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Denaturalizing the Environment: Dissensus and the Possibility of Radically Democratizing Discourses of Environmental Sustainability

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Denaturalizing the Environment: Dissensus and the Possibility of Radically Democratizing Discourses of Environmental Sustainability

The aim of this article is to introduce the concept of dissensus as an important perspective for making current organisational discourses of environmental sustainability more radically democratic. It presents the Anthropocene as a force for social naturalisation – one that paradoxically   acknowledges humanity's role in negatively impacting the environment while restricting their agency to address this problem to those compatible with a market ideology. Radical democratic theories of agonism help to denaturalize the relation of organizations to the environment yet risk reproducing values of anthropocentrism and patriarchy in doing so. Dissensus, by contrast, emphasizes the need to 'redistribute the sensible', treating organizations as a space for continually denaturalizing and renaturalizing our socio-material relation with the world. Yet it also puts forward a radically democratic political ethics demanding that firms ecologically preserve the environment to allow for positive dissensus while internally resisting institutional power structures that naturalize these organizational environments. This paper, thus, seeks to show the significance of dissensus for enhancing radical democracy both in regards to discourses of environmental sustainability specifically and more generally within organisations.

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Introduction

The notions that humans have become a geological force is increasingly accepted both in the natural and social sciences as well as popularly. This transition from the 'holocene' to the 'anthropocene' era (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000) brings with it greater expectations for governments and organisations to directly and urgently address problems of climate change (see especially, Clark 2014). These concerns have catalysed policy at all levels of contemporary governance – from the global Paris climate agreement in 2015 to the diverse implementation of national environmental regulations to the 'green' shift in individual's daily behaviour. It has also stirred dramatic debates concerning the veracity of these claims (particularly from those on the political Right) as well as sustained critiques regarding corporate power (emanating especially from the Left).

While their responses may vary across national contexts and economic sectors, there is a general acceptance of the need to ironically both naturalise and politicise organisations. Specifically, there are growing desires for organisations to both become more aware of their environmental impact and accept greater responsibility for the ecological damage they cause. Yet the Anthropocene has led to what we view as a distinct and growing irony in the relationship between environmental sustainability, on the one hand, and the scope for organizational action to address this issue, on the other. While these discourses attribute to humans' greater climatic impact, they also simultaneously circumscribe their agency for politically and culturally combatting these problems. Rather, the Anthropocene exists as a hegemonic 'common sense' that not only promotes neoliberal values of marketization and

corporatisation but also entrenches them as unalterable social realities which cannot be changed even in the face of the existential threat of climate change.

Theoretically, the concepts of 'naturalization' and 'denaturalization' help to critically shed light on this phenomenon. Here, a naturalizing process frames a set of dominant values and practices as "objective" and thus unable to be changed. By contrast, a denaturalizing process highlights the contingency of prevailing status quo and in doing so reveals the possibility for it to be challenged and replaced by an alternative (Malm and Hornbor 2014; Waterton 2010). The naturalising of a discourse allows it to become hegemonic and to structure social relations in accordance with its underlying ideas and principles (Laclau 2000, 2005; Laclau and Mouffe 1985). The Anthropocene implies a social process which naturalises organizations, limiting their actions to those that are market friendly even as they strive to reduce their environmental footprint.

For this reason, discourses of organizational sustainability associated with the environment would benefit from a radical democratic intervention. They would serve to denaturalise, thus fundamentally putting into question, their underlying assumptions and opening them up to contestation and change. The obvious fear is that such an activity would simply reinforce those ideas that challenge the very existence of climate change or its human causes. Yet there is also a less explored danger that a radical democratic politics will unwittingly reinforce the very hegemonic values it is trying to unsettle and potentially replace. Prevalent radical democratic approaches to such agonism often continue to prioritise values of 'conquest' and anthropocentrism which are quite similar to market based discourses of the Anthropocene. Values of dissensus can redirect radical democratic energies toward both challenging those who would deny the significance of climate change and producing new ways of individually and physically inhabiting our organizational environments.

This article introduces the concept of dissensus as an important perspective for radically democratizing organizational discourses of environmental sustainability. It presents the Anthropocene as a process of social naturalization that paradoxically acknowledges humanity's role in negatively impacting the environment while restricting their agency to address this problem to those compatible with a market ideology. Radical democratic theories of agonism help to denaturalize the relation of organizations to the environment yet risk reproducing values of anthropocentrism and patriarchy in doing so. Dissensus, by contrast, emphasizes the need to 'redistribute the sensible', treating organizations as a space for continually denaturalizing and renaturalizing our socio-material relation with the world. Yet it also puts forward a radically democratic political ethics that demands firms externally preserve the environment while also internally resisting institutional power structures that socially naturalize organizational environments.

