# ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK ON THE GREEN NEW DEAL

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# A GREEN NEW DEAL BEYOND THE "NORTH"

## Both promise and peril[1]

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### Introduction

Since 2019, the world has seen the emergence of significant ecological and social crises. From wildfires raging in the Brazilian Amazon, unheard-of summer temperatures in Antarctica, 38-degree Celsius heat waves in Siberia, disastrous floods in the American Midwest and across parts of southern Africa, and the loss of billions of animals in Australia's catastrophic bushfires, the world is burning and drowning in front of our eyes. On top of this came the most dramatic societal shutdown since World Wars I and II in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The spread of monoculture agri-business, the movement of people toward cities, and the destructive simplifications of landscapes shaped by a modern narrative of "development" have made increasingly populated urban centers a greater risk of zoonotic spillover (the spread of deadly pathogens from animal species to people. The lightning speed spread of pathogens is propagated along tightly interconnected supply chains and frenetic movement of people around the world. Recent research has shown that rapid changes in land use influence the risk and emergence of zoonotic diseases in humans (Gibb et al. 2020). The "just-in the-time" demands of this nature–labor orchestration extinguish the life-giving potential of the land, water, and human cultures. It is a system that also serves as an ideal conduit for a viral pathogen to penetrate new bodies faster than underfunded public health systems and existing knowledge can handle it.

The chapter is structured as follows: first, we sketch how ecological breakdown and social inequality are intertwined, and indeed co-constitutive of capitalist, statist, and patriarchal modernity. Next, we describe the response strategy to address these twinned crises by exploring prominent calls for a Green (New) Deal in the United States and Europe. We highlight the central focus on techno-solutions to ecological and social crises that have come to define these Northern-led Green New Deals (GNDs), namely, the global implications of Northern-led techno-optimism in bringing about progressive "eco-friendly" policies. These implications piggyback on historical relations of uneven development centered around resource imperialism and the continued dependency on racialized, gendered, and classed workers. We then highlight why a focus on techno-solutions cannot be separated from the growth imperative of capitalism and must also be contextualized within the current political

juncture, which offers a breeding ground for racial and patriarchal capitalism, authoritarian and far-right governments, and even ecofascist elements to thrive. We conclude by going beyond a techno-focus on growing "greener" and instead describe alternative just transitions and radical transformations that prioritize reparation and restorative justice, decolonization, autonomy for workers, and deliberative democracy in transforming what a global green new deal might look like. We highlight the transformative power of building global solidarity across autonomous social movements that remain politically and ethically committed to social and environmental justice outside the state and hence are not wooed by new streams of capital growth and profit.

## Intertwined social and ecological crises

In the last two years there has been a spate of conflict flashpoints, violent coups, and increasingly visible evidence of shameful inequalities in wealth, which have resulted in unprecedented demands for social change around the world. Among the most dramatic of these have been movements in Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, and elsewhere in Latin America. Social uprisings have also emerged in India, France, Lebanon, Haiti, Algeria, Sudan, and South Africa. Across Europe and North America before the pandemic, youth movements have been amassing on the streets every Friday demanding climate justice and a future worth living in.

India witnessed a general worker strike of 250 million on 26 November 2020, making it the biggest strike in world history, followed by months of sustained mobilizations against the three farm bills proposed by the increasingly authoritarian and neoliberal Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in India. Hundreds of thousands of farmers mobilized in and around Delhi against the laws that sought to remove their guaranteed procurement prices and further marginalize them in favor of the agro-industrial lobby and digital agriculture technologies, and will erode their autonomy over their own production systems (Narasimhaiah and Kulriya 2021). Over the few months the farmers have been camping on the borders of Delhi, while other worker groups and unions, academics and students, environmental organizations, youth and feminist groups, human rights advocates, and many others have shown solidarity with the protest, contradicting many observers who dismissed it as a movement with a "narrow sectarian" base (Asher 2021; Kaur 2021; Siwach 2021).

The United States, a country built upon the backs of anti-Black racism and settler colonialism, has suffered the greatest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, disproportionately impacting the most marginalized in society. In 2020, the combination of ongoing police violence, the pandemic's deeply uneven impacts, and the historical legacy of systemic racism resulted in the largest and most widespread social uprisings in the country in decades. Anti-racism protests rapidly surfaced globally, with demands to defund the police, the physical dismantling of colonial symbols and statues, and widespread reassessment of institutional and corporate strategies to "end white supremacy." Indigenous Peoples' movements for self-determination, such as the rail blockades held in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation in Canada who are protesting the construction of a gas pipeline across their unceded land, and the reclaiming of territories taken over in colonial times, have joined this series of "beautiful trouble" (e.g., Boyd and Mitchell 2013), as have worker movements in South Africa and other countries.

While the causes of today's social and ecological crises are varied and have emerged from context-specific geographies, there is a striking commonality to the demands that social movements are making. They generally revolve around calls for autonomy from oppressive

states; a growing resistance to profit- and power-hungry global elites constantly pushing people and nature to beyond the point of tolerance (e.g., Chile, Hong Kong, Algeria, Haiti, Sudan, Ecuador); and resisting and ending anti-Black racism, casteism, settler colonialism, Islamophobia, extractivism, and ecologically devastating policies (e.g., in the United States, Canada, India, Latin America). But the corresponding state response has been quite different, from crackdowns on and vilification of social movements by right-wing parties and governments, to appreciative nods and a semblance of positive policy moves by a few liberal or welfarist regimes. Only a few mainstream politicians have dared to say anything fundamentally different. Among these responses are: the "Green New Deal" manifesto of once-US-presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders; parallel statements and manifestos by former UK prime ministerial candidate Jeremy Corbyn (see Bailey and Hofferberth, this volume); the Green New Deal for Europe (not to be confused with the European Green Deal) (see Adler and Wargan, this volume); and the Pacto Ecosocial del Sur, a manifesto spearheaded by Latin American and Caribbean countries calling for the cancellation of external debt, tax reform, universal basic income, post-extractive economies, and food and cultural sovereignty from Northern economies, among other demands.[2] The Green New Deal (GND), in its different variants, proposes a corrective to the social and ecological destruction of the mainstream development model and to some of its key architects such as the fossil fuel and military industries.

A GND to sustainably modernize economies in overly developed regions of the world has implications for the lives, livelihoods and ecosystems of the rest of the world, which will invariably be transformed in the name of "greening." Before delving into the role that a GND might play, we first contextualize global calls for a GND with three priority concerns that illustrate how ecological degradation and pernicious social inequality are not only intertwined, but have become more pronounced due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. These concerns include worker precarity, climate change response strategies, and "saving nature."

## *Worker precarity*

The unprecedented lockdowns imposed as a response to the pandemic initially caused local and global economies to come screeching to a halt, exposing the vulnerability of hundreds of millions of workers. In India, up to half a million migrants were forced to start walking to their ancestral villages after a 21-day lockdown was imposed without warning by the Modi government in April 2020 and carried out with shamefully inadequate consideration or groundwork to respond to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. Many days later, when the impacts became very visible and pressure from civil society and state governments ramped up, the Indian government announced some (rather inadequate) relief packages. As Jessica Faleiro of ActionAid International describes, internal displacements of workers in India associated with the pandemic are the tip of an iceberg of broader migrations and dislocations of the masses due to climate-induced natural disasters, resulting in the emergence of "ghost villages" in some hilly regions (Faleiro 2021): and building on a history of development-induced displacement of about 60 million people in the last few decades (Mathur 2008). A study by the Azim Premji University (2021) reports that about 230 million people were pushed into poverty in the first year of the pandemic.

