CHANGING THE CLIMATE:

LABOUR-ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE-FORMING IN A NEOLIBERAL ERA

by

James Patrick Nugent III

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

Graduate Department of Geography

University of Toronto

© Copyright by James Patrick Nugent 2009
Changing the Climate: Labour-Environmental Alliance-Forming in a Neoliberal Era

James Patrick Nugent

Masters of Arts

Department of Geography
University of Toronto

2009

ABSTRACT

This research explores how unions, corporations and the federal government in Canada are responding to the dual economic and climate change crisis. Climate change politics have fostered alliance-forming both between the labour and environmental movements as well as between the state and capital. Climate change policy over the past two decades has been a planned, coordinated neoliberal project by the state and capital that has led to increasing emissions. Meanwhile, most unions successfully transcended the ‘jobs versus the environment’ dichotomy being used by business to propagate a voluntarist climate change policy. After giving their support to the ratification of Kyoto, labour has struggled to operationalize labour-environmental alliance-forming. Recently, both labour and the state-capital alliance have drawn on an ecological modernist discourse to frame climate change as an opportunity for jobs or capital accumulation, respectively. But this discourse fails to address the transnational dynamics of climate change, and economic and environment justice.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank-you to all those labour-environmental organic intellectuals with whom I have crossed paths and who are so selflessly engaged with the struggle for a better world. Your wisdom and inspiration has carried me through.

A special thank-you to Ken MacDonald who has been a tremendous supervisor and mentor over the years. Your inquisitiveness has not only provided me with helpful feedback but instills in all of us the joy that is learning. Thank-you also to Scott Prudham and my co-workers who gave me early feedback on my investigation. One year of financial support was awarded to me by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I remain responsible for all errors.

Finally, thank-you to the tea pickers and maize farmers in Mulanje, Malawi who always bring me back to what is most important in life.

*Dedicated to the two greatest organic intellectuals I know: Mom and Dad.*
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Climate Change and Social Change:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theorizing Labour-Environmental Alliance-Forming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Social Movement Theory: Rethinking Environmentalism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Class-Cultural Theory: Class-Cultural Divide?</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Sociological Marxism: Hegemony, the Organic Intellectual and the Double Movement</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Broadening the Resistance:</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Predicament of Militant Particularism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Historical Context of Labour-environmental Relations in Canada</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Becoming an 'Environmental Superpower':</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neoliberal Climate Change Policy and the Cloak of Ecological Modernization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Rising Emissions: Voluntarist Climate Change Policy 1988-2002</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Climate Change as a Planned Neoliberal Project</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>The Kyoto Debates: Evoking the Job-Environment Trade-off</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>A Clean Energy Superpower? At what cost?</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6

“Someone has to build it” – Labour's Response to Climate Change Under Neoliberalism

6.1 A Just Transition: Challenging the Jobs vs. Environment Dichotomy and Supporting Kyoto

6.2 Green Job Creation: Climate Change as an Opportunity

6.3 Hitting the Ground: Labour-Environmental Alliance-Forming In Practice

6.4 Explaining the Challenges Faced by Labour-Environmental Alliance-Forming

6.5 A Defensive Response: The CAW’s Response to the Deepening Manufacturing Crisis

6.6 Looking for Partnerships: The United Steelworkers’ Response to the Manufacturing Crisis

7

A Critique of Ecological Modernization: The Problems of Ecoliberalism and Green New Dealism

8

Concluding Thoughts and Future Research

Bibliography
**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Membership in the NCCP “Industry” Issue Table</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Composition of the Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental (CCRES)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>The ideological work of labour-environmental organic intellectuals: policy documents on climate change by Canadian labour organizations</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Projected changes in jobs by sector between 2000-2010 assuming Kyoto compliance</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Unions with members in the nuclear industry</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Canadian employment in the automotive sector (annual average in thousands)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Strategic pathways of unions in the face of neoliberalism 'logic of participation'</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>The impact of voluntary emission reductions during the 1990s</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Characterization of Just Transition in a CEP Pamphlet</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Anti-NAFTA Cartoon from CEP Pamphlet</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Power Workers' Union clean coal advertisement</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Canadian auto industry sector-wide profitability 1972-2008</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Declining market share for the Big Three auto producers</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Effective exchange rate of the Canadian dollar 1996-2008</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Canada's deteriorating automotive trade balance</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Change in Canadian manufacturing jobs 1998-2008</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Declining share of manufacturing employment as percentage of overall Canadian Employment 1998-2008</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAM  Alliance for American Manufacturing
AFL-CIO  American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AREA  Alliance for Responsible Environmental Alternatives
BBP  Better Building Partnership
BCTD  Building Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO
CAFE  Corporate Average Fuel Economy
CANC  Climate Action Network Canada
CAW  Canadian Auto Workers
CCPA  Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
CCRES  Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental Solutions
CDMs  Clean Development Mechanisms
CEP  Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada
CLC  Canadian Labour Congress
CME  Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
COP  Conference of the Parties
CUPE  Canadian Union of Public Employees
ECWU  Energy and Chemical Workers Union
EFCC  Executive Forum on Climate Change
IBEW  International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
IPCC  Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITUC  International Trade Union Confederation
IWA  International Woodworkers of America
MOU  Memorandum of Understanding (auto emissions)
MVFCSA  Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act
NAFTA  North American Free Trade Agreement
NCCP  National Climate Change Process
NDP  New Democratic Party
PWU  Power Workers' Union
TAF  Toronto Atmospheric Fund
UNFCCC  United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD  United States Dollar
USW  United Steelworkers
WBCSD  World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WTO  World Trade Organization
CHANGING THE CLIMATE: LABOUR-ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE-FORMING IN A NEOLIBERAL ERA

Business is regulated by strong unions, not by good intentions. ... [A]ny green strategy has to be pro-union. If unions are loosing ground, so is any chance of a green future. The market won't green itself. Corporate America won't green itself anymore than it would lift wages by itself, or enforce safe working conditions by itself. I think that means that our environmental partners need to do more than tolerate unions. They have to be openly pro-union. They need us as a vital political partner, as do we and our children and grandchildren need them.

—Roger Toussaint, Transport Workers Union, Local 100 speaking at the North American Labor Assembly on Climate Crisis, 7 May 2008

1 INTRODUCTION

In June 2008, Greenpeace Canada moved its head office to 33 Cecil Street, Toronto, Ontario. Such a move would not normally be noteworthy except that the new next door neighbour and landlord who welcomed Greenpeace was the United Steelworkers (USW). In 2004, workers now part of the USW won a $6000 lawsuit against Greenpeace for lost work time during a logging protest in British Columbia during the notorious 'timber wars' of the 1990s. Even though at the time of this protest the loggers involved in the lawsuit were part of the International Woodworkers of America (which only later merged with the USW in 2004)—the significance of an environmental organization moving into the USW-owned building, located next to the union hall, has not been lost on USW union officials and activists. Nor is this an isolated gesture by the USW towards environmental groups. Also in June 2008, members from the USW and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee showed up together at the doorstep of the BC Forest Minister's office to demand the establishment of a Forest Land Reserve that would protect forests from urban sprawl, as well as to demand the development of secondary wood manufacturing facilities, the banning of raw log exports, and more efficient wood processing. Meanwhile, in February 2009 the USW entered into a 'strategic alliance' with Environmental

1 Comments made by Roger Toussaint at: North American Labor Assembly on Climate Crisis, organized by the Cornell Global Labor Institute, 7 May 2008, New York City.
3 The Greenpeace move next door was repeatedly raised during discussions I had with union officials and rank-and-file members at various events I took part in and helped organize between September 2007 and January 2009. These events included teach-ins on how to build community alliances around climate change, various conferences as well as a four-day USW 'Globalization School' at which the Steelworkers environmental policy was discussed at length.
Defence, forming a new organization called Blue-Green Canada. The purpose of this alliance is “to advocate for working people and the environment in key areas of global trade, the use of toxic chemicals in commercial activity, the creation of green manufacturing jobs, and in the development of strategies to address climate change.”

This type of alliance building follows various attempts since the 1960s to forge a common political programme across and amongst the labour movement and so-called 'new social movements' that focus on women's rights, gender relations, environmental protection, ethnicity and migration, peace and international solidarity (see e.g. Carroll, 1997; Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001; Bandy & Smith, 2005; Conway, 2004; 2006). The formation of cross-movement solidarities has seen some success, such as the Zapatistas international solidarity movement and the “red-green alliance” in Germany (Zirakzadeh, 2006). In Canada, broad-based and extra-parliamentary social justice coalitions—such as the Action Canada Network—battled hard during the late 1980s and early 1990s to resist attempts by national and provincial governments to dismantle the welfare state (Bleyer, 1997; Warnock, 2006). As the Canadian government pushed forward with a free-trade agenda, anti-globalization protests broke-out in Québec City in 2001, bringing together thousands of social justice activists, labour, environmentalists, student groups, and various hues of leftist political parties. But despite some noted achievements, such cross-movement solidarity has received criticism for being too narrowly focused (e.g. limited to opposing a specific free-trade agreement), for being too ad-hoc and shallow, or for getting side-tracked by the reformist tendencies symptomatic of trade unions and their social-democratic parties (Warnock, 2006; Gould, et al., 2004). Moreover, important moments of counterhegemony have failed to crystallize despite seemingly ripe political conditions. For example, the recent wave of environmental concern in Canada, led by a growing awareness of climate change, has not resulted in strong political alliance-forming between the environmental movement and other social movements. In some ways this is surprising given that the politics

---


5 In 1999, in what is often referred to as the 'Battle for Seattle', tens of thousands of people took to the street to protest the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference. The ad-hoc coalition of 'Teamsters and Turtles' formed during the protests between union and environmental activists, is often referenced by both groups when emphasizing a tradition of positive inter-movement relations.

of climate change touches upon an incredibly diverse set of political movements, including: biodiversity conservation, food and water security, indigenous rights (e.g. over land targeted for energy development), the rights of migrants (environmental refugees), historical North-South inequities and jobs. At the same time, the rapidity with which some distinct political movements—from both the Left and the Right—have accommodated and internalized 'climate change' suggests among other things, that this accommodation might well be largely instrumental; i.e. a way to define historical problems anew as a mode of accessing institutional legitimacy and access to resources that accrue as 'climate change' becomes a dominant environmental issue. In any case, eco-socialists such as Kovel (2007) pin great hopes on climate change politics to bring about a sweeping social transformation:

Global warming is not the only aspect of the ecological crisis to have reached planetary proportions, nor is it the only one with the potential to actually destroy the human species. But it definitely has the most power to seize the world's imagination. This is because of global warming's literally spectacular quality, the way it manifestly affects other aspects of the crisis—for what on earth can evade the influence of climate?—and last, and certainly not least, for the way in which global warming puts the entire history, and the prehistory as well, of industrial capitalism into the dock. Here the leading culprits are in full view: the whole petro-apparatus, from the pushers of 'automobilia' to the imperial apparatus that wages endless war to keep the carbon flowing from the ground, where it belongs, to the atmosphere, where it will destroy us. In a word: a moment for the global realization of ecosocialism has arrived (p.258).

But if climate change politics does in fact hold the potential for such a monumental social realization and eco-socialist transformation then we should at least understand what factors shape the cooperation between two important players in any such transformation—the labour and environmental movements.

Some researchers have begun to specifically theorize why coalitions between organized labour and environmentalists do or do not form (Rose, 1997; 2000; Norton, 2003; Obach, 2004; Gould, et al., 2004; Turner, 2006) and the counterhegemonic potential they may hold for the Left (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Adkin, 1998; Brecher, et al., 2000; Kovel, 2007). But only a handful of studies have specifically focused on labour-environmental relations in Canada (Keil, 1994; Bantjes, 1997; Adkin, 1998; Simon, 2000; Moore, 2002; Prudham, 2008) and only Sawchuck (2009) has begun to discuss the response by Canadian unions to climate change. This lacunae is unfortunate since understanding labour's response to climate change is important for analyzing the broader politics of climate change (both within Canada and the international arena) and its

potential to fundamentally transform society (for better or for worse).

To understand the potential of labour-environmental alliances to realize an eco-socialist vision we must not only examine the organizational challenges and ideological debates around environmental policy within the labour movement. We must explore how corporate and state actors have aligned themselves, in what Gramsci calls a ‘war of position’, to shape climate change policies around a neoliberal vision articulated through an ecological modernist discourse. Climate change and climate change politics must also be understood in relation to hegemonic neoliberal policies and the political-economic conditions these create. Over the past decade, escalating fears around climate change have paralleled a growing economic gloom within Canada's industrial heartland, hard-hit by the elimination of over 500,000 manufacturing jobs. This manufacturing crisis—intensified by the financial meltdown in 2008—has emerged out of a planned neoliberal restructuring of the Canadian economy, grounded in free-trade and free-market principles that have redirected industrial capital investment overseas. In an attempt to resist the further deterioration of the (highly unionized) manufacturing sector, some trade unions are trying to strategically 'renew' themselves by establishing new civil society partnerships from the local to transnational scale (Turner, 2006). At the same time, Canadian governments and closely allied business interests have often presented a trade-off between the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions and a strong economy. But the framing of climate change policy as a choice between jobs or the environment has been resisted by leaders and activists within the labour and environmental movements who have attempted to build a common social movement aimed at resolving today's dual economic and climate change crisis through the creation of 'good green jobs.' The state-capital alliance has also begun framing climate change as potential economic opportunity through a neoliberal ecological modernist discourse that sees 'green competitiveness' as a new basis for capital accumulation realized through eco-efficiencies and investments in the green technology sector.

The purpose of this grounded research is two-fold: a) to understand how labour-environmental alliance-forming and alliance-forming between capital and the state have shaped and been shaped through climate change politics in Canada; and b) to explore how climate change and climate change policies have emerged through a neoliberal political-economy and an increasingly hegemonic discourse of ecological modernization. Although I examine state-capital alliances, my overarching focus is on 'labour-environmental alliance-forming,' by which I mean more than simply formal, single-issue coalitions between unions and environmental organizations. Rather I also try to capture with this term intensive discursive and political-
economic processes through which subjects—e.g. both union organizations and individual rank-
and-file members—are 'repositioned' ideologically so as to become politically concerned and
possibly engaged with broader social (socio-ecological) movements (Hall, 1988).

The first objective of this thesis is to investigate the historical context of labour-
environmental relations in Canada through which the 'jobs versus the environment' discourse has
played out (chapter four). I do this by first developing a theoretical framework in chapter three
for analyzing labour-environmental alliance-forming (and socio-ecological change more broadly)
that draws on Antonio Gramsci's concepts of 'hegemony' and 'organic intellectuals'. I hope to
move beyond traditional social movement theory, which conceptualizes labour-environmental
alliances-forming rather ahistorically in terms of 'interest-based coalitions', while at the same
time challenging the 'class-cultural divide' thesis which exaggerates the barriers to labour-
environmental alliance-forming because of its narrow conceptions of 'workers' and
'environmentalists'.

A second objective of this paper is to situate labour-environmental alliance-forming
within politics scale. Both my historical investigation and my later discussion on contemporary
labour-environmental alliance-forming draw theoretically on the concept of 'militant
particularism' by which I mean the tendency of labour struggles to adopt a protectionist position
or constrain their resistance to place-bound, localized projects (Harvey, 2001). Overcoming
militant particularism is one of the fundamental challenges faced by unions confronted the with
jobs-environment dichotomy. The transnational dynamics of both climate change and uneven
capitalist development demand now, more than ever, that disparate, dispersed, particularist social
struggles being waged by labour and environmental activists 'jump scale' (Smith, 1992;
Prudham, 2008) so as to become integrated into networks or coalitions that form part of a broad-
based 'social movement of movements' (Cox & Nilsen, 2007). The research gathered to date on
coalition-forming between unions and environmental groups, however, suggests that such 'scale
jumping' is far from guaranteed. Indeed, where labour-environmental alliance-forming has
occurred, it has been strongest in relation to strengthening environmental regulations at particular
worksites (e.g. occupational health and safety) and communities where workers live (e.g. water
and air pollution controls), with only ad-hoc coalitions formed in resistance to certain free trade
agreements considered 'dual threats' to labour and the environment. A major aim of this paper is
to therefore gain greater insight into the types of material and symbolic conditions that allow for
(or obstruct) such synergy across scale.

After situating Canadian labour-environmental relations within a historical context of
class struggle and political-economic processes, my third objective is to chronicle the evolution of climate change and climate change policy over the past two decades (chapter five). I critically examine how climate change and climate change policy have been shaped by ideological commitments of the state and business alliances to neoliberalism. Climate change policy in Canada was dominated for most of the past two decades by what I call ‘voluntarist’ climate change policy. Business drew on a neoliberal discourse and the ‘economy versus the environment’ myth to effectively avoid having to reduce emissions while weakening national and international greenhouse gas emission policy targets. At the end of chapter five, I show how neoliberal climate change policy has more recently been recast (and masked) through a discourse of ecological modernization.

The fourth objective of this thesis is to critically explore how the concerns and vision of organized labour in Canada are shaping and being shaped through climate change politics and the broader political-economy over the past two decades (chapter six). I argue that Canadian unions successfully challenged the ‘jobs versus the environment’ dichotomy being propagated by business and state actors, thanks to the work of labour-environmental organic intellectuals in developing the counterhegemonic notion of ‘just transition’ and through a vision for ‘green job creation.’ Through this type of labour-environmental alliance-forming, the Canadian labour movement played an important role in generating public support for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. Labour-environmental organic intellectuals have also increasingly linked climate change itself to neoliberalism—which labour had long been fighting. But despite the ideological basis being laid-out for stronger and potentially counterhegemonic labour-environmental alliance-forming, I argue that such alliance-forming has unfortunately been weak and slow to develop in the period following Kyoto ratification. Chapter six I therefore examine the reasons for this weak labour-environmental alliance-forming, looking at factors both internal and external to the Canadian labour movement—e.g. internal disagreement over how to support emission reductions and how to strategically respond to worsening political-economic conditions. I conclude chapter six by looking at how certain elements of the ecological modernization discourse have been adopted by unions as a response to neoliberalism and in an attempt to reconstitute Fordist relations.

In chapter seven, I draw together and sharpen my critique of ecological modernization as a proposed framework for addressing climate change. I critique the way it is used to mask neoliberal climate change policies that continue to threaten workers and their environments. I also critically assess the political vision being articulated by unions (also through an ecological
modernist discourse), questioning what this vision will mean for climate change as well as workers both in Canada and abroad.
2. Methodology

I have been interested in labour-environmental relations, and the contradictions seen in attempts to address environmental degradation through capitalist social relations more generally, since spending one year in southern Malawi where I researched the political ecology of forest conservation on and around Mulanje Mountain. Through this research I revealed how transnational tea production and industrial forestry practices historically contributed to deforestation. I also critiqued recent efforts, led by a biodiversity conservation organization, to re-imagine and reorganize the Mulanje Mountain landscape as a site for global biodiversity conservation. The material and symbolic claims of tea estate workers, ‘illegal’ farmers and forestry workers to the Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve were often ignored or neglected by the powerful transnational actors, leading to intense conflicts over resources. Studying this conflict made me start to wonder how ideological alliances and tensions between capital, the state and labour in my own country shaped ecologies both at home and abroad.

For the purposes of this present research, I have drawn insights into these socio-ecological relations using a variety of methods. The historical synthesis of labour-environmental relations presented in chapter four derives primarily from secondary sources. Chapters five and six both draw on ethnographic methodologies as well as critical discourse analysis. Between September 2007 until May of 2008 I engaged in participant observation while volunteering with a grassroots environmental advocacy organization based in Toronto called the Toronto Climate Campaign. Working with this group helped me to familiarize myself with climate change policy debates in Canada and the ways that a particular group of self-described environmental activists were framing the problem of climate change. I attended climate change policy forums organized by academic institutions and municipal governments in the Greater Toronto Area. I also helped the Toronto Climate Campaign organize forums and public demonstrations aimed at fostering dialogue on climate change amongst environmental and labour activists. These events provided an important venue for observing the challenges facing labour-environmental alliance-forming, particularly from the perspective of environmental organizations.

My insights into climate change policy formulation presented in chapter five are also derived from analysis of specific climate change policies, reports, websites, newspaper articles and press releases circulated by both government departments and corporate lobby groups. Although past government climate change policies were readily available in cases where these policies had been officially tabled in the House of Commons, most websites and documentation from the Liberal reign of power were taken offline by the Conservative government in 2006
when they came into power. For example, the Conservatives shutdown the website for the National Climate Change Process that had drawn together statistical data and analysis relevant to climate change policy undertaken by government departments, industry ‘stakeholders’ and private consultants commissioned by the government between 1998-2002 during the lead up to Kyoto ratification. Similarly, anti-Kyoto corporate lobby groups such as the Alliance for Responsible Environmental Alternatives (AREA) and Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental Solutions (CCRES) strategically shut down their websites after disbanding following the ratification of Kyoto. Accessing these past websites therefore required me to make use of the Internet Archive based out of the Presidio of San Francisco.

My examination of labour’s responses to climate change and the economic crisis in chapter six is based on participation observation, individual and group interviews, critical discourse analysis and some political-economic analysis. From May 2008 to May 2009 I was elected onto the Executive Committee of the Canadian Union for Public Employees, Local 3902—a union for part-time lecturers and teaching assistants at the University of Toronto. My position on the Executive allowed me to participate in regional and national union meetings, conventions and educational workshops organized by my own union and other private sector unions. For example, I was invited to attend workshops organized by the United Steelworkers aimed at educating their members about the manufacturing crisis and climate change. I was also a delegate at the ‘Good Jobs Green Jobs’ conference organized by the Blue-Green Alliance in February 2009. These experiences helped me gain insights into the processes and politics of knowledge production within the broader labour movement. My Executive Committee position also gave me political legitimacy that was critical for gaining access to union officials and key actors involved with labour-environmental alliance-forming. Just as important were the observations I was able to make of the everyday functioning of a union and the experience of trying to engage our own members with the issue of climate change (e.g. I helped to draft and circulate our union’s Climate Change Policy). Chapter six also draws heavily on union policy documents that I obtained either on-line or in-person from various labour organized (including unions, regional labour councils, and organizations representing formal labour-environmental alliances).
3. **CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THEORIZING LABOUR-ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE-FORMING**

Despite increasing popular concern about climate change the growth rate of greenhouse gas emissions at a global scale has actually increased substantially from about 1.1% per year during the 1990s to 3.4% per year between 2000-2007 (Raupach, et al., 2007; Richardson, et al., 2009). While attending the Ontario climate-change policy conference circuit over the past year, it became clear to me that policy makers and many environmentalists alike are baffled—given what to them is a self-evident political urgency—as to why the Canadian government has failed to develop a comprehensive national climate change policy and has consistently tried to hijack international climate change negotiations. Many presenters at climate change policy conferences and academic lectures alike explain societal inaction in the face of the climate crisis by referring to a 'lack of political will'; however, the genesis and nature of political will is seldom detailed. The term itself can be disempowering because it tends to evoke images of individual politicians or 'political leaders' (the elite) who wield the fate of society rather than the other way around. When an exegesis of 'political will' is provided, it often reflects a doomsday, neo-Malthusian view that sees radical social change coming only after environmental catastrophe has struck. Again, this is disempowering as it suggests that there is nothing we can do to bring about radical socio-ecological change except to wait for ecological judgment day. I have encountered this paralyzing pessimism far too frequently while handing out flyers and doing outreach on the streets of Toronto to mobilize for teach-ins and demonstrations focusing on climate change politics. But I have also heard the doomsday explanation of socio-ecological change preached by our supposed environmental leaders—like a former federal Minister of the Environment.

The widespread cynicism and environmental determinism regarding social action on...
climate change is perhaps not surprising in Canada. First of all, the mere scope of the climate change problem at hand—not least of which is the call for a rapid and monumental shift to a post-carbon (if not post-capitalist) economy within one generation—is daunting. Our liberal-democratic system which tries to reduce political participation to voting once every four years (and even then marginalizes small and radical parties), is also not setup for taking wide-sweeping action on such issues since this would demand intense political mobilization and engagement of the masses. Furthermore, a doomsday understanding of political will may also be attributed to the fact that climate change has only recently gained serious attention within Canadian mainstream media. This has not given people much time to move from a general skepticism of global warming—well-cultivated by media and corporate interests—towards seriously considering possibilities of social mobilization and change. Finally, the ingrained dualistic thinking that pervades our culture has no doubt inhibited an easy acceptance that humans are (co)producers of nature and the so-called 'natural' disasters associated with rising greenhouse gas emissions. But if empty or doomsday conceptions of 'political will' reflect a dangerous disenfranchisement of Canadian society, they also demonstrate the success of the hegemonic bloc in reproducing status quo socio-ecological relations.

Another popular view is that 'political will' and radical socio-ecological change come about automatically once politicians or the masses are 'enlightened' of the climate change problem. Promoted in different variations by lifestyle greens and eco-theologians, the belief is that changing the world involves simply fostering a 'green consciousness' that changes the way people think about and experience the world (Dryzek, 2005). In turn, this enlightenment is supposed to somehow automatically lead to a rational and presumably fair resolution to the problem. This premise forms the basis of many climate change initiatives, for example: the Toronto-based environmental group Just Earth that focuses exclusively on lobbying individual Members of Parliament about climate change believing that they can change the position of politicians simply by reasoning with them; the countless books listing '50 things you can do to save the planet'; annual green rituals like 'Earth Hour'—well-endorsed by major media outlets and corporate sponsors—which encourages individuals to switch off their light bulbs for one hour to stop global warming; and the numerous 'environmental education' campaigns launched by mainstream ('non-partisan') environmental organizations and government agencies. In other words, climate change is understood primarily as a problem of communication. But as Chess (2007) has made clear with respect to risk communication surrounding climate change,
Now, improved green sensibilities [or green consciousness] might be sufficient to maintain an equilibrium in which people lived in harmony with nature, but they cannot tell us how to get from our current severe disequilibrium to this harmonious state. There is no theory of the transition, which surely requires some political program, and some kind of action at the collective level. The problem here is that social, political, and economic structure is more than just a reflection of the attitudes of society's masses or elites, and so changed sensibilities will not necessarily lead to structural change (emphasis mine, p. 201).

So, no matter how aware people may be about climate change and regardless of their subjectivities as 'environmentalists', their ability to actually change their behaviour is still constrained by social, political and economic structures or institutions—not least of which is capitalism. Indeed, trying to avoid talking about these structural conditions and a 'theory of transition', is precisely what leads many environmental organizations and agencies to adopt a seemingly 'apolitical' or 'neutral' approach to climate change that serves only to reinforce existing hegemonic socio-ecological relations.

But if 'changing people' through environmental education is not enough to bring about radical socio-ecological change, what is? How do we approach the politics of climate change through an analysis of power? Below I assess three theoretical approaches that might help conceptualize the process of labour-environmental alliance-forming and its role in shaping socio-ecological change: social movement theory; class-cultural theory; and sociological Marxism. While all three approaches offer unique insights into labour-environmental alliance-forming, I hope to move beyond traditional social movement theory that conceptualizes labour-environmental alliances-forming rather ahistorically in terms of 'interest-based coalitions', while at the same time challenging the 'class-cultural divide' thesis that suggests barriers to labour-environmental alliance-forming based on narrow conceptions of 'workers' and 'environmentalists'. I therefore arrive at sociological Marxism as the preferred approach for my empirical investigation. The use of Gramscian and Polanyian concepts in sociological Marxism help us the most to situate labour-environmental alliance-forming against the parallel process of state-capital alliance-forming that has worked to shaped climate change policy through an

---

10 Similarly, Robbins (2007) observes that while lawn owners are aware and dissatisfied with the negative impacts of lawn chemicals, and may even consider themselves environmentalists, this awareness is not enough to get them to stop using pesticides and herbicides because of the competing social pressures and moral demands in their lives (e.g. being a 'good neighbour' who looks after their lawn 'properly').
ideological commitment to neoliberalism and a more general belief that we can somehow 'green capitalism.'

3.1 SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY: RETHINKING ENVIRONMENTALISM

Two main schools of thought within social movement theory have been used to examine labour-environmental relations: resource mobilization theory (RMT) and new social movement (NSM) theory. Resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), and its later variant, the political process model (McAdam, 1982; Tilly, 1988) explain social movements and coalitions in terms of social groups instrumentally engaged in the rational pursuit of shared 'interests'. Drawing from rational choice theory and organizational theory, resource mobilization theory (RMT) seeks to explain how social movements form, engage in and sustain collective action—i.e. their pragmatic structuring and operations. In assuming that actors (individuals or organizations) have predetermined material interests, RMT reifies a *Homo economicus* (economistic) view of human behaviour predicated on the egotistic, profit-seeking individual. But these economistic assumptions are ill-suited for understanding both activists who are often motivated by moral commitments directly opposed to the technocratic, individualistic and consumerist logic of capitalism, or for theorizing social movements underpinned by a 'group logic' of participation that evades the free-rider problem guiding rational-choice theorists.\(^{11}\) Clearly individuals do not always make rational calculations based on explicit economic criteria; meanwhile, organizations are dynamic and should not be seen to have static 'interests'. The notion that social groups hold immutable interests, shares in the economic determinism of structural Marxism and its problematic notion of 'class interests' which are seen as pre-given (but often masked by 'false consciousness') rather than ideologically constituted.

One problem with seeing classes as having pre-given 'interests' is that it allows for an easy *a priori* determination as to what these interests may be. This may contribute to a popular assumption that unions have no interest in, or are inherently antagonistic to, environmentalism. In turn, this propagates the myth that there is an inherent trade-off between jobs (working class interests) and the environment (a non-working class interest). On the one hand, Goodstein (1999) has argued that even if jobs were the only interest of the working class, then they should favour environmental regulation which statistically generates more 'blue-collar' jobs then it eliminates. Moreover, Prudham's (2005) analysis of the 'job versus the environment' debate in

\(^{11}\) 'Group logic' holds that "unless large numbers join the group effort, nobody will benefit" making free riding irrational (Schwartz and Paul, 1992: p.214).
the forestry sector in the Pacific Northwest demonstrates that it is not enough to see job-loss as simply a result of environmental regulation or to view conflict in terms of 'interests' at a particular moment in time. Some forestry jobs were in fact lost in the Pacific Northwest during the early 1990s immediately following environmental regulations to save the spotted owl from deforestation. Nevertheless, underlying the 'ecological crisis' in the Pacific Northwest is a long history through which nature and labour were increasingly commodified and 'restructured' by a capitalist mode of production that was concerned neither with sustainable forestry practices nor the communities dependent upon forestry for their livelihoods. A narrow understanding of 'interests' not only leads to a false 'jobs vs. environment' binary but fails to uncover the historical development of the conditions through which such interests or choices are generated.

Moreover, the notion that 'workers' and 'environmentalists' are separate categories with antagonistic interests is grounded on a narrow understanding of the multitude of *environmentalisms* (and corresponding conceptualizations of 'the environment') that actually make up the 'environmental movement' (from wilderness protection to environmental justice) as well as the diversity of unions and groups of workers that comprise the 'labour movement' (e.g. 'blue-collar' vs. 'white collar' unions, or 'business unionism' vs. 'social unionism'). The diversity within these movements (which my research helps uncover) both resists their *a priori* correlation to specific 'interests' while actually suggesting great potential exists for synergistic inter-movement political mobilization.

While not denying the importance of class positioning in the shaping of particular understandings of nature and approaches to environmental politics—not to mention the class-differentiated impacts of environmental 'bads'—this paper rejects the notion of any pre-determined or inherent class 'interests' that preclude, or promote, labour-environmental alliance-forming. Rather than taking interests as given, I see the very task at hand as one of exploring how political subjects and organizational alliances are constituted (or fail to be constituted) through material and symbolic processes. Nevertheless, RMT and structural Marxism should remind us that organizations do operate within certain structural conditions not always of their own choosing (be they historical, legal, financial, etc.). Organizations wanting to engage in coalition work, for example, only have limited resources to allocate to a wide-variety of competing political causes.12

---

12 Obach (2004) argues that a crowded field of environmental organizations all vying for financial supporters leads many organizations to narrow the range of issues they work on, making coalitions less likely as each organization tries to guard their own particular 'turf.' A broader organizational range may make it easier for an organization to work with other organizations to achieve its goals, but will make it harder to distinguish itself in
While much existing analyses of labour-environmental coalitions follows resource mobilization theory in assessing the rational cost-benefit of organizations joining a coalition, this tends—as discussed above—to reify 'interests' through a static and limited view of organizational goals and organizational or individual behaviour. Moreover, the focus on 'interests' fails to explain the subject 'repositionings' involved in labour-environmental alliance-forming which may occur outside of formal coalitions between organizations. A more useful approach aligns with new social movement (NSM) theory to show how alliances form discursively through the production of unifying identities (Touraine, 1981; Melucci, 1989; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Unlike RMT which tends to privilege existing organizations formally embedded within the state (such as unions), NSM theory tries to explain the proliferation in the 1960s of movements around ethnicity and 'race', women's rights, gender relations, environmental protection, migration, peace and international solidarity—all concerns which had been shut out by formal state structures, including the state-brokered labour-capital compromise in the West. These marginalized NSM groups—e.g. women, queers, those facing environmental injustice, etc.—are viewed as the agents who will envision and bring about new forms of society (Capra, 1983; Bookchin 1986; Doherty, 2002). In this case, NSM theorists often see revolutionary struggle as a discursive practice of forging 'collective identities' amongst these disparate groups who are marginalized by the dominant society (Habermas, 1981; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001; Conway, 2004). The rise of these 'new social movements' also led post-Marxist thinkers (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Adkin, 1998) to decenter the working class (and their organizations) as the privileged revolutionary agent. Marx argued that revolutionary social change was the historical mission of the proletariat. Of course, at least in the West, the proletariat has not developed into the revolutionary class that Marx envisioned, partially due to the post-War compromise (detailed below) which offered the working classes in the West material improvements at the expense of both their own full political emancipation and the material and political emancipation of the Third World majority. The post-War compromise structurally tied unionized workers to capital—through pensions, mortgage debt, etc. The reformist tendencies of trade unions have therefore raised doubts as to the potential role of unions in creating radical social change. Consequently, post-Marxists argue that transformative change need not come about through the forging of class identity, but rather through the articulation of a common radical democratic struggle that opposes all forms of oppression including patriarchy, racism, etc. as well as capitalism.

order to win-over supporters. Obach refers to this as the 'coalition contradiction.'
Unfortunately, however, NSM theory and post-Marxism's de-emphasis of the working class, and the shift toward 'post-industrial' discursive contests over the frameworks of meaning and the construction of collective identities, has led many to completely abandon study of the industrial working class as a potential source of progressive environmental politics. A common belief follows the argument of Inglehart (1977), Porritt, (1984), and Offe (1985) that a 'new middle class' arose after WWII that will lead the 'post-industrial revolution' since they are less materially burdened and thus able to pursue 'quality of life' values. In this way, 'environmentalism' is seen as a project of the middle class who can afford to organize around their values and beliefs. This 'post-scarcity' thesis has been challenged on the grounds that the middle class with its privileged position within the hegemonic social order, may in fact have the most to lose from—and therefore be reluctant to take part in—radical socio-ecological changes (Martell, 1994). Meanwhile, scholars studying movements of poor and racialized communities fighting for environmental justice would be aghast at the notion that only the middle class has agency and political significance in shaping environmental policy. In fact, much environmental legislation historically emerged out of workplace activism. At the same time, Tormey & Townshend (2006) lament that with post-Marxism's de-emphasis of the class struggle and proletarian emancipation, and the recent turn in much new social movement theory toward the discursive processes of radical subject formation (e.g. 'collective identities'):

the material causes of radical political action are too often underplayed. This is not to say that all meaningful resistance has a material cause; but it often does, often enough to suggest that poverty and material factors are at least as important as other variables in radicalising individuals (p.216).

This criticism on the one hand implies that the labour movement—and its historical concern for material conditions of workers—is still an important subject of analysis for understanding radical socio-ecological change. Therefore my own research hopes to reexamine the working class as an important agent of socio-ecological change by drawing attention to how industrial unions are conceptualizing, and mobilizing around, climate change. On the other hand, even if unions are pressing for progressive socio-ecological changes, many may question just how radical, i.e. counterhegemonic, unions can be considering their historical ties to what Wilson (1987-88) called the 'axis of exploitation' (i.e. the way unions collude with the state and capital to maintain the existing national and global inequities and ecologically destructive industrial processes).13

13 Dobson (2007), for example, argues that radical socio-ecological change will be most likely pushed for by the Third World poor who are marginalized from consumption, and particularly (Third World) women who are not
But the degree to which unions are, or might, contribute to counterhegemonic socio-ecological change is yet to be well-assessed empirically. Moreover, the extent to which unions in North America are in fact structurally constrained as agents of socio-ecological change should only make it all the more important to highlight (and support) the elements within unions that are nevertheless agitating for counterhegemonic change.

3.2 **Class-Cultural Theory: Class-Cultural Divide?**

While NSM theory emphasizes the importance of discourse in fostering socio-ecological change through the construction of alternative visions of the 'sustainable society,’ it has also been criticized for undertheorizing how 'culture' and 'identity' are connected to social relations, state formation and social reproduction more generally. At an organizational level of analysis, this problem is taken up by class-cultural theorists such as Fred Rose (1997; 2000). Rose argues that labour-environmental coalitions are inhibited due to a 'class cultural divide' between blue-collar unions and white-collar environmentalist groups. As I intend to critically examine below, Rose essentially argues that the day-to-day occupational experiences of middle-class workers help instill values and organizational behaviour conducive to environmentalism, whereas the opposite is true for blue-collar workers thereby setting up a problem for coalition building between labour and environmental organizations. Although Rose himself is sympathetic to building coalitions between labour and environmental organizations, his class-cultural divide thesis actually helps reinforce the problematic assumption that working class organizations are unlikely to engage in, let alone lead, progressive environmental politics. Indeed the influence of the class-cultural divide thesis, and Rose's work in particular, may itself contribute to a disinterest in empirically investigating labour-environmental relations. In any case, I will continue by critically exploring the insights of this class-cultural approach to labour-environmental relations, followed by what I feel are some of its shortcomings for examining labour-environmental alliance-forming. In brief, these shortcomings are that the generative class theories used by Rose to explain a 'class-cultural divide' regarding environmentalism, is simply not supported by the empirical evidence. Owing to his failure to critically deconstruct key categories such as 'environmentalism', 'the environment', and 'the labour movement', Rose ultimately (mis)uses class-cultural theory in such

---

only the most marginalized from consumption but who share a universal concern for reproduction as much as production: “it may be argued from a radical green perspective that the external limits imposed on the production process by the Earth itself are beginning to shape a class that is more or less permanently marginalized from the process of consumption. From this point of view it is the distance from the process of consumption and the degree of permanence of this isolation that currently determine the capacity of any given group in society for radical green social change” (original emphasis, p.143-144).
a way as to reaffirm the problematic notion of 'class interests'. Rose defines 'environmentalism' as simply a values or beliefs based movement which thereby masks the material struggles waged through environmental politics—namely the struggle for environmental justice, driving much of the observed labour-environmental alliance-forming.

Class-cultural theory draws from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1989; 1990). Using Bourdieu's terminology, class-cultural theory argues that workers from different social fields (social groupings or 'classes') are different not simply in etic terms but precisely because they share and reproduce different collective dispositions within a given field. Individuals acquire collective dispositions through their day-to-day experience: living, working and becoming socialized—and socializing each other—within a particular social field, through what Bourdieu calls *habitus*. As Bourdieu (1990) elaborates, habitus refers to:

both a system of schemata of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices. And, in both of these dimensions, its operation expresses the social position in which it was elaborated. Consequently, habitus produces practices and representations which are available for classification, which are objectively differentiated; however, they are immediately perceived as such only by those agents who possess the code, the classificatory schemes necessary to understand their social meaning. Habitus thus implies a 'sense of one's place' but also a 'sense of the place of others' (p.131).

