objectives and introduce the research questions=. I then outline the contribution that my sociological approach, involving a commitment to qualitative research methods, enables me to make. Next I explain the detail of my case-studies, the rationales for choosing them, and the processes of 'casing'. I then indicate the ethnographic research techniques deployed to generate data, which were observation and participation; interview; and documentary analysis. It is also necessary to explain the themes that emerged early on in my analysis. I finish the chapter by highlighting my concern with finding methods that might challenge the technically focussed approaches identified in Chapter 2, and reflecting on the ethical issues raised by my (relatively privileged) position as an academic researcher conducting fieldwork in the Caribbean.

Research objectives and questions

To recap, the research problem to which this thesis is orientated is that there is at once a considerable degree of deliberation about the topic of climate change, at the same time as the climate crisis worsens. Some theorists have identified the aforementioned post-political consensus around climate change as being a key part of this situation. The main objective of this thesis, then, is to explore, sociologically, the extent to which responses to climate change in and around the Caribbean are proceeding in a post-political fashion. The thesis does this via an investigation of a range of responses to climate change in different contexts. The general geographical context in which this research problem is explored is the Caribbean region, and I look at a variety of responses to climate change here in terms of the activities of actors and accounts provided by them.

Fuller details of the characteristics of the case-studies will be provided below, while now I shall clarify the research questions.

Emerging from the discussion in Chapter 2 are a set of questions which address the research problem introduced in Chapter 1, and recapped above. These are:

- To what extent does a post-political, post-democratic consensus operate in responses to climate change in case studies in and around the Caribbean?

While the specific indicators of post-politics are outlined below, this broad question is broken down into further questions:

  - What kinds of responses to climate change are being undertaken in the Caribbean context?
  - How far do these responses indicate technocratic, or managerialist, or otherwise instrumental representations of climate change and solutions to it?

Taking the characteristics of the Caribbean context into account, it is possible to ask:

  - What does a post-colonial context mean for conceptualising of responses to climate change in terms of the post-political?
  - What might looking at non-Western societies add to our understanding of climate change politics?
  - In what ways are contemporary climate change and development practices shaped by historical relations?

Adopting an overtly sociological frame of analysis, and seeking to move beyond overly abstract discussions of post-politics, I will investigate people's responses to climate change, and accounts of these, in practice. Hence the following question will be asked:

  - What does an engagement with people's activities in practice, such as particular policy-making or public engagement endeavours, and people's accounts of these, contribute to more abstract theoretical discussions of the post-political?

In addition to the question above, my thesis will attempt to explore sociologically the tensions, ambivalences and complexities involved in how different actors in the field articulate and deal with some of the constraints on their activities. It also asks the following question therefore:

- How might sensitivity to the contradictions, tensions and the potentially ambivalent character of action around climate change contribute to an understanding of the post-political condition?

In the last chapter I showed that certain approaches, such as mainstream economics, seem to reproduce post-politics in their scholarly treatments of climate change. In contrast, sociology, with its focus on how social relations are embedded in climate change has potential to surpass post-political framings. Yet the sociological literature on the social relations of climate change tends not to engage directly with the notion of post-politics. Hence, I also ask:

- What affinities are there between depoliticised and 'unsociological' representations of climate change?
    - How far do technocratic and managerialist responses to climate change rest upon individualistic models of social action?
    - What models of society and social action are embedded in various responses to climate change?

Having introduced the research questions to be addressed, I now outline the methodological approach employed in order to respond to these questions. The methodological and strategic approach taken to answering these research questions is more fully elucidated below in section 3 of this chapter. In sum, though, the approach of this thesis involves an investigation of a range of responses to climate change in different contexts. More specifically I look at a range of responses to climate change in each of the three broad case-study contexts outlined below. In each case I use a combination of the following methods: observation and participation; interviews; and documentary analysis in order to generate answers to the aforementioned research questions. I observed and participated in some of the activities actors undertook, as well as discussing their accounts of these activities with them in interviews.

In order to answer the first research question about the extent to which a post-political, post-democratic consensus operates in responses I shall identify the indicators of the post-political thesis to be examined in practice. Taking my cue from the Swyngedouw's (2010: 14-15) outline, and the discussion in the previous chapter, indicators of the post-political thesis in activities would include:

- instances of technocracy, where technical questions and solutions are prioritised over consideration of more substantive ones;

- the prioritising of abstract scientific measures or metrics, such as the fetishizing of the element CO_2, and a subsequent focus on instrumental targets

- a problem-focussed governance centred on expert management and administration

- institutional arrangements which are post-democratic in terms of denying scope for genuine discussion of political alternatives with a focus instead on administration

- moves towards populism where a universal imaginary of a global populous, or environment is prioritised with the subsequent side-lining of potentially conflicting claims of particular constituencies

- attempts at consensus formation and forms of stakeholder participation resting on the assumption that 'the people know best', so long as they are educated in the appropriate technical and scientific knowledge

- a general tendency towards managerialism

- the presupposition of capitalist forms of social relations in responses to climate change; in other words, the idea that 'there-is-no-alternative' to neoliberal capitalism

- populism and universalism and the obscuring of antagonistic or differential social relations

I shall now further clarify the methodological and strategic approach taken to answering the research questions. In order to move beyond abstract accounts of people's practice I identify particular policy-making, public engagement endeavours, and activism, and participate in, or observe, these where possible. I also interview some of the people involved so as to find out more about their perceptions of these activities. In the analysis I then identify whether features of the post-political are evidenced in practice. By adopting an involved ethnographic approach I am able to be sensitive to the complexities and the inherent tensions of people's action in practice.

By adopting cases in the Caribbean I am then able to investigate the specific conditions of the region. As part of my research and analysis I identify links between the specific colonial history of the region and the degree of post-politics in evidence. This involves reading the literature detailing relevant aspects of the colonial history of the Caribbean, as well as engaging with accounts of the contemporary characteristics of development processes. This will enable me in my data analysis to explore the possible links between post-politics, colonialism and development.

In order to explore the affinities between depoliticised and 'unsociological' representations of climate change, I asked people in interviews about their understandings of society, and the kind of society they saw as being necessary for responding to climate change. I also analysed the different responses in terms of the kinds of social relations implicit in different responses.

In addition to exploring the above, and again recalling the points from discussions in the previous chapter, I also aim to be sensitive to the nuances of people's activity, though, in order to develop a more subtle sociology of the politics of responses than is perhaps allowed for in some of the representations of climate change post-politics. To be sure, the thesis aims to contribute to existing discussions of the post-political condition of contemporary climate change politics, by exploring the contextual detail of responses to climate change in three case-study sites located, broadly speaking, in the Caribbean region.

It was suggested in Chapter 2 that discussion of climate change is dominated by substantially *unsociological* approaches which individualise and neglect to consider the social and political relations underpinning it. Moreover, there is an absence of empirical studies of climate change that adopt a sociological approach in relation to discussion about the post-political condition. Yet sociology's concern with social processes, and the methods which facilitate empathetic understandings of social actors (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007), can make a significant contribution here (Urry 2011). My study, therefore, is sociological in its approach by investigating the social and political processes related to claims made in representations of, and responses to, climate change. I highlight the underlying assumptions people make about the way the world is, and how it ought to be, when they are involved in, or are articulating, responses to climate change. While not necessarily taking the claims made for granted, I explore the different ways in which the representation of climate change can influence the kinds of action advocated in response. In order to do this, I adopted a qualitative research approach. The processes of 'casing' (Ragin 1992), and the specific methods employed in those cases, including literature review; documentary analysis; participant and non-participant observation; and interviews, will be discussed further below. Before this I shall now discuss the sociological underpinnings of my methodology.

2. Towards a qualitative sociological contribution to discussions of the politics of climate change in the Caribbean

Much of the early research into climate change was defined by the natural sciences, and dominated by the quantitative methodologies of geophysics, atmospheric chemistry, and meteorology (Hulme 2009; Schneider 2009; Webb 2012). More recent social scientific approaches, notably economics, have added to these quantitative valuations with economic statistical data (Hulme 2009; Lohmann 2010; Urry 2011). In contrast to these approaches, I wish to address the 'social science crisis' accompanying, or even further engendering (Lohmann 2010), the 'climate change crisis', by contributing an explicitly *qualitative* account of responses to climate change.

Although a varied range of methods are encompassed under the label of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:3), a common characteristic of qualitative research is that tends to facilitate in-depth understandings of the phenomena under investigation by generating rich and detailed data (Bryman 2004; Mason 1996; Silverman 2000). Rather than looking for technically orientated, statistical data, such as the claimed characteristics of 'adaptive capacity' (Gupta et al. 2010), for instance, I sought rich contextual data that would shed light on the theoretical discussion introduced in Chapter 2. To reiterate, the point of this thesis is not to provide a totalising, fully representative account of the phenomena explored, but rather to provide insights into the detail of people's accounts and responses to climate change in the contexts explored (Denzin and Lincoln 2003), all the while acknowledging the complexity of the social world (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

While this involved subjective interpretation and decision making as an on-going part of the research process (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Ragin 1992), I adhere to Mason's (1996: 5), instruction that 'qualitative research should be systematically and rigorously conducted'. I also acknowledge, though, that there is considerable debate about what criteria to use in assessing rigour (Hammersley 2008:170; Seale 1999; Silverman 2004). I have attempted to be 'rigorous' in terms of 'attentiveness, empathy, carefulness, sensitivity, respect, reflection, conscientiousness, engagement, awareness, and openness' (Davies and Dodd 2002:279). I now outline the details of the research methods employed in this study.

3. Research methods

'*Wen fish come fram riva-batam an' tell you haligetta gat pain-a-belly you betta believe a'* (cf. Young 1988:28)[13]

In addressing my research aims I developed a methodology consistent with my theoretical, epistemological and political concerns. My methods needed to be flexible enough to respond to the shifting policy and activist fields which I initially identified as sites for the research, and involved enough to be able to generate in-depth data. As such I employed an open-ended, ethnographic, case-study methodology, in the course of which I used a range of methods depending on what was appropriate in each time and place (Bryman 2004; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Mason 1996; O'Connell Davidson and Layder 1994; Roberts and Sanders 2005; Silverman 2000; Yin 2003).

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 3) ethnography usually involves: studying people's actions and accounts in everyday contexts; largely unstructured data generation, from a range of sources, including documents, informal conversations and observation; a focus on a few, relatively small-scale cases; analysis involving interpretation of meanings, actions and their consequences, institutional practices, and the wider implications of these; resulting in the production of descriptions, explanations and theories. In my study, I used a combination of participant and non-participant observation; semi-structured interviews; and documentary analysis. In order to better understand how and why these methods were used, I shall first introduce the case-study contexts for my fieldwork, and the processes of 'casing' (Ragin 1992).

Fieldwork contexts

Ragin's (1992: 217) notion of 'casing' is useful here for highlighting the extent to which the selection and definition of cases are an on-going part of the research process. I can testify to this, as initially the UK and the Caribbean were identified as primary case-study sites. I had hoped to compare examples of

[13] Belizean Kriol proverb literally: 'when the fish comes from the river-bottom and tells you the alligator has belly-ache, you better believe it.' Meaning information from a close source is more reliable. Bogues (2003: 12 and 17) speaks about the importance of both local languages, and of music and spiritual culture as counter-hegemonic challenge the dominant discourse and practices of colonialists. I have included include Kriol phrases throughout the thesis in acknowledgement of this point.

activism with formal science and policy-making in both the UK and the Caribbean. Instead, for reasons discussed in further depth below it was not possible to develop the UK cases.[14] An advantage of case-study research, though, is the flexibility it affords the researcher in modifying the research design as discoveries come to light which might clarify or challenge the assumptions made when cases were first identified (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 25-29; Yin 2003: 55). Moreover, the character of ethnographic research requires, and allows, the revisiting of the boundaries of cases, research questions, aims and theoretical framework as part of an on-going iterative and analytical process (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

For a number of reasons, then, the Caribbean[15] became the only site for fieldwork. Firstly, it was noted in Chapter 2 that theoretical discussions of the post-political condition have been largely conducted with reference to 'advanced capitalist societies'. Meanwhile, while there are some studies of climate change in the Caribbean (Benjamin 2010; Bishop and Payne 2012; Climate Change Secretariat 2005; McGregor et al. 2009), a 'number of gaps exist in both the general and the specifically Caribbean academic literature', as Bishop and Payne (2012: 1536) have highlighted, particularly in terms of the socio-economic and political aspects of climate change. A second reason why the Caribbean is an appropriate focus for this project is that the, generally, low-lying small island developing states (SIDS) of the Caribbean are represented as being among the most vulnerable to some of the most damaging effects of climate change, such as increased intensity in hurricanes and sea-level rises (Benjamin 2010; Bishop and Payne 2012; Climate Change Secretariat, 2005). In part this vulnerability is attributed to the underdeveloped infrastructure of SIDS, a fact directly related to their status as former colonial territories, who, as 'underdeveloped' societies, have contributed significantly less to activities causing climate change. It is therefore possible to find out how people are responding in under-resourced, formerly-colonized states, where levels of industrialisation and 'development' are relatively low, and yet the impacts of climate change are considerably greater. Linked to this, thirdly, as part of my

[14] In the end, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs) was the only formal science/policy organisation at which I spent time researching, after a lack of response from the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP; http://www.ukcip.org.uk/about-ukcip/), the national climate change adaptation body. The Leeds branch of a climate justice organisation that was loosely connected to the Camp for Climate Action (CfCA) collapsed having held a series of meetings trying to organise a week of action in preparation for climate justice week (http://www.climate-justice-action.org/news/2010/12/05/global-week-of-action/). Not long after that, in 2011, the CfCA also formally disbanded (http://www.climatecamp.org.uk/2011-statement; Saunders 2012).

[15] Although Cancun is located in Mexico, it is also on the Caribbean coast, and is located directly above Belize.

concern for politically engaged scholarship, I sought to contribute to responses which might move beyond the modernist, technocratic focus which dominates much sustainability science (Blühdorn 2011). This is another reason why I was keen to pursue a sociological approach. Finally, I also have a significant biographical connection to the region, which is where my father was born and where many of my family still live.

While the Caribbean region was the general location for the fieldwork, three contexts formed the bases for the case-studies. Within these specific opportunities, organisations, networks, and events helped to further shape the cases (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; O'Connell Davidson 1994: 174; Yin 2003). As outlined in Table 1 below, the fieldwork period was structured around the COP16 climate change talks, which took place from the November 29 to December 10, 2010 in Cancún, Mexico. After the COP16, I travelled down the Yucatán Peninsula from Cancún to Belmopan, Belize, for the second part of my fieldwork. I shall now discuss each of these contexts in more depth.

Table 1: Summary of fieldwork sites

Dates	Location	Case-study
November 27th – December 14th 2010	Cancún, Mexico	1) Activists' mobilization at the UNFCCC COP16 climate change Conference; main findings discussed in Chapter 5
December 2010 – March 30th 2011	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, Belmopan, Belize	2) Caribbean region's response to climate change; main findings discussed in Chapter 4
December 2010 – April 2011	Various locations across Belize	3) Conservation, oil-drilling, and development in Belize; main findings discussed in Chapter 6

Activists and the COP16 (Chapter 5)

As indicated in the literature review, some authors have suggested that the range of responses to climate change politics by activists represents a challenge to either the post-political condition, or the post-political thesis (North 2010; Pusey and Russell 2010; Urry 2011). In addition, my interest in the ways

in which people engaged with the processes of the COP partly stemmed from my prior involvement with actors engaged in climate justice activism, which became internationally prominent at the COP15 in Copenhagen where networks such as Climate Justice Now! (CJN!) and Climate Justice Action (CJA) were active (Bond 2012). While Chatterton et al. (2013) have explored the actions of climate justice activists at the COP15, there have been no examples of sociological research into climate change activism at subsequent COPs. What is more, existing studies tend not to consider the relationships between particular activist networks and their conceptualisations of the social relations of climate change, and what implications these have for discussions of the post-political condition.

I travelled to Cancún, as both an activist and a scholar, seeking to be involved in actions to challenge what I saw to be a post-political consensus around climate change, as well as to better understand the broader sociological significance of such actions. In spite of the limitations stemming from this somewhat ambivalent insider/outsider status, which are discussed below, upon arrival in Cancún I proceeded to the Klimaforum10 (KF10) 'people's summit' camp where I became a volunteer. For the two and a half weeks that I was in Mexico for the COP16, I participated in the KF10 activities, visited other camps, and attended workshops and demonstrations. I also attended meetings of the CJN! network, and reported back from these to KF10. I spoke with fellow participants in interviews and informal conversations; kept a fieldwork journal noting salient experiences throughout this period; and collected documents relating to the events, such as leaflets and fliers. All of this meant that I was able to reflect on my experiences of being an activist at the camp. The data for this setting have been written up as a case in Chapter 5 of the thesis. Another case-study was regional responses to climate change in the Caribbean.

Caribbean regional responses (Chapter 4)

Once the COP16 had finished, I travelled down the coast of the Yucatán Peninsula to Belize where the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (or 5Cs) is based. 5Cs 'is the key node for information on climate change issues and on the region's response to managing and adapting to climate change in the Caribbean' (5Cs, 2010). I had a loose arrangementto meet the staff at 5Cs upon my arrival in Belmopan[16], the small, sleepy, capital city where 5Cs was based. Through a contact at the University of Belize's international student

[16] I had exchanged two brief emails with the Deputy Director of the Centre.

office, I had also arranged accommodation there, but, because of their official, quasi-governmental status[17], I was unsure as to the degree of access I might be granted at 5Cs.

After giving a presentation to senior Centre staff outlining my research I was offered space at 5Cs to use as base whilst conducting my fieldwork, but it became clear that it would be difficult for me to conduct participatory observation with staff at 5Cs as I had hoped. Members of staff instead suggested that I speak to local actors in Belize to find out what was happening nationally and locally in terms responses to climate change and different forms of public engagement. I followed this advice which led to my third case-study, mentioned shortly.

In the end I spent three months based at 5Cs as a guest researcher. During this time I got to know many of the staff, and spoke to some of them informally about our respective work. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with three 5Cs staff, and actually ended up participating in some of their local projects in Belize (pictured below), as well as observing some of the day-to-day activity of 5Cs. As is discussed in more depth below, however, the nature of this involvement was not as I had anticipated it to be. Instead of conducting an ethnography of 5Cs, I broadened my focus to address the Caribbean region's political responses more generally. The data generated in this setting have been written up into a case in Chapter 4 of the thesis.

Development, conservation and climate change in Belize (Chapter 6)

A national case-study in Belize was also adopted following advice from 5Cs staff who pointed out that Belize would be a rich site of engagement given the kinds of issues arising there, which had strong implications for climate change, although not always directly concerned with it. I contacted NGOs and government ministries with the intention of speaking to them about their public engagement activities around climate change. It quickly became apparent, though, that climate change was much less of a focus for the environmental NGOs and ministries than conservation and development. In response to this finding I shifted my focus slightly. At the same time, I became aware of on-going tensions that had flared up over proposed drilling for oil in and around protected areas, and Belize's barrier reef. I pursued these issues as a topic that would similarly contribute to discussions about the post-political, even if not directly

[17] 5Cs was supported by the Caribbean Regional government administration, Caricom, but was technically independent from them.

focused on climate change. The details of findings from this setting have been written up into a case in Chapter 6.

On the differences between cases

My main considerations in planning the research were identifying cases which would enable me to address the research aims (O'Connell Davidson and Layder 1994; Yin 2003), although I knew that these were likely to change as the research progressed and light was shed on previously shady areas. In fact, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 22) remark 'the absence of detailed knowledge of a phenomenon or process itself represents a useful starting point for research'. Beyond that, more practical issues such as: 'contacts with personnel promising easy access, the scale of the travel costs likely to be involved, and the availability of documentary information, etc. are often major considerations in narrowing down the selection' of cases (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 30). While I attempted to ensure then that the data I produced allowed me to speak to the research aims, the data generation, and the development of the research problem were more of an on-going, iterative process (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Silverman 2000).

It should be apparent, though, that the cases are not directly equivalent. Such lack of equivalence does not pose an obstacle to this research, however. Rather, the contrasting accounts and activities in different contexts has enabled me to generate a rich variety of data with which to explore the sociology and politics of climate change, in terms of the theoretical discussion outlined in Chapter 2. In fact, the differences in available data in different contexts, such as contrasting levels of access or participation afforded, constitute interesting findings about the contexts themselves. I had to be flexible in my approach, so when it became clear that I would not be able to conduct an ethnographic study of 5Cs, for example, I quickly followed up the suggestion of interviewing people locally in Belize. In turn another layer to my investigation was added, and with it a shift in focus of the research aims. Having outlined the cases, I shall now explain the methods adopted in order to generate data in them.

Observation and participation

Participant observation was much more possible with the activist groups I came into contact with, not least because the events I attended were intended to be

open to broader publics.[18] I kept a fieldwork journal and updated a blog where I recorded reflections on the issues that emerged as part of my participation. I have also included photos and pictures collected both at the time of events and later, in order to better convey the detail of activities to the reader. The keeping of records of events and activities, was not without its problems, such as obtaining consent to record certain proceedings. Sometimes taking field notes proved impractical as well (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; O'Connell Davidson and Layder 1994; Roberts and Sanders 2005). This is why the data generated by interviews and documentary analysis is important for cross checking my own records and reflections on events.

Picture 1: Bus protest in Cancun

(Protests I took part in in Cancún included this impromptue one which was caused by the police stopping our bus en route back to KF10 after a big march on 7th December in Cancún. Photo credit: Rodolfo Rada)

[18] In practice these events were not necessarily as open as might have been hoped by some of those involved. This is discussed further in Chapters 5 and 7.

Picture 2: Survey flight in Belize

(Though generally not very involved with 5Cs activities, I was given the opportunity to fly with 5Cs staff and a film crew to take photos for a project documenting coastal erosion in Belize. Me on the right with the camera. Photo credit: Timo Baur)

Picture 3: Survey flight

(A photo of one of the Atolls taken by me as part of the aforementioned project. Author's photo)

Picture 4: Gales Point

(While in Belize I attended a University of Belize fieldtrip to the community of ex-maroon slaves at Gales Point Manatee. This photo depicts us communally preparing to cook a traditional dish. Photo credit: Ritamae Hyde)

Interviews

I conducted interviews with 35 people during my research. These included activist participants at the COP16; civil servants; NGO workers; technicians at 5Cs; and academics. The interviews varied from fifteen minutes to over two hours in length. The participants who I spoke with in Cancún were people I had met at one of the civil society spaces, or on demonstrations. Staff at 5Cs were harder to secure interviews with. While many people would speak to me informally during the course of everyday activities, and from which I learned a great deal, staff were often too busy or unavailable to interview on record. In the end I interviewed three of the staff there, an IT and information management officer, a senior project manager, and their newly appointed public relations officer. The fact that I was attempting to investigate, as a sociologist, the very field in which 5Cs operates also helps to explain some of the difficulties I had in securing access here.

In Belize, as was the case in Cancún, I used an opportunistic and snowball sample of respondents. Meeting people in person led to recommendations of other people to speak to, or sparked my curiosity to pursue further interviews. I spoke to representatives from the main protected areas management NGOs; the Ministry for the Environment (including the Forestry

Department and the Geology and Petroleum Department); the Environmental Research Institute at the University of Belize; the United Nations Development Program; as well as various others involved in conservation, tourism and development activities.

I have anonymised the interview respondents' responses using different codes for each setting. Those interviewed at 5Cs have the prefix 5Cs followed by a number. In Cancún the prefix I employ is COPIV followed by a number. In Belize the prefix is BZ followed by the number. To build on the picture painted by my interviews and observation, I employed the synthesis and analysis of documents and websites.

Documentary analysis

Secondary data is widely acknowledged to be an important tool of social research, and is frequently employed to complement primary data or to develop theoretical insights (Baxter et al., 1996; Bell, 1993; Hind 1987 Gomm, 2004; May, 1993). A range of documentary sources have been collected and analysed as part of this study.

Academic literature has been drawn on as both background context to the cases, as well being a source of data in itself, in terms of identifying some of the main ways in which other academics have engaged with the same or related topics. The case-study chapters necessarily include literature throughout then. In addition, many other documents formed a key part of the analysis.

Other documents included fliers, brochures, scientific reports and policy statements, which I collected in person or through online searches. The fact that many of the groups that I encountered were involved in promotional and outreach work meant that I could sign up to public access mailing lists, follow groups on Twitter (5Cs) and 'like' Facebook pages, or check blogs regularly. From these I also received email updates about developments in events. The 'Belize Coalition to Save Our Natural Heritage' has a Facebook page, and blog, where their very recent court victory against the Government of Belize was publicised, for instance (see Chapter 6). In addition, I would regularly search for and download scientific or policy reports throughout the research and writing up stages in order to bolster my understanding of processes and events. Interestingly, though, these documents do not straightforwardly represent the understandings acted upon by different actors in the everyday practice of engagement exercises. They are produced for particular purposes, with particular audiences in mind (Gill 2000; Prior 2003; Smith 1974). I shall now

explain the ways in which I went about analysing the data, and the emergent themes.

4. Analysis and emergent themes: acknowledging ambivalence

The discussion in Chapter 2 indicated the scope for sociological analyses of responses to climate change to contribute to an evaluation of the notion of the post-political condition. In developing my contribution I adopted an ethnographic case-study approach, which enabled me to cultivate a richly contextual account of activities in different settings. Key to my contribution are my attempts to incorporate the subtleties inherent to people's activity in practice into the analysis, in particular the instances of ambivalence and uncertainty. In doing this, I have been able to move beyond more abstract theoretical discussions about the post-political. The three cases were structured around specific geographical locations, events, networks and organisations.

My ethnographic, multi-case methodology meant that I generated a considerable amount of very detailed data. One of the most challenging stages of the project, then, was narrowing down this material to identify more or less coherent cases in order to write up a document that would enable me to fulfil the criteria of a university research thesis. This proved to be overwhelming at times during the analysis, apparently a common feature of ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; O'Connoll Davidson 1994).

It is perhaps obvious by now that the analysis was a part of a continuous process of reflection on the data and literature. In practical terms I identified salient themes by transcribing the interview data, repeatedly reading through the transcripts and making notes, often returning to the literature until salient themes related to my research problems could be identified. Alongside the interview transcripts which I read through, I searched for additional secondary documents, similarly analysed in terms of the focuses of the thesis. I also reflected on my own involvement in the processes of data generation, which has led to some of the most interesting aspects of my findings.

The fact that I was (necessarily) flexible in terms of following up different avenues for investigation was rewarding in that it lead to some of the original insights of the thesis about the roles of ambivalence and pragmatism in people's accounts, for instance (discussed in more depth in Chapter 7). The level of involvement I was afforded via ethnographic participation meant that I was able to read climate change politics with a degree of subtlety and nuance that I had not expected when initially designing the project. To begin with I had

been much more convinced of the post-political thesis, but later, and as I immersed myself in the data, I noticed degrees of ambivalence and pragmatism in the ways in which people spoke about what they were doing. It then became clearer that much of what people were doing and saying suggested a more nuanced picture than that afforded by my initial encounters with the post-political thesis.

The flexibility of my methodological approach also facilitated the emergence of the Belize case-study, as I had not originally planned to conduct research at the national-level. The unanticipated directions I took also required me to repeatedly refine and rewrite the research questions to allow me to explore the new situations I had experienced (Machin, 2008 describes a similar process). In addition, as colonialism had not featured prominently in the literature, I was less sensitive at the outset of the project to the possible relationship between colonialism and depoliticisation processes than after I arrived in the Caribbean.

On the other hand, in spite of the openings that this flexibility afforded, I found the uncertainty deeply unsettling at times, especially when confronted with my mass of interview transcripts, documents and journal notes. Hence the iterative process of refining the questions and identifying core themes has probably been one of the hardest and most unnerving parts of the thesis. Nevertheless, through returning repeatedly to discussions in the literature (as outlined in Chapter 2); engaging in scholarly dialogue with my supervisors; and reading through my notes, interview transcripts, documents and so on; I was gradually able to rebuild the research questions and identify consistent salient themes in the data.

This required a substantial shift in my ‘subject-positioning’ (Kerr, Cunningham-Burley, and Tutton 2007b), for I began the thesis as an activist and a scholar who had somewhat internalized the post-political thesis. As part of the process of conducting the research, however, and alongside the empathy engendered by ethnographic engagement with respondents, I have developed a more subtle engagement with the range of activists’ accounts. While my initial identification with anti-capitalist critiques of climate change politics remains intact, through the process of doing the research I have found that my relationship to the ‘activist milieu’ has shifted as I have become more aware of the complexity and subtlety of the contours of different forms of action around climate change. Indeed, this has been one of the most enlightening parts of the ethnographic experience. As will hopefully become more apparent in the pages that follow, I became more sensitive to contrasting ways of dealing with the

politics of climate change. I became more sympathetic to the everyday constraints people face in their practice. Overall, I encountered a subtlety to people's accounts and practice, which is missed in some of the discussions of climate change politics outlined in Chapter 2.

Another feature of my approach was that I regularly reflected on my role and whether I performed authentically, ethically, accurately and so on. There were more 'mundane' aspects of these reflections, such as noting the contrast between me wearing scruffy clothes at the activist camps in Cancún, and having to go and buy smart clothes from the local market in Belmopan in preparation for my introductory meeting with 5Cs staff.[19] There were also more existential dimensions as I recorded in my fieldwork journal. I was also in regular dialogue with my supervisors, who had access to my fieldwork journal blog, while in the Caribbean.

These reflections are interesting for considering the subtle ways in which the acceptable standards of action might be part of the culture of an institutional setting (Roberts and Sanders 2005), and how self-censorship might be required in order for researchers to meet these. Similarly this anxiety about how I self-present reflects the tendency in the social sciences for researchers to be ambivalent about their status as researchers, or about holding some kind of intellectual authority, and political or ethical responsibility. (For instance in the public sociology debates, or in the literature on activist related scholarship).

In addition to the more general sociological contribution that my qualitative research makes, I would also situate my ambitions, if not always my practice[20], in the tradition of politically orientated research often associated with such traditions as, variously, 'emancipatory research', 'scholar activism', 'participatory action research', and 'standpoint epistemology' (Castree et al. 2010; Chatterton 2006; The Autonomous Geographies Collective 2010). I shall now outline my orientation to this tradition.

[19] The difference in expectations between my different case sites about what to wear is interesting. It perhaps reflects different ways in which actors in different places perform, or embody their responses or activities.

[20] Below I discuss further how and why institutional constraints can limit attempts to be consistent between political approach and practice.

5. Positioning, privilege and ethics: beyond 'post-political' social science via attempting activist scholarship?

'*The increasing encroachment of a commercial and entrepreneurial value system at universities makes it difficult for concerns with climate justice to be given the attention they deserve in higher education.*' (Jamison 2010: 819)

Picture 5: Hard Science, Practical Solutions

(Photo of University of Leeds PR banner picturing a polar bear and including the following slogans: 'Climate Change *Hard science, practical solutions* Making a World of Difference University of Leeds'. Photo credit: Lyndley Aldridge)

'It all adds up'?

I mentioned above that I came to the project as an activist as well as a scholar, and my aims with this project were always political as well as scholarly. Aware of the rich debates within the social sciences about the possibilities for politically and normatively engaged, or detached, scholarship and the limitations and critiques of these, I pursued an approach which I hoped would challenge the

post-political as it appeared to function within academia, and subsequently in research around climate change. Hence, unlike the sustainability sciences and ecological modernisation approaches outlined in Chapter 2, I attempted to find an approach to researching climate change which would not take the co-production of policy (Jasanoff 2004), or the improvement of markets (Guesnerie and Stern 2012; Stern 2007), for granted as (often implicit) normative goals. An explanation for why those goals are so prevalent in climate change scholarship has already been provided in Chapter 2, but here I shall outline the academic context within which that scholarship, and indeed this project, takes place.

Challenges to the form of the public university via funding cuts, increasingly managerialist and marketised models of education, alongside highly problematic 'publishing-for-profit rackets' (Harvie 2011), are arguably symptoms of the post-political condition as it operates in the (increasingly) neoliberal academy (Collini 2010; Juris 2008; Pusey and Sealey-Huggins 2013; Sealey-Huggins and Pusey 2013; Thatcher 2012; The Autonomous Geographies Collective 2010). The University of Leeds, where this project has been based, is an example of where attempts at pushing through neoliberal changes to higher education are taking place. To some extent, then, Leeds was a fieldwork setting for the research because it was the context in which many of my reflections and much of my engagement took place. The university is one of many 'elite' Russell Group universities to charge the full £9,000 fees, and its outgoing Vice Chancellor, Michael Arthur, during his tenure as head of the Russell Group, lobbied in support of the much-derided Brown Review (Collini 2010). As has been outlined in much greater detail elsewhere, the Brown Review, with its narrow, market-orientated representation of higher education, constitutes an attempt at the further crystallisation of the neoliberal model for higher education (Collini 2010).

In addition, the banner pictured above provides a symbolic example of how the wider university context here at the University of Leeds is shaped by a particular approach to knowledge generation, in this case in a technical focus on climate change. Moreover, the University's own carbon-reduction campaign, entitled 'It all adds up'[21], seems to bear many of the hallmarks of a post-political approach. The campaign, invoking the idea of a universally implicated campus populous, suggests that 'we' should consider our individual actions in terms of the energy they consume because 'it all adds up'. This representation relies on an individualising of carbon consumption, and echoes both the deficit and 'ABC' policy-making models in its implication that it is primarily ignorance that

[21] See http://hotspots.leeds.ac.uk/ for further detail on the campaign.

contributes to carbon-intensive activities on campus. Echoing the sentiments of Jassanoff (2004), quoted at the outset of the Chapter, I would suggest that it is necessary to view the contexts of knowledge production as closely bound to the kinds of knowledge produced in these contexts. Hence it is in these conditions that the approaches of as 'militant-ethnography' and 'scholar-activism', appealed to me.

Many researchers have made the case for overt partisanship in research claiming that research should be judged by the extent to which it is emancipatory, rather than its reliability or accuracy (Hammersley 2000). This scholarship tries to 'confront various forms of inequality and injustice… and engag[e] in social change' (Hardy, 2010: 73; see also: Anderson, 2002; Juris, 2008; Russell, 2012). Hence, partisans often pride themselves on providing 'the theoretical and factual resources for political struggle' (Silverman 2004: 65). These approaches aim to be not only (overtly) politically engaged but also collaborative, thus breaking down the divide between researcher and object (Juris 2008: 20). '[B]y providing critically engaged and theoretically informed analyses generated through collective practice, militant ethnography can provide tools for activist (self-)reflection and decision making while remaining [rigorous (19) and] pertinent for broader academic audiences' (Juris 2008: 22). Adopting this approach also offered potential for me to better understand the ways in which activists' value-positions and knowledge claims are articulated and enacted (Anderson 2002: 303; Juris 2008: 319; see also Shukaitis and Graeber, 2007), and for 'embodied and affective understanding' (Juris 2008: 20). While sympathetic to these ambitions, I was also aware of their inherently instrumental implications, as well as the problem that partisan researchers' can risk not being 'surprised by their data' instead looking for 'examples which can be used to support their theories' (Silverman 2004: 65). Indeed I shall now consider how my attempts to practice scholar-activism were somewhat strained, or constrained, in practice.

