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Empowering Environmental Justice: Grassroots Organizing, Global Resistance and the Transformative Capacity of Zero Waste

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Steven Paul Cauchon

June 2018

Dissertation Committee:
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The Dissertation for Steven Paul Cauchon is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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To say that this dissertation was a collaborative effort would be an understatement. Without the love, support, and motivation provided by my wife, Kerah Cauchon, this dissertation would not have been possible. Likewise, if not for the countless individuals and activists who shared their lives, stories, homes, and offices with me—often at significant personal expense—I would never have gained access to the insights I attempt to convey in this dissertation. My dissertation chair, Professor Bronwyn Leebaw, has also demonstrated remarkable patience, encouragement, and guidance as I grappled with a number of difficulties during this entire process. Bronwyn, I sincerely thank you for this, helping me develop this project, and put it into conversation with important scholarly debates. I am also fortunate to have had the mentorship of Professors Cecilia Lynch, Farah Godrej, and Marissa Brookes, whose scholarship continues to inspire my interest in transnational coalitions, the intersection between theory and practice, and an interpretivist approach to international relations. Lastly, the colleagues and friends who provided feedback on all my drafts are too numerous to name here—you know who you are, thank you!

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my mother,

Carol Edith Lobo

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Empowering Environmental Justice: Grassroots Organizing, Global Resistance and the Transformative Capacity of Zero Waste

by

Steven Paul Cauchon

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Political Science
University of California, Riverside, June 2018
Dr. Bronwyn Leebaw, Chairperson

Our oceans continue to fill with toxics and plastics as nations struggle to manage the growing amount of industrial and consumer generated waste. In facing this particular challenge, the global community has become aware of how this issue disproportionally impacts marginalized communities and requires international solutions that are ultimately grounded in local realities. Certain grassroots organizations on the frontlines of the global waste crises have chosen to form coalitions with powerful international actors, based on the assumption that doing so is necessary for successful campaigns. These international actors can, in turn, take the lead in unilaterally managing local campaigns, or they can work as support mechanisms that encourage local activists to take the lead. What is at stake in such approaches for developing environmental justice? Do transnational organizations empower communities to build long-term mechanisms of sustained environmental justice, or do they undermine this broader goal? In this dissertation I argue that international coalition partners, rather than unilaterally directing local organizations and actors on how to achieve justice should pay more attention the insights and ideas of the frontline communities they support. I find that coalition strategies that support local organizing and ownership of solutions are more sustainable in the long-term; whereas

mobilizing collation partners around centrally developed goals and approaches to environmental justice are not. To underscore this argument I trace the history of two leading transnational environmental non-governmental organizations (TENGOs) fighting toxic waste—the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) and Greenpeace. In this analysis I pay particularly attention to how their ideas on environmental justice have evolved and how these developments have influenced the means by which these organizations support frontline communities. The analysis is based on primary documents, participant observation, and over 70 semi-structured interviews conducted in California, the Philippines, the Netherlands, and France. Ultimately, the analysis reinforces my claim that developing long-term community organizing and empowerment are fundamental for addressing local *and* global injustices related to waste management.

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CHAPTER ONE

Environmental Justice, Waste, and Transnationalism

Conventional wisdom today on global environmental justice primarily focuses on transnational level analyses and solutions, often missing the powerful role and leadership of local organizations on the ground. This wisdom has tremendous hold on our visions of justice and the type of scholarship that emerges. Meanwhile, a separate scholarship on justice as capabilities has advanced new ways of revealing the significance of grassroots community activism and solutions. While many insights have emerged from these two distinctive bodies of work, they have grown in isolation from one another. Indeed, the top-down conventional wisdom in transnationalism problematically ignores the importance of empowering grassroots actors, meanwhile justice as capabilities scholars have paid insufficient attention to how empowering local communities can emerge from transnational processes. Both therefore blind us from rethinking how to forge more powerful coalitions, which align global and local concerns and make translocal organizing and mobilizing possible. Given the nature of environmental justice problems, which are often both global and local, any single level analysis that exclusively advances a top-down or bottom-up view remains problematic. Building on existing scholarship (McFarlane 2009; Banerjee 2011) and the insights of grassroots activists, I refine and apply an innovative theoretical framework that I call “translocal,” which underscores how the transnational and local/grassroots are both critical to long-term coalition building in the fight for environmental justice.

A translocal framework pushes beyond traditional one level of analyses to make sense of how transnational organizations align and gain strength from collaborating with local organizations and communities in their quest for long-term environmental justice. This shift in framework prioritizes a new push for supporting local capacity development, rather than unilaterally directing local organizations and actors on how to achieve justice. The solution is not singularly global, local, nor are the two mutually exclusive—yet, existing scholarship has largely neglected rigorous discussion of how top-down and bottom-up movements form together. In this vein and by drawing on the ideas of frontline communities—those most affected by the environmental hazards associated with waste—I develop the concept of local capacity within my translocal framework, which I term "ownership" capabilities. This concept refers to the ownership of capabilities that empower individuals and communities to not only resist how environmental ills are distributed, but also to confront the social, cultural, political and economic processes that animate them.

Translocal coalitions form these capacities out of top-down decisions related to empowerment and bottom-up decisions that align with international goals and visions. Translocal coalitions also shape organizing and mobilizing in distinctive ways that have been taken for granted, or unnoticed, due to prior focus on exclusive, singular levels of analysis—either international, national or local. Unpacking what organizing and mobilizing look like within a translocal, multi-level coalition-building context provides a much deeper understanding of the possibilities for long-term environmental justice,

especially the injustices frontline communities experience vis-à-vis the global movement of waste.

Each year, nations produce 1.3 billion tons of waste, a figure expected to reach 4 billion by 2100 (Simmons, 2016). The expanding role of incineration makes it difficult to see the growing amount of waste that consumer economies generate—yet poisoned food chains, illness, and death are all associated with the byproducts of incineration, such as dioxin, toxic ash, and persistent organic pollutants. When communities that are more affluent bury, burn or 'throw something away,' they seldom know or have to confront where that 'away' is. In 1987, a landmark study, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States,* found that the proportion of people of color living in neighborhoods that hosted hazardous waste facilities was twice that of non-host neighborhoods and that this applied to 90% of states in the United States (Chavis and Lee). This problem disproportionally affects communities of color and low socio-economic status, often targeted by waste industries because they are less likely to be capable of waging effective resistance.[1] Importantly, this problem extends well beyond the United States, and emerges on the global scale as well. Transnational environmental nongovernmental organizations (TENGOs), such as Greenpeace, have been successful in stopping the construction of new landfills, trash incinerators and so-called "waste to energy" facilities within the Untied States from 1985-1998. However, these achievements have unwittingly pushed

[1] Indeed, according a study commissioned by the California Waste Management Board in 1984, polluting

many of the global North's waste issues, and associated industries, to marginalized communities in the global South (Pellow 2007).[2]

In response to the global toxic waste trade, Greenpeace and its coalition partners became pivotal actors in the passage of the Basel Convention in 1992, which represented an important victory for environmental justice, particularly in response to hazardous waste dumping.[3] Designed to regulate the transboundary movement of waste, the Convention empowers environmental justice coalitions to leverage strategies associated with transnational advocacy networks by naming and shaming violators, threatening outside intervention, and framing new political realities (Keck and Sikkink 1998; McCann 2006, 21). Nevertheless, many waste industries continue to out-maneuver the Basel Convention, often in collusion with states that are party to the agreement. Greenpeace continues to lobby for the ratification of the Basel Amendment, which explicitly prohibits the shipment of *all* hazardous waste from developed to less developed countries (LDCs), and is actively involved in monitoring would be violators.[4] Like other prominent TENGOs, Greenpeace's success depends on its highly sophisticated legal and scientific units' ability to advance environmental laws and professionally trained "direct

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[2] According to Energy Justice Network, these are simply trash incinerators rebranded or "green washed" as scientifically, "there is no such thing as "waste-to-energy." Matter cannot be turned into energy without a nuclear reaction" (Energy Justice Network 2016).
[3] Although too numerous to list here, Greenpeace key accomplishments outside the realm of waste include securing an international ban on hazardous waste trade, the adoption of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, a moratorium on whaling, and a global ban on the burning of toxic waste and dumping of radioactive waste at sea (Bunin 2003, 4). According to Zelko, since 1970, "no single organization has done more than Greenpeace to bolster and reshape environmental protest around the world" (Zelko 2013, 4).
[4] For instance, 90% of the world's electronic waste—worth nearly $19 billion—is still illegally traded or dumped in the South each year (Nichols 2015). In response, The Ban Amendment prohibits all transboundary movement of hazardous waste from Annex VII States to non-Annex VII states for final disposal (See Basel Convention, 2017).

action teams" to identify, monitor and protest any violators, often speaking and campaigning on *behalf* of less powerful coalition partners.[5]

For many scholars, activists, and policy makers, Greenpeace exemplifies transnational environmental justice organizing. It works with large international agencies, puts pressure on states and transnational corporations, and mobilizes domestic populations for global campaigns (See Zelko 2013; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Pellow 2007). However, when TENGOs like Greenpeace obtain legal victories, they do not necessarily or automatically empower coalition partners and local communities. Despite their important global leadership, Greenpeace's inability or reluctance to prioritize its coalition around both top-down and bottom-up priorities, visions, and capacities is emblematic of the larger problem and void in the scholarship. This strategic oversight and scholarly gap not only limits more powerful "translocal" coalitions from forming, top-down dynamics driven by globalization actually create greater injustices by disproportionately affecting poorer nations and communities. As a result, a type of injustice is being built into the very processes and decisions in coalition-building, but unnoticed by activists and scholars who are seeking to advance a more environmentally just world.

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[5] Although there is no agreed upon list of what environmental groups are "prominent," they are typically characterized as being comprised of white, middle and upper class members (often male), and focused on issues, such as preservation, endangered species protection, etc. Examples of the largest and most influential environmental organizations, also known as the "Group of Ten" and/or "Gang of Green": Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, Greenpeace, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society and the World Wide Fund for Nature. Conversely, environmental justice groups are often much more anthropocentric in their outlook and understand the 'environment' as were we 'work, live, and play.' Moreover, women of low socioeconomic status and color are the predominant leader of environmental justice groups. (See Di Chiro, 1996).

The Philippines, for example, continues to be targeted by various actors for hazardous waste exports, despite having multiple prohibitions in place under domestic laws and international conventions that Greenpeace successfully lobbied for. Indeed, the fact that frontline communities are often poor, indigenous, and disempowered has made it difficult for such communities to make effective use of legal victories in waging ongoing struggles for environmental justice in the Philippines. I will show, however, that this strategy of resistance is ineffective in marginalized countries and cannot fill the void of lacking necessary local capacity to resist. Specifically, this dissertation helps to reveal why local capacity and visions for justice remain a critical factor for global environmental justice and how activism that seeks to address injustice is incomplete when frontline communities lack the capacity to address their structural roots, monitor enforcement, and advance local solutions.

How do transnational organizations seek to empower communities in an effort to make legal victories and international norms meaningful locally? In addition, what is the role of community empowerment as a dimension of environmental justice? To address this set of questions, the dissertation builds on debates regarding the meaning of justice, the competing demands made by environmental organizations, and how they strategize to confront disempowering structures, processes, policies and thus movement goals (Pulido 1996; Schlosberg 2007; 2013; Holland 2008; Allen 2013). I use these insights to argue that the organizational modalities of TENGOs are not simply premised on instrumental assessments of external opportunities and constraints, but are also the product of their distinct interpretations of justice and coalition building. Differences in the way that

transnational organizations conceptualize environmental justice have important implications for the way they prioritize environmental goals and how they pursue them. For instance, Greenpeace has been remarkable in mobilizing coalition partners to shape public sentiment surrounding its international campaigns, fund its operations and project power, all of which add to its ability to form coalitions with environmental justice movements across disparate regions of the world to confront that unjust way that waste is distributed. Yet, a problem of justice emerges when the organization conceptualizes and pursues distributive justice in a top-down manner, divorced from community empowerment. Greenpeace activists often dismiss the significance of demands on the part of frontline communities for meaningful participation and community empowerment. Such demands can be at odds with the strategies that Greenpeace has cultivated in order to secure coalitions aimed at advancing more policy-orientated goals.

The primary intervention this dissertation makes is to show how international successes is leveraged to build new local capacity and argues for a translocal vision of justice. Frontline communities, in short, are in a better position to translate legal victories and norms at the international level into meaningful visions of change at the local level, when TENGOs take their knowledge claims and visions of justice more seriously. This challenges the conventional wisdom on transnational environmental justice activism and scholarship, which have focused largely on the Greenpeace model. It brings into sharper focus what is at stake when transnational coalitions fail to support frontline communities in becoming equal partners with their own local capacity and role in fighting for change. To accomplish this, I develop a new translocal framework that blurs the relationship

between local, national and global scales and underscores the significance that frontline communities place on organizing, community empowerment, and advancing solutions grounded in local knowledge.

With this new framework, my research locates an alternative approach to environmental justice activism in the work of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), which emerged out of activist's frustration with Greenpeace's model. Founded in 2000, GAIA is a TENGO that allies with more than 800 grassroots groups, NGOs, scholars, and scientists in over 90 countries from its dual offices in Berkeley and the Philippines. The coalition has since achieved a number of significant policy victories[6] by linking grassroots initiatives, *organizing* based on "Zero Waste" principles, and building a global movement to make use of evolving international legal standards and norms, in a *translocal* fashion.[7] Both GAIA and Greenpeace emphasize distributive justice. However, GAIA argues that distributive justice and community empowerment must go together—that frontline communities must be involved in framing the parameters of distributive justice, in formulating the strategies to pursue it, and empowered to sustain this work. In other words, for GAIA, the means and ends of coalitions cannot be so easily divorced—if community empowerment is a goal.

GAIA is a critical case for understanding how local empowerment can occur within translocal coalition building, which I argue, sheds important light on the broader

[6] See Chapter Four

[7] As I discuss in Chapter Two, although organizing and mobilizing are often confused with one another, there are a number of important distinctions between them. Mobilizing is centralized, works toward breadth, rather than depth, and therefore focuses on discrete transactional encounters with as many people as possible, such as signing a petition, 'showing up,' etc. Organizing, in contrast, is more decentralized, focused on fostering solidarity, individual development and creates a collective capacity not present when individuals act alone (Han 2015, 3, 15).

tension raised whenever TENGOs seek to work with grassroots organizations or combat local problems. As I will show, because GAIA has interpreted environmental justice as empowering and strengthening the capabilities of its local members, the coalition has prioritized efforts to support grassroots organizations. Specifically, by helping them understand the social and political sources of environmental injustices, building their skills for articulating and implementing alternatives, and encouraging relationships that foster solidarity for the basis of sustained collective action. Although GAIA's approach is not a panacea for the host of political, economic, and structural problems faced by communities experiencing environmental injustices, it represents an understudied alternative mode of transnational organizing. This model confronts global injustices through a vision of change grounded in the lived experiences and ideas of frontline communities, not board members of a transnational organization. In order to analyze GAIA's community-based approach, I draw on insights from capabilities theory (discussed in Chapter Two) (Holland 2017, 396; Schlosberg 2010; Sen 1993; Nussbaum 1995).

GAIA's theoretical approach also pushes work on justice as capabilities in new and promising directions by demonstrating that developing the capabilities of frontline communities does more than simply address the injustices they face, but also advances broader avenues for justice due to the unique knowledge and insights often cultivated in frontline spaces. For example, GAIA describes the distribution of waste as:

> Part of a larger web of health, equity, race, power, gender, poverty and governance issues...We absolutely cannot stop toxic pollution without simultaneously promoting environmental and social justice, because pollution depends on and perpetuates injustice. Because of this, supporting the principles of environmental justice is a key component in our work (2014).

GAIA reveals new ways for capabilities theory to integrate ideas about voice and narrative into its discussion of community-based empowerment. Most importantly, I argue that GAIA's approach itself advances capabilities theory by placing community empowerment into a translocal context. This multi-level process of empowerment rubs against traditional notions found in capabilities theory, but brings important attention to how local communities share knowledge, ideas, and strategies for shaping local empowerment, even in networks that transcend local arenas. This is not only possible; it is critical to the global and local reality of many justice-oriented fights. I argue that in order for scholars to appreciate the significance of GAIA's approach and theoretical insights, it is better understood and analyzed as an example of translocalism and evaluated with reference to different criteria often applied to the study of transnational coalitions.

I bridge capabilities scholarship with insights from the conventional literature on transnationalism (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Pellow 2007), while also illustrating the limitations in the latter, particularly how scholars have tended to define "success" in ways that make it difficult to perceive the significance GAIA's translocal approach (see Lynch 1999. For instance, TENGOs generally look to states, industries, and legal reform strategies for obtaining environmental justice domestically and abroad (Pellow 13, 2016, see also Coulthard 2014). When states are not responsive to their citizens, previous studies suggest local NGOs can throw a 'boomerang' to more influential transnational NGOs, which may compel their home states and international organizations to pressure the unresponsive state to change its practices and policies (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Policy and regulatory victories are important, but from the perspective of grassroots activists in the Philippines and elsewhere, absent *socioeconomic* and *political transformations* at the local scale, state/industry centric strategies to transnational activism are limited (see Luke 1997; Schlosberg 2013; Arturo 2008).

In evaluating the work of transnational coalitions and their role in linking the local and global, this dissertation demonstrates that scholars must consider the relationship between success as defined in relation to influence over global governance *and* success as defined in relation to community empowerment. With the primary theoretical innovation laid out above, the remainder of this chapter provides a brief history of the problem: the commodification of waste and how it is predicated on industry's ability to dump on relatively marginalized populations.[8] This history is followed with a brief preview of how GAIA and Greenpeace have responded differently to the problem, their respective interpretations of justice, and the international and grassroots sources of their decision-making, which sets the stage for deeper comparisons and analysis in the dissertation. The chapter ends with an outline for the rest of the dissertation.

Roots of Global Waste Management Injustice

Before a robust international presence of organizations and networks, individuals and local communities managed their own waste, which typically involved some combination of dumping, burying and burning, on land and at sea. Older methods of

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[8] A full account of the history of waste management in the United Staets (see Crooks 1993; MacBride 2011), its relationship with environmental justice (Pellow 2002; Bullard 2001; Cole and Foster 2001) and how it has taken on a global dynamic (see De Kadt 1999; Pellow 2007) is beyond the scope of this chapter.

waste disposal were far less problematic, as waste was more compostable and far less toxic than what exists today. For example, beginning in the 1890s, many U.S. cities were able to effectively manage waste disposal through a mix of public and private enterprises to haul, dump and burn most municipal waste (Crooks 1993, 3). After World War II, the problem fundamentally shifted in both the composition and growth of the U.S. waste stream. An increase of single-use products, plastic containers, and the growth of toxic chemicals used in production created dangerous forms of waste that previously did not exist, which was simultaneously compounded by urban population growth and increases in household waste. The passage of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act in 1970 made the management of solid waste the primary responsibility of municipalities in the U.S., mirrored by other industrialized cities globally (De Kadt 1999, 136). The early 1970s also marks the beginning of the consolidation of waste management industries and municipalities contracting-out of such services.

As the problem of waste grew, awareness and public concern regarding the health and environmental impacts of landfills and waste incinerators also increased. For example, the toxic ash residue produced by waste incinerators, specifically its disposal, became a galvanizing point for opposing their construction (De Kadt 1999, 139; Crooks 1993, 29). Combined with a growing awareness that both incinerator facilities and toxic disposal sites were disproportionally cited in communities of color and low socio-economic status (Bullard 2001; Cole and Foster 2001), communities began organizing to protest such locally unwanted land uses (LULUs). Indeed, activists and scholars view the early struggles against incinerators and toxic landfills in the 1980s as the beginning of the

environmental justice movement, (Pellow 2002, 5; MacBride 2011). As I will discuss in Chapter Three, Greenpeace USA was not only a decisive ally for grassroots communities resisting such facilities, but was also one of the first major environmental organizations to align its goals and strategies with the nascent environmental justice movement. However, as opposition to such facilities grew, so too did municipal waste streams. Combined with increasing environmental standards associated with the construction and operation of landfills and incinerators, these events paradoxically made waste an increasingly valuable commodity (Surak 2016; Melosi 1999; Crooks 1993).

Unlike most utilities, cities and towns typically charge a flat fee for waste disposal. Additionally, because most disposal sites are located in marginalized communities, the majority of Americans pay little attention to the amount of waste they generate or where it ends up (rising from 228 million tons in 2006 to 254 in 2013) (Simmons 2016). Therefore, part of the profitability of managing waste depends on the ability of industry finding vulnerable host communities in the face of growing awareness regarding the health risks associated with its disposal. For instance, because of grassroots activism, "the incineration industry was hitting the same kind of wall that the nuclear business had" (Crooks 1993, 30). Municipalities and the industries responded by moving waste disposal sites further and further away from populated areas, avoiding communities with *organized* opposition while targeting those perceived as relatively weak (see EJNET 2017). The United Church of Christ report exposed this *"environmental racism"* as operating at the core of waste management in the United States (see also Pellow 2002;

Bullard 2005; Cole and Foster 2001).[9]

In response to the report's findings, and the subsequent pressure applied by a growing network of grassroots activists, Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 in an attempt to mitigate the unequal distribution of hazardous facilities in low-income and minority communities.[10] Despite federal actions and policies meant to address environmental injustices in such communities, as follow up study twenty years later, "Toxic Waste and Race," revealed similar results (Bullard et at. 2007). Environmental racism continues to persist despite Clinton's Executive Order, largely because civil rights claims (e.g. Title VI) based on unequal distributions have been unsuccessful. The courts have ruled that such cases fail to demonstrate *intent* on the part of governmental and corporate actors (See Cole and Foster 2001). In fact, no case has been successful in finding a company guilty of engaging in environmental racism in the U.S., despite a robust legal system. The utility of pursuing environmental justice through state and legal apparatuses alone has proven to be hollow and ineffective (see Pellow 2016).

Critics of litigation as a strategy for pursuing environmental justice assert that many of the rulings have failed to address the way government and corporate decisions affected racial groups unequally, regardless of intent (Pellow 2007, 16). According to this this perspective, what appeared to be race neutral decisions by state and private actors are

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[9] Environmental racism refers to policies, practices, or directives that differentially affect or disadvantage individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color (Bullard 2002)

[10] The executive order required that all federal agencies "make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations" (Huang 2014).

rather a result of *systematic* political exclusion, misinformation, and disrespect (see Young 2011; Pulido 2000). Luke Cole and Sheila Foster (2001) stress the way communities of color are targeted for waste disposal sites because they lack the *political capacity* embedded in technical knowledge, institutional access, and the resources necessary for exercising meaningful participation in the siting process. Although the authors argue litigation is an important tool for addressing procedural issues communities face vis-à-vis facility citing processes and their relationship with legacies of residential segregation, they also contend:

> Tactically, taking environmental problems out of the streets and into the courts has proven, in many instances, to be a mistake. In struggles between private industry and host community, there are two types of power, the power of money and the power of people…The success of grassroots environmental justice groups in local struggle to control their environment reflects the degree to which such groups built a movement largely outside of formal decision making structures an litigation avenues (129, 131).

The authors thus raise an important question activists and environmental justice scholars still grapple with today, namely, *how to pursue litigation/regulatory strategies and community empowerment at the same tim*e. For instance, Greenpeace USA learned early on that legal strategies, leveraging environmental policies, norms, and public opinion were inefficient to stop local governments from permitting the construction of polluting facilities within marginalized communities in the absence of grassroots pressure. Indeed, after combining sustained grassroots political pressure at the local scale *and* lobbying and litigation tactics at the state and national scale, Greenpeace USA helped defeat plans to construct over three hundred waste incinerators in the United States between 1985 and 1998 (Pellow 2007).

Success in the United States has not meant success elsewhere. Despite these victories, with the growth in global free trade agreements, solid waste and its associated management had become global and highly profitable commodity by the 1990s (Crooks 1993, 35), redoubling industry efforts to locate host communities abroad. Although pollution controls associated with landfills and incinerators have improved since the 1990s, they still entail the release of toxic substances few communities are willing to accept (Nemerow, et al. 2009; MacBride 2011; Connett 2013). Indeed, based on production and disposal practices, especially associated with electronics, waste streams continue to become increasingly toxic (Surrak 2016). Thus in countries with more stringent environmental regulations and informed communities, the disposal of toxic materials continues to become more costly. Even when "e-waste," plastics and other "recyclables" with toxic elements are captured before reaching landfills and incinerators, they are not necessarily recycled properly. For instance, cities that pride themselves on high recycling rates, such as San Francisco, often export such items to countries in Africa and Asia for processing, which frequently lack adequate environmental and labor conditions (MacBride 2011). The "free market" logic animating this practice is poignantly captured in Lawrence Summer's now infamous internal World Bank memo, which reads: "I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that ... I've always thought that underpopulated countries in Africa are vastly under-polluted."[11]

[11] *New Work Times.* 1992. Furor on Memo At World Bank. February 7

Greenpeace and others have brought important international attention to the problem of the global North disproportionately generating waste and then placing this waste in LDCs. Stories like the *Khiaan Sea*, and images depicting children sorting through waste in unsafe conditions, are among one of many examples of this (see Pellow 2007).[12] Indeed, the growing awareness of the environmental and health impact associated with the export of toxics, plastics and e-waste to LDCs provided the impetus for the creation of the Basel Convention, which became legally binding on parties to the Convention in 1992. The overarching objective of the Convention is to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous wastes by promoting the reduction of hazardous waste generation and restricting is transboundary movement, "except where it is perceived to be in accordance with the principles of environmentally sound management" (Basel Convention 2017). However, a number of parties to the convention felt this language was not strong enough to mitigate the increasing North to South flow of hazardous waste. This resulted in the introduction of the Basel Amendment in 1994, which explicitly prohibited the Annex VII countries (members of OECD, EU, Liechtenstein) from shipping such waste for final disposal in non-OECD States (Basel Convention 2017). Although the amendment has yet to enter force, the Convention demonstrated the power and potential of TENGOs to change the policies, and ostensibly the practices, of the world's largest corporations and most powerful governments (Pellow 2007, 14).

[12] See Pellow 2007

It is important to note that states are primarily responsible for enforcing what the Basel Convention mandates, yet TENGOs remain critical for several reasons. They use the language and spirit of the Convention and the Amendment to target and bring attention to violators. Transnational legal advocacy also provides local movements with sources of institutional and symbolic leverage, such as naming and shaming, establishing moral high ground, and the threat of outside intervention against opponents (Keck and Sikkink 1998). David Pellow's study provides a comprehensive study of the impact the Convention has had—including discouraging the incineration of pesticide waste from Denmark in Mozambique, successfully remediating damage caused by a U.S. company dumping "Agent Orange" in the Bahamas and bringing attention to how PepsiCo exported more that 9 million pounds of plastic from California to India in 1993 (2007).

What makes TENGOs even more critical is the fact that the United States has failed to ratify the Convention—the world's largest generator of hazardous waste and only MDC that has yet to do so—compounded by the fact that exporting waste to LDCs has now become commoditized into a multi-billion dollar industry that is anti-regulation. The problem persists even in countries party to the convention, who export their waste to LDCs due to unclear regulations, loopholes, and state differences in defining what is a "commodity" and what is "waste" vis-à-vis the Based Convention (Surak 2016, 113). Ratification of the Basel Convention has served as a galvanizing force for environmental activists, yet national and transnational courts generally lack the independence, resources or will to enforce judgments against powerful stakeholders in government and society (McCann 2006; Scheingold 1974; Rosenberg 1991). Moreover, only states party to the

convention can trigger Basel Convention compliance mechanisms, limiting NGOs to having to pressure the Secretariat to do so.[13] On top of these political barriers, the commodification of this problem, according to an interview with a high-ranking government official in the Philippines, has made the importation and disposal of toxic waste has, pound-for-pound, a rival to the profitability of illegal guns and drug trafficking.[14] TENGOs are therefore a critical spearhead, which often lack support from states to combat environmental waste.

As a result of this limitation, GAIA has responded by organizing a translocal movement that applies pressure primarily at the local scale by empowering communities to monitor the enforcement of international conventions, such as Basel, especially when state's are unable to effectively do so, if not complicit in their violation. As I will discuss in Chapter Two and Four, GAIA's approach is centered on "Zero Waste" principles, which seek to address how communities understand and manage waste after they succeed or fail in shutting down a polluting facility. GAIA members claim that when environmental justice communities adopt a Zero Waste approach, this helps them move from a "no" (i.e. fighting injustice) to a "yes" position (i.e. realizing justice)—a key shift for movements and coalitions to endure (Benford 2005; Connett 2013). This includes formalizing and respecting the work of "waste pickers," remanufacturing using recycled inputs, and a growing involvement in the politics that influence one's waste stream and its disposal. As one activist in Puerto Rico remarked, affluent communities often disparage waste workers and their labor is not valued despite the vital role they play in

[13] Author interview with Jim Puckett, former Toxics Campaigner Director, Greenpeace International, October 2017.
[14] Author interview with Vice Gov. Enrique Cojuangco, December 2015.

sustainable waste management solutions. However, when organized and connected with the GAIA network, they "feel that their work is being recognized in other places, because here, it is hard to get recognition."[15] In such cases, Zero Waste projects "seek to redress generations of harm wrought by waste-disposal industries and allied governments on populations who have had no other choice but to live and work amid waste and waste facilities" (MacBride 2011 126).

For example, with the help of Greenpeace, the Philippines was the first country to pass a state-wide ban on waste incineration as mandated by the Clean Air Act of 1999 and Ecological Sole Waste Management Act of 2000.[16] However, at the local scale, many villages (*barangays*) and municipalities struggle with enforcement due to a lack of capacity, corruption and oppression. Conversely, communities that are trained in Zero Waste and organized through GAIA are not only in a better position to resist, but also transition to just and equitable waste management practices embodied in the Philippines model legislation. Indeed, the barangay Fort Bonifacio recently achieved the highest waste diversion rate (85%) in Metro Manila—well above global averages (San Francisco is currently around 80%).[17] Through intensive training in the GAIA network, the local

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[15] Author interview with Adriana Gonzalez, February 8, 2016.
[16] In addition to banning waste incineration via the Clean Air Act (RA 8749), The Ecological Solid Waste Mangament Act (RA 9003) specifically mandates "all, especially the local government units, to adopt a systematic, comprehensive and ecological solid waste management program which shall ensure protection of public health and environment; utilize environmentally sound methods; set targets and guidelines for solid waste avoidance and reduction; ensure proper segregation, collection, transport and storage of solid waste; promote national research and development programs for improved SWM; encourage greater sector participation; retain primary enforcement and responsibility of SWM with local government units; encourage cooperation and self-regulation among waste generators; institutionalize public participation; and strengthen the integration of ecological solid waste management, resource conservation and recovery topics into the academic curricula" (Sapuay 2014, 53).
[17] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Municipal Solid Waste in The United States: 2011 Facts and Figures. Washington, DC: GPO, May 2013.

work of grassroots organizations, like Mother Earth Foundation, has helped build on and formalize the work of waste workers, tripled their average income, and changed the mindset of a community that was once an informal dumping ground of Manila.[18] Moreover, acknowledging the expertise and incorporating the participation of waste pickers within the local government structure has not only been a cost effective means of waste management, but also enhanced the political capacity, respect, and health of the community members as well.[19]

Despite such achievements, working closely with grassroots movements and communities can be time-consuming, lead to 'all talk and no action,' and can constrain TENGOs from acting decisively. Coupled with a philanthropic community that has generally demonstrated a lack of appreciation for grassroots organizing, the potential of GAIA's translocal approach to addressing the injustice associated with the transnational movement of waste has not received adequate attention. Indeed, Grassroots environmental justice organizations and the transnational network infrastructure needed to connect them are often under funded by influential foundations. In 2009, only 15% of environmental grant dollars were classified as benefitting marginalized communities, and only 11% were classified as advancing "social justice" strategies, "a proxy for policy advocacy and community organizing that works toward structural change on behalf of those who are the least well off politically, economically and socially" (Hansen 2012, 1).

Many funders, foundations, and therefore large TENGOs, also have a tendency to focus on "deliverables" that lend themselves to quantification, such as 'likes', retweets,

[18] Author interview with Sonya Mendoza, December 2015.
[19] Author interview with anonymous waste workers, December 2015.

policies passed, pounds of plastic pulled from oceans, etc., while overlooking the significance, albeit complimentary outcomes, of a communities cultivation of respect, experience, and solidarity. Furthermore, because the problems associated with waste continue to be exported to the global South—out of sight and out of the minds of those most responsible—campaigns that focus on waste often fail to resonate with Northern donors. Consequently, influential TENGOs like Greenpeace have generally shifted resources from waste to issues such as climate change, ocean pollution, and deforestation that do. According to one GAIA fundraiser:

> Funding is a huge problem, because waste is one of the world's top global issues and yet, in the US and Europe, it is out of site, out of mind, and that's where philanthropic dollars come from and its not a sexy thing to support. So if you are working on climate, ok, if your working on alternative energy, ok, but if you go into any community in the global South and you ask them, what are some of your top issues, waste is key and there's just not a lot of support for the organizing that happens.[20]

Not being *dependent* upon big donors is intrinsic to bottom-up approaches to activism, as such dependency can be in tension with the goal of capacity building and self-reliance. However, investing in and recognizing the potential of grassroots organizations ultimately stands to complement the ostensible aims of Greenpeace and influential funders by increasing the impact and longevity of the transnational coalitions they form. Presently, in order to form coalitions and gain access to funding, grassroots organizations must disproportionally modify their goals and strategies to align with more powerful actors they see as essential for their success (see Bob 2005; Cable et al. 2005).

By examining the multiple scales on which TENGOs and coalitions operate, the translocal framework I employ elucidates what is at stake in the tradeoffs frontline communities face in joining coalitions and their capacity for advancing significant

[20] Author interview with anonymous GAIA steering committee member, January 2016.

developments in avenues for asserting power and organizing across borders (see McFarlane 2009; Banerjee 2011). Furthermore, in reconciling theoretical scholarship on justice and studies of transnationalism with the ideas of frontline communities, this dissertation examines unexplored tensions and potential between top-down and bottom-up decision-making, strategies that mobilize and organize coalition partners, and how they relate to the competing understandings of justice. I argue that when differences in how activists understand and peruse justice are ignored, scholars of transnational activism might be overlooking forms of success that they have mislabeled as failure or overstating the extent to which coalition victories have helped realize long-term environmental justice.

Indeed, despite existing international policy meant to mitigate the transboundary movement of waste, high per capita waste generation in the global North continues to result in dumping on the South. I have suggested that this is not only the result of flawed policies and regulatory frameworks, but also the result of frontline communities lacking the ability to translate them into meaningful change at the local scale. Nevertheless, foundations, influential TENGOs and scholars continue to concentrate on policy victories and overlook, if not dismiss, the significance of community organizing for confronting the current global waste crises. Alternatively, the work of GAIA suggests community empowerment and capacity building are essential for moving from a reactive position (stopping environmental threats) to one that is proactive in terms of realizing social, economic and environmental justice. By comparing the work of Greenpeace with the lesser-known approach of GAIA, this study deepens discussions on environmental justice

by recognizing competing ways activists and communities conceptualize and prioritize different dimensions of justice in the global fight against unfair waste management practices, which are ultimately grounded in local realties.

Even though waste has become a global commodity, its generation, disposal and associated ills are still largely municipal issues, giving local stakeholders the *potential* to realize meaningful change. Therefore, confronting the injustices associated with the transnational movement of waste requires action not only at the international and national scale, but also a significant engagement with local as well. However, based on scholarly assumptions of transnational environmental justice coalition cohesiveness and analytical frameworks that favor an international level of analysis, the significance of GAIA approach, and the insights of frontline communities have not been adequately addressed. In the following chapter, I thus build on theoretical insights on justice, social movements, and related critiques in order to make sense of how GAIA and Greenpeace operate, their rational for doing so and their potential tradeoffs, *from the perspective of local stakeholders*. In developing the translocal theoretical framework, I demonstrate how GAIA's approach resonates with and advances existing studies on justice as capabilities (Schlosberg 2007; 2013; Holland 2008; 2017) while challenging scholars to also consider the importance of ownership vis-à-vis how capabilities are developed in practice.

The goal is to not only bring attention to the limitations associated with predominant models of transnational activism, and the concepts we use to understand them, but also the promise of cross-national, cross-cultural and non-colonial environmental justice—not beholden to state-centric, liberal, and legalistic notions of

success and justice. Indeed, my research suggests that scholars of transnationalism should be paying more attention to how supporting local organizing relates to increasing the agency and capabilities of frontline communities. Through the lens of the translocal, the study underscores alternative approaches to environmental justice organizing that are being developed and conceptualized by community-based actors, such as those that influenced GAIA, in need of further exploration. In doing so, the dissertation contributes to debates on environmental justice and transnationalism by refining how we understand transnational environmental justice coalition outcomes, their associated strategies, the complex interaction of scales on which they operate, and how local stakeholders evaluate them based on particular understandings for justice.

Structure and Chapter Outline

This dissertation's primary lines of inquiry concern (a) TENGOs working on waste and environmental justice, (b) the dynamics of the coalitions they participate in, and how (c) this affects individuals, organizations, and policy at multiple scales. Each of these concerns reveal the significance of *mobilizing* versus *organizing* for transnational environmental justice, and throughout the dissertation, I draw inferences from the transnational to the local scale.[21] The major takeaway this dissertation advances is that top-down and grassroots strategies alone are insufficient for advancing long-term and sustainable forms of environmental justice. **Chapter Two** sets up the core translocal theoretical framework for addressing a number of gaps in environmental justice studies, which favor one or more level(s) of analysis at the expense of others (Pellow 2016).

[21] See Appendix A for a full account of the methods this study employs, how I went about analyzing the data, and reflections related scholarly and interpretive reflections.

Specifically, I demonstrate: (1) how certain strategic approaches relate to the distinct dimensions of injustice embedded in environmental justice struggles, (2) the associated compromises members make, and (3) how they relate to coalition goals. Going beyond limitations set by prior frameworks, I link debates on justice to both the top-down down coalition model of Greenpeace and the bottom-up model of GAIA to reveal their respective propensity to engage in mobilizing versus organizing. These top-down and bottom-up models together provide a new framework that I term "translocal," with new sets of logics for coalition and capacity building. I argue that insights from debates on environmental justice suggest a need to expand our analysis of TENGOs beyond their ability to confront unjust distributions through international policy to also include how they empower frontline communities in terms of building local capacities and skills (Holland 2017, Schlosberg 2013).

Chapters Three and Four develop the dissertation's comparative investigation by establishing a historically grounded analysis of Greenpeace and GAIA—with attention to how each organization developed, how members articulated strategies and ideas for change, and how major campaigns altered those strategies. In both cases, I employ an environmental justice framework, informed by concepts developed in the field, to critically examine the principles and motivations that drive their respective approaches. Specifically, I analyze the power relationships within their respective and overlapping work in waste with attention to how these relationships came to be, who they benefit and who they leave out (18; Schwarts-Shea and Yanow 2012, 47). Chapters Three and Four represent "heuristic case studies" that are utilized in order to refine inductively the

relationship between GAIA and Greenpeace's organizational principles, notions of justice, and associated strategies and goals (George and Bennett 2005).

Chapter Three begins by tracing how the initial prefigurative, participatory and devolved structure of Greenpeace's first office in Vancouver metamorphosed into the hierarchical, bureaucratic, "international environmental powerhouse" it is today (Zelko 2013, 5). Specifically, I explore how certain Greenpeace leaders were instrumental in promoting an organizational ethos and top-down mobilizing strategies that have proven useful for winning highly visible international campaigns and raising funds, but have nevertheless adversely impacted how the organizations engages with community-level organizations and campaigns associated with environmental justice. In **chapter Four**, I provide a similar account of GAIA, how it filled the void left by Greenpeace's departure from work on waste, and why it has chosen to support local scale organizing for resisting the unfair movement and disposal of waste globally, from the ground-up. The chapter argues that attention to GAIA's strategic approach sheds light on some of the neglected limitations of the top-down approach selected by Greenpeace, as well as the neglected potential inherent in grassroots approaches to transnational organizing.

These exploratory cases in turn provide the "thick description"[22] used in **Chapter Five** (see Gerring 2004; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012), which compares the work of GAIA and Greenpeace in confronting the practice of dumping, burying, and burning waste in the Philippines. Focusing on how GAIA and Greenpeace work in this common space provides the analytic leverage for evaluating the relationship between their distinct

[22] (See Gertz 1973)

approaches. It also serves as the basis for understanding how this relationship can entail a fruitful division of labor, yet may involve unexplored tensions between their distinct approaches. Indeed, the chapter's core argument regarding the advantages associated with frontline community capacity building assists current efforts to build equity and alignment between the goals and strategies of predominant TENGOs, grassroots organizations, and funding sectors. Specifically, I contend that transforming the structures and power relations that animate global injustice requires efforts to build the capacities of frontline communities to *identify and take the lead in implementing solution*s at the local level rather than teaching local leaders to implement agendas set by transnational organizations.

CHAPTER TWO

Justice, Community Empowerment, and the Translocal

I had just finished a round of interviews with Greenpeace staff when I met with two so-called "freelance activists" who had been based in the Philippines for many years. The meeting and ensuing friendship was fortuitous as both had worked for Greenpeace, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), and were more than familiar with the Environmental NGO and political landscape in their native country. Initially, I wanted to get their perspectives on Greenpeace's "water patrol expeditions," which were part of a global campaign centered on empowering frontline communities to confront local polluting industries.[23] The first responded "Greenpeace just uses these allies as man power, they don't let the local one do their capability or knowledge in fighting that matter." The other agreed and remarked:

> To set an example, the oceans campaign, they're [Greenpeace] looking for fisherman folks that already have this kind of initiative for ocean protection…they [fisherman] are focused on specific issues, so if you are a fisher folk community, then you have this set of problems regarding your area, but it doesn't include sharks…[Greenpeace] would say, no, we won't help you. Oh, sharks? We will help you now; lets have a conference, media briefing, da da da. Then Greenpeace will find another community where there are sharks and so on. The help is not direct…they just [sic] using only the part that works for them.[24]

After subsequent interviews with local stakeholders, it became clear that while the campaign had a good starting idea and had brought significant media attention to certain

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[23] The animating idea behind Greenpeace's Project Clean Water campaign is the "right to know" how industry production processes may impact a community's environment and health, specifically how such practices are potentially contaminating local water supplies. To this end, Greenpeace organized "water patrol expeditions," a series of high profile events involving the direct participation of frontline communities confronting companies polluting local rivers and lakes.

[24] Author interview with anonymous activists, February 2016

industries that were polluting local water supplies, the campaign languished. These same interviewees claimed the campaign failed to meet its full potential or empower them due to a lack of community ownership and Greenpeace's increasing lack of support for capacity building.

What is the role of community empowerment as a dimension of transnational environmental justice? Scholarship on transnational activism has been premised on the idea that activists with shared values and ideas can work together effectively to challenge more powerful actors, and that transnational coalitions facilitate the transfer of resources, expertise, and strategies that community-based organizations can effectively mobilize in waging their own struggles (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Pellow 2007). As many have observed, this is not always the case, as community-based organizations may feel pressure to frame their struggles in conformity with the values of more powerful actors to solicit support (See Bob 2005) or may not share their interpretations in relation to frameworks and strategies for justice (Harrison 2011; Pulido 1996; Schlosberg 2007). As a number of scholars have recognized, frontline communities commonly possess indispensable knowledge and insight regarding the implications of environmental degradation (Agrawal 1995; Corburn 2005), which suggests that it is particularly important to consider how such communities have evaluated the work of Transnational Environmental NGOs (TENGOs), as well as articulated alternative approaches to environmental justice. Greenpeace, for example, has been effective in *mobilizing* frontline communities in the Philippines for high profile direct actions, used to leverage policy change aimed at the unequal distribution of waste. Nevertheless, from the

perspective of grassroots activists in the Philippines and elsewhere, justice entails more than environmental transformation vis-à-vis centralized polices aimed at improving air, water and soil quality. Justice also centers on the importance of community empowerment, social capital, and translocal solidarity for perusing global change grounded in local transformations.

One of the reasons community empowerment is overlooked in the realm of waste and environmental justice activism more broadly is predominate TENGO strategies, and scholarly frameworks used to understand them, assume that state accountability is sufficient to hold corporations accountable. Indeed, many activists, and the scholars who study them, still look primarily to national governments and international organizations to accommodate their demands via legislation, institutional reforms, and policy concessions (Pellow 2016, 4). However, as Pellow remarks, the concern is "that such an approach leaves intact the very power structures that produced environmental injustice in the first place…such efforts ultimately risk reinforcing their legitimacy" (4; see also Coulthard 2014). For example, the "boomerang model" (Keck and Sikkink 1998) suggests that when domestic movements operate within non-responsive states, they can receive support by throwing a "boomerang" to sympathetic and relatively more powerful organizations and governments, which in turn intervene to put pressure on the nonresponsive state. This is the strategy that Greenpeace mobilized to obtain a number of regional and global waste trade bans, including the Waigani Convention in the South Pacific (1995); the Bamako Convention in Africa (1991), and the Basel Convention (1989), all if which helped mitigate the uneven global distribution of waste. However, the model indicates that states

and industries respond primarily to the power of states and outside actors, rather than pressure from below.