Habitus is reproduced through social institutions—not just the workplace, but the family, school, bar, etc. A person's habitus gives them an unconscious or internalized understanding of the 'rules of the game' allowing them to successfully operate as a member of a particular social field; but, at the same time excluding them from membership in other social fields. Thus, habitus sets limits on agency in any one field (Smith, 2006).

The 'class culture divide' thesis argues that contrasting habitus of blue-collar and white-collar workers generates (and reproduces) different common sense views of the world, as well as different practices for engaging with, and changing, the world. As Rose (1997) argues:

>Social class shapes distinct cultural subsystems that order consciousness, organize perceptions, define priorities, and influence forms of behavior. The specific content of consciousness emerges through historical experiences and action within the framework created by class cultures. [Social] Movements reflect the class background of participants even if they do not explicitly articulate their goals in class terms. This has enormous implications for when and how people from different classes mobilize politically (p.463).

14 Smith (2006) refers to collective dispositions as a 'set of cultural commonalities' (p.3).
In other words, work-life experience (habitus) is seen to pre-condition and be conditioned by characteristic organizational cultures and forms of political action. Much more crudely put, social practice is said to shape one's politics. According to Rose, the working class carries out routine, repetitive practices with little autonomy or control over the production process. Their work-life experience is “based on compulsion....Thus the culture of the work place is defined by the daily battle with authority” (Rose, 1997: p.476). The working-class thus sees political practice revolving around direct conflict over interests, and this is reflected in the types of political organizations they form (e.g. unions). Meanwhile, middle-class professionals experience more autonomy at work since they require specialized knowledge that is unsuited to direct supervision. This means that middle-class workers must be self-motivated and perform at work because of the self-fulfillment gained through completing more complex and intellectually challenging tasks in contrast to immediate rewards or punishments from supervisors. In sum, “the middle class is organized around a culture of autonomy, personal responsibility, intellectual engagement, variability, and change” (Rose, 1997: p.477). For middle-class professions, therefore, political action is a process of education and self-expression, which leads them to value-orientated, less hierarchical, voluntary associations such as environmental organizations.

According to Rose, the value-driven concerns of middle-class environmentalists are at odds with, or at least incomprehensible to, the interest-based understanding of political action of blue-collar workers. In other words, blue-collar workers are used to fighting for concrete material gains which makes them suspicious of environmentalists who purport to be acting in light of an abstract concern for nature. This may lead workers to dismiss environmentalists or charge them with having a 'hidden agenda', in turn, driving workers to side with employers whose interest-based actions and collective dispositions are at least recognizable. Moreover, different classes of workers may have fundamentally different epistemologies, particularly in terms of how they relate and come to know nature. Rose's position is underscored by White's (1995) argument that blue-collar workers conceive of nature more anthropocentrically in terms of its human-use value compared with middle-class environmentalists who are more likely to see nature in eco-centric terms as a 'wilderness' that is threatened by work. Furthermore, both Rose (2000) and Thomas Dunk (1994) draw on case studies of timber workers—who they argue obtain practical knowledge of the forest through their daily work-tasks that reveal the forest as renewable (they see them regenerating); meanwhile, middle-class environmentalists base their knowledge about forests on scientific reports (generated by others within their social field) which presents forests as threatened by cutting. This different understanding of what constitutes 'the
forest', leads to a conflict over who 'really' knows the problem.

According to class-cultural theorists, this organic difference between social classes is fully exploited by employers who find themselves under attack by environmental groups. Employers use their discursive power (or in Bourdieu's terms, *symbolic capital*) to articulate a distinction between 'workers', whose 'insider' knowledge (of the forest, factory, etc.) is legitimated, and 'outsiders' including 'environmentalists', whose knowledge is thereby delegitimized. These distinctions are internalized, or in Bordieu's terms misrecognized, as natural, pre-given categories through an act of *symbolic violence*. This power to divide social groups is what Bourdieu calls the *power of constitution*:

> The struggle over classifications is a fundamental dimension of class struggle. The power to impose and to inculcate a vision of divisions, that is, the power to make visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit [e.g. what is a 'worker' and what is an 'environmentalist'], is political power par excellence (p.138).

In sum, the antagonistic categories of 'workers' and 'environmentalists' are given a subjective existence as such, through discourse ('performative utterances') that draw on the objective (or class-cultural) differences between these social fields (workers and environmentalists) as otherwise merely etic categories.

While the 'class culture divide' thesis offers an important analytical framework for understanding what makes labour-environmental alliance-forming so difficult, it fails to provide a clear explanation of how these difficulties are in some cases overcome and runs the risk of being applied too broadly without careful empirical analysis. To begin with, Obach (2004) argues that Rose's case study tends to exaggerate the cultural differences and tensions between social classes. The conflicts between the timber industry workers and environmentalists used in Rose's case study are particularly intense examples of conflict; a survey completed by Obach (2002) of other labour-environmental relations at a national scale in the United States reveals cooperation to be far more common. Just because there are conflicts between loggers and middle-class environmentalists seeking to protect 'wilderness,' this does not mean that blue-collar workers do not participate in other forms of environmentalism (especially issues of environmental justice). Furthermore, there are many types of blue-collar workers (besides the extreme example of loggers) whose work-life experience (habitus) and collective dispositions are

---

15 Obach (2002) identifies several reasons why the logger-environmentalist conflict is particularly intense which have not only to do with how workers relate to nature but also due to the precariousness of the work (which leads workers to side with the company) and the geographic isolation of single-industry logging towns.
much more in-line with middle-class environmentalists with whom they might therefore share similar elective affinities in terms of conceptualizing nature and engaging in political action. In effect, Rose overreaches with his analysis by suggesting that the habitus of a very particular group of 'blue-collar' workers is shared by all workers. Without sensitivity to difference, this slips towards the problematic suggestion, noted earlier, that all blue-collar workers share the same 'interests'. Obach also argues that the degree to which class cultural differences do exist, they may not actually inhibit cooperation significantly since both unions and environmental organizations share very similar organizational cultures at regional and national levels—precisely where most coalition building actually develops. My own research supports Norton's (2003) assessment that the sociological evidence does not support generative class theories of environmentalism. If there was in fact a 'class-cultural divide' and the environment was a 'middle-class' concern, then we would expect white-collar unions to be more likely to form coalitions with environmental organizations. But my own research shows that blue-collar unions like the United Steelworkers, the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union and the Canadian Auto Workers are in fact the ones most active in fighting climate change and forming alliances with environmental organizations not white-collar unions like the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) or the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

While Obach may be correct that the professional staff of both unions and large environmental organizations belong to a similar social field; nevertheless, formal coalitions signed into by organizational leaders, of the type Obach examined, may remain weak or limited in terms of their political efficacy if there is not widespread support amongst the rank-and-file membership of both organizations. In other words, cultivating broad-based support within unions and environmental organizations for engaging in, and expanding, coalition activities may ultimately depend on the rank-and-file members from both organizations participating in some kind of transformative experience that brings them closer together ideologically, if not physically (e.g. strikes supported by ENGOs; political protests against mutually distasteful legislation; education conferences; a significant change in ecological or political-economic conditions; etc.). But the basis for this transformative (and potentially counterhegemonic) experience does not seem clearly theorized by class-cultural theorists who are more focused on social reproduction—i.e. the socio-cultural processes preventing labour-environmental alliance-forming.
3.3 **SOCIOLOGICAL MARXISM: HEGEMONY, THE ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL AND THE DOUBLE MOVEMENT**

A useful theoretical approach for understanding the ideological and material basis that is promoting labour-environmental alliance-forming can be found by drawing on Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi—through what Michael Burawoy (2003) calls 'sociological Marxism'. If Bourdieu's analysis seems to emphasize the reproduction of social relations, Gramsci, while also discussing reproduction through hegemony, is also quite focused on the possibilities that exist for overcoming these structures through counterhegemony (although he never uses this term).

Sociological Marxism draws on Gramsci's analysis of hegemony to understand the formation of stable social (class) alliances under capitalism and the mechanism through which new social alliances may be forged. Gramsci's insights into hegemony rejects the economism and automaticism of classical Marxism in favour of analyzing “the way society organizes classes as such— their meaning, their capacities, their interests, their alliances—and thus the potential for the transformative class struggle” (Burawoy, 2003, p. 223). In other words, Gramsci appreciates that class 'interests' are in fact constructed as part of a process of alliance-forming. Meanwhile, Polanyi's notion of a 'double movement' helps ground alliance-forming and socio-ecological change within a materialist understanding of commodification and market liberalization.

For Gramsci, hegemony is a process through which the ruling class maintains its power and legitimacy, not simply through the coercive functions of the state (what Gramsci calls "political society''), but rather by garnering the consent of the masses through the organization of 'civil society'—i.e. the ideology, institutions and intellectuals characteristic to bourgeois capitalist society. Through civil society, the 'practical sense' or consciousness of the masses (gained from their lived experiences within capitalism) is mediated through the ruling class' ideology (i.e.'worldview' or 'class outlook'), in turn becoming a popular taken-for-granted 'common sense' (Smith, 1999; Williams, 1977). As Smith (1999) notes: “[h]egemony eventually both plays on common sense and produces common sense: if effective it provides the sense that what is happening is obvious, normal and natural. It is taken for granted” (242). In a bourgeois capitalist society, hegemonic power is therefore reflected by the degree to which the masses (or

---

16 As Smith (1999) notes, hegemonic processes must be revealed as “identifiable social-political projects” (p.240) implemented through particular sites of power. Harvey (2005a) clearly applies this notion of hegemony as a project, to the study of neoliberalism.

17 Here I am using Williams' (1977) definition of ideology as “relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs, of a kind that can be abstracted as a ‘world view’ or ‘class outlook’” (p.109). Gramsci defined 'common sense' as “the most widespread conception of life and of man” (quoted in Crehan, 2002: p.110).
'subaltern') internalize bourgeois interests as the 'general interest' and the bourgeois worldview as the 'natural order of things': there is no alternative. In this way, class struggle is contained. This understanding of hegemony provides a methodological starting point for understanding why union members or 'environmentalists' and organic intellectuals approach climate change the way that they do. For example, we see this hegemonic process play out in the way that corporations and bourgeois politicians frequently allude to maintaining a 'balance' between the economy and environment concerns, thereby naturalizing a conceptual trade-off between the two ('jobs versus the environment'). Similarly, as the manufacturing crisis deepened over the past decade, Canadian trade unions have been told by government and corporations that they have no choice but to submit to ‘competitive pressures’ or ‘market demands’ talked of as if they were in fact uncontrollable forces of nature rather than the consequences of very intentional political projects. Critically, however, civil society provides a terrain of (class) struggle resulting from the capacity of some individuals, Gramsci's 'organic intellectuals', to realize and try to overcome their own systematic oppression.

The role of the intellectual is key to the entire hegemonic process. For Gramsci, the function of the intellectual is “directive and organisational, i.e. educative, i.e. intellectual” (quoted in Crehan, 2002, p.131). As Crehan (2002) notes, Gramsci defines intellectuals quite broadly to include “all those with a responsibility to instill knowledge into others and ensure, in however minor a way, that a given way of seeing the world is reproduced”(p.132). Meanwhile, the term organic intellectual refers to intellectuals (including organizations) who emerge from, and articulate the ideologies of, a particular class “as it moves from being merely a class-in-itself to being a class-for-itself” (Crehan, 2002, p.137). While intellectuals who are organic to the bourgeois class ('traditional intellectuals') help reproduce hegemony, organic intellectuals of subaltern social groups may be able to articulate an alternative ideology that is counter-hegemonic. The latter is made possible since, as previously noted, the subaltern's 'common sense' also contains a 'nucleus' of critical understanding of hegemony (i.e. 'practical sense') owing to their day-to-day experiences living within a subordinated position. Nevertheless, according to Gramsci this practical sense remains but “incoherent and fragmentary 'feelings'”

18 As I later discuss, Bourdieu (1989; 1990) would refer to the ability of the bourgeoisie to make self-interest appear as the general interest, as a form of symbolic power or symbolic violence.

19 For Gramsci, intellectuals include “the entire social stratum which exercise an organizational function in the wide sense – whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration” (quoted in Crehan, 2002, p.132). I adopt a broad interpretation of 'organic intellectuals' to include both individuals as well as organizations.

20 For Gramsci's study of Italy, the proletariat was seen as the subaltern group whose organic intellectuals gave hope for leading the 'war of position' (defined below) against the hegemonic historical bloc.
unless it can be articulated by an organic intellectual into a counter-hegemonic worldview (quoted in Crehan, 2002, p.130). Therefore, the organic intellectual, and the discursive and material tactics they employ to cultivate new counterhegemonic subjectivities, become critical for understanding the successful formation of counterhegemonic alliances.

Establishing hegemony (and counterhegemony) involves building and maintaining a 'historical bloc'—a 'system of alliances' including elements of the dominant economic class and its organic intellectuals in addition to the strata of the subaltern who have been won over by concession and compromises (Hall, 1986). Gramsci did not use the term 'counterhegemony', but he did recognize that to challenge hegemony would entail alliance-forming both across classes (e.g. in Gramsci's Italy, between the peasants and proletariat; organic intellectuals and traditional intellectuals) and also within classes (e.g. between revolutionaries and non-revolutionaries). Gramsci's notion of 'class alliances' transcends Lenin's because it views (counter)hegemonic alliance-forming as more than simply the aligning of political 'interests', but rather as a process through which subjects take on entirely new (and potentially revolutionary) ideologies:

It is in this movement, from the 'political' to the 'intellectual and moral' plane, that the decisive transition takes place toward a concept of hegemony beyond 'class alliances'. For, whereas political leadership can be grounded upon a conjunctural coincidence of interests in which the participating sectors [or 'classes'] retain their separate identity, moral and intellectual leadership requires that an ensemble of 'ideas' and 'values' be shared by a number of sectors—or, to use our own terminology, that certain subject positions traverse a number of class sectors. Intellectual and moral leadership constitutes, according to Gramsci, a higher synthesis, a 'collective will', which, through ideology, becomes the organic cement unifying a 'historical bloc' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: p.66-67).

In other words, counter-hegemony is more than simply a coalition of predefined 'interests'. Rather, the work of counterhegemony is to ideologically (discursively) cultivate and articulate what can then be held as common or collective ideas and values. The effectiveness of organic intellectuals rests in their ability to identify the practical sense of those identifying as 'workers' and 'environmentalists' and to articulate a coherent and convincing counterhegemonic political narrative that generates consciousness and motivates collective action. This slow ideological process of forming an historical bloc and winning over the 'national-popular collective will' is what Gramsci referred to as a 'war of position' (as opposed to a 'war of manoeuvre' epitomized by the Russian Revolution). This points to a 'grassroots-up' strategy of social change in which widespread changes in civil society and 'popular culture' leads to changes in political society.
Unlike classical Marxists, however, Gramsci recognized that, given the formidable power of hegemony, the formation of a new collective will (i.e. a counterhegemonic bloc) is far from guaranteed (Hall, 1986). Therefore, the strategies employed by organic intellectuals to forge new counterhegemonic blocs, in both their success and failures, becomes all the more important to study. To this end, I investigate how activists and leaders within unions, and certain unions and environmental organizations themselves, operate as organic intellectuals engaged with building counterhegemonic labour-environmental alliances. In this study, I use the term 'organic intellectuals' in a broad Gramscian sense to include individuals, umbrella organizations, or loose networks of people.

But in studying the 'war of position' which has unfolded around climate change policy in Canada, I am also concerned with the role of traditional intellectuals emerging from capital class ('business leaders' in control of the means of production) in building alliances with the state to shape the terms of socio-ecological change. Chapter five examines the way that capitalist traditional intellectuals have consciously tried to shape the collective will in favour of neoliberal climate change policies through a discourse of ecological modernization. Chapter six then examines how organic intellectuals within the labour movement have at times managed to counter the hegemonic discourse around climate change and neoliberalism by shaping the collective will around their own ideas of climate change policy: greater regulation; just transition for workers; international agreements; proactive government investment; etc. At the same time, I argue that the labour movement may be complicit in promoting an ecological modernist discourse that has an uncertain, and potentially deleterious, future for both labour and the environment. In any case, I remain attentive to how this unfolding war of position differentially positions social groups within or outside the hegemonic power bloc.

Gramsci’s analysis of alliance-forming provides a basis for understanding how counterhegemony is organized; however, beyond his notion of the organic intellectual, Gramsci does not go very far in explaining the genesis of counterhegemony (Burawoy, 2003). Polanyi (1944), on the other hand, while not really discussing the workings of hegemony, nevertheless shows how counterhegemony is grounded in the (mal)functioning of the self-regulating market. In his study of liberalization during the 19th century, Polanyi uncovers what he calls the double movement. On the one hand, an alliance between haute finance and national governments tried to institute a self-regulating market based on the doctrine of economic liberalism—encouraging laissez-faire, free trade and attempts to commodify labour, land (nature) and money. Despite the market system treating land, labour and money as commodities produced for sale (exchange),
they are not in fact simply produced according to supply and demand (and are therefore only 'fictitious commodities'). The commodification of land and labour, for example, tried to 'disembed' the economy from the social sphere, working against the traditional systems of production and social order and leading to the degradation of humans and their environments. Consequently, as the 19th century progressed, a broad-based counter-movement—made up of various subordinated classes in alliances with certain negatively affected capitalist groups—arose to resist the self-regulating market and to demand social (and environmental) protection.21 Polanyi insightfully reveals how this 'counter-movement' was not simply the work of one 'revolutionary class' but rather a diverse array of societal interests who variably pushed for more protectionist legislation. The source of political resistance in liberal capitalist societies is shown by Polanyi to have emerged not only through the politics of production but also because of the more general failure of the market in meeting societal concerns over both labour and nature (Burawoy, 2003; Prudham, 2008). Polanyi’s analysis therefore encompasses both labour politics and environmental politics. But while a Polanyian analysis helps us predict that the planned move towards liberalization will lead to a societal backlash through social alliance-forming, it is unable to predict either the type of political projects that these social alliances will engage in nor which will be triumphant; this is conditioned by particular historical and socio-political contexts that must be empirically examined. The fascist and socialist projects that emerged out of the societal backlash of the 19th century were hardly predictable, especially in all their particular geographic variations. Therefore, my research into labour-environmental alliance-forming aims to uncover the nature of the counter-movement specifically within the Canadian context—motivated by a deep concern over what political future this may bring about.

3.4 BROADENING THE RESISTANCE: THE PREDICAMENT OF MILITANT PARTICULARISM

The scalar dimensions of hegemony and the counter-movement are not well theorized by Polanyi or Gramsci. But the transnational dynamic of both climate change and neoliberalism (or uneven capitalist development more generally) make it clear that the ultimate success of labour-environmental alliance-forming rests on how well it resolves significant tensions between particular place-bound loyalties and identities and the type of more general or universal abstractions required to build opposition to neoliberalism and climate change emissions at

21 Similarly, James O'Connor (1998) refers to the underproduction (degradation) of the conditions of production (including land and labour) as the basis for his second contradiction of capitalism. The second contradiction also leads to social resistance and demands for more (eco-)socialist forms of production.
broader scales. For example, how does national protectionism in Canada or America in the face of the current economic crisis impact workers abroad whose livelihoods were based on exporting to North American markets? How do international climate change negotiations arrive at an 'acceptable' level of global warming as reflected in emissions targets given that such targets might spell socio-ecological devastation for certain (poor and racialized) parts of the globe but not others? The concept of militant particularism helps us investigate these types of questions as we analyze the counterhegemonic work being carried out through labour-environmental alliance-forming. Here I draw on David Harvey's (1996; 2001) discussion of militant particularism based largely on his reading of Raymond Williams' novels.

According to Williams, militant particularism is the hope and tension occurring when the “[i]deals forged out of the affirmative experience of solidarities in one place get generalized and universalized as a working model of a new form of society that will benefit all of humanity” (quoted in Harvey, 1996: p.32). In other words, the ideological work carried out by organic intellectuals to bring people together in common resistance at one scale (e.g. in a factory, city, nation or some other constructed 'community') may not work, or may even work against, what is needed to articulate counterhegemony at other scales (e.g. in fighting for transnational socio-economic and environmental justice). Alluding to one set of (universalist) abstractions to broaden counterhegemonic struggle threatens to undermine solidarities at another (local, grassroots) scale in which social movements are ultimately grounded:

The move from tangible solidarities understood as patterns of social life organized in affective and knowable communities to a more abstract set of conceptions that would have universal purchase involves a move from one level of abstraction—attached to place—to another level of abstraction capable of reaching out across space. And in that move, something was bound to be lost. 'In came,' Williams ruefully notes, 'necessarily, the politics of negation, the politics of differentiation, the politics of abstract analysis. And these, whether we like them or not, were now necessary even to understand what was happening.' Even the language changes, shifting from words like 'our community' and 'our people' in the coalfields to 'the organised working class,' the 'proletariat' and the 'masses' in the metropolis where the abstractions are most hotly debated. . . . The shift from one conceptual world, from one level of abstraction to another, can threaten the common purpose and values that ground the militant particularism achieved in particular places” (Harvey, 1996: p.33).

Fostering solidarities across time and space is an ongoing ideological struggle for organic intellectuals engaged with labour-environmental alliance-forming. The most basic example is the effort to get 'workers' or 'union members' to also identify as 'environmentalists' (and vice-
versa). The challenge of militant particularism is heightened in times of economic crisis when the state-capital alliance uses increasing pressures arising from the short-term exigencies of workers to suppress far-reaching, eco-socialist or internationalist visions aimed at more fundamentally transforming the underlying logic driving the global socio-ecological crisis. Harvey gives the example of a militant strike by British autoworkers aimed at protecting the job security of workers making a highly polluting, luxury vehicle. A successful strike, while helping these workers in the short-term, would not help bring about a transformation in production geared at realizing a more ecological and equitable society. Similarly, the ongoing manufacturing crisis in Canada (and now a more generalized crisis) raises the question about whether workers' struggles to protect historic gains in wages, working conditions and job security will incorporate a push for a more sustainable society that releases far less greenhouse gas emissions. I therefore gauge how successful organic intellectuals are at creating, shaping and circulating ideological abstractions such as 'just transition', 'green jobs' or a 'Green New Deal', in their attempt to mobilize workers around a broader socio-ecological purpose.

Organic intellectuals in labour organizations are faced with no easy task. For example, although I expose the 'jobs versus the environment' dichotomy as a myth in chapter four and in chapter six, sometimes environmental measures—like drastically reducing emissions—will require the shutting down of certain plants or entire sectors either temporarily (as factories retool) or permanently (e.g. bitumen refining from tar sands). Chapter six examines the ideological work that labour-environmental organic intellectuals carried out to try to anticipate the militant particularism of these vulnerable workers so as to allow even these workers to politically support the shift towards a post-carbon economy. Of course, these organic intellectuals are engaged in a war of position with a state-capital alliance that has attempted to ignore the fate of such workers or encouraged them to oppose climate change regulations.

Although I focus here on organic intellectuals based within the labour organizations, further studies should also consider the labour-environmental ideological work carried out by organic intellectuals based within environmental organizations. These organic intellectuals have their own challenges such as convincing self-proclaimed defenders of the 'global environment' to consider the importance of class politics in reaching ecological goals.
Uncovering the history of labour-environmental alliance-forming helps challenge the prevailing assumption that 'workers' and 'environmentalists' are distinct and mutually antagonistic subject positionings owing to an inherent trade-off between jobs and reaching environmental policy goals. Moreover, an historical perspective may help counter attacks on workers who are blamed in the bourgeois press for somehow causing the economic and climate change crisis. North American autoworkers, for example, are currently faced with record lay-offs and plant closures but are commonly said to have dug their own graves by producing inefficient vehicles.\textsuperscript{22} The corporate media strategically ignores or even inverses the true power relations governing decisions about the nature of production (i.e. who controls production) and hence mystifies the production of nature (i.e. how 'nature' is ideologically and materially produced through these social relations). As the President of the Canadian Auto Workers, Ken Lewenza, pointed out in responding to a Globe and Mail editorial calling for cuts to the autoworkers' wages and benefits: “We didn’t write the free trade deals, and we don’t manage the companies. We don’t design the vehicles – we just build them.”\textsuperscript{23} But even as Lewenza's remarks remind us that workers are seldom free to make decisions over the design of products and production processes, there are nevertheless determined efforts being waged by organic intellectuals within unions—including autoworker unions—to develop and shape environmental and economic policies and thus engage in the visioning, if not planning, of a new world. Therefore, the historical class struggle is not so simply defined by what Braverman (1974) referred to as a division of labour between conception (monopolized by the bourgeoisie) and execution (by workers). This division of labour is neither pre-given nor ideologically accepted by workers and their unions. Rather, as this chapter hopes to convey, history has shown that workers and their unions have at times been quite active in imagining a new sustainable economy and developing

\textsuperscript{22} In June 2008 Canadian Auto Workers waged a militant strike against General Motors (GM) at a pick-up truck facility in Oshawa after GM announced it would close the plant even though it had just signed a Collective Agreement with workers only weeks before which guaranteed that the plant would stay in production. Immediately workers themselves were heavily blamed for causing the economic crisis that supposedly justified GM's actions—criticized for being overpaid and having 'unreasonable' benefits packages. At the same time, workers were equally blamed alongside the company for producing 'gas guzzling SUVs'. An article in the Toronto Star reported that “GM has blamed rising fuel prices and less demand for gas-guzzling pickup trucks as the main reasons for closing the truck plant in Oshawa – a move that will put 2,600 people out of work.” When GM announced to shut the plant, the company was therefore vindicated since they were seen to be on the side of fighting global warming. See “Hargrove won't rule out GM strike,” Toronto Star, 5 June 2008, available on-line at: \url{http://www.thestar.com/Business/article/437616}, accessed 6 June 2008.

policies to address the socio-ecological crisis—even if these alternative visions and policies have been most often ignored or opposed by the hegemonic bloc. Examining the history of labour-environmental alliance-forming is also important for giving context to my later discussion of how the labour movement has responded to climate change in the face of the unfolding economic crisis.

Of course, organized workers have not always been the vanguard of counterhegemonic socio-ecological change. Well-publicized battles that pitted certain workers fearing job loss against environmental groups serve well to remind us that labour-environmental alliance-forming is anything but guaranteed. As Prudham (2008) notes in reflecting upon forestry politics in British Columbia, “there is no reason to suppose that the politics of work and environmental change proceed in sympathy” (191). In other words, the historical double movement identified by Polanyi and applied here, may be even more complicated than even Polanyi himself first imagined. The commodification of land (nature) and labour may create very real antagonisms (as well as synergies) both across and within what are in fact quite heterogeneous labour and environmental 'movements'. The work of the historian is to therefore uncover where and why these tension points have occurred.

Unfortunately, the historiography of labour-environmental relations in Canada is severely lacking within published academic works. The historical engagement of labour in environmental politics is often buried within general historical works on unions and even then mentioned only in passing. Perhaps not surprisingly, the best written sources of labour-environmental relations are publications by unions themselves, most often through their Health, Safety and Environment Departments. Some exceptions include a small body of work focused on the forestry sector in British Columbia—most notably Prudham (2007; 2008); Moore (2002) and Simon (2000; 2003)—and the landmark study by Laurie Adkin (1998) on two industrial unions in Ontario during the 1980s.

Polanyi and Gramsci help us to frame the history of labour-environmental alliance-forming in relation to the emergence and neoliberal restructuring of Fordist social relations in the mid-to-late twentieth century—although we should keep in mind the way that the ecological crisis has deepened through capitalist production more generally (O'Connor, 1998). The post-War Canadian welfare state—or what Gramsci referred to as Fordism—was an historical bloc made up of a relatively stable alliance between capital, labour unions, and the liberal-democratic state. As Steinmetz (1994) puts it:
Fordism was based on the centrality of industrial labor as producer and consumer. Male workers were relatively well-paid, and the welfare state propped up consumer demand during slack periods. The social movement sphere was monopolized by the official labor movement, centralized and bureaucratized labor unions; closely connected were social-democratic or labor parties engaged in neo-corporatist relations with employers' organization and the state (p.26).

From this perspective, new social movements are the response of constituent groups whose concerns—such as the environment, women's rights, racial equality, etc.—were originally excluded from the Fordist power bloc. However, as I will discuss in relation to the Canadian context, the restructuring of the hegemonic historical bloc under neoliberalism through the 1980s and 1990s has now shut out organized labour. This has created an opportunity for realigning labour into a 'counterhegemonic bloc' along with NSMs actors who were never partners, or full partners, within the post-War hegemonic bloc—e.g. those affected by environmental injustice. Although certain environmental concerns raised in the 1960s have become hegemonic (e.g. the state's commitment to 'control' pollution), and what were once marginalized groups like Greenpeace have now become mainstream multi-national organizations in their own right; nevertheless, on certain issues such as climate change, even mainstream environmentalism is largely sidelined by decision makers in Canada. Moreover, groups suffering from environmental injustices both in Canada and in the Third World, have always been and continue to be neglected by the hegemonic bloc, again creating more opportunities for counterhegemonic labour-environmental alliance-forming.

The idea that 'environmental groups' were originally shut out from Fordist relations, however, might suggest that working-class politics and environmental politics have always been distinct and opposed. But Prudham (2007) and Simon (2000; 2003) argue that this may not have always been the case—even in the British Columbia forestry sector that is notorious for sensationalized 'timber wars' ostensibly waged between unions and environmental groups in the 1990s. Examining politics around forestry policy in British Columbia during the 1940s and early 1950s, Prudham shows that, in fact, important ideological struggles were waged between capital, unions, and political parties before Fordist forestry successfully became hegemonic. Of particular interest is the position initially put forth by the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)—a political party which later became the New Democratic Party but which, at the time, was a much more radical socialist party trying to unify all trade-unions under a common counterhegemonic political programme. Arguing before the Royal Commission on Forestry in 1943, the CCF called for the nationalization of the forestry industry, the reduction of forest
waste-wood, and the creation of value-added manufacturing. Far from the export-oriented, 'sustain-yield', industrial (i.e. capitalist, scientific, and techno-managerial) forestry which eventually took hold under Fordist social relations, CCF propaganda envisioned a form of localism entailing small-scale production governed by an agrarian ethic of conjoined labour and environmental stewardship. For its part, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA)—the largest forestry union in British Columbia for most of the 20th century—ultimately endorsed sustain-yield forestry during the Royal Commission, albeit voicing some environmental concerns such as its impact on salmon streams. Thereafter, the IWA became a staunch proponent of the so-called 'exploitation axis' that characterized industry-state-labour relations under Fordism (Wilson, 1987-88; Burda and Gale, 1998; Burda et al, 1998; Salazar and Alper, 1996). As Prudham (2007) argues:

Organized labour [primarily under the auspices of the IWA, the International Union of Pulp, Sulphite, and Papermill Workers, and the United Papermakers] pressured for state oversight of the industry in the name of forest-dependent communities, but assumed no direct role in overseeing forest appropriation and regulation. Instead, labour's consent and the support of working families and their communities were tied to lucrative wage and benefit agreements forged with large, ostensibly stable, and (initially) profitable companies in collective bargaining agreements; these agreements contributed (for a time) some measure of economic predictability and labour peace to an otherwise volatile industry (p.266).

In more recent decades, most notably during the 'timber wars' of the 1990s, the IWA consistently allied with timber corporations in blaming environmental groups (mostly wilderness preservation groups) as the main cause of job-loss (discussed further below). Nevertheless, both Prudham (2007) and Simon (2000; 2003) are careful to situate the IWA's consent to Fordist forestry within a particular political context of red-baiting and union-busting which, among other things, made it difficult for the Communist leadership at the time to champion the more ecological vision set-out by the CCF. Lembke and Tattam (1983) also argue that the purging of Communists from the leadership of the IWA at the start of the 1940s altered the way in which the union related to forests:

Communists not only out-performed their opponents as organizers, but they offered a superior concept of what industrial unionism should be. For them, unions were not ends in themselves but rather organizing centers for the working class. One only has to review the newspapers published by the union under the two regimes to get a sense of the difference between them. Under Communist editorship, the IWA's paper, the Timberworker opposed clearcutting of forests and log exports and promoted reforestation and conservation (quoted in Simon, 2000: p. 204).
The sensitivity to ecology by the early IWA is articulated by Harold Pritchett—the union's first president, and a Communist—who declared at the 1939 convention:

> Nature has been exceedingly generous, but indications are that if cutting practices still generally followed are continued, old growth fir will be long gone before new growth is ready for manufacture. . . . Organized labour must arouse public opinion to a greater degree and weld it to political and community leadership through legislative action to obtain correlation and integration in the use of forest resources, wood products, pure water . . . wildlife, recreation. (quoted in Neufeld & Parnaby, 2000: p. 269)

These findings show that the anti-environmentalism associated with the IWA during the 'war in the woods' (discussed further below), should not be viewed \textit{a priori} as the inevitable 'class cultural' political manifestation of forestry workers; but rather, as an outgrowth of the particular politics surrounding the union's historical development through a period of anti-communism and Fordism. In fact, as discussed below, at least one other forestry sector union—the Pulp Paper and Woodworkers of Canada—has shared much more cooperative relations with environmental groups (Simon 2000; 2003).

In any case, the Fordist hegemonic historic bloc through which mid-century labour-environmental relations where heavily shaped came into crisis in the 1970. The 'neoliberal turn' of the 1970s gave birth to a new right-wing hegemonic project aimed at dismantling the Keynesian welfare state and Fordist compact through what Harvey calls 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2005b). Accumulation by dispossession refers to several policies: the privatization and commodification of public assets; the deregulation of speculative and volatile financial markets; the management and manipulation of financial crisis; and various forms of state redistribution such as tax cuts for the rich. To accomplish the neoliberal project, new hegemonic alliances have been forged with 'popular elements' who have consented to a new 'common sense' that melds together neoliberal values with national traditions and existing cultural values. This right-wing alliance has assumed different forms in different places, but has successfully worked everywhere to increase the power of multinational corporations, investment banks and the wealthiest percentile through an all-out assault on the working class who has, in turn, seen real wages and social safety nets eroded and their environment degraded. Any privileges that organized labour enjoyed within Fordism have been gradually stripped away.

In Canada, labour has been forced to face the familiar barrage of neoliberal attacks, including: free trade agreements; deregulated investment; the outsourcing of jobs; privatization; and the gutting of social programmes. Although the real goal of these neoliberal measures is to
restore profit rates that had declined under Fordist relations, neoliberalism has been justified through a discourse of increasing ‘national competitiveness' in order to retain or attract investment capital. But in the drive to increase competitiveness, these neoliberal policies have intensified and entrenched the commoditization of labour in which workers are not viewed as human beings with rights who have friends, family and community, and who depend on their jobs to meet socio-cultural and physical needs, but are rather seen simply as 'labour costs' subject to neoliberal 'restructuring.' Undermining the strength unions has been at the centre of many neoliberal attacks. Union density has fallen from its peak in the mid-1980s at 40 percent to 36 percent in the mid-1990s and now resting at 30.3 percent (and 27% in Ontario) (Jackson, 2004; Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2008). One consequence has been that despite strong economic growth and improved productivity during the past thirty years, average real wages have stagnated while real wages of the lowest paid workers have in fact decreased (Russell & Dufour, 2007).

The defensive (militant particularist) positioning by Canadian unions in the face of neoliberal policies has undermined attempts at building broad-level oppositional social movements (Warnock, 2006). Both Adkin (1998) and Obach (2004) suggest that many unions (even ones known for their 'social unionism') have found it difficult to devote time or resources to broader, 'longer-term' environmental issues (such as global climate change) when they must defend against attacks on what are considered 'core' concerns like wages, benefits and job security. The reluctance to address environmental issues may be especially true for unions who have responded to neoliberal attacks defensively through concession bargaining in an attempt to maintain traditional Fordist relations with capital and the state.

Both Turner (2006) and Adkin (1998) have tried to categorize the responses of unions to neoliberalism and Canadian environmental policies, respectively. Turner (2006) argues that neoliberalism has driven a 'logic of participation' both for corporations and labour. On the one hand, intensified competitive pressures under neoliberalism have led firms to outsource, union-bust, 'restructure', or renew labour-management partnerships (where corporations see unions as useful political allies or too firmly entrenched to dismantle). At the same time, Turner argues that unions also find themselves in a situation of having to innovate or face decline. Turner identifies four basic strategies employed by unions. Those unions who undertake defensive cooperation (concession bargaining and cooperation with employer demands) or defensive opposition (unions attempt to resist neoliberalism on their own using traditional or militant particularist strategies), will continue to face decline according to Turner. Meanwhile, unions
engaged in *activist integration* (internal democratic reform and grassroots rank-and-file mobilization) and *expansive integration* (coalition building with other unions and social actors, organizing the unorganized, international solidarity and possibly new labour-management partnerships) can succeed in spurring labour movement renewal (Figure 4.1). Union mergers both nationally and internationally is another form of expansive integration that have not only allowed large unions to compensate for dwindling memberships, but has also allowed smaller unions weakened by membership decline, to more readily confront increasingly powerful multi-national corporations.²⁴

![Figure 4.1 Strategic pathways of unions in the face of neoliberalism’s 'logic of participation'](#)

These strategies map closely onto the typology of union strategy develop by Laurie Adkin (1998) based on her survey of rank-and-file Canadian Auto Workers in the late 1980s. The Ontario automotive workers were asked by Adkin what they would do if faced with a conflict between short-term job security and eliminating a source of environmental pollution. Adkin identifies four basic categories of appropriate union strategy amongst their responses: *conservative-corporatist* (rejection of alliances with other social actors; accept trade-offs between jobs and the environment); *social-corporatist* (conflicts can be resolved through negotiations with employer making alliances not necessary; socially-conscious union can

²⁴ In April 2008, for example, the USW signed a formal accord with UNITE, an England-based union, to enter into negotiations that would see the formation of the first trans-Atlantic union representing 3.4 million workers.
develop alternatives to trade-offs); social democratic (range of attitudes towards alliances; State seen as responsible for resolving conflict; rejects necessity of a trade-off); and convergence (critique of the profit goal and its fundamental conflict with environmental goals; openness to alliances; workers identify broadly as part of community). Whereas a conservative corporatist strategy helps define business unionism, social unionism is characterized by a social-corporatist and social democratic strategy, and convergence is reflected in what Adkins calls movement unionism. These typologies of union strategies help organize the historiography of labour-environmental alliance-forming and serve to remind us that the 'labour movement' and 'unions' are anything but homogenous in terms of their economic and ecological politics.25 They remind us, for instance, that militant particularism—as a defensive or corporatist union strategy for responding to neoliberal pressures—can itself take on several variations.

