ALTERNAUTAS

(Re)Searching Development: The Abya Yala Chapter

Vol. 11 – Issue 2 [December 2024]

Bridging Justice Struggles: A Political Ecology of Translocal Alliance Building against Extractive Industries

Hannah Porada [a], *Rutgerd Boelens* [a,b,c,d], *Jeroen Vos* [b]

[a] *CEDLA Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, University of Amsterdam;* [b] *Water Resources Management Group, Department of Environmental Sciences, Wageningen University;* [c] *Department Social Sciences, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú;* [d] *Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Universidad Central del Ecuador*

Accepted: 28 September 2024 / Published online: 12 December 2024

How to cite:

Porada, H., Boelens, R. & Vos, J. (2024), Bridging Justice Struggles: A Political Ecology of Translocal Alliance Building against Extractive Industries. *Alternautas,* 1-34. DOI: 10.31273/n9gkhy06

University of Warwick Press
http://www.alternautas.net

ISSN - 2057-4924

Hannah Porada [1], Rutgerd Boelens [2] and Jeroen Vos [3]

Bridging Justice Struggles: A Political Ecology of Translocal Alliance Building against Extractive Industries

Abstract. We investigate the idea of translocal bridge building – a concept related to ideas of network and alliance building – between environmental and social justice struggles. We examine the potentials and challenges of connecting place-based struggles against extractive industries. Moving beyond normative-idealized ideas of movement alliances, we theoretically root the paper in non-romanticizing accounts of justice networks. We empirically draw on the lead author's research with groups struggling against extractive industries across Germany, the Netherlands, and Guatemala. Our argument is threefold. First, it highlights the potentials of bridging while at the same time raising issues of unequal power and difference, space, and scale among the actors in translocal and multi-scalar justice struggles. Second, the focus on bridge building and our role as bridge building researchers contributes to an understanding of the political and ethical possibilities and dilemmas of research that blurs the boundaries between research and activism. Third, we discuss how bridging

[1] Hannah Porada is a PhD researcher with focus on Political Ecology at the CEDLA Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, University of Amsterdam, Binnengasthuisstraat 46, 1012 ZD Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Email: h.m.porada@uva.nl. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3672-716X (Corresponding author)

[2] Rutgerd Boelens is Special Chair for Political Ecology of Water in Latin America at CEDLA Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, University of Amsterdam. He is also affiliated to the Water Resources Management Group, Department of Environmental Sciences, Wageningen University; the Department Social Sciences, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú; and the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Universidad Central del Ecuador. Email: rutgerd.boelens@wur.nl. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8412-3109

[3] Jeroen Vos is Associate Professor at the Water Resources Management Group, Department of Environmental Sciences, Wageningen University. Email: jeroen.vos@wur.nl. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4716-8682

may help generate counter-power but also risks perpetuating power imbalances. We suggest that our insights highlight the potentials and challenges for multi-scalar, multi-actor, translocal and cross-cultural alliances, and encourage researchers and social movements alike to explore the difficult yet insightful tensions of bridging spaces.

Keywords: Translocal Alliances; Movement Networks; Environmental Justice; Extractive Industries; Political Ecology; Activist-Research; Positionality

Resumen. Investigamos la idea de tender puentes translocales – un concepto relacionado con la creación de redes y alianzas – entre las luchas por la justicia ambiental y social. Examinamos las posibilidades y los retos de conectar las luchas territoriales que confrontan las industrias extractivas. Más allá de las ideas normativas-idealizadas de las alianzas entre movimientos, partimos teóricamente de descripciones no romantizadas de las redes de justicia. Nos basamos empíricamente en la investigación de la autora principal con grupos que luchan contra las industrias extractivas en Alemania, los Países Bajos y Guatemala. Nuestro argumento se basa en tres puntos. En primer lugar, destacamos el potencial de tender puentes y, al mismo tiempo, cuestionamos los desequilibrios de poder, la diferencia, el espacio y la escala entre los actores en las luchas translocales y multiescalares. En segundo lugar, la construcción de puentes nos permite reflexionar acerca de nuestro papel como investigadores, contribuyendo a la comprensión de los dilemas políticos y éticos, así como las posibilidades de una investigación que desdibuja los límites entre el trabajo académico y el activismo. En tercer lugar, analizamos cómo la construcción de puentes ayuda a generar contrapoder, pero también genera riesgos de perpetuar los desequilibrios de poder. Sugerimos que nuestras reflexiones enfatizan las posibilidades y los retos de las alianzas multiescalares, translocales, transculturales, y entre múltiples actores, y animan tanto a los investigadores como a los movimientos sociales a explorar las tensiones de los espacios translocales, considerando sus dificultades y su potencial.

Palabras clave: Alianzas translocales; Redes de movimientos; Justicia ambiental; Industrias extractivas; Ecología política; Investigación-acción; Posicionalidad

Resumo. Pesquisamos sobre a ideia de construção de pontes translocais - um conceito relacionado às ideias de formação de redes e alianças - entre as lutas por justiça ambiental e justiça social. Examinamos os potenciais e os desafios de conectar essas lutas territoriais contra as indústrias extrativas. Indo além das ideias idealizadas e normativas das alianças entre diferentes movimentos, nos fundamentamos teoricamente em relatos não romantizados de redes de justiça. Empiricamente, nos

baseamos na pesquisa da primeira autora com grupos que lutam contra as indústrias extrativas na Alemanha, Holanda e Guatemala. Nosso argumento tem três partes. Primeiro, destacamos os potenciais da construção de pontes e, ao mesmo tempo, levantamos questões de desequilíbrios de poder e diferença de espaço e escala entre os atores em lutas translocais e multiescalares. Em segundo lugar, construir pontes nos faz refletir sobre o nosso papel como pesquisadores, contribuindo assim para a compreensão das possibilidades e dilemas políticos e éticos da investigação que borra as fronteiras entre a pesquisa e o ativismo. Em terceiro lugar, discutimos como a construção de pontes pode ajudar a gerar um contrapoder, mas também corre o risco de perpetuar os desequilíbrios de poder. Nossas reflexões destacam os potenciais e os desafios das alianças multiescalares, translocais, transculturais e entre diversos atores, e incentivam tanto pesquisadores quanto movimentos sociais a explorar as tensões e os insights provenientes desses espaços translocais de construção de pontes.

Palavras-chave: Alianças translocais; Movimentos em rede; Justiça ambiental; Indústrias extrativas; Ecologia política; Pesquisa-ativista; Posicionamento

Introduction

This article investigates the idea of bridge building between groups involved in environmental and social justice struggles. We examine the potentials and promises, but also pitfalls and challenges, of connecting place-based struggles against extractive industries. The notion of bridging centers around the conceptualization and forging of translocal connections between place-based actors whose struggles are disconnected but related. The idea of bridge building is informed by the shared experience - across places - of living in a territory overburdened by extractive industries and of being politically marginalized. It acknowledges the 'place-basedness' of the struggles it seeks to connect. This means that the struggles are inseparable from the territory where they originate, led by territorially-rooted actors, and reflect their material and social realities, as well histories and memories, identities, knowledge and practices (Altman, 2019; Ehrnstroem-Fuentes, 2022; Escobar, 2008; Järvalä, 2022). In that sense, the proposition of 'translocal' bridges seeks to balance recognizing place-based realities with identifying transverse connections (Banerjee, 2011; Boelens et al., 2023; McFarlane, 2009; Kinkaid, 2019).

In this article we ask: *How can place-based struggles against extractive industries' intervention practices be bridged? What are the potentials, promises, challenges and risks of bridging multiple differences?* We approach these questions from a political ecology perspective. This means that we pay theoretical attention to power relations, and the

evident and hidden costs of bridging. Empirically, we commit to an in-depth examination of the place-based struggles. Normative-politically speaking we stress the transformative potential of bridging (cf. Bridge, McCarthy, and Perreault, 2015).

We empirically draw on the lead author's research trajectory and reflections, engaging with three territorially-rooted struggles against extractive industries (i.e., coal mining in Germany, gas extraction in the Netherlands, and mining of building materials in Guatemala). We combine the lead author's insights with the co-authors' reflections from other translocal activist-research collaborations. Theoretically, we build on environmental justice, critical geography and social movement scholarship on translocal networked movements and justice struggles. Translocal connections can yield various material and political outcomes desirable for the connecting struggles. They can challenge dominant discourses and practices, generate visibility around shared grievances, encourage mutual learning about mobilization strategies, facilitate the sharing of ideas and practices, create spaces of solidarity, and generate multi-scalar counter-power in asymmetrical conflict settings (e.g., Diani & Bison, 2004; Gerlach, 1971; Horowitz, 2012; Staggenborg, 2010; Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010; Zajak & Haunss, 2022). While these promises of bridging are much accentuated, we turn toward critical and non-romanticizing accounts of justice networks, which call for being aware of power and hierarchy, cultural background and political settings, values and ideologies, including positionality of movements vis-à-vis one other and their territorial rootedness or unrooting (e.g., Beamish & Luebbers, 2009; Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008; Daphi, Anderl, and Deitelhoff, 2022; Dupuits et al., 2020; Gawerc, 2021; Juris, 2004; Kirk, Nyberg, and Wright, 2023; Tubino-de-Souza et al., 2024). We thus build on Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel (2008) to conduct a power- and geographically-sensitive analysis of translocal movement networking, removing idealized-normative ideas and essentializing understandings of such alliances as much as possible.