Billions of workers around the world have had to continue providing "essential" services during the pandemic, often at low wages and putting their health on the line in the process. Others have been obliged to accept reductions in daily earnings or have lost their jobs entirely. The level of disposability of informal livelihoods was hardwired in the production and

circulation of goods and services prior to the pandemic but has now reached astronomical proportions. Many workers have been touted as "guardian angels" (Lynes and Trepanier 2020), upholding a society in which certain privileged members can order all their needs from the comfort of home while the "angels" endure health risks and extreme economic precarity. They are often racialized migrant laborers brought to North America and Europe under specific conditions that restrict the possibility of attaining legal status in the country of arrival and the social services that can support their well-being and that of their families (Ferguson and McNally 2015). In countries like India, they are made up predominantly of Dalit (the so-called "outcastes") and other lower castes, religious minorities and Indigenous People.

As C.P. Chandrasekhar and Jayati Ghosh (2020) write, informal workers make up more than 60% of the global workforce (in countries like India, above 90%). Their role in a globalized economy of "just-in-time" capital accumulation is precisely to have a high turnover rate. There are always substitutes to replace those who are burned out, or made redundant, or forced to return to their country of origin (or domestically, to their village). John Bellamy Foster and Intan Suwandi (2020) note that another factor of migrant labor is their *cheapness*. For instance, unit labor costs of Indian nationals working in the United States are only 37% of that of their US citizen counterparts. This wage differential has nothing to do with differences in productivity but has much more to do with the continuation of a highly interconnected global network of racially driven exploitation. The racialized premise of global development is a point we will return to later in this chapter and which we argue challenges any attempt at building a "Green New Deal."

## Climate response and adaptation

The rapid shutdown of various parts of the economy associated with the lockdowns did indeed lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, with between a 4% and 7% drop for the year 2020 (Le Quéré et al. 2020). However, this effect becomes negligible on a broader time horizon when understood as emerging from circumstance rather than directed planning (Forster et al. 2020). Moreover, the reduction in emissions is still a far cry from the minimum 7.6% drop per annum that would be required to remain below 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming (UNEP 2019). Focusing on the outcomes rather than on the intention is dangerously misleading, as increased Amazon deforestation due to the loosening of environmental regulations in Brazil has illustrated (Londoño et al. 2020). In India, the lockdown period was used by the government to roll out several ecologically devastating projects (e.g., industrial agriculture, mining, expressways) and dilute environmental laws and social protections for farmers at a time when mass mobilization was restricted due to the pandemic (Kothari 2020). The consequences of such decisions will be felt as we emerge from the pandemic.

The promise of powerful governments and multinational corporations to "return to normal" as soon as possible threatens to plunge people and nature into a spiral of unprecedented economic structural adjustments. It is not surprising that peoples' movements and civil society groups are resisting this with all their might. But it is not enough; a dangerous "return to normal" has already happened and this time it comes with a "green" face.

Scholars Bigger and Webber (2021) warn of the risks of "green structural adjustment" as a strategy by the World Bank to encourage cities across the Global South[3] to take on more debt through promises of marketizing urban renewal and climate change adaptation and resilience. The underlying driver of such strategies is to channel the liquidity of Northern investors (or as the authors claim, "spatially fix" their otherwise speculative capital) toward

bankable urban projects that will not only generate trillions of dollars in climate transactions but also continue the colonial process of funneling those returns from the Global South back toward the Global North. In this sense, climate change adaptation and resilience, while viewed as a legitimate concern, also becomes itself a new frontier for capital accumulation (Chandrasekaran 2021). Bigger and Webber (2021) illustrate how "green structural adjustment" works in practice through the examples of Jakarta, Indonesia and Can ThoCity, Vietnam. In these, the World Bank undertakes a diagnostic assessment of these cities' climate vulnerabilities and recommends how to make them more investable for large-scale flood protection, transport, and sewage management infrastructure that will assure climate change "resiliency." Like previous forms of structural adjustment, generating a "resilient city" through urban renewal involves taking on World Bank loans and by turns repaying the debts that follow. The training programs associated with the World Bank's approach offer recommendations to municipal, local, and national governments on the obstacles that prevent private investment in climate resilience and how to remove those obstacles. These include improving credit ratings, fine-tuning methods for land value capture or the swapping of public land for infrastructure development rights, and encouraging blended finance through public–private partnerships.

Ultimately, this form of "greening" is geared toward making investment suitable for capital accumulation by Global North investors in the name of responding to climate change. At the same time, it entirely obfuscates the fact that climate impacts are the result of Global North development strategies in the 500-year quest for capital accumulation, falling disproportionately on the regions of the world least responsible for this modus of development even as these post-colonial nations are obliged (and tempted with the complicit acquiescence of their elites) to participate in its acceleration through market integration. The ethos of capital markets is a return on investment; it matters little whether the side objectives are couched as being eco-friendly, climate-resilient, LGBTQ-friendly or not. Potential returns on investment take precedence over any and all intentionality, however urgent or well-meaning. It is for this reason that development banks like the World Bank, national governments like the United States, or supranational governing blocs like the EU can spend billions in renewable energy infrastructure and in supporting Green Deals while simultaneously investing in the arms industry, coal-fired plants and natural gas pipelines. A form of "green" gaslighting becomes all too clear when unfair and unintended outcomes become viewed as profitable opportunities for the perpetrators of this logic, using narratives like pandemic recovery and climate resiliency to cover up their tracks.

## *"Saving nature"*

The links between deforestation, expansion of extractivism and industrial agriculture, biodiversity loss, and the role that these play in encouraging the conditions for zoonotic disease spillover events from animals to humans leading to global pandemics, has led to renewed calls for protecting nature (Gibb et al. 2020; IPBES 2020). The clarion call has been resounding: the prevention of future pandemics can only happen by protecting nature. In the last year, urgent calls to protect nature have emerged from influential groups like National Geographic, the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUCN), The Nature Conservancy, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The so-called "suicidal" war on nature, as recently proclaimed by UN chief António Guterres, stands as a testament to the need for nature protection and will come to define the United Nations' biodiversity conservation strategy to be revealed later in 2022. Protecting nature was also recently emphasized

in the UN Environment Programme's "Making Peace with Nature" report released in February 2021 (UNEP 2021).

Yet, it is never entirely clear how "nature" is defined, how it is to be protected, or by whom. Do the lifeworlds of the Penan of Sarawak, Malaysia, the Shuar of Ecuador, or the Anishinaabe of Turtle Island count in what "nature" refers to? How about the intricate rice terraces co-constructed by the Ifugao people in the Philippines or the Satoyama landscapes of Japan in which people not only actively construct "nature" but whose cultures are themselves profoundly shaped by these assembled landscapes? "Nature" is instead treated as a black box of pristine, depopulated landscapes requiring "protection" from human recklessness. The precise relationships between humans and the non-human world that characterize what "nature" refers to and how it is treated are assumed to default to a dualistic understanding of separation between humans and the non-human world (Moore 2015). At the same time, while human recklessness is purported as the instigator, rarely, if ever, are capital accumulation and settler colonialism singled out as the actual culprits for the modus of development that treats the non-human world as an expendable resource for extraction, consumption and waste. The continued treatment of "nature" and "people" as separate and unnuanced categories paves the way for overly simplistic and culturally skewed technical solutions that risk exacerbating twinned social and ecological crises.