This paper seeks to show the significance of dissensus for enhancing radical democracy both in regards to the environment and more generally within organisations. In order to do so it will first critically review the current literature on the Anthropocene, sustainability and organisations – revealing its creation of a hegemonic 'common sense' that prioritises both profit and ecological preservation. It will then highlight how the radical democratic values of agonism can significantly challenge – or denaturalise – this hegemonic discourse of sustainability while also simultaneously reinforcing it. To avoid such radical democratic 'dangers', we will then focus on the role that dissensus can have for

'redistributing the sensible' internally within organizations while also strengthening existing environmental resistance movements – particularly those targeting corporations. We will conclude with a broader reflection on the significance of dissensus both for transforming organisational sustainability as well as business and society overall.

Sustainable Organizations?

This section focus on how contemporary organisational discourses linked to the Anthropocene emphasizes both ecological and market sustainability. Heikkuren and Bonnedahl, for instance, highlight the similarities between economic and ecological sustainability in how 'the corporation becomes perceived in the quest for sustainable development' (2013, p. 191). A market based sustainability strategy 'implies that fair trade, environmental protection and other sustainability issues can appear in product and service offerings as quality features through customer valuation' (Heikkuren and Bonnedahl 2013, p. 194). This promotes the idea that market sustainability – the ability for firms to be competitive and profitable – can be effectively linked to environmental sustainability through reducing a company's overall negative environmental impact. Murphy suggests that 'integrating corporate sustainability into business strategy…. [allows to create] sustainable competitive advantages for the firm' (Murphy 2012, p. 5).

Nevertheless, these growing environmental concerns have challenged and expanded conventional organisational discourses of market sustainability. Environmental sustainability 'seeks to improve social welfare by protecting the sources of raw materials used for human needs and ensuring that the sinks for human wastes are not exceeded' (Goodland 1995, p. 3). Therefore, on the one hand, it is different from economic sustainability which corresponds purely to the 'maintenance of capital' (Goodland 1995, p. 3) regardless of its wider ecological or social impact. On the other hand, these potentially competing perspectives could be reconciled through 'voluntary CSR (corporate social responsibility) actions that enhance a firm's competitiveness and reputation' (Orlitzky et al. 2011, p. 6) or 'green product innovation [allowing] energy minimization, materials reduction, and pollution prevention' (Dangelico and Pujari 2010, p. 471).

Organizational discourses of environmental sustainability are increasingly linked to the broader concept of the Anthropocene (Malm and Hornborg 2014; Steffen et al. 2011a). While a full accounting of this idea goes beyond the scope of this paper, the Anthropocene importantly proposes that we are in a new geological era marked by human made environmental damage at a global scale. Particularly relevant to this analysis are its underlying values of stewardship and geoengineering. Stewardship refers to the maintenance of 'scientifically developed boundaries for critical Earth System processes that must be observed for the Earth System to remain within a Holocene-like state' (Steffen et al. 2011b, p. 757). It requires the global implementation of 'an effective architecture of a governance system' (Steffen et al. 2011b, p. 757) for ensuring the world's ecological sustainability – such as those found in the Paris Climate agreements. The failure to do so would could lead to catastrophic results that would 'fundamentally alter our relationship with the planet we inhabit' (Steffen et al. 2011b, p. 740). Geoengineering is the voluntary manipulation or engineering of the Earth System such as solar radiation management whereby sulphur is injected in the atmosphere or carbon is captured in the ground. According to its supporters, geoengineering would enable humanity to successfully respond to the approaching global environmental crisis.

The concept of Anthropocene has been explored within organization studies and management literature in a limited number of articles. For example, Hoffman and Ehrenfeld

mention that sustainability has been increasingly influenced by ideas of the Anthropocene leading it to progressively embrace 'systems thinking [that is to say] new forms of: partnerships, materials use and supply chains, domains of corporate activity, organizations, and the economic models and metrics that are used to measure them' (2014, p. 2). However, recognizing there is relatively little research in organization studies and management literature on the Anthropocene, Alcaraz et al. advocate a 'cosmopolitan-oriented research agenda on the Anthropocene, business and (global) responsibility' guided by 'cosmopolitan principles…. for all human beings, including "distant Others"' (2016, p. 325). Furthermore, Robinson argues that 'a holistic approach' to sustainability is required by the Anthropocene in order to move beyond greenwashing practices typically associated with corporate driver sustainable development (2012, p. 181). This should be guided by 'two fundamental principles, cooperation and resilience' (Robinson 2012, p. 181) encompassing key organisational activities ranging from waste management to sustainable innovation.

Sustainability has evolved in meaning to highlight the human role in both sustaining the environment and organizations within a competitive market environment. Sustainability strategies argue that the alignment of ecological goals with demands for profitability will improve efficiency and decision-making. Beloff and Lines mention that 'competitive advantage may migrate to those firms that learn to create customer and shareholder value in ways that do not harm the environment' (2005, p. 1). Similarly, Pattberg and Zelli (2016) explore the institutional framework that permit organizations to be both environmentally responsible and economically competitive.