I came up against a number of barriers to practicing the kind of radical scholarship I aspired towards. Activist scholarship was more appropriate, and more possible, in some settings than others, and even in those instances, as a relatively inexperienced scholar, it was still somewhat of an experiment. I was concerned that my approach was less 'organic' than others I was aware of (such as: Hardy 2010; Juris 2008; Russell 2012) because I was not already as deeply involved in the groups I hoped to research, and the groups I had been involved with did not establish themselves enough for me to be able to research with them. I was not, however, a complete 'outsider' from the outset (Russell

2012), as I had been actively involved in the then emerging climate justice movement.

The planned UK informal case-study was going to be based around Climate Justice Week, UK, October 2010, and I had been involved in trying to organise events as part of this week. Unfortunately, however, the event did not go ahead. This was for various reasons, including a lack of interest, and disagreement over the direction climate change activism should take here in Leeds. What is more, throughout the course of my thesis, the Climate Justice Movement declined in salience among activists who had previously been involved (Saunders 2012). The rise of anti-austerity and Higher Education struggles in the UK (Bonefeld 2011; Pusey and Sealey-Huggins 2013; Russell and Milburn 2011), for instance, and the occupy movement globally, which was in turn inspired by the 'Arab Spring' protests, coincided with a decline in support for climate activism after the failure of climate change negotiations in Copenhagen.

The sometimes opposing interests of doing an academic PhD and being an activist, were felt when at one stage I had wanted to refocus the climate change case-study in order to follow what I perceived to be a transition from climate justice movements into more general anti-cuts and anti-austerity politics.[22] My supervisors advised against this. Indeed I frequently felt that the competing priorities of research and activism often meant that the latter was neglected.[23] The comparatively fixed institutional framework of academia, and the differing requirements of authoring a PhD, came into conflict with the more changeable character of social movement activism then.

In spite of some involvement I did not feel confident that I had managed to develop enough involvement with the CJA collective who I had hoped to be working with in Cancún. I found myself feeling torn between wanting to be involved as an activist and also reflecting on activism in general due to my role as a researcher there. Initially, for instance, I was concerned that keeping a fieldwork journal might further reinforce the 'researcher' aspect of my role there. In the event, many people were keeping diaries, journals and blogs, or writing articles for audiences elsewhere so I did not stand out as much as I had

[22] Recent climate change-related protests, such as 'No Dash for Gas!' (http://www.nodashforgas.org.uk/) have seen activists make strong links between the austerity, energy poverty and climate change.

[23] There is still important conceptual work to be done exploring where the researcher 'ends' and the activist 'begins' in the scholar-activist formation.

feared.[24] Occupying a somewhat ambivalent position, myself, in being both inside and outside of the processes I was researching to various degrees led to tensions, but it also afforded me with a degree of reflexivity and analytical distance which enabled me to move beyond the mere self-description of the processes. Indeed, Roberts and Sanders (2005) caution ethnographers to be alert to the ways in which biography and other non-observable social structures can influence the research process. These tensions were to lead to productive reflections on my experiences, which are discussed elsewhere in the thesis. For instance, I had not anticipated that the public or non-official spaces of the COP16 would be so geographically dispersed, and this meant that my involvement was not evenly distributed across different sites. This lack of involvement did mean that I was able to establish a degree of critical distance from the activities in Cancún, perhaps enabling me to develop more nuanced readings of people's practice and claims making. In fact, I felt I was unable to fully pursue the activist-scholar approach mentioned above, and ended up completing a more orthodox style of social science research. In sum, then, my reflections on the research process itself have contributed to the generation and analysis of data.

Another emergent shift in the research process was brought about by the uncertainty over the level of engagement I might be permitted at the 5Cs. I was given less access to the activities and staff of the 5Cs than I had hoped for. Whereas I had planned to investigate the public engagement activities of 5Cs, it turned out that because staff there were so busy, and because I was viewed as an outsider who was welcomed to do research *from*, but not necessarily *on*, 5Cs, I needed to shift my focus to consider responses to climate change in the Caribbean more generally. The suggestions made to me by 5Cs staff were useful for directing me towards the third, unplanned case-study within Belize nationally, which shifted focus from being explicitly about climate change politics to being more generally about the related issues of protected areas conservation, oil extraction in protected areas, and ecotourism there. Related to these political and pragmatic discussions of the approach I have taken are broader ethical questions. I shall now turn my attention to these.

[24] Indeed one feature of the COP16 which had surprised me was just how many people seemed to be there not for the event itself but rather to try and meet some or other external aim, such as representing an NGO, collecting fieldwork for a project or reporting back to media in their own country.

Ethics and privilege

The research was required to go through the University of Leeds' Ethical Review Committee. While such committees have been criticised for their basis in medical research, and an overly cautious attitude to social science research (Cahill, Sultana, and Pain 2007; Hedgecoe 2008; Scheper-Hughes 2004), undertaking this process provided a useful opportunity to work through the implications of the different stages of the project, and to try and plan for how to ensure the safety of myself and those with whom I was researching. I was committed to ensuring that no harm came to my fellow participants in the course of my research, and to ensuring that I was open and honest with all participants at the outset about my research aims and intentions. All in all, I tried to operate with 'an ethic of care' in the broadest sense (Cahill et al. 2007: 306).

At different stages of the project the informed consent forms and participant information sheets I had prepared were more or less useful. At the COP16 mobilizations, for instance, it felt forced and artificial to bring out such a formal document in such an informal setting. In contrast, the documents came in useful for helping to establish my credibility as a researcher at the 5Cs. As well as these institutional ethical concerns, I am also keen to reflect on my role as a researcher. In particular the ways in which my existing position, and background context, has shaped the research.

Part of the reason I chose the Caribbean region as fieldwork site was because of my familial connections there. My father was born on the island of St. Kitts, where I have a number of relatives. I was keen to use the opportunities I had been afforded in undertaking a PhD to contribute in some way to the situation for people living in Caribbean, which is by many measures rather bleak, as is noted elsewhere in this document. Nevertheless, I must also acknowledge the anxieties that arose about my status as a Western, funded scholar, and some of the concerns raised by other researchers that academics can initiate parasitical relationships with their participants (cf. Stone and Priestley 1996).

In light of the concerns noted in the previous subsection, too, there was a risk of contradiction between my aims and my practice. As Bogues (2003: 3) points out:

> many of the theories and frameworks which currently reject the Western episteme are themselves rooted in the conceptual protocols of this tradition. In particular they ignore the black or anticolonial intellectual tradition, and as such their critique of the Western intellectual tradition is oftentimes an internalist one, that while useful and important, displays similar assumptions about the 'native' or 'black'.

There is a danger, then, of 'exoticising', or 'othering', the Caribbean region as part of a scholarly neo-colonial gaze. I hope that my attempts to avoid this have been achieved in practice, and acknowledge the challenge of building on the limitations of this project in future research.

The apparent irony of there being a substantial carbon cost to flying out to the Caribbean to research climate change was never lost on me either, even if I try not to reduce climate change to abstract metrics such as CO_2 emissions.[25] In part, I justified my trip because I included a visit to the island of St. Kitts where I met family there who I had never seen before. Combining the research trip with a family visit seemed less problematic. Thousands of people make the journey 'back home' to visit family each year; though this does not absolve the ecological costs of my journey, or relinquish the inherent privilege I have in being able to make it. I hope that in the course of conducting and disseminating this research project I have been able to contribute to important counter-hegemonic discussions that will inherently support the interests of those in the Caribbean who suffer at the hands of unjust social and political relations. It is with a degree of ambivalence that I would also reiterate the point made above, though, that research has value in and of itself; and it should not always be reduced to its instrumental outcomes.

Elsewhere I was concerned about how to present myself, as a critical scholar, to the some of the participants I worked with, given our contrasting starting points. I noted in my fieldwork journal that I was concerned that at the 5Cs, for instance, they might not want to engage with me if I fully disclosed the details of my previous, COP protests, case-study. Ultimately I am reasonably confident that I managed as best I could to balance my contrasting interests and aims without misleading my participants.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the methodological approach of the thesis. The case-studies and methods used have been detailed. I focussed on a variety of actors, settings and activities, in different contexts, because these provided me with a varied and detailed set of data to analyse responses to climate change sociologically, in terms of the post-political. I have also shown how the tensions

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[25] I do feel, though, that there is an important political and sociological discussion to be had about the structural, rather than individual, causes of climate change, which can itself be integrated into the frameworks under discussion in Chapter 2.

of conducting ethnographic fieldwork can be responded to in such a way as to develop interesting avenues for reflection and participation. In the subsequent three Chapters I explore the post-political condition according salient features of the three case-study settings. Chapter 4, explores responses to climate change in the Caribbean; Chapter 5 presents the role of activists at the COP16 in Cancún; and Chapter 6 looks at conservation and development in Belize. In each case-study chapter I present the data relating to that case, and conduct analysis of that data. In Chapter 7 I synthesise the case-study findings and relate these to a reflection on the ideas discussed in the literature review.

Chapter 4 | ‘Trouble nuh set like rain’[26]: The Politics of Climate Change in the Caribbean

Picture 6: Map of the Caribbean

(Source: Bueno et al. 2008)

1. Introduction

In this chapter, prominent responses to climate change at the Caribbean regional level are examined in terms of the extent to which they may conform to the model of the post-political consensus. I begin by exploring, and to some extent replicating, a theme prominent in accounts of climate change in the region, which is to identify the natural hazards and geophysical effects associated with climate change in the region, as well as to highlight the economic costs of different impacts. I next go on to outline some of the prominent regional policy responses to climate change, identifying some of the main actors and practices at work. I suggest that the relatively depoliticised representations of climate change in the region underpin largely technocratic

[26] Jamaican proverb meaning: unlike bad weather, we are often not warned by dark clouds on the horizon; a reminder to be careful.

policies, which tend to centre on adaptation and the management of climate change. I then explore financialization as another prominent, depoliticised, policy response. Following this, in sections 5. and 6. I suggest that these responses cannot be fully understood without making reference to the history of colonialism and pressures towards neoliberal development in the region. I turn now to consider prominent representations of climate change in the Caribbean.

2. Representing Climate change in the Caribbean

Picture 7: Tropical storm

(Taken from: Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011 conference poster)

The Caribbean region is particularly vulnerable to climate change[27], and a growing body of scholarship is emerging which discusses this (Benjamin 2010; Bishop and Payne 2012; Blake and Websol 2010; Bueno et al. 2008; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2010; Grove 2012a, 2012b; Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011; de la Torre, Fajnzylber, and Nash 2009; McGregor et al. 2009; Trotz 2008; Witter 2012). Bishop and Payne (2012: 1536) suggest, however, that much of the existing literature is limited in its engagement with the social and political dimensions of climate change. Indeed,

[27] Vulnerability has a specific meaning with regards to environmental change, as is discussed later.

I found that much existing scholarship is somewhat dominated by natural scientific and economic framings.[28]

An interesting pattern, which I am repeating here partly by way of illustration, is evident in most of the reports emerging from government institutions, and in much of the literature on climate change in the Caribbean region. Accounts typically begin by remarking on the gravity of the situation the region faces based on natural scientific modelling of the impacts of climate change, which are frequently expressed in terms of actual or projected financial costs.[29] The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report, for instance, estimates costs for the region at between $22 billion annually by 2050, and $46 billion annually by 2100 (Benjamin 2010: 82; also de la Torre et al., 2009).

Projections of the negative impacts of climate change in the region include: threats to food supplies resulting from disruptions to agriculture; increased disasters; more intense and frequent storms, such as hurricanes; threats to fresh water supplies; ocean acidification and resulting harm to coral, and subsequent loss of income from fishing (Benjamin 2010: 84). Increased temperatures will allow for increases in vector-borne diseases, acute respiratory infections and heat stress, while rising sea-levels threaten the region's infrastructure, which is mainly located in coastal areas, as well as damaging mangroves and wetlands (Benjamin 2010: 83). The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (2012) states that an estimated 60% of the Caribbean population live within 1.5 kilometres from the coast, exacerbating the threat of harm from rising sea levels. The pictures below provide a graphic illustration of these threats.

[28] Another approach is to link climate change to colonialism in the region, but only historically such as in Carey (2011) and Vogel (2011).

[29] A good example and overview of this kind of approach is Gamble (2009).

Picture 8: Belize City

(A photo I took of Belize City, while assisting a Centre worker on a coastal monitoring project, shows the proximity of the city to the sea and hence its vulnerability to rising sea levels, and coastal flooding. Author's photo)

Picture 9: Flooding in Belize City

(Source: Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, 2009: 3)

Generally, then, the predominant registers in which climate change and its impacts are discussed are scientific and economic, with a focus on natural disasters and geophysical effects, such as sea-level rises or extreme weather events, and with losses quantified, abstractly, in terms of millions or billions of dollars. While such representations may be important, it was noted in Chapter 2 that in instances where the natural sciences and economics set the tone for

discussions about climate change, there can be a tendency towards depoliticised policy responses in which the scope for appreciation of the sociological and political dimensions is narrowed. Accompanying reports about the natural hazards associated with climate change are discussions about the notions of '*vulnerability'*.

Vulnerability

According to McGregor, Dodman and Barker (2009: 5) the concept of vulnerability was coined in part to highlight the connection between 'natural hazardous events and the poor socio-economic conditions that are often the root cause of disasters'. In other words, the concept of vulnerability is intended to reflect the socio-economic conditions underpinning disasters (Barker 2009).

The common characteristics of Caribbean countries which are said to constitute their vulnerability include: 'low-lying areas vulnerable to sea-level rise and storm surges; geographic positions strongly affected by tropical and storms hurricanes; current high temperatures…; scarce land resources; and dependence on fresh groundwater resources' (Benjamin 2010: 80). Other socio-economic characteristics are also said to make them particularly vulnerable (Benjamin 2010: 80), including the dependence on imported petroleum, and on tourism as a major industry. Witter (2012), for instance, remarks that tourism is 'a fragile industry under the most serious threat from climate change'.

The ways in which vulnerability and related concepts such as adaptation and resilience are discussed sometimes constitute attempts to reach quantifiable, or objective, measures of what are often, in practice, unquantifiable and highly contextually structured phenomena (Bishop 2012: 950), as was noted briefly in Chapter 2. This gives an indication of why some policies around climate change might be understood as being problematic. By focussing on finding objective measures of 'vulnerability' these approaches can narrow the scope for reflection on the substantive aspects of climate change, instead prioritising instrumental outcomes. An interesting feature of discussions of vulnerability is that the ways in which the term is currently used sometimes conceals or prohibits reference to the histories of colonialism.

Some authors have made more or less explicit reference to the links between the region's colonial history and its contemporary dependence. Witter (2012), for instance, connects responses to climate change to the region's indebtedness, which is itself linked to colonialism, as I show later. In most discussions of vulnerability, however, commentators tend to focus on particular

measures of vulnerability often without addressing broader political questions about the history or the origins of these (Bishop 2012). There were generally few explicit mentions of the history of colonialism in the discussions of climate change I conducted and encountered (such as in Benjamin 2010). At one event ('Responding to Climate Change in the Caribbean') I overheard some of the organisers privately chastising Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation for mentioning slavery and its abolition in his presentation. They suggested that Simms was being insensitive to the region's history by trying to make links between the injustices of slavery and empire and those of climate change. Elsewhere, Potter et al. (2004: 147) describe 'vulnerability assessments' as being 'detailed inventories of buildings and infrastructure, especially network structures like water pipelines, electricity and telephone lines, are needed to assess the degree of loss or damage due to an event'. There seems little scope within such a technical representation to explore the social relations of colonialism, and yet the socio-economic conditions in the Caribbean are substantially shaped by the colonial history, and post-colonial present, of the region, a point that is discussed in more depth in section 5. below.

I would suggest, then, that the preference for natural scientific descriptions of climate change and its effects, as well as the tenor of discussions about vulnerability, is evidence of a tendency towards depoliticised representations in discussions of climate change in the Caribbean. This predominance of objectivist representations of climate change can in turn be related to the dominant policy responses which are emerging in the region. The next section will outline a sample of these, before moving on to consider what they indicate about the possible dominance of a post-political framework.

3. Policy responses to climate change in the Caribbean

Policy responses to climate change in the Caribbean are in their infancy, as they are in many countries (Benjamin 2010; McGregor et al. 2009; Witter 2012). Additionally there is considerable variation within the region as to how high a priority is attached to climate change (Witter 2012). Nevertheless, there are a number of influential initiatives which have the support of prominent institutional actors in the Caribbean, such as the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), which is the organisation of Caribbean regional economic and policy coordination; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); the World Bank; the United Nations' (UN) Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Development Programme (UNDP); and development agencies such as the UK's Department

for International Development (DIFD); and the European Union (EU). A major Caribbean initiative supported by some of these institutions was the establishment of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (or 5Cs).

Coordinating regional responses: The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

I spent three months based as a guest researcher at 5Cs. The 5Cs was established in 2002 with the support of some of the aforementioned institutions (Blake and Websol 2010: 2) and is based in Belmopan, the capital of Belize. It has become the main institution for coordinating CARICOM's regional responses to climate change. According to their description, the 5Cs:

> provides climate change-related policy advice and guidelines to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States through the CARICOM Secretariat and to the UK Caribbean Overseas Territories and is also the archive and clearing house for regional climate change data and documentation in the Caribbean (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2012c)

As such, I suggest it is a good reference point for exploring some of the main trends in Caribbean regional responses to climate change.

Details of 5Cs main projects are listed on their website (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013e), as well as in a video they produced for the COP17 in 2011 in Durban (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2012b). Based on these, and on my involvement, I shall summarise the main trends and tendencies emerging from past and current regional projects and initiatives. It is worth mentioning here that the policy framework adopted by the 5Cs is strongly influenced by the adaptation, vulnerability and resilience approaches mentioned previously, as well as the approaches of the UNFCCC. A key area of concern for the 5Cs is the production and management of knowledge and information about climate change.

Knowledge management and stakeholder engagement

Reflecting the ways in which climate change comes to be understood, as an issue requiring technical knowledge or expertise, is the fact that the management and circulation of knowledge were often identified as being significant in the Caribbean (Benjamin 2010: 81). The detail and complexity of

the local impacts of climate change is not included in the models of the IPCC's 4th Assessment report which also excludes in-depth data on damage to agriculture, public health, water resources, energy, and other ecosystem losses (Benjamin 2010: 82). For this reason, generating more detailed, regionally applicable data is cited as a priority in the region. Gamble (2009), for instance, talks of the need to develop 'appropriate climatic frameworks'. While Witter (2012) remarks on how weak data sets and tools designed for global changes need to be modified to study regional and local climates.

Hence an initial concern of Caribbean projects was producing, and co-ordinating, data that might strengthen regional understandings of climate change. 5Cs1, information specialist at 5Cs, commented for instance that 'there is no journal about climate change' in the Caribbean, and that '…the status of science in the Caribbean itself is not very highly evolved.'[30]

Typically the kinds knowledge or information sought were natural scientific research data and economic cost-benefit analyses. Natural scientific representations of climate change were promoted via 'climate trend analysis training' (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013c), and the establishment of protocols for monitoring coral reefs (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013a), for example. Attention was also focussed on sea level rises (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013a), and the 5Cs is involved in a computer-based project to 'downscale', or increase the resolution of, climate change General Circulation Models (GCM) so as to provide data deemed relevant at the national level (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013c). Indeed, the 5Cs is significant actor in the management and dissemination climate change data, notably via its 'Clearinghouse' project (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013f) to collate and manage information on climate change in the region.

Connected to the production and management of information about climate change are questions about its circulation and distribution. Hence, different kinds of stakeholder engagement were important, reflecting the trend towards inclusion and participation in environmental and development politics (Catney and Doyle 2011; Davis 2006). Sometimes this was a requirement of donor funding, as 5Cs project manager 5Cs2 remarks:

> … most donors, but the World Bank in particular … required … that you have consultation, that you document the consultations that you have …

[30] Comments such as these perhaps assume a problematic character if the history of colonialist ideas about 'immaturity' and 'evolution' in non-European countries are noted (Bogues 2003).

> and you also show proof that whatever your consultation you responded adequately, you address the issues raised.

Elsewhere, the ‘effective and sustained involvement of civil society’ is identified as being a priority in developing responses, and citizens are talked about in terms of needing to take responsibility, and to take opportunities to participate (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2009:23). Likewise, at a conference entitled ‘Responding to Climate Change in the Caribbean’ the (Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011:7) the involvement of ‘local actors’ who are in possession of ‘traditional knowledge’ was called for. In this instance engagement was seen as necessary in order to persuade small farmers, who distrusted representatives of business and government, and were therefore reluctant to purchase crop micro-insurance in one case, to go along with the insurance scheme. The suggestion that publics would be more fully invested in policy-responses if they were proactively engaged reflects the suggestion that participation is sometimes sought as an antidote to lay ambivalence (Kerr et al. 2007a).

Public outreach officer 5Cs3 commented that: ‘generally people are familiar with the idea of climate change and places getting hotter…[but] they're not fully aware of how it happens and what are the direct effects to them’. Elsewhere it is suggested that: ‘among those affected, climate change is frequently confused with other issues like ozone depletion’ (Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011:8). It could be that calls for engagement and outreach are somewhat in keeping with deficit models.

Particular kinds of knowledge and information about climate change are brought to mind in these calls for engagement, however. People are deemed to be ignorant of the natural and sustainability science concepts, and of formal policy responses, in their insufficiently nuanced appreciations of climate change. Again, this kind of representation of publics is a feature of deficit models of engagement where the underlying scientific, and implicit normative, framing of the discussion are deemed to be beyond contention (Wynne 2008). Nevertheless, I also encountered a degree of reflexivity among actors about the limitations of engagement as people on the ground confront tensions over how to implement these policies.

There was a recognition that stakeholders need to be found, or created, in order to share information with, or to feed into policy and programme

development. 5Cs3 highlighted the need to tweak more general or technical reports for specific audiences whose experiences of climate change vary. Similarly, Clearinghouse organiser 5Cs1, talked about the problems with getting information out to people in the region because of low levels of internet literacy and a lack of resources. Hence, community and stakeholder engagement can be challenging because (5Cs1):

> it's not easy to reach the end user … the people out there … the fisherman, the farmer in the bush. … and it's not just giving somebody a manuscript about climate change. You need to tailor that information.

While the problems of translating knowledge are recognised, such problems are partly based on the forms that knowledge and engagement takes, as well as the imagined characteristics of the publics to be engaged. In this context, concerns voiced over locating the publics to be paired up with the information perhaps correspond to a deficit model of public engagement, as information sharing. To the extent that the goals of participatory processes are pre-determined, or do not facilitate scope for substantive discussion and outcomes, and where the focus is, like the data, technical, this kind of approach is in keeping with the deficit model mentioned in Chapter 2, which was also linked to the use of participatory methods in the governance of unsustainability. In sum then, where engagement with communities is in order to better understand people's values and attitudes so that policies can achieve more 'buy-in', and thus better help to direct their behaviour; to improve the administration of top-down, technocratic policies; or to improve lay people's understandings of technical dimensions of climate change, they are contributing to depoliticisation of responses to climate change. If the management of knowledge was a key concern, then so too was management in general.

An overriding concern of projects in the region is with the management of responses (Barker et al. 2009; McGregor et al 2009; Trotz 2008). The development of regulation and policy was an priority, for instance, in the 'economic and regulatory proposals' in the region (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013a). In addition, countries in the region were encouraged to develop national adaptation policies (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013a). Elsewhere, 'a risk management approach to adaptation to climate change' was promoted in another project (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013c). These concerns with knowledge and management were underpinned by a technical approach.

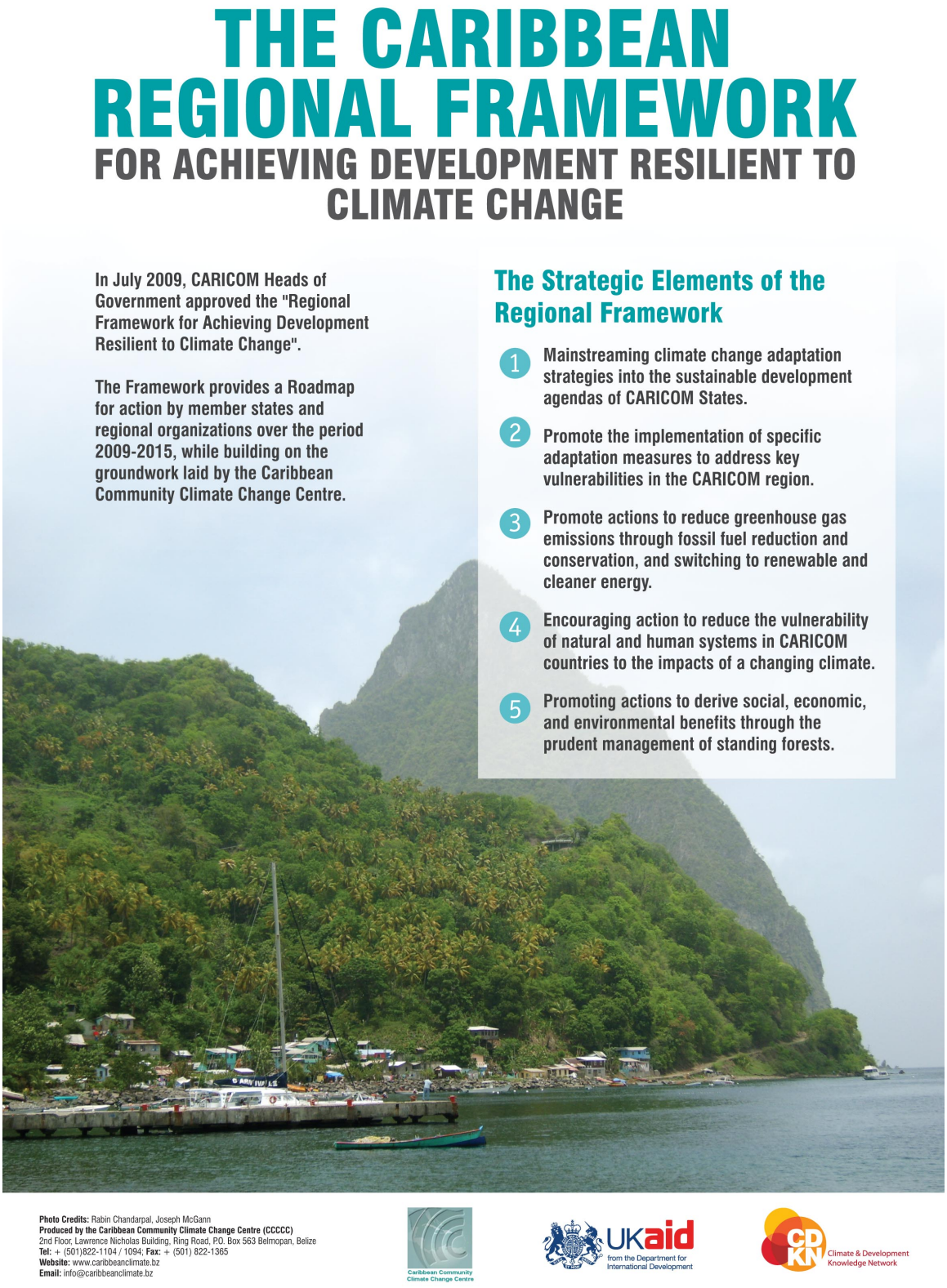
Technical adaptations

The overwhelming focus of projects and initiatives in the Caribbean tends to be 'adaptation'. The region is a very small contributor to emissions meaning that there is less scope for 'mitigation'. Focussing on adaptation in the region is inherently pragmatic given the fact that the region cannot easily influence global mitigation policy and therefore must try and deal with the actual affects as they are happening. Nevertheless, it was mentioned in Chapter 2 that many attempts to adapt to climate change often involve rather optimistic (managerialist) assumptions about the potential for capitalist societies' to respond. As such there are implicit assumptions about society embedded within discussions of adaptation (and mitigation).

Furthermore, many of the adaptation measures undertaken are technocratic, with 5Cs3 remarking that the 'key challenges' faced are: 'financial, institutional [and] technical'. The projects undertaken are often very technically focussed around instrumental goals. Examples include the development of a solar-powered reverse water osmosis facility in Bequia, St Vincent (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2011); the assessment of Hydro-meteorological sensors for monitoring changes in rainfall and temperature in Dominica (Boyce 2011); a rainwater harvesting and waste water recycling facility in Saint Lucia (King-Joseph 2011); and piloting crop irrigation systems in Milton, Dominica (Enviroplus Consulting Inc. 2011). I would not want to discount the potential benefits of such initiatives, some of which have potential to be practically useful to communities in the Caribbean. I am however keen to call into question the overriding logics that prioritise such technical measures, at the possible expense of broader political considerations.

Financial and economic concerns also featured prominently in these projects, such as with attempts to 'mainstream' climate change into the sustainable development plans of countries in the region (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013d), or in efforts to quantify the economic impacts of climate change, which I will discuss in more depth below. Another flagship project of 5Cs was the 'Climate Change in the Caribbean: Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change' (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2009). This document is also indicative of how responses in the region are framed. Management, of standing forests, for instance, features prominently, and adaptation is also seen as a priority (Trotz 2008: 2). Following on from the Regional Framework is the 'Caribbean Regional Resilience Development Implementation Plan (IP)' which

builds upon and further extends the aforementioned approaches (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2012a).



Picture 10: Regional Framework poster

(Source: http://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/ongoing-projects/2009-2021-regional-planing-for-climate-compatible-development-in-the-region.html)

In sum, these projects represent examples of the ways in which sustainable development is operationalized and implemented by prominent actors in the Caribbean region. Some of the ways in which climate change is being 'mainstreamed', however, would suggest that what is meant by sustainable development fits the descriptions of 'simulation' and the 'governance of unsustainability' identified as being key features of post-ecologist politics discussed in Chapter 2. Without challenging the unequal relations which have simultaneously heralded climate change and undermined the region's capacity to cope, relations which I probe in more depth below, the extent to which projects will successfully meet both development and environment goals is arguably limited. Indeed, where policies and projects focus on instrumental technical and managerial outcomes, at the expense of broader substantive concerns, they do appear to tend towards depoliticisation. Meanwhile, the prioritisation of continued economic growth and the mantra that 'there-is-no-alternative' to neoliberal capitalism were both identified as being aspects of the post-political condition. I now consider this point in relation to the role of finance in regional responses to climate change.

4. The financialization of climate change in the Caribbean

'*we're hoping the numbers will do it*' (5Cs2)

Paralleling the preference for discussing climate change in natural scientific terms, and focussing on technical policy responses, another prominent tendency I encountered was to discuss climate change in financial or economic terms. It was mentioned in the literature review that a predominant approach to climate change is financialization. Evidence of financialization in the case of climate change in the Caribbean can be found in a number of places. In his research, for instance, Grove, (2012a, 2012b) suggests that financialization is a key theme in the establishment of the regional climate change insurance mechanism, the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF).

The CCRIF offers insurance to member-states in the incidence of a disaster, as such it functions as a significant part of the Caribbean response to

the emerging natural disaster impacts of climate change (Grove 2012b). Uncertain futures are reorganised so as to make the present profitable, by enabling states to leverage their potential exposure to catastrophes on financial markets to provide capital for rebuilding infrastructure in disasters' wake (Grove 2012b: 140). By financializing risk, and prioritising the threats to economic development that ensue from natural disasters, financialization functions in the Caribbean as both a cultural as well as an economic process which 'seeks to inscribe a normative rationality of 'living with risk' that treats risk as both a threat and opportunity' (Grove 2012b: 140). Calculatory techniques are drawn on in order to 'convert radical uncertainties into insurable risks' (Grove 2012b: 141).

A problem with this kind of insurance-based financialization is that 'wide-ranging disaster management issues take a back seat to narrow financial interests' (Grove 2012b: 146). Indeed for Grove (2012b) this process functions to circumscribe the range of possible responses to climate change-induced disasters in ways that fit the model of the post-political condition outlined in Chapter 2. Parallels can be drawn here with the ways in which the problem of sustainability in the region is recast as an opportunity for particular kinds of market-friendly development, as well as with the reliance on particular forms of expert knowledge and classificatory techniques in order to facilitate these representations. In addition to the projects already mentioned, I also found other instances of a preference for representing climate change in financial or economic terms.

Economic valuations

Many of the major engagements with climate change in the Caribbean either rely on, call for, or contribute to, economic valuations of climate change, such as in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (2010) *Review of the Economics of Climate Change*. Another 5Cs project cited the need to 'translate the 'science' of climate change into language which can then inform policy and subsequent action to mitigate the impacts of climate risks'. Projects such as 'The Economics of Climate Change in the Caribbean' (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2010) echo the influential argument made by Stern (2007) that economic valuations of climate change are needed so as to provide impetus for policy action. It was widely suggested, by actors involved in these processes, and in written reports, that an 'economic case' was necessary to both cost and motivate policy support for adaptation. One of 5Cs' project managers spoke to me about the potential role

for economic valuations to play in understanding and organising responses in the region:

> We are hoping that the numbers will be able to help people to understand that decisions you make now will actually help you to save overall. So we're hoping the numbers will do it … I think the numbers will help a bit … I think it's easier for people to do business as usual … also some of the impacts of climate change are evident now but a lot of it is going to be more evident later … at the end you have the disbelievers who totally don't think that this is going to happen, so all of these things makes it a challenge… (5Cs2)

A hope, then, is that the economic case, the weight of numbers, can help to persuade policy-makers who might otherwise pursue more short-term development goals, or who are entrenched in 'traditional mind-sets, and governance practices that are out-dated' (Whitter 2012: 8). 5Cs2 also implies that climate change 'disbelievers' are more likely to be persuaded by economic than scientific arguments. This last point is particularly interesting in light of the tensions that exist between abstract representations of climate change versus more substantive, qualitative accounts.

In so far as the Caribbean is able to use such valuations to claim access to financial assistance, this move is significant, with the region being framed as deserving of resources. Nevertheless, the preference for framing climate change in terms of economic valuations (which Urry 2011 refers to as 'economic imperialism') engenders and extends the financialization of climate change. Many of the approaches being advocated here seem to rest on the implicit model of market capitalist society, as well as the idea that it is possible, perhaps essential, to maintain capitalist economies alongside responses to climate change.

