Diffusion of Environmental Governance vs. Corporate Power in the Context of Global Environmental Crises

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Abstract

International diffusion of environmentalism increased since the 1970s. Simultaneously, neo-liberalism prioritized corporate dominance over regional and national opposition (Harvey, 2007). This makes it difficult for ideas—including environmental governance—to leave worthwhile legacies to future generations, hence the issue of materialism. Three prominent transboundary environmental crises, 1) Amazonian deforestation, 2) The Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and 3) the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear disaster, are analyzed to explore how governments and corporations use ideologies and discursive strategies to create false environmental discourse that crowds out and silences environmentalism and then return general discourse to corporate anti-environmentalism. This strategy thrives in inconsistent national environmental governance. Normative transnational activism (Sikkink and Keck, 1998) is juxtaposed with analyses of environmental destruction on a corporate level (Falkner, 2009) to analyze how corporate environmentalism discursively restrains environmental governance at global, national, and local levels.

Introduction

Since the 1970s international diffusion of environmentalism has increased substantially. Controlling environmentally degrading industrial practices became an issue yet carbon based global climate change from consuming oil and coal intensified. This is not an exclusively international issue. National and local-level politics are also important. The United States refused to implement the Kyoto Protocol, but some U.S. cities, like Chicago, and states, like California, implemented carbon emission reductions (Falkner, 2009, 133-136). At the national level, former Vice President, Al Gore, went on speaking tours to explain the consequences of climate change.

After the 2011 March 11th Disaster in Japan there also have been differences between local, national, and international environmental concerns. At the international level, there were initially fears of radioactive contamination outside of Japan's national borders in South Korea, resulting in school closures because of feared radioactive rain, China monitored Japanese food imports for radioactivity, and India banned Japanese imports for three months (Takenawa & Nishikawa 2011). At the national level there has

been a mixed response; 70% of Japanese people supported an end to nuclear power (Fukue, 2012) but many national and local policies do not reflect this. Greens Japan, an anti-nuclear green party consisting largely of local and municipal politicians was created, though it has not yet effectively opposed major Japanese political parties (The Associated Press, 2012; McCurry, 2012).

In Brazil, the national government's amount of support for conservation has varied. At the local level there have been divides between indigenous people and settlers over deforestation. At the international level there have been calls to stop deforestation though many corporations continue to globally profit from rainforest destruction.

The national context in the abovementioned countries is inconsistent often contradictory environmental policies and unwillingness of governments and societies to deal with the root cause of environmental destruction: global consumption. This paper argues that corporate environmentalism, along with nation-states, creates a hierarchical discursive field by masquerading as environmentalism, crowding out environmentalism, and subsequently shifting discursive terrain back to consumption. Unlike other ideological discursive strategies of negative representation of Others (Van Dijk, 1995), these discourses erase environmental movements from debates.

To focus on global corporate power three recent crises with serious global, trans-boundary impacts will be examined: 1) deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, 2) the BP 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and 3) the ongoing nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant following the March 11, 2011 massive earthquake and tsunami.

These cases show corporate environmentalism to be a discursive fiction that obscures environmentally destructive material practices and shuts out environmental groups. This occurs because corporate environmentalism use of environmentalist-like discourses. People with slightly different views shut each other out through violation of normal conversational procedures: e.g., not letting others speak, etc. (Van Dijk 1995). Thus, a non-discursive aspect of green-corporate discourse is its crowding out of other environmentalist discourses and ideologies. There are many environmental frameworks including "authoritarianism, "corporate and state managerialism," "pluralistic liberalism," "conservatism," "moral community," "ecosocialism," "ecofeminism," to "decentralized communitarianism" (Harvey, 1996, 177-180).

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Figure 1. Ideological Discursive Shifts between Corporate Environmentalism and Environmentalism

Left Economies	Environmentalism				Neo-liberalism
Anti-Market Discourse		←--→	Market Discourse		
Saliency of Workers' Struggles	Eco-socialism	Ecologism	Environmentalism	Corporate Environmentalism	Saliency of Markets
↓	Discourse of Saving the Environment				↓
→ Discourse of protecting workers', livelihoods, economies (instead of environments←					

A useful question to ask is: how many of these are included in texts composed by green environmental corporations? Many of Harvey's (1996) list of types of environmentalism contradict business models. Corporate discourses keep us in the habit of thinking and speaking in favor of business models, growth, and economic consumption. To put it in Deleuze's (1989) terms, our "habits" prevent us from seeing things differently, and absent some sort of media—or discourse—to stop this, we are unlikely to act differently. Our habits may simply be avoiding problems until we can see and recognize them. This is a common, but dangerous, way to deal with the legacies of pollutants that we cannot see (Nixon 2012) and is prevalent in avoidance of dealing with global warming (Gilding 2011).

Yet, personal models of responsibility may be less effective (Andermatt Conley, 2009). The "fragmented" nature of U.S. politics provides openings for businesses to

block policies designed to mitigate global warming (Bryner, 2012) and enables policies that do not ask corporations to change (*ibid*). Therefore, corporate influence is best understood simultaneously discursive and material. It provides things that manipulate the political process: money, electric power, airplanes, etc. Thus, the semiotics of talk at this point is linked to material structures. Since this "'play of difference' among signifiers could not be sustained without extensive embedding of semiosis in material practice in the constraints and affordances of the material world" (Jessop, 2007, 239). A discourse of protecting the economy requires words and text as well as actual things: factories, railroads, telephones, cash, stores, etc. In fact, a factory can be transformed into a symbol, of prosperity for businesspeople, or of dirty pollution for environmentalists. The concrete material shift to "green" production in an actual factory can help shift the overall discourse away from environmental destruction to prosperity. But the habits of the mind can also cause us to overlook realities in the factory, as in the opening lines of Deleuze's *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (1989) where the mind only sees the factory building, rather than the labor struggles inside.

