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CO<sub>2</sub>

*The Greening of a Region*

*Edited by Tine Damsholt & Orvar Löfgren*

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# Contents

Introduction 7

*Tine Damsholt & Orvar Löfgren*

## *Performing Green* 14

Please Keep this Paper Alive. Black Boxing the Copenhagen Accord 16

*Ann Sofie Breivik Thorhauge*

The Day the Bike Became a Weapon 30

*Sebastian Ross, Anna Lawton & Ida Ravnholdt Poulsen*

Live-Feed Turned Green – COP15 on Facebook 33

*Mareike Glöss*

## *Branding Green* 36

Regional Green 38

*Orvar Löfgren*

Nostalgia for Mud 42

*Siri Shaddock & Maiko Shibuta*

Doing Green. Practices and Choices at Copenhagen Hotels 46

*Beth Benedict Christensen*

Green Jeans in a Grey Industry 52

*Rikard Edbertsson & Andrea Dankic*

## *An Emotional Climate* 58

Ecological Ecumenism and Emotional Politics 60

*Paul Sherfey & Samantha Hylar*

Confessions of a Climate Sinner 65

*Mette Klessen Wagner & Ditte Bjarnild*

Celebrating a Funeral 70

*Marie Amstrup Møller, Mette Birck, Helene Rendtorff & Ditte Hørlyck Campbell*

The Greening of Christianity? 74

*Tine Damsholt*

## *Tasting Green* 78

The Greening of Two Hard Rock Cafés 80

*Vasia Moragianni*

Eco-shawarma – Local/Global Green Fast Food 83

*Betina Riis Asplin*

100% Green? 86

*Kenneth Mujih Fobezih Mungu*

## *The Feel of Recycling* 88

Message in a Bottle. Recycling in Everyday Life 90

*Neal Storan*

“Trash-can of Worms” 93

*Jenny Holmqvist, Leila Valoura & Karen Paulson*

## *References* 96





# Introduction

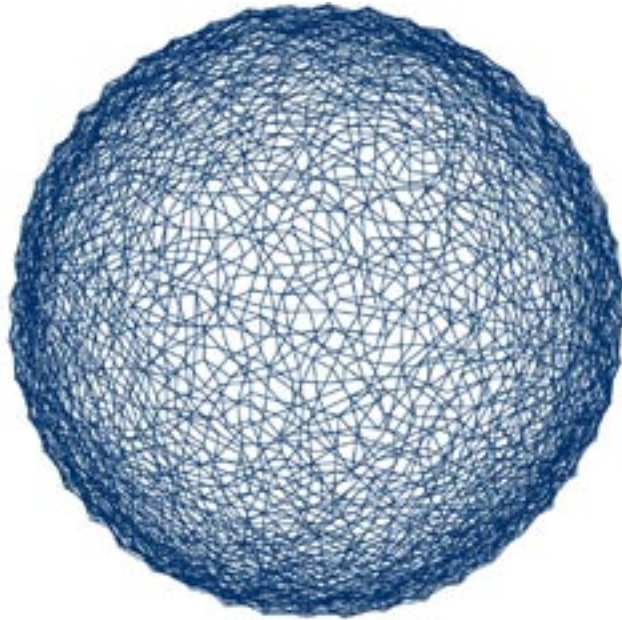
*Tine Damsholt & Orvar Löfgren*

As the opening date for the Copenhagen Climate Conference (COP15) approached in November 2009, the Danish capital was transformed. A long time of planning was coming to an end. Anticipation and excitement was in the air. Now was the time for a decisive turning point in global climate politics – this was HOPENHAGEN, as an international campaign expressed it.

The city was changed in many ways. First of all through the invasion of thousands of visitors of all kinds: politicians, administrators, NGOs, environmental activists, global media, etc. Secondly, through the events and exhibitions taking place during the two conference weeks transforming not only Copenhagen but the whole Öresund – a transnational region that has been in the process of marketing itself

as a green haven of the future for a long time. COP15 was not only a climate conference but also became a striking example of a city, a nation and a transnational region trying to brand itself as greener.