In order to better understand and explain the dominant regional responses to climate change outlined previously, and the role of financialization in facilitating the adoption of neoliberal climate change policies, reference must be made to the broader political history of the region, and particularly, the recent neoliberal influences on policy trends. The next section will explore this history in order to better understand the ways in which the Caribbean region's dependence is framed.

5. Understanding depoliticisation in a post-colonial context

> *'Conventional-minded writers from the imperial centres have seen the [Caribbean] region as a backward area requiring guidance from outside to modernize it, which really means to westernize it-which in turn means to shape it into yet another capitalist-industrial society beholden to the foreign investor'*
> (Lewis 1983:2)

Numerous commentators have highlighted the fact that neoliberal models of growth have been promoted in the Caribbean by Western, and Caribbean, capitalist political leaders (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1984; Blackburn 1998; Le Franc 1994; McAfee 1991; Meeks 2007; Potter et al. 2004). Here I briefly consider the processes whereby these models came to be adopted. Doing so adds context to an account of why climate change is being responded to in the fashion that it is. It should be reiterated, however, that this kind of historical context is frequently omitted from accounts of climate change in the Caribbean, as is evident with the ways in which vulnerability is framed, and with the reliance on objective natural scientific and economic knowledge. I would suggest that including reference to the colonial history of the region goes some way towards trying to politicise accounts of climate change.

When the former colonies in the Caribbean and beyond gained their independence they were often in poor financial situations because of their underdeveloped economies which were structured to suit the needs of colonizing countries. As Kitching (1982: 181) writes 'the economic policies of imperial and colonial government were often designed to protect and enhance the economic interests of industrialists/merchants/financiers in the colonized country at the expense of other interests among the colonized'. Sometimes, upon independence, former coloniser countries gave ex-colonies preferential trade agreements, but over time, the US government, under pressure from its domestic industries, pressured the World Trade Organisation to cancel these (Grove 2012b). This meant that Caribbean countries were disproportionately dependent on imports, especially in times of economic and financial crisis, such as when there was an oil price hike in 1973 (Potter et al 2004: 211). Governments then seeking IMF assistance during a crisis faced high rates of interest and other strict (neoliberal) conditions on the loans provided as 'assistance' (Motta and Nilsen 2011). These conditions included forced competition with other, more developed economies in global financial markets, via removal of so-called 'artificial barriers to trade'; cuts to public sector

spending; devaluation of currencies; and the abandoning of support for their domestic industries[31] (Motta and Nilsen 2011; Potter et al. 2004: 211-222). The resulting forced 'integration' into the world market often manifested as an unfair disadvantage for former colonies (Grove 2012b), and these neoliberal economic reforms had frequently disastrous consequences (Potter et al. 2004).

Consequences included such perverse impacts as (often subsidised) foreign (US and European) imported goods becoming cheaper than domestically grown ones, thereby undermining the region's food sovereignty, as well as entailing the economic and ecological costs of relying on more intensively farmed imports (Whitter in Black 2001). Social costs included the poverty wages and slave-like conditions of workers working in so-called 'free zones', as well as the driving down of pay and conditions of workers working in rival banana plantations where the military were often brought in to enforce anti-union 'no-strike' policies (Witter in Black, 2001). Other social costs included poor living conditions, crime and social unrest. A sad irony of this was that the private security industry was one of the few to grow while others deteriorated.

These reforms, combined with the threat of violent intervention in countries who chose to pursue a socialist path of development, such as Grenada and Cuba (Beckles and Shepherd 1993), essentially ensured that the region took a path of development which could be seen as post-political in the sense that the mantra that 'there-is-no-alternative' to neoliberal development was violently enforced. These countries were therefore forced to readjust their economies in line with highly technocratic programmes designed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Motta and Nilsen 2011: 11). Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have historically pushed particularly neoliberal versions of development in the Caribbean, often requiring budget cuts to state spending and the introduction of markets. These developments do not benefit all actors equally. Hence the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation were the targets of protest and critique for the punitive ways in which they forwarded particular neoliberal policy agendas via conditional access to aid funding (Graeber 2012; Motta and Nilsen 2011; Potter et al. 2004). More recently, Meeks (2007: 9), in an analysis of current trends in Caribbean thought, states that there is still 'a poverty of new thinking on economic policy' in the region contributing to a continued adherence to the IMF's line of 'putting capital before people… even at a time when such

[31] Parallels can be drawn between these policies and the 'austerity' agendas currently underway in many Western European countries, such as the UK, Greece, Portugal and Spain.

programmes are being questioned vociferously from within and outside the IMF and the World Bank'.

It is impossible to explore the post-political condition in the Caribbean context, and understand the predominance of market-orientated and technocratic responses to climate change, without reference the historical trajectory following on from colonialism. There is strong evidence to support the claims that the region has historically been *underdeveloped* as part of the colonisation of the territories by European imperialists; the displacement, and genocide of indigenous peoples; and the syphoning off of profits from the region that fuelled industrialisation, via brutal plantation slavery regimes (Beckles and Shepherd 1993; Blackburn 1998); the very industrial expansion that is now implicated in contemporary climate change. All of this colonial history is directly related to the contemporary conditions which exacerbate the impacts of natural hazards, turning them into disasters.

In spite of this influential history, many accounts of climate change in the region, such as those mentioned above which draw heavily on a-historical notions of vulnerability, typically fail to explore the models of 'colonial governmentality' (Bogues 2003:4), which have shaped the current situation. Bogues (2003: 4) remarks on the myopic representation of the history of Africa, whereby discussions of the history of the continent are excluded from accounts of its present. Arguably this parallels the situation in the Caribbean where one of the extended legacies of neoliberal expansion in governance in the region seems to be the establishment of a set of boundaries around what it is acceptable for policy actors to speak about (de Sousa Santos 2005a, 2005b), as evidenced in the official institutions of the region. This provides an insight into the appropriate climate change policy languages required to generate allies and frame acceptable responses, and which is evidence of a degree of depoliticisation.

Part of the concern over the financialization of responses to climate change stems from the historical role that financial institutions such as the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have had in shaping relations between the more 'developed' and the less 'developed'[32] regions such as the Caribbean. Many of the climate change projects designed in the region are directed and funded via the World Bank, and the IMF. It is worth briefly scrutinizing the role of these institutions to further illuminate the on-going

[32] I include 'development' in scare quotes to indicate that the term is problematic. Unfortunately there is not the space for me to go into an explicit critique of it here, but it is implicit throughout the thesis.

processes of financialization in the region, and how these might raise further questions about the politics of responses to climate change.

World Bank

NGOs, such as the World Development Movement (WDM) have been keen to point out the problematic track record of the World Bank. Wright (2012: 56) explains how global financial institutions have come under substantial criticism for ‘funding large industrial projects in developing countries that had significant adverse impacts on the environment and local communities’. In 2011 Worthy and Jones (2011) published a WDM report on climate finance which found that much of the funding promised to help developing countries adapt to climate change was being provided in the form of loans channelled via the World Bank’s Pilot Program for Climate Resilience and other Climate Investment Funds. A key problem with this is that the additional funding adds to the debt burden of already indebted recipient countries (Worthy and Jones 2011: 5). They suggest that scheme ‘appears to be a model designed entirely around the interests of rich countries and development banks rather than the needs of those affected by climate change in urgent need of finance’ (Worthy and Jones 2011: 5).

> According to the World Bank:
>
> The World Bank Group’s Approach to Climate Action is founded on its core mission of supporting economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries. While climate change is an added cost and risk to development, a successful global climate policy can and should open new economic opportunities to developing countries (The World Bank Group 2009:2).

Elsewhere the World Bank’s expressed aim is to 'facilitate the development of market-based financing mechanisms' (The World Bank Group 2009: 2). Others, too, have explicitly stated that: ‘climate change adaptation should be viewed as a business opportunity’ (Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre 2013b). In many documents there is a focus on alliances, presenting governments, civil society and businesses as having shared interests (Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011), which again would seem to fit with the model of the post-political condition as involving alliances and partnerships. The model of development pursued here is one in which private sector companies can

maintain their profits – or, in the case of the consultancy and insurance firms, even expand them (such as Acclimatise 2013)- by entering into agreements with public sector organizations such as 5Cs. Investments in climate change actions are not undertaken out of philanthropy, however, it is envisaged that they will have a return for investors. The concept of sustainable development is frequently used in this context to represent responses to climate change in terms of their potential to help facilitate particularly neoliberal forms of economic development in the region, as with the aim of the 'transformation of Guyana's economy whilst combating climate change' (Guyana 2010). Again, then, particular models of society are presented when development is referred to, notably capitalist social relations which involve the pursuit of development based on economic-growth. In terms of the post-political consensus, such representations would seem to imply that policies are proceeding along the lines that 'there-is-no-alternative' to capitalism.

It is also important to acknowledge the fact that these processes are contested though, such as in the approach of the 'Caribbean subaltern' suggested by Meeks (2007). This approach acknowledges that '[t]he fundamental shaping feature of our time is the powerful and inexorable movement of capital', but too, that 'capital is not all powerful and is everywhere met with resistance from people' (Meeks 2007: 49). Forms of resistance are varied, and include the formal politics of states and international organisations.[33] Crucially, for my analysis here, Meeks (2007: 50) suggests that '[p]eople forge their own philosophies to explain life, which arrive with elements of resistance and, inevitably, elements of accommodation'. Compromise, tension and contradiction are therefore a feature of political action in the contemporary Caribbean. When considering Caribbean policy responses, it is also important to bear in mind the fact that the region is a part of broader global processes, an acknowledgement of which helps to explain the pressures to adopt particular approaches to climate change there. This acknowledgement also helps to explain the tensions which were evident as part of people's reflections on policy processes, and it is to an examination of these that I shall now turn my attention.

[33] It will also be shown in the next chapter that it is mainly more radical campaigning groups who seek to make the links between the injustices of colonialism and their relationships to those of climate change, coining terms such as Co_2lonialism (Bachram 2004; Forsyth and Young, 2007).

6. Necessity and pragmatism: the international institutions, models of development and perceptions of responsibility

Somewhat reflective of the generally technocratic and scientific approaches outlined above, a finding from my attempts at involvement with 5Cs was that it was harder here, than in my other case-studies, to encounter instances of ambivalence. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that the space of the 5Cs might be a difficult place in which to explore ambivalence. Kerr et al. (2007: 60), for instance, suggested that professionals in their workplaces may be reluctant to express ambivalence. In addition, if 5Cs is somewhat based on scientitsic policy registers which do not allow much space for political discussion, then they might not allow much space for ambivalence either. Indeed, whereas I had hoped for a fairly high degree of access to the activities of 5Cs I found that in practice the Centre was organised in such a way that this was hard to achieve. I did, however encounter what I would suggest were expressions of pragmatism in relation to climate change politics in the Caribbean, which featured fairly prominently.

It is worth briefly acknowledging that, perhaps unfortunately, for the more everyday sense in which I deploy the concept of pragmatism in this thesis, nearly all of the academic literature on pragmatism makes reference to the philosophical tradition of that name (Bacon 2012; Holmwood 2011; Marshall 1998), which is a 'philosophy of meaning and truth' (Blackburn 2005:286). I am not deploying pragmatism in these terms, or in terms of the recent trend towards 'pragmatic sociology', which is similarly concerned with meaning making, and about trying to better understand people's 'reasons for acting and the[ir] moral exigencies' (Boltanski 2005: 20 cited in Blokker 2011:251; Holmwood 2011; Silber 2003). Rather, I use the term in a much more everyday sense. To be clear, I am concerned with highlighting what I suggest were people's practical approaches to problem solving. This does not require recourse to the much more abstract philosophical discussions about the ontological and epistemological status of the mind. Both pragmatism, and a degree of ambivalence, were evident in people's reflections on the degree of the Caribbean's dependence on international institutions for shaping responses to climate change. Again it should be noted that this is itself connected to the pressures countries in the region face as part of their developmental challenges and colonial histories.

A link can be made between claims made that leadership is required or expected at the international level, and reference to the relatively disadvantaged status of the Caribbean, internationally, with regards to being able to adapt to or

mitigate climate change. Actors often defer responsibility to the international governance bodies when speaking about who has capacity to act. I asked 5Cs3 from 5Cs, for instance, whose responsibility is it to act in response to climate change. She responded:

> … it has to come at different levels. Even a developing country, we also have a role to play … it's not a good idea for any country, especially a vulnerable country to sit down and not act on addressing climate change. … As parents you have a role… teachers have a role, governments have a roll, to support projects … overall developing countries can still use a lot of support from developed countries. And we would like to see a stronger, more effective global framework that commits certain parties to stronger reduction commitments.

Additionally, 5Cs1, for instance, regarded mitigation as being an international problem, presumably because the Caribbean is such a low emitter of carbon. Adaptation meanwhile is said to be the responsibility of national governments. The focus on adaptation rather than mitigation in the region seems to reflect the fact that Caribbean societies are much more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and yet much less responsible for their causes. The view that the region is not solely responsible for its situation is fairly widespread.

Similarly the Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy (2011: 5) conference summary document speaks of the governments of the Caribbean as 'being responsible for making sure that their own policies are effective'. Yet it is also mentioned that there is 'a strong moral case for calling on the main polluting countries not only to make greater mitigation efforts, but also to provide support for the region's adaptation' (Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011:5). Additionally, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (2012a) makes a similar argument that the region needs external support, because as 5Cs3 comments: 'developing countries … are still balancing environmental and developmental goals.' Furthermore, echoing calls for a regional 'mini-Stern', 5Cs2 stated:

> quite frankly [for] a lot of these [countries] climate change isn't the only game in town. There are lots of other developmental things that these people have, so quite frankly they are challenged …

It is worth pointing out that these calls for external support would not be necessary if the region had not been underdeveloped in the wake of colonialism, though. It is also worth mentioning that calls for international action or support sat alongside more optimistic suggestions about how the region would be able to better prepare itself for changing climates if the necessary expertise, funding and political will were available, though (as exemplified in Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, 2012b). Indeed, 5Cs2 saw no inherent conflict between pursuing climate change goals and development ones, indeed he thought they could and should run together. Similarly, 5Cs3 comments: 'overall… we look at how we can balance national development and protect our environment at the same time', although 5Cs3 speaks of it as being a 'challenge', because '[w]hen you are a country that is a developing country you will always have to make trade-offs'. Here then, there is evidence of pragmatism in accounts where competing priorities are acknowledged and a narrative of sustainable development is invoked (Igoe and Brockington 2007 see Chapter 6 on Belize for more on this in a specific Caribbean country setting).

The UNFCCC and the IPCC are two of the most significant international intuitions shaping the Caribbean region's response to climate change.[34] Many of the officials involved in climate change policy in the region attend the UNFCCC's COPs, for instance. Elsewhere, at a conference entitled 'Responding to Climate Change in the Caribbean' the Executive Director of 5Cs, Dr Kenrick Leslie, suggested that 'The Caribbean response to climate change needs to be understood within the international institutional architecture' (Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011:2). Respondent 5Cs1 commented: 'there is no real climate change work without' the UNFCCC and the IPCC. It is apparent, then, that a certain degree of faith is being placed in this international architecture. Additionally, 5Cs3 remarks: 'we need a very effective global climate change framework. So far we still don't have a legally binding agreement for certain countries that are high emitters. We need to see more ambition at that level'. Benjamin (2010: 85) remarks, too, recent international climate change negotiations 'failed to provide adequate measures to fully mitigate the anticipated effects of climate change for SIDS'.

In spite, or perhaps because, of their prominence, these institutions, and the international processes of which they are a part, were discussed by my respondents in terms that suggested that actors occupied a somewhat

[34] This is correspondent with Shaw's (2011) doctoral research thesis whereby the IPCC is often taken as a reference point by actors seeking an authoritative source on climate change.

contradictory position in relation to them. There was a tension in the fact that, on the one hand, these institutions were seen as a necessary site of engagement for Caribbean regional policy-makers because they were so internationally prominent, the UNFCCC is ostensibly the body through which global climate change policy is being made after all; and on the other hand there was clearly a degree of scepticism expressed about the extent to which these institutions would be able to deliver the kinds of outcomes that the region would need. In this sense, actors in the Caribbean region occupied the ambivalent position of not only being unable to control of the processes on which it depends, but also recognising this fact. Related, then, to the perceived vulnerability of the region and its dependence on, or susceptibility to, forces and process beyond its control, is an indication of pragmatism, in response to the tension of international policy-making procedures being perceived as being somewhat limited, yet remaining the best hope for actors in the region.

The levels of support and engagement provided, and the policies proposed, by richer countries, are not as ambitious as Caribbean policy-makers think they should be in order to meet the specific needs of the region. Hence actors in the region expressed doubts or uncertainty about these international processes, which sat alongside expressed commitments to the processes. Yet any ambivalence is seemingly dealt with via recourse to pragmatism, in that people suggest a need to work with the resources that are available to them. Such strategies could constitute the forms of accommodation mentioned earlier (Meeks 2007). 5Cs1, for example, suggested that the negotiations of the UNFCCC were not based solely on the premised goals of achieving responses to climate change, because:

> there are so many groups involved … the intention of most of the people taking part in the discussion is mostly egoistic … so the paradigm is not necessarily acting on climate change issues but, at the end … money is negotiated [on].

Project manager 5Cs2, meanwhile, talked about a project that had its funding cut because:

> the UK have a new government they have been making some changes … so that is already affecting the rate of implementation for that project. And … [an]other project … they're cutting more than half … of the project. … But we do what we can with what we have.

5Cs2 relates the disruption of his project as being a consequence of UK government change to the lack of action on climate change[35]. 5Cs1 also expressed a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the ways in which climate change projects were conducted. He suggested that projects do not always achieve their aims, and might be being implemented almost 'for the sake of it', with a risk of it being 'yet another project spending money'. In response to this somewhat ambivalent position, of relying on processes that do not function smoothly on their own terms, 5Cs2 indicates a degree of pragmatism where he states that 'we do what we can with what we have'. It seems like he is making the most of the resources available to him.

The dependence of actors in the region on international processes could mean that the depoliticised representations of, and responses to, climate change described earlier in this chapter were part of a pragmatic strategy to establish Caribbean interests in the face of a dominant discourse which does not even genuinely acknowledge (in terms of action) the problems the region faces, and where some policy-makers in the region are deemed not to be taking climate change as seriously as they should. Regional economist Witter (2012), for example, has lamented the lack of co-operation and coordination on climate policy within the region. Hence, by adopting the approaches of the UNFCCC, actors in the region are able to draw on the authority of climate change policy-making institutions. Indeed, some of these international processes were first advocated for by actors prominent in the region.[36] Additionally, actors in the region aligning themselves with these institutional processes makes sense when it is considered that the UNFCCC and the World Bank being the main arenas in which climate change policy is made, and through which funding flows. It should also be considered that a number of respondents commented on the region being overstretched in terms of access to the financial resources necessary to adapt. As suggested above, though, doubts are expressed about the progress these institutional processes are making, something that strikes me as indicating an underlying ambivalence. In response to this ambivalence, actors in the Caribbean region are pragmatic in adopting policies and practices which could be defined as conforming to a depoliticised logic then. The tensions inherent in trying to representations of climate change in technical terms are indicated in one prominent initiative to emerge from the 5Cs, the '1.5^{o}C to stay alive' campaign which I shall briefly consider here.

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[35] The UK Conservative-Liberal Democrat government's implementation of such widespread cuts is itself related to the broader global economic processes of recession and financial bail-outs.

[36] Some of the scientists who contributed to the United Nations' (1998) Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States are also 5Cs staff.

7. '1.5°C to stay alive!': abstract representations and subjective concern

Picture 11: Aim for 1.5 To Stay Alive

(The website text accompanying this photo is as follows: 'If the world temperature rises by more than 1.5 degree Celsius the Caribbean's low-lying counties and small island states will be at serious risk of economic hardship, poor health, and environmental degradation from rising sea levels, severe weather, coastal erosion and coral and sea life deterioration.' Taken from the 'Did you know?' sidebar of www.carribeanclimate.bz on the 8th February 2011)

The slogan '*Aim for 1.5°C to Stay Alive!*' was coined by 5Cs, and adopted by Caribbean Small Island Developing State's (SIDS) and others in their attempts to define an 'acceptable' limit to global warming induced by climate change. The adoption of the 1.5°C target fits into the discussions of 'dangerous' climate change; the popular science idea that there is a 'tipping point' beyond which climate change becomes dangerously 'unmanageable' because of natural feedback loops (Pierce 2007); and the idea that quantitative policy targets might be set, at the international level, to help governments keep climate change at a manageable level (Shaw 2011, 2013). Disconcertingly for advocates of 1.5°C, however, the international policy community has settled on 2°C as the dangerous limit (Shaw 2011). The Caribbean's UNFCCC COP negotiating position, therefore, has more in common with activists from campaigning organisations, such as 350.org, whose '350ppm' target is based on the same

underlying scientific claims as the 1.5°C limit to warming than those of many industrial nations. In terms of the theory of the post-political condition, a focus on abstract temperature targets appears to reflect the technical fetishization of climate change.

There is an inherent tension in these appeals, however. The abstract numerical metric is, *prima facie*, held to be authoritative because it is 'objective', and therefore beyond dispute. In practice, however, the apparently abstract metric only has meaningful traction precisely because of the inherent normative and symbolic implications contained within it. Pursuing the target in international forums such as the COP relies on the implication that people should care about the fate of substantial disruption and suffering that the Caribbean region faces as a result of climate change. Embedded within calls for a 1.5°C limit to warming, therefore, are normative appeals to a need to secure particular versions of Caribbean society, although these appeals are concealed behind an abstract scientific narrative. This point perhaps undermines the claim that there is a universally-objective scientific basis for the target. In sum, the 1.5°C target is used as a political negotiating tool, and it simultaneously represents a possible future reality to be planned for and contended with.

The call for 1.5°C is optimistic in sociological terms, however, because of the evident structural constraints on government action, as well as the pressures not to depart from highly resource-intensive models of capitalist development (Urry 2011 for example). Such optimism is apparently recognised by those involved, even at the same time as being maintained, perhaps indicating the ambivalence inherent to climate change work in this context. For instance, while simultaneously appealing for 1.5°C, some officials working in the region, such as the Executive Director of 5Cs, have acknowledged the unlikelihood of reaching this target globally and have called for international funding to help vulnerable countries 'meet their adaptation needs' (Institute for the Study of the Americas and Centre for Caribbean and Latin American Research & Consultancy 2011:3).[37] Adopting this target reflects the somewhat ambivalent position of the region then, because it both co-opts the existing '2°C' policy discourse (Shaw 2013), as well as being undermined by the lack of action in meeting the latter target.

Disturbingly, much of this discussion is likely to be somewhat moot as commentators point out that even if all the actions agreed to at the COP 15, 16

[37] It would be interesting to further investigate of the rationales behind claims that some climate-related vulnerabilities, such as rising sea-levels, are seen as possible to overcome through policy intervention, but not others, such as those to do with poverty and inequality.

and 17 were carried out, the 2°C target would be missed by some way (Bond 2012b:xv; Rajamani 2011:508; Wapner 2011:138), let alone the 1.5°C target. Indeed, the only significant decline in carbon emissions since Kyoto was signed was during the economic downturn (Wapner 2011: 139). Hence scientists and policy-makers are now openly discussing the possibilities of up to 6°C of warming, further undermining the claim that there can be consensus over an all-encompassing 'safe' limit to warming. It is worth recalling Blühdorn's (2013: 31) point about the contradictory character of post-ecologist politics, that populist forms of governance accompanying it are not an exception or deviation from the governance of unsustainability, but are key to its very functioning. In this case, the pursuit of the 2°C target, however unlikely sociologically speaking, enables elites to claim that they are responding (Shaw 2011) while at the same time taking wholly inadequate action.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the prominent responses to climate change in the Caribbean region. Notably, much of the discussion around climate change in the Caribbean is based on predominantly natural scientific representations of climate change, identifying the natural hazards and geophysical effects associated with it, as well as remarking on the economic costs of different impacts. These representations disavow the political questions raised by climate change. Many of the policies undertaken in response to these representations of climate change are accordingly technical and materialist in orientation. Prominent among these were concerns with knowledge management and stakeholder engagement; a focus on technical adaptations; and processes of financialisation. Indeed, the financialisation of climate change was one way in which the region's responses to climate change came to be tied to neoliberal development practices.

In contrast to the tenor of most existing engagements with climate change in the Caribbean region, I turned my attention to the role of neoliberal ideology, whose prominence can be directly linked to the decline of colonialism, in shaping responses here. The dominant global climate change and development policy frameworks require and encourage distinctively neoliberal forms of development, which are pushed by actors such as the World Bank, who are major development donors in the region. This helps to account for the fact that in spite of the widely documented negative impacts of neoliberalism on the region, there is a tendency towards models of development which

presuppose markets, and which represent climate change as a business opportunity.

Recognition of the ongoing impact of the legacies of colonialism and underdevelopment, and the consequently relatively disadvantaged position of the region, helps to explain the form that these responses have taken, however. In this regard, the region could be understood to be in a relatively disadvantageous position when it comes to determining the direction it takes in response to climate change. It lacks the resources seen as necessary to develop appropriate responses, and therefore relies on international institutions. Hence, in order to better understand and explain how and why seemingly post-political processes are dominant in this context, I suggest that the political history of colonialism in the region, and its relative economic and political marginalisation, must be considered.

Finally, I considered instances of ambivalence, and pragmatism, that I encountered in people's responses. Tensions existed between development goals and climate change policy, and were also evidenced in claims that the region had little responsibility for causing climate change, and yet were dependent on processes beyond the region's control for support. In response a pragmatic approach to international institutions was adopted. There is further evidence of ambivalence where the objective target-based responses to climate change come into tension with some of the subjective claims bound up with the ways in which the objective accounts are presented. All of this helps to contextualise the more general finding that post-political processes are at work, and by constructing this case-study I have been able to add detail and depth to the picture of how climate change is being responded to in the Caribbean region. If the practices of the UNFCCC tend towards depoliticisation, then it is useful to look in more depth at some of the attempted challenges to the UNFCCC which have emerged in movement protests at the COP. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 5 | Challenging post-political co$_2$lonialism in Cancún?: Activists at the COP16

'*the dangerous thing is that there are too many things that is just left over to market mechanisms*' (COPIV16)

1. Introduction

For three weeks I camped in a tent pitched on a polo field surrounded by jungle home to scorpions, tarantulas and snakes, tropical birds and butterflies; I also slept on a mattress underneath a giant tarpaulin in what at times looked like a well-stocked refugee camp, alongside peasant farmers from across Mexico and Central America, activists from across America and beyond; and I marched in streets lined with heavily armed Federal Police.

Chapter 2 considered contributions from authors who on the one hand suggested that emerging forms of activism around climate change could be taken to constitute forms of resistance to this post-political condition (such as Pusey and Russell 2010). Or, on the other hand, that the existence of this resistance undermines the very argument that there is a post-political condition of climate change itself (Urry 2011 for instance). In light of that discussion, this chapter presents an ethnographic case-study focussed on activist engagement with responses to climate change at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 16th Conference of Parties (COP16) negotiations in Cancún, Mexico. In presenting an account of some of the salient features of my engagement with actors in Cancún I consider what the forms of activism and engagement at the COP16 might say about the idea that there is a post-political consensus surrounding climate change. Key features of the debate around the post-political consensus are examined in terms of the activities I encountered and participated with in Cancún. I explore how different actors in the field acted, and how they reflected on and accounted for their activities in light of some of the complexities and tensions involved in their practice. The chapter is structured as follows.

I begin by outlining the significance of the COP process in relation to responses to climate change in order to better understand why so many people headed to Cancún, Mexico for the COP16. Next I consider some of the reasons cited by actors as motivations for their action in Cancún. I explore the insights I was granted via activists' reflections on their interpretations of the COP and of

governments (in)action around climate change to date. Following this, I move on to outline the main alternative spaces and counter-summits established by activists gathered in Cancún. From my involvement with activists I was also able to see how, in contrast to the relatively narrow and reductionist models of agency that correspond to the post-political, people expressed interesting ideas about the characteristics of society.

Far from being unified in their critiques and claims, however, there were considerable tensions between activists in Cancun, and I turn my attention to these next. Most notable was a disagreement between so-called 'hippies' and 'anarcho-punks'. Also notable were the challenges activists faced in overcoming divisions between groups or spaces, and in facing the police. I then reflect on these tensions with reference to notions of ambivalence. To begin, and in order to better understand why so many people headed to Cancún, Mexico for the COP16 I shall outline the significance of the COP process in relation to responses to climate change, and discuss the preceding COP15.

2. Why the COP16?: From 'Hopenhagen' to 'Nopenhagen'

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) came into effect in 1994 (Harrison and McIntosh Sundstrom, 2010). Signed by over 180 nations, the UNFCCC commits countries to attempts to keep greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to a level that prevents 'dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system' (Article 2, UNFCCC Harrison and McIntosh Sundstrom 2010:1). The Conference of Parties (COP) has met annually since then to monitor the progress of the UNFCCC. In 1997, at the UNFCCC's third Conference of Parties (COP3) in Kyoto, Japan the Kyoto Protocol was established. Now infamous partly because of the extent of backtracking and exclusion surrounding the agreement[38], Kyoto established emissions reductions targets for industrialized countries.

The Kyoto Protocol, which covered the years 2008-2012, has now expired. It was this fact, that Kyoto was due to expire, coupled by the calls from scientists and others for the apparent necessity of extending emissions reductions targets, which helped to make the 2010 COP15 meeting in Copenhagen become such a highly anticipated event (Blühdorn 2011; Böhm

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[38] The US, responsible for one quarter of global emissions, failed to ratify the treaty. And various 'developing' countries, such as China, which is now the largest global emitter of CO_2, were exempt from binding reductions targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

and Dabhi 2009; Fisher 2011). In the run up to Copenhagen media attention and political interest reached such frantic levels that the COP15 was described in such hyperbolic terms as 'the last chance' to stop 'dangerous' climate change and was sometimes even referred to as 'Hopenhagen' (Blühdorn 2011; Hurlbert 2011). It is worth noting that regarding climate change in such a way mirrors the representation of climate change as a 'universal threat' that was identified in Chapter 2 to be a feature of the post-political discussed. Death 2011 (cited in Van Alstine, Afionis, and Doran 2013:333) argues that summits: 'function as means through which political elites enact symbolic performances aimed at reassuring the global audience of the utmost seriousness with which environmental sustainability concerns are treated'. This argument fits with Blühdorn's (2011) analysis of the simulative dimensions of the governance of unsustainability.

There is a long history of NGO involvement with the UNFCCC process (Fisher 2010: 11; Mintzer and Leonard 1994; Muñoz Cabré 2011). Indeed '[c]alls for public participation in the formulation of … responses [to climate change], are explicit, if not always prominent' in policy documents such as Article 6 of the UNFCCC (Few et al. 2007: 47). Mintzer and Leonard (1994: 29) claim that public pressure has sometimes contributed to higher levels of government attention, and that NGO participation can help keep the COP processes 'open, transparent, and participatory' (Mintzer and Leonard 1994: 22). NGOs can, too, be claimed to be contextualising UNFCCC processes in line with 'the concerns of common people "on the ground"… acting as a conscience for the overall process' (Mintzer and Leonard 1994: 40). [39] Nonetheless the formal accreditation process is highly bureaucratic (see: (UNFCCC, 2011) involving the vetting of 'legitimate' NGOs.

Public engagement and social movement activism around the COP15 also reached unprecedented levels (Fisher 2010).[40] In spite of it being one of the largest European social movement mobilisations around climate change ever, the event itself was roundly regarded to be a failure so serious that it

[39] There are significant differences between different NGOs though. Some NGOs are highly corporate in their hierarchical structures and operate with questionable ethics (Jasanoff 1997), while others are much more radical, democratic and grassroots. So organisations claiming to represent issues of social and environmental justice risk the appearance of lending 'grassroots', popular legitimacy to a set of processes which are inherently unjust through various processes of co-optation and green washing (Building Bridges Collective 2010).

[40] Since Cancún there have been two COPs, COP17 in Durban in 2011, and more recently the COP18 in Doha in 2012. Pre-Copenhagen, Bali saw a significant civil society/social movement mobilization.

risked derailing the possibility of future climate change negotiations entirely (Blühdorn 2011; Böhm and Dabhi 2009: 3; Boykoff 2012: 251; Fisher 2010, 2011; Howard 2009; Hurlbert 2011; Mcgregor 2011; Rajamani 2011), hence the moniker 'Nopenhagen' mockingly ascribed to the outcomes.

The 'deal' emergent from the negotiations was called the Copenhagen Accord. Notable for the extent of dissent from it, the Accord was merely 'noted' by the COP, with no concrete agreement reached to follow the path of the text.[41] Crucially, for the exploration I am conducting, one major sticking point for some of the governments such as Bolivia and Venezuela, who refused to sign up to the agreement, was the suggested reliance on market-based solutions, which were perceived to be unjust. The preferred methods for achieving emissions reductions were the clean development mechanism (CDM) and carbon trading schemes (CTS) (Lohmann 2008, 2012). It was mentioned in Chapter 2 that both of these propose the extension of markets into hitherto uncommodified areas. This kind of neoliberal mechanism presupposes an imaginary of a society of consumers who could participate in these new carbon markets and engage with responses to climate change through entrepreneurship and consumption (May 2012). Such a focus on market mechanisms mutually reinforces the argument that 'there-is-no-alternative' to market capitalism, even in the face of catastrophic global climate change, although at the COP15 this argument did not proceed unopposed. An agreement which fails to challenge the structural causes of climate change, relying instead on technically rational and market-based strategies, could be categorised as post-political.

Accordingly, a particularly downbeat assessment of the Copenhagen Accord, was made by Lumumba Di-aping, representative of the G77 (group of the Global South developing countries). Di-aping described the Accord as 'being devoid of any sense of responsibility or morality' (McGee 2009). Drawing a direct link with the rationality present in the Holocaust, he added '[i]t is a solution based on the same values that funnelled six million people in Europe into furnaces' (Bond 2012b: 15; McGee 2009). Unsurprisingly, Di-aping was roundly criticised for daring to make any connection between the rationality of the Copenhagen Accord and the tragedy that was the Holocaust. Nonetheless, a

[41] No new binding emissions targets or actions were agreed, and a secret deal was unilaterally agreed by the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa (Bond 2012).

contrasting, or perhaps necessarily concomitant[42] interpretation was provided by the then Prime Minister of the UK, Gordon Brown. He commented that the Accord was a 'first step towards a green and low-carbon future' (McGee 2009). Similarly, even whilst noting the inadequacy of the deal, the then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon called it an 'essential beginning'.