This concern for the environment in organizations is translated into the concept of corporate social responsibility – specifically linked to neoliberal ideas of "responsibilization". Lozano argues that discourses of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility rely upon 'individual "Eureka" moments to be endorsed by … organizations' (2014, p. 212). Markman and colleagues (2016) further emphasise the responsibility of individual entrepreneurs to bring about sustainability and corporate social responsibility at the organizational level. This is rooted in market assumption where entrepreneurs can 'accelerate innovation and allow organizations to scale up their environmental and social innovations' (Markman et al. 2016, p. 675). Similarly, in a review article, Heikkurinen and Bonnedahl argue that: 'corporate responsibilities for sustainability extend beyond the need to follow social codes of ethics, as well as being functional in providing economic wealth, to also include an *active role* in ecological stewardship and sociocultural well-being' (2013, p. 192; our emphasis).

This review of the organisation studies literature reveals the extent to which environmental discourses reflect ideas of the Anthropocene. In particular, they emphasize the deep and inexorable connection between environmental and economic sustainability. This, in turn, serves to naturalize market ideologies and solutions.

Denaturalizing the Anthropocene

The previous section focused on how organizational discourses drew on ideas of the Anthropocene to critically combine both ecological and market sustainability. The Anthropocene represents a paradox that stresses the human and organizational role in negatively impacting the environment while also ideologically and institutionally limiting their agency to address this problem – confining it to market based solutions linked in particular to stewardship and geoengineering.

Theoretically, the Anthropocene can thus be viewed as a hegemonic discourse that shapes environmental understandings and practices of organisations. Libby and Steffen

contend that writing global history in the present period involves 'describing changes to the Earth system over time demands understanding of the history of the biophysical factors, the human factors and their integration' (2007, p. 1694). This hegemonic discourse is 'anthropocentric' (Grear 2015, p. 225) in that it sees humanity and organizations as the dominant actors shaping the environment and history. Finally, the hegemonic vision of space, and as such organizational relations, are further increasingly defined by these ideas, as even Earth Science perspectives now maintain that 'human actions are now on such a large scale that we live in a new geological period, the Anthropocene' (Dalby 2007, p. 103).

A key part of this hegemonic strategy is naturalizing certain ideologies such as those associated with market values. To naturalise, in this context, is to transform socially contingent and constructed ideas and practices into something which is viewed as "natural" and therefore beyond the scope of human questioning or change. In the contemporary period, neoliberal ideologies promoting market and corporate based solutions are naturalised as the primary and perhaps best means for addressing pressing environmental issues. By naturalising these market discourses within organisations, the Anthropocene has paradoxically closed off rather than opened up the possibility for human action in relation to the environment. While reifying human action it also presently downplays their capacity to transform their social condition in any radical or serious way.

In particular, the Anthropocene naturalizes the idea that organizations must simultaneously sustain both the environment and the market. It demands that organisations fulfil their obligations as part of a wider 'earth governance system' (Biermann 2014, p. 57) for contributing to sustainable development goals. This process of naturalization makes it challenging to imagine organizations that would deliver environmental sustainability without a private sector strategy, that is to say without being competitive on a market through for instance green product innovation. Even Ecuador's *buen vivir* model, which was supposed to move away from mainstream neoliberalism, recognizes that a majority of organizations must be economically competitive even as they collaborate with governments in the 'collective pursuit' of ecological preservation (Calisto Friant and Langmore 2015, p. 65). Similarly, drawing on the example of EU regulation, Lawrence (2017) argues that environmental law will be based on a type of 'neoliberal governmentality' (p. 67) whereby it is assumed that ecological goals are best achieved through market innovations.

However, organisational discourses based on the corporate Anthropocene and its naturalisation of market ideologies have been challenged and denaturalized from a number of perspectives. de Bettignies and Lépineux (2009), for instance, adopt a business and society approach that refocuses the Anthropocene on the environmental damage caused by multinational corporations. According to this perspective, it is unrealistic to expect business organizations to provide a solution to problems that they created in the first place. They propose an alternative perspective which promotes a 'global common good' (de Bettignies and Lépineux 2009, p. 177) explicitly inspired by anti-corporate forms of activism.

Armiero and De Angelis argue from a Marxist perspective that the Anthropocene discourse creates a 'universalism [that] erases hierarchies, power relations, and historical inequalities' (2017, p. 346). Accordingly, the Anthropocene naturalises neoliberal ideologies by concealing class struggle and other potential social cleavages. By revealing how the Anthropocene discursively tries to "erase" politics and conflict, it is possible to politically denaturalise organisations and society in relation to the environment. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and actor network theory, Ergene and colleagues (2018) challenge the Anthropocene in organization studies from 'ecological feminist perspectives' (p. 222). They proclaim the need to reclaim sustainability in organization studies by moving beyond the prevailing focus on economic value which is inscribed in sustainable development and are instead 'proposing affirmative practices of relating to others in pursuit of producing alternative visions and

projects for social life (human and nonhuman) in an ecology of sustainable concerns' (Ergene et al. 2018, p. 240).