Levels of variation and potential inaccurate representations of what discourse represents, as shown in this paper are further intensified because of the multiscalar politics of the state. We do not necessarily know what will be the legal practices of environmentalism simply by analyzing Federal legal practices. There may be a variety making it difficult for the mind to make schemata that can be strategically used for protest. For example an exceptionally good subnational pollution control practice might generate misleading assumptions of similarity in other subnational or national units. This may render the simpler discourses of "green" transnational corporations (TNCs) more appealing

As Jessop (2007) notes the state both operates discursively and creates hierarchies. When not differentiated by levels this occurs through the states' claims to represent a people, though who exactly rarely explained. The state's basis as resting on a "common interest" or "general will" (Jessop, 1990b, 341 in Jessop, 2007, 31) "...puts the contradictions and dilemmas necessarily involved in political discourse at the heart of the work of the state. This is because claims about the general will or common interest are a key feature of the state system and distinguish it from straightforward political domination or violent oppression." In short, rather than using straightforward oppression or violence, the state claims that its actions are justified because they are in the interest of all citizens. However, there is often a gulf between this discursive claim and access to the state which operates by creating hierarchy: "(a) the state is neither a unified subject nor a neutral instrument but an asymmetrical institutional terrain on which various political forces (including state managers) contest control over the state apparatus and its distinctive capacities..." (Jessop, 2007, 31).

Figure 2 Claims to a General Will and the Construction of an Asymmetrical Institutional Terrain

Discourse of Employment vs. Discourse of Environmentalists				
	All 3	Brazil	United States	Japan
Environmentalism vs. Helping Workers (*Discursive* in Brazil and Japan, but a *practice* in BP Deepwater Horizon)	Yes	Socialist democracy vs. ecological responsibility	BP funds testing of sea-food vs. relative legal impunity	National government's claims that energy prices will double if nuclear power is scrapped (Sieg & Sheldrick, 2012).
Discourse of National Exports vs. that of Environmentalism				
	All 3	**Brazil**	**The United States**	**Japan**
Export economy *and* an example of environmental conservation	Yes	Agricultural export economy *and* rainforest conservation (Leahy, 2011).	U.S. government continues drilling in Gulf of Mexico, plans for export; BP claims to support conservation	Nuclear power as climate change mitigation

In the context of asymmetrical hierarchies masked by discursive claims to universal representation, the states analyzed here have used discourse to divide environmentalists from "the people" that the state claims to represent. There are two large discourses where this occurred:
1. Employment vs. Discourse of Environmentalists
2. National Exports vs. that of Environmentalism

These discourses operate in Brazil, the United States, and Japan, but do so in different ways. Class is also present in the relation between the nation states and corporations (the upper class) and environmentalists (presumably middle or working class).

At a semi-national level, in the discourse of employment vs. environmentalism a dichotomy is established between the people (sometimes defined as employees and consumers) and environmentalists. Class is used in different ways based on differing economies. In Brazil this follows a Left pattern: there is a socialist response that counters rainforest conservation, which is portrayed as harmful to workers; yet the category of workers does not include indigenous peoples and rubber tappers that make their living from material resources from the rainforest. In contrast, the United States contrasts the workers as executive as endangered by environmental litigation (thus BP executives were initially shielded from legal penalties after the Deepwater horizon accident). Japan, which maintains a relatively Keynesian economy, seems halfway between the two: it claims that energy prices will be too high if nuclear power is not used. Thus, environmental goals of preventing another nuclear disaster are discursively represented as detrimental to the workers (employed in Japanese factories) and the Japanese consumer and business community.

The international level of governance and economy is brought in to justify a dichotomy of "national exports vs. environmentalism." Perhaps because of the presence of international environmental norms, this requires a more delicate anti-environmentalist discourse that in fact usurps notions of conservation. Thus, Brazil must strike a balance between being an agricultural superpower (agriculture being a leading cause of Amazonian deforestation) and being great at conservation. The United States mitigates the impact of legal actions against BP by allowing continued drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Japan can promote nuclear power as an ecologically responsible alternative to GHG emissions, thereby mobilizing environmental discourse to derail environmental activism by creating an unleveled playing field where environmentalists can only contradict themselves.

Theory

The abovementioned split between popular will, corporate interests, and survival calls for a consideration of idealism and material realities. Therefore, normative transnational activism (Sikkink and Keck, 1998) will be juxtaposed with analyses corporate environmentalism and (Marxist) ecologism. As per normative transnational activism, Sikkink and Keck (1998) analyzed how and under what conditions transnational

activist groups can gain power. The mode of power is "normative" assuming that governments wish to maintain a good global reputation and in some situations will be pressured through diffusion of information by transnational advocacy groups to stop practices such as human rights abuses and environmental degradation.

There are however some limitations to this. First of all, polluting corporations and nation-states disseminate deceptive eco-friendly discourses. Corporations are good at making themselves look environmentally responsible even when they really are not (Sklair, 2001, 250). Examples of this include the reopening of the Oi Nuclear Power plant in the Kansai region of Japan despite the presence of active earthquake fault lines on the region (Yomuri Shimbun, 2012) and popular protest. It occurred after the mayor of Osaka reversed his anti-nuclear power stance after pressure by corporate groups concerned about a necessary 14.9% electrical cut (Asahi Shimbun, 2012). This involves some collective forgetting of the Japanese Diet's 2012 rejection of T.E.P.C.O.'s claim that the damage caused to the Fukushima Daiichi reactors were the product of a tsunami rather than the earthquake (Mainichi Shimbun, 2012) when there were cracks in the reactors (Spotts, 2011).

In Latin America the BodyShop, has claimed to work actively with indigenous communities when in fact these partnerships have been less than ideal (Burke, 2010). Soybean farming spread into the Amazon region causing further deforestation. Soybeans have been seen as a healthy alternative to red-meat which is seen as a cause of deforestation; however, within the past ten years actions have been directed against the global consumption and distribution of both industries.

BP met with different responses at the subnational and national levels when attempting to silence negative representations of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, yet could significantly limit media access to the site. At the subnational level, the Port Fourchon, Louisiana Harbor Police restricted access and limited what reporters could photograph; at the federal level, the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) challenged BP's flight restrictions for reporters (Zak, 2010). Thus BP obstructed the use of mass media as a national and international conduit of environmental consciousness. This is important because the mass media is an important conduit for opposing TNC's (Sklair 2001). Despite democracy's commitment to free press, BP's ability to obstruct media access shows how inconsistencies at the local and national levels are exploited to create the power to shape public perceptions.