Also notable among the outcomes of the COP15 in Copenhagen was the way in which activists from the nascent 'climate justice movement' joined some of the Global South and other sympathetic COP attendees, in order to challenge the dominant post-political consensus around the agreed course for action (Bond 2012; Pascal 2009; Pusey and Russell 2010). Hence the 'climate justice movement' grew in prominence in Copenhagen (Bond 2012) as part of the challenge to what has been described by Forsyth and Young (2007) as 'co_2lonialism'. In many ways the *justice* element of the climate justice movement is about trying to acknowledge 'climate debt'. This debt is said to be owed to countries in the Global South, as a consequence of them not having benefitted from the wealth generated via the industrial processes that released climate change causing emissions (Bond 2012; Russell et al. 2012). In this regard climate justice is implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, used to acknowledge the impact of colonialist relations, and their neoliberal successors, on shaping the causes and proposed 'solutions' to climate change. A number of anti-capitalist climate justice activists sought to 'Seattle'[43] Copenhagen (Bond 2012: 16), and 'did not come to Copenhagen to participate *inside* the negotiations as NGO observers, [but]… came specifically to protest *outside'* of the COP (Fisher 2010: 15 her emphasis). The activists attempted to draw attention to the differential vulnerability[44] and responsibilities of countries at the same time as calling into question the distinctly neoliberal capitalist trajectory of the dominant agreement (Pusey and Russell 2010; Chatterton et al. 2013). Even so, Fisher (2010, 2011) and McGregor (2011) claim that to a large extent civil society actors were 'disenfranchised' at the COP15. Fisher (2010), however, sees the security

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[42] Necessary in the sense that the discrepancy in status and wealth of each representative could require interpretations which are more or less post-political to meet the interest of their respective constituencies.

[43] In 1999 Seattle was home to the infamous World Trade talks which were forcibly shut down by global justice campaigners.

[44] In the official negotiations more powerful countries pushed for 2°C warming as the threshold of dangerous climate change. Aside from the instrumentalism associated with targets in general (Shaw 2011), the 2°C target is problematic in relation to the position of certain states who call for 1.5°C, such as those in the Caribbean as was discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

concerns aroused by these outsider threats as part of the cause of disenfranchisement.

Bolivian President Evo Morales, and former Venezuelan President the late-Hugo Chavez, were two of the most vocal opponents to the mainstream 'solutions' to emerge from the COP15. In response they organised the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (CMPCC) in April 2010 as a popular alternative to the mainstream COP (Building Bridges Collective 2010). The conference was attended by a number of climate justice networks and affinity groups from around the world (Bond 2012b; Building Bridges Collective 2010). The 'Cochabamba People's Agreement' (Bond 2012b:153; Building Bridges Collective 2010) which emerged from the CMPCC was held up by many a source of optimism that the COP16 in Cancún might take a more progressive and radical turn.

The failure of Copenhagen, anticipated or feared by some activist publications (Steven 2009), was a feature of dialogue around the continued need for activism around climate change that persisted during the COP16 in Cancún. As part of a trend for activists to mobilize for summits (or 'summit hop' (Saunders 2012: 842)), and following on from activists travelling to Copenhagen, thousands of activists responded to call outs from different groups to attend a number of events and actions at the COP16. There have been no studies published which explore this in terms of its sociological and political dimensions though. In the next section I turn my attention to a summary of some of the main alternatives advocated and enacted by activists at the COP16. Before doing that I shall briefly explore people's accounts of why they travelled to Cancún to take part in protests and counter-summits.

3. From COP15 to 16: motivations for action

'*The lesson of this feeble climate deal? Governments have played God and failed. It is up to the activists now*' (Esteva 2010)

Picture 12: Stop CO2LONIALISM

(Source: http://vi.sualize.us/cop16_people_from_ngos_and_social_movements_protest_in_Cancún_pollution_mexico_democracy_politics_picture_iEZp.html)

The theory of the post-political and post-democratic condition suggests that publics place faith in elites to resolve climate change via technocratic and scientific means. In contrast to this, such faith was absent among many of the people I spoke to in Cancún. Many had attended activities in Copenhagen, and cited the disappointment of Copenhagen, in relation to a lack of faith in professional politicians, when accounting for their participation in Cancún. La Via Campesina's (2010: 1) 'Global Forum Position Papers', for instance, laments governments' incapability to tackle the root causes of 'current climate chaos' at the COP15 and cites this as a reason to protest at the COP16. COPIV16, a co-organiser of the big civil society counter-summit, Klimaforum9, in Copenhagen, said that he was unhappy that most countries in Cancún had signed up to the Copenhagen Accord and warned that: 'the dangerous thing is that there are too many things that is just left over to market mechanisms.'

Respondents involved in the informal spaces I spoke to were indeed, to greater or lesser extents, all sceptical of the ability of existing COP and UNFCCC negotiations to include marginalised groups, or perspectives outside of the 'mainstream' of debate. They tended to see the COP as being dominated

by a narrow range of interests, usually more concerned with securing and furthering their own power than responding to climate change in a sustainable way. COPIV8, for instance, who worked as a translator at the La Via Campesina (LVC) campsite said that she saw the processes of the COP as being 'constructed in a way to disempower the campesino's voice'. The specific policy outcomes of the COP were said to be skewed in favour of corporate and establishment interests over those of peasant farmers. Furthermore, US NGO activists COPIV1 and COPIV2 noted that the UN processes are seen as a 'waste of time' by members of the community who their organisation represents. COPIV1 and COPIV2 therefore, 'don't go inside the negotiations in the hopes that some miraculous climate deal is gonna be made ... But we go in there to stop a lot of the things that are gonna really be harming us'. Activist COPIV4, similarly, expressed scepticism about the role of the UN and multinational corporations when he commented that:

> I dont think the UN has played an effective role. And I dont know how productive large multinational corporations have been.

In this sense, then, it is apparent that these people were highly sceptical about the scope for genuinely political contestation to occur within the COP, in other words the COP is being represented in terms that suggest it is depoliticised.

While some actors from counter summits had the necessary accreditation to enable them to enter the official COP negotiations, many of the people I spoke to in Cancún who thought that they were going to be accredited later found out that their accreditation had fallen through, was rescinded for unknown reasons, or said that they faced persecution from the security staff (Climate Justice Now! 2010).[45] NGO worker COPIV7 remarked that 'we were supposed to have accreditation at COP, but you know it's the same old, only certain people are getting in and … at the last minute it fell through'. COPIV1 and COPIV2 commented that because accreditations were very limited: '… we have the important role of being able to go inside … and we can come out and let people outside know what's going on', because '…it's important to know what's going on in there... Inside is all secret' (COPIV2). The perception of the formal COP as being secretive or inaccessible was further reinforced by the highly militarized police operation that, quite literally, surrounded the site of the

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[45] This was also highlighted by McGreggor (2011) and Fisher (2011) as being a feature of the COP15 Copenhagen negotiations. There have been reports of this kind of exclusion happening in Durban at the COP17 in 2011 too.

COP with police checkpoints, mounted guns, and reinforced steel fences. I shall say a bit more about the policing of the COP later in the Chapter.

Picture 13: Police Guard the Moon Palace Checkpoint

(Source: http://www.climate-justice-now.org/category/events/COP16-Cancún/Cancún-mobilisations/)

Picture 14: Army Patrol

(Source: http://www.therevolutionmovie.com/gallery/revolution-image-22.asp)

Picture 15: Police at the COP16

(Source: http://upsidedownworld.org/main/mexico-archives-79/2827-battle-in-Canc%C3%BAn-the-fight-for-climate-justice-in-the-streets-encampments-and-halls-of-power)

Although there was a general perception of the COP as largely being inaccessible, it is worth noting differences in the range of approaches to engagement with the COP in Cancún. COPIV1 and COPIV2, for example, favourably contrasted their own insider/outsider strategy with the that of big NGOs who:

> …after Copenhagen and after there was no climate bill passed in the US … just feel so defeated. They're just 'crying', feeling that they didn't do anything. Whereas I personally feel like we've done a lot, as a, whatever you wanna call it, as a broader movement of people who want a better way of life and create a better world.

COPIV1 and COPIV2 explained their practice as being about broad 'movement building', rather than a narrower focus on a deal from the COP, in which networks such as Climate Action Network, a coalition of 'Big Green' NGOs, were more interested. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), for instance, was one of a number of NGOs that formed the Climate Action Network (CAN), whose focus was very much on lobbying the actors *inside* the COP. CAN, in contrast to the more radical NGO coalition Climate Justice Now!, for instance, employed a rhetoric of 'calling on leaders' (Climate Action Network 2010) to take action. This is in contrast to the understandings highlighted elsewhere in this chapter, that action to tackle the root causes of climate change could not

emerge from the UNFCCC COP because governments are hamstrung by their involvement with the corporate interests of market capitalist societies.

Others stated that they were largely uninterested in the proceedings of the COP expressing an understanding of the whole COP process as somewhat illegitimate, sometimes even irrevocably so, and hence not a process worth participating in. Activist, COPIV9, for instance stated that he: '… didn't come expecting much of anything to happen and my expectations have been met rather disconcertingly'. In some instances, there was a movement of people inside the COP and back out to the more public spaces, while other bigger NGOs remained in the nearer where the COP was based. I discuss these different spaces in more depth below.

If the formal COP was generally seen as being in the interests of a narrow elite, and less open than it could have been, then one of the reasons for setting up civil society spaces was to model more progressive and egalitarian ways of coordinating discussion and action around climate change. As organiser of Klimaforum09 in Copenhagen COPIV16 remarks, the public spaces were about:

> hav[ing] an open space that was free for everybody … in contrast to … the COP15 where everything is closed. It is possible to get accreditation but you need to be part of some organisation, or company, or what have you. It's not open to the public.

As alluded to earlier, social movement or civil society action was seen as necessary by some in order to steer responses to climate change in more politically progressive directions, because, as one person put it: 'we know our governments aren't gonna do it' (COPIV3). COPIV7, too, claimed that governments would not take necessary action because they are too invested in the current system, a claim discussed below. Hence, 'it's clear that it's time now for some civil disobedience… It's up to us to propose the changes' (COPIV7). Meanwhile COPIV3 comments that 'looking at our government systems, especially in the US, they're clearly broken... In serving some interests but not serving others and it tends to serve those that have the most money.' Similarly COPIV7 talks of governments being in partnership with 'the twisted element of corporations'. Recalling the discussions in Chapter 2, Chatterton et al. (2013) for instance suggested that social movement responses to climate change did challenge the post-political consensus. Where activists claim that the formal political processes of government favour elite interests their critique echoes

aspects of the post-political theory. By articulating such critique, however, they are to some extent undermining any 'consensus'.

Reflecting the contrasting approaches to the COP, some people were much more optimistic than others about the potential for government reform, under popular pressure. COPIV7, for instance, saw civil society as having some power to influence governments, in contrast to COPIV9 who was highly unconvinced of the capacity of governments to come to a 'rational' response at all:

> …the consequences seem to be so severe that the existing political system as it exists must be done away with and recreated, remade. … in light of the massive failures here of governments… it's up to the citizenry, the subordinated populations to intervene politically toward the hope of enacting, of creating, a different world … I can't say I really see that happening.

This last comment portrays a sense of frustration which was a fairly common feature of people's accounts. Some people simultaneously felt that they were in a relatively subordinate position to the tendencies of capitalism, and hence expressed doubt about the potential for them to influence the necessary changes, as above. Yet at the same time undertook action to try and challenge these tendencies in one way or another, perhaps suggesting the paradoxical or ambivalent character to their positions. A discussion of this (possible) ambivalence features more fully later in the chapter.

Often, criticism of the COP was indicative of a more general lack of faith in governments. I asked COPIV6, for instance, what he saw as the role for governments and negotiators in the COP, and he responded: 'No room. We don't need them anymore.' COPIV5 agreed, adding: 'we don't need the politicians, we have the faith in humans we [us].' The belief that people can undertake direct action in order to challenge dominant practices indicates a form of 'prefigurative politics' (Franks 2003). The ethic of prefiguration is strongly linked to anarchist social movements (Day 2005; Franks 2003; Purkis 2001; Springer 2011; Williams and Shantz 2011), and is based on actors attempting to reflect the social relations desired in future societies in their present forms of organisation and action, in opposition to more hierarchical and centrist forms of movement organising, as part of an ethical position that means should be consistent with ends (Franks 2003). Prefigurative politics, and a general faith in the capacities of people at large to provide alternative forms of social arrangement ostensibly reflects a different model of agency to those

embedded within the (depoliticised) forms of engagement presented by the COP, and helps to explain activists motivations for establishing their own autonomous civil society spaces.

For many participants, it was up to publics to create alternative systems because it was seen by some as naïve to expect a palatable deal to emerge from the formal COP. Running alongside this scepticism, however, was an apparently optimistic belief in activists' capacities to effect change. Such optimism would appear to contradict people's stated recognitions of the limits to agency that exist in the relative power of multi-national corporations in comparison to 'ordinary citizens'. Again, I would suggest that the evidence of contradiction in these accounts, could be interpreted as indicating a somewhat ambivalent dimension to their position.

In sum, many of the people I spoke to stated that the reason they thought activism was necessary was because of the inadequacy of official responses. A mistrust of professional politicians is reflected in the sentiments of the call for '*1000 Cancúns*' (discussed below) (as well as the call to participate in actions to '*Reclaim Power*' in Copenhagen). This apparent lack of faith in ruling elites ties into the broader literature around the 'crisis of legitimacy', and a scepticism and distrust of established political structures and institutions (Delanty 1997; Thorpe and Gregory 2010). Importantly, a lack of faith in ruling elites also challenges the idea of naïve or passive publics reinforcing a post-political consensus. Having identified some of the expressed motivations for people's participation in Cancún, I shall now explore the diverse alternative responses that people undertook in more depth.

4. Counter-summits and counteractions

There were four main 'civil society' spaces in and around Cancún, with people attending these from a broad spectrum of organisations. I shall outline each of these in turn.

Klimafroum10 (KF10)

The first space I encountered, indeed the first to be established, was Klimaforum10 (KF10). KF10 was modelled on the Klimaforum0 [46] in

[46] Klimaforum09 was established by a coalition of organizations in Copenhagen, and supported by the Danish government.

Copenhagen, having secured the 'branding' and assistance of KF09 during the Cochabamba conference. It was marketed as 'a people's climate change summit', where representatives from various environmental NGOs, indigenous groups and others went to run and attend workshops on topics such as the problems with REDD+, and the concept of climate justice.[47]

Upon arrival at Klimaforum10 (KF10), I became involved in a series of fraught meetings between volunteers and the management committee. A particularly interesting dimension to these discussions was the fact that participants regularly appealed to broader political standpoints when criticising the forms of organisation within KF10. During a particularly tense discussion one of the prominent organisers appealed for people to co-operate within KF10 because 'out there is the space for competition'. Tensions within KF10 were exacerbated due to a lack of visitors and a glut of volunteers. In addition, the site was difficult to access because of the number of police roadblocks and checkpoints on the route to the site of KF10 near Puerto Morelos from Cancún, which slowed traffic and made it harder for people to access. Barriers such as these reinforced a sense of disconnect within and between activists and our spaces in Cancún.

La Via Campesina (LVC)

Operating beyond the physical geographical location of Cancún, one of the most influential framings of popular responses to the COP16 came from the international peasants' organisation, La Via Campesina (LVC). Recognising that, in the wake of Copenhagen, many people would be unable, or unwilling, to travel to Cancún to protest, LVC issued a global call for action. '*1000 Cancúns*', as it was popularly known, called for 'people to organise thousands of protests and actions to reject the false and market solutions' and 'to create thousands of solutions to confront climate change' (La Via Campesina 2010b). Here, again, the theme of autonomous direct action was prominent. The call was answered by an array of actors globally as tens of thousands of people mobilized to organise actions. The form of these protests were varied, including counter-summits, seminars, and occupations. They took place in countries as far apart as Bangladesh, Korea, Canada, Honduras and Turkey.[48] The call for 1000

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[47] See http://klimaforum10.com/en/ for a full record of the events and activities that took place.

[48] See LVC http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=50

Cancúns apparently resonated among actors globally.[49] As such, 1000 Cancúns could be read as a relatively novel attempt to establish more political alternatives to the format of the mainstream COPs. The actions inspired by LVC's call could in other words be understood as an attempt to create alternative forms of political practice.

In addition to activities organised internationally in response to LVC's call-out there were a range of mobilisations within Mexico during the time of the COP. These mobilisations were linked in to the existing networks around local Mexican political struggles. Hence they included representatives from autonomous communities in the areas of Chiapas and Oxaca, as well as the Movement for National Liberation. LVC arrived in Cancn in a series of caravans which had travelled from across Mexico, visiting high-profile sites of ecological degradation and social conflict en route in order to highlight first-hand what might be meant by the climate justice.[50] This is reflective of the fact that people in Cancún were not limited to an instrumental 'single-issue' focus on climate change. Instead people were aware of, and keen to emphasise, broader political concerns and the argument for understanding climate change as a bigger political issue was frequently made.

LVC established the 'Global Forum For Life, Environmental and Social Justice', a protest camp, workshop and meeting space at an unused sports stadium in central Cancún provided by the government. Here too, the number of people present was much lower than had been predicted by the organisers, a fact indicated by piles of unused mattresses that stood towered in the centre of the space. I was one of a number of the KF10 volunteers who travelled to LVC to explore, variously, the possibility of joining up with an anti-capitalist organisation; attending the demonstration planned for the 7th December; or just participating in a different space.

Situated within the LVC camp, but operating somewhat independently from them was the 'ANTI-C@P ANTI-COP' (or antic@p) network. in preparation

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&Itemid=195 and CJA http://www.climate-justice-action.org/news/2010/12/16/1000-Cancúns-cop16-the-peoples-report-backs-ii/ for more details.

[49] One of my own planned case studies had been intended to tie-into a similar call-out (for a Global Week of Action for Climate Justice! on 12th – 16th October: http://www.climate-justice-action.org/mobilization/action-calendar/).

[50] For more see: http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=984:the-international-caravan-of-la-via-campesina-advances-for-Cancún&catid=48:-climate-change-and-agrofuels&Itemid=75.

for COP16 I had been in discussion with Climate Justice Action, one of the prominent organising networks for the COP15. They had identified the antic@p as being significantly aligned to our own attempts to politicise climate change responses because of the tone in which they discussed climate change. I shall now discuss the approach taken by these actors.

Picture 16: Mattresses inside a tent at the LVC campsite

(Source: http://migrantdiaries.blogspot.co.uk/)

Antic@p anti-cop

Actors in the antic@p offered a different perspective in that they attempted to politicise climate change by arguing that it was capitalist forms of social organisation that were the *root cause* of climate change. This representation differed from those I encountered who claimed that it was corporate involvement in responses to climate change that were the problem. These people tended to treat neoliberalism as a grotesque and excessive form of capitalism that could be tamed. In contrast, the antic@p analysis suggested that the tendencies of neoliberalism were an intensification of, not a departure from, the underlying logics of capitalism. Moreover, the tendency towards this kind of intensification of capitalist logics was itself claimed to be a consistent feature of capitalism in general.

On the ground in Cancún this group were also seen as having a less compromising political position than some of the NGOs, or indeed than LVC, where their camp was based. Often it seemed that affiliates of the antic@p were at pains to point out their radicalism and unwillingness to accept reformism.

The antic@p participated in a 4,000-strong protest march organised by LVC for the 7th December. They were a key contingent of a group of activists who refused to stop at the designated 'rallying point' which had been agreed with local police. Instead these activists marched directly to the steel barricade which had been erected in order to stop protesters from reaching the Moon Palace complex where negotiations were taking place. Protesters then ran towards the fence with a giant inflatable silver hammer, in what was a relatively confrontational and antagonistic symbolic act. The thousands of paramilitary riot police stationed on the other side of the fence made light work of deflating the hammer, but nevertheless these actors had succeeded in exceeding the more consensual and less confrontational symbolism of the march.

Picture 17: La Via Campesina March

(Source: http://comuntierra.org/site/blog_post.php?idPost=121&id_idioma=2)

Picture 18: La Via Campesina March 2

(Source: http://comuntierra.org/site/blog_post.php?idPost=121&id_idioma=1)

Picture 19: Indigenous Bolivian activists on La Via Campesina protest march

(There were representatives from a range of Latin American indigenous people's groups in Cancún. Source: http://allan.lissner.net/1000-Cancúns-global-day-of-action-for-climate-justice/)

Picture 20: Giant inflatable hammer prop

(Source: http://upsidedownworld.org/main/mexico-archives-79/2827-battle-in-Cancún-the-fight-for-climate-justice-in-the-streets-encampments-and-halls-of-power)

Being so focussed on anti-capitalism, rather than just climate change, the antic@p frequently drew attention to issues beyond climate change, broadening their focus beyond just action taking place in Cancún. They hung banners lamenting the murder of the 16 year old Greek protester by riot police on the

anniversary of that event, for example. Antic@p were scathing of the potential or even desirability of the COP to come up with a deal in the interests of climate justice. People in this group were firmly in support of direct action tactics.

Another example of the direct action protest undertaken by the antic@p was a 'Reclaim the Streets' style protest (Grindon 2004). 'Reclaim the square', was a street party which took part on the final day of the LVC camp. This protest brought together local onlookers and activists. The event included a piece of interactive street theatre, which served to inform people why activists had converged on Cancún, and used a bicycle-powered sound system to transform the local square into a street party. Some of the other actions planned by the antic@p were cancelled, however, due to police infiltration.

Picture 21: Reclaim the Streets Protest in Cancún

(Photo courtesy of Karmakanonen, Denmark)

Picture 22: Antic@p banner

(*The banner reads: 'No destruccion ambiental, Si la destrccion del capital' (No to environmental destruction, yes to destruction of capital,* author's translation) Source: http://www.comuntierra.org/site/blog_post.php?idPost=121&id_idioma=2)

It was clear that for some people who deemed there to be a contradiction at the heart of capitalism's relationship with the environment, the antic@p constituted a distinctively political, dimension to the protests in Cancún. COPIV9, for instance, concluded that:

> The perspectives and practices that have been advanced here in Cancún by antic@p are surely the ones that need to be carried forward and expanded upon' because I really don't see much of any hope for anything unless there's a mass mobilization along those lines…it surely has to be anti-capitalist and if we're speaking of making actual gains in the world I think it's going to have to be antagonistic.

It will be shown later, however, that the antic@p's practice perhaps limited the scope for others' engagement with them.

In sum, workshops, talks, and protests were a significant feature of the activity organised at the aforementioned informal spaces.[51] LVC had daily workshops and talks, including the aforementioned guest speech by Bolivian President Evo Morales. The KF had daily events, organised around a similar range of topics. Participatory democracy was, with more or less success, a feature of these self-organised open spaces. Often the expressed aim of these alternative spaces, meetings and protests was to challenge the assertion that 'there-is-no-alternative') and involve marginalised publics.

Finally, it is worth very briefly contrasting these spaces with official Mexican government's space *'Villa de Cambio Climático Climatica'* (or Villa Climatica). Villa Climatica had various corporate-partners, including an 'Official Airline Partner', and mirrored a 'green' trades fare. Responding to climate change was presented here in terms of changing consumption habits. There were music concerts and exhibitions, including one on Nissan's electric car. The kinds of activity taking place here, such as the promotion of 'green consumerism', fit well with the post-political and post-democratic models of engagement and action via consumption, because they imply that 'there-is-no-alternative'. It too was under attended in comparison to the organisers' expectations. In order to better understand how an analysis of the activity taking place in Cancún might contribute to discussions of post-politics I shall now look at some of the different accounts of action provided by actors in Cancún.

5. Accounts of society and the social

In interviews I asked people to reflect on their understandings of how the social world is, or should be, organised in order to respond to climate change. Here people drew on a diverse range of understandings of human action, which were often based on accounts of people as more than just consumers or voters. Rather there was considerable emphasis on, or an expressed belief in, the agency of actors to influence the world, albeit whilst often acknowledging limitations and barriers to collective action. COPIV3 remarked on a 'separation' between people:

> Lots of the problems we have now are based on separation you know we can see there are corporations doing their own thing, or the government

[51] Another significant space was the Espacio Mexicano (or EsMex). I did not have much engagement at EsMex, which seemed to be a site established by the big green NGOs. The site was separate from LVC, which some people suggested was becase the EsMex NGOs had difficulty in openly supporting the kinds of antagonistic positions adopted by LVC.

> doing theirs. Everybody trying to be on top of the pile and not working together.

Furthermore, COPIV3 suggested that ‘we're all connected at a deeper level’ which is little understood. So at the COP16 for instance:

> people are focussed on climate and yet it's not just about climate it's about er something deeper than that…it really is a moral and spiritual question and a change in the whole paradigm ultimately if we're gonna survive as a species on this planet.

Hence interdependence, and people’s general neglect of it, is highlighted.

COPIV8, based at LVC, understood peasant farm workers as being a source of important insights due to their close connection to the land. We should listen to these people:

> because it's those in the third world who are going to feel the affects the worst, and first, from climate change … [and] when our food is becoming privatized, big corporations are controlling more and more what it is that we eat, it's the small farmers who can really make a difference, who are dedicated to non-GM food. … we need grassroots [interventions] from the people, from those, who are oppressed.

Her account suggested, then, that these people either should have, or do have, added insight into the processes associated with climate change due to their proximity to its effects, a kind of standpoint epistemology. At the same time these people have lesser responsibility for its causes. This account is interesting in relation to the preference for technical and scientific knowledge noted elsewhere. Representations such as these also move beyond viewing climate change as merely a technical issue because they bring moral or ethical and political questions into the discussion. Similarly COPIV3 speaks of: ‘…the wisdom of some indigenous people [because] they're connected to their roots in nature’. In addition, COPIV14, contrasts the connection indigenous people are suggested to have to the ‘frontline’ of environmental damage, with a distance that he perceives Western people as having. He then suggests that because of this distance Western people are unlikely to resist as much as those people whose territories are directly threatened, because:

> For those people it's about their identity and their home and it's the members of their family getting attacked, their human rights being abused … in reality it's not the same [for us] because you're rights aren't getting abused daily … I grew up in a big city, and people who grew up in a city just don't have that connection with the land.

In spite of this perceived disconnect, there were sometimes optimistic accounts of the 'average people's' potential to understand the need for radical change, compared to elite actors inside the COP:

> …your quote unquote 'average person' is a good person and believes that things can change … As for those high level people don't even think like that … you can't expect anything there, but you can expect something on the ground from people (COPIV2)

Similarly, COPIV4 commented that 'I think each person can understand what's right and wrong, especially when it comes to the destruction of the environment'. Likewise COPIV7 suggests 'it really has to come from civil society, we're the only one who's going to be able to break this market-state deadlock'. This representation of necessary responses as needing to come from the ground up contrasts with more elitist and technocratic post-political versions of action.

People, 'the public' or 'the average person' were also represented as being ignorant and in need of educating, however. COPIV2, for instance, remarked that: 'I think the majority of people don't even know what capitalism means, or how it works or what it actually entails…it's just like a word that people associate with freedom and liberty and choice and wealth and happiness'. Understandings or images of people as ignorant, indoctrinated or badly socialised were sometimes identified as barriers to participation. COPIV9 cites:

> massive barriers [to participation] from cultural socialisation processes… [such as] television. Or the obsession with consumerism, the obsession with having power and privilege and wealth. All these ridiculous cultural values propagated by the existing system. As well subordination in hierarchical apparatuses.

In part, activism was justified with reference to non-activists' perceived lack of awareness, and yet it was also partly about trying to counter ignorance or apathy. Conceptions of publics as potential political agents contrasts with unsociological versions of publics, such as market actors to be nudged into carbon neutral consumption practices; or as passive voters, dependent on elites, and whose political agency is only to be expressed in fixed-term election cycles.

As well as accounts that gave insights into people's understandings of society, people, also articulated understandings of the economy, generally as incompatible with dealing with climate change in its current form. COPIV1 suggests that:

> capitalism and continued growth and economic development forever is not gonna happen. No matter what the outcome of this COP, or the next COP is, … it's gonna have to stop because our planet already right now is making that happen. Whether we want it or not.

This interpretation contrasts with the idea that continued economic growth is a precondition of sustainability. Moreover, for COPIV6:

> It's not only that it is corrupt and it's bad and it is destructive, but it is really not working …we need a system change … I think we really have to watch the whole world and the whole economic system which is for us in the auto-destruction level already…. It's a huge mountain of debt and it's not gonna go anywhere. we're talking always about growth but where [are] we all gonna grow?

COPIV8 too stated that the existing economic system: 'encourages people to continue as is… some people might think they're engaging in the environmental struggle by buying organic food or shopping at a fancy grocery store. But in the end they're just consuming, consuming, consuming.' Current market-based economic models were often seen as being inherently ineffective then.

The functioning of economic systems was widely criticised not just for being ineffective, but also for being unfair. So as well as claiming that market capitalism was technically incapable of adequately responding to climate change, people also justified their actions in terms of ethical opposition. COPIV8, for instance, remarked that: 'I don't think the current system function can't continue, no. And inequality, absolutely racism, all the big '-isms' are tied in with achieving environmental justice.' An alternative was trying to lead by

example: ‘really it’s in our examples we can try and model what we want the earth to be. I've tried to do that, but... we have our moments…. because it begins with inside each of us.’ Given the extent of opposition faced by movements, this kind of approach could be interpreted as a pragmatic strategy, something I discuss in more depth below.

People’s accounts of participation, aims and ethics were varied and wide-ranging. All were examples of ways in which people attempt to engage with climate change, indicating the plurality of responses. In contrast to the post-political post-democratic condition which functions to obscure political concerns, the people I encountered generally made reference to broad substantive issues. This is apparent in explicit appeals to justice and fairness, for instance. Such views are directly at odds with any account based on the claim that capitalism is the only viable form of economic and social organisation. Likewise, in contrast to treating climate change as a problem to be dealt with by a unified class of elites supported by scientific expertise and a passive public, the approaches outlined above perhaps signify dissent, and dissensus (May 2008). There are limits to these engagements, though, resulting partly from their plurality. These limits could be considered to be part of general tensions and reflexive self-criticism I encountered, which included people explaining how and why they tried to make the most of situations they participated in. It is to these instances that I shall now turn.

6. Tensions at the COP16 in Cancún: ambivalence and pragmatism

Movements to challenge the dominant framings of climate change emerging from within the formal COP16 faced a number of limiting challenges. These challenges included: logistical issues, such as the presence of highly militarised police and road blocks; the divisions which existed between spaces; the fact that some activists were allowed into the COP while others were not; and tensions between groups. Exploring these tensions can provide insights into the underlying complexity running through people’s actions in Cancún, and the often ambivalent dimensions of undertaking climate change activism (Saunders 2012).

One prominent example of tension between activists was the antagonism felt between so-called ‘hippies’ and the ‘anarcho-punks’. COPIV10 commented on these divisions:

> something that I've been noticing subtly, it's not a specific political ideology, well maybe it is, beyond the logistical problems of getting

> together, there's been this punk/hippy division thing going on … there's this subtle undercurrent, and I was worried, the day when people came from KF10 on the 'hippy bus', which is now what the bus is called among like the hardcore punk people. ... [Some of them] were not impressed with the grass skirts, face paint, neo-primitive cultural appropriation hippy-thing… thinking that they're just a little flaky, that they don't have really good politics, that we have better politics than they do and so on, whatever. Nobody actually said that out loud. It's just that I know how to read the jokes, and there was just that feeling that they're just being dismissed a little bit.

COPIV10 is highly reflexive in her account here, as were many others I spoke to. COPIV8, meanwhile, was disappointed that the forms of action taken on the big LVC march on the 7th December were, as she saw it, relatively celebratory and 'tame', lacking a sense of anger which she thought might better reflect the urgency of the situation.

Picture 23: The 'Hippy' Bus

(Source: http://socialistwebzine.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/battle-in-Cancún.html)

Picture 24: The 'Hippy' Bus 2

(Source: http://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2010/dec/10/Cancún-climate-change-summit#/?picture=369534300&index=11)

Picture 25: Protester

(Some activists were unimpressed by the imagery employed by their fellow protesters, such as the faux indigenous attire modelled above)

It was not just for a lack of anger or militancy that the 'hippies' drew flak, it was also the apparently 'under-theorised' quality to some of the 'hippies'' participation that actors like COPIV8 reacted against. Members of the antic@p

were apparently dismissive of the 'hippies' because of what they saw as an inadequate political analysis and lack of radicalism. The 'hippies' dressed up in faux-indigenous attire, as pictured in the examples above, which was seen as an example of their lack of political and cultural sensitivity. While agreeing with aspects of this critique I found myself wondering whether these critics would rather the march were smaller but somehow more ideologically 'pure', without the celebratory 'hippy' presence? I also found it interesting that some representatives from the antic@p defined their politics in terms of their opposition to the 'hippies', demonstrating the contingent and relational dimensions of the processes taking place.

From attending the same protest march I know that the 'hippy bus', consisting mainly of international participants from KF10, were among those adopting a relatively upbeat approach to the protest, whereas the 'anarcho-punks', many of whom were affiliated to the antic@p, and who had arrived from Mexico City, took a more confrontational stance on the march. The criticism faced by the 'hippies' was interesting because part of the reason that their bus was on the march at all was because a few of the members of the KF10 camp had persuaded their fellow attendees to join them on the big LVC demonstration in Cancún. This insight further indicates the contingent and emergent, or unplanned and relational, underpinnings of people's participation and involvement in actions in Cancún.

Displaying a similarly reflexive attidude, COPIV9 commented on the KF10 space, and the contrast perceived between the anarchist/anti-capitalists and 'lifestyle-ist hippies'. He stated that the urgency of the climate crisis necessitates revolution rather than lifestyle changes: 'a hippie, life-stylist approach to the problem … [is not] very useful given the severity of the issue at the moment and it's likely acceleration in the near future.' Elsewhere COPIV14 was somewhat ambivalent in his comments that:

> … lifestylism is counter-productive. In one sense I can see it as necessary cos we do need to change the way we live, but I see it counter-productive [for] the environmental movement, whatever that is, to try and basically bully people … into how they should and shouldn't live. I don't know if that's a productive method.

Activists in the antic@p also came into conflict with the organisers of LVC's camp, who at one point threatened to deny antic@p a space within the site. This was partly because the antic@p were antagonistic to the point of critiquing LVC for 'selling out'. In the eyes of the antic@p, LVC occupied a closer, or more

accommodating, relationship to states, and hence capital, as evidenced by LVC: working with the Mexican authorities to secure the physical space for their camp site; to agree protest routes with police; and agreeing to host a speech by Bolivian head of state, Evo Morales. Given such an openly antagonistic position it is understandable that this might lead to tension.

