Green Justification and Environmental Movements

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Chapter Title
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Abstract
This chapter discusses the contribution of the economics and sociology of conventions (EC/SC) to the study of environmental movements. The first section briefly reviews how EC/SC has contributed to a renewal in the study of collective action by relating it to processes of social construction of public problems. An examination of how actors succeed in turning their "private troubles" into "public issues" reveals that the observable diversity of environmental movements can be explained by the diversity of ways in which (1) material dependencies matter to people and (2) people try to have these concerns legitimized. As illustrated by the debates on "green justification", some arguments on the value of the environment relativize the political weight of the notion of justifiable social order in favor of the notions of ecosystem and biosphere and consequently challenge the "grammar of justification". Ecological arguments can also highlight the importance of "familiar attachments" as a specific source of emplaced valuations. In contrast to reductive frameworks (e.g. the NIMBY, "not in my backyard", syndrome), EC/SC takes into account not only how actors try to manage orders of worth, interest-based valuations, and familiar attachments in arguments about the value of the environment but also how they succeed or fail in having them recognized as publicly relevant. The final section discusses how EC/SC enables comparative and historical analyses of environmental movements, conflicts, and controversies and how it helps to shed light on the transformation of critique in an increasingly interconnected but still diverse world.

1. Introduction

The term *environmental movements* is commonly mobilized in the social sciences literature to mean "networks of informal interactions that may include, as well as individuals and groups who have no organizational affiliation, organizations of varying degrees of formality (including even political parties, especially Green parties) that are engaged in collective action motivated by shared identity or concern about environmental issues" (Rootes and Brulle 2013: 413).

It is clear that any attempt to produce a list of environmental issues is destined to result, to borrow Danny Trom's (1999) analogy, in something similar to Borges' imaginary taxonomy of animals. This taxonomy is mentioned by Foucault in his "Preface" to *The Order of Things* and it reads: "animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (1) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies" (Foucault 1970: xv). The "monstrosity" of Borges' list of categories lies in "the impossibility of thinking about the common space of their encounter" (Trom 1999: 35). The same can be said of the space of encounter pertaining to climate change activism, anti-pollution efforts, conservation movements, campaigns against large infrastructures (including energy infrastructures) and projects judged to be environmentally harmful, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, mobilizations for quality of life in urban spaces, pro-agroecology farmers' movements, transition towns, alternative food networks, movements for the defense of indigenous lands, animal rights movements, and alternative medicine movements. This list is of course not exhaustive because new issues definable as "environmental" are always emerging in the public domain. The acceleration in technological innovations—with all their associated impacts on the human body and the environment—plays a role in fueling this dynamic.

The category "environmental movement" provides a common conceptual space in which to discuss extremely diverse issues and experiences, such as protests and lifestyles, wildernesses and urban spaces, and sustainable development and degrowth. In an attempt to organize this diversity, environmental movements have been categorized according to conceptual tools that emerged in industrialized countries since the 1960s for the analysis of social movements (ideology, identity, repertoires of action, forms of internal organization, etc.). Ecologism versus environmentalism, scientific ecology versus political ecology, "deep" ecology versus "shallow" environmentalism, and ecocentrism versus technocentrism are just some of the distinctions that have been made according to the ideologies underlying environmental movements. These distinctions have contributed to consolidating the differentiation between the reformist and critical varieties of environmentalism. The critical varieties of environmentalism have in turn been split into progressive and reactionary forms of environmentalism.

These simplistic oppositions reveal how inadequate the mainstream theories of social movements are in terms of giving an account both of the many ways in which "the environment" can be a source of "troubles" and of the various paths that can turn "personal troubles" into public (environmental) "issues", to borrow Charles Wright Mills' famous distinction. In *The sociological imagination* (Mills 1959), the American sociologist defined as "troubles" those problems that are experienced as pertaining to the individual and her

immediate relation to others while "public issues" lie beyond one's personal control, pertain to society's organizations and processes and are rooted in society rather than in the individual

The aim of this chapter is to show how the application of the economics and sociology of conventions (EC/SC) for the study of collective action and social movements gives a more precise understanding of what accounts for the variety of environmental movements and their varying potential to radically challenge traditional views of politics and the public sphere. In doing so, it helps shed light on a defining characteristic of environmental movements, which is their "self-limiting institutionalization", that is, their "resistance to the deradicalizing effects of institutionalization" (Rootes and Brulle 2013: 417).

The first section (2) briefly reviews the contribution of EC/SC to the debates on collective action and social movements. The EC/SC notion refers here to the branch of French pragmatic sociology known as economics of conventions or as the "sociology of critical capacities" (Blokker 2011). This field has contributed to the emergence of "a complex pragmatist institutionalism", which is centered on the importance of overcoming the distinction between economic value and social values to study the diversity of valuations and conventions of worth at work in economies and societies (cross reference: Diaz-Bone and Larquier: Conventions: Meanings and Usages in Economics and Sociology of Conventions) .

This approach helps to show that environmental movements fundamentally question how materiality and material dependencies are made to count in public decision-making processes. In other words, environmental movements highlight the diversity of ways in which materiality and material dependencies can *matter* to people and how people try to make them count as *publicly valuable*.