Furthermore, boomerang strategies for successfully stopping state sponsored repression and mitigating the global trade in waste are sometimes in tension with the goal of empowering frontline communities to make use of international norms in order to pursue justice and hold local leaders accountable for injustices. This chapter argues that TENGOs cannot rely on normative pressure or legal mechanisms for this purpose, but must also employ strategies that empower vulnerable coalition partners to confront the ease with which transnational corporations move to places with lax legal enforcement. Because frontline communities depend upon jobs that poison their communities, yet remain particularly vulnerable to the negative burdens of pollution, they have the potential to play a unique political role in confronting environmental harms. Nevertheless, their voices and insights are often disregarded in accordance with the strategic priorities of TENGOs. Although mobilizing legal victories, normative change and organizing community empowerment are complementary ends of justice, certain environmental justice frames, and therefore strategic priorities, are ultimately privileged while others are discounted by influential TENGOs like Greenpeace. My research locates an alternative approach in the work of GAIA, which places a premium on *organizing* and empowering communities to pursue global justice and structural change from *the ground-up*.

Although GAIA's approach resonates with a capabilities approach to justice, it also stands to improve our understanding of the conditions of enablement that are

required as a matter of substantive and procedural justice. For instance, debates on the meaning of justice have illustrated that political agency (Sen 1993), control over one's environment (Nussbaum 2005; 2011), and having the political capabilities to influence related rules, regulations, and bring about forward-looking alternatives (Holland 2008; 2017; Schlosberg 2013; Schlosberg and Coles 2016) are all fundamental to justice. In what follows, I discuss how GAIA's approach to justice as empowerment not only illustrates the connection between legal victories and the role of community capacity building, but also how a crucial and overlooked location of the latter is in frontline communities controlling the conditions of their own involvement in transnational coalitions. Indeed, although Greenpeace has been an important ally in advancing normative and policy change for environmental justice at the national and international scale, the means by which it does so often come at the expense of community empowerment and engagement. In comparing their work to that of GAIA, I suggest justice also requires conditions that enable people to overcome their vulnerabilities, which are a consequence of their particular social, economic, and political circumstances at the local and global scales.

But in order for scholars of transnationalism to appreciate these insights, and what is at stake for grassroots organizations that form coalitions with TENGOs, we must expand the scope of our analysis beyond a coalition's ability to win or lose particular campaigns and also examine to what degree they are able to empower frontline communities during this process. To do this, I build on McFarlane's (2009) concept of the *translocal*—composites of place-based organizations, which exchange ideas,

knowledge, practices, materials and resources across multiple sites and whose significance and activities tends to blur the relationship between local, national and global scales. The framework helps disentangle the various actors and interests within coalitions and provides the epistemological space for examining how different ways of conceptualizing environmental justice impacts their dynamics, strategies, and goals at multiple scales. I argue that when these differences are ignored, scholars of transnational activism might be overlooking forms of success that they have mislabeled as failure or significant developments in avenues for asserting power and organizing across borders. For instance, attention to the distinct ways TENGOs conceptualize justice help us to better understand and analyze important differences between strategies centered on organizing and mobilize coalition partners and their relationship to community and individual empowerment.

In this chapter, I thus begin by discussing how debates regarding competing approaches to conceptualizing environmental justice offer insight into what is at stake in the goals and strategies that predominant TENGOs have employed in forming transnational environmental justice coalitions. I then draw insights from scholarship on justice as capabilities to highlight the significance of strategies that help mitigate the unfair distribution of waste *and* empower marginalized groups in the global South to affect change at the local scale. By looking at the ideas and practices of activists whose activities resonate with capabilities theory, we also learn something about that theory—not only through attention to similarities, but also differences. With this in mind, the subsequent section argues that influential TENGOs and scholars of transnationalism can

employ a translocal framework in order to understand the associated tradeoffs frontline communities experience in *top-down* versus *bottom-up* orientated coalitions, which typically rely on mobilizing and organizing strategies respectively. I conclude that a translocal framework suggests scholars of transnationalism must engage significantly with global *and* local political realties in order to learn from the insights of frontline communities and their conceptual and strategic innovations for transnational environmental justice activism. Specifically, I show how supporting local organizing to hold governments and industries accountable, providing resources for their capacity to implement the laws, and addressing the socio-economic roots of the environmental issues they face are all integral elements of justice.

Competing Approaches to Conceptualizing Environmental Justice

Although the meaning of environmental justice is contested—especially since it has expanded into different contexts and acquired different scales[25]—overall, it examines how the distribution of environmental goods and ills relates to social factors, such as racism, classism and sexism that unfairly shape local, national, and international responses to environmental problems (Harrison 2011, 10; Bullard 2005, 25). Indeed, Environmental justice is generally concerned with structural injustice and framed to address a somewhat different set of questions than those posed by liberal theorists. In his seminal work, *A Theory of Justice,* John Rawls makes the case for understanding "justice as fairness" and focuses on the institutions and political process that yield a fair

[25] For a more nuanced understanding of movement diffusion see (Sze and London 2008; Pellow and Brulle 2005; Schlosberg 2013).

distribution of social goods. However, his use of the "original position" and "the veil of ignorance" to objectively arrive at the means for evaluating and adducing processes for the fair distribution of social goods has been critiqued on a number of grounds. Iris Young (1990) and Nancy Fraser (1997) observe that Rawls's theory of justice assumes away and thus ultimately fails to consider the *actual* social, cultural and structural conditions that produce unfair distributions in the first place. Specifically, Rawls's abstract liberal paradigm fails to recognize how distributional inequities are not only connected to *real* structures of privilege and oppression, but also how these same structures serve to a deny the agency that would allow individuals and communities to effectively challenge them (See Taylor 1994).

Likewise, scholars have commented on how even though environmental justice groups share a common concern with prominent forms of activism that focus on the *distribution* of environmental ills (i.e. Not In My Back Yard), the latter often fail to address the connection between unfair distributions and the social structures that produce them (Schlosberg 2004). When the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991 adopted seventeen "Principles of Environmental Justice," it thus emphasized the conceptual, rhetorical, and cultural differences between predominant environmentalist and environmental justice movements (Sandler and Pezzullo 2007). These principles articulated a call for a response to the unfair distribution of environmental goods/ills *and* their relationships to legacies of colonialism and racism while concomitantly challenging the idea of just distribution based on liberal property rights. The principles underscore the importance of a more expansive understanding of

environmental issues and their relationship to multiple dimensions of justice—specifically, one that takes seriously the relationship between unjust distributions and socio-economic structures, indigenous rights, and self-determination.

Thus, scholars who theorize environmental justice contend that justice is seldom reducible to issues of unfair distributions, as it often entails recognizing and respecting the diverse claims that affected communities make and the importance of participating in procedures that impact where they 'live, work, and play' (Figueroa 2003; Fraiser 1997; Holland 2017; Bullard 2005; see also Honneth 1995; Taylor 1992). A capabilities approach to justice accordingly combines the concepts and practices of recognition, participation and distribution in order to understand their relationship to how communities are able to fully live the lives they design (Schlosberg 2007, 34; 2013; Holland 2008). In Schlosberg's words, "one must have recognition in order to have real participation; one must have participation in order to get equity; further equity would make more participation possible, which would strengthen community functioning, and so on" (2007, 51). Indeed, when significantly engaged in the *process of exercising collective power*—having their ideas heard, being involved in strategic planning, and participating in protest activities and solutions—individuals and communities can build self-confidence and own their increased *capacity* for political change (see Polletta 2002; Juris 2008; Arturo 2008).

Similarly, this study finds that the environmental justices associated with waste must be understood as a response to structural injustice and that capability theory helps us understand the importance of community empowerment as a dimension of this. Although

this study locates contributions to a capabilities approach in the ideas shared by the activists interviewed and observed, attention to their ideas not only conforms to, but also has the potential to advance capabilities theory. Indeed, they represent more than "additional voices" that shed light existing theories as they also generate new questions and modes of framing political inquiry (Godrej 2011, 118-119). Specifically, the study examines how GAIA members add an important dimension to environmental justice theory by underscoring the significance of frontline communities confronting environmental injustices *themselves* and *at their source*, rather than focusing on addressing their second-order effects. The empirical analysis thus seeks theoretical insight from activists by examining the degree to which frontline communities have voice and exercise meaningful participation in transnational coalition processes and how this relates to transforming their political agency. I now turn to how competing approaches to justice can also manifest coalition strategies that are limited and can actually be in tension with those which seek to advance community empowerment and capabilities.

Praxis: Competing Strategies for Pursuing Justice

Despite a growing number of coalition and partnerships between environmental justice movements and prominent environmental organizations, studies suggest significant tension still exists based on the distinct principles of justice that animate their respective practices, strategies, and goals. For instance, Harrison's work suggests that although environmental justice and environmental activists share a concern over the use of pesticides in agriculture, the relative "positionaltiy" and disproportionate exposure of the former expands the scope for how they understand, and thus seek to address, this

problem (2011).[26] Despite the appearance of being natural allies fighting pesticide drift, “mainstream" environmental approaches to this issue have been predominantly shaped by conceptions of justice—utilitarianism, libertarianism, and communitarianism—which do not satisfactorily address their associated environmental inequalities (2011, 204). For instance, while framing pesticide drift as an “air pollution” problem (i.e. suggesting it is “everyone’s problem”) may increase the frame’s resonance and thus pool of potential allies, this strategic response risks glossing over the inequities and oppression associated with pesticides *disproportionate* exposure on specific communities (181-182).

Indeed, the history of racist practices, institutions, and power relations associated with California’s agricultural production system have not only resulted in communities of color’s disproportionate exposure to pesticides, but equally important, has limited their *capacity* for effecting meaningful change (Pulido 1996, 123-124). As a result, rather than concentrating primarily on implementing policies that limit the effect of pesticides on the environment, frontline communities also frame their struggles as a need to challenge the larger social and economic structural issues at their root—exploitation, powerlessness, marginalization, cultural imperialism, and racism—that oppress them (Young, 2011). To be sure, building power in communities to overcome structural injustice *and* confronting the environmental ills they produce are complementary ends of justice. However, when coalitions prioritize addressing the latter by way of litigation and lobbying over the community organizing vital for mitigating the former, these goals can become in tension

[26] Positionality refers to how aspects of our identity (e.g. race, class, gender) stand with respect to the power relations within dynamic networks and social relations (see Merriam et. al, 2001).

with one another. In contrasting the legal strategy preferred by prominent anti-pesticide environmentalists with the organizing of farmworkers, Pulido remarks:

> While one set of actions rests with lawyers, the other seeks to create the conditions where the worker is able to exercise his or her *voice*. The *process* of producing those conditions are twofold, not only must the power be altered (by building a movement), but the worker must be ready to assume leadership and responsibility, which usually is the end *product of intensive political and personal development* (1996, 116, emphasis added)

While a common strategy of frontline communities for overcoming "voicelessness" [27] is forming coalitions with more privileged and influential actors, it is important for such actors to see frontline communities "not merely as 'the patient' whose well-being commands attention, but also as 'the agent' whose actions can transform society" (Drèze and Sen 2002, 28; 1989, 279).

Likewise, my fieldwork with waste workers in the Philippines reveals that communities which have gained experience by resisting waste incinerators and landfills often become the future teachers and organizers for what comes next, "creating alternatives to typical 'expert' flows of information…aimed at disrupting dominant flows of power" (Schlosberg and Coles 2016, 11). The analyses suggests cultivating and respecting local expertise is not only normatively important, but also fundamental for empowering frontline communities to become protagonists in confronting the structural injustice *they* experience. Indeed, national scale studies of environmental justice movements frequently illustrate the significance of *transformative politics*—when participants in local struggles acquire skills and information that increase their capacity to become active in crucial decisions that affect their lives—for resisting environmental

[27] "Voicelessness" refers to economic and social inequalities that prevent "the underprivileged from participating effectively in democratic institutions, and give disproportionate power to those who command crucial resources such as income, education, and influential connections" (Drèze and Sen 2002, 28).

injustices *and* addressing their structural causes (Cole and Foster 2001; Lake 1996). However, as grassroots environmental justice movements have scaled up and formed coalitions with more established environmental TENGOs with a predilection for state and industry focused change, there has been a tendency to subordinate their local participation and goals by professional activists, many of whom prefer to speak and campaign on their behalf.

For instance, frontline communities in the Philippines continue to use "bucket" and free-range egg sampling to understand and connect the high levels of dioxin emitted by local waste processing facilities to local spikes in cancer, asthma and skin rashes.[28] Yet, TENGOs often dismiss this knowledge as it is seldom admissible in court, if not disregarded as "random chance" by scientific experts and public officials (Gauana 1998; Holland 2017). Although relying on experts may be a pragmatic move, my study suggests this reduction elides the relationship between power cultivated during the process of struggle and how such power is essential for enforcing, monitoring and maintaining any victories after outside TENGOs have left. Indeed, I find that environmental justice legal victories are limited if communities do not have the power, information, and meaningful involvement in their creation and enforcement.[29]

Nevertheless, many TENGOs operate like a business in terms of their organizational structure, ironically, mimicking the same structures that many grassroots

[28] The bucket testing is an air quality sampling technique. The low cost technique allows individuals to trap air in a bag (inside the bucket) that is then sent in to a laboratory for analysis.
[29] For example, despite the Bill Clintons Executive Order 12898 in 1998, intended to focus federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of federal actions on minority and low-income, no plaintiff has prevailed in proving a civil rights violation in an environmental justice suit due to the limitations associated with establishing *intent* (Cole and Foster 2001, 126).

organizations are resisting. According to one GAIA activist, "how we are organized has an impact…I think that a structure that mimics the powers that we are trying to change can be a hindrance, that's the most politically correct way I can say it."[30] Even though more hierarchical environmental organization can be efficient in mitigating the unfair distribution of environmental ills, frontline communities often claim it can inadvertently reproduce the same neocolonial and paternalistic oppression at the core of their struggles.

Methodologically, focusing on the ability of coalitions to win or lose individual campaigns therefore risks overlooking the significance of local ownership, empowerment, and what could prove to be invaluable insights regarding the ethical practices and preconditions required for frontline communities to construct a more just and sustainable world order (Coulthart 2015, 12). However, studies of transnationalism are often based on liberal conceptions of justice that place primacy on distributional fairness, making them less perceptive to the potential for environmental justice coalitions to also serve as an emancipatory tool within the context the global justice (Martin et al. 2013; Vermeylen and Walker 2011). Thus, attention to the distinct ways scholars *and* activists conceptualize justice help us to better understand and analyze different approaches to activism. However, bridging theoretical and activist's insights with studies of transnationalism requires engagement with local *and* global political realties. With this in mind, the following section employs a translocal framework to argue how attention to the conception of justice animating GAIA helps elucidate the role of *translocalism*—that is, transnational organizing from the bottom-up—its relationship to empowering

[30] Author interview Ahmina Maxie, January 2016.

grassroots organizations, and reconceiving predominant theoretical framings of environmental justice based on the knowledge and practices of frontline communities.

Translocalism: Organizing Global Power from the Bottom-Up

As the salience of environmental justice discourses continue to grow, framing environmental problems as such, according to Agyeman, is no longer "limited to what were once called environmental justice organizations, but is now being incorporated into the ideological and tactical repertoires of Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and the Sierra Club" (2014, 238). Thus, despite contrasting, and some times conflicting, ways of conceptualizing environmental justice, grassroots movements and more established environmental organizations continue to find it in their interests to form coalitions. For example, David Pellow's study of organizations resisting the flow of toxics to the global South suggests part of their efficacy in targeting authorities at multiple scales depends on forming coalitions with TENGOs like Greenpeace (2007, 6-7). By joining forces with Greenpeace, grassroots organizations are able to benefit from the latter's financial resources, experts, media acumen and connections. In turn, Greenpeace is able to link its global and national work with local organizations, providing a sense of legitimacy in the eyes' of industry, policy makers, and funders. This can range from individuals/organizations simply signing a petition, showing up for a single Greenpeace protest (colloquially referred to as 'warm bodies'), to more long-term partnerships. Even if these coalitions are only 'on paper,' simply having a sizeable list of coalition partners is fundamental for Greenpeace leveraging its bargaining power in policy and industry domains. Studies of such coalitions generally portray them in a positive light, with some

suggesting they foreshadow a "global social movement" for environmental justice (e.g. Pellow 2007, see also Mohai et al. 2009)

Yet, many of these coalitions are actually short-term and opportunistic, where organizations galvanize around specific and well-defined campaigns in limited contexts (Sandler and Pezzullo 2007, 318). Partially at issue here is that analyses of transnational movement networks frequently assume a level of connection and coordination that does not exist, which obfuscates certain tensions between domestic and transnational actors (Gill 2009; Roberts 2007). Indeed, predominant TENGOs, intentionally or not, continue to coopt environmental justice discourses, resulting in privileging hegemonic practices, frameworks and rhetoric regarding environmental coalition strategies (See Adelman 2015). Furthermore, despite forming coalitions with frontline communities and attempting to address the lack of diversity in their own ranks, critics claim that these moves have produced little progress and are, in any case, superficial or geared simply to raising funds (Di Chiro 1998, 112; Talyor 2000; Bullard 2005). Thus, environmental justice activists continue to criticize predominant environmental organizations for "patterns of environmental racism and undemocratic processes, including its hiring practices, lobbying agenda, political platforms, financial backers, [and] organizing practices" within the U.S. and abroad (Sandler et al. 2007, 4). This presents a unique challenge for how scholars should evaluate the growing number of transnational environmental justice coalitions that have emerged between organizations located in the global North and South (Lawhon 2013; Martinez-Alier 2002).

I suggest that in order to understand what is at stake in the distinct strategies and goals that transnational coalitions employ, we must start by treating TENGOs as distinct from the frontline communities they support (Tarrow 1998, 192; see also Brandy and Smith 2005). However, given the diversity of Transnational Movement Network (TMN) actors, such as TENGOs, grassroots organizations, epistemic communities, foundations, in addition to the conceptual language at our disposal, it can be difficult to disentangle and critically assess the ways in which they engage one another. For example, networks are typically thought of as networks-as-structures, network-as-actors, or both (See Kahler 2009). Within scholarship on international relations, networks are primarily studied as *actors*; "forms of coordinated or collective action aimed at changing international outcomes and national policies" (Ibid. 5). The seminal work on "networks-as-actors" or "transnational advocacy networks" (TANs) by Khagram, Riker and Sikkink further distinguishes such *actors* as transnational activist networks, coalitions, and movements, which is based primarily on their respective degrees of shared principles, identity and cooperation (2002). Although definitions vary, the authors suggest coalitions generally involve the linkage of members across boundaries to coordinate and share strategies and information to influence social change.

Despite an inconsistent terminology used to describe the coalitions activists form, the primary unit of analysis used for understanding how they influence "social change" has been the *transnational campaign*. However, a focus on campaign outcomes misses certain potentialities and pitfalls associated with coalition work. Indeed, the fact that transnational environmental justice activism consists primarily of coalitions underscores

the diverse ways in which activists connect environmental concerns with justice depending on spatial and social contexts (Holifield et al. 2010, 6-7; see also Roberts 2007; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Benford and Snow 2000). Analytically, understanding transnational coalitions *as actors* is useful for explaining how their composite agency operates, (e.g. boomerang model, discussed below) and specifying the mechanisms (e.g. information, leverage, symbolic and accountability politics) by which they are able to restructure world politics (e.g. passage of Basel). It is far less useful in understanding the diffusion of agency within a given network or how that network might enhance or diminish the capabilities of a given "node."

Alternatively, a translocal framework is preferable for examining and describing the significance of networks whose activities tend to blur the relationship between local, national and global scales (McFarlane 2009). Translocal in this sense refers to the multiplicity of local spaces, actors, and their interrelationships in a global world (Banerjee 2011). For instance, although GAIA often behaves as a unified actor to influence policy and norms at the international scale, this work is ultimately grounded in and emerges from local spaces distributed across nation-states involving communities, organizations, resources, and relationships that do not fit into categories such as the national or the international (Banerjee 2011, 331). Thus a translocal framework is also more sensitive to the relationship between coalition processes and the local structures that put certain groups under the systemic threat of domination, making them less able to develop and exercise their political capacity to confront distributional injustices (Young 2011, 52). Indeed, GAIA represents more than just a central connector between sites, as it

has more depth than the notion of "node" in network studies captures—in terms of the organization's history, ideas, and labor required to produce and maintain it (McFarlane 2009, 562). As GAIA's International Coordinator put it,

> Everyone generates waste, everyone is engaged in that system, and so it is inherently hyper-local. So, in the context where you have corporations, incentives and policy structures that are global…there is a real need for what we call "translocal," which helps people from different localities connect up with one another and support each other, and yet, also respects the fact that each locality is really different in the decisions that they are making, the constraints they are under, and the context they are facing. The idea of translocal organizing is really critical in our sphere. You have to bring in the knowledge of what is going on in the global sector and advocate for shifts in incentive structures and policies that are influencing local realties. And yet, at the same time, the real emphasis of the work has to be local, and making local transformations, and using those to demonstrate that a different system is possible.[31]

Because GAIA is a locally rooted translocal coalition that emerged from the grassroots, it functions less as a powerful network node within a transnational network and more like a conduit of information, resources and infrastructure that provides the translocal space for organizations operating at multiple scales to connect and organize. Therefore, GAIA requires relatively less funding as frontline communities, rather than professional activists, are doing most of the network's heavy lifting at the local scale. As I discuss further below, GAIA is consequently less beholden to deep pocket donors and thus able to organize in such a way that prefigures its vision for a more just future in the form of Zero Waste.

Organizing versus Mobilizing

In terms of understanding the relationship between conceptions of justice and strategy, the translocal framework also helps one understand how such coalition dynamics relate to the agency of networks-as-actors at the transnational scale *and* the

[31] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.

agency of the network's members at the local scale concomitantly. For instance, by framing GAIA as an example of translocalism, we are in a better position to appreciate the significance of its strategic approach to environmental justice, which centers on supporting frontline communities *organizing* around Zero Waste principles.[32] Although often conflated, there are a number of important distinctions and tradeoffs between organizing and mobilizing obfuscated by focusing on the transnational campaigns coalitions engage in. For instance, organizing is typically decentralized and focused on fostering solidarity and individual/community development. In her study of how organizations develop activists, Han argues community organizers "bring individuals together in a way that creates a collective capacity not present when individuals act alone" by creating new relationships that generate new commitments and resources (2015, 15). Organizing thus serves as the foundation for the "transformative politics" Cole and Foster argue change ostensibly weak communities into those that are capable of challenging the structural roots of environmental injustices. In their words, self-confidence and increased capacity "dialectally build on each other in a way that transforms the personal and collective experiences of power relations by ordinary residents in otherwise disenfranchised communities" (Cole and Foster 2001, 153).

Mobilizing, in contrast, is more centralized, works toward breadth, rather than depth, and therefore focuses on discrete transactional encounters with as many people as possible (Han 2015, 3). Mobilizers need not necessarily transform the capacities of

[32] Discussed in detail in Chapter 4, Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systemically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and material, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them (Connett 2013, 10).

individuals and communities for future activism, as the goal is to leverage numbers for more immediate goals. In fact, setting a lower bar for an individual's and a communities' involvement can help organizations maximize "buy-in" and turnout. Mobilizing strategies thus help environmental NGOs project power by building their membership base, gathering petition signatures, and turning out in large numbers, which are in turn used as leverage for pressuring states and polluting industries. While mobilizing is useful for obtaining policy victories, altering international norms and changing industry practices, TENGOs that prioritize this approach must often forgo many of the long-term benefits of organizing to confront the roots of environmental injustices.

Although Han's study contends organizations that combined "transformational organizing" with "transactional mobilizing" were more effective in the long-term, she also underscores how organizations face a constant tension between investing in membership and investing in members (2015, 4). For instance, unlike more tangible and thus quantifiable measures, such as number of members, polices implemented, and fundraising capacity, the transformations inherent in organizing often go unnoticed, as they are relatively more difficult to define, capture and track. Moreover, "grassroots capacity building is time-consuming, slow, and emotionally challenging" and is rarely funded by foundations, as they require organizations to demonstrate more tangible and immediate accomplishments to continue to receive funding (Harrison 2011, 178). However, while mobilizing activists for a dramatic march on Washington may draw significant media attention, "the living room conversations that give participants the

courage to board the buses happen under the radar" (Pastor et al., 4). Thus, as one GAIA activist remarked:

> There is a real difference between organizations that are looking to mobilize people, to sign onto things or to apply pressure, and organizations and networks that are really trying to support grassroots organizing…Focusing on list building is not our top priority…GAIA prioritizes supporting folks who are working to develop collective action strategies and structures that are going to last and change things locally.[33]

The dissertation build on Han's national scale study by investigating to what extent a TENGO's decision to prioritize organizing or mobilizing goes beyond external opportunity structures *and* movement goals (Han 2015; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Pastor et al. 2011), but is also predicated on how they understand justice.

Furthermore, whereas Han's study admittedly focused on relatively "privileged" environmental organizations in the United States, my research suggests that due to the degree of marginalization experienced by frontline communities in the global South, the tradeoffs they experience between organizing and mobilizing are even more acute. Indeed, GAIA members claim that in order to enhance the agency of relatively less powerful communities attempting to transform local waste systems in countries like the Philippines, the network must prioritize supporting local organizing efforts.[34] For instance, although GAIA members include professional activist, environmental health and justice researchers, scientists, and Zero Waste advocates, GAIA has challenged conventional TENGO approaches to and reliance on "expert knowledge." According to one GAIA member, "the goal of the GAIA network is to empower local organizations, its more a bottom-up approach than top down. In others [TENGOs], the organizations

[33] Author interview with Delphine Lévi Alvarès, February 2016.
[34] Author interview Paeng Lopez, December 2015.

themselves are experts…it's more technical, more policy orientated."[35] Although the network still relies heavily on "expert knowledge" about macro processes and technical information, its achievements rely heavily on harnessing and organizing frontline community knowledge and involvement. Once organized, such communities are not only in a better position to drive change locally, but also diffuse their knowledge and experience throughout the network, allowing members to learn from and teach each other. The knowledge sharing serves to empower individuals and communities, foster network solidarity, craft locally informed policy, while adding to a knowledge base that mitigates victories in one location becoming the burden of another.

Although organizing need not replace the more policy-focused politics of mobilizing strategies of organizations like Greenpeace, it represents an understudied supplement to "local, regional and transnational efforts that put one's body in the midst of actual change and the production of counter-institutions" (Schlosberg and Cole 2015, 15). According to GAIA's International Coordinator, organizing and mobilizing are both essential for translocal movements, yet "organizing is what grounds the transformation work in real change possibilities, whereas mobilizing leverages public support and visibility."[36] For instance, instead of mobilizing to ensure that 'warm bodies' show up to a protest event, sign a petition, or send a check, GAIA has pursued organizing strategies that foster deep relationships with frontline communities. As Monica Wilson, Policy and Research Coordinator for GAIA remarks about this distinction, "how do we get people to

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[35] Author interview with Delphine Lévi Alvarès, February 2016.
[36] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.

that level where they are building and articulating that vision, *not just showing up for the vision*."[37]

Top-Down versus Bottom-Up Theories of Change

In addition to elevating the significance local stakeholders place on organizing strategies, the translocal frame illuminates how their empowerment relates to coalitions that leverage power in a bottom-up versus a top-down fashion. For instance, David Pellow's work employs the "boomerang model" to explain how TMNs are able to resist the movement of global toxics by obtaining policy victories and changing the nature of the discourse in which these debates take place at the international scale (2007). Although the boomerang model (Keck and Sikkink 1998) is useful for explaining how transnational advocacy networks (TANs) use "leverage politics" to effect change nationally and internationally, it presumes that liberal norms will mitigate repression and that liberal states will exert pressure on illiberal states that are unresponsive to their domestic populations. As I discuss in Chapter Five, a limitation of this model for perusing transnational environmental justice is that liberal states, such as Canada, and their constituent industries, are often complicit in the transboundary movement of waste. This is not to suggest there are not advantages in marginalized groups throwing a "boomerang" to relatively more powerful TENGOs. However, because industries and governments construct polluting facilities and dump toxics in communities they perceive as relatively weak, boomerang strategies appear to address the symptoms of environmental injustices, rather than their root causes. Indeed, the way in which the

[37] Author interview with Monica Wilson, February 2016

strategy operates is often state-centric, predicated on liberal conceptions of justice, and therefore, the logic for how it leverages power is top-down.

Existing research suggests a TENGO's decision to pursue change in a top-down fashion, which largely focuses on national/international policy, is a function of personal experience, organizational principles, institutional path dependency, and the belief that such an approach is the most expedient option for environmental activism (Hansen 2012, 4). I use the concept top-down here to refer to two mutually constitutive approaches. The first is an approach to organizational structure (i.e. hierarchical); the second is an organization's preferred scale for realizing change. For instance, a top-down approach to environmental justice attempts to leverage power where it can have the broadest impact, such as the international and national scale. In theory, the higher the scale, the larger the scope of those positively affected at the bottom scales, including frontline communities. In order for this approach to work, influential TENGOs frequently adopt a business-like structure to ensure efficient use of resources, maximize impact, and to ensure organizational survival in a highly competitive NGO market (Jordan and Maloney 1997, 19). However, the down side of infusing business ideas into the nonprofit world is that social change organizations are increasingly expected to "churn out good quarterly metrics…to report mounds of data and compete with one another for funding based on "numbers" and "deliverables"" (Hansen 2012, 35-36). As a result, top-down policy interventions do not always trickle down to or benefit the intended marginalized communities (Powel 2008, see also Skocpol 1991)

Indeed, even though a more hierarchical organizational structure may be more

efficient in realizing policy victories, normative change, and raising money, it often comes at the expense of the skill development, motivation for participation, and sense of ownership associated with long-term community involvement. For instance, the goals of more hierarchical TENGOs often put pressure on coalition partners to abandon participatory democratic process as an organizational principle (Morgan and Seshadri 2014). According to an activist who has worked with GAIA and Greenpeace:

> Greenpeace works through their own people and not at the community level, maybe in some cases, but in my experience no such actions were done…Here, Greenpeace works mostly through the media. GAIA is different because it works from the local level, it gets citizens into the issues…it's a different kind of work.[38]

Because NGOs that are more 'professional' have more resources to devote to networking, coalition building, and insider tactics useful in policy and legal circles, they are reluctant to incorporate the participation of relatively inexperienced and less influential grassroots activists (Smith and Bandy 2005 8-9; Schafer 2000). For example, Greenpeace often subordinates strategies that significantly involve frontline communities and instead relies on "experts," such as lawyers, professional activists, scientists who can "get things done" more efficiently. Greenpeace maintains that professionally trained "Action Teams" maximize a campaign's media coverage and potential to succeed while minimizing the organization's liability associated with "untrained" local involvement (Bunnin 1997, 1981).

This strategy worked well in such campaigns like that of Greenpeace successfully compelling parties to the London Convention to ratify a global ban on ocean incineration

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[38] Author interviews with anonymous activist, December 2015.

in 1988 (Parmentier 6-7, 1999; Carney 1982). However, the onus for incorporating local voices and involvement was relatively low in this instance because the optics of the campaign were largely at sea and not based in any particular community per se. As I discuss in Chapter Three, Greenpeace's use of "Action Teams" in campaigns involving locally affected populations challenged this strategic calculation and forced the organization to confront a question it still wrestles with today. Namely, to what extent was it willing to address social issues as an integral component of its environmental campaigning, and to involve the communities within which a given campaign is embedded, while still maintaining its influence (Bunin 1997, 86)?

While participation in top-down orientated coalitions, like those headed by Greenpeace, may yield the financial resources, expertise, and media attention critical for frontline communities fighting for environmental justice, research also indicates it can paradoxically undermine the capacity of participating members (see Tattersall 2010). Because capacity development depends on the extent coalition partners are involved in the *process* of negotiating coalition strategies and goals, it necessitates relaxing the desire for centralized coordination and encouraging local organizations to pursue regionally specific agendas that relate to the coalition's broader goals (175). As R. Gregory Roberts notes:

> By its nature, community empowerment transforms personal efficacy into group efficacy, which enables communities to take charge of the struggle, and eventually take charge of their respective communities…This is precisely what happened in the Civil Rights Movement (1998; 229,256; cited in Cole and Foster 2005).

This quote captures the idea animating an alternative *bottom-up* theory of change embraced by GAIA. Like a top-down approach, I use bottom-up to refer to both organizational structure and the scalar focus of change. For instance, bottom-up translocal coalitions are more horizontal, rather than hierarchical, in which forms of political organization and practice are based on "coordination among autonomous groups, open access, direct participation, consensus-based decision-making, and the ideal of the free and open circulation of information" (Jurris 2004, 351). Strategically, this often means pursuing global change and building power through building on the capabilities of frontline communities. Thus, GAIA "targets" frontline communities suffering environmental injustices for empowerment, which has the potential to produce "universal" systemic improvements (i.e. from the ground up) (Powel 2008).[39]

Although relatively understudied, more organizations are experimenting with more long-term and bottom-up coalitions that are able to accommodate the different ways communities experience social injustices, but predicated on common "values and vision; grounding the alliances with deep roots in affected communities…and scaling up with others for greater impact" (Pastor et al. 2011, 11). However, the significance of such coalitions is difficult to assess when analyzed using a justice as a distribution framework, implicitly or not (e.g. shutting down a polluting facility or not). In order to appreciate how GAIA's supportive infrastructure relates to developing local capabilities necessitates

[39] According to Powell, "this approach recognizes that the needs of marginalized groups must be addressed in a coordinated and effective manner. To improve opportunities and living conditions for all residents in a region, we need policies to proactively connect people to jobs, stable housing, and good schools. Targeted universalism recognizes that life is lived in a web of opportunity. Only if we address all of the mutually reinforcing constraints on opportunity can we expect real progress in any one factor" (Powel 2008, Quoted in Hansen 2012).

moving beyond the traditional metrics for measuring coalition success. For instance, Tatersall's research on transnational *labor* coalitions indicates their success entails more than winning a specific external outcome, such as influencing the decision of a politician or employer. Coalitions are also successful to the extent they are able to enhance the long-term capacity of the coalition itself (e.g. sustainable relationships between organizations) and the internal capacity of the constituent organizations (e.g. developing new member leaders, strengthening campaigning skills and political vision of the organization's leaders) (Tattersall 2010, 22-23; see also Brookes 2013). Her study finds coalitions are strengthened or weakened in this regard depending on the kinds of relationships that develop amongst organizations, the *process* of negotiating and framing coalition goals, and how and to what extent member organization are involved in the coalitions (3).

These findings speak to debates in critical environmental justice scholarship by challenging the conventional wisdom that transitional coalitions are simply a tactic for furthering the goals of member organizations as they also represent opportunities for empowering grassroots organizations (12; Pellow 2016; see also Schlosberg and Coles 2015; Cole and Foster 2001). For instance, although top-down strategies that mobilize activist help coalition members resist the unfair distribution of polluting facilities, the cursory means by which this approach encourages the participation of local organizations can miss critical opportunities to engage in the movement building. As one GAIA member put it, "you can have all the wins you want on paper, but if there is not political will, knowledge, and understanding of people's rights…then the policy by itself is just

words on paper…it's only as powerful as the movement and holding people to it (policy)."[40] Conversely, even when campaigns failed in their initial attempts to shutdown a polluting facility in their communities, GAIA members frequently cited a feeling of belonging, solidarity, and a desire to *continue fighting and helping others* engage in similar struggles. I find that these sentiments of solidarity are engendered by GAIA's support of local scale organizing, networking grassroots leadership, and the empowerment realized through the direct participation of their members.

National scale environmental justice studies frequently underscore the link between building leadership skills, awareness of how to exert political pressure, and the technical knowledge of frontline communities for successfully resisting the siting of a toxic facility (Cable, Mix, and Hastings 2005; Cole and Foster 2001; Faber 1998). What has received less attention is how such empowerment relates to sustaining transnational coalitions, their long-term efficacy and the ability of member organizations to implement *solutions* to the injustice they face. As Bobby Peek of GroundWorks, a GAIA coalition member, explains:

> We work with people at a movement level, so we will be in protest, we will be shot at, we will be arrested…but at the same level, we are engaging with policy, we are training people on policy, we are working at a technical level whether its on air pollution, climate, coal, or waste. So we marry the political with the technical and the policy and unless you do that in a very active way as your method of work, all our victories will be meaningless because you will get the political victory of an anti-incineration ban, but it will be meaningless if you can't get people to enforce it.[41]

The empowerment that Peek comments on is not only vital for having policy enforced, but also provides the foundation for what comes next. As one GAIA staff member remarked, "our best achievement is to empower local people…Even if they fail to shut

[40] Author interview with Janet Redman, Institute for Policy Studies, February 2016.
[41] Author interview with Bobby Peek, March 2016.

down an incinerator, they often move forward with a *Zero Waste* movement. We help organize local people, train them and show at the national and international level that the battle is not over."[42] Successfully confronting global environmental injustices entails not only building power in frontline communities. It also requires building transnational coalition power in such a way that is equitable, incorporates the voices and experiences of frontline communities, and confronts the power of TNCs by *embodying alternatives* rather than simply supporting policies, candidates or individualist politics (Scholsberg and Cole 2015, 18). Indeed, fixating on strategies that only confront the manifestations of structural injustices paradoxically rationalizes relying on experts and operating in a top-down fashion, undermining strategies that positively transform the capabilities of frontline communities.

Nevertheless, there are still significant tradeoffs inherent in the bottom-up organizing of GAIA. For instance, much of its engagement with frontline communities is "customized," making it relatively slower in its ability to address the urgent issues many members face. Supporting and scaling up local organizing not only requires more time, as consensus driven decision-making is especially difficult at the transnational scale, but also can result in 'all talk and no action.' Indeed, Greenpeace's founding members discovered many of these limitations early on and decided to abandon a more grassroots and prefigurative approach to organizing consequently (see Chapter Three). Moreover, the difficulty inherent in quantifying the transformations associated with organizing, and it relationship to advancing environmental change, makes it difficult to raise funds as the

[42] Author interview with Delphine Lévi Alvarès, February 2016.

majority of influential foundations prefer top-down strategies and their ostensible ability to produce concrete results (Faber 2005, 6). For instance, when foundations have supported waste-related TENGO campaigns, they tend to prefer 'upstream' interventions and market-based solutions, like those currently exemplified by Greenpeace, rather than how waste affects populations, the environment, and relates to socio-economic structures 'downstream.'

And while the goals of both organizations are pursued in a context where they are seeking funds to do their work, GAIA's positioning of community information, vigilance and organizing as form of power represents an alternative to the fundraising and lobbying power of Greenpeace. Although the power imbedded in such 'weapons of the weak' may often be invisible to many political scientists, the 'every day resistance' they pose to structural injustice and oppression are no less significant (Scott 1985). Indeed, Greenpeace and GAIA advance two very different avenues for pursuing environmental justice in a context of stark economic inequality: Greenpeace positions itself as a conduit for transferring resources from wealthy donors and individual members to poor communities, while advertising their efforts and "branding" them in order to maintain their supply of money. However, this is less effective at altering structural conditions locally as well as globally. Conversely, GAIA has gone in a different direction that does not have to engage in "branding" that is in tension with its goals as it operates on a much smaller budget, seeks non-restricted funds (discussed in Chapter Five), and relies primarily on the dedication and energy of frontline communities, often fighting for their lives.

Despite these differences, Greenpeace and GAIA frequently cooperate with one another, which can result in a productive division of labor in order to advance a transformative agenda over the long-term, while simultaneously maintaining the expertise and speed needed in the short-term. However, as TENGOs like Greenpeace continue to engage in issues like climate justice, they not only have the capacity to influence what donors want to see, but often divert, intentionally or not, resources away from grassroots organizing. This is not simply a concern for GAIA; given Greenpeace's ability to shape global environmental discourses, influence states, international organizations and funding communities. As one environmental justice organizer remarks, "it seems everybody and their brother now claims they do EJ work, making it harder for community and real EJ groups, staffed with frontline communities and people of color, to survive and thrive."[43] This is despite recent findings, which underscore how grassroots organizations often achieve better results compared to large ENGOs, due to powerful support networks, an understanding of the intersection between environmental and social problems, and an ability to rally together across divisions (Schlegel and Peng 2017).

Indeed, as the following chapters indicates, while Greenpeace has been remarkable at fundraising and challenging polluting corporations by mobilizing direct actions, it has struggled to empower frontline communities to not only resist oppressive institutions, but also create new ones. Conversely, the goal of many environmental justice groups is not simply to stop the construction waste management facility in their community, or the pollution associated with those already in existence, but also

[43] Author interview with Bradley Angel, November 13, 2017

implement just alternatives to them, such as those embodied in a Zero Waste approach. Thus, the bottom-up and prefigurative structure of GAIA represents not only a normative commitment to putting frontline communities first, but also it member's transformative potential to make meaningful change (Coulthard 2015, 162). As Schlosberg and Coles put it:

> What we can see in such movements is not necessarily a model liberal interest group, organizing around a value and lobbying for representation at the level or sphere of the classic sovereign. Instead, they serve, often intentionally, as forms and examples of prefigurative politics. The focal point is not to organize to lobby or vote for change; the point is to literally embody that change, and to illustrate alternatives, more resilient, and more sustainable practices and relationships (2015, 15-16).

The rationale for comparing the work of Greenpeace and GAIA is not to suggest transnational environmental justice coalitions abandoned top-down or mobilizing strategies, but rather to present a complementary alternative in need of further exploration. Indeed, the policy and normative change aspects of Greenpeace's approach to transnational activism and the empowerment and local ownership fostered by GAIA's translocal approach are rather complementary for addressing the injustices associated with waste. However, scholars of transnationalism have tended to focus one the high-profile victories of Greenpeace while overlooking the significance of organizing that leverages transnational power by building capabilities at the local scale. By employing a translocal framework, the dissertation alternatively pays particular attention to the structural injustices associated with the transboundary movement of waste actors face domestically and how this relates to national and global processes.

Conclusion

This chapter underscores the potential and pitfalls of transnational environmental justice coalitions and how the implicit/explicit notions of justice organizations bring to bear on environmental issues inform their strategic paths. It builds on arguments that suggest strengthening the agency of oppressed actors is crucial for challenging the structures and institutions that produce environmental injustices. Indeed, many individuals living in polluted communities have little formal education, have few prospects for employment, and lack the capabilities that would enable them to effectively challenge polluting industries entering their neighborhood. As a result, polluting industries are disproportionately located in these communities, intensifying preexisting constraints, which creates a vicious cycle of injustice. Therefore, justice often requires redressing the social structures that oppress certain groups *and* empowering them to overcome the institutional subordination that produce unjust distributions of environmental ills in the first place (Young 2011, 114; Harrison 2011, 15). Because of their disenfranchisement within conventional political spheres, this underscores the significance of the direct participation of environmental justice communities in speaking for *themselves* (Schlosberg 2004, 523; Faber 2005, 58). This suggests a need to critically evaluate the ways in which transnational coalitions recognize indigenous knowledge,[44] respect the ways in which frontline communities frame environmental justice, and employ strategies that allow them to become leaders in their own cause, even if this comes at the expense of realizing more immediate policy and legal victories.

[44] By indigenous knowledge, I refer insights predicated on the direct experiences of local communities vis-à-vis the workings of nature and its relationship with the social world (see Dei 1993, 105).

However, when we assume the spread of ideas and mutual understandings of justice are the basis for transnational coalitions (see Keck and Sikkink 1999), we can lose sight of the tradeoffs frontline communities often face. For instance, a focus on transnational campaign outcomes, such as the ratification of the Basel Convention, risks glossing over how the process associated with such a campaign might enhance or diminish the agency of participating frontline communities. Indeed, significant compromises concerning the goals, strategies and values of coalition members also buttress transnational coalitions that make such victories possible (see Bob 2005). This does not undermine the argument that TENGOs and grassroots organizations can be motivated by shared principles, but rather underscores how they also operate in an exceptionally competitive 'marketplace of ideas' and problematizes the impact that the former can have on the latter.[45] Although the boomerang model has brought attention to the importance of anchor NGOs and the role that resources, shared interests and norms play in building coalitions, it is "limited in terms of understanding movements that have a more collective character and style of action that goes beyond issue campaigns and policy reforms" (Escobar 2008, 271). The dissertation thus contributes to studies of transnationalism by demonstrating the utility of a translocal framework for examining the potential of such global movements. Because the processes and injustices associated with waste operate at multiple scales, our understanding of transnational environmental justice

[45] For instance, Clifford Bob (2005) emphasizes *power dynamics* and *marketing*, rather than the power of norms, in understanding how domestic SMOs are able to ally with transnational coalition partners. For example, in his study of the Ogoni movements, it was not until they t reframed their goals to stress environmental concerns, rather their initial political autonomy goals, that Greenpeace and other transnational actors became seriously involved.

coalitions is only partial when we focus on their impacts at the local, regional, national or transnational scales in isolation (Pellow 2016, 4; see also Sze 2016).

Moreover, the fact that the claims of transnational organizations are not only to represent, but also empower community activists, suggests that scholars and policy makers should take these priorities more seriously. This chapter underscores how the translocal approach of GAIA represents an alternative to the top-down model of environmental activism and represents an important response to the unique challenges presented by the role of TNCs in environmental injustices, in the Global South, and the states that fail to regulate them. GAIA's translocal approach to environmental justice brings critical awareness to what is at stake in strategies that focus on the location of environmental ills, but fail to address the social structures that oppress certain groups and the institutional subordination that produce unjust distributions of environmental ills in the first place (Harrison 2011, 15; Schlosberg 2007; 2013; Holland 2008; 2017). To support this contention, the following two chapters (Three and Four) critically examine and trace which types of organizations assert specific justice claims, their associated strategies, and how certain assertions find support in transnational environmental justice coalitions as a function of their internal politics and power relations. The goal is to critically address predominant approaches to transnational environmental justice activism exemplified by Greenpeace by juxtaposing the alternative approach of GAIA (Chapter Five) for addressing the global movement of waste specifically and pursuing justice in general.