The above examples reveal serious flaws with using norms to oppose TNCs. Since TNCs are apt at public image, they evade debate about the nature and consequences of their actions. Assertions of "green consumerism" do not stop the root of ecological problems: consuming resources (Dobson, 2007, 53-54). Nuclear power, frequently portrayed as a way to cut fossil fuels, requires uranium, a limited resource, and creates serious disposal and pollution problems (Dobson, 2007, 81). In America and elsewhere corporations and governments have tried to both consume and conserve resources through carbon offsetting which ironically "...ultimately stalls the identification of meaningful solutions by leaving the present fossil fuel economy in place" and often leaves the Global South to deal with the consequences (Ervine, 2012, 19).

The abovementioned critique of normative theory is not intended to imply that resistance to corporate anti-environmentalism is futile. There are "conflicts' within industries that diminish their ability and power to influence the outcomes of environmental regulations (Falkner, 2009). Similarly, in the past ecological thinking has overcome entrenched power structures and worldviews and can be applied to visions of economic social justice (Bellamy Foster, 2000). This means that the overwhelming power of business may not prevent ecological thought and practice in the long run. It also means that ecological thinking may be compatible with widespread calls for progressive and/or Marxist economic change ruminating from the Occupy movement.

Some TNCs may only partially fulfill criteria for effective normative action. The upshot of this is normative activism may only be partially effective for the cases analyzed in this paper. To be effective there must be: "(1) issues involving bodily harm to vulnerable individuals, especially when there is a short and clear causal chain (or story) assigning responsibility; and (2) issues involving legal equality of opportunity" (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, 27). All cases analyzed here involve bodily harm. In Japan and the Gulf of Mexico there are rather clear casual chains of negligence by energy producers. Clear causal chains are difficult to find in Brazil because it is harder to identify sources and corporations but there are clearer links between consumption and deforestation. So why is there not more normative critique? The TNCs analyzed in this paper are less vulnerable to normative action. "Target actors must be vulnerable either to material incentives or to sanctions from outside actors, or they must be sensitive to pressure because of gaps between stated commitments and practices" (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, 29). TNCs analyzed in this paper may only be vulnerable to image disparities, though I show how they mobilize discourse to evade this.

Are corporations vulnerable to the abovementioned material incentives? A clear reassertion of corporate (class) power has been ongoing since the 1970s that, when not implemented consensually, may be enforced through national military power (Harvey, 2008). Neoliberalism also ensures that only its answers will suffice and is theoretically unified by assumptions that see "competitive markets as superior in terms of efficiency, justice, or freedom, or a combination of them" (Paromaki, 2009, 433). This relates to "the culture ideology of consumerism" which convinces society that consuming is the only way to an enjoyable life and that "the free market" is essential to distribution of what we consume (Sklair, 2001, 6). Thus, corporations are less vulnerable today than they were at the both the start of the contemporary environmental movement in the 1970s and in 1998 when Keck and Sikkink's book was first published. Corporations—while not controlling everything—have effectively mobilized to strongly influence how environmental regulation proceeds (Falkner, 2009). Moreover, the environmental movement has been simultaneously watered through its interactions with corporations. The environmental movement would benefit from having a more well defined and robust ideological core (Dobson, 2000). In lieu of this ideological core, Marxist movements have only recently embraced ecological sustainability (which has been dormant since Stalin's rise to power (Bellamy Foster, 2000)).

Nonetheless, it should be clarified that contemporary Marxism does not universally accept ecological protection and that environmentalism in itself is sometimes linked to global capitalism in ways that do not forestall destructive consumerism. For example, the London based socialist, James Heartfield, pamphlet, *Green Capitalism: Manufacturing Scarcity in an Age of Abundance* argues that socialism is created by increased production (2008) and elsewhere that available open space should be developed into housing and a failure to do so is based on dislike of the masses (45-46). Contrary to this, Raymond Williams (1973) made known socialists thought, in Britain, and perhaps elsewhere, had an urban bias against rural production which obscured Left-wing, rural working class ways of interacting with nature. Nonetheless, what Heartfield's analysis of environmentalism does elicit is the potential ideological slippage between anti-Environmentalist Left discursive ideology and anti-environmentalist capitalist production that I highlight in figure 1 because his proposals would actually initially depend on a decrease in environmental protections simultaneous to an increase in corporate production of housing and other inexpensive consumer goods. Heartfield also evokes a slight conceptual weakness of eco-socialism since Marxist notions of class, formulated in the mid-Nineteenth Century, do not inherently include contemporary forms of environmentalism, and contemporary forms of environmentalism are not always sensitive to problems of class hierarchy, though at the same time some of his assertions may be singular to British society and should be not be taken as globally applicable universals.

Within a more global context, Heartfield's critiques of environmentalism do however resonate in other parts of the world. The idea of appreciating nature in Indonesia (Tsing, 2005) is not based on "the fields and forest of ordinary, parochial, rural lives" (122), but rather on modernized, Westernized, consumerist views of nature transposed into Indonesian national cultural forms (124). At a more general stage, the establishment of "resource frontiers" happened established alongside environmentalist movements, and even at times claimed to save Indonesian rainforests simultaneous to corporate environment destruction (Tsing, 2005, 32). Therefore, even despite some anti-environmentalist practice in socialism, we can see how environmentalism can also be hijacked and taken back to a corporate globalized form that I have referred to as "the saliency of the markets" in Figure 1. This is precisely why environmentalism needs a more stable ideological identity, but also suggests that this cannot be simply siphoned off, ready-made from other ideologies (a critique that is made of environmentalism by Michael Freeden who argues that "green ideology" bears many similarities to conservative ideology (1996, 535-537). Yet, do the abovementioned problems with socialism and environmentalism suggest the need to take a more corporate approach?

