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Towards what futures? The political dimensions
of sustainable development and resilience



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Sustainable Development Goal 16 and The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Documentation's Role in Promoting A Democratic Society

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Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) is about peace, justice and inclusive and strong government institutions. This study aims to examine how the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) documentation could be used to address its dark past and to promote a culture that respects human rights and a democratic society through inclusive government institutions. The citizens of Liberia in West Africa, suffered from a protracted civil war that was partly due to economic deprivation, repression and poverty. This civil war was characterized by extreme violence and violation of human rights that led to substantial civilian deaths, extensive damage to health, education systems and internal and external displacement and child soldiers through forced conscription. To address the atrocities committed against the citizens of Liberia and the violation of human rights laws, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was sanctioned by the Liberian government. TRCs are temporary institutions set up to establish the truth by documenting patterns of past violations, their causes and consequences. They offer victims, perpetrators and witnesses a platform to recount their experiences. These narratives are meant to create an understanding of the causes of war, counteract political speculations, facilitate reconciliation and healing, and promote a democratic society with inclusive government institutions and development for all.

Keywords: Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, Archives, Documentation, Human Rights, Liberia and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainable Energy Landscape Strategies - Feasibility, Fusion and Alternative Futures

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Sustainable development is urgently in need of resilient energy landscapes, capable to support basic needs for stable and peaceful states of the future. If we look at current research on global energy markets, it becomes evident, that energy landscapes all over the world need to change substantially. In order to provide basic needs, such as water supply, electricity and heating in cold areas, energy infrastructures will become pivotal. Therefore, my contribution tackles the research questions, in which ways current future energy landscapes are imagined by whom and under which conditions.

As a consequence, I will focus on the case of fusion energy. Its role in future energy markets, discussed within academia, will be examined as well as the global conditions of its special knowledge distribution. Assuming, we would reach the aim of technically constructing fusion power plants that work perfectly well by 2060, we still lack two very important details at the moment: primarily, the wider acceptance of this new technology and secondly, the unequal nature of its knowledge distribution all over the world (needless to name high energy provision capacities of countries doing research in fusion). Even in European countries, the acceptance of fusion in the main public opinion, has its adversaries, not even to mention the lack of educational »decolonized« attempts to equally share the knowledge and participation in such knowledge hubs. Not convinced? - How many plasma physicists would you know from Kenya, Tibet or Peru?

A second case, then examines the recent published UNHCR's »Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy«, in order to learn and to shape future energy landscapes from bottom up built United Nations energy strategies. At places, where people are urgently in need of basic energy infrastructure, free from overproduction and exaggeration, we can learn and draw significant conclusions. Can we imagine future mobile energy infrastructures free of carbon emissions for millions of people? Are new ways of cooperation become obvious between states, people and places in need and the private sector? What consequences are implied concerning the realization of such new global sustainable energy strategies and could significant energy policies be drawn for future development of single states?

Finally, I will conclude on imaginations of resilience concerning these two different scenarios. The concept of »sustainable energy« will be weighed out thoroughly. What is feasible, what is imaginable and what do we need, in order to manage future needs.

Emerging political considerations in climate change adaptation

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Although adaptations to climate are an ancient social activity, policies and programmes for adapting to climate change are relatively recent phenomena. Despite this relative newness, climate change adaptation has been a dynamic field, undergoing a range of changes during its existence. Here we provide an overview of several key influences on this development with a particular interest in the political dimensions. We begin by examining some of the factors behind the emergence of political interest in adaptation, including the recognition of traditional and indigenous knowledge and the calls for community-based adaptation. Science has provided an understanding of climate change impacts and has been the foundation of the adaptation response by governments, business, NGOs and others. Questioning the hegemonic role given to science is another of the emerging political considerations in the discourse. Climate change adaptation has also merged with the field of disaster risk reduction and that of sustainable development. Neoliberalism is also an important source of political values and political discourse for climate change adaptation is discussed. We also discuss the impact of neoliberalism on adaptation policy and practice (i.e., ‘apolitical’ economic and scientific rationalities). Accordingly, the relationships with other discourses have implications for the identity of climate change adaptation. These developments have implication for a range of institutional, social and cultural issues, including regulatory frameworks, policy instruments, administrative procedures and coordination between sectors and actors, and social/ political opportunities and barriers.