CHAPTER THREE

Greenpeace: No Permanent Allies or Enemies

Greenpeace's philosophy, "no permanent allies or enemies," embodies the organization's propensity to work with and against polluting industries and governments, stay on the cutting edge of global environmental problems and adjust campaign priorities based on the fluctuating interest of influential foundations and individual 'members.' Its success as a transnational actor is thus associated with a globally recognized name brand, high-profile direct actions and a disciplined hierarchical structure vis-à-vis 26 National Regional Offices (NROs) (Zelko 2013).[46] However, the fluidity of Greenpeace priorities and alliances has also resulted in frontline communities criticizing the organization for reaching out to cooperate on a single campaign, claiming credit for cooperative endeavors, and then abandoning them (Pellow 2007). This limitation continues to produce ethical dilemmas for the organization, in addition to policy victories lacking a firm grounding in the grassroots. Nevertheless, social scientists still frame Greenpeace as a vehicle for the expansion of civil society and as a pioneer of transnational activism and environmental justice (Zelko 2013, 314; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Greenpeace is an influential transnational actor, but how and when the organization has elected to engage in environmental justice work continues to be a function of its

[46] Although too numerous to list here, Greenpeace accomplishments include securing an international ban on hazardous waste trade, the adoption of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, a moratorium on whaling, and a global ban on the burning of toxic waste and dumping of radioactive waste at sea (Bunin 2003, 4). According to Zelko, since 1970, "no single organization has done more than Greenpeace to bolster and reshape environmental protest around the world" (Zelko 2013, 4).

leadership, animating values, and campaign priorities. Environmental justice activists, alongside current and former Greenpeace members, contend that while the organization is most influential when it supports grassroots organizing, its philosophy of no permanent allies or enemies steers it towards top-down and short-term engagement that often conflicting with a grassroots' approach. This chapter explores why and when Greenpeace's shift to mobilizing strategies occurred and how a decentralized and democratic environmental peace movement became the highly professionalized, bureaucratic and top-down global organization it is today. I investigate these questions by drawing on Greenpeace archives, news articles, and in-depth interviews conducted with staff and affiliated organizations over the course of two years. The analysis pays particular attention to how the organization developed, how members articulate strategies and ideas for change, how major campaigns altered those strategies and how its current organizational structure and strategies affect its coalition work. I demonstrate that key Greenpeace leaders were instrumental in promoting a limited environmental agenda and top-down mobilizing strategies, despite the objections of certain NROs and campaigners. I argue that while this move was beneficial for increasing the organization's political influence and membership base, it continues to undermine its capacity for securing long-term environmental change and pursuing environmental justice.[47]

[47] Greenpeace direct actions are not simply aimed at policy change, but have always sought to raise environmental awareness. Wapner refers to this aspect of Greenpeace's work as raising "ecological sensibilities," which shift the governing ideas that animate society and standards of how people and governments behave vis-à-vis the environment (1995, 322, see also Bunin 1997). Although this aspect of Greenpeace's work is worthy of attention, this chapter focuses primarily on the how is campaigns and associated strategies affect coalition partners, rather than the public opinion and broader environmental norms.

In developing this argument, I begin by examining Greenpeace's foundational debates regarding its structure, environmental agenda, and strategies. I demonstrate how the culture of Greenpeace provides a structure within which NROs may improvise, but still act in ways that conform to and reproduce structures of meaning, of which they may not necessarily be aware (Hopgood 2006, 217). For instance, although Greenpeace International is responsible for the development and coordination of global strategies, NROs are "independent" in how they carry these campaigns at the local scale and in securing associated funding.[48] This autonomy exists even though NROs must continually align their work with, and make financial contributions to, Greenpeace International in exchange for permission to use the Greenpeace name. As I will show, Greenpeace NROs develop distinct cultures that are local, but much of what campaigners think, believe and value is the product of the broader organization's historical structures and cultural capital (216; see also Agyeman 2004; Bruelle 2000; Cormin and Balser 2002). This chapter demonstrates how both bottom-up and top-down processes shape NROs and their capacity to advance change and justice.

Differences between bottom-up and top-down dynamics compete to shape what justice looks like in the end, which I reveal by examining Greenpeace USA's involvement in anti-toxics and environmental justice activism from 1978-1998 and the subsequent resistance of Greenpeace International. Specifically, I illustrate how tension emerges from top-down pressures that resulted in Greenpeace scaling back its work on toxics and

[48] In addition to coordinating global campaigns and strategies, Greenpeace International maintains contacts with supporters and donors in countries without NROs, maintains Greenpeace's famous fleet of ships, provides fundraising support and global IT services to NROs, and *protects the Greenpeace trademark* (Greenpeace 2017).

grassroots organizing. This ultimately led to the creation of Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) because of the void this move created in the world of waste related activism. I use this analytic narrative to elucidate how Greenpeace's organizational culture, historically constructed from top-down pressures, currently undermines its revitalized goal of helping frontline communities realize environmental justice and long-term structural change. I build on the previous chapter, which underscores the connection between strategies that *organize* versus *mobilize* (Han 2014; Hansen 2012) and how activists understand and pursue justice, to make sense of how Greenpeace's resurgent interest in environmental justice is being hindered and point to what is potentially at stake in its current top-down approach.

Bottom-up and top-down TENGOS both use strategies that depend on grassroots engagement, but *how* they do so depends on the means by which they negotiate the various interests within coalitions. Because of the influence Greenpeace wields, grassroots organizations often reframe and align their goals in order to receive their support (see Bob 2005). Although this may appear to be a tradeoff that only concerns those who want to join forces with Greenpeace, because of the latter's influence, it can undermine the value of grassroots' approaches to global environmental justice. I support this conclusion by examining Greenpeace's current climate justice campaign in the Philippines, which is predicated on an understanding of justice that is at odds with strategies and notions of justice advanced by the frontline communities that Greenpeace is supporting. The implications of this tension suggest a need to reexamine what is at

stake in strategies that fail to empower frontline communities to confront how climate change is presently destroying their communities and sources of livelihood.

The Founding of Greenpeace

The 'peace' in Greenpeace has its origins in the organization's first campaign, a protest against ocean-based nuclear testing in 1971 by the U.S. government. Protesters, with tie-dyed T-shirts, sailed into a nuclear testing site off the Aleutian Islands—putting bodies in harm's way to disrupt, 'bear witness,' and bring attention to the practice—challenging environmentalist stereotypes associated with "middle-aged Sierra Club hikers in corduroys and cardigans" in the process (Zelko 2013, 4-5). The campaign itself gained most of its funding from a sold-out concert hosted by Greenpeace—"the biggest counter-culture event of the year," according to Rex Weyler, co-founder of Greenpeace International.[49] The nascent organization, (previously known as The Don't Make A Wave Committee[50]) quickly expanded its campaign focus by sailing its ship, the *Vega*, into to the South Pacific to disrupt French nuclear weapons testing on the island of Moruroa from 1972-1974. Importantly, this disruptive effort required coordinating activists in several countries and represented Greenpeace's first attempt at global environmental activism, thereby marking its entry into "world civic politics"[51] (Zelko 7; Wapner 1995, 312).

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[49] Quoted from Greenpeace (2017a).
[50] Established with the sole objective to stop a second nuclear weapons test at Amchitka Island in the Aleutians. The committee's founders were Dorothy and Irving Stowe, Marie and Jim Bohlen, Ben and Dorothy Metcalfe, and Bob Hunter.
[51] When activists work to change conditions without directly pressuring states, their activities take place in the civil dimension of world collective life or what is sometimes called global civil society (Wapner 1995, 312)

By combining the nonviolent tactical repertoire of the peace and civil rights movements to advance an environmentalist agenda, Greenpeace expanded the strategic approach of environmental organizations to include a grassroots framework. This pushed against the "insider approach" that had dominated environmental activism at the time, opening the door to new forms of activism and potential for change (Jordan and Maloney 1997; Maloney et al. 1994).[52] The insider approach was a result of the U.S. institutionalizing environmental concerns into laws and public agencies during the 1970s and 1980s. Ultimately, this led environmental organizations to actively seek becoming "transformed into professional, bureaucratic, mainstream interest groups…led by managers, staffed by professional economist, lawyers and biologist, and supported by sophisticated public relations and fundraising departments" (Salazar 1995 5, quoted in Jordan and Maloney 18, 1997). By contrast, Greenpeace's primary innovation grew out of its 'counter culture' philosophy in the early 1970s, led by its founder's idea to create an organization that was non-hierarchical, decentralized, and democratic (Harter 2004, 3). Greenpeace's early lack of formal decision-making structure had the makings of a social movement that is fundamentally shaped by the means it employs, "prefiguring" the kind of society it wants to help bring about (Darcy 2013), and presenting new opportunities for environmental justice.

Alongside a number of successful campaigns, Greenpeace also went through a series of personality conflicts, public relations embarrassments and power struggles that

[52] One of the original distinctions between insider groups and outsider groups, according to Wyn Grant, "is a distinction based on interest group strategies, by which is meant the combination of modes of action used by an interest group to attain its goals…The basic aim of such insider groups is to establish a consultative relationship whereby their views on particular legislative proposals will be sought prior to the crystallisation of the government's position (1978, 2).

transformed it from a grassroots and consensus-driven organization in the early 1970s to one characterized by professionalization, centralization, and hierarchy by the end of the decade.[53] Indeed, as Greenpeace's full-time staff and membership increased, its lack of formal structure paradoxically created the basis for a fundamentally undemocratic organization in which a small group of people, predominantly men from the "professional managerial class,"[54] made decisions (Harter 2004, 90). This group consisted of two camps, "the mechanics" and the "mystics," whom Zelko describes as "the split between the older generation of peace movement protesters," inclined toward scientific rationalism, and "a group of younger activists who embraced various counterculture beliefs and values" (2013, 7). During Greenpeace's first antinuclear sea voyage from Vancouver to the Aleutian Islands, founders Jim Bohlen and Bob Hunter already personified this division:

> Bohlen's primary goal was to run a sober campaign that would garner the respect of elite groups, such as scientist, politicians, and high-level bureaucrats, as well as attract the attention of the popular media. Hunter, on the other hand, was more interested in creating a mythology for the environmental movement, one that would resonate with millions of people and help bring about the change in mass consciousness that was so vital to his vision of the future (Zelko 2013, 79).

During the Alaskan journey, Hunter recalls, "we fought bitterly among ourselves...Everything we did or said got sucked into an overwhelming power struggle."[55]

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[53] Zelko provides the most comprehensive account of this period (1970-1980), which I rely on extensively here (2013).

[54] Harter suggests the term "professional managerial class" best describes Greenpeace's personnel, which embraces the middle class salaried worker as en effective agent of change in society that nevertheless reproduces capitalist culture and class relations (Harter 2004, 86, 88).

[55] See Greenpeace 2017a

Although the maiden voyage was a success, it also marked the beginning of a growing division within Greenpeace regarding its ultimate direction.[56]

For instance, in 1975, when Greenpeace began to campaign against commercial whaling, internal power struggles would animate significant changes in the organization's campaign priorities, philosophy, and membership. The anti-whaling campaign was based on the premise that humans should cease hunting whales due the to their "supreme intelligence," invoking both ecological and animal rights lines of argumentation. Combined with stunning images of activists putting themselves between whales and large ships with harpoons, Greenpeace became "renowned throughout the world, giving them entrée into the world's most *lucrative environmental 'market'*—the United States" (Zelko 2013, 8, emphasis added). Indeed, Greenpeace's appeal to the public's ecological sensibilities *and* sympathy for the individual whales hunted was advantageous in garnering public support for their campaign and expanding their membership base (see Epstein 2008). However, the logical inconsistences between extending individual rights to animals *and* supporting the small-scale ecology of fishing communities would become manifest in Greenpeace's subsequent campaigns to end the harp seal hunt in Newfoundland and Quebec (Zelko 2013 239).

In 1976, Greenpeace began its anti-sealing campaign by forming an alliance with the Newfoundland sealing community against large commercial sealers. Greenpeace's new president, Hunter, explained, "we formed an alliance (with the sealers) to go after the large icebreakers mainly from Norway, that were going into the birthing grounds. These

[56] According to Hunter, "that bomb went off, but the bombs planned for after that did not. The nuclear test program at Amchitka was cancelled five months after our mission, and some scholars argue that this was the beginning of the end of the Cold War" (Greenpeace 2017a)

were the real threat to the continued viability of the seal herds."[57] Increased public support grew out of this grassroots approach and led Greenpeace to gain an international presence and attention. However, after the alliance with the sealers was considering "no longer useful," Greenpeace essentially dissolved it (Harter 2004, 97). While Greenpeace's 'abolitionist' stance against whale hunting rested on firm holistic ecological grounds (i.e. their threatened extinction as a species), the rationale for such a position vis-à-vis harp seals lacked similar scientific bases (Zelko 2013, 249). To be sure, the harp seals were "utterly adorable" and hunted in a rather crude fashion. Even so, their population was relatively stable despite the fact that such hunts had been taking place for centuries (232).

Nevertheless, from a fundraising and public relations perspective, the shift to a "zero kill" stance represented a shrewd business decision by Hunter. In his words, "We knew we would have to walk a tightrope between a balanced "scientific" analysis that the hunt itself was simply bad for the ecology of the ocean…and the depths of emotion that the killing of "babies" generated in the breasts of million of urban people."[58] Indeed, supporting the hunt, in any capacity, did not sit well with a number of Greenpeace members galvanized by brutal images of "murdered seals" and a demand for their "rights." Moreover, as Zelko suggests, the images of "Greenpeacers" putting themselves between a seal pup and a human hunter were so powerful that, "any abstract thoughts of animal rights, ecology, and conservation were expunged…Such a visceral experience,

[57] "Greenpeace and the Politics of Image," Ideas, CBC Radio Transcripts (9 and 16 November 1993), 14, cited in Harter 2004, 95.
[58] Hunter 1979, 250, quoted in Zelko 2013, 247

and the passion summoned forth, was something new to the environmental movement" (2013, 255). While the strategy was effective from the perspective of Greenpeace, evident in the public outrage aimed at the hunt, the sealers would ultimately become collateral damage in the success of the campaign (Harter 2004, 100).

Marking a dramatic reversal in the alliance, the controversial Paul Watson, who had assumed control of the anti-sealing campaign in 1978, claimed "the entire hunt must be stopped immediately and totally by both commercial and landsmen interests...the Greenpeace position is that we are totally opposed to the killing of all seals by Canadians, Norwegians, Danes, and others."[59] Consequently, the sealers and Greenpeace, quickly engaged in a public relations campaign, with Greenpeace emerging as victorious. Indeed, the European Economic Community enacted a mandatory boycott on seal products in 1983, which "devastated two entire economies and communities: those of the Inuit and the Newfoundland sealers" (Harter 92). Thus, Greenpeace had become the bitter enemy of Newfoundland sealers, in addition to the Inuit communities in Greenland for a similar 'zero kill' stance vis-à-vis whaling.

Although the organization would latter apologize to both groups and draw a distinction between commercial hunts and those based on subsistence and traditional ways of life, Greenpeace's whaling campaign represented a fundamental tension that the organization still grapples with today. Namely, the tension concerned with what extent the organization was prepared and willing to address social issues as an integral

[59] Greenpeace Chronicles, 2 (Winter 1976-1977), 3, quoted in Harter 2004, 97.

component of its environmental campaigning and how to involve the communities within which a given campaign is embedded (Bunin 1997, 86). Indeed, as an environmental organization engaged in grassroots initiatives in collaboration with diverse local communities, that have their own visions of justice, Greenpeace NROs would ultimately become confined to a set of internationally top-down practices and ideas. While top-down and grassroots approaches do not necessarily need to conflict with one another, historically, they have.

For instance, the inability to sustain the alliance with the sealers was part of a growing list of issues in the late 1970s that caused Greenpeace to also revaluate its organizational structure. Although Greenpeace's participatory and consensus-based decision-making structure during the anti-whaling campaign in 1975 had given everyone a voice, it also led to exhausting meetings and bureaucratic inefficiency, which took "some of the shine off the grassroots model" (Zelko 2013, 277). The organization's devolved and quasi-prefigurative structure worked when offices were raising their own funds based on local priorities. However, as its international ambitions grew, so did the need for a more "efficient" coordinating body that could conduct campaigns and raise money in a more disciplined way (Yearly 1991, 70). Indeed, by 1978 the Vancouver office was $180,000 in debt because of nonstop campaigning and had to rely on the thriving San Francisco office's funding acumen (Dale 1996). As a result, when the Vancouver office attempted to consolidate power in Canada, they met resistance form the San Francisco office, ultimately suing the latter for the rights to the Greenpeace name in June of 1979 (Brown and May 1989). At stake in the dispute was not only the rights to the Greenpeace name,

but whether the organization would break down into autonomous NROs or maintain its international scope, "chasing down international polluters as easily as multinational corporations could drift from country to country"—the *modus operandi* that distinguished Greenpeace from other environmental organizations (Dale 1996, 97).

David McTaggart, who was leading the various Greenpeace groups operating out of Europe during this time, is largely responsible for settling the dispute and ultimately consolidating the organization's power in Amsterdam. McTaggart thought Greenpeace—an international environmental organization that relies on high profile nonviolent direct action, without attachment to any political ideology or party—"had considerable potential if it could be run by hard-nosed professionals rather than hippies" (Zelko 2013, 305). Seizing on the opportunity provided by the dispute between San Francisco and Vancouver, McTaggart convened a meeting of Greenpeace delegates from around the world in Amsterdam. During the meeting:

> Greenpeace Europe agreed to change its name to "Greenpeace Council" and invited others to join the new organization. Greenpeace USA and Greenpeace Canada were immediately accepted as members but, in the process, had to accept the bylaws of Greenpeace Europe. All the national groups signed the Greenpeace Council accord, ceding theirs rights to the name Greenpeace in exchange for voting membership on the council. Virtually overnight, the various Greenpeace tribes were merged together to create a European-dominated international organization with bureaucracy, a hierarchical, centralized structure, and headquarters based in Amsterdam. (313-314.)

For McTaggart and his lieutenants, Greenpeace was not so much a vehicle for organizing and consciousness change as it was "a tool of political persuasion" (Zelko 2013, 316). Thus, within a few months of the Amsterdam meeting, McTaggart's Greenpeace international developed a sophisticated management structure, with various legal, administrative, financial, and communication arms scattered throughout the world,

bearing remarkable similarity to the mainstream environmental organizations from which Greenpeace differentiated itself in the early 1970s (Zelko 2013; 316, Jordan and Maloney 1997). While the concentration of power in Amsterdam and shift to employing 'professional' staff essentially ended the internal power struggle between "the mechanics" and the "mystics," how and to what degree it would form coalitions with frontline communities continued to be debated, or worse, ignored as unimportant. Indeed, despite their numerous environmental accomplishments since consolidating power, Greenpeace staff and campaigners have also been limited in their ability to cooperate with labor unions (Harter 2004), frontline communities (Pellow 2007), or to develop a significantly engaged membership base (Jordan and Maloney 2004).

Although the above criticisms are valid, and Greenpeace has routinely acknowledged and attempted to address them with varying degrees of success, the organization's history vis-à-vis environmental justice continues to vary by country and region. According to the current Executive Director of Greenpeace USA, Annie Leonard, "Greenpeace is not a homogeneous bunch, there is not one model of how Greenpeace works. Even though we align ourselves in our programs, we fight like hell about it, because we have very different ideas of what our theory of change is."[60] Indeed, despite Amsterdam's influence, each NRO has tended to have its own culture, environmental priorities and strategic outlook. For instance, although Greenpeace centered political power in Europe throughout the 1980s, Greenpeace USA was one the most effective fundraising NROs, giving it a special degree of independence. As a result, Greenpeace

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[60] Author interview with Annie Leonard, Executive Director of Greenpeace USA, March 2016.

USA became involved in the environmental justice movement and was closely aligned with civil rights organizations and labor unions—unlike its European counterparts that continued to cultivate an image of being "above party politics" and thus tended to occupy less contentious political "middle ground (Zelko 2013, 317)." Understanding this unique period in Greenpeace's history is not only essential for appreciating how its approach to environmental justice has developed, but also how and why it struggles with the concept today.

Waste, Incineration and Justice

From 1980 to 1990, U.S. municipal solid waste (MSW) generation increased at a record 35 percent—from 151 million tons to 205.[61] Combined with growing levels of toxicity associated with industrial waste, and the purported need to construct new landfills and incinerators to process it, the mid 1980s also witnessed the growing prominence of the anti-toxics and environmental justice movements in the U.S. (Pellow 107, 2007). As protests continued to undermine the political viability of land-based disposal options for toxics, incinerating such waste at sea became an increasingly appealing alternative. The 'out of sight, out of mind' logic behind ocean dumping, and the concomitant lack of community resistance, had already made the practice common for a number of municipalities and industries. For instance, before 1988, certain municipalities were eligible to dump MSW at sea, as long as it took place beyond the so-called "106-mile Ocean Waste Dumpsite" zone.[62] As a result, municipalities legally

[61] U.S. EPA 2006, 4
[62] See U.S. Government Printing Office (2010).

dumped roughly 50 million tons of industrial waste and sewerage sludge, contaminated with heavy metals, off the coast of the U.S. in 1968 alone—in addition to the 55,000 plus containers of radioactive waste already dumped from 1951-1962 (U.S. EPA 2015).

In 1978, Greenpeace's toxic waste activism thus centered on how dumping waste at sea was damaging *ocean ecology* and strategies that would make this "invisible" practice increasingly visible (Parmentier 1999, 2). Following the now well-established Greenpeace playbook, their plan of action focused on fomenting political will by way of high-profile direct actions against polluters, commissioning and circulating scientific evidence meant to repudiate the incineration industry's questionable claims, and leveraging these strategies to lobby states and international organizations to ban the practice. For instance, the London Dumping Convention (originally named The Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter of 1972) was one of the first international conventions aimed at protecting oceans from harmful human activities. However, before Greenpeace became significantly involved, the convention was achieving little more than keeping a record of whatever information Contracting Parties chose to share, and in a sense, "providing a convenient legitimacy to the increasing number of countries wanting to use the sea as a garbage dump" (Parmentier 1999, 4).

In 1981, Greenpeace successfully applied for "observer status" to the Contracting Parties to the London Dumping Convention meetings, with an aim to challenge the rights of a few countries to use the global ocean commons as a dumpsite (1999, 3; Spaans 1988). After obtaining observer status,

> Greenpeace International had been given opportunities to provide input to the panel, by way of oral and written submissions in the first few years, and by way of full participation in the last few…Greenpeace International had also prepared and distributed each year in advance of all key meetings to all Contracting Parties a Greenpeace Annotated Agenda to keep them alert to all relevant developments in the field of policy and science pertaining to all issues relevant to the London Convention (Parmentier 1999, 6).

By 1985, Greenpeace's anti-dumping campaigners had considerable political clout in both European and U.S. policy circles, "presenting national and international governments with extensive scientific and technical evidence that calls into question the desirability, efficiency and environmental acceptability of waste incineration at sea" (Greenpeace 1998). During this time, Lisa Bunin was the lead Greenpeace campaigner and first "toxic lobbyist" in the U.S. fighting ocean incineration, bringing particular attention to the ills associated with incinerating highly toxic substances, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and herbicide orange.

Bunin's messaging was in direct opposition to the claims advanced by the Association of Maritime Incinerators (AMI), which insisted that incinerating such toxic substances at sea was preferable to simply dumping them at sea or burying them in landfills as "the ocean would neutralize the hydrochloric acid that was coming out of the stacks."[63] Thus, in an effort to sway public opinion in their favor, Greenpeace officially launched an eight-week action campaign in August 1987, directed at the aptly named maritime incineration vessel, Vulcanus II, operating in the North Sea. During this time, Greenpeace brought attention to how Vulcanus II, under the authority of the Dutch company Ocean Combustion Service (OCS), would leave every three weeks from Antwerp harbor, loaded with 3000 tons of toxic waste from various chemical industries

[63] Author interview with Bev Thorpe, November 2017

and incinerate the waste eighty miles offshore of Den Helder, Netherlands (Greenpeace 1988). Although OCS claimed burning the chemical waste at temperatures in excess of 1100 degrees Celsius eliminated 99.9% of it toxic content, Greenpeace countered that this was not only a dubious statistic, but that .01% of 3000 tons of toxic waste ending up in the sea every month was unacceptable (Greenpeace 1998). While often stymied in attempting to board and disrupt the operations of Volcanus II, and their lives put at risk by high-powered water jets, the campaigner's actions yielded the desired media coverage. Indeed, two months later, when campaigners chained themselves to the chimney of the incineration vessel *Vesta*, which consequently had to return to port, Greenpeace's "Ban the Burn" campaign was receiving global media coverage (Bunin 1997, 79).

With public opinion moving in its direction, Greenpeace began collaborating with NGOs and governments in the South Pacific and Caribbean—potential destinations for "burn ships" carrying waste generated in the U.S. and Europe (Bunin 1997, 78). Combined with Greenpeace-commissioned studies that demonstrated the dangers associated with ocean incineration and how the practice created a disincentive for the development of clean production methods—Greenpeace effectively fomented national scale public resistance and channeled it to the international scale. Consequently, Greenpeace compelled the Contracting Parties to the London Convention to pass a worldwide ban on ocean incineration in 1988, which became legally binding in February of 1994 (Parmentier 6-7, 1999; Carney 1982). Although AMI ultimately went out of business four years before the ban went into affect, essentially ending the practice of waste incineration at sea in 1990, the production of hazardous and municipal waste

continued its upward trend. As a result, the world witnessed the continued proliferation of land-based incinerations, the number of which more than doubled in the U.S. from 77 in 1980 to 186 ten years later (Tangri 2003, 66). As the world's leading producer of waste continued to invest in such disposal methods, Greenpeace turned its focus to the next battle—fighting land-based incinerators.

The Shift from Sea to Land and Environmental Justice

Although the United States was a signature to the London Protocol, which expressly prohibits incineration at sea and the export of wastes for the purpose of ocean dumping, it never ratified it. According to Bunin, the United States "wanted to leave the technology open so maybe they could burn their waste some other place in the world, which was sort of the beginning of our social consciousness and social justice aspect of our work."[64] Indeed, while Bunin was working on ocean incineration, Greenpeace USA was already involved in a number of land-based toxic actions located in communities directly affected by toxic pollution. However, unlike the organization's oceans incineration campaign, which took place largely "out-of-site, and off the agendas, of any particular community," the land-based toxics campaign presented a challenge for Greenpeace USA: working with frontline communities and local stakeholders (Bunin 1997, 81)

For example, in 1984 Greenpeace USA was campaigning to stop the company Ciba Geigy from discharging toxic waste into the Atlantic Ocean. However, it neglected to engage the local union representatives associated with the facility, The Oil, Chemical,

[64] Author interview with Lisa Bunin, former Toxics Campaigner, Greenpeace USA, January 2016.

and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), which criticized Greenpeace for ignoring the economic and job loss implications of their actions—reminiscent of the Vancouver office's inability to reconcile the livelihood interests of Newfoundland sealers with the former's environmental ends. It took several years of respectful cooperation before Greenpeace gained the union's trust and assistance and campaigners quickly learned that to effectively and ethically confront the production and disposal of toxics on land, they would need to work closely with impacted communities (Bunin 2003, 3).

Even though waste incinerators generate jobs, they typically yield poor economic results for municipalities, entail hazardous working conditions and emit dangerous toxins, such as persistent organic pollutants, that negatively affect surrounding communities (Pellow 106. 2077; Connett 2013). Learning form the mistakes associated with the OCAW union, and armed with scientific evidence underscoring the health and environmental ills of waste incineration, Greenpeace began to embrace the social injustice and "economic blackmail" associated with incinerators (see Bullard 1992). Moreover, with the release of the *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States* study in 1987, communities now had evidence that incinerators and toxic landfills were disproportionally placed in areas home to low-income communities and people of color (Pellow 2007, 103; Bullard 2000; Getches and Pellow 2002).[65] Thus, if the nascent toxic campaign in the U.S. was going to be successful, Greenpeace needed to cooperate with grassroots movements already framing landfills and waste incinerator as instances of environmental racism and injustice.

[65] For instance, a 1990 Greenpeace report concluded, "communities with existing incinerators had populations of people of color 89% higher than the national average, and communities with proposed incinerators had populations of people of color 60% higher than the national average" (Pellow 2007, 103).

After working with Bunin on ocean incineration in 1986, Dave Rapaport became the national toxic campaigner for Greenpeace USA. At first, the strategy for the campaign centered on generating media attention and advancing national legislation on waste incinerators, landfills and toxic production methods—"we were very simplistic, we thought we'll just pass a law and go do something else," Rapaport recalled.[66] However, as Greenpeace continued to forge coalitions with the existing movements already fighting landfills and toxics since the Love Canal disaster, such as the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste and the National Toxics Campaign, toxic campaigners questioned the utility of mobilizing cooperative actions simply around photo opportunities.[67] More specifically, according to Rapaport, "how do we do these things in a way that has a positive impact on the work of these locals and empower them? We could organize this existing movement, make them a part of what we are doing and simultaneously help grassroots activists win their local battles."[68] The strategy was a significant deviation from the broader organization's well-established *modus operandi* and thus met with skepticism from Greenpeace International.

Nevertheless, due to cash influx from a legal settlement associated with the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior[69] (which also lead to the NRO gaining 50,000 new members in a single month) Rapaport had the resources and autonomy to hire staff that would lead

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[66] Author interview with Dave Rapaport, former Toxics Campaign Director, Greenpeace US, November 2017.

[67] In 1978, it was discovered that hazardous waste abandoned by Hooker Chemical Corporation had contaminated homes and schools in the Love Canal area in Niagara Falls, New York. The Love Canal Case, and the grassroots response that framed the issues as a matter of social injustice, is associated with the birth of the anti-toxics movement in the U.S. (see Levine1982; Brulle and Pellow 2006).

[68] Author interview with Dave Rapaport, November 2017.

[69] According to Greenpeace, French secret service agents planted two bombs and sank the Greenpeace ship, the Rainbow Warrior, in 1985, which also resulted in the death of one crew member (Greenpeace 2017c).

Greenpeace USA in a completely different direction—working with the grassroots.[70] According to one such hire, Bradley Angel, a community organizer and environmental justice activist,

> That was the time Greenpeace was flush with funding for its toxics campaign. I was really excited because there was a real interest in how to move Greenpeace from high profile media actions to actually working with communities…Overall, the Greenpeace toxics campaign, in those early years, was incredibly dedicated, principled, effective, and respectful of communities. It totally changed Greenpeace's lily white, you know, solo direct action approach. My work and others was more community-led direct actions with Greenpeace, blockades of incinerators, toxic sites, etc., not just a couple of people literally parachuting in and leaving, as happened to numerous places.[71]

Given Angel's grassroots organizing experience, his hiring was timely as it occurred when the infamous Cerrell Report (1984) was leaked—a study commissioned by the California Waste Management Board to define communities unlikely to resist the siting of Locally Unwanted Land Uses (LULUs). The report suggested polluting firms should target communities "with the least amount of political and financial capital" and avoid areas with high populations of "housewives," as they were the occupational classification most likely to resist.[72] The report served as a blueprint for waste industries seeking to capitalize on the phase out of hazardous landfills in California. However, the report also implicitly suggested that if housewives (typically those located in poor communities of color) became organized, industry faced an uphill battle—a strategy Angel and Greenpeace USA would embrace.

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[70] Author interview with Dave Rapaport, November 2017.
[71] Author interview with Bradley Angel, November 13, 2017
[72] See Ejnet (2017) for full report

The incinerator battles that Greenpeace and local organizations won in California alone are too numerous to list here.[73] However, their successful strategies centered on forming coalitions with grassroots organizations and empowering those whom industry perceived as least likely to resist. For instance, Greenpeace was the first national environmental group to join the Concerned Citizens of Central Los Angeles and Mothers of East Los Angeles to stop a 1,600-ton-per-day waste incinerator from being built in their community—providing technical advice, expert testimony, lobbying, research, and legal assistance (Bullard 1993, 32). This was a significant partnership during the time as incinerators "were not deemed adequately 'environmental' by local environmental groups such as the Sierra Club or the Environmental Defense Fund," according to Di Chiro (1996, 299, cited in Sandler, et. al 2007). And although Greenpeace still engaged in its typical media stunts (e.g. campaigners would show up to public hearings dressed in chicken suits and death masks), it was the empowered and angry mothers of Los Angeles that provided the numbers, stories, local knowledge and ultimately the political leverage for stopping many incinerators from being built.[74]

As a result of such coalitions, grassroots organizations led by people of color became experts on toxics and successfully linked them to local problems associated with housing, transportation, air quality, and economic development in their communities (Agyeman, et. al 2016, 324). Indeed, grassroots organizations not only have the advantage of being close to the population immediately affected by incinerator proposals,

[73] E.g. Los Angeles's Lancer project for municipal garbage, Stauffer Chemical Co.'s hazardous-waste incinerator in Carson, and Pacific Waste Management's solid-waste incinerator plant for municipal garbage in Irwindale, to list a few.
[74] Roderick 1987

but also being deeply aware of how they intersect with social and economic concerns (Bullard 1993, 38). Greenpeace was thus instrumental in *supporting* local communities in organizing to stop California's plans to build thirty-five incinerators in 1985 (it was only able to build three) (Connett 2013, 46). Moreover, by engaging in coalition work centered on principles of environmental justice, Greenpeace USA helped empower grassroots collation partners to engage in subsequent local battles and redefine its previously "limited" environmental agenda (Bullard 1993, 39).

Greenpeace coalition partners were also empowered by access to studies that linked the production of dioxin to other polluting industries, such as pulp and paper mills, agriculture, chemical companies—many of which provided evidence of collusion with the EPA in covering up such data (Gibbs 1999). For instance, Greenpeace joined forces with Paul Connett, who was fighting a plan to construct an incinerator Ogdensburg, New York and forming coalitions with other citizens groups resisting similar proposals. Before becoming a leading voice in the Zero Waste movement, Connett was a professor of biochemistry at St. Lawrence University who became embroiled in debates regarding the level of dioxin emissions associated with waste incineration. Connett's findings regarding the link between incineration emissions and dioxin buildup in the human food chain represented a turning point in the discursive battle vis-à-vis incineration's cost/benefit analyses (see Webster and Connett 1997; 1998).[75] For instance, the chemical industry's

[75] Specifically, Connett and Webster's studies found that cow's milk "could expose an individual to nearly 200 times more dioxin than inhalation…by our calculation one quart of milk would expose an individual to the equivalent of breathing the air next to the grazing cattle for eight months" (Connett 2013, 45). When used to question the health impacts associated with constructing a number of slated incinerators, industry consultants frequently dismissed Connett and Webster's calculations.

public stance was that while dioxin was bad for animals, dioxin emissions represented little concern for humans (Tschirley 1986; see also Gibbs 1999).

Connett, with the help of Greenpeace and a number of local organizations, convened the First Citizens Conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1991, to provide a stronger counterbalance to industry's strategy of downplaying the relationship between dioxin exposure and human health. According to Connett, "not only were we able to provide a large number of grassroots activists a better understanding of the dioxin issue, but were able to show honest scientists working for the EPA and other regulatory agencies that there was a large public interest in finding out the truth about dioxin" (Connett 2013, 47). Equipping local activists with this information and empowering them to win their own battles was a key element of the coalition's strategy. As Connett Remarks:

> It is important to stress that only communities themselves can actually achieve victory, no one from the outside can do it for them. As I have said in many public presentations, affecting change is like driving a nail through a piece of wood. The expert can sharpen the nail, but you need to hammer a public opinion to drive the nail home (47).

Indeed, as a result of sustained pressure from environmental justice and antitoxic coalitions, between 1985 and 1998, plans to construct over three hundred waste incinerators were defeated, or put on hold, in the United States (Pellow 2007, 104).

This period demonstrates the potential of Greenpeace's grassroots organizing and coalition building, which can span single issues to mobilize diverse communities around many related concerns. This has a distinctive value for advancing justice, one that is missing in a top-down vision and leadership that is singular to one issue and solution. Nevertheless, Greenpeace USA's environmental justice messaging and grassroots

coalition work intensified tensions with Greenpeace International, which claimed the NROs approach did not play into the core strengths of the organization. As Rapaport remarked, Greenpeace at this time "was about the boat and the prowess of being able to do these direct actions and we were doing this extremely resource-intensive thing, hiring people, doing grassroots organizing where, if you're successful, you're sharing the credit, not taking it, maybe even being invisible sometimes."[76] Amsterdam's position was arguably valid from a fundraising perspective, as former Greenpeace USA Toxics Researcher, Pat Costner remarked, "working with communities and doing community outreach is not a way to draw in funds, it's a great way to expend funds."[77] However, Costner also suggested that from an environmental justice perspective, the work was remarkably successful as it was empowering communities to fight both the symptoms and the causes of injustice associated with toxic waste disposal.

Shifting from the National to International Scale

Unfortunately, the success of anti-toxic activism based in the United States also increased incentives for exporting U.S. waste and incineration technology to the global South and Eastern Europe (Pellow 2007). According to one Greenpeace toxics campaigner, "after the fall of the Berlin wall, the first thing these countries got was Western waste and dodgy technology like incinerators, so it made sense to start the fight in Eastern Europe."[78] Greenpeace's anti-toxics strategy in Europe at this time consisted of tracking incineration investment projects, monitoring the hazardous waste trade, and

[76] Author interview with Dave Rapaport, November 2017.
[77] Author interview with, Pat Costner, November 2017
[78] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Toxics Campaigner Greenpeace International, December 2015

solo direct actions aimed at policy change—specifically targeting delegates and technical meetings associated with the Basel convention.[79] For instance, the most influential NRO in Europe, Greenpeace Germany, consisted primarily of scientists who lacked community-organizing skills and seldom made the connection between incinerators and issues of social justice. Its more technical approach to environmental activism was successful in previous campaigns not significantly embedded in a particular community. However, because this strategy lacked the same success of their U.S.-based counterparts, Greenpeace International hired Lisa Finaldi, a coalition partner with experience fighting incinerators *and* organizing communities in North Carolina. According to Finaldi,

> There was an understanding that building the capacity of people on the ground was a vital part of the effort…that victory was more likely when you had both elements. You had local people with stories who could show what was happening and then you had somebody working at the policy level who also understood that they were answering to people in these communities…I found that in Europe, NROs thought that they could just campaign their way through it, and they were doing the worst in terms of stopping incinerators…One of the first things I did was to bring the scholar, Paul Connett, to a tour of Europe to meet with communities. That helped break the ice to say yes, this community-based work can work."[80]

The speaking tour with Paul Connett centered on community-based strategies that were working well in the Americas, such as skill shares, leadership building, and legal assistance. Greenpeace and Connett would meet with councilors and speak about the dangers and inefficiencies associated with incineration and, according to Madeleine Cobbing, a waste campaigner working in the UK,

> basically supported what the local campaign groups were doing and also got publicity at the same time….The strategy was, because there were so many [incinerator] proposals in all different places and involved quit a lot of details, but there was only a few people helping, so we didn't feel we [Greenpeace] had the capacity to get involved with every inquiry to help them. So, we decided we would support the groups, rather then having us come in from the top and telling them they didn't

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[79] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Toxics Campaigner Greenpeace International, December 2015

[80] Author interview with Lisa Finaldi, November 017

> want it [incinerators]…We knew from looking at other battlers elsewhere that that was the most effective way to do it.[81]

During the same time that Greenpeace was supporting communities fighting the onslaught of incinerators in Europe and Southeast Asia, it also became significantly involved in the infamous *Khian Sea* episode. The *Khian Sea* was a vessel that spent sixteen years attempting to dump 14,355 tons of toxic incinerator ash from Philadelphia in countries with high populations of people of color and poverty rates—one of the first high-profile cases documenting the injustices associated with transnational waste dumping (see Pellow 2007). Greenpeace's involvement in the *Khian Sea* saga brought global attention to the inequities associated with the global movement of waste and provided the primary impetus for its international waste trade campaign.

Unlike pervious international campaigns that focused almost exclusively on 'the environment,' the pragmatic and ethical lessons learned from working with environmental justice organizations vis-à-vis fighting incinerators in the United States diffused into Greenpeace's subsequent campaign to stem the international trade of toxic waste. According to Jim Puckett, who was hired by Greenpeace International to lead the global campaign,

> Because toxics involved people being harmed, not just plants or animals, that made them very different and we knew we had to win this by working in coalition. But, Greenpeace (International) was not used to doing things with grassroots-people movements. Greenpeace USA took the lead there…the waste trade campaign was a really good ambassador for convincing Greenpeace to do that…it became easy to sell, even to some people that never wanted to think about human issues in Greenpeace.[82]

[81] Author interview with Madeleine Cobbing, November 2017
[82] Author interview with Jim Puckett, former Toxics Campaigner Director, Greenpeace International, October 2017.

Greenpeace campaigners like Von Hernandez and Annie Leonard, who were already working closely with frontline communities fighting incinerators and toxic landfills in the Philippines and India, began building awareness and documenting the dangers associated with the global movement of hazardous waste. Hernandez and Leonard were among the many Greenpeace campaigners working with and conducting skill shares with local communities on toxics in various sectors, from pulp and paper, to pesticides, to water systems that were coordinated under Greenpeace International's toxics umbrella. According to Puckett, the local "political work" of such campaigners, and the deep relationships they established in the process, were essential to the treaty and convention efforts carried out at the international scale. As Puckett went on to remark,

> As a result, we accomplished waste trade bans in the Waigani Treaty in the South Pacific, in the Bamako Convention in Africa, in the Cartagena convention in the Caribbean, and the Lomé convention…when it came time for the Basel Convention, we had a powerful political force because of our *regional representation*. We shocked the U.S., Australia, and Japan—they didn't have a chance…[83]

Moreover, according to Pellow, without Greenpeace's presence in the Basel Convention meetings, "that agreement would never have contained the few progressive elements it has" (Pellow 2007, 75). As a result, Greenpeace's global toxics campaign became a blueprint for other international environmental justice actions in the years that followed (Pellow, 2007 123)

Shifting Focus Upstream and Away from Justice

Back in the United States, Greenpeace's toxics work continued in a similar fashion until the early 1990s, when the NRO was experiencing budgetary issues and had to

[83] Author interview with Jim Puckett, former Toxics Campaigner Director, Greenpeace International, October 2017.

accept a multimillion-dollar bail out from the International office. According to Zelko, Greenpeace's new Executive Director, Thilo Bode

> had always felt that Greenpeace USA's involvement in the environmental justice movement was inappropriate and that Greenpeace should stick to what it was famed for—campaigning on issues of global significance and carrying out spectacular direct actions—rather than involving itself in local grassroots movements. The result was that Greenpeace USA was forced to retreat toward the safe ground of mainstream environmentalism, a move that greatly disappointed many American activist (2013, 317-318).

Furthermore, as the bulk of Greenpeace funding comes from "membership dues," it has always been important for the organization to showcase high profile victories to sustain and grow their membership base (discussed further below). As Madeline suggests:

> When you get involved in the incineration issue, it will just take over everything that you do because it is never ending, there is always more proposals and it is also very resource intensive…you never know where the next proposal is going to come up. After a while, it doesn't really take you anywhere, you are always just fighting to block the next proposal.[84]

Indeed, although Greenpeace was involved in a number of significant victories, absent a international ban on waste incineration, Greenpeace would have to keep chasing industry around the globe as the former followed the path of least resistance. Moreover, while Greenpeace's grassroots approach prevented the construction of the majority of new waste incinerators in the United States, after they lost the high profile Liverpool, Ohio, incinerator campaign in February of 1997, Greenpeace management started scaling back such work (See Jones and Zakai 2004)

Greenpeace's anti-toxic work always had an endgame of barring all options for toxic waste disposal—whether it involved incineration on land or at sea—and to "choke industry into clean production."[85] Moreover, as public awareness about the problems associated with toxic waste continued to grow, Greenpeace began to pivot to the pollution

[84] Author interview with Madeleine Cobbing, November 2017
[85] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Toxics Campaigner Greenpeace International, December 2015

prevention line and their messaging shifted to "Why are they generating this waste in the first place?"[86] The idea was that to be truly effective in stopping the release of dioxin from waste incineration, Greenpeace needed to go up the waste stream and stop the production of hazardous substances. Thus, Greenpeace began to focus on toxic generators, specifically industries that produced chlorinated waste, which was part of a larger reorientation that took place in the mid 1990s to engage in more "market-orientated campaigns." [87] As one campaigner remarked,

> because at that point, governments were already giving up their power to the corporations via GATT and the WTO, and we realized we weren't getting what we wanted from governments, so it was much quicker, we believed, to get the change we wanted via corporate market campaigns…it doesn't mean we dropped political work completely, but it helped to have corporates on board.[88]

Indeed, because agreements like GATT, WTO and NAFTA have the capacity to supersede established national and international environmental arrangements, it made strategic sense for Greenpeace to increase its pressure and focus on changing the practices of corporations.