The tensions and internal criticism described above are arguably reflective of a relationship between the roles people undertook in Cancún, the spaces they attended and their approach towards the issues. Very loosely speaking, people who travelled with LVC and the antic@p tended to be more overtly confrontational in their politics, often calling for revolutionary changes in established social and political systems. By contrast, people at KF10 and EsMex often tended to pay more attention to the activities of the formal COP, and to place more faith in the possibilities for the reform of established systems.

Picture 26: President Morales at LVC

(President of Bolivia, Evo Morales on stage with other speakers from Nigeria, Cuba, and Mexico. Source: http://Cancúnclimate.wordpress.com/)

Others adopted less antagonistic and more conciliatory approaches, and were keen to challenge the divides that existed between groups. COPIV10, for example, commented that she was: '… always around all kinds of people. I

really don't care if you're hippies I go and I'm not hippy.' Meanwhile, COPIV14 said that: '…this good protester/bad protester thing doesn't make sense'. There were also instances of people overcoming the physical and political divisions, where they travelled between different camps and meetings or protests. '[P]eople … started to mix more' (COPIV10) after the big LVC protest. A number of people were also frustrated with the fact that civil society responses seemed to be disparate and divided:

> Cancún is a really great example of just how fragmented [we are] in all of our efforts. LVC had to do their own thing, and KF had to do their own thing, and the Climate Village is its own thing. And it's all great that people are doing these things but shouldn't we have had a discussion and worked it out so at least … we could have a congress at some point … To ride an hour and a half on a bus to get to one venue to the next doesn't facilitate community discussion very well. (COPIV7)

COPIV10 likewise:

> we're isolated geographically... And there are people in each of these places that were unsatisfied. Even here there's been a lot of problems between the anti-capitalists and LVC… there's been difficulties, there's been language barriers, there's cultural barriers, there's major organisational … problems (COPIV10)

Here, again, are expressions of a rather high degree of reflexivity about the challenges that activists at the COP faced.

While overcoming divisions between different actors was aspired to by many activists, the fundamental tensions between groups were still perceived to be significant. COPIV14 suggested that 'lifestylists': 'focus on doing things personally [and] just ignore the political aspect... And similarly perhaps the other way round as well. You'll get people who focus on the politics without thinking about lifestyle at all'. In some ways, then, while united around the COP, people defined their own involvement and practice with reference to other groups, often very critically so.

These tensions reflect the findings of Schlembach et al. (2012) and Saunders (2012), mentioned in Chapter 2, about the spectrum of political standpoints taken among climate activists. They also perhaps both partly echo, and undermine, challenges to the post-political framing of climate change. They echo elements of the theory of the post-political condition in the sense that

some actors were critical of the insufficiently politically confrontational action perceived to be taking place elsewhere. Those activists who were not willing to challenge the state, or to adopt an anti-capitalist stance were perceived as being insufficiently radical. This kind of approach to radical politics, again, has been noted to be feature of climate activism (Pusey and Russell 2010; Russell 2012; Schlemberg et al. 2012; Saunders 2012). Yet the tensions I encountered also perhaps undermine challenges to the post-political condition because resistance becomes weakened by being fragmented (Saunders 2012). It seems an insurmountable, and in some ways, healthy, paradox. Healthy in the sense that resistance to post-political framings of climate change is somewhat heterogeneous, therefore challenging the universalism and populism, and the disavowal of conflict, inherent to attempts to establish a post-political consensus. These kinds of tensions and paradoxes could signify a degree of ambivalence because they reflect the experience for some people of the inherently uncertain character of conducting climate change activism.

In addition to, or perhaps even in response to, the aforementioned tensions, expressions of ambivalence could be detected in people's reflections on the various factors which they identified as affecting, structuring in sociological terms perhaps, the processes which took place in Cancún. These included: the geographical separation of spaces; the unknown funding sources of the alternative spaces; and the militarised police presence. Considering these factors can contribute to an understanding of how it is, in pragmatic terms, that activists come-to-terms with the apparent persistence of the post-political condition to which they are apparently so opposed.

The fear of a 'heavy police hand' (COPIV4), for instance, was cited as a concern by some activists. People made reference to the pressure of having to commit their bodies in protest, such as COPIV9 who suggested that risk of arrest or confrontation with police restricted the kinds of actions it was possible for people to undertake.

Picture 27: Riot Police

(Source: http://www.ips.org/TV/cop16/wp-content/library/Riot_cops_2.jpg)

Other barriers to action and involvement at the civil society spaces outside the COP were discussed, such as those 'from above'. COPIV12 was one of a number of participants who questioned the role that the government might have had in restricting the capacity for protest. As she remarks:

> the government by doing this event here in Cancún, make it pretty difficult for the Mexicans to come… it's not the same as if it was close to Mexico City … it would be millions … how you can reach this place? Also …nobody support[s] these movements, so how you can start a movement without money? … Most of the people will like to take a bus, [but] they cannot leave their children. And it's not because they are comfortable with this situation on the contrary, it's the economical situation which makes this impossible to them.

The recognition that participation in social movement activities could be curtailed by practical constraints was also apparent when COPIV9 spoke of the 'economic implications' limiting participation '...for two weeks …not everyone can afford a ticket to Cancún'.

In addition, there is a degree of ambivalence evident in the frequently cited concerns that forms of action were not being seen to 'prefigure' the kinds of progressive social relationships that participants had aspired towards. For some of the reasons already mentioned, the spaces and activities in Cancún were not necessarily felt to prefigure the model examples they had hoped for. As COPIV13 remarked:

> I'd understood it was 'living the example' I thought we would be using solar-power, you know using biodigesters. And when I arrived it wasn't the case. We were using gas generators to power all kinds of lights, to pump our water. We're buying all our supplies from Wal-Mart, and I really didn't agree with that … So that's why I was disappointed with KF10.

Ambivalence emerged in people's acknowledgments of the difficulties involved in trying to match their political aims with the pragmatic strategies required to deal with the limitations they faced. As COPIV9 remarked*:* 'one of the major questions coming from this [mobilization]… not that I have really an answer to it… [is] that there's a gap here between theory and practice.' This reflected my own anxieties about how to interact with others in both the antic@p, who shared the kind of analysis I had, and my friends on the 'hippy' bus. An overriding theme to emerge from these accounts, then, is one of self-critique and reflexivity about the limitations of people's actions. People applied similar critical outlooks to their own actions that they applied to the actions of others, and to the wider processes of the COP and global capitalism.

Elsewhere, COPIV8 was critical of LVC not being as inclusive and democratic as she might have hoped for given that it was meant to be a civil society space:

> a lot of decisions have been kind of top-down, rather than made democratically… the format could have been a lot better… …There absolutely could have been more participation, more engagement, more exchange.

Both COPIV8 and COPIV9 also remarked on what they saw as ineffective or insufficient outreach by the organisers of the Via Campesina (LVC) space. Similar criticisms were levelled at the antic@p, who were not seen to be as accessible to outsiders as people wanting to get involved would have liked. The antic@p were hard to engage with partly because of the group's suspicion of newcomers in light of heavy police infiltration. The fact that opportunities for involvement with these groups were perceived to be limited has implications for trying to build the kinds of mass democratic, participatory movements that most people said was a goal.

Echoing these somewhat ambivalent, self-critical reflections on activism was criticism of the KF10 and its 'eco-village' camp site for being located on the grounds of an elite and exclusive polo club which had been hired out for the

duration of the events. The location, plus problems with the hierarchical and entrepreneurial organisation of the camp, led to criticisms from participants that the space was not representing the prefigurative ethos of 'being the change' people wanted to see. Additionally, people from KF10 were discouraged from attending the LVC space by the KF10 organisers, which indicated an apparent conflict between the organisers of KF10, and other political organisations in Mexico. Many people were pragmatic in their response to these tensions though, for instance by moving between these different spaces depending on the events and activities taking place at each.

Picture 28: The KF10 Polo Field

(The polo club where KF10 was held was seen by some activists as being antithetical to the aims of the movement. Source: http://Cancúnclimate.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/klima97.jpg)

Irrespective of the outcomes of the official COP, and of the acknowledged limitations of their involvement, some participants still saw value in attending the COP counter-summits and protests, particularly in the coming together or networking of like-minded groups. COPIV8, for example, said:

> I'm glad I came. I am glad I came… I've met some really cool people… that share similar sentiments and so through different conversations we were able to talk about how would we make it better? And I think those

> were constructive conversations for going back home and continuing organising. And it's always a good morale booster to meet others that are doing similar things and that will also go back to wherever they're from and continue their struggles.'

These perceived rewards constituted part of the justification for peoples' continued involvement in these mobilisations in spite of the aforementioned tensions and frustrations. On some levels their aims are to bring about substantial social and political change, but on other levels their actions facilitate contact between like-minded actors who can share meaningful exchanges and experience renewal. COPIV8 continues:

> maybe the biggest outcome of the whole thing would be the message that campesinos have a voice and that should be heard… I think this space has been good for bringing together a lot of different people, sharing of stories, there are lots of struggles here represented. That aspect is really amazing.

COPIV1 and COPIV2 made a similar point:

> …it's about networking; it's about meeting people that we hadn't met before that had the same ideas but don't necessarily know what others are doing … just making those friendships. Creating those networks of individuals that we can contact after this. This isn't just gonna be something that we're here for and then we leave and it's done.

In this sense, then, the tensions encountered did not mean that people's involvement was entirely worthless.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored activists' responses to climate change as manifest in their activities around the UNFCCC COP16 talks in Cancún. The COP process has thus far failed to establish meaningful action on climate change, and activists' accounts have generally suggested that the COP was viewed as representing elite interests. Rather than having faith in these elites, as the populism of the post-political and post-democratic condition requires, I

encountered an overwhelming scepticism among activists. For this reason people attended protests and counter-summit events in Cancún.

A range of approaches was encountered among activists though with some 'demanding' action of governments, while others attempted to bring the kinds of alternatives they aspired towards into being via 'prefiguration'. I also explored people's imaginaries of society and found that these do not fit well with the thin versions of society which are inherent in post-political accounts. People articulated expansive spiritualistic conceptions of human nature, and critiques of economic and political systems, for instance.

Nevertheless, there were significant tensions uncovered between different actors, such as the 'hippies' and 'anarcho-punks'. Indeed people perceived substantial challenges to their attempts to organise their prefigurative political practices along non-hierarchical lines, such as the militarised police presence, and the divisions between and within groups and the perceived contradictions between their theory and practice. In spite, or perhaps because of such challenges, many people were not naïve about the scope of their action. There was evidence of ambivalence as people accounted for the limitations of these actions while pragmatically trying to making the most of their attempts.

The tensions running between actors in Cancún corresponds to, and hence partly explains, some of the differences in the literature identified in Chapter 2 where it was noted that some authors saw more or less evidence of a post-political, post-democratic condition. It also reveals some detail about the challenges faced by those who seek to resist it. In the next Chapter I shift my focus to Belize, a Caribbean country which is located on the Yucatán Peninsula directly below Cancún.

Chapter 6 | 'Dis da fu wi'?[52] – Conservation, development and community engagement in Belize

'Fi Wee Belize'

Pickney march tru di street di sing
yah dah fu wee Belize
mis Matie cross di street di halla
yah dah fuh wee Belize
even Shiela granny di brokdong to di tune
yah dah fu wee Belize
but tell mi, weh all dat really mean?

Yu si lang time befo time was time
dem bring wee yah pan this side
wi ancestors dem work sweat fi sweat
wid axe eena dem hand
yuh grampa neva tell yuh di stories
bout di logwood camp?
an how da slave blood build this nation,
not Europeans?

Bot dah more dan one story ah must tell
cause like mi fren Wilford seh
from the sarstoon to di Corozal land
all a wee dah wan
and the Maya yuh see
mi deh yah lang before Columbus and colonization

[52] Belizean Kriol meaning 'this is for us', or 'this is ours'. Taken fron Gonzalez (2010). Kitagawa & Momsen (2005: 190) found that this phrase was often used in discussions about conservation with locals.

Dem build temples and great cities
at the height a dem civilization

So yah dah fu wee Belize
this blessed land by the Carib sea
all mi Garinagu brothers and sistas
join in wid wee
from Africa to St. Vincent
to a jewel in Central America
you brought a vibrant culture
and helped build our nation

So on our independence day
all a wee di sing 'yah dah fu wee Belize'
cause Mestizo, East Indian, everyone
we made Belize what it is
Belize dah truly fi wee

(Hyde 2010:27–28)

1. Introduction

Picture 29: Map of Belize and Central America

(Source: http://www.belizephonecard.com/Belize/map_of_belize_2.htm)

Formerly known as British Honduras, Belize is a Caribbean country located on the Central American Caribbean coast, on the Yucatán peninsula, sharing borders with Mexico to the north and west, Honduras to the south, and a contested border with Guatemala on the west. I arrived in Belize after navigating the coastline of the Yucatán south from Cancun, and was immediately struck by the diversity of the country's population. In addition to the cultural and linguistic diversity, I was also struck by the natural beauty of the country's coast line and Cayes situated next to the barrier reef. Belmopan, the capital, where I was based, is sited some 50 miles inland. It was moved here following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Hattie in 1961 on the former capital Belize City. Immediately it is possible to see how the geography and development of Belize are influenced by climatic conditions.

The flexibility afforded by doing ethnography enabled me to respond to the activities I encountered in Belize, even though they did not speak directly to my research questions at that time. While in Belize I attempted to focus on responses to climate change. It quickly became apparent, however, that climate change was not as high a priority as the conservation practices with which it is tied up. Indeed, activism, engagement and policy making there were more

overtly directed towards the latter than the former. Of greater significance to actors in Belize, then, were conservation, development and oil-drilling. Hence this chapter focuses on these, although it should become clearer that they have significant implications for climate change. The aim here is to consider the extent to which these processes and dynamics in Belize share the dynamics of post-politics as discussed in Chapter 2. The chapter unfolds as follows.

I begin the chapter with a summative discussion of the literature about conservation and development in order to determine the extent of continuity of that work with work around post-political processes identified elsewhere. Following this discussion, I outline the processes surrounding conservation in Belize, before moving on to consider community engagement in conservation there. Having established that NGOs have a rather big role to play in conservation in Belize, in the section which follows I turn a more critical eye to their practice in considering the particular, often neoliberal, forms of development and conservation promoted by them. The forms of development in Belize are then subjected to further scrutiny, and, as is a common theme in the thesis, pressures of neoliberal development are shown to connect to the history of colonialism in Belize. I elaborate on this finding in the next section by exploring some of the tensions that I encountered in attempts to implement neoliberal conservation and development in practice. The example of oil drilling is considered as it illustrated the complex, ambivalent, relationships that government actors and NGOs were drawn into. In the final section of the chapter I discuss the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) scheme which was under consideration in Belize, and the ambivalent and pragmatic positions that emerged in response to it. Contemporary REDD schemes are also linked to the history and development of Belize and its status as a former colony from which wood was exported. In order to better demonstrate the relevance of this case study I shall now consider the role of neoliberalism in conservation and development.

Picture 30: The Sugar Shack

(A hurricane damaged shack in Gales Point Manatee a small coastal community of mostly ex-runaway slaves, or maroons (Hyde and Dalby 2009). Author's photo.)

2. Post-political conservation and development: neoliberalism in Belize

Upon my arrival in Belize, beginning to speak to local people about climate change, it quickly became apparent that the overwhelming focus of environment-related policy-making, activism and NGO work in Belize was orientated towards conservation, with climate change featuring much less prominently. Hence the main focus of this chapter is not climate change, although I did speak to people about it, but instead I turned my attention to accounts of conservation and development. An analysis of conservation practices, however, can also contribute to an exploration of the post-political condition, and I shall now briefly explore how.

Paralleling claims that responses to climate change are post-political, due to their presupposition of capitalist markets, their technocracy, and populism, a number of scholars suggest that the dominant governance trend in conservation is decidedly neoliberal (Brondo and Bown 2011; Duffy 2000; Igoe and Brockington 2007). The processes of neoliberalisation, whereby states are scaled back via privatization and decentralization (Motta and Nilsen 2011), as they were in policy reforms of the 1980s and 1990s[53], involve *deregulation*, or more appropriately the *reregulation* by states of previously untradeable things

[53] As is also happening in some European countries at the moment, most starkly Greece.

into commodities (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 437).[54] In this context, Igoe and Brockington (2007: 433) identify emergent forms of 'hybrid governance' involving: 'increased corporate sponsorship of conservation organisations; the increased management of protected areas by private for-profit companies…; and increased emphasis on ecotourism as a means of achieving economic growth, community prosperity and biodiversity conservation'. Beyond these forms of hybrid governance, processes of neoliberalisation involve territorialisation which is 'the partitioning of resources and landscapes in ways that control, and often exclude, local people' (Igoe and Brockington 2007:432; Ybarra 2012).

In a similar fashion to the populism associated with the post-political, these neoliberal models of development and conservation assume that there are no losers, and hence problems are reframed as opportunities for economic growth, with nature being protected via investment and consumption consumption (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 434). In this representation, it is suggested that 'conservation can be achieved without addressing the difficult and systemic inequalities and power relationships that are inextricably linked to so many of our global environmental problems today' (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 434). Hence protected areas expand in conjunction with economic development in order to mitigate the environmentally destructive consequences of development (Büscher and Dressler 2007). The idea that there need not be any structural change, or conflict between different interest groups, in the pursuit of conservation goals, reflects the post-political and post-democratic condition identified in Chapter 2.

Another parallel with the post-political is that these tendencies in conservation are seen to be technocratic (Grandia 2007). Yet 'technocratic solutions' risk negative social and ecological consequences, with local communities not benefitting from projects (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 436). The findings outlined above would indeed seem to suggest that these kinds of processes are unfolding in Belize. The reality on the ground is much messier than the ideal outlined above, however (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 435). I did indeed encounter tensions and messiness in accounts of the unfolding of neoliberal processes in Belize, as is further outlined later in the Chapter. I shall now outline the conservation activities I encountered in Belize, although it should become clearer that there are implications of these for both climate change and an exploration of the post-political condition.

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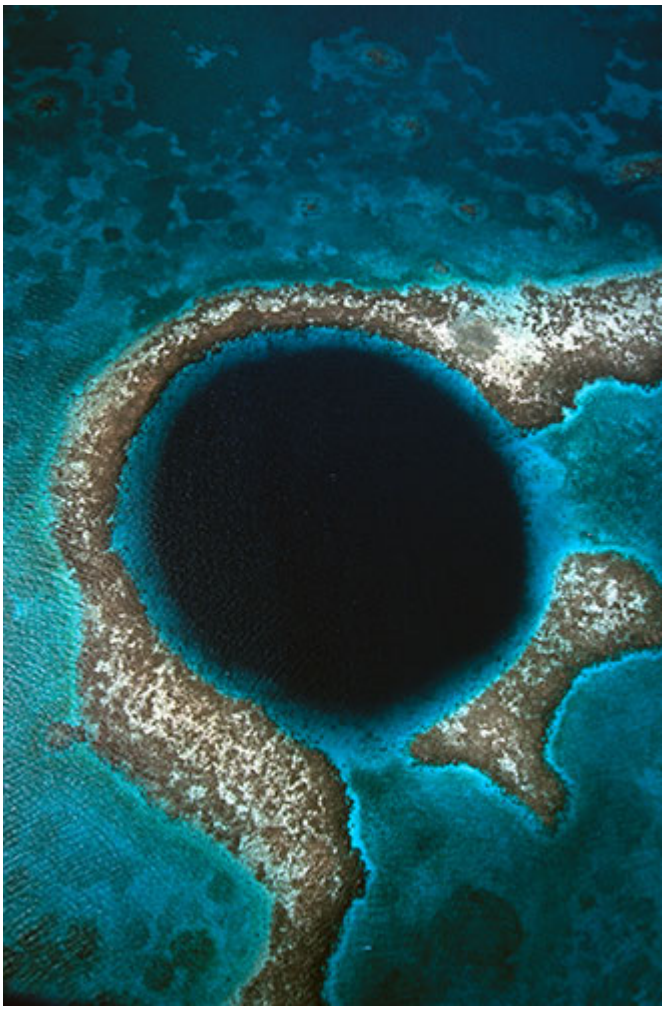
[54] As explored in relation to forests and REDD below.

Conservation in Belize

Picture 31: Lamainai Lizard

(Lizard at the sacred Maya site of Lamainai – Belize is home to considerably bio-diverse fauna and flora. Source: Joanne Ashworth.)

In their history of conservation in Belize, Young and Horwich (2007) identify a range of range of legislation and management agreements governing conservation. Belize's independence from colonial Britain, which took place in 1981, helped to spur on conservation (Young and Horwich 2007). Colonialism in Belize is discussed more fully below. In the 1990s, the spread of environmental concern that accompanied the Rio Summit was also felt in activism in Belize (Clarke 2009: 55). International processes have been instrumental in establishing conservation efforts in Belize, then. Indeed, the Belize Audubon Society, an offshoot of the Florida Audubon Society, was particularly influential in establishing protected areas in Belize (Young and Horwich 2007). Elsewhere the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated the Belize Barrier Reef (pictured below) as a World Heritage Site in 1996, and an expansion in marine conservation followed. Whereas once the barrier reef offered protection to buccaneers and pirates, now it is protected for its biodiversity.



Picture 32: The Blue Hole

(Picture of the 'Blue Hole' in Belize's barrier reef. A popular deep-sea diving site and hence often used in marketing. Source: Christian Fevrier/bluegreenpic/Rex Feature http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/gallery/2010/jun/03/natural-disasters-guatemala#/?picture=363335092&index=2)

Belize has a forest cover of 69% of which 52% are designated as protected areas, the majority for extractive purposes (Young and Horwich 2007). The first nature reserve was established in 1928, and in 1964 the government, under pressure from international conservation organisations, increased the protection of Belize's forests (Young and Horwich 2007). The Protected Area Conservation Trust (PACT) was established in 1996 and is a statutory body for conservation funded through an exit tax on visitors who enter Belize (Young and Horwich 2007).

Following wider trends for the devolution of environmental governance (Swyngedouw 2010a: 225), the management of Belize's protected areas usually

involves NGOs in various co-management agreements with government ministries (Clarke 2009; Westby 2010; Young and Horwich 2007; Young 2008).[55] The co-management of protected areas is defined as 'the equal sharing of power and responsibility between government and a local community unit, with advisory involvement of an NGO where possible and desired, in the management of a protected area by members living on, near or adjacent to it' (Young and Horwich 2007:140). An example is the agreement signed by subsistence farmers pledging to help protect black howler monkeys (pictured below) with the formation of the Community Baboon Sanctuary in 1985, for instance. Young and Horwich (2007: 131) say that this project has been held up as a model for other rural communities who 'realized that they too could participate in the growing conservation/ecotourism movement'.

Picture 33: Howler Monkey

(Howler Monkey at the Community Baboon Sanctuary Belize. Source: http://www.howlermonkeys.org/2012/02/baboon-sanctuary-featured-in-bbc-travel-article/)

Worth mentioning in relation to the instrumentalism of post-political practices, is that much of the dialogue about conservation in Belize focuses on the *management* of protected areas and other conservationist efforts, aimed at 'systematic rationalisation' (Young and Horwich 2007). Indeed, according to Clarke (2008), the management framework for marine areas in Belize has developed in such ways as to prioritise 'bio-ecological' considerations at the

[55] I analyse the role of NGOs in more depth below.

expense of human cultural values and belief systems.[56] Management is apparently needed to help counter the threats to conservation in Belize.

According to Young (2008: 18) the threats to conservation in Belize include: 'high deforestation rates, improper solid waste management, rapid coastal development, increasing poverty, weak institutional and legal frameworks, and the recent discovery of sweet crude oil' (Young 2008: 18). Young and Horwich (2007: 143) also identify 'climate change, cruise tourism, ecotourism, escalating poverty and crime, pollution… and rampant deforestation' as being threats to Belize's natural resources and protected areas. In addition, another apparent threat to conservation is community 'misuse'. In efforts to counter these threats a significant aspect of the conservation activities I encountered in Belize was community or stakeholder participation or engagement. It is to examples and accounts of these that I shall now turn my attention.

3. Community engagement with conservation

Nearly all of the organisations and institutions I encountered, including government departments, and the University of Belize's Environmental Research Institute, were involved in forms of community engagement. The range of activities cited as forms of engagement was broad, including: writing newspaper articles; making appearances on public television and radio; attendance at national events and festivals, such as La Ruta Maya, a popular canoe river race; and publishing leaflets, pamphlets, booklets and brochures. I collected a number of the latter, and also attended public meetings. In addition some groups arrange private meetings (with different stakeholders). In many accounts of the motivations or necessity for community engagement, the need to counter ignorance, as a perceived threat to conservation, was cited.

Raising awareness and presenting facts

In general people I spoke to feared that, due to low levels of formal education, the average Belizean would not understand the science of conservation if it were not translated into accessible language. In communicating the work of their scientific research institution, for instance, BZ7 was concerned about the presentation of material being 'in a form that can be passed on to the regular

[56] Often people seek to include the social aspects so as to be better able to manage their goals for instrumental reasons, however.

person out there … in a way that they can understand … in a way that's palatable to them'. BZ7 continues:

> … the public may not necessarily be aware of why scientists are conducting what studies, and why even the managers of protected areas are doing what they are doing.

The theme of needing to translate materials into accessible terms was repeated elsewhere. BZ5, who worked for a prominent conservation organisation, speaks about his organisation trying to direct their publications towards specific audiences. BZ1 a senior project manager at the United Nations Development Programme remarked on the need to speak to a number of different audiences:

> our language to the policy maker has to… make direct economic inferences… The language to the … grassroots is a little different. The language to the actual technocrats within the government is different. … it works best to engage these people within their selected niches …

These insights into how different audiences require different 'languages' is interesting given the discussion, in Chapter 2, which highlighted the fact that all engagement practices involve representations of the people with whom the engagers are attempting to engage (Barnett et al. 2012). Likewise, the suggestion that the technical and scientific language requires translating into terms that lay publics can understand echoes the tendencies highlighted in the discussion of deficit models of engagement in Chapter 2. It perhaps suggests that the models of engagement undertaken in Belize mirror the tendencies of deficit forms of engagement. It is also worth noting, though, that BZ1 is reflexive in her acknowledgement of the contrasting requirements of audiences indicating the fact that actors do not uncritically buy-in to the processes which they are involved with. Indeed, people were generally quite reflexive in their accounts of their activities. BZ1 continues:

> … when you are developing interventions for communities sometimes they may not see very plainly their part within the document because you need to use the wonderful, sexy words that the donor wants to hear … A lot of the time we are saying the exact same thing. But because we need to speak different languages to different people, some of the people, the clientele get lost in the discussions.

It seems, then that pragmatism was required because people said that the work they were able to do was limited by a lack of resources. Others made similar points. The language of donors is hard for stakeholders to engage with, in spite of the fact that these same donors stipulate engagement as part of their funding requirements. Practitioners must be pragmatic**,** therefore, in attempting to make the most of the structural contexts within which they are working in order to bridge different interests.

In keeping with the idea that lay people might not be informed enough in the necessary language of conservation or development projects, many of those I spoke to who were involved in public engagement in Belize claimed their work was largely about presenting facts. BZ2 of the Belize Coalition to Save Our Natural Heritage (hereafter the Coalition), a pressure group of NGOs established in opposition to proposed oil drilling[57], said that, in their public meetings or public presentations about the risks of proposed oil drilling, they aimed to:

> provide information … in an unbiased view … because we want people to get information and make up their own mind.

Such comments suggest that actors had faith in publics' capacities to reach sound judgements when presented with the necessary information.

As part of the Coalition's opposition to drilling offshore and in protected areas they ran a campaign to trigger a referendum on the issue. The slogan they adopted was '*learn, sign, vote*'. They attended big public events and took out ads in the popular press to try and get the 17,000 signatures required to force a referendum. I asked BZ2 whether if in only presenting 'the facts' there was a risk of people voting against them. She replied that:

> When people hear [that for] 10cents/acre for land the company can come and pay because we have oil. We don't have to put any spin on that … everybody puts a spin on everything. But we try not to spin it as much as possible cos then the opposing side can always spin what you have done. But when you have facts it's hard to spin facts.

These claims that NGOs' roles are to provide facts and that meetings are informative rather than normative was somewhat called into question by the disagreements I witnessed between NGOs and Government's accounts of the

[57] I look at this specific example in more detail below.

'facts'. Indeed two representatives of the Department of Environment accused some members of the Coalition of deliberately misleading the public. Even apparently 'objective' facts were a point of disagreement then. Meanwhile, BZ6 suggests that:

> it's only when people realise the true value of our natural resources, that they would be able to take action. You know we want to empower people. Give them the facts … If you have the right information you can make the right decision.

The idea that people need to be educated about the facts in order to realise or appreciate the 'true' value of their lands, and then be more invested in protected areas management and conservation, was echoed by others I spoke to. BZ11, for example, suggested that 'the key thing is to raise the awareness, raise their consciousness, train them and then involve them in the resource management'. Given the disagreements that took place over 'the facts', however, I would suggest that educating people about natural resource management was not as neutral a process as was being presented. Indeed the idea that people would make particular decisions given the 'right information' implicitly assumes that conservation processes are inherently beneficial, which is complicated in practice, as explored later in the chapter. It also suggests that there is a belief in a broadly beneficial investment in finding ecologically-sound solutions.

It was not merely NGOs who saw lack of education as being linked to unsustainable behaviour in and around protected areas, though. Forestry Officer, BZ3, described steps the Forestry Department were taking to try and educate people about the laws around legitimate activity in protected areas, implying that publics did not adequately understand political policymaking procedures.

In sum, there was an tendency towards representing communities in Belize as being ignorant, and of 'ordinary people' as not having the necessary expert knowledge, instead being in need of some form of education, retraining, or reskilling in order to meet the agendas of NGOs, funding agencies, or the government. This tendency towards 'including' problematic publics in the governance of conservation mirrors the kind of consensus-seeking populism outlined in Chapter 2 as being a key feature of the post-political condition. The calls for education about neutral facts is similar to the depoliticised preference for assumedly neutral, 'scientific technocracy', consensus free from political conflict, and top-down and technocratic forms also highlighted in Chapter 2 (Swyngedouw 2010: 223). Wynne (2008) has noted, however, that the science

on which engagement is based is rarely called into question. Moreover, given that in Belize the facts themselves were sometimes contested it is questionable how far neutrality is achievable.

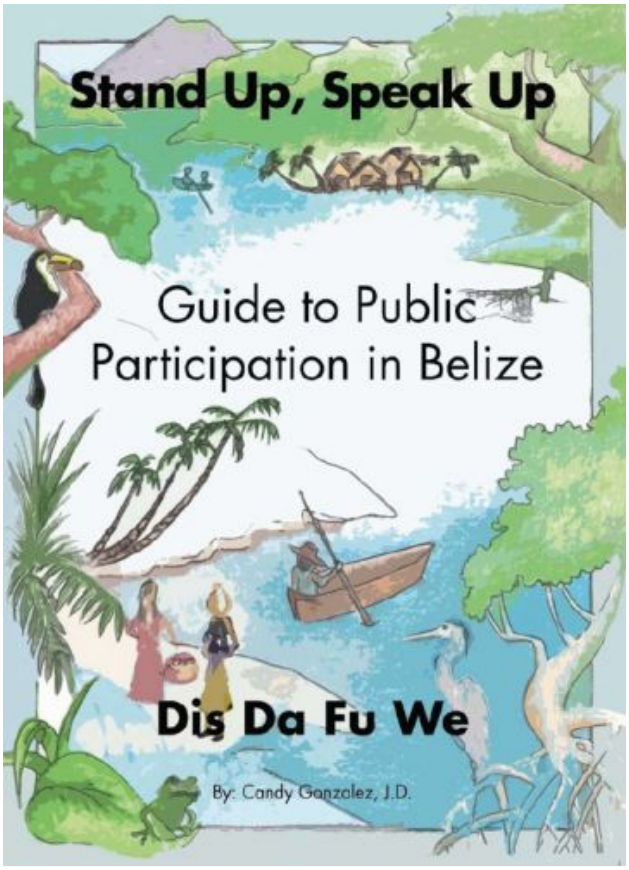
Other studies in Belize, such as Few's (2005: 155) investigation, noted that top-down managerialism was persistent in the consultation processes (see also Grandia 2007). Few (2005) also found that communities' contributions to engagement processes were often misrepresented. According to Few (2005: 156) this 'controlling, managing and 'containing' [of] dissent' happened as part of the management of dissent in order to meet preconceived planning goals. Yet Igoe and Brockington (2007: 444) point out that conducting discussions in technocratic language can be exclusionary, or patronising, especially where local people's opposition to projects is framed as them being unable to understand or value the projects in appropriate ways (see also Faust and Berlanga 2007). An image of Belizeans' understandings of environmental and conservation issues as being inadequate, and of communities as being in need of education, was part of the narrative of justification for the activities of NGOs.

Politics and political will

NGOs were commonly held to be representatives of the many local communities who live on or near lands (now) designated as protected areas. NGOs' roles were partly justified on the basis of their local knowledge, and them representing of the concerns of stakeholders. As BZ1 remarked: 'Communities have grown to trust' particular organisations, hence 'it is also a lot easier for one of these [NGO] groups to engage their community than [outside agencies such as the] UNDP or even the Government of Belize'. Not all people I spoke to viewed this responsibility favourably, though. BZ4, for instance, was critical of the government for neglecting to take responsibility for educating communities. BZ5, similarly, argued that it should not be the responsibility of the NGOs to find alternative livelihoods for communities. In addition, Belizean political culture was cited by a number of respondents as a contributing factor in the necessity for NGO action.

An account of Belizean society provided by a few of the people I spoke to was one of it being relatively politically passive. BZ9, for instance, talked about the role of her organisation as being about countering the fact that 'people have become so conditioned to not realise that their voice matters'. One activist was envious of UK organisations such as Greenpeace, and remarked to me that Belizeans were not radical enough and needed to be more confrontational in

order to have more of an impact. According to BZ7 from the University of Belize, Belizeans are discouraged from questioning or challenging authority. BZ9 makes a similar point: '… people stay ignorant when they feel that their voice does no good … people are frightened because their children lose scholarships and they lose their jobs.' So there were tangible limits perceived with regards to 'speaking out'. Hence suggestions that: 'you need to have, I guess a group of core people who say it doesn't matter … not everybody has to be the front person' (BZ9). A guide to public participation produced by Belize Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (BELPO), entitled 'Dis Da Fi We' is an example of an attempt to counter this perceived political illiteracy.



Picture 34: Guide to Public Participation in Belize

(This guide is produced by Belize Institute of Environmental Law and Policy BELPO. Author's copy.)