Our argument is threefold. First, beyond an understanding of successful or failed bridging efforts, our reflections grounded across place-based struggles provide the opportunity to think through the potentials of translocal alliance building without compromising aspects of power, difference, space, and scale. Second, the lead author's role in her bridge building research heightens understanding of the political and ethical possibilities and dilemmas when the boundaries between research and activism are blurred. Third, while forging alliances can generate different forms of counter-power, it also risks reproducing power imbalances.

That said, our objective is not to contribute to a prescriptive "single model" of bridging or suggest a panacea that can be scaled up to connect distant struggles, territories, and movements. Rather, we want to learn from and think along with the place-based struggles and their bridging efforts, seeking to support their diversity and

strengthen their practices (cf. Hommes, Vos, and Boelens, 2023). Our objective is thus to examine the idea of translocal bridge building by bringing together different theoretical threads, empirical experiences, and methodological reflections. Theoretically, we amplify intents of scholars that have entwined social movement scholarship on the benefits and costs of alliances with critical geography's emphasis on power, space and scale (e.g., Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008; Dufour, 2021; McFarlane, 2009). Empirically, we look at the three place-based struggles individually and together, highlighting the key aspects that surface when looking at them through a bridging lens. Methodologically, we emphasize an experiential approach and how our own translocal alliance building efforts are informed by our positioning and in turn raise questions about positionality and ethics.

Below, we first describe the three empirical cases. We then discuss our methodology and considerations of positionality and ethics followed by our conceptual considerations. Next, we analyze the cases to reflect on their potentials and promises, and the challenges and contradictions of bridging. We discuss two main aspects that bridging must consider, namely issues of positionality and the tension between generating counter-power and aggravating power imbalances. Finally, we summarize our argument and contributions.

Place-based Struggles against Extractive Industries

Mobilization against Brown Coal Mining in the Rhineland, Germany

Germany has had a long mined brown coal in three regions along the "brown coal belt" spanning the country. Decades of large-scale brown coal extraction have made Germany the biggest carbon emitter within the European Union (Global Carbon Atlas, 2019). Most coal is extracted in the Rhenish brown coal area (*Rheinisches Revier*) in the state of North-Rhine Westphalia, between the cities of Cologne, Aachen and Mönchengladbach (Brock, 2023). For decades, the electric utility company RWE (*Rheinisch-Westfälisches Elektrizitätswerk AG*) has operated three open pit mines.

Facilitated by the federal mining law (BBergG, 1980: §77), the mines cover vast areas of land (i.e., more than 325 km^2 in the Rhineland). This has entailed the destruction of around 130 villages and the resettlement of more than 40,000 people since the 1950s (BUND, 2017). RWE manages and promotes the best practice of "joint resettlement." The company negotiates compensation with the affected populations behind closed doors and supposedly resettles entire villages at once. Critics, however, question the social legitimacy of the resettlements, noting the resulting social

fragmentation within villages (Porada & Castro Rodríguez, 2019). Regional organizations criticize the irreversible destruction of cultural heritage and the landscape, the psychological stress for inhabitants, and environmental damage (Jansen, 2013).

Coal mining has been contested for decades. The mines took center stage in environmental and climate justice movements' actions over the past decades. The lead author's field site, the villages next to the 48 km^2 Garzweiler II mine, has repeatedly been in the spotlight of protests. In 2008, thousands of people protested mine expansion. In 2012, activists made themselves known beyond national borders for occupying the Hambach forest, trying to hinder mine expansion, and making the forest a symbol of anti-coal resistance. Since August 2015, the Ende Gelände alliance - supported by international activists - has received attention for their civil disobedience actions that blocked coal mines and demanded a turn away from fossil capitalism (Ende Gelände, 2015).

In 2018, a group of residents confronted with resettlement due to the expansion of Garzweiler II, linked up with others living along the brown coal belt. They consolidated an alliance called "All villages stay" (*Alle Dörfer bleiben*), and criticized the needlessness of displacements against the prospect of an earlier phase out of coal use in the power sector. The movement solidarized and built alliances with local and national organizations (i.e., BUND, Greenpeace, Fridays for Future). In 2020, the coal agreement (national law; *Kohlekompromiss*) legally determined an earlier end of coal use, confirming that previously earmarked mining areas were no longer needed, so that the Hambach forest and several villages next to Garzweiler II were saved from destruction (Radtke & David, 2024). Despite the coal agreement, the protest reached a new peak in January 2023, when the destruction of the village of Lützerath next to Garzweiler II mine gained international attention. A wide-ranging alliance of villagers, local activists, national climate and environmental organizations, scientists, and international groups consolidated an alliance and centered their protests around the village's destruction, making it a symbol of Germany's failed climate policy.

Opposition to Gas Extraction in Groningen, the Netherlands

For decades, the Netherlands has met its energy needs with gas extraction. Since 1963, a public-private partnership between the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Dutch Petroleum Company (NAM - *Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij*, a joint venture of Royal Dutch Shell and ExxonMobil) has produced gas from Europe's largest gas field, located in the northeastern province of Groningen (van der Voort & Vanclay, 2015). Gas has been an important export product and the enormous profit from it has been a fundamental pillar of Dutch welfare spending.

The apparent benefits and vitality of gas for national energy security long kept gas extraction beyond question (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2023).

From the start, critics voiced concerns about potential negative consequences at gas extraction sites. Their claims remained unheard and were actively disregarded by state institutions and NAM (Brandsma, Ekker, and Start, 2017; Hupkes et al., 2022). In the 1970s and 1980s, land subsidence (i.e., sinking land above the gas field with major impacts on the water systems; *bodemdaling*) was acknowledged as a consequence of extraction and accounted for with a compensation fund. In contrast, earthquakes – or rather human-made gas quakes (*gasbevingen;* Kester, 2017; Perlaviciute et al., 2017) as it later turned out – first witnessed in the mid-1980s and increasingly frequent since the 1990s, were long denied as a consequence of gas extraction. This was backed up by supposedly neutral technical expert reports (Porada, Boelens, and Vos, 2024b). When the relationship between gas extraction and tremors was no longer deniable, NAM continued to downplay the gas quakes' relationship with widespread damage to houses and other buildings in the area to reduce compensation payments as much as possible (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2023).

NAM's strategy of ignoring and individualizing inhabitants' compensation claims made Groningers increasingly feel ridiculed, and the situation of powerlessness created psychological and social despair (Schreuderer et al., 2023). In 2009, inhabitants founded the Groningen Ground Movement (GBB – *Groninger Bodem Beweging*) to collectively defend their interests, which today has more than 4000 members. GBB organized protests, mobilized legal procedures, engaged local alliances, and directly negotiated with government institutions. GBB's initial focus on compensation soon widened to safety issues, transparency problems, and gas phase-out demands (GBB, no date). Especially after a strong gas quake in 2012, safety risks of gas extraction were no longer deniable (van der Voort & Vanclay, 2015). The Groninger Gas Council (*Groninger Gasberaad*) was founded as alliance between local civil society organizations, including GBB.

Several actions linked the Groningen struggle to larger issues and other place-based struggles (see also Valladares Pasquel, 2024). Among them were the actions of the national climate activist group *Code Rood* in 2018 and 2019 connecting to the Groninger struggle and GBB's exchange with activists from Niger delta affected by Shell's oil extraction. Such actions were mostly short-term. Longer collaboration was difficult to sustain given the wariness among many Groningers of what they perceived as "radical activists" (pers. comm. inhabitant 13-11-2021). Upholding a multi-scalar and multi-actor coalition was also challenging given the feeling among many of being

caught in a situation of eternal stagnation (Schreuderer et al., 2023). Many Groningers' decided to direct their efforts to the place-based mobilization and strategies aimed at fueling the national debate, which has yielded some results including triggering a parliamentary inquiry and achieving the gas phase-out. Inhabitants also engaged in small-scale actions to express their dissent against the situation. Such targeted strategies continue to aim for fair compensation and wider-reaching reparations.

Contestation of Construction Material Mining in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

In Guatemala, the end of the civil war in the 1990s marked a turning point for extractive industries. New elites with access to international markets entered the country and formed alliances with the old elites who maintained control of political resources and land. The number of mining licenses skyrocketed and with it the number of conflicts (e.g., Bull & Aguilar-Støen, 2016; Rasch, 2013). Most mining licenses concern metallic ores, but non-metallic mining also increased significantly. The elite-owned cement monopoly Cementos Progreso became the second-biggest mining player nationally (Aguilar-Støen, 2014).

In the Palajunoj valley (Valle de Palajunoj) to the south of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala's second largest city in the country's western highlands, large-scale mining of construction materials (i.e., sand and stones) began in 1999. In the territory with a rural feel, several mining companies – all of them subsidiaries of Cementos Progreso – started operating without properly consulting the affected Maya K'iche indigenous communities (Ordóñez, Mazariegos, and Chávez, 2019; pers. comm. lawyer 22-04-2021; inhabitant 15-08-2022). The discourse of urban concrete-built development, combined with a racist narrative about the "backwardness" of rural populations was mobilized to legitimize extraction in the indigenous territory (pers. comm. university researcher 22-08-2022).

The inhabitants of the Palajunoj valley soon denounced environmental degradation (e.g., soil erosion, deforestation, flooding), respiratory health issues, and far-reaching cutbacks in everyday life due to constant explosions and heavy truck traffic (Ordóñez, Mazariegos, and Chávez, 2019). To avert this criticism, the mining companies engaged in practices of cooptation under the guise of their CSR strategies. For example, they offered community garden projects, female leadership training, or direct payments to selected indigenous leaders. These practices seek to rupture the social fabric in the valley and create an atmosphere of distrust among valley inhabitants. This is one factor that challenges a coherent and lasting mobilization against mining (pers. comm. NGO member 21-08-2022). The resistance also must

account for micropolitical contradictions, differences and tensions that arise within a heterogonous movement (Porada, Boelens, and Hogenboom, 2024a).