One such proposed solution by biologist E.O. Wilson is the "half-earth" proposal to devote one-half of the earth's lands and waters to conservation; another comes from institutions urging for 30% of the earth to be protected by 2030. These proposals, well-meaning as they may be, continue a neo-colonial approach to conservation, as they: (1) are focused largely on separating the pursuits of modern development from a passive nature that requires protection, (2) are proposed and debated largely by academics and NGOs of the Global North, (3) do not involve communities living in the ecosystems and landscapes sought to be "protected," (4) ignore the immense knowledge and conservation practice of such communities, and (5) hardly challenge the planet-destroying production and consumption patterns of the Global North (Kothari 2021a and 2021b).

The influence held by figures like E.O. Wilson lies in the cultural matching they do (Richardson 2018). This refers to the ways in which problems and their solutions are determined according to established cultural habits, aesthetics, and deeply ingrained universalities in how relationships between humans and non-humans are demarcated and socio-culturally cemented. Half-earth conservation, or other models suggesting that the world's population should go entirely vegan (e.g., Springmann et al. 2018), for example, reflect a deeply white-washed cultural construction of "nature" and of human relations to their non-human kin. In the process, the failure to delink these solutions to hegemonic forms of cultural matching allows the white supremacist project of Western development and conservation to go unquestioned. This has a bearing on how one views GND-like proposals.

To conclude this section, the increasing precarity of workers, the urgent need to respond to multiple ecological crises (including those of biodiversity, pollution, and climate), and the imperative to recognize alternative relationships between people and our non-human kin, together illustrate the impossibility of separating social inequality from ecological degradation. A GND has the potential to recognize these intersections and intervene in ways that do not replicate a "return to normal" by simply "greening" growth. Green growth has potential adverse impacts in terms of how costs of development get shifted elsewhere. This often takes place through an ongoing legacy of racialized[4] and patriarchal patterns of resource extraction and the continued pattern of violent and humiliating land dispossession and cultural genocide in expanding the frontier of capital markets. Great care is required to

reclaim a GND that does not get co-opted by "business as usual." This requires an unequivocal rejection of tendencies like "green structural adjustment" that fail to unmake the imperialist construction and continued dependence on a Global South as a source of extraction of cheap labor and natural resources for continued wealth accumulation in the North (Podur 2021). A GND must have clear positions against resource imperialism, racial capitalism, the securitization of the status quo by the nexus of state and capital, and the patriarchal project of shifting regenerative work to unpaid or unrecognized labor. It requires a specific call for a reparations ecology that takes decolonization and combating patriarchy as the guiding principles for conceptualizing what it means to be "green." In the next section, we briefly discuss how the GND, as championed in the United States by 2020 presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders, came to prominence. In doing so, and in also referring to the EU's Green Deal, we analyze how the GND gets framed as providing technological and managerial solutions, at times with a justice focus, to the intertwined social and ecological crises we have described and the implications of this focus particularly for the Global South.

## "Green New Deal" or more efficient old deal?

Talk of a Green New Deal began after the global financial crisis of 2008 with the United Kingdom's New Economics Foundation issuing a report on "A Green New Deal" for a shift toward renewable energy production (Elliott et al. 2008). More recently in the United States, a youth-led grassroots climate mobilization known as the Sunrise Movement staged a sit-in on 13 November 2018 to occupy Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi's office (Roberts 2019). Their demands were that all Democrat leadership in the House refuse to accept donations from the fossil fuel industry and to establish a House Select Committee on a Green New Deal. Many Democratic representatives, including representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, voiced support for the movement and further publicized the message. Within a month, major environmental organizations including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, over 300 local elected officials, and numerous Democratic members of Congress were supporting the Committee for a GND that prioritized green jobs and green energy transitions. In early 2019, Senator Ed Markey and Representative Ocasio-Cortez released a Green New Deal Resolution at the 116th US Congress calling for public investments in public transportation, zero-emission energy sources twinned with social safeguards geared toward the most vulnerable communities, including universal health care, increased minimum wage, and affordable housing (H. Res. 109).

When Bernie Sanders announced he was running for the 2020 presidential race in the United States, he supported Ocasio-Cortez's resolution and promised his own version of a GND, noting that climate change is an "existential threat" to the nation and the planet at large (Rosane 2019). Bernie's version of the GND[5] had a clear focus on both ecological and social justice issues. It centered heavily around the need to tackle the climate crisis, moving completely away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy, while explicitly supporting various grassroots movements (e.g., climate justice, divestment) that have demanded such measures. Importantly, unlike mainstream climate change proposals, it emphasized the need to address social justice issues in the transition period, especially for those most vulnerable (including low-income people, people of color, children, seniors, and people with disabilities). It stressed the need to create dignified, ecologically oriented jobs for workers likely to be affected by the transition away from a fossil fuel–based economy, and to place transport infrastructure and energy systems in public hands (including through worker cooperatives). Measures for conserving public lands for "ecologically regenerative and sustainable

agriculture" and ecological restoration were also included, and touted as having the potential to create millions of jobs. The renegotiation of international trade deals to "ensure strong and binding climate standards, labor rights, and human rights" was another significant commitment. Bernie's GND also explicitly opposed continued exploration of oil and gas in rolling back mega-infrastructure projects such as the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines.

Bernie's campaign had gained momentum on the power of social movements demanding workers' rights and climate/environmental justice. It is important to note that relatively recent examples from Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Greece have shown that leftist parties which have obtained power in government with the help of significant grassroots mobilization have, to varying extents, failed to maintain consistent and ongoing connections to these grassroots struggles or commitment to democratically driven political organization and socio-cultural transformation (Federici and Linebaugh 2018). Leftists, youth, workers, progressive liberals, and others rooting for transformation need to understand that a GND will only be successful to the extent that people's movements rise up on an unprecedented scale to build sufficient autonomy, and to hold the state (whomever it is composed of) accountable to political and economic democracy. This autonomous power is also known as "dual power," reflecting the establishment of "counter-institutions" that both meet the needs of marginalized populations and are also run by those very people (Broumas 2018). The most critical component of this is direct, radical power exercised by collectives on the ground (Zografos 2019).

Unfortunately, the GND, in its various incarnations, does not have an explicit focus on radical grassroots democracy in which centralized power withers away. There remains a great dependence on the nation-state, with its inevitable tendency to concentrate power, even if in the name of the people. Other such crucial flaws could severely hamper the potential for real change that the GND promises. There remains a significant dependence on technological solutions to problems that are not necessarily technological in nature – a fundamental flaw that has been seen in mainstream "solutions" for decades (Collard et al. 2016; Kallis 2017). Existing outlines of a US GND say nothing about reducing overall energy demand (apart from "weatherization" to reduce domestic consumption) or the consumption of materials. As such, they fail to acknowledge the unsustainable exploitation of nature and natural resources required to create electric cars, solar panels, and wind turbines (Hickel 2018; Riofrancos 2021). The US GND proposal commits to holding corporations accountable to domestic climate goals and labor standards, but is not explicit in whether they will also be held accountable globally. The failure to consider global corporate accountability is particularly worrying given the utter failure of previous institutionalized efforts. One such example is the UN's Global Compact, which lacks any monitoring or enforcement provisions and has been accused of perpetuating "bluewash," the practice of corporations purporting to voluntarily participate in philanthropic efforts in order to improve their bargaining power in the multilateral governance arena (Bruno and Karliner 2000).