As a result, by the end of the 1990s, Greenpeace's toxics campaign was metamorphosing into its current producer responsibility and consumer-oriented Detox campaign (discussed below). According to international toxics campaigner Bev Thorpe, "Greenpeace, as a whole, went to more of a support role for local grassroots groups and in some cases we funneled money into them while we focused on stopping the generation of hazardous waste."[89] As Greenpeace decided to phase out its work on waste incineration, local communities had little choice but to fight these battles alone.

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[86] Author interview with Bev Thorpe, November 2017
[87] Author interview with Bev Thorpe, November 2017
[88] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Toxics Campaigner Greenpeace International, December 2015
[89] Author interview with Bev Thorpe, November 2017

According to Ananda Tan and many toxic campaigners, “when Greenpeace pulled out of that work, that’s when a lot of the deep divisions occurred between Greenpeace and the EJ world.”[90] Connett similarly explained,

> The tragic moment came where intellectually it was sound, where they said, the real cause of this dioxin problem is chlorine, so we’ve got to go after chlorine. But it was all press releases and about the same time we had this German take over Greenpeace International, who was not against incineration number one, and number two, he didn’t believe in the grassroots. He was corporate, he came from the corporate world and he wanted Greenpeace established on a corporate basis…But Greenpeace was at its strongest when it was working with grassroots movements.[91]

This shift significantly moved Greenpeace away from its grassroots potential. Indeed, the new director of Greenpeace International, Thilo Bode, frequently remarked to campaigners, “what does working with communities and fighting environmental racism have to do with Greenpeace’s mission?” or “Working in coalitions lessens Greenpeace’s high profile.”[92] According to Angel, despite the fact that Greenpeace USA’s work was empowering communities, got a vast amount of press coverage, saved lives, and was incredibly effective at promoting pollution prevention efforts, Greenpeace International was concerned the U.S. office was not raising enough money.

> So, in the summer of ‘97, Greenpeace International succeeded. In my opinion, it was a coup d’état, they twisted the arm of the Voting Membership after several years of battle, removed Barbara Dudley as executive director, installed somebody from Germany, and proceeded to wipe out 95% of the toxics campaign and walked away from communities on a wide range of issues. Aside from a few people from the toxics campaign, they wiped out the indigenous lands campaign, they demolished the EJ work, they betrayed tribes, including tribes denouncing Greenpeace for environmental racism, which was absolutely true. For example walking out on the Ward Valley Nuclear Waste Dump fight with the tribes that Greenpeace had done incredible work with for years.[93]

Although Greenpeace invited Angel to stay on as senior staff, he resigned in protest at the end of 1997. In his words, “grassroots community groups—urban, rural and indigenous—

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[90] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016.
[91] Author interview with Paul Connett, December 2015.
[92] Author interview with Bradley Angel, November 2017
[93] Author interview with Bradley Angel, November 2017

we were outraged and protested, but also decided to form a new organization (Greenaction for Environmental Health and Justice), which took over all the incinerator battles in this part of the world, even with no resources, that Greenpeace had just walked away from."[94] Angel was not alone as a number of Greenpeace campaigners, who had built long-term relationships with communities fighting incinerators and toxic pollution, decided to leave Greenpeace.

For instance, according to Jim Puckett, who had become the Toxics Director at Greenpeace International, when Bode took over, he told Puckett, "Jim, you won and you're done. I said, that's not how it works, its great to have a piece of paper that says you're going to have an amendment [referencing Basel], its going to take some work to get it enforced and he said, no, I disagree, you're done."[95] To be sure, while conventions such as Bamako and Basel may have made certain forms of dumping formally illegal, in practice they were insufficient in and of themselves to prevent the transboundary movement of hazardous waste to developing countries (Bullard 285, 2005). Puckett thus reluctantly left the Greenpeace in 1997 and created the Basel Action Network[96] (BAN) to address convention loopholes that allow hazardous waste to enter countries that lack requisite infrastructure, "champion global environmental health and justice," and end the global trade of toxic waste (BAN 2017).

The void Greenpeace left in the world of toxics also led to the creation of GAIA. Reflecting on the impetus for forming GAIA, Leonard offers the following observations:

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[94] Author interview with Bradley Angel, November 2017

[95] Author interview with Jim Puckett, former Toxics Campaigner Director, Greenpeace International, October 2017.

[96] Originally part of the Asia Pacific Environmental Exchange, which he co-founded with Annie Leonard

"we realized that we can't just abandon this work and Greenpeace is not a reliable enough organization to keep doing it, we needed to develop an infrastructure so that this work could continue and not be dependent on Greenpeace."[97] Indeed, during the time of her departure in 1996, "Greenpeace had a very top-down model and was really led by the International Executive Director in Amsterdam," and was focused on clean production.[1] Alternatively, Leonard was thinking about how to continue the bottom-up networking approach that had worked well in Southeast Asia, the Americas and at the center of project "Return to Sender" associated with *Kihan Sea*.[98] During a subsequent clean production workshop in Lowell, Massachusetts in 2000, a number of activists suggested, "if we have incinerators, we are not going to have clean production, and so out of that, GAIA was born."[99] Thus, GAIA, Greenaction and BAN (in conjunction with IPEN) continued to fight waste incinerators and the global trade in toxic waste by supporting organizing from the bottom-up.

Meanwhile, throughout the following decade, Greenpeace orchestrated campaigns out of Amsterdam in a top-down fashion, bolstered by strategies focused on mobilizing volunteers, frontline communities and membership donations. What this meant was that Greenpeace turned towards environmental priorities subject to constant top-down reevaluation and relied primarily on small teams of experts to conduct high-profile actions. This, in the end, continues to adversely affect the trust and long-term

[97] Author interview with Annie Leonard, March 2016
[98] In 1987, Khian Sea docked briefly at Haiti's Gonaives Harbor and dumped 4,000 tons of dioxin and furan contaminated waste on the beach. Project Return to Sender helped remove the toxic ash from Haiti and returned it to the U.S. in April , 2000. (see Essential Action 1998; Pellow 2007).
[99] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.

commitment necessary for forming coalitions with grassroots organizations.[100] And while many toxic campaigners felt Greenpeace may have abandoned certain communities sooner than they would have liked, many suggested this was simply a tradeoff associated with the organization being on the 'cutting edge' of environmental issues. In the following section I analyze what is at stake in Greenpeace's ability to stay on this cutting edge, its propensity to engage in top-down mobilizing, how it raises funds, engages members, and participates in environmental justice coalitions today.

Mobilizing versus Organizing: The Tension between Success and Influence

While the exceptional autonomy of Greenpeace USA during the 90s demonstrated the organization's capacity for developing campaigns grounded in and respectful of the needs of frontline communities, such NRO autonomy has also resulted in a number of public relations disasters.[101] For instance, in 2015, Peruvian officials blamed Greenpeace activists, operating out of the Andino NRO, for permanently damaging the country's famed Nazca Lines, one of the country's "most important cultural treasures," by using the fragile desert site as the backdrop for Greenpeace's environmental message, "the future is renewable."[102] After Deputy Culture Minister Luis Jaime Castillo told news agencies the Greenpeace's actions where "a true slap in the face at everything Peruvians consider sacred," and threatened to sue the campaigners responsible, the organization was inundated with negative publicity.[103] Greenpeace International responded by issuing the statement, "without reservation Greenpeace apologizes to the people of Peru for the

[100] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016.
[101] See McGrath 2014
[102] See Associated Press 2015
[103] See McGrath 2014

offence caused...Rather than relay an urgent message of hope and possibility to the leaders gathering at the Lima UN climate talks, we came across as careless and crass."[104] In order to maintain its brand name and unified focus, Greenpeace International continues to grapple with maintaining "global discipline" while respecting the distinct environmental aspirations of NROs.

Avoiding similar incidents is further complicated when Greenpeace forms coalitions with like-minded organizations and grassroots movements, potentially conflating their respective activities in the eyes of media. As one campaigner put it, Greenpeace is reluctant to "allow people to use our name, because then we are liable, we've got quite a big legal team for good reason."[105] Moreover, because Greenpeace designs direct actions to catch industries, and sometime authorities, off-guard, its need for discipline and secrecy has made it difficult for the organization to involve their own "members" in decision-making and strategic processes (Zelko 2013, 314). For instance, Greenpeace's media stunts are carried out by well-trained "action teams," which allow *the organization* to "be the hero and take that direct action that no one else dares to take and be swift and bold," according to one campaigner.[106] When numbers matters, Greenpeace projects power by gathering petition signatures and mobilizing supporters to "show up" for demonstrations. As one Greenpeace volunteer put it.

> Everything that can go wrong is planned for. So you come, you have a role, and you are supposed to follow the instructions—one person is leading them, we are all volunteers. We are not supposed to say there is one person telling us what to do, but there is. It has to be; otherwise, the

[104] See McGrath 2014
[105] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Toxics Campaigner Greenpeace International, December 2015
[106] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Netherlands Campaigner, December 2015

> demonstration/action is all over the place. We have plan B, plan C, someone is in charge of handling contingency. It is a little top-down in a way.[107] .

Greenpeace International's ability to coordinate clandestine direct actions, quickly mobilize volunteers, and redistribute resource ensures NROs stay focused on global priorities and keeps polluting industries guessing. It has also helped Greenpeace cultivate a global brand of environmental activism that continues to attract new members, donors and the respect of international organizations and states. However, the organization's focus on mobilizing coalition partners, members and volunteers also entails trade-offs worthy of consideration.

Mobilize the Checkbooks

Since organizing a concert to fund its first campaign, Greenpeace has relied primarily on individual member donations. However, even though volunteers supplement campaigns, Greenpeace has no formal membership involvement and supporters have no rights to participate in the organization's decision making—"they may define themselves as members but they are actually positioned as subscribers to the organization's glossy magazine" (Carroll and Ratner 1999, 9). Allowing members to self-select their level of engagement, and making it as easy as possible, helps what Han calls "mobilizers" maximize their chances of finding people poised for action to accomplish the organization's goals (16-17). Mobilizers thus set a low bar to become a "member" and build power through *transactional* outcomes (e.g. signing a petition, donating, showing up to an event)—taking people "where they are," but not transforming their capacities for future activism (11). Conversely, "organizers" seek to *transform* the motivations and

[107] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Netherlands Volunteer, December 2015

capacities of their members by giving them real responsibility, however difficult and complicated it may be (Han 9-10). For instance, while many members admire the accomplishments of Greenpeace campaigners, and are happy to submit donations, few experience the challenging and empowering aspects of putting one's body in harms way to save the environment, conducting research or pressuring elected officials to affect meaningful change. This has fundamentally steered Greenpeace away from local visions and radical potential for advancing justice

Nevertheless, even the most dedicated "checkbook member" must be continually *convinced* that their contributions are having an impact, given the ever-growing competition "for the environmental dollar" (Jordan and Maloney 1997, 189).[108] As a result, Greenpeace's high profile media stunts are aimed just as much at satisfying its membership base as achieving any significant environmental change—producing a tension between the "success" and "influence" of the organization (1997, 185). For example, In 1994, Greenpeace UK ran a lobbying campaign, with a budget of over $2 million, to stop Shell's plan to decommission the Brent Spar oil storage platform by "dumping it" in the North Sea (Schoon 1995). However, Greenpeace grossly overestimated the amount of oil in the Brent Spar, claiming the platform could contain in excess of 5,000 tons of oil in its tanks, as opposed to the 100 tons of oil sludge that remained (most of which consisted of inert silt) (Oliver 1995). Although Greenpeace issued an apology to Shell for misleading the public, the bell had already rung and

[108] According to one Greenpeace fundraising director, the organization reefers to "supporters" as "everybody who supports our program, like if you sign a petition." However, the goal is to always, "help supporters to become donors…after somebody signs the petition, we call them to be donor" (Author interview with Liza Baranyai, Deputy Fundraising Director, Greenpeace Southeast Asia, January 29, 2016).

popular opinion stayed overwhelmingly against Shell's plan. Thus, Shell abandoned its plan to sink the oil platform, which independent experts found would have been "environmentally negligible" compared to its ultimate onshore disposal.[109] Moreover, while the campaign was nevertheless successful in the eyes of Greenpeace and its supporters, the organization also underestimated the environmental costs of driving the 65,000-ton structure to shore for decommissioning in 1999.[110]

While individual donations grant Greenpeace a degree of independence from large foundations that many environmental organizations envy, it cannot engage in environmental campaigns seen as "too radical" or aligned with established political groups (Zelko 2013, 317). For example, Judis argues that because Greenpeace relies on direct donations, it does not "emphasize the kinds of environmental issues that plague working-class neighborhoods" (1992, quoted in Jordan and Maloney 1997, see also Harter 2004). Given that the "mainstream environmentalist movement" has largely "been designed by and for a white, upper-middle-class demographic," abstaining from environmental campaigns that intersect with socio-economic issues may simply be a shrewd *business decision* (Dahmen et al. 2017; see also Pulido and Peña 1998; Ageyman, et. al 2016). Indeed, Greenpeace, like a number of influential transnational NGOs (FoE, Amnesty International, etc.), has adopted a business-like structure to ensure the efficient use of resources and organizational survival in a highly competitive NGO marketplace (Jordan and Maloney 1997, Hopgood 2006, Bob 2005). For instance, in 1991 Forbes

[109] See Fisheries Research Services (2017).
[110] Author interview with Shlomo Dowen, August 2016.

Magazine praised the businesses-oriented turn McTaggart helped usher in after consolidating power in Amsterdam:

> Under its recently departed guru, David McTaggart, Greenpeace became a skillfully managed business, mastering the tools of direct mail and image manipulation…Greenpeace Germany, for instance, second-largest branch operation after Greenpeace United States, had revenues last year of 36 million and 700,00 members, of whom permit Greenpeace to automatically debit their bank accounts annually.[111]

Thus, Greenpeace's skill at mobilizing "checkbook members" has helped it continue to outpace the funding capacity of 'competing' environmental organizations since the 1990s, such as the Sierra Club and World Wildlife Fund (Bosso 1995; Jordon and Maloney 1997), and develop into an effective environmental "protest business."[112]

The Cost of Doing Business

When we look beyond Greenpeace's ability to build its membership base and coffers, realize policy victories, or change industry practices, the limitation associated with mobilizing members and coalition partners becomes increasingly evident. For instance, unlike more grassroots-oriented environmental organizations, which attempt to maximize participation in public gatherings and protest events, Greenpeace's current focus on social media mobilization does not. As one longtime Greenpeace campaigner remarked, "we went from the political, to market campaigning and now the latest [over the last 5 years] we're much more into mobilizing people [online]. I see it more as clicktivism as all our

[111] Quoted in Jordan and Maloney (1997, 24).
[112] According to Jordan and Maloney (1997), a protest business has the following characteristics: 1. Supporters rather than members are important as a source of income; 2. Policy is made centrally and supporters can influence policy primarily by their potential for exit. 3. Political action is normally by the professional staff rather than the individual supporter or member. 4. Supporters are unknown to each other and do not interact. 5. Groups actively shape perceptions of problems by providing supporters with partial information. 6. Supporters are interested in narrow issue areas. Particularity rather than ideological breath is the agency of recruitment.

new bosses are coming from Avazz, 350.org and those kind of organizations."[113] While "clicktivism" has the potential to represent significant political action (Halpuka 2014), Tufekci has demonstrated that because social media reduces the costs of coordination and communication, social movements are no longer forced to create leadership structures that later enable members to exercise power (2017; Han 20-21, 2014).[114] Indeed, similar to the advent of mass media (e.g. television and direct mail) in the 1960s and 1970s, which reduced incentives for civic associations to hold meetings with members, advances in social media have created incentives for ENGOs to focus exclusively on mobilizing, rather than organizing (Han 19, 2014; Skocpol 2003).

For instance, a key strategy for Greenpeace's "Detox My Fashion" campaign, which seeks to eliminate hazardous chemicals from popular clothing brands, is mobilizing "social media pressure" to compel corporations to change their production practices. When brands fail to meet the commitments outlined by Greenpeace,

> We have what we call "Twitter storms." For example, a certain brand last year, we had Adidas who did sign (Detox agreement), but they didn't deliver. So, we made a campaign around Adidas with several nonviolent direct actions against them. We clogged their Facebook channel, their Twitter, Instagram, making sure our demands are met…as soon as something like this happens; they are willing to sit down at the table. All we want to do is have them sit at the table and talk with us—as soon as they do that, we stop.[115]

While corporations may fear being the target of such campaigns, this approach to activism forgoes the long-term benefits of organizing supporters and coalition partners to become more engaged participants, thereby developing their civic and political capacities in the process (Klien 2014, 12; Han 2015; see also Leonard 2011; Maniates 2001).

[113] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace International campaigner, December 2015

[114] For the most part, "clicktivism" denotes the simplification of online participatory processes (e.g. online petitions, content sharing, social buttons) that creates a societal disposition toward feel good, "easy" activism (i.e. "slacktivism") (Halupka 115-116, 2014).

[115] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace International Toxics Campaigner, December 2015

Moreover, while having Adidas "detox its fashion" is a step in the right direction, the incrementalist change it represents, predicated on individual consumer choice and corporate responsibility, risks legitimizing existing dynamics of consumption and production (Maniates 2002, 65; Macbride 2011, 225). For instance, the campaign has little engagement with the garment workers themselves—such as addressing working conditions, organizing, etc.—based on the idea that if corporates eliminate the toxic chemicals from their production supply chain, then worker's health will improve.[116] However, professional actions teams, lawyers, scientists and distant 'clicktivists' "are generally not part of the communities they advocate for and hence do not contribute to building grassroots leadership, particularly in indigenous communities" and thus perpetuate a mode of activism that is incompatible with long-term structural change (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence 1999, 10).

As Bode and McTaggart were acutely aware, building environmental coalitions linked with social justice issues not only dilutes Greenpeace's profile, but also is antithetical to the desires of many donors. Thus, the professional action teams used to generate media headlines and the management skills needed to maintain the efficient operation of TENGOs become "more important than the organizing skills needed to develop grassroots leaders, make institutional change, develop methods to raise community consciousness, or build a movement" (Pérez 2009, 98). As I discuss in the following section, given Greenpeace's ability to shape global environmental discourses, influence states, IOs and funding communities—combined with their resurging

[116] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace International Toxics Campaigner, December 2015

involvement in environmental justice movements—the tradeoffs between organizing and mobilizing are acutely felt by Greenpeace coalition partners in the global South.

Working in Coalition and Revisiting Environmental Justice

Although mobilizers and organizers both use strategies that depend on grassroots engagement, the ways in which they do so are very different (Han 2014, 16-17). For instance, many Greenpeace-led coalitions represent what Gould et al. (2004, 90) call "short-term marriages of convenience" and fall short of Cole and Foster's (2001, 164) concept of "movement fusion" (Agyeman 2005, 4). As one campaigner suggested, "There is a kind of inconsistency in the Greenpeace approach, because they are always trying to make the effort to drive the problem forward and address it in a global way…but they can't hang around and follow through."[117] Campaigners referred to this approach as "hit and run"—where Greenpeace finds a community that exemplifies their international campaign at the local scale, makes a big "media splash" and then moves on. According to Finaldi,

> So, here's how it goes in Greenpeace, its another one of those everyday of the week things where people say 'have we done enough, do we move to the next big shiny object' and I don't say that in a negative way at all. The role of the organization is to be on the cutting edge and to make the right decisions to move forward. Probably about half the time the forward movement is too soon… And so being a Greenpeace partner is a very tricky endeavor that one doesn't take lightly…maybe we abandoned them (communities) at the wrong moment—its just hard when so many people depend on you and suddenly you are not there anymore.[118]

While a 'hit and run' approach may result in certain discrete victories and media attention for grassroots activists, it seldom empowers them. For instance, Greenpeace has a history of seeking out local stories that flesh out their campaign messaging, "but not necessarily

[117] Author interview with Madeleine Cobbing, November 2017
[118] Author interview with Lisa Finaldi, November 2017

making the investment to help that community be the story and doing the work in and of itself."[119] Such critiques are not unique to Greenpeace, as numerous environmental justice organizations have also cited "opportunism, racism, classism, and a low or no value ascribed to community-level impacts" when it comes to forming coalitions with "big green groups" (Ramos, et al. 2002). According to one such EJ activist:

> Generally, the large mainstreams are dismissive, condescending and not too embracing of EJ and just treat it as a token in the room…it comes down to, what is the organizational culture, what is the organization makeup, as far as diversity, class and gender. That has a big impact on coalition and alliances, I think a lot of groups are recognizing, at least more grassroots ones, we are going to have to work with the big groups in order to progress, but we still have not figured out how exactly we are going to do this.[120]

Indeed, forming coalitions with influential TENGOs is often tactically necessity due to the influence and resources at their disposal. Thus, environmental justice organizations have created principles, such as the Principles of Environmental Justice, the Jemez Principles, the Principles of Working Together, and Principles for Alliance with Green Groups to help guide more *just* collaborations between them. Although a full discussion of these principles is beyond the scope of this section, the core values reflect a commitment to frontline communities speaking for themselves, working from the ground-up, and respecting the different cultural, languages, and political histories of the various communities committed to addressing environmental justice (Principals of Environmental Justice, 1991).

Greenpeace was a participant at the First People of Color Environmental Justice Leadership Summit in 1991 and a signature to the Bali Principles in 2002.[121] However,

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[119] Author interview with Lisa Finaldi, November 2017
[120] Author interview with Ahmina Maxey, February 2016.
[121] The Bali Principles references a Johannesburg resolution between representatives of people's movements and TENGOs to build an international climate justice movement based on principles adopted

according to Tan, "it took a lot to actually even get the senior management of Greenpeace to even vaguely understand what we were talking about back then…I would contest whether Greenpeace, as an institution, has a very strong understanding of what it means today."[122] Indeed, although climate justice is now a signature campaign of Greenpeace, to what degree the organization should work with environmental and social justice organizations is still subject to external and internal debate. As Hernandez remarks,

> You also have to be mindful of the tactical alliances and where they diverge, because, remember, Greenpeace has a mission and it is really about advancing the defense of the environment, first and foremost, and it is important that we guard against mission creep. We can work with other groups tactically…but even internally, this is a debate, there are people in Greenpeace that are uncomfortable campaigning on EJ or climate justice, just the word justice opens up a can of worms.[123]

Since Greenpeace failed to maintain its alliance with seal hunters in Newfoundland, it has struggled to walk the 'membership tightrope' that would allow NROs to engage in social justice issues and share campaign credit without alienating or diluting its support base. For example, although Greenpeace is no longer against indigenous seal hunts, according to Greenpeace's litigation council for climate justice, Kristin Capser, "some of our supporters would kill us. They think any hunting is wrong, but we decided that we need to heal these wounds, we really respect these communities, we are on the same frontlines with them on climate change."[124] Campaigners also suggested that the hiring of Kumi Naidoo as Greenpeace International's new executive director, and subsequent incorporation of social justice into the organizations mission statement, represented a

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from the Environmental Justice Leadership Summit in 1991 (See International Climate Justice Network 2002).

[122] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016.

[123] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.

[124] Author interview with Kristin Casper, February 2016.

turning point for the organization in this regard.[125] However, more skeptical observers attributed the organization's maneuver to the momentum climate justice discourse was gaining internationally and Greenpeace's failure to achieve its climate change goals vis-à-vis an "inside-the-Beltway" strategy.

Specifically, despite spending a collective half billion dollars to advance and influence the Waxman-Markey bill in the U.S., "big Greens," such as Greenpeace, were out maneuvered by industry on a grand scale (Klien 2014, 228). According to Skocpol, the major flaw with the strategy of influential environmental organizations vis-à-vis Waxman-Markey was the absence of a mass movement *applying pressure from below* (2013). For instance, because the bill centered on cap-and-trade legislation, which places a disproportionate burden of climate mitigation on marginalized communities, 'big Greens' lacked the support of environmental justice organizations. Reflecting on the lack of serious engagement with the grassroots organization during this time, Tan remarked,

> There's a different way to do this and we believe we can beat these same industries if we fight them on the front lines…community by community, block by block, facility by facility, in places where we hold power. Where we are able to organize people power in our neighborhoods, to push on them effectively, like stopping their incinerator proposals, the expansion of their refineries, construction of their pipelines, renewal of mining permits and winning. This is where we should be concentrating our organizing effort and our resource investments.[126]

Hernandez suggested that after the failure to pass the Waxman-Markey bill, Greenpeace's climate justice campaign represented key lessons the organizations had learned. In his words, "for us to win this global battle (climate change), we need to collaborate with other movements and we need to be a people power organization, not just a lone-ranger,

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[125] When Kumi Naidoo became executive director in 2009, he was not only the first African Executive Director—"a symbol that the pressure group no longer belongs to the developed world"--but he also brought with him a focus on environmental justice and a desire to work better in coalition, which was occasionally met with criticism (Moss 2009)
[126] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016.

vanguard, we actually need to have people powering our campaigns."[127] A number of campaigners suggested the climate justice campaign in the Philippines was indicative of how Greenpeace was actively improving its method of frontline community engagement and "the most visible expression of how we are adopting the [environmental justice] principles."[128] However, the way Greenpeace has framed climate justice in this campaign appears deeply influenced by their historical focus on legal action, corporate responsibility, and policy change, often at odds with what is being articulated at the grassroots.

Climate Justice for Whom?

Unlike the end of the 20th century, when Greenpeace International was against forming coalitions with environmental justice organizations, as environmental justice discourses have grown, so has the interest of once reluctant TENGOs (Agyeman 2014, 38). Nevertheless, activists still debate the causes of environmental injustices (e.g Pellow 2007; Cole and Foster 2001; Bullard 2005) and consequently continue to articulate different, and sometime competing, justice claims (Schlosberg 2004; 2007; 2013; Harrison 2011; 1996). Therefore, despite the growing number of coalitions between influential TENGOs and grassroots organizations, we must continue to examine which actors are able to assert which kinds of justice claims and how certain assertions find support whereas others do not (Sikor and Newell 2014, 152; Sen 2009). Indeed, as Pellow and Brulle illustrate, the hierarchical dynamics between the U.S. "mainstream environmental movement" and the U.S. environmental justice movement bear striking

[127] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.
[128] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.

resemblance to TENGOs in the global North facilitating and dominating transnational discussion and actions around global environmental justice issues today (Pellow and Brulle 2005, 185).

For example, although the increasing salience of climate justice issues can serve as the basis for transnational coalitions (see Keck and Sikkink 1999), many of these are actually short-term and opportunistic, where organizations galvanize around specific and well-defined campaigns in limited contexts (Sandler and Pezzullo 2007, 318). Indeed, Anna Abad explained the rationale for forming coalitions with local organizations vis-à-vis Greenpeace's climate justice campaign: "(1) it helps legitimize how climate injustice is not just a domestic issue, but a global one; (2) our message reaches a wider audience and network; and (3) it helps bring the critical mass for supporting the campaign."[129] However, when asked what climate justice means, the majority of staff suggested the concept was still being debated within the organization. According to Casper, "we are really struggling with that…climate justice has a deep meaning and means different things in different places." However, Casper acknowledged that Greenpeace's efforts centered in the Philippines were based on particular understanding of justice—"we are using climate justice more in the sense of climate change and seeking justice in the courts, so its primarily in terms of remedying a harm, a tort way of thinking about justice."[130] Staff familiar with the campaign suggested the rationale for framing justice in terms of "climate liability" not only played to Greenpeace's strengths, such as its legal

[129] Author interview with Anna Abad, Climate Justice Campaigner, Greenpeace Philippines, March 2016
[130] Author interview with Kristin Casper, February 2016.

unit and success with corporate engagement, but that such a strategic framework resonated with key Greenpeace fundraising NROs (e.g. the US and Germany).

Indeed, Greenpeace's climate justice work is largely animating by the polluter pays principle, which, according to Naidoo, seeks to remedy how "companies that have made huge amounts of money based on exploiting carbons should carry the responsibility for supporting communities who are paying the price of climate change."[131] The companies currently under investigation include Chevron, ExxonMobil, BP, Royal Dutch Shell, and ConocoPhillips, which are responsible for the majority of global CO2 and methane emissions in the earth's atmosphere, according to a study by Richard Heede (2014). In Greenpeace's words,

> Climate Justice seeks to challenge the influential role of the big polluters, alongside their host governments, for refusing to take responsibility for climate change...just like the successful campaign in the US and elsewhere against the big tobacco companies...the Climate Justice campaign seeks to hold the big polluters to account for their contribution to the climate crisis.[132]

For instance, the Philippines is one of the word's most vulnerable countries vis-à-vis climate change (Kreft, et al. 2017), one of the least responsible for CO2 and methane emissions, and home to many of the companies listed above. Thus leading the climate justice campaign out of the Greenpeace Philippines NRO lends the campaign not only legitimacy, but also useful optics.

Furthermore, the Philippines' constitution is unique in that it grants citizen standing to pursue a writ of *Kalikasan,* a legal remedy for protecting and advancing "the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of

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[131] Author interview Kumi Naidoo, March 2016.
[132] See Greenpeace 2017b

nature."[133] Seizing on this opportunity, Greenpeace reached out to Derek Cabe in 2015, a community organizer in Bataan, home to both fishing villages and a large number of coal power plants, to petition the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines.[134] According to lawyers associated the campaign, the primary goal of filing the petition was "to put the investor-owned companies with historical responsibilities on notice."[135] Yet when asked if this was an example of a Greenpeace climate justice campaign in the Philippines or a Filipino-led campaign, which Greenpeace was supporting, one Greenpeace lawyer remarked:

> Its difficult to explain what climate justice is to the general public…it is quite complex to explain to the ordinary Filipino…The process of converting them and getting them on board with a campaign takes a while, there is a lot of investment that we had to put into...We didn't want to hog the lime light, they are the human face of climate change…launching or fighting a case to them is something that they fear, they don't want to go to jail, they don't want lawyers to go after them because really, they don't have any understanding of the legal process.[136]

However, Cabe was very clear about her community's rationale for joining the fight with Greenpeace and the injustice her community was experiencing. "We are linking up with organizations at the national level because we want our issues to be magnified…we are losing our homes, we're losing our *livelihoods* we are dying because of coal plants…they have the resources, they have the lawyers, we don't."[137]

Nevertheless, because many TENGOs believe that addressing climate change is so urgent, they often bracket social variables that actors like Cabe underscore and instead, "craft environmental agreements, legislation, or regulations that only address one

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[133] See section 16, Article II of the Philippines constitution.
[134] Part of the rationale for reaching out to this community, according to a legal and political advisor at Greenpeace Southeast Asia, is that they have studies that can be cited showing adverse impacts of climate change.
[135] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace lawyer, March 2016
[136] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace lawyer, March 2016
[137] Author interview with Derek Cabe, November 2017.

problem, or a narrowly defined set of problems, at a time (Downey 2015, 3; see also Bullard 2005)." Similar to Greenpeace's strategy for "detoxing fashion," this incremental approach risks leaving intact the power structures that produce environmental injustice in the first place and omits the more transformative approaches for realizing justice (Pellow 2016, 4). According Tan, Greenpeace's strategy in the Philippines is indicative of the "policy-based organizations that were representing our interests at the various COP 21 processes, under the umbrella of climate justice, that did not represent the grassroots or base-building organizations." Although he acknowledged some were good allies, "they really do not represent the democratic interests of these communities or are not based in these communities on the front lines of EJ and climate justice issues."[138] This was a common refrain by the It Takes Root Delegation during the COP 21 Convention on Climate Chance in Paris of 2015. In their own words:

> In order to achieve the policy shifts we need for the long-term, even the best inside strategies will not be strong enough if we are not organizing powerful, grassroots pressure on the outside as well. There is a promising, growing unity of social movements at the global scale led by the people most impacted by climate change, who are pressuring governments for more meaningful action, often while implementing their own real solutions on the ground and planning for how vulnerable communities can best survive severe impacts of climate change.[139]

Similarly, Cabe reflected Greenpeace's support in the following way,

> I am not just a campaigner, I am a community organizer and we have to organize the front lines…if they do not fight it, they will not survive, so it is very important for us to capacitate them, to empower them…That's why, in my relationship with Greenpeace and other big networks, I always ask them, can you provide us training for the community? To do research and study, because you have the resources and we don't.[140]

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[138] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016
[139] See Grassroots Global Justice Alliance 2017
[140] Author interview with Derek Cabe, November 2017.

However, because "citizen science" is seldom admissible in court, cultivating such capacities is not a priority for Greenpeace. [141] As Finaldi recalled about working with frontline communities fighting incinerators and incorporating community knowledge into Greenpeace's messaging, "the scientist at Greenpeace would say, 'we absolutely can't say that…we just don't have the science to say that.' I spent too much time in meetings where people got twisted about what they could and could not say about stuff like that."[142] Although Cabe acknowledged that given her role as a petitioner, any research her community would be able to generate would be inadmissible in court, she also claimed the human rights petition is not her community's primary focus.

For Cabe's community, because climate change is already decreasing fishing stocks and exacerbating floods associated with typhoon season, they are trying to develop alternative sources of livelihoods. Moreover, the community fears the local coal plants are largely responsible for local spikes in cancer, asthma and skin rashes. However, because the burden of proof of establishing such connections with the Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR) is on the accuser, her community needs training in rudimentary water and air testing so they can make progress on this urgent local problem. As Cabe suggests,

> How can we study the pollution, the amount of pollution that the coal plants are spewing in our seas, in our water, in our air? We don't have those expertise and they [Greenpeace] have those expertise and resources, that's what I relay to them…they are only willing to provide us with the expertise of the organization, like filing charges against the agencies who are involved in providing permits…They do not appreciate the painstaking organizing of communities, because it cannot be

[141] As Ottinger argues, the capacity to conduct citizen science not only includes participation in the analysis of the local problems and the development of solutions, but also "supporting proactive knowledge production in affected communities" (2013; 2011; Corburn 2005; cited in Agyeman et al. 2016, 327).
[142] Author interview with Lisa Finaldi, November 2017

> timeframed. It cannot happen in three months, or in a one-year program or in an activity. They are well-meaning, but it is their work.[143]

Cabe's unfulfilled requests bear striking resemblance to the support Greenpeace USA *did* provide anti-incineration coalition partners, who became empowered not only by scientific studies, but also by participating in evidence gathering and related strategies (Agyeman et al. 2016, 324). Moreover, former Toxics campaigners suggested dealing with legal obstacles associated with incorporating community knowledge into campaigns was surmountable. However, the hardest "sell" to Greenpeace International was the impact this would have on the narrative and messaging of the campaign. Specifically, that once you start to elevate the role of jobs, health, and justice, the focus on corporate responsibility, the environment, and ultimately Greenpeace, becomes diluted.[144]

The need to negotiate various organizational interests and strategies while working in coalitions is to be expected and the tradeoffs of doing so may simply be the concern of those wanting to join forces with Greenpeace's climate justice work. Furthermore, Greenpeace campaigners appeared sensitive to inadvertently co-opting the climate justice frame from movements like that of Cabe. As Casper remarks, "we don't want to be seen in any way as taking away the power of the word climate justice for other communities and people."[145] However, due to their size and influence, Greenpeace exercises a considerable amount of power when articulating and advancing the principals, goals and strategies of the coalitions in which they are involved and, regardless of good intentions, often force grassroots organization to operate within them (see Bob 2005). Moreover, the

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[143] Author interview with Derek Cabe, November 2017.
[144] Author interview with Lisa Finaldi, November 2017
[145] Author interview with Kristin Casper, February 2016.

influence that Greenpeace wields is not limited to relatively less powerful coalition partners, but also extends to large foundations and other funding sources.

For instance, although the majority of NROs rely on individual donations, Greenpeace International still receives funding from large, albeit non-corporate, foundations. Furthermore, a number of funders I spoke with pointed out that affluent donors, located primarily in the global North, are more comfortable not only giving to larger organizations like Greenpeace, but also with their approach. As one fundraiser remarked, going through Greenpeace International can be beneficial for foundations interested in large global projects and that value a certain degree of confidentiality. Greenpeace International "is unique in the sense that we have a lot of existing relationships with foundations and are known to engage in projects where we cannot divulge information…so foundations tend to respect that."[146] She further claimed that part of Greenpeace's strategy with its climate justice work was "putting the word out there and educating funders on the opportunities…Greenpeace can influence foundations on what they are giving to…That's a very unique position to be in, if you're a smaller organization, you might not have the platform to do that." As a result, Greenpeace campaigners are optimistic about the future of climate justice litigation and already have plans to replicate the current Philippines campaign in Fiji, Nepal and elsewhere. And although climate litigation continues to be a useful strategy in the global push for climate justice, litigation has proven insufficient in and of itself for achieving policy reform, let alone environmental justice (Cole and Foster; Jha 2017). As I explore in Chapter Five,

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[146] Author interview with anonymous Funding Coordinator for Greenpeace

absent community empowerment in the face of strong corporations and weak states, policy and legal victories are often short lived and incomplete.

Conclusion

Greenpeace representatives suggest the organization has come a long way since the mid 90's, when Thilo Bode frequently reminded his staff that, "We are an environmental group, not a social justice group."[147] However, its organizational structure continues to result in tensions with its resurgent commitment to social justice. For instance, environmental justice groups have suggested that when forming alliances with large organizations like Greenpeace, the former ought to "respect the right of the community groups to set the agenda, including identifying the problem, determining the goals and defining success," which is in direct tension with Greenpeace's top-down decision-making structure. Moreover, Greenpeace's use of professional activists that "parachute in" and mobilize coalition members to their shared ends is also contrary to the principle that "people from the outside should not come in and think that there is no leadership in the grassroots community. The people in the community should lead their own community and create a legacy by teaching young people to be leaders" (First People of Color Leadership Summit, 1991).

According to newly appointed Executive Director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Yeb Saño, the above criticisms are well-known within the organization, and as a result,

> It has become essential for us to work with the grassroots, not only for us to be free from criticism, not only for us to be absolved from the accusations that we wear a parachute and drop into places and do our action there. I think the more important realization is our mission is to

[147] Author interview with Annie Leonard, March 2016

> actually change the world in a positive way and that's something you cannot really do without working with those most affected by the issues we care about.[148]

While the human rights case Greenpeace is pursuing in the Philippines is unique in this regard, given that the petitioners are primarily made up of frontline communities, it is too soon to tell if the campaign will incorporate insights from Greenpeace's accomplishments and missteps in forming such coalitions.

Beyond its climate justice work, a number of Greenpeace campaigners and managers also pointed to how the organizations "New Operating Model" (NOM) represented a broader attempt to address the organization's key criticisms and limitations. Specifically, around 2010, Greenpeace staff began to question the centralization of power in Amsterdam and the limitations associated with changing the behavior of individual actors like governments and corporations. According to former International toxics campaigner Bev Thorpe, "Greenpeace realized that you have to keep the organization relevant in the 21st century, and to do that, you can't have a handful of people sitting in Amsterdam, coming up with campaign strategies."[149] Thus in 2016, Greenpeace developed a new strategy (known as the Framework) to guide their work over the next decade.[150] Although light on specifics, the Framework stresses the need to "shift the way power is distributed" within the organization. For instance, campaigners frequently referenced the discrepancies between the location of high fund-raising NROs, such as Germany and the US, and that of the world's most pressing environmental issues. As one

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[148] Author interview with Yeb Saño, February 2016.
[149] Author interview with Bev Thorpe, Greenpeace Canada, November 2017
[150] According to Greenpeace, "The Framework was developed through a comprehensive and participatory bottom-up process that involved volunteers, activists, partners, staff and board members from across Greenpeace globally" (see Greenpeace 2016 Annual report)

campaigner put it, "the key battles of our time are not happening in Europe, the money and the power is in Europe, but if you want to take a stand on coal, you have to focus on India and China."[151]

Therefore, the need to distribute resources to these regions compelled Greenpeace to begin implementing the so-called "NOM," or New Operating Model. Although the particulars of the NOM are not exactly clear, even to a number of senior Greenpeace staff, many of the key features pertain to devolving power from Greenpeace International to NROs.[152] For instance, NROs now have the opportunity to "pitch projects" to Greenpeace International executive directors, who meet annually to decide on Greenpeace's "global priories."[153] Although NROs will be responsible for the development of projects, if approved by Amsterdam, NROs must ensure projects meet the organization's objectives as defined in the global strategic framework. "So that is one way to keep the global discipline on campaigning, and Greenpeace has been very good about campaigns in various countries having the same position and not much doing your own thing, going alone" claims Hernandez.[154] By 2013, Greenpeace reported that 16 different projects previously led from Amsterdam had become "distributed campaigns…now fully led by national offices," including their current flagship climate justice campaign in the Philippines.[155]

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[151] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace Netherlands Campaigner
[152] Author interview with Yeb Saño, February 2016.
[153] Author interview with Von Hernandez, formed Executive Director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, March 28, 2016.
[154] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.
[155] See Mobilisation Lab 2017

Although a number of campaigners also suggested the NOM was going to redistribute power downward—from Greenpeace the institution to supporters around the globe, the organization has yet to provide details about how this operates in practice. Indeed, now as Executive Director of Greenpeace USA, Annie Leonard remarks, "I don't think the NOM entails working with local communities…What the NOM did is distribute power from Amsterdam around the world within Greenpeace, but that doesn't necessarily lead to working more with allies."[156] Naidoo himself acknowledged the restructuring was largely a response to a lack of democratic decision making *within* Greenpeace and that the NOM was not necessarily emblematic of a shift to working closer with the grassroots. However, referencing his desire to move Greenpeace back towards working at the intersection of environmental and social problems, he remarked,

> Sadly, change takes longer than one would like…For me, one of the challenges was the pace of change, so trying to convince people to move faster was not always easy…What I have been pushing is not going for quick fixes or instant gratification and one of the things that I brought to Greenpeace is this idea that the struggle for justice is a marathon, not a sprint, and we should not be going for the fastest rate of victory when, in fact, that victory might be shallow, because we moved a bit too fast maybe, in claiming victory…and not going for structural and systemic change.[157]

Kumi's frustration bears remarkable similarity to the struggle between the mechanics and the mystics within Greenpeace in the 1970s and how the organization's inability to combine its trademark style of direct actions with mass participation compromised its ability to develop into the movement its founders envisioned (decentralized, nonhierarchical, participatory, and consensus driven) (Zelko 318).

Indeed, as the organization continued to expand its international agenda and open offices beyond its first headquarters in Vancouver, the Greenpeace of today bears little

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[156] Author interview with Annie Leonard, March 2016
[157] Author interview Kumi Naidoo, March 2016.

resemble to the prefigurative movement its founders originally envisioned. Due in large part to the influence of McTaggart, Greenpeace has not set itself up to be a movement that necessarily empowers its coalition partners or membership base. Rather, they are committed to achieving high profile environmental ends with mass "membership" and coalitions representing key *instruments* in that process (Jordan and Maloney 1997, 189). While Greenpeace USA's antitoxic work represents a telling contrast to what McTaggart, and latter Bode, saw as Greenpeace's key strengths, according to Zelko, the organizations that went on to embrace a bottom-up organizing network structure (e.g. GAIA, IPEN, and Greenaction) did so "only by renouncing the kind of political influence that groups such as Greenpeace attained" (2013, 318). However, I investigate this claim in the following chapter through a deeper examination of the creation of GAIA and what is at stake in Greenpeace and GAIA's respective approaches to perusing justice in the Philippines in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR

Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA): Zero Waste Grounded in the Grassroots

Greenpeace has been successful in establishing prominence as an "international environmental powerhouse" and a pioneer in fighting industries that dump, bury and burn waste and toxics globally. Its success as a transnational actor is partly due to its hierarchical organizational structure, high-profile direct actions, and cultivation of a name brand that appeals to donors and volunteers worldwide (Zelko 2013). Why, then, did prominent members of Greenpeace break off and form GAIA, adopting an entirely different approach to transnational organizing? Does GAIA's approach empower frontline communities, and if so, how? In addition, what, if any, are the limitations associated with such an approach to translocal organizing? This chapter investigates these questions by drawing on observations from GAIA's global and regional meetings (in Sophia, Bulgaria; Paris, France and Manila, Philippines), in-depth interviews conducted with staff and affiliated organizations, and a variety of GAIA documents and news articles. It argues that inequality in the siting of waste facilities is symptomatic of complex structural injustices associated with power differentials, lack of respect, and corruption tied up in local *and* global processes. Therefore, GAIA has chosen to support local scale organizing for resisting the unfair movement and disposal of waste globally, from the ground-up. This chapter argues further that attention to GAIA's strategy sheds

light on some of the neglected limitations of the top-down approach selected by Greenpeace, as well as the neglected potential inherent in grassroots approaches to transnational organizing.

In developing this argument, this chapter builds on insights from theoretical literature on transnational organizing and justice, and addresses ongoing debates about the importance of domestic capacity building through demonstrating that the *process* by which coalitions cooperate is as important as any short-term victories they achieve. Specifically, I bridge insights from scholarship that has examined the limitations of "vanguardist" approaches to transnationalism (Tattersall 2010, 168; Juris 2005; Escobar 2008) with recent work that looks at the significance of strategies that *organize* versus *mobilize* (Han 2014; Hansen 2012) environmental activists for empirically examining the significance of the "prefigurative" (Polletta 2002) and transformative (Cole and Foster 2001) potential of GAIA. Although scholars often study community organizing in domestic contexts, I contend organized grassroots communities are also relevant for building a long-term global environmental justice movement from the ground-up. However, because the primary unit of analysis for studying transnational coalitions tends to be the nation-state and international institutions, there is a logical tendency to frame coalition success vis-à-vis *transactional* outcomes, such as passing policy, prevailing in a specific campaign, or closing a polluting facility. This approach neglects the *capabilities* individuals and communities need to not only resist unfair distributions of environmental ills, but also for confronting the social, cultural, political and economic processes that

animate them (Holland 2017, 396; Schlosberg 2010; Pelling 2011; Schulz and Siriwardane 2015).

