



Report on Activities of the Orfalea Center Research Cluster

Transnational Politics and Social Movements of Climate Justice

John Foran and Richard Widick

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Transnational Politics and Social Movements of Climate Justice Research Cluster
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Dear members of the Executive Committee,

Today we are happy to report a successful year of participatory action research, community organizing, scholarly publication, and institution building in the substantive areas of climate change, globalization and its environmental contradictions, climate justice movements, and climate governance, and we would like to thank the Orfalea Center for its generous institutional and financial support, especially for the May 10, 2014 conference that our group produced at UCSB, at which we showcased a number of our activities. In the October 2013 round of Research Cluster funding, the Center awarded us \$2000 specifically to help with conference costs, the total cost for which amounted to some \$20,000. With the help of fourteen academic programs, the Chancellor, the Campus Architect, several student organizations, the Fund for Santa Barbara, and the Sara Miller-McCune Foundation in addition to the support of the Center we were able to meet the costs and successfully cap the year's activities with a day-long gathering that attracted over 150 participants from UCSB and the community. Richard Widick's position as Visiting Scholar at the Center has thus become the basis for a very strong and substantively fruitful research and publication collaboration on global environmental governance and transnational social movements.

Background

But our work for the year is not done, and the depth of our range and commitment to the project requires a bit of background in order to successfully convey what we have achieved this year with our support from the Center. In 2011 John Foran and Richard Widick first attended the UN climate talks in Durban, and since that time we have progressively built the International Institute of Climate Action and Theory (IICAT)—our research network and innovative public-facing climate-focused think tank—into an active and increasingly central part of the global civil society participation in the talks.

We have represented the University of California as Official UN Observer Delegates in 2011, 2012, and 2013, and on December 1st this year we will be inside the talks at Lima, Peru, for COP 20—the last working meeting before the next universal climate treaty is adopted in Paris at COP 21 in 2015. We have produced seven UN Press Conferences (five in Doha 2012, two in Warsaw 2013), and this year in Lima we will produce at least two more. The first one will be the occasion for releasing a report from our Orfalea Center Research Cluster titled *What Now for Climate Justice? Debating Social Movement Strategies for the Last Year of Struggle over the Next Universal Climate Treaty*. We are working with Patrick Bond of the Durban Center for Civil Society (South Africa) and Jim Schultz of the Democracy Center (Cochabamba, Bolivia) to ensure that our report includes civil society voices from a broad range of social movements in the global south.

A second UN Press Conference in Lima will convene the most active members of the climate justice movement on the global stage on the last day of the talks, a strategy we have used effectively in Warsaw and Doha to ensure that underrepresented youth, women, labor, small island, indigenous, and poor peoples' voices from around the world have their voices heard. The peoples and International Non-Governmental Organizations with whom we have worked in the past and are working with now on both the *What Now for Climate Justice?* report and the UN Press Conferences and Side Event include Tom Goldtooth (Indigenous Environmental Network), Asad Rehman, Nnimmo Bassey and Silje Lundberg (Friends of the Earth International in the UK, Nigeria, and Norway), Jim Shultz (The Democracy Center, Cochabamba, Bolivia), Lidy Nacpil (Jubilee South, Philippines), Anjali Appadurai (Earth in Brackets), Reem al-Mealla (Arab Youth Climate Movement, Bahrain), Fatima Ibrahim of the UK Youth Climate Coalition, Mthika Mwenda (PanAfrican Climate Justice Alliance, Kenya), and Pascoe Sabido (Corporate Europe Observatory), among many others. This is how we study both power and resistance in the climate conflict—by participating in the dialogue and debate, getting inside the action, inside the talks, and taking the position, backed by the consensus on global warming science, that a new global treaty is possible, necessary, and in need of greater ambition and more ample and transparent financial commitments.

This year we have also proposed to convene an official UN side event at Lima, at which we will discuss our Research Cluster's report as part of an open debate on a panel geared toward ensuring the new treaty includes language and policies that advance food security, the right to food and nutrition, women's rights and livelihoods, and inter-generational climate justice—which our group sees as intimately linked.

For the 2013-2014 academic year, John Foran was chosen as UCSB's Sustainability Champion for his work on the climate issue, including his IICAT research and institution building, his teaching in the department of sociology, his climate-focused scholarship, his leadership of the Fossil Free UC divestment campaign, and his active mentorship of students. John used the \$25K grant that came with the Championship to build a foundation for the year's activities, the expansion of IICAT with the addition of research associates and new African scholar (Adrian Nel), and to bring a team of five graduate and undergraduate researchers—Corrie Ellis, Summer Gray, Ben Liddie, Natasha Weidner, and Emily Williams—into our research program for a year of international public scholarship aimed at participating in and understanding the UN climate talks and the climate justice movement. Giving ourselves the name of IICAT Climate Justice Project, our team of seven commanded a noticeable presence at the Warsaw climate talks (some of our work is also found at the [IICAT Climate Justice Project](#)). We conducted scores of videotaped interviews and documented the entire conference audio-visually, as well as the social movements' activities outside in the streets. In this regard, our film and video projects, designed to participate in the global dialogue and struggle over the next treaty, are well on their way toward release in the first quarter of the new year—the last year of struggle and negotiation before the treaty is adopted in Paris in December of 2015.

List of project-related publications and talks by our research group, 2013 - 2014

Publications

John Foran and Richard Widick. “Breaking Barriers to Climate Justice.” Pp. 34-39 in *Contexts: Understanding People in their Social Worlds*, a journal of the American Sociological Association, Volume 12. Number 2. May 2013.