Meanwhile BZ3 remarked on the lack of protest over proposed oil drilling, saying:

> you wont see people on the streets as you probably would see them in England with placards … what you'd hear from the general public I think,

> is that if oil is going to bring money to the country, they prefer money. Cos what they want is to see improved social services. And they don't understand how that could be gotten from environmental resources.

BZ6 also remarks that people are reluctant to support conservation efforts without getting something back, and again cites Belizean culture as linked to this:

> I guess it's because of the culture, people in Belize are still on fixed on the idea of giving money to conservation … because people tend to think that if I'm paying $20 here, what do I get back? And I always have to tell people it's not about what you get, you're contributing to conservation in your country.

Meanwhile, in relation to oil drilling, BZ7 remarks that:

> … it's very rare for people to unite … and so it becomes fragmented, and for opposing side it's always easy to kind of blow off your opponents … if you can get one of them to be scared and the rest of them scatter and then you no longer have a coalition.

Yet according to some studies, attempts at resistance have successfully challenged aforementioned attempts to contain dissent in some instances (Few 2005; and Brondo and Bown 2011). Corresponding to the perceived lack of a culture of dissent in Belize, the characteristics of formal politics were also cited as a barrier to effective environmental action.

BZ11, who worked for a prominent international environmental organisation, said, for instance, that:

> we've been working with communities and they're really excited about conservation ... But at the same time some of the decisions are made at the top down, whereby a developer might come from abroad submit a proposal to the government who then give environmental clearance, which goes in contravention of what we're trying to do on the ground with communities.

Here NGOs' attempts to work with communities on conservation are suggested to come into conflict with the top-down processes of governments favouring developers interests.

A number of people cited political will, or its absence, as being a key aspect influencing the direction that different policies and practices take. BZ9, in turn, cites money and corruption as being why there is a lack of political will. Problems with the five-year parliamentary political cycle were also cited as contributing to the shortsightedness of governments (BZ9).

Belize is small enough that most ministers and MPs are relatively accessible to the population. A consequence of this system, however, is that a culture of 'clientism/clientelism', or patronage, can develop where politicians reward supporters with bribes or hand-outs (BZ7) (Nowottny 2007). As BZ5 sees it:

> … the political system controls people and most of the people who are affected by climate change are poor people. And these people … become dependent on politicians … if they want their water bill to be paid they go to a politician because they voted for that politician. So if that politician is against conservation it would be hard to get the support of those local communities...

Nowonttny (2007: 3) suggests that such major political problems as 'the exposure of acute corruption, political patronage continuing unabated, and the increasing disillusionment of the electorate with the artificial polarisation created by both political parties', have all emerged in Belize in the past decade. A reason for, this, she says, is that 'Belizean democracy, in short, has its roots in the colonial oppression of the past' (Nowonttny 2007: 3).

Even where political will, and state regulation, is present, some respondents I spoke to perceived that the neither the Belizean state, nor protected areas managers, were adequately equipped to enforce regulation due to a lack of resources and personnel (Clarke 2009: 18; Young and Horwich 2007; Young 2008: 23). A Forestry Department worker BZ3, for instance, commented that 'the weakness with this, our system of protected areas is that there is very low enforcement. So there's a lot of incursions into the protected areas.' Furthermore, 'you have a lot of local communities on the peripheral, the boundaries of the protected areas, and more and more we find them going in, actually going into the boundaries' (BZ3). BZ6, too, noted that there were

'...illegal activities in the protected areas … Like logging, like hunting in those protected areas is a problem…'.[58]

In order to achieve buy-in, or acquiescence, to conservation processes, some practitioners suggested that those being excluded from, or discouraged from using, the protected areas must benefit in some way from the enforcement in those areas. Otherwise those people might return to the areas they have been pushed out of, or move into forests that are less securely enforced, a process described as 'leakage' in the depersonalised, technocratic terminology of REDD (BZ3). This is partly why it is so important for these practitioners to try to persuade these groups to adopt lifestyles and value systems that are commensurate with the needs and aims of conservationists, market actors and the state, something discussed in more depth below.

Some also described these practices in terms of tensions perceived to exist between protected areas and people's needs. BZ6 said people are:

> aware of the law … [but] it has a lot to do with sustenance and poverty… it's very difficult to arrest someone who is hunting for something they're going to use for their family... we do exercise judgement when our park rangers are arresting people. You know if it's for sustenance, or if it's for sale depending on the quantity … but … it's very difficult to tell a poor man not to go hunting, not to do this when they need to because its where they get their next meal from; so that's another thing we have to fight with.

The tensions inherent in trying to conduct conservation work in these contexts are highlighted by this quote. Elsewhere, Young (2008: 22) notes how poverty in Belize forces people to rely on substance agriculture where they 'squat on and farm public lands'.

This discussion all relates Duffy's (2000) linking of ecotourism to the clandestine political interest groups of a 'shadow state' in Belize, and the associated drugs trafficking which takes places there. In turn, Cupples (2012: 20) speaks about this as being related to 'the general crisis of sovereignty'. In Belize these matters are also connected to the military patrol of protected areas which border Guatemala due to the on-going border dispute there (Nowottny 2007), and the claims that forests are illegally invaded for logging, trafficking, border crossing or migration, and hunting (Young 2008:20). The Belize Defence

[58] Whilst the limiting of incursions of 'ignorant' community groups into protected areas might seem like a positive goal with regards to ecological protection, there are political and ethical implications of this kind of management approach, as is discussed later in the present chapter.

Force (BDF), a military force partly trained by the British Army, works in protected areas to assist with enforcement. Ybarra (2012: 481) calls the processes where the military is involved in the enforcement of protected areas 'coercive conservation'. Additionally, Ybarra (2012), shows how the 'the long history of denying rights to indigenous peoples in Mesoamerica' can be linked to the designation of groups of Guatemalan forest inhabitants as 'suspect citizens' or 'potential insurgents'. Representations such as these were introduced as part of a discourse of concern about the jungle as a dangerous and vulnerable place in need of military protection as part of the war on drugs and concerns about squatters. In this way, the needs of conservation can become entangled with wider geopolitical ones. A possible problem is, however, that some indigenous communities do not acknowledge state borders. The role and character of NGOs in conservation and development practices warrants further scrutiny given that they occupy an important role in relationships between communities, governments, conservation and development.

4. NGOs, conservation and development in Belize

While NGO and government actors sometimes claimed a neutral position as representatives of community groups, it was noted in Chapter 2 that some critics have suggested that they are often implicated in neoliberal processes by facilitating neoliberal models of development (Catney and Doyle 2011; D'Cruz and Satterthwaite 2005; Davis 2006). As the commodification of commons comes to be understood as the best vehicle for conservation, and with financially struggling governments seeking resources, NGOs can get caught up in processes of privatisation and decentralisation, often entering into arrangements with for profit enterprises (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Seagle 2012; Westby 2010). It is partly because of a lack of resources supporting conservation (and development) [59] that forms of 'hybrid governance' arrangements can appear as enabling participants to be able to 'eat one's conservation cake and have development desert too' (Grandia 2007; Igoe and Brockington 2007:434).[60] It was noted in Chapter 2 that these arrangements are suggested to be a key part of the functioning of neoliberalism (also Duffy 2005).

[59] The suggestion that the necessary resources for conservation are lacking is a finding from Belize which is highlighted elsewhere in this chapter.

[60] This reflects a tendency for some NGOs becomeing increasingly corporate in their practices (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 439; Jasanoff 1997).

Arguably the aforementioned ideas about engagement rest on particular understandings of development, which in turn can be explored in terms of their implicit models of society. As Ybarra (2012: 482) remarks:

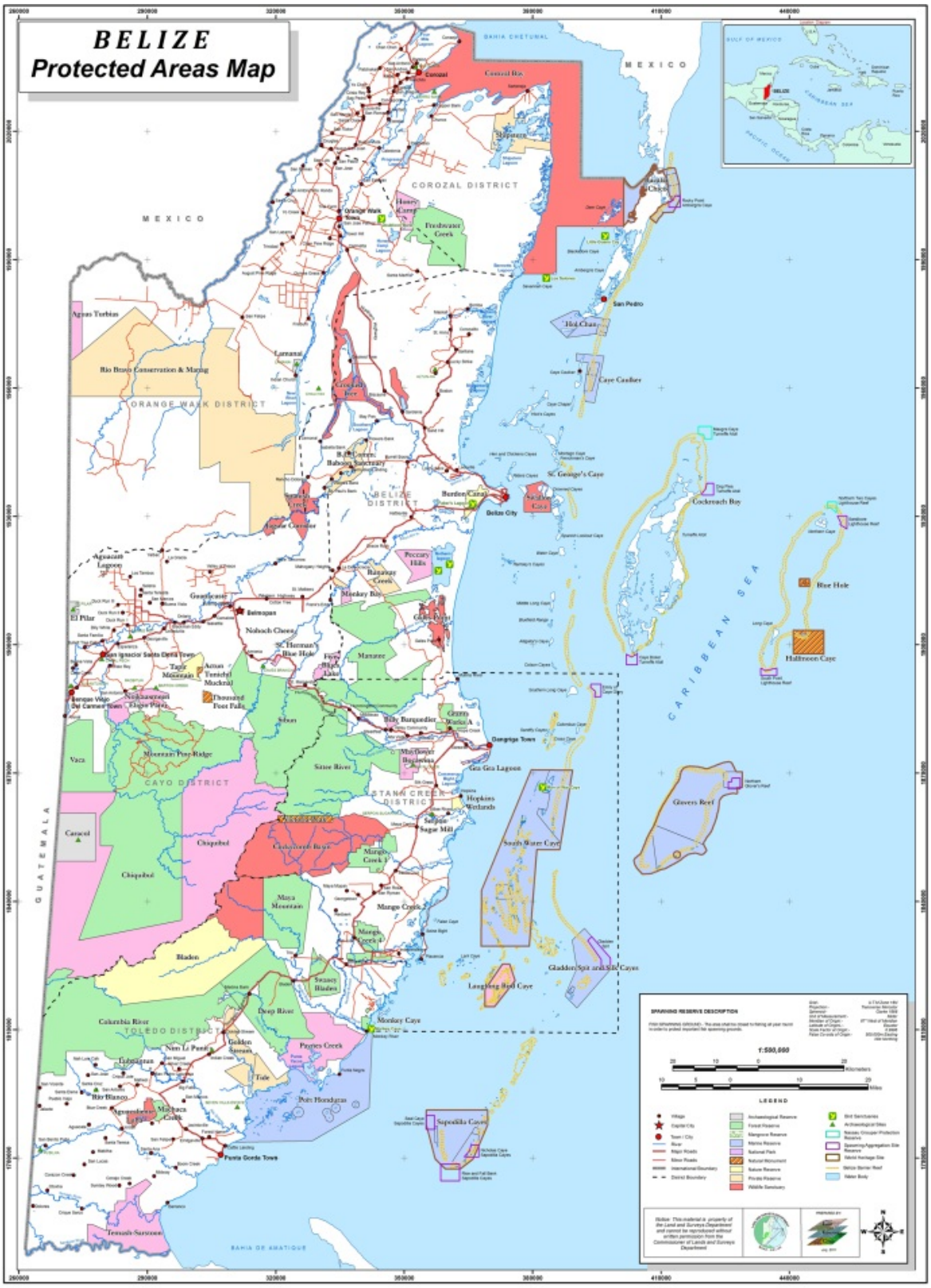
> conservation and development projects utilize a series of assumptions for their target communities in or near protected areas … questions of whether a target population is indigenous; has or wants 'traditional' or 'sustainable' livelihoods; and/or is a marginalized population that merits special protection are hotly debated.

Likewise, Duffy (2005: 313) found that particular notions of environmental science, ecosystems, and markets, are mobilized in efforts to create and enforce trans-boundary marine conservation areas in and around Belize. These arrangements operate with a 'clear neoliberal market rationale' where they assume that 'conservation must pay its way' via income from tourism, for instance (Duffy 2005: 313). A number of researchers caution against the optimism accompanying the claim that conservation and sustainable livelihoods are compatible with neoliberal processes, however (Igoe and Brockington 2007:433; Kitagawa and Momsen 2005).

Conservation in Belize, for instance, is based on a system of protected areas management that strictly regulates peoples' use in accordance with specific development ideals. NGO manager, and local community representative, BZ4, suggested, for example, that there was a 'need to change people's culture so they're more business minded'.[61] This was because people need to be moved away from forest- or marine-resource based subsistence lifestyles. Hence, BZ4 talked about 'encouraging our farmers to engage in better agricultural practices', such as 'slash and mulch' as an alternative to slash and burn. Meanwhile BZ12 said:

> we try to promote alternative forms of livelihoods for them other than using the resources of the protected areas, so … we have to provide them with training with skills … Some of the communities have the attitude that when they see us coming that they think we have money and we can save them: we are trying to get them to not think that way … We won't be babying them all the time...

[61] BTY worked for an NGO that worked with Maya communities around protected areas in southern Belize.



Picture 35: Map of Protected Areas in Belize

(Source: http://www.pactbelize.org/ProtectedAreas.aspx)

In these instances, then, it would indeed seem that the NGO actors are involved in processes that encourage particular rationalities among their communities.

Ecotourism is frequently portrayed as an alternative to depending on the forest for resources (Duffy 2005). Speaking about assisting in finding alternative sources of income or subsistence, such as by retraining community members as tour guides, BZ12 remarks:

> … we encourage them to sell [craft products] and set up little gift shops and manage it ... it's hard for fishermen they don't have any education … they drop out of school and then they go fishing for life ... to build them up to do some sort of alternative is very difficult ... we started community banking in 2 of … our fishing communities… they are shareholders and the point is for them to use that money to improve their livelihood … For fishermen its about constantly educating them, to try and get them out of the protected areas, the marine protected areas doesn't have a fence … so it's a lot of work.

Picture 36: View from Lamimani

(Lamianai is a Maya site open to the public and from the top a view of surrounding rainforest and lagoon is possible. Photo credit: Joanne Ashworth)

Hence education and retraining were seen as key to fostering approaches to life that would aid particular, market and money orientated, versions of conservation and development. Engaging in savings is often encouraged in development because it helps to develop fiscal discipline (D'Cruz and

Satterthwaite 2005; Mitlin and Patel 2005). BZ4 also identified potential obstacles to encouraging farmers to see themselves as market actors in economies:

> one of the biggest challenge[s] is the change in the mental approach to farming… most of our farmers used to be subsistence now we want to make them into commercial farmers … they need to treat it as a business when the traditional farmer doesn't care whether he makes a profit.[62]

Similarly, when discussing climate change and the potential for establishing a REDD scheme in Belize, BZ3 was aware that the Maya did not see value in the same terms as required to enforce these schemes:

> the Mayans … don't want 500, 600, 700 US dollars some of them have no concept of money … they just want the resources to live … carbon credits doesn't mean much for them.

Here BZ3 expresses scepticism about monetised versions of value in relation to indigenous practices. Any simplistic idea that NGOs are straightforwardly acting as neutral in undertaking community engagement is also called into question in light of BZ4's comments. The above quotes reflect the wider tendency for NGOs to have been incorporated into processes of neoliberal development. That this incorporation involves public engagement around technical information, such as education in how markets function, suggests that it reflects the kinds of post-political processes identified elsewhere and outlined in Chapter 2.

A number of other references were made to the need to encourage market-oriented world-views and practices among people I spoke to. For BZ4, the justification for this the wider social changes away from forms of barter towards the necessity for cash, as well as a need to counter people's dependence on foreign imports; both of which can in turn themselves be connected to the increase in neoliberalisation globally, and the pressures for dependent economies to follow these models of development.

Part of the focus on changing livelihoods was about proving that development was attainable alongside organisations' conservation aims: all the

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[62] Clarke (2009: 58) reports on the gendered dimensions of changes in livelihood practices in Belize. She notes that women were previously much more involved in subsistence fishing, with men typically being the ones who would fish for market, whereas women now tend to pursue careers and were much less likely to fish. This is another example of a shift from subsistence-based lifestyles to more market-dependent forms.

while trying not to neglect or exclude the communities they worked with. Some people I spoke to even went as far as to suggest that development would not work without conservation, and that tying livelihoods to environmental concerns would therefore be a 'win-win' scenario 'and at same time addressing this climate change' (BZ4). The somewhat ambivalent challenges of trying to uphold such a potentially conflicted position are unsurprising. BZ4 is having to negotiate potentially conflicting goals.

The aforementioned comments about needing to encourage a new kind of market-orientated valuing system are interesting in light of BZ4's comment that Maya farmers in Belize did not previously farm to sell, but rather that food security used to be a priority. The values of traditional Maya farmers were to 'work in harmony with the natural resources'. He continues:

> The forest for indigenous communities is not just trees … other groups would go 'oh there's trees, I could make x amount of dollars selling lumber.' For indigenous communities, yes we could get housing material, but we also get food, medicine, spiritual values all these things. So it's much more than just timber…

I would suggest that there is evidence of ambivalence in comments such as these. On the one hand people are concerned about the decline of traditional lifestyles, but on the other, there is a perceived necessity to engage with market practices, as these market practices apparently offer the most hope for funding conservation work. The finding that NGOs experience tensions in attempting to find alternative livelihoods mirrors the findings of similar studies and claims made in the literature cited above.

According to Igoe and Brockington (2007: 442) in conservation 'local people are increasingly seen as having fundamentally flawed relationships to both nature and the market'[63], and they must become 'eco-rational subjects' both in an *eco*nomic and *eco*logical sense (Goldman 2001 in Igoe and Brockington 2007: 442). According to Igoe and Brockington (2007: 442) this subjectivity hinges on:

> 1) having legally guaranteed property rights, which: a) gives them the authority and incentive to protect natural resources as 'environmental stakeholders', and b) gives them the capital and/or collateral to enter into conservationoriented business ventures; 2) being able to realise the

[63] Interestingly, there is currently debate over whether Classical Maya civilizations collapsed because they were environmentally destructive (Ybarra 2012: 483).

> present and projected market value of the nature in which they live; 3) being able to acquire the skills, technology, and ethics of accountability that are necessary to care for nature as prescribed by the transnational interpretive communities that oversee these transformations; and 4) gaining the skills that are also necessary to acquire jobs in the tourist sector (Child 2000).

Indeed, Cupples (2012: 11) suggests that some of the: 'framings of indigenous peoples[64] and climate change[65] generated by NGOs … perpetuate neocolonial fantasies of indigenous peoples as incapable of adapting to modernity and doomed to disappear' (see also Cárdenas 2012: 309; Seagle 2012: 447).

It has been suggested that representations such as these are key in attempts to justify neoliberalisation. Inexperienced people are not always very well equipped to become market actors, however, and can be taken advantage of even when formal property rights exist (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 443; Berlanga and Faust 2007: 443). Moreover, financial recompense might not constitute sufficient compensation for the loss of access to land (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 443), particularly if part of that loss is spiritual. In addition, tourism is a fickle industry which is subject to fashion trends, often leaving those who rely upon it vulnerable and less self-sufficient than previously (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 443). Furthermore, 'neoliberalised conservation often devalues local environmental knowledge and undermines local environmental initiatives' (Igoe and Brockington 2007: 443).

In contrast to the optimistic hopes for a reconciliation of environmentalism and market rationality other researchers have noticed the limitations of these attempts. Ybarra (2012: 482) suggests that depoliticisation occurs if conflicting rights claims are marginalised during the designation of forest territories as protected areas. Others too have critiqued 'how boundary work in conservation serves to criminalise local resource users' (Ybarra 2012: 482). This parallels Catney and Doyle's (2011: 185) application of the post-political where they remarked on what they call a 'post-materialist 'fortress' approach, [which] sees people as the main environmental degraders, and seeks wilderness parks devoid of human imprints'. Very particular versions of nature, conservation, livelihoods and lifestyles are imagined when NGOs and others engage in development and conservation projects then.

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[64] As victims.

[65] As transcendent and teleological megahazard.

In sum, then, the forms of development to which people must relate are shaped by broad political processes. In looking at what livelihoods are deemed appropriate by those conservationists, NGO workers and government representatives discussed above, there is evidence of the logics of depoliticisation, whereby actors are increasingly pressured into abandoning existing value systems, and adopting instead the vocabularies of markets and commodities. My research provides more detail on some of these imagined aspects of action though, by highlighting ways in which actors are often reflexive, and somewhat conflicted, as they undertake action in practice. In order to better understand the form that conservation takes in Belize, and to account for as to why there are pressures towards apparently neoliberal processes, it is necessary to briefly look at the ways in which Belize's colonial history may have influenced its development.

5. Understanding Belizean Development

Belize is a former British colony and as such the structure of its economy and society is fairly representative of other Caribbean former colonies in terms of: its dependence on foreign markets; its relative underdevelopment; and the legacies of colonial administrative political structures (Bolland 1988; Richardson 2007). Unlike many of the Caribbean colonies, though, Belize was never a plantation economy (Bolland 1988; Duffy 2000; Richardson 2007; Wood 2003). Instead it was predominantly the expropriation of wood that fuelled the extraction of wealth from Belize (Richardson 2007).

The end of formal colonial administration occurred relatively recently in Belize, and it was in 1981 that British Honduras became the independent state of Belize (Bolland 1988). Young and Horwich (2007) pinpoint 1959 as the year when large scale agriculture replaced forestry as the primary income earner in Belize, and the 1980s saw a big expansion of commercial agriculture, with a growth in foreign investment in citrus and banana plantations (Clarke 2009: 15). Now, not unlike many other former colonies, Belize's main industry is agriculture, particularly the cultivation of citrus, banana, and sugar cane (Monnereau and Helmsing 2011:9; Richardson 2007).

The growth in foreign investment in Belize in the 1980s occurred, not coincidently, alongside the rise of neoliberalism globally. Richards (2011: 7-9) comments on the political influences of neoliberal ideology and structural adjustment strategies in Belize, and points out that their role in Belize's development. Policies such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

(GATT), to which Belize became a signatory in 1997, have been used to facilitate market rationalities, for instance (Richards 2011: 8). The establishment of Belize as an offshore banking centre is representative of both deregulation processes, and the importance of international investment, in shaping the contemporary Belizean economy (Duffy 2000:552). All of this corresponded with independence, and with the privatization agenda of the then government (Key 2002:4). According to Monnereau and Helmsing (2011: 10) Belize's domestic elites, joined by foreign investors, exercise important controls on the country's political economy. Similarly, Duffy (2000: 550) shows how in Belize a 'shadow state', involving 'links between international capital and local elites, determines the direction of policy making', especially in relation to ecotourism and the environmental regulations required to facilitate it. Yet these government actors have been implicated in corruption, with popular 'feeling that the numerous privatisations of the 1990s and 2000s involved government politicians taking payments from the buyers' (Nowottny 2007: 12; also Richardson 2007: 41). The point of mentioning this is to indicate the fact that the form that development takes in Belize is shaped by the legacy of colonialism, and the enforced entry into international market processes that ensued in the wake of independence.

Tourism, meanwhile, became a national development priority for Belize in the 1980s (Duffy 2000: 556; Key 2002: 4). Young and Horwich (2007) suggest that, at this time, the 'partnership between tourism and conservation… set the stage for increasing the number of protected areas in Belize'. The industry expanded rapidly with many becoming involved in tourism related activity (Clarke 2009: 16), but without having much control over the directions of its growth, indicating the inherently unbalanced power relations at its base (Key and Pillai 2006). The rise of coastal tourism also contributed to a decline in traditional subsistence fishing by some coastal communities (Clarke 2009:104). Yet after initial interest in eco-tourism, Young (2008: 22) reports that in 2004 'the country took a noticeable shift from embracing ecotourism to preferring large-scale mass tourism' with cruise ships damaging the coast. One of the noted attractions to tourism is the insulation it might provide against economic shocks in their main or other areas of employment (Monnereau and Helmsing 2011). It was mentioned previously that development processes often do not proceed as planned, and can involve a degree of messiness. I shall now explore this suggestion with regards to tensions I encountered between actors in Belize.

6. Tensions in neoliberal development

'*Di stilles calf suck di mos milk*'[66]

In spite of some evidence of a tendency towards 'win-win-win' narratives of neoliberal development, I found that tensions existed between conservation and development priorities, with not all actors sharing the same perspective on particular versions of development. In spite, or perhaps partly because, of co-management agreements which link NGOs and government agencies, some NGO actors described more dependent or cooperative relationships between them and the government (BZ6), while others described their relationship as being regrettably, or even necessarily, more adversarial (BZ9).

'Development' is referred to by some people, BZ1 and the Government of Belize, for instance, as being key to improving Belizean's lives. Others, however, saw development as potentially coming into conflict with local communities' interests, or with aspirations to avoid environmental degradation. BZ9 was critical of what she termed 'runaway development', for example, and argued that developers are ignorant about the role and significance of local ecosystems: 'they have no understanding of what mangroves do', and yet 'they're looking to develop at any cost'. This echo's comments in Clarke's (2009: 57) study of fishing communities where she noted that: 'community members feel that no matter how much they opposed major developments based on the potential damage to the environment, the government would ignore their concerns and approve such developmental projects anyway.' By contrast, a representative from the Department of Environment had a fairly favourable image of the environmental impact assessments (EIAs) required as part of planning permission for developments. Kitagawa and Momsen (2005), meanwhile, warn that successes in tourism and development can spur further development in turn putting pressure on ecological commitments.

Several of the relationships between environmental organisations and government ministries were adversarial according to some. A number of people I spoke to indicated that tensions emerged at the political (ministerial), rather than technical (civil service) level. BZ3 even suggested that technicians might be more allied to conservationists' aims. According to BZ3 and BZ5, it was a

[66] Kriol proverb, literally: 'the stillest calf sucks the most milk'; meaning the uncomplaining person often gets the most out of a situation (Young 1988:7).

clause for ministerial discretion written into all legislation, akin to a power of veto over control of protected areas, meaning that government ministers have ultimate discretion over co-management agreements, which exacerbated tensions between development and conservation. BZ5 feared that the government might seek to take over protected areas if they perceived them to be a good revenue earner, warning that: 'it can be done with the stroke of a pen from the minister of natural resources'. Some thought that 'the legislation in Belize, like in most countries, are created to enable loopholes for policymakers' (BZ2). So ministers could potentially de-reserve protected areas land without any public consultation. Similarly, scientist BZ7 suggested that the discretion of minister means some departments are better managed than others, which undermines governance in Belize: '…the laws are beautiful … But at the end of the day, it's not illegal for any minister to say "I say something different"'.

These sentiments recall the earlier points made about an apparent lack of political will. They also suggest a possible disconnect between democracy and ecology, something considered elsewhere by Blühdorn (2013). In short, what the above discussion perhaps suggests is that even where a general tendency towards neoliberalism might be evident, the dynamics of people's practices complicate this tendency, in so far as they challenge or counter the tendency. An illuminating example of the tensions and conflicts discussed above materialised in the form of the debate over oil drilling in Belize. It is to an account of this debate, as I encountered it, that I shall now turn.

'Drill we will'…'is not Belize'?

Oil was first commercially exploited by Belize Natural Energy, Ltd (BNE) near the Mennonite community of Spanish Lookout in 2005 (Richardson 2007: 29). The discovery of oil there prompted hope among some that there might be reserves elsewhere in the country (Richardson 2007: 29). It also prompted fears about the ecological consequences of the accompanying extractive process. In 2006, the Sarstoon-Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM), an NGO and protected area co-manager, issued a legal challenge to the government in the Supreme Court over its granting of a permit for seismic testing for the exploration for oil in the Sarstoon-Temash National Park in Southern Belize which is surrounded by Maya and Garifuna communities (Gonzalez 2007; Moore 2007). This was only to be the start of tensions over oil drilling in Belize however, as according to Gonzalez (2007: 121) exploration has continued 'outside the law'.

A number of factors contribute to the scepticism and caution around the prospects surrounding the discovery of oil in Belize. There was fairly widespread scepticism from my respondents and in the literature, for instance, about the scope for ordinary Belizeans to share in the benefits resulting from the discovery of oil (Gonzalez 2007; Richardson 2007; Young 2008). Partly because of '[a] string of corruption scandals [which] have left the general public somewhat jaded about the likelihood of an equitable distribution of the wealth generated by the country's natural resources, especially oil' (Richardson 2007: 29). Richardson (2007: 29) comments that establishing the export of oil in Belize: 'has been accomplished with a similar level of legal and contractual instability and low returns that have been associated with other economic developments, such as privatization of the public assets'. In addition, Belize lacks the capacity to refine the oil (Pisani 2007:63), and some respondents were rather sceptical that Belize would have the infrastructure or expertise to ensure that drilling could take place safely, insofar as any drilling is 'safe'. Respondent BZ3 reflects the apprehension that a number of respondents had about the proposed oil drilling:

> if we're doing all of this, and taking this risk and basically giving up a world heritage site … then I would at least want to see some benefits coming in to the country, but I know for a fact that that won't be the case, because it's happened over and over again, that countries that are far larger than Belize weren't able to negotiate properly.

Elsewhere, BZ13 remarked that:

> it's very emotional right now, and people need to step back a little bit more … the science is being ignored... because the issue is more than just environment, the issue is economics too …who would benefit from it… in the first place, who would suffer if something happened to the environment? Poor! But who would benefit from it? Rich... And based on the history of where the oil was gotten out of the jungle before, there's almost few beneficiaries besides people who work for the company and the shareholders.

BZ13's comments signify a faith seemingly placed in the potential for objective science (technocracy) to help choose appropriate action. But BZ13 also acknowledges that oil drilling also entails broader questions about the uneven distribution of potential costs and benefits. BZ6, meanwhile, was worried about

what the drilling might do to Belize's environmental credentials which are crucial for its promotion as an eco-tourist location. Like others, BZ7 spoke in somewhat ambivalent terms about drilling:

> … oil at the moment is providing the only revenues that we have to be able to cover the super bond we owe in terms of our debt commitments … it's a scenario where as much as I would not want to see offshore drilling, or drilling in protected areas, I think we would probably have to arrive at a compromise.

These comments indicate the range of complex sentiments held by actors working in this context. Opposition or support to oil drilling is not clear-cut one way or another and so compromise between actors is suggested. According to Capital Weekly (2011: 3), though:

> one of the things most Belizeans, across all lines, political and otherwise seem to agree on— [is] that the government and people of Belize are not getting anything close to our fair share of revenues from the sale of petroleum by the only company producing oil in Belize, a company that is foreign-owned.

Interestingly, Belize's position as a small developing country is invoked both as a justification for drilling[67]; at the same time as being invoked as a reason why drilling might not be beneficial. As BZ7 puts it:

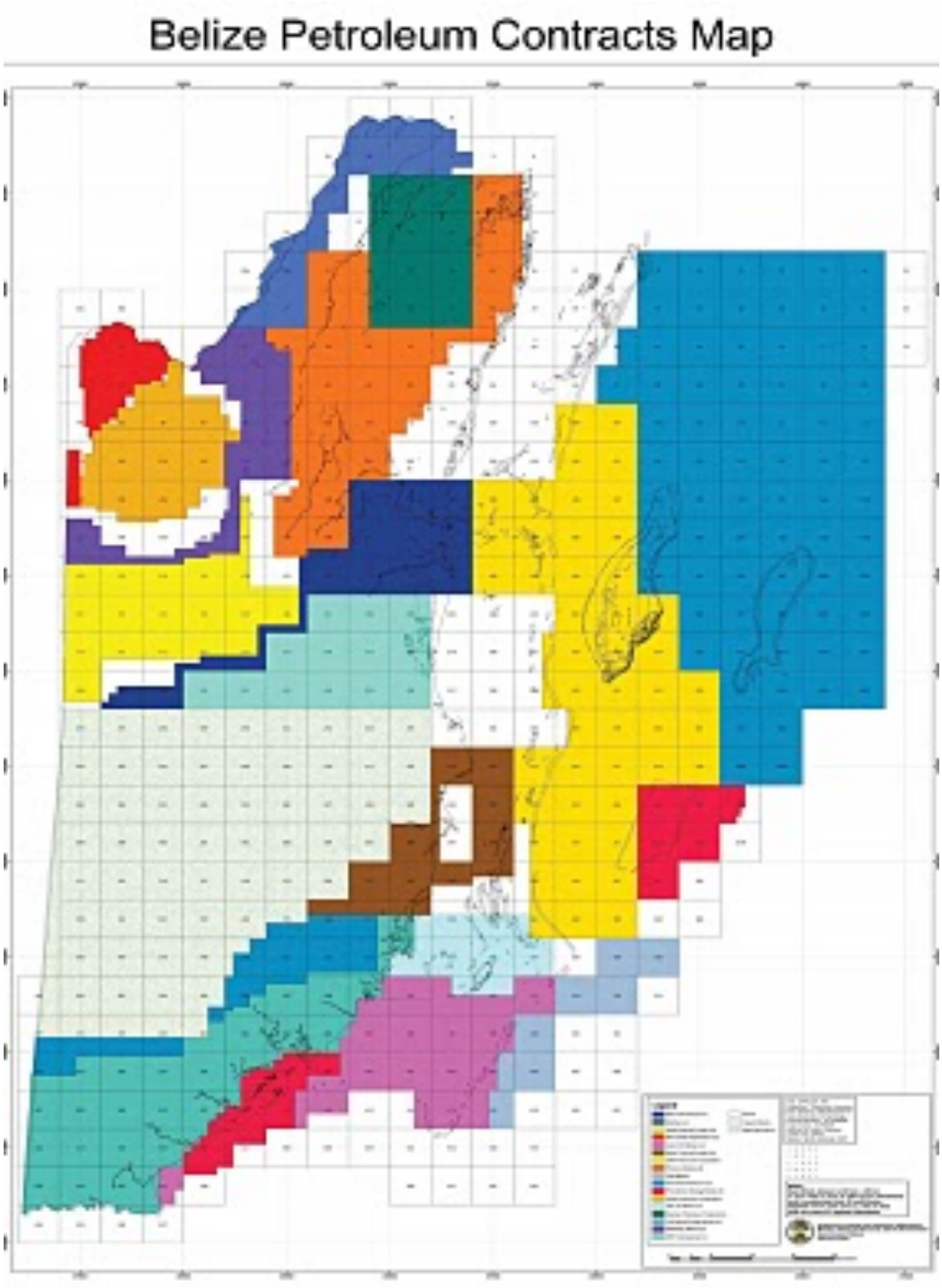
> …to me it isn't really about oil. It's about governance issues in the country and the fact that people don't trust the leaders, rightly so by some of the experiences that we've had...

On the other hand, however, BZ3 suggested that part of the attraction to oil drilling, over conservation, is the apparent ease of access to resources:

> …funding is there. You could just dig up this thing and sell it for a lot of money … what they're looking at is oil exploration as the solution to our economic [problems].