Strategies that organize and mobilize frontline communities are often complementary, yet there are also important and understudied power dynamics associated with their use in transnational coalitions. For instance, when forming alliance with transnational environmental NGOs (TENGOs), grassroots environmental justice organizations frequently cite a need for *more* community-based research, skill sharing and leadership development that foster the necessary ownership and capacity building for long-term structural change (Hansen 2012, 36). Unfortunately, grassroots organizations and local activists in the global South typically do not enjoy the same ability to choose their coalition partners as do influential and well-resourced TENGOs. Moreover, the "demand" for assistance from TENGOs outweighs "supply," giving the former's disproportionate power in selecting which grassroots organizations to support and making it more likely that influential TENGOs will select those organizations that already appear to reflect their existing values or interests (Bob 2005). Although grassroots organizations typically take whatever outside support they can, forming coalitions often entails significant "costs" on their part—such as altering key movement characteristics, issue focus, and strategies—to meet the expectations and preferences of supporting TENGOs (Bob 2005, 4-6).

I develop this set of insights by investigating the importance of translocalism and the tradeoffs between top-down coalition structures that mobilize actors and bottom-up structures that organize them. I employ translocal framework in order to assess the

connections between the local, national and transnational scales on which networks operates, while not giving any scale *a priori* emphasis. The translocal framework used provides leverage for understanding TENGOs like GAIA that represent complex grassroots network, which exchange ideas, knowledge, practices, materials and resources across sites and whose activities blur the relationship between multiple scales (McFarlane 2009). This approach both challenges and enriches previous work on environmental justice that has tended to focus on how waste's *distribution* was associated with racial, class and related socio-economic variables at the local (Cole and Foster 2001), national (Bullard, Mohai and Saha 2007; Pellow 2002) and transnational (Pellow 2007) scales in isolation. For instance, instead of focusing on factors associated with discrete wins and losses, the analysis developed here focuses on the process of bottom-up organizing. Specifically, how it relates to the value local stakeholders associate with movement building, local empowerment, the ownership associated with implementing sustainable alternatives, and challenging the structural roots of the environmental injustice associated with waste at multiple scales (see Bosi and Uba 2009, 413; McAdams 1999; Hansen 2012).[158]

I argue that the success of bottom-up TENGOs in general, and GAIA specifically, is best gauged in its ability to function as anchor organizations that organize and build local power, *while concomitantly* scaling up this work for more policy-orientated campaigns at the regional, national, and transnational scale. Although this process is relatively time-consuming due to the difficulties associated with supporting community-

[158] Although numerous definition exists, Chris Crass's description of movement coalitional work across building is useful here: "a polices based in grassroots organizing, participatory democracy, differences, creative direct action, organization building, strategy rooted in a vision for a better world" (Dixon 2013, 2)

based initiatives, building consensus, and securing funding for such work (Mansuri and Rao 2013), from the perspective of frontline communities, these tradeoff are often necessary for achieving long-term change. To support this position, I begin with a brief history of GAIA, focusing on how the network originated and how its members have articulated strategies for combating the injustices associated with waste. I pay particular attention to GAIA's changing ideas about what constitutes success in theory and in the practice of environmental justice. I then draw a conceptual distinction between organizing and mobilizing (Han 2014) to bring attention to the significance of GAIA's translocal structure and how it compares to the top-down approach of influential TENGOs like Greenpeace. I argue that GAIA's support for local organizing is critical for empowering frontline communities to move from fighting an injustice to implementing just alternatives and policies over the long-term. Next, I provide a more nuanced foundation for this claim by examining how GAIA's support for waste workers implementing Zero Waste solutions helps mitigate the latter's disproportionate exposure to waste and related issues of disrespect, livelihoods and power relations. The concluding section considers how GAIA's cultivation of indigenous knowledge, solidarity, and the direct involvement of frontline communities in pursuing global movement might help us think about transnational coalition success in a different light.

The Founding of GAIA

In my interviews with GAIA members, I encountered two narratives regarding its creation, both of which involved Greenpeace. From one perspective, GAIA's founding members anticipated an incompatibility with Greenpeace's top-down campaign model

and wanted to pursue a more sustainable approach to fighting waste incinerators. From another perspective, shared by many current members of GAIA, the organization was created as a response to the void left after a decision on the part of Greenpeace to scale back, if not abandon, work on toxics and incineration. Nevertheless, both narratives underscore the influence of Greenpeace, and specifically the influence of Annie Leonard, who is currently director of Greenpeace USA and Von Hernandez, now Regional Director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia (GPSEA). Indeed, despite varying accounts regarding GAIA's genesis, the two narratives overlap in terms of the network learning from and building on the achievements *and* shortcomings of Greenpeace's model of transnational activism.

As noted in Chapter Three, the environmental campaign priorities and strategies of Greenpeace are constantly being reevaluated, which is reflected in one of its animating principles, "no permanent allies or enemies" (Greenpeace 2016). This philosophy, which is also reflected in its typical one to three year campaign span, has helped Greenpeace work effectively with and against polluting industries and governments in a constantly changing transnational NGO landscape. However, it has also adversely affected the trust and commitment necessary for forming alliances with grassroots organizations in the long-term.[159] For instance, speaking about Greenpeace's departure from work on waste, one GAIA activists remarked:

> A lot of [GAIA] members originally worked with Greenpeace and there was some frustration with how they supported a lot of anti-incineration work organizing early on, but then there was a shift and people felt that it was just dropped. I think [GAIA] members value organizations *that stick with the*

[159] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016.

> *community*…you know, you are supporting folks and than all of a sudden, because you don't have money for something anymore, you just drop those relationships?[160]

One of the first lessons learned by GAIA activists, then, was that in order to continue effectively fighting the unfair practices associated with waste incineration in the long-term, a more *sustainable* and *dedicated* coalition was needed—one that could withstand the vicissitudes of donor interests and, relatedly, TENGO campaign priorities.

As founding member Pawel Glusynski remarked during the time of GAIA's creation, "Greenpeace was stepping out from anti-incineration campaigns toward other priorities. But everybody felt that we still needed coordination and support at the global level as many countries were still facing the same problems (with incinerators)."[161] Thus, on June 2000, anti-incineration activists put forward the idea for forming GAIA during an international clean production training in Lowell, Massachusetts. A joint statement issued by participating individuals and organizations reflected the vision for GAIA, which called upon governments "to halt proposals for new incinerators and phase out existing incinerators. Instead we call for the implementation of production and waste management systems, which are based on the principles of clean production and environmental justice."[162] Mirroring a strategy increasingly employed by environmental justice organizations today, the founding members collectively chose to focus on a *specific* issue (waste) rooted in particular communities, while concomitantly emphasizing the similarities of such struggles and their relationship to global processes (Faber 2005, 55).

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[160] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.
[161] Author interview Pawel Glusynski, March 2017.
[162] Emails obtained by author after interview with Pawel Glusynski, March 2017.

When GAIA was officially formed at the end of 2000, during a conference outside of Johannesburg, South Africa, the participants hailed from 23 different countries and represented a number of preexisting national and regional networks opposing waste incineration and supporting just alternatives.[163] Annie Leonard coordinated the agenda and goals via email as those who planed to attend had yet to convene in a central location. According to these emails, the goal of the inaugural meeting was to reaffirm the creation of GAIA as a global movement against waste incineration, foster relationships between allies, and capitalize on the experience and knowledge of the over 60 participating members.[164] To these ends, the meeting had two key axes: the first consisted of thematic workshops that built on the expertise of GAIA members. Specifically, participants focused on the health impacts of incineration, lead by Pat Costner (Greenpeace USA); Zero Waste alternatives with Dr. Paul Connett (chemist and Zero Waste consultant) and Von Hernandez (Greenpeace Philippines); waste issues specific to "Southern" countries with Bobby Peek (GroundWork, South Africa); and international treaties (e.g. Basel, POPs, Bamko) with Jim Puckett (Basel Action Network), to name a few.

The workshops provided opportunities for participants to learn and exchange information about issues that concerned their local and regional work, but also animated the second axis of the meeting, which centered on articulating the collective strategies and goals of the network. Themes that emerged out of these conversations included: identifying global entities "pushing" incinerators in member countries (e.g. the World Bank, U.S. Government); discussing actions for targeting and resisting them; developing

[163] The meeting coincided with negotiations that would become the bases of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (GAIA 2010).
[164] Emails obtained by author after interview with Pawel Glusynski, March 2017.

information needed to support local campaigns (e.g. lists of local consultants, case studies, economic and political contexts); examples of successful international collaboration and ideas for future GAIA global campaigns (e.g. promoting Zero Waste, coordinated protest letters and action alerts). At the end of GAIA's first official meeting, the "theory of change" that emerged was already quite different from that of Greenpeace. For instance, the decision to have a dual name for the network: Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance *and* Global Alliance for Incinerators *Alternatives* reflected a desire to embrace a more holistic approach to fighting the ills associated with waste management. More specifically, GAIA would aim to leverage the preexisting urgency of organizations fighting incinerators and experience implanting alternatives at the local scale for resisting the movement of waste and associated technologies globally.

GAIA would also aim to develop model waste management *solutions* that had wider application beyond any particular campaign or community—"basing solutions on local knowledge and respect for the environment *and* people" (GAIA 2010, emphasis added). To pursue this approach, participants at the global meeting decided to create a centralized coordinating body that could disseminate case studies, expert knowledge, stories, funding, and cooperative opportunities through regional and country based hubs, which could in turn adapt this information to local needs and circumstances, thereby fostering local capacity and community ownership. Indeed, they also decided that the goals and strategies of GAIA would materialize from the bottom-up, through efforts to generate consensus among representatives of regional nodes, grassroots organizations and frontline communities (GAIA 2010). As GAIA members continued to "learn by doing,"

they would also to develop the network's goals and strategies in subsequent local, regional and global meetings.[165]

Supporting, Rather Than Providing Leadership

Transnational advocacy networks allow those in positions of power, who possess expertise or resources, to aid less powerful actors on a global scale. This can entail using a more responsive legal infrastructure (e.g. boomerang pattern, Keck and Sikkink 1998), proximity to international organization (e.g. access to information, negotiations, and lobbying) (Sikkink and Smith 2002), and a more permissive protest environment, in terms of the rights and protections enjoyed by activists (Pellow 2007). Nevertheless, critics charge that the concentration of movements and networks in the global North is paternalistic, reproduces power asymmetries, and generates solutions that reflect the sensibilities of citizens and governments in this region (Pellow 2007, Sikkink and Smith 2002). Acknowledging such criticisms and a history of mistrust between environmental organization, GAIA's established their *coordinating* office in Berkeley to leverage its relatively privileged position to support the leadership role of activists and organizations based in the global South (Pellow 2007, 88). As Janet Redman of the Institute for Policy Studies remarks,

> What GAIA does that's amazing is that it really is a space for augmenting the struggles that people have identified *themselves* and are looking for very specific things…The exchange of knowledge, experience, tactics and strategies is incredibly powerful and its GAIA's staff that holds it all together. GAIA staff are certainly connectors that enable…but it's lead by the struggles themselves and that's where the power comes from in that network.[166]

[165] GAIA members would continue to conduct global meetings (Penang, Malaysia in 2003, Hondarriba, Spain 2007, Paris, France, 2015) and regional meetings in South Africa, Mexico and Belgium starting in 2006.
[166] Author interview with Janet Redman, Institute for Policy Studies, February 2016.

For instance, due to the experience and connections of Hernandez, GAIA was able to tap into the promising work of Waste Not Asia, an alliance of community-based activists from 12 Asia-Pacific nations opposing the expansion of waste incineration technologies. One reason Southeast Asia was being flooded with incinerator proposals during this time was that TENGOs based in the global North had successfully pressured their home governments and industries to reject incinerators, leading companies to relocate in other countries with lax regulations. Thus, the decision in 2001 to turn Waste Not Asia into the secretariat of GAIA not only gave the network a *strategic* foothold in Manila (the heart of the growing waste trade in Southeast Asia). It also reinforced the *principle* that communities on the frontlines of the waste crises, exacerbated by successful activism in the North, should lead the global work.

Building on the momentum of Philippine's ban on waste incinerators in 1999 (see Chapter Five) and the signing of the Stockholm Convention two years later, GAIA's first campaign pursued a typical TENGO approach in targeting World Bank practices.[167] Using a combination of leverage and accountability politics (Keck and Sikkink 1998), GAIA members put pressure on the World Bank to stop using "global North money" to fund the construction of incinerators in the global South. Although the campaign was partially successful in this regard, one of the key accomplishments was the solidarity and movement building that took place during the struggle.[168] During the process of this campaign, GAIA members continued to foster relationships and build connections with

[167] The Stockholm Convention went into effect in 2004. It seeks to eliminate the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and implicates incinerators in producing them (e.g. dioxin and furans) (See Stockholm Convention 2001)
[168] Regarding the campaigns success, "financing for incinerators did decrease significantly" (Author interview with Monica Wilson, GAIA Policy and Research Coordinator, February 2016.)

grassroots organizations that had already been engaged in incinerator fights in their communities for decades. This included building on the accomplishments of Goldman Prize recipients, Von Hernandez of the Philippines (2003), Yuyum Ismawati of Indonesia (2009), Rossano Ercolini of Italy (2013), Nohra Padilla of Colombia (2013) and Desmon D'sa of South Africa (2014), for their work on social justice and waste.[169] It became even clearer to GAIA staff that scaling up and supporting campaigns, with preexisting community experience and energy behind them, was essential for developing a global movement from the ground-up.[170]

Since its inception, GAIA has provided a number of seed grants and skill shares to grassroots organizing efforts, supported numerous municipal level waste incineration bans, passed Zero Waste legislation, and helped defeat more than 150 existing and proposed incinerators in 25 countries around the world (GAIA 2016). Although a more nuanced account of GAIA's accomplishments is beyond the scope of this chapter, in the following section I focus on its ability to successfully resist the construction of "waste-to-energy" facilities proposed by the company Innviron in Argentina, India, and the U.S.[171] I use this example to demonstrate the relationship between GAIA's translocal network, its focus on supporting local organizing, and how these elements relate to building a global environmental justice movement from the ground-up.

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[169] The Goldman environmental prize is the world's largest award honoring grassroots environmental activists

[170] Author interview with Monica Wilson, February 2016

[171] At "waste-to-energy" plants and at landfills, the biomass (e.g. paper, cardboard, food waste, grass clippings) and non-biomass materials (e.g. plastics and other synthetic petroleum based products) contained in municipal solid waste are burned to produce steam that generates electricity. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, "producing electricity is only one reason to burn MSW. Burning waste also reduces the amount of material that would probably be buried in landfills. Burning MSW reduces the volume of waste by about 87%" (EIA 2017).

Mobilizing versus Organizing

Organizing and mobilizing are often confused with one another despite a number of important distinctions. Organizing is decentralized, focused on fostering solidarity and aims to generate new *collective capacity* and human based resources (Han 2015, 15). Coalition organizing generally involves extensive technical training, supporting members' active involvement in assessing problems and implementing solutions, which in turn fosters local leadership, deep relationships, and solidarity (Han 2015, 16-17). Mobilizing, in contrast, is more centralized, works toward breadth, rather than depth, and therefore focuses on discrete transactional encounters with as many people as possible (Han 2015, 3). Coalition mobilizing strategies often include gathering petition signatures, having members turn out in large numbers for a protest event or simply adding an organizations name to a coalition list. Although mobilizers specialize in maximizing turnout and visual impact useful for leveraging policy change and changing industry practices, the centralized leadership associated with this approach can exclude less powerful coalition members from the strategy and goal articulation process, creating a number of potential tensions. As Han Remarks,

> Although both mobilizers and organizers may use outside strategies that depend on grassroots engagement for success, the ways in which they engage the grassroots are very different…Structurally, the work of mobilizing is usually centralized in the hands of a few leaders, while the work of organizing is distributed through a larger network of leaders (2015, 15).

With few exceptions, these structural and strategic differences have not received significant attention in studies of transnational activism, despite the ongoing tensions they foment between grassroots environmental justice organizations and the influential TENGOs with which they form coalitions (see Pastor et al. 2011; Hansen 2012).

For instance, in an open letter published by 1Sky Board of Directors on August 6, 2010, the organization articulated why the U.S. Congress has failed to pass meaningful climate legislation (see Caldwell 2016). A number of grassroots organizations, GAIA among them, provided a response to this letter, outlining an alternative explanation regarding the failures *they saw* with the "beltway strategy" of "mainstream" environmental organizations (e.g. 1Sky) over the past 10 years (Russell 2010).[172] For instance, the response to 1Sky claimed that due to a lack of movement building and significant engagement with the grassroots by "mainstream climate advocacy,"

> [A] decade of advocacy work, however well intentioned, migrated towards false solutions that hurt communities and compromised on key issues such as carbon markets and giveaways to polluters. These compromises sold out poor communities in exchange for weak targets and more smokestacks that actually prevent us from getting anywhere close to what the science—and common sense—tells us is required (Russell 2010).

However, a number of activists I spoke with suggested that addressing climate change through policy mechanisms usually entails bargaining with *multiple* stakeholders and that compromises are inevitable. Moreover, while many of these same individuals acknowledged the need for influential ENGOs to work closer with grassroots movements and admired their work, they also suggested grassroots organizing was simply a different approach to addressing a common goal.

In response to such rebuttals, the letter goes on to develop a multi-pronged critique of "mainstream" ENGO approaches to climate justice in the United States. In particular, how prominent climate activist organizations engage with grassroots organizations. First, it suggests mainstream ENGOs have confused their access to D.C. policy makers with the

[172] These organizations included Grassroots Global Justice, Indigenous Environmental Network, and GAIA—for full list see Russell, 2010.

power to influence them. Although ENGOs may have access to “face-time” with legislators, this is insignificant when compared to the corporate power and influence concentrated in this arena. Alternatively, grassroots environmental organizations are in a better position to confront corporations and politicians in their tribes, cities and villages where they have deeper relationships, knowledge, and resources to affect meaningful change. The letter argues because of the superior potential to realize environmental and social change at the local scale, a logical conclusion is to build coalition power by investing in grassroots movements.

The letter also contends that strategies focused primarily on CO_2 reduction, such as cap-and-trade and waste-to-energy facilities, advance false solutions that place a disproportionate burden on already marginalized communities and do little to address the root causes of climate change. For example, certain ENGOs, and industries, have promoted “waste-to-energy” incinerators as a ‘solution’ to climate change as they generate electricity by burning waste—purportedly releasing less CO_2 than coal, oil, and natural gas power plants. However, this calculation (e.g. Clean Power Plan) ignores the CO_2 associated with “biomass” incineration (as it is theoretically a “renewable” fuel source) and how the dioxin and fly ash incinerators produce disproportionately affects the health of marginalized communities in which they are typically located (Connett 2013). This is especially short-sited when one considers that the “waste” going into such facilities could be recycled, composted and repurposed, creating potential jobs, organic fertilizers (which sequester carbon), and cleaner environments for those most vulnerable to the ills associated with climate change.

Lastly, the letter suggests influential ENGOs often confuse density with depth and relatedly, mobilizing with organizing. For instance, “mainstream” ENGOs have tended to focus on mobilizing coalition members to sign petitions and show up for a protest event in order to project numerical power to law makers. This is an efficient strategy if the goal of a coalition is to win more short-term campaigns, as the ENGOs which lead them do not necessarily need to cultivate the civic skills, motivations, or capacities of the people from whom they are trying to solicit “buy-in.” Instead, “they focus on maximizing numbers by activating people who already have some latent interest (Han 2014, 8).” However, mobilizing strategies have done little to advance movement building and have resulted in an “anything is better than nothing” mentality regarding government action addressing climate change (Russell 2010).

Alternatively, “grassroots *organizing* is the process by which people in communities rally around a common cause, *acting on their own behalf* with allies and networks…often building new institutions needed to win a *lasting change”* (Russell 2010, emphasis added). Indeed, in contrast to mobilizers, organizers “try to transform the capacity of their members to be activists and leaders” themselves (Han 2014, 8). The letter to 1Sky argues that local scale organizing, and the durable power it fosters, will be essential for addressing climate change in a just and sustainable manner. Therefore, climate alliances need to *lead with the grassroots*, rather than the other way around. In the letter’s words, this will require:

> [B]uilding power from the bottom up. The strategy we emphasize includes: 1) Investing in grassroots action at frontline struggles to win the victories that build our power, improve our communities and *stop the corporations causing climate disruption*; 2) Prioritizing local organizing to build the resilient communities, economic alternatives, and political infrastructure that we need

> to *weather the climate crisis*; and, 3) Supporting solidarity with grassroots movements around the world, to link our struggles, and to craft policies and structures we need internationally to support solutions determined locally (Russell 2010).

The letter ends by connecting the above strategies to key victories (e.g. stopping the construction of new coal mines, preventing the proliferation of coal power plants and waste incinerators, and defeating "Big Oil") in frontline communities. However, the letters defines success as more than the ability to shutdown polluting facilities, but also as the capacity of alliances to build a leadership base locally to confront the structural sources of environmental injustices, not simply their consequences (Russell 2010). Specifically, they link the above successes in the ability of *community-based networks*, such as Indigenous Environmental Network, Energy Justice Network, and GAIA, to organize and harness the energy of grassroots communities, transforming vulnerable populations into more powerful actors, and building relationships with and between them. This alternative notion of success underscores a key distinction between organizing and mobilizing activists—the latter has the potential for individual and collective transformation in a way that mobilizing does not (Han 2014, 15).

The distinction between organizing and mobilizing comes into sharper focus with attention to differences in the ways TENGOs utilize digital technologies, such as social media and listservs. Despite obstacles associated with the "digital divide," the proliferation of cell phones with Internet access has allowed both TENGOs and grassroots organizations to expand their reach and influence.[173] However, groups like

[173] According to Pippa Norris, the digital divide refers to "a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing three distinct aspects. The *global divide* refers to the divergence of Internet access between industrialized and developing societies. The *social divide* concerns the gap between information rich and poor in each

Greenpeace have employed them primarily to mobilize activists, share campaign victories and stories via social media, sign petitions and raise funds, which help increase the organization's breadth. Conversely, GAIA has used digital technologies in order to connect, organize and cultivating leadership at local scale, thus increasing the organization's depth by eschewing the reliance on a centralized network node at the transnational scale. For example, GAIA coordinators use email, listservs, and Skype to link policy, industry, technical, organizational and the direct action questions of members to people in the network who would best be able to address them. According to one member, "it could take a person years to figure out which grassroots activists and national leaders are experts in the issue they are facing. With a phone call I was able to say, ok, you need to talk and connect with these five people."[174] Thus, GAIA coordinators are reluctant to call themselves leaders or organizers per se, as they rather see themselves as enablers that help scale up local organizing and connect grassroots movements.

For example, GAIA's translocal network was instrumental in stopping Innviron's numerous attempts to build gasification plants (i.e. waste incinerator) around the world in the past ten years. Beginning in 2008, Professor Raul Mantenegro, president of the grassroots ENGO, Fundacion para la Defensa del Ambiente (FUNAM), followed four failed waste gasification projects proposed by the company Innviron in Argentina.[175]

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nation. And finally within the online community, the *democratic divide* signifies the difference between those who do, and do not, use the panoply of digital resources to engage, mobilize, and participate in public life" (2001, 4).

[174] Author interview with Mike Ewall of Energy Justice Network, March 2016.

[175] Innviron, is one of the many gasification companies that have been created, dissolved or amended by Neil Williams, CEI of EnviroPower, starting with GPEC International in 1997 (CULV 2017).

Because gasification plants are expensive to build, create disincentives for waste reduction, and frequently fail to deliver on the economic promises of their developers, community activists and ENGOs met the proposals in Argentina with fierce resistance. According to Mantengro, "our experience in Argentina was that Innviron was not serious about completing projects, and that Innviron was willing to make misleading claims in order to secure contracts" (Kumarl 2013).[176] Montenegro remarked in a subsequent interview that Neil Williams and his company, Innviron, "never informs about their failed projects and rescinded contracts. Thus, local officials with poor information are delighted with their false offers" (CULV 2017). Although activists were ultimately successful in stopping multiple attempts by Innviron to build their facilities in Argentina, the company continued to follow the past of least resistance globally.

Indeed, after unsuccessful attempts in Argentina, Innviron began proposing similar gasification schemes in Kerala, India, in 2013. However, after learning about the failed attempts in Argentina through the GAIA network, and successful strategies for resisting them, Shibu Nair of the ENGO, Thanal, helped conduct an investigation of the company and identified a number of false claims made in their official government paperwork.[177] According to Nair, "it was shocking to see that an American company was presenting cooked up facts, false claims and lies to get a business in India through backdoor with unethical practices of bribery and lobbying."[178] Based on these findings,

[176] Indeed, the claim that CEO of Invvriron, Neil Williams, had "built 500 waste treatment facilities around the world in Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey, the Bahamas and the US," were refuted by a *Times of India* investigation (Kumarl 2013)
[177] See Thanal 2017
[178] Statement of Shibu K. Nair, of the organization Thanal in Trivandrum, Kerala, India Regarding Innviron and Dr. Neil Williams' effort to build an incinerator in Kerala Dated March 1, 2014

subsequent protests and grassroots pressure from groups like Thanal, the state of Kerala withdrew from the project despite pressure from Indian national government officials. Nair remarked that the information about Innivron's misleading statements and track record in Argentina, access to GAIA's case studies outlining the false promises of 'waste-to-energy' technology, and the support of the broader network were all instrumental in his organizations ability to successfully resist.[179]

However, as one GAIA member suggested, the anti-incinerator landscape is "like a giant 'whack-a-mole' game—where grassroots, community efforts succeed at beating down new burn proposals, only to have them pop up in a different community at a later point in time" (cited in Connett 2013, 60). It was therefore little surprise to GAIA members that shortly after failing in Argentina and India, Innviron attempted to build a similar gasification plant in Las Vegas in 2013. Nevertheless, the grassroots organization, Citizens of North Las Vegas United, was in a remarkable position to quickly stop the proposal, in large part due to the experience and support of GAIA members in Argentina and India. According to Monica Wilson, "it was a great example of members working for each other on translocal organizing and solidarity…what was critical to the success of this case (stopping the proposal in Las Vegas) was the network."

Previous studies suggest that a TAN's ability to stop a company like Innviron often necessitates "strong anchor organizations" that are in a position to provide technical expertise, communication strategies, funding and the capacity to bring together relatively less experienced grassroots groups to forge alliances (See Keck and Sikkink 1998;

[179] Author interview with Shahriar Hossain, March 2016.

Hansen 2012, 17). But as discussed in Chapter Three, even well resourced groups like Greenpeace lack the capacity to take on waste management industries on all fronts. Thus effectively resisting companies like Innviron not only requires strong anchor organizations at the transnational scale, but also the long-term commitment and presence of organized power at the local scale. As one former Greenpeace activist put it, “they (Greenpeace) are great at research, putting out big shiny reports, doing big actions and creating compelling memes for the media; they are not good at organizing power.”[180] Conversely, the primary power of GAIA’s coalition is grounding in local communities who are organizing to protect their communities themselves and generating a wider base of support to exert their collective power. As Nair remarked about his organizations involvement resisting Innviron in India, “you have to keep community ownership, if the community feels this is their issue, then they will own the issues and it is strengthened. If they feel this is not their issue, this is a top-down process, they will not act.”[181] With this in mind, in the following subsection I discuss the integral relationship between GAIA’s commitment to supporting local organizing and its bottom-up translocal structure.

Organizing Translocally

National scale studies suggest there is an unambiguous preference among activists for mobilizing members and volunteers within top-down structure as the capacity to do so works best when centralized decision-making power is in the hands of a few leaders (Han 2014, 15). As the previous chapter indicates, this tendency also applies to *transnational*

[180] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016.
[181] Author interview with Shahriar Hossain, March 2016.

organizations like Greenpeace; based on its centralized approach and use of high-profile direct actions conducted by professional "action teams." Conversely, the work of organizing complements a bottom-up structure where decision-making power is distributed through a larger network of leaders, building power in the "people-based assets" of the coalition (15-16). Because the power of the network is located in and flows from the grassroots (i.e. bottom-up), GAIA's paid staff primarily concentrate on maintaining the translocal space for members to connect and acting as *conduits* of information and power for the networks' collective goals. Thus, GAIA's *translocal structure* represents a complex network of place-based organizations, which exchange ideas, knowledge, practices, materials and resources across sites—blurring the distinction between local, national and global scales (McFarlane 2009).

As illustrated in Chapter Three, the evolution of this approach is partially the result of lessons learned from the way that Greenpeace USA leveraged power from the grassroots vis-à-vis its toxic campaigning from the mid 1980s until 1997. However, because Greenpeace International ultimately shifted its focus away from working with and supporting organizations at the grassroots, a number of former members suggested Greenpeace lacked the appropriate organizational *structure* to campaign on issues associated with environmental justice. As one anonymous GAIA member put it, "they (Greenpeace) set their goals, work for three years and then when they are done, they move onto something else…that is just different from our model of trying to transform a system by working with people locally."[182] The bottom-up structure of GAIA was

[182] Author interview with anonymous activists

established by those that had come to believe that communities most affected by waste and pollution "must play a leadership role in developing and advancing solutions" and that democratization of power and resources in the network is essential for the "creation of just and sustainable local economies."[183]

However, there is no guarantee that fostering such participatory mechanisms and relying on consensus building within frontline communities will produce positive outcomes. For instance, the search for "consensus" does not preclude the subordination of minority voices within such communities, especially if existing social structures at the local scale reflect entrenched power hierarchies and inequalities (Mansuri and Rao 2013, 114; Henkel and Stirrat 2001). It is also a naïve assumption that frontline communities will always work toward common interests in the face of environmental injustices as they may also face significant problems associated with coordination, asymmetric information, and conflicting values (Mansuri and Rao 2013, 285). Many GAIA members acknowledged this and suggested that building capacity and consensus and the local scale therefore required engagement that was flexible, self-critical and long-term. Moreover, since the majority of organizations associated with GAIA find it themselves, and not the other way around, nodes of the GAIA network tend to have preexisting social capital that are built on in order to overcome such limitations. Indeed, NGOs that attempt to foster the direct participation of frontline comminutes work best when they "build on organic movements," are *facilitated* by a responsive center, and conditioned by "a culture of learning by doing" (306).

[183] Author interview with Monica Wilson, February 2016; GAIA 2017

For instance, GAIA does not lead coalitions in a hierarchal sense, but rather provides the umbrella spaces where diverse organizations can coalesce around a few key issues and principles while still preserving their autonomy and context-based specificity (see Jurris 2008, 14). For example, a signature campaign of GAIA has been keeping subsides for "waste-to-energy" schemes out of international agreements like COP21 while shifting sustainability narratives toward Zero Waste alternatives. However, the primary energy, knowledge and power driving this transnational work is grounded in the translocal—that is, efforts on the part of frontline communities sharing, teaching and learning from each other. GAIA staff alternately acts as a "switchboard" that connects grassroots efforts with technical assistance, funding opportunities and similar organizations abroad.[184] Once local organizations find GAIA, or vice versa, one of the first steps taken by GAIA staff is providing the tools, information and mentorship that *allows them to become leaders in their own causes*. As Bradley Angel puts it, "so really mentoring them, involving them in every step of the way, including strategy discussions, decisions, organizing events, speaking to the media, and speaking to heads of government agencies."[185] Part of this approach entails digesting technical and policy information and making it more comprehensible to and useful for frontline communities. This has been critical in frontline community battles against "waste-to-energy" companies like Innviron, which often pits industry and scientific 'experts' against community based 'non-experts.'

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[184] Author interview with Bobby Peek, Climate and Environmental Justice Campaign Manager, groundWork, March 2016

[185] Author interview with Bradley Angel, November 2017

For instance, industries continue to sell "waste-to-energy" facilities to Indonesian government officials as a "green solution" to their municipal waste management crises. However, GAIA contends such facilities "leave a toxic legacy of ash and air pollution" that will disproportionally impact vulnerable populations in Indonesia and create disincentives for recycling and product redesign—especially when compared to the Zero Waste approach (discussed below) (Larracas 2017).[186] Rather than lobby the Indonesian government themselves, GAIA has supported members of Yayayasan Pengembangan Biosains dan Bioteknologi (YPBB) and Perkumpulan Gerakan Indonesia Diet Kantong Plastik (Indonesia Plastic Bag Diet Association) in Indonesia.[187] Specifically, by providing them with technical information, Zero Waste case studies, trainings, and linking them with other GAIA members to learn how Zero Waste might work in their particular context.[188] Indeed, on October 2016, GAIA sent Frolain Grate of Mother Earth Foundation (MEF) to Bandung, Indonesia, to conduct Zero Waste training with YPBB and other Indonesia grassroots organization. During these training sessions, Grate shared his personal experience successfully implementing Zero Waste models at the village level (*barangay*) in Metro Manila, Philippines, and how MEF was able to scale up to city

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[186] Because gasification systems typically depend on cheap and non-recyclable plastics as feedstock, they help create structural market incentives for producing *more* of such plastics, rather than less. Compounded by enormous upfront investments, many gasification facilities consequently use contracts to lock in municipalities to deliver a certain tonnage of waste per day, for upwards of thirty years.

[187] YPBB is "a non-profit and non-governmental pioneered since 1993. For more than 20 years, YPBB dedicate ourselves to helping people achieve a high quality of life and sustainable, both in the present and future generations, through lifestyle in harmony natural (or organic)" (YPBB 2017)

[188] For example, according to a recent report by GAIA, "in Indonesia, cities would be required to provide "waste-to-energy" companies a minimum of 1,000 tons per day of waste – a perverse incentive that would significantly undermine any long-term attempts to reduce plastic waste" (2017).

models, like San Fernando City (discussed in Chapter Five).[189] The training was caped off with workshops that "explored ideas together to formulate a strategy for building of Zero Waste models, at the village scale, in the Bandung" that provide an alternative to the waste incinerators currently proposed by industries in Indonesia (YPBB 2017b). In the span of less than a year, GAIA helped YPBB organize to resist such "waste-to-energy" facilities, train them on Zero Waste models, and obtain a commitment by the national government to reduce plastic pollution by 70% by the end of 2025.

By building deep relationships with frontline communities, GAIA is able to harness and scale up the work of groups like YPBB in Indonesia, which contributes to the network's global goal of changing narratives about "waste-to-energy" schemes as viable solutions for municipal solid waste management and climate change. At the same time, GAIA's support of local organizing, and the sense of community, ownership and experience this fosters, helps build power for fighting these battles at the local scale (see Jurris 2008).[190] Thus, GAIA functions as both the supportive connective tissue of the network and as the "anchor organization" that can represent and scale up the coalition's common national and international interests. The members in turn provide the numerical support for lending legitimacy, harnessing indigenous knowledge, and the necessary local leverage for informing policy positions and making sure any policy gains are implemented and enforced at the local scale (Hansen 2012, 36). As GAIA's International Coordinator suggests,

[189] The barangay, (i.e. barrio or village) is the most basic political and administrative unit, headed by a locally elected Barangay Chairperson (referred to by locals as Barangay Captain), in the Philippines.
[190] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.

> To really transform a system, it's not *just* if this ream of paper goes to an incinerator versus a landfill versus a recycling plant and trying to shift it from one to the other…The things that we are going to prioritize are going to be campaigns that are not just about shifting a system around waste, but also building community engagement, democracy and transformative power relationships *along the way*.[191]

In contrast, when it comes to mobilizing its members, GAIA has demonstrated that "when communities are organized in terms of building local capacities, skills and livelihoods, when the network needs to mobilize for whatever reason, it comes naturally."[192] As a result, GAIA is able to be increasingly political effective at multiple scales and on a limited budget, while concomitantly putting its principle of leading with and building power at the *grassroots* into practice (see Jurris 2009). However, many environmental justice scholars and activists still look primarily to national governments and international organizations to accommodate their demands via legislation, institutional reforms, and policy concessions, à la Greenpeace (Pellow 2016, 4). With this in mind, the following section delves deeper into how GAIA's *translocal infrastructure* represents more than its ability to target policies and institutions at the international scale. Specifically, I address how it also serves to transform power relations at the local scale and foster the solidarity for collectively resisting the unfair movement of waste at the national and international scale.

The Zero Waste Solution

Environmental justice struggles are typically animated by a "no" position (no to unfair exposure to environmental ills, environmental racism, etc.), but the resolution of such injustices is only temporary if communities are unable to articulate something they

[191] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.
[192] Author interview Paeng Lopez, December 2015.

can live with (Connett 2013, XII). Indeed, while stopping an injustice is the primary reason communities collaborate and engage in collective action, it is the positive vision of a just transition that strengthens coalition member's resolve for more systemic and long-term change (Foran 2014, 4). This point resonates with more critical environmental justice studies, which suggest the only fair and effective means of addressing global environmental injustices will be through an insurgent and radical transformation of structures and circulations of power at the local scale (Macbride 2011; Pellow 2016; Coulthard 2014; Schlosberg and Cole 2015). Although Macbride admits that such transformations vis-à-vis restructuring the inequities associated with production and consumption are "tremendously difficult to get going" and sustain (168), scholars have noted the recent emergence of movements that are "creating and participating in alternative circulations of power and material nature in new collectivities…an environmentalism of everyday life" (Schlosberg and Coles 2015, 2). Here, I examine how the Zero Waste approach GAIA members adopt represents such a form of political and ecological resistance. I argue that the everyday politics embodied at the local scale through the implementation of Zero Waste systems represents an unexplored mechanism for "transforming selves, communities, trans-border relationships and ethical-political imaginaries" toward broader political and economic changes animating the unfair circulation of waste at the global scale (Schlosberg and Coles 2015, 15-16). Specifically, I contend that implementing Zero Waste principles is more than a method of transitioning to ecologically sound waste management practices as it also addresses a number of socio-

economic variables, such as lack livelihoods, respect, and leadership skills that drive the unfair distribution and practices associated with waste disposal.

It is common for GAIA members to adopt the "Zero Waste approach" after they have succeeded or failed in shutting down a waste disposal site. This is because regardless of their ability to shut down a polluting waste facility, communities must still develop *solutions* for managing their own waste. Definitions of Zero Waste vary, but the only peer-reviewed definition to date contends that:

> Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use…Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systemically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and material, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them (Connett 2013, 10; see also Zero Waste International Alliance).

Although a full discussion of the technical aspects of Zero Waste are beyond the scope of this chapter, the "ten steps" communities take towards Zero Waste include: source separation, door-to-door collection systems, composting, recycling, reuse, waste reduction initiatives, economic incentives, residual separation, better industrial design, and interim landfills (15).

Many of the steps outlined in the Zero Waste approach resonate across the spectrum of environmental movements. As the previous chapter indicates, focusing on extended producer responsibility schemes, the elimination of toxic chemicals from production process, and putting pressure on companies to redesign their products are methods of change embraced by influential TENGOs in general and by Greenpeace in particular. However, instead of working primarily with existing industries and technocratic approaches to waste management, the Zero Waste movement has explicitly

allied itself with environmental justice activism and challenged the artificial notion that communities must chose between healthy environments and economic opportunities (i.e. health vs. jobs) (Macbride 2011, 166-167; Ciplet 2008). As Connett remarks, "Zero Waste is not just about saving material resources, *it is also about saving people*" (2013, 182, emphasis added). While TENGOs in the Global North have focused on adding a 4th "R" to the traditional "three R's of recycling," (reduce, reuse, recycle *and redesign*), Connett argues that we need to add a fifth R, *respect*—specifically as it relates to informal waste workers in the South.

Although referred to by a number of different names, such as scavengers, rag pickers, and Catadores, "informal waste worker" refers here to the labor intensive, low-paid, under-recorded, unregulated and informal (often illegal) work in the context of municipal solid waste management—usually completed by individuals and family groups of low socio-economic status (See Wilson, et al. 2006). Indeed, a lack of economic opportunities "pushes" about one percent of the developing world's populations living in and around dumpsites into waste-picking as a means to avoid starvation (Medina, 2008). As with many informal sector workers, these individuals do not pay taxes, have licenses and are therefore not consulted in waste management schemes or included in social welfare programs (see Haan, et al. 1998). Immigrants, indigenous populations, and peoples of color disproportionally make up those engaged in scavenging—often framed by politicians as "sources of environmental contamination" themselves (Pellow 2007, 98). As a result, social and political structures push waste workers into spaces where environmental quality is low and incentivize the construction of noxious facilities in the

areas they occupy (Ibid.). Indeed, racial and class hierarchies, from the municipal to the global scale, are reinforced by and produce unfair distributions of waste (Pellow 2002, 167; 2007; Connett 2013).

Breaking this cycle of injustice therefore entails upstream waste management solutions, in terms of product redesign and waste reduction, *and* downstream solutions that work with affected communities. For example, studies suggests when "organized and supported, waste picking can spur grassroots investment by poor people, create jobs, reduce poverty, save municipalities money, improve industrial competitiveness, conserve natural resources, and protect the environment" (Haan, et al. 1998, 1; see also Medina 2007). However, due to the spatial and cognitive disconnect between where the majority of the world's waste is produced and where it is ultimately disposed of, the remarkable work of over 15 million informal waste workers engage in globally is often "invisible," if not disparaged, by more affluent communities (see Ageyman 2014). Indeed, the dominant view of social change preferred by Northern communities, activists and donors has focused on market-based, "conflict-free incrementalist change" and upstream solutions, such as buying 'green,' extended producer responsibility, etc. However, this approach fails to address the injustices associated with the North's consumption and production process or threaten the associated power dynamics and institutions on which they are predicated (Maniates 2002, 65; Macbride 2011, 225; Coulthard 2014).

Since its inception, GAIA has alternatively focused on the problems associated with throwaway societies, such as landfills, incinerators, ocean pollution, *and* how such

societies create and rationalize "throwaway people." Indeed, a key pillar of GAIA's mission is to "stand in solidarity" and "support" the demands waste workers make, such as "safe working conditions, fair wages, and voice in the policy decisions that shape their lives" (GAIA 2017c). Part of this support entails technical training for waste workers, connecting them to funding opportunities, and supporting the formation of waste worker cooperatives. For instance, in the Philippines, GAIA members have helped waste workers organize a citywide association in San Fernando City, Pampanga, which now has a representative who sits in the city's solid waste management board—giving the association the same vote as the mayor and other councilors. The collectors, most of whom earned 50 pesos a day as informal waste collectors, now earn a minimum monthly salary of 8,000 pesos and are provided health benefits by the *barangay*. GAIA supported cooperatives (discussed in detail in Chapter Five) have proven pivotal in formalizing their work, providing safer working conditions, education of their children, profit sharing agreements, having meaningful participation in waste management planning, and fostering the broader community's respect for their work (Connett 2013, 182).

By concentrating on supporting waste workers, GAIA's approach to transnational activism not only addresses the unfair distributions of waste, but also seeks to mitigate the risks associated with how it is disposed, by whom, and the lack of *respect* and *recognition* for those actually making a positive difference downstream (MacBride 2011, 3; see also Bullard and Johnson 2000). Discussing GAIA's work with informal waste workers, Zero Waste specialist Dr. Paul Connett remarked many waste workers are "now respected, organized and unionized cooperatives, and seeing them being allowed to go

door to door collecting recyclables… its marvelous that GAIA has put such a priority on working with the Catadores in Brazil, India, South America and so on."[193] Furthermore, when waste workers join the GAIA network, they become more organized and are in a unique position to scale up and connect their strategies vis-à-vis recycling, repurposing, and reducing residual waste going to landfills and waste incinerators—all of which mitigates the global crises associated with waste. Indeed, the Zero Waste approach not only yields better economic opportunities and improved environments for marginalized communities at the local scale, it also "provides a key stepping-stone toward sustainability at the global level" (Connett 2013, XII). In the following subsection, I explain this connection and how GAIA's translocal approach depends on the creativity of frontline communities applying Zero Waste principles, a willingness to share indigenous knowledge with the broader network, and the solidarity this processes engenders.

Fostering Indigenous Knowledge, Translocal Mindsets, and Networking Local Leadership

Recent studies suggest those most impacted by unfair circulations of waste, like waste workers, are also those building local resistance and power in the form of just and sustainable material flows (Schlosberg and Coles 2015, 11). Communities that have gained experience by resisting some form of environmental injustice, such as waste incineration and landfill, often become the future teachers and organizers for what comes next, "creating alternatives to typical 'expert' flows of information…aimed at disrupting

[193] Author interview with Paul Connett, December 2015.

dominant flows of power" (11, see also Winne 2011). I refer to such experiences and information collectively as indigenous knowledge—the product of the "direct experience of the workings of nature and its relationship with the social world" by peoples at the local scale (Dei 1993, 105).[194] Despites its utility, local governments, professional TENGO activists, scientists and lawyers often underutilize, if not ignore, indigenous knowledge. Indeed, this knowledge, and the experiences of frontline communities resisting and living next to polluting facilities, are often dismissed as "mere anecdotes" when used to bring attention to clusters of illnesses, if not disregarded as simply "random chance" (Guana 1998; Holland 2017) by scientific experts and public officials.