Normative theory assumes that the use of norms will create a discourse that will be adopted by nation-states and others (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Transnational activist groups will then force these entities to practice their discourses (ibid). While Keck and Sikkink do not see environmental discourses leading to practice without pressure from activist groups, there are some problems when applying this to TNCs. TNCs frequently mobilize environmental discourse in a way that mitigates harm to their "reputations" rather than providing solutions to environmental degradation (Sklair, 2001, 250). There

are managerial styles of dealing with environmental degradation which ignore that industrial production is a root cause (Dobson, 2007). Sklair (2001) is skeptical that corporations will not do anything that damages their production and profits which is often what is needed to stop serious ecological damage. While not invalidating Keck and Sikkink's argument it does shift some of the onus of political change away from simple normative discourse to economic protest that, as Sklair (2001) explains aims to "disrupt" TNCs "smooth running (accumulation of private profits and claims of hegemony) locally and can find ways of globalizing these disruption" (296). Nonetheless, there needs to be a move far beyond consumerism: "As the culture-ideology of consumerism created many of the components of the ecological crisis it is not likely that any system predicated on it will be able to resolve this crisis" (ibid, 301). It is also important to remember that the culture ideology of the Transnational Capital Class (T.C.C.) also undermines itself with its claims of justice (ibid).

Methodological Approach

Discourse is contrasted with material realities of practice. I do not take discourse as isolated, but rather, as Shapiro theorizes, treat discourse as part of an assemblage called a "*dispositif*" linked to a variety of processes including "institutions" and "scientific statements " (2013, xiv). I do not necessarily intend to prove a new discourse, but rather to show how discourse obscures material realities and using Shapiro's term (ibid) can "disrupt" corporate discourse. I assume that there are already formed corporate discourses and culture ideology and that discursive moves analyzed here link to these already existing discourses. I add my own interpretation about how certain statements link with a corporate discourse about the environment. Since discourses are sum totals of millions of statements, I also briefly analyze how various environmental discourses fit with seemingly different discourses.

Media is used to find examples of writing and statements that express discourses. Media is used to signal events (Lippmann, 1922) rather than to determine the full truth of statements or to analyze structure, biases, and intent of newspapers. There may be limitations with the use of newspapers due to the selection bias of newspapers. Nonetheless, the fact that these statements are in newspapers means that they are consumed locally, nationally, and globally thus formulating larger opinions and discourses than smaller scale proclamations.

Discourse, especially ideological neo-liberal discourse, probably will not be clearly stated, but instead obscured within statements:

> "Overall, we find that preferred, consistent or otherwise self-serving information will be emphasized, highlighted, focused upon, and made explicit and prominent, whereas the converse is true for dispreferred information. In persuasive communication, this means that such discourse structures have obvious functions in the management of the minds of the recipients." (Van Dijk, 1995, 32).

Accordingly, overemphasis of corporations' ecological responsibility and de-emphasis of their environmentally destructive activities should be expected. However, I do not expect a total dichotomy between the two. Corporations also, as will be explained later, admit mistakes and plans of reform that emphasize responsibility. Distinguishing environmentalist and anti-environmentalist discourse is more complicated than determining good and bad.

Finding "culture ideology" is not as simple as looking for direct expression as one might when analyzing totalitarian governments; "ideologies seldom express themselves directly in text and talk, and do so only by general ideological propositions, which, however, may be less efficient in persuasion" (Van Dijk, 1995, 33). With this in mind, elements of ideological discourses must first be found then contrasted with material realities. Moreover, relating an ideology to practice begs for a provisional definition of ideology. It is "….changeable and practically orientated thinking of citizens in the social and political world" (MacKenzie, 2003, 11) which makes ideas translatable into "decision making" in politics that often requires "decontestation" of alternative political ideas thus rendering practical political action possible (Freeden, 1996, 76-77). Therefore, ideologies like material elements both limit the range of political thought and simultaneously enable the translation of ideas into concrete political action which may serve as a link between ideas expressed in discourse and material practices.

Multi-scalar discourse analysis is conducted. Relational links between different levels of government and corporate discourses are prioritized. This discourse analyzed differs slightly from, but is influenced by, Van Dijk's assertion that common beliefs are midpoints between individual thoughts and how minds process discourses (1993, 107-108), or discourse as "always knowledge as power" using Foucault's large scale genealogically evolving discourse (George, 1994, 30-31). The temporal frame is limited to recent events. I share the notion that discourse influences actions, rather than simply words and thoughts, and view discourse as process rather than reality. Also, this research acknowledges that discourse is not used consistently which creates potential for discursive inconsistency and blending (Harvey, 2006, 89).

Since examples of discourse from different multilevel settings are used, at each level analysis remains thin. Discourse analysis is often criticized for being thin (Rose, 2001). My priority is providing an overall view of relations between singular events by showing linked texts which form a style of discourse that operates globally, nationally, and locally, rather than explaining how each level works. Accordingly, a thin discourse is sought to qualitatively explain relations of power that work across different levels. It is infeasible to thickly explain all levels in one paper. Working at one level or example would make things too local and incapable of creating knowledge that can generate political action and thought (See Harvey, 1996 more for considerations of problems between local and large-scale political thought).

With this in mind, discourse was chosen that fit in with discursive categories that were relevant to my study, especially to corporate explanations of the environment. Of

special attention were the abilities of discourse to conceal the operations of power (Jessop, 2007).

Cases analyzed here were selected based on complex similarities and linkages to a larger, more difficult to observe relationship. Thus, energy and resource extraction may seem different but are related. This is in contrast to positivist approaches where "specialized" knowledge aims to create "compact descriptions of phenomena useful for prediction..." that prioritizes "directly observable entities...assuming that the rest is are only theoretical constructs" (DeLanda, 2009, 23-24). In this context, Gilles Deleuze's idea of "incommensurability" is used to show relations between entities such as nuclear power, oil drilling, and Amazonian deforestation, which hitherto seemed unrelated but have hidden relations (See Toohey, 2012, 66-67, for a description of Deleuze's incommensurability). As this paper shows, there are discursive links between all three sectors, though they initially appear incompatible.