These alternative perspectives are valuable but they, nevertheless, require a radical component to successfully politically denaturalize the Anthropocene. For example, Grove and Chandler explain how the Anthropocene reformulates the traditional dichotomy between humans and nature within political philosophy through a renewed emphasis on values of resilience (2017). They advocate a 'politics of resilience within the wider cultural and political moment of the Anthropocene…. [which] enables us to consider the political possibilities of resilience from a different angle, one that is irreducible to neoliberal post-political rule' (2017, p. 79). Furthermore, drawing on the performative notion of scene and the Arendtian idea of the political as theatre, Swyngedouw and Ernstson argue that 'the Anthropocene is a deeply depoliticizing notion…. [which] unfolds through the creation of a set of narratives, what [can be described] as "AnthropoScenes", which broadly share the effect of off-staging certain voices and forms of acting' (2018, p. 3). In order to respond to this, they have sought to develop 'a post-foundational political perspective that rests on the idea of the political as performative acting, the moment when those who are not counted disrupt the state of the socio-ecological order' (Swyngedouw and Ernstson 2018, p. 25). Finally, Purdy (2015), through an intellectual history of US environmental discourses, makes the case that radically democratizing the Anthropocene in the present and future depends on recasting a past politics of nature for this purpose.

The Danger of an Agonistic Environment

Thus far this paper has shown how the Anthropocene has become a hegemonic organisational discourse which links environmental and economic sustainability. We also revealed the importance of radical democratic theories for denaturalising these market based environmental discourses and in doing so allowing for alternative ideologies and practices to emerge.

A perhaps obvious place to begin such an intervention would be with a greater prioritisation of an agonistic ethos. However, the ideas of radical democracy associated with agonism – the idea that antagonism can be restricted within the boundaries of agreed rules within the framework of liberal democracy (Mouffe 2013) – are not fully appropriate for the radical democratic task of denaturalizing the Anthropocene and its associated organizational discourses about the environment. In fact, an agonistic politics of the Anthropocene might limit radical democracy 'to matters of secondary or tertiary concern' (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 441). For example, using agonism within the framework of sustainability, Arias-Maldonado advocates a 'pragmatic turn in our approach to sustainability, resulting in a more pluralistic debate about both the desirable sustainable society and the means by which it is to be achieved' (2013, p. 72). In other words, agonistic debate would act to inform and guide the actions of organizations without fundamentally challenging market competition (Arias-Maldonado 2013). Radical democracy would then be about pluralizing the options within the predominant framework of a market economy, as opposed to radically changing political structures and promoting alternative economic systems

Agonism is a political theory concept introduced by Chantal Mouffe which aimed to explore the possibility of radically expanding the political possibilities of liberal democracy (see Mouffe, 2013). In the view of Mouffe (1999), liberal democracy was limited by its overriding priority of achieving consensus, a problem which could be resolved through a greater emphasis on disagreement and pluralism. There has been significant engagement with ideas of agonism by organization studies scholars. Applying it specifically to the field of critical management studies, Simon Parker and Martin Parker define agonism as 'a particular

mode of political engagement that acknowledges a space between being "for" and being "against"' (2017, p. 1367). This "mode of political engagement" would consist of 'a middle ground between the antagonistic versions of Critical Management Studies that appear to want to oppose management, and "performative" scholars who appear to accommodate with managerialism' (Parker and Parker 2017, p. 1366).

Agonism would then be a way for an organizational scholar to formulate a critique that at least in theory could be effectively speak to and be used by more mainstream managers. This means that organizational practices are critically engaged with but nevertheless recognized as having a value as 'agonism proposes an on-going confrontation with an adversary…. [whose] existence is perceived as *legitimate*' (Parker and Parker 2017, p. 1376; our emphasis). Similarly taking inspiration from Mouffe, Rhodes and Harvey operationalize agonism in order to criticize mainstream approaches to ethics in HRM. They advocate instead a 'different model of the relationship between ethics and HRM – one that finds the possibility of ethics in the contestation and destabilization of HRM…. [which] arises through resistance to moral normalization and the constraint of freedom' (2012, p. 49).

Analogous to Parker and Parker (2017), Rhodes and Harvey consider agonism as a 'a political process… [which helps] combat both false consensus and destructive antagonism so as to enable difference to be addressed through democratic means' (2012, p. 55). In other words, agonism is not about destroying the other – as though she were an enemy – but about a respectful confrontation – always recognizing the legitimacy of the 'adversary' (Rhodes and Harvey 2012, p. 56). In the HRM context, this approach is typified by trade unions which contest the HRM decisions within the framework of the established rules of industrial relations (Rhodes and Harvey 2012, p. 56).