Green living in the Öresund region is by no coincident one of the sub-themes in Interreg IV, a financed project based on “Culture driven innovation”, addressing integration and everyday life in the region. The project is primarily conducted by students and teachers of the Copenhagen-Lund master program in applied cultural analysis (MACA) in collaboration with many business partners but in particular, in the case of the subtheme Green Living, primarily alongside the organisation Wonderful Copenhagen (WOCO). For the group of students and teachers engaged in this project, COP15 pre-



COP15  
COPENHAGEN  
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2009

*How do you materialize CO<sub>2</sub>? Artists have become increasingly important in visualizing climate issues. At COP 15 the globe – with or without atmosphere – was everywhere, as balloons, art installations or here as the conference logo.*

sented a rare chance to conduct fieldwork and ethnography that simply couldn't be missed: an applied cultural analysis of a mega-event, studying its actors, arenas, symbols, messages and media. MACA students from the Interreg-program approached the occasion from a wide range of perspectives such as marketing, green shopping, art performances, demonstrations, meetings, and street life.

A mega-event such as COP15 has many stakeholders. Everybody wants to participate in one way or another, not only politicians and administrators, but also NGOs of all types: protest movements, corporations, institutions, brand-builders, marketing specialists, and so on. Such actors continually strive for new and innovative ways of reaching out, as such a new aesthetic of climate politics emerged through street events, on billboards and on home pages. The media also adopted new ways in shaping the political landscape, public debates as well as activist strategies. Finally, COP15 also offered a chance to follow a city, a nation and a transnational region in a process of transformation: Was "Hopenhagen" being born before our very eyes? Was the Öresund region emerging as the natural homeland of future Green living?

### *Shades of Green*

The aim of this project is not only to explore green politics but the green dimensions that accompany all sorts of activities and products, for example in green living, green design, green fashion, or green architecture. All of a sudden it seems everything needs a green element. There are questions of norms and morals, right and wrong, good and bad, but also strong emotional inputs from green passion to green guilt.

A new vocabulary has emerged that every child from the age of six has to understand: climate change, global warming, carbon footprint, carbon neutral, greenhouse gases, green washing, C2C (cradle to cradle) etc. CO<sub>2</sub> has become something everybody is talking about. It is something evil, the enemy, something to avoid and something to fight against. During the local election campaign in Copenhagen, November 2009, CO<sub>2</sub> appeared in slogans on several campaign posters, often as something that the candidates rejected: "Say no to CO<sub>2</sub>!" Climate and carbon has been politicised.

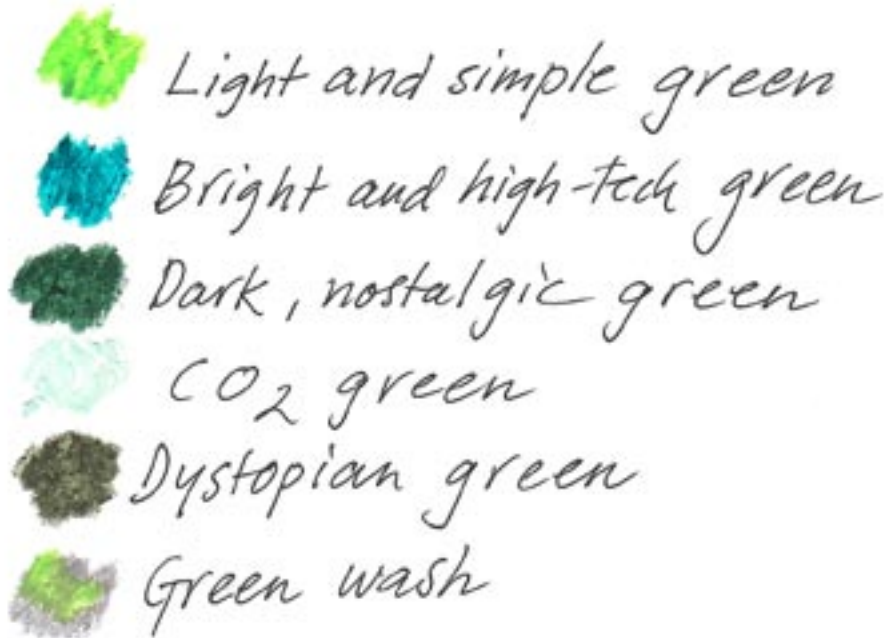
It is interesting to analyze how this global discourse has assumed cultural shapes and forms. How are green icons, symbols and narratives created and communicated? In what ways are