The case of the forestry sector in British Columbia since the neoliberal turn provides strong support for Turner's thesis regarding the logic of participation under neoliberalism. Thousands of forestry workers across the Pacific Northwest lost their jobs during 1980s and 1990s as forestry capital tried to maintain rates of profit through increased mechanization, increased exports of unprocessed logs, and 'flexible management' (Barnes & Hayter, 1997; Hayter, 2003; Prudham & Reed, 2001).26 In brief, neoliberalism subjected both trees and humans to greater commodification and integration into global systems of capitalist exchange (Prudham, 2005). Rather than acknowledge and challenge the political-economic reality facing the forestry industry, the International Woodworkers of America (reconstituted as the Industrial Wood and Allied Workers of Canada in 1987), responded to neoliberal restructuring through defensive cooperation. The IWA partnered with timber companies and corporate front groups, such as the Forest Alliance and Share BC, in attacking environmental groups (derided as 'preservationists') for instigating environmental regulations and putting land out of production which was said to account for the job losses and threaten future job security (Simon, 2000). Meanwhile, the IWA denied any negative impact of new technologies on employment levels while unproblematically accepting the neoliberal logic of intensified international competition that has driven Canadian corporations to focus on the exporting of unprocessed logs. A IWA background paper published in 1996 argues that:

25 My generalized use of the terms 'labour movement', 'labour,' and 'unions' are therefore used for the sake of clarity when placing them in abstract juxtaposition with 'the state' and 'capital.'
26 According to Marchak et al. (1999), between 1980-1995 British Columbia saw a 23% decrease in jobs for loggers (5,600 lost from a workforce of 24,300). In the same period, saw mills shed 6,700 jobs (an 18.8% decrease) from a workforce of 35,800 in 1980. While pulp mills lost 3,600 jobs (18.8%) from a workforce of 19,000 between 1980-1994.
Fortunately, today’s advanced technology makes possible both high wages and decent working conditions in a fully competitive, highly efficient industry. Canadian sawmills, logging operations and other woodworking plants are among the most productive and competitive in the world; this allows Canadian workers to gain a steady and even growing share of wealth generated in the industry without undermining our ability to export our products into international markets. . . . Since the early eighties, technological change has been much less a factor in forest sector job loss than has regulatory change and removals of lands from production. Certainly that has been the case in the U.S. Pacific Northwest, where job loss due to injunctions in support of the northern spotted owl caused roughly 50% reductions in timber harvesting on federal lands between 1988 and 1992. This led to the loss of nearly 30,000 forest sector jobs (quoted in Simon, 2003: p.299). 27

The belief that jobs could be saved by intensifying forest exploitation through deregulation, increased capital investment (technology) and greater exports, was fundamentally flawed because the rate of forest harvest was well above what was considered sustainable and so offered no long-term job security (Marchak et al., 1999; Simon, 2000). Moreover, many areas converted to wilderness preservation would not have been economically viable for corporations to log anyways (Jones, 1983; M’Gonigle, 1997). Meanwhile, technological change had allowed levels of timber extraction in the 1980s and 1990s to remain constant or increase while jobs were eliminated (Marchak et al., 1999). The IWA’s position therefore shows the effectiveness of the timber corporations in propagating a ‘jobs versus environment’ dichotomy aimed at dividing unions and environmental organizations—even in the face of an NDP government throughout the 1990s that was at pains to appeal to the labour and environmental constituencies which made up its core political base (Bridge & McManus, 2000; McManus, 2002; Wilson, 1998; Salazar & Alper, 1996). While the IWA may be criticized for failing to find common ground with environmental groups, many BC environmental groups in the 1990s—e.g. the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Sierra Club, the Valhalla Wilderness Society—may have deserved criticism for their steadfast preservationism that often failed to show sensitivity to the impacts that neoliberal policies were having on workers.

The intense battles between the IWA and environmental groups during the ‘timber wars’—peaking with a series of naval blockades and counter-blockades exchanged with Greenpeace (Simon, 2000)—contrasts with the strategic approach of the Pulp Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC). The PPWC is a smaller forestry union in British Columbian which formed in 1963 when five BC locals broke away from the US-based International Brotherhood of Pulp,

Sulphite and Papermill Workers. Their purpose was to form an independent Canadian union that was much more democratically controlled by the rank-and-file (PPWC, n.d.). Thus, the PPWC has from its origins been more strategically committed to what Turner (2006) calls activist integration. This is reflected in the union's constitutional structure and the fact that communists and socialists were not purged from union leadership as they were in the IWA (Simon, 2000; 2003; PPWC, n.d.). At the same time, the PPWC has engaged in expansive integration, strategically partnering with environmental groups like Greenpeace. In contrast to the IWA who blamed environmentalists for job loss, the PPWC (and also the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union in BC) aimed its attacks at corporations. During the so-called 'timber wars' of the 1990s, the PPWC (unlike the IWA) actually acknowledged that current rates of timber extraction were not sustainable and advocated for a transition to a labour-intensive, value-added forestry industry. They also pushed for a reduction in work hours, thereby joining the traditional concerns of the labour movement around unemployment and quality of life, with new concerns over ecological and economic sustainability. In stark contrast to the IWA position quoted above, the PPWC flatly rejected the 'jobs versus environment' dichotomy while identifying problems with technological innovations characteristic of neoliberal forestry:

There is a crisis in our forests, and the forest companies want us to think we must choose either jobs or trees. The crisis is real enough: If we keep cutting trees at current rates, our forests will disappear forever. Forest company methods, like clearcut slashing and burning, are wiping out our forests. Replanting a single species of trees and tending them with herbicides is not the solution. Forest companies use technological change to make less people cut more trees faster. Production goes up, while jobs are disappearing throughout the pulp and wood industries. We need to create more jobs while cutting fewer trees. We are exporting jobs by exporting logs and chips. We could stop wasting our wood, and develop industries that create jobs here turning our trees into value-added products (quoted in Simon, 2003: p.299).28

It is important to note that this quote is taken from a PPWC policy document and may not necessarily reflect the opinion of the rank-and-file. But interviews conducted by Simon (2000) supports the notion that PPWC rank-and-file do not hold environmental groups responsible for job losses in the forestry sector. Simon argues that workers' day-to-day experience with job loss through technology, and their adversarial relationship with 'the boss' may make them suspicious of corporations' claims that job loss is simply due to 'preservationists.' Moreover, workers in the PPWC who are used to more democratic processes may be suspicious of top-down plans.

advocated by techno-managerial 'experts' working for the corporations (or government). Still, the convergence of PPWC policies with those of environmental groups has not always guaranteed smooth relations. For example, the PPWC was critical of Greenpeace's use of blockades to prevent loggers from doing their job (Simon, 2000). But overall the PPWC and Greenpeace have shared a concern for workers, and the PPWC has even supported wilderness protection in certain areas.

Turner's (2006) hypothesis that unions like the IWA that adopt a defensive cooperation strategy will decline, is supported by the fate of these two unions coming out of the 1990s. Whereas the PPWC has maintained its health as a union (despite membership declines), the IWA decided to merge with the United Steelworkers in 2004. While political-economic factors pressing on each of these unions may also help explain their organizational progression, it is likely not a coincidence that the more corporatist IWA found a winning mobilization strategy in the USW. After all, like the PPWC, the USW has ambitiously engaged in social unionism including strategic alliances with environmental groups. The significant political impact that mergers can have for unions was seen on 5 June 2008 when members from the USW and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee showed up together at the doorstep of the BC Forest Minister's office to demand the establishment of a Forest Land Reserve that would protect forests from urban sprawl, as well as to demand the development of secondary wood manufacturing facilities, the banning of raw log exports, and an end to the wasting of wood left behind in cutblocks. The WCWC, which had been vehemently opposed by IWA before the merger with the USW, is now seen as a strategic ally. This only goes to show how degrading economic and environmental conditions under neoliberalism can sometimes foster a counter-movement based on labour-environmental alliance-forming.

The strategic divergence of two other unions in response to neoliberalism and environmental conflicts is well-illustrated in Laurie Adkin's (1998) landmark study comparing the responses of the Energy and Chemical Workers Union (ECWU) and the Canadian

---


30 The IWA's antagonism toward environmental groups has oscillated much more than I am able to detail here. For a more nuanced discussion on labour-environmental relations in the West Coast forestry sector over the past century, see Moore (2002). For further discussion on the transformation of worker-environmentalist subjectivities, particularly in non-union organizations, see Prudham's (2008) study of sawmill workers in British Columbia who formed the Youbou Timberless Society after their sawmill was closed due to corporate consolidation.

31 In 1992, the ECWU merged with the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP).
Autoworkers (CAW) to a wave of public concern around air and water pollution in Ontario during the 1980s. Based in Ontario's 'Chemical Valley' (Sarnia), the ECWU responded defensively to environmentalists seeking to address environmental hazards in the community (and workplace) caused by the company's toxic chemical spills. The ECWU tried to safeguard the gains won during the Fordist era by siding with the company against the environmentalists—i.e. by adopting a conservative corporatist strategy of defensive cooperation (militant particularism). The company, forming a power bloc with the local media and politicians, won the consent of the workers and community by launching a discursive attack against the workers and community, threatening workers with the loss of jobs if environmental regulations were adopted. Through cultivating a 'crisis consciousness,' the neoliberal adage of 'there is no alternative' was internalized by Chemical Valley workers, and an inherent trade-off between jobs and environmental protection became naturalized as common sense.

This ability to divide the workers and community against the 'environmentalists' by naturalizing the 'forces of the market' and making anti-environmentalism seem like it was in the 'general interest' or the public good, is a good example of hegemony and what Bourdieu refers to as symbolic power. On the one hand, symbolic power is "the capacity that systems of meaning and signification have of shielding, and thereby strengthening, relations of oppression and exploitation by hiding them under the cloak of nature, benevolence, or meritocracy" (Wacquant, 2005: 134). While symbolic power can also become the power of constitution—"[t]he power to impose and inculcate a vision of divisions"(Bourdieu, 1990: 138)—through which 'workers' and 'community' are pitted against 'the environmentalists.'

In contrast, Adkin also explores the case of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) who in the 1980s and early 1990s managed to fight concessions during bargaining while actively forging counterhegemonic alliances around many social justice and environmental issues (i.e. by adopting a social democratic-convergence strategy of activist integration and expansive integration). The Green Work Alliance is a good example of how the CAW responded to neoliberal pressures on jobs by pushing for a counterhegemonic development strategy that would save jobs while fostering more democratic and ecological production (Keil, 1994). In 1991, a CAW-organized Caterpillar plant in Brampton was shut down as a result of a Canada-US free trade agreement signed in 1989. CAW and Greenpeace activists who were part of the Green Work Alliance organized a plant takeover—hoping to convert the factory into a democratic worker's cooperative that produced energy-efficient windows. Ultimately, the plan failed due to a lack of technical know-how and an inability of the group to secure capital financing (the NDP
government at the time provided no assistance). Nevertheless, the Green Work Alliance does present a concrete example of the potential—however constrained—for unions to challenge the hegemonic relations of production and help facilitate the shift towards more sustainable production by engaging in coalition-forming with environmental organizations.

Other important, albeit underreported, examples of labour-environmental alliance-forming in Canada have centred around 'environmental health.' Workers have long taken an interest in the environmental conditions of their workplaces and how pollution from the factories in which they work affects the places in which they live (Leopold, 2007). Reducing toxic chemicals hazards in the workplace is now viewed by unions as a central health and safety issue. Unions successfully demanded the mandatory labeling of toxic chemicals used in the workplace through the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System which was federally legislated into existence in 1988. At the same time, unions like the USW (2006) are proud of their history dating back to the 1960s in helping bring about legislation to reduce air pollution and acid rain in the communities where workers lived. Unfortunately, little has been written about the more recent role of unions in helping to build formal environmental health coalitions, namely the Labour Environmental Alliance Society (based in British Columbia) and the Community Right to Know Campaign (based in Ontario). Union activists have been instrumental in forming these two coalitions, which successfully built-up public support around 'community right to know' legislation that would make it mandatory for companies—including small enterprises—to publicly report what toxins they are using and releasing into the environment. Community right to know laws are now being passed through the Ontario legislature, and a campaign by LEAS is underway to push legislation at the federal level. Many successful environmental health campaigns that were later broadened to the national or provincial levels, initially began as place-bound struggles—e.g. individual union locals trying to stop the air pollution of particular companies, or community right to know campaigns in particular neighbourhoods or cities. How this 'scale jumping' occurred should be further investigated. One factor may have been the narrow focus of these struggles on creating or changing one particular law which did not pose a fundamental challenge to social-relations (i.e. specific laws were challenged rather than the flawed system of law-making itself under bourgeois democracy).

Another characteristic of these struggles around environmental health, quite relevant to my discussion around climate change policy, is that they were originally trying to address direct threats to the health of particular workers. Even the USW's support for legislation around acid rain stemmed out of earlier attempts by the union to reduce the health effects of air pollution
being released from smelters (where USW members worked) into the communities where USW members lived. This might help explain some of the difficulties faced by labour-environmental organic intellectuals who are trying to convince other workers in Canada to fight for reductions of greenhouse gas emissions since these emissions are not as easily portrayed as immediate health risks for workers. The fact that the effects of climate change will not be directly felt by many workers in Canada until the medium to long-term, and even then only in particular geographic regions, makes it harder for organic intellectuals to use well-worn health and safety arguments for building place-bound, grassroots campaigns to reduce emissions. Tellingly, labour-environmental alliance-forming around climate change policy in Canada has so far been seized with the immediate economic dimensions of climate change—such as the implication for jobs—rather than more abstract concerns like environmental justice (for spatially and temporally distant populations), future health risks and species extinction.

Still, the labour-environmental alliance-forming that has occurred around environmental health has helped build trust amongst the labour, environmental and social justice organizations involved. My interviews and participant observations revealed that the relationships developed through these earlier coalitions around environmental health have spilled over into alliance-forming now occurring around climate change. For example, some of the same activists representing union and environmental organizations that were involved in the community right to know campaign in Toronto, are now helping lead labour-environmental coalitions aimed at shaping climate change policy. Moreover, at union conferences and in policy documents, organic intellectuals sometimes refer to the prior work accomplished through environmental health coalitions as a way of establishing a sense of historical solidarity and trust between the union and those environmental organizations now working on climate change.

Although the historiography of labour-environmental relations in Canada is fragmented, we can still draw some conclusions that help to contextualize my discussion of alliance-forming around climate change in the neoliberal era. First, it is clear that the division between 'workers' and 'environmentalists' are overblown and should not be viewed a priori as inherently antagonistic subjectivities. The history of labour-environmental relations in the forestry sector shows just how varied union responses to socio-ecological crisis may be, even within the same sector or same union over a period of time. Unions' concern for ecology must therefore be situated within a much broader analysis of the political-economic conditions in which unions find themselves as well as the internal organizational politics that direct unions' strategic decisions for responding to these conditions. Turner and Adkin provide useful typologies for
understanding strategic responses of unions to neoliberalism and environmental policies, and help refine the notion of militant particularism to highlight any number of defensive or corporatist union strategies. Moreover, the history of union mergers provides some evidence to support Turner's theory that unions responding defensively to neoliberal pressures will not survive. Finally, my brief survey of labour-environmental coalitions around environmental health suggests an important area for further historical research, while suggesting that what has helped labour-environmental alliance-forming 'jump scale' in the past, may not apply to the politics of climate change. To contribute to a richer historiography of labour-environmental relations in Canada, the next two chapters investigate how hegemonic state-capital alliance-forming (chapter five) and labour-environmental alliance-forming (chapter six) have shaped climate change policy over the past two decades.
5. **Becoming an 'Environmental Superpower': Neoliberal Climate Change Policy and the Cloak of Ecological Modernization**

A voluntary [climate change] program would have considerable advantages over either regulations or new taxes. . . . A voluntary program would lead to the lowest cost solutions and allow industry the flexibility to adopt the most effective measure that also contribute to competitiveness. For governments, a voluntary program offers a more timely and lower cost response than complex regulations, greater likelihood of maintaining jobs and economic growth, and builds a more cooperative environment for addressing Canada's commitments.


Encouraging businesses and individuals to change behaviour requires appropriate price signals, and these signals can be strengthened through carefully designed market-based mechanisms such as emissions trading and environmental taxation. . . . Canada’s business leaders are committed to leadership in addressing the challenges of sustainable development and in particular of climate change. . . . The goal of Canada's business leaders is as ambitious as it is clear: to enable our nation to harness its plentiful energy resources and abundant human skills to become an energy and environmental superpower.


The past two to three years has seen an almost unprecedented concern across Canada over the environment and climate change in particular. An increasingly powerful group of politicians, policy-makers, mainstream environmental organizations and business CEOs have strategically allied with one another to shape and take advantage of this recent green wave in popular opinion.33 For almost two decades many of these same businesses and politicians, together with a complicit mainstream press, debated or ignored climate change science while raising the threat of massive job-losses should policies and international agreements aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions be adhered to. But now, this new ‘power bloc’ would increasingly like us to believe that we are all affected by climate change and therefore everyone shares a responsibility to work towards a solution. As the Premier of Ontario exclaimed: “Climate change is a crisis we caused together, and a responsibility we all share, together.”34 Of course, just *how much* of a responsibility for climate change everyone shares is often strategically avoided by bourgeois

---

32 The Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) were known until 2001 as the Business Council on National Issues. I use CCCE in referencing both these quotes to draw attention to the discursive shift within the same organization between 1994-2007.

33 For a discussion of opinion polls over the past few years, see footnote no.6.

politic... Moreover, climate change will not be a commonly shared experience. As hurric...Katrina so tragically demonstrated, the rich and powerful will escape the negative impacts of climate change the same way they have long-escaped the negative impacts of war, famine and disease. Nevertheless, reflective of the ecological modernization perspective, we are told that climate change presents an important (business) opportunity: everyone can come out a winner. As climate change policy guru Thomas Homer-Dixon ambitiously offered: “You have to create win-win-win opportunities: win for business, win for the environment, win for Canadian society” (quoted in Campbell, 2008, p. 42).35

But it is not only green entrepreneurs and career politicians that see climate change as an opportunity: activists engaged in counterhegemonic struggles also see climate change as a political opportunity to bring about a radical transformation towards a just and sustainable society. Eco-socialists such as Joel Kovel (2007), Ian Angus (2007), John Bellamy Foster (2008) and Patrick Bond (2008; Bond et al., 2007), have all advocated for a counterhegemonic social struggle that addresses the oppressive and disproportionate impacts associated with climate change and climate change mitigation policies. In contrast to the proponents of ecological modernization, eco-socialists argue that addressing climate change—and doing so equitably—necessitates a transformative social struggle that fundamentally challenges neoliberalism and capitalism more generally. Therefore, the increasingly pervasive presentation of climate change as a universal and positive-sum problématique conceals an intense ideological struggle—what Gramsci would call a ‘war of position’—over the terms of socio-ecological change. The following chapter will examine the role of labour-environmental alliance-forming in shaping this war of position. In this chapter, I follow the historical development of climate change politics in Canada over the past two decades, looking at how state-capital alliance-forming has actively framed climate change policy through an increasingly hegemonic discourse of ecological modernization. From 1992 until about 2002 a discourse of voluntary emission reductions prevailed, later giving way to a discourse that claimed to support limited government regulation of greenhouse gases. I argue that despite this rhetorical gesture towards emission regulation, the discourse of ecological modernization reflects an underlying and shared ideological commitment by capital and the state to neoliberalism.

35 It is important to note that the Maclean's issue in which this quote is found, elsewhere contains advertisements for Suncor—one of the biggest greenhouse gas emitters in Alberta's tar sands. It is no coincidence that a mainstream magazine like Maclean's is both funded by Suncor and quoting Dixon discussing the way that business can benefit through climate change policy.
5.1 RISING EMISSIONS: VOLUNTARIST CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY 1988-2002

In the late 1980s, governments heeded the warnings of climate change raised by scientists and environmental organizations who—feeding off their lobbying successes around acid rain and ozone depletion—were enjoying a period of political strength relative to subsequent decades. This posed a significant threat to corporations that had not yet coordinated their response to potential greenhouse gas regulation. But it did not take long for the state-capital alliance to negotiate a neoliberal response to global warming. The first strategy of business in avoiding regulations was to simply deny that climate change was a serious problem. The science of climate change was called into question thereby generating a 'debate' that helped paralyze any precautionary interventions by the state. Between 1992-2002, as the science became harder to question, business moved from denying that climate change was a serious problem, to simply downplaying our economic capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while arguing that regulations were an inefficient or ineffective policy instrument. A neoliberal regime of 'volunteer regulation' became dominant through a discernable state-capital alliance that circulated a series of story-lines, metaphors and myths alluding to 'national competitiveness', job-blackmail and the need for 'balance' between environmental and economic priorities (conceptualized as inherent trade-offs). The so-called 'free-market' was looked upon for policy 'solutions', but at this point no support was given to carbon pricing (either as part of a cap-and-trade or carbon tax program). Environmental organizations (even mainstream ones) were notably marginalized during this period in climate politics. This neoliberal discourse of climate change in many ways continued, if not deepened between 2002-2008. During this period the state increasingly tried to reconcile economic growth and climate change through a reformist discourse of ecological modernization—marked by the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. An ecological modernist discourse recasts environmental problems as a positive-sum problématique based on the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle, and the idea that 'pollution prevention pays' (Janicke, 1991; Mol, 1995; Hajer 1995; Mol et al., 2009). Government, business and environmental organizations are brought together as 'partners' or 'stakeholders,' while ecological elements (such as carbon) are assigned monetary units facilitating tradable pollution rights, cost-benefit analysis, and greater risk analysis. In other words, techno-managerial innovation is seen to spur a new wave of business opportunities in a so-called 'green economy' based on renewable energy, green chemistry, recycling and greater 'efficiency'. The success of ecological modernization in actually realizing social, economic and ecological goals, presupposes the establishment of some kind of regulatory framework to entice or enforce commitment amongst
all actors to the core principles of ecological modernization, and to set-up market-based institutions necessary for the exchange of commodified nature. In Canada, business initially tried to uphold a discourse of ‘self-regulation’ and coordinated a unified resistance against binding regulations that they saw as a threat to profit margins and capital accumulation. However, by 2005 most major corporations in Canada had rhetorically embraced limited regulation by the government, even if the failure of the government to actually impose any regulations at a federal level (and the presence of only weak regulations in some provinces) meant the *de facto* continuation of voluntarist climate change policy. Meanwhile, the framing of emission regulations as a means to increase international 'competitiveness' reflects the way in which ecological modernization serves to propagate climate change policy as a neoliberal project.

The ideological and practical commitment of the state and capital to neoliberalism during the 1980s and through the 1990s helps explain the success of corporations in weakening domestic and international emission reduction targets. The state-capital alliance first stalled the ratification of Kyoto by Canada and then effectively blocked its implementation. Moreover, ideological commitments to neoliberalism ensured that specific climate change policy instruments developed by the government would be contained within a neoliberal framework. As discussed earlier, neoliberalism is characterized by a set of policies, including: the liberalization of the market through international free-trade agreements and deregulation of finance capital; the integration of commodity circuits regionally and globally; the call for 'small government' which translates into fiscal and administrative budget cuts, the redistribution of wealth to the rich through tax cuts, the privatization and commodification of public assets, and the downloading of responsibilities to local levels of governments without a proportional transfer of resources. Driving this neoliberal project is a reverence amongst policy makers for what Polanyi (1944) called the 'self-regulating market' which tries to disembed the economy from socio-ecological relations. Neoliberalism becomes hegemonic across regional and international scales through an institutional network that disseminates a discourse of 'competitiveness'. In this way, public policy becomes ever-more beholden to the logic of the market and the purview of transnational capital. The creative and productive processes of society are increasingly oriented towards the market (exchange values) rather than towards meeting social needs (use-values).

At the federal level, neoliberalism was ushered in during the 1980s through Brian Mulroney's 'grand coalition,' and was just as enthusiastically pursued by the 'fiscally conservative' Liberals in the 1990s and early 2000s, and then in a much more socially
conservative form since the election of the minority Conservative government in 2006. Although I focus here with federal-level politics, neoliberal policies were also vigorously being implemented during the 1990s at the provincial level, most notoriously by the Progressive Conservative governments of Mike Harris in Ontario and Ralph Klein in Alberta. As Warnock (2006) points out, governing social democratic parties in Canada—the Michael Harcourt NDP government in British Columbia, Bob Rae's NDP government in Ontario, and the Parti Québécois in Québec—were also complicit in implementing neoliberalism, and may actually have been able to push through policies that would have otherwise been more militantly resisted by unions and other social justice organizations had they been enacted by Conservative or Liberal governments. 36

As McCarthy & Prudham (2004) argue, neoliberalism is necessarily an environmental project, even if it has not been widely studied as such. This is because neoliberalism, like classical liberalism, attempts to restructure societal relations to nature in an attempt to subordinate nature to what Polanyi (1944) called the self-regulating market. The enclosure of the commons in Europe during the 19th century was an attempt to restructure socio-ecological relations governing the commons in favour of capitalist, export-oriented agribusiness (Polanyi, 1944; Feeny et al., 1990; Cox, 1985). But the attempt of the enclosure movement to disembed the economy from socio-ecological relations worked to degrade society and ecosystems, giving rise to a popular counter-movement that was only subdued (in the West) through two world wars and the class compromise embodied by the Keynesian welfare state. In turn, Keynesianism laid an important foundation for environmentalism in the twentieth century that, unfortunately, would come under attack through neoliberal policies:

Increasing environmental protection was one of the major achievements of the Keynesian state arising in the wake of classical liberalism, and the proliferation of environmental laws, regulations, constituencies, and norms in advanced capitalist countries, particularly in the postwar period, came to represent a substantial and growing constraint on capitalist accumulation strategies—ripe for neoliberal attacks. In fact, we contend that assaults on Keynesian-era environmental regulation have been as central to neoliberalism as assaults on labor and social entitlement programs that have received far more critical attention (McCarthy and Prudham, 2004: p.278)

This neoliberal assault on Keynesian-era environmental regulation in Canada is clearly documented by Macdonald (2007), albeit not in these terms. Focusing on the way that business

has managed to influence environmental policy through participation in 'public consultations', back-door meetings, alliance-forming and the financing of media campaigns, Macdonald argues that Canada went through a period of increasing regulatory pressure through the 1980s—highlighted by issues of acid rain and ozone-depletion—before environmental regulations were relaxed by governments in the 1990s in favour of voluntary agreements with business. Below I hope to relate this period of neoliberal deregulation more specifically to climate change.

The prerogative of the state-capital alliance in Canada since the 1980s has not been to curb climate change, but rather to foster a neoliberal 'business climate.' Climate change was thrust onto the international political agenda in the late 1980s, shortly after neoliberal policies had taken hold in Canada under Brian Mulroney's Conservative government. While Mulroney may have presented himself as the poster boy for the environment, and is remembered as such today by the mainstream media, my discussion below linking Mulroney's North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to climate change, should call this into question. Nevertheless, it is ironic, given the current Conservative government's complete contempt towards domestic climate change policy and soiled reputation for hijacking international climate change talks, that the first international convention aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions was proposed in Toronto at the 1988 Conference on the Changing Atmosphere under the auspices of Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney and Gro Brundtland. The fact that a Conservative Canadian government hosted the first international climate change summit reflects the degree to which environmentalism had become an election liability through the 1980s (Macdonald, 2007), while also reflecting the failure of business to effectively coopt environmentalist discourse up to that point in time. The relative political strength of the environmental movement during the 1980s, is reflected in the 1988 Toronto Conference Statement which might even be considered radical in terms of today's climate change policy debates. The Statement opens by warning that: “Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war.” It goes on to call for deep cuts to greenhouse gas emissions and for industrialized countries to bear any economic fall-out:

21. In order to reduce the risks of future global warming, energy policies must be designed to reduce emissions of C02 and other trace gases. Stabilizing

Reducing carbon dioxide emissions by twenty percent from 1998 levels by the year 2005 (what became known as the “Toronto targets”) is more than ambitious compared with emission targets being bandied around by governments today—especially those by Harper’s Conservative government. But it should be remembered that these early targets were only ever considered “an initial global goal” with deeper cuts to greenhouse gas emissions needed after 2005. Without deeper cuts, in the order of 50-85% of 2000 levels by 2050, global average temperatures would increase 2.0-2.4°C causing a 0.4-1.4 metre rise in sea levels (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007a). The resulting impact would be devastating: flooding of low-lying coastal regions causing massive food shortages and displacements; increased drought in mid-latitudes and semi-arid low latitudes; increasing risk of species extinction, coral reef bleaching and wildfires; and numerous health complications associated with floods, heat waves and changing distribution of some disease vectors (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007b). Poor countries would especially be devastated, not only due to their geographic location but also because they have a much weaker capacity to adapt to climate change (Roberts & Parks, 2007).

But even if the Toronto targets of a 20% reduction of 1988 levels by 2005 was insufficient, in 1990 the Mulroney government already began to backtrack on these targets, announcing that Canada would only stabilize its greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by 2000 (Harrison, 2008). With this new goal in mind, the Mulroney government was one of the first countries to sign the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

---


40 These figures come from updated information published in 2007 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that would not have been unavailable to policy makers in the late 1980s. But as we see reflected in the 1988 Toronto Conference Statement, even policy makers in the 1980s were aware that much deeper cuts were needed to stabilize the climate. Even the First Assessment of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published in 1990, stated that no less than a 60% reduction of long-lived gases (including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) from 1990 levels was required to stabilize atmospheric concentrations (IPCC, 1990).
(UNFCCC) at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. However, the environment was again a central issue during the 1993 election and the Liberal Party under Jean Chrétien (who would go on to win) tried to outdo the Conservatives by proposing a 20% reduction in emissions below 1990 levels by 2005. This target was still nowhere near the 60% reduction from 1990 levels that the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated was necessary to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (IPCC, 1990).

In 1995, the Canadian government released the National Action Plan on Climate Change which was based on reaching emission targets through the funding of technological development and voluntary measures. The Voluntary Challenge and Registry and its Québec equivalent, ÉcoGESte, was established as a system for businesses to report emission reductions that were achieved voluntarily through energy efficiency. Meanwhile, during international climate change negotiations at the first Conference of the Parties (COP-1, under the UNFCCC), Canada joined with the U.S., Japan, Australia and New Zealand in successfully demanding the inclusion of more 'flexible mechanisms' such as international emissions trading and credits for existing carbon sinks (Macdonald, 2003). Essentially, this allowed Canada to more easily reach its stated emission targets without actually reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions. By the time that Canada (under Chrétien's Liberals) signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the new emission reduction target had shrunk to only six percent below 1990 levels by the year 2012, and further 'flexibility mechanisms', including clean development mechanisms (CDMs), were included in the Protocol to try to ensure buy-in from countries like Canada and the United States. Continually, the Canadian government seems to have spent more effort trying to weaken the international treaty on climate change rather than actually reducing emissions at home where voluntary measures were still favoured over strict regulations. During the 2000-2001 round of negotiations (COP-6), Canada again partnered with Japan and Australia (with the United States having since pulled out of Kyoto under George W. Bush) to win no limitations on their reliance of international 'flexibility mechanisms' to meet their reduction commitments. Canada was also given ‘carbon credits’ for its business-as usual forestry practices and forested land cover. Finally, on 10 December 2002, the House of Commons approved ratification of the Kyoto Agreement.
The ratification of Kyoto by the Liberal government is often characterized as a failure by business to successfully lobby and exert influence upon the government (e.g. see Macdonald, 2003; 2007; Harrison, 2008). Macdonald (2003; 2007), for example, focuses on the period between 2001-2002 in presenting what he sees as the failure of Canada's most powerful corporations to use public and closed-door lobbying to prevent Kyoto ratification. But my own reading of climate change policies in Canada both leading up to, and following, ratification suggests that the ratification of Kyoto was in fact only a partial loss for business—and even then only a temporary one. If we examine the business campaign through the 1990s to resist regulated emission reductions (rather than simply focusing on the intense lobbying efforts around the time of ratification), then we can see the amazing success of capital, and neoliberal ideology more broadly, in shaping climate change policy. After all, despite reoccurring announcements since 1988 by Canadian governments to reaffirm their commitment to reducing emissions, greenhouse gas emissions steadily rose through the 1990s, and were 21.1% higher than 1990 levels by the time Kyoto was ratified in 2002 (Figure 5.1). This is shocking since the Kyoto Protocol was only supposed to be an initial step towards much deeper targets by mid-century.
Moreover, a full fourteen and a half years passed from when Mulroney first committed to the 1988 Toronto targets to when Kyoto was ratified in 2002 (with the deadline for actual implementation not until 2012). During this period, both domestic and international greenhouse gas abatement targets were weakened by successive Canadian governments. Meanwhile, the 'voluntary mechanisms' announced in the 1995 and 2000 national plans, bear the hallmark of neoliberal policies designed to 'let the market work' through self-regulation. Voluntarism was the primary abatement strategy of the Canadian government right up until 2002 when the government signaled for the first time that it would require companies to sign 'covenants' and then buy permits for each tonne of greenhouse gases they emitted or else face sanctions. The push for the inclusion of 'flexibility mechanisms' as part of the Kyoto Protocol's emissions accounting further reflects the neoliberal ideological orientation of climate change policy. Most significant amongst these flexibility mechanisms may be the establishment of international trading in carbon credits—which essentially provides a way for corporations to buy their way out of making actual emission reductions. More fundamentally, the establishment of a 'carbon market' has led to the commodification of carbon whereby carbon is no longer produced for use but rather for exchange. This may not only discursively shift the focus away from the ultimate goal of reducing emissions towards a new focus on their exchange, but it could also lead to socially oppressive and ecologically damaging processes of enclosure, characteristic of (neo)liberalism (Prudham and Boykoff, forthcoming). For example, the rising market price of sequestered carbon could lead to the eviction of tenant farmers as landowners or governments seek to profit from the conversion of their land to forest plantations. Similar to the impact of biofuel production, Jindal et al. (2008) has documented how carbon sequestration projects in East Africa are disrupting local ecosystems while undermining local access to previously communal forests.

5.2 Climate Change as a Planned Neoliberal Project

How did neoliberal ideology come to so effectively shape Canada's climate change policy? How were emission targets so effectively delayed and weakened? How were greenhouse gases themselves brought into circuits of capital exchange? In examining the origins of liberalism in the 19th century, Polanyi (1944) seems to provide a useful answer: “The road to the free market was opened and kept open by an enormous increase in continuous, centrally organized and controlled interventionism [by the state]” (146). If neoliberalism is also
necessarily an environmental project as Prudham and McCarthy (2004) have argued, then we must also reveal how neoliberal climate change policy was planned.

To begin with, understanding neoliberalism as an environmental project must involve looking beyond specific climate change policies. Helping to facilitate the formation of voluntarist and market-based climate change policy 'solutions' were neoliberal budget cuts. The neoliberal structural adjustment in Canada during the 1990s, for example, brought drastic cuts to the budgets of environment departments under the guise of reducing the deficit and in favour of massive corporate tax breaks. The Environment Canada budget, for example, was reduced thirty percent from $800 million to $500 million, while cuts by provincial governments ran significantly deeper (Boyd, 2003). It is therefore no coincidence that during this period of restricted government funds policy makers turned to the 'free market' and voluntary measures by the private sector in an attempt to reach environmental policy objectives on the cheap. Moreover, even if regulations had been implemented, constrained budgets ensured that enforcement would be lax.41

In Canada, we can also look to the North American Free Trade Agreement to show how neoliberalism has been operationalized through legal structures and discourse that have accelerated greenhouse gas emissions while also aggravating attempts to implement climate change policy. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed into force by Brian Mulroney in 1992. Aimed at integrating trade and investment between Canada, the United States and Mexico, NAFTA is one of the farthest reaching free trade agreements in the world. A recent report by Environment Canada (2008) analyzing the trends of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions over the past two decades, clearly draws a link between NAFTA and increasing greenhouse gas emissions:

With decreased tariffs under the Free Trade Agreement and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) commencing in the mid-1990s, the intercontinental trade of manufactured goods began to accelerate, allowing Canada’s manufacturing base (primarily in Ontario) to expand.

While many developed economies have increased their exports of services and

41 The infiltration of neoliberal ideology into environmental policy was also facilitated by the strengthening of corporations relative to the environmental movement during the 1990s. Ironically, this was partly due to the fact that environmental concerns had become gradually mainstreamed and depoliticized through their formal (if only partial) incorporation into state structures during the 1970s and 1980s. For example, the formation of government environmental departments and state regulation of pollution worked to legitimize an 'acceptable' level pollution that became harder for environmentalists to challenge. Meanwhile, the granting of non-profit status to environmental groups helped grow their ranks but legally restricted their ability to engage in political advocacy and often shifted their agenda to fit more closely in-line with government funding priorities.
imports of goods (thereby experiencing a decrease in industry-based emissions), others such as Canada and Norway have also significantly increased their production and export of fossil fuels. Increases in Canadian trade have had another repercussion in terms of GHG emissions: there has been a corresponding rise in the movements of freight trucks, rail carriers, aircraft and marine vessels to help transport the goods we produce, consume and trade. These activities have contributed significantly to Canada’s increasing GHG emissions ... (p.5)

In other words, NAFTA has generated an explosion of transportation activity in North America with commodity supply chains becoming integrated across ever-increasing spatial scales. But this increase in emissions from transportation is not only due to an overall increase in trade since NAFTA was signed, but also stems from a shift in the mode of transportation being used to ship cargo:

A rise in domestic and international trade was the most important factor underlying the 17 Mt (43%) increase in emissions from freight transport. Alongside increases in the requirements for freight travel, another important factor influencing most of Canada’s commercial deliveries have been the types of modes used. Since 1990, due to processes such as the emergence of just-in-time delivery and the need for flexible freight transportation systems, most freight movement has been undertaken using heavy-duty trucks, the most energy- and emission-intensive mode of freight transport (p.16).

Therefore, we also see that NAFTA has accelerated the circulation of commodities across both spatial and temporal scales within the hyper-competitive neoliberal system of exchange.

Environmental and labour activists have roundly criticized free trade agreements for privileging the interests of corporations before people and their environment. While activists often articulate this criticism more abstractly as a 'race to the bottom' in which countries lower labour and environmental standards to compete for transnational capital investments, McCarthy (2004) takes a more specific look into legal proceedings under NAFTA to show how free trade agreements attempt to subordinate nature to the market. Investor protection clauses in NAFTA's Chapter Eleven have allowed corporations to by-pass sub-national environmental regulations and citizen concerns by appealing to secretive supra-national tribunals. The loss of control by sub-national governments over the regulation of land-use under NAFTA (e.g. when foreign investors are given rights to set-up a toxic dumpsite despite local opposition), and the broadening of intellectual property rights over life itself (e.g. through the patenting of genes or crops), reflect a new phase of enclosure (McCarthy, 2004). Nowhere is this enclosure more clear than in the Albertan tar sands, where land, water and air have been commodified in order to export bitumen and synthetic crude to the United States as part of the planned integration of US and Canada's
energy policies under NAFTA. Tar sand development has caused egregious social and ecological destruction, and is Canada's fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas emissions (Nikiforuk, 2008; Marsden, 2008). The extraction and refining process that turns bitumen into synthetic oil creates 3-5 times more emissions than with other conventional sources of oil, and consumes 349 million m$^3$ of water each year. All ruling political parties have fully supported tar sands development; however, even if future federal governments wanted to stop tar sands development—e.g. as part of a strategy to address climate change—such attempts could be challenged by corporations through NAFTA.

Article 1114 of NAFTA (Chapter Eleven) states that parties to the Agreement cannot be prevented from “adopting, maintaining or enforcing any measure otherwise consistent with this Chapter that it considers appropriate to ensure that investment activity in its territory is undertaken in a manner sensitive to environmental concerns.” But as straightforward as this environmental protection clause seems, it nevertheless stands in direct contradiction with other sections of NAFTA. Precedent-setting cases so far suggest that the economic prerogative of corporations will trump government environmental policy-making when the two come into conflict. Legal scholars have argued that if the Canadian government wanted to revoke water withdrawal licences of U.S.-owned oil companies as a strategy for trying to stop or slow down tar sands development, this could be interpreted as 'indirect expropriation' under NAFTA's Chapter Eleven leaving the government susceptible to being sued by the oil-companies (Cumming & Froehlich, 2007). Meanwhile, section 1106:1(f) of NAFTA states that the Canadian government cannot require corporations “to transfer technology, a production process or other proprietary knowledge to a person in its territory.”

