

Disruption, Decarbonisation, Reparations

Date/time: 3 – 4 September 2020

Venue: Virtual (hosted on Zoom)

Supported by the University of Warwick [Research in Global Governance Network](#) and the [Solberga Foundation](#).

Organisers: Harpreet Kaur Paul (PhD Candidate, School of Law), Sahar Shah (PhD Candidate, School of Law), Celine Tan (Reader, School of Law), Leon Sealey-Huggins (Assistant Professor, Global Sustainable Development), and Alexandra Homolar (School of Politics and International Studies)

Background: This event was the product of discussions between Sahar, Harpreet, and Celine – the idea for a climate-focused interdisciplinary conference was then put to members of the Research in Global Governance Network ([RiGG-NET](#)) at a brainstorming event. The conference was initially conceptualised as a 3-day conference at Warwick University bringing together activists, civil society leaders, and academics working towards the common goal of climate justice. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was reconfigured for an online setting.

Event details: The full event timetable can be viewed using this [link](#). The event consisted of six 1.5 hour panel discussions, each with around eight speakers and one chair (there were around 50 speakers/chairs altogether). We had over 200 registered attendees, with up to 60 participants attending each panel. Most panels followed a standardized format (each speaker was given seven minutes to present their work, and a brief Q&A was hosted by the panel chair after all speakers had presented), but we had some more interesting presentations as well – for instance, the ‘Justice as Healing: Indigenous & Anti-colonial Cosmologies’ panel featured a fantastic interactive guided meditation by [Mama D](#) (from Community Centred Knowledge in London). The speakers were a mix of practicing lawyers, civil society members, activists, and academics. We sought all speakers’ and chairs’ written consent to record the event and thus recorded all of the event except the segment of one speaker that did not consent to be recorded.

Funding: Harpreet and Sahar were compensated for their time planning and hosting the conference by RiGG-NET. A key part of the concept of this conference was the inclusion of non-academic speakers and speakers from marginalised groups. Funding from the [Solberga Foundation](#) enabled us to invite non-academic speakers (for example, civil society members and activists) with significant expertise that would not otherwise have been able to attend (that is, underwaged or unwaged speakers). This resulted in an enriching and highly educational dialogue – we received extensive positive feedback on the diversity of speakers/topics covered over the course of the two days.

Accessibility: Our primary accessibility concern was financial, but we were able to compensate underwaged speakers thanks to the Solberga Foundation. We invited one non-English speaker (Eliesio Marubo, an Indigenous lawyer based in Brazil), and were able to learn from him thanks to generous translation work by Vitor Ido, another speaker on the panel fluent in both Portuguese and English. A major accessibility issue for us was the use of Microsoft Teams – as we conducted technical checks with speakers in the days preceding the event (to ensure everybody was able to use the platform), we encountered substantial issues – the biggest being that speakers with non-institutional e-mail accounts were not able to present in the live Teams events we had scheduled for the day. We found that speaking at a live event on Teams involves a degree of technical complexity that we were not certain we could

communicate effectively to all our speakers in time for the conference. This necessitated a last-minute platform switch to Zoom for accessibility. We encountered no technical issues from that point forward.

Reception/feedback: We received overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic feedback from speakers, chairs, and attendees alike (both during the conference and afterwards). As noted above, people were particularly drawn to the dynamic nature of the conversation between academics and non-academics, and we feel that this feature of the event enabled us to attract a broad audience.

Outputs/next steps: The conference ended with an open discussion about potential outputs. We settled on three general ideas: 1) a blog symposium, 2) a joint policy note, and 3) an edited collection. We sent a follow-up note to all speakers following the event (to set out potential outputs and invite expressions of interest) – the responses we received were predominantly from academics, and most expressed a preference for the 3rd option (with the caveat that a special issue in a journal would be preferable to an edited collection, due to its relatively higher value in the Research Excellence Framework). We have decided to proceed with this idea and are in the process of conceptualizing a special issue/considering which journals we might approach.

Notes of gratitude: Special thanks go to Celine Tan and Harpreet K Paul for this event – it was through Harpreet’s extensive experience and expertise in climate justice/activist spaces that we were able to invite so many fantastic non-academic speakers. Harpreet’s experience hosting similar events also enabled the event to run incredibly smoothly – we received excellent feedback on the organisation of the event. Celine offered exceptional academic/professional support and guidance and was eager to support the idea of facilitating a dialogue between academic and non-academic speakers (an idea taken from the IEL Collective’s inaugural conference in November, 2019). We also received incredible support from Serena Natile (now a Warwick colleague) and many non-Warwick colleagues, such as Vitor Ido.

Sahar Shah
30 September 2020
Warwick Law School