green or climate-smart lifestyles presented and promoted? Green is also a contested colour. There are several kinds of competing shades: dark green, bright green, light green, etc. According to Alex Steffen who first coined the terms in 2003, dark green alludes to a rural nostalgia, a belief that environmental problems are an inherent part of industrialized capitalism and an uncritical belief in growth. The dark green brand is associated with ideas of deep ecology, post-materialism, simple living, and holism. Bright green represents high tech solutions and sustainable innovation. In short, it's the belief that for the future to be green, it must also be bright. Bright green is sustainable or eco-friendly production, urban revitalization, and CO<sub>2</sub>-saving designs. Where bright green focuses on radical changes in the economic and political operation of society, light green tends to emphasize changes in lifestyle and consumption as the key. Light green is a call for individuals to change as part of a personal lifestyle choice. The phrase "Green is the new black", represents this way of thinking. Finally, "gray" in opposition to all the shades of green corresponds to those who deny that there is a need to do anything at all, whether as individuals or as a society.

### *Telling and Doing Green*

In short, green is a political and cultural arena, in which tensions and paradoxes of modern living are acted out. There are striking differences between green rhetoric and actual green practices. It is quite simple to show a benevolent attitude to green politics, but much harder to actually implement them. Many environmental campaigns fail because they are packaged the wrong way. There is also the effect of green fatigue, when people feel that there is an overload of too many green do's and don'ts.

One of the challenges that face all shades of green thinking is that climate changes as well as the new green strategies are largely invisible; one cannot see the difference in regards to life as it used to be. Green energy looks exactly the same as energy conventionally produced, the plugs are the same and only energy saving bulbs might visualize the difference. In preparation for COP15, the Danish Ministry of the Environment launched the climate campaign: "1 ton less" – referring the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emission per capita that should be reduced. A gigantic orange balloon with a volume equivalent to 1 ton of CO<sub>2</sub> was placed on Christiansborg Palace Square as a symbol, but also as a means of making all the



numbers and figures more comprehensible. It was a way of materializing the otherwise invisible carbon emissions that accompany our everyday life.

Often labels and stickers are used to inform people of green products, deeds and the green

branding. However, scepticism towards climate change and green washing makes it important to promote green and environmental options in a convincing way. Labelling must be carefully considered not to be overdone which could create more scepticism. To separate the “true green”

products and services from the impostors, green certifications have become a new trade. Hotels, restaurants and even churches can be assessed to get a green certification or diploma but often these labels are local and cannot be interpreted easily by foreigners. Although climate change and environmentalism are global processes they are implemented in local everyday practices. All these differences and tensions provide a rich field for applied cultural analysis and innovative thinking.

### *After the Party*

Studying COP15 also offers a chance to see how the dynamics of an event change. All of a sudden the conference was over, leaving an aftermath of frustration and disappointment in its wake. The world leaders failed to come up with a Copenhagen agreement, the much wanted next step after Kyoto. As the world watched there were desperate attempts at breaking out of the stalemate of procedure and stalling, but time was running out. What will be remembered? Polar bears roaming the streets, the appeal of the sinking nation Tuvalu, or the quarrels between the dominant Western powers and the developing countries?

There are many lessons to be learned from a

mega-event like this. It was observed how rapidly changing moods were handled as great expectations suddenly transformed into a depressive anticlimax. The media were quick to relabel Hopenhagen into a total failure, perhaps a bit too quick. There is plenty to consider about the dynamics of failure. There could be an impulse to just forget and move on. Did COP15 even happen? If there had been a Copenhagen agreement, the meeting would have had a cherished position amidst the pantheon of climate politics. But COP15 did take place and the experiences of many thousands of participants and millions of onlookers were real enough. COP15 directly influenced both green politics and green living, but also in unexpected ways. From the point of cultural analysis it is especially interesting to see how climate politics and green living constantly are given new cultural forms, expressing in changing languages, symbols and activities.