The following section (3) discusses how EC/SC helps in distinguishing between arguments on the value of the environment that rely on publicly justifiable definitions of worth (as defined by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, 2006; see for a discussion Wagner, 1999) and arguments that challenge the "grammar of justification" (Lafaye and Thévenot 2017). This latter is understood as the combination of identifiable rules (or "axioms") that any action implying ordering things and people in terms of their being less or more worthy has to comply with if it aims at being publicly acknowledged as legitimate. Ecological arguments that are based on visions of the ecosystem and biosphere and that thus valorize the planetary scope of ecological problems, their interspecific or more-than-human dimensions, and the impact of today's decisions on future generations, radically question the model of polity on which orders of worth historically rely.

Moreover (see section 4), ecological arguments that highlight the importance of "familiar attachments" (Thévenot 2007) also undermine the modern construction of justice because they claim that the singular ways in which humans and their environments interweave and interpenetrate are politically important. This interconnection gives rise to embodied and emplaced reasons to attribute value to something or someone that challenge publicly justifiable definitions of worth (see Centemeri 2017, 2018).

An environmental movements approach inspired by the EC/SC thus critically examines the NIMBY (not in my backyard) category as a useful analytical tool for understanding environmental conflicts. The NIMBY notion implicitly rejects any reasons to mobilize that are related to "interest-based valuations" (Eranti 2017) or familiar attachments to an environment because they are egoistic. In contrast, the conceptual tools provided by the

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EC/SC can trace the many ways in which actors try to manage orders of worth, interest-based valuations, and familiar attachments in arguments about the value of the environment and how they try to make these arguments count in the public space.
The final section (5) discusses how EC/SC enables comparative and historical analyses of environmental movements, conflicts, and controversies and how it helps to shed light on the transformation of critique in an increasingly interconnected but still diverse world.

2. EC/SC and social movements: justifications and "reality tests" in the social construction of public problems

The study of collective action and social movements has developed historically from a small number of paradigms that continue to structure this field of research today, often through their combined use. These paradigms are the *resource mobilization theory* (or RMT, an approach strongly inspired by Mancur Olson's utilitarian model of collective action), the *theory of political opportunities structure* (developed by Doug McAdam), and the *frame perspective*. Also important in the evolution of this field has been the *New Social Movements* (NSMs) perspective, which developed from the European "critical theory" tradition (Alberto Melucci and Alessandro Pizzorno in Italy, Jürgen Habermas in Germany, Alain Touraine in France) and which focuses on the emergence of new social identities and political cultures (see for an introduction to these authors and approaches Della Porta and Diani 1999).
The study of social movements has suffered from a structuralist bias that has led to the neglect of action as a relevant dimension of analysis. This has meant no attention has been paid to either the reasons behind mobilizations, the motives for criticizing and contesting, or the different ways of interpreting a commitment to a cause. When action is taken into account in the mainstream frameworks, it is in the form of rational choice theory, that is, it is based on the premise that actors have preferences that are given and unknowable. The result has been a relative disinterest in questions of cognition, emotion, and morality as well as of meaning more generally. In other words, there has been a relative disinterest in cultural dimensions (Baumgarten et al. 2014) and a sidelining of the material contexts of mobilization as a relevant level of sociological inquiry.
While the NSMs approach has been more mindful of cultural dimensions, particularly through the work of Alberto Melucci (1996), it is also characterized by a strong normative commitment that has proved an obstacle to a thorough analysis of the concrete processes of mobilization. There has been a desire to see signs of a new model of society emerging in these so-called NSMs (especially in environmentalism) that mark a clear shift away from the conservative, liberal, and Marxist models (this is the case in particular with Alain Touraine's work, see Touraine 1980). Thus, discontinuity has sometimes been overemphasized at the expense of elements of continuity.
In keeping with the cultural legacy of the NSMs approach and reviving the theory of collective behavior, the *frame perspective* introduced by David Snow (Snow *et al.* 1986) has paved the way for a reintegration of cultural dimensions (notably in the sense of political cultures) in the study of collective action. According to the frame perspective, social movements are producers of meaning. This approach examines motives and takes into account activities such as "defining and interpreting situations, investigating the causes of problems and responsibilities; discussing means and ends, reasoning about principles and

negotiating strategies" (Cefaï and Trom 2001: 13). It is worth noting that an emphasis on motives, meaning, and reasons involves the use of ethnographic approaches in the study of social movements.

A group of French scholars (including Janine Barbot, Daniel Cefaï , Nicolas Dodier, Claudette Lafaye, and Danny Trom) have been drawing on conceptual and methodological tools from the sociology of critical capacities since the late 1990s to critically discuss the framework perspective, thus demonstrating their relevance for the study of social movements. In particular, these authors have highlighted the importance of Luc Boltanski's and Laurent Thévenot's works on justification (2006, originally published in French in 1991) and the plurality of regimes of engagement (Thévenot 2007; cross reference Hansen and Meilvang). The justification approach, in fact, highlights the existence of "grammars of the res publica, the common good, and the general interest (...) architectures of the ordinary sense of equality and justice that actors must comply with in order to produce acceptable performances in public" (Cefaï and Trom 2001: 17). According to Boltanski and Thévenot, the modern configuration of the public sphere rely on a convention-based shaping of the environment and material (inter)dependencies that makes some (inter)dependencies relevant and others irrelevant in an assessment of the legitimacy of the social order. The authors have made the assumption that strong constraints of legitimacy and generality weigh on the public expression of arguments for or against a given order of things. Actors must account for the general relevance of their particular situation (an operation of public justification) and to do so they appeal to different conceptions of the common good that have historically emerged in Western societies and that political philosophy has elaborated in the form of different representation of the polity.