John Foran. “Energy Independence Means Freedom from Fossil Fuels.” *Santa Barbara Independent*. August 26, 2013. <http://www.independent.com/news/2013/aug/26/energy-independence-means-freedom-fossil-fuels/#commenttoggle>. A longer version is available online at www.iicat.org

John Foran and Summer Gray. “At the Crossroads: Another Maldives is Possible.” *Truthout*. September 17, 2013, <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/18901-at-the-crossroads-another-maldives-is-possible> Published in the Maldives at <http://www.dhivehisitee.com/election-2013/comment-piece/crossroads-another-maldives-possible/>

John Foran and Summer Gray. “240,000 letters: Mohamed Nasheed’s Campaign to Restore Democracy to the Maldives.” *Dhivehi Site*. September 26, 2013, <http://www.dhivehisitee.com/election-2013/comment-piece/240000-letters-mohamed-nasheeds-campaign-restore-democracy-maldives/> Published as “Mohamed Nasheed’s Campaign to Restore Democracy to the Maldives.” *Counterpunch*. September 27-29, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/09/27/mohamed-nasheeds-campaign-to-restore-democracy-to-the-maldives/>

John Foran and Summer Gray. “A Fight Like Many Others: What Happens in the Maldives Elections on October 19 Concerns Us All.” *Counterpunch*. October 18-20, 2013, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/10/18/a-fight-like-many-others/> Published in the Maldives, October 18, 2013, <http://www.dhivehisitee.com/election-2013/uncategorized/fight-like-many-others/>

Richard Widick. “Dangerous Places: Social Media at the Convergence of Peoples, Labor, and Environmental Movements.” Martha McCaughey (ed.) *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*. Routledge. 2014.

John Foran. “¡Volveremos!/We Will Return:” The State of Play for the Global Climate Justice Movement at the 2013 Warsaw UN Climate Summit COP19.” Pp. 454-477 in *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*. Volume 6. Number 1. May 2014. <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Interface-6-1-Foran.pdf>

John Foran, “‘Get it Done!’ The Global Climate Justice Movement and the Fateful Race for a Radical Climate Treaty.” Pp. 34-42 in *Global Undertones*. Volume 1. Summer 2014, <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/26768321/global-undertones-into-the-streets>

John Foran and Summer Gray. "Climate Injustice: The Real History of the Maldives." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. Volume 58. September 2014.
<http://berkeleyjournal.org/2014/09/climate-injustice-the-real-history-of-the-maldives/>

John Foran and Jill Stein. "Climate Action." Forthcoming in Ben Manski, editor, *A Field Guide to the Greens*.

Richard Widick and John Foran. "Whose Utopia? —Our Utopia! Competing Visions of the Future at the UN Climate Talks." Forthcoming in a special issue of *Nature and Culture*, "Beyond Utopia: Crisis, Values and the Socialities of Nature," co-edited by Constanza Parra, Casey Walsh, and Lindsay Vogt.

Talks, Panels, Conferences, and Press Conferences

Two UN Press Conferences at UNFCCC COP 19, Warsaw, Poland. November 2013.

Talk by John Foran. "Achieving Radical Emission Reductions: A Plan for Social Action." The Radical Emission Reduction Conference. Tyndall Center/Royal Society. London, England. December 2013.

Panel organized by Richard Widick and John Foran. "What Now for Climate Justice? Designing Public Engagement in the Struggle for Climate Justice across Local, National, and International Scales." With Michael Dorsey, Hilal Elver, and Richard Falk. Orfalea Center Globalization conference on "Materialities." March 1 2014.

Talk by John Foran. "Achieving Radical Emissions Reductions: A Plan for Social Action." "Materialities: A Global Studies Conference." UCSB. March 2014.

Conference co-organized by Corrie Ellis, John Foran, Summer Gray, Ben Liddie, Natasha Weidner, Richard Widick, and Emily Williams. "Re-Imagining Climate Justice: At the Crossroads of Hope and Possibility." UCSB. May 2014.

Panel organized by Richard Widick and John Foran. "What Now For Climate Justice? Re-Imagining Civil Society and Social Movement Strategies at the UN Climate Negotiations" at the Re-Imagining Climate Justice Conference. With Michael Dorsey. UCSB. May 2014.

Talk by John Foran. "Re-Imagining Climate Justice: The Sustainability Champion Talk." UCSB. May 2014.

Talk by John Foran. "The Search for a Global Climate Treaty: An Analysis of the 2013 U.N. Climate Summit." American Sociological Association. San Francisco. August 2014.

Workshop organized by John Foran and Howard Ehrman. "System Change Not Climate Change." On the People's Climate Train. September 2014.

Panel organized by Richard Widick and John Foran. "What Now for Climate Justice? Proposing Radical Climate Justice for the 2015 Global Climate Treaty." With Patrick Bond,

Michael Dorsey, Lidy Nacpil, Anjali Appadurai, and Jim Shultz. Peoples Climate Justice Summit, New York, New York. September 2014.

List of project participants

Kum-Kum Bhavnani — Professor of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara; filmmaker

Patrick Bond — Professor of Development Studies and Director of the Duran Center for Civil Society at KwazuluNatal University, Durban, South Africa

Grace Chang — Associate Professor of Feminist Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Michael Dorsey — United Nations Nongovernmental Liaison Service, Consultant on Sustainability and Small Island Developing States; Interim Director of Energy and Environment at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Study, Washington DC.

Corrie Ellis — Graduate Student in Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara

Hilal Elver — UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Food, formerly Research Fellow, Orphalea Center and Professor of Global Studies at University of California, Santa Barbara

Richard Falk — Emeritus Professor of International Law, Princeton University; Professor of Global Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

John Foran — Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Summer Gray — Graduate Student in Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara

Janet Walker — Professor of Film and Media Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Richard Widick — Research Scholar, Orfalea Center, University of California, Santa Barbara