In this collection of ethnographic snapshots we will look at some of these experiences. From the rich field of materials gathered, a selection of texts emerged arranged into five themes: "Performing Green" takes a plunge into the new and inventive forms activists engaged with political communication, which formed striking parts of

COP15 and the demonstrations that surrounded it. “Branding Green” discusses such processes as a balancing act between doing too much and too little and of adapting to the often quick changes in ideological climates. “An Emotional Climate” investigates the merging of the ideological offerings of the climate discourse with reference to religious practices, language and ritual forms.

“Tasting Green” looks at the different ways restaurants and even fast food stands are trying to adapt to the emerging interest in green food ways. Finally “The Feel of Recycling” scrutinizes the handling of waste and considers an emotional and symbolic dimension where concern for the environment is re-enacted through the micro processes of everyday life.

*Polar bears in all shapes and sizes became a dominant symbol at COP 15. During the conference activists became a colourful part of the urban landscape. (Photo: Gustavo Herrera)*





The presence of activists was a striking part of COP15. Copenhagen's accessibility meant that a greater number of activists could amass than earlier climate conferences. The conference itself was also more open; the inside of the Bella Centre was not only populated with politicians and civil servants, but also NGOs and activists. COP15 saw new ways of handling politics and protests, from Facebook to new demonstration tactics. The police likewise turned to new tactics themselves. COP15 became famous for mass arrests and a detention centre for hundreds of demonstrators, sometimes referred to as the Copenhagen Guantanamo, provoking further discussions. The police strived to curb any tendencies to violent protests, but COP15 activism will be most fondly remembered for its creativity, such as the spectacular way in which Greenpeace gate crashed the royal banquet.

The materiel dimension of these new tactics and political practices are important from the perspective of cultural analysis. Everyday objects such as bikes were transformed into potential threatening weapons in the eyes of the police and cold asphalt and minus degrees

combined with the bodily choreography of the police taking people into custody – making them sit in so called “choo-choos” in the streets for hours – became a threat to activists and the worried parents of those young activists. Also in the friendly demonstrations a lot of things were involved. On a December morning, outside the Bella Centre where the main demonstration was taking place, one could in the train transporting the activist towards the goal observe how absolutely necessary mobile phones were. They were constantly used to coordinate meeting places and last minute tactics. Warm clothes were indispensable as were hot drinks and nutrition to be able to keep on going for a long day.

In one of the tree following papers Ann Sofie Breivik Thorhauge gives us a glimpse inside the COP 15, and explores how the Copenhagen Accord materialized through tiresome processes, engaging both human and non-human actors. Sebastian Ross, Anna Lawton and Ida Ravnholdt Poulsen investigate the transformation of bikes in the Bike Bloc event and Mareike Glöss presents how virtual meeting places as Facebook became important in the performance of green activism.

# Please Keep This Paper Alive

## *Black Boxing the Copenhagen Accord*

*Ann Sofie Breivik Thorhauge*

*From the bottom of my heart, I urge you, please keep this paper alive.*

*(Muhamad Nasheed, President of the Maldives)*

In the early morning, on the last day of the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, Muhamad Nasheed, President of the Republic of the Maldives got up from his chair in the Bella Center. He turned around to face the assembled representatives from the world nations and he begged them to keep the Copenhagen Accord alive.

The Maldivian President made his plea after six hours of nightly negotiations where four small states (Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Sudan) had kept issuing points of orders preventing an adoption of the paper by the Conference of the Parties. The plea was made twelve hours after the handshakes between the protagonists

of the drama, who in the late hours of COP15 had turned out to be the presidents and ministers of China, India, Brazil, South Africa and the United States of America.

On this morning, most of the world leaders had already left the Bella Center, discretely ignoring the traditional family photo session. The President of the Maldives was still there, and he was still struggling to keep the beheaded, the weak, and much criticized paper – the Copenhagen Accord – alive. The President of the Conference, Prime Minister of Denmark, Lars Løkke Rasmussen was coming close to giving up. The last thread of a result, this weak, weak paper was about to be rejected by the COP, leaving the climate conference a total failure.