While Bernie Sanders' campaign focused on putting an end to unprecedented inequality in the United States, his version of the GND was not clear on how such inequality can be addressed at its root, beyond taxing billion-dollar fossil fuel companies and providing "green jobs" to lift low-income sectors. Without clarity on the issue of systemic inequality inherent within capitalism, a GND cannot challenge its foundational structures of racism, gendered divisions of labor, and the precarity of working-class people.

Why does this detail on local, national and global inequality matter so much? As we describe below, many of the same people who wouldn't dare question a system responsible for the severance of life-support systems and centuries-long systemic dehumanization, are now

throwing billions of dollars of investment into "green" development. The EU's Green Deal (described further in chapter by Adler and Walgan, this volume), while sounding impressive on paper in offering €100 billion/year over ten years for "green investment" in Europe, is one of several proposals (and historical culprits) pushing for a more inclusive capitalism (see further chapter by Selwyn, this volume). The concern with this "too little too late" approach is not about the amount of the financial support, but rather about how it shifts risk away from private enterprise (and wealthy individuals) and onto the public sphere and future generations.

The global implications of sidestepping systemic inequality within a GND paves the way for "green" colonialism, perpetuating the 500-year quest for cheap raw materials and the labor of Black and Brown bodies to achieve more efficient (call it "green" if you will) growth (Taylor and Kaur 2019). The impacts that this "greener" mode of development has on the Global South is anything but new (Podur 2021). Yet dominant actors of the global economy stand to benefit immensely from a GND that elevates "green" and remains unhinged from the global politics of class, race and gender. Often the depiction of "green" advocated by influential actors in global conservation, multilateral, and development lending arenas takes form through technological solutions.[6]

## *Green New Deal or green tech for profit?*

It is worth reiterating a point from earlier that, despite stated commitments to social responsibilities and engagement with the communities in which industry operates, private finance always functions to ensure returns on investment as profit. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that increasing profitable growth (measured as enhanced production throughput) can be accomplished without exploiting the biophysical environment and shifting costs of production to labor. In other words, any absolute decoupling of social and ecological impacts from economic growth remains a myth (Hickel and Kallis 2020; Parrique et al. 2019; Vadén et al. 2020).[7] The early stages of the global pandemic – which had shown improved ecological outcomes due to decreased economic growth – has never made the fallacy of decoupling so evident. When it comes down to the bottom line (financially and metaphorically), the interest of the private sector in the GND is to secure future profits and minimize their own risk. Issues such as workers' rights, demands for dignified jobs, wages, food security, housing, health care, and ecological sustainability are bound to be downplayed or ignored altogether in versions of a GND that do not challenge private sector investments.[8]

The existential fear of losing privileges as a result of the unexpected social and ecological "externalities" of "business as usual" has (likely unwillingly) forced global elites from the far-right to the center-left to reckon with climate change as an "investment risk" (Christianson and Pinchot 2020). From BlackRock CEO Larry Fink to Jeff Bezos, the world's richest man and CEO of Amazon, to former US President Donald Trump, those who throw billions of dollars into "solutions" like planting a trillion trees (Friedman 2020) do so not only as a good public relations exercise but also to achieve a good return on investment to stabilize such risk. Throwing a few hundred million more into funding environmental groups (the ones unlikely to challenge the fundamental structures of capitalism), is great for a "green" image while not making any dent in their wealth. In other words, big business does not deny the risks of climate change, but the response to these risks is only to maintain or enhance profit-making potential rather than address the uneven social impacts that ecological breakdown generates. Up until late 2020, Amazon even threatened to fire employees that spoke out about climate change (Milman 2020). Indeed, maintaining "business as usual" could not have been made any clearer than Microsoft's recent commitment to become "carbon

negative" by 2030, with CEO Satya Nadella stating that a "corporation's purpose is to find *profitable solutions* to the *problems* of people and planet" (Clifford 2020). This view resonates with that of the United Nations, which has long espoused a triple bottom line putting people and planet on the same plane as profits. In the face of ecological breakdown, securitizing a future for capital accumulation will require increasingly centralized policy-making and authoritarian control (Mitchell and Chaudhary 2020). A GND that stems from the Global North and sets the terms for engaging with the Global South rather than be open to an equal and historically reparative relationship presents a perfect opportunity to justify such securitization.

The logic that profits can go on forever while protecting people and the planet is seductively dangerous at a time of unprecedented global inequality and ecological collapse resulting from that very same logic. Ecological economists have repeatedly argued that efficiency improvements in a profit-oriented enterprise will eventually run up against the Jevon's Paradox – that increasing energy and material efficiencies reduce prices and therefore enhance demand, effectively offsetting efficiency gains in a perpetually growing economy (Alcott et al. 2012; see also Schor and Tienhaara, this volume). The concern is not only that demand will rise for products made more efficient (energy-wise or materially), but that positive spinoffs in other areas of the economy will arise, making it difficult to measure the overall impact of material or energy efficiencies in terms of final throughput (Giampietro and Mayumi 2018; see also McCollum, this volume). For instance, while the shift to a digital economy might have resulted in reductions in material and energy expenditure per transaction (though see Greenford et al. 2020 for contradictions to this assumption), the broader shift to digital lifestyles and the use of smartphones have increased the need for rare earth mineral extraction. Cloud computing and artificial intelligence increase the demand for electricity, which is more often than not met by coal-fired power plants (Wonder Alorse 2019). While in 2002, you might have possessed a laptop computer and a cellphone, you now have a more energy-efficient smartphone or tablet that performs the same functions but is now also connected to a Wi-Fi–enabled stove, online banking, Amazon Prime, social media networks (powered by coal through giant computer farms), and to your electricity-powered car. Such all-pervasive digitization has serious consequences for the places where raw materials and energy are extracted (Caffentzis 2019). Similarly, digital agriculture platforms permit powerful agribusinesses to render yields more predictable and precise through digitized drones and sensors; consolidated contracts between farmers, fertilizer and pesticide suppliers, seed companies, and shipping companies; and more streamlined than ever production cycles to consumers through e-commerce arrangements (GRAIN 2021). In addition to reinforcing hegemonic control by agribusiness, the result is greater material and energy throughput even if digitization improves marginal efficiencies in energy expenditure. Technological improvements that stimulate energy efficiencies and cost savings *do not sit idle* in a capitalist system; they get reinvested back into growth, and, in turn, into further ecological and social degradation (Kallis 2017).

Returning to Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, he claims that we must "trust in technology" and put a billion dollars in an "innovation fund." Elsewhere, billionaire and Tesla CEO Elon Musk has offered a prize of US$100 million to capture and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (Clifford 2021). Yet, it is the endless proliferation of hi-tech developments, from 4G and 5G to AI, to drones, deep learning and geographic information systems, which have only made capitalist development and expansion in the realms of mineral extraction, food, energy, urban development, communication and finance that much quicker and cheaper (Arboleda 2020). This is not to deny that some of these technologies have their own benefits

and can empower people, but the overall political and economic relations in which these technologies are brought into being requires recognition. Meanwhile, the social alienation, worker displacement, inequality and ecological consequences of these technology-induced efficiencies are increasingly visible, and the uncertainties for future generations palpable. Quick technical fixes will usually produce social disparities and are by themselves entirely insufficient to generate the relational shifts needed among humans, and between humans and the rest of nature.