Moreover, indigenous knowledge is created and disseminated by what one GAIA organizer calls "5-9 activists," emphasizing that this is a second job for individuals already beset by a number of socio-economic challenges. Therefore, promoting the meaningful involvement of "5-9 activists" can be seem like an unnecessary burden for supporting TENGOs, especially if they have full time "experts" and activists at their disposal. For instance, many Greenpeace activists I interviewed saw GAIA's reliance on grassroots communities as a principled, budget-oriented approach, as it is less efficient at "getting results" then the lawyers, scientists, and professional activists at their disposal. As Chapter Three illustrates, Greenpeace phased out its own consensus-based and grassroots orientated organizational structure early on as it lead to exhausting meetings and bureaucratic inefficiency (Zelko 277, 2013). Moreover, Greenpeace's use of

[194] Although the reified distinction between indigenous knowledge and "Western-scientific" knowledge is problematic, they are better thought of as different *types* of knowledge with differing logics and epistemologies (Agrawal 1995, 433).

professionally trained “action teams” and centralized coordinating bodies has helped it conduct campaigns and raise money in a more disciplined and efficient way, in addition to increasing its capacity to chase down international polluters as easily as multinational corporations drift from country to country (Dale 1996, 97; Yearly 1991, 70; Bunnin 1997, 1981)

Although the surgical interventions by Greenpeace experts and staff have helped coalition member win key victories, specifically in regards to their anti-toxic work, they have also neglected to organize in ways that strengthen the resolve of coalition members and develop their capacity to continue the long-term struggle for justice (Cable, Mix, and Hastings 2005, 887). As GAIA’s South America regional coordinator remarked:

> I love the idea of not being like a super hero for nobody because (laughing)…I really think that real changes come from the local arena, from bottom-up and not the opposite…for reality to be transformed, [we] really need to put our energy in promoting local organizations to get stronger and get funds for them to keep doing the work that they are doing…other organizations like Greenpeace have their roll. But theirs is sort of a more superficial way of facing issues…it’s much more visual, about media and it’s a different way of doing things.[1]

Furthermore, those considered “experts” not only enjoy a position of privilege in the environmental policy arena vis-à-vis frontline communities, “irrespective of the intimate knowledge and experience of exposure that vulnerable populations may have,” as similar power disparities also operate within environmental coalitions (Holland 2017, 401). For instance, the privileged role that professional activists occupy, despite propitious intentions, “can function to diminish the voice and disregard the experience of those exposed to environmental harms, resulting in both procedural and substantive injustices” (401; Ottinger 2013). As Leslie Fields, director of the Sierra Club’s Environmental

Justice and Community Partnerships Program remarks:

> The mainstream environmental world has become more professionalized, so it the person with the most capital letters behind their name that people listen to, not the women who has been living in the same community for 50 years…who has seen how this community has been polluted. But she is not considered an expert based on her indigenous knowledge. We lose out on a lot when we don't include those people.[195]

Since "house wives" attempted to convince state and industry representatives that their children were being poisoned and born with birth defects in the infamous Love Canal struggle against Hooker Chemical Company, claims regarding expertise have been used repeatedly to dismiss the knowledge of frontline communities experiencing environmental injustices (EPA 1979; see also Cole and Foster). Unfortunately, similar preconceived notions of who is and is not an "expert" are grounds for agenda setting, strategizing, justifying who participates, and who is qualified to create and disseminate knowledge within environmental coalitions (Sikor 2014, 155).

In order to understand how and to what degree GAIA staff address such power dynamics and issues associated with expertise, I participated in a number of their global and regional meetings. During the meetings, which ranged from a few days to over a week, members would reflect on and renew GAIA's mission, develop and deepen relationships, discuss key campaigns, and consult with network leaders from around the world about the direction and scope of their cross-border work.[196] To these ends, GAIA staff organized presentations, thematic skill shares, and group workshops, but members themselves ran them. Even though many skill share sessions relied on "traditional

[195] Author interview with Leslie Fields, February 2016.
[196] The frequency of GAIA's global and regional meetings is largely contingent on available funding as GAIA typically subsidizes, if not covers member's travel and lodging expenses. Indeed, most of GAIA's group "meetings" are conducting via Skype, email etc.

scientific knowledge" with the help of "experts," such as chemists, professional activists, and policy specialists, they were primarily based on firsthand experiences shared by waste workers, frontline community members, and 5-9 activists. From the PhDs in chemistry to the waste workers, no one's expertise appeared to be privileged during this process. According to one participant,

> "This is what makes the network unique. We are coming from different backgrounds, with different abilities, and different experiences, both good and bad, fighting incinerators and implementing Zero Waste. But here, we are equals learning from these differences, learning how we can best support each other and create a common vision."[197]

For instance, each day started with participants forming a circle and sharing stories about their personal successes and failures, what they had learned, and how this might inform GAIA's vision and network strategies going forward. Throughout the day, thematic posters depicting stories, ideas, and concepts we had all been adding to would continue to multiply and canvas the room. At the end of these meetings, participants collectively brought these posters together and continued to debate and comment on them. One of the key insights I gained from these meetings was the *process* of having equal voice in sharing experiences, learning and deliberating about the collective goals and strategies of the network, and the solidarity and energy it engendered in the participants appeared to be just as significant as any concrete network goals that may have emerged.

Additionally, daylong conferences open to the public typically followed GAIA's regional and global meetings, which served as both community outreach and "to

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[197] [197] Author interview Paeng Lopez, December 2015.

strengthen member engagement, leadership, and connectivity."[198] For instance, GAIA's most recent global meeting in Paris ran alongside the COP21 negotiations, in which a number of GAIA members were also participating. The network took this opportunity to organize a public conference on the connection between Zero Waste and climate change and, similar to their internal meetings, the panels consisted of a balance between Zero Waste experts (scientists, policy specialist, and entrepreneurs), professional activists, waste workers and representatives from grassroots organizations. One of the more poignant panels was on "the role of reuse and recycling workers in the Zero Waste path," which consisted of presentations from waste workers from South Africa, India and Colombia. One of the presenters was GAIA member Nohra Padilla, a third generation waste worker from Bogotá and recent recipient of a Goldman Environmental Prize in 2013. The prize acknowledged her work organizing the Association of Recyclers of (ARB), a cooperative that represents the city's 3,000 informal recyclers and the 12,000 members of the National Association of Recyclers in Colombia (ANR) (Goldman Prize 2017). During her presentation, she reflected on the role organizing played in transforming marginalized and disrespected waste workers into cooperatives not only making a positive impact vis-à-vis waste management, but also becoming increasingly politically active. As Padilla remarked, "I feel very strengthened and proud to be on the stage with the workers (waste workers)…but the problems of climate and waste are not just environmental problems, but political problems, they are about power relations."[199] Indeed, her co-presenters agreed and discussed the ways in which they were confronting

[198] GAIA 2015 global meeting agenda (see GAIA 2015)
[199] Author observation at Zero Waste and climate change panel, December 2015.

the roots of the injustices associated with waste, not just their symptoms.

For instance, the presenters suggested the roots of injustices associated with waste are not only due to a lack of voice and power in communities where waste workers have yet to be organized and their work respected, but due to how a similar dynamics also operate when working with ENGOs. According to one of the presenters, Simon Mbata of the South African Waster Pickers Association,

> "(like politicians) NGOs also are afraid to go into the landfills and talk to the waste pickers…Where are the waste pickers who started Zero Waste before the Zero Waste concept? Waste pickers started it, but we are forgotten, there has to be respect for waste pickers, it has to be recognized…Many (material recovery) projects are planned in offices, far from the waste pickers, they displace waste pickers.[200]

The presenters agreed that when ENGOs cooperate with waste workers, the former must support addressing the economic, social, and political conditions that have tended to marginalize waste workers, not just "environmental" ones. According to Padilla, "we (waste workers) suffer the same injustices, we have the same goals, we want our work to be valued. We want social and environmental justice."[201] The speakers concluded by articulating a need for more forums that provide the opportunity to make the invaluable work they are engaged in increasingly visible to the broader public, environmental activists, and share insights with each to foster solidarity and challenge preconceived notions of expertise that have posed a significant challenge to forming equitable alliances.

Because the negative health and environmental effects waste workers experience living and working in waste disposal sites often lack official statistics, corroborative

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[200] Author observation at Zero Waste and climate change panel, December 2015.
[201] Author observation at Zero Waste and climate change panel, December 2015.

studies, and are refuted by government officials and industry 'experts,' there is a temptation to rely on the expertise of professional activists for assistance. However, as the waste workers in this panel suggested, any long-term solution to challenging local injustices must empower frontline communities to exercise their own voices and become leaders in their own struggles. Moreover, from an environmental justice perspective, it is also an acknowledgment of who is targeted by polluting facilities and disproportionally impacted, not just "a few white people holding a banner somewhere or dangling from a bridge."[202] Indeed, part of harnessing and building on the creative ways frontline communities have pushed back against structures of domination in their own communities is not only supporting the creation of local leadership and collectives, but linking them so that they can learn, share and scale up their efforts. This holds true for many environmental injustices that require promoting an international and national policy agendas, such as the Basel Convention and waste-to-energy subsidies, but are place-based, thus necessitating solutions grounded in and respectful of local realities.

Moreover, while the sharing of personal struggles, victories and failure by frontline community members during GAIA's public and internal meetings in Paris served to refine the network's core vision, it was also palpably cathartic to those speaking and listening. One could not help being moved by the stories and I often struggled to locate myself as either scholar or activist in these moments. As fellow attendee Leslie Fields observed,

> The Zero Waste conference was my favorite part of COP21. I was so moved by the waste pickers…the women from Colombia who got the Goldman Prize who stood up there and said I am proud to be a waste picker. She has organized them, they have union, they have identity cards—she

[202] Author interview with Bradley Angel, November 13, 2017

> made me cry. It really is another world is possible, but you have to organize and it is a great sacrifice for people that are considered the most despised group of people in their societies, its amazing.[203]

Indeed, it was easy to see how such gatherings serve as the arenas that create and imbue translocal networks with meaning and solidarity—critical for a coalition's longevity and efficacy (Jurris 2008, 98; Mahon 2004, 60; see also Tattersall 2010). For instance, the end of GAIA's global meeting in Paris was capped of with a night of dancing and singing which felt more comparable to a family reunion than an ENGO retreat focused on outlining a framework of concrete objectives, targets and strategies.

Beyond the Paris meeting, the majority of GAIA members I spoke with during my fieldwork characterized their involvement in the coalition as akin to being a part of a family, not as opportunistic or simply as a means to pool resources. Although many of the same individuals remarked that their *initial* motivation for joining GAIA was to oppose some sort of polluting industry happening in their community, they also claimed that after these campaigns succeeded *or* failed, they and their organizations stayed active in the coalition. According to GAIA's International Coordinator, "closing a facility or stopping a new one, that is not a long-term win, you still have to do a lot to change afterwards."[204] She went on to explain that by change, she was referring to a need to *continue* challenging the socio-political conditions that engender environmental injustices at the local scale and *fostering a proactive translocal mindset* for resisting the unjust circulations of waste and implementing alternatives.

Part of GAIA's strategy for creating a translocal mindset is grounded in fostering network solidarity and changing individual and community "Not In My Back Yard"

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[203] Author interview with Leslie Fields, February 2016.
[204] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.

(NIMBY) mentalities into a "Not On Planet Earth" (NOPE) mentality vis-à-vis waste and incineration. According to Victor Mitjans, a GAIA board member in Spain, when organizations first approach him for assistance, they often come with the former mindset, thus:

> One of the first steps is suggesting that no, we don't want this incinerator anywhere at all. We try to convert a NIMBY reaction into a more proactive and global approach. Once this has been done, then you can start working with other issues in their communities, such as energy, health, and so on. We work with them to build a more evolved speech to empower them.[205]

Changing NIMBY mindsets and fostering network solidarity is essential to GAIA's translocal approach as the number of full-time staff and resources at the network's disposal, by themselves, are paltry when compared to transnational waste industries. Indeed, as the network's success in resisting Innviron indicates, the ability to prevent one community's victory becoming another's burden depends on the willingness of local organization to share information, strategies, join in collective actions and *stay active* in the network.

GAIA coordinators suggested that changing NIMBY mindsets follows from the solidarity engendered during their global and regional gatherings, online communications, and the bonds that develop as members become leaders in their own communities and share these experiences. According to one GAIA member, the sense of ownership, experience, and trust that emerges out of supporting the direct participation of frontline communities in the network "gets people to trust you and when they need something, they call you and you work on it…it creates more leaders throughout the

[205] Author interview Victor Mitjans, February 2016.

structures we are building."[206] Specifically, structures that *support* organizing at the local scale, rather than *leading* this work by mobilizing organizations and individuals from the national and national scale. As one GAIA organizer put it:

> People who start of with no prior knowledge of local governance, and start off with a campaign against incineration, end up becoming more active in their community. I want to equip them with transferable skills that can be a value to them for the rest of their lives that relate to community organizing. They have already exhibited an above average giving a shit about their community; we want to build on that for everyone's benefit. If they are being trained in a culture of holding public meetings, taking minutes, publicizing them, etc. then they are learning the skill sets that makes them useful contributors to the community[207]

GAIA's long-term support of grassroots organizing and Zero Waste training develops deep and durable power in frontline communities to both resist environmental injustices and implement solutions. So while organizations may join GAIA in order to receive assistance fighting a polluting facility, it is the positive vision of Zero Waste that follows, grounded in local leadership and creativity, that sustains the network. Indeed, because the primary drivers of waste and its associated injustices operate at the local scale, frontline communities have the potential to affect significant change in their communities. In turn, the empowerment and solidarity that comes out of implementing Zero Waste at the local scales is the foundation for GAIA's global fight against incinerators and unfair waste management practices.

Limitations and Tradeoffs

Nevertheless, GAIA's approach to transnational activism is not without limitations. For one, there is no "right way" to support communities fighting incinerators, unfair waste management practices, or moving toward decentralized and Zero Waste

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[206] Author interview with Adriana Gonzalez, February 2016.
[207] Author interview with Shlomo Dowen, August 2016.

management systems.[208] Indeed, GAIA lacks a single model for supporting waste workers as, according to Neil Tangri of GAIA (India), "the demands of waste pickers vary widely from place to place as does their degree of organization and politicization" (cited in Connett 2013, 183). Therefore, much of GAIA's engagement with frontline communities is "customized," rather than a one-size-fits-all strategy, making it relatively slower in its ability to address the urgent issues many members face when compared to organizations like Greenpeace. For example, one of the strengths espoused by those who favor a top-down approach is that it is more efficient at creating broad campaigns that are readily adaptable to different contexts. As Hernandez remarks, a strength of Greenpeace is its ability to maximize "campaign impact and effectiveness, because if you have a clear strategy, that has a clear power analysis and how you will make things happen, then you work at it. You cannot do this in GAIA, you cannot say you have to do this or that; you can only enable and build."[209]

For many GAIA organizations, the time investment needed to build consensus, solidarity, and empower members of the network is a necessary tradeoff as mitigating the injustices associated with waste is not simply about efficiently addressing their symptoms, but transforming the structures that produce. According to Bobby Peek:

> People can't keep their environment safe because they don't have power...So for us, it is critical that there's democracy, solidarity and equity. To have that, it means you have to move slower…you build a movement, you build a collectivism…where as NRDC and Greenpeace, these are big corporate NGOs that make decision in a way that are filtered down…because we are movement building, because we are democratic, our approach is different and that determines how we work.[210]

[208] Author interview with Dharmesh Shah, India Coordinator, GAIA, February 2016.
[209] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.
[210] Author interview with Bobby Peek, Climate and Environmental Justice Campaign Manager, groundWork, March 2016

Nevertheless, GAIA receives more requests for help then it can currently follow up with, putting a strain on the capacity of the network to respond. According to GAIA staff, while this is a challenge they are ready to meet it, as the network grows, so does an increasing awareness of potential opportunities *and* threats communities face regarding waste.

Supporting and scaling up local organizing not only requires more time than leading global campaigns. Quantifying and explaining how GAIA's supportive infrastructure relates to the victories of their member organizations is also problematic. Moreover, during my time with GAIA staff, they were always hesitant to claim credit for what members had accomplished. As the international coordinator remarked about the successful Zero Waste models and waste worker cooperatives operating in the Philippines, "I would never say GAIA shifted things in San Fernando, I would say GAIA members made this amazing system shift happen in the Philippines with the *support* of the network."[211] Although this disposition makes it difficult to solicit funds from donors, it is vital for maintaining deep relationships and trust with frontline communities. As one GAIA member put it, "this presents a big challenge for GAIA because we are a world of branding and a world of meaning, and they take on some risks for that, but it's also, from a justice perspective, exactly what they should be doing."[212] Conversely, Hernandez remarked that this is one of the largest limitations of GAIA, as their capacity to raise and distribute recourses depends too much on eccentric foundation support, which understands this connection. He claimed addressing this funding limitation would require

[211] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.
[212] Author interview with Molly Greenberg, January 2016.

GAIA to modify its current structure and how they chose to engage in environmental issues.[213] Indeed, as one GAIA organizer in Puerto Rico remarked, "building grassroots power, a lot of people go, 'that's really cool, that's important work, but that's not what's going to get us funding, so we might not work with that.'"[214]

Indeed, the majority of foundation dollars go to larger and well-resourced organizations like Greenpeace, suggesting a donor preference for top-down strategies and their ostensible ability to produce concrete results (Faber 2005, 6). Alternatively, as Janet Redman suggests, "no one is saying that you need to fund the intermediary people who hold the networks together…it's a much less sexy space, it doesn't have the stories of struggles that the grassroots do or the really easy to paint stories of success like the big greens do."[215] Echoing this sentiment, Shibu Nair remarked,

> There's a level of visuality that funders want to see…where in movement building, you don't get that, you don't get the type of sexy leader, you don't get the big hit on the big issue, its very slow…sometime the political language is so different from the funder giving it, its difficult for movement people, movement organizations, to get money.[216]

Indeed, both scholars and funders often use the number of individuals that show up to a protests, an isolated campaign victory, or the passage of a high profile piece of policy to gauge the success of a transnational coalition campaign, not the transformative impact of organizing (Pastor et al. 2011). According to Faber, the long-term success of the global environmental justice movement therefore "depends on the reorientation of foundation priorities to support grassroots organizing and base-building strategies" (2005, 52).

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[213] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.
[214] Author interview with Adriana Gonzalez, February 2016.
[215] Author interview with Janet Redman, February 2016.
[216] Author interview with Shibu K. Nair, December 2016

However, the disconnect between GAIA's translocal approach and the inclinations of influential donors is not simply an issue of metrics. A number of activists spoke with me off the record and shared the sentiment that long-term strategies and goals that build on the assets of frontline communities do not resonate with Northern donors.

> We have to remember that most donors come from a wealthy class, who are not used to grassroots, lean organizing style and strategies of change. They are used to putting their money into something and getting some kind of investment back. This is why the more money you get (campaigning) the more money you get. It's therefore hard for small budget grassroots organizations to be side by side with a WWF (World Wildlife Fund). If they (funders) reach out to WWF and want a proposal, WWF can turn it out in a couple of days. With grassroots organizations, this could be much more difficult.[217]

GAIA's focus on waste, and its work with waste workers, makes this process even more difficult. In the U.S., where the majority of well-resourced donors and foundations are located, very few of them are interested in waste-related issues, let alone grassroots activism. Although an increasing number are concerned with issues around consumption, plastics and ocean waste, the "out of sight out of mind" mentality of the U.S. undermines the urgency of this global issue. Moreover, when foundations and TENGOs have engaged in waste-related campaigns, they tend to focus on upstream interventions and market-based solutions (e.g. production processes, "waste-to-energy," and cap-and-trade) rather than how waste affects populations and the environment downstream. In the following chapter, I discuss how GAIA members in the Philippines have overcome the limitations associated with an overreliance on foundations by implanting Zero Waste alternatives at the local scale.

[217] Author interview with anonymous activist, March 2016

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the emergence of GAIA's approach to translocal organizing and its potential to *transform* marginalized communities into more powerful actors. Although this "invisible" work is difficult to define, capture and track, it is a vital complement to the *transactional* outcomes (e.g. number of members, amount of funding, policies past) of TENGOs pursuing environmental justice vis-à-vis top-down mobilizing (Pastor et al. 2011, 13). I have argued focusing on the coalition's ability to win or lose a particular campaign, although significant, missis the broader implications of GAIA's strategic approach. As this chapter demonstrates, when we expand our scope beyond a coalitions ability to win or lose single campaign, we are in a better position to appreciate the significance of strategies that support local organizing, solidarity, capacity building and how they relate to the full spectrum of injustices frontline communities face (Bosi and Uba 2009, 413; McAdams 1999; Hansen 2012). The translocal approach of GAIA does not provide a panacea for the host of political, economic, and structural problems faced by communities experiencing environmental injustices. It nevertheless represent an understudied alternative mode of transnational organizing that attempts to confront global environmental justice through policy work at the national and international scale, but ultimately inspired by practical embodiments of new sustainable materialisms, grounded in the politics and practices of everyday life, at the local scale (Schlosberg and Coles 2015, 2,7).[218] However, current analytic frameworks for understanding environmental

[218] Given their locations in poor communities in the Global South, Zero Waste movements do not simply represent "next generation post-materialist" movements. According to the authors Schlosberg and Coles, "this challenges the basis of a long-held theory of new social movements. … In the now-classic notion of

movements are ill equipped to address the complex and interlinked innovations that movements like GAIA represent (6).

Analyzing the GAIA network as an international actor (see Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002) can capture the mechanisms by which they influence national and international policy. However, to say "GAIA accomplished X" is misleading as, according to one GAIA coordinator, they "try to avoid laying claim that [they] as paid staff make a lot happen; it is the broader network that is making things happen."[219] Furthermore, applying a network-as-structure framework, while potentially more sensitive to the different "nodes" of the network and the various scales on which GAIA operates, risks overlooking the shared principles, ideas and solidarity that bottom-up organizing fosters. Because the processes and injustices associated with waste operate at multiple scales, our understanding of transnational environmental justice coalitions is only partial when we focus on their impacts at the local, regional, national or transnational scales in isolation (Pellow 2016, 4; see also Herod 2011; Sze 2016).

For instance, debates in critical environmental justice studies suggest challenging the centralized systems and structures of domination that animate environmental injustices will be gradual, complex and require more than reformist and liberal orientated approaches have hitherto been able to achieve (Scholsberg and Cole 2015; Coulthard 2014; Pellow 2016; Pastor et al. 2011; Faber 2005; Hansen 2012). As Escobar argues, "for the most farsighted social movements…the basic idea is the same: overcoming the

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postmaterialism, environmental concerns are seen as part of a range of interests that emerge after basic needs are met. As Inglehart has long argued (for example, Inglehart, 1989, 1997; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005), the satisfaction of basic needs is followed by a shift to citizens interested in a range of post-material concerns" (2015, 7).

[219] Author interview Christie Keith, February 2016.

model of modern liberal capital society becomes a must for survival, and perhaps a real possibility" (2008, 303). Indeed, although there is little doubt that dismantling the inequitable structures associated with waste will require more than any single campaign can seek to accomplish, the transformations taking place at the local scale vis-à-vis Zero Waste communities are promising in this regard. Thus the prefigurative means by which coalitions organize, how they empower and inspire frontline communities to stay active in this struggle in the long-term are just as important as any material or policy victories realized along the way. As Bobby Peek suggests:

> "You can have all the good legislation, but if you do not have that legislation being understood and pressurized by people on the ground in an *organized manner*, the politicians make the decisions or make the legislation and just walk away and claim it as a political victory, but it's a meaningless victory"

But with few exceptions, (Faber 2005, Pastor et al. 2011; Hansen 2012), we are still in need of movement metrics that are in a better position to capture "narrative as well as numbers, politics as well as policies, transformations as well as transactions" (Pastor et al. 2011, 2). Although it remains to be seen how effective GAIA's approach to transnational activism will be as it continues to confront the injustice associated with waste, this chapter nevertheless suggest a need for more empirical and activist-orientated research on the strategies and goals of environmental justice coalitions and the concepts scholars use to understand them.

Individual campaigns and policy victories are obviously important. But it is the sustained energy, knowledge, solidarity and commitment of frontline communities that cannot be underestimated or rationalized away by predominate top-down approaches to transnational environmental activism that have hitherto demonstrated themselves to be

insufficient, if not counterproductive, for realizing environmental justice on their own. However, isolated grassroots movements are also insufficient by themselves in combating the global hegemonic practices associated with a number of the world's instances of environmental injustice. Therefore, a global response is necessary; but one that is grounded in, respectful of, and in solidarity with those struggling for justice at the local scale. For this to be sustainable, coalitions must not only fight against and say no to systems of domination and injustice, but also replace and actively participate in constructing just alternatives. In the following chapter, I discuss how this dynamic played out vis-à-vis Greenpeace and GAIA's work in the Philippines. Specifically, I demonstrate that GAIA's commitment to organizing reflects a commitment to pursuing justice not only in terms of collectively resisting the inequitable flow of foreign waste to certain communities, but also in terms of empowering them and respecting the different ways in which they understand and seek to address environmental injustice themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

Environmental Justice and Waste in the Philippines: Grassroots Perspectives on GAIA and Greenpeace

Over half the world's population lacks access to regular trash collection. This is a troubling statistic, given that states generate 1.3 billion tons of waste annually, 40% of which ultimately ends up in unregulated or illegal dumpsites (Simmons 2016). When waste is not properly collected and disposed of, pollution runs into rivers and contaminates ground water, causing populations to become increasingly susceptible to deadly illnesses and infections. This crisis is particularly acute in the global South, where uncollected waste is heaviest near slums and densely populated areas. Indeed, open illegal dumpsites continue to grow in cities like Metro Manila, which produces over 8 thousand tons of waste a day (Alave 2011). The negative effects of dumpsites are exacerbated during typhoon season, when they clog storm runoffs and trap polluted floodwater, resulting in additional instances of dengue, malaria and other diseases. These conditions have also been linked to catastrophic events such as the Payatas garbage mountain landslide, which killed over 300 people on July 10, 2000 (BBC 2000; Simmons 2016). The fact that those most affected by such phenomenon are often displaced (due to natural disasters or dwindling rural economic opportunities), poor, and indigenous intensifies the stark environmental injustices associated with waste in the Philippines.

Southeast Asia is one of the primary destinations for the global North's waste and associated dirty technologies, such as waste incinerators. Although many exports to this region are legal, 90% of the world's electronic waste—worth nearly $19 billion—is illegally traded or dumped in the South each year (Nichols 2015). The Philippines continues to be targeted for exporting hazardous waste, illegally mislabeled as recyclable content, from countries such as Japan (2,700 metric tons in 1999), Canada (2,500 metric tons in 2013), and most recently South Korea (5,000 metric tons in 2016) (Clapp 2016; Hopper 2015). Transnational Environmental NGOs (TENGOs) continue to raise awareness about such injustices and have largely focused on legal strategies for mitigating these problems. Greenpeace, for example, has been effective in mobilizing frontline communities in the Philippines to leverage policy change at the national and international scale aimed at the transboundary movement of waste. However, it is also criticized for lacking contextual sensitivity and failing to help impacted communities implement policy change at the local scale. Alternatively, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), has pursued a very different approach to the problem, which centers on support for grassroots initiatives, local organizing and participatory democracy in addressing the Philippine's waste crises, even though such an approach is more time-consuming, challenging and rarely funded by influential foundations. Both Greenpeace and GAIA have developed transnational coalitions that aim to support frontline communities in their struggle against toxic dumping, and both organizations have pursued global environmental justice through strategies aimed at empowering local communities to influence global governance and to make use of evolving international

legal standards, such as the Basel Convention. However, the two have developed remarkably different organizational models and have interpreted environmental justice in different ways.

For Greenpeace and GAIA, as many transnational organizations, success is defined with reference to claims regarding their role in facilitating a linkage between global governance and local empowerment that serves to strengthen local communities in ways that enable them to influence or mobilize international norms. However, in evaluating transnational organizations, scholars have tended to focus on their success in achieving legal victories and alternating international norms, with less attention to the impact of transnational organizing on local communities. This chapter compares the distinct organizing models developed by Greenpeace and GAIA with attention to their implications for local communities they purport to serve and empower, focusing on their operations in the Philippines. I use data gleaned from semi-structured interviews with Greenpeace staff, GAIA staff, and the various communities and grassroots organizations with which they form coalitions. I show that GAIA's approach has had a profound impact in the Philippines by linking issues of justice, sustainability, and livelihoods to their support of local organizing. Specifically, in the creation of jobs by way of formalizing waste workers, GAIA has fostered the capacity of communities to create safer environments and scaled up these efforts for greater impact. In contrast, Greenpeace's role in advancing environmental policy change has been significant, but the means by which they engage frontline communities has been more uneven in that such efforts are often subordinated to "urgent" national and international campaigns. I argue how GAIA's

achievements demonstrate the importance of bottom-up organizing as a response to the problems and limitations of top-down transnational mobilizing.

In developing the argument, I engage and address scholarship on transnational organizations, international norms, and environmental justice (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Pellow 2007; Schlosberg 2013). More specifically, I build on insights from the literature on transnationalism, but suggest that scholars have tended to define "success" in ways that make it difficult to perceive the significance of bottom-up, translocal organizations such as GAIA. I bridge this work with scholarship on environmental justice by analyzing how grassroots organizations evaluate and interpret these concepts. From the perspective of grassroots activists in the Philippines and elsewhere, success is more than environmental transformation vis-à-vis centralized polices aimed at improving air, water and soil quality. Success requires attention to socioeconomic inequality, community-building, political transformations and linking up with similar "decolonized local communities" (Luke 1997, 205-206; Arturo 2008) for global ends as well. In evaluating the work of transnational coalitions and their role in linking the local and global, scholar must consider the relationship between success as defined in relation to influence over global governance and success as defined in relation to community empowerment. Specifically, I contend that transforming the structures and power relations that animate global injustice requires efforts to build the capacities of frontline communities to identify and take the lead in implementing solutions at the local level rather than teaching local leaders to implement agendas set by transnational organizations.

I also address scholarship on international norms by comparing two ways of forming coalitions with local communities to engage international institutions and by demonstrating that GAIA's approach is more powerful than commonly assumed. For instance, attention to community empowerment is particularly important in contexts where the injustices associated with environmental devastation have been sanctioned and authorized by the state. TENGOs generally look to states, industries, and legal reform strategies for obtaining environmental justice domestically and abroad (Pellow 13, 2016, see also Coulthard 2014). However, many of the injustices associated with waste in the Philippines are state-sanctioned or perpetrated by industries that are supposed to be state-regulated. When states are not responsive to their citizens, previous studies suggest local NGOs can throw a 'boomerang' to more influential transnational NGOs, which can compel their home states or international organizations to pressure the unresponsive state to change its practices (Keck and Sikkink 1998). However, TENGOs, and the funders who guide them, often design campaigns focused on policy change that are limited in scope and only address a single dimension of the complex global environmental justice crises associated with waste. For example, in the Philippines, Greenpeace was instrumental in the ratification of the Basel Convention, the national ban on waste incineration (Clean Air Act, RA 8749), and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003). Despite ongoing lawsuits to compel Local Government Units (LGUs) to enforce such policies, due to malfeasance, power asymmetries, and the slow pace associated with the Philippine's judicial system (see Batalla, 2000), implementation has been inadequate. Policy and legal victories are important, but absent *socioeconomic* and

political transformations at the local scale that assist marginalized populations in making sure they are enforced, the boomerang pattern and similar state/industry centric strategies to transnational activism are limited in achieving long-term environmental justice.

Socioeconomic transformation here includes, but is not limited to: improved community economic conditions, job opportunities, incubation of ecologically sustainable local business, increased public/private and philanthropic investment in such enterprises, and community ownership of them (See CEJA 2017). Additionally, *community and political transformation* refers to: increased engagement (e.g. community advisory groups and inclusion in decision making processes), cultivation of leadership and technical skills, and increased collaborative partnerships with NGOs, academics and local agencies regarding how waste management (see CEJA 2017). I couch these indicators in debates on justice as capabilities (Schlosberg 2004; 2007; 2013; Young 2011; Drèze and Sen 2002; Holland 2008), but how and to what degree environmental justice coalitions articulate and address them in practice varies significantly.[220] Therefore, this chapter is grounded in the perspectives of local movements and communities, specifically, how they value and understand the strategies and capabilities needed for confronting the complex and interlinked aspects associated with the transboundary and internal movement of waste in the Philippines. Local environmental justice organizations are "the critical frontline fighters" whose affiliations with TENGOs "lend credibility and ground the latter organizations and their efforts in the experiences

[220] As Walker (2009, 205) claims, capabilities has "an internal pluralism, incorporates a diversity of necessary forms of justice, rather than privileging only one, and retains flexibility in how functionings and flourishings are to be secured."

and issues of communities and activists on the ground" (Agyeman et al 2016, 329; Pellow 2011). However, influential TENGOs perspectives and accomplishments often overshadow those of frontline communities (Ageyman et al 2016, Gedicks 2005).

The remainder of this section sets up the comparison of Greenpeace and GAIA by briefly discussing the history of waste and anti-incinerator activism in the Philippines. The following subsection analyzes semi-structured interviews conducted in the province of Cavite to explain several limitations associated with the country's waste management policies and underscores key dilemmas and possibilities for pursuing environmental justice in such communities. The following section begins by teasing out assumptions, principles, and perceptions of the Greenpeace Philippines office through interviews conducted with Greenpeace activist and coalition partners. I apply these insights to the former's involvement in the case of Canadian waste illegally shipped to the Philippines in 2013. Specifically, I examine Greenpeace's strategy to mobilize communities in the province of Tarlac (where the Canadian waste was ultimately dumped) to pass the Basel Amendment. I demonstrate that the state-sanctioned importation of Canadian waste was predicated on corruption, poverty and misinformation and that Greenpeace's strategy has done little to address these root causes. I contend that absent support for local organizing to hold government accountable, fostering the capacity of communities to implement the laws and addressing their socio-economic roots, the potential of Greenpeace's approach for realizing environmental justice in the Philippines is significantly limited, from the perspective of the local stakeholders that the organization purports to serve.

The final section compares the work of Greenpeace to that of GAIA and the members they support in the Philippines. I examine how RA 9003's (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act) implementation has largely depended on the work of GAIA supported organizations like Mother Earth Foundation (MEF) for empowering communities at the local scale to both fight waste incinerators/dumps and educate them on the potential of implementing Zero Waste solutions. Via semi-structured interviews conducted in the *barangay (brgy.),* Fort Bonifacio, I argue that GAIA's translocal approach has helped communities enforce environmental laws, formalize and scale up the efforts of waste workers (from the village to the provincial scale) and positively transformed the socio-economic conditions of the communities they work with in the long-term.[221] The following subsection looks at the funding and frame resonance limitations of this approach to transnational activism and offers provisional explanations and solutions to its shortcomings. I conclude that the ability to effectively tackle not just the ecological, but also the sociopolitical aspect of the Philippines' waste crises depends on a transnational environmental justice coalition's ability to design strategies that correspond to the direct needs, lived experiences, and local knowledge of communities on the frontlines. Specifically, coalitions supporting their first-hand assessments of the problems they face, designing solutions, and implementing them.[222]

[221] The barangay, (i.e. barrio or village) is the most basic political and administrative unit, headed by a locally elected Barangay Chairperson (referred to by locals as Barangay Captain), in the Philippines. The Barangay captain, together with the Barangay Council, are considered to be the "Local Government Unit" (LGU) (see Local Government Code Of the Philippines 2017)
[222] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 2016.

Waste Work in the Philippines

During the mid-1990s, most of the Philippines' growing waste stream was deposited in open dumpsites (over 700 still exist nationwide today)—exposing the public to airborne infections, groundwater contamination, and disease-causing agents—disproportionality affecting "scavenger families" and informal waste workers (Sapuay 2014, 51). Seizing on this 'opportunity,' international institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and Japanese Bank for International Cooperation attempted to finance lucrative incineration projects in the Philippines and surrounding countries to 'help' deal with the crises (Greenpeace 2003). Indeed, Manila was receiving many offers for waste incineration technology transfers from various countries and industries, including a proposal that would have been the world's largest incinerator.[223] As Chapter Three indicates, although waste was no longer a priority for Greenpeace International during this time, its role in stemming the construction of waste incinerators in the North inadvertently contributed to industries redoubling their efforts to build new facilities in countries such as the Philippines. Indeed, because grassroots activism in the U.S. was remarkably successful in shutting down and stopping the construction of new incinerators (the U. S. went from 6,200 in 1988 to less than 100 today), this created additional incentives for waste industries to aggressively target Asia in the early 1990s.[224]

In response to this, activists Von Hernandez and Annie Leonard took it upon themselves to spearhead much of the anti-incineration work in Southeast Asia during the

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[223] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.
[224] Author interview with Annie Leonard, March 2016; (see also Pellow 2007, 133)

late 1990s, before Greenpeace had an official in the region.[225] Moreover, because Hernandez did not have the resources typically enjoyed by a Greenpeace International-driven campaign, it required him "to build a strong coalition at the local and international level…and it was unorthodox at that time, given the personality of Greenpeace, being involved in that type of movement."[226] Although his early work focused on foreign entities dumping hazardous waste in developing countries,

> It did not take long for me to realize that it wasn't just hazardous waste that was being dumped in Asia, but also toxic technologies…Incinerators tend to follow the path of least resistance…aware that environmental monitoring and enforcement capacity is severely lacking in the global south…obsolete incinerators can easily be packaged as modern, non-polluting technologies for handling waste (Greenpeace 2003).

Indeed, given that many Filipinos were fed up with the numerous issues associated with substandard dumpsites, and relatively unaware of the health and environmental impacts of waste incinerators, there was little if any initial resistance to them.

This led Hernandez to reach out to Leonard and other experts like Paul Connett to get involved in a series of workshops with local environmental organizations and community activists to raise awareness about the ills associated with waste incineration in the Philippines. These workshops addressed how waste incinerators are the largest source of dioxins (one of the most toxic chemical substances known to science) and that the byproduct of incineration, "fly ash," contained lead, arsenic and cadmium that have all been linked to birth defects, cancer, and other respiratory ailments (Ibid.). With support from the Catholic Church, Hernandez subsequently helped organize protests, testified in

[225] Hernandez, began focusing on the Philippine's waste problem when he joined Greenpeace in 1995, (Beech 2007)
[226] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.

hearings and organized skill shares to inform and empower local organizations.[227] Although a Greenpeace Toxics campaigner himself, Hernandez remarked that the use of skill shares and an emphasis on transferring knowledge to local groups was a response to a critique that Greenpeace still faces today—that it is a "foreign organization parachuting in, making a big splash and dealing with an opportunistic issue."[228]

The strategy proved effective and helped foster a grassroots critical mass that led to the formation of the Clean Air Coalition. The coalition mobilized opposition to waste incinerators at the local and national scale and notably presented the Philippines Congress with more than 2 million signatures supporting a nationwide ban on waste incinerators while the Clean Air Act was being debated (Pellow 2007, 125). Thus, Hernandez was able to leverage the support of the Clean Air Coalition, and his connections in the Senate, to add a ban on incineration to this national legislation. When Congress appoved the act (RA 8749) in 1999 with the incineration ban provision, the Philippines became the first country in the world to have such a ban. Environmental NGOs (ENGOs) around the world hailed the decision as "a major triumph for environmental justice," especially since the policy originated in the global South and was intended to address injustices taking place there (124).

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[227] When small NGOs and community organizations do not have the ability to mobilize against an environmental threat, they often turn to the church (typically Catholic) for help. Indeed, the Catholic Church has a long history of grassroots activism in the Philippines. For instance, "church-based organizations effectively campaigned against the U.S. bases and the Bataan nuclear plant, against the rapacity of the transnational corporations, and against the abuses and excesses of the Marcos regime. Church people used not only the pulpit, the classroom and various media as means of struggle, but also the street demonstration, the picket line and sometimes, guerilla warfare" (Ofreno 1987, 325).

[228] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.

Although this represented a significant victory, the incineration ban did not take care of the Philippines' growing waste stream or address the associated socio-economic issues facing those living near waste disposal sites. Attempting to address the former, the same community and church-based organizations that cooperated on passing the Clean Air Act, including Greenpeace, convened a national waste conference in January 2000, which yielded the EcoWaste Coalition (EWC).[229] EWC was established in order to assist its member organizations pool resources and information to confront Metro Manila's waste crisis. Specifically, by advocating for policies based on the common threats members faced while elevating successful community based stories of sustainable and ecological waste management. EWC members and community-based organizations helped successfully pass legislation, based on Zero Waste principles, shortly after the Clean Air Act victory. The Republic Act 9003 (RA 9003), also known as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (ESWMA), was signed into law on January 26, 2001, and mandated that:

> [L]ocal government units, to adopt a systematic, comprehensive and ecological solid waste management program which shall ensure protection of public health and environment; utilize environmentally sound methods; set targets and guidelines for solid waste avoidance and reduction; ensure proper segregation, collection, transport and storage of solid waste; promote national research and development programs for improved SWM; encourage greater sector participation; retain primary enforcement and responsibility of SWM with local government units; encourage cooperation and self-regulation among waste generators; institutionalize public participation; and strengthen the integration of ecological solid waste management, resource conservation and recovery topics into the academic curricula (Sapuay 2014, 52).

[229] Church-based groups included the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and National Secretariat for Social Action, Justice and Peace (CBCP-NASSA) (see NASSA 2017; Caritas 2017). In addition, EcoWaste Coalition "is a public interest and advocacy network of more than 150 community, church, school, environmental and health groups…EcoWaste Coalition organizes and supports various citizens' efforts addressing waste, climate and chemical safety issues through: research and evidence building approach; information dissemination; skill shares and workshops; policy development and advocacy; and demonstration projects of ecological alternatives and strategic campaigns and alliances, locally and internationally" (IPEN 2017).

At a time when many doubted that such policy changes would be possible in an impoverished nation, the passage of the Clean Air Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act demonstrated that they could, indeed, be achieved. More importantly, as Pellow observes, these events demonstrated the importance of community mobilization and social movement action to the success in proposing and passing environmental legalization (2007, 124).

However, almost twenty years after the ratification of RA 9003 and RA 8749, incinerator companies continue to exploit legal loopholes to burn garbage, and foreign waste is still exported to the Philippines and disposed of in poorly managed landfills that disproportionally impact marginalized communities. Although the lack of implementation of RA 9003 has been attributed to several technical, economic and administrative limitations of local and national governments (see Sapuay 2014), the most common explanation given by activists, government officials and frontline communities pertain to corruption and a lack of community capacity to implement the policy and hold officials accountable. Indeed, levels of government corruption in the Philippines are relatively high as is the public perception that public office is used for gaining and maintaining economic, political, and social power (see Batalla 2000, 2). According to Vinay Bhargava, World Bank country director for the Philippines, "our analysis so far reveals a broad consensus that corruption in the public and private sectors in the Philippines is pervasive and deep-rooted, touching even the judiciary and the media" (cited in Batalla, 2000, 2). Thus, various waste management industries continue to put pressure on the Philippines government to eliminate the national ban on incineration as,

according to high-ranking government sources, there are significant financial kickbacks for building large-scale incinerators projects *and* importing waste from abroad.[230]

The temptation to engage in corruption and malfeasance is particularly acute at Local Government Unit (LGU) level, as there are few incentives for implementation of RA9003 (despite it being their legal mandate) and limited funds available for solid waste management. Moreover, because of a lack of follow-through at the *barangay* level in terms of building local systems and training by the national government, the policy's potential has gone largely unrealized. Although the law is clear on the need for community education and participation, according to Sapuay, it seemed it "pre-occupied itself in putting technical details rather than preparing the society for compliance" (2014, 56). The mobilizing efforts of Greenpeace and leaders like Hernandez were essential for the ratification of the Basel Convention, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA9003) and the Clean Air Act (RA 8749). However, in the following section, I contend that absent support for local organizing to hold government accountable, fostering the capacity of communities to implement the laws and addressing their socio-economic roots, such as poverty, lack of respect, political efficacy, these victories are incomplete.

Environmental Justice and Province of Cavite

Neighboring Metro Manila, the province of Cavite, is peppered with many *barangays* that highlight the potential and limitations associated with the Philippines waste management legislation. For instance, the *barangay* Aguado, (roughly 40 miles

[230] Author interview with Vice Gov. Enrique Cojuangco Jr., December 2015.

outside Manila), represents a telling case of environmental injustice, community resistance, and the urgency of empowering frontline communities vis-à-vis this legislation. Before the Integrated Waste Management Inc. (IWMI) incinerator began operating in Aguado, the sparsely inhabited *brgy.* was a relatively pristine countryside home to many displaced Filipinos. As community activist, "Nancy" recalled, "they had beautiful rivers, it was nice, the air was good," after she was relocated here in 1999 by the Philippines national government (due to super typhoon Oniang).[231] However, facing a dearth of employment opportunities, given the *brgy's.* remote location, residents were initially open to IWMI's offer to construct a "diaper facility," which promised to bring infrastructure and jobs.[232]

However, the facility ultimately built by IWMI in 2003 was a "pyrolytic waste oxidizer" (incinerator) from Canada-based EcoWaste Solutions Inc., which had the capacity to incinerate 10 tons of biomedical waste, including seized illegal drugs, from Metro Manila per day (Adraneda, 2005). The local government approved the facility without full knowledge of what the plant was going to be, according to a local activist who investigated the facility's construction despite the Clean Air Act's prohibition. Indeed, she claimed "there was no public consultation" about what kind of facility would be built and, given the site's isolated location, the developers were "able to build the plant and operate it without the community knowing at all about it initially."[233] Although the facility did provide jobs, about 100 in a community of roughly 5 thousand at the time,

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[231] Author interview with anonymous activist, December 2015
[232] Author interview with anonymous community group, December 2015, Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[233] Author interview with Anne Larracas, March 2017

hundreds more would become sick, often fatally, as result of its operations.[234] Indeed, after the incinerator became operational, local residents started to notice nauseating smells in the air and a spike in skin rashes, asthma, and tuberculosis—a few years later, various forms of cancer spiked as well.