Despite these challenges, valley inhabitants have repeatedly mobilized over the years. They denounce the mining operations and, more broadly, seek to defend their territory. Different valley-based indigenous organizations, often supported by urban social movements, challenge the mining operations by drawing on legal means, roadblocks, and protests. As part of their territorial defense strategy, the concerns around mining are articulated in connection to other problems affecting the territory (Porada, Boelens, and Hogenboom, 2024a). Among them are the municipality's territorial ordering plan (POT – *Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial*; Municipalidad de Quetzaltenango, 2017; 2021), a new logic of municipal spatial governance. The POT is perceived as an imposition of municipal territorial authority over indigenous territorial authority and as a mechanism that reorganizes municipal space and relations while leaving extractive interests unimpeded (Baud et al., 2019). Additionally, the maintenance of the city's garbage dump in the valley and the lack of municipal utilities (i.e., water, drainage, electricity; pers. comm. journalist 12-08-2022) are repeatedly denounced, reflecting a wider pattern of urban-rural and ethnic marginalization.

The mobilization against mining and interrelated issues of territorial ordering and marginalization remains strongly place based, reflecting challenges for an overarching Guatemalan anti-mining coalition (Aguilar-Støen, 2014; Copeland, 2023). The POT catalyzed resistance alliance building between valley-based indigenous organizations and urban social movements, coming together over shared concerns. An alliance from below and in defense of territory formed in 2018 which demanded the suspension of all mining operations in the valley and the POT (García Garzón, 2021). Though these demands remained mostly unrealized, one mine (i.e., La Rosa) was legally suspended in 2019. The POT was only amended in 2019, but the indigenous organizations deemed the alterations insufficient (Porada, Boelens, and Hogenboom, 2024a). Elections held in 2019 led to a new municipal government which had promised the suspension of the POT during the election campaign. As the newly-elected government nonetheless continued to promote the POT, the valley's inhabitants responded with a 75-day protest in 2022, blocking the main entrance of the valley. This created a so-called "garbage crisis," as the city's garbage could no longer be disposed in the valley. Mining activities were temporarily impeded as well (No Ficción, 2022). This tense moment between the valley's inhabitants and the municipal government soon received national attention. Mediation was attempted through a visit from the Guatemalan president and dialogue tables with

the municipality. However, the indigenous organizations did not feel heard and felt confronted with preformulated results (pers. comm. indigenous social movement member 07-08-2022). They nonetheless could no longer maintain the openly visible protest, as leading protestors were met with strategies of intimidation, violence, and criminalization (Prensa Libre, 2022).

Methodology and Positionality

Research Approach and Methods

We draw on the lead author's research trajectory and bring it into conversation with the co-authors' experience in international and translocal activist-research collaborations, allowing us to report on shared insights. Having researched the issue of brown coal mining in the Rhineland (core period February-April 2019 with longer-term engagement), the lead author took these lessons and experiences regarding social mobilization with her to conceptualize her doctoral research on extractive conflicts in the Netherlands and Guatemala. Next to focusing on the territorially specific extractive transformations and resistance struggles, she wondered if and how these struggles could be bridged. To investigate this question, she engaged in an iterative qualitative research process seeking to ground the idea of bridging across places. This also included political-strategic dialogues and ethical-analytical reflections with the Riverhood and River Commons projects'[4] alliance action-researchers, engaged in similar translocal and cross-cultural bridge-building among environmental justice movements [see also van den Berge, Vos, and Boelens, 2022; Houart, Hoogesteger, and Boelens, 2024; Vos, 2024].

Through fieldwork across places, we examined and deepened our understanding and reflections about the idea of bridging (Netherlands core period from September 2021 to January 2022; shorter field visits in 2021, 2022, and 2023; Guatemala core period from July 2022 to September 2022; shorter field visit in 2024; continuous online engagement in both cases). Through a set of commonly used critical geography methods, comprising interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation (Gomez & Jones III, 2010), we explored the feasibility, possibilities and challenges of bridging. Our fieldwork comprised 58 interviews (38 for Groningen; 20 for Quetzaltenango), and roughly 95 informal conversations (40 for Groningen; 40 for

[4] Two research projects that focus on rivers and water justice movements, the building of multi-actor networks, and environmental justice labs, see https://movingrivers.org/

Quetzaltenango; 15 online conversations with collaborators specifically on bridging conceptualization and reflection) as well as participant observations (e.g., gatherings of social movements) and field visits across places (e.g., to see mining impacts). Though not all interviews, conversations and gatherings focused on the idea of bridging, they did jointly contribute to our understanding of the place-based realities and political strategizing, and sometimes yielded unexpected reflections that informed our thinking about translocal bridging.

That said, our research approach was explicitly committed to remain flexible and open to the unexpected (cf. Hommes, Vos, and Boelens, 2023). Perceptions, possibilities, and challenges of bridging were not necessarily stable; the struggles and realities across territories are complex, contingent, heterogeneous and changing. This made us continuously reflect on the question of how to work with contingency, embrace uncertainty and account for ever-changing bridging possibilities. Initial ideas for bridging emerged from discussions held with inhabitants, social movement members, NGO practitioners, and researchers from February 2021 onwards (i.e., in-person or virtual meetings, creation of solidarity networks, exchange through audiovisual tools, creation of joint counter-maps, and joint media coverage). Not all ideas materialized, and different challenges emerged while we grounded these ideas across struggles. Our interlocutors and collaborators expressed different concerns about bridging between the Netherlands and Guatemala. It was this encountered tension between enthusiasm and skepticism that accompanied us throughout the research process. The lead author documented these learning insights and reflections in a field diary and brought them into conversation with the co-authors' experiences.

The research was ethically approved, and consent was obtained from all participants. Due to sensitivities, we anonymize all research participant names and delete detailed recognizable characteristics. Beyond complying with these formal ethical standards, we underline that the collaborative nature of bridging and our own role in it spoke to the need to explicitly engage with questions of epistemology, positionality and ethics (cf. Hommes, Vos, and Boelens, 2023; Tubino-de-Souza et al., 2024). Our way of seeing and knowing the struggles across places guided our understanding of possible bridging actions. The understanding was in turn shaped by the way different place-based actors perceived us, our epistemological stance, and political positioning.

Positionality

The idea of translocal bridging raises questions around positionality and ethics. While our bridging approach starts from a stance of solidarity with the place-

based struggles, we acknowledge that this may be a complex and contradictory claim in the conflict- and tension-ridden struggles we engage in. To bridge encounters between differently positioned actors it is important to acknowledge their autonomy and diverging political priorities and positioning, research interests, and methodological choices (Borras and Franco, 2023, p. 60; see also Edelman, 2009, p. 247).

Responding to these considerations, in this article we adopt a "posture of active positionality" (Soerdirgo & Glas, 2020, p. 527). This means that we continuously consider and reflect on our own positionality, its perception by others, the positionality of our collaborators, and explore emerging ethical-political questions. Regarding ethics, we acknowledge the inherent potentials, contradictions, compromises, and conflicts that arise as we situate bridging at the interface of academic research and political activism (Borras & Franco, 2023; Edelman, 2009; Hale, 2006; Loperena, 2016; Piven, 2010).

Our reflection on positionality and ethics builds on the considerations of Hale (2006) who distinguishes and explores the tensions of politically different committed research practices. "Cultural critique" as argued by Hale (2006) – understood as critical research from a distance committed to subaltern political causes through the knowledge it produces – allows for academically defendable contributions, avoiding oversimplifications and analytical closure. In contrast, "activist research" – directly engaged in a political struggle – is forced to choose analytical closure over complexity to express a political alignment. Cultural critique and activist research are judged in different spaces, respond to different loyalties, each with its own dilemmas. Whereas cultural critique is academically defendable, it can disappoint the struggle it intends to support, and vice versa (Hale, 2006). Research positions evolving in a reciprocal relationship between cultural critique and activist research are compromised, contradictory and difficult to conduct. "Porous boundaries" (Hale, 2006, p. 98) between the two practices can simultaneously generate an analytically profound and politically transformative contribution (see also Borras & Franco, 2023; Edelman, 2009; Loperena, 2016). It is this tension that our bridging approach explores.

Our considerations are further informed by what Shanks and Paulson (2022, p. 173) term "ethical research landscapes." This term highlights the importance of recognizing the different positionalities, power dynamics, and material and epistemic injustices that underpin North-South, translocal and cross-cultural collaborative research processes and relationships. Shanks and Paulson (2022, p. 179) particularly stress the ethical challenges of engaging with actors in conflict-ridden territories. As we reflect on bridging between territories and actors that are troubled by insecurity, violence, widespread mistrust, and polarized political stances, we acknowledge the

importance of always explicitly reflecting with our partners in these alliances on ethical dilemmas and positionality implications.

Conceptualizing Translocal Justice Bridging

Our proposition of bridging is informed by environmental and social justice scholarship. The idea is that place-based movements benefit from alliances or networks of mutual solidarity across differences, places, and scales (e.g., Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008; Juris, 2004; Martínez-Alier, 2012; Schlosberg, 1999; 2004; Zwarteveen & Boelens, 2014). To create counterpower to inequitable processes and powerful actors, place-based struggles benefit from an engagement in coalitions across differently scaled actors (Hoogesteger & Verzijl, 2015).