Amazonian Deforestation

Ecological successes in the Amazon rainforest clash with cultural and ideological power for TNCs operating in Brazil and for global and national governance. Both the Brazilian nation-state and TNCs use a culture ideology. At the international level Brazil mobilizes competing discourses: 1) economic discourse, as a dominant agricultural export economy and, 2) environmental discourse, as a country that is doing an excellent job conserving the Amazon rainforest (Leahy 2011). Part of this discourse comes from research analysts quoted in the press outside of Brazil. João Augusto de Castro Neves, a political editor of *The Brazilian Economy*, described the Amazon rainforest in *The Financial Times* as: "...part of Brazil's status as a rising power along with its agricultural strength...When you look at China, it has manufacturing; India has information technology. When you think of Brazil, you think of land, agriculture and food production" (Leahy, 2011). Thus, the economic benefits of the Amazon are prioritized over conservation or indigenous land.

Brazil, while using economic discourse, does not fully abandon environmental discourse. The Environmental Defense Fund at the international level discusses the late Brazilian rainforest/trade union activist Chico Mendes using words that blend local, sustainable use of rainforest with rainforest conservations. Medes's work is described as "...the establishment of Brazil's extractive reserves protected forest areas that are inhabited and managed by local communities" (EDF, 2013). At the national level the sense of local or sustainable inhabitation is currently described as needing to be implemented through consumption, rather than already practiced outside of consumption. Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff said: "It's important that we have offered alternatives... to people who live in the rainforest, so they can be productive without destroying the environment" (BBC 2012). At a local level, An Amazonian settler, Waldemar Vieira Neves, said "People say we're destroying the rainforest...We're not. We're protecting it, we depend on it. But we have to find a way so that both we and the

forest can survive" (Lusting, 2011). Therefore, there are elements of national and local discourses that promote agriculture in the rainforest, rather than environmentalism.

Brazilian business also partakes in this. However an example of discourse found in newspapers uses harsher political language that mobilizes fears of Brazil's authoritarian past. Sen Katia Abreu, the President of C.A.N. the Brazilian National Agriculture and Livestock Agency said, "This is the first time we're ending the monopoly, that we're ending the environmental dictatorship where half a dozen [non-governmental organizations] controlled the environment ministry" (BBC, 2011).

At the national and local level Brazilian legislation contradicts environmental discourse by providing amnesty to people known to have caused deforestation and at a local level murder of prominent environmental activists (Leahy, 2011). This segues with Sklair's mention of corporate concern about the environment where TNCs and the transnational capital class (T.C.C.) promote corporate responsibility as an image rather than an ecological reality. On the one hand it is a nationalist culture-ideology. It tries to resolve contradictions. The first is between Brazil as the rising exporter of agricultural products vs. Brazil as an ecologically responsible nation-state. The second is Brazil as socialist democracy vs. Brazil as an ecologically responsible. The second contradiction can be analyzed in the context of changes in American labor that split it away from environmentalism in the 1970s in favor of protecting industrial production (Sklair 2001, 203) as well as changes in Marxism that moved away from ecological concerns in the early twentieth century (Bellamy Foster, 2000). On the other, there is the culture-ideology of TNC's in general. Some support deforestation (and profiting too). Others set up funds to help stop deforestation.

At the local level traditional communities affected by global consumption of products from deforested areas can be identified. Indigenous people and rubber tappers (who are less recent migrants to the Amazon) have had their homes and source of sustenance destroyed. Both rely on the rainforest for resources but often extract these resources in far more sustainable manners. The national government has had a mixed interaction with indigenous peoples and ecological sustainability in the post-Authoritarian era. On one hand, local elites, with impunity from the national government, have used extreme violence and government access to halt conservation of the rainforest (Hochstetler & Keck, 2007). On the other hand, legal decisions of the Brazilian government swerve between hard penalties for those that illegally destroy the Amazon and legal impunity (Wartmann, 2012). The abovementioned issue is complicated by Brazil's integration into the global economic system.

There has been an ambiguous interplay between mass media, corporations, and environmental activists. Corporations admitted to globally distributing rainforest goods well after the knowledge of the ecological consequences while simultaneously claiming willingness to change. As of 2009, many TNC's were involved in extracting and selling in Brazil and abroad beef and leather grown in deforested areas. Beef was sold by Tesdo, Asda, Marks & Spencer, JBS, and Princes Food in Britain (Adam, 2009). The Brazilian Association of Supermarkets and Walmart banned the sale within Brazil of cattle products from the Amazon rainforest (Adam, 2009). However, Brazilian companies often

made detection difficult by mixing beef products raised within and outside of deforested areas (Adam, 2009). Leather was sold by Timberland, and Nike who also offered to look into other options for obtaining resources (Adam, 2009). But this is not simply caused by TNCs. It is also driven by global consumption. *The Forest Disclosure* report, written in cooperation with corporate leaders, showed that rainforest products were exported to the European Union, the People's Republic of China, and India (Mitchell, 2010). In this situation global and local (rainforests) levels are dangerously mixed through global capitalism. TNCs are less willing to examine the implications of this.

The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

BP uses its culture ideology (see Sklair, 2001) to discursively protect its environment friendly image. BP spins its image to maintain an ecologically correct stance. Materially, BP funds research through its Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative program about what describes as the "effects of the tragic Deepwater Horizon oil spill" (GoMRI, 2012). BP marshals scientific and technological knowledge to solve the crisis it created but uses a techno-scientific discourse to evade serious questions about its corporate responsibility and industry wide-dangers of offshore drilling. The research themes are largely scientific with the only preventative measure being technological development (ibid). Technological solutions include:

- "Technology developments for improved response, mitigation, detection, characterization and remediation associated with oil spills and gas releases" (ibid)

Scientific themes include:
- "Physical distribution, dispersion, and dilution of petroleum (oil and gas)…"
- "Chemical evolution and biological degradation…"
- "Environmental effects of the petroleum/dispersant system…"
- "Impacts of oil spills on public health…" (ibid)

This discourse mobilizes scientific and technological discourse. Rather than words such as "response," the main theme is "research" and technological planning. The stated goals do not talk about policies of BP per se, but rather scientific things that are happening and, perhaps, can be solved by science and technology rather than political action or litigation.