Technological innovation does not emerge out of a vacuum; it is embedded in structural power relations where there is a significant tendency for efficiencies to favor already privileged, socially mobile, wealthy groups and their government sponsors. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines to combat COVID-19 offer a case in point. They were developed by giant pharmaceutical companies, sold for profit to the first bidders who had the wealth and infrastructure to store their vaccines in the appropriate conditions and vaccinate their populations. In the early months of 2021, a kind of "vaccine apartheid" has spread around the globe, with the bulk of available vaccines being cornered by the usual suspects of historically privileged countries (Thier 2021). Understanding and reversing the root causes of social inequality and ecological degradation – as they are based in systemic racism, classism, and patriarchy – was never meant to be part of the techno-fix strategy.

## Situating "Green" in patterns of exploitation

A Green New Deal would do well to address how collective organization can play a part in directing the ways in which technology is developed and used. This would require engaging people through deliberative direct democracy to define the ethical and political parameters on the purpose and limits (both ecological and social) of technological development (Mumford 1964). Democratically defining the limits and potential of technological advancements might offer the space to oppose "green" tech that reinvests efficiency surpluses back into capital accumulation and hence sustains a status quo of entitlement and greed for a privileged few. The ramifications of such a shift are profound within Western modernity. Capital relations treat humans as separate from and dominant over a nature "out there," viewed as something to protect, manipulate or extract from, and ultimately to commodify and exchange in order to sustain profits. As Jason Moore argues, "nature can neither be saved nor destroyed, only transformed" (2015: 45). In this way, a sensitively crafted GND can serve to "restore nature" (including human labor land, air, sky, water, and non-human kin) by replenishing a multitude of socially mediated relations that build on an ethics of regeneration, and explicitly reject the instrumentalization or commodification of such relationships.

Moore explains how the availability of biophysical nature and unpaid or underpaid work is crucial for capital accumulation to proceed at an adequate rate of growth. He calls this the planet's "ecological surplus," or the ratio of system-wide capital assets to system-wide appropriation of unpaid work/energy (Moore 2015: 95). He also claims that this surplus is dwindling due to a contradiction between the rate of transforming nature and labor inputs for economic production, on the one hand, and the social reproduction of labor and the regeneration of biophysical structure to replenish natural resources, on the other. The rapid depletion of fertile soils and crucial pollinators, the emergence of superweeds from industrial pesticide resistance (and indeed zoonotic diseases and global pandemics), groundwater contamination, and a rapidly aging workforce all pose significant threats for maintaining an ecological surplus for capital accumulation to continue without disruption. It is partly for these reasons that interest in urban sustainability and green-friendly investments have been increasingly

prioritized by multilateral lending agencies and urban planners as described earlier with the concept of "green structural adjustment." Cities are seen as hotbeds of "sustainability" innovation and as exemplars of what sustainable living has come to mean (Angelo and Wachsmuth 2020). The urban link to the rural gets increasingly severed as a steady stream of smallholder farmers and small producers flock to urban areas, dispossessed from their land and resource base by a combination of decreasing yields due to climate change and ecological collapse, threats from agribusiness and urban-industrial expansion, and shifts in demography influenced by unequal access to health, education, and civic amenities (Paprocki 2018). Domestic migrants (and in some cases refugees) serve as a burgeoning "cheap" labor source domestically in rapidly urbanizing centers in places like Nigeria and India, and are easy targets within networks of (often illegal) recruiting agencies peddling in migrant labor export to places like Canada and Australia (Ferguson and McNally 2015). The securitization of "cheap" labor along with investment in nature-based solutions and ecosystem services as instrumentalized "natures" are together imperative to overcome the problem of a dwindling ecological surplus to keep the machinery running. Some analysts have observed that the three new farm laws promulgated by the Government of India in late 2020, which spurred the farmer agitation referred to above, were an attempt to convert tens of millions of farmers into what is potentially the world's largest remaining pool of cheap labor, with a handful of corporate giants doubling-down their control of India's agriculture (Engdahl 2021; Todhunter 2021).

The word "green" obfuscates what is required to adequately respond to ecological breakdown by putting a certain kind of environmental crisis at the forefront, and in so doing, reinforcing dualistic binaries between humans and "nature." As Aldeia and Alves (2019) argue, the word "environment" is itself deeply problematic. To utter the word "environment" is to instantly speak about the world around "us," not including "us." Ecological relationships, on the other hand, very much include the social behavior and history of humans. They therefore offer a deeper understanding of the geographically and historically specific moments of shaping and transforming the material and energy of people and the rest of nature, in ways that have come to define global capitalism (Moore 2015). Going beyond capital relations, however, ecology also requires breaking through what Ferdinand (2019) calls the "double fracture" of environmentalism and coloniality that fail to inform each other. Understood in this manner, long struggles against oppression and exploitation of being considered sub-human to varying degrees (e.g., "lower" castes, Indigenous People, Black people, women, and people with disabilities), are neither secondary effects of ecological breakdown nor should they be considered as unrelated to ecological impacts. Yet, the fatally erroneous separation of social crises from a vision of untouched wilderness or pristine "environmental" crises continues to define many "eco" movements around the world and is especially encapsulated by the use of the word "green."

Wainwright and Mann (2018) take this concern further by describing how a GND similarly assumes that the state is somehow unrelated to capital accumulation. The authors question the assumption that the state can simply reassert itself to take control of the deleterious effects of capital while continuing to glorify liberalism as a means to respond to ecological breakdown. The (neo)liberal state should be understood as a consolidation of power through historically colonial and liberal advances that work toward neutralizing decolonial, feminist, LGBTQ, and class struggles into governable modalities; the state operates to unify heterogenous elements into a singular national jurisdiction. Such a "unified" jurisdiction is then obliged to compete for resources and power with other national jurisdictions in a global arena premised on the political and economic relations of capital. In the current state of affairs, this means prioritizing the flow of capital (migrant labor, goods, and services),

militarizing national borders, and policing migrant (especially Black and Brown) people to ensure that those attempting to enter specific jurisdictions are vetted first and foremost in terms of their labor potential rather than their status as dignity-deserving human beings (Ferguson and McNally 2015).

In contrast to state-driven strategies, the Out of the Woods Collective in its 2020 book *Hope Against Hope: Writings on Ecological Crises* argue that collective identity can rather be considered "solidarity" when it unifies *against* (not in favor of) the consolidation of power associated with fixed notions of state and nationalistic forms of identity, and crucially without quashing difference. Such "no borders" solidarity can and should be global because the impacts of capitalist ecology intentionally weave through human and non-human bodies beyond national boundaries (Arboleda 2020). The false separation of state and capital ignores the ways that the two are co-dependent on each other. As the Collective argues, a GND risks being rife with contradictions that on the one hand involve the state implementing policy to end the use of fossil fuels and on the other hand pay for social welfare improvements, such as social housing, by taxing profits from fossil fuels. Recalling the impact of the original 1930s New Deal, the Collective claims that such reforms "not only helped stabilize capitalism (and its endless drive for profits), but the compromise helped undermine the disruptive power which had forced the concessions in the first place" (2020: 204). This is also reminiscent of the failures of orthodox leftist parties taking power in several countries in Latin America, or Greece, which funded their enhanced welfare programs through "neo-extractivism" (Hargreaves 2019).