Finally, Dawkins applies 'pluralistic agonism' to business ethics and stakeholder theory (2015, p.1). Instead of denying the existence of conflict between corporate interests and stakeholders, a 'fair fight' should be organised (Dawkins 2015, p. 12). The latter 'entails voicing and contesting differences under conditions that recognize power relations and, rather than ignoring or attempting to eliminate them, promotes conventions and ethics of action that reduce undue preference' (Dawkins 2015, p. 12). In order to illustrate what he means by the latter, Dawkins mentions – in the context of a strike – that agonism 'respects both the stakeholders' capacity to contest practices that are contrary to their interests and the corporations' property rights' (2015, p. 12). In other words, wildcat strikes or radical contestation would be an instance of antagonism and not agonism. Organization studies use agonism to describe forms of conflict where there is an agreement between the adversaries over the rules of engagement respected as well as an acknowledgement of their equal right to exist.

The concept of agonism has been specifically used in relation to organizations and the Anthropocene crisis. For instance, Robinson argues that there is a need for 'a holistic approach [which is characterised by] environmental management systems, designed for sustainable development, [and that] can help society adapt to the challenges of the Anthropocene' which would move beyond sustainability as it is currently practised by business (2012, p.181). Accordingly, this change would be brought about by pluralistic voices challenging the corporate status quo about the environment through 'public debate' (Robinson 2012, p. 183). However, this agonism does not challenge the very idea of market economy as 'market reforms… foster resilience' (Robinson 2012, p. 193). Furthermore, Karlsson (2013, p. 1) argues that a 'macro-level choice' needs to be made as existing strategies of organizational sustainability will not be sufficient to respond to the Anthropocene. The only way to deal with the latter would be a radical democratic agonism 'formulat[ing] new political ideas that can break with the ambivalence of the Anthropocene and offer new pathways to compromise' (Karlsson 2013, p. 8). The public debate shaped by

agonism would enforce an institutional framework which would force organizations to respond to the Anthropocene through prioritizing the environment. Barry and Ellis maintain that agonistic debate is crucial for promoting renewable energy initiatives based on "local energy governance" (2011, p. 35) as opposed to imposing technocratic decisions from above or waiting to reach a full agreement of all the involved stakeholders.

While the critique of existing organisational discourses and approaches to the environment provided by agonism are valuable, they also do not fundamentally or radically challenge and denaturalize market ideologies. More precisely, its problems run deeper than simply a seeming to easy acceptance of the dominant ideologies of the status quo. Agonism can also serve as a force for naturalizing and depoliticizing the very frame of reference of the status quo by delimiting the boundaries of the debate to reflect its underlying hegemonic values. For instance, Staeheli argues that 'the importance of norms in regulating the public and in legitimating particular kinds of behaviours, ideas, and bodies in public are most easily seen at moments of conflict' (2010, p. 75). This means that agonistic debate about environmental politics could further naturalize the existing presuppositions around the necessity to sustain both the environment and markets.

Perhaps more importantly for this analysis, agonism naturalizes ideas of anthropocentrism – especially linked to the human ability to simply engineer the environment as they would like. This naturalization means that anthropocentrism becomes an unquestioned element beyond the scope of public or organizational debate. Consequently, human-made politics – in that case agonistic pluralism – would be able to construct nature according to its decisions as it would be an external object that can be manipulated and controlled. Geoengineering is an extreme form of this type of anthropocentrism. For example, Derickson and MacKinnon advocate an agonistic politics that would allow 'historically marginalized communities to meaningfully engage or transform environmental governance processes in accordance with their own visions' (2015, p. 307). The potential danger with this quite ostensibly empowering idea is that through inclusion of marginalized communities – a worthwhile social justice objective – mainstream environmental governance based on human mastery of the natural world could be legitimized and naturalized. Castree, further, highlights the danger of agonistic interventions of geoscientists in the public debate for naturalizing Anthropocentric discourses of political engineering for best combining sustainable development with continued capitalist accumulation (2017, p. 58). Barry and Ellis, as we already mentioned, likewise study how agonism could naturalize renewable energy initiatives through 'allowing a greater range of options for communities to choose how (but not whether) they "do their bit"' and in doing so "changes their incentive structure to allow a greater range of low carbon options to be negotiated in each locality' (2011, p. 39). The local community would have the anthropocentric idea that it can control and engineer its environment, and that public debate should be about the best way to do it.

Just as troubling is how agonism can reinforce ideas of patriarchy by framing this discussion as between different ways of humans 'taking care' of the environment through stewardship. Machin argues that 'the irresolvable and ongoing contestation over the meaning of the *anthropos* may provide a pertinent opportunity for the reinvention of democracy… and the politicization of the Anthropocene' (2019, p. 4). In other words, agonistic debate about anthropos – the fact that humanity is disrupting environmental processes – might naturalize a patriarchal perspective stressing the need for humans to manage and "take good care" of nature. Furthermore, this agonistic form of "political engagement" might create a form of '"agonistic green citizenship"… that incorporates the environment as a ground of disagreement and asserts the responsibility to recognise that decisions' (Machin 2012, p. 861). In terms of organizational discourse, this could help mobilize stakeholders through

interpellating them as green responsible citizens via their participation within these agonistic public debate.

