

CARBON MARKETS VERSUS JUST TRANSITION

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IDEAS ABOUT NATURE

- ❑ Nature as an external undefined entity, associated to the idea of transcendence

Williams calls primitive condition before human society (Williams 1980:72)

- ❑ Nature as a place

The nature found in the surrounding pastoral countryside [...] the interpretive frame through which people there measure their lives, evaluate others, take political positions, and just make sense (Gieryn 2000:467)

- ❑ Nature as complexity

Nature is a complex web of inter-related and ever-changing relationships (Kill 2015:7)

- ❑ provider of good as services

once nature has become describable as a provider of measurable ecosystem service units, units from different places and of different quality can be compared and equivalences between them can be negotiated (Kill 2015:6).



ORIGIN OF THE GLOBAL CARBON MARKET MECHANISMS

➤ Environmental Services

The concept of environmental service emerged from the utilitarian framing of ecosystem functions in the 1970s (Corbera 2011)

Because ecosystem services are not fully 'captured' in commercial markets or adequately quantified in terms comparable with economic services and manufactured capital, they are often given too little weight in policy decisions. (Costanza et al. 1997)

➤ Environmental valuation and Payment for Environmental Services

Environmental "valuation" is a matter of putting a (market) price on the environment. The virtue of pricing environmental goods and functions is to allow commensuration between alternative options or courses of action. According to the utilitarian approach, which provides the theoretical basis of this mainstream economic approach, commensuration is a prerequisite for rational decisions. (Centemeri 2015)

NATURE ON THE SHELVES: UNFCCC GLOBAL CARBON MECHANISMS

❖ Global Carbon Trading

Instituted by the Article 17 of the Kyoto Protocol, this mechanism allows countries that have emission units to spare - emissions permitted them but not used - to sell this excess capacity to countries that are over their targets. This mechanism is the perfect example of the application of the free market law of "demand and supply" to the climate change fight

❖ Clean Development Mechanism (CMD)

Defined in Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol the CDM invites industrialized countries with a GHG reduction commitments to invest in projects that reduce emissions in developing countries as an alternative to more expensive emission reductions in their own countries

❖ Joint Implementation (JI)

Article 6 of the Kyoto Protocol; it allows a country with an emission reduction or limitation commitment under the Kyoto Protocol (Annex B) to earn emission reduction units (ERUs) from an emission-reduction or emission removal project in another Annex B Party

NATURE ON THE SHELVES: UNFCCC GLOBAL CARBON MECHANISMS

❖ Reduction of Emissions due to Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD)

Launched at the Montréal Cop 11 in 2005, this mechanism for paying governments, companies or forest owners in the Global South for keeping and looking after their forests (instead of cutting them down, for example), as forests are seen as important 'carbon sinks', literally capturing and storing CO₂ over long periods of time. (Böhm, Murtola and Spoelstra 2012:7)

❖ Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs)

Moves beyond pure offsetting, including a net mitigation element

Moves away from being project based to a mechanism including policies and measures, e.g. "mitigation activities"

All countries, including developed and developing countries, can participate in the mechanism, meaning, they can generate or use carbon offsets

Needs to ensure environmental integrity and transparency, including in governance, and apply robust accounting rules to avoid double counting (De Jong 2015)



COP 21 AND TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON ECONOMY

➤ Nature and the Paris agreement

The binding provisions are mostly procedural and include commitments to (i) submit an INDC, (ii) submit an updated INDC every five years, (iii) demonstrate a progression in subsequent INDCs, (iv) pursue domestic measures to achieve INDCs, and (v) submit emissions inventories and information necessary to achieve INDCs (Day 2015:3).

➤ Carbon market in the Paris agreement

The concept of market-based approaches is anchored in the form of multiple synonyms found throughout the entire text. Expressions such as 'cooperative approaches', 'internationally transferred mitigation outcomes', 'enhanced' this and that – appearing no less than 50 times throughout the Paris Agreement– all refer implicitly to market approaches. Another euphemism liberally used to convey the idea of markets without mentioning them outright is the word "opportunity/ies" which appears around 13 times, making it clear from its contextual placement that the Paris Agreement creates a big opening for companies to come in. (Furh et al. 2015)

COP 21 AND TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON ECONOMY

➤ Paris agreement and climate justice

Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting the importance for some of the concept of “climate justice”, when taking action to address climate change.

Acknowledgment of the importance of human rights 3 times in the text (Twice in the Preamble and once in the operational part)

Recognition of “Loss and Damage” and exclusion of Liability and compensation

➤ Paris agreement and just transition

Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities.

The Paris agreement has failed to secure a clear commitment from the Parties that they will design and implement their climate policies with full respect for human rights and promoting a just transition for the workforce as well as decent and quality jobs. [...]Tackling climate change requires a change of society, and this must be done in cooperation with people, not at the expense of their rights (ETUC 2016)

JUST TRANSITION: ORIGIN AND CONCEPT

- The term Just Transition was coined by Californian activists seeking to improve relations with workers in industries affected by environmental campaigns. The original organisation behind the call is the Just Transition Alliance, founded in 1997. However, as a concept, its break-through moment came when the Canadian Labour Congress [CLC] released their 2000 report “Just Transition for workers during Environmental Change”. This report gave the term ‘Just Transition’ a solid basis within the labour movement (O’Driscoll 2011)
- Just transition is a mechanism addressing simultaneously sustainable development, environmental protection, and social/climate justice through the triple aspect of distribution of climate burden and benefits, participation in the decision making process/action and recognition of all stakeholders.



KEY DIMENSIONS OF JUST TRANSITION

❑ Meaningful environmental transition and sustainable development

The shift to a low carbon economy will mean massive changes in the way we produce goods and services, in travel and transport, and in the pattern of future investment (TUC 2008:36).

❑ Representation, participation and employee involvement

Just transition calls to include democracy and social justice in environmental decision-making processes. (TUC 2009).

❑ Stable employment and long-term planning

In the context of just transition we have to create green and decent jobs, transform and improve traditional ones (TUC 2009).



KEY DIMENSIONS OF JUST TRANSITION

❑ Social justice and a fair distribution of costs (and benefits)

just Transition recognizes that support for environmental policies are conditional on a fair distribution of the costs and benefits of those policies across the economy (TUC and allan 2008)

❑ Government backing and a united purpose

The “shared solution” approach advocates for a collaboration between the current governing bodies and the other parties/ Actors to implement just transition

The “differentiated responsibility” approach plead for the ‘losers” of the transition and because of its stronger emphasis on workers’ and plead for change of the rules of the game

The “social ecological” approach is more confrontational and based on the assumption that the current crisis is being structured by an unequal distribution of wealth, property and power in capitalist society. That is why it advocates for the public ownership and control of natural resources

CONCLUSION

- The ideology behind the current global carbon market mechanisms results from the utilitarian vision the society has of nature
- The market based mechanisms intituted by the Kyoto Protocol proved to be inadequate to solve the climate crisis
- Despite all the Media presenting the Paris Agreement as a success, it appears to be a great diplomatic success, but a climate disaster
- Realisinz the failure of the global leaders to put in place a suitable post kyoto agreement in Paris, climate justice movements engaged on the way of civic disobedience, and organised marches to force governments to engage on the way of just transition
- After 21 years of failing global regime centered on the market, the only way forwards after Paris in that of just transition, and that is the essence of the continuous action of climate justice movements around the world in general and of the Climate job campaign of Portugal in Particular,

THANK YOU