It can be quite difficult to access official documents, conduct interviews, or speak with government officials on the record about how the facility was permitted to operate, given the national incineration ban and public opposition to the facility. Aguado residents claimed the incinerator was rejected by other surrounding *brgys.,* but Aguado was chosen because its inhabitants were relatively poor, were unaware of the potential effects, and lacked a meaningful awareness of the incineration ban. Many residents also claimed it was built in Aguado due to government corruption, cronyism, and legal/factual ambiguity regarding what the facility was processing and how it was doing so. Indeed, corruption and waste management are regular bedfellows in the Philippines; given the considerable amount of autonomy LGUs enjoy vis-à-vis the national government in this sector.[235] Although LGU officials are largely responsible for implementing RA 9003, they often do not and are complicit in its violation. For instance, during my stay in Aguado, unmarked waste trucks coming from outside the province, many of them leaking foul smelling liquids, continued to pull into the IWMI facility, despite RA 9003 and community opposition—"we don't even know what is inside (the trucks)…but it's not *our waste*."[236]

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[234] Author interview with anonymous community group, December 2015
[235] See Philippines constitution (1987).
[236] Author interview with anonymous community group in Aguado, December 2015

As one resident familiar with Filipino waste management policy remarked, even though "the law is good, the implementation is bad."[237]

Nevertheless, with the support of local church clergy who were working with Cavite Green Coalition (a provincial alliance of environmental organizations), local activists began informing Aguado residents about the connection between the incinerator and the surge of health maladies—much of this contrary to what IWMI and LGU officials were telling them. For instance, a local church began playing videos, filmed secretly within the facility, showing human bones and other remains going into the incinerator, handled by workers lacking appropriate safety gear.[238] Residents became organized in opposition to the plant through the support of Cavite Green Coalition, EWC, Health Care without Harm and GAIA, despite intimidation from IWMI representatives, workers, and LGU officials. For instance, residents learned to sample for dioxin themselves, using rudimentary procedures like bucket testing and free-range egg sampling, in order to foster local capacity and ownership of this struggle. Many of the residents claimed this was an empowering experience as they had previously lacked the knowledge and means to link the illnesses their community was experiencing with the incineration facility.[239] An independent commission by International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) later supported their suspicions when it found that the eggs collected contained abnormally levels of dioxin that were more than three times the limit set by European Union standards (Adraneda, 2005; EcoWaste Coalition 2011). The evidence was not enough to establish a direct connection between the waste facility and the high levels of dioxin in

[237] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[238] Author interview with anonymous community group in Aguado, December 2015
[239] Author interview with anonymous community group in Aguado, December 2015

the surrounding environment (making any legal action problematic). However, much like activists in Warren County in 1982, it did embolden the community to protest and make "loud noise and embarrass the company through the media" (Cole and Foster 2000, Ageyman et al. 2016).[240]

Limitations and Potential for Realizing Justice in Aguado

The community was ultimately successful in shutting down the incinerator in 2005, thanks in large part to local direct actions, evidence gathering, and awareness building. GAIA and local ENGOs also continued to work with the Aguado residents after the incinerator was shutdown, training them in Zero Waste principles. For instance, the local elementary and high school's remarkable implementation of Zero Waste has demonstrated to the community that source segregation, composting, and the clever reuse of products can all but eliminate residuals from their waste stream—and therefore the need for open dumpsites, let alone incinerators that burn Metro Manila's waste. In the first year alone, there was a 17% drop in malnutrition due to the availability of organic compost and vegetables, produced from organic waste previously sent to landfills, by the school children *themselves*.[241] Additionally, the trainings and skill shares that GAIA and EWC coalition members provided helped transform previously marginalized individuals into community leaders. As one such member remarked, "I learned how to fight for advocacy and what is right to do…to put pressure on the mayor, *brgy.* and work with other NGOSs…I learned how to stand in front of other people, even in the highest

[240] Author interview with anonymous community group in Aguado, December 2015
[241] Author interview with Paeng Lopez, December 2015

level—before, I was shy."[242] Many of these community leaders, now organized, would go on to help resist other landfills and incinerators in *brgys*. outside of their own, underscoring the significance of the solidarity developed vis-à-vis direct participation by frontline communities.

However, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reissued a permit to IWMI in 2009, allowing them to resume "processing" agrochemical and industrial waste (EcoWaste Coalition 2011). Like in many such scenarios around the world, waste incinerations are shutdown, only to reopen in neighboring communities, or as "waste-to-energy" facilities (e. g. gasification, thermal oxidizers, pyrolysis and plasma arc) which many scientists claim are simply incinerators in disguise and still entail significant health risks (Connett 2013; GAIA 2017a). Furthermore, although the DENR has only permitted IWMI to use "autoclaving technology," sources familiar with the plant suggested it continues to "burn" medical waste, which negatively affects the health of the surrounding community. Even though GAIA continues to conduct seminars and provide materials for community members to administer residential health surveys, the lack of funding for such work has made continuing such efforts problematic. Moreover, LGU officials will not accept the community's findings and claims the facility is operating within the parameters of the law—but "we don't know that for sure because they won't let anyone in anymore."[243] Indeed, residents claimed the *brgy.* Captain is colluding with IWMI and has a person working on the inside, allowing him to forewarn the facility

[242] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[243] Author interview with Paeng Lopez, December 2015

about any surprise inspections.[244] My translator/guide even cautioned me about asking the *brgy.* Captain, about the incinerator, as such a line of inquiry could be dangerous for my host family and myself.[245]

The IWMI facility also employs a significant number of *brgy.* residents, which has produced community divisions, often resulting in intimidation for those who speak out against it. Moreover, as with many environmental injustices, IWMI has and continues to use various forms of "economic blackmail" to undermine local resistance. The most nefarious form I encountered had to do with cinder blocks, allegedly made using "fly ash," a byproduct from the incinerator. Although the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has recently ruled that fly ash is safe for use in materials like concrete, the issue is still debated, given that the EPA study only examined the use phase of such materials, not the manufacturing, installation, demolition, or disposal phases (Vallette 2014; Pearson 2014). Indeed, according to residents, these blocks are more flammable and less stable compared to conventional cinder blocks. Nevertheless, because of the composite materials, the blocks are cheaper than conventional cinderblocks; thus, the facility appears to be helping the community by providing 'subsidized building materials.' The LGU is using these same materials in the construction of low-cost housing for future displaced Filipinos, estimated to be in the thousands, within a short walk from the facility, according to community activists.

[244] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[245] Although I did not know it at the time, my translator lied about the primary purpose of my visit to the Aguado Captain. When he asked why I was here and if it had anything to do with IWMI, my translator claimed I was here to look at how the school was successfully implementing Zero Waste practices (which I was), but denied I had any interest in IWMI to protect myslef and my host family from harassment. Indeed, many residents took a considerably risk hosting an obvious outsider to conduct research, many which said they will probably face some form of subsequent retribution if anything was traced back to them.

Therefore, the injustices Aguado residents currently face cannot be reduced to corrupt LGU officials and the polluting facility that poisons them, as it is rather a symptom of misinformation, underdeveloped political capacity *and lack of economic opportunities*. For instance, residents I spoke with claimed any solution for closing the facility must ultimately address the jobs that will be lost and involve their direct involvement—"as responsible resident of this community, I should be responsible for fighting things that will affect us badly. It is important for the involvement of the people of the communities."[246] As Ochie Tolentino of Cavite Green Coalition put it, "I want the community to be independent in their fight, that's why we trained them to be leaders through the help of EcoWaste and GAIA, to capacitate the community's first. But the leaders cannot move in Aguado due to limited funds."[247] Unlike other *brgys.* GAIA has worked with in the Philippines, Agudo has yet to build the organizational and infrastructural capacity (e. g. material recovery facility and organized waste workers, discussed below) due to LGU resistance and limited funds. Indeed, consistently cited by Aguado residents and GAIA members was a need to get funds *directly* to the former so they can continue to train more individuals to conduct research and educate the broader community about the dangers associated with IWMI and foster the political will for implementing RA 9003.

Conversely, despite being instrumental in passing RA 9003, Greenpeace's current goals have largely shifted to high profile "upstream" campaigns; such as its recent push for extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation in the Philippines. There is little

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[246] Author interview with anonymous community group in Aguado, December 2015
[247] Author interview with Ochie Tolentino, March 2016

doubt that upstream policy victories can help mitigate the Philippines' growing waste crises. Nevertheless, without continued support for communities like that in Aguado, the potential of such policies, like RA 9003, go unrealized. For instance, Nancy discussed her recent invitation to the Third Civil Society Organization Forum led by Greenpeace, focusing on extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation. The meeting was a productive dialogue with various municipal solid waste (MSW) stakeholders, including informal and formal waste workers, about the need for national EPR legislation in the Philippines. Although humbled by Greenpeace's invitation, photo-ops and media presence, Nancy confided in me after the event that she was at a loss for how EPR legislation would help the residents of Aguado, who were suffering and dying because of policy that was already not being enforced in her community.

My fieldwork in Aguado indicates a number of provisional strengths and weakness associated with GAIA and Greenpeace's approach to activism in the Philippines. GAIA's strength is the customized support they provide (based on the specific needs of frontline communities) and the solidarity and empowerment that develops through the cultivation of local leadership. However, because this approach is more deliberate, less visible and therefore relatively difficult to solicit 'buy-in' from funders, GAIA's efforts in communities like Aguado are often hindered due to a lack of funding. Conversely, Greenpeace's strength is generating funds, media attentions, and attracting volunteers to change industry practices and advance environmental polices meant to benefit frontline communities. However, as the case of Aguado demonstrates, such policies are insufficient in and of themselves and the means by which Greenpeace engages such

communities can create false expectations and feelings of being used (as discussed below). Because Greenpeace continues to form coalitions with grassroots organizations and frontline communities like those in Aguado, giving their campaigns additional legitimacy and potential volunteers, it is important to understand what is at stake in such partnerships for community-based organization. Although Greenpeace coalition partners typically appreciate what they have accomplished in the Philippines and continue to form strategic alliances with them, many still lament how their cooperative endeavors are superficial and short-lived engagements centered on garnering media attention. In the following section, I discuss the perception of Greenpeace by coalition partners in this regard and how their involvement in the case of Canadian waste is a telling example of their need to build deeper relationships with frontline communities.

Greenpeace Philippines

Greenpeace is one of the world's most recognized environmental groups not only because of its "successes," but also due to its signature high profile direct action and associated name-brand, carefully managed by Greenpeace International. However, Greenpeace NROs have also been critiqued for reaching out to frontline communities to cooperate for one activity (e. g. mobilizing them), or a single campaign, claiming credit for cooperative endeavors, and then abandoning them (Pellow 2007). Most Greenpeace campaigners I spoke with in the Philippines acknowledged the limitations associated with its top-down model, short-term mobilizing campaigns, and how this affects frontline communities. But many of these same individuals also argued that the environmental problems facing the Philippines were so urgent, that the most sensible approach to

mitigating them was to craft environmental legislation and work with industries, one issue at a time and as quickly as possible, rather than even attempt to address their socio-economic root causes. For instance, Greenpeace Philippines currently lacks the people or training for community organizing as the directives coming from Greenpeace International and Greenpeace Southeast Asia (GPSEA) pertain to hiring campaigners that specialize in social media.[248] However, current and former Greenpeace Philippines staff also claimed the top-down 'corporate structure,' and the direct action media stunts favored by Greenpeace International, are ineffective in addressing the environmental *and* livelihood concerns of many Filipinos. As one former Greenpeace volunteer put it:

> Greenpeace is diverting from its original goals…directly going to the community, talking with them, and asking them to do something. (Why?) The global Greenpeace (Greenpeace international) is really into this strategy of mobilization…if there is ever a need for Greenpeace to mobilize people, I know they will seek the help of EcoWaste…but they can't say that they changed someone because what they mobilize are people that are already aware and organized…they just make use of those people that are easy to work with…most of the battles, most of the campaigns, are done through social media…I don't see them as serious organizers, I see them as mobilizers.[249]

Thus, several activists have left Greenpeace in frustration, while others still contend the potential of the organization outweighs any of its purported institutional disadvantages.

The Country Director for GPSEA, Amalie Obusan acknowledged her office was currently grappling with this problem and that the New Operated Model (NOM) (see Chapter Three) being implemented was a response to the limitations associated with their direct action campaign model. She claimed, "While that was successful in getting legislation passed, it wasn't really successful in terms of engaging people and bringing them on board. And so, it becomes very difficult during implementation stages (of

[248] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[249] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015

legislation)."[250] Greenpeace's direct-action model typically involves professional activists doing most of the campaign work in which media stunts are used as leverage for lobbying policy change vis-à-vis governments and polluting industries. But part of this leverage depends on mobilizing frontline communities to show up to protests, sign petitions, and share stories via social media. As one digital mobilization specialist for Greenpeace International remarked about how this affects grassroots organizations in the long-term, "often times we try to mobilize people and then after that we leave, we really don't have a good exit strategy or there is no strategy that empowers the people to take it on themselves."[251]

Indeed, Greenpeace's reputation among environmental justice organizations in the Philippines is mixed, if not unfavorable. Although they do not always use the language of environmental justice per se, grassroots environmental organizations in the Philippines still note the connection between their disproportionate exposure to environmental ills and issues of poverty, misinformation, and disrespect. Consequently, they frequently cited a need for skill shares, funds, direct access to information, and support for local organizing from influential TENGOs that seek to assist and join forces with them. However, many of the organizations I spoke with remarked that while Greenpeace was good at getting policy passed and galvanizing public support for their shared environmental goals, Greenpeace was not supportive of grassroots organizing. When I raised this critique to Ali, she remarked,

> I think that is a very fair and very accurate assessment…part of the shift (New Operating Model) is to work more closely with grassroots organizations, people's organizations and grassroots

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[250] Author interview with Amalie (Ali) Obusan, February 2016
[251] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist December 2015

> communities. This open campaigning approach became a principle which Greenpeace recognized must [sic] be working towards so that we are able to engage much more people…in that sense, we are still in the early stages of establishing our networks and our communities and our relationships with them.[252]

When I pressed other Greenpeace campaigners on how this shift worked in practice, I was told that "although it is not explicitly put in our objectives," environmental justice is always "inherent in the work that we do" in the Philippines. Specifically, "Project Clean Water," was a good example of how Greenpeace was fostering the direct involvement and empowerment of the communities with which they form partnerships.[253]

The animating idea behind Greenpeace's Project Clean Water campaign is the "right to know" how industry production processes may impact a community's environment and health, specifically how such practices are potentially contaminating local water supplies. According to Greenpeace, "the public's right to know is essential to any effective public participation, good governance and sustainable business. It is comprised of legal initiatives like access to information, public participation in decision-making and *access to justice in environmental matters*" (2010, emphasis added). To these ends, Greenpeace organized "water patrol expeditions," a series of high profile events involving the direct participation of frontline communities confronting companies polluting local rivers and lakes. The water patrol participants boated down rivers, hung banners, and protested in front of industries *Greenpeace researchers* had identified as polluters of local water supplies. According to a Greenpeace representative involved in this campaign, "the kind of relationships that were built during that project empowered

[252] Author interview with Amalie (Ali) Obusan, February 2016
[253] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist December 2015

them."[254] However, when I spoke with members of Buklod Tao, one of the community organizations that supplied boats and a number of volunteers for the water patrol units, about how this empowered them, one member remarked,

> That is Greenpeace's style (confrontational), it is short-term help, but it is not long-term because we have to go back in and raise awareness for the local community, we have to go back or stay, but the trouble is, this (water patrols) is just a passing thing. There is something wrong; there is [sic] some factors that is missing—ownership. [For Greenpeace], it's all about clear advocacy, engagement with local government officials.[255]

According to many Buklod Tao activists, the clean water project had a good starting idea, but once it got its "media mileage," it languished due to a lack of proper organizing and follow-through by Greenpeace.

Indeed, because Greenpeace environmental priorities are constantly in flux, it designs campaigns to last about a year and to maximize visual impact. This approach has proven useful for fostering the name-brand recognition associated with its funding acumen, lobbying, and mobilizing volunteers, but has been at odds with building sustainable relationships with frontline communities.[256] According to an anonymous activist, Greenpeace is therefore unable to support community organizing in a meaningful way because they do not "have that kind of connection with the community, they don't have that kind of connection with other stakeholders for that matter. Why is that? Because

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[254]Author interview with Abi Aguilar, February 2016

[255]Buklod Tao is "a peoples' organization in Brgy. Banaba, San Mateo, Rizal that reinforces the capacity of communities to respond to disasters and enhance their environment…Buklod Tao envisions a free, peaceful, and progressive community where everyone has strong relationships with God, their fellow men, Mother Nature, and is capable of taking care of themselves during disaster" (Buklod Tao 2017). Author interview with anonymous Buklod Tao activist, December 2015

[256] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015

they don't stay long."[257] Speaking about how short-term partnerships focused on policy change affected his organizations, one Bukload Tao member remarked:

> There is a show of protest of the people against these environmentally critical projects, and then we address the local government to express our views, and that's it…The trouble is, there is no cascading down of the spirit of the law to the smaller sector of the community like us. There is no empowerment. The actualization, the practice of all these things is regretfully lacking…so there is no empowerment, empowerment just on paper. And of course, Greenpeace is maybe aware of this, but to peruse empowerment of the people, it's a big job, and it requires day-to-day engagement with the community by Greenpeace…but sad to say, they are only at the advocacy level. They are not at the level of organizing; they are not at the level of capacity building…you have to go down, you have to leave the offices, leave their laptops and computers and go.[258]

But as one former Greenpeace campaigner suggested, it can be problematic that Greenpeace even tries to engage with frontline communities, given their current approach and priorities—"to affect policies, you should stay were policies are made and not engage with communities and create expectations."[259]

The risk of creating false expectations within frontline communities is not only a limitation of Greenpeace as it often makes subsequent interactions by other ENGOs much more challenging. For example, because they frequently cooperate with Greenpeace in the Philippines, one activist claimed it is a challenge to explain to community partners how her organization is different and separate—"for community folks, all these ENGOs are the same."[260] When pressed on why her organization would continue to work with Greenpeace, given this limitation, she explained because Greenpeace is skillful at mobilizing volunteers, garnering media attention, and that their "name-brand" is recognized by the general public, politicians, and fund raisers, it is often a necessary

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[257] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[258] Author interview with anonymous Buklod Tao activist, December 2015
[259] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[260] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015

tradeoff.[261] Even though Greenpeace has helped create positive change in the Philippines, the institutional constraints campaigners face and the limitations of the policies it has helped pass is evident vis-à-vis their role in resisting Canadian waste illegally dumped in the Port of Manila in 2013.

Canadian Waste and the Limitations of the Basel Convention

Between June and August of 2013, 50 container vans were seized by customs police after a "spot inspection" revealed they contained heterogeneous waste (e.g. plastics, household garbage, and used adult diapers), rather than the declared homogeneous waste (e.g. recyclable plastic scrap materials) (Philippines Bureau of Customs 2014). The container vans were withheld at the Port of Manila while the issue was investigated, as this appeared to be a violation of several national and international laws. Four months later, 48 additional container vans would arrive, culminating in 103 held by officials at the port, with five left unaccounted for.[262] On February 20, 2014, the Bureau of Customs (BoC) filed smuggling charges against the owner of the exporting firm, Chronic Incorporated, and the company's licensed customs brokers in the Philippines. The issue also precipitated a number of petitions demanding that the waste return to Canada and triggered various protests, many of which directed at the Canadian Embassy. Indeed, Shalimar Vitan of GAIA regretted that "countries like Canada may be beginning to think that the Philippines is the mythical 'away' of their 'throw-away' culture. No community, let alone a country, deserves to be unjustly treated as a dumping ground. No community is disposable" (Yap 2014).

[261] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[262] Author interview with Vice Gov. Enrique Cojuangco Jr., December 2015,

Although Canadian ambassador Neil Reeder's first statement regarding the waste reflected a position of support for resolving the issue, the embassy ultimately claimed it was a "private commercial matter" between a Canadian exporter and the Philippines importing partner (Pazzibugan 2015).[263] Furthermore, the Custom Commissioner initially responsible for overseeing this process, John Phillip Sevilla, was forced to resign due to his support for the immediate return of the waste, according to a high-ranking government official.[264] His replacement, Alberto Lina, who owns several companies that deal with the BoC, such as the hospital waste treatment facility IWMI, raised several conflict of interest questions (Tulfo 2015). Nevertheless, under the new direction of Lina, the BoC had "no objections" to dumping the waste in a domestic landfill at "the earliest possible time" (Orejas 2015). The Department of Environment and Natural Resources would also reverse course and supported the disposal of the Canadian waste in Filipino landfills "for the sake of our diplomatic relations," according to Environmental Secretary Ramon Paje (Ibid.; Pazzibugan 2015). Indeed, this was 'the best solution' for the Philippines government, due to an upcoming visit (May 2015) by President Aquino to Canada focused on growing trade. As a result, 29 of the containers vans were unlawfully dumped in a private landfill in Tarlac province, after rotting at the Port of Manila for almost two years, while various government agencies worked on the legality and public relations associated with disposing the waste domestically.

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[263] "We are responsible stewards of the environment in Canada and we expect our companies and the importing companies to be socially responsible. We will try to resolve this as best we can because we have a very strong relationship [with the Philippines and] we don't want that to be affected by issues like this" (Santos 2014).
[264] Author interview with anonymous government official December 2015.

The Metro Clark Landfill

The 100-hectare landfill in question, managed by Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation (MCWMC), already had a history of alleged graft and environmental problems before accepting the Canadian waste in 2015. Indeed, local church, indigenous, and community activists have opposed the landfill ever since it was proposed. "We have been fighting this for the past 14 years, the Canadian waste is not the only problem," remarked Diane Figueroa, a local community organizer and president of Concerned Citizens of Bamban (CCOB).[265] The MCWMC landfill is located within the Clark Special Economic Zone in Tarlac province (80 kilometers north of Metro Manila), specifically created to accommodate the transfer of the U.S. Clark Air Field base to Filipino control in 1991. The Aetas, an indigenous community of about 500 families, were resettled to this area (their ancestral homeland) by the Philippines government after the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo's eruption, even though it was still significantly polluted due to the use and disposal of PCBs, pesticides and lead during the base's operations (Rieder et al. 2005). Indeed, a significant number of Aetas would experience severe health issues as a result of the U.S. base's contamination, many of which were already sick because of sorting through asbestos-laden metal in the early 1990s, employed for 30 cents a day by the U.S. Navy (Ibid.).

Because the *Dapdap* resettlement area of the Aetas occupied a significant portion of the land on which developers identified as ideal for constructing the landfill, it was crucial to get their support. Therefore, in 2000, the German consortium that won the

[265] Author interview with Diane Figueroa, December 2015.

development bid visited the Aeta community; conducting interviews, providing medical evaluations, medicine, and food.[266] In exchange, each Aeta was required to provide their name and signature. However, according to one Aeta, this was a ruse to manufacture false support of the landfill—"they used these signatures to present to the higher authorities, saying these Aetas are willing to accept this landfill. But there is a trick…these Aetas do not know how to write or read. They were surprised (when the landfill was built)."[267] The Aetas have thus continued to oppose the landfill as they not only felt deceived during the approval process, but also due to the *additional* health issues they continue to suffer since the facility became operational. For instance, according to one former MCWMC employee, not only are the Aetas surrounding the landfill regularly admitted inside to sort through and clean untreated medical waste for recycling without protective equipment, the facility allows contaminated water to run into the creek near their resettlement area, contaminating the Aeta's drinking water, usually under the camouflage of heavy rain.[268]

According to Figueroa, the developers of the dump claimed they chose the site in Tarlac because the "clay soil was ideal for the construction of a sanitary landfill."[269] However, many residents I spoke with claimed it was because the company felt it could exploit the permitting processes specific to the region, its remote location, and the perceived weakness and ignorance of the surrounding community and Aetas. However,

[266] The consortium, Birkahn & Nolte GmbH and Heers & Brockstedt Umwelttechnik GmbH, currently they holds a 30% stake in the company, the remaining 70% is owned by various Filipino investors (Rufo Colayco being one of the largest domestic share holders) (see Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. 2017)
[267] Author interview with anonymous Aeta community leader, December 2015.
[268] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist December 2015.; Author interview with Diane Figuero March 2017.
[269] Author interview with Diane Figueroa, December 2015.

Figueroa's group reached out to the Aetas and Greenpeace, who collectively mobilized over 8 thousand people in protest, once they learned the landfill would be accepting waste from Metro Manila (Vanzi 2001). The coalition's sustained efforts compelled the MCWMC to assure the public that the landfill would only accept waste from the Clark Special Economic Zone and Central Luzon. Tarlac provincial board resolution No. 108-2003 and separate *brgy*. ordinances supported this stance, which prohibited waste being imported to the new landfill, according to Figueroa.[270] However, after the DENR issued an environmental compliance certificate (No. 0012-704-213) in 2001, which did not specify any "limits within the country for the waste collection area of the facility" (Flor 2015) the MCWMC was essentially free to accept waste from outside the region of Central Luzon.

Thus, when opposition groups questioned the legality of the Canadian Waste sent to Tarlac in 2013, Rufo Colayco, president and CEO of MCWMC claimed the facility was operating within the parameters of their DENR certificate. However, many government officials spoke off the record regarding the corruption associated with such certifications and how waste processing facilities are built and operated in the Philippines. According to one such official:

> Garbage is traditionally a source of undeclared income for local municipalities, which is used for politics…what happens now, in the DENR, you pay a ton of money, they give a permit that you can handle legal waste, or hazardous waste, and what they do (the facility) is that they don't do any actual treatment, all they have to do is have a truck with a skull and bones logo and they just dump it straight…its corruption.[271]

[270] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist December 2015
[271] Author interview with anonymous government official December 2015.

Importing heterogeneous and toxic waste into the Philippines is a violation of the Basel Convention, the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990 (RA 6969), and RA9003, which explicitly prohibits the importation of toxic waste co-mingled with recyclable content. However, because of the profit associated with the illegal trade of toxic and medical waste internationally and its disposal in countries like the Philippines, the same official remarked, "it has the potential to be bigger or as big as (the importation) of drugs."[272] Therefore, although the Canadian waste issue has received significant media attention, both officials and activist I spoke with suggested the illegal importation and disposal of waste often goes undetected, if not sanctioned, by corrupt officials.

Transnational versus Translocal Approaches for Resisting Canadian Waste

Because of government corruption and malfeasance, it is essential to have organized opposition and informed communities at the grassroots monitoring the enforcement of laws associated with waste. Indeed, without proper education about the ills associated with waste disposal, corrupt government officials and industries continue to exploit the poverty of this municipality vis-à-vis vote buying and the promise of jobs that are nevertheless hazardous to the health of the community, according to an anonymous Capas municipal councilor.[273] He remarked, "People are easy to buy here, especially in the Capas resettlement area" and claimed the Mayor of Bamban, Jose Antonio Tiglao Feliciano, uses a 200,000 (PHP) a month kickback from the landfill to bribe local officials to not interfere with the landfill's operations or the waste trucks currently

[272] Author interview with anonymous government official December 2015.
[273] Author interview with anonymous Municipal Councilor, December 2015.

opposed by their constituents. Therefore, when this official raised objections about the trucks and their negative health and environmental impacts, the Mayor said to "shut my mouth and I should not interfere…they would be using the landfill money for our campaign in the upcoming election."[274] Indeed, many community leaders claimed Rufo Colayco has financed numerous local and provincial elections in such a manor, including that of former Tarlac governor Victor Yap and current Governor (2016) Susan Yap, both children of the late governor Jose Yap—who pushed for the original landfill project in 2000.[275]

Due to the systemic corruption and nepotism associated with waste, Vice Gov. Enrique Cojuangco jr., remarked, "if the people of Tarlac are not angry, there is only so much I can do, we can fight together, but I can't fight their fight. So, I said you must get the people angry (to Figueroa) by talking with them."[276] Community anger did increase as the CCOB continued to build awareness about the growing health issues amongst the Aetas, current and former MCWMC employees, community members and their connection with the landfill and leaking waste trucks. However, in the face of resistance from government officials and multiple death threats based on her group's vociferous opposition to the landfill's operations, Figueroa sought the help of outside TENGOs to bring attention to what was happening in Tarlac. Based on her positive experience with Hernandez in 2001, Figueroa reached out to Greenpeace to help organize local resistance to the Canadian waste and put pressure on LGU officials to enforce the law.

[274] Author interview with anonymous Municipal Councilor, December 2015.
[275] Author interview with Diane Figueroa, March 2017.
[276] Author interview with Vice Gov. Enrique Cojuangco Jr., December 2015.

Nevertheless, while they shared the goal of returning the waste to Canada, Figueroa's organization wanted to begin by educating and organizing communities to resist *in Tarlac*, whereas Greenpeace prioritized mobilizing as many people as possible in Metro Manila to pressure *the national government* to return the waste and ratify the Basel Ban Amendment.[277] Thus, when Figueroa contacted Greenpeace, she claimed it was in a hurry to mobilize her organization to its ends.

> They told us they have plans also, but it was not acceptable for me, because of our situation…I can send people, I told them, but I don't think it is time yet, people are not yet ready for that big step…we have to face the local issue before going out, we don't even know what to shout because we don't understand how it came about (Canadian Waste)…we are happy to work with NGOs, but we can't allow them to take over, sometimes they want control, but it is the people who have to be in control for change to happen. They must have ownership to be in it for the long-term.[278]

For instance, during the Concerned Citizens of Bamban's investigation of the Canadian waste, they discovered it was not the only foreign waste being dumped in Tarlac. Specifically, for the past five years, the CCOB organized local teams to monitor trucks entering the MCWMC landfill and documented multiple instances where the landfill accepted untreated hospital and hazardous waste from locations both domestic and abroad.[279] According to an environmental technician and farmer from Bomban, "this (waste) is a billion-dollar industry right now. Ordinary people doesn't [sic] really know about this, but right now, they're understanding, they're angry. The law helps (RA 9003), but it is not enough. We need more monitoring groups that we can trust."[280] He attributed

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[277] The Ban Amendment "provides for the prohibition by each Party included in the proposed new Annex VII (Parties and other States which are members of the OECD, EC, Liechtenstein) of all transboundary movements to States not included in Annex VII of hazardous wastes covered by the Convention that are intended for final disposal, and of all transboundary movements to States not included in Annex VII of hazardous wastes covered by paragraph 1 (a) of Article 1 of the Convention that are destined for reuse, recycling or recovery operations" (see Basel Convention 2017).
[278] Author interview with Diane Figueroa, December 2015.
[279] Author interview with Diane Figueroa, March 2017
[280] Author interview with anonymous Bamban resident, December 2015.

the community's increasing awareness about the corruption and health impacts associated with the landfill to the organizing orchestrated by church and community leaders like Figueroa. He went on to suggest, as did the majority of Tarlac residents I spoke with, that what they therefore needed from outside ENGOs was more information and training to support the organizing already being done locally.

Indeed, the Concerned Citizens of Bamban had more ambitious goals than the removal of Canadian waste and the mitigation of future waste coming in vis-à-vis passing the Basel Ban Amendment. They also aimed to train households on waste segregation and mentoring the next generation of activists to monitor and be involved in local politics (e.g. budget planning, overseeing compliance, etc.) so the community would be empowered to eliminate the need for and ills associated with the MCWMC landfill. However, Figueroa claimed that because her group disagreed with Greenpeace's priorities and strategies, Greenpeace did not "seem that enthusiastic in supporting us. They only call me every time they have an activity, but when it comes to our activity, they are not really that supportive."[281] Her contact at Greenpeace responded that Greenpeace's engagement with "Tarlac community is what we call 'opportunistic work,'" and therefore, "I always emphasize whenever we work with such communities or reach out to new communities, you don't make any promises, we don't say that we're here for the long-term."[282] Indeed, despite answering her initial call for assistance,

[281] Author interview with Diane Figueroa, December 2015.
[282] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist December 2015

Figueroa felt abandoned by Greenpeace once her organization failed to follow its lead—"that's why we do it our way and on our own."[283]

Nevertheless, Greenpeace continued to engage on the Canadian waste issue with other ENGOs in Quezon City, such as EWC, IPEN, and GAIA until roughly the end of 2015 with little success. According one Greenpeace activist, "we have done so many mobilizations, we've used the social media, we've done an online petition with Change.org, so all those possible strategies and tactics we've employed, but it didn't really fly as much as we were hoping."[284] Furthermore, a number of Greenpeace campaigners expressed frustration about the internal institutional pressure to rollback their work on this campaign. Indeed, not only was the Greenpeace Canadian office not responding to her calls to cooperate, the same Greenpeace activist remarked that management was "unhappy" about her level of involvement in the Canadian waste issues.[285] As noted in chapter three, the NOM of Greenpeace suggests 80% of a regional office's work should contribute to "global priorities" and 20% toward "national issues."[286] Because work on waste was no longer a global priority for GPSEA and Greenpeace International,

> What happened was the Canadian waste issue…then there is the incinerator issues and this plastic issue and everything else which are national in context, its like I did 80% national and 20% global…in a way, it is frustrating for me as a worker from the national office when I think there are pressing issues on the national side, that I think are really important and I cannot ignore, so it really, yeah, there is this side of the operating model that is kind of sad. You have to deprioritize…So every time we do mobilizations, rallies, etc. ,I have to get signed off, any activity that will have Greenpeace's brand has to be signed off because it could be another Nasca Lines[287].[288]

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[283] Author interview with Diane Figueroa, December 2015.
[284] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist, February 2016
[285] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist, February 2016
[286] Author interview with Amalie (Ali) Obusan, February 2016
[287] Peruvian officials have blamed Greenpeace activists for permanently damaging the country's famed Nazca Lines, one of the country's "most important cultural treasures" and UNESCO World Heritage site,

As a result, Greenpeace campaigners sympathetic to working with organizations and communities fighting the Canadian Waste were limited to writing 'media articles.'[289] Hernandez regretted the decision to deprioritize this issue—"it is clearly a role for Greenpeace, its an international issue, we have Greenpeace office in Canada we can work with to apply pressure on the Canadian government" (i.e. boomerang pattern, Keck and Sikkink 1998).[290] Therefore, Greenpeace's decision to effectively withdraw from working on the Canadian waste issue was surprising, given the considerable role the TENGO played in ratifying the Basel Convention, RA 9003 and their connections in Canada.

Nevertheless, the BoC, DENR, and Department of Foreign Affairs agreed to enforce a subsequent court order requiring the return of 50 of the 103 containers at the expense of the importer, Chronic Plastics Inc. in September 2016, because of pressure from other civil society organizations and ENGOs that stayed engaged.[291] Although it was not one of the parties to the case, Greenpeace celebrated the decision, but cautioned, "unless the Philippines government ratifies the Basel Ban Amendment, the same incident will happen and the country will continue to be a recipient of hazardous waste from richer countries" (Greenpeace 2016). Indeed, just a few months later, a shipload containing 5,000 metric tons of waste illegally arrived in the Port of Cebu from South

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by using the fragile desert at the site as the backdrop for Greenpeace's environmental message, "the future is renewable," in 2015 (see Associated Press 2015).

[288] Author interview with Amalie (Ali) Obusan, February 2016

[289] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist December 2015

[290] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.

[291] Ang Nars Party List, EcoWaste Coalition, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Public Services Labor Independent Confederation, Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa and Arjohn Queral

Korea, falsely declared as “solid granular particles of wood chips and synthetic resin” (Depasupil 2017). However, this was not simply the result of poor policy as an internal investigation headed by Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) Director Neil Anthony Estrella suggested certain customs personnel in the Philippines were “in cahoots” with the broker responsible for the waste. Specifically, Estrella claimed the broker in question “has already confessed to me. There were at least three customs personnel involved, including one who is occupying a supervisory level position” (ibid.).

It is questionable what effect the Basel Amendment would have had in context where the responsible agencies for monitoring and enforcing the Basel Convention and Amendment are complicit in their violation. One solution to such “blockage” suggested by Keck and Sikkink would involve Filipino ENGOs bypassing their government and seeking international allies to put pressure from the outside (1998, 12). However, the Canadian Greenpeace office did not respond to the Philippines office’s multiple calls for assistance or put any meaningful pressure on the Canadian or Philippines government to return the waste.[292] Even if they had, the Canadian government expressed that it was “unable” to help return the illegally exported waste. Specifically, they did not have the means to “force the shipper by law to take the waste back to Canada,” and because “the Philippines doesn’t have the legal means to force the shipper to take the waste back,” according to Canadian Ambassador Neil Reeder (Orejas 2015). Indeed, when states are mutually complicit in condoning, if not perpetuating such an injustice, the state-centric and top-down logic of the boomerang pattern of transnational activism is limited.

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[292] Author interview with anonymous Greenpeace activist, February 2016

Similarly, Greenpeace attempts to leverage its positions of privilege in the global North to put pressure on states and industries operating in the South would be better served if the organization also built power in the impacted communities they form coalitions with. For instance, like the Concerned Citizens of Bomban teams that continue to monitor and protest foreign waste illegally sent to the MCMWC landfill in Tarlac, it was the Concerned Citizens of *brgy.* Tingub who reported the South Korean garbage to authorities and have since been monitoring it.[293] "We thank and salute the residents of *Barangay* Tingub for their vigilance, which helped in bringing the unlawful dumping to light" said Aileen Lucero of EWC (EcoWaste Coalition 2017). However, for Greenpeace to do so, it would have to modify its current approach to mobilizing in the Philippines—which many members claim as essential for controlling the organization's discipline, name-brand, and maintaining its funding capacity. With this in mind, the following section examines how GAIA has inverted the logic of the boomerang pattern to empower grassroots organizations to confront unresponsive governments themselves and develop proactive solutions to the injustices associated with waste in the Philippines.

GAIA in the Philippines

The international processes and injustices associated with exporting the negative externalities associated with waste and consumption by the global North has received significant scholarly attention (see Walker 2009; Agyeman 2011; Pellow 2007). What has received less attention is how the structural incentives driving this phenomenon are

[293] Indeed, the Concerned Citizens of Bamban monitoring team discovered additional container vans with waste sent to the MCWMC landfill, 3 months before the South Korean waste was discovered—this time, the container vans were traced back to the Netherlands.

predicated not only on the vulnerability of marginalized communities abroad, but also on the success of ENGOs in the North resisting these externalities at home. Specifically, because of the success of Northern activists resisting waste incinerators, their victories have inadvertently transported such dirty technologies to other locals in the South, creating a new injustice (Walker 2009; Pellow 2007). This is presumably not the intent of such activists; however, can we consider an environmental justice victory in the North successful if it simply results in the industry becoming an injustice in a different location? From the prospective of GAIA, the answer is no, according to one of their key animating principles vis-à-vis resisting waste incinerators—Not On Planet Earth (NOPE), as opposed to Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY). In order to address the significance of this principal in practice and how it relates to GAIA's bottom-up approach to transnational activism, attention to the various scales on which the operate is critical (Pellow 4, 2016).

In attempting to mitigate one community's victory becoming another's burden, GAIA functions as a conduit of information, resources and infrastructure that provides the translocal space for organizations operating at the local scale to connect and support *each other*. Although GAIA often behaves as a "unified actor" to influence policy at the international scale (Khagram, Riker, Sikkink 2002; Kahler 2009), this work is ultimately grounded in and emerges from local spaces distributed across nation-states involving communities, organizations, resources, and relationships that do not fit into categories such as the national or the international (Sassen 2006; Banerjee 2011, 331). In the previous chapter, I argued that GAIA's collective efforts to transform the capabilities of their most vulnerable members at the *local scale* represent the potential of their *global*

network. By capabilities, I refer to conditions of enablement that allow individuals and communities to overcome vulnerability based on the social, cultural, political and economic process that animate the injustice they face, not simply the ills they produce (Holland 2017, 396; Pelling 2011; Schulz and Siriwardane 2015).

For instance, international alliances like GAIA are often necessary for identifying and advocating responses to the common threats members face at the national and local scale, such as fighting waste-to-energy subsidies in climate agreements (discussed below). The primary aim of theories that seek to explain the significance of such alliances have tended to focus on how they emerge, cooperate, and how effective they are in achieving their common goals (e. g. Keck and Sikink 1998; Smith, et al. 1997) (Escobar 2008, 271). Although such models for understanding transnational networks have brought attention to the importance of anchor NGOs and the role that resources, shared interests and norms play in building alliances, they are nevertheless located within liberal traditions. As such, they "are limited in terms of understanding movements that have a more collective character and style of action that goes beyond issue campaigns and policy reforms" (Ibid.). Alternatively, a *translocal* framework provides superior leverage for understanding networks like GAIA that represent more complex networks of grassroots organizations, which exchange ideas, knowledge, practices, materials and resources across sites and whose activities blur the relationship between local, national and global scales (McFarlane 2009). It what follows, I consider how GAIA not only engages in alliances geared toward more visible policy change within the public sphere (à la Greenpeace), but also how it maintains a translocal network oriented toward transforming

the capabilities of frontline communities to sustain such victories. In focusing on political capabilities, this section addresses *how* GAIA helps transform vulnerable populations into those capable of positively influencing the processes that affect their vulnerability themselves (Holland 2017, 397; Nagoda 2015).

Leading Global Change with the Grassroots

Supporting local transformations and building solidarity means GAIA must work slowly as it attempts to foster consensus and agency locally for advancing the network's global goals (i.e. from the ground up). For example, GAIA channels much of its work on waste in the Philippines through regional scale coalitions like Waste Not Asia (WNA), national scale coalitions like EcoWaste Coalition (EWC) and local scale organizations like Mother Earth Foundation (MEF).[294] According to Paeng Lopez, "we sit in the background essentially and let EcoWaste take the lead in terms of campaigning and that's how GAIA works, you don't read about us in the news everyday."[295] Although GAIA is currently engaged in highly visible incinerator fights in Australia, Malaysia, India, and Thailand, much of their work involves the less visible support of local scale Zero Waste organizing needed to sustain the network's collective victories. Speaking about these partnerships, Anne Larracas, GAIA's Asia Pacific Associate Director remarks:

> For this work (anti-incinerator and Zero Waste) to be affective and sustainable, you have to be able to commit to the next 3- 5 years, or until substantial change happens. And that work is incredibly difficult because it involves organizing, establishing relationships and years of working with a city

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[294] As noted in the previous chapter, Waste Not Asia (WNA) was campaigning on waste and incineration issues in SE Asia before GAIA was formally established in 2000. Today, WNA serves as the regional platform for GAIA's more than 200 Asia-Pacific members from over 20 countries, fighting incinerators and working on Zero Waste to address "unsustainable consumption; municipal, healthcare and hazardous waste management; toxics and pollution; and environmental injustice" (GAIA 2017c).

[295] Author interview with Paeng Lopez, December 2015

> or an organization…before engaging a community, we always make sure that it something that we can commit to.[296]

For instance, through skill shares, trainings, and international networking events, GAIA supports the advocacy work of EWC members in the Philippines and connects them to its network of grassroots organizations, ENGOs and Zero Waste specialists. According to EWC current president, "it's a good thing we have GAIA because the experts complement our campaigns…we are really working together smoothly on incinerators and cement kilns."[297] In turn, EWC represents another powerful node in the GAIA network that buttresses the translocal movement.

GAIA's approach of supporting local scale leadership is both an ethical commitment and a strategic imperative for addressing the global waste crises. Ethically, frontline communities need to be empowered to resist, not simply to be saved. While GAIA members organize loosely around shared principles, such as Zero Waste and environmental justice, applying this principle to local circumstances requires local leadership and support. Reflecting on this experience in the GAIA network, President of MEF, Froilian Grate, remarked, "GAIA doesn't want to impose on its members what should be done or what should be the priorities and I appreciate that because strategies should be implemented, ideally, at the local level."[298] Likewise, MEF does not come into a community with a preexisting campaign or to solicit buy-in for any predetermined solutions—"we instead offer different modes for them to follow and at the end of the day, the community will have their own free will to choose what will work for them," says

[296] Author interview with Anne Larracas, December 2015
[297] Author interview with Aileen Lucero, December 2015
[298] Author interview with Froilian (Froi) Grate, January 2016

Grate.[299] Indeed, encouraging the participation of frontline communities in the analysis of the problem they face *and* the development of solutions (i.e. supporting proactive knowledge production) is not only useful for building coalitions that can transform ecological conditions, but also people (Agyeman et al. 327, 2016; Ottinger 2013). In the following subsection, I examine GAIA's support for Mother Earth Foundation in the Philippines to explore how GAIA's model of translocal activism is primarily located in the grassroots organizations leading the Zero Waste work at the domestic scale.

Mother Earth Foundation and Waste Workers

GAIA members in Southeast Asia have placed an emphasis on addressing the unsafe and toxic conditions facing poor communities, which often have little choice but to scavenge through open dumpsites. This is especially true for migrant families in the Philippines, many of which are former fishermen and farmers displaced by natural disasters or have sought alternative livelihoods in the Manila due to dwindling rural economic opportunities. Regrettably, many of these impoverished families are unable to find employment and thus end up living next to dumpsites and waste picking as a last resort. In response, grassroots organizations are helping build awareness about the connections between waste, poverty and justice in the Philippines—"it is defiantly growing and Mother Earth is one of those organizations where this has really clicked," claims Lopez.[300] Indeed, Mother Earth Foundation has taken the lead in helping implement RA 9003 by focusing on building the capacities of communities and working with governments at the local scale to implement Zero Waste solutions.