[67] Non-oil producing countries are much more vulnerable to global oil price shocks (Meeks 2007: 63), so it is possible to see why the Belizean government would seek to exploit this natural resource, 'Oil is an economic lifeline' for poor countries (The Commodity Note 2011:33).

Indeed even BZ9 who was opposed to drilling, agreed with the perceived need to cut the country's debt (BZ9). The pro-government paper, Capital Weekly (2011: 2), also linked potential oil revenues to the country's debt commitments (Capital Weekly 2011). None of the people that I spoke to linked the debt that Belize faces to the historical legacy of colonialism, though.



Picture 37: Petroleum Contracts Map

(This map depicts oil exploration concessions sold to oil prospectors, although in this version the concessions around the barrier reef have been reduced. Author's copy.)

The coincidence of the 2010 Gulf of Mexico BP oil spill, and the release of a map picturing the whole of Belize, including all protected areas and the coastline in and around the Great Barrier Reef area, carved up into oil exploration concessions helped to renew opposition to oil drilling in Belize. It sparked the formation of the Belize Coalition to Save Our Natural Heritage from a group of NGOs. BZ2 summarised the main goals of the Coalition:

> [1)] to secure a ban on oil exploration and exploitation in the offshore and protected areas … [2)] to recommend new legislation where it is needed and to strengthen existing legislation governing the oil industry … [3)] to ensure that there is equitable distribution of [oil] revenues towards Belize's national development. Particularly looking at addressing social issues, including education ... we want to ensure that the oil industry develops in a very sound, environmentally sound manner in Belize.

Picture 38: Logo of the Coalition

(Source: http://belizecoalition.wordpress.com/)

Picture 39: Referendum Banner

(Banner for the 'Vote No' campaign source: http://www.grandbaymen.com/blog/2012/03/07/belizeans-vote-against-offshore-oil-drilling/)

The campaign for a referendum on drilling in offshore and protected areas, which began whilst I was in Belize, was unprecedented being the first ever attempt to trigger a referendum since independence in Belize. In order to secure the referendum, the Coalition of NGOs with different priorities and approaches needed to work together in a somewhat tense and pragmatic alliance.

Some NGOs had stronger ties to government processes, such as the Audubon society one of whose members told me that 'because we are a senior NGO our expertise is always asked for [by government]' (BZ12). Other NGOs, however, such as SATIIM, mentioned above, have a history of conflict with the government. Unsurprisingly, then, SATIIM was one of the most vocal and confrontational members of the Coalition.[68] In contrast, BZ6, a representative of a big NGO implied that the threat of de-reservation of protected areas required caution in how that NGO acted. BZ6:

> …for us, it's very tricky … we have our protected areas to manage …. so we need to be very strategic … We've worked on a lot of controversial issues in the past and we've managed to come out well … we're about creating a balance between people and the environment and I think a lot of these radical groups need to understand that.

[68] I recently learnt that in 2013 SATIIM's co-management agreement has been cancelled by the government.

The different kinds of relationships with the government mapped on to differences in terms of what action Coalition partners were willing to take, and what action they called for from government. A distinction existed between those calling for a ban on *offshore* drilling, and those seeking a ban on drilling altogether. BZ4, for instance:

> There are different approaches. There are some groups who are very confrontational. My personal view is negotiation. But there are times the government has refused to negotiate … that's the time you may need to confront …

BZ7 comments on the reticence of organisations such as the Association of Protected Areas Managers (APAMO) to take overly confrontational action. According to her this was:

> very telling because they are supposed to have power in the fact that they are already a coalition itself of protected areas managers, but … they really shy away from making pointed opinions on, or giving views on certain issues.

Yet this results perhaps from fear '…of repercussions, and speaking your mind' (BZ7), given some NGOs' dependence on government for co-management arrangements. This recalls the earlier points about political will and Belizean culture. BZ9 linked the funding of NGOs to conservatism:

> some groups … are more conservative, I think they worry about their funding too much and they don't worry about the issue as much … we're more issue oriented than funding oriented. We're not gonna back down over funding and we're not gonna grovel over funding, and we're not gonna allow our funders to say that we shouldn't speak on a certain issue.

Interestingly, for BZ7, her institution had its own reasons for not commenting on the oil drilling case:

> I think for the betterment of Belize we wanna make sure that that credibility is fully established before we are out there putting positions on anything that, especially something that we don't work on. We are not measuring impacts of oil drilling. … in the long term I think that establishing that credibility and being that independent voice is more

> important to us than at the moment making a statement on the oil situation.

Perhaps such a statement indicates the perceived value of the kinds of objective, dispassionate knowledge that was suggested to be part of the post-political condition.

Elsewhere there was a sense of pragmatism in suggestions that different groups could play to their strengths and weakness:

> … we work at different levels and we just need to merge that dynamics to work to each other's strengths and that's being strategic … we all want the same thing, some will be the bulldog and some will be the snake who's smarter and do things differently (BZ6)

Although BZ1 suggested that the way in which the Coalition framed the discussion in terms of pro- and anti-drilling was polarising for those groups who were not opposed to drilling per se. BZ1 also suggested that adversarial approaches to the issue, and a lack of dialogue or discussion between the government and the Coalition, contributed to the tension and conflict. Such confrontation perhaps undermines the kinds of consensus-based populism that are features of the post-political condition, however.

Again, above BZ7 strikes a rather pragmatic tone. Even though BZ7 was critical of the confrontational/adversarial approach of some Coalition members, the ways in which both BZ2 and BZ9 spoke suggested that there was no alternative. BZ6 accepted that those groups which have room for manoeuvre will be able to, or need to, be more confrontational.

Tensions between NGOs and the government were amplified by language that was perceived as being confrontational by both, with the Prime Minister of Belize stating 'Drill we will', and members of the Coalition who claimed that 'offshore drilling, is not Belize!' (OCEANA Campaign slogan).

fact demonstrated by tensions raised over proposed oil drilling. BZ11 said that:

> there is a disconnect between government and civil society … government perceives civil society as attacking them, [while] civil society perceives government as not willing to act.

Similarly, BZ2 remarked that '…in any advocacy issue, government will try to conquer and divide, divide and conquer', such as by responding favourably to advocacy from one of the Coalition's partners, while criticising the more confrontational direct action undertaken by another.

An interesting finding was that, in spite of the link of oil consumption and production to climate change (Urry 2011), climate change was often not a direct concern of people I spoke to about oil in Belize. I did not expect this given that the extraction of oil connects to climate change in terms both of the emissions generated from using the oil, and in terms of the broader ecological implications of extraction in protected areas. Such a finding can perhaps be explained by reference to the limited contribution that countries in the region have generally made to causing climate change, and the disproportionate effect of its impacts.

In fact, generally links were not made between conservation and development to climate change explicitly. In part, however, the fact that I was surprised by this reveals something about my own approach to the topic, perhaps reflecting my somewhat naïve understanding of climate change as the paradigmatic ecological issue. Where climate change was mentioned it was often in terms of incorporating climate change into their existing activities, or in terms of dealing with the impacts of climate changes on communities' practices. BZ6, for instance, commented: 'now we look at how things are going and realise climate change is a buzz word and try to put that into the education that I am doing'. BZ11 was one of few to link climate change to conservation. She comments that:

> in 2006 we realised that climate change is a major issue… because all our conservation actions and our conservation investment could be compromised if we do not factor in the [climate] variability.

A number of people commented on the fact that the regional climate change centre (5Cs) was located in Belize and yet knowledge and awareness of climate change in the country was not as high as they might have expected given that fact. BZ6 thought that people were not necessarily seeing the effects of climate change and therefore it was hard to discuss the topic.

BZ7, however, thought that many people knew that climate change was having impacts in terms of changing patterns, especially those people working in agricultural or natural resource linked industries. Although people's knowledge of the technical aspects of climate change, or how to adapt to it, was claimed to be insufficient (BZ7). Indeed, BZ4 pointed out that the livelihoods of

the communities he worked with would be negatively impacted upon by climate change because they were subsistence farmers for whom changes in weather patterns would have a substantial impact (BZ4). He also remarked that some in these communities reported noticing changes in weather patterns which had otherwise been seen to be stable for generations (BZ4). In terms of the causes of climate change, BZ4 spoke of how slash and burn agriculture contributes to greenhouse gasses, although 'we don't contribute like the US or China or Canada to climate change and global warming' (BZ4). Hence, Belize should be more focussed on adaptation than mitigation (BZ7). Although, while there was an unsurprising focus on natural scientific framings of climate change, NWB pointed out that:

> we cannot just be looking at the ecological parts of the change, we need to factor in social dimensions

Echoing the points made elsewhere in the thesis and above, BZ11 also spoke of the importance of making sure that the information about climate change was provided in the right language for the intended audience: 'we had to put in it a language they they would be able to comprehend', by making reference to past storms and their impacts in order to connect with people's experiences.

Related to this, a prominent example of how market values might be encouraged via funding for conservation is the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) scheme. According to a number of authors, REDD is a good example of the processes of neoliberalisation in response to climate change, as discussed in Chapter 2. I shall explore REDD in Belizean context, after first discussing the historical significance of trees in colonialism and development in Belize.

Picture 40: Picture of Mahogany Tree in Belize

(55% of Belize is covered by rainforest. Mahogany was the main export expropriated by colonialists in their invasions from the 16th Century onwards. Author's photo.)

7. Tress and wealth: seeing REDD in Belize

Ever since the first British buccaneers in Belize built up lucrative logwood and mahogany[69] expropriation endeavours (Bolland 1988), Belize's economy and society have been shaped by the timber industry, 'which leased or owned most of the forested territory in British Honduras' during the colonial era (Steinberg 1998:411). Initial colonial government was largely concerned with ensuring that the path to extraction was as smooth as possible (Bolland 1988). Land was divided up between settlers, supporting and legitimising the often violent expulsion of indigenous populations; facilitating the forced transport of enslaved peoples from elsewhere in the British Empire and Africa; and, when slavery was outlawed, ensuring that there was a supply of cheap labour for work in the logging industry (Bolland 1988). At that time, in the eyes of the colonial authorities, the indigenous Maya appeared as a threat to the logging and export

[69] The former used in dyeing industry in overseas countries, while latter fed luxury furniture market.

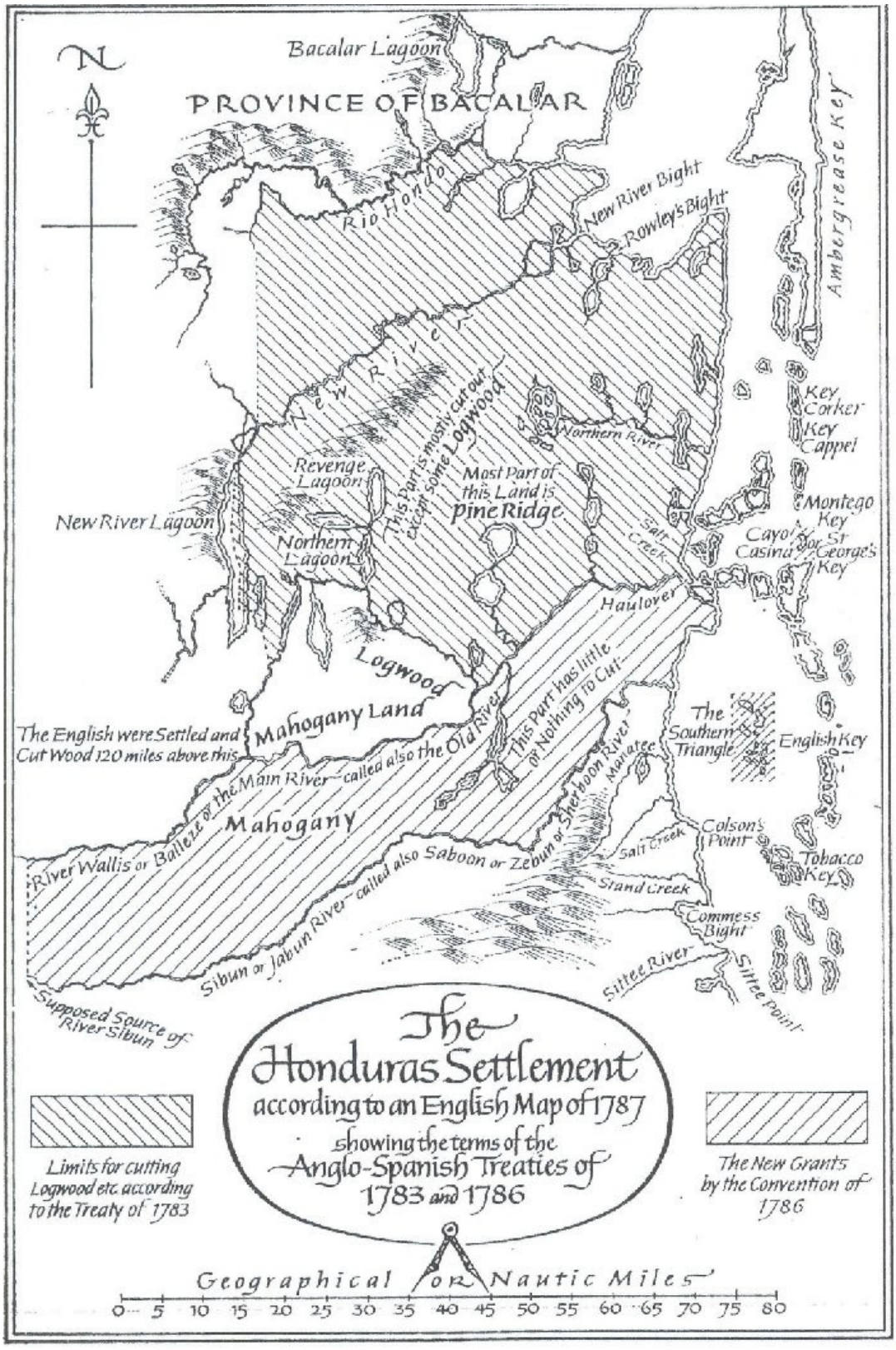
of timber, whereas to the Maya logging constituted an encroachment on their whole ways of life (Bolland 1988: 128).

Contemporary approaches to forest relationships in Belize would seem to have a precedent in the historical relations of colonialism, then. Nineteenth century religious missionaries labelled aspects of traditional Mopan culture, knowledge and practice as 'pagan' and as out of keeping with superior Western modernist techno-social practices.[70] Missionaries stressed:

> Western models of modernity … [involving] farm machinery, chemical fertilizers, modern crop varieties … [and] … a Western valuing system that perceives land as a commodity, something to be used to generate profits. These new values further alter the traditional perception by the Mopan that the land, forest, animals, and crops all have spiritual qualities (Steinberg 1998: 415).

Hence, 'a culture that traditionally viewed the natural world with spiritual reverence is being replaced by one that perceives the natural world as void of any spiritual significance' (Steinberg 1998: 415). Perversely, according to Steinberg (1998: 415), this 'has contributed to the development of short-term ecological values among the Mopan'.

[70] A feature common to colonialism (Bhambra 2007; Bogues 2003).



Picture 41: Colonial Era Map of British Honduras

(Map depicting the logwood concessions according to the terms of the Anglo-Spanish Treaties of 1783-1786. Source: Ifo and others in Hyde 2009: 1)

Recent government policy has to some extent represented a continuation of these colonial policies (Steinberg 1998: 411; also Bolland 1988: 112, 135). '[M]ost of the indigenous people in southern Belize are officially landless' (Steinberg 1998: 412). Moreover, governmental discretion over who is allowed to occupy land means that '[t]he threat of land being taken away looms large in the minds of many Maya' (Steinberg 1998: 412). Steinberg (1998: 413) suggests that:

> '[t]o the government, the mature forest in the reserve is standing timber which is not being used productively unless it is logged. Subsistence hunting and the gathering of non-timber forest products apparently are not considered important activities because the government does not receive any direct revenue.

Insecure land tenure, a hangover from colonial expropriation of land, and the subsequent exclusionary policies of central government with regards to granting land titles, contributes to a situation of Mopan Maya pursuing shorter-term slash and burn agriculture (Steinberg 1998: 411) which leads to decreased biodiversity.[71] These claims are somewhat supported by the previously mentioned finding that Maya lifestyles are seen as being incompatible with market-sensibilities. It is in this context, of either no income from 'unproductive' Maya land use, or revenue from international logging companies, that REDD schemes are attractive to those seeking to marry conservation and development goals.

During my time in Belize, the Forestry Department, and some NGOs, were attempting to quantify the 'carbon value' of Belize's forests so as to open the way for funding from REDD schemes. Rather than being straightforwardly positive, or even negative, about the prospects for REDD, people I spoke to were somewhat ambivalent in their tone. BZ3, for instance was at first sceptical of the schemes, and acknowledged the potential for REDD to enable market-price speculation as with any commodity:

> if we do all this work for REDD, and climate change isn't addressed through that project then effectively we end up in the same situation.

[71] Somewhat perversely, when the Mopan attempted to develop eco-tourist trails through the forests, the government turned their applications down citing logging interests (Steinberg 1998: 413).

BZ4 was also well aware of existing criticisms of REDD schemes, but saw potential for them if they were correctly undertaken:

> …brothers from South America, especially indigenous people, who depend a lot on the forests, they're totally against it. They said the REDD is just a mechanism to make big rich companies to continue doing what they are doing, as long as they provide the money then go ahead and continue deforesting, continue to contaminate our water… But I think there's opportunities once we make sure that you give the money, but you don't necessarily tell us how to use it.
>
> … people think it's just a matter of 'well we have the money we'll pay them to keep quiet and we continue doing our mining, our logging, our extraction of oil' … business as usual.

Public engagement around REDD appealed to some insofar as it was a potential opportunity to inform people about the relationship of forests to climate change, as well as demonstrating to pro-development actors that forests can be 'productive'. The scheme, and its presentation, was represented as being viable insofar as it managed to straddle conservationist and developmentalist boundaries.

Government officials BZ11, BZ1 and BZ3 were also sceptical that Belize would be able to access the funding through REDD even if they wanted to. Making reference to schemes in Guyana supported by the Dutch government, BZ1 was sceptical about Coalition's claims that Belize could adopt a similar approach to the Yassuni ITT[72] scheme in Ecuador because of Belize's small size and the smaller scale of its possible resources.

Conclusion

Climate change is implicated in the practices of conservation and development in Belize in terms of the implications of deforestation in Belize's protected areas, or in terms of the contribution that oil-drilling would make to causing climate change if the oil were burned and carbon released into the atmosphere. In this chapter, though, because I found that climate change did not feature as prominently as conservation, I have detailed some of the key features of conservation and development practices as I encountered them via people's

[72] The Ecuadorian government had (at the time of the interview) managed to secure payments for not developing the oil resources buried in Yassuni National Park. Since then, however, the scheme has apparently collapsed.

accounts. Conservation practices can be considered in terms of the extent to which they are depoliticised, and I have detailed how conservation and development unfold with respect to NGO and government activity in Belize.

The community engagement work of NGOs in Belize often involved understandings of indigenous groups and other publics as being in need of education about the facts of conservation. Representing publics as needing to know facts, rather than to discuss value questions, perhaps mirrors the avowed neutrality of the consensus-seeking populism found in post-political framings of climate change. Nevertheless, I also found that there was disagreement between different parties as to how far their activities constituted neutral fact presentation. While NGO actors might seek to claim a neutral position as representatives of community groups, they are sometimes implicated in the pursuit of neoliberal conservation and development processes, such as encouraging indigenous Maya to adopt market rationalities.

In contrast to claims that neoliberal development might be a 'win-win-win' process, however, I found evidence of tensions inherent to certain forms of development. These tensions were exemplified by conflicts that arose over proposed oil drilling in protected areas. They highlight some of the conflicting motivations and priorities of different actors involved in conservation, development and governance practices. Similarly, discussions of REDD also indicated this. So while I found that there was evidence of an overall trend towards depoliticisation and neoliberalism, I found that it was also necessary to take account of the limits to these trends in the form of the ambivalent situation faced by actors on the ground, with some actors sounding conflicted in the fact that they had to work with policies which they acknowledged did not fit with the existing value systems of indigenous people, for instance; or where tension between groups generated conflict. Another key finding of the Chapter was that considering the country's colonial history, can better help to explain the broader geopolitical relations of neoliberal development in Belize. All of this has implications for further developing sociological accounts of the politics of climate change. In the next chapter I explore these implications in more depth by synthesising the findings across the different case-study chapters.

Chapter 7 | Contextualising post-politics: analysis and synthesis

1. Introduction

In exploring different examples of responses to climate change in relation to, variously, approaches to public engagement and activism, policy-making, development and conservation, this study has shed light on the contemporary social and political relations of climate change. The preceding chapters have explored different contexts in which responses are taking place, and highlighted some of the complexities of people's action there. This chapter returns to the research questions in order to consolidate the research findings:

- To what extent does a post-political, post-democratic consensus operate in responses to climate change in case studies in and around the Caribbean?
    - What kinds of responses to climate change are being undertaken in the Caribbean context?
    - How far do these responses indicate technocratic, or managerialist, or otherwise instrumental representations of climate change and solutions to it?
    - What does a post-colonial context mean for conceptualising of responses to climate change in terms of the post-political?
    - What might looking at non-Western societies add to our understanding of climate change politics?
    - In what ways are contemporary climate change and development practices shaped by historical relations?
- What does an engagement with people's activities in practice, such as particular policy-making or public engagement endeavours, and people's accounts of these, contribute to more abstract theoretical discussions of the post-political?

- How might sensitivity to the contradictions, tensions and the potentially ambivalent character of action around climate change contribute to an understanding of the post-political condition?

- What affinities are there between depoliticised and 'unsociological' representations of climate change?
    - How far do technocratic and managerialist responses to climate change rest upon individualistic models of social action?
    - What models of society and social action are embedded in various responses to climate change?

The aim in this chapter, then, is to synthesise the findings from across the different cases in order to better illustrate my responses to the above questions. In order to do this the chapter is split into three parts. I begin by briefly synthesising the evidence suggesting that there are tendencies towards post-politics in climate change, and development and conservation, based on how climate change is represented, and the forms of action advocated in response, in each case-study site. This highlights the first contribution of this thesis, which is to provide a detailed, in-depth account of the forms of the manifestation of the post-political across different contexts, particularly in the Caribbean.

The second part of the chapter highlights another contribution of the thesis, which is to add texture to the discussions about the politics of responses to climate change. It does this by considering some of the ways in which the smooth functioning post-political condition is challenged; both directly via protest, and indirectly by particular local conditions. Part 2 also further complicates the picture of the post-political consensus by highlighting the instances of ambivalence and the complexities of action which were encountered during the research. Any overly monolithic representations of the post-political condition, and correspondingly simplistic models of action, are complicated by this finding. All of this suggests that an ethnographic, sociological study adds richness to the debates outlined in Chapter 2.

Finally, in the third part of the chapter I recap the representations of climate change encountered, and the types of action proposed in response, and attempt to link these to implicit models of society. Here the analysis is moved a stage further, by demonstrating the evidence that there is an affinity between post-political and individualised (Middlemiss 2010; Scerri 2009), or

unsociological (Shove 2010a; Urry 2011), accounts of climate change. I begin now, then, by collating the evidence about the extent of the post-political consensus from across the different cases. Doing this provides a detailed, in-depth look at the possible forms and the extent of the post-political in different contexts.

Part 1: Detailing post-political forms: examining the extent of the post-political

It was noted in Chapter 2, as part of the discussion of the post-political thesis, that there is a risk of over-stating the coherence of the consensus, and that there is scope for contextualising it with regard to particular empirical conditions. Other authors (Chatterton et al. 2013; and McCarthy 2012, 2013 in particular) have acknowledged the ways in which attempts to depoliticise climate change have been contested in practice, for instance. Here I draw together the evidence from across different contexts to demonstrate what my research can add to the claim that the tendency in responses to climate change is towards depoliticisation. I shall discuss each case in turn.

The Caribbean

In my exploration of prominent responses to climate change at the regional level in the Caribbean I found that much of the existing discussion tends to focus on natural scientific and economistic accounts. A common feature of this discussion, then, was to highlight the likely impacts of climate change in natural scientific terms, as well as to identify potential economic costs. There is little doubt that the Caribbean region faces substantial threats to its current ecological conditions, which will in turn likely impact upon its economic development. A problem with focussing on abstract, technically orientated measures of the impacts of climate change, however, is that substantive political and social questions are obscured, and the discussions conducted about how to respond to climate change follow a depoliticised, technically orientated path. The way in which the concept of vulnerability is deployed, a-historically, was exemplary of this.

As well as the aforementioned representations of climate change, I identified some of the prominent mechanisms and initiatives for responding to climate change that Caribbean regional scientists and policy-makers are involved with. There was found to be a general concern for developing, and co-ordinating, further technical knowledge, such as in the work of organisations like

5Cs. Another concern I identified was trying to find recipients, or end-users, for this technical knowledge. Often the forms of public engagement undertaken to accomplish this task seemed to be suggestive of a deficit-model, depoliticised form, where publics were viewed as being in need of education with the science of climate change. The scope for ambivalence or uncertainty to be accommodated seemed narrow here.

Other key features of responses were the focus on establishing managerial mechanisms, or on technical adaptations, such as the development of crop irrigation systems. Representing climate change as a technocratic problem in need of expert management in this way indeed fits the model of the post-political condition. I also found, however, that projects often had to abide by this kind of logic because these were the terms decided on by international organisations such as the World Bank and IMF. Indeed I found that via processes of financialization, involving international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, the Caribbean region's responses to climate change came to be tied to neoliberal development practices. This echoes the situation found in Belize, as described below. Hence, I found that responses to climate change did conform to the main tendencies of the post-political condition in the sense that they were populist, presupposed capitalist forms of economy and society and relied on technocratic representations of climate change. There were complications to this general framing, though, and I shall explore those in more depth in Part 2 of this chapter. Responses to climate change in the Caribbean were significantly shaped the UNFCCC and its COPs. I shall now recap the findings from my own involvement with the COP alongside activists in Cancún.

Cancún

The evidence from Cancún suggested that the formal negotiations of the UNFCCC COP were indeed considered by many activists to be proceeding along lines that could be described as post-political, although this term was never used by people I encountered. The dominant policy solutions being negotiated within the COP all pre-supposed forms of market capitalism as the primary way of dealing with climate change. Additionally, the proceedings of the COP also often involved reliance on technocratic forms of science-based governance, to the perceived detriment of indigenous and local community groups. This was best exemplified by the pushing forward of market mechanisms which require technocratic knowledge and accounting processes such as REDD. Many activists were critical, therefore, of what they saw as

being a narrow range of interests on which the COP was based, and a lack of access for those representing 'the grassroots'. A number of people in turn linked this to the form that democracy was said to take in their domestic settings, with cosy relationships perceived to exist between business and government more generally, for example. That the UNFCCC process might be 'a performative expression of a post-political condition' (Swyngedouw 2010a:227), was perhaps suggested in the processes of accreditation at COPs which is seemingly an objective and inclusive process, but actually fraught with tension, whereby those who step outside of the accepted consensus are censured. In addition, the forms of engagement and activism which were sanctioned as part of the official COP were seen to be those that did not question the mainstream consensus. Or rather, those antagonistic alternatives were directly challenged and opposed by state police. The agreement emerging from Cancún was signed up to by every country apart from Bolivia, which was a lone dissenting voice. The efforts of most governments to establish consensus, as well as the marginalisation of Bolivia's dissent within the COP itself, are indeed evocative of the populism of the post-political.

In contrast to a faith in elites, and technical and managerial solutions to climate change, many of those activists I spoke to in Cancún were keen to problematize the idea that 'there-is-no-alternative' to neoliberal capitalism. Rejecting the perceived failures of the UNFCCC, many activists were engaged in activities that sought to reject a depoliticized framing of climate change, sometimes explicitly, often implicitly. Some of the people I spoke to thought that communities, such as peasant farmers, might have unique insights into the solutions necessary for climate change, which contrasts with the deficit model of public engagement. On the other hand, however, the ways in which some actors remarked on publics as being unaware, of the workings of capitalism for instance, also paralleled the populism of the post-political. This suggests that activists, too, share the notion that publics need educating. The demonstrations, 'people's forums', and camps I encountered were, ostensibly, often about trying to bring about alternatives to the COP via forms of direct action, though the acknowledged limitations to these will also be mentioned later. To an extent then, the claims, noted in Chapter 2 (Chatterton et al. 2013; Pusey and Russell 2010; Saunders 2012; Urry 2011), that activism exists as a space where resistance or complication of the post-political takes place, was borne out by my research.

In sum, then, my research indicates that the mainstream COP was described by activists in ways which mirror the tone of the theory of the post-political, and this was cited as part of the motivation for their protests. In

response, some activists attempted to politicise climate change in their actions, but with greater or lesser success. The detail of how and why this happened, and with what effects, is discussed more fully in Part 2 of the chapter below. Shifting my focus from the international context of a summit protest to the that of a Caribbean nation, I looked at the example of Belize.

Belize

Like the Caribbean region as a whole, Belize is a country highly susceptible to effects of climate change, such as more intense and frequent hurricanes and rising sea-levels. Belize also has considerable biodiversity and rainforest cover contributing to its popularity as a destination for ecotourism. In my research in Belize, however, I found that responses to climate change were much less prominent than the related issues of conservation and development, although this relationship was not always acknowledged. In particular, I found that the post-political condition could be investigated in Belize with regard to the tensions which are perceived to exist, by many actors, between conservation, indigenous or community engagement, and development.

My analysis drew on existing studies that had identified trends in contemporary conservation practices, towards marketization for instance, that reflect a tendency towards depoliticisation. Indeed, I found that claims made about the role of NGOs by people I spoke to seemed to rest on them presenting facts to communities. The focus on technical or scientific facts as authoritative was mentioned in Chapter 2 as mirroring the post-political condition. Indeed, a disavowal of conflict, in order to establish consensus, was another feature of the post-political condition that was echoed in the claims made by some actors that NGOs' representations of issues are neutral. Such claims were not themselves uncontested, however, as will be discussed in Part 2 of this chapter.

I also found that NGOs and government actors worked with different models of the communities that they sought to engage with in mind. One stated characteristic of communities, then, was that they were in need of education, about the appropriate relationships they ought to have with protected conservation areas. Areas that had historically been home to indigenous populations have more recently been designated 'protected' as part of the drive towards biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Communities whose practices were not in tune with this fairly recent designation are hence deemed to be ignorant, and in need of educating in terms of models of conservation and protected areas management. Communities' ignorance is in

itself seen as something to be managed: if not ‘eco-rationally’ then ‘scientifically rationally’. Claims such as these suggest that a deficit model might be being adopted by some of those who conduct public engagement about conservation in Belize.

In addition, the role of NGOs in the management of protected areas could also be seen as problematic when viewed through the theoretical lens of post-democratic governance. Some actors suggested that because of relatively politically passive populous, and because of their unique relationships of trust with communities in Belize, NGOs were necessary representatives of community interests. An alternative reading might suggest that participation has become a key populist tool which is intrinsic to neoliberal governance, and as such the extent to which NGOs’ roles is entirely benign might be questioned. Where NGOs are involved in pushing particular development and conservation interests and agendas, for instance, their role could contribute to the containment of dissent. In fact, the forms of development pursued by some Belizean NGO and government actors required the encouraging of market sensibilities, and the promotion of understandings of capitalist principles of production and consumption, among indigenous community groups. In these cases, the model of communities as ignorant rested on the underpinning assumption that subsistence-based lifestyles in protected areas meant that communities did not value natural resources in the correct terms. Here, again, the path that development was taking rests on the claim that ‘there-is-no-alternative’ to neoliberal development was enacted via pressures, tied into conservation and development agendas, applied to those communities who do indeed live alternative, non-market lifestyles. Schemes such as REDD, which were found to be under consideration in Belize, would likely further financialise conservation practices tying them to the UNFCCC’s market-based response to climate change.

The conflict around proposed oil drilling that I investigated raised similar issues about the ownership of land, development priorities, and relationships between NGOs, the government, and community groups. Interestingly, however, while a number of those issues could be understood in terms of the post-political condition, climate change was not cited as being significant in relation to oil drilling. This echoes the focus on adaptation in the Caribbean region as a whole, rather than mitigation, something which itself reflects the post-colonial development relations of climate change because the majority of people in those countries that were colonised neither benefitted significantly from the fruits of industrialisation, nor directly contributed to them, hence a focus on

dealing with the consequences, rather than the causes of climate change. The legacy of colonialism in the region is discussed more fully in Part 2 below.

In sum, the activities around conservation in Belize that I explored did suggest a tendency towards post-political forms of neoliberal development. There was here too, however, evidence of tensions, as well as resistance to these pressures, which will be discussed in more detail below. Looking at the case-study of Belize has helped to add detail to my exploration of the post-political, about how it might operate with regards to the related phenomena of development and conservation.

A distinctive contribution of this thesis, then, is to highlight some of the specific features of the broad tendencies towards the post-political condition in responses to climate change, and practices of conservation, in different case-study contexts. In the process I have added detail in support of the broad theoretical claim that there is a tendency towards post-political and post-democratic responses. In addition to facilitating a better understanding of tendencies within climate change politics, though, the thesis is also able to contribute to an understanding of the resistance to, and limitations of, depoliticised responses. The chapter will now summarise this aspect of my contribution in terms of the textured analysis I am able to make on the basis of my qualitative involvement with actors on the ground, where I encountered tensions, ambivalence and pragmatism.

Part 2: Adding texture to the post-political: complication and context

By considering the detail I uncovered in the different contexts of my exploration, I am able to problematize any overly monolithic model of the post-political condition. In particular, I am able to explore some of the countervailing tendencies and contextual features of the post-political condition. In the three subsections below I explore three themes that emerged in the course of my exploration which add texture to the broad picture of depoliticisation. I start by reiterating the ways in which the differences between actors' aims and practices added complexity to depoliticisation processes. I then move on to discuss the degrees of ambivalence and pragmatism in people's accounts, an acknowledgment of which I hope avoids representing actors as overly naïve. In order to better understand these other two dimensions of the texture of responses I conclude this part of the chapter by considering how the specific colonial history of the region is connected to the pressures to adopt neoliberal policies in response to climate change.

Complexity in the unfolding of the post-political: tensions and divisions

'*Daag wid too much owner no get no bone*'[73]

In my regional Caribbean case-study I found that the fact that climate change came into competition with other policy areas meant that even policies that might be described as post-political were somewhat limited. This was evidenced in an official's claim that economic data was needed in the first instance to persuade policy-makers that climate change was a salient policy issue at all. Hence while there is pressure from organisations like the World Bank to adopt neoliberal policies, the policies being put into practice in different Caribbean countries are not necessarily climate change orientated. This finding resonates with McCarthy's (2012, 2013) critique of Swyngedouw (2010), where McCarthy suggests that Swyngedouw had been somewhat Eurocentric in his analysis, neglecting the US context, for instance, and as such overstated the extent of consensus that operated in support of action on climate change. In short, then, any drive towards post-political climate change policies in the Caribbean was apparently curtailed by the need to balance climate change with issues of development. It was for this reason, in fact, that objective scientific and economic data about climate change were sought. I shall explore the prominence of developmental concerns in more depth below.