---


43 An early test case for environmental protections under NAFTA involved the U.S.-based Ethyl Corporation which challenged the right of the Canadian Government to ban the import of a suspected neurotoxin called MMT, used as a gasoline additive (Soloway, 1999). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had banned MMT since 1970, so the U.S. government was not willing to take up the NAFTA challenge on behalf of Ethyl Corporation against the Canadian Government. Nevertheless, Ethyl Corporation was able to use the investor-state provisions under Chapter 11 to directly challenge the Canadian government's ban. Not only did the Canadian government pay a $19 million settlement to Ethyl Corporation, and rescind regulations banning MMT, but the case sent a chill over the government's enthusiasm to safeguard Canada's environmental health against foreign investors. Similarly, Canadian tar sands oil companies could use investor-state provisions of NAFTA to challenge legislation in states like California which penalizes oil that comes from more environmentally destructive sources such as the tar sands (Laxer & Dillon, 2008).

that oil corporations already using relatively cleaner but more expensive technologies or productions processes in the U.S. or Mexico could not be forced by the Canadian government to also use them in Canada, thereby blocking regulations requiring firms to use state-of-the-art pollution abatement technologies (Laxer & Dillion, 2008).  Perhaps most threatening is Article 605 of NAFTA, which prohibits Canada from reducing the proportion of “energy or basic petrochemical good” that it exports to the United States, relative to its total supply, to anything lower than the average of the most recent three-year period. This is particularly shocking since it prevents the Canadian government from shutting down the tar sands in favour of meeting domestic demand through less ecologically destructive energy production (or from diverting all of the tar sands oil produced toward developing renewable energy sources). If Canada could not produce enough of its cleaner energy (e.g. cleaner conventional oil) to both meet its own domestic demand in addition to the proportion that must be exported to the U.S. under article 605 based on the past three-year average, then the Canadian government would effectively be forced to keep the tar sands in production to comply with NAFTA energy supply obligations.

Besides the neoliberal planning that went into cutting environment department budgets and orchestrating NAFTA, business and the state were intentionally brought together in an even more direct manner so as to coordinate the neoliberalization of climate change policy. Although the bold targets announced at the 1988 Toronto Conference may have been a small victory for scientists, environmentalists and opportunist politicians appealing to a green electorate, it was also wake-up call for corporations. Seeing their profits—or in some cases their very existence—threatened by calls for emission reductions, corporations began to organize themselves through national and international trade and business associations. Coming out of the 1992 Rio Summit, corporations moved quickly to coopt the discourse of ‘sustainable development’ so as to effectively 'green' their image and gain legitimacy as environmental managers. The success of

---

45 The Parkland Institute study does not discuss section 1106:2 which appears to contradict their claim. Section 1106:2 states that: “A measure that requires an investment to use a technology to meet generally applicable health, safety or environmental requirements shall not be construed to be inconsistent with paragraph 1(f). For greater certainty, Articles 1102 and 1103 apply to the measure.” This seems to suggest that governments could require the transfer of a potentially cleaner technologies but still might not be able to require the transfer of a cleaner production process. Of course, even in the former case, corporations would be able to use 1106:2 to challenge whether the Canadian government's health, safety or environmental requirements were 'generally applicable.' Moreover, if domestic investors in Canada are already allowed to use dirtier technologies, then article 1102 would mean that the Canadian government could not force new U.S. investors from using cleaner, more expensive, technologies since Chapter 11 stipulates they need to be treated “no less favourable” than these domestic investors.

corporations in shaping environmental discourse is seen by the turn of environmental organizations toward 'market-based solutions' as a strategy for biological diversity conservation, and also through 'vote with your dollar' campaigns that frame environmental activism in terms of green consumerism. Corporations themselves were also becoming much more coordinated, forming national and international business organizations that operated as both ideological think tanks and political lobbyists on environmental issues. A key example is the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) that formed shortly after the 1992 Rio Summit as a merger of two other international business associations—the Business Council for Sustainable Development based in Geneva and the World Industry Council for the Environment that was an International Chamber of Commerce initiative based out of Paris. Comprised of over two hundred of the world's most powerful corporations, the WBCSD has been instrumental in developing and circulating an ecological modernist discourse through the United Nations and other international arenas. While primarily lobbying at the international level, the WBCSD has also served as a think tank for national-level business associations. In Canada, the WBCSD worked with the Alliance for Responsible Environmental Alternatives—one of the first national-level industry lobby groups that specifically formed to resist emission regulations.

The Alliance for Responsible Environmental Alternatives (AREA) was established in September 1994 under the directorship of Syncrude Canada (an oil company operating in the Athabasca tar sands). Masquerading under an environmental name, AREA self-identified as “a coalition of industry, labour and municipalities from across Canada, with forty-seven members representing many sectors of the Canadian economy.” Predominantly, however, AREA's membership comprised of nearly fifty oil and mining companies or associations and dependent industries such as transportation and cement companies. Until it disbanded sometime in 2003 (following the ratification of Kyoto), AREA was an official observer at international climate change negotiations and participated in national meetings organized by government. Besides directly lobbying the government on climate change policy, AREA was astutely conscious of its role in fighting a war of position in the public realm. AREA hired a public relations firm to try to

---

47 Not all corporations were quick to approach climate change policy through an ecological modernist discourse. In 1997, the largest international oil, gas and automobile corporations came together as the “Global Carbon Coalition” to launch a massive advertising campaign in the United States aimed at undermining public support for the Kyoto Protocol. However, the Coalition was short-lived and replaced by new corporate coalitions like the Business Environmental Leadership Council that professed an ecological modernist rhetoric. See Lester R. Brown, 25 July 2000, “The Rise and Fall of the Global Climate Coalition,” Earth Policy Institute, available on-line at: http://www.earth-policy.org/Alerts/Alert6.htm, accessed 4 March 2009.


49 Ibid.
shape the collective will, or what AREA explicitly recognized as the 'public interest':

While industry groups effectively articulate the concerns of their members, they do not have sufficient independence or credibility to be effective spokespersons for the public interest. On the other hand, environmental groups are seen to be independent and can therefore more effectively position themselves as the only groups with the public interest at heart. As a result, Canadian industry is less successful in influencing environmental policy development. Effective lobbies are cohesive, speak with one voice and position themselves to promote the public interest, as opposed to the self interest of their members.  

While being careful not to be seen outright as “anti-Kyoto,” one discursive strategy used by AREA for undermining the Kyoto protocol involved questioning climate change science, such as the anthropogenic causes of climate change. As late as 2000, AREA published in its newsletter that:

Despite the notion that science has been rendered a non-issue by the politics of the climate change debate, we must not lose sight of the fact that science, and only science, can be the final arbiter in understanding climate and climate change. Given the environmentalist's and media's continued perpetuation of the idea that anthropogenic "global warming" is "a done deal", it is important to keep an eye on evolving climate science, particularly when alternative theories to the enhanced greenhouse effect exist to explain climate variation. The "precautionary principle" may work to neutralize debate focused upon the uncertainty inherent in climate science, but it cannot so easily be used to dismiss alternative climate theories supported by sound science and growing evidence. This article discusses one area of scientific research that provides such an alternative, namely solar science.

Besides using scientific uncertainty to attack Kyoto, AREA also emphasized the negative economic impact that would result from the implementation of Kyoto, which it said would “only be achieved with adverse impact [to] our economy, jobs and standard of living.” Not surprisingly, AREA advocated for “such voluntary market mechanisms as international emissions trading, joint implementation between developed countries, carbon sinks and the clean development mechanism” —all measures which were eventually incorporated into Canada's climate change policy and approach to international negotiations. At the same time, AREA was quite candid in their preference for market-based policy making:

AREA believes market-based voluntary action plans should always be the first resource government looks to when seeking industry involvement in the climate change challenge. Voluntary programs can reduce costs, increase flexibility and innovation, speed implementation and avoid technology "lock-up".54

The same year that AREA was founded (1994), the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI)—an association of 150 Canadian corporations (which later changed its name to Canadian Council of Chief Executives)—formed a 'Task Force on the Environment.' With representation from fourteen of Canada's biggest oil, gas, forestry and steel corporations, the Task Force released a paper entitled *Climate Change: A Strategy for Voluntary Business Action*. As the name suggests, the paper tried to make the argument for the self-regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. While accepting the precautionary approach in the face of scientific uncertainty, the paper nevertheless argues that:

Governments recognize that the challenge of climate change is beyond the pale of a simple regulatory scheme, and will require high levels of cooperation and commitment from a vast array of players. A voluntary program would have considerable advantages over either regulations or new taxes. A voluntary program is a significant component of the climate change action plan adopted by our major trading partner, the United States. For Canada to choose a different course could have a negative impact upon our competitive position. A voluntary program would lead to the lowest cost solutions and allow industry the flexibility to adopt the most effective measure that also contribute to competitiveness. For governments, a voluntary program offers a more timely and lower cost response than complex regulations, greater likelihood of maintaining jobs and economic growth, and builds a more cooperative environment for addressing Canada's commitments (BCNI, 1994: p.2).

These neoliberal prescriptions based on 'voluntarism' successfully made their way into government climate change policy not only through reports and letter writing campaigns by organizations like AREA and the BCNI, but also through meetings and 'consultations' arranged by federal and provincial Ministers responsible for energy, natural resources and the environment. The government, in other words, played a crucial role in helping to bring 'business leaders' together with the specific aim of having them influence the development of climate change policy. In April 1998, for example, the Joint Ministers of Energy and Environment launched the National Climate Change Process (NCCP) to “establish a national process to examine the impact, costs and benefits of implementing the Kyoto Protocol and the various

---

implementation options open to Canada.”

Co-chaired by the Albertan and federal governments, the NCCP brought together 450 'experts' and 225 'stakeholders' into sixteen 'issue tables' that met many times over the following eighteen months. Recommendations from these issue tables were then incorporated into Canada's First National Business Plan and Canada's National Implementation Strategy on Climate Change, both released in October 2000. As Macdonald (2003) and Harrison (2008) have already noted, the NCCP essentially reinforced the status quo in terms of government climate change policy—which is to say a policy based on voluntarism and some government subsidies but devoid of any measures that would come close to actually reducing emissions (such as fossil-fuel taxation or mandatory energy efficiency standards). But what must also be pointed out is that the incorporation of neoliberal recommendations through the NCCP into the government's Business Plan of 2000 reflects the success of business in completely co-opting the entire 'consultation' process and agenda. This further demonstrates how climate change policy was a planned neoliberal project facilitated all along by a state-capital alliance (the hegemonic bloc).

To begin with, participation in the NCCP was by invitation only. So the fact that the overwhelming majority of 'experts' and 'stakeholders' were simply businessmen (and indeed most of them were men), reveals the ideological orientation of the Ministers who set the parameters for participation. Of the thirty-one members on the 'industry' issue table, twenty were corporations or business associations, six were representing government departments, two were from think tanks (including the notoriously neoliberal C.D. Howe Institute), and only one represented an environmental organization (Table 5.1). Participation in the other issues tables were similarly structured. Conspicuously missing from all the issue tables is any representation from organized labour and other civil society groups.

---

In looking over this list, it should not be surprising that the government's 2000 Business Plan, ended up being exactly that: business' plan, by business and for business. The token participation of environmental organizations in the NCCP reflects the more general marginalization of the environmental movement by the state during the formation of Canada's climate change policy, even as it demonstrates a certain degree of accommodation of environmental organizations by ecological modernist institutions. Meanwhile, the exclusion of unions from the NCCP reflects an underlying class-struggle over the state apparatus. More fundamentally, the constitution of the 'industry' issue table also reflects a 'symbolic struggle' over classifications, such as who is considered an 'expert', legitimate 'stakeholder' or even 'industry.' This shows how the state-capital power bloc worked to marginalize labour through what Bordieu would call the power of constitution.

---

5.3 The Kyoto Debates: Evoking the Job-Environment Trade-off

Between 2000-2002 as international pressure mounted to ratify Kyoto, business organized itself even more intensely to resist regulation. As Macdonald (2003) has documented with some detail, business was unified against Kyoto ratification, with some important exceptions found in the renewable energy, nuclear and insurance industries. The three most powerful broad-based business associations in Canada—the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Manufacturing and Exports Association, and the Council of Chief Executives—joined together with other business and trade associations to form the Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental Solutions (CCRES; Table 5.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and these provincial chambers:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Other Broad-Based Business Associations:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Alberta; Atlantic Provinces; BC; Ontario; Québec | Canadian Energy Pipeline Association  
Petroleum Services Association of  
Canada Propane Gas Association of  
Canada |
| **Other Broad-Based Business Associations:** | **Transportation** |
| Canadian Council of Chief Executives  
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters  
Canadian Council for International Business  
Alberta Chamber of Resources  
Centre patronal de l’environnement du Québec  
Business Council of British Columbia  
Vancouver Board of Trade | Automotive Parts Manufacturers  
Association Canadian Trucking Alliance  
Motor Coach Canada  
The Used Car Dealers Association of Ontario |
| **Sectoral Trade Associations:** | **Other sectors** |
| **Oil and Gas**  
Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors  
Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Landmen  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers | Building Construction Trades  
Department, AFL-CIO, Canadian Office  
Canadian Chemical Producers’ Association Canadian Electricity Association  
Canadian Fertilizer Institute  
Canadian Plastics Industry Association  
Canadian Steel Producers Association  
Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of BC  
The Cement Association of Canada |

Table 5.2: Composition of the Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental Solutions as of October 11, 2002 (adapted from Macdonald, 2003: p.20)

Essentially, this business alliance continued to make the same arguments that had prevailed during the 1990s:

1. Ratification must come only after agreement upon a detailed, national plan;
2. Canadian policy must not hurt competitiveness, and must be consistent with American policy;
3. The instrument of voluntarism must be given priority over law or tax; the 2010 time-frame must be extended; and,
4. Canadian money,
both public and private, should be spent on new technology development, rather than purchase of international credits (Macdonald, 2003: p.22)

While these points generally reflect a desire for a neoliberal climate change policy, it is rather ironic that business began arguing against international credits when they were originally the ones pushing the Canadian government in the 1990s to negotiate international credits as a means to avoid emission reductions.57 But this should more simply be read as a manoeuvre by business to get the government to subsidize the technology development costs for Canadian companies; appealing to a nationalist sentiment worked to delegitimize the government's plan for reaching Kyoto targets through buying international credits.

During the Kyoto ratification debates, the business alliance launched public media campaigns warning of the job losses and spikes in gasoline prices that ratification would bring. The business alliance also engaged in more direct government lobbying efforts such as letter-writing, briefs and high-level meetings where Kyoto was criticized for threatening 'future investment' especially since 'Canada's largest trading partner' had pulled out of the Protocol (Macdonald, 2003). The Canadian Council of Chief Executives claimed that 200,000 jobs would be lost if Kyoto was ratified.58 But the spectre of job loss was most ominously put forward by Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) (2002) who argued in their report, *Pain Without Gain: Canada and the Kyoto Protocol*, that:

Implementing the Kyoto Protocol would have a severely damaging effect on Canada's energy and manufacturing sectors. Production closures across Canadian industry could result in the permanent loss of 450,000 jobs in manufacturing alone by 2010. Net job losses across the Canadian economy as a whole would be even greater as a result of adjusting to a less carbon-intensive economic structure (p.1).

The calculation of these figures did not go unchallenged. The left-leaning Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, for example, dismissed the methodology used to arrive at such devastating job-loss calculations:

Half a glance at the CME's study, however, reveals the shoddiness of its research. The corporate lobbyist neglects to consider jobs created from 30%

---


growth in the economy and only considers job losses from an estimated 2% hit due to Kyoto policies (using the worst-case scenario, of course).

Almost every other study show that there will be both job gains and job losses-as you would expect from a shift in the economy-with job gains outnumbering job losses. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, using the same federal data as the CME, found that there would be 13,000 job losses in the Canadian energy sector over ten years, but 16,000 new jobs created.59

Therefore, the assumptions and methodologies used by the business alliance to generate job-loss fears deserve intense scrutiny—a task that I will later argue was taken up by the labour movement. But regardless of their accuracy, such job-loss 'studies' conducted by business groups were extremely successful in being circulated uncritically throughout the mainstream media and amongst policy-makers. One reason for this success is that the threats of job-losses from Kyoto ratification played into prevailing assumptions in Canadian political culture regarding the inherent trade-offs between jobs and environmental regulation that had been well-cultivated over the previous decade (e.g. through the sensationalized reporting of the West Coast 'war of the woods'). The corporate media was only too happy to cite unsubstantiated job-loss numbers in order to stir controversy around Kyoto.

The business alliance and an uncritical mainstream media were joined in their anti-Kyoto rhetoric by the neoconservative governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario (MacDonald, 2003; Harrison, 2008). For their part, Quebec, Manitoba, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories openly supported ratification, and Kyoto was also given support at the national level by the Bloc Québécois and New Democratic Party. The Government of Alberta was the most vocal opponent of Kyoto amongst the provinces, spending $1.5 million in an anti-Kyoto media campaign and often uncritically referencing the CME's 450,000 job-loss figure.60

In May 2002 the Albertan Government reported that Alberta's economy would lose between $2.5 billion to $5.5 billion by 2010 if Kyoto was ratified (Government of Alberta, 2002). In the Alberta Legislature, this figure jumped to $8 billion (without reference to any studies) as governing Progressive Conservative MLAs warned that Canada would lose 450,000 jobs with between 40,000 to 70,000 of these jobs being lost in Alberta.61 Only one year earlier, the

Albertan Premier told reporters that “I've heard figures in the billions of dollars. I've heard figures in the trillions of dollars ... if we were forced to achieve those standards.” Meanwhile, Ontario Premier Ernie Eves had stated that Ontario would not support Kyoto if it killed “even one job.”

Besides citing job losses as a reason to not ratify Kyoto, a more creative version of the “economy versus the environment” discourse argued that ratification would undermine the current economy, in turn, forestalling the development of technologies that could better position us to address climate change in the future. For instance, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (2002) *Pain Without Gain* report concludes:

> Sustainability means that our approach to that challenge must allow Canadian industry to continuously enhance its competitiveness with respect to attracting investment, upgrading technologies, strengthening productivity performance, and developing new markets for its products and services — in other words, to grow. At the end of the day, *investment and innovation are the only guarantees that Canadians will be able to find the technological solutions that will enable us to sustain real reductions in greenhouse gases and real jobs and income growth beyond 2010* (emphasis mine, p.19).

Not surprisingly, the federal Liberal government tried to play down the impact that Kyoto ratification would have on the economy. The Government's 2002 *Climate Change Plan for Canada* projected only a 0.4% sacrifice in the *growth* of the gross domestic product between 2002 and 2010. The *Climate Change Plan* emphasized that employment would increase by 1.26 million jobs rather than 1.32 million jobs without implementation, stating: “this means forgone employment growth (not job losses) of about 60,000” (p.62).

Underpinning the gloomy economic forecasts that the business alliance attributed to ratification, was a neoliberal discourse of 'international competitiveness'. This discourse assumes that countries are set in zero-sum economic (and political) competition with one another. In other words, if countries do not act in concert on issues like environmental policy *and do not act on an equal basis* then businesses in some countries will have an unfair economic comparative advantage. During the Kyoto debates, the business alliance and their provincial government allies, consistently pointed to the withdrawal of the United States from Kyoto under President George W. Bush, as a major reason why Canada should not ratify Kyoto. Ratifying, so the

---

argument went, would make Canadian businesses less competitive than their American counterparts. In 2002, for example, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives Council argued that:

The third thrust of our national policy work in the months ahead will be driven less by perceived opportunities to increase Canadian growth than by the need to address potential threats to the country's competitiveness. Here, I am referring in particular to Canada's upcoming decision on whether to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change. The Council has been active on this front for many years, engaged both in international negotiations and in the domestic consultation process. While Canadian companies have been among the world leaders in achieving energy efficiencies, we in the Council always have had strong reservations about the feasibility of the target Canada accepted during the Kyoto negotiations. These concerns were compounded by the decision by the United States last year not to ratify the Protocol.

I have been encouraged by recent remarks from several Cabinet ministers . . . all of whom have acknowledged concerns about the potential competitive impact of ratification in the absence of United States participation.64

Statements like these used a neoliberal discourse of 'competitiveness' to attack Kyoto and tried to make ideological the notion that Canada could not develop its own national climate change policy independent of the United States. Ironically, the neoliberal business alliance in chorus with neoconservative provincial governments and even the Liberal Federal Industry Minister Allan Rock,65 all called for Kyoto to be replaced with a 'made-in-Canada' solution—a phrase that would reappear four years later as federal policy under Stephen Harper. This appeal to 'Canadian competitiveness' as a way to resist Kyoto ratification reveals how neoliberal climate change policy was propagated through a nationalist discourse. Business’ call to 'save the national economy' was of course void of any critical reflection about what type of nation—what social and socio-ecological relations—were actually being 'saved'. Needless to say, the national vision of business and neoconservative politicians was not grounded in the same set of values as the labour and environmental justice activists I later discuss.

In the end, Kyoto was ratified by the Liberal government on 10 December, 2002. But if the business alliance lost the immediate battle over the ratification of Kyoto, they had won, and would continue to win, the war against emission regulations. Throughout the 1990s, emissions

---


had been allowed to steadily increase thanks to the effective organization of business and the state around a neoliberal approach to climate change policy that successfully resisted regulations from being implemented. Moreover, we must remember that the Kyoto Protocol was in the first place a compromised version of the 1988 Toronto targets. By conjuring up myths of potential job-losses and the need to stay competitive with the United States, business successfully worked to block a more radical public discussion about when and how to make the much deeper emission cuts needed beyond Kyoto in order to stabilize the global climate.

5.4 TOWARDS REGULATION? RHETORIC AND RISING EMISSIONS IN THE POST-RATIFICATION PERIOD 2003-2009

The planned neoliberal resistance to emission reductions was therefore crucial for creating the material and discursive conditions that allowed for weak implementation of the Kyoto protocol during the post-ratification period of 2003-2005, and ultimately the abandonment of Kyoto by the Harper government in 2006. The Kyoto debates had allowed business to refine and disseminate important story-lines ('national competitiveness'), metaphors ('made-in-Canada solution') and myths ('jobs versus the economy') that paralyzed the Liberal government from instituting regulations following ratification and which would later be unabashedly tapped by the Harper Conservative government to justify its total abandonment of the Kyoto Protocol. Consequently, the post-ratification period in many ways saw the deepening of neoliberal climate change policy. Nevertheless, ratification also led some governing parties and corporations to allude to an ecological modernist regulatory framework as a means to reframe climate change as an opportunity for capital accumulation.

To begin with, the post-ratification period of 2003-2005 saw many continuities with the previous voluntarist neoliberal climate change policy. Only eight days after Kyoto was ratified, the Minister of Natural Resources quietly reassured the oil and gas industry that abatement costs above $15 per tonne would be subsidized by the government and that required emission reductions for the sector would not exceed 15% of the business as usual projection for 2010 (Macdonald, 2003; Harrison, 2008). This agreement, negotiated with the oil industry by none other than the Prime Minister himself, had been critical to resolving divisions within cabinet prior to ratification; however, the $15 per tonne figure was more than thirteen times less than the price needed to achieve the Kyoto targets according to the analysis conducted in March 2002 for the National Climate Change Process (Harrison, 2008). This 'compromise' all but guaranteed
that Canada's efforts to meet Kyoto targets would be paid for by tax payers rather than
corporations, either in the form of the government's purchase of international credits or through
massive domestic subsidies to corporations—a transfer of wealth characteristic of neoliberal
policies since the 1970s. The further weakening of emission regulations can be further seen by
comparing Chrétien's 2002 Climate Change Plan for Canada with Paul Martin's 2005 Project
Green - Moving Forward on Climate Change: A Plan for Honouring Our Kyoto Commitment.
During Paul Martin's term as Prime Minister (December 2003 to February 2006), the reduction
target of 15% for large final emitters was further lowered to 10% while the auto industry was
only forced to accept a voluntary agreement that would deliver little more than business-as-usual
reductions (Harrison, 2008). Overall, the “Kyoto gap”—i.e. the difference between the
baseline Kyoto target of 560 Mt (carbon dioxide equivalents) and the business-as-usual
projections for the end of the Kyoto implementation period in 2012—had risen from 240 Mt to
270 Mt between 2002-2005, respectively (Macdonald & VanNijnatten, 2004). Yet, the burden of
emission reductions to be assumed by heavy industrial polluters—oil and gas and electricity
generation and manufacturing—actually decreased from 55 Mt under the 2002 plan to 39 Mt in
2005, with no less than 185 Mt of the 270 Mt in emission reductions (68.5%) to be met through
the purchase of international credits (Macdonald & VanNijnatten, 2004). All told, Martin's
'Project Green' set out to spend $12 billion by 2012 with the aim of putting Canada in
compliance with Kyoto (Harrison, 2008).

But if there was any hope at all that the Liberal government's newest plan would reach
the Kyoto targets, these hopes were killed with the election of the Conservatives led by Stephen
Harper in 2006. Climate change did not feature prominently in the 2006 election even though
Harper clearly signaled his intention not to meet the Kyoto targets.66 Back in 2002, Harper had
written a fundraising letter to his party's supporters referring to “the job-killing, economy-
destroying Kyoto Accord” as a “socialist scheme to suck money out of wealth-producing
nations” based on “tentative and contradictory scientific evidence.”67 Not surprisingly then,
the Conservative Party (2006) platform did not even mention the word 'climate change' or
'Kyoto' once, although it did revive the call for a “made-in-Canada plan” to “address the issue of

66 Campaigning in Halifax, Harper announced that: “The Kyoto accord will not succeed at achieving its objectives
and this government, the Canadian government, cannot achieve its objectives.” CBC, “Tories would turn back
17, 2009.
67 Toronto Star, “Harper Letter called Kyoto 'socialist scheme',” available on-line at:
greenhouse gas emissions” (p.37). As soon as he was elected, Harper shelved the Liberals' climate change programmes, shut down government websites focused on climate change, and refused to buy international credits—effectively abandoning Kyoto. In lieu of the Kyoto target to reduce emissions 6% under 1990 levels by 2012, Harper only promised to end the growth of emission by 2025. Regulations were only talked about in terms of reducing conventional air pollution. While the Liberals were quick to condemn Harper for neglecting Canada's international commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, the belligerence of the Conservative government would not have been possible without the steady growth of emissions through the 1990s and early 2000s under the Liberal watch. Thus it was easy for Harper to condemn the previous Liberal government's inaction as a way of legitimizing his own (much weaker) emission targets.

Climate change policy in Canada over the past two decades could be read as an intensifying neoliberal project that has only deepened the socio-ecological crisis. But even if this is true, we can also identify an important discursive shift that has gradually moved hegemonic climate change policy from voluntarism towards policies framed by an ecological modernist discourse that at least makes gestures to the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. In many ways, the speeches and well-publicized climate change plans of government and business have long-carried the hallmarks of ecological modernization. To begin with, the 1990s witnessed what Hajer (1995) would characterize as a shift in debate from whether a climate crisis existed to its interpretation. The hegemonic discourse of 'sustainable development' since the late 1980s has meant that:

> Environmental politics is only partially a matter of whether or not to act, it has increasingly become a conflict of interpretation in which a complex set of actors can be seen to participate in a debate in which the terms of environmental discourse are set (Hajer, 1995; p.15).

After Kyoto was ratified, any lingering debate around the scientific existence and anthropogenic causes of climate change was generally replaced by agreement that a problem existed—even if opinion diverged as to its scope and remedy. Even throughout the ratification debates of 2002, the business-alliance was careful not to oppose Kyoto in principle but rather to argue for 'more realistic' targets and timelines while proposing alternative 'solutions' such as voluntary and flexible mechanisms. When speaking directly against Kyoto, business did not deny there was a climate change problem but simply argued that competing economic priorities 'unfortunately'
prevented stronger action.

For its part, the government increasingly used the language of ecological modernization to make its climate change policy more palatable to business. The government consistently claimed to be 'working with all stakeholders,' and engaged in extensive 'consultation' exercises with business and (to a much more limited degree) environmental organizations, as we saw with the National Climate Change Process. Technological innovation was considered the critical means for reducing emissions and increasing efficiency while staying internationally competitive. This positive-sum vision of climate change policy is clearly articulated in the concluding paragraph to the introduction of the government's 2002 Climate Plan:

Meeting Canada’s climate change goals calls for new directions to be set and new strengths to be developed. It requires the best of our citizens and scientists, our innovators and entrepreneurs. It is an opportunity to enhance both the competitiveness of our economy and the quality of our lives: a national project worthy of a great country (p.4).

But what was blatantly avoided through this early ecological modernist discourse was reference to any kind of regulatory framework to actually enforce emission reductions. Without such a regulatory framework (indeed, without a strong regulatory framework), ecological modernization simply becomes a rhetorical fig leaf to cover neoliberal environmental policies that facilitate increasing emissions. In the absence of regulation, pollution prevention did not pay, and corporations saw no advantage in seriously committing to the precautionary principle. Even the government's attempt to lower targets to more 'reasonable' levels, failed to curb growth in emissions. Still, if successive Liberal governments failed to institute any regulations, the 'covenant' permit system announced in the 2002 Climate Plan did manage to shift the discourse towards regulation for first time. But after three years of consultations and no 'covenants' actually signed, the system was eventually shelved in 2005 by Prime Minister Paul Martin in favour of a cap-and-trade program that would regulate greenhouse gases under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. This cap-and-trade system of regulation proposed by Paul Martin in 2005, while arguably a stronger form of regulation than had theretofore been proposed, was not successfully implemented before the Liberal minority was brought down in 2006 and replaced by the Conservatives. In the meantime, corporations were given still more time to emit as they pleased and so emissions continued to rise.

Even if the Martin government never got a chance to implement a cap-and-trade system, by 2005, businesses were slowly beginning to accept the idea of a certain degree of regulation—
so long as it was minimal and market-based. The Minister of Environment at the time, Stéphane Dion (2006), explains how corporations began to accept the reality of a regulatory framework only after they were convinced that the Liberal government was finally serious about regulating:

In the summer of 2004, I was appointed minister of the environment by Prime Minister Paul Martin. By the spring of 2005, I became convinced of two things: first, that we could reduce our greenhouse gas emissions while increasing our competitive advantage; and second, that we needed a system of enhanced regulations to do it. In response, companies from a variety of industries sent their lawyers to change my mind.

By the end of the summer, as it became increasingly clear that we were serious, those same companies changed their tactics. Rather than send us their lawyers, they began sending us their engineers. Their message was one of support and excitement. They thanked me for telling their executives what they themselves had been saying for some time. I knew that it was possible to have emissions down and profits up, but it was good to hear it from those on the forefront of our quest for a sustainable future (p.25). 68

This narrative makes clear Dion's belief that greenhouse gas emissions could be curbed within a capitalist paradigm of maintaining profit rates and securing one's comparative advantage within a hyper-competitive global marketplace. Incidentally, this passage also shows the close relationship that the Minister of the Environment has with corporate representatives—whom Dion refers to as “those on the forefront of our quest for a sustainable future.” Dion is not alone in his faith that ‘business leaders’ will solve the climate crisis: this well-scripted language was also propagated by international institutions like the WBCSD.

Similarly, in October 2005, eighteen of Canada's largest corporations, including Alcan, Bombardier, DuPont, Shell, Home Depot, Tembec, amongst others including forestry and insurance companies, were brought together by Prime Minister Paul Martin to form the Executive Forum on Climate Change (EFCC). As had been the case for the World Economic Forum's G8 Climate Change Roundtable in January 2005, the EFCC's objective was to directly advise the Prime Minister in advance of the COP-11 being hosted in Montreal at the end of the same year. 69

---

68 In 2005, Stéphane Dion clearly pitched his vision of ecological modernization to the Vancouver Board of Trade: “I would argue that in this new industrial revolution in which we find ourselves, it is imperative that we improve our performance regarding environmental pressures, in order to enhance our quality of life and our economic competitiveness. We need to become a more efficient economy, a greener society.” Environment Canada, 19 September 2005, “Canada's Project Green Speaking notes for the Honourable Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P. Minister of the Environment Vancouver Board of Trade, Vancouver, BC,” available on-line from the Internet Archive: [http://www.ec.gc.ca/media_archive/minister/speeches/2005/050919_s_e.htm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/media_archive/minister/speeches/2005/050919_s_e.htm), accessed 30 May 2009.

69 Executive Forum on Climate Change, “Background,” available on-line from the Internet Archive at:
the previous business strategy of undermining Kyoto in favour of a strategy focused on trying to ensure that Kyoto would generate new business opportunities:

As corporate leaders representing a broad cross-section of the Canadian economy, we believe that all governments, corporations, consumers and citizens have responsibilities under the Kyoto Protocol and that the world must act urgently to stabilize the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and minimize the global impacts of climate change.

... To help us do more, we need policy certainty for post-2012. We need a strategy now for the next 50 years, with short and medium-term targets to guide us. Governments must set clear markers along the way to unleash competitive market forces and allow the discovery of a long-term value for carbon emission reductions. Only then will we secure the deep reductions needed to prevent human interference with the climate system.

... We encourage governments to:

• Build on the foundation provided by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol to launch a process and work plan that would support development by 2008–2009 of an inclusive and climate-friendly post-2012 regime.
• Send a clear political signal that the Kyoto Protocol’s mechanisms (Emissions Trading, Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism) will be made to function effectively in the near term and will continue to operate after 2012.

... We recommend that Canada, respecting federal and provincial authority:

• Develop a long-term energy strategy that positions Canada at the vanguard of new transformative energy technology, particularly where we have a comparative advantage.

... • Set objectives to meet global best practice for energy production and consumption through regulated standards, procurement, financial and tax incentives and market-based approaches like emissions trading and trading of energy efficiency credits (emphasis mine).70

In calling for a 'long-term strategy', these corporations were seeking to reduce the uncertainty (i.e. investment risk) caused by frequent changes in the federal government's climate change policy. At the same time, the EFCC statement makes it clear that these businesses were ready to accept implementation of the Kyoto Protocol's regulatory mechanisms, including: emissions trading, 'regulated standards' and tax incentives. Regulations were no longer viewed as


interfering with the free market, but rather as a necessity in order to “unleash competitive market forces” and maintain comparative advantage in an increasingly eco-techno-efficient global economy. This discourse is a far cry from the anti-Kyoto rhetoric and voluntarism pushed by the business alliance leading up to Kyoto ratification. Rather, the ecological modernist discourse of business shifted—with an important coordinating role played by the highest levels of government—toward embracing a limited form of regulation.

This shift towards a language of regulation should be viewed as a strategic response by the state-capital alliance aimed at placating mounting political pressure in favour of curbing greenhouse gases while still ensuring that these regulations would be either weak or completely ineffective. On the other hand, certain businesses also hoped to profit from new regulations in cases where they offered a competitive advantage. Even Harper's neo-conservative government was susceptible to the growing public concern over climate change. Between 2006 and 2007, public opinion surged in favour of climate change action with increasing demands for stronger regulation of greenhouse gases. 71 The popularity of global warming eco-apocalyptic blockbusters like The Day After Tomorrow (2004), in addition to documentaries like Al Gore's (2006) An Inconvenient Truth, suggest the extent to which climate change politics infiltrated mass popular culture. Therefore, Harper's apparent inaction around climate change policy during his first term, and his blatant disregard for greenhouse gas regulation in particular, became an election liability that all the other opposition parties were eager to exploit. The opposition parties were able to take advantage of the Conservatives' minority status in parliament to successfully bring before the House of Commons two private members' bills on climate change, one of which—Bill C-288, the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act—would even receive royal assent. 72 In response, Harper was eventually forced to develop at least some kind of regulatory framework and to restore $5 billion into many of the previous Liberal government programs (Harrison, 2008). In January 2007, the Conservative government released its Turning the Corner plan which pushed up the date when it aims to stop growth in emissions from 2025 to 2012. The


72 See footnote no. 125 & 126, p.160-161.
plan also announced an absolute emission reduction target of 20% from 2006 levels by the year 2020, but it was assumed that this target could be reached only through the regulation of emission intensity, rather than any absolute reductions through cap-and-trade.

The haphazard response of Harper to intensifying climate change politics follows a similar pattern that Polanyi observed in the counter-movement observed during the 19th century. As Polanyi (1944) noted: “Laissez-faire was planned, planning was not” (p.147). Likewise, although Harper's government was ideologically opposed to developing climate change policy let alone regulation, they were forced to start planning emission reductions in response to growing concerns around the climate crisis. Still, the degree to which the Harper’s government was forced away from the earlier type of voluntarist climate change policy towards a discourse of ecological modernist regulation should not be exaggerated. Environmentalists and opposition parties roundly criticized the government for changing the baseline for measuring emission reductions from 1990 to 2006 and relying on emission intensity targets rather than implementing cap-and-trade or a carbon tax. Far from arguing that reaching Kyoto could generate new business opportunities, the Harper Government released a study called The Cost of Bill C-288 to Canadian Families and Business that warned of “275,000 Canadians losing their jobs by 2009” should Canada try to meet its Kyoto obligations (Environment Canada, 2007: p.2). Meanwhile, in his 2008 federal election campaign, Harper clearly distanced himself from the ecological modernist discourse of his main opponent, Stéphane Dion—who had by then become the leader of the Liberal Party. Harper fiercely (and successfully) attacked the Liberal's “Green Shift” platform championed from its inception by Stéphane Dion. The Green Shift fully incorporated an ecological modernist discourse, arguing that a carbon tax could be used to boost efficiency and spur “a new generation of green-collar jobs in energy, construction, design, and consumer products” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2008: p.11) For their part, both the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois argued strongly during the 2008 election campaign for upholding Canada's Kyoto commitments through a cap-and-trade system, also highlighting its potential for green job creation. The support for carbon pricing by all the other political parties during the 2008 election, makes the Conservative win all the more significant. At the same time, the election revealed a fissure in the hegemonic bloc around the issue of climate change regulation, with some large final emitters—notably oil and gas corporations operating in the tar sands— siding with Harper against instituting any further regulatory framework.

The Conservative's campaign strategy effectively worked to portray Dion's Green Shift
plan as 'unrealistic' and 'too expensive,' by drawing on long-standing 'economy versus the environment' mythology. At one point in the election campaign, Harper went so far as to say that the Liberal carbon tax would be “economically a catastrophe” that would “plunge Canada into recession.”73 But underlying Harper's discursive strategy was a very real material increase in emissions that had accumulated over the previous eighteen years under the Liberals' watch. The size of this 'Kyoto gap' made it all the easier for Harper to convince voters that it was impossible or untenable to still comply with the Kyoto Protocol and that we should instead focus on developing a much weaker 'made-in-Canada' replacement—a phrase he deployed repeatedly during the election campaign. The Conservatives were therefore able to exploit the discursive and material conditions advanced throughout the 1990s and early 2000s in order to continue uphold a neoliberal climate change policy that gave-up only minor concessions to actual emission regulation.

Despite the political deadlock at the federal level, several provincial governments have taken up an ecological modernist framework and actually imposed regulatory frameworks for emission reductions. Some highlights of provincial climate change policy are worth noting even if a more detailed analysis is outside the scope of this study. Alberta, ironically, became the first government in Canada to actually impose greenhouse gas regulations when it's provincial 'cap-and-trade' system became effective July 1st, 2007. Quebec instituted a small carbon tax on fossil fuels in October 2007. British Columbia has gone the farthest so far by way of regulation, instituted North America's first 'revenue-neutral' carbon tax in 2008 as part of the province's goal to reduce its emissions 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 (Harrison, 2008). Meanwhile, in 2008 Ontario and Quebec signed an agreement to develop an inter-provincial cap-and-trade system before joining British Columbia, Manitoba and various states in the U.S. as part of the Western Climate Initiative that will develop an international cap-and-trade system in North America.

5.5 A CLEAN ENERGY SUPERPOWER? AT WHAT COST?

If these provincial initiatives, together with Harper's own unplanned policy reversal to start regulating emission intensity, suggest the beginnings of a real existing national regulatory framework, some profound questions still remain whether, or to what degree, ecological modernization can address the prevailing socio-ecological crisis. The shift to an ecological

modernization discourse has been driven by a strong focus on realizing 'eco-efficiencies' through technological innovation. While greater efficiency is seen as a way of saving costs while reducing emissions, the focus on efficiency can distract from the more fundamental need for wealthy countries to make absolute reductions in consumption and waste levels (Foster, 2002). After all, even if Canada did meet its Kyoto commitments, on a per capita basis Canadians would still be contributing disproportionately far more to global warming than the overwhelming majority of the world's population. Serious investigation must be undertaken to assess whether regulatory structures announced through an ecological modernization discourse are actually reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and whether the costs associated with these regulations are being fairly distributed. The continual rise of greenhouse gases in Canada and a global increase in fossil fuel emissions of 3.4% per year between 2000-2007, certainly suggests that any regulatory measures that do exist have not been effective (see Figure 4.1 and Richardson, et al., 2009). Tellingly, none of the real existing regulations are aimed at reaching Kyoto targets—which themselves were only ever supposed to be an initial step to much deeper reductions after 2012. Moreover, emerging science suggests that much deeper and earlier reductions in greenhouse gases are needed than was originally anticipated during the negotiations for Kyoto (Richardson, et al., 2009). Even if an ecological modernization approach to emission regulation could theoretically bring about emission reductions, we need to question the timeframe involved with such reductions and who or what will be the victims of climate change in the meantime. Discussions around preventing “dangerous climate change” over 2°C provide little comfort to communities that have already had to relocate due to rising sea levels, drought or hurricanes. Meanwhile, as we discussed, so-called market-based mechanisms for reducing emissions, such as cap-and-trade and the Clean Development Mechanism, threaten marginalized communities with eviction as their land becomes prioritized for the production of ethanol, forests, or wind energy.