Daniel Cefaï (see in particular Cefaï 2007) has been the author most invested in efforts to establish a dialogue between EC/SC and social movement theories. EC/SC is "the central part of the pragmatic turn in French social science and can be considered as a "pragmatist institutionalism" (Diaz-Bone 2011: 51). The EC/SC critique of methodological individualism and rational choice theory is considered by Cefaï as an important source of inspiration to move away from the utilitarian and psychological language that is still central to the frame approach. In fact, EC/SC is based on the idea that actors' rationality is limited, situated, interpretative and argumentative and that conventions – intended not as arbitrary standards or traditional customs but as logics of coordination and evaluation in situations of uncertainty - are fundamental resources for coordinated action and for criticism (Diaz-Bone 2011; see also Batifoulier 2001). Moreover, the frame approach ignores the "constraints" that the public dimension of action places on actors and focuses instead on a strategic conception of action in which frames are treated as symbolic resources, motives are seen as collective representations, and public arenas are reduced to fields or markets of protest (see also Luhtakallio 2012).

The result of this encounter between EC/SC and social movement theory is a reading of social movements as being embedded in the complex dynamics of the emergence of public problems. In other words, social movements are seen as being engaged, through their participation in the construction of public problems, in expressing a critique of a given order of things across a variety of public arenas that are equipped with material dispositives (French *dispositifs*).

As discussed by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006), a critique is never simply a discursive exercise. It always involves the use of "testing devices". "Critical reality tests" show the

relevance of materiality for supporting critical arguments. In critical moments, materiality and material dependencies, once they have been duly "put in forms", provide evidence of the rightness (or wrongness) of a certain judgment of a situation (cross reference Thévenot L., Investments in forms). Consequently, when expressing a critique, social movements participate in the larger social processes of putting materiality and material dependencies "in forms" by creating or challenging categories and tools for evaluating things, beings, entities, places, and so on.

In other words, EC/SC spotlights the intertwining of axiological, epistemic, and material dimensions in social movements activity. It is a socio-economic approach but is also a cultural approach to social movements but not in the sense that culture is what determines or causes action. Rather, culture is what becomes visible and what is produced and reproduced through action (Trom 1999: 46). This culture that is produced and reproduced through collective action is also the production of a materiality, a spatiality, an ecology.

In addition, this perspective reveals that there are limits to the role of social movements in the emergence of public problems. In fact, public problems are not the outcome of the claim-making activity of a particular social group but the historical product of a complex collective activity that involves the creation or use of categories. Mobilizations are therefore moments in which new categories emerge and old categories are criticized, modified, or displaced. Social movements are thus just one of the actors in the process. They are not exclusively concerned with defending opinions and affirming identities; they are also directly involved in dynamics that relate to cognitive processes of categorization and that influence economic, science, and technology issues.

3. Green justification and the "many worths" of nature

Adopting a convention theorist perspective in the study of environmental movements leads first of all to a questioning of the notion of "environment". From a EC/SC perspective, "environment" is an umbrella notion that refers to different ways of "characterizing" materiality and material dependencies and of defining how they "matter" for better or for worse. The environment can be characterized in terms of resources, landscape, ecosystem, ecology, land, place, space, commons, natural capital, heritage, public goods, wilderness, and so on. The most relevant—and most fraught with consequences—of these characterizations are those relating to "nature" (cross reference G. Plumecocq: Approaches to Ecological Problems in Convention Theory: Values and Organizing Relationships to the Environment).

Claudette Lafaye and Laurent Thévenot (2017) addressed this issue in a key article (originally published in 1993 in the *Revue française de sociologie*) exploring what happens to the dynamic of critique when nature is brought into play. Based on research conducted on environmental conflicts concerning large contested infrastructures, the authors showed that the environment was characterized in these conflicts using justifiable orders of worth. They demonstrated that there is consequently a type of environmental critique that fits the grammar of legitimacy underpinning the modern construction of the public sphere. When the environment is characterized as "heritage", the reference is to a "domestic" construction of value, while reference to the beauty of a landscape derives from an inspired order of worth. The use of testimonials in defense of nature is associated with a worth defined in terms of "renown", while the definition of ecosystem services and their

monetization puts a price on elements of nature, giving rise to the creation of markets or payments. A technical treatment of the environment involves its evaluation in terms of the (industrial) efficacy of processes, while the claiming of inequalities associated with the environment (especially in terms of distribution of environmental harms) refers to a civic definition of value.

Lafaye and Thévenot's analysis therefore provides a better understanding of so-called reformist environmentalism, where the environment is valued according to orders of worth whose definition is based on an idea of social order as an exclusively human matter. It also better clarifies the ecological turning point of the 1970s.

While historians have confirmed that environmental issues did not just emerge with the environmental movement of the 1970s, Lafaye and Thévenot showed that it is pertinent to speak of an ecological turning point that was marked by the emergence of a "green" order of worth, where value started to be attributed to what was clean, biodegradable, or recyclable and the opposite of what pollutes (Lafaye and Thévenot 2017). The key issues in defining green worth have thus become "ecological analysis, renewability, future generations, and the planet as an integrated ecosystem" (Blok 2013: 497).