As a slight counter-point to the tendency towards technocracy, and in an attempt to acknowledge some of the nuances of responses to climate change in the Caribbean, I looked at the example of the '1.5^{o}C to stay alive!' campaign which provided evidence of tensions inherent to objectivist framings of climate change. Tensions were shown to exist between the appeals to 1.5^{o}C as an acceptable limit to warming, and the reality that even 2^{o}C is becoming an increasingly impossible reality.

In Cancún, meanwhile, I found that some activists' attempts to subvert or challenge dominant responses to climate change from within the COP ran into opposition and faced limitations themselves. There were significant divisions and differences among the approaches of activist groups, about how actors thought that the COP should be challenged, and why, for instance. Some actors I spoke to were critical of the 'big green NGOs' who were somewhat more

[73] Kriol proverb literally translated as: 'The dog with too many owners doesn't get any bone'; meaning divided loyalties can be costly (cf Young 1988:5).

invested in the processes of the COP, for example, while some were more optimistic than others about the potential for governments to challenge corporate dominance. These differently articulated critiques of what was taking place in the COP corresponded in turn to the different popular spaces, as well as the differing tactics and approaches to action that actors took. In effect, these differences could be mapped on to degrees of internalization of the critique of the post-political consensus. Those actors that tended to see the COP process as lacking space for genuine political discussion, such as affiliates of the antic@p, were more likely to adopt an antagonistic approach.

Notable in my experience was the tension that existed between those who were described by a respondent as 'anarcho-punks', and those who were described as being 'hippies'. The latter were criticised by the former for having an insufficiently thought-out understanding of climate change politics. All of these divisions, though difficult to avoid in activism (Saunders 2012), perhaps undermined the impact of activists' responses, and constituted a fragmentation of the climate justice movement. The ambivalent and pragmatic dimensions of this fragmentation are considered in more depth in the following subsection. In addition to the tensions I encountered, however, some people were keen to try and bridge the gaps between groups, lamenting the extent to which people's resistance was divided. Striking among these accounts, though, was the degree of reflexivity, self-awareness and self-criticism that most people displayed. Additionally, it was interesting that people often situated their own positions in relation, or contrast, to those of their fellow activists, underlining the dimensions of contingency in people's actions.

In Belize, in contrast to the depoliticised neoliberal ideal of development being a 'win-win-win' process incorporating conservation and local communities, some NGOs were found to come into tension with certain forms of development. These tensions meant that the pressures towards post-political forms of development did not go unopposed. The models of development imagined or called for by actors corresponded to their roles, and their relationship to the state. More independent NGOs wanted the aims of conservation or sustainability to trump development, while others pursued more of a compromise with government institutions, attempting to pursue development and conservation in conjunction, partly because of fears that confrontation might jeopardize their co-management agreements. Moreover, there was disagreement among NGO actors over how much of a confrontational stance to take, with some actors claiming that their role in conservation and development processes was relatively neutral. That I found disagreements such as this to exist would probably call into question the fixity of any post-political consensus.

Contrasting and conflicting reactions to proposed oil drilling in protected areas, also showed the range of conflicting approaches to conservation and neoliberal development. It was found that members of the Belize Coalition had varying strategies to try and affect change, and to garner support or influence, in opposition to oil drilling. Hence there was a degree of tension within the coalition. Relating these findings back to the literature discussed in Chapter 2, my research does suggest that some NGOs are more or less implicated in post-political forms of neoliberal development, but that this involvement is complex. I shall turn my attention to these complexities in the next subsection of this part of the chapter. In sum, then, the diversity present in the range of responses complicates the idea of a monolithic post-political consensus.

Ambivalence and pragmatism

'*Barefoot-tea better than empty belly*'[74]

Another key contribution of this thesis is that, because of my ethnographic engagement with actors on the ground, I was able to explore evidence of a degree of ambivalence, in people's accounts, and often a pragmatism in response. This finding further complicates overly monolithic or abstract representations of the post-political condition.

In the Caribbean context, at the 5Cs, my ethnographic involvement with actors was somewhat limited. I found it harder to gain the level of access to that might have facilitated a better understanding ambivalence in that context. I would suggest that this lack of access was partly due to the form that the case-study context took, and the prevalence there of post-political forms of policy-making which sought to emphasise scientific rigour, technical control and management. In this regard, then, the character of the case-study context itself shaped my engagement. Nevertheless, I did uncover some evidence of actors at the 5Cs as occupying a somewhat ambivalent position in relation to global climate policy trends, and the lack of action taking place at that scale. Here, ambivalence related to the somewhat subordinate and dependent position of

[74] Belizean Kriol proverb meaning 'a simple dinner is better than none/going hungry' (Young 1988: 2)

the Caribbean in global politics. These actors adopted a somewhat pragmatic attitude in response to this situation over which they seem to have limited control.

Ambivalence and tension were much easier to identify in Belize and at the COP16 than at the regional level, partly because of the depth of my involvement with people there. Ambivalence might have functioned as a constraint on policy-makers and scientist's actions at the 5Cs, where science-policy processes seemingly required that actors concentrate on more definite problems. This is a reflection on the case-study contexts themselves, which supports Kerr et al.'s (2007) findings that the certain contexts are more amenable to discussions of ambivalence. I found that many of the people involved in forms of activism in Cancún were aware of some of the limitations of their actions. This was evidenced via the ambivalence expressed about the contradictions between prefigurative or transformative aims, and the much more messy and compromised experience of activism in practice. Ambivalence was also evident where people reflected on the under attendance or inaccessibility of the 'people's' spaces, or the conflicts which existed between different groups, notably the so-called 'anarcho-punks' and 'hippies'. This finding reflects the analyses of climate activism provided by Saunders (2012) Schlembach (2011) Schlembach et al. (2012) which suggested that tensions and contradiction were an inherent feature of activism. Again, there was evidence of a pragmatic response to the ambivalence inherent in trying respond to the depoliticised features of climate change, with people making the most of, or being pragmatic in, their actions. The level of engagement I was able to have with activists enabled me to highlight the high degree of reflexivity that people displayed. Activists were often much more candid and reflexive about their experiences, which made it easier to encounter instances of ambivalence. This partly reflects the methodology I employed, as well as about the contexts in which the research was conducted.

In Belize, I encountered ambivalence in the sentiments of actors who were trying to negotiate the relationships between modern development pressures, traditional indigenous lifestyles, and conservation work. Conservation work, particularly the policing of protected areas, appeared to problematize the relationship between indigenous communities and the natural resources on which they have historically relied. Hence those actors caught up in these processes occupied somewhat of an ambivalent position in trying to marry their developmental, conservationist, and community representative responsibilities. Traditionally indigenous people's relationships to forests had a

spiritual character, however, yet one NGO actor described how he was encouraging alternative, market-orientated valuing approaches.

In addition, ambivalent sentiments were evident where actors discussed their scepticism towards oil drilling, alongside the acknowledgement that as a small, developing country, Belize would perhaps need the resources that could be gained from oil, provided that these were not syphoned off, and provided oil drilling was conducted 'safely'. Likewise, the ways in which the potential of the REDD scheme were discussed suggested that there were mixed feelings about its potential. LWF's reluctant support of REDD, in spite of his recognition of its known drawbacks, was in part because of his position as a civil servant, which required a degree of pragmatism, about adopting marketised responses to climate change. It is perhaps worth contrasting this sentiment with the ways in which REDD schemes were regarded by COP16 activists, who rejected REDD outright, claiming that such attempts to marketise carbon emissions and forests were inherently unjust or unworkable. More generally, pragmatism was required by actors striving to satisfy different needs, as was evident with regards to the different languages of policy-makers and local communities, for instance. Elsewhere, conservation organisations with different ambitions and aims were drawn into a necessarily pragmatic alliance in order to oppose oil drilling.

To conclude this subsection of the chapter, I suggest that although ambivalence could counter the functioning of post-democratic or post-political tendencies, it, too, had its limits and it was not necessarily a 'productive' feature of people's accounts. All of the above instances of ambivalence and pragmatism can be better understood if the specific history and context of the Caribbean region, and the colonial relations thereof, are accounted for. The next subsection highlights another dimension of the contribution of my research findings by looking at these links between the colonial and the political.

Colonialism and the post-political: accounting for history and context

'*Blow you nose same place weh yuh ketch yuh cold*'[75]

It was noted in Chapter 2 that existing discussions of post-politics have not considered the possible impacts of legacies of colonialism on contemporary development trends (apart from Catney and Doyle 2011). On the basis of my

[75] Belizean Kriol proverb meaning: When adversity comes, turn for help to those who were your friends in prosperity, especially if they helped to cause the adversity (cf Young 1988: 3).

research, however, I would suggest that any investigation of the political responses to climate change in the Caribbean must take into account the structuring legacy of colonialism there. It must also, therefore, consider the ways in which current models and modes of neoliberal development are connected to this colonial history; acknowledging the post-colonial dimension to the post-political condition helps to better contextualise the aforementioned trends in responses.

The Caribbean

It was acknowledged in Chapter 4 that the Caribbean region was in a relatively disadvantageous position when it came to determining the direction it takes in response to climate change. The technocratic and financialized logics underpinning responses mentioned above correspond to the agendas of those people funding responses to climate change in the Caribbean. While references to vulnerability featured prominently in discussions, the legacy of colonialism was often not formally acknowledged. Yet the very neoliberal development path to which contemporary climate change policies conform was set in motion as part of the backlash against independence from colonialism in the 1970s and 1980s. Hence the tendencies towards depoliticisation in responses to climate change in the Caribbean can be directly related to the history of colonialism in the region. Beyond this, however, I also found that action on climate change was somewhat deprioritised in relation to more immediate development needs. Again, the very fact of the Caribbean region's *under*development is a direct consequence of the exploitation of the region's resources under colonialist regimes, as well as disadvantageous relations in the contemporary relations of global capitalism resulting from post-colonial neoliberal development pressures. In response, the narrative of sustainable development was drawn on by actors in order to try and make the case in economic terms that climate change was a development priority. In sum, the limited resources, and a need to establish climate change as a salient issue among many others, help to explain why actors in the region favoured depoliticised, objectivist and instrumental approaches to climate change. These findings support Catney and Doyle's (2011) claim that post-political policies are particularly prominent in the global South. Finally, the focus of the Caribbean region on adaptation, rather than mitigation, reflects the fact that, the region has done little to contribute to the causes of climate change, and further still lacks the resources of Western European countries, partly as a direct result of the legacy of colonialism.

Belize

As with the Caribbean region as a whole, a better understanding of the history and sociology of Belize helps to explain why the conservation and development practices there took the neoliberal shape they did. Belize, as a former British colony, shares the characteristics of many post-colonial societies, such as a heavy dependence on exports, a reliance on foreign capital, and an underdeveloped economy. This colonial legacy is partly accountable for the current tendencies towards neoliberal development mentioned above, and the tensions that stem from attempting to balance neoliberalism and conservation. The historical lack of resources to fund conservation in Belize, for instance, meant that actors sought revenue from oil drilling. In line with Catney and Doyle's (2011) arguments, in Belize, where oil extraction and the claimed development benefits ensuing from it, came into tension with conservation, perspectives on the governance of the state were strongly shaped by Northern, depoliticized concepts of sustainability.

Furthermore, the challenges I observed to traditional Maya subsistence farming practices are an example of the way in which Western, neoliberal capitalist societies were seen by some of my respondents the model for development practice in the Caribbean. As was shown in Chapter 6, this kind of 'othering' of indigenous lifestyles has its historical president in Belize in the actions of colonialist loggers. There are some perverse continuities in the way in which contemporary REDD schemes have potential exploit the standing forest resources, at the benefit of polluters in the global North-and at the expense of indigenous Maya communities-and the old colonial logging activities.

Cancún

At the COP16 in Cancún, in contrast to the other two case-studies, colonialism did feature in the accounts of some of the actors and networks I encountered. Actors in Cancún sometimes explicitly drew attention to the legacies of colonialism, as with the slogan 'co_2lonialism', and the processes of the COP were regarded by some as encouraging 'co_2lonialist' responses, for instance. Unlike approaches where climate change is represented in fairly technical and managerialist terms, these actors were often trying to politicise climate change, hence they were keen to refer to broader social and political contexts and processes. One way in which broader social and political processes were referred to was via the concept of climate justice. References to the injustices of

climate change often involved implicit reference to the practices of colonialism, even if these not always made explicit. The idea that indigenous people were less at fault for climate change, yet disproportionately vulnerable, is an example of this. More generally, the idea that neoliberal capitalism was an inevitability was directly called into question here.

To draw this part of the discussion to a close then, my empirical investigations have added richness and detail to the discussions of post-political introduced in Chapter 2. Whereas the post-political condition has almost entirely been considered with regards to Western capitalist societies, focussing on the Caribbean, a region whose contemporary condition is strongly shaped by the legacies of colonialism, has highlighted the ways in which a post-political focus on technocracy and abstraction can help to obscure the historical role of colonialism, as well as the post-colonial practices of neoliberal development.

To reiterate, I found that there were a range of responses to climate change taking place in the case studies I explored. Some of these broadly corresponded to what could be described as a post-political framing of climate change by being based on, variously, markets; universalising economic or scientific projections; and the abstract quantification of climate change. Others attempted to subvert these representations, though. Sometimes competing representations gave rise to, or came into tension with, ambivalence and required a pragmatic approach from actors involved in the implementation of responses. These actors were not necessarily convinced by the activity they were involved with, but for different reasons they felt compelled to act in any case. The findings indicate that the post-political is unable to operate unopposed, as others have also suggested (Chatterton et al. 2013; Urry 2011), although perhaps for slightly different reasons. Indeed, it seems that the interplay between post-political tendencies, and different forms of resistance and challenge, throws up various contradictions which sometimes act as limits on its functioning.

The final part of the chapter moves my discussion to a broader analytical level and indicates some of the wider implications of my study for understandings of the social relations of neoliberalism, and for the sociology of climate change. It does this by returning to the discussions considered in Chapter 2 and identifying relationships between different understandings and representations of climate change encountered; the actions actors advocated in response; and contrasting the corresponding models of society embedded in these accounts.

Part 3: The models of society implicit and explicit in responses to climate change

In Chapter 2 I noted that all responses to climate change have embedded within them particular assumptions about the social world, or about how individuals within that world relate to each other. Particular policies and practices proposed in response can imply or set into motion path-dependent ways of acting (Urry 2011), all of which require, at some point or another, implicit models of society to operate. Some of these models are substantially less sociologically plausible than others though, because they rest on overly simplistic accounts of human behaviour as being based on individual choice, for instance, which some sociologists have suggested are inaccurate (Shove 2010a for example). Or because they fail to acknowledge how deeply embedded the causes of climate change are in complex patterns of social relations (Urry 2011). In this final part of the chapter I consider these claims in light of the findings from my case studies. First I recap the main representations of climate change, and associated forms of action advocated in response. I then move on to consider the models of society implied within these.

Understandings of climate change

Synthesising my findings from across the three chapters I suggest that contrasting types of action proposed in response invoke or require particular *representations* of climate change. Climate change was understood, variously, as: an issue of social justice; a technical problem to managed using expert knowledge; an area for scientific investigation; an economic or financial challenge or opportunity; a matter of general public concern; or as being secondary to conservation issues. I shall explore these representations below by addressing each of the three case-study sites in turn.

The Caribbean

At the Caribbean regional level, accounts were found to be focussed, variously, on the region's vulnerability to the physical impacts of climate change; the technical and scientific details of climate change; and trying to identify objective measures for phenomena, such as valuations of economic costs. There was little explicit discussion of the social and political relations of climate change and responses to it. Particular socio-political and economic imaginaries were identified in seemingly objective calls for '1.5^{o}C to stay alive' as a 'dangerous' global warming target. These calls are based on normative assumptions about

the kinds of social organisation that need to be protected in international policy mechanisms. Different forms of action were also advocated in conjunction with representations of climate change.

The development of scientific models and measures of climate change, and the pursuit and better management of evidence and information were both generally seen as priorities for action. Tools for risk analysis were sought, as were new insurance mechanisms. Processes of financialisation were also prominent in the region (see Grove 2012), and the 'mini-Stern' project attempted to create an economic account of the costs of climate change. Additionally, many of the World Bank's funding schemes are based on supporting market mechanisms, such as REDD or the Clean Development Mechanism. Other pilot projects tend to be quite technically orientated; desalination plants, for example.

Given that the major responses in the region are tied to international institutions such as the World Bank, the IPCC and the UNFCCC, who operate with top-down, expert-led models of policy-making, the corresponding kinds of action advocated in the region were unsurprisingly expert-led and managerialist in character. Portrayals of the region as vulnerable to the impacts, but not so culpable for the causes, of climate change were deployed in claims for external funding for adaptation projects. In addition, these representations simultaneously helped to justify calls for action at the level of international institutions.

Cancún

In Cancún, meanwhile, some of the activists I spoke to were keen to present climate change as being an issue of social justice. This was seen in contrast with the dominant representations of climate change emerging from within the COP. There climate change was seen to be being treated as business opportunity, or problem to be solved by the application of technocratic science and policy; the same kinds of representation noted above as being prominent in the Caribbean. Protesters, and some delegates, were therefore keen to challenge the workings of the COP insofar as it was an inherently unjust process.

In terms of the actions accompanying these understandings of climate change, instead of the perceived hierarchical relations of the COP, actors generally favoured more autonomous camps, and forms of direct-democratic decision making in meetings and for organising activities. As noted above, and in Chapter 5 however, there were contradictions between, for instance, the

inclusive aims of the antic@p, and their exclusive practices. Some actors complained that activities were inaccessible, or that the setup of activist camps did not reflect the kinds of alternative social relations aspired to in general. Some of the limitations to people's action in Cancún were attributed by activists to repressive policing or government divide-and-rule tactics. If depoliticised responses to climate change rest on models of citizens as passive consumers (Aitken 2012), then it does not suit elites to have activist publics undertaking autonomous protests. The use of militarized policing make sense in this context.

Belize

In Belize, conservation was a much more prominent concern than climate change. In considering this point it is worth recalling McCarthy's (2012, 2013) point that in some contexts climate change is not an established enough area of policy-concern to the extent that (even) post-political responses are sought. Concerns about conservation practices, instead, were about the encroachment of ignorant publics into protected areas; ineffective governance; and whether or not development might provide extra resources for, as opposed to undermining, conservation.

A range of different actions were advocated depending on actors' positions taken in relation to the development/conservation nexus. Organisations with closer ties to government were much less confrontational than those who were not. At the same time, actors in some organisations saw conservation and ecotourism as potential solutions to the perceived conflict between conservation and development. These actors encouraged members of the communities they worked with to adopt market-orientated practices, although they were sometimes rather ambivalent about this. Others, such as the more confrontational advocacy groups, were much keener to challenge what they saw as a disengaged or cowed tendency among communities. Lobbying, protests, and public education activities were some of the forms of action pursued by these organisations. Representatives from different government departments had slightly different takes on development and conservation, with those from the Geology and Petroleum Department seeking to pursue oil-exploration in protected areas, justified on the basis that this would support Belize's debt commitments. Others from the Forestry Department, and UNDP were more ambivalent about both oil drilling, and proposed alternatives, such as establishing payments for ecosystems services in schemes like REDD. Having recapped some of the main findings from my investigation in terms of representations of, and action in response to, climate change, I now tentatively

move to relate these forms of action to the implicit or embedded models of society contained therein.

Models of society

It was mentioned in Chapter 2 that accounts of climate change, and types of action advocated in response, can be linked to different (often implicit) models of society. Different imagined social relations can be found to be evident in accounts of publics and engagement, or in particular development models, for instance. Some models of how society should be organised fit better with deficit models of public engagement, than others for example. Market orientated responses imply that there will be consumers who must participate in these markets. By extension, different models of how society works are likely to be more or less in accordance with the tendencies of the post-political. I would suggest that more sensitive to the complexity of social action, or sociological, a particular representation is, the more likely it is to be antithetical to post-political approaches because, as was noted in Chapter 2, the latter have a tendency to flatten social complexity and difference in favour of an imagined universal responsibility for climate change. Vice versa, the more economically and politically reductionist, an account of climate change and responses to it are, the less likely they are to be compatible with sociological accounts of human behaviour and action.

The Caribbean

At the Caribbean regional level, the prominence of natural scientific, technically-focussed representations of, and responses to, climate change neglects the embedded social relations of climate change (Hulme 2009), particularly the contested political ones. This is because there is little space within technical discussions to ask questions about meaning, values and ethics. In addition, where climate change is financialized and considered in economic terms this encourages a-social and individualistic models of the social where people are seen as individual market rational actors and or consumers, especially where the models of development which are drawn on tend towards the neoliberal. Moreover, the focus on technical responses risks prioritising the maintenance of existing social structures at the expense of considering substantive alternatives.

In addition, however, actors at the regional level also recognised some of the limits to their actions at that level, and hence called for action on climate change at the global level. This recognition reflects an acknowledgment of the

processes structuring climate change internationally, because much decision-making on climate change is indeed taken internationally. The acknowledgment of these global processes, as well as calls for adaptation rather than mitigation, are appropriate in sociological terms given the fact that the social structural causes of climate change, and its effects, are unevenly distributed. The kinds of measures being pursued at the Caribbean regional level were often those explicitly opposed by climate activists at the COP16 in Cancún. I now turn to a consideration of the models of society in evidence in these accounts.

Cancún

There was an overwhelming perception that multi-national corporations had greater power to influence governments than 'ordinary citizens'. The lack of faith in the COP process because of established interests could be interpreted in sociological terms as being an acknowledgement of the structural constraints on international government action (as identified by scholars such as Urry 2011). Meanwhile, activists' concern with trying to challenge status quo responses to climate change could be interpreted as constituting an attempt to 'de-familiarise the familiar' that is a feature of much critical sociology (Davis 2008; Outhwaite 2006). Finally, critiques of existing economic systems reflects claims made by some sociologists, such as Urry (2011), that alternative economic and social models need to be adopted in order to seriously confront the causes of climate change.

The aims of seeking anti-authoritarian and participatory alternative responses to climate change came from understandings of climate change as being an issue of social justice rather than merely a technical problem to be confronted (Schlembach et al. 2012; Schlembach 2011; and Springer 2011). Models of society here were relatively sociological in the sense of acknowledging interdependence, and the role of capitalist social structure in contributing to climate change. Additionally, the concern with including marginalised groups, such as indigenous peasant farmers, could be taken as demonstrative of a sensitivity to the marginalisation of certain groups in society, a kind of 'standpoint epistemology' perhaps. Social scientists have indeed commented that it is likely that those with least resources to face the challenges of climate change are likely to be the ones most impacted upon (Bishop and Payne 2012; Hulme 2009). The desire to establish alternative camps and summits, and to self-organise these, along anti-hierarchical lines, reflected a faith that people might have some degree of agency to affect change (Day 2005; Franks 2003). Civil disobedience and other forms of public action were

represented as being about trying to affect change or apply pressure, indicating a model of social change as being influence by the power of collective action of social movements. Davidson (2012: 618) remarks on the disproportionate impact of highly committed individuals on post-carbon transitions.

Other challenges perceived to collective social action included the impact of state security services on limiting the right to protest, or a contradiction between participatory rhetoric and authoritarian practice. Actors also expressed doubts about publics' wider comprehension of climate change, or capitalism, for instance. These doubts justified activists' roles as educators, or as acting on behalf of publics. There was not one coherent 'account of society' shared by all of the activists I encountered in Cancún, though. Tensions existed which were often based on different understandings of the issues, their corresponding models of society, and, relatedly, their ideas about what kinds of action to take. Unsurprisingly, anarchists tended to pursue a more radical line, while some of those who were designated as 'hippies' were more keen to highlight the lifestyle changes that might be made in order to mitigate climate change.

Belize

I found that prominent in accounts of public engagement around conservation in Belize was the idea of some publics as insufficiently acting in accordance with the needs or requirements of conservation policy. These concerns were raised by government actors and some prominent NGOs actors. Some of the imaginaries of sustainable society implied by those involved in conservation work, for instance, suggested that indigenous groups were at risk of living unsustainably, particularly where they were ignorant of the goals of biodiversity conservation. The idea that communities were in need of education echoes the flat models of society implicit in 'deficit' forms of engagement. There was talk of retraining indigenous people in accordance with market rationalities, because of them needing to be integrated into the practices of market-based society. Others, however, were keen to point out what they saw as the disadvantaged position of indigenous communities whose 'traditional' forms of social life were deemed to be positive in their comparatively benign impact on the environment; compared to drilling or extraction of resources which were seen as more dirty.

In contrast, a society and economy based on ecotourism was held up as a model for how communities might better live in harmony with their environment. Hence, with regard to oil drilling it was suggested by some people that drilling would hamper Belize's current status as an ecotourist destination by

despoiling the Barrier reef, or threatening the protected areas. Those in favour of pursuing oil drilling, though, thought that Belize's economy and society would be enhanced by wealth brought into the country. This kind of model of society is rather in keeping with neoliberalism. In Belize I found that there were pressures towards the adoption of neoliberal forms of development. As was noted in Chapter 2 these reflect particularly depoliticised model of society. In sum, I would say that it is indeed possible to explore the imagined models of society implicit in responses to climate change, though there is more work to be done here.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have synthesised the main findings from across the different case-study contexts. To recap, I found that engaging with actors on the ground, as part of an ethnographic involvement with their practice, generates a more detailed picture of contemporary climate change politics than some of those more abstract theoretical discussions mentioned in Chapter 2. My sociological analysis added depth and detail to the theoretical model of the post-political by indicating how people variously try and enact, and resist various tendencies in climate change politics. Looking at this picture facilitates greater reflection on who, specifically, is responding to climate change in different contexts, and how they are doing so. Moreover, my ethnographic involvement in different contexts enriched the picture further, enabling me to identify instances of tension, ambivalence, and pragmatism as part of people's accounts and activities. Conducting fieldwork in the Caribbean has suggested that it is necessary to take into account the Caribbean region's status as formerly colonized territories and the impacts of these post-colonial links on the present. Finally, I have shown that in practice particular taken-for-granted imaginaries of the social world are called into being where action on climate change takes place.

Conclusions

'Mi caan believe it.
Government waan fi move mi.
Mi tun refugee,
inna mi owna country.
But a long long time mi live yah so,
mi cant go no weh.
Dem really tek poor people fi fool,
dem really tek poor people fi fool.
Oh mista Babylon,
a weh u get da system yah from?
buldosa dung poor people land.
Jah know seh mi nah vote again(no sah)
Cah di MP dont give a damn.
A weh u get da system yah from?
bout seh mi live pon squatta land.'[76]

1. Introduction

In presenting the findings of my ethnographic study of how actors in different contexts in the Caribbean are involved in responses to climate change, in the previous chapters I have explored the political and social relations of responses in relation to the themes of post-politics, ambivalence, colonialism and development, and implicit models of society. This involved identifying, and engaging with, actors and activity around policy-making, public engagement and activism in three case-study sites in different contexts, all broadly relevant to understanding responses to climate change in the Caribbean. These different case-study contexts were firstly responses to climate change at the Caribbean regional level; secondly, activist responses to formal policy-making of the United

[76] An extract of lyrics from the song 'Poor People Land' by popular Jamaican dancehall artist Vybz Kartel. Cooper (2013) has suggested that dancehall is music of popular resistance. Here for instance, Kartel is lamenting the neglect of poor people's interests by the government and developers that forcibly move them from their lands, a lament that seems justified on the basis of the research conducted in this thesis.

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 16th Conference of Parties in Cancún, Mexico; and thirdly the relationships of community engagement around conservation, the governance of protected areas, and development in Belize. In this short concluding chapter I highlight the main findings of this thesis, and in so doing, outline the contributions of this thesis to the areas of scholarship outlined in Chapters 1 and 2.

2. Exploring the post-political in the Caribbean

The aim of this thesis has been to conduct a sociological exploration of responses to climate change, in and around the Caribbean, in terms of the extent to which they are proceeding in a post-political or post-democratic fashion. The research found there is an overall tendency towards post-political responses to climate change, but that these varied in the different case-study contexts. In the Caribbean region climate change discussions were dominated by the natural sciences and hence technocratic policies were formulated. One of the dominant policy frameworks in the Caribbean region is the UNFCCC, whose COPs were critiqued by activists at the COP16 for being elitist and exclusionary. In Cancun, therefore, some activists attempted to politicise climate change by suggesting that there were many alternatives to neoliberal capitalism. Meanwhile in Belize pressures towards neoliberal development mirrored those of the post-political condition. Thus the thesis provides a detailed account of specific processes and practices, as found in a range of settings, that demonstrate post-political and post-democratic, or depoliticised, responses to climate change. The research also shed light on the complexities inherent to these processes in practice.

3. Beyond monolithic accounts of post-politics: ambivalence

It was noted in Chapter 2, where I discussed of theories of the post-political, that some authors have suggested that Swyngedouw's (2010) account of the post-political is overly monolithic in its portrayal of climate change politics (Chatterton et al. 2013; and McCarthy 2013 for instance). My own ethnographic research approach enabled me to gain insights into how actors I encountered dealt with the contradictory and conflicted positions that they occupied. It became clear, therefore, that I needed to move beyond merely focussing on how post-political responses unfolded, towards trying to better understand some of the tensions and contractions that emerged in practice. Hence drawing on the

sociological discussion of ambivalence which enabled me to identify ways in which people involved in different responses may not be wholly invested in them. In the face of ambivalent responses, I found that often a pragmatic approach was adopted by actors as a means of negotiating the tensions they experienced. People in each situation sought to make the most of the resources available to them, and were often well aware of the limitations of their actions. They usually did not naively going along with post-political policies. Indeed people often reflected with a degree of cynicism about the constraints they faced and the necessity to overcome these. This kind of detail had largely gone unacknowledged in the existing literature. So my research so far has added texture to overly monolithic representations of climate change, generating a more nuanced understanding of climate change politics.

4. Neoliberal development, colonialism, and post-politics

By conducting fieldwork in the post-colonial Caribbean, and by relating the notions of post-politics to forms of development, and the specific characteristics of these contexts, I am also able to contribute to a better understanding of how pressures towards neoliberal development occur there. Indeed, I found that the legacies of colonialism, and pressures towards certain forms of neoliberal development, were significant in shaping (post-political) responses to climate change in the Caribbean.

5. Sociologies of climate change

My thesis also contributes to the emerging field of the sociology of climate change by indicating the ways in which sociology can be deployed to explore implicit sociological models in responses to climate change. The case studies allowed me to explore, particularly in the final part of the thesis (Chapter 7), the different models of society which are related to different social and geographical locations. Some actors were more likely to see society, and social development, in neoliberal terms, hence suggesting a bigger role for markets in responses to climate change. Others, such as some of the activists I spoke to, were keen to challenge the models of society implicit in dominant responses. I found parallels between the post-political and certain unsociological ways of interpreting the world, such as certain tendencies within policy making (Shove 2010a), economics (Urry 2011) and the weak implicit social models embedded within natural science (Wynne 2010). While there is more work to be done in probing

the characteristics of the relationship between depoliticised responses to climate change, and sociological models of society, this is the first study to explicitly begin that process. I shall now briefly reflect on the limitations of the project, and the scope for future projects to better progress the nascent research agenda outlined here.

6. Reflections on the research process and avenues for further investigation

The process of undertaking this research has been at once frustrating and rewarding, involving the development of my research skills in accordance with the opportunities and barriers I was exposed to. It was indicated in Chapter 3, though, that the false-starts and unforeseen changes inherent in the research process turned out in some instances to be productive, giving rise to the focus on ambivalence. The sometimes uncomfortable tensions raised by my attempts at practising scholar-activism are another example of where the methodology employed in future research would need to be carefully considered.

Confusion still remains over the extent to which, in seeking to challenge the tendencies which have been designated as being 'post-political', actors are in fact bringing the post-political into being. There is more work to be done in understanding the successes of, as well as the limitations of, challenges to the post-politics of climate change, so that the full extent and character of the 'consensus' could be better understood. Likewise, the basis for understanding the models of sociology embedded within responses to climate change was not as developed as it could have been. The absence of explorations of the relationships between different implicit models of society, and the character of post-political responses, suggests that more work could also be done here. Finally, I was not as sensitive to the potential scope for analysing the role of colonialism in responses as I could have been as it was not a feature discussed very much in the literature. Hence, here too I would suggest that there is still considerable work to be done in generating a fuller picture of the dynamics of colonial, post-colonial, and post-political relations. In spite of these limitations, however, the study did demonstrate that an ethnographic approach can shed light on the dynamics of everyday practice in response to climate change. This in turn helps to better ground and detail reflections on the post-political tendency.

Conclusion

In this study I have engaged empirically with responses to climate change in and around the Caribbean in order to uncover what post-politics might mean in practice. Technocratic and managerial approaches to climate change are limited in so far as they fail to take full account of the sociological complexity of the issues faced. By presenting markets as a taken-for-granted objective, they present particular social and political arrangements as natural. Researching different contexts ethnographically has helped me to develop a rich, in-depth appreciation of the social and political relations of climate change, and associated phenomena, in the Caribbean, and beyond. Hence, I have added texture to existing discussions of the post-political by looking at some of the ambivalent dimensions of people's accounts, and would suggest that describing climate change responses as post-political only gets us so far in understanding responses. If we seek responses to climate change that will be effective in their own terms then we must challenge the post-political mode of thinking that predominates. This can be done sociologically, as with this thesis, and it is also done by actors whenever their actions display the complexities which are inherent to social life. Mainstream economics, with its concern on the smooth functioning of markets, and sustainability science approaches, with their focus on management, are poorly equipped to deal with the political and sociological dimensionsbal of climate change, let alone appreciate the nuances of ambivalence and compromise involved in how people actually respond to climate change in practice.

Recent developments in the politics of climate change leave little to inspire. As I write this conclusion the early reaction to the imminent IPCC's 5th Assessment Report is emerging (Harvey 2013). Due for publication on the 28th September 2013 the early indications from the report are that the prognosis outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis continues to grow increasingly bleak. Meanwhile the COP19 will take place in Warsaw this year without any significant progress having been made on establishing a meaningful policy framework. In light of these facts, and in light of the thesis findings, I am rather pessimistic about the possibilities for substantial change. It will likely be an unfolding tragedy that those who bear the least responsibility for causing climate change will be among those to suffer the most.

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