Any hope that ecological modernization can actually achieve emission reductions—even in the presence of real existing regulatory frameworks—may also be fundamentally undermined by the way in which ecological modernization otherwise propagates neoliberal policy prescriptions. A major reason that corporations eventually accepted the discourse of ecological modernization was because it came with a guarantee to increase ‘competitiveness’. The degree to which a regulatory framework was to be imposed on business, this was sold to them as a way to reassert their international comparative advantage both through cost savings in the form of eco-
efficiencies (often subsidized by the public treasury) and through the research and development of ‘green' technologies that would increasingly be in demand in a carbon-constrained world. The way that ecological modernization encapsulates neoliberal ideology is clear in the most recent policy declaration of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (2007), tellingly entitled *Clean Growth: Building a Canadian Environmental Superpower*. In a marked shift from its early opposition to Kyoto and emission regulations, the CCCE (2007) policy declaration heralds climate change policy as a means to increase the competitiveness of Canadian firms through green technology development. Emission targets are welcomed as a mechanism for spurring green technological development and thereby turning climate change into a business opportunity:

*Targets are a spur to environmental progress, but to be effective, they must be framed within a policy environment that keeps companies healthy and profitable and that both encourages and enables increased investment in new technologies.*

...we need an overall policy framework that recognizes competitive realities. Economic growth and the energy that feeds it are prerequisites for Canada’s ability to innovate. Canada’s technology strategy therefore must be reinforced by a broader framework of energy and environmental policies that will enhance Canadian competitiveness and our ability to supply resources to a growing global market (original emphasis; CCCE, 2007: p.6).

To reiterate the notion that Canada is situated in a global ‘war' for investment, the CCCE policy declaration concludes by stating:

*The goal of Canada's business leaders is as ambitious as it is clear: to enable our nation to harness its plentiful energy resources and abundant human skills to become an energy and environmental superpower (original emphasis; CCCE, 2007: p.9).*

While Canadian businesses may be comforted by the prospect of becoming an 'energy and environmental superpower,' workers—especially in the Third World—may worry as to what this will mean for them. After all, technological change and global competition have often been in direct conflict with workers' struggles for good jobs and a healthy environment, as the history of labour-environmental relations in the West Coast forestry sector revealed (chapter four; also see Foster, 2000). Nevertheless, both federal and provincial government leaders have now embraced Canada's new role as green geopolitical contender. In a speech delivered at the Canada-U.K. Chamber of Commerce in London Prime Minister Harper tried to woo international investment into Canada's oil and nuclear industries by drawing directly on the CCCE policy script:
Let me just be clear on this. Canada intends to be not just an energy superpower, but also a clean energy superpower, because the reality of climate change is upon us.\textsuperscript{74}

Similarly, in unveiling the Ontario’s Green Energy Act, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, George Smitherman, announced on 23 February 2009 that:

There exists today a global race to establish the policies, attract the investment and build the foundation for the green economy that is sure to sustain future prosperity and progress. ... It is a race Ontario is determined to win. This proposed legislation would help Ontario become the preferred destination for green jobs, green investment and green energy.\textsuperscript{75}

But if both Harper and Smitherman are talking about how to 'go green and win', they are not necessarily talking about becoming the same type of green superpower. Whereas Harper has begun to employ the discourse of ecological modernization for justifying state subsidies to the coal, oil, gas and nuclear industries (e.g. through the development of 'clean coal' and carbon capture and sequestration technologies), Smitherman's plan is to spur investment in renewable energy (in addition to nuclear power). Despite both of these policies claiming to be 'green', they will therefore have quite different ecological implications. In any case, the vision laid out by Harper, the CCCE, and Smitherman to create 'green jobs' does not in any way guarantee that these will be good, unionized jobs. In fact, the persistence of neoliberal competitive logic within the discourse of ecological modernization suggests that the fight by the state-capital alliance to become the green superpower of the world could actually increase the concessionary demands placed upon the wages, benefits and working conditions of labour. In this sense, workers could be confronted with the deepening of neoliberalism under the cloak of ecological modernization—a process we might term green neo-neoliberalism, or simply, ecoliberalism.

Finally, even if Canada does succeed in winning the 'global race' to attract green investment and capture the global market for green technologies, who will be the losers? Is it actually possible to reach global ecological goals like reducing anthropogenic climate change so long as the


consequence of neoliberal competition is uneven development and global poverty? I return to these questions again in chapter seven in my critique of ecological modernist discourses.

This chapter discussed the active role of business in shaping Canada's climate change policy over the past two decades. I argued that climate change policy has been a planned, coordinated neoliberal project by the state and capital that has led to increasing emissions. Corporations organized into alliances that effectively weakened the international emission reduction targets that were aspired to through the Kyoto Protocol. More importantly, through a series of story-lines, metaphors and myths, business set the terms of debate for climate change policy that would successfully stave off regulations even after Kyoto was signed. The government directly invited the ideological influence of business (and excluded labour) during its development of climate change policy, revealing neoliberal climate change policy as a planned project. Even though the state-capital alliance shifted their climate change policy discourse from voluntarism to a certain degree of regulation, the sustained hegemony of neoliberal ideology across these ecological modernist discourses continues to raise serious concerns for both workers and their environments. For example, the state-business alliance first presented international 'competitive pressures' as the primary reason against taking climate change action; but this discourse shifted to an acceptance of 'green competitiveness' as the new driving force of capital accumulation and climate change policy. Yet during this discursive shift, the neoliberal logic of hyper-competitiveness simply reaffirmed its hegemony. At the same time, dominant discourses around climate change and climate change policy have not gone completely unchallenged. In the following section, I will examine how labour-environmental alliances actively resisted voluntarist neoliberal climate change policy and mobilized in support of the Kyoto Protocol by challenging the myth of an inherent trade-off between jobs and the environment. At the same time, labour-environmental alliance-forming has struggled to mobilize around a unique counterhegemonic vision that could transcend the trappings of ecological modernist discourse.
6. “SOMEONE HAS TO BUILD IT”
LABOUR’S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE UNDER NEOLIBERALISM

On the evening of the 25 November 2008, a Scarborough gymnasium was literally overflowing as over 1200 people gathered at a community town hall meeting to discuss a proposal for an offshore wind turbine project to be built adjacent to the Scarborough Bluff’s. The atmosphere in the room was tense, and the presence of two fully uniformed police officers did not seem to help. After a brief introduction by the wind energy company (in this case, a subsidiary of the publicly-owned Toronto Hydro), people stormed the two microphones on either side of the room to argue in favour or against allowing the company to set-up an anemometer to research the feasibility of the offshore wind project. For four hours, environmental organizations and the wind turbine company essentially teamed up against an organized group of local residents from the affluent Meadowclift and Guildwood neighbourhoods who felt they would be unfairly burdened with the costs of climate change mitigation (i.e. when the ‘ugly’ windmills along the horizon drove down their lakeshore property values).\(^76\) While the arguments presented by both sides were largely predictable, what may have surprised many of those in the gymnasium was the presence of a bus load of United Steelworkers who turned out in support of the wind turbine project. Speaking on their behalf was Carolyn Egan, the President of the Steelworkers Toronto Area Council:

Hello, I'm Carolyn Egan and I am president of the Toronto Area Steelworkers including many members who live in Guildwood. And I'll say, that our union has often been at odds with environmentalists. That has been our history. But, we've had a lot of discussion in recent times, both with our members here and with many of our members in Toronto and the environs. And we have decided that it is in our interest, and in the interest of our children, and our future, to support the idea of wind turbines and clean renewable energy. So, we strongly support this project, this research project, and we hope that it goes forward. And I notice in your presentation you talk about the potential job creation. Because we have to look at both the environmental warming that is going on, the global economic crisis, as well as the global environmental crisis. And for us, we support what you're doing, and we're wondering if you would consider, and look very seriously at local procurement. [loud extended clapping] If you go on to produce the windmills [drowned out by the clapping]... and we're talking with a windmill production company in Pennsylvania and they are looking to setup in Ontario and we want the jobs to benefit our members in Scarborough (emphasis mine).\(^77\)

\(^{76}\) Others speaking in opposition to the wind turbine project simply voiced dissatisfaction with the degree of democracy throughout the entire consultation and decision-making process.

\(^{77}\) Comments made by Carolyn Egan at: Toronto Hydro Public Meeting, 25 November 2009, Sir Wilfred Laurier
Egan's suggestion that windmills could generate local job creation in Scarborough through local procurement policies, was a powerful answer to the local anti-wind resistance, especially since the wealthy Meadowclift-Guildwood neighbourhoods are surrounded by some of Toronto's most impoverished neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, the presence of the Steelworkers was unexpected, and unappreciated, by Meadowclift-Guildwood residents who were opposed to the wind project. The disgruntled City Councillor for the area would later complain that: “All I asked TO [Toronto] Hydro was a forum for my residents to ask questions. I got six buses of Greenpeace folk, two buses of steelworkers, and throw in some enviro students from York [University] for some added 'mike hogging' (sic).”78 But for Egan and the environmental organizations, the windmill forum was a long-awaited opportunity for unions and environmental groups to show solidarity for a 'green jobs' creation strategy aimed at addressing both climate change and the deepening manufacturing crisis.

This chapter explores how the concerns and vision of organized labour in Canada are shaping and being shaped through climate change politics and the broader political-economy over the past two decades. Even though the hegemonic bloc has tried hard to exclude labour from the planning of climate change policy (and the economy more generally), this has not prevented labour from developing, and to some degree mobilizing around, its own policy prescriptions that challenge the hegemonic political agenda—sometimes in quite radical ways. The shift in discourse around climate change policy by the state-capital alliance, from voluntarism towards an ecological modernist framework of regulation, has been closely followed by a parallel shift within the labour movement, from seeing climate change as a potential (albeit reconcilable) threat to jobs towards seeing climate change as an opportunity for job creation. Initially, in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the issue of climate change was just starting to enter policy debates, unions committed to social unionism gave early support for addressing climate change—even if it was not seen as a major priority. As the scale and urgency of climate change gradually became apparent throughout the 1990s, unions were forced to more seriously confront climate change policy as a potential threat to jobs. But rather than accept the 'jobs versus the environment' dichotomy propagated during this period by the business alliance, Canada's largest industrial unions challenged this supposed trade-off by developing the

---

counterhegemonic position of 'just transition' and by making early calls for climate change policy to be driven by a 'green job creation strategy.' Through this type of labour-environmental alliance-forming, the Canadian labour movement played an important role in generating public support for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. As climate change became increasingly viewed as an opportunity for job creation, labour-environmental alliance-forming also increasingly linked climate change to ongoing struggles of labour against neoliberalism and for greater democratic control of capital. But despite the ideological basis being laid-out for stronger and potentially counterhegemonic labour-environmental alliance-forming, such alliance-forming has unfortunately been weak and slow to develop in the period following Kyoto ratification. I examine the reasons for this weak labour-environmental alliance-forming, looking at factors both internal and external to the Canadian labour movement—e.g. internal disagreement over how to support emission reductions and how to strategically respond to worsening political-economic conditions. The framing of climate change by the labour movement as an opportunity for green job creation has coincided with—if not helped to facilitate—the hegemonic shift towards an ecological modernist discourse. I conclude this chapter by looking at how certain elements of the ecological modernization discourse have been adopted by unions as a response to neoliberalism and in an attempt to reconstitute Fordist relations. The following chapter then provides a critical appraisal of what this discursive shift towards ecological modernization may mean for labour, climate change and counterhegemony.

6.1 A JUST TRANSITION: CHALLENGING THE JOBS VS. ENVIRONMENT DICHOTOMY AND SUPPORTING KYOTO

Over the past two decades—and more earnestly during the past ten years—organic intellectuals based from within the labour movement have engaged in important ideological work explicitly aimed at revealing and resolving the dual economic and climate crisis. The most crystallized articulations of such labour-environmental alliance-forming is circulated through the policy documents of unions and labour councils (Table 6.1), the speeches of labour officials at union meetings and conventions, and through the formal member education programmes delivered by unions.
Table 6.1 The ideological work of labour-environmental organic intellectuals:
policy documents on climate change by Canadian labour organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Policy Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Steelworkers (USW):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Our Children's World</em> (August 1990)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Securing Our Children's World: Our Union and the Environment</em> (June 2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CEP Policy 915: Just Transition to a Sustainable Economy in Energy</em> (September 2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CEP Energy Policy</em> (September 2002)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Auto Workers (CAW):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Taking the First Step: Climate Change, The Kyoto Protocol, and Canada's Role</em> (December 2002)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Climate Change: Rising to the Challenge</em> (March 2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Climate Change and our Jobs: Finding the Right Balance</em> (August 2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Keeping our Cool: A Climate Change Primer</em> (September 2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CLC Policy on Just Transition For Workers During Environmental Change</em> (April 1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, these articulations do not reveal the actual organizational priority that unions have given to labour-environmental alliance-forming; nor do they necessarily reflect the predominant ideologies of rank-and-file members (many of whom are politically disengaged from their unions, with another small group of activists wanting to see their unions adopt even more radical positions). Still, these crystallized articulations of policy are well worth examining since they often reflect the outcome of intense ideological debates within unions and thus have real impacts for how these organizations mobilize around socio-ecological issues like climate change and neoliberalism. Not only do these official proclamations of union policy and pedagogical materials help shape broader political debates (e.g. by giving signals to politicians as to how far labour is willing to push or resist on certain issues), but they also provide internal institutional legitimacy and resources for union activists to undertake certain concrete initiatives. Of course, the degree to which official union policy is simply convenient political posturing—i.e. rhetoric that finds itself constrained by external and internal organizational politics and structures of
power—must always be kept in mind, especially for those serious about making unions effective counterhegemonic agents of socio-ecological change.

Policy development by labour around climate change has come mostly from Canada's three largest private sector unions: the United Steelworkers (USW), the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP), and the Canadian Autoworkers (CAW) (Table 6.1). Most public sector unions have only began to develop policies around climate change in the past two or three years. The fact that 'blue-collar' unions have more comprehensive and far-reaching climate change policies challenges the popular assumption that the environment is a 'white collar' issue. The interest of blue-collar unions in climate change speaks to their historical engagement with environmental issues (chapter four). This has led these unions to institutionalize environment committees, devote full-time staff to work on environmental issues, and develop environmental policy on an ongoing basis. Recently, industrial unions from Canada have even taken part in international climate negotiations. Blue-collar unions are particularly motivated by the fact that their members are most directly impacted by any strategy to reduce emissions, but also because their members could stand to benefit the most from a new generation of 'green jobs'. As Goodstein (1999) has shown for the United States, a disproportionate number of jobs created through environmental regulations are for blue-collar workers. The deepening manufacturing crisis has made the creation of green jobs a strategic focus of these unions. In contrast, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), a white-collar public sector union, which is Canada's largest union at 590 000 members, has not published any comprehensive climate change policy, and has focused their environmental action rather narrowly around 'greening the workplace' (i.e. reducing the ecological footprint of its own union operations and buildings). Similarly, the Ontario Public Service Employee's Union (OPSEU)—another major 'white collar' union—and its parent union, the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) only seriously began to consider environmental policy three years ago, and have also focused on reducing the carbon footprint of its own operations rather than engaging in broader political mobilization.

As early as 1980, a resolution at a convention for the United Steelworkers of America (USW) warned of global warming. In 1990, two years before Canada even signed the UNFCCC, the USW Environmental Task Force developed a report—adopted by the 25th Constitutional Convention in Toronto—which provided a detailed review of global warming, forewarning that
“it may be the single greatest problem we face.” The vision laid out by organized labour for addressing climate change initially focused on challenging the hegemonic presentation of climate change policy as a choice between jobs or the environment. The USW’s *Our Children’s World* first challenged the jobs versus the environment dichotomy in relation to climate change as early as 1990:

Steelworkers have heard the jobs argument before. For many years companies have tried to use economic and environmental blackmail on the union and its members. In every fight for a new health and safety regulation, or better wages, or improved pensions, there is a corporate economist to tell us that if we persist, the company or the industry will fold, with hundreds or thousands of lost jobs. It rarely turns out to be true, and for good reason. Someone has to design the cleaner process or equipment. Someone has to build it. Someone has to install it. Someone has to operate it. Someone has to maintain it.

In the long run, the real choice is not jobs or environment. It’s both or neither. What kind of jobs will be possible in a world of depleted resources, poisoned water and foul air, a world where ozone depletion and greenhouse warming (sic) make it difficult even to survive?

The notion that “someone has to build it” helped preempt fears that addressing global warming would necessitate job losses. In presenting climate change as a potential opportunity as early as 1990, the USW was well ahead of the thinking not only in the labour movement but even amongst business lobbies that would wait more than a decade before shifting towards a 'win-win' ecological modernist discourse of climate change. The early development of such well-thought out positions, meant that trade unions were well-prepared to counteract the type of job-blackmail that business lobby groups such as AREA and CCRES would later use unsuccessfully to derail Canada's acceptance of the Kyoto Protocol. Rather than simply accept the dismal job-loss predictions concocted by the anti-Kyoto business alliance, a group of unions (including the CEP, CAW, USW and the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada) and environmental organizations (including the David Suzuki Foundation, the Endswell Foundation, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare) commissioned the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) to examine the economic impact that Kyoto ratification would have on the Canadian energy sector, and ways to mitigate this impact. The CCPA report by Dale Marshall (2002) was published in April 2002—two months after the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) had warned that ratifying Kyoto would cost 450,000 jobs (see chapter five). Revealing the CME’s analysis as “completely misleading and baseless” (p.6), the CCPA report extracted unpublished data from

the same econometric sources (produced by the federal government) to show that there would in fact be an overall growth of 3,200 jobs in the energy sector by 2010 should Canada comply with its Kyoto obligations, even assuming no purchase of international credits (Marshall, 2002). This compared to a growth of 6,700 jobs with a business as usual scenario without Kyoto. The CCPA report also argued that other structural political-economic trends, having nothing to do with Kyoto, were already undermining jobs in certain energy sub-sectors (e.g. the increase in exports of low value-added energy commodities to the United States). Unions covering the energy sector, such as the CEP, were able to use the CCPA analysis to challenge the anti-Kyoto propaganda that had been drummed up by the Government of Alberta and its oil and gas industry. Soon after Canada ratified Kyoto, the President of the CEP wrote to his 150,000 members:

It must have astounded Premier Klein, but the day after Canada became the 87th country to ratify the Kyoto Accord on Climate Change, the sun came up over Alberta. ... There haven't been layoffs of CEP members in the energy sector after the ratification of Kyoto, and there won't be in the short term, even though we can expect employers to use Kyoto as a convenient rationale when they make business decisions for the same reasons they have always had for downsizing their workforce.

A lot of the job-scare tactics that the business lobby used to try to prevent ratification of Kyoto were hot air—enough to have accounted for Calgary’s shirt-sleeve weather in early January.

In fact, all of the economic modeling prepared by Infometrica [commissioned by the federal government] shows that almost every sector of the Canadian economy will continue to grow over the next decade as we implement policies to reduce greenhouse gases and meet our obligations under the Kyoto Accord.

Given that the economic models showed that complying with Kyoto would still allow for growth of 3,200 jobs by 2010 in the energy sector, one might assume that this made it relatively easy for labour-environmental activists within the CEP to garner support around Kyoto ratification. But we must first recognize that the CEP, like the USW, began showing support for Kyoto before the government's economic models and national plans had been released. This means that the CEP

---

80 Infometrica is the company that the Government of Canada commissioned to conduct economic modeling around the cost of Kyoto ratification. The CCPA also used unpublished data from Infometrica to carry out its 2002 study that I refer to here. See: Brian Payne (CEP President), “Business lobby's job-scare tactics a lot of hot air,” CEP Journal, Volume 11, No.1, p.3.

81 The economic models stemming from the NCCP report were not completed until November 22, 2000 while the CEP held their convention in September 2000 where they passed Policy 915: Just Transition to A Sustainable Economy in Energy which gave an in-depth review of climate change and the Kyoto Protocol.
and USW were actually showing support for climate change policy at a time when the associated job losses were highly uncertain (and therefore, more greatly feared). Moreover, while the CCPA report did reveal that there would be a net growth of jobs by 2010 under a Kyoto regime, job-losses were still projected for some sub-sectors in which CEP members worked (see Table 6.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Sector</th>
<th>Change in Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coal mining</td>
<td>-1 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas utilities</td>
<td>-6 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petroleum and coal products manufacturing</td>
<td>-1 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petroleum and natural gas</td>
<td>-400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electric utilities</td>
<td>+11 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pipelines</td>
<td>+1 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>+3 200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 Projected changes in jobs by sector between 2000-2010 assuming Kyoto compliance (Source: Adapted from Marshall, 2002)

One might therefore question why the CEP, and other industrial unions like the CAW and the USW, nevertheless supported the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol? To begin with, it is clear that Canadian unions, unlike the business alliance, did not take a simple economistic approach to climate change. As we saw in chapter four, there is a long history of environmental policy development within the labour movement that reflects an implicit appreciation for how human welfare and non-human elements and processes are inter-linked in the long-run. Industrial unions like the CEP, USW and CAW who came out early in support of climate change regulations did so largely out of their commitment to social unionism. These unions prided themselves as being community-engaged, 'progressive' unions and increasingly saw concern for the environment as part of this progressive identity. Even before the potential impact on jobs was being seriously discussed, climate change was recognized as 'one of the environmental issues' with which progressive unions needed to grapple. In this sense, climate change was first viewed simply as 'another environmental issue'—albeit a potentially serious one—that needed to be addressed alongside environmental problems like acid rain, the ozone hole, deforestation, etc. Therefore, early union action around climate change reflected more of an 'environmentalist' response to the commodification of nature. For example, the 1990 USW environmental policy spoke not only about what environmental degradation meant for jobs, but also to the morality of
taking environmental action:

We believe that the greatest threat to our children's future may lie in the destruction of their environment. For that reason alone, environment (sic) must be an issue for our union. In addition, we cannot protect Steelworker jobs by ignoring environmental problems (emphasis mine).\textsuperscript{82}

Of course, just because unions like the USW took early positions in favour of tackling climate change and the signing of Kyoto, this does not mean they made climate change an institutional priority. In fact, throughout most of the 1990s, none of the major unions developed much by way of action plans or campaigns aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This suggests that during this period unions saw climate change as an issue that was somewhat external to the more traditional, meat-and-potato issues like wages, working conditions and job security. The priority of unions during the 1990s was to resist neoliberalism (or 'globalization' as it was called in union policy documents). Unions did not yet link climate change directly to neoliberalism in the same way as the attacks on wages, working conditions and job security. Therefore, until the late 1990s, climate change policy was only a secondary concern for industrial unions that they approached more passively or reactively. Nevertheless, the development of environmental policies by the large industrial unions in the late 1980s and early 1990s underwrote an early commitment to addressing climate change long before Kyoto ratification would become an intense political debate during the early 2000s. While these unions could surely have later challenged the Kyoto Protocol while still showing general support for addressing climate change, this would have been more difficult to do given the internal political momentum within these organizations in favour of taking 'progressive' political action on the environment.

A critical factor that underpinned labour's support for Kyoto, was the ideological work carried out throughout the 1980s and 1990s by organic intellectuals to resolve the apparent contradiction between saving jobs and the need for stronger environmental regulations (like reducing greenhouse gas emissions). By 1990, most major industrial unions—namely, the CAW and the USW (the CEP was not yet formed)—all had environmental policies and environmental committees that were explicitly guided by the discourse of sustainable development as articulated by the Brundtland Commission.\textsuperscript{83} The notion of sustainable development has


\textsuperscript{83} The CAW had reactivated their environmental committees in 1986, the Canadian Labour Congress got an
received well-deserved criticism for being vague, self contradictory, ontologically void, and complicit in facilitating the neoliberal coup of environmental policy (Redclift, 2005). But if corporations were working to define ‘sustainability’ in their own image, the institutionalization of sustainable development within unions helped produce some creative (and at times, counterhegemonic) solutions for transcending the dichotomy pitting job security against environmental protection. This early ideological work undertaken by unions around sustainable development meant that by the time the debates around Kyoto ratification heated up, and even before any econometric modeling had been undertaken, unions were already suspicious of the job blackmail that the business alliance was using to try to preemptively turn the labour movement against Kyoto ratification.

The major concern of unions was that working (class) families should not be unfairly burdened with the costs of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Labour-environmental organic intellectuals therefore developed the policy of a just transition that advocates for protecting the social and economic integrity of workers and their communities when environmental policies lead to unavoidable job losses. The adoption of a just transition policy allowed unions to accept the fact that a certain degree of job-loss would be necessary in the transition to a sustainable (post-carbon) economy. Making the case as to why environmental regulation was not to be feared by workers, became all the more important in the neoliberal context of deregulation.

The values underscoring just transition have deep roots in the labour movement, which has always contested the terms of job losses due to technological change and political economic 'restructuring'. But the general idea of just transition in regards to socio-ecological change stems from the pioneering labour-environmental activism of Tony Mazzocchi, who worked with the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International in the United States. In the 1970s, Mazzocchi argued that certain hazardous industrial sectors were so harmful they should be shut down with affected workers being given compensation, education and retraining (Leopold, 2007). In the 1980s, Mazzocchi advocated for a 'Superfund for Workers' to compensate workers who lost their jobs whenever factories closed to avoid the costs associated with cleaning up chemically contaminated sites. Whereas Mazzocchi focused more on the rights of workers during deindustrialization, just transition later became concerned with industrial transformation into a sustainable economy (Bennett, 2007).

---

environmental sub-committee (of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee) going in 1989, while the USW changed the International Health and Safety Department to the 'International Health, Safety and Environment Department' in 1990.
In Canada, the argument that workers displaced from environmental policies should be given income protection and job retraining, had already been argued by unions like the USW, CAW and the ECWU since the 1980s. The struggle of workers for fair compensation became part of the broader struggle by other marginalized groups for environmental justice (Gottlieb, 2005). By 1992, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) had endorsed “transition measures” as one of five key “workers' environmental rights”:

5. Transition measures: The right to compensation and retraining in the event of environmental layoff, when due to an employer’s inability or unwillingness to conform to environmental regulations or, conversely, due to the employment effects of compliance with environmental rules.84

But it was not until the mid 1990s that the actual concept of a 'just transition' was seriously developed and incorporated as union political strategy. Ironically, one of the key architects of just transition policy in the Canadian labour movement came out of the ECWU—a union which Adkins (1998) found to accept neoliberal energy policies and which opposed most environmental legislation around toxins throughout the 1980s.85 Brian Kohler, who had worked as staff with the ECWU in the 1980s, later became the National Health, Safety and Environment representative for the CEP when it was formed in 1992 upon the merger of three smaller unions. Speaking at the 1995 annual general meeting of the Great Lakes United, Kohler presented his vision of a “structured adjustment or transition program” for displaced workers.86 With the support of the USW and CUPE, Kohler teamed up with Mae Burrows from the CAW and Dave Bennett from the CLC to help draft the CLC's twenty page Policy on Just Transition For Workers During Environmental Change adopted by the Executive in April 1999.87 Kohler then went on

---

84 The other key environmental rights proclaimed by the CLC were: The right to joint union-management environment committees; the right to refuse to pollute; the right to environmental information; and whistle-blower protection. These formed part of the CLC's policy, _A National Pollution Prevention Strategy_, endorsed by CLC National Environment Committee, February, 1992. See: CLC/National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, 1993, “Sustainable Development: Getting There From Here -A Handbook for Union Environment Committees and Joint Labour-Management Environment Committees,” Ottawa: Mutual Press, p.116.

85 The resistance of the ECWU to environmental regulations is summarized by Adkin (1998): “When the petrochemical companies waved the banners of industry ‘disappearance’ from Canada and massive job loss in the early-to-mid 1980s, the ECWU leadership accepted the logic that reducing government royalties on oil and gas extraction, deregulating prices, and increasing exports were the only ways to preserve and to create jobs (p.141).”


87 Both Bennett (2007) and Burrows (2001) would later write about their experiences drafting the CLC's just transition policy. Burrows also went on to found the Labour Environmental Alliance Society discussed in
to draft the CEP's *Just Transition to a Sustainable Economy in Energy*, adopted in September 2000 (also see CEP, 2002a). Both of these documents, but especially the CEP policy, discuss just transition with respect to climate change and Canada's obligations to the Kyoto Protocol. The documents go beyond simply a statement of principles to detailing specific funding mechanisms and political strategies for actually realizing just transition. Funding sources that are identified range from new taxes and fees taken from polluting industries, to expanding unemployment insurance programs and funding a 'sustainable economic strategy' by drawing on pension funds and establishing a new National Investment Bank. The CCPA union-commissioned report, discussed above, develops these funding mechanisms even further, going so far as to outline an eleven billion dollar, ten-year budget for financing both a just transition program and several other measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Marshall, 2002). The revenue source for these programs would come from removing government subsidies to non-renewable energy sources (valued at $250 million per year) and auctioning emission permits as part of a cap-and-trade system ($10 billion over ten years). Meanwhile, a reduction in the work week and increasing value-added manufacturing are two other recommendations for reducing job losses due to climate change policies. Besides helping to secure union endorsement of the Kyoto Protocol, these proposals detailing how to fund just transition, and the very idea of just transition itself, demonstrate a concerted effort by unions to proactively engage in the planning of the economy and society's response to climate change. Although most rank-and-file union members are not actually engaged in the minutia of this counterhegemonic work—indeed most of these just transition proposals were drafted by paid union staff or union brass who have not worked on the shop floor for many years—nevertheless, policy directions are most often democratically approved by the entire membership. Moreover, there is a general expectation that the union is engaged in research, ideological development, and political actions, even if there is disagreement amongst the membership over how much of this type of work is 'appropriate'.

In developing just transition as a political strategy, Kohler identified that the problem was not simply whether environmental policies led to an overall net gain or loss of jobs (which was all that was reported by government in assessing the impact of Kyoto), but also who would specifically be the winners and losers:

It has been theorized that a transition to sustainability will create at least as many jobs as will be destroyed. However, it is clear that the workers and the communities that
presently depend on dirty or unsustainable economic activities will not necessarily be the same ones that benefit from the new, environmentally friendly ones.\textsuperscript{88}

This concern for environmental justice at the heart of just transition has provided an important critique of politicians who trumpet the job creation potential of a new green economic order (ecological modernization) in quite general terms without due consideration for the specific situation of workers faced with corresponding job losses. The Canadian government's 2002 \textit{Climate Change Plan for Canada}—while better than the 2000 \textit{Business Plan} and \textit{Implementation Strategy} that failed to mention jobs at all—still neglected to disaggregate the impact that Kyoto compliance would have on different sectors and sub-sectors of the economy and on different geographic regions. But it is this very conundrum of specific groups of workers in particular locations faced with job losses that sets the conditions for militant particularism. As the CLC (1999) policy on just transition clearly warns, workers and communities who are faced with job-loss as a result of environmental policy, will move to block or slow these policies so long as there is no alternative for them, regardless of the broader societal benefits of those policies. Of course, companies affected by regulations take full advantage of these vulnerable workers to try to turn them against 'environmentalists'. Just transition, on the other hand, provides an ideological basis for labour and environmental activists to fight for environmental regulations while defending the rights of all workers to employment. Therefore, the concept of just transition works to discursively shift the debate from whether or how to save certain \textit{jobs} to how to save certain \textit{workers}. Strategically, this creates a new avenue for labour-environmental activists to reframe 'environmental' issues as 'socio-economic' issues—that is to say human problems. This reframing makes it easier to win the support of people who do not identify with the ecocentrism underpinning much of the advocacy undertaken by the mainstream environmental movement.

Organic intellectuals, like Kohler, Burrows and Bennett who are involved in the just transition movement are quite aware that they are engaged in what Gramsci called a 'war of position' and an attempt to shape the 'collective will.' In the same way that the business alliance \textit{AREA} hired a public relations firm to turn the 'public interest' against Kyoto, the CLC (1999) lays out a plan to construct the counterhegemonic 'public will:'

\begin{quote}
We have to promote Just Transition as a slogan, a “dominant metaphor”, a leading element in the discourse about environmental change. We have to
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{88} Brian Kohler, 1995, “Making the Transition to a Clean Economy.” \textit{Loc cit.}
But despite a clearly laid out program, the notion of just transition has not yet become a 'dominant metaphor,' even amongst the rank-and-file membership. As Dave Bennett (2007), the former National Director for the CLC's Health, Safety and Environment Department, would lament seven years after the publication of the CLC's just transition policy: “Just Transition has, however, remained largely a slogan and a well-articulated theoretical program” (p.7).

The reasons for the slow uptake of a just transition program go beyond what Bennett attributes to the failure of “Canadian society and its government” in becoming a “vanguard of environmental change” (7), to issues around the internal failures within the labour movement to mobilize workers around a more radical political agenda. For example, the CLC's (1999) strategy paper on just transition focuses much more on developing a 'communications strategy' rather than how to actually mobilize and organize workers. Nevertheless, the concept of just transition has been successfully institutionalized within several Canadian unions as part of their member education programs and informational materials. During the last international climate change talks in Poznan in December 2008, just transition was adopted as a central demand by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) (ITUC, 2008). But perhaps the biggest effect of the just transition metaphor, was in helping to rally labour’s support for the Kyoto Protocol during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Labour's support for Kyoto was never a forgone conclusion. In the United States, for example, vocal opposition to the Kyoto Protocol by the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) helped precipitate the U.S. Senate's failure to ratify Kyoto and subsequently pass an anti-Kyoto Senate resolution by a vote of 95-0. Even in Canada, not all unions were in favour of Kyoto. The Alberta Building Trades Council, for example, was a member of the anti-Kyoto business-led coalition, AREA (even though the Alberta Federation of Labour was in favour of Kyoto). Meanwhile, in 2002 the Building Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO (BCTD), which represented 400,000 Canadian construction workers, joined CCRES.89 The BCTD also invited Tom Vant, Executive Secretary

---

89 The Building Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO includes fourteen affiliated international building trades unions in Canada, including: the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers; the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers; the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen; the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; the International Union of Elevator Constructors; the International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers; the Laborers'
for AREA, to their 2002 annual conference in Ottawa to address the plenary about “the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and it’s predicted negative impact on jobs for our members.”\footnote{Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO, Canadian Office, “Building Together: Second Canadian Legislative Conference,” available on-line from the Internet Archive: \url{http://web.archive.org/web/20030211093055/www.buildingtrades.ca/conf2002/resume.html}. Retrieved 20 January 2009.}

The support of the building trades to the anti-Kyoto business alliance is perhaps not surprising given their business unionism ideology.

But despite these noted exceptions, all of the major labour organizations in Canada—most vocally the Canadian Labour Congress, CEP, the CAW, and the USW—openly supported ratification of Kyoto. This support would not likely have been possible without these labour organizations having first developed a comprehensive just transition policy, and then receiving some signal from the government that it was going to be implemented. Committing to just transition became a major condition if the government wanted to earn labour's endorsement of Kyoto. In leveraging (or trying to leverage) the government's commitment to just transition, we see how labour played an active and important political role during the Kyoto debates. Given the fierce resistance launched by the business lobby against Kyoto, the public support offered by labour in favour of ratification—especially from the CEP whose members worked in oil and gas industry, including the Albertan tar sands—was clearly appreciated by the Liberal government.

In fact, during the intense debates around Kyoto in 2002, the Minister of the Environment, David Anderson, made a special announcement in the House of Commons to thank the labour movement for their support:

> We have heard a lot over the last few weeks and months from the opposition about businesses, business organizations and their lobbyists and their claim that somehow jobs will be lost. I would remind those business lobbyists that the true objective of business is of course shareholder value or what some people call profit. However, the true objective of labour unions, of the association of workers, is the number of jobs for their members, the safety of employees in the workplace and of course their pay. These are among the issues that concern unions.

> I would like to salute the Canadian labour movement, in particular the Canadian Labour Congress and Ken Georgetti, its president, for the resolution it has passed and for the determination it has shown in the ratification of Kyoto.
The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada and its president, Brian Payne, understand despite the fact it represents many workers up in the tar sands, in the oil patch, that the environment and job creation can go hand in hand.

I look forward to working with labour and labour representatives, particularly the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union in a partnership to anticipate changes that may occur because of Kyoto measures, to identify how we can smoothly have a transition, and of course to identify appropriate methods of training for people who may be displaced, if that is the case, or who may be moving into new technologies. It is an opportunity for the Government of Canada to work together with the labour movement, who are the people who should be and in fact are the most concerned about the jobs issue. There has been a little too much in the way of crocodile tears from lobbyists from big business on this issue (emphasis mine).91

The Environment Minister's “salute [to] the Canadian labour movement” came during his official introduction of the government's Climate Change Draft Plan Overview to the House of Commons. The Minister was therefore able to use labour's endorsement of Kyoto as a way to deflect criticism coming from the business alliance and Official Opposition (the Progressive Conservatives) over the potential economic impact of ratifying Kyoto. Despite having excluded labour from national 'consultations' around Kyoto in the belief that business knew best how to address climate change, Anderson's speech shows that at least during the heat of the Kyoto debates, the government needed labour's support as a way to legitimize its plan for the economy and the environment. Anderson's announcement in the House shows to some degree the impact of political lobbying by Canadian unions during the Kyoto debates. Anderson's remarks came one day after a lobby effort by the CEP in Ottawa that was part of a larger cross-country series of “Kyoto forums” held by the CEP throughout October and November 2002. The CEP had even put together 'Kyoto campaign' kits for any organizations wishing to lobby the government in support of ratification. In addition to having the Minister publicly commit to working with them to “smoothly have a transition,” the CEP later reported to their membership that the federal government was going to create a “government-labour committee on jobs and just transition.”92

Even though this committee does not seem to have ever materialized, and while it is difficult to assess just how much political support a determined Prime Minister Chrétien with a majority


government needed at the time to guarantee Kyoto's swift ratification, it is nevertheless clear that labour did have a real political impact on debates over whether Canada should ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

The ideological development of just transition reflects a deeper engagement of unions with environmental issues like climate change that moves beyond simply gestures of solidarity in the spirit of social unionism. Social unionism had led unions like the USW and the CAW to give early support to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in terms of a more environmentalist' opposition to the commodification of nature and the ecological problems this created. But as the economic ramifications of climate change policy became better understood, industrial unions became more concerned with the potential that climate change policy had for job loss. The threat to job security posed by climate change was met by some impressive counterhegemonic policy development by labour-environmental organic intellectuals around the concept of just transition. Still, the low priority given to climate change by unions throughout the 1990s, and even their focus on just transition during the Kyoto debates (as important as this was), reflects a more defensive or reactive position adopted by labour towards climate change policy. Climate change was still perceived as a threat, albeit one that could be mitigated through just transition. But as I will now proceed in discussing, climate change started to take on a whole new priority and meaning within the labour movement during, and coming out, of the Kyoto debates. Climate change was increasingly viewed as an opportunity for job creation. This conceptual shift from seeing climate change as a threat to viewing climate change as an opportunity can be attributed, on the one hand, to the ongoing ideological work of labour-environmental organic intellectuals to
connect the politics of work and the politics of nature, particularly in light of a worsening manufacturing crisis (and deepening climate crisis). Increasingly, unions linked the existence of global warming and proposed climate change policy prescriptions to their analysis of neoliberalism and the shortcomings of bourgeois democracy. In other words, climate change was increasingly understood not simply as a response to the commodification of nature, but rather as a broader response to both the commodification of labour and nature under neoliberalism, and capitalism more generally. I now turn to exploring labour's conceptualization of a green jobs creation strategy at the turn of the century. I argue that the green job creation strategies produced by labour organizations at the turn of the century articulated some radical, if not counterhegemonic, visions of socio-ecological relations. In order to assess the degree to which these visions were realized, I then describe some manifestations of labour-environmental alliance-forming which emerged around these green job creation strategies. But as we saw in chapter five, after the ratification of Kyoto the hegemonic discourse also started to frame climate change as a new opportunity for the greening of capitalism using the 'win-win' discourse of ecological modernization. This raises the question as to what degree labour's vision around climate change policy has played into the discourse of ecological modernization and reformist politics simply aimed at the restoration of Fordist relations.