BP's Conservation Leadership Initiative funds biodiversity research in non-Western countries and has launched conservation scientists' NGO and government careers (British Petroleum 2012). BP describes this initiative as follows: "The programme [*sic*] pushes participants to move beyond academic research into the kind of practical conservation that changes the way people and communities think about their environment" (British Petroleum, 2012). The negative use of the term academic may neutralize conceptual and critical thought—as exists in this paper—about BP. The onus of change is displaced onto "people" and "communities" rather than corporations.

This is not to say that an "Other" category is constructed for environmentalists. Instead, placing the onus of change on "people" and "communities" foreshadows BP's discursive reconstruction of its self as an environmentalist group. The program uses the following environmentalist—though not necessarily ecologist—words:

- "young scientists"
- "environmental conservation"
- "conservation initiatives"
- "sustainability in its truest sense"
- "capacity building programmes" (British Petroleum, 2012)

Rather than adopting the identity of a company whose negligence created a large environmental disaster, BP instead uses environmental discourse to recast its self as a proactive conservation minded corporation.

Though they do not specify national, ethnic, or racial backgrounds of participants, BP uses discourse to make itself appear similar to a civil rights conscious organization that supports researchers in the Global South. As BP says, "With the help of BP, the CLP awards $800,000 in grants each year to young conservationists—typically under the age of 30—living and working in Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Pacific Islands" (British Petroleum 2012). Nonetheless BP hints, rather than proves, that people from developing countries, not developed countries are being supported. This is also significant because it potentially creates a sympathetic globalizing elite much like the one that Sklair (2001) discusses. These "alumni" will likely feel sympathetic to BP and perhaps be more accessible to BP's officials than activists and government officials that BP did not fund. This is hardly improbable when compared with the use of education of Southern Hemisphere intellectuals to create support for neo-liberalism in Latin America (Dezalay & Garth, 2011) because the grants appear to create policy and scientific support where it may not yet exist. This potentially increases BP's political and intellectual power. This environmentally conscious discourse contrasts with the following material realities.

Geographically uneven consequences within the Gulf of Mexico obscure serious harm caused by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Scott Gordon, director of the Shellfish Bureau of the Office of Marine Fisheries in Mississippi, said that the 2010 oyster harvest was 50% of its typical level after the BP oil spill (Jamail, 2012a). BP's investment in testing of seafood for contamination has not influenced people to continue buying seafood from the region and a subsequent decline in seafood retailers' business (Jamail, 2012a). But seafood companies in Texas and Western Louisiana which were not impacted are doing better (Jamail, 2012). This is important because businesses resist environmental regulation when they are unified, and are less powerful when not (Falkner 2009). This clarifies how regional divisions in the seafood industry may prevent it from adequately confronting environmental damage. Seafood businesses that catch certain types of seafood—menhaden a fish that oil and meal is made from—are doing better this year than others: crabs, oysters, and shrimp (Bjerga, 2012). There have been large

increases in deformities such as shrimp with no eyes, mutated crabs without claws, and between 2-20% of red snappers with legions (depending on where samples were taken) (Democracy Now, 2012). Fishers from polluted areas cannot go to others; therefore geography influences how well seafood producers are doing (Bjerga 2012).

Payments from legal settlements may not discourage BP's reckless oil drilling. Assuming so may in fact be blurring the line between the ideas of an individual not breaking the law for fear of being sued by the government versus a corporation that can afford to be sued by the government. BP sold a Norwegian oil field for $240 million, $5.5 billion worth of Gulf of Mexico deep-water drilling sites to Plains Exploration & Production Co, and $33 billion in assets to pay $38 billion in damages for the spill (The Associated Press 2012). Moreover, some U.S. federal government bureaucracies actually provide BP further opportunities in the Gulf of Mexico. In 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Engineering and Management authorized BP to engage in deep-water drilling (albeit with further safety regulations and BPs own additional voluntary safety measures) (Aljazeera, 2011).

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster

From a culture-ideology perspective, the Japanese government has acted in tandem with the nuclear industry since the 1950s to support a variety of nuclear platforms. Japanese politicians and the nuclear industry have employed a variety of rhetoric such as suggesting that people should accept nuclear power plants to promote the Japanese nation-state and national technology that would restore Japan's national prominence after the defeat of World War II to nuclear industry funded manga (Japanese comic books) and "interactive science exhibits" aimed at children that claim that atomic power is always safe (Penney, 2012). Nuclear power companies have mixed this with harder methods such as threats against family members of employees that protest; the nuclear industry is one of the main industries in the areas affected (Penney, 2012).

Economic discourse and the profits of transnational corporations influence decisions to support nuclear power not just at the national level, but also at the international level. The Japanese government, ignoring public opposition, promotes nuclear energy against the backdrop of lucrative contracts for The Toshiba Corporation, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, and Hitachi Ltd. to build nuclear power facilities in Vietnam, Jordan, Lithuania, and China (Harlan, 2011). At a governmental (national) level corporate discourse circulated during decision making about whether or not Japan should discontinue nuclear power. Nationally, the Japanese government said that energy prices would double if nuclear power were scrapped (Sieg & Sheldrick, 2012). As per the international level, there were concerns that if Japan discontinued nuclear power it would destroy foreign confidence in Japanese nuclear technology (Harlan 2011). These discourses merge with corporate discourse and simultaneously downplay environmental fears and mobilize environmentalism. For example, Masaharu Hanyu, head of Hitachi's nuclear power systems said: "I really don't think Fukushima poses a threat to our

negotiations…In terms of energy security and mitigating carbon emissions, there is still a major demand" (Harlan, 2011). This is not limited to Hitachi. Nobuo Tanaka, an associate at "Kezai Koho Center" said on October 30, 2012 that "Without nuclear power, Japan will inevitably have to import more oil, natural gas and coal in addition to increasing power generation through renewable sources such as solar and wind…This will cause a triple problem of rising costs, reduced security and greater emissions of greenhouse gasses…" (Paraphrased by Takashi Kitazumi, 2012). "Mitigating carbon emissions" posits nuclear energy as a solution to environmentalist concerns over global climate change. The seriousness of the Fukushima Daiichi disaster is downplayed. Seeming to respond to Japanese peoples' rejection of nuclear power Hanyu shifts the discourse to technological fixes mobilizing foreign judgments of Japan: "The Lithuanian negotiations were really important to us….We wanted them to know that we are indeed learning from Fukushimma No. 1. If they had been wary, they would not have picked us" (Harlan, 2011).