The Ecological Promise of Dissensus

As shown in the above section, radical democratic values associated with agonism offer much potential for denaturalizing the Anthropocene but also serious limitations. We will now turn to the ecological promise of radical democratic ideas of dissensus. In particular, dissensus may have a role for radically democratizing the Anthropocene in that unlike agonism it would involve an actual reshaping of organizations at both the discursive and sensible levels. This suggests that dissensus as a radical form of politicization of the environment is connected with its denaturalization both ideologically and materially.

The notion of dissensus – especially linked to the work of Jacques Rancière (2000, 2006) – has been widely used within organization studies. Beyes and Volkman apply the concept of dissensus in order to analyse organizational change in a context of profound political transformations (2010). They studied how a political event of historical dimensions such as the fall of the Berlin wall had effects on a specific organization in Berlin, the Berlin State library (2010). Dissensus involved 'the emergence of the articulation of a new political subjectivity, of a "wrong name" which resists the logic of identification by the ruling order…. a dissensual reconfiguration of what is visible and sayable followed by a consensal process of social organization and thus the closure of politics' (Beyes and Volkman 2010, p. 651). In other words, dissensus was a profound moment of political rupture that radically challenged and changed socio-political and organizational discourses. Dissensus, in this respect, destroyed the organising of the Communist regime allowing for alternative organizational dynamics to emerge based on a new frame, namely 'the "fusion" of east and west' (Beyes and Volkman 2010, p. 652).

Huault and colleagues (2014) have similarly used Rancière's concept of dissensus in order to analyze emancipation in organizations. In particular, they argue that 'emancipation is triggered by the assertion of equality in the face of institutionalized patterns of inequality, it works through a process of articulating *dissensu*s, and it creates a redistribution of what is considered to be sensible' (Huault et al. 2014, p. 24; our emphasis). Accordingly, dissensus is about 'a fundamental break in consensus…. [which] is in no way the art of pacification or a lever to ensure agreement between citizens' (Huault et al. 2014, p. 32). The latter is linked to an 'emancipatory *politics* involv[ing] transgressive and conflictual challenges being made to consensus frequently defined by powerful groups' (Huault et al. 2014, p. 32; our emphasis). Therefore, dissensus emancipates individuals within an organisation through allowing them to break free of established and ultimately hegemonic agonistic disagreements at both the macro and micro levels.

Agonism and dissensus are both, then, denaturalizing forces for organizations as they question and politicize existing organizational processes and do not take them for granted. Additionally, they accomplish this through a process of democratization. However, they share important differences. Agonism accepts the overall rules of the games and focuses on disagreement rather than fundamentally transforming an existent organisational order. This leads agonistic practice to engage critically with their adversaries (see Parker and Parker 2017) in order to start a process of democratization inside the existing frame of references.

Consequently, the prospect for organizational change – either through external or internal pressure – brought about by agonistic forms of "political engagement" will tend to be gradual. Conversely, dissensus puts into question the very discursive logics giving rise to

these different stakeholders and their disagreements. This does not mean, of course, that adversaries are inherently or immediately changed into enemies to be eliminated. Rather, it points to ways dissensus can bring about a fundamental reordering of organizational values and practices through processes of 'dis-identification' (Rancière 2009, p. 62). Dissensus also presupposes a radical equality between all of the organizational members (see, Rancière 1991, 1999, 2006, 2009). As such, dissensus permits for a more radical reordering of existing organizational authority and power relations.

Furthermore, agonism and dissensus represent different types of radical democratic processes of denaturalizing organizations. Agonism denaturalizes organisational power through promoting greater disagreement and therefore pluralism. Dissensus engages in a more radical form of denaturalization through putting fundamentally into question dominant organisational discourses and identities.

The contestation and reordering of organizational processes through a politics of dissensus is also important for another reason. It expands the very scope of "denaturalizaton" to include not just the ideological but also the material. It represents a redistribution of the sensible – which can be defined as 'a space we use to order our perception of our world and how we connect our sensible experience to intelligible modes of interpretation' (Huault et al. 2014, p. 33). Accordingly, dissensus goes beyond simple discursive change – which might be associated with forms of agonism emphasizing pluralistic debate – as 'creating a dissensus… interrupts the order of the sensible' and the material experience of organizations (Huault et al. 2014, p. 23). This allows for an aesthetic and material rearticulation of organizational processes, reflecting 'how we actually sense the world' (Huault et al. 2014, p. 24). This commitment to dissensus is thus an acknowledgement 'that aesthetics and politics are not discernible in isolation from each other' (Papastergiadis 2014, p. 16). Organizational power is not only about abstract rules but is also inscribed in the 'share of the sensible' (Huault et al. 2014, p. 29; Rancière 2000) ordering of our organizational environment including its materiality. This can lead to quite radical concrete organisational practices. Huault and Perret (2016), to this end, have applied the notion of the "redistribution of the sensible" to transforming management learning by organizing an art exhibition with their students.