6.2 Green Job Creation: Climate Change as an Opportunity

As the financial crisis became a more generalized crisis throughout 2008, the term 'green jobs' and 'green investment' have gained widespread currency in the desperate scramble to try to curb record losses of jobs and profits. But the use of the term 'green jobs' in the mainstream media or amongst politicians (looking for votes) and corporations (looking to cash in on government economic stimulus funding), neglects some fundamental concerns: What are the wages and working conditions of these 'green jobs'? Will such 'green work' help achieve social justice objectives or simply exacerbate environmental injustices? Is this work actually 'green' or merely a form of 'greenwashing'? I will later explore these questions in more detail, but suffice it to say right now that the current mainstream use of the term 'green jobs' belies a more radical conceptualization forwarded by the labour movement at the turn of the century. The CLC's *Green Job Creation Project* introduced 'green jobs' as a central metaphor within the Canadian labour movement for understanding climate change policy (and environmental policy
more generally) as a job creation opportunity. The CLC Green Job Creation Project was
developed between 1999-2001, and was formally adopted at the 2003 CLC convention. It spells
out a specific green industrial policy that is realized through ecological tax reforms and
environmental regulation. The CLC argues that: “If the Kyoto Accord is implemented
thoroughly and seriously, the prospects for sustainable job creation will increase dramatically”
(p.12). Drawing from the 1996 Canadian Rational Energy Program—an economic modeling
exercise undertaken in 1996 by the Sierra Club, the Climate Action Network and Natural
Resources Canada—the CLC projected that meeting Canada's Kyoto targets could create a net
gain of 1.5 million jobs by 2015. The CLC's optimism around green job creation is grounded in
the theory that by substituting reused and more durable goods for primary materials we will
reduce energy use while creating more jobs since three times more energy is used in the primary
extraction of materials than in manufacturing (and given that four manufacturing jobs already
exist to every one job in primary production). But the CLC's vision goes beyond merely reducing
pollution and the “throughput” of energy and resources through the economy. In addition, the
CLC hopes to realize a “sustainable society,” broadly defined, that is firmly grounded in the
“social values...essential to sustainability, such as health, housing, education and social justice”
(p.1). The CLC Green Job Creation Project (2001) therefore defines 'green jobs' as “secure,
stable, quality jobs which are clean, healthy and stress-free” (p.1). Achieving the 'sustainable
society' and these types of good green jobs is seen to require union representation and stronger
participation of workers in workplace decision-making (e.g. joint labour-management
environmental committees). But the CLC (2001) recognizes that truly realizing sustainability
and green jobs necessitates nothing short of a complete transformation of global socio-ecological
relations:

The global economy is not sustainable. We are exceeding the capacity of the
earth to sustain all forms of living things, including human life and health. As a
result, we are causing the extinction of plant and animal species and destruction
of ecosystems; shrinking cropland; falling water tables; destruction of the
protective ozone layer above the earth, disruption of climate, increased storms,
flooding, drought and global warming; shrinking natural resources such as fish
and forests, some minerals and fossil fuels; pollution and chemical
contamination of air, water, soil and food (the “toxic economy”) and huge
population growth.

The reasons for this are that too much non-renewable energy is used in the
production, transport, use and disposal of goods; there is too much “material
throughput” in industry and resources used up, without reuse, recycling, or
remanufacturing; and too much consumption of goods per head in the
developed countries.

Behind this reasoning lies the whole force of the transnational economic system. Globalization, free trade, deregulation, privatization and the transnational corporate agenda facilitate these trends by increasing the volume of destructive practices. Pitched against these forces is the organized labour movement in alliance, and potential alliance, with the environmental and social justice movements.

In one sense, we have the continuation and expansion of the struggle between labour and transnational capital, but in a newer and wider context – the destruction of ecology which is also a deteriorating global human predicament of bad jobs and shrinking employment, (sic)

We are up against both the causes and the effects of an unsustainable economy: environmental crises, environmental racism; unemployment, as the productive base of the economy is warped and destroyed; unfairness and social injustice as one small segment of the world’s population reaps the benefits at the expense of all the rest; and human health destroyed by famine, the loss of local, sustainable agriculture, lack of sanitation, polluted air and water, and chemical contamination. There are no jobs on a dead planet. (original emphasis, p.3)

Therefore, the CLC analysis clearly views ecological destruction and the erosion of the productive capacity of the earth as a pressing threat to both job creation and human welfare. Implicitly following a Polanyian analysis, the protection of both land (ecosystems) and labour (human health, social justice and jobs) are seen by the CLC to be in direct opposition to an intensification of commodity production and circulation through ‘globalization’--a euphemism used by unions to discuss neoliberalism. This conceptualization of the socio-ecological crisis with its clear analysis of power, its call for an end to (capitalist) overconsumption, and its concern for workers especially in the Third World in the face of neoliberalism, contrasts sharply with the belief inherent in ecological modernization that social and ecological problems can be resolved within the current political-economic system. Although the CLC report failed to elaborate much further on the specific linkages between the climate change crisis and the global economic crisis under neoliberalism, the mere fact that these dual crises were explicitly linked, reflected an important ideological step towards building a counterhegemonic labour-environmental alliance.

By 2002, the Canadian Auto Workers had also begun pushing the Federal government to meet the Kyoto Protocol's emission targets through a green job creation strategy. In December 2002, the CAW released its climate change policy paper entitled, *Taking the First Step: Climate*
In debunking the business lobby's "jobs versus the climate" scare tactics, the CAW (2002) argues that neither jobs nor the economy need to suffer in order to reach emission targets since emission reduction strategies could entail more work, not less:

In general, we can think of two broad strategies for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions: doing less, or doing more.

The business lobbyists argue that capping our greenhouse gas emissions will limit our future economic expansion. The only way to meet our Kyoto commitments, they warn, will be for our economy to do less that it otherwise would have. We'll produce fewer emissions, but we'll also do less work. Stagnation, dislocation, and unemployment will be the outcomes.

Most Kyoto supporters, meanwhile, stress the potential economic stimulus that would be provided by investments and innovations in many sectors of the economy that will be sparked by the effort to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. For them, striving to meet our Kyoto targets will inspire us to do more in our economy, and to do it better. Innovation, investment, and job-creation will be the outcomes (original emphasis, p.10).

While the CLC climate change policy papers avoid direct attacks on the federal government, the CAW (2002) harshly criticizes the federal government's dearth of funding for climate change initiatives and the failure stemming from its use of voluntary emission targets:

To its credit, the federal government is proceeding to formally ratify the Kyoto agreement, against corporate opposition. However, the federal plan for actually achieving our Kyoto targets is extremely vague, and the government has not committed itself to the fiscal and regulatory measures that will be necessary to back up Canada's fine words about climate change with real actions (p.1).

The CAW argues that Kyoto will only create an opportunity for the Canadian economy if the federal government is ready to impose "taxes, spending, and regulation – rather than vague appeals to voluntary conservation" (p.12).

The CAW's critique of the federal government's voluntarist climate change policy is placed within a much broader critique of deregulation under neoliberalism. The CAW's analysis provides more specific details, compared with the policy papers of other unions, as to how free trade and deregulation—particularly in the energy and transportation sectors—have led to higher greenhouse gas emissions (while also threatening job security, wages and working conditions).

93 The main arguments of this policy paper were also circulated through the mainstream press by CAW President Buzz Hargrove in a timely letter to the National Post during the intense debates around Kyoto ratification. See: Buzz Hargrove, 16 December 2002, "Kyoto's economic opportunities," National Post Published: Monday,. http://www.nationalpost.com/financialpost/story.html?id={2F66C2E4-83E9-44AE-85EA-0441CB61013D}. Accessed 15 March 2009.
For example, the CAW (2002) policy discusses how the deregulation of highway trucking has not only increased the exploitation of truck drivers but also contributed to climate change:

. . . it is far more fuel efficient to move bulk freight by railway than by heavy truck, and hence far less damaging to the environment. But under deregulation [since the late 1980s], highway trucking has become the main form of transport for most industrial and commercial shippers. The increased pollution associated with heavy trucks is not a factor in the bottom-line decisions of private shippers. Trucking is a very low- cost mode of transport (mostly thanks to the incredible exploitation of truck drivers, who work for average wages of $15 per hour and face terrible working conditions), and so the trucking industry continues to grow year after year. Heavy trucks and other heavy diesel equipment have increased their greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent in the last decade – five times faster than light vehicles – and they now account for 9 percent of total Canadian emissions. Unchecked, this rapidly-growing source of emissions would surpass passenger cars and light trucks by the end of this decade as the major source of transportation-related emissions. Putting some regulation back into the transportation sector, so that heavy trucking is used where it is most essential, and more bulk freight is put back on the railways, will be an important source of pollution reduction in the transportation industry (p.7).

Meanwhile, in condemning the lack of national planning for Canada's energy industry, the CAW notes that:

. . . the deregulation of our energy industry since the 1980s has meant that energy industry emissions are among the fastest growing in Canada’s economy, rising by about 35 percent over the last decade. Part of addressing our national pollution problem, then, will clearly involve getting some regulatory control back over this dirtiest of our industries. Instead of allowing energy companies free reign to produce as much energy as possible, and then sell it to the lowest bidder, releasing massive pollution in their wake, we need instead to once again start planning our energy industry – focusing on meeting Canadians’ energy requirements at minimal cost (including environmental cost) (original emphasis, p.6).

The problem with the energy industry is therefore linked by the CAW to the neoliberal pressures that commodify as much petroleum as possible irrespective of the negative environmental impacts. Moreover, the CAW notes that with NAFTA, the percentage of greenhouse gas emissions due to energy exports to the United States increased by 50 megatonnes (or 109%) in 2000 compared with the previous decade.

The CAW's call for stronger, and more democratic national planning in order to address the socio-ecological crisis is echoed in a sixty page policy paper published by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) in the middle of the Kyoto ratification debates (CEP, 2002a). The CEP policy paper accomplishes two objectives: first, it
discuss in detail the science and effects of climate change (as well as the other environmental and international political problems associated with the energy industry), calling on the government to not only ratify Kyoto but to also begin making plans for further reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of up to sixty percent; secondly, after illustrating how neoliberal energy policies have harmed workers and consumers of electricity, the policy paper calls for a new national energy policy that will strengthen worker control and Canada's sovereignty over its energy resources. These objectives are eloquently outlined in the introductory paragraph:

Energy is the issue of the 21st century. Energy, and global warming, are environmental challenges that put the very future of our planet at risk. Energy is the source of vital human needs like warmth, light and transportation. Energy is an economic necessity required for the production of goods, and energy industries employ millions of people. For all these reasons, an historic struggle over energy policy is being fought out globally and in Canada. International treaties to stop climate change, environmental campaigns, and the forces of economic globalization are each advancing an energy agenda in conflict with each other. Yet there is an essential voice largely absent from these crucial decisions. It is time that governments, companies and decision makers include and listen to workers, and in particular to energy workers. There can be no successful, meaningful or viable energy policy for Canada that does not respect the views and interests of the working people who produce, distribute and process this country’s energy resources.

It is the exclusion of these interests that allows the world’s largest corporations and enormous bureaucracies of public utilities and regulatory boards to continue the policies that have brought the world to the brink of environmental disaster and alarmingly depleted this country’s energy resources. At the same time, our sovereignty and ability to govern Canada’s energy future is being eroded quickly by the economic force of globalization and continental integration with the United States (CEP, 2002a; p.3).

This CEP narrative not only presents a radical ideological challenge to the type of neoliberal policies pursued by oil and gas corporations (e.g. privatization, deregulation, free trade, etc.), but more fundamentally challenges who should be in control of setting energy policy (including climate change policy). The CEP discourse fundamentally challenges the way that a few dozen corporate CEOs are presented as the legitimate voice of the oil and gas 'industry.' We already saw, for example, how the federal government legitimated these corporate spokesmen (and their voluntarist prescriptions for reducing emissions) during 'consultations' for the National Climate Change Process. To be sure, the CEP does not represent all energy workers, nor would all its rank-and-file members necessarily agree with its policy positions; nevertheless, in stark contrast
to the autocracy of corporations, the CEP is a democratically run organization representing tens of thousands of workers in both the upstream and downstream industries at the heart of the carbon economy. The CEP policy itself was adopted in a democratic fashion (one member, one vote) at the 2002 CEP national convention in Toronto where the union leadership was subject to recall. Therefore, through both its discourse and practice of policy formation, the CEP embodies its struggle for a more democratic approach to climate change policy.

In an attempt to shape (what Gramsci called) the 'national collective will', the CEP promoted national economic development and long-term energy self-sufficiency through a variety of policies: the re-regulating the energy industry; pulling out of NAFTA so as to reduce both exports and foreign imports of oil; ending subsidies for oil and gas extraction; and raising royalties to make renewable energy more cost competitive with traditional energy sources (CEP, 2002). These proposals contrasted radically with the policies of the Liberal federal government ruling at the time. The Liberals had finished off the privatization of Petro-Canada and provided massive capital tax breaks and royalty holidays for oil and gas development in the tar sands (aimed at satisfying American demand). Meanwhile, the Harper Conservative government not only extended these subsidies but has worked to further privatize energy resources (e.g. the
Atomic Energy of Canada Limited) while championing the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America that would integrate Canada's energy resources even further into a North American free market and military system. It is clear, therefore, that the federal government is beholden to the quick profiteering of oil and gas companies in their dash to commodify as much oil and gas as possible for sale to the United States, rather than supporting a petrochemical industrial policy for Canada that would see more downstream, value-added jobs being created. As the CEP (2002) laments: “This value-added sector of the Canadian economy is being held hostage to continentalist energy policies, NAFTA and deregulation” (p.40).

In challenging NAFTA and loss of sovereignty over our energy resources (and hence our energy policy), the CEP does not directly link increasing emissions to increasing energy production and exports under NAFTA. Still, the union raises a critical if somewhat implicit connection between Canada's ability to develop an effective national climate change policy and the degree to which we have sovereign and public control over our natural energy resources. At the heart of the CEP critique, therefore, is a counterhegemonic claim on energy resources as a democratic right rather than a commodity:

...energy is not simply a commodity that Canadians can choose on the basis of quality or price. Energy is an essential public service, and energy production must be maintained constantly. Building energy facilities usually requires large investments that receive direct public investment or major public subsidies. For these reasons, the provision of energy should not be left to the so-called “free market” with its fundamental drive for short term profit regardless of social cost, environmental impact or consequences for worker health and safety.

Nevertheless, energy policy in Canada has been captured by the ideological business elite in its pursuit of globalization, privatization and deregulation. Step by step, the regulation of energy policy in Canada is being taken out of the hands of public bodies and turned over to profit seeking corporations. This dangerous trend is far from complete, and must be reversed (CEP, 2002a: p.30-31).

The battle over energy and climate change policy is therefore an ideological war of position over the very meaning of energy (and carbon) as much as its physical regulation. The CEP sees energy as something much more than a commodity to be passed through the circuits of capital accumulation. Rather, energy is seen as a 'public service' that is produced to meet human needs. The CEP's struggle for greater public control over energy highlights the way that debates over climate change policy have bolster the fundamental struggle for democracy. As I later argue, this
counterhegemonic struggle for democratic control over energy and climate change policy is in serious jeopardy of being compromised by organized labour's complicity in an ecological modernist discourse in which a language of 'partnership' is used to mask highly undemocratic power relations.

It is clear from all the above statements presented by the CLC, CAW and CEP that the often obscured link between neoliberalism and climate change is brought to the fore through the work of labour-environmental organic intellectuals. This provides an important ideological basis for labour-environmental alliance forming since it challenges the notion that we can try to solve climate change (or issues like good wages and working conditions) within a neoliberal political-economy. Neoliberalism is exposed (or can more easily be exposed) as a common enemy for those who would otherwise simply identify with either the 'environmental' or 'labour' movement respectively. In fact, many of these union policy documents consciously recognize the type of 'double movement' Polanyi wrote about, and highlight the potential for labour-environmental alliance-forming to give power and direction to the counter-movement. As the 2002 CLC Green Job Creation Project notes:

The transnational corporate agenda, expressed in globalization, privatization, deregulation and free trade, stands in the way [of a green job creation]. But there are already cracks in this agenda: an alliance of the labour movement with environmentalists and the social justice movement can move us even further down the road (p.2).

But despite the potential for labour-environmental alliance-forming to help bring about a broad counterhegemonic opposition to neoliberalism and climate change, such labour-environmental alliance-forming has had trouble progressing much beyond the ideological work of organic intellectuals articulated in union policy documents. I will now explore some of the on-the-ground examples of labour-environmental alliance-forming that emerged out of these counterhegemonic articulations. Despite realizing some important projects, labour-environmental alliance-forming has been hampered by ideological disagreements within labour over how best to respond to both neoliberalism and climate change.

6.3. HITTING THE GROUND: LABOUR-ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE-FORMING IN PRACTICE

Despite efforts by unions to promote Kyoto as an opportunity for green job creation, the government did very little to stimulate job creation specifically aimed at reducing greenhouse
gas emissions. One early and notable exception, however, is the Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF) Better Building Partnership, spearheaded by City of Toronto Councillor Tony O'Donohue after he attended the first international climate change conference in Toronto in 1988 (TAF, 2001). In 1990, the City of Toronto resolved to reduce community-wide emissions twenty percent from 1990 levels by 2005. To assist with reaching this goal, a $23 million endowment fund was established in 1991 through the sale of City property. Toronto was one of the first municipalities in the world to make emission reduction commitments, and the only municipality to establish a fund dedicated to this goal. As an arms length agency, the Toronto Atmospheric Fund supports a range of projects mostly centered on improving energy efficiency particularly in high-rise homes, encouraging local renewable energy capacity, reducing transportation emissions, and increasing public awareness of climate change.

In 1996, the Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF) initiated the Better Building Partnership (BBP), which provides financial securities so that public and private sector building managers can leverage loans for conducting energy efficiency retrofits. After the City consulted with unions, landlords, construction companies, environmental groups and financial institutions, the Toronto Atmospheric Fund allocated over $2.6 million to the BBP. As of 2007, the BBP boasts that this money has generated an economic impact of $161 million, with 636 buildings registering for the programme, generating 2 530 person years of employment, $19 million per year in energy savings, and 200 500 tonnes per year of CO2 emission reductions.94

To be sure, the BBP is not a revolutionary project. For one thing, the TAF is based on the type of 'public-private partnerships' championed by ecological modernist discourse. Major sponsors for the TAF include oil and gas companies like Enbridge Consumer Gas and Suncor Energy (a major developer of the Albertan tar sands). The project is also relatively small and energy efficiency is arguably one of the easier emission reduction strategies to implement due to the associated short-term cost savings (much of which is captured by landlords and corporations). More fundamentally, the BBP reflects the resistance of ecological modernist policy approaches to regulation. Changing the building code would arguably be far more effective than a small revolving fund for building retrofits. Nevertheless, the BBP provided labour-environmentalists with a concrete example of how emission reductions could spur job growth. For example, the CLC (2002) cites the BBP as the major impetus for its Green Job

Creation Project. The BBP continues to be used by labour leaders in speeches to push for a much broader programme of building retrofits across the country. In 2009, labour-environmental organic intellectuals organizing through the Toronto and York Region Labour Council's 'Good Jobs Coalition', have developed the idea of building retrofits into a much more ambitious programme to 'retrofit our communities.’ This more ambitious programme hopes to ensure that good green jobs are created through an equity and social justice framework.\(^95\) Therefore, while the vision encompassed by the TAF may have been reformist at best, it still remains an important motivation for more critical labour-environmental alliance-forming.

Another early example of labour-environmental alliance-forming aimed at job creation and emission reductions was the Green Car Industrial Strategy launched in 2002 by the CAW, Greenpeace, the David Suzuki Foundation and the New Democratic Party. The Green Car Industrial Strategy called for the federal government to adopt several fiscal and regulatory measures to bolster Canadian production and consumption of fuel efficient and alternative fuel cars. These measures included: a legislated twenty-five percent improvement in the average fuel efficiency of motor vehicles sold in Canada by 2010; working with California and New York to establish a jurisdiction to facilitate the green car market; providing a GST rebate for Canadians to buy 'alternative fuel vehicles'; and subsidies to the automotive industry to facilitate the design and production of green cars in Canada.\(^96\) This strategy was by no means radical; after all, the twenty-five percent increase in efficiency was already stated as a target in the Liberal's 2002 Climate Change Plan for Canada. And although the political campaign behind the Strategy did not amount to any new legislation, the heavy involvement of the New Democratic Party in this campaign shows how green industrial strategies developed by unions successfully took on a broader political form. Moreover, the Green Car Industrial Strategy made a significant ideological contribution in explicitly linking the Canadian auto industry's “deepest economic downturn in a generation” to the need for a shift towards green production.\(^97\) A national auto

---

\(^95\) The Good Jobs Coalition was formed in the fall of 2008 by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council in direct response to the recession. More than 1000 community and labour activists were invited to come together at the “Good Jobs For All Summit” held on 22 November 2008 at the Toronto Metro Convention Centre. The Summit had a strong 'green job' focus, and a Green Jobs for All sub-committee was formed afterwards comprising of union, community and environmental activists. I have attended all the regular meetings of this sub-committee at which ideas like 'retrofit our communities' have arisen as potential projects to mobilize around.


\(^97\) *Loc cit.*, “Introduction.”
strategy was called for that would improve the long-term job security of workers as well as meet the long-term necessity of reducing auto emissions. In contrast, leaving these decisions up to Canadian auto producers and the 'free-market' would only lead to the pursuit of short-term profits through the unsustainable production of light-duty trucks like SUVs. Unfortunately, the groups involved with the Green Car Industrial Strategy did not engage in serious mobilization around its key demands. With little opposition, the Canadian auto makers continued to produce fuel inefficient vehicles—the consequences of which I discuss in detail further below.

Internal educational programmes for union activists have been another political form in which union climate change policies are manifest. Regular educational workshops are organized by the health, safety and environment departments of the major industrial unions to mobilize the members who sit on environmental committees at the local or regional levels. For these workshops, and for broader distribution to the public, the CAW published a new information booklet on environmental issues (including climate change) every year from 2002 onwards, in partnership with the Workers Health and Safety Centre. Not only did the CAW have an internal member education program on the environment, but it also trained CAW members to give annual Earth Day presentations to approximately 65,000 students at primary and secondary schools across the country. Although CAW activists engaged in this project told me there were “mixed results” in trying to grab students' imagination (and attention), bringing a labour-environmental perspective directly into the schools is a significant example of labour's attempt to shape the collective will.

Moreover, in 2003 the CAW began taking the necessary steps to build a seventy-five meter wind turbine on the compound of their Port Elgin Family Education Centre. The aim of this turbine is to “educate CAW members and the public at large on global warming, climate change and pollution issues, provide leadership in meeting Canada's Kyoto commitment and reduce our reliance on nonrenewable energy sources.” Using members’ dues to build a wind turbine reflects a serious commitment by the CAW to reduce emissions and demonstrate the viability of green production. At the time the CAW began this project there were only 10 wind turbines operating in Ontario, meaning that the CAW needed to negotiate through significant bureaucratic tape in trying to obtain the required regulatory approvals from all three levels of

---

98 The Workers Health & Safety Centre is one of the thirteen organizations funded by Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.
100 CAW Family Education Centre, [no date], “Clean, Wind Energy at the CAW Centre,” Pamphlet, p.2.
government. The difficult experience of these early wind projects helped motivate the Ontario Liberal government to streamline the regulatory process in the 2009 Green Energy Act. The CAW's wind turbine project therefore contributed to the overall development of the wind energy industry in Ontario. The CAW project has also made a concerted effort to support the domestic design and production of its turbine tower, blades and foundations, even though the generator must be imported since there is no Canadian manufacturer. In effect, the CAW Port Elgin windmill embodied the vision of the CAW and other industrial unions for establishing more renewable energy production in Canada as a way of simultaneously addressing the parallel manufacturing and climate crisis. More fundamentally, the CAW wind turbine demonstrates labour's determination to help lead the planning (conception) of production, environmental policy and society more broadly—despite the increasing marginalization of labour by the hegemonic bloc in the era of neoliberalism.

But if windmills became an early symbol of the 'green jobs movement' for labour, they also were adopted by the champions of ecological modernization to symbolize the potential to green capitalism. The windmill therefore is a contested symbol in the same way that ecological modernization remains a debated political vision. For example, the extra efforts and expense made by the CAW to procure windmill components from Canadian, unionized companies, contrasts with the corporate-led drive towards renewable energy production in which the primary concern is securing the lowest cost for wind turbine parts and installation labour (from anywhere, anyhow). Therefore, the CAW wind turbine project provides us with an important reminder that the fight for 'green' production and 'green' jobs is not necessarily synonymous with the fight for 'good' production and 'good' jobs. I later return to this debate in my critique of ecological modernization (chapter seven).

I have already mentioned the concrete examples of labour-environmental alliance-forming undertaken by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) during the Kyoto debates. The CEP engaged in political lobbying at the federal level in favour of Kyoto ratification and a fund for just transition. The CEP's lobby campaign in the fall of 2002 involved: directly meeting with federal policy-makers; holding regional information forums and media events in Edmonton, Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal; an internal education campaign; and resolutions and statements for endorsement by organizations and individuals, respectively. Shortly after Kyoto was ratified, the CEP and CLC went on to join “KyotoSmart,” which described itself as “a network comprised of provincial governments as well as a diversity
of industry, labour, municipal and environmental organizations.”101 Between 2003-2006, KyotoSmart essentially worked as a federal lobby group. Overall, however, KyotoSmart did not really produce much aside from two letters to Prime Minister Martin, one letter to Rona Ambrose when she became Harper's Minister of the Environment, and a brief (five page) position paper that sets out a vision (rather than specific policy prescriptions) to guide the federal government's Kyoto implementation plan. The network also worked to coordinate official side events and parallel events during the 2005 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Montréal. While it is difficult to determine the impact that KyotoSmart had on government policy, the group's major desire for a federal emissions trading system, greater incentives for renewable energy, and a just transition program were all essentially ignored by the Liberal and subsequent Conservative governments. Notably, the government did not seem to respond to KyotoSmart's appeal to be more directly involved in consultations for the government's Kyoto implementation planning.

Although KyotoSmart seems to have failed at influencing policy, it does mark an important shift by the CEP (and other unions) towards accepting an ecological modernization discourse. Besides the CEP and some environmental organizations, KyotoSmart's membership included renewable energy business associations (e.g. Canada Wind Energy Association), 'green' corporations and supposedly 'environmental' provincial governments. But these actors did not necessarily share the CEP's vision for a more democratic, worker-oriented, national development strategy (discussed earlier). So in trying to find 'common ground' with these green entrepreneurs and bourgeois provincial politicians, rather than trying to mobilize a grassroots base around its more radical demands, the CEP came to accept the discourse of ecological modernization. For example, one of KyotoSmart's first press releases, signed by the CEP and other members of the coalition, argues that:

> Canada’s [climate change] plan must provide the right incentives to shift our economy and our society to lower emissions by advancing Canadian innovation, supporting competitiveness and sustainable communities, and providing incentives for new and existing low emission technologies. The plan should encourage action at home to maximize the environmental, technological and health benefits for Canadians.102

The focus on 'innovation', 'technology' and 'supporting competitiveness' echo an ecological

---


102 Ibid.
modernist vision that seems removed from the more counterhegemonic vision articulated in earlier CEP policies.

### 6.4 Explaining the Challenges Faced by Labour-Environmental Alliance-Forming

With a few exceptions, there have not been many concrete, on-the-ground examples of labour-environmental alliance-forming around the issue of climate change—especially not in the period immediately following the Kyoto debates (2003-2007). Needless to say, the government was never forced to implement any kind of green job creation programme. Even the concrete examples of labour-environmental alliance-forming that did occur before 2003 (outlined above), did not always reflect the more radical vision articulated in the climate change policy documents of unions—although, direct engagements by the CAW in community education programmes and green production do stand out. Meanwhile, with the formation of formal coalitions like KyotoSmart, we see a marked shift by unions towards accepting an ecological modernist discourse. In what follows, I try to explain why only weak labour-environmental alliance-forming might have occurred following labour's support for the ratification of Kyoto. Alliance-forming has been shaped by internal disagreement within the labour movement over how to best reduce emissions, as well as by the strategic responses of unions to the deepening manufacturing crisis and political crisis amongst the federal bourgeois parties. I then go on to identify a new surge of labour-environmental alliance-forming led by the USW (beginning in 2005) that uses an ecological modernist discourse to advocate for the (re)institution of Fordist social relations.

From the outset, we must recognize that labour-environmental alliance-forming aimed at reducing emissions and creating green jobs was no easy task given the resistance to both of these goals by the hegemonic bloc. As I showed in chapter five, there was little indication until 2005 that the state-capital alliance was going to move beyond a voluntarist climate change policy, and even the ecological modernist rhetoric of 'green jobs' had not yet been taken up by the hegemonic bloc. This political context alone made labour-environmental alliance-forming, especially in its most radical forms, a challenging undertaking. The green job creation strategies envisioned by labour to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and spur job growth involved a type and degree of socio-ecological planning that contradicted the neoliberal economic policies and related neoliberal climate change policies of the hegemonic bloc. Therefore, any critical analysis of labour-environmental alliance-forming should not lose sight of the extremely antagonist
political climate in which the organic intellectuals leading this alliance-forming found themselves.

Weak labour-environmental alliance-forming cannot be blamed on a shortfall in resources of labour organizations or because of an *a priori* determination of competing priorities ('interests'). After all, through the drafting of environmental policies, labour-environmental organic intellectuals reconciled the apparent contradictions of union priorities into a signal counterhegemonic vision. As we have seen, the fight for other union priorities like good wages, job security, etc. were all incorporated into the new vision for a green economy and a 'sustainable society'. These policies recognized, for example, that a green industrial strategy could both reach ecological objectives while leading to overall job creation (albeit with some potential job losses in certain areas, which could be addressed through a just transition programme). Therefore, low levels of labour-environmental alliance-forming follow Kyoto ratification were not due to a lack of resources or other competing priorities *per se*, so much as how the rank-and-file and leadership within these unions conceptualized these priorities and what resources they put towards these priorities accordingly. Unions that were already engaged in a plethora of campaigns championing the traditional 'meat and potato' issues of unions chose not to fight these struggles along a more eco-socialist trajectory. To fully understand why an eco-socialist programme was rejected by the union's top brass leadership, or never called for by the ordinary rank-and-file membership, would require a much more extensive examination of union culture and labour history than this paper is able to afford. Nevertheless, some more cursory insights can be noted based on my interviews with union labour-environmental activists and a general analysis of internal union politics around the issue of climate change policy. Moreover, my historical overview of labour-environmental alliance-forming in chapter four offers some further insights into the types of strategic decisions unions have been forced to make in response to neoliberalism and climate change policies.

To begin with, there exists a dialectic between the political positions taken by the union's top brass and the attitudes of rank-and-file members. The notion that top union brass may be concerned foremost about things like winning membership elections to stay in office, might suggest they tend to follow the general will of the membership; however, it must also be noted that members look to their elected officials for visionary leadership. In other words, top brass officials can afford to take political risks to push the membership towards engaging in a particular fight in a particular way—indeed if they do not, they may risk being supplanted by
other aspiring leaders who do convey a particular vision for labour struggle that strikes an accord with the membership. In brief, the ideology or political vision of the top union brass matters significantly in the overall direction a union takes. This is even more true for industrial unions given that their organizational structure is more hierarchical than public sector unions like CUPE, meaning that the national executive has more leeway in setting policy and allocating resources for the entire membership at all locals. It is therefore telling that in separate interviews, two senior level staff administrators from two major industrial unions who have worked for over a decade on developing environmental policies of unions, told me that the union's top brass have been reluctant to accept a political mobilization strategy based on labour-environmental alliance-forming. This lack of buy-in from the national executive leadership would help explain why these industrial unions did not pursue labour-environmental alliance-forming as a central mobilizing strategy.

On the other hand, even if some of the top brass did see the value of labour-environmental alliance-forming, they may not have felt that enough of the membership would have supported their lead on the issue given their assessment of the prevailing cultural attitudes of the rank-and-file toward environmental issues. But even in this case, we could be critical of the low priority that top brass gave to formal education programmes geared at raising rank-and-file members' awareness around environmental issues and the political potential of a green industrial policy. Even the CAW, which stands out amongst Canadian unions for their exceptional internal and community environmental education programmes, would still arguably have needed a much more intensive education programme to engage all their members in a counterhegemonic response to the neoliberal structural changes in the auto sector that I discuss below. But even if we can critique the ideological priority given to union education programming, we must also recognized that time and financial resources necessarily constrain, to some degree, the capacity for implementing educational programmes. This is especially true during an economic downturn when there is a drop in member dues and more money must be spent simply to maintain strike-lines. In any case, in trying to fully understand union culture and how rank-and-file members might come to support or resist counterhegemonic struggle around climate change, we must not only examine the formal educational programming of unions, but also the ways that union members learn informally through various political actions, campaigns, and interaction with environmental activists (Sawchuck, 2009). This points to the need for much greater ethnographic study that engages more extensively with rank-and-file members so as to
understand how labour-environmental alliance-forming is a process of counterhegemonic learning in the day-to-day lives of these members.

Even though all major unions supported Kyoto, labour-environmental alliance-forming following ratification was hindered, in part, by disagreement between and within labour organizations about how best to reduce emissions. These disagreements rest on how far these groups were willing to accept an ecological modernist faith in technology coupled with various manifestations of militant particularism stemming from fears over job-loss. A major point of disagreement has been around the role of nuclear and coal power in reducing emissions.103

Thanks to union mergers and organizing drives, every major public and private sector union in Canada now has some members working in the nuclear (including uranium) industry, making nuclear power a politically sensitive topic (see Table 6.3). These workers are structurally tied to nuclear power through fears of job security and pensions that rely on the continued contributions of new workers entering into the companies. Some unions even have a direct ownership stake in nuclear companies. The Power Workers’ Union (which is part of CUPE) and The Society of Energy Professionals, for example, have a 5.2% ownership stake in the Bruce Power nuclear facility.104 The national governing body of Canada's largest union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has been generally silent on nuclear and coal power, and the national union body has not published any specific energy or comprehensive environmental policies. According to one labour-environmental activist working inside the organization at the national level, CUPE has been reluctant to support renewable energy (wind and solar) because of fears that this would shift energy production into private hands rather than public utilities. Environmental organizations have done little to alleviate these fears with their calls to 'decentralize' energy production through community energy co-operatives and small-scale, household operations that fail to address what this would mean for the type of good paying, unionized jobs that currently characterize more centralized nuclear and coal power generation. During its 2007 national convention, CUPE members from across the country voted in favour of a pro-nuclear position contained within an energy policy resolution put onto the convention floor by three large union locals covering members at Hydro-Québec (CUPE Locals 1500, 2000, 4250).105 The IBEW has

103 Turning to nuclear energy as a climate change mitigation strategy has also been debated amongst environmental organizations, but here I focus on the debate occurring amongst unions.
105 CUPE, “Resolution No.188 (Energy),” Passed at the 2007 CUPE National Convention, available on-line
likewise been supportive of building new nuclear plants. Meanwhile, the USW and CAW have largely avoided taking a stance on nuclear energy, heavily downplaying the issue by merely stating in their policies that more research is needed to determine whether the benefits outweigh the costs. The CEP, on the other hand, presented a more detailed discussion of the environmental and economic problems with nuclear power in their 2002 *Energy Policy*. This policy asserts unambiguously that “CEP cannot support an expansion of nuclear power in Canada” due to “deep public distrust of nuclear power, large capital costs and prohibitive liability costs, and the difficult problem of radioactive waste material from nuclear power” (CEP, 2002: p.46). The range of union policies on nuclear energy clearly resists any kind of reductionist analysis as to how 'labour' (as a homogenously constructed entity) views energy and environmental issues, and speaks to the difficulties faced by organic intellectuals in forging a counterhegemonic labour-environmental bloc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canadian Unions with Members in the Nuclear Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Workers’ Union (PWU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Steel Workers (USW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication, Energy &amp; Paperworkers Union (CEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Association of Machinists &amp; Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society of Professional Engineers and Associates (SPEA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Association of Firefighters (IAFF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk River Technicians and Technologists Union (CRTT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3 Unions with members in the nuclear industry
(Source: Canadian Nuclear Workers Council, 2009)

The fate of coal in the face of climate change is another sensitive topic for those unions whose members are involved with coal mining and the use of coal in power plants. Although all national unions have publicly supported shifting away from coal power towards renewable energy, the extent and speed of this shift is still internally debated. Some unions such as the IBEW, USW and CUPE have argued in favour of 'clean coal technology,' including carbon capture and storage technologies which are fiercely criticized by environmental organizations for being unproven, risky and a diversion from investment in renewables. Probably the most vocal

union proponent of nuclear and coal power in Canada is the Power Workers Union, representing 15,000 members in the energy generation and distribution sector in Ontario. The PWU is one of the largest and richest locals within CUPE, but has been notorious for taking political positions that diverge with policies set by CUPE Ontario or CUPE National. For example, during the fight against the privatization of Ontario Hydro during the late 1990s, the PWU originally was opposed to privatization but then flip-flopped in favour (Swift & Stewart, 2005). Perhaps indicative of its more conservative positions, the PWU has tried hard to maintain a separate identity within CUPE, even maintaining its own logo and the name “Power Workers Union” rather than being referred to by its local number under CUPE (“Local 1000”) as is the customary practice.

The PWU's form of 'business unionism' contrasts markedly with the community-engaged 'social unionism' of the CAW. Still, the PWU has actively followed legislative changes to energy production, regulation and distribution, frequently sending submissions to legislative committees and task forces setup to examine energy policy. The PWU also launched a public awareness campaign in 2005 called “A Better Energy Plan” to advocate for an increase in the energy supply through a mix of sources that included 'clean coal', hydro, nuclear, 'green power' (wind, solar, geothermal), and 'energy efficiency.' The campaign was largely a response to McGuinty's 2003 election promise to close Ontario's coal-fired power plants to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but was also a response to the long-term planning process being undertaken by the Ontario Power Authority that would determine Ontario's next generation of energy infrastructure. As part of the campaign, the PWU made legislative submissions and launched a media campaign that involved media releases, advertisements and letters to the editor. In one 2005 media release, entitled “Nuclear and Cleaner Coal Are Key to Ontario’s Kyoto Response,” the President of the PWU, Dan Mackinnon, argued that:

...the Ontario government’s pledge to close the province’s coal-fired generating plants is a big mistake. The province’s economy, electricity consumers and electricity system reliability will suffer. Ontario is Canada’s industrial heartland - electricity is the life blood. For Kyoto to work here it must be both effective and affordable. There is a better option – refurbish additional nuclear generation and finish the job of reducing pollution from the province’s coal plants.106

Mackinnon does not challenge Kyoto itself in this statement but rather focuses his critique on the

means through which the provincial government aims to reduce emissions. One of the major justifications that Mackinnon makes for keeping coal plants open is that a shift to renewables or natural gas-fired power plants would unfairly burden low income families. This concern for the distributive costs of increasing energy prices as we shift to a post-carbon economy must surely be pursued by social justice organizations like unions. However, fighting for environmental justice was only a secondary concern during the PWU’s campaign. Tellingly, the PWU did not try to articulate a policy that would relieve the economic burden felt by low income families while still allowing for the decommissioning of coal plants—for example, through energy pricing scaled to income or through reformed tax credits. Rather, advertisements used by the PWU focused on scaring consumers about the “price hikes” that would result from closing coal power plants, while other ads intentionally cited misleading information about the greenhouse gas emission from coal power plants. Figure 6.3, for example, shows an advertisement in the local paper of an Ottawa municipality that reads “CLEAN COAL EMITS 96.4% LESS POLLUTION.”