[299] Author interview with Froilian (Froi) Grate, January 2016
[300] Author interview with Paeng Lopez, December 2015

MEF has been operating in the Philippines since 1998 and was a key organization that helped pass the Clean Air Act (RA 8749) and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003). Specifically, they were instrumental in changing the title from the "Integrated" to the "Ecological" Solid Waste Management Act, underscoring their point of entry on the issue—source segregation in the household and community capacity building. As noted, part of the limitations associated with implementing RA 9003 is a lack of follow through by LGUs on what the law dictates; namely, encouraging the "cooperation and self-regulation among waste generators" (i.e. households) and the mandate to "institutionalize public participation" (Sapuay 2014, 52). Indeed, public participation is not only essential to holding LGUs accountable for enforcing RA9003, but also for segregating waste at its source. As the founding member and former president of MEF, Sonia Mendoza recalls,

> At the time, the trucks were not coming to pick up the garbage in our village…we had been reading that how to treat your waste is by segregation, composting and recycling and so, it was very basic. Five households here started it (MEF), then many people followed us, so we decided that will be our thrust, because it (waste) comes from the households.[301]

Whereas integrated waste is essential for incineration, pre-segregated waste is fundamental to decentralized and sustainable waste management. For example, because over 50% of Metro Manila's waste is organic, it must be integrated with other recoverable materials that have a higher caloric content, such as paper and plastics, in order to not only be combustible, but also meet the contractual minimums of waste tonnage being sent to incinerators. Thus, waste incinerators not only pollute, they discourage proper segregation and recycling while concomitantly encouraging

[301] Author interview with Sonia Mendoza, December 2015

importing waste from surrounding municipalities and abroad. Conversely, by working closely with households and informal/formal waste workers, MEF has been remarkably successful in getting communities to mainstream *inclusive and sustainable solutions*, such as promoting programs on materials recovery, composting, livelihood trainings, and the use of existing public and private funds towards these ends (GAIA 2017a).

For example, at one point, MEF strategically focused its energy on targeting and educating elected LGU officials about the benefits of going Zero Waste and how it complemented the mandates of RA 9003. However, as in Aguado, many *brgy*. officials are reluctant to enforce RA 9003, despite being the legally responsible entity for doing so. Beyond alleged issues associated with corruption, many LGU officials claim they are unable to enforce RA 9003 because they do not have the funds to construct the requisite material recovery facilities (MRFs) or that household residents have little interest in segregating their waste. MEF learned that by working with informal waste workers and the broader community, they were able to achieve much better results. Indeed, one of the first steps MEF takes when they partner with a community is to equip informal waste workers to go door-to-door and train the broader community on how to engage in proper waste segregation, the importance of composting, and other Zero Waste principles. During these visits, waste workers also conduct surveys on how households and schools manage their waste and compile estimates of how much they produce, which is then used to determine the size of the material recovery facility that community will need.

This is a critical first step because diverting organics from household and municipal waste streams is only effective if communities have access to a material recovery facility with the capacity to sort, reclaim, and compost waste. But unlike the capital intensive MRFs of more industrialized countries, the material recovery facilities promoted by Mother Earth do not adversely affect public health or the environment, are low-tech and rely primarily on human, rather than financial, capital (Caballero 2017). The marginal costs of such material recovery facilities are not only appealing to LGU officials; they also provide a safe and necessary source of employment for marginalized communities. Many Mother Earth projects have helped *brgys.* turn once open and polluting dumps into beautiful "Eco Gardens"—now the source of organic compost, produce and livelihoods. MEF also conducts workshops to transfer this knowledge to other *brgys.* throughout the Philippines and has been instrumental establishing over 1,000 such material recovery facility nationwide.[302]

Mother Earth Foundation's work in *brgys*., such as Fort Bonifacio, has also helped Filipinos become more attuned to the socio-political issues associated with waste management, the vital role of waste workers, and demonstrated to once reluctant LGU officials that the implementation of RA 9003 is not only possible, it is also socially responsible and profitable. MEF began working with in Fort Bonifacio in June 2012 and like many *brgys.* outside of Metro Manila, it was once host to a large open dumpsite. According to one former informal waste worker there,

[302] According to MEF, "more that 130,00 people—from Mayors, Barangay Captains, Church and community leaders, government agencies and academes and even students and housewives have attended the workshops and seminars" (MEF 2016).

> Before we (waste workers) were just ignored…as long as the people's waste were collected and thrown here, that's all, they don't care…people just tell us, 'get this you, that's your job,' many people disgraced us…There is a big change now, we are respected (by the community and the government). Because of Mother Earth, we are empowered and given training. Not just for work, but also like a family, we (waste workers) get together, we talk about solid waste, internal issue and gather here as one team to talk about concerns and strategies (once a week) with equal voice.[303]

Roughly a year after engaging the residents of Fort Bonifacio, MEF was able to help formalize 23 waste workers as official community organizers, solid waste liaison officers, *barangay* collectors, and waste monitors. The collectors, most of whom earned 50 pesos a day as informal waste collectors, now earn a minimum monthly salary of 8,000 pesos and are provided health benefits by the *brgy.* So while MEF still works closely with local government officials, "the real champions for us are the waste workers" claims Grate, "we believe in a system where they transition from being informal waste workers to formal waste workers."[304] For instance, in San Fernando City, Pampanga, waste workers from different *bgys.* have formed a citywide association, which now has a representative who sits in the city's solid waste management board—giving the association the same vote as the mayor and other councilors. As Grate remarks, "part of our strategy is to give them proper recognition and proper voice, what's unique in all our projects is we always form a group association, or cooperative, of different waste workers."[305]

The recyclables collected by organized waste workers divert waste from the community's residual stream and serve as a supplemental income. For instance, I was shown how they grind up single use plastic "sachets" wrappers to make and sell pavers (each one contains a kilo of such plastic). What was once a ubiquitous source of plastic

[303] Author interview with waste worker "Claire," December 2015
[304] Author interview with Froilian (Froi) Grate, January 26, 2016
[305] Author interview with Froilian (Froi) Grate, January 26, 2016

residual waste, not accepted by "junk shops," had become a source of employment.[306] Similarly, rather than sell discarded magazines to junk shops, they are now used to make picture frames, yielding a 50-fold increase in profit. Combined with the sale of organic compost, plants and vegetables, previously marginalized waste workers now make more than the average Filipino and provide an essential service for the community. In fact, Fort Bonificio recently achieved the highest waste diversion rate (85%) in Metro Manila, resulting in daily savings to the brgy. of 15,000 pesos in hauling and tipping fees alone (Cabellero 2017). The lack of trash on the streets and the diversion rate has also become a source of respect for the now formal waste workers.[307] Indeed, the MRF/Eco Park that they manage has become a fieldtrip stop for students, international guests, and LGU officials wanting to learn and apply insights from their success.[308]

Although increasing the capacity of marginalized populations can be considered a successful outcome in its own right, capabilities, once developed, can remain latent and theoretically never manifest into concrete outcomes that improve human life. For instance, although the community of Aguado received similar training to that of Fort Bonificio, the former has since been unable to construct its own MRF or organize informal waste workers due to a lack of funding. This underscores a key limitation of GAIA's approach; namely, while it is committed to supporting members of the network in the long-term, it is not always in the form of funds local organizations need to continue fighting and winning local environmental justice campaigns. Nevertheless, part of MEF's

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[306] I.e. recycling vendors
[307] Author interview with waste worker "June," December 2015
[308] MEF has also helped establish a city scale Zero Waste model in San Fernando (consisting of 35 *brgys*.) and is currently working on a provincial scale model (consisting of 200 *brgys*.)—yet all are still built and sustained by local communities.

success is a result of the support they continue to receive from the GAIA network. For instance, GAIA helped MEF secure its first source of core funding and sponsored Mendoza to become a GAIA Zero Waste fellow in 2002.[309] As a Zero Waste fellow, Mendoza was flown to Berkeley, CA, and participated in a month-long immersion process; learning more about the Zero Waste approach, sharing stories, and building networks with other Zero Waste fellows and GAIA members from around the world. The experience culminated in Mendoza presenting her own insights on decentralized ecological waste management, and what MEF was doing in the Philippines, during the California Resources Recovery Association conference that year. "That was my baptism," Sonia explained, "I was not used to giving presentations, but after that, it was easy to be talking with people and groups."[310] Similar to Mendoza's experience, Grate, was sent to India and Bangladesh by GAIA to learn more about compost management at the village level and how he could incorporate this knowledge into the strategies of MEF supported communities.

GAIA and MEF's model of leading with the grassroots to implement proactive solutions to environmental injustices stands in contrast to what communities have experienced working with Greenpeace in the Philippines. Although MEF is a member of EWC, and thus cooperates with Greenpeace, Mendoza reflected on the difference between these two groups—"GAIA is more committed to community work, to helping members of GAIA in the community, even nonmembers of GAIA than Greenpeace…After mobilizing the protest and the media, that's it… they [Greenpeace]

[309] A ten thousand USD grant from the New World Foundation
[310] Author interview with Sonia Mendoza, December 2015

don't offer solutions."[311] Grate also remarked, "when you work with local communities, one of the first questions is, are you like Greenpeace? We say we work with them, but have different strategies."[312] Mobilizing communities to protest a landfill is often what gets media and social media attention, which is useful for leveraging policy change. Alternatively, organizing a proactive response to the landfill is not dramatic, but is what fosters the leadership, ownership and solidarity necessary for long-term change. As Lopez remarks,

> Without ownership, people would feel like they have been used or exploited…we want them to realize that what they are doing is something for themselves, for the community, for the next generation. Incinerators, they spring from all corners of the earth, you can't just firefight, the only thing we can do is empower communities.[313]

In theory, swiftly mobilizing against environmental injustices and organizing for a just transition are complimentary strategies. In practice, influential TENGOs operating in the global South often rely exclusively on the latter. Reflecting on this contrast, Rap Villavicencio of MEF remarked, "Did you change their status for the rest of their lives or just certain months? Our edge is our approach is holistic; we don't leave the community unless they are ready to take-up the operations…we want them to own the project, not the sponsor, the funder, or the NGO."[314]

Despite their accomplishments, many grassroots organizations like MEF are largely self-funded. This is not necessarily a problem, as an overreliance on external funding can cause organizations to modify their goals and strategies based on the desires of their patrons (Bob 2005). However, the work of MEF does illustrate the utility of a

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[311] Author interview with Sonia Mendoza, December 2015
[312] Author interview with Froilian (Froi) Grate, January 2016
[313] Author interview with Paeng Lopez, December 2015
[314] Author interview with Rap Villavicencio, December 2015

bottom-up model for change that is able to operate on a limited budget, especially when compared to the top-down model favored by large TENGOs and donors. Indeed, much like the centralized approach to waste management being pushed on countries like the Philippines (i.e. centralized disposal via multi-million dollar waste incineration projects), the contrast begs the question: would TENGOs not be better off diverting more resources and attention toward grassroots organizations addressing not only environmental injustices but also their socio-economic roots?

On the Dilemma of Funding

Funding is a concern for all ENGOs, from large TENGOs like Greenpeace to grassroots organizations like MEF. However, this is especially challenging for organizations like GAIA and MEF that do not concentrate their efforts on high profile campaigns or on issues that necessarily resonate with influential donors. Waste is not a funding priority for influential donors in the North, although MEF and GAIA have made progress in linking their anti-incineration and Zero Waste work to issues that do, such as ocean plastics. According to Aileen of EWC, "not all funding agencies are into waste…because change in behavior is hard to measure, especially the impact (of Zero Waste models)."[315] Moreover, when groups like EWC do receive funds, they are often "restricted" and can only be used for certain purposes, often resulting in a drift from their core goals and strategies. For example, although it now has a strong campaign on "chemical safety for consumers," one former EWC member remarked the large grant:

> [C]an only be used for such purposes, like consumer safety, but the primary purpose of EcoWaste is to facilitate *the implementation of the RA9003*. But because it has no budget for this…it is really a

[315] Author interview with Aileen Lucero, December 2015

> challenge, very few organizations are funding toxic work (and issues of waste management)…what is happening is that organizations are becoming funder driven, so some tend to lose focus, I think that is also happening with EcoWaste right now…the challenge right now for many organizations right now is to educate the funders.[316]

Indeed, although MEF has now assumed the lead in implementing RA 9003 and has concrete results, such as diversion rates and jobs created, what often goes unnoticed is the local ownership and relationship building that allows such projects to be sustainable in the long-term. However, when funders and influential ENGOs attempt to scale up and duplicate the quantifiable "deliverables" of organizations like MEF, without realizing how these results are grounded in local ownership and the flexibility to modify projects based on local knowledge, such support can become problematic.

Speaking about such an experience with Northern donors in the Philippines, one activist I spoke with ("Lloyd") shared his experience working in mining communities in the province of Kalinga. Part of his organization's previous success in reducing mineworker's exposure to and use of mercury (part of the gold extraction process) involved a three-year immersion in the community, and an approach to the problem that was not just environmental (as it had previously been by Northern NGOs), but also related to livelihoods, education, and local culture. Speaking about this, Lloyd remarked, "Before talking about the environment, we should ensure they have something to eat or they will not listen. For them, mercury is important for them to have something to eat the next day."[317] However, despite his success in working with this community,[318] when funders approached his organization about scaling up the campaign, they were only

[316] Author interview with anonymous activist December 2015
[317] Author interview with anonymous activist, February 16, 2016
[318] Converting 95% of small-scale miners to mercury-free methods, thus preventing two tons of mercury from being released into the environment in the span of three years (see BAN Toxics 2012).

interested in the deliverables, such as levels of mercury reduction, and not the process on which his work was predicated:

> For the funder, it's like, you won't do it my way, I'll find another group that will do it my way…So after a few comments, when I read the final proposal I sent, I was like, where is the original? It's not our project anymore; they only want us to implement it. But we need the money, so we agree. Most organizations now is deliverables driven…That's also why I like what GAIA is doing, because there is a space to modify things, like on what GAIA is doing with the cement kilns in Cebu.[319]

Lloyd went on to discuss how cement kilns are able to circumvent the Philippines Clean Air Act as they are not primarily waste incinerators, but cement makers, although they often make more money burning toxic waste in the cement firing process. Thus, he argued that what is needed is policy change to address this loophole at the national scale *and* alternative jobs at the local scale, if the cement kilns are closed. Lloyd claimed that he now is now "free to be creative" in this regard while working with GAIA. But in his previous organization, because of restrictive funding, "they just want it approached this way, from the top-down, for them this is safe…but for me, I am the one in the field, I know what's going there, in this area, it should be this way, in this area this way…but the funders don't like this."[320]

Alternatively, GAIA has tended to rely on small-scale contributions and a particular set of donors who recognize the value of their work, and the relative autonomy and local creativity on which it thrives. However, to get more donors interested in their work, GAIA has made a concerted effort to elevate how their support of Zero Waste communities, and promoting job creation through the formalization of waste workers, relates to mitigating climate change—a salient issue for Northern donors. For example,

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[319] Author interview with anonymous activist, February 16, 2016
[320] Author interview with anonymous activist, February 16, 2016

because "waste-to-energy" incinerators not only divert waste from landfills, but in burning waste, they generate electricity that purportedly releases less CO2 than coal, oil, and natural gas power plants, they are championed as a solution to climate change. However, this "strange fusion of ecological sustainability and economic development" preserves historically inequitable distribution of wealth and power for those that have caused the most ecological destruction (Luke, 2015) and places the burden of mitigation on the world's most vulnerable populations to climate change. Although the pollution controls associated with "waste-to-energy" incinerators have improved since the 1990s, they still entail the release of toxic substances few communities are willing to accept (Nemerow, et al. 2009; MacBride 2011; Connett 2013). Furthermore, the above calculation (e.g. Clean Power Plan) ignores the CO2 associated with "biomass" incineration, as it is theoretically a "renewable" fuel source.[321] When biomass CO2 is factored into such calculations, "waste-to-energy" incinerators actually create more greenhouse gasses than their rivals do, especially when most of the feedstock "waste" could be recycled, redesigned or composted. Indeed, composting not only sequesters carbon, but as this chapter has demonstrated, Zero Waste alternatives create jobs, organic fertilizers, and clean environments in communities that would be otherwise subjected to the POPs and other pollutants associated with waste's incineration.

Thus, GAIA's work on climate change has focused on ensuring that Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) plans articulated at forums such as COP21 do not include waste-

[321] Author interview with Mike Ewall of Energy Justice Network, March 2016.

to-energy schemes that put the burden of Northern "solutions" on the global South. GAIA has instead called for investment in Zero Waste solutions that both mitigate climate change and provide the transformative changes needed to create sustainable economies and realize social justice at the local scale. Specifically, supporting and empowering waste workers who provide valuable waste management services that mitigate climate change, create jobs and provide creative ways to minimize the consumption of earth's finite resources (GAIA 2015). However, GAIA still struggles to convince influential TENGOs, and the funders who guide them, that the challenges associated with climate change and waste will require more than mobilizing volunteers for international policy and agreements. It will also require the support of organizing communities at the local scale actively engaged in shifting the unsustainable processes and injustices associated with waste.

Conclusion

The Philippines is a country with remarkable laws relating to waste and incinerators, much of this thanks to the work of Greenpeace and local ENGOs. However, because of poverty, corruption, and lack of enforcement, these laws have not realized their full potential. The fact the cohorts and relatives conspiring with corrupt LGU officials manage waste and dumpsites with their own ends in mind "is a well-known secret in the Philippines," claims Hernandez. Thus, "moving away from that practice and putting the focus on front-end initiatives, like training communities, setting up of MRFs and recycling markets, moves away from that model that has benefited most local

government officials."[322] Indeed, in many instances of environmental injustice, "powerful stakeholders have entrenched relationships with public officials that predispose the latter to support the interests of those stakeholders, even when vulnerable communities object" (Holland 2017, 402). It is therefore difficult to imagine a scenario where working *primarily* with the state or polluting industries in the Philippines will produce meaningful change in frontline communities that suffer from poor waste management practices. I have thus argued that the profitability of exporting waste to marginalized communities is not only the result of industries bending, if not breaking laws, often in collaboration with exporting/importing governments, but also predicated on their lack of awareness, information and the power to resist (Downey 2015, 51; Boyce 2002; Cole and Foster 2001).

The implications of this argument are twofold: first, it problematizes framing the success of environmental justice campaigns in terms of shutting down a polluting facility or passing policy as long-term success will often require transforming the capabilities of vulnerable populations. Framing justice, and therefore the success of environmental justice campaigns otherwise risks overstating the extent of their remediation. It also obfuscates a critical awareness about what is at stake in strategies that focus on the location of environmental ills, but fail to address the social structures that oppress certain groups and the institutional subordination that produce unjust distributions of environmental ills in the first place (Young 2011, 114; Harrison 2011, 15). Thus, the strategies of TENGOs like Greenpeace may be limited for addressing transnational

[322] Author interview with Von Hernandez, March 2016.

environmental injustices, absent grassroots support. Centrally developed strategies and dramatic stunts may have worked well for compelling industries to modify their practices and states to (ostensibly) commit themselves to environmental policies. However, this strategy relies on the influence of influential TENGOs, typically located in the North, and implicitly presupposes a responsive domestic legal infrastructure and the agency of affected populations to exercise their rights once established.

Conversely, from the perspective of community members and activists that I interviewed, efforts to transform the political agency of frontline communities to challenge corrupt officials and polluting waste industries, and implement just solutions, are *needed* before the strategies pursued by Greenpeace can be meaningful. Indeed, many individuals who become involved in environmental justice struggles have not previously been politically active in their communities and perceive themselves as lacking the capacity to become community leaders (Cole and Foster 152, 2001). As environmental justice communities are generally disenfranchised within conventional political spheres, this underscores the significance of speaking for *themselves* during the process of struggle (Schlosberg 2004, 523; Faber 2005, 58). Given that the claims of transnational organizations are to not only represent, but also empower community activists, these findings suggest that scholars and policy makers should take these priorities more seriously.

Because what frontline communities need in terms of capabilities varies considerably, the strategies and goals that environmental justice coalitions develop will have to emerge largely from the ground up. However, isolated grassroots movements are

little match for the power of TNCs associated with waste, and the states that aid them. Thus, understanding how grassroots organizations can form coalitions with influential TENGOs, while still exercising meaningful involvement at the local scale is a puzzle environmental justice scholars and activists must continue to grapple with. Although the adoption of environmental justice concepts, such as climate justice, from Southern, indigenous, and frontline communities by Northern TENGOs like Greenpeace ostensibly indicates an increased recognition of the "importance and validity of these discourses" (Ageyman et al. 2016, 30), *how* and *to what degree* they are applied in transnational coalitions *practices* is still questionable. Indeed, intentionally or not, TENGOs thus far have tended to co-opt environmental justice discourses within coalitions, which has resulted in certain campaigns and coalition strategies being privileged, making attention to how GAIA has avoided such an outcome even more timely.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion: Theoretical Innovations and Future Research

How do transnational organizations make legal victories and international norms meaningful for empowering local communities? This dissertation has argued that even when influential TENGOs rhetorically acknowledge the relationship between disempowering social structures and the environmental problems associated with waste, the perceived urgency of the latter can lead them to pursue environmental agreements, legislation, and regulations that often fail to address the former. Greenpeace and its use of direct action mobilizations carried out by professional activists frequently demonstrate their capacity to change the practices of polluting industries and regulator bodies. However, professional activists in transnational spaces often dismiss the demand for meaningful frontline community participation and empowerment, which are problematically viewed to be at odds with the goal of quickly obtaining top-down policy-orientated goals. To be sure, Greenpeace has proven to be valuable coalition partner, but the means my which it does so often fails to empower grassroots organizations, thus neglecting an opportunity to help them challenge the way global environmental injustices relate to local scale dynamics.

The translocal framework I have developed brings this problem into sharper focus by underscoring the value local stakeholders place on cultivating local knowledge, sharing their insights, and owning the capabilities that empower them to pursue short *and* long-term environmental justice. I have thus argued that focusing on the ability of a

coalition to win or lose a particular campaign, such as closing a polluting facility or getting a particular policy implemented, although significant, is only a facet of environmental justice—one that is short-term focused. Indeed, the role of TENGOs in cultivating support for local stakeholders and building their capacity for subsequent action is as important as their role in altering policies, wining individual campaigns, or working to change legal norms. For this reason, analysis of transnational environmental justice coalitions, which fail to adequately consider the perspectives and needs of frontline communities, are necessarily incomplete.

TENGOs can galvanize transnational environmental justice coalitions to achieve quick victories, but the problems they seek to remedy are still predicated on larger and systemic injustices: disrespect, disenfranchisement, poverty, corruption and racism that operate at the local scale. As a result of ignoring the *process* by which coalitions form and achieve their victories, the goals, discourses and strategies of more influential TENGOs are prioritized, often at the neglect of co-authorship and developments with local communities, which is problematic for several reasons. As I have explained in Chapter Three, Greenpeace's top-down approach prevents long-term capacity from forming at the local scale, which I have argued is critical for preserving global change and re-constituting the very structures of global oppression against the marginalized communities Greenpeace seek to help. Indeed, Chapter Five reveals that even when significant victories occur, like the passage of the Basel Convention, coalition victories that lack community capacity building are insufficient for long-term change and environmental justice.

I have argued Greenpeace's mode of transitional activism has also tended to overshadow the work and insights of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) translocal approach, which demonstrates the importance of organizing and ownership of capabilities by marginalized communities at the local scale for environmental justice. Because existing studies focus their attention on the ability of transnational coalitions to win or lose specific international and national campaigns, conventional wisdom holds that strategies associated with mobilizing are key to their success. While mobilizing is useful for obtaining policy victories and changing industry practices, TENGOs that prioritize this approach must often forgo many of the long-term benefits of organizing to confront the roots of environmental injustices. I have argued that translocal organizing alternatively serves as the foundation changing ostensibly weak communities into those that are capable of challenging the structural roots of environmental injustices.

When compared to Greenpeace's top-down approach to mobilizing, organizing translocally is relatively time consuming, complicated and, if done well, positions frontline communities to lead campaigns, which makes it difficult for GAIA to raise funds and act decisively. Nevertheless, because it is not beholden to deep-pocketed donors, GAIA has the flexibility to design strategies that correspond to the direct needs, lived experiences, and local knowledge of communities on the frontlines, which GAIA members claim is a necessary tradeoff for pursuing deep-rooted change and justice. Moreover, although these contrasting approaches to environmental justice stand to compliment each other, the lack of attention to GAIA's innovative model by influential

funding communities and scholars, who have tended to emphasize the advantages of Greenpeace's approach, has weakened the potential of such development.

It is therefore critical to showcase GAIA's focus on fostering and supporting community-led processes and Zero Waste initiatives against the conventional model set by Greenpeace. GAIA not only provides a proactive solution to resisting unfair waste trade and management practices, it also helps address many of the socio-economic conditions that produce environmental injustices in the first place. It is a model case for how to help frontline communities resist injustice, while also empowering localities to emerge more equipped with structural capacities for advancing and embodying sustainable alternatives on their own, over the long-term. From the perspective of frontline communities in the Philippines and elsewhere, justice entails not only *mobilizing* actors in a top-down fashion to confront the disproportionate effects of waste disposal in their communities, but also *organizing* grassroots communities to become self-sufficient in effecting long-term change in line with global norms, from the bottom-up.

While Greenpeace has historically been less involved in supporting community organizing and forming alliances with environmental justice organizations, it is not an foreign idea. In fact, this was the primary modality of Greenpeace's Toxic and Anti-incineration campaign in the United States, before transitioning to a more transnational mode of activism at the turn of the century. Chapter Three unpacks Greenpeace's historical development to reveal rare moments where it successfully invested in local

community building through skill shares, campaign planning, and direct actions centered on environmental justice. I argued that these moments were remarkably successful in closing existing incinerators, stopping the construction of new ones, and empowering communities. As many former toxics campaigners pointed out, Greenpeace has actually succeeded the most when "we have invested resources behind indigenous and front line communities…when we have thrown down behind social justice as opposed to our exclusive environmental goals and that's really been the success of a lot of its toxics work."[323] This model of translocal coalition building has ever since been submerged by Greenpeace International's ever-changing global priorities and current motto—'no permanent allies or enemies'—that lack a long-term vision for justice.

Comparatively, the means by which GAIA's translocal structure encourages local and regional conversations to stay focused on the common goals they face, while also staying abreast of and involved in the common threats and opportunities faced by all GAIA members, is unique in the world of TENGOs. As illustrated in Chapters Four and Five, the paid staff of GAIA, whom are based in the global North and South, function primarily as the network's connective tissue that facilitates transnational coordination, communication, and the expansion of bottom-up information structures. By tapping into and scaling up the commitment of preexisting and ongoing struggles at the local scale, GAIA has been able to develop regional networks that are sensitive to local realties and provide a centralized node to help coordinate, not lead, the development of global strategies and support. However, because what communities will need in this regard

[323] Author interview with Ananda Tan, February 22, 2016.

varies according to context, GAIA cannot centrally develop strategies, à la Greenpeace, and must move much slower consequently. This has also resulted in relatively fewer high profile victories when compared to Greenpeace, but as I have suggested, many of these victories remain short-term oriented and lack an understanding of how to forge coalitions required for maintaining them, once Greenpeace withdraws their support of local partners.

What is the role of community empowerment as a dimension of environmental justice? I have argued that theoretical debates on justice help understand why GAIA members are committed to community empowerment and grassroots organizing for global change, despite a number of ostensible limitations. This dissertation has illustrated that the strategic choices of TEGNOs are the product of distinct interpretations of justice, which has a significant impact on how they prioritize environmental goals and how they pursue them. For instance, although each Greenpeace NRO may have its own culture and varying degrees of autonomy, what campaigners believe, value and how they act is also the product of the historical process associated internal debates associated with its top-down structure and campaign strategies as well. While Greenpeace has proven adept at mobilizing coalition partners to shape public sentiment around international campaigns, fund its operations and project numerical power, as its campaigns have overlapped with environmental justice movements, its focus on how environmental ills are unequally *distributed* has produced a number of tensions. Even when TENGOs like Greenpeace adopt environmental justice frames and form coalitions with frontline communities, there is still the impulse by more powerful coalition actors to impose an assimilation of their

approach to justice on relatively less powerful members. Therefore, despite what appear to be good intentions, the principles of justice on which Greenpeace's environmental goals and strategies are predicated can, unintentionally or not, make issues, such as disrespect, racism, and paternalism, less visible and in certain cases, reinforce them.

A core takeaway of this dissertation is that when TENGOs are not cognizant or fail to address the structural antecedents of environmental injustices in their coalition work, these partnerships have the ability to undermine the full scope of justice demanded by frontline communities. And while incorporating the language of justice into its mandate may sit better with Greenpeace staff and members today than it has historically, as its climate justice campaign indicates, the organization is still grappling with how to work in environmental justice centered coalitions. Although it is too soon to claim if such involvement foretells a genuine change on the part Greenpeace, due to its size and experience, it nevertheless exercises considerable influence when articulating and advancing the principals, goals and strategies of the coalitions in which they are involved.

Moreover, because of the influence Greenpeace has on funding communities, grassroots organizations must frequently align their goals and strategies with those of Greenpeace to receive external funding and support. Even though the work of GAIA demonstrates that external funding is not a necessary condition for translocal organizing to take place:

> This culture prevents activists from having collaborative dialogues where we can honestly share our failures as well as our successes. In addition, after being forced to frame everything we do as a "success," we become stuck in having to repeat the same strategies because we insisted to funders they were successful, even if they were not. Consequently, we become inflexible rather than fluid and ever changing in our strategies, *which is what a movement for social transformation really requires* (INCITE! 2017, 10, emphasis added).

Indeed, while coalition efforts may fail to realize certain campaign objectives, they can still simultaneously empower and enhance the capabilities of coalition partners to organize and build a global movement. Because this depends on the *process* of negotiating and framing coalition goals, and how and to what extent member coalition partners are involved, it often means relinquishing the efficiency associated with Greenpeace's top-down and centralized means of coordinating campaigns. Alternatively, building local ownership of capabilities entails encouraging local stakeholders to help determine campaign strategies and pursue locally grounded agendas that complement the coalitions broader goals.

Nevertheless, I have demonstrated how existing frameworks for studying coalitions often fail to examine how different ways of conceptualizing environmental justice impacts their dynamics, strategies, and goals, thus overlooking forms of success mislabeled as failures and significant developments for asserting power and organizing across borders. Indeed, there is a key difference between coalitions that achieve a single policy victory and those able to simultaneously build the capacity of local organizations for future campaigns (Tattersall 2010). Thus organizing communities, respecting and building on their indigenous knowledge, and diffusing their experiences through GAIA's global networks is a both a principled and practical model for confronting the injustices associated with global waste crisis, from the ground-up. In examining this approach, the dissertation has reveled the role that translocalism plays in response to significant limitations in the work of TENGOs, which purport to assist communities, but have done little to support sustained and meaningful forms of community empowerment.

GAIA's theoretical approach also brings attention to how its distinct model challenges the way environmental justice has been theorized in the scholarly literature and illustrates the importance of addressing conditions that enable people to overcome their vulnerabilities, which are a consequence of their particular social, economic, and political circumstances at the local scale. I have argued that GAIA's approach resonates with existing environmental justice scholarship, which continues to expand and debate the application of justice frameworks that go beyond issues of distribution. Specifically, capabilities framework provides a valuable means for linking *and* blurring the boundaries between Northern literatures on environmental justice with research on Southern environmentalisms. Yet, equally as important, GAIA's approach also advances capabilities theory by placing community empowerment into a translocal context, with attention to how local communities share knowledge, ideas, and strategies for empowerment in networks. This speaks to many of the insights in the scholarship, but also challenges scholars to consider the importance of ownership vis-à-vis how capabilities are developed in practice.

Foundations for Future Research

The primary contribution this dissertation makes is to lay bare a new translocal framework for environmental justice that seriously considers the critical role of top-down/ bottom-up coalition building and mobilizing/organizing dynamics, based on the perspective and insights of frontline communities. Empirically, this dissertation examines two different cases and models in order to distinguish how a translocal framework advances justice, and why this differs from our conventional understandings. Currently,

transnational frameworks provide a more short-term type of justice by solving the specific environmental crisis at hand. I employ case studies of Greenpeace and GAIA to reveal that a translocal framework can both advance this short-term change for justice, while also establishing broader global changes in power relations that empower marginalized local communities.

To be clear, the empirical goals of this dissertation were not to adjudicate the utility of GAIA's translocal model and Greenpeace's transnational model. Instead, I employ these case studies to demonstrate an alternative to the top-down model to environmental activism in countries like the Philippines, which are in need of further exploration. Future research must therefore continue to refine how we understand transnational environmental justice coalition outcomes, their associated strategies, and the complex interaction of scales on which they operate. I have argued that a translocal frame and debates on justice help in this regard, specifically in understanding the significance of strategies that foster leadership, solidarity, and community development at the local scale for justice at the national and international scale. Indeed, GAIA's support for organizing amongst waste workers has been effective in producing concrete outcomes—such as waste diversion rates, increasing incomes, and improved health—*in addition* to building the capacity of frontline communities to confront the socio-economic roots of the unjust location of waste facilities in their communities. The comparison of GAIA and Greenpeace thus contributes to literature on transnationalism by critically examining models of activism that focus on distributive justice, which are often liberal and state-centric, while offering an alternative model of transnational environmental

justice organizing. I have argued that in order to understanding how coalitions are not only vehicles for obtaining policy victories, but also for creating leaders, instilling organizing techniques, and cultivate knowledge that empower communities to pursue short *and* long-term change, scholars should reconsider assumptions regarding transnational environmental justice coalition cohesiveness and the utility of frameworks that favor an international level of analysis.

The shortage of community organizing and empowerment in Greenpeace led coalitions may simply be a tradeoff for the influence it has been able to exert. Moreover, professionalization and hierarchy does not prelude organizations like Greenpeace from organizing temporary coalitions around overlapping goals or from continuing to function as a promoter of global environmental justice. Indeed, the list of Greenpeace's policy accomplishments and its ability to coordinate international campaigns, through such frameworks as the boomerang model, would support this claim. However, a major limitation of such model and the field of transnationalism, is that most scholarly approaches look at organizing, if at all, from a policy-change frame rather than from a movement-building frame. Alternatively, through the lens of the translocal, the boomerang model is insufficient vis-à-vis weak states, strong corporations, and absent civic monitoring and community capacity. I have suggested that GAIA's approach thus represents an understudied alternative to prominent approaches to framing transnational advocacy networks that have placed legal victories and international norms at the center of strategies for altering the behavior of powerful actors.

As landfills continue to grow and waste incinerators become increasingly difficult to build, due to their associated health and environmental burdens, waste management industries continually move waste out of sight and out of the minds of more affluent communities. While we all suffer from inadequate policy associated with waste management to varying degrees, communities of color and low socio-economic status are the global "canaries in the coal mine." However, as this dissertation has demonstrated, those most impacted by the environmental injustices associated with waste are also those building local resistance and power in the form of just and sustainable Zero Waste alternatives. These represent more than isolated local movements. As indicated by alternative approaches to environmental justice organizing that developed and conceptualized by community-based actors, such as those that influenced GAIA, they also serve as an exemplar of a translocal movement that seeks to confront the global injustices associated with waste, from the ground up.

APENDIX A

Methods, Analysis and Interpretive Reflections

My research on GAIA and Greenpeace draws on news coverage, historical records, court cases, policy documents, and included more than 70 semi-structured interviews with present and former senior staff, campaigners and activists; both in person, at their respective headquarters and via Skype when in person interviews were not possible. I developed the questions with attention to insights from debates on the meaning of justice, as well as previous studies on domestic and transnational environmental justice activism (see Chapter Two). Given that these questions emerged from provisional inferences made before I conducted the bulk my fieldwork, I constructed them in a semi-structured fashion. This gave participants the flexibility to express how they understand justice, how this relates to their work on waste specifically and to translational activism more broadly (i.e. grounded theory, see Flick 2009; see also Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 50). Being a board member and activists associated Zero Waste San Diego[324] since 2013; I was able to gain unique access to both Greenpeace and GAIA. My personal involvement in activism not only equipped me with waste related technical knowledge and connections with activists and other stakeholders in this field. It also bolstered my perception as an 'insider,' rather than an 'outsider' with myopic scholarly interests.

[324] Zero Waste San Diego's mission is to create, promote and implement programs that: (1) maximize management and conservation of resources; (2) reduce "waste"-related greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming (3) educate and persuade citizens, businesses, and governments in the San Diego County region to adopt a zero-waste philosophy, and (4) provide ideas and guidance through the process of making and implementing Zero Waste plans in our region.

Nevertheless, during all interactions, I was forthcoming about my interests and intentions as both scholar and activist. Initial interviewees were self-selected, responding to solicitations to participate in my study via email. I sought out subsequent participants more directly based on referrals, important historical roles they played in their organization, or with unique perspectives.

Although this study draws on stories and examples from a number of locations, the primary comparative analysis of Chapter Five is based on fieldwork conducted in and around Metro Manila, the Philippines. GAIA and Greenpeace's work in the Philippines serves as an ideal setting for addressing this dissertation's key question—how do TENGOs empower frontline communities to make legal victories and international norms meaningful locally and what is the role of community empowerment as a dimension of environmental justice? First, the Philippines, like many countries in Southeast Asia, continue to function as the developed worlds dumping grounds; influenced by corrupt officials, poverty, industry calculations, and global processes. Both GAIA and Greenpeace therefore have permanent office in the Philippines and mediate a number of waste related coalitions. Indeed, the Philippines is the focus of considerable environmental efforts by both GAIA and Greenpeace and is home to a number of their signature achievements and missteps. For example, the Philippines is a signature nation to the Basel Convention, was the first country to pass a national ban on waste incineration, and has passed model legislation for decentralizing waste segregation and recycling (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, discussed in Chapters Four and Five). Despite these policies, the Philippines continues to be dumped on by the global

North and its most vulnerable citizens continue to struggle with the injustices associated with waste disposal and incineration domestically. The analysis thus focuses primarily on the period between 2000-2016, which marks the introduction of a number of key Greenpeace policy victories in the country and the establishment of GAIA.

The analysis is informed by two types of empirical investigation: (1) over three months of participant observation—consisting of participation in and observing meetings, press releases and protest event, and (2) extensive in-depth interviews—both formal and informal with the organizations leaders, activists and affected communities in the Philippines. The use of participant observation was instrumental in engendering trust with activists, frontline communities and provided insight into how participants understand environmental justice and how this related to their coalition work (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 64-65). Given my activism in waste, GAIA staff invited me to participate in their regional meetings in Sofia, Bulgaria, Paris, France, and Manila, Philippines. This access presented multiple opportunities to engage and observe GAIA members during protest events, strategic meetings, and in informal settings. A number of interviews were subsequently done offsite and via Skype, from December 2015 to June 2017. Alternatively, because of the way Greenpeace is structured and the strategic premium they put on secrecy observation and interviews were limited to my capacity as a relative outsider.[325] These consisted of interviews with professional activists at their headquarters and at certain protest events. However, given the close relationship between GAIA and

[325] As I discuss in Chapter Three, because of the clandestine nature of many of Greenpeace's direct actions and a history of industry attempted to discredit the organizations, a number of discussants informed me that they were unable to talk about the particulars of certain campaigns and related internal processes.

Greenpeace, and the fact that many GAIA members are former Greenpeace members, I had access to multiple perspectives on Greenpeace's goals, strategies and how they developed.

In order to explicate the significance of the interactions between TENGOs, grassroots organizations and local scale communities, I spent over a month in the Philippines, living and working with GAIA and Greenpeace partners. Because GAIA and Greenpeace are engaged in a number of strategic partnerships and overlapping campaigns in the Philippines, the activists and communities I engaged with, using a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, provided considerably insight in comparing how they both work at the national and local scale. I spoke with affected communities and organizational leaders about the relationship between the injustices they face, campaign strategies, and the impact coalitions partners had on them. In interpreting these interactions, I drew insights from discourse methods in order to focus on how various actors interpreted these campaigns and the meanings they ascribed them. Similar to Schaffer's study of "demokrassi" in Senegal, local understandings of "justice" varied significantly and were often dissimilar from language used in academic debates (see Schaffer 1998). For instance, while local struggles over environmental pollution and waste were frequently linked to the distribution of environmental ills, participation in decision-making process and issues associated with recognition and capabilities (Sikor and Newell 2014, 151; Schlosberg, 2004, 2007), the responses of frontline communities also disciplined my thinking in certain ways that caused me to rethink my initial hunches in productive ways.

Thus participant observation was an essential tool in providing the evolving semi-structured interviews with the appropriate language for bridging academic debates with what communities where articulating and demanding on the ground, and visa versa. This was also useful in examining different articulations and approaches to justice *within* coalitions themselves and their associated power dynamics. Immersing myself in the work of coalition members helped in identifying why certain campaigns and strategies were more salient than others, examining tensions and cooperative outcomes in specific contexts, which in turn provided the empirical grounds for critically engaging with assumptions, explanations, concepts and practices that guide TENGO coalition work and how scholars understand them (Lynch 2014, 19). However, a key dimension of such an approach is a commitment to *reflexivity* [326] regarding the ways in which my personal identity (e.g. white U.S. male) and worldview may affect the way I gathered and analyzed the studies data (Lynch 2014; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). This includes being aware of the distorting affects that arised from my location in the academic field, my personal relationship with activism on waste, and acknowledging the fact that I am inextricably involved in the social processes under observation (Lynch 2014). Throughout the analysis, I therefore offer reflections on instances where my fieldwork resulted in dissonance with my initial theoretical framework and where frontline

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[326] Reflexivity may also involve "interrogating forms of inclusion and exclusion and breaking down boundaries. Likewise it may involve listening for silences and sometimes responsibly sustaining those silences, depending on the context" (Ackerly and True 2010: 29, quoted in Lynch 2013, 21-22). For example, a reflexive approach includes strategies such as "member checking," in which findings are discussed with those studied in the field. This does not deny or undermine the researcher's epistemological role, but rather acts as a strategy for addressing the dynamics associated with a researcher's subjectivities, otherwise known as 'confirmation bias.'

communities challenged and enriched my initial line of inquiry (Schartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 26-32).

For instance, how actors and organization articulated justice seldom mapped neatly onto concepts rooted in the theoretical literature, often compelling me to reexamine certain assumptions while in the field. Indeed, the fieldwork I conducted helped me move beyond an analytical focus on the fissures and breaks *within* transnational coalitions to also reflect on my own positionaltiy vis-à-vis the movements I was studying. For instance, my position as both activist and scholar helped bridge boundaries between academic and activist debates and theory and practice while in the field. However, as a white male scholar coming from the global North, my position of privilege not only gave me unique access to senior TEGNO staff and government officials—I often felt this colored how I was being perceived by frontline communities that took the time to share their lives, experiences, and homes with me.[327] Indeed, I found myself looking for confirmation regarding the frameworks of justice that animated the project, and that my interviewees often did so based on who I was and how I was framing the questions. I quickly learned that in order to mitigate potential response bias, my questions needed to be more open ended, which would better enable me to *listen* to the insights they had to offer.

The irony is that I often found it difficult to avoid the kind of epistemic injustice that the project was investigating vis-à-vis influential TENGOs and the frontline communities they ostensibly support. For instance, scholarly critiques of Greenpeace and

[327] For instance, I was frequently granted audiences, and was able get around security protocols, with government officials for no other reason I can intensify as being white male scholar.

those I encountered as an activist animated the project, and as a result, the analyses does not always paint the organization in the most favorable light. However, not only are the majority of the 'Greenpeacer' who were generous enough to speak with me well meaning individuals who have often devoted their lives to saving the environment—many of them realize the limitations associated with their organization's approach to working with frontline communities. Thus, the findings of this dissertation should not only give TENGOs like Greenpeace pause to reflect on the voices, stories, and struggles of frontline communities, which have both material and epistemological consequences for the ways in which we understand justice, agency and global/local social change, but scholars as well. Indeed, upon doing so myself, I found I was in a better position to advise frontline communities on their current struggles, share with them what I had learned, and contribute to the lives of those that made such study possible.

Indeed, the relational character of participant observation often requires researchers to establish relationships with participants to co-generate knowledge, rather than treating them as simply a means to an end (e.g., "my informants," "my data") (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 58-59). This required striking a balance between my roles as a researcher, participant, activist and friend. Therefore, many of the interviews conducted were undertaken on the basis of anonymity as many of the discussion were of a critical nature relating to a close knit ENGO community. Thus, all information and quotations for which I do not provide full citations are based on confidential interviews, field, and participant observations. All quotations were selected based on opinions or examples shared by a large number of people, which illustrate the dissertation key

argument. To ensure their reliability, I have triangulated all statements and quotations, building on at least three different sources, and provide personal information to contextualize statements, if the interview was on record. Where interviewees use similar information or observations, I use the language of "according to many interviewees," I mention their shared characteristics to contextualize my claims.[328] Thus the accounts of Greenpeace and GAIA presented in Chapters Two and Three are not intended to constitute definitive histories, but rather cogenerated interpretations that illuminate the historical pathways GAIA and Greenpeace have taken, the principles they have articulated and developed along the way, and how these relate to their current strategies and goals.

[328] This writing approach was inspired by, and the paragraph paraphrases, Autesserre 20114, 13-14.

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