However, the ecological mode of valuation encounters the difficulty of establishing an equivalent that allows for the commensurability of beings (Lafaye and Thévenot 2017). In other words, the complexity of ecological interdependencies makes it impossible to stabilize unambiguous "tests" of green worth. As discussed by Anders Blok (2013), the central importance that climate change has assumed—it has become "the" environmental issue of our time—has led to efforts to turn CO_2 into the general equivalent of the green value, with unsatisfactory results.

There is more to it, however. In their exploration of the philosophical foundations of green worth, Lafaye and Thévenot pointed out that "ecological arguments" reveal a "gap" with respect to the framework of justification in terms of what determines both legitimate political orientations and ordinary justifications (Lafaye and Thévenot 2017). Ecological arguments bring actors into the political debate who cannot directly make their voices heard, namely future generations and nonhuman living beings.

In particular, ecological concerns lead to a relativization of the political weight of the modern notion of social order (where the environment is functional to stabilize a social agreement) in favor of the notions of system and ecosystem. Based on the cybernetic vision, the notions of interdependence, flows, feedbacks, and balance are central to the ecological vision and pave the way to views on governing as the exercise of technocratic control (Lafaye and Thévenot 2017).

Another holistic vision of socioecological interdependencies has emerged alongside the notion of "system", which is that of "biosphere". The reproduction of the biosphere is linked to the maintenance of biodiversity. This holistic vision leads to a relativization of the centrality of the human species in favor of an ecocentric perspective ("deep ecology"), which is embodied by the idea of the planet earth as an organism (the Gaia hypothesis).

This diagnosis partially converges with Eve Chiapello's analysis of what she calls "ecological criticism" (Chiapello 2013). Drawing on the framework that she developed with Luc Boltanski for analyzing the transformations of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), she distinguished four types of criticism: social, artistic, conservative, and ecological. She characterized ecological criticism by the fact that, one, it challenges the ability of the capitalist system to guarantee the future of humankind and, two, it has no preference for

any particular political model and is highly adaptable to all regimes and all types of labor management.

According to Chiapello, ecological criticism is crucial in orienting the dynamic of the present socioeconomic conjuncture. She discusses three directions of change in the current economic system that are inspired by ecological arguments: green capitalism, the local economy on a human scale, and the return of the state.

Chiapello's analysis thus moves away from an approach that is mindful of the "many worths of nature" (Blok 2013) in situations of action. In her view, the difficulties of stabilizing a green order of worth are related to the absence of a clear political model for the ecological society, which explains the tendency of critical ecological arguments to combine with other forms of criticism (social, artistic, and conservative).

As argued by Laura Centemeri and Gildas Renou (2017), the approach to environmental conflicts and movements outlined by Thévenot and Lafaye and the relevance of ideologies in the transformation of capitalism highlighted by Chiapello can both serve to strengthen the analytical foundation of the study of environmental conflicts as conflicts of environmental valuation, as developed by the Catalan historian and economist Joan Martinez-Alier (2002). Martinez-Alier distinguished different types of environmentalism (the "cult of wilderness", the "gospel of ecoefficiency", and the "environmentalism of the poor") according to the "languages of environmental valuation" on which they are based. This approach has been very influential in the field of political ecology because of its connection with the structuring of a global environmental justice movement. It has been decidedly less so, however, in the field of social movement studies, because, among other things, it merely revives a structuralist/Marxist perspective on collective action. Despite these limitations, Centemeri and Renou (2015) argued that Martinez-Alier's proposal was relevant insofar as it promoted a move away from the distinction between (economic) value and (social) values in favor of a diversity of ways of defining worth. EC/SC adds to this framework with its focus on integrating moral, cognitive, and material dimensions in the "reality tests" and the "grammatical" constraints related to the public confrontation of arguments.

Overall, EC/SC involves viewing environmental problems as a consequence of the interplay of a diversity of actors operating in multiple arenas through processes that are marked by a specific historicity and materiality that contribute to producing and reproducing power relations.

One of these arenas is the market. With a view to expanding the analysis of political consumerism beyond labeling schemes and boycotting and "buycotting" (or positive buying) strategies, Sophie Dubuisson-Quellier (2013) showed how, from a EC/SC perspective, some French environmental social movement organizations actively urge firms to introduce new ecofriendly features (conditions of production, proximity, seasonality, low-packaging) into their products and at the same time encourage consumers to introduce "ecofriendly principles of worth" into their valuation of products by providing them with market devices to help in their purchasing choices (shopping guides, shopping tests). In doing so, they seek to create business opportunities for firms while shaping consumers' preferences for that kind of valuation by convincing them of their responsibilities and their role as agents of change. Dubuisson-Quellier (2013) called this a "market mediation strategy".

Daniel Nyberg and Christopher Wright's (2013) study of corporate environmentalism revealed how the compromises that companies make between green worth and market worth to respond to growing environmental concerns are actually based on a form of

hierarchy of these two valuation criteria that leads to the hegemony of market worth. In other words, corporations express green valuations in terms of market profitability. In this sense, compromises between green worth and market worth become a way of "compromising the environment". According to the authors, "broad scale corporate compromises are not independent applications of orders of worth, rather they change the understanding of these orders" (Nyberg and Wright 2013: 420).

