

System Change, not
Climate Change:
Whose system?
What change?

The Climate Change Movement

Joined by a concern for climate

Centred on tactics: civil disobedience, school strikes

Not one coherent movement, lack of strategy

Different assumptions about the state, democracy & political economy

Liberal, Socialist, Radical

table 1: an overview of critical political economy

Political economy model	Liberal	Social democratic - Socialist	Radical
<i>Action towards the state?</i>	Electoral and representative	State-focused action and mobilisation of subordinate groups	Largely outside or against the state
<i>Challenge to private property?</i>	Minimal	Reforms, ranging between redistribution, nationalisation, planning	Transcending, communing, collective ownership, communities
<i>Key authors?</i>	Smith, Hayek	Keynes, Crosland, Korpi, Marx (1)	Marx (2), Kropotkin, Bookchin, Gibson-Graham
<i>Limitations</i>	Excludes change that threatens <u>capitalist relations</u> and private property rights	Systemic barriers prevent the implementation of substantial reforms	Limited power resources of groups promoting radical 'alternatives'; difficulties in 'scaling up'

Table 2: a critical political economy account of the Citizens' Assemblies debate

Role for the Citizens' Assembly	Advisory Citizens' Assembly	Binding Citizens' Assembly
<i>Relationship with the state?</i>	Enhanced representation	Direct engagement and empowerment of citizens through citizens' assemblies
<i>Challenge to capitalist relations, and private market relations</i>	Limited	Seeks to address the disproportionate influence of corporations
<i>Key proponents?</i>	Green Alliance	XR
<i>Potential limitations</i>	Perpetuates and reinforces existing inequalities	Limits to the capitalist state
<i>Broad political economy framework</i>	liberal	Social democratic/socialist

Table 3: a critical political economy account of the Green New Deal debate

Approach towards the GND	Green Economic Recovery	Green New Deal	Radical critique
<i>Relationship with the state?</i>	Capacity to address the green transition	Capacity to address the green transition, but with the support of social movements, especially trade unions	Sceptical regarding the opportunities for meaningful change
<i>Challenge to capitalist relations, and private market relations</i>	Limited	Substantial change to patterns of ownership	Highlights the need for more radical alternatives to capitalist relations of production, such as de-growth alternatives
<i>Key proponents?</i>	Starmer-led Labour Party	Corbyn-led Labour Party, Labour for a Green New Deal	Critics: Neal, <u>Beuret</u> , Davey (<u>Feasta Climate Working Group</u>)
<i>Limitations</i>	Excludes change that threatens property and individuals	Systemic barriers prevent extension of reforms	Limited power resources of groups promoting these initiatives; difficulties in 'scaling up'
Broad political economy framework	liberal	Social democratic/socialist	radical

Table 4: a critical political economy account of alternative eco-communities

Type of alternative community	<i>Imagined consumer communities</i>	<i>Alternative producer communities</i>	<i>Intentional regenerative communities</i>
<i>Relationship with the state?</i>	Government and industry can be influenced by consumer power	Communities are the engine for change that the state can enable or hinder	Minimal, change is best achieved outside of the state
<i>Challenge to capitalist relations, and private market relations</i>	Limited	Substantial change to patterns of ownership and value of necessary products and utilities	Transcend capitalist relations and create new systems of production, democracy, culture and interpersonal relations
<i>Key proponents?</i>	Flight Free UK	Community Energy England	Global Ecovillage Network
<i>Potential limitations</i>	Leaves in place existing power relations, and especially capitalist property relations	Systemic barriers to the wholesale introduction of alternative energy production	Limited power resources of groups promoting these initiatives; difficulties in 'scaling up'
<i>Broad political economy framework</i>	Liberal	Social democratic/socialist	Radical

Conclusion

- Ownership matters
- Building power in institutions & movements is a promising point of overlap
- Ignoring differences in assumptions can be limiting