Scholars have stressed the idea of translocality (e.g., Banerjee, 2011; Boelens et al., 2023; McFarlane, 2009; Kinkaid, 2019), striking a balance between place-based complexities, and transverse connections. Translocal allyship promises direct tangible-material wins but also less-tangible gains such as the contestation of dominant discourses, the democratization of processes, the politicization of previous normalized orders, or the amplification of place-based ontologies (e.g., Boelens et al., 2023; Diani & Bison, 2004; Gawerc, 2021; Gerlach, 1971; Horowitz, 2012; Staggenborg, 2010; Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010; Zajak & Haunss, 2022). Alliance building also entails costs and risks, for instance of time investments or the blurring of core movement identity (e.g., Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008; Daphi, Anderl, and Deitelhoff, 2022; Juris, 2004; Gawerc, 2021; Dupuits, 2020).

Critical geography and social movement scholars have argued that the idealized-normative "flatness" (Bulkeley, 2005) of translocal and cross-cultural alliances' and networks' imaginaries risks masking power asymmetries. Issues of power, space, and scale within and among movements have been highlighted (e.g., Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008; Dufour, 2021; Dupuits et al., 2020; McFarlane, 2009; Routledge & Cumbers, 2013). Conceptually connecting to these observations, Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel (2008) propose a power- and geographically-sensitive analysis of "global justice networks" to understand how networks unevenly connect spatially and culturally dispersed place-based struggles. To capture the "spatially dispersed social coalitions of territorially rooted actors" (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p.192), they propose to "re-insert the realities of uneven development, space and power relations" (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 197) into the analysis of movement coalitions. Movement networks are understood as unstable and contingent assemblages and temporarily come together

in convergence spaces (Routledge, 2003 as in Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p.192; see also Chesters & Welsh, 2005; Davies, 2012; Escobar, 2008; Kinkaid, 2019; McFarlane, 2009; Rodríguez-Giralt, Marrero-Guillamón, and Milstein, 2018).

Seven dimensions serve to assess movement convergence spaces (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008; *Figure 1*). First, movements in search of alliances are not place bound yet remain place based in their everyday struggles. Place-based movements are enabled or constrained by the particularities in which they operate, and thus chose to act at place-based scales, or to engage in wider coalitions against powerful multi-scalar institutions (see also Dufour, 2021; Schlosberg, 1999; Vos et al., 2020). Territorially rooted, historically constructed identities shape wider coalitions. Coalition building impacts place-based identities (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, pp. 192-193; see also Kinkaid, 2019).

1	Importance of place-basedness and territorial rootedness
2	Common ground for mutual solidarity while staying attentive to heterogeneity and difference
3	Practical-relational encounters for shared identity-building
4	Uneven conditions and inequalities among movements lead to different degrees of empowerment and marginalization within networks
5	Importance of grounding process and active work of bridge builders
6	Clashing logics of interaction shape network practices
7	Networks as sites of power struggle and contestation

Fig 1. Characteristics of uneven justice networks (own compilation based on Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008).

Second, movements seeking to consolidate common ground, and a shared vision need to remain attentive to aspects of heterogeneity. Intersectional differences (e.g., gender, class, ethnicity, or resources), place-based hardship and everyday struggles for survival may prevent networks from being realized (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, pp. 193-194; see also Kirk, Nyberg, and Wright, 2023). Third, practical-relational encounter spaces are crucial to allow for the connection of

grievances and aspirations across difference and the nurturing of a shared political identity beyond common concerns. Global concerns, which are understood locally, become "glocal" issues (Swyngedouw, 2004) while staying attentive to power imbalances and diverging capacities among movements vis-à-vis one other (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, pp. 194-195; see also Routledge, Cumbers, and Nativel, 2007; Routledge & Cumbers, 2013).

Fourth, spatially-extensive networks fostering non-local connections are shaped by uneven starting conditions and inequalities among movements (e.g., resources, geographies). Within networks, certain movements thus "become empowered while others remain marginal" (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 195; see also Daphi, Anderl, and Deitelhoff, 2022). Coalition movements sometimes actively decide to stay at the margin to focus on the defense of their territory or opposition to national actors (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, pp. 195-196).

Fifth, networks require grounding in the respective place-based struggles through embodied work of bridge builders, promoting the network imaginary, working to establish ties and building trust (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 196; see also Beamish & Luebbers, 2009; Gawerc, 2021; Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010).

Sixth, networks are shaped by diverging ideas of interactions and facilitation. Power relations within and among movements and clashing operational logics shape network practices (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 196; see also Daphi, Anderl, and Deitelhoff, 2022).

Seventh, converging networks themselves must be understood as sites of power struggle and contestation. Diverging goals, ideologies, and strategies as well as the uneven distributions of discursive and material power shape networks' configurations. This can lead to "problems of representation, mobility, and cultural difference, both between the social movements that participate and between activists within particular movements" (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 196; see also Abazeed, 2023; Daphi, Anderl, and Deitelhoff, 2022; Hoogesteger et al. 2023; Widener, 2007).

Analyzing the Potentials and Challenges of Translocal Justice Bridges

We scrutinize potentials and challenges of translocal bridge building, moving along the analytical dimensions proposed by Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel (2008), crosspollinating insights from the three place-based empirical realities. We start by highlighting bridging as (1) *balancing acts between acknowledging the place-*

basedness and territorial rootedness of struggles, while also thinking through broader coalition building. In the German Rhineland, the movements forged multi-scalar alliances amid an entrenched legal situation and the confrontation with powerful actors. The shared experience across places along the brown coal belt enabled new connections (e.g., the *Alle Dörfer bleiben* movement), yet remained territorially rooted and sensitive to issues of identity (i.e., West vs. East German experience) and territorial-material realities (i.e., the resettlement process). These exact realities also nurtured skepticism towards alliance building, warning us not to romanticize such efforts, or as one inhabitant said, "many people joining the protests have not cared about our situation in the resettlement process… They use the resettlement … as a symbol to fight for their purpose [climate justice], instead of fighting for the villages themselves" (pers. comm. 13-03-2019).

In Guatemala, "the particularities of place … vitiate[d] against broader spatial mobilization and pose[d] important problems" (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 193). Bridging was complicated by the encountered conflict situation, turning initially conceptualized bridges into "bridges too far." The territorial issues were highly politicized and recent mobilizations had been met with repressive strategies and violence, criminalizing several leaders as "terrorists" for exercising their right to protest. The tense atmosphere was omnipresent: "The issues in the valley are overly sensitive now. The lines of communication between valley inhabitants and the municipality have been cut. It might be complicated to investigate the issues" (pers. comm. urban social movement member 29-07-2022). A municipality official intimidated the lead author, asking to "stop sticking [her] nose into the problems in the valley" (pers. comm. 01-08-2022). In a gathering with indigenous movement members, they expressed their fear amid the increased levels of violence. The sensitivity of the issue and the atmosphere of violence and fear raised ethical concerns around the safety of research activities, and more so for local organizations wanting to federate and build activist bridges (cf. Copeland, 2023).

Another insight emerged regarding the most-needed scalar connections for different place-based struggles. The Groninger struggle gained momentum as it managed to frame local demands as national concerns (pers. comm. Groninger social movement member 04-11-2021). International bridges were only built when such scalar connections promised visibility and tangible gains. In 2015, GBB started to criminally prosecute NAM, and announced it would appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of rejection. In 2017, a lawyer acting on behalf of an alliance between GBB, the Dutch environmental NGO Friends of the Earth Netherlands (*Milieudefensie*), and the Netherlands-based foundation StandUpForYourRights brought the Groninger situation to the UN Human Rights Commission. Despite such exceptions, the struggle mostly stayed out of international

arenas. Such insights made us reflect on the scalar alliances needed to defend territorialized interests (i.e., translocal bridges are not "naturally" obvious or "intuitively" claimed). In Quetzaltenango, successful mobilization against mining happened through legal appeals to the national court in 2019 (pers. comm. urban social movement member 26-08-2022). The movement identified opposition to the national and local government as the most apt strategy for territorial defense (cf. Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 195), but was also confronted with the impunity and arbitrariness of court decisions.

The (2) *possibility of consolidating common ground across heterogeneity and difference* turned out to be an important dimension. In Germany, the overarching framing, and shared desire to stop fossil fuel capitalism, climate change, and social and environmental damage worked to unite actors across scales (i.e., parts of the local population, coal protest movements, climate justice movements, environmental organizations, scientists, celebrities) and turned into a far-reaching political movement (i.e., the Hambach and Lützerath mobilizations in 2018 and 2023, respectively). In the Netherlands and Guatemala, we encountered scattered enthusiasm about the forging of connections between these two place-based struggles. A Groninger social movement member stated: "I heard your subject, your connection with Guatemala. I am also thinking about the connections we established beyond Groningen before. I am very much curious what your research will result in" (pers. comm. 13-10-2021). In Quetzaltenango, the political importance of coalition building was underlined, simultaneously pointing to the importance of recognizing unevenness in translocal movement endeavors (i.e., political repression, elite capture):

We could think about twinning (*hermanamiento*) Guatemala and the Netherlands. That has weight in Guatemala and creates pressure. The elite do not like it when these issues are made public internationally. And international support can be useful given the increasing repression of dissent (pers. comm. NGO member 22-04-2021).