Tuomas Ylä-Anttila et al.'s (2018) study focused on the competition and compromises between arguments related to economic growth and the market, on the one hand, and ecological arguments, on the other. Based on an analysis of newspaper content between 1997 and 2013, they examined the "consolidation" process around the idea of climate change mitigation that was underway in five countries around the globe (United States, Finland, France, Russia, India). They showed how statements that openly opposed economic and ecological arguments came to be replaced over time by ecomodern evaluations that were supported by a variety of actors (political, business, ENGOs). The authors suggested that this transformation should be interpreted within a more complex framework in which large corporations no longer intervene directly in the public debate but rather engage in the production of anti-climate expertise through the funding of think tanks. They also noted that the public sphere is now largely dominated by social networks, where far right groups promote the view of an unreconcilable opposition between market value and ecological value.

The subject of conflicting arguments was also the focus of Tomi Lehtimäki's work (2018, 2019) on the emergence of organic agriculture as a public issue in Finland. Lehtimäki looked at the attempts of organic agriculture supporters to assert the difference between organic and conventional agriculture in Finland from the 1980s to the 2010s. Through a sociohistorical analysis, he showed that organic agriculture had enjoyed a contentious status from the start due to a certain vagueness in its defining traits. This finding allows us to relativize the dominant idea that organic agriculture is losing its critical potential due to its incorporation into mainstream agricultural markets. Moreover, his analysis of media discussions in Finland over the same period showed that the debates were more complex than just an opposition between "good" organics versus "bad" industrial food. In particular, he showed the importance of the transformation of domestic worth into a "nationalist framework" in which the qualities of organic agriculture were associated with the national origin of the product.

In her study of the different registers of the worth of ecology as a science, Céline Granjou (2015) highlighted the relevance of the scientific arena as a space of conflict between evaluative arguments that impact the public construction of environmental issues. Drawing on her research on French and English "ecotrons" (experimental infrastructures for the study of ecosystems), she showed how the worth of ecology as a scientific discipline initially associated with biodiversity conservation had been progressively associated with the idea of ecosystem services, based on an experimental model of ecological engineering. According to the author, ecology was evolving from a paradigm of conservation to one of (bio)security, where nature is seen as a "vital infrastructure that ecology can manipulate, regulate, and optimize for the well-being of societies" (Granjou 2015: 45).

4. Diversity of concerns and attachments in environmental conflicts

The literature discussed so far has placed the emphasis on the comparisons between arguments, often studying their diachronic transformation in order to point to the "internalization of criticisms" processes (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). The methodology employed has mainly involved text and interview analysis and has only occasionally included ethnographic observation.

The importance of ethnographic observation was indirectly acknowledged by Claudette Lafaye and Laurent Thévenot when they asserted in their discussion of "green justification" that ecological arguments require a better exploration of the different ways in which humans engage with non-humans since the latter construct the common good on a broader ecological realm than common humanity (Lafaye and Thévenot 2017).

In an influential essay, Anders Blok showed that the green justification hypothesis developed by Lafaye and Thévenot, the network-based new spirit of capitalism as defined by Boltanski and Chiapello, and Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) all succeed in theoretically articulating an important but partial sociopolitical grammar of ecological worth.

More precisely, Blok drew on three cases to make his argument: the case of carbon markets to illustrate the plausibility and limitations of green justification; the case of urban sustainability to illustrate an ecological inflection of the "new spirit of capitalism"; and the case of biodiversity conflicts surrounding whales as "charismatic animals" to test Latour's invitation to think about justice beyond common humanity.

Blok suggested that the case of the intense whaling controversies showed that the conventions approach does not adequately capture "the widespread reality of human attachments to whales and other charismatic non-humans" because of an "overly cognitive conception of human engagement with things" (Blok 2013: 505). He added that "affective attachments arguably form the backbone of contemporary whaling disputes" (Blok 2013: 505).

According to Blok's argument, while these observations are in line with Latour's invitation to explore the variety of assemblages connecting human to nonhuman beings, the ANT perspective does not offer adequate tools to study the dynamics that take place in the new political space that then emerges. Blok thus stressed the need for "a new ecology of collective passions" (Blok 2013: 507) to deal with environmental issues and acknowledged that "environmental movements should be credited with reopening crucial questions of the proper 'equipment' of our good common world" (Blok 2013: 496).

The regimes of engagement approach developed by Laurent Thévenot (2007) is in line with this. From a regimes of engagement perspective, environmental issues are interpreted as situations that provide insight into the conditions of access to the public space based on "engagements of proximity".

A comparative study of environmental conflicts in France and the United States conducted as part of a larger comparative research program jointly run by Laurent Thévenot and Michèle Lamont (see Lamont and Thévenot 2000) highlighted the relevance of forms of valuing the environment based on what Thévenot called "attachments to sites" (see Thévenot, Moody, and Lafaye 2000).

The presence of a Native American Me-wuk community among the opponents of the Clavey river dam project in California (the US case) revealed forms of valuing this natural place that resisted public characterizations of worth. Public characterizations of worth are based on representing a natural place as equivalent to others in order to judge its value.

Nevertheless, these "attachments" could be shared, and they were seen as reasons to mobilize. A "commonality" can be built on "familiarity", even if the extension of this "world in common" is limited by the requirement of experiencing the same emotional involvement in certain things and spaces.