Figure 6.3: Power Workers’ Union Clean Coal Advertisement (Source: Nepean This Week, 20 October 2006)

---

107 Nepean This Week, No.42, October 20, 2006, p. 20.
This ad prompted the Ontario Clean Air Alliance to point out that the 96.4% reduction only refers to a decrease in sulphur dioxide emissions through the use of end-of-pipe technologies. The Alliance heavily criticized the PWU for obscuring the fact that such end-of-pipe technologies “would do nothing to reduce the coal plants’ greenhouse gas emissions that cause dangerous climate change.”108 The Ontario Clean Air Alliance would again butt heads with the PWU during an exchange of letters to the editor in 2009 over the suitability of building new nuclear plants.109 These antagonistic interchanges serve to expose the tensions between the labour and environmental movements around issues of emission reduction policies. Moreover, considering the fact that the Ontario Clean Air Alliance includes as part of its membership the CAW (both as the national union in addition to two regional environmental committees), the disagreement between the Alliance and the PWU reflects broader political tensions within the ‘labour movement’ itself on the issue of climate change policy.

The tensions in the labour movement around nuclear and coal energy are also clearly revealed in a 2007 report written by the Canadian Labour Congress' Task Force on Power Generation. The Task Force was struck at the 2005 CLC national convention, “to develop a comprehensive policy on the role of coal-generated and nuclear power in Canada's energy future” (CLC, 2007: p.1). All major unions in the CLC participated in the Task Force. The report echoes many of the earlier positions of labour against privatization and deregulation while arguing for a nationally-oriented power generation and distribution system. Although the benefits of renewable energy and energy efficiency are emphasized, the report essentially endorses all existing power sources, including nuclear power and 'clean coal' (through carbon capture and storage). The report concludes by stating that “the Task Force favours a gradual, planned transition to power generation from renewables but recognizes that no major current source of power can or should be eliminated from consideration” (p.67). Essentially, the Task Force argues that nuclear and coal must continue to be used since consumer demand for energy cannot be curtailed enough to simply rely on renewables, and a rapid transition to renewable energy would raise energy prices which would ultimately create job losses. This reformist conclusion reflects the compromise made between those unions on the Task Force like CUPE representing the PWU (staunch advocates of coal and nuclear) and unions like the CEP whose

own energy policy argued much more decisively against nuclear and coal.

Ultimately, support for clean coal and nuclear by PWU and other unions reflects a militant particularism in the face of few real existing alternatives for workers in these sectors. These internal disagreements can only be overcome through serious inter-union discussions on energy and environmental policies, which are unfortunately rare. Moreover, unions (and environmental organizations) must also be sufficiently educated and mobilized internally to fight and win against the hegemonic bloc for the implementation of comprehensive just transition and green job creation programmes. So long as unions endorse nuclear and 'clean coal', they will continue to find it difficult to work with many environmental organizations. For example, one of the most organized and well-funded networks in Canada that is trying to influence climate change policy is Climate Action Network Canada (CANC). Established in 2002, CANC is “a nation-wide coalition of 50 environmental, faith, development, aboriginal, health, and youth organizations committed to making action on climate change a reality.”110 CANC is similar to KyotoSmart in that its political work is aimed primarily at lobbying through letter writing to high-level politicians. But unlike KyotoSmart, CANC's membership does not include governments or corporations, and it also produces more publications and holds more regular coordinating meetings. But the Mandate and Charter of CANC, that prospective members must sign, squarely rejects nuclear and coal as future energy sources and states that they must be phased out. This points to an important tension therefore between CANC and some labour organizations over the issues of nuclear and coal energy that could frustrate labour-environmental alliance-forming.

6.5 A DEFENSIVE RESPONSE: THE CANADIAN AUTO WORKERS’ RESPONSE TO THE DEEPENING MANUFACTURING CRISIS

Despite the CAW's early commitment to labour-environmental alliance-forming during the Kyoto debates, by 2007—and in the context of worsening political-economic conditions in the auto sector—the CAW national leadership had adopted a more defensive, corporatist strategy towards both climate change policy and neoliberal structuring of the economy. This worked to further undermine labour-environmental alliance-forming while helping to facilitate a hegemonic

---

shift towards the language of ecological modernization. Overall, the CAW (or at least the CAW national leadership) seems to have increasingly drifted away from it’s commitment to the Kyoto Protocol made in 2002. In a letter to the *National Post* summarizing the CAW's policy on Kyoto in 2002, CAW President Buzz Hargrove projected both strong moral and economic arguments in favour of Kyoto:

> As long as we do more work, not less, to protect the environment, Kyoto will be good for industry as well as for the planet. Of course, the most important reason for supporting Kyoto has nothing to do with the economy -- and everything to do with our grand-children and their grandchildren. We shudder at the thought of the hellish lives they will be forced to live if the nations of the world cannot start to work together to limit climate change. Canada must do its part in this global effort. And if we do it right, we'll create jobs and strengthen our economy at the same time.  

By 2007, however, Hargrove's tone had changed and he was widely quoted by the media and politicians having made statements that generated doubt and antagonism towards reaching the Kyoto targets. Testifying before a special federal legislative committee setup in December 2006 to amend Bill C30 (Canada's Clean Air and Climate Change Act), Hargrove appeared to give up on Kyoto and spoke against Canada taking an ethical position on emission reductions if other countries were not doing the same:

> First, it's impossible to get there [to the Kyoto targets] by 2008 and 2012. That would be the point I would make. Even if Canada did everything possible, it couldn't do it by itself. If the United States doesn't do it, and if other major powers around the world don't move in lockstep, then you still have a problem. Why would we jeopardize everything that Canadians hold dear while others are going merrily along their way?

During his testimony, Hargrove failed to acknowledge the possibility for Canada to buy international credits to meet its Kyoto commitment, even after he was reminded of this option. Rather, Hargrove drew attention to the crisis in the domestic auto sector (described below) and the damaging role that environmentalists and environmental policies were playing in deepening this crisis, according to him. Although Hargrove never directly spoke against Kyoto, he


managed to speak from both sides of his mouth at the same time, committing to the “theory” and “principle” of Kyoto while arguing that the existing timelines could not be met. For example, in February 2007, Hargrove was again quoted in the *National Post* only this time complaining that:

> It [trying to reach the Kyoto deadlines] would be devastating for the whole community, anybody that signed on . . . It's not even a remote possibility. No prime minister in any one of the parties in the House of Commons is going to bring in any kind of regulation that says we have to do that. It would be suicidal for our economy.

> We have to find an intelligent way to walk lock-step with the international community and I think Kyoto is the basis for doing that, the timelines obviously have to be adjusted to meet the new reality, but I think in principle and in theory that is the only way to go.¹¹³

Hargrove's shift away from supporting Kyoto deadlines and his criticism of 'the environmental movement' was quickly picked up by the media. In one *Toronto Star* article simply entitled, “Green insanity looms: CAW,” Hargrove was quoted as having warned that: “We stand to lose 150,000 jobs in our auto industry if the insanity of this environmental movement is allowed to continue.”¹¹⁴ Hargrove was therefore at once defining himself, and autoworkers, apart from 'the environmental movement', while playing into the well-worn 'jobs versus the economy' debate.

The marked shift in Hargrove’s discourse away from Kyoto, and his growing antagonism with 'the environmental movement', must be understood against structural changes in the political-economy of auto production in Canada between 2002-2008. At the very time that political pressure was mounting at all levels of government to enact tougher auto emissions standards to help address global warming, the Canadian auto sector was experiencing a deepening economic crisis. During the 2008 financial collapse, auto producers around the world faced bankruptcy as credit dried up and both auto producers and customers could not make payments. By the spring of 2009, two of the 'Big Three' North American automakers had already filed for bankruptcy (General Motors and Chrysler). North American automakers were especially hard hit during the financial collapse due to the fact that they had already been experiencing a decade-long realization crisis (also known as a shortage of commodity demand, or 'overcapacity'). Although the Canadian auto sector remained profitable every year between

---


1972-2008 except in 2002, the Canadian auto industry saw their profits levels decline each year during the period between 1998-2007 (Figure 6.4).

This extended economic crisis has resulted with a loss of market share by Canadian auto producers, a stagnation in overall production and, most importantly, a loss of CAW jobs in Canada. The CAW members who have managed to keep their jobs have also been faced with concessionary bargaining demands from their employers as the Canadian auto companies have tried to 'restructure' and 'cut costs' in order to restore profit margins. Between 1999-2008, Canadian auto producers lost about twenty percent market share to imported vehicles (Figure 6.5) while their overall production also fell after reaching a peak in 1999 (Figure 6.6).
Reports covering employment in the automotive sector during this period vary depending upon methodology, but all generally agree on the same trends. Industry Canada (2007) reports that employment in automotive manufacturing experienced a recovery in the 1990s, then stagnated in the early 2000s before falling considerably in the late 2000s (see Table 6.4). Statistics Canada reports that the motor vehicle parts sector saw an increase of 37,200 jobs (36.4%) between 1998-2004, while the motor vehicle manufacturing had a more modest increase of 3,800 jobs (5%) in the same period (Bernard, 2009). However, in just the four year period between 2004-2008, the motor vehicle parts sector lost 40,600 jobs (29%), more than erasing any gains made during the previous period, while motor vehicle manufacturing lost 15,900 (19.8%), respectively.
Several factors contributed to the realization crisis experienced by the Big Three in Canada, including: a rise in the price of the Canadian dollar, unfavourable free trade agreements and shifting trends in consumer demand. To begin with, the Canadian dollar rose steadily against the United States Dollar (USD) from $0.66 USD in January 1999 to a high of $1.09USD in November 2007, then gradually declining before the financial collapse in the fall of 2008 after which it fluctuated between $0.80USD and $0.90.\textsuperscript{115} The effective exchange rate for the Canadian dollar—which measures the value of the Canadian dollar vis-à-vis the currencies of Canada's six most important trading partners—shows a similar trend (Figure 6.6).\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\hline
Motor Vehicle Assembly & 55 & 58 & 57 & 56 & 53 & 52 & 50 & 50 & 50 & 47 \\
\hline
Truck Bodies and Trailers & 16 & 18 & 18 & 18 & 19 & 17 & 18 & 18 & 18 & 19 \\
\hline
Automotive Parts and Accessories & 81 & 87 & 93 & 98 & 99 & 97 & 98 & 97 & 97 & 92 \\
\hline
\textbf{Total Automotive Manufacturing} & \textbf{152} & \textbf{163} & \textbf{168} & \textbf{172} & \textbf{171} & \textbf{166} & \textbf{166} & \textbf{165} & \textbf{165} & \textbf{158} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Canadian employment in the automotive sector (annual average in thousands) (Source: Industry Canada, 2007)}
\end{table}


\textsuperscript{116} The Canadian-dollar effective exchange rate index is a weighted average of bilateral exchange rates for the Canadian dollar measured against six of Canada's major trading partners' currencies: the U.S. dollar, the European Union euro, the Japanese yen, the U.K. pound, the Chinese yuan, and the Mexican peso.
The price surge of the Canadian dollar over the past decade is partly attributed to a weakening US economy (and dollar), but also corresponds with increasing global demand for Canadian oil and minerals, in addition to currency speculation. In any case, a high Canadian dollar made imported vehicles cheaper while making Canadian exports more expensive globally, helping bolster demand in Canada for imported vehicles while reducing sales of Canadian vehicles abroad.

Besides a high dollar, the CAW (2008a) also argues that trade liberalization has worked against Canadian auto production since the Canadian government has opened Canada's markets to foreign producers—especially from Japan, Germany and South Korea—without these countries opening up their own auto markets to Canadian exports (of course, this argument assumes that there would be demand in these countries for the larger type of vehicles produced in Canada). The CAW highlights Canada's trade imbalance with these countries (Figure 6.7) in calling for new trade conditions similar to the 1965 Auto Pact in North America. The Auto Pact allowed for the full rationalization of the North American auto industry, and ensured that for every dollar of vehicles sold in Canada one dollar worth of vehicles had to be built in Canada. However, the Auto Pact did not hold up to neoliberal pressures, and was ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization in 2001. With the abolishment of the Auto Pact, the previous tariffs paid by these foreign corporations were abolished making imports cheaper. This helps explain
the flood of imported vehicles into the Canadian market.

As a higher Canadian dollar and lower tariffs allowed foreign vehicles to flood the North American market, the Big Three strategically turned to producing larger vehicles to gain higher marginal profits on the increasingly popular large vehicle models such as SUVs.\textsuperscript{117} The Big Three auto companies specifically targeted Canada for the location of production facilities for larger vehicles since the Auto Pact had already led to the concentration of large vehicle assembly in Canada. At the 2007 CAW Council—the parliament of the CAW responsible for setting union policy—Hargrove explained this historical development while trying to defend CAW jobs tied to the production of large vehicles:

> We didn't make the decision to build the big trucks, or the big cars, or the big engines, or the big stampings, or the big transmissions in Canada. The corporations did. The government, when they put together the Auto Pact, encouraged them to do that. The Auto Pact was on a dollar value basis. Whatever you sold in Canada in dollar terms, you had to build in Canada. It was easy to meet those standards by putting up plants to build more expensive, larger vehicles in our country. We developed an expertise - that's obvious when

you go into our plants. Our industry got good at it, and we keep building these large vehicles.\textsuperscript{118}

The Big Three's shift away from small vehicle production meant that in 2006, two-thirds of the 2.5 million vehicles built in Canada were in the largest size categories, with more than eighty percent of engines built in Canada being V8 engines and the rest being V6 engines.\textsuperscript{119} This means that by 2007, no four-cylinder engines were being built by CAW members. Consequently, the Big Three's corporate strategy of producing large vehicle in Canada was vulnerable to environmental policies aimed at reducing smog and greenhouse gas emissions, in addition to increasing gas prices and a recession that would make the purchase of larger, more expensive vehicles less inviting for consumers.\textsuperscript{120}

The ways in which both the CAW and environmental organizations chose to address the political-economic challenges facing unionized auto workers in the country, unfortunately undermined labour-environmental alliance-forming around climate change. For their part, environmental organizations remained largely silent as thousands of autoworkers lost their livelihoods throughout the 2000s. The one noted exception might be the work of Greenpeace and the David Suzuki Foundation's participation in the 2002 Green Car Industrial Strategy; however, this project was not pursued with much enthusiasm and soon petered out. By failing to address the impacts that their emission reduction policy prescriptions would have on specific groups of workers, and how to mitigate for this, environmental organizations failed to win over the trust of unions.

In turn, the CAW responded to the structural changes facing Canadian auto production with a growing militant particularism. As the 2000s progressed, the CAW increasingly started


viewing environmental policies that discriminated against larger vehicles as a direct threat to CAW members—especially in light of ongoing layoffs and plant closures. By 2007, Hargrove was responding to the auto crisis both by lashing out at 'environmentalists' while at the same time promoting SUV culture. Speaking to 800 delegates assembled at the CAW Council in Port Elgin, Hargrove lamented:

You can't say to people you can't buy, you can't put penalties on people that want big vehicles who have big families, that have kids in hockey, and basketball, and want to travel a country as large as Canada or the United States by car. You've got to be able to have the vehicles and that is the only way this can happen.

. . .

[If] I appear a little upset on this, I am. I'm upset, because the more work we do on this issue, the more ground we seem to be losing. I said to the Prime Minister that it's almost like everyone has given up on the autoworkers and given up on the auto industry. We are all now going to be environmentalists and we're going to do whatever the environmentalists say that we should or have to do. The environment, I repeat, is important, but our members' jobs are much more important to me.121

In situating himself apart from the environmental movement and failing to address the fundamental ecological problem with SUV culture, Hargrove (and the CAW) lost legitimacy as a counterhegemonic labour-environmental organic intellectual.

But if Hargrove worked to undermine alliance-building between the CAW and environmental groups, he nevertheless found a new ally in the Ontario Premier who was invited to give the keynote speech at Port Elgin (the first time a Premier was ever invited to do so). According to Hargrove, McGuinty's invitation was given following a high-level government-auto industry meeting after which McGuinty publicly announced that “what we need [is] to develop technologies that allow us to have bigger vehicles with much more fuel efficiency.”122 Speaking to the CAW Council in Port Elgin, McGuinty reaffirmed his commitment to building big vehicles, drawing on a discourse characteristic of ecological modernization that points to a technology-driven, 'win-win' scenario:

We need to set ambitious goals together that we can reach together, so we can benefit together. My vision is that working together we're going to make Ontario the clean car capital of the world. And that's a big part of our climate

122 Loc cit., p.15.
There's an old school of thinking that says you've got to choose between the environment and you've got to choose between the economy...and the economy, and you can't stand up for being green and stand up for jobs at the same time. I don't buy that. Leading economists are telling us you don't have to choose between the economy and the environment.

And in the auto sector you don't have to choose between what's good for the customer and what's good for the environment either. Going green isn't necessarily about going small. I grew up in a family of ten. Terri and I have got four kids. So there are two things I want in a car. I want a car that's going to comfortably accommodate six of us. They are all between the ages of 20 and 25 now, all right, they are big bodies. We've got to be comfortably accommodated in a car.

I also want a car that is good for the environment. Don't tell me that we can't make that car, the best of its kind, right here in Ontario. Remember, they used to tell us, over the ages, that we'd never fly.123

McGuinty's narrative of reaching goals “together” and frequent reference to the family throughout his address, draws on the language of 'partnership' promised through ecological modernization. While Hargrove might take solace in McGuinty's commitment to maintaining SUV culture in Ontario, he ought to be worried about what this 'partnership' actually means for workers (even beyond the ecological impacts of running more SUVs). During his speech, McGuinty drew an analogy between fighting for the hockey puck in the corners of the rink and fighting for Ontario's auto industry in a “highly competitive, global economy.” Clearly then, McGuinty's notion of partnership is really about keeping auto corporations competitive within the neoliberal market. As I later discuss, the ecological modernist reference to 'partnership' in this case only masks the ongoing socio-economic restructuring aimed at maintaining profit rates by forcing workers to take concessions. Nevertheless, so impressed was Hargrove with McGuinty's auto strategy, that he praised McGuinty's record as Premier and—similar to the 2006 federal election—encouraged his members to 'strategically vote' for Liberals in the upcoming Ontario election. Even if the CAW's new policy in favour of strategic voting owes itself, in part, to the political crisis in the Canadian Left following the failed social democratic reign of Bob Rae's NDP in Ontario during the 1990s, Hargrove's new love affair with the Liberals serves as an unfortunate substitute for building a stronger (eco-)socialist political party that could take up the shortcomings of the NDP. In any case, the CAW leadership's proclivity towards militant particularism, strategic voting and their buy-in to the (false) promises of ecological

modernization, all reflect a defensive, corporatist strategy for addressing both the auto and climate crises.

The CAW's approach to the auto crisis generated tensions for labour-environmental relations that eventually spilled out into the federal legislative during deliberations in the House of Commons around climate change from 2006-2008. This again demonstrates how labour has helped shape the political debate around climate change—in this case, helping to legitimize the Conservatives neoliberal climate change policy of inaction. Climate change was an unrelenting thorn in the side of Harper's first term of office (April 3, 2006 - Sept. 7, 2008). With the Liberals trying to capitalize on the green credentials of their new leader, Stéphane Dion, and with all opposition parties trying to take advantage of an upswing in popular concern over climate change, the opposition tried to fully exploit Harper's weak environmental platform. Therefore, Buzz Hargrove's outspoken criticism of the environmental movement and shift away from supporting Kyoto obligations were a welcomed gift to the Conservative government. The Conservatives evoked the name of Buzz Hargrove on at least a dozen different occasions during parliamentary debate as a way of defending their approach to climate change policy. In fact, quoting Hargrove became so routine in the House of Commons that it turned into a running joke during parliamentary debates. For example, in the following nonsensical interchange, the Prime Minister responds to a question about the Afghanistan mission by simply quoting Hargrove's stance on Kyoto:

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, incredibly, it seems as though the Prime Minister remains in full denial on the situation of detainees in Kandahar. I will ask him about some other detainees. Since 2003, Canada has been sending warships to the Arabian Sea . . .

. . . Where are the detainees going, Guantanamo?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I have anything to add to this subject at the moment, but I would hardly want today to pass without a rare chance for me to quote Buzz Hargrove on the good work that the Minister of the Environment is doing.

Buzz Hargrove said:

I believe [the minister] tried incredibly hard to find balance between the economy, the concern working people have for their jobs and the environmental concerns that concern every Canadian. I think he took a major step forward today that will deal with some of the environmental concerns that will not throw tens of thousands of
Canadians out of work.\textsuperscript{124}

Besides having their President's name at the centre of rhetorical sparring in the legislature, the CAW, together with the CLC, participated in legislative committees charged with amending climate change bills. During the first session of the 39th Parliament (April 3, 2006 – September 14, 2007) no fewer than three bills on climate change were brought before the House of Commons—two of which were private members' bills sponsored by the opposition parties.\textsuperscript{125} The most contentious of these three bills, however, was the government's own Bill C-30, first introduced as: “An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, the Energy Efficiency Act and the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act (\textit{Canada's Clean Air Act}).” As the Conservatives' response to climate change, Bill C-30 was actually designed to undermine attempts to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Bill C-30 failed to even mention the word Kyoto, and more importantly, tried to take greenhouse gases off the list of “toxic” substances named under the existing Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). Without them being labeled “toxic,” the federal government would lose the legal authority to regulated greenhouse gas emissions. Lacking support from all opposition parties, the bill was about to die on the floor after first reading. However, looking to present himself as the green knight, NDP leader Jack Layton made a last minute agreement with the Conservatives that sent the Bill to a special Legislative Committee for amendments. Since the Conservatives had a minority government, the opposition parties held a majority of votes on the Committee. After a series of fierce committee meetings, the bill would emerge almost unrecognizable from its original version, having been completely reoriented towards committing the government to taking actions that would ensure Canada met its international obligations under Kyoto. The capacity to regulate greenhouse gases was reaffirmed, a new carbon budget was added to the bill, and even the title was changed to “Canada's Clean Air and Climate Change Act.” Moreover, in a direct testament


\textsuperscript{125} The three climate change bills brought before the House included (in order): Bill C-288 An Act to ensure Canada meets its global climate change obligations under the Kyoto Protocol (\textit{Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act}); Bill C-30 An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, the Energy Efficiency Act and the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act (\textit{Canada's Clean Air Act}); and Bill C-377 An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change (\textit{Climate Change Accountability Act}). While Bill C-288 was passed, Bills C-30 and C-377 would die on the floor at the end of Harper's first parliamentary session as Prime Minister, only to be reintroduced (but not passed) as Bills C-468 and C-377, respectively.
to the decade-long ideological work of labour-environmental organic intellectuals, the NDP successfully entered an amendment into Bill C-30 that contained a requirement for the Minister of the Environment to detail specific measures of “a just transition for workers affected by greenhouse gas emission reductions.” The inclusion of this just transition language in C-30 and in Bill C-288 (also being debated at the same time) was the first time that just transition was ever formally codified into legislation. Although Bill C-30 would die on the floor, Bill C-288 would go on to successfully receive royal ascent.

The Legislative Committee hearings for Bill C-30 provide a clear snapshot of climate change politics going into the spring of 2007 and reveal how underlying tensions involved with labour-environmental alliance-forming took on a direct political form. During the Legislative Committee hearings for C-30 several witnesses were called to testify, including the major business lobby groups, scientists, high-level civil servants, environmental organizations, green venture capitalists and renewable energy lobbyists. Representatives from the CAW (Buzz Hargrove) and the CLC (Marie Clarke-Walker and Andrew Jackson) were also invited to speak. The Committee met for a grueling seventeen days, perhaps summed up best by the leader of the Green Party, Elizabeth May (2007) who noted that: “Its hearings were the most fractious, partisan, unpleasant and unruly I have ever witnessed” (p.46). The performance of the CAW during these Committee hearings—and the negative impact this had for labour-environmental alliance-forming—can be better illuminated by first contrasting it to the presentation of the CLC.

In contrast to Hargrove's discursive shift away from Kyoto, the CLC speakers used their deputation before the Legislative Committee to squarely reaffirm labour's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, including support for the government purchase of international carbon credits should this be necessary to meet Canada's Kyoto deadlines Critical of the government's intensity-based approach to emission reductions, the CLC argued in favour of a “modest” cap and trade system that achieved a carbon price target of $30 per tonne as laid out by the Pembina Institute. Despite withstanding attacks by Conservative MPs, Marie Clarke-Walker and Andrew Jackson calmly laid out their vision of how climate change policy could create thousands of jobs through a green industrial policy that was funded, in part, through the sale of domestic carbon.

126 Bill C-30, 30 March 2007, “An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, the Energy Efficiency Act and the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act (Canada’s Clean Air Act) – Reprinted as amended by the Legislative Committee on Bill C-30 as a working copy for the use of the House of Commons at report stage,” available on-line at: http://www2.parl.gc.ca/content/hoc/Bills/391/Government/C-30/C-30_2/C-30_2.PDF, accessed 20 June 2009, p.19. This was only the second time that ‘just transition’ had ever been codified into law, the first being only a few months earlier in Bill C-288 (which would eventually receive Royal Assent).
credits and the transfer of subsidies from the oil and gas industry into green technological development. At the same time, the CLC pressed for the establishment of a just transition fund that was governed, in part, by labour. Finally, they also discussed ways to protect low and middle-income families from potentially higher energy costs. The CLC written submission to the Committee went into much more detail about the types of programmes that could make up a green industrial policy (e.g. retrofits, investments in renewables and public transit, etc.). While failing to note the ethical responsibility the North has for historical carbon emissions, the CLC submission nevertheless promoted (albeit without any details) the transfer of technology and resources to the developing world to help them reduce emissions and to prevent the flight of capital to countries with lax emission standards. Overall, most environmental groups would no doubt have welcomed CLC's vision of climate change policy, aside from the CLC's support for nuclear power, carbon capture and storage, and auto emissions—issues that that the CLC only referred to in its written submission rather than bring them out for divisive debates during oral testimony. The CLC clearly used the committee hearings to project themselves as an ally of the environmental movement.

The performance of the CLC during the Committee hearings contrasts sharply with that of the CAW. The CAW was invited to testify during the Committee's hearings on the theme of transportation. Discussion around this theme quickly became a debate over fuel efficiency standards for automobiles. One of the initial purposes given to Bill C-30 was to enact the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act (MVFCSA) which had already been passed by parliament in 1982 but never proclaimed. The MVFCSA was the Canadian equivalent to the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards passed in the United States in response to the 'energy crisis' of the mid-1970s. However, in Canada auto manufacturers successfully lobbied the government so that the MVFCSA was never proclaimed and was instead replaced by a voluntary agreement in which Canadian companies agreed to meet U.S. standards. In April 2005, the Harper government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with domestic and foreign automakers that committed them to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 9.3 Mt between 2007-2009. The inclusion of the MVFCSA in Bill C-30 was initially intended by Harper to allow the government to set regulations once the MOU expired. However, with Bill C-30 sent back to the all-party Legislative Committee, the risk for Harper was that amendments made in Committee by the opposition parties could replace the voluntary MOU with binding regulations on fuel efficiency that would be effective immediately. The second major issue at
stake was whether emission standards were going to be set on the basis of the corporate fleet average (i.e. across all cars sold domestically by a given auto corporation) or according to each class of vehicle.

Buzz Hargrove was invited to speak on behalf of the CAW during the same session as David Adams from the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers of Canada (representing foreign automakers), Mark Nantais from the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association (representing the Big Three) as well as John Bennett who was the director of the Climate Action Network Canada. The tension between the CAW and the environmental organizations was marked, with Hargrove at one point telling Bennett to “get real.” Hargrove not only cast doubt on Canada's capacity to reach its Kyoto targets, but he also clearly sided with the Canadian automakers against the environmental groups both in ensuring that the voluntary MOU would be upheld (rather than replaced by binding regulations) and in opposing emission standards set according to the corporate fleet average. Since foreign manufacturers generally import smaller vehicles that have greater fuel economy than the large vehicles produced in Canada, Hargrove and the domestic auto producers specifically argued against setting fuel economy standards that were based along corporate fleet averages since this would disadvantage domestic manufacturers (and CAW jobs). Instead, Hargrove and the domestic manufacturers advocated for fuel efficiency standards set on a class by class basis for each type of vehicle (the CLC written submission also encouraged this approach). In this way, large vehicles would have less stringent standards than small vehicles, and would therefore not be placed at a competitive disadvantage. Even though selling more small vehicles might help slow climate change, it would nevertheless threaten CAW jobs in an unacceptable manner—at least according to how Hargrove came to conceptualize the dilemma.

The sparring between Hargrove and Bennett during the Bill C-30 Committee hearings obviously impacted Hargrove enough that the CAW's 2007 climate change policy devoted an entire section to describing the interchange. But if Hargrove complained of feeling “stuck in the middle between the auto industry and the environmental movement,” we must remember that this feeling is at least partly of his own doing (CAW, 2007: p.3). Although we must be sympathetic to the ominous political-economic situation facing Hargrove's membership, and

---

while we must also note the lack of support given to autoworkers by most environmental organizations, we may still criticize Hargrove for his lack of counterhegemonic vision that instead led him to adopt a militant particularist and ecological modernist approach to auto emissions. The goal of a counterhegemonic organic intellectual is to conflate the struggle of labour (traditionally defined) with the struggle to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In the case of smaller, more fuel economic cars being imported from lower-wage countries into Canada, we see how labour's fight against globalization appears to stand in contradiction with the pursuit of progressive ecological objectives like reducing emissions through using corporate fleet averages. But there were other possible approaches for trying to resolve this dilemma that Hargrove chose not to articulate—e.g. retooling domestic companies for small vehicle production; nationalizing the auto industry if necessary to meet social and ecological goals; massively shifting towards public transit through domestically produced buses and trains; etc. However, these ideas call for the reorientation of production in favour of meeting of social needs rather than producing for the market (commodity exchange). In other words, these alternatives challenge the very basis of capitalism—against which Hargrove was not prepared to ask his membership to fight (at least not in terms of auto policy). Rather than articulate a counterhegemonic vision, Hargrove accepted the apparent trade-off between auto jobs and climate change goals while rejecting alliance-forming with 'the environmental movement.' Ironically, this type of conservative-corporatist/social corporatist union strategy was found by Adkin (1998) to be uncharacteristic of CAW members and leadership during the 1980s. This highlights the variable nature of labour-environmental relations across time even within the same union.

The CAW's attempt to solve the auto crisis through collaboration with the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association during the Bill C-30 hearings and by accepting concessions during bargaining, follows a form of defensive cooperation that Turner (2006) argues is futile for resisting the logic of participation under neoliberalism. If the primary goal of union mobilization remains trying to keep the Big Three profitable and globally competitive by lowering costs, then these 'costs' might just as easily relate to the conditions of labour as much as the do the conditions of nature (to the degree that these are different things). In other words, even if a militant particularist strategy works in the short run to ward off competitive pressures caused by environmental regulation, this will not solve the underlying pressures that neoliberalism places on workers' wages, working conditions and job security. Ultimately, the only counterhegemonic solution to protect both the conditions of labour and nature can be to fundamentally challenge the
capitalistic goal of profit and the mechanisms of global competition. So long as union leaders like Hargrove subscribe to a discourse of militant particularism or ecological modernization then more creative solutions will not be seized that could benefit both workers and their environments.

Ironically, the futility of defensive cooperation under neoliberalism for both labour and nature was demonstrated by a CAW-led initiative to establish a small-car factory in St. Thomas, Ontario. In response to fears that one of the two assembly plants in St. Thomas producing full-size sedans were going to be shut down, the CAW formed a ‘partnership’ with the Ontario government, Ford Motors Canada and Magna International to try to convince Ford Motors Co. (international) to joint-finance a new small-car assembly plant in St. Thomas. The CAW (2007) reported this initiative in their climate change discussion paper—which was otherwise devoted to promoting the continued production of large vehicles:

Government participation in efforts to improve the economics of small-car production in Canada could also play an important role. The CAW recognizes that high costs, among other factors, is one reason why automakers have shifted small car production offshore. At the same as we regulate automotive imports, we must also take creative efforts to enhance the potential return on small car production in Canada. The CAW’s innovative proposal to Ford for a new small-car assembly plant at St. Thomas indicates our willingness to think “outside the box” on this score. Governments and companies need to be just as innovative, in which case we can ensure that Canada’s auto industry can benefit from the “downsizing” that may be motivated by environmental concerns (not to mention by high fuel prices) (emphasis mine; CAW, 2007: p.17).

This passage shows how the CAW approached the problem of establishing small-car production in Canada by simply adopting the language and goals of capital. The goal, as seen by the CAW, was “to enhance the potential return” of making small cars in Ontario so that Canadian corporations could maintain their global competitiveness. But at what cost to workers? The discussion paper does not explain what the CAW means by their “willingness to think 'outside the box.'” What the CAW actually proposed to its 'partners' was for the St.Thomas small-car plant to be subcontracted out by Ford Motors Canada to Magna International (Ford would potentially benefit from the production of engines in Windsor). To make the offer financially attractive to Ford Motors International, the CAW would keep labour costs low at the St.Thomas plant by agreeing to the notorious “Framework of Fairness” agreement with Magna.\footnote{Greg Keenan, 30 August 2006, “Ontario to join drive for new Ford small-car plant,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, available on-line at: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20060830.RCORDIANO30/TPStory/Business.}
corporatist “Framework of Fairness”, which has been roundly criticized by other unions and labour activists, gives the CAW free access to Magna factories to organize unions, in return for the union giving up the right to strike, abandoning the grievance procedure, steward representation and other fundamental union principles.\textsuperscript{129} Whereas the CAW's dominant strategy of encouraging the continued production of large vehicles undermined their support for achieving emission reduction goals, their eco-modernist proposal to enter into an 'innovative' 'partnership' to encourage small-car production was to come at the expense of workers' fundamental rights. Both strategies found themselves complicit in, and constrained by, the logic of neoliberalism.

To be fair, it would be a mistake to view all of the CAW's proposals for solving the auto crisis as somehow anti-ecological (or anti-labour). It is true that Buzz Hargrove had tremendous influence in shaping CAW policy both as the union's President and primary spokesperson, especially given the hierarchical nature of the union. However, his outspoken remarks were not always representative of official union policy or the views of other CAW leaders. The CAW's 2007 climate change policy actually presents several creative ideas that would both reduce emissions while creating jobs. For example, the policy calls for a rebate system to get old, highly polluting vehicles off the road (thereby creating a market for new, more efficient, vehicles). The CAW also calls for high levels of government investment to help establish domestic production of hybrid vehicles. Another CAW campaign launched was to establish extended producer responsibility (EPR) through which auto companies would be required to recycle vehicles after they are retired, thereby reducing the extraction of raw materials from the earth while at the same time creating jobs in the vehicle recycling plants. Producing vehicles that use cleaner fuels, such as ethanol, is also recommended and the related socio-ecological problems of ethanol production are noted. Finally, the CAW (2007) policy also advocates for “massive investments in public transit” (p.18), but does not describe what this means in any detail. Aside from specific policy prescriptions, the CAW 2007 climate change policy also presents a more abstract and radical analysis: arguing against free market capitalism in favour of production for social needs; calling for democratic renewal so that governments intervene in the market in the public's interest; and reforming global relations to prevent a 'race to the bottom' as


countries lower labour and environmental standards to compete for foreign investment. These ideas all reflect profound counterhegemonic analysis that seem to contradict the rhetoric of Hargrove and initiatives like the St. Thomas small car joint-venture. But this contradiction between policy and practice only goes to demonstrate the ongoing ideological struggle around environmental policy within the CAW and the labour movement more generally.

6.6 LOOKING FOR PARTNERSHIPS: THE UNITED STEELWORKERS’ RESPONSE TO THE MANUFACTURING CRISIS

If the CAW leadership responded to the auto manufacturing crisis by shifting away from their early commitment to Kyoto and cooling down to labour-environmental alliance-forming, the United Steelworkers responded to the deepening manufacturing crisis by revitalizing their commitment to addressing climate change through building labour-environmental alliances. This labour-environmental alliance-forming led by the USW has taken up a discourse of ecological modernization in an attempt to reconstitute Fordist social relations. The USW was one of the first unions to argue in favour of reducing greenhouse gases in their 1990 report Our Children's World, and were one of the only unions to come out in support of Kyoto in the USA. But aside from taking these important positions, the USW in Canada did not thereafter engage in much labour-environmental alliance-forming around the issue of climate change until 2005. In 2005, the USW International Executive Board Environmental Task Force was formed to update the USW's 1990 report. Whereas the original report focused on exposing the false trade-off between jobs and the environment, the new forty-page report, entitled Securing Our Children's World: Our Union and the Environment explores the linkages between environmental issues—particularly climate change—and the hemorrhaging of manufacturing jobs under neoliberalism (referred to as 'globalization'). The USW's revitalized strategy for addressing the dual manufacturing and ecological crisis includes: coalition-building with other unions and environmental organizations; organizing the unorganized; international solidarity; and new labour-management partnerships. This strategy is analyzed in the American context between 1999-2004 by Turner (2006) who refers to it as expansive integration.

The manufacturing crisis in Canada reflects a broader process of 'deindustrialization'—or what Neil Smith (1984) more appropriately theorizes as 'uneven development'—through which capital has sought to maintain profit rates by continually shifting out of developed areas into to poor countries (or regions) where operating costs are cheaper. The flight of industrial capital
from Canada has led to staggering job losses over the past decade, particularly in the manufacturing sector that forms the membership base of the USW. After increasing in the late 1990s, employment in the manufacturing sector stagnated and then declined (Figure 6.8; Figure 6.9). Nearly 322 000 manufacturing jobs were lost between 2004-2008, despite rising employment in the economy as a whole (Bernard, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2008). The long-standing manufacturing decline in Canada became worsened drastically since the general economic recession began in the fall of 2008. Since the financial collapse in October 2008 until the end of June 2009, a total of 186 000 manufacturing jobs were lost making up 51% of the total jobs lost in that period (363,000 total).\textsuperscript{130}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure6.8.png}
\caption{Change in Canadian manufacturing jobs 1998-2008 (Source: Bernard, 2009)}
\end{figure}

In response to dwindling membership strength as a result of the manufacturing crisis, many industrial unions began to merge into larger unions. A series of union mergers between 1970-2005 turned the USW into the largest private sector union in Canada with 280,000 members. The USW is also the largest international union in North America and in the summer of 2008 announced it would sign an agreement with Unite the Union (the biggest union in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland) to form the first transatlantic union since the formation of the International Workers of the World in the 1930s. The stated purpose of this global union is for “challenging the growing exploitation by global capital.” Besides increasing the political clout of the USW, union mergers have helped generate more membership dues that have helped finance the type of labour-environmental alliance-forming initiatives—e.g. policy research and development, conferences and educational programs—that smaller unions would have found more difficult or prohibitive to fund.