The tension between consolidating common ground and recognizing differences also manifested in a Groninger translocal bridging experience. GBB engaged in a translocal exchange with a movement from the Niger Delta, given the confrontation with the same fossil fuel company (Shell) and the Niger Delta movement fighting a court case in the Netherlands. Due to the overlapping experience, they framed their convergence as an anti-Shell action. Supported by the NGO Friends of the Earth Netherlands - pursuing an anti-fossil-fuel-campaign at the time - the movements exchanged on structural-extractive issues, the damage caused by Shell, and health impacts (pers. comm. NGO member 31-10-2021). They compared strategies of contention (pers. comm. Groninger social movement member 08-10-2021). The

framing of commonalities was crucial for the action: "If you look at elitist mining companies and local construction material extraction in Guatemala, that is much more difficult to connect with the case of Groningen. To find a common narrative is more difficult, maybe other international networks of support for both issues individually are more apt" (pers. comm. NGO member 31-10-2021).

The bridging of the Groninger and the Niger Delta movements also perpetuated their differences. Diverging power constellations, historical experiences, and political context became evident (i.e., history of colonization, violence, political regime). The place-specific everyday experiences of marginalization made the consolidation of common ground challenging. A Groninger social movement member stated:

Beyond the similarities of the cases, there are also major differences because the democracy in the Netherlands is stable, there are courts that work, and livelihoods are more stable and less affected by extraction than for example in Nigeria (pers. comm. 08-10-2021).

An NGO member added: "The Niger Delta case in some respects was much worse, for instance regarding the use of violence and the loss of livelihoods" (pers. comm. 31-10-2021). Doubt was also raised about the effectiveness of bridges: "One should not underestimate the time and effort it takes to organize such exchanges and not overestimate the results" (pers. comm. NGO member 31-10-2021). The Groningen-Niger Delta experience elucidates how place-based concerns can inspire but also hinder networking successes.

Fostering (3) *shared identity building and mutual solidarity through practical encounters* has maintained the alliances in Germany. To cultivate a shared identity, "place- and face-to-face based moments of articulation" (Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 194) have been crucial. Repeated consolidated actions have effectively pushed through some fundamental demands (i.e., an earlier coal phase-out, preservation of Hambach forest). In Quetzaltenango, such concerted efforts are difficult to realize, reflecting the highly uneven configurations of power and diverging capacities for resistance across places (i.e., political repression, everyday struggle for survival, difficulty consolidating a national movement).

Questions of movement identity surfaced as central enablers of but also obstacles to translocal bridging efforts. The struggles across territories are rooted in place-specific ontologies and identities that shape the opposition to the dominant extractive logic. Territorially-rooted identities and place-specific relations of people with their territory and its resources shape the understanding of what the resistance struggle is about. At the same time, movement identities also strategically crystallize in confrontation with other struggles, and in turn may (but do not necessarily) lead to new conscious or unconscious hybrid bridging identities.

In Groningen, wider opposition formed around compensation and safety concerns triggered by the gas quakes after decades of almost unquestioned gas extraction. The struggle shifted from a fight for state and extractive actors' recognition of the injustice to a demand for compensations and reparations. It was never explicitly framed as an anti-extractive struggle nor mobilized the climate change discourse as, for instance, the German movement did. The Groninger movements chose moderate strategies such as technical knowledge production, fact-based information sharing, and legal means, given the depoliticizing narratives and bureaucratic-technical approach it was confronted with (cf. Porada, Boelens, and Vos, 2024b). GBB criticized extractive transformations while carefully maintaining an image as a serious interlocutor (pers. comm. Groninger social movement member 08-10-2021). Such strategic choices and framings were intricately linked to the political context. Activism as a "dirty word" (Luke et al., 2018, p. 524) potentially limited the movements' public support and access to political spaces. In this line of argumentation, convened anti-fossil-fuel protests (i.e., *Code Rood* in 2018) were criticized as acts of "radical activism" (pers. comm. inhabitant 13-11-2021). Encounters between inhabitants and activists backfired and thus impeded the fostering of long-term alliances. In the confrontation with territorially unrooted outsiders, the Groninger way of mobilizing and a movement identity linked to the place-based experience of gas extraction clearly crystallized.

In Quetzaltenango, the resistance movement took a clear anti-extractive stance. It further articulated its opposition to mining in connection with wider concerns around territorial defense and claims of territorial autonomy, rooted in the Mayan cosmovision and peasant identity (pers. comm. indigenous social movement member 07-08-2022). That said, the fundamentally different and potentially clashing understandings and identities of the movements in Groningen and Quetzaltenango are an important consideration when thinking about the strengthening of translocal bridges.

The (4) *uneven starting conditions and inequalities among movements* made us consider *different degrees of empowerment and marginalization* evoked through bridging. The iterative process of identifying and re-evaluating bridging ideas illustrated how initially proposed bridges (e.g., media coverage, audiovisual tools) were complicated once translated across difference. The Groninger movement continuously used strategies of visibility, but only once engaged in cross-continental bridging aimed at visibility. The translocal engagement with the Niger Delta movement showed how the connection of their struggles reproduced the different contexts and geographies they were embedded in, and shaped differentiated perceptions of empowerment (cf.

Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, 2008, p. 195). In line with that, a Groninger social movement member described the impact of the translocal action as "rather marginal" (pers. comm. 18-10-2022) compared to place-based strategies.

In Quetzaltenango, tendencies of criminalization and violence complicated the idea of generating counterpower through visibility. Visibility was controversial; it could foster resistance and generate tangible benefits but also backfire by aggravating insecurities and marginalization. Amid the long history of territorial defense, mobilizations aiming for visibility repeatedly surfaced (i.e., protest in 2022), simultaneously entailing risks of criminalization, and thus aimed at achieving concrete material results (e.g., the suspension of POT). Translocal alliances were understood to mitigate risks associated with becoming visible, yet also as difficult to achieve (pers. comm. indigenous social movement member 15-08-2022).

Caught in a never-ending saga of political disappointments, many Groningers did not longer believe in material changes or democratized outcomes. Their perception of possible improvements had stagnated. Much work had flown into the contestation of the gas extraction, and lifetime and energy had been lost to Kafkaesque bureaucracy. A common sense of pessimism raised questions around the benefits and costs of future alliances:

I know that the climate activists… have been trying to connect with the indigenous people in the Amazon… but it takes a lot of energy, and it is just one newspaper article. So, you put in a lot of energy and the result is five minutes of fame?… It only helps for a little moment of time and then it is something for the archives… So, in that way I am a bit pessimistic… people here … are tired. It is difficult to get them more active, they have spent so much energy with so little result... So, some people will not act anymore… And some people… I do not think they want to hear it anymore… They want to go on with their life (pers. comm. inhabitant 18-10-2021).

However, not all shared this fatigue. A social movement member conceptualized empowerment as far-reaching and with longer time horizons – in terms of material and political effects like fair compensation and reparations, gas phase-out, parliamentary investigation – rather than brief moments of visibility and stressed the mobilization's achievements. Yet translocal bridging was not perceived as the most coherent strategy with place-based strategies to generate counterpower (pers. comm. Groninger social movement member 13-10-2021).

Our bridging lens provided insights into the (5) *importance of grounding work and bridge builders*. Bridging resonated with the place-based struggles on the personal, conceptual-discursive, and political-institutional levels. Collaborators stressed the opportunity for translocal learning and to jointly counter extractive industries' dominant knowledge claims, discourses, and practices (see also Dupuits, 2015). A

Guatemalan NGO member mentioned how bridge builders could open a new line of argumentation for mining-affected communities (pers. comm. 27-04-2021). A Guatemalan NGO researcher highlighted the potential of bridges amid the repression of critical voices: "The silence encompasses academia in Guatemala. It is good to think about how we can strengthen our network" (pers. comm. 04-05-2021). A Groninger university researcher stated the importance of mutual learning:

Latin American cases can learn from Groningen; for instance, how in the Global North we see similar processes such as the social cohesion ruptured by mining. And Latin American cases often have an impressive trajectory of social mobilization we can learn from (pers. comm. 21-04-2021).

A Groninger water professional with work experience in Latin America stressed how bridges could counter normalized discourses around extraction-related water issues. "Working in the Andes, I worked on mining and water management. I think even though many people might not see it, the case of Groningen has a lot of relevance for questions around water management and mining. I can identify many parallels" (pers. comm. 24-11-2021).

The place-based realities also impede grounding in a translocal bridging context. The long Groninger history of gas quakes, the slow and unjust compensation policies, the techno-bureaucratic approach, the social and psychological despair among inhabitants amid the non-materializing improvements and safety concerns, have burned out inhabitants' energy. "People here are tired. They don't want to talk about this anymore" (pers. comm. Groninger social movement member 08-02-2023).

People across places refused research activities, pointing to issues of the bridge builder's positionality vis-à-vis the struggle at hand. "Much research and so many projects have happened, yet nothing changed for peoples' realities, or it sometimes even changed them for the worse," stated a resident of Quetzaltenango (pers. comm. 22-08-2022). In Groningen, myriad technical investigations and experts' claims of scientific objectivity awoke resentment against researching outsiders. The experience was similar in Germany. "It's been nonstop for the last five years and I can't do it anymore" (pers. comm. inhabitant 14-03-2019). These disappointments challenged the idea of a bridge building researcher.

The dominance of technical knowledge promoted in the interest of extractive industries across places in turn shaped the expectations of a researcher's positioning. The power of technical knowledge claims implied discomfort with intents to blur research and activism. Groningers warned the lead author to keep a critical distance and were skeptical about a bridge building researcher: "You can only organize an

action backed up with sound scientific findings. Because people will ask you 'where is your proof?' So that is why it is important to focus on the research" (pers. comm. inhabitant 18-10-2021).