The abovementioned process of persuading reluctant buyers and constituencies is not limited to national and international business sales. It operates on the national to subnational access as well. While the Japanese people may suffer nationally if there is a large earthquake and subsequent disaster, the immediate devastation of the 3/11 disaster was limited to Tohoku. Nobody in southern Japan was permanently evacuated from their town or banned from selling agricultural products. People living near the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant were. But like the people of Vietnam, Jordan, Lithuania, and China the Japanese government acted on behalf of its nuclear power industry to persuade them. As Aldrich (2008) mentions the Japanese nuclear power industry targeted areas with low levels of civic society participation. Hence constituents that were not prepared to resist were preferred. In many cases the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) invited nuclear power companies to their districts and, where there was opposition, sent politicians to persuade reluctant municipalities (Aldrich, 2008). At recent public hearings in the Fukushima Prefecture, one of the speakers was a nuclear power employee (after complaints the government decided to leave such employees out, though most people do not expect the government to craft policy based on widespread anti-nuclear viewpoints) (Fukue, 2012).

Recent events in Japan may render Aldrich's (2008) assertions national and international in scope. First, the nuclear industry used the national government to subvert popular resistance to nuclear power. Moreover, the United States expressed concern about abandoning nuclear power, which shows that other countries (international) also influence Japanese policy changes. Despite 70% public opposition to nuclear power (Fukue, 2012) and popular willingness to pay higher energy prices the Japanese government (The Japan Times, 2012b)—after approving a phase-out of nuclear power by 2030, decided to continue using nuclear power. It initially mobilized NGO discourse to collect public opinion. According to *The Japan Times,* "The government also held "deliberative polling" sessions on Aug. 4 and 5 to which it invited nearly 300 citizens to Tokyo to participate" (Fukue, 2012). Thus, the national government used NGO's discourse of deliberation to deceptively appear interested in local opinion. However, this

may not have worked quantitatively in other locations. *The Japan Times* criticized the deliberative sessions: "In Sendai, one of nine speakers was an employee of Tohoku Electric Power Co. After identifying himself as such, he said that reducing nuclear dependence to the 20 to 25 percent target is "the closest option to my company's idea" (Fukue, 2012).

This was also an international issue. The U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy, Daniel Poneman, discussed with Seihi Maehara of the LDP, who has since moved from opposition to ruling party, the possibility of Japan not fulfilling the cessation of nuclear power because it would create a rise in oil and natural gas prices for the U.S.; the LDP found this agreeable citing concerns that these industries would charge Japan exceedingly high prices if nuclear power were abandoned (The Japan Times, 2012). Other U.S. exports were quoted by the Japanese press in support of nuclear power. The business discourse appears to be more respectful by addressing Japan's sophistication and economic modernity. The *Japan Times* Business section quotes John Hamre of the Washington, D.C. Center for Strategic and International Studies:

> "You're paying five times as much for natural gas. So if you're going to make the
> decision that you're only going to have natural gas-fired electric generation plants,
> you're going to encumber your economy with energy costs five times higher than
> the competition… There can't be any romanticism about alternative energy. If
> you're going to be a modern, sophisticated economy, you have to address this
> question of making nuclear power a legitimate source of energy."
> (Kitazumi, 2012).

Thus, corporate discourse, while writing off environmentalist, portrays Japan as capable of modernity and economic competition—so long as it continues to use nuclear power.

Yet, the economic discourse does not just enter through anti-environmentalist discourse. Environmentalists also mobilized corporate environmental discourse to persuade energy companies to abolish nuclear energy. This created discursive preconditions for a shift from corporate environmentalism to corporate discourse. In a *Japan Times* editorial, (name not provided), it was said that "Businesses should look at the withdrawal from nuclear power generation as an opportunity for investment and innovation." (The Japan Times, September 18 2012). "Investment" and "innovation" links to corporate discourse rendering phasing out nuclear power compatible with business interests, so long as it remains profitable for the energy industry. But what happens when businesses do not see a profit in corporate environmentalism? This shift, in terms of national economies can be seen in a commentary by Shinji Fukukawa published on October 17, 2012. It begins by comparing the Japanese situation with that of other regional countries: "China, South Korea and Taiwan, for their part, are stepping up efforts to improve safety of nuclear power as a key pillar of a low-cost energy supply" (Fukukawa, 2012). Thus, technological discourse—"improve safety"—is mixed with economic discourse—"low cost energy supply." This is further mixed with perceived global inevitabilities: "The world's energy structure is thus moving in a direction

different from what is being envisioned by the Japanese government. Under such circumstances, it seems obvious that Japanese industries will be at a disadvantage in the global economic competition" (Fukukawa, 2012). Thus, national economic competition is prioritized over environmental concerns. However, Fukukawa still uses the environmental discourse, but to emphasize an economic need for nuclear power: "Nobody disputes the idea of raising the nation's reliance on renewable energy sources, but the problem is that renewable sources cost more than fossil fuels and nuclear power..." (Fukukawa, 2012).

Outside of the media, the Japanese business community promoted harsher understandings of the implications of relinquishing nuclear power. As per the Zero Nuclear Plan, Hiromasa Yonekura, chairman of Keidanren, the largest Japanese business association said that "Japan's business circle can hardly accept this plan" (JIJI, 2012). The article said that he also was "Considering the impact the plan could have on the economy and peoples' lives" (Newspaper's paraphrasing) (JIJI, 2012). The use of images of "peoples' lives" links to Jessop's (2007) assertion that governments use a notion of "the people" to discursively legitimate their decisions thereby showing that businesses are assuming the representative role of governments. Nonetheless, Japanese businesses do not always need to mobilize "the people" or corporate environmental discourse to make their case. Yasuchika Hasagawa, chairman of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Keza Doyuka), called the Zero Nuclear plan "totally unacceptable" (JIJI, 2012).