Further comparative research studies (the aforementioned French/US program was followed by a French/Russia collective program, see Thévenot 2020) led Thévenot to progressively identify different political "grammars of commonality and difference" and related forms of "justifiability held in common" (cross reference: Hansen and Meilvang). He highlighted the existence in the public space of different ways of connecting the particular to the general beyond the "rise in generality" required for justification. "Rise in generality" here refers to a demonstration that a particular situation has value because it exemplifies a general category.

More precisely, comparing France and the United States highlighted the importance of the vocabulary of opinions for a definition of the common good as a composition of diverse legitimate interests. On the other hand, comparing France and Russia highlighted the importance of affinities to "common-places". By "common-places", Thévenot meant "intermediate entities" that are vehicles of communication and difference through personal affinities. In other words, they are not just the places but also the artefacts (songs, poetry, monuments, literary or historical figures, forests, parks, urban spaces, etc.) to which people feel affectively attached. While these affective reasons for attachment are singular, objects and places are affectively meaningful for a whole community on the basis of a shared experience.

Mobilizing this framework, Olga Koveneva compared the different ways of resolving conflicts on environmental use in two suburban parks, one in Moscow and the other in Paris (Koveneva 2011). In the French case, when local conflicts of use arose, they were promptly addressed through public meetings involving all the "qualified" actors (fisher's association representatives, municipal representatives, environmental association representatives, etc.). However, little importance was attached in these meetings to the experience of the fishers and volunteers, who would go to the park every day and make sure any minor maintenance work was carried out. In the Russian case, by contrast, the emphasis was on direct action and the "common-places" that emerge out of everyday environmental practices. The "common cause" of the environment was expressed in terms of the "common work" of taking care of a specific environment. The park's management dealt with conflicts of environmental use by seeking forms of local adjustment and acknowledging the importance of practices and attachments to common-places without resorting to a formalized public debate. As Koveneva remarked, however, this way of dealing with conflicts of use hindered expressions of criticism and gave rise to forms of paternalism among the authorities with respect to the citizens. This trend was further reinforced by the local activists' decision to rely exclusively on international ENGOs to bring any environmental issues to public attention.

Koveneva's case study shows that environmental issues are infused with tension between a vision of justice, which is based on detachment and equivalence, and a vision of care, an issue originally raised by feminist thinkers. Alongside environmentalism, feminism is the movement that has most clearly exposed the limits of the construction of the separation between public space and the proximity sphere and between issues of production and issues of reproduction.

Eric Doidy (2008) conducted a pioneering study on the relevance of the moral argument of care in environmental mobilization. In particular, he explored the "topic of care" in the mobilizations of French farmers in the Jura region that aimed at sustainable (as opposed to industrial) agriculture. Their claims concerned the value of the forms of familiar attachments (to people, animals, places) that shaped their practices. By referencing care, the farmers tried to avoid the quagmire of linking the "goods of proximity" to a "roots" and identity argument. In fact, movement "entrepreneurs" from a reactionary background had previously instrumentalized the idea of "roots" and ended up concealing the diversified visions of the "good farmer" that coexisted in these mobilizations.

Laura Centemeri (2015) highlighted a similar reliance on the vocabulary of care to express the goods of a familiar attachment to an environment, together with the effort to link them to a progressive critique, in her study of the impact of the Seveso disaster on the trajectories of a group of local environmental activists, whose actions ranged from protests to direct environmental interventions intended to "repair" socioecological relations.

These developments of the EC/SC have inspired a body of further research on how people concretely defend emotional attachments (to places, humans, and nonhumans) as a form of legitimate value that should be taken into account in public decision-making.

In her research on water use conflicts associated with the Orb river basin in France, Audrey Richard-Ferroudji (2011) discussed the limitations of deliberative tools in terms of their ability to include different constructions of issues related to different "participation formats" (political and moral subject, stakeholder, inhabitants, curious participant). She called for a reflection on the interconnection of different formats of participation with a view to creating an appropriate device that recognizes the differences between participants along several dimensions.

Based on data collected through participatory observation and interviews conducted between 2003 and 2009 within the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the Roundtable for Responsible Soy in Asia and Latin America, Emmanuelle Cheyns also criticized the "inclusiveness paradigm" in the case of the Multi-stakeholder Initiatives for Sustainable Agriculture (cross reference: Cheyns: Ecological and Sustainability Voluntary Standards). Cheyns analyzed how these Roundtables framed the legitimacy and engagement of actors and questioned their capacity to include participants other than "stakeholders". Moreover, she showed how these mechanisms had led to a form of "de-politicization" of standards.

Referring to the specific case of the RSPO, she highlighted the capacity of local NGOs to help locally affected communities and small-scale farmers to make their voices heard in such international contexts by restoring their dignity through a specific work of care and through preparing them for the public speaking "test".

The evolution of EC/SC to include personal attachments as reasons to value the environment also contributes to challenging the mainstream interpretation of mobilizations against unwanted land uses in terms of NIMBYism, that is, as an expression of self-interest (see Eranti 2017).