From technocracy to democracy: How engagement with power asymmetries and values can be promoted in the processes of improving climate resilience and adaptation

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In both research and policy, there is an emphasis to promote resilience and adaptation to the socio-environmental challenges of climate change. Considering the unequal impacts of climate change, this study stresses that engagement with power asymmetries and values should permeate policy and planning processes that pertain to climate resilience and adaptation. However, research has shown that such engagement often is hampered by technocratic and market-based policy frames, which tend to focus on instrumental knowledge and thereby reduce resilience and adaptation to managerial and technical issues. Consequently, issues that pertain to power asymmetries and democratic value-pluralism, such as those related to (in)justice, are largely neglected. The purpose of this study is to examine ways to promote engagement with power asymmetries and values that concerns (in)justice in the policy and planning processes of climate resilience and adaptation. The study presents four major approaches to this end, along with concrete examples of how they have been put to practice.

The risks of anticipatory governance in the context of climate change mobility and the thirst for more data

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The intersection of data and technology has received growing attention in the migration space generally,[1] but it has specific application in terms of climate and disaster related displacement. This is because the collection, use and sharing of data is being encouraged for predictive and planning purposes for climate related events. The 2018 *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (GCM) and, separately, the *Global Compact for Refugees*, each emphasise the need for policy responses informed by data.[2] In fact, to “collect and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies” is the very first objective of the GCM.[3] Privacy concerns and the protection of personal data are also mentioned, but little is said about *how* these protections will be upheld, nor is privacy protection expressly mentioned in the specific section of the GCM addressing disasters and the adverse effects of climate change.[4] Indeed, the first paragraph of that section emphasizes information sharing.[5] Yet, technology is increasingly harnessed to gather data both in the event of a climate related disaster, and to forecast future impacts, including potential patterns of mobility and displacement.

Organizations tasked with the management of migration have taken it upon themselves to ensure the protection of personal information, however these tend to be internal policies rather than binding rules. This paper highlights the long-term risks that may be associated with an unbridled approach to data collection for anticipatory governance of disasters in the context of individual rights and the “uncertain futures” of migrants and refugees.

[1] See, eg, Mark FN Franke, ‘Refugees’ Loss of Self-Determination in UNHCR Operations through the Gaining of Identity in Blockchain Technology’ (2020) 0(0) *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 1.

[2] *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, GA Res 195, UN GAOR, 73rd sess, 60th plen mtg, Agenda Items 14 and 119, UN Doc A/RES/73/195 (11 January 2019) paras 10, 17 (hereafter GCM); *Global Compact on Refugees*, GA Res 151, UN GAOR, 73rd sess., 55th plen mtg, Agenda Item 65, UN Doc A/RES/73/151 (17 December 2018)

[3] GCM, Objective 1.

[4] GCM, para 18.

[5] GCM, para 18(h)

Resilient- Society ‘for’ Sustainable Development? -Deconstructing the ‘problem representation’ within Disaster Management Policies in India.

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Introduction of Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005 and National Policy for Disaster Management (NPDM), 2005, marked a paradigm shift in the disaster policy thinking of the Indian government from a highly sporadic and stand-alone to a proactive disaster risk reduction perspective (NPDM,2005; NPDM 2009). The paper attempts to uncover the ‘problem representation(s)’ within the DM policy documents through the ‘What’s the problem represented to be’(WPR) approach by Bacchi(2009). These representations affect the policy responses by limiting the scope of the policy to specific directions in which problems are defined. The paper also analyses the epistemologies and disaster paradigm behind these problem representations, within which the policy answers are imagined. The paper’s findings suggest that the conceptualization of disaster assumed by the Indian DM policy documents is influenced by the intellectual underpinnings of the dominant ‘hazard’ paradigm (Hewitt, 1983) and advocates policy solutions that overemphasize the role of hazard triggers. It further argues that the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and ‘Resilient-society’ as policy goals are also increasingly subsumed under the ‘larger’ ambit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the recent National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP), 2019. Moreover, the dominance of the ‘reactive’ resilience framework in the policy text is also matched with an under-emphasis on ‘social vulnerability,’ which elides the role of socio-economic processes shaping vulnerabilities. The paper finally argues that the dominance of SDGs and resilience framework coupled with the ‘problem representation’ within DM policies effectively depoliticize the central role of processes like globalization, colonialism, development, and other socio-economic processes in the creation of ‘disaster risk,’ and therefore offer depoliticized and technocratic solutions which are ‘hazard-centric.’