The response to Japan's nuclear disaster is an example of how corporate environmentalist discourse can shift to underlying corporate discourse that is hostile to environmentalism. Initially a corporate environmentalist discourse was used to critique nuclear power—thus linking environmentalism to corporations (see Figure 1). There was a corporate environmentalist discourse being used—to critique nuclear power—but it perhaps relied too much on the business value of conservation. By using economic terminology, this discourse transformed into corporate discourse without environmental concerns. When environmental business value disappeared, so did environmental discourse.

Theory can explain the insistence on using nuclear power to meet the energy consumption demands of large corporations and the use of nation states. First, neo-liberalism has restored the power of economic elites by using governments to create markets, whether or not people impacted by them want them (Harvey, 2008). The Japanese governments, corporations, and nuclear industries, ignored the majority of its constituents' concern about the danger of nuclear power. But this not simply a national issue. The United States and the LDP prioritized oil and natural gas pricing over the wishes of Japanese people (and others globally) to end nuclear power. As Sklair (2001) has mentioned, the transnational capital class—as represented by corporations and sympathetic bureaucrats—does not necessarily prioritize national interest. This is especially apparent in Japan where 70% of the population opposes nuclear energy (Fukue, 2012) but Japanese politicians and corporations support nuclear power. It is

unlikely that many of the countries Japan exports nuclear power obtained consent from their citizens since they have authoritarian governments or legacies.

Energy industries, not anti-nuclear activists, have been granted the power to shape the discursive parameters of the nuclear power debate. This may be due to the TNCs diffusion across national boundaries, industrial unity, and support from national governments. Businesses have been able to halt effective curbs on greenhouse gas emissions that are creating global climate change, in part because of the widespread use of these energy sources across many industrial sectors (Falkner, 2009). Sikkink and Keck (1998) have noted the failures of normative movements in countries that are economically valuable to first world countries, such as Mexico. In short, economic relations may decide whether or not a country changes due to pressure from protest groups. Business plays a role in this. In light of the diffusion of the nuclear power industry—as can be seen in both Japan and the United States for example—countries may be vulnerable to it, especially since it provides energy for so many other industries that influence these countries' economies. One visible link in that relationship is the U.S. company, General Electric (G.E.). G.E. built the Mark reactor I, the model of nuclear power reactors involved in Fukushima Daiichi disaster. But this is not simply a matter of limited national markets. General G.E. built 23 Mark 1 reactors that still supply U.S. companies and consumers in the United States (Smith, 2012). Sustained doubts about nuclear power shows governmental vulnerability to the nuclear energy industry in Japan and the United States that evades classification as either domestic or international. Thus, TNCs trump popular uprisings against nuclear power by uniting vulnerable countries with the nuclear industry.

Conclusion

In Brazil, Japan, and the United States corporations and the state use a fictitious environmental discourse to create an uneven discursive space where environmentalists look contradictory: i.e. by saying that nuclear power is reducing greenhouse gas emissions, etc. Discourses are not always overt (Van Dijk, 1995). In fact the state, when promoting corporate ideology initially appears to be concerned about popular issues.

The environmental movement has yet to present a widely accepted anti-consumerist ideological discourse. They have not stopped consumerism that generates Amazonian deforestation, though they somewhat mitigate it using global bans on soybeans grown in deforested areas. They have not sufficiently discursively opposed U.S. and global consumption of oil that caused the Deepwater Horizon accident. Nor have they influenced the U.S. government to ban oil drilling (despite recent success in Alaska). Japanese movements momentarily dislodged the consumption mentality that helps governments justify nuclear power as an alternative to difficult energy sacrifices but did not create an ideological discourse that mitigates corporate discourse.

In contrast, all three cases suggest that corporations can manage threats to their business caused by their crises. Outside of Japan, few promoted the disappearance of

environmentally destructive industries. Many in Japan called for the end of the nuclear industry. Most Americans have not called for the end of the automobile and petroleum industries. Most Brazilians have not called for the end to the soybean or cattle industries. Neither has a sufficient proportion of Japan or the United States envisioned a future where the affected regions are free of large scale corporate influence. They have effectively critiqued problems without challenging the ideology of reckless consumption. Power that can do so needs to—in theory and practice—confront current discourses and levels of consumption.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix. Discourses and Practices of Culture Ideology

	All 3 Cases	Amazonian Deforestation	The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill	The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster
Promoting Destructive Practices Rather than admitting vulnerability (This is more of a *practice* rather than a *discourse*)	Yes	Continued economic development in rainforests	Continued drilling	Doubts of nuclear energy showing national vulnerability Ignoring anti-nuclear public opinion
Doing the same elsewhere,	No	No	No	International contracts for nuclear plant construction (Harlan 2011)
Admitting environmental violations *and* expressing a willingness to change (*discourse*)	No	1.) Local elites allowed by the government to use violence against activists (Hochstetler & Keck 2007). 2) legal penalties and/or impunity for rainforest destruction (Wartmann, 2012). (Local-national levels) 3.) Corporations admit to globally distributing illegal rainforest products despite knowing ecological consequences/ (International level)	BP funding research about the "effects of the tragic Deepwater Horizon oil spill" (GoMRI 2012).	No
Export economy *and* an example of environmental conservation	No	Dominant agricultural export economy and as a country that is doing an excellent job conserving the Amazon rainforest (Leahy 2011).		Nuclear power as climate change mitigation
Environmentalism vs. Helping Workers (*Discursive* in Brazil and Japan, but a *practice* in BP Deepwater Horizon)	Yes	Brazil as socialist democracy vs. Brazil as an ecologically responsible	BP has enough assets to survive penalties	The Japanese government claimed that energy prices would double if nuclear power were scrapped (Sieg & Sheldrick 2012).