In a key article, Danny Trom (1999) argued that the NIMBY label embodies an evaluative judgment that aims to discredit a construction of the common good based on the experience of a singular perceptive relationship to a "spatialized nature". In particular, Trom examined the capacities (notably in terms of esthetic judgments) that citizens mobilize to relate their singular experience of a specific place and its value to a legitimate argument by

using the category of landscape. More recently Veikko Eranti (2017) argued in favor of the analytical utility of the notion of "NIMBY conflicts" by defining them as "political conflicts over local land-use, in which residents (as citizens) act to influence the land-use decisions, through having disputes over the systems of valuation used in the decision-making" (Eranti 2017: 297). The NIMBY concept is used by the author to denote the conflicts rather than the actors participating in the conflicts.

In her study of 40 years of conflict over the expansion of the Milan Malpensa airport, Laura Centemeri (2017) analyzed how the activists protesting against the most recent expansion project made the case for the singular value of a heathland area just outside the airport's boundaries. The construction of the value of this seemingly ordinary spatialized piece of countryside was based not on the category of landscape but on the ecological uniqueness of the heathland as an ecosystem, as related to the common good of biodiversity. At the same time, the activists were engaged in transforming this site into a "common-place" through seeking the involvement of users (sportspersons, amateur naturalists, neighboring inhabitants) in environmental activities. This "ordinary" place of nature was thus transformed into a showcase for a non-exploitative use of the environment. The activists wanted to raise awareness on the need for a different conception of territorial development in a context marked by a strong alliance between the political and economic elites to support economic growth through investment in large infrastructures.

Similarly, Anders Blok and Marie Leth Meilvang's (2014) study of the large-scale sustainable urban development project *Nordhavnen* in Copenhagen showed how a number of civic associations and "partial urban publics" had emerged "based on a heterogeneity of valuations, concerns and familiar attachments to this particular city-based ecology". These actors all shared the same goal, which was to challenge the vision of sustainable urbanism embodied by the project and championed by its promoters (cross reference: Blok: Sustainable Urbanism. Green Engagements and Compromised Conventions in the 21st Century). The activists used a variety of "counter-visuals", that is, forms of image-making involving photography, drawings, mappings, and websites, to express, share, and make publicly visible a range of embodied attachments not easily otherwise accommodated in the semantic apparatuses of urban planning. Blok and Meilvang suggested that this network of critical activities can be best thought of as "'partial' urban ecological publics" that are called into existence by the planning moment itself and in which inclusive learning processes take place.

Drawing again on the Danish case, Jakob Laage-Thomsen and Anders Blok (2020) further explored urban ecological mobilizations in a study of what the authors defined as "urban green communities" (see Christensen et al. 2019), that is, groups of activists and citizens engaged in urban gardening, beekeeping, food collectives, biodiversity enhancement, tree planting, and other similar citizen-based "urban greening" group practices. The authors' aim was to overcome the limitations of approaches that interpret these social phenomena either in terms of social movements or, conversely, as initiatives that serve the purpose of neoliberal policies. They showed instead the variety of modes or "styles" of civic engagement with urban sustainability politics.

More specifically, based on an analysis of the activities of green communities across Denmark during the period 2008-2017 using a digital methods approach, Laage-Thomsen and Blok identified six recurring styles of civic engagement: urban greening as subservient to other civic plans; the cultivation of familiar attachments to nature(s); greening as a means to

familiar sociability; sustaining a green partnership; place-based resistances to planning politics; and mobilizing gardens for sustainable transitions.

Similarly, focusing again on the Italian case, Centemeri (2018) adopted an approach based on the heterogeneity of valuations and concerns to analyze the transnational permaculture movement as a "mosaic" movement, where different political cultures and sociotechnical imaginaries coexisted. Taking into account how valuations and attachments were articulated in arguments about the value of the environment and how they translated into "subversive" local economies, she sought to highlight the diversity that lies beneath a category such as "everyday environmentalism" (Schlosberg and Coles 2016) and to prove the potential of a EC/SC-informed approach for the study of ecotopian prefigurative movements whose critique is expressed through the creation of new conventions of coordination.

Taking attachments into account highlights the link between ecological issues and spirituality. As Richard-Ferroudji (2020) argued based on her research on water management in the region of Pondicherry (India), the diversity that characterizes transnational environmental movements like permaculture includes, among other things, the place of spiritual attachments to the environment and the varying recognition that different political cultures give them.

The diversity of attachments and concerns is displayed in all its complexity in situations of environmental disaster. In the literature on mobilizations after situations of environmental contamination as a result of industrial accidents (see on Minamata, Jobin 2006; on Seveso, Centemeri 2015; on Amoco Cadiz, Bouteloup 2019), EC/SC invites an exploration of the different and often competing (and conflicting) constructions of environmental damage and victims. Moreover, taking into account the conventions of monetization adopted in judicial compensation settlements allows us to analyze in detail the moral tensions that victims' movements are faced with (Barbot and Dodier 2016; Jobin 2021). More in general, an EC/SC perspective helps to shed light on the conflicting interpretations of "repairing" in post-disaster situations (Centemeri et al. 2022).

5. Conclusion

Taken together, this body of literature demonstrates how an approach to environmental movements inspired by the EC/SC can reveal the variety of paths that lead actors to attribute value to the environment and how the resulting variety of valuations is related not only to diverse concerns and attachments but also to what Annemarie Mol (1999) defined as "ontological multiplicity". Valuations, concerns, and attachments run right through and feed the construction of environmental causes as public problems. In every single situation of environmental struggle, actors with not only different views but also different experiences of the problematic situation have to find a way to collaborate. Public compromises, "common-places", and the negotiation of interests are various ways of managing diversity to allow people to act together in a common cause.