In Quetzaltenango, positivist research results were understood as a basis for defending territorial claims, whereas bridging research was perceived as less relevant for the ongoing struggle. "Objective-scientific knowledge is important... indigenous epistemologies are disregarded when defending territory. It is not serious if it is not academic," summarized an NGO member (pers. comm. 22-04-2021). Residents of the Palajunoj valley asked for "hard research data" such as maps with hydrological measurements. Such requests exposed the contradictions of social scientists trying to foster solidarity through bridging while our interlocutors understood solidarity as keeping a critical distance and providing positivist research tools.

Bridging is impeded by (6) *clashing or uneven practices of interaction and facilitation within and among struggles*. Across places, the vertical steering of alliances was challenged by the place-based "messy" conflict situations. The extractive alliances deployed divisive strategies of cooptation and permeated social relations with distrust. This made bridging based on principles of trust and collaboration puzzling. At the same time, the affected populations responded heterogeneously to extractive interventions in their territory. These responses ranged from resistance to mining and negotiation of favorable conditions, to voluntary or involuntary acceptance of mining activities, and were rooted in different actors' positionings and diverse ways of strategizing toward extractive actors (cf. Porada, Boelens, and Hogenboom, 2024a). Bridging risked simplifying these nuances of contestations. The intent to unite the "local" opponents of mining was not straightforward. The question of whom to align with was complicated (cf. Loperena, 2016). This underlines the importance of balancing action in solidarity with analytical nuance out of a non-demonizing responsibility toward all research participants (cf. Hale, 2006).

Interactive tensions emerged from differing timelines and action logics of the place-based struggles vis-à-vis mobile and unrooted actors. These different perceptions of time and scale meant that bridge building was not always possible. The apparent benefits of bridging and relevant modes of bridging envisioned by resistance actors in different moments of struggle were changing and contingent, linked to the evolving place-based struggles and realities. In Groningen, for example, the short-term actions of the climate activist group Code Rood stood in contrast with the long-term struggle and demands of GBB. Similarly, the logic of our slowly published research based in academic institutions in the face of big political momentum (e.g., the publication of the parliamentary inquiry results) was at odds with the need for rapid slogan-style responses of grassroots struggles (cf. Hale, 2006). Academic and grassroots worlds responded to contradictory institutional needs. For instance, GBB sought concrete

policy recommendations (pers. comm. Groninger social movement member 06-03-2023), whereas our academic work focused on criticizing the effects of past policies.

In Quetzaltenango, resistance to mining was embedded in a more far-reaching territorial defense struggle, closely linked to the long resistance to the extractive colonization of the indigenous territory and to efforts to achieve territorial autonomy. The indigenous-led territorial defense strategies did not always focus on mining. They articulated concerns about mining amid emerging political opportunities, such as the implementation and contestations of the POT (cf. Porada, Boelens, and Hogenboom, 2024a). It can be challenging to translate these longer-term visions of re-establishing indigenous territoriality and autonomy into other place-based struggles with their own territorial history, territorial vision, and defense strategy.

Finally, it was important to understand translocal bridges as (7) *sites of power struggle and contestation.* Across places, the mobilizations against mining were not uniform but characterized by contradictions and tensions. These complexities emerged from the different stances embodied by allied actors. Acknowledging this diversity is a starting condition to successfully build bridges between differently positioned actors. In Germany, some inhabitants disregarded the anti-coal mining alliance of mostly territorially-unrooted organizations and expressed a feeling of being left out (pers. comm. inhabitants 13-03-2019; 17-03-2019), while others cherished the convergence among movements (pers. comm. Rhenish social movement member 24-03-2019). In Quetzaltenango, the multi-scalar indigenous mobilization efforts were sometimes at odds with the rooted interests of inhabitants (pers. comm. inhabitant 22-08-2022). For example, the lengthy protest in 2022 meant a loss of income for engaged families but was less of a burden for families with higher incomes from remittances (pers. comm. NGO member 30-07-2022). The imperative of equity promoted by the mobilizing indigenous organizations, mostly led by men, was contradictory to the double burden and power imbalances confronted by mobilizing women (pers. comm. inhabitant 24-08-2022). This shows how alliance building can foster solidarity but also needs crucial attention for micropolitical issues of power, representation, and difference (cf. Cumbers, Routledge, and Nativel, p. 196). It raises the question of how bridges can be built that strengthen the position of so-far marginalized and sidelined perspectives and actors in grassroots struggles.

Moving along seven analytical dimensions, we have grounded and cross-pollinated the idea of bridging across the three place-based struggles. This has generated insights for translocal and cross-cultural alliance building beyond a simplified understanding of successful or failed bridges and fleshed out the importance of considering issues of power, similarities and differences, unevenness, space, and scale.

Discussion

Reflections on Positionality

We return to the theme of positionality and ethics. Our reflections emerge from our posture of active positionality (cf. Soerdirgo & Glas, 2020) and from grounding the idea of bridging across the extractive conflict-ridden territories in Groningen and Quetzaltenango. Our translocal bridging approach – informed by the lead author's experience of overarching solidarization across scales in Germany and the experiences of the co-authors with environmental and mining struggles, water justice, and activist research in Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Spain – built on the common framing of the affected populations as struggling against extractive industries. We constructed a shared defense issue centered on the benefits of bridging, aware of the risk of oversimplification (cf. Hale, 2006).

This framing was, for instance, complicated by the fact that the Groninger struggle was not explicitly anti-extractive and more focused on compensation and reparations. Across cases, the mining-affected populations responded heterogeneously to the extractive interventions in their territories (see also Valladares Pasquel, 2024). These micropolitics complicated the idea of a unified resistance movement and morally clear political alignment (cf. Loperena, 2016), raising the question of how bridging could work to strengthen plural resisting movements. The conflict situations permeated by mistrust, insecurity, violence, and polarization further made bridging based on principles of trust challenging (cf. Shanks & Paulson, 2022).

We also realized that bridging risked simplifying the diverging roots, substances, and goals of the struggles at hand. The risk of glossing over differences (e.g., safety, political access, ethnicity) complicated the consolidation of common ground. The struggles were deeply territorially rooted, raising questions of how our relative territorial unrootedness and distance as activist researchers could be overcome, even more so given the disappointment and fatigue generated by previous researchers.

	Extractive powerful stabilization	Potentials of generating counter-power through translocal bridging	Risks of aggravating power imbalances through translocal bridging
Factual knowledge	• Expert knowledge as legitimate resource • Extractive interests embedded in techno-scientific episteme	• Generation of joint counter-expertise based on positivist-factual knowledge to challenge and re-politicize powerful expert knowledge shielding extractive interests	• Diverging starting conditions across territories to generate counter-expertise (e.g., resources, financial means, technical ability) • Prospects of counterpower and marginalization are place-specific (e.g., empowerment through visibility not given)
Decision making/ agenda setting	• Dominance of extractive alliances' influence on decision making and agenda setting • Exclusion and sidelining of alternative actors and views	• Translocal institutional bridging and alliances between marginalized actors to contest the multi-scalar power of extractive structures, agenda setting, and institutions	• Different scalar arrangements to defend place-based interests, translocal alliances not "natural" (e.g., national political accountable actors) • Differences among movements (e.g., political access, ethnicity, colonial trajectories) challenge consolidation of common ground and goals, shared framing and identity • Place-based heterogenous responses to extractive developments, complex conflicts, and relations of distrust complicate identification of "one" marginalized actor
Discourse	• Dominant discourse • Normalization of extractive imperative and developmental ideology	• Translocal conceptual-discursive bridging to jointly counter dominant discourses that normalize dominant-extractive norms, truths, and values, and stabilize powerful interests	• Focus on intangible outcomes of bridging risks neglecting the expectations of direct material and territorialized benefits resulting from bridging actions amid place-based needs and realities (e.g., violence, repression, unsafety)

Fig 2. The three layers on which the dominance of extractive industries, modes of counter-power, and risks of aggravating power imbalances through bridging surface (developed based on Boelens et al., 2023, p. 19).

The explicit positioning as an activist-researcher at times generated stark discomfort among research participants. Across territories, the reduction of experienced injustices to the technical-legal realm created a desire for positivist research that would allow residents to counter powerful experts (cf. Luke et al., 2018). Grassroot movements and place-based struggles expected researchers to produce technical reports (e.g., mapping the impacts of mining). The lead author was instead interested in observing and analyzing the place-based struggle and facilitating bridging encounters with distant struggles or organizations. In that sense, our interaction with the research environment and complex conflicts complicated our scientific decision making process around which methodological and analytical choices were most aligned with the struggles at hand (cf. Shanks & Paulson, 2022). We suggest that this experience underlined the importance of continuously and explicitly reflecting with research partners on contradictory positioning, unquestioned assumptions, and emerging ethical-political concerns for bridging research practice.

Cross-Pollinating Reflections on the Possibilities and Risks of Bridging

We explored the potential of translocal bridging, highlighting both issues of power imbalances and differences in multi-scalar and multi-actor justice alliances. Our analytical insights point to three layers – factual knowledge, decision making and agenda setting, and discourse. It is on these that the dominance of extractive industries, the possibilities to generate counterpower through bridging, and the risks of aggravating power imbalances through bridging surface (*Figure 2*). We suggest that these insights can inform diverse modes of counterpower but also indicate the challenges of connecting territorially-rooted struggles.

Conclusion

We have investigated the idea of bridge building between place-based struggles against the interventional impacts of extractive industries. We have drawn on research experience across Germany, the Netherlands, and Guatemala to highlight the potentials and challenges that emerged once grounding the idea of bridging across sites and scales. We have analytically highlighted the promises of translocal and cross-cultural alliance building but – drawing on non-romanticizing accounts of movement network and alliance building – also stressed the problems and obstacles that are evoked through bridging endeavors within and among movements.