So then does a Green New Deal need an entirely new name? Or perhaps more fundamentally, a more radical approach? A statist initiative that seeks to prioritize an abstracted notion of a pristine "green" environment excluding racial and patriarchal capitalism, settler colonialism, and the dependence on underpaid labor is perhaps just the ticket that half-earthers and eco-modernists are seeking. But liberal and statist approaches that co-opt diversity for national unity do not just engage with the anti-capitalist left; they also engage with far-right fascists. This ambivalence is utterly frightening, as we describe below.

## Racial capitalism, (eco)fascism, and the Green New Deal

Tightening border imperialism, justified along ethno-nationalist and xenophobic lines, ensures that the divisions of labor remain confined to very specific working conditions that increase the precarity of migrants' lives. The imperial mode of living (e.g., Brand and Wissen 2012) to "get something" and not pay for any of the costs has increasingly taken on a far-right, fascist turn. The passing of the National Registry of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Act in India in late 2019, rooted in shoring up a Hindu supremacist vision of development while castigating any dissent against this vision as "anti-national," is a case in point (Crowley 2019). That India, under Narendra Modi, is also muscling up to the resource imperialist requirements of global capital allows it the space not only to extract resources and labor from people and planet, but also to victimize anyone suffering from its consequences. This is no different (albeit with visible local variations) from the United States under Trump, Brazil under Bolsonaro, Turkey under Erdogan, the Philippines under Duterte, China under Xi, or Russia under Putin.

Many environmentalist arguments that frame ecological crises as a "threat" have disturbingly Malthusian implications that must be reckoned with. In the 1968 book *The Population Bomb*, author and environmentalist Paul Ehrlich described a New Delhi slum from his taxi window as a "hellish mob," describing his fear of being unable to eventually

return to his hotel and his recognition of "emotionally" experiencing what he called "over-population" (Purdy 2015). This perception is rooted in the fear that more bodies seeking a "good life" would not be sustainable for those who already hold such privileges. The imagery around "threat" erases colonial and imperial histories of Euro-American (or Hindu Brahminical for an Indian analog) domination. The richest 10% of the population are responsible for 50% of global emissions, for example (Lawson et al. 2020). In India, the richest person consumes 17 times the poorest (Shrivastava and Kothari 2012). A blanket statement that climate change is a "threat," without an obligatory attachment to global inequality in consumption (e.g., Wiedmann et al. 2020), or indeed in the control over production and consumption, could therefore be readily construed as ecofascist. The GNDs we have seen emerge are disappointingly silent on this. This is not to assert that human numbers on the planet do not have material consequences. Yet, such a position is a red herring when viewed in isolation from the political economy of resource flows and dependencies on cheap labor that underpin development. A decontextualized focus on demographics as having damaging environmental implications is frequently either a naive absence or willful dismissal of the underlying structures and historical relations of coloniality, Euro-American cultural hegemony, and resource imperialism in explaining uneven global production and consumption patterns. One outcome of this decontextualization is to point fingers at the "over-populated" and uneducated masses of the Global South as the culprit for environmental crises. This lack of historical context could also lead to justifications for depopulating large portions of the earth in the name of equitable and eco-centric conservation (e.g., Kopnina et al. 2018). It can also lead to frightening approaches like Hardin's "lifeboat ethics," which implicitly or explicitly consider people of the Global South to be expendable (Clark 2019).

In a world embedded in global capitalism and statism (building on patriarchy, racism, and casteism), "finance-rich, resource-poor" countries are increasingly looking to "resource-rich" countries and regions in the Global South to secure both their food and energy needs (Borras and Franco 2012). While traditional players (e.g., North America and Europe) that have been on the "frontier" of imperialist pursuits are still in the game, new players like India and China also want a piece of the pie. Indeed, the very notion of "national development" is becoming increasingly irrelevant in an era where transnational corporations have been active in dispossessing people of their lands, food and cultural sovereignty domestically, regionally and globally. India, for example, is active internally in "land-grabbing" strategies for biofuel, industrial development, "nature" conservation business parks and transport infrastructure, and abroad in fueling the investment boom in mineral deposits and agro-industrial projects (Ministerio de Minería Chile 2019). Examples of the latter include an Indian joint venture (backed by the Indian Ministry of Mines) known as Khanij Videsh India Limited (KABIL) involved in prospecting lithium extraction in Chile's Atacama desert and Bolivia's Uyuni salt flats for "green energy" production, under the aegis of so-called "sustainable development" in the mining sector. Elsewhere, Indian companies such as Karuturi Global have been involved in forcefully removing peasants from their ancestral lands in their intent to invest in industrial-scale sugarcane, palm oil, and rice plantations in Ethiopia, ostensibly to help the local economy (Chandran and Gardner 2017). Without paying attention to the broader political economy of globalized economic production that transcends national borders, a GND in Europe, the United States, Canada, South Korea, and its variants in China (e.g., "Ecological Civilization") will be mere window dressing to conceal an underlying imperialist quest for cheap nature and cheap labor to satisfy the (increasingly "eco-friendly") demands of the wealthiest people (Schwartzman 2019).

As Fuchs et al. (2020) have recently shown, the EU Green Deal does nothing to halt the offshoring or cost-shifting of ecologically destructive agricultural practices in the food that it imports, particularly meat and grains imported from places like Brazil and Indonesia that are experiencing some of the worst biodiversity losses. While outsourcing the harm, those spearheading GNDs take the "green" credit. Zografos and Robbins (2020) further elaborate on this point by illustrating how both the EU Green Deal and the Markey/Ocasio-Cortez–proposed GND resolution in the United States remain glaringly silent on their implied dependence on "green sacrifice zones." These refer to the resource extraction, transportation, and waste dump sites located largely in the Global South required for the transition to a low-carbon economy. The authors, echoing similar views of EU interventions toward the "underdeveloped" (e.g., Rutazibwa 2010), go on to argue that by invoking tropes of salvation from "existential crises," the EU GND reinforces the moral and ethical aspects of a European savior complex, in which it is the Global North that unquestionably holds the power to secure a (white) future worth living in. Yet, to be truly just, a GND must overhaul the "cost-shifting" culture that the historical and ongoing colonial relations that growth-oriented development invariably depends upon. This is *very* different than merely transitioning to a more efficient "green" energy economy.

In India, where solar energy generation has become the cheapest in the world (Wood 2019), the transition to renewable energy could not be more of a blessing. But while decentralizing energy production to ensure clean energy sovereignty at the panchayat (village council) or urban municipal level is one ray of hope, transitioning entire coal-based megacities to maintain and enhance inherently unsustainable commerce and production requires industrial-scale renewable energy generation, which is an entirely different matter. Mega-solar and wind parks are an increasing source of ecological damage and social dislocation across the world.

Nor is "energy-efficiency" by itself a solution if absolute demand itself is not called into question. Increasing demand for supposedly efficient digital technologies in the world's largest companies, including Google, Apple and Microsoft, has resulted in some of the world's most deplorable working conditions at the source of raw material extraction behind seemingly benign digital communication platforms (Caffentzis 2019). In some cases, pregnant women are often powerless to prevent themselves and their children from working in the mines to extract the rare earth minerals to fuel the (now pandemic-induced) virtual workforce (Langlois 2019). Competition over rare earth minerals for "green" tech has also directly perpetuated one of Africa's longest running armed conflicts (Totolo 2009). Harm reduction in industrialized and rapidly industrializing countries, including China and India, in their move away from polluting coal and unbreathable air toward a hi-tech society fueled by renewable energy, means harm creation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where lives deemed less valuable are made to shoulder the cost. It also means harm creation domestically. For instance, in the grasslands of Kachchh and Andhra Pradesh, the coasts of southern India, the fields of Assam, and the desert of Rajasthan, wildlife, farmers, and pastoralists face ever-increasing takeover of the territories they depend on for supposedly "clean" solar and wind energy production.