The USW has tried to reverse deindustrialization in North America by forming long-term strategic alliances with environmental organizations aimed at promoting green job creation and

preventing industrial capital from leaving North America. In 2006, the American branch of the USW entered into a formal agreement with the US Sierra Club to form a separate organization called the Blue-Green Alliance (Foster, D. 2007). By 2009, the Blue Green Alliance had grown to include Communications Workers of America (CWA), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA). The Blue-Green Alliance aims to: reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create jobs through massive public and private investments in renewable energy and building retrofits; reduce toxins in the environment (broadly defined); ensure a 'just transition' for workers who lose their jobs due to environmental regulations; and to promote trade policies that protect key American industries against global competition, while upholding labour and environmental standards (Turner, 2006; Foster, D. 2007; Blue Green Alliance, 2009). By joining forces, these unions and environmental organizations hope to increase their capacity for political lobbying and popular education. Not only do they have a combined membership base of about six million people, but they also tend to reach out to quite different social groups thereby increasing their collective political influence. Besides the Blue Green Alliance, the USW was also a founding member of the Apollo Alliance—an American coalition of labour, businesses, environmental groups, and other community groups. Formed in 2001 after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Apollo Alliance specifically focuses on promoting 'energy independence' from foreign oil through the production of 'clean energy'. Besides securing energy independence, the Apollo Alliance seeks to reduce greenhouse gases and create 'green-collar jobs.' Evaluating the degree to which these alliances have shaped public policy and political culture in the United States is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say, that by helping popularize metaphors like 'green jobs' and 'the green economy,' these alliances were a significant driving force behind President Obama's successful election campaign and provided a ready blueprint that Obama used when formulating his $787 billion 'green' stimulus package announced only one month after taking office.133

Labour-environmental alliance-forming around climate change has taken grip in America much more than Canada owing to a number of reasons: the strong discourse emerging in America in favour of 'energy security' following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and in light of ongoing

---

wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that many perceived to be have been waged over oil; the loss of manufacturing jobs in the United States took a more severe downturn in the United States than in Canada, especially during the early 2000s; the anti-labour, anti-environmental Bush administration forced both unions and environmental organizations to find new ways of building their political clout; an overall greater amount of resources amongst U.S. unions to put towards formal labour-environmental initiatives; a stronger American nationalist identity from which to draw support for protectionist policies; and so forth. Nevertheless, organic intellectuals working within the USW and other labour organizations in Canada, have closely watched and learned from the development of the 'green jobs movement' in the United States. Union activists and officials I talked with from the USW-Canada, the CAW and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council all told me that they had been convinced or energized about the potential of labour-environmental alliance-forming after attending a series of international conferences organized by the Blue-Green Alliance beginning in 2007. Following the work being done in the United States, these organic intellectuals have seized upon the political opportunity created in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis to launch a number of labour-environmental alliance-forming initiatives. In February 2009, the USW-Canada and Environment Defence officially launched “Blue-Green Canada..” While it remains to be seen the direction that this new organization will take, the organizers have told me that they intend for Blue-Green Canada to become more than simply a single-issue coalition (like KyotoSmart). Rather, the goal of Blue-Green Canada is to mobilize communities around a broad agenda for a green economy with good paying, quality jobs. As we already saw with the USW's intervention at the town hall forum in Scarborough regarding the proposed offshore wind turbine project, one of the major political objectives of USW labour-environmental alliance-forming is to ensure that renewable energy projects aimed at reducing emissions also become an economic stimulus for generating local (Canadian) manufacturing jobs.

The policy documents published by the United Steelworkers, and speeches by union top brass, remain extremely critical of globalization and the power it has given multinational corporations; however, official USW policy stops short of critiquing capitalism itself. Rather,

---

bespeaking a social democratic or 'progressivist' political orientation, the USW unproblematically views labour-environmental alliance-forming as part of a broader effort to reconstitute post-War social relations through a nationalist agenda of ecological modernization. Union officials advocate for the reconstitution of Fordist relations (a hegemonic bloc comprising of organized labour, the state and industrial capital) through frequent reference to metaphors like a “Green New Deal” and to historical figures like Franklin D. Roosevelt. For example, in his introduction to *Securing Our Children’s World* (USW, 2006), Leo Gerard—the International President of the USW—situates labour-environmental alliance-forming within a metaphor of post-War reconstruction:

> Today, two of the greatest threats to our children’s future are the destruction of good-paying jobs and the environment in an economy where multinational corporations compete globally without regard or loyalty to their home countries. But destruction of what we hold dear is not inevitable. Just as Canadians and Americans responded to the challenges of World War II by harnessing the ingenuity and productivity of its working people, we can retool our economy and rebuild it on sound environmental principles. Such an endeavor could create millions of new jobs for our economy, regenerate our manufacturing capability and capture emerging energy efficient technologies for the benefit of all that secure us from being victimized by changing conditions.

> The future of manufacturing will belong to those nations that solve the problems of the world's growing shortage of fossil fuels through energy-efficient technologies and building and process redesigns (p.1).

Therefore, the goal laid out by Gerard is to rebuild a national economy through the 'retooling' of industry towards green production and the realization of techno-efficiencies.

Similarly, Dave Foster—the Executive Director of the Blue Green Alliance and former Director of the USW District 11—specifically called for a Green New Deal:

> Unemployment is rising faster than at any time in my life. Budget deficits are exploding. We don't need incremental change. We need profound transformative change and we need it now [lots of clapping]. Governments, governments around the world are being compelled to step in and invest in massive restructuring in the global economy. And they should. But make no mistake we have a choice. Either we'll finance the recovery of all our old problems, high energy costs, declining resources, unsustainable trade deficits and a global warming crisis. Or, we'll adopt a green New Deal for the global economy (emphasis mine).

135 Comments made by Dave Foster at: Good Jobs for All Summit, 22 November 2009, Toronto.
This call for a Green New Deal has been increasingly echoed in various union communications by Foster and Gerard, as well as by other popular advocates for ‘green collar jobs,’ such as Van Jones.\textsuperscript{136}

The USW's goal of realizing a Green New Deal, while largely rejected by finance capital and the state, has nevertheless been pursued by the USW through attempts to build alliances with green venture capitalists and domestic manufacturing capitalists. This type of alliance-forming draws on the logic of 'partnership' and 'pragmatism' characteristic of ecological modernization. The edict of labour-capital 'partnership' was clearly articulated by Ken Delaney—the Assistant to the National Director of USW-Canada—at the 2009 'Good Jobs, Green Jobs' conference in Washington D.C. organized by the Blue-Green Alliance. Speaking on a panel entitled “Doing Well by Doing Good: Progressive Models to Motivate Shared Risks and Rewards Between Wall Street and Main Street in the Green Economy,” Delaney discussed the USW's strategic approach for securing investment in green manufacturing:

\ldots I think the green revolution is similar. It's going to require a lot of thinking outside the box. \ldots It's going to require innovation, it's going to require \ldots experimentation \ldots Now I think there is a role for all the parties to play, government certainly has a key role, environmental groups and unions certainly do, and of course corporations, the private sector are going to have to play a key role. And I think that when you are trying to make a big shift in thinking, the best way to get that done is through partnerships, and I think that's what the panel is all about, how to work together. \ldots like once you're able to walk into the room \ldots with ah ah management and with ah ah creditors into the ah government official's office, well, like all of a sudden you're not a special interest group any more. All of a sudden you represent a broader base, and people listen to you. \ldots So I think that ah ah building alliances and partners is certainly key.\textsuperscript{137}

In what Delaney calls the “partnership model,” the role of government is reduced to “creating markets” for renewable energy and 'green' products by legislating emission and efficiency standards and feed-in tariffs. But the major political objectives of the Blue-Green Alliance and

\textsuperscript{136} Van Jones (2008) frequently calls for a Green New Deal in his book entitled: \textit{The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems}. Jones was one of the keynote speakers at the ‘Good Jobs, Green Jobs National Conference’ organized in February 2009 by the Blue-Green Alliance in Washington, D.C., and is highly regarded by most of the Toronto-based labour-environmental activists I interviewed. In March 2009, Van Jones was appointed as a Special Advisor on Green Jobs for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, suggesting the appeal that his ideas have for the Obama administration.

the Apollo Alliance are not only to push the shift towards energy efficiency, renewable energy production and the manufacturing of ‘green’ products, but to also ensure that this shift actually creates jobs in America. Therefore, the 'innovative' strategies promoted by Delaney also refers to retaining or attracting manufacturing capital in the USA or Canada through financial incentives like tax breaks. Another 'innovative' strategy adopted by the USW has been to 'partner' directly with manufacturing capital in formal political alliances. A clear example of this in the United States is the formal alliance forged between the USW and American steel producers called the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM). The USW and the American steel producers collectively bargained to have 2.5 cents of every ton of steel produced go towards funding the AAM. Working under the slogan, “Keeping America Strong,” the major goal of the AAM is to lobby for protectionist steel policies. Both the American and Canadian branches of the USW have also called for mandatory 'Buy American' and 'Buy Canadian' procurement policies for all government purchases and as a condition for private companies receiving federal economic stimulus money.138

While demands for protectionist policies coming from manufacturing-based trade unions are certainly not new, what is new is the use of climate change and strategic alliances with environmental organizations to push politically for these policies. For example, one of the main arguments used by the AAM in pushing for protectionist trade policies, is that American steel companies produce less greenhouse gas emissions than their main competitors in China (AAM, 2009). Recognizing that existing neoliberal trade agreements work against protectionist procurement policies, both the USW (2006) and Sierra Club (2008) have argued that these agreements must be changed or broken if necessary to ensure that measures aimed at reducing greenhouse emission will lead to domestic job creation. For example, Leo Gerard preemptively dismissed any ruling by the World Trade Organization (WTO) that would get in the way of a national job creation project aimed at giving all publicly-owned buildings an energy retrofit using American-made materials:

> if you did a little tweaking the way you use taxes, and said we’re going to retrofit those [public buildings] to current standards, and we’re going to retrofit them with products that are union made in America, you’d end up creating millions of jobs. You’d get WTO complaints and the hell with it. Let’s fight the WTO complaint for 10 years while we build the stuff. And you’d create good

descent jobs. In other countries, whether it’s France or Britain or Brazil, they ought to do the same thing, use their taxpayers' dollars to retrofit their building to current technology.139

Similarly, Dave Foster promoted the use of carbon tariffs as a way to protect domestic manufacturers in his keynote address to over one thousand labour and community activists attending the Good Jobs for All Summit organized by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council:

Take the example of General Election. GE does not care if it makes its wind turbines in Pantong China or in Canton Ohio, or in Hamilton Ontario. GE will choose to make their products where labour is cheapest, profits are greatest. They'll pick China over Canton or Hamilton— if the way we solve global warming permits China to go on producing wind turbines in factories that run with the dirtiest sources of energy on Earth, and then ship those products to North America spewing more greenhouse gases while [consuming] fuel [to travel] halfway around the world. If on the other hand, General Electric knew that when that wind turbine reached the North American port it would have to pay the true cost of that dirty energy, at the US or Canadian border with a carbon adjustment fee, then GE would have every economic reason in the world to build their clean energy equipment in Ohio or Ontario [clapping]. And this, and this example is true for every energy intensive industry in the country today. Take steel, a ton of steel produced in North America emits one ton of carbon into the atmosphere. In China producing a ton of steel emits three tons of carbon. If we put a price on carbon, when that Chinese steel lands in California or British Columbia it no longer makes sense to import steel; it only makes sense to make in North America what we consume in North America.140

The idea of ‘carbon adjustment fees’—or what the CAW (2002) has promoted as a “Kyoto tariff” (p.19)—has therefore become an important political basis for labour, environmental organizations and domestic manufacturers to join in strategic opposition to neoliberal trade policies in the name of addressing climate change and protecting domestic jobs. What has for long-time been only a union slogan, “Buy Canadian,” has now been welded together with environmentalist campaigns to 'buy local' so as to reduce our carbon footprints. At the same time, domestic manufacturers are only too happy to get on board with the USW and environmental organizations to use an environmentalist discourse in order to protect their domestic market share against foreign competition. But as I argue in the following chapter, even if a nationalist ecological modernist paradigm aims to address some social and ecological problems in Canada or America, it also has the potential to frustrate efforts for reducing poverty

139 Comments made by Leo Gerard at: North American Labor Assembly on Climate Crisis, organized by the Cornell Global Labor Institute, 7 May 2008, New York City.
140 Comments made by Dave Foster at: Good Jobs for All Summit, 22 November 2009, Toronto.
and ecological degradation in poor countries.

This chapter has examined the response of labour to climate change, climate change policy, and the deepening manufacturing crisis created by neoliberalism. Although a small number of unions showed early support for curbing global warming, most unions did not engage with the issue until debates arose over the implementation of emission regulations under the Kyoto Protocol. Even then, labour-environmental alliance-forming has mostly taken the form of ideological work contained in union policy documents rather than in concrete projects. During the mid-1990s, organic intellectuals started to investigate climate change policy as a potential threat to jobs. By developing the concept of just transition, most unions were able challenge the 'jobs versus the environment' mythology being propagated at the time by the business alliance. Even if just transition was more reactive than visionary (i.e. focused on how to compensate affected workers rather than how to create a new green economy), it was nevertheless critical in fostering labour's support for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Between 1999-2002, organic intellectuals began to proactively envision climate change policy as an opportunity for green job creation. Early articulations of green job creation strategies contain some important counterhegemonic elements, including the rejection of corporate-led globalization and more democratic, public control of national energy resources and environmental policy. But despite a few noted attempts by unions to operationalize their vision for addressing climate change, there have not been many on-the-ground examples of labour-environmental alliance-forming in Canada since the debates around Kyoto ratification. The reasons for only weak labour-environmental alliance-forming following Kyoto ratification, and some of the political ramifications, were discussed. A major reason for weak alliance-forming was internal disagreement within organized labour over how best to reduce emissions. As the manufacturing crisis worsened throughout the 2000s, we also saw how the CAW leadership adopted more of a militant particularist, corporatist attitude towards climate change regulations. Meanwhile, the USW responded to the worsening political-economy through a strategy of expansive integration. In the mid-to-late 2000s, all major industrial unions, in one way or another, accepted an ecological modernist discourse. However, the USW has must enthusiastically employed a nationalist ecological modernist discourse in an attempt to (re)constitute a 'Green New Deal.'
7. **A CRITIQUE OF ECOLOGICAL MODERNIZATION: THE PROBLEMS OF ECOLIBERALISM AND GREEN NEW DEALISM**

Is colluding with an ecological modernist discourse a winning strategy for labour-environmental alliance-forming if it wishes to help resolve the dual socio-ecological crisis of climate change and neoliberalism? Before assessing labour's political strategy we must first understand the differences between how an ecological modernist discourse has been employed by labour and how it has been used by the current hegemonic bloc. I will first critically examine how the hegemonic bloc draws on ecological modernist discourse in an attempt to maintain or deepen neoliberalism. I refer to this use of an ecological modernist discourse to maintain the hegemony of neoliberalism as 'ecoliberalism'. I then move on to critique the way that labour has drawn from an ecological modernist discourse in its own way in an attempt to reconstitute Fordist relations. Labour's political vision and use of an ecological modernist discourse is what I refer to as Green New Dealism. Green New Dealism works to challenge certain aspects of neoliberalism while still consenting to capitalist structures more generally. I conclude by critically examining the opportunities and dangers that Green New Dealism creates for socio-ecological relations in Canada and around the world.

In chapter five I charted the way in which an ecological modernist discourse of regulation was eventually subsumed by the hegemonic bloc around 2005 after a long period through which the state-capital alliance had successfully upheld voluntarist climate change policy. The rearticulation of ecological modernist climate change policy meant that regulations were no longer viewed as threats to accumulation; rather, modest regulation was seen as a potential catalyst for enhancing 'green competitiveness'. So long as emission regulations were not too deep, or implemented too fast, Canadian corporations could 'go green and win'. Costs could be reduced through eco-efficiencies and new markets could be opened through the development of eco-technologies, the production of 'green' consumer goods, and the commodification of carbon itself (carbon markets). In fact, according to Harper and his corporate backers, not much needed to really change at all: we could give a new life to nuclear power, now reframed as an emission reduction strategy; we could still use coal, albeit transformed through eco-technological miracles into 'clean coal.' As both Harper and business associations proclaimed, Canada could become a "clean energy superpower." Similarly, McGuinty announced that Ontario would become the "clean car capital of the world."\(^{141}\)

---

141 See chapter four p.157-158 for the context and citations of these quotes.
hegemonic bloc over how much of the new green pie should be given to renewable energy corporations—as noted through different emphasis given to renewables by the Harper and McGuinty governments. But to the extent that renewable energy has been accepted by the hegemonic bloc, the government has assured Canadian renewable energy corporations that they will be made 'globally competitive'. It is clear, therefore, that the shift to ecological modernization envisioned by the hegemonic bloc did not fundamentally challenge neoliberal orthodoxy—aside from the minor role government would play in 'creating markets' through soft emission regulations and massive state subsidies to corporations so that they could make investments in green technologies while still maintaining profit rates.

One problem with this neoliberal ecological modernist discourse—what I am here calling 'ecoliberalism'—is that it may not actually work to curb global warming (at least not anytime soon). Another problem, is that ecoliberalism is surely not going to be good for workers. To begin with, ecoliberalism has resisted the type of stringent emission regulations scientists say are necessary to avert 'dangerous global warming' of 2°C. And as I have discussed, the labeling of 'dangerous global warming' at a 2°C threshold is itself contentious given that many marginalized communities are already experiencing the damaging effects of climate change, while many more people—mostly living in extremely poor countries—will be devastated even if we do manage to stay within a 2°C threshold. Moreover, the 'green jobs' that are expected to appear once Canada reaches status as a 'clean energy superpower' or the 'clean car capital of world' may not end up being as 'green' as they are made out to be. Nuclear and coal (no matter how 'clean') will continue to have significant ecological repercussions (e.g. from the mining of fuel and disposal of waste). Even renewable energy production is not without its ecological problems—the silicon tetrachloride released as a by-product in the manufacturing of solar panels is a fast-growing environmental toxin, while greenhouse gas emissions are released in the production of the steel and concrete used to build windmills. Under the ecoliberal model, all these materials used to generate 'clean energy' will most likely be produced in countries who have made lax environmental regulations their 'comparative advantage'. As for 'clean cars', we have already seen how the rush toward biofuels like ethanol have led to land enclosure and higher food prices. And at the end of the day, the use of ethanol still emits carbon dioxide. Moreover, a 'clean car' no matter how clean, is still a car and therefore has ecological impacts associated with the materials used in its construction and for the roadways on which it drives. Finally, even though ecoliberalism champions eco-techno-efficiencies as a way for businesses and consumers to save
costs while reducing their ecological impacts, the focus on efficiency (such as Harper's focus on emission intensity) can nevertheless distract from the more fundamental need for wealthy countries to make absolute reductions in consumption and waste levels. Therefore, the 'green' future promised by an ecoliberal discourse may not be so green upon closer inspection.

Ecoliberalism is also not a promising future for Canadian workers. Green jobs do not necessarily mean good jobs. If the neoliberal competitive model is left unchanged, Canadian workers will continue to be set in competition with workers everywhere in the world—regardless of whether they are producing windmills, energy efficient windows or four-cylinder cars. Even with the energy retrofitting of buildings and the installation of windmills—that must be physically done in Canada—there is no guarantee that this work will be done by unionized workers. In fact, there is even no guarantee that the corporations contracted to do this green work will hire Canadian workers. After all, neoliberalism has increasingly tried to increase the mobility of labour across national borders so as to create a downward pressure on wages. Government-sponsored temporary worker programmes invite migrant workers into Canada from poor countries, but these workers receive only a fraction of the wages and few of the legal rights given to Canadian workers. Consequently, there is no guarantee that any work in Canada, including green work, will be reserved for well-paid unionized workers with full citizenship rights. As we see in the agricultural sector, where agribusinesses have increasingly turned to migrant labour from Mexico, the production of local, organic food does not mean the creation of good jobs—even if they are, in fact, green jobs.

Unions should therefore be more critical of politicians like McGuinty and his vision of becoming a 'clean car capital of the world.' One year after McGuinty made this announcement at the CAW National Council in Port Elgin, he helped cut the ribbon to open a new engine plant in Alliston that was going to make fuel-efficient, four-cylinder car engines. But it was to Honda Inc. that the McGuinty government had given no less than $154 million as a way to attract their investment into Ontario. The Government heralded the move as evidence of the government's commitment to generating green manufacturing jobs, and the Premier's Office sent out a press release entitled: “New Honda engine plant drives green jobs.” But how good will these jobs at Honda be? After all, Honda has fought bitterly against union organizing drives at its Alliston auto plants so as to co-opt and bar workers from enjoying unionized working conditions.

Unionized workers should also expose the nationalist narrative used by the state-capital alliance to sell ecoliberalism as a 'win-win-win' policy direction. On the one hand, this nationalist narrative (centred around metaphors like becoming a 'superpower' or 'capital of the world') helps legitimize massive state subsidies to private corporations. These public subsidies are said to be necessary for 'attracting green investment' (like Honda) or for 'keeping Canadian companies competitive' (by paying for the costs of corporations to develop or install green technologies). On the other hand, we have seen how politicians like Harper and McGuinty frequently speak in terms of 'we' and 'working together' in order to discipline workers to the logic of ecoliberalism. In the name of improving Canada's 'national competitiveness' or 'comparative advantage' in the green economy, workers are asked to 'do their part' and take concessions on wages, pensions, benefits, and working conditions. The example of the small-car facility at the St. Thomas plant discussed in chapter six is a good case in point. The CAW was complicit in disciplining workers under Magna's “Framework of Fairness”—a major concession accepted so that Ford and the state would invest in the production of green cars at the St. Thomas plant.

These types of concessionary demands placed on workers are further accentuated during recessionary times when capital finds it increasingly difficult to maintain profit rates. In sum, the nationalist ecological modernist discourse conveyed by the hegemonic bloc works to conceal the underlying power relations that are inherent to class struggle in an era of neoliberalism. Initiatives like the opening of a small-car plant in St. Thomas demonstrate the difficulties that neoliberalism poses for trying forge labour-environmental alliances that benefit both workers and the environment.

If ecoliberalism provides a dismal future for Canadian workers, it also presents serious problems for workers in poor countries. The transnational character of capital under neoliberalism sets the conditions for 'hyper-competition' amongst different countries (and regions within the same country). We have seen how the hegemonic shift toward an ecological modernist discourse—even one that appeals to market-based regulations—upholds the hyper-competitive logic of neoliberalism. Canadian corporations and bourgeois politicians alike have situated Canada within, what the McGuinty government characterized, as: “a global race to establish the policies, attract the investment and build the foundation for the green economy that is sure to sustain future prosperity and progress.” But we must ask ourselves, who will be the

---

143 Comments made by George Smitherman, Ontario Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Ontario Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, 23 February 2009, “Ontario's Bold New Plan for a Green Economy,” available on-
losers in this global race? Will the 'future prosperity' of the green economy be as (un)fairly distributed as is the prosperity from the current economy? And what will this mean for climate change? The belief that neoliberal competition over scarce green investment dollars can resolve the climate change crisis fails to acknowledge the links between global poverty and climate change. Not all countries can be 'winners' under an ecoliberal competitive model, and yet the problem of global warming is such that all countries must ultimately gain the capacity to reduce their emissions . . . and soon. Therefore, even if it were true that Ontario or Canada could become a clean energy superpower and win the 'race' for green technology and green jobs, the competitive logic of an ecoliberal approach to climate change policy severely limits the extent and timeframe for making global emission reductions. If green investment only remains a business opportunity for the wealthiest economies, then the causes of climate change that are directly linked to poverty—such as deforestation; energy production from coal; emissions from cheap but highly polluting vehicles; etc.—will continue unabated. Moreover, if green technology is simply monopolized by the North, then either: i) poor countries who lose the 'race' will simply not be able to reduce their emissions as they continue to industrialize thereby failing to curb global warming; or ii) we will move into an era of eco-fascism or eco-neo-colonialism in which global emission standards—that the self-proclaimed green superpowers codify into international trade deals and treaties—are used to force industrializing countries to buy expensive green technology from these green superpowers. Similarly, I have also discussed the serious dangers that the commodification of carbon creates for both ecosystems and marginalized communities as landscapes are sought after and transformed for carbon sequestration projects aimed at realizing the new value of carbon generated through international carbon markets. All these concerns demonstrate the importance of examining the specific links between neoliberal (or ecoliberal) policies and climate change at a global analytical scale.

If the ecoliberal discourse of the hegemonic bloc holds little hope for solving climate change or improving the livelihoods of workers in Canada or in poor countries, what about the vision being forwarded by unions like the USW for a Green New Deal? Whereas the hegemonic bloc has drawn from an ecological modernist discourse to reaffirm the logic of neoliberalism, labour has used the language of ecological modernization in an attempt to reconstitute Fordist relations. Through this discourse of Green New Dealism, unions have become champions of eco-efficiencies, investments in green technologies and new 'partnerships' with industrial capital

and the state—all as a strategy to address the deepening manufacturing crisis. But while Green New Dealism shares much of the same ecological modernist language as ecoliberalism, there remain some critical differences. Foremost, the Green New Deal is a nationalist project aimed at improving the welfare of (unionized) workers and domestic industrial capital, whereas ecoliberalism is a nationalist project aimed at improving the profits of transnational corporations and finance capital with little to no regard for the welfare of workers. Although Green New Dealism does not fundamentally challenge capitalism, it does oppose the hyper-competitive logic of neoliberalism and the downward pressures this places on wages and working conditions.

Whereas both discourses draw on the notion of 'green jobs', only Green New Dealism is really concerned with whether these green jobs are in fact good, unionized jobs. Green New Dealism envisions a national green economy that is achieved through government subsidies to domestic manufacturers and protectionist trade policies—e.g. 'Buy Canadian' policies and 'Kyoto-tariffs'.

On the one hand, Green New Dealism may offer more hope for reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. By rejecting the logic of neoliberalism, emission regulations under a Green New Deal arrangement are less susceptible to being undermined in the name of keeping businesses ‘internationally competitive.’ Of course, international competitive pressures will continue to exist in any phase of capitalism—neoliberal or otherwise. But at least through Green New Dealism, protectionist policies like Kyoto-tariffs could help ensure that economic development in Canada was done through less polluting industrial processes. Of course, there is no reason why labour could not achieve a New New Deal without demanding that this be a Green New Deal. In other words, labour-environmental alliance-forming is certainly not guaranteed through labour’s push to reconstitute Fordist social relations. One problem with protectionist policies is that they could foreseeably be used to keep less polluting products out of Canada so as to favour more polluting, but unionized, production in Canada. This dilemma is illustrated by the CAW's militant particularist campaign, and collusion with domestic auto producers, to block small-car imports into Canada and to maintain weaker vehicle emission standards (see chapter six). This example reminds us of how environmental concerns were originally marginalized by the post-War Fordist arrangement and the consent of labour to a productivist ethos that often ran counter to environmental objectives. Nevertheless, Green New Dealism would offer labour a greater potential to use its power within the state-labour-capital alliance to not only advance its vision for national economic development (i.e. investment in domestic manufacturing) but also to advance progressive environmental policies (including more stringent emission regulations
and investment in green manufacturing). Of course, how much greater potential labour would have for effecting socio-ecological change under a Fordist arrangement would remain an important academic debate and form the basis of class struggle. After all, the Green New Dealism is not anti-capitalist and so fails to fundamentally challenge the relations of production as would be necessary if workers wanted to not only be paid well for producing cars, but to also gain the capacity to decide what type of cars (or transit) to be building. Meanwhile, whether ecological concerns are given high priority by labour under the new Fordist regime would largely depend on the success of labour-environmental organic intellectuals in mobilizing the rank-and-file around their vision of a 'sustainable society'. The fact that many unions have rather uncritically taken up faith in 'solutions' like 'eco-efficient production', 'clean coal' and nuclear power, while seldom attacking over-consumption or the productivist ethos pervading the North, calls into question just what shade of green their Green New Deal would become.

But if Green New Dealism has the potential to bring about stronger environmental regulations in Canada, what does it say about the socio-ecological crisis viewed at a global scale? Reconstituting Fordist relations through a Green New Deal would surely benefit a good number of Canadian workers—namely, those who could secure unionized jobs (either 'blue collar' or 'white collar'). But the post-War class compromise made in the North between organized labour, the state and capital, was often to the exclusion of women, racialized social groups in Canada, and the Majority World (see chapter three). Green New Dealism runs the risk of reproducing these same undemocratic, hierarchical power relations under the charade of 'partnership.' First, this is a concern because of the ongoing social, economic and political oppression these groups would face. Moreover, since Green New Dealism does not fundamentally challenge capitalism, and the inequities it propagates, Green New Dealism cannot foster a just and expeditious solution for resolving global socio-ecological phenomenon like climate change. Not only does capitalism led to a growth in emissions by encouraging overconsumption by the rich, but as I have already discussed, capitalism also propagates global poverty which is also fundamentally linked to rising emissions (since poverty in the Third World leads to deforestation and the use of cheap dirty fuels and technologies as a rapid means to industrialization).

For their part, nationalist, protectionist policies may help secure jobs for unionized Canadian workers, but they do little to ensure that Canadian corporations operating abroad are paying decent wages and abiding by environmental laws. In fact, the nationalist solidarities used to forge the labour-state-capital alliance under Green New Dealism could, in turn, foster a
militant particularism at a national level that works to undermine attempts at building international solidarities between organized Canadian workers and the world's poor. In other words, nationalist abstractions—used in struggles for a 'Green New Deal', 'Buy Canadian' policies, and the 'Canadian labour movement'—resist abstractions operating at the universal level—e.g. 'the international working class', 'human rights', 'global environment'—that are necessary for mobilizing people into broader struggles for international eco-socialism. Therefore, a nationalist capitalist arrangement may help some Canadian workers enjoy the good green life, but stops far short of what is needed to fundamentally address the global socio-ecological crisis. Even within Canada, if only a small group of workers benefit from a Green New Deal, then those living in poverty will not be able to afford to reduce their emissions (e.g. through building retrofits or buying more expensive hybrid vehicles). More importantly, all people whose primary task each day is simply to survive, may not be able to find the time needed to sustain the type of political organization needed to struggle for and realize a 'sustainable society'. Still worse, oppressed groups (either in Canada or abroad) could face greater eco-oppression as they are forced to comply with environmental regulations they can ill afford.

What I hope this discussion brings to the fore is the need for a careful analysis as to what an ecological modernist discourse really invites—both in its ecoliberal form as well as its Green New Deal form. Neither vision provides a winning strategy for labour-environmental alliance-forming if the goal is transformative socio-ecological change at a global scale. Those who are seriously committed to realizing social and environmental justice both in Canada and abroad must not be fooled by the ‘win-win’ rhetoric of an ecological modernist discourse.
8. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The past two decades of climate change policy formation in Canada reveals a concerted and commendable effort by labour-environmental organic intellectuals to articulate a transformative vision that aims to integrate labour’s long-standing goal for economic justice with the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in an environmentally just manner. This work has been critical for transcending a ‘jobs versus the environment’ discourse that has been intentionally propagated by corporations and certain right-wing political forces in order to divide the labour and environmental movements. By ideologically challenging the so-called ‘trade-off’ between jobs and the environment, organized labour was able to throw their support behind the ratification of Kyoto Protocol. This must be seen as an important milestone of labour-environmental alliance-forming in Canadian history, regardless of the fundamental problems with Kyoto that I have noted. We also saw how the CAW has engaged in community labour-environmental education around climate change and even undertook to build a windmill to demonstrate the viability of green job creation.

But despite a few noted examples, labour-environmental alliance-forming has been very slow to progress beyond union policy statements into a broad and concrete (eco-socialist) political movement. In many ways, the more radical vision of ‘green job creation’ that was originally articulated by labour-environmental organic intellectuals at the turn of the century (grounded in a programme that was explicitly fighting against globalization and fighting for more democratic control over natural resources and environmental regulations), has been usurped and perverted by the hegemonic bloc into an ecoliberal discourse of ‘green jobs’. Meanwhile, organized labour has since become complicit in propagating an ecological modernist discourse in hopes of realizing a Green New Deal. Even though the growing popularity of ‘green jobs’ as a solution to the deepening economic and ecological crisis must be seen as a partial victory of labour-environmental alliance-forming (in so far as ‘green job creation’ was finally addressed by policy makers), I have discussed the fundamental problems with how ‘green jobs’ is articulated both through the hegemonic ecoliberalist discourse as well as through labour’s discourse of Green New Dealism. Whereas ecoliberalism is a ‘lose-lose’ for workers and the environment, Green New Dealism may provide some advantages for workers in Canada but fails to address the transnational character of both poverty and global warming.

Without an historical analysis of climate change policy and labour-environmental alliance-forming, it is easy for the hysteria around ‘green jobs’ and ‘Green New Deals’ to distract
us from reflecting on how these discourses have been shaped by, and continue to shape, broader socio-cultural, political-economic and socio-ecological processes. The ideological underpinnings of ready-found ‘solutions’ to the current dual economic and ecological crisis are revealed through historical analysis. In turn, an historical perspective is necessary for those wishing to debate and improve upon the strategies adopted by labour and environmental organizations as they try to grapple with the systemic causes of the dual economic and ecological crisis. The use of sociological Marxism provides us with a useful analytical approach for revealing how discourses of ecoliberalism and Green New Dealism are historically generated and disseminated through particular relations of power (with this thesis focusing on class struggle). On the one hand, Gramsci’s notion of a ‘war of position’ between particular social alliances, and his focus on organic (and traditional) intellectuals, help us to locate specific sites of hegemonic power. While hegemonic power surely permeates throughout all aspects of our social and cultural lives, locating specific sites or moments of power should help unions and environmental organizations identify targets for their political activism. For example, by uncovering the highly undemocratic and corporate-driven character of the National Climate Change Process (from which organized labour was essentially excluded—see chapter five), we flag the need for more democratic involvement of workers in the formation of climate change policies. Similarly, looking at the conscious role of intellectuals (either traditional bourgeois intellectuals or labour-environmental organic intellectuals) in shaping the ‘collective will’ through public relations campaigns, brings focus to the institutional mechanisms through which hegemonic discourses are propagated or possibly challenged.

Meanwhile, Polanyi’s notion of the double movement draws attention to the fact that both climate change and the manufacturing crisis have actually been planned neoliberal projects. This helps us to better explain labour-environmental alliance-forming as a response (or ‘counter-movement’) to the socio-ecological impacts of these neoliberal projects (even if the historical undertakings of labour-environmental organic intellectuals suggest that the alliance-forming comprising the counter-movement is less ‘spontaneous’ than Polanyi believed was the case in the 19th century). Currently in Canada, as it was during the late 19th century in Europe, the free market economy is having a disastrous impact on both labour and the environment, in turn, bringing together both unions and (some) environmental organizations in strategic opposition to neoliberalism. I have shown how neoliberalism has led to the disappearance of good paying union jobs in Canada which has been met with intensifying resistance by certain unions with
some unions engaging in expansive integration (strategic alliance-forming). At the same time, climate change policies being propagated by the state-capital alliance are grounded in a faith that the self-regulating market can somehow reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But as I discussed in chapter five, the self-regulating market has failed to curb emissions, leading to increasing ecological devastation: flooding, drought, species extinction, new pest infestations, the spread of diseases, etc. This ecological destruction has created a parallel backlash to neoliberalism coming from the environmental justice movement in Canada and abroad. Finally, just as in the 19th century, the counter-movement in which labour and environmentalists are engaged is taking on a nationalist, 'buy local, buy Canadian' character that calls for protectionist measures. This new ‘eco-protectionism’ is aimed at both reducing the loss of manufacturing jobs from free trade while at the same time reducing the carbon footprint of goods consumed domestically (since local production consumes less energy for distribution or since Western production processes are generally less polluting). While it may be too early to say what political form this counter-movement will take, the war of position being waged by unions is for the reconstitution of Fordist relations through some form of a 'Green New Deal'. Although Green New Dealism is fundamentally flawed as a labour-environmental alliance-forming strategy for transformative change, if even this struggle is lost by labour, we may well end up experiencing the deepening of neoliberalism and what some have called 'eco-apartheid' through which the promises of 'green technology' and environmental protection are only accessible to a privileged minority.

While Polanyi leads us to examine how neoliberalism engenders socio-ecological change, we must also continue to draw out the underlying contradictions within capitalism more generally. I have argued in chapter seven that capitalist competition, whether neoliberal in character or otherwise, will prevent the rapid and globally just solution for reducing greenhouse gases from being realized. Labour-environmental alliance-forming that focuses on (re)constituting a Green New Deal fails to address these underlying contradictions of capitalism. Neither Polanyi nor Gramsci theorized at the global scale, but it is clear that a transnational perspective is needed for understanding and helping to address both global poverty and global warming. My research has only briefly touched upon the ways in which the double movement is occurring at a global scale. More research is therefore needed to explore how the impacts of neoliberalism, climate change, and climate change mitigation policies are being experienced and resisted in other countries—particularly in the Third World. But we must also look at how ecoliberalism is a transnational project achieved through global institutions like the World
Business Council of Sustainable Development, the World Bank, the G-20 (Group of Twenty), etc.

Just as we must broaden our scale of inquiry into labour-environmental alliance-forming, further research should also more narrowly examine what is inhibiting alliance-forming at the scale of individual unions and groups of individuals. My research has primarily analyzed hegemony and counterhegemony at the national scale or at the level of social movements. This has provided insights into the broader context, or conditions, through which labour-environmental alliance-forming has taken place, while also allowing me to highlight how Green New Dealism reflects a form of militant particularism at a national scale. If I have been able to identify the types of strategies that unions in Canada are adopting in the face of climate change and neoliberalism’s ‘logic of participation’, only more detailed ethnographic research can provide insights into how these strategic decisions are being arrived at. More detailed ethnographic study can also uncover how socio-cultural relations at the individual union level or ‘shop-floor’ level work against (or in favour of) the radicalization of individual union members. For example, I have already briefly discussed how leadership struggles and ideological debates within unions play an important role in shaping the priorities of a union. Organizational structures may also encourage or discourage rank-and-file participation in union decision-making. Meanwhile, different unions have cultivated quite different organizational cultures over time that work to reproduce certain core values and beliefs about ‘the environment’, ‘environmentalists’, ‘workers’, technology and the role of ‘the union’ or union members as political actors. Gaining these types of ethnographic insights are critical for understanding how people come to resist or affirm attempts by labour-environmental organic intellectuals to build solidarities across space and time (and hence overcome militant particularisms). We must therefore study the labour movement as an ‘organized’ project in relation to its potential for fostering transformative socio-ecological change.

A closer ethnographic investigation should also explore how labour-environmental alliance-forming is shaped through the politics of gender and race. Sexism and racism within unions, companies and society at large, may prove to be critical factors that are blocking labour-environmental alliance-forming. We already can see how racialized communities and women are bearing the brunt of neoliberalism, climate change and dubious climate change mitigation schemes. Therefore, the precarious situation of women and racialized groups, and their involvement in leading counterhegemonic struggles, must be more seriously investigated.
Finally, we must also keep in mind that there are many spaces of neoliberal resistance and struggles for democracy. While this thesis focused on labor organizations in bringing forth labour-environmental alliance forming, further research could look much more closely at environmental organizations—both at a national- or movement-level as well as at a more detailed organizational-level. Many of the same questions I have asked about labour organizations during this research would apply to environmental organizations: What internal and external factors are blocking or encouraging environmental-labour alliance-forming? How have environmental organizations engaged with an ecological modernist discourse? What are the ideological tensions between and within different environmental organizations? How do environmental organizations incorporate scale into their policies and political mobilizations? And so forth. Besides environmental organizations, further research could also examine struggles by non-unionized workers in response to climate change or climate change mitigation policies. Here, we might look to draw connections between the literature covering labour-environmental alliance-forming undertaken by Northern trade unions and the well-established body of literature around conservation politics and community forestry that focuses on how poor groups of people in the South (often famers) have responded to socio-ecological changes and environmental regulations. Identifying the connections between the labour-environmental struggles in the South with labour-environmental struggles in the North could help generate the ideological basis for building transnational solidarities that are critical for overcoming militant particularisms and waging counterhegemonic struggle in an era of neoliberalism and global warming.


Annual Review of Sociology. 27:283.


University of British Columbia Press.