Our argument is threefold: First, we argue that our process of grounding generated insights into the potentials of translocal bridging while at the same time raising issues of unequal power and difference among the actors in multi-scalar justice struggles. Second, our bridging lens produced a nuanced understanding of some possibilities and dilemmas at the interface between research and activism. These include the

dilemma between long-term analytical nuance and short-term movement demands, the need for positivist research to support of grassroot struggles, a complication of the idea of morally-clear political alignment with place-based struggles considering they are heterogenous and full of tensions, and the tendency of oversimplification in the search for common ground. Third, while bridging can generate counterpower on various levels, it also risks reproducing power imbalances, notably in terms of place-specific starting conditions, prospects of empowerment and marginalization, regarding issues of shared identity building amid place-based or across-place differences, and concerning expectations of material benefits or intangible outcomes.

We suggest that our reflection, anchored in three empirical realities, could trigger simultaneously critical and hopeful discussions around the bridging of territorially rooted struggles. We encourage researchers and social movements alike to explore the difficult yet insightful tensions of bridging spaces. We propose remaining attentive to place-specific realities and diverging positionalities, but also to opportunities for coming together in diversity to strengthen and amplify the demands of place-based struggles and generating multi-scalar counterpower.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network NEWAVE under Grant Agreement No. 861509. We thank all research participants for their openness to share their stories and views with us.

References

Abazeed, A. (2023) 'Heterogeneity of water justice and the question of Nile solidarity,' *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 12(2), pp. 187–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/22779760231170530.

Aguilar-Støen, M. (2014). 'Staying the same: transnational elites, mining and environmental governance in Guatemala' in Bull, B. and Aguilar-Stoen, M. (eds.), *Environmental Politics in Latin America.* 1st Edition. Routledge, pp. 131–149.

Altmann, P. (2019) 'The Commons as Colonisation – The Well-Intentioned Appropriation of Buen Vivir,' *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 39(1), pp. 83–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.12941.

Banerjee, S.B. (2011) 'Voices of the Governed: towards a theory of the translocal,' *Organization*, 18(3), pp. 323–344. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508411398729.

Baud, M., Boelens, R., de Castro, F., Hogenboom, B., Klaufus, C., Koonings, K., & Ypeij, A. (2019) 'Commoning Xela: Negotiating collective spaces around a Central American intermediate city,' *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 0(108), pp. 267–279. https://doi.org/10.32992/erlacs.10584.

BbergG (1980) 'Federal Mining Act', *Bundesgesetzblatt, I.* Berlin: Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, pp. 1310–1391.

Beamish, T.D. and Luebbers, A.J. (2009) 'Alliance Building across Social Movements: Bridging Difference in a Peace and Justice Coalition,' *Social Problems*, 56(4), pp. 647–676. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2009.56.4.647.

Boelens, R. Escobar, A., ... and Wantzen, K. M. (2023) 'Riverhood: political ecologies of socionature commoning and translocal struggles for water justice,' *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 50(3), pp. 1125–1156. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2120810.

Borras, S.M., and Franco, J.C. (eds.), (2023) *Scholar-Activism and land struggles*. 1st Edition. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing.

Brandsma, M., Ekker, H., and Start, R. (eds.), (2017) *The gas colony: From national resource to Groningen's tragedy* [in Dutch]. 3rd Edition. Groningen: Uitgeverij passage.

Bridge, G., McCarthy, J. and Perreault, T., (2015) 'Editor's Introduction' in Perreault, T., Bridge, G. and McCarthy, J. (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*. Routledge, pp. 3–18.

Brock, A. (2023) 'Securing accumulation by restoration – Exploring spectacular corporate conservation, coal mining and biodiversity compensation in the German Rhineland,' *Environment and Planning E Nature and Space*, 6(4), pp. 2134–2165. https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848620924597.

Bulkeley, H. (2005) 'Reconfiguring environmental governance: Towards a politics of scales and networks,' *Political Geography*, 24(8), pp. 875–902. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2005.07.002.

Bull, B. and Aguilar-Støen, M. (2016) 'Changing elites, institutions and environmental governance,' in Castro, F., Hogenboom, B. and Baud, M. (eds.), *Environmental Governance in Latin America*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 137–163.

BUND. (2017) 'Heated homes - villages on the red list' [in German]. Available at: https://www.bund-nrw.de/themen/mensch-umwelt/braunkohle/hintergruende-und-publikationen/verheizte-heimat/ (Accessed 2 Feb 2019).

Chesters, G., and Welsh, I. (2005) 'Complexity and social movement (s) process and emergence in planetary action systems,' *Theory, Culture & Society,* 22(5), pp. 187–211.

Copeland, N. (2023) 'Politicizing water: Rescaling resistance to extractive development in Guatemala,' *Geoforum*, 140, p. 103704. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103704.

Cumbers, A., Routledge, P. and Nativel, C. (2008) 'The entangled geographies of global justice networks,' *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(2), pp. 183–201. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132507084818.

Davies, A.D. (2012) 'Assemblage and social movements: Tibet Support Groups and the spatialities of political organisation,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(2), pp. 273–286. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2011.00462.x.

Daphi, P., Anderl, F. and Deitelhoff, N. (2019) 'Bridges or divides? Conflicts and synergies of coalition building across countries and sectors in the Global Justice Movement,' *Social Movement Studies*, 21(1–2), pp. 8–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2019.1676223.

Diani, M. and Bison, I. (2004) 'Organizations, coalitions, and movements,' *Theory and Society*, 33(3/4), pp. 281–309. https://doi.org/10.1023/b:ryso.0000038610.00045.07.

Dufour, P. (2021) 'Comparing collective actions beyond national contexts : 'local spaces of protest' and the added value of critical geography,' *Social Movement Studies*, 20(2), pp. 224–242. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1732199.

Dupuits, E. (2015) 'Technical vs. Grassroots Experts in Global Water and Forests Governance,' *Alternautas*, 2(1). https://doi.org/10.31273/alternautas.v2i1.1006.

Dupuits, E. Baud, M., Boelens, R., de Castro, F., and Hogenboom, B. (2020) 'Scaling up but losing out? Water commons' dilemmas between transnational movements and grassroots struggles in Latin America,' *Ecological Economics*, 172, p. 106625. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2020.106625.

Edelman, M. (2009) 'Synergies and tensions between rural social movements and professional researchers,' *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), pp. 245–265. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820313.

Ehrnström-Fuentes, M. (2022) 'Confronting extractivism – the role of local struggles in the (un)making of place,' *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 18(1), pp. 50–73. https://doi.org/10.1108/cpoib-01-2018-0016.

Ende Gelände. (2015) 'Stop coal excavators. Protect the climate' [in German]. Available at: https://2015.ende-gelaende.org/ (Accessed 11 May 2019).

Escobar, A. (2008) *Territories of difference: place, movements, life, redes*. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822389439

García Garzón, C. (2021) *Reclaiming Citizenship. Contesting and negotiating participation and rights: An account of the social mobilization against two development*

projects in Quetzaltenango (Guatemala). Master's thesis. University of Amsterdam.

Gawerc, M.I. (2021) 'Coalition-building and the forging of solidarity across difference and inequality,' *Sociology Compass*, 15(3). https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12858.

GBB – Groninger Bodem Beweging. (no date) 'What does the GBB do' [in Dutch]. Groninger Bodem Beweging. Available at:

https://www.groninger-bodem-beweging.nl/gbb/wat-doet-de-gbb/ (Accessed 3 May 2021).

Gerlach, L.P. (1971) 'Movements of revolutionary change,' *American Behavioral Scientist*, 14(6), pp. 812–836. https://doi.org/10.1177/000276427101400604.

Global Carbon Atlas. (2019) 'CO2 Emissions'. Global Carbon Atlas. Available at: http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions (Accessed 27 July 2019).

Gomez, B., & Jones III, J.P. (eds.), (2010) *Research methods in geography: A critical introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell

Hale, C.R. (2006) 'Activist research v. cultural critique: Indigenous land rights and the contradictions of politically engaged anthropology,' *Cultural Anthropology,* 21(1), pp. 96–120. https://doi.org/10.1525/can.2006.21.1.96

Hommes, L., Vos, J., & Boelens, R. (2023) 'The need to acknowledge, study and engage with new water justice movements,' *PLoS Water*, 2(5), e0000128. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pwat.0000128

Hoogesteger, J., & Verzijl, A. (2015) 'Grassroots scalar politics: Insights from peasant water struggles in the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Andes,' *Geoforum,* 62, pp. 13–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.03.013

Hoogesteger, J., Suhardiman, D. ... & Vos, J. (2023) 'River Commoning and the state: A cross-country analysis of river defense collectives,' *Politics and Governance*, 11(2), pp. 280–292. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v11i2.6316

Houart, C., Hoogesteger, J. and Boelens, R. (2024) 'Power and politics across species boundaries: towards Multispecies Justice in Riverine Hydrosocial Territories,' *Environmental Politics*, pp. 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2024.2345561.

Horowitz, L.S. (2012) 'Translation Alignment: Actor-Network Theory, Resistance, and the power Dynamics of alliance in New Caledonia,' *Antipode*, 44(3), pp. 806–827. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00926.x.

Hupkes, S., Adams, W., Busscher, N., & Postmes, T. (eds.), (2022) *Insight in Impact. The*

consequences of gas extraction for residents of Groningen. Groningen: Kennisplatform Leefbaar en Kansrijk Groningen.