To the extent that a GND does not fundamentally reverse these patterns, it is highly unlikely that the kinds of transformational social changes that it seeks will be attained, even if it does offer a welcome dent in carbon emissions by the fossil fuel industry (Arnoff et al. 2019). The advancement of strong social welfare reforms in some Western European countries was the culmination of long-fought struggles of labor unions against their capitalist bosses. Similar wins are imperative to avoid racialized labor exploitation in global food production

in the North and South alike, for example. The ultimate success of the 2020–2021 farmer mobilization in India, resulting in the eventual repeal of the proposed farm bills offers a case in point. Social and environmental workplace safeguards that have created high standards of living in Europe are necessary beyond its borders, and not as a zero-sum game in which Europe continues to benefit at the expense of others. Building social supports cannot therefore take place by cost-shifting the heavy burdens of material and surplus labor requirements for such transitions to places like the DRC. Likewise, the siting of intensive extractive agriculture and mineral extraction should not be justified in so-called "undervalued" areas or "wastelands" falsely characterized as devoid of history, people or nature, such as the Olususun e-waste dumpsite in Nigeria. Entrenched hierarchies of racial and patriarchal capitalism, stemming from slavery (of people of color and women) and the amassing of wealth by colonial oppressors, have shaped both historical and contemporary global development and consumption patterns. They have allowed for countries like India and China to shoulder the manufacturing requirements for consumption in the EU, the United States, Canada, and Australia, while simultaneously preying upon African countries and their own marginalized ecosystems and peoples for raw material assets.

## Toward a pluriverse of alternatives

As Indigenous Anishinaabe scholar Vanessa Watts (2013) writes, remedying historical mistakes that have led to ecological breakdown does not mean comparing or measuring Indigenous cosmologies with the mistakes made by Euro-Western development, including through post-structuralist critique. Instead, moving forward toward the re-flourishing of ecologies requires restoring socio-cultural relationships with the land as territory, as a living place that affords agency to both people and non-people alike. Eurocentric narratives of state and capital were historically (and continue to be) premised on the idea of a Global South, that presumably had/has nothing to contribute practically or intellectually to human flourishing (Dabashi 2015; Richardson 2018 and Amin 1989). Cultural genocide and assimilation of non-European ways of life has therefore been seen as acceptable, as a "sacrifice zone" or as the inevitable cost of "progress." The political economic relations of a "green" economy that cost-shifts production and waste dumps to the Global South and finds solutions in ideas like industrial-scale global veganism or half-earth conservation resonates deeply with what Mitchell and Chaudhury claim as plans that "involve the re-enactment and innovation of key techniques used by European colonizers to annex land, displace communities and undermine the sovereignty of BIPOC[9] peoples across the planet" (2020: 10). As we describe further below, a focus on replenishing social relations among and between humans and non-humans requires adopting an explicitly historical approach in the spirit of *reparations* from five centuries of colonial impositions. Moving beyond what Arturo Escobar (2018) defines as a "one world world," also means rejecting the interpretation of both "problems" and their "solutions" as technical-fixes to keep the overall structure intact and which replicate what Shiva (1993) calls "monocultures of the mind."

## *We need a reparations ecology*

As Raj Patel and Jason Moore (2017) and later Táíwò (2022) argue, a "just" Deal ("Green," "New" or otherwise) should set in a motion a "reparations ecology" – directly opposed to the ecological relations of capitalism in which people, land, water, and non-human nature are treated as commodified resources. A "reparations ecology" relates the visceral historical

memory and ongoing trauma of Western modernity's binaries of "nature" from "humans," and humans according to race, gender, class, and caste, to specific violent acts of cultural genocide, dispossession and ecocide. It involves reappropriating the flow of materials and energy to permit a plurality of ecological relationships, rendering the binary separations mentioned above irrational. The Western obsession of needing to rationalize (i.e., classify, quantify, predict and control) solutions would therefore be turned on its head by reparations ecology, which should provide unconditional payments for anti-capitalist and grassroots approaches to re-commoning social and ecological development pathways.

Reparations go much further than any kind of redistributive attempt (the least of which are restricted merely to monetary terms), and instead prioritize alternative knowledges and ontologies as legitimate without any requirement to be translated into Western Euro-descendent logics, settler colonial languages, or any other form of hegemonic ideology. Reparations undo centuries of privatization and reverse the logic of private property that perceives emerging values only as potential market opportunities for profit. In solidarity with recent arguments by Bagayoko (2021) and Nacpil (2021), ecological reparations mean, first and foremost, recognizing that "indebted" countries that have endured centuries of colonial crimes against humanity and stolen natural and cultural wealth deserve much more than debt cancellation. To this end, ecological reparations are not performative acts but involve material transfers such as giving land back to Indigenous populations. Neither reparations nor decolonization can be used in the abstract or metaphorically. Rather, they serve as both self-reflexive invitations and missile words to intentionally disrupt "comfortable" Euro-liberal humanist proposals that tend to window dress generations of cultural and ecological trauma in an effort to fashion more inclusive and "progressive" forms of domination. Reparations means holding space for emotionally sensitive and situated, experienced knowledge to be treated legitimately and at least on par with abstract or theoretical models, allowing for actions to take place according to the terms and conditions of those who have experienced and continue to experience ecological and cultural trauma (Murdock 2018). This is what being attentive to ecology means; this is what being "green" ignores.

## We need holistic transformation

While reparation is crucial to deal with historical and ongoing Global North-South relations, also needed are transformations in other forms of inequity and exploitation, including gender, caste, and race. We need transformations across political, social, economic, cultural and other domains of life, consistent with ecological wisdom and sustainability. Across the world, there are hundreds of thousands of initiatives that are meeting human needs and aspirations without trashing the earth, and without worsening inequities and injustices. Rather, they take form by respecting the diversity and resilience of nature and of human cultures, by reducing socio-economic inequities, and by challenging and attempting to replace structures of oppression, injustice and unsustainability. Many have arisen from within movements resisting extractivist "development," others are currently relevant assertions of traditional practices and worldviews, and others still emerge from within industrialized societies and challenge their essentially exploitative narrative. A recent compilation of over 100 essays brings many of these together: global networks that compile thousands of practical examples of agroecology, commoning community conservation, alternative currencies and transition movements; worldviews and approaches building on Indigenous, spiritual, and other traditions such as swaraj, hurai, tao, and kyosei (from Asia), buen vivir, sumac kawsay, sentipensar (and many other parallels across Latin America), ubuntu (and its parallels across

Africa), caring for country (from Australian aboriginal peoples), minobimaatisiiwin (and other native North American cosmologies) (Kothari et al. 2019).[10] These essays also include radical reinterpretations of mainstream religions, and ideological and other approaches from within industrialized or modern societies (such as degrowth, ecosocialism, ecofeminism, alter-globalization, free software, and decolonial design).