Theoretically, dissensus can be conceptualised as a socio-materialist radical politics which transforms social and material practices and relations. Particularly relevant to themes of the Anthropocene, it points to the "entanglement of humanity and nature" (Chandler 2018, p. 5) The idea would be to make dissensus in organizations 'less human-centred or anthropocentric' through taking into account the way organizational processes are inexorably mixed with materiality – specifically rooted in how we hegemonically are disciplined to "sense" and therefore make sense of our existing organisational environments.. For example, this could be brought about by the production of a 'countervisuality' to challenge dominant organizational types of literal and figurative seeing (Mirzoeff 2014, p. 213).

Dissensus, accordingly, is a radical democratic politics that challenges the policing of the senses in relation to the environment. In fact, organizational discourses about the environment organize – or "police" – do not just influence how we understand the environment as an abstract policy and ethical issue but also how we sensibly experience it within organisations. The police according to Rancière are: 'models of government and practices of authority based on this or that distribution of places and capabilities' (2006, p. 46). In other words, 'policing includes acts that lay out order, assign roles and places and legitimizes the ordering of existing social space. This happens far beyond the security forces including policy makers, regulatory bodies, managers and administrators' (Huault et al. 2014, p. 32). A type of political engagement driven by dissensus will then involve radically contesting how this police operates through ordering what can be seen, said or heard about the environment in the Anthropocene.

The New Environmental Politics of Dissensus

Dissensus is an organizational politics of continual denaturalization and renaturalization of organizational sensibility and its relation to ideological values and sociomaterial processes. Specifically relevant to issues of the environment, dissensus shifts the focus from innovatively combining to ecological and economic sustainability to how organizations help to shape their members experience of their world. Through such a fundamental questioning, organisational sensibility is both democratized and redistributed. It opens the space for alternative ways to experience organisational environments to emerge and flourish.

This is what happened with the local environmental social movement in Notre-Dames-Des-Landes which was able to successfully prevent the building of the second airport in the city of Nantes by a partnership between the French government and a large multinational organization Vinci – despite the fact that the latter argued that it would be both sustainable for the environment and beneficial to the local economy (see, Temper et al. 2018). Strikingly, the French government tried to create a form of agonism through the organizing of a local referendum, but the social movement refused to participate in it and thereby radically challenged the institutional framework articulated by this sustainability project. The organizational decision-making process in terms of environmental politics was denaturalized in that at the end it was the social movement that prevailed as opposed to the management of Vinci. However, at the same time, there was a process of renaturalization of environmental sustainability as during the Notre-Dames-Des-Landes social movement: 'individual subjectivities [were] also created through collective identity formation and relations as well as through the material practices of engagement with nature' (Temper et al. 2018, p. 760). Renaturalization is therefore linked to the emergence of new organizational identities, which connects a process of dissensual dis-identification with a positive a radical experience of re-identification.

Significantly, this means that environmental sustainability was renaturalized by the creation of a new share of the sensible – in particular through the new bonds created by activists through the struggles and the creation of a permanent activist camp. Another aspect of this renaturalization was the promotion of new types of socio-material relations, for instance through the use of permaculture and the refusal of pesticides. These efforts resonate with the examples of British climate camps that tried to politically denaturalize organizational decision-making through setting up a permanent camp with democratic processes that would seek to renaturalize environmental politics through creating a more respectful relationship with the environment (Frenzel et al. 2014). Importantly, this represents a profound democratization and redistribution of traditional sustainability discourses. Here the emphasis is not on sustaining the market but the radical democratic community they have created together to preserve the environment. Thus, through 'politicizing the embodied, everyday practices involved in sustaining the protest camps as a home space, campers are able to connect the politics of daily life to the project of building community and political alternatives' (Frenzel et al. 2014, p. 464).

The sustainability proposed by dissensus allows for a reconfiguration of sustainability away from equilibrium or balance and toward an openness that does not seek to police the sensibilities. In fact, the notion of sustainable development – a concept that naturalizes organizational discourse around a market ideology – is rooted in a desire for balance and equilibrium of the environment on the one hand and the market on the other. The idea is that organizations should preserve both environmental and economic sustainability. By contrast,

dissensus seeks to keep open the possibilities of the sensible, highlighting how the environment is not external to us but intertwined with our relationship to power and dominant identifications (Chandler 2018). Dissensus is a type of radical democratic political engagement that eschews pre-established frames of references for the 'chance' to experience new ways of sensing and living within the world (Rancière 2006, p. 49).