Jansen, D. (2013) 'Lignite Mining in the Rhineland. Garzweiler II'. BUND NRW. Available at: https://www.bund-nrw.de/fileadmin/nrw/dokumente/braunkohle/2017_11_02_Lignite_mining_in_the_rhineland_Garzweiler_II_01.pdf (Accessed 9 Oct 2024), pp. 1–12.

Järvelä, J. (2023) 'The mine or the mire? Mobilising place in natural resource struggles,' *Journal of Business Ethics*, 187(2), pp. 237–254. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05262-3.

Juris, J.S. (2004) 'Networked social movements: global movements for global justice,' in *Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks*. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781845421663.00029.

Kester, J. (2017) 'Energy security and human security in a Dutch gasquake context: A case of localized performative politics,' *Energy Research & Social Science*, 24, pp. 12–20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2016.12.019.

Kinkaid, E. (2019) '"Rights of nature" in translation: Assemblage geographies, boundary objects, and translocal social movements,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 44(3), pp. 555–570. https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12303.

Kirk, J., Nyberg, D. and Wright, C. (2023) 'Divided yet united: Balancing convergence and divergence in environmental movement mobilization,' *Environmental Politics*, 32(1), pp. 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2021.1981082.

Loperena, C.A. (2016) 'A Divided Community: The ethics and politics of activist research,' *Current Anthropology*, 57(3), pp. 332–346. https://doi.org/10.1086/686301.

Luke, H., Rasch, E. D., Evensen, D., and Köhne, M. (2018) 'Is 'activist' a dirty word? Place identity, activism and unconventional gas development across three continents,' *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 5(4), pp. 524–534. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2018.09.014.

Martínez-Alier, J. (2012) 'Environmental Justice and Economic Degrowth: An Alliance between Two Movements,' *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 23(1), pp. 51–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/10455752.2011.648839.

McFarlane, C. (2009) 'Translocal assemblages: Space, power and social movements,' *Geoforum*, 40(4), pp. 561–567. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2009.05.003.

Municipalidad de Quetzaltenango. (2017) *Territorial Ordering Plan of the Municipality of Quetzaltenango* [in Spanish]. Municipalidad de Quetzaltenango.

Municipalidad de Quetzaltenango. (2021) *Territorial Ordering Plan of the Municipality of Quetzaltenango and its reforms 01-2019 and 02-2021* [in Spanish]. Municipalidad de Quetzaltenango.

No Ficción. (2022) '7 points to understand why the POT is a reason for conflict in Quetzaltenango,' [in Spanish]. *No Ficción,* 21 April. Available at: https://www.no-ficcion.com/projects/7-puntos-pot-xela-crisis (Accessed 21 Apr 2022).

Ordóñez, C., Mazariegos, J., & Chávez, L. (2019) *Emerging Economic Activities in the Palajunoj Valley, Quetzaltenango. The need to foresee and guide peri-urbanization* [in Spanish]. Guatemala: FLACSO.

Perlaviciute, G., Steg, L., Hoekstra, E. J., and Vrieling, L. (2017) 'Perceived risks, emotions, and policy preferences: A longitudinal survey among the local population on gasquakes in the

Netherlands,' *Energy Research & Social Science*, 29, pp. 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2017.04.012.

Piven, F.F. (2010) 'Reflections on scholarship and activism,' *Antipode*, 42(4), pp. 806–810. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00776.x.

Porada, H., Boelens, R. and Hogenboom, B. (2024a) 'Entangled territorial controversies: Contesting mining, territorial ordering, and authority in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala,' *Geoforum*, 155, p. 104110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2024.104110.

Porada, H., Boelens, R. and Vos, J. (2024b) 'Gas extraction governmentality: The depoliticization of Groningen's extractive territorialization,' *Political Geography*, 108, p. 103001. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2023.103001.

Porada, H. & Castro Rodríguez, P. (2019) *Resettling Villages, Unsettling Lives. Understanding the local experience of mining-induced resettlements in the Rhenish lignite region in light of the energy transition debate*. Master's thesis. University of Copenhagen.

Prensa Libre. (2022) '*Authorities of the Palajunoj Valley denounce the municipality of Quetzaltenango for alleged abuses and obstructing access to information,' [in Spanish]*. Prensa Libre, 7 July. Available at https://www.prensalibre.com/ciudades/sub_quetzaltenango/autoridades-del-valle-del-palajunoj-denuncian-a-comuna-de-quetzaltenango-por-supuestos-abusos-y-obstruir-acceso-a-informacion-breaking/ (Accessed 4 Oct 2023).

Radtke, J. and David, M. (2024) 'How Germany is phasing out lignite: insights from the Coal Commission and local communities,' *Energy Sustainability and Society*, 14(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13705-023-00434-z.

Rasch, E. (2013) 'Mining: another system of dispossession? Megaprojects, "development" and citizenship in Guatemala: the case of San Idelfonso Ixtahuacán, Huehuetenango,' [in Spanish]. *Iberoamericana (Madrid, Spain)*, 13(49), pp. 151–162. https://doi.org/10.18441/ibam.13.2013.49.151-162.

Rodríguez-Giralt, I., Marrero-Guillamón, I. and Milstein, D. (2018) 'Reassembling activism, activating assemblages: an introduction,' *Social Movement Studies*, 17(3), pp. 257–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1459299.

Routledge, P. (2003) 'Convergence space: process geographies of grassroots globalization networks,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28(3), pp. 333–349. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5661.00096.

Routledge, P. and Cumbers, A. (2013) *Global justice networks: Geographies of transnational solidarity*. Manchester University Press.

Routledge, P., Cumbers, A. and Nativel, C. (2007) 'Grassrooting Network imaginaries: relationality, power, and mutual solidarity in global justice networks,' *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 39(11), pp. 2575–2592. https://doi.org/10.1068/a38338.

Schlosberg, D. (1999) 'Networks and mobile arrangements: Organisational innovation in the US environmental justice movement,' *Environmental Politics*, 8(1), pp. 122–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414441.

Schlosberg, D. (2004) 'Reconceiving environmental Justice: global movements and political theories,' *Environmental Politics*, 13(3), pp. 517–540. https://doi.org/10.1080/0964401042000229025.

Schreuder, W., Busscher, N., Postmes, T., Zijlstra, A., & Vojvodic, E. (eds.), (2023) *Insight into Impact: The Societal Consequences of Gas Extraction in Groningen and Ways of Thinking for the Future.* Groningen: Kennisplatform Leefbaar en Kansrijk Groningen.

Shanks, K. and Paulson, J. (2022) 'Ethical research landscapes in fragile and conflict-affected contexts: understanding the challenges,' *Research Ethics*, 18(3), pp. 169–192. https://doi.org/10.1177/17470161221094134.

Soedirgo, J. and Glas, A. (2020) 'Toward active reflexivity: positionality and practice in the production of knowledge,' *PS Political Science & Politics*, 53(3), pp. 527–531. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096519002233.

Staggenborg, S. (2010) 'Conclusion: Research on Social Movement Coalitions' in Van Dyke, H. J. and McCammon, N. (eds.), *Strategic alliances: Coalition building and social movements.* University of Minnesota Press. pp. 316–330.

Swyngedouw, E. (2004) 'Globalisation or 'glocalisation'? Networks, territories and rescaling,' *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17(1), pp. 25–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757042000203632.

Tubino-de-Souza, D., Hommes, L., … and Joy, K. J. (2024, Forthcoming) 'River Co-learning Arenas: Principles and practices for transdisciplinary knowledge co-creation and multi-scalar (inter)action'. *Local Environment*.

Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal. (2023) *Groningers before Gas. Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Natural Gas Extraction in Groningen*. 24 February. Available at: https://www.tweedekamer.nl/Groningen/rapport (Accessed 24 Feb 2023)

Valladares Pasquel, A. C. (2024) *The Oil in the Soil and the Gas under the Grass. Social Movements and the Politics of Ideas in Ecuador and the Netherlands*. PhD Thesis: University of Amsterdam.

Van Den Berge, J., Vos, J. and Boelens, R. (2022) 'Water justice and Europe's Right2Water movement,' *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, 38(1), pp. 173–191.

Van Der Voort, N. and Vanclay, F. (2015) 'Social impacts of earthquakes caused by gas extraction in the Province of Groningen, The Netherlands,' *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 50, pp. 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2014.08.008.

Van Dyke, N. and McCammon, H.J. (2010) *Strategic alliances: coalition building and social movements*. University of Minnesota Press.

Vos, J. (2024) 'River Defence and Restoration Movements: A Literature Review,' *Water Alternatives*, 17(2), pp. 239–265.

Vos, J. Boelens, R., Venot, J. P., and Kuper, M. (2020) 'Rooted water collectives: Towards an analytical framework,' *Ecological Economics*, 173, p. 106651. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2020.106651.

Widener, P. (2007) 'Benefits and burdens of transnational campaigns: A comparison of four oil struggles in Ecuador,' *Mobilization an International Quarterly*, 12(1), pp. 21–36. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.12.1.t1g5814j9v358067.

Zajak, S. and Haunss, S. (2021) 'The politics of alliances. The making and breaking of social movement coalitions. Introduction to the special issue,' *Social Movement Studies*, 21(1–2), pp. 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2021.1973890.

Zwarteveen, M.Z. and Boelens, R. (2014) 'Defining, researching and struggling for water justice: some conceptual building blocks for research and action,' *Water International*, 39(2), pp. 143–158. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2014.891168.