Two of the most inspiring radical alternatives that have challenged multiple structures of domination and unsustainability, and have done it at scale, are found in the Zapatista autonomous region in Mexico and the Kurdish autonomous region at the intersection of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria (Aslan and Akbulut 2019; Leyva-Solano 2019).[11] In both cases, there is an attempt to create a radical, fully participatory form of political and economic governance, with strong adherence to ecological and feminist principles. In both, there is a strong challenge to the centrality of the state; both are also periodically attacked in various ways by the nation-states they are located within. Beyond these examples, there are the movements to reclaim spaces from privatization, such as of land, natural ecosystems and knowledge, and return them to the commons through democratic governance for the benefit of all. These include the conversion of car parking lots into collective urban gardening in some European cities, the re-assertion of "community economies," worker-led production systems, and the movements for open-source, "copyleft" technologies (De Angelis 2019; Halpin 2019; Karyotis 2019). There are also thousands of examples across the world of "territories of life," which are natural ecosystems governed by Indigenous Peoples and other local communities in ways that conserve biodiversity while securing dignified livelihoods.[12]

During the COVID-19 pandemic, even as states and corporations have ramped up authoritarian, profit-making tendencies, people's movements of the kinds mentioned above have demonstrated the remarkable resilience of communities that have always already been mobilized for self-determination and self-reliance.[13] The ones who had their food, water, and energy systems intact, having sustained them from the past or asserted them anew, have fared much better than those funneled into globalized markets governed by the state-corporate nexus.

## *Common threads linking a plurality of solutions*

While enormously different from each other, such radical approaches do show some common values and principles: commons and collectives over selfish individualism (but not denying individual identities and aspirations), autonomy and freedom with responsibility, respect for the rights of humans and non-human nature, self-reliance and localization, simplicity or notions of "enoughness" and sufficiency, direct democracy enabling equitable participation by all, and so on. And they attempt transformation in at least five spheres of life (Kalpavriksh 2017):

a   *Ecological wisdom, integrity, and resilience*, maintaining the eco-regenerative processes that conserve ecosystems, species, functions, and cycles; respect for ecological limits at various levels, local to global; and the infusion of ecological wisdom and ethics in all human endeavor, including the recognition of the rights of nature in law and policy;

b   *Social well-being and justice*, including lives that are fulfilling and satisfactory physically, socially, culturally, and spiritually; where there is equity between communities and individuals in socio-economic and political entitlements, benefits, rights and responsibilities; where there is communal and ethnic harmony; where hierarchies and divisions

based on faith, gender, caste, class, ethnicity, ability, and other attributes are replaced by non-exploitative, non-oppressive, non-hierarchical, and nondiscriminatory relations; and where collective and individual human rights are ensured;

c    *Direct and delegated democracy*, where decision-making starts at the smallest unit of human settlement, in which every human has the right, capacity, and opportunity to take part, and builds up from this unit to larger levels of governance by delegates that are downwardly accountable to the units of direct democracy; and where decision-making is not simply on a "one-person, one-vote" basis but rather consensual, while being attentive to emerging power asymmetries, respectful and supportive of the needs and rights of those currently marginalized;

d    *Economic democracy*, in which local communities and individuals (including producers and consumers, wherever possible combined into one as "prosumers") have control over the means of production, distribution, exchange, and markets; where localization is a key principle, and larger trade and exchange is built on it on the principle of equal exchange; where private property gives way to the commons, removing the distinction between owner and worker.

e    *Cultural diversity and knowledge democracy*, in which pluralism of ways of living, ideas and ideologies is respected, where creativity and innovation are encouraged, where the generation, transmission and use of knowledge (traditional/modern, including science and technology) are accessible to all, and where spiritual and/or ethical learning and deepening are central to social life.

Achieving transformation in the above five spheres must be above all a decolonizing effort. Such an effort must also be in conversation with a global and transversal interweaving of radical alternatives, as for instance, what the Global Tapestry of Alternatives[14] and related platforms are attempting. At the same time, we recognize that these initiatives have their own internal complexities and uneven relations of power that define them in both space and time. Our aim is not to romanticize them, but rather to view them as openings continuously in the process of "becoming" and which show potential for remaking the world in more just ways. To summarize, a Green New Deal will further reinforce violence and will be a vast waste of effort and time if it is restricted to bringing in historically marginalized people to play the rules of "one-world world" development, "green" or otherwise. Without needing to engage with Northern-led GNDs like the EU Green Deal, innumerable alternatives from the many Global Souths of marginalized working-class people around the world can and should be facilitated to flourish on their own.

*Postscript:* a recent reflection on the implications of a "Global Green New Deal", spearheaded by War on Want, The Leap and others, is attempting to transcend the limitations of GND-like approaches by explicitly building upon Global North-South inequality, uneven patterns of consumption and resource imperialism, and the politically neutralizing efforts of liberal democracy.[15] Further, and as this chapter was being finalized, a new book entitled *A People's Green New Deal* by Max Ajl was published by Pluto Press in May, 2021. Ajl's work interrogates the presumption of "northern" accumulation and consumption patterns to realistically initiate ecological transformation of the kind needed to pull the breaks on the social and ecological crises we face. His works draws attention to the red flags of romanticized Keynesian social welfare programs and eco-modernism that risk further reinforcing the socially alienating class and racial divisions that fuel ecological breakdown. He centers his analysis on the transformative potential that anti-imperialist agroecological farming practice

can play in opening up possibilities that are nowhere to be seen in any GND being proposed by the Global North. Ajl's "People's Green New Deal," instead, demands an internationalist convergence committed to decolonial climate reparations, and abolitionist and Indigenous self-determination in the twin struggle for social and climate justice.

## Notes

1  This chapter is an updated and extended version of the two-part article, "Harm Here is Still Harm There: The Green New Deal and the Global South" published in *Jamhoor* in May 2020.
2  In this chapter, we focus primarily on the impacts of Northern-led GNDs, as these are becoming inscribed into policy and materially affecting development priorities within and beyond their boundaries.
3  We extend our understanding of "Global South" to go beyond colonized or economically weaker nations historically located in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, to include marginalized sections of society across the world, including within the so-called "developed" countries; and its counterpart, the "Global North" to go beyond economically powerful nations historically located primarily in Europe, North America, Australia, Singapore, and Japan, to include rich and powerful sections within the geographical South.
4  We use this word in the broadest sense, to both specify the underpinnings of global capitalism as rooted in anti-Blackness, but also the ways this extends to similar forms of discriminative "othering" and exploitation, such as casteism. In doing so, we do not intend to equate forms of racism, but rather to highlight how racialization serves as a crucial process in the making of contemporary capitalism.
5  Available from: https://berniesanders.com/issues/green-new-deal/
6  See critiques of several techno-managerial-market solutions in the section "Universalizing the Earth: Reformist Solutions," of Kothari et al. 2019.
7  See also the Jevon's Paradox, below.
8  We make here a distinction between "private" sector and community or collective processes, both being distinct from "state-led" sectors; as we show later, community-based initiatives can be a radical alternative to both the state and the private corporate sector.
9  Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
10  Available for free PDF download at: https://radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/pluriverse
11  See also: Jineolojî (https://www.jineoloji/en/) and the Reworlding series on uprising democracy (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3rWIHuKpIg)
12  For examples, see documents and case studies at www.iccaconsortium.org; on the conservation efficacy of such initiatives, see https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1462901119301042?via%3Dihub
13  For several examples from around the world, see https://www.interfacejournal.net; for examples from India, see several volumes of the series "Extraordinary Work of "Ordinary" People: Beyond Pandemics and Lockdowns", https://vikalpsangam.org/article/extraordinary-work-of-ordinary-people-in-multi-language-translation/
14  https://globaltapestryofalternatives.org
15  https://waronwant.org/our-work/global-green-new-deal

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