This approach takes into consideration the specific arrangements and mediations that are deployed to manage this diversity in environmental mobilizations. The irreducible diversity of the reasons for valuing an environment hints at the reality of the multiple ways in which human beings depend on their environment, make sense of these dependencies, and recognize their importance. How this diversity is to be accounted for in the institutions that

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organize the political community is a contested and debated question. EC/SC therefore offers tools that provide a level of granularity in the description of associative dynamics and mobilization that allows us to identify the numerous normative tensions that run through mobilized actors, both individual and collective, as well as the public space more generally. In this regard, Eeva Luhtakallio and Iddo Tavory (2018), drawing on research on climate change activists and NGO workers in Finland and Malawi, pointed out that a focus on the specificity of public engagement, as distinct from modes of action driven by the logic of rational choice or familiarity, allows a finer-grained analysis of the processes through which commonality is created in social movement organizations, thus enabling an original approach to the question of identity.

Furthermore, these contributions clarify the breadth and depth of the ecological crisis as a major cultural, political, and technical/scientific challenge that calls for a rethinking of concepts of justice from the perspective of care and responsibility for future generations and nonhuman living beings. This challenge, which is planetary, remains one that must be addressed from within the diversity of political cultures and the specificity of local histories and ecologies (Luhtakallio 2019). In contrast to the totalizing temptations of the Anthropocene master narrative, the approach to environmental movements promoted by EC/SC, particularly in the versions more open to the influences of pragmatism, is attentive to the variety both of the concerned publics that emerge across the globe and of knowledges and practices (see Blok and Jensen 2019).

This diversity emerges in studies that adopt a comparative perspective. In this respect, Eeva Luhtakallio (2012) highlighted in her comparative study of urban environmental mobilizations and grassroots activism in France and Finland how reference to a limited number of historically sedimented forms of justification is useful in the comparative analysis of political cultures across different national contexts. She argued that, compared to the frame approach, the perspective of EC/SC addresses the constraints that the public dimension of mobilizations places on modes of valuation and that it identifies a restricted number of "repertoires" that are differentially relied upon according to context (see also Lamont and Thévenot 2001).

Boris Gladarev and Markku Lonkila (2013) adopted Luhtakallio's approach in their analysis of the arguments for and against urban building construction projects in St. Petersburg and Helsinki that had been presented in the media in 2008-2009. They showed that industrial worth had dominated the Finnish debate and civic worth had emerged in the Russian case through the vocabulary of legality, court decisions, and official documents. The Russian case also revealed the difficulty that actors face in agreeing upon a reality test for legal procedures. This last observation highlights another contribution of EC/SC to the study of environmental movements, which is that a perspective of conventions influences the way in which we study power and power dynamics. Environmental mobilizations take place in contexts that are shaped by power relations, which are understood primarily as the ability of some actors to impose the terms of acceptability of arguments in a public confrontation and to define what counts as legitimate evidence. For example, in her study of the RSPO's operations in Indonesia, Laura Silva-Castañeda (2012) showed how the auditors failed to include claims and conflicts based on indigenous and land rights in their reports because the proof put forward by local communities did not comply with the format of "solid" evidence. The analysis of power thus expands to include the power of "forms" that ensure coordination while sacrificing ontological multiplicity (Thévenot 2007). More specifically, it

becomes important to study the processes that lead to a definition of the legitimate "informational basis" (Borghi 2018) for discussion, debate, and decision in these processes' relationship with coordination goals.

The analysis of informational bases should be complemented with that of situated "grasps" (in French *prises*) as defined by Christian Bessy and Francis Chateauraynaud (2019) in their model of the "sense of thing". Grasps "mediate between the perceptual level and the level of representations deployed through the language" (Bessy and Chateauraynaud 2019: 142): they are forged through combining representations with perceptions, calculation and experience. Chateauraynaud applied this approach to the study of environmental controversies and conflicts (Chateauraynaud and Debaz 2017), highlighting the importance of taking a long-term perspective in order to understand not only how new justificatory arguments are created but also how the outcomes of previous "reality tests" in turn influence the "expressive power" of an argument in a given situation. He thus emphasized the relevance of not separating the study of arguments from the study of the situations of action in which arguments are mobilized.

The invitation to take situations of action seriously into account is also justified by the fact that EC/SC does not rely on a "general equivalent" (like force or power) to explain social dynamics. This is particularly important for discussions concerning environmental movements and the ecological critique in scenarios of global catastrophe. According to Francis Chateauraynaud and Josquin Debaz (2017: 21), the study of environmental issues and movements needs to put the experiential, ontological, and normative uncertainty of each situation of action at the core of the inquiry in order to incorporate "the formation of collective subjects, of powers of action, of visions of the future capable of changing the order of the reversible and the irreversible" in a single analytic movement.

With particular poignancy, the environmental crisis and the looming climate change catastrophe have presented sociologists with the challenge of using their analytical tools to contribute to keeping the future open to different possibilities of social and material collective "becoming" (Ingold 2011) . In this sense, EC/SC has much to offer to both theory and action.

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