Dissensus, therefore, provides for an external politics demanding that firms preserve the environment so that individuals can experience ever new sensibilities. Kalonaityte suggests, for instance, that it would be possible to operate a form of dissensual politics through contesting organizational politics about the environment via the legal system (2018). Accordingly, a specific activist group, Deep Green resistance, 'filed in [a lawsuit] 2017 on the behalf of Colorado River ecosystem for personhood rights' (Kalonaityte 2018, p. 525). This was a radical challenge to the institutional framework favouring mainstream approaches to sustainability. By contesting the power corporations have to be the stewards of the environment – and by including new entities in the organizational decision-making process such as non-anthropocentric entities, in this case a river eco-system. Furthermore, a dissensus based form of organizational sustainability might be brought about by anti-corporate environmental activism (for example, Van Bommel and Spicer 2011), which can be performed by indigenous communities resisting corporate sustainability strategies that endanger their ways of life (see, Banerjee 2011). Similarly, dissensus could inform radical attempts to create post-capitalist organisations and communities that reject market competition – such as organizing of permaculture in ecovillages (Roux-Rosier et al. 2018). These efforts not only offer a radical alternative to existing capitalist organisational models but also put pressure on firms and governments to preserve the environment so these and other alternative ways of being in the world can emerge and flourish.

Dissensus promotes, moreover, an internal organizational politics aimed at challenging the corporate policing of the sensible and the senses in regards to the environment. Wright and colleagues argue that 'identity work [of managers] is central to the micro-political enactment of business responses to climate change, and… for some, the climate crisis provides an impetus for personal reinvention as a moral agent of change' (2012, p. 1451). In other words, managers dealing with sustainability face significant tensions as their identity is split by the contradictory demands of the currently hegemonic sustainability discourse – demanding that they both preserve the natural environment and the economic market. But as Wright and colleagues argue in these 'tensions…. [about identity work and the different demands of sustainability] there is also the potential to alter, challenge, as well as reproduce existing discourses' (2012, p. 1454-1455).

A dissensual organizational sustainability might emerge in the space of these identity tensions if some of these managers move from an ambivalent position to an oppositional one redistributing the sensible thereby providing a denaturalization and a renaturalization of organizational politics. Similarly, employees inside firms might create a dissensual organizational politics by demanding to prioritize ecological objectives thereby reframing sustainability as a radical democratic project moving beyond the market. This could be linked to struggles for more democratic forms of organizational governance – ranging from revolutionary workers self-management (Esper et al. 2017) to giving real power to environmental activists in decision-making.

Internal whistleblowing is another potential source of dissensual politics for radicalizing existing discourses of organisational sustainability. By revealing the truth (Contu 2014; Weiskopf and Tobias-Miersch 2016; Kenny 2018) about the destructive aspect of the environmental politics of their organizations – particularly in the fossil fuel and agribusiness industries – whistleblowers could shed light on the role that corporations are having in destroying the environment and as such reducing the potential for creatively engaging with

our natural world. Of course, such whistleblowing would have to be integrated in a broader dissensual politics that fundamentally challenged the right of corporations to exist or the need to take into account the demands of the market (Nyberg et al. 2013, p. 453).

Dissensus offers a radical democratic environmental politics that both highlights the potential abundance of sensible possibilities contained within organisations and the need to preserve the very material world necessary for their emergence. It refocuses environmental discourses on sustaining the global environment for the continual "redistribution of the sensible" within organisations and communities. While conventional sustainability discourses associated with the Anthropocene concentrate on economic and environmental sustainability and agonistic perspectives on allowing for greater disagreement, dissensus offers the possibility for continually experiencing our environment in ever new and exciting counter-hegemonic ways. In denaturalising our social environment it allows for individuals and organizations to expand how we can engage with both nature and each other.

Concluding Discussion: Denaturalizing the Environment and Organizations through Dissensus

With this article we have sought to radically democratize current discourses of environmental sustainability in organizations and beyond. We first highlighted a significant but overlooked irony of contemporary organisational discourses linked to the Anthropocene; that they simultaneously expand the public acknowledgement that humans and organizations impact the environment while restricting the agency of organisations to respond to this threat to market friendly actions and strategies. We then showed how radical democratic perspectives such as agonism challenge – and denaturalize to a certain extent – this capitalist 'common sense' but continue to reproduce its underlying assumptions of human based control. In contrast, theories of dissensus engage directly with how ideologies shape our 'sensible' relation to organizational environments and therefore offer an opportunity to radically question them and transform them. Yet they also reorient and strengthen externally focused ecological struggles based on the need to preserve our environment precisely so that we can continue to find fresh means for 'sensibly' experiencing it and renaturalizing it in a broad range of institutional contexts.

This has some important implications. Theoretically, it introduces the need to 'denaturalize' environmental discourses – especially as linked to organisations. While mounting and diverse ecological concerns help bring to the forefront issues related to nature, they can also socially naturalize these understandings and our corporal engagement with it. Dissensus is a significant addition to current understandings of the Anthropocene within organization studies because it emphasizes the need to put into question and fundamentally re-orient our 'sensible' relation to the diverse environments we socially inhabit. Beyond just ecological issues it creates a novel way for approaching organisational power and hegemony, giving greater emphasis to which types of 'sensibilities' (and not just values) that are being prioritized and to what ultimate ideological and practical ends. It is only by 'redistributing the sensible' that we can sustain our environment and expand its possibilities beyond its current social and economic limits.

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