That morning Edward Miliband, the British environmental minister stood up as the eloquent

forger of words. Twice he called for a temporary suspension of the meeting, and on his second remark the President of the COP got the point. Lars Løkke Rasmussen suspended the meeting, and went home to sleep. After an hour and a half of off-microphone discussions in the corner of the conference hall, the meeting was resumed and a new formulation of “note taking” was presented to the conference of the parties.

After two extraordinarily long seconds of nervous anxiety it turned out that there was no objection to this new formulation, and the hammer went down to confirm that the Conference of the Parties took note of the Copenhagen Accord, agreed upon by the United States and China, South Africa, Brazil, India and whichever nation wanting to associate itself with it. As the hammer went down to confirm this acceptance, the president of the Maldives spontaneously got up from his chair again, this time clapping and greeting the plenary in relief. The Copenhagen Accord was still alive, as weak, as disappointing, as incomplete it was, Muhamad Nasheed cheered that the United Nations had for now black boxed the Copenhagen Accord.

As the 15th Conference of the Parties under the United Nations’ Framework Convention on

Climate Change ended on the 19th of December 2009 it had materialized into a three page text followed by two empty tables in which the countries wishing to associate themselves with the Accord within 40 days should fill in their voluntary and nonbinding emission targets for 2020. This little text, this immutable mobile, this folding, wrapped up COP15 and traveled the world in briefcases and through computer networks translating into disappointed newspaper articles, furious blogs and perhaps also the dismissal notices received by the Chinese chief negotiator and the resignation by the UN secretary of Climate Change, Mr. Yve de Boer.

Using the theoretical concepts of actor-network theory (ANT), this article explores how the Copenhagen Accord materialized through tiresome and messy processes, engaging numerous human and non-human actors. It also suggests that the minute and fragile quality of the Copenhagen Accord is a part of an explanation of why this paper is still alive.

### *Assembling the Copenhagen Accord*

Perhaps the Copenhagen Accord is the epitome of COP15. At least this much criticized paper is the materialized assemblage of the COP. And

now that all the attendants have gone home, the banners have been taken down, the Bella Center has been cleaned up, and the Parliament of Nature (the table around which a new treaty should have been signed) has been sold at Bruun's auction house, the Copenhagen Accord is what we have left.

Perhaps the Copenhagen Accord it is not the only result or network that got assembled during the COP, but so far it is the only relatively stabilized object/network that materialized from the momentary tumbling and bumbling of bodies and objects, discourses and emotions of COP15.

But how did the Copenhagen Accord come about? What got folded into these three pages? How was this object assembled? From what materials did this text materialize? Well the short answer is that what was needed to assemble the Copenhagen Accord was a pen, three pieces of paper and a hand capable of writing. But we all know that this is not only a simplification, it is an explanation so entirely unsatisfactory that it comes close to being recognized as a lie.

On the level of banality the Copenhagen Accord was most probably written at a computer, and therefore one must at least add the com-

plexity of a computer and a printer to the three pages of paper and the hand (now capable of typing), in order to describe the materialization of the Accord. But even this account is still far from satisfying for any curious inquiry into the making of the Accord. It must be admitted that it took some very special hands writing on that computer or at least some very special vocal chords dictating the words to be typed on that computer. To be (relatively) precise it took the hands or voices of the US President Barack Obama, the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, the Brazilian President Lula da Silva, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the South African President Jacob Zuma, to materialize this document.

But does it stop here? Didn't it also take the heartbreaking plea from the Maldivian President and a bed for Lars Løkke Rasmussen to keep this paper alive? And what about the diplomatic tools of the British minister for environment? Not to speak of the other 113 heads of state which have not been mentioned yet. And who am I to dismiss the two years of diplomatic negotiations that went prior to the conference, and the ten days of frustrating discussions and delays in Copenhagen. And maybe it also took the

20,000 NGOs attending the meeting, the 5,000 parties in constant discussions, the 3,000 journalists reporting from inside the Bella Center to the millions of readers of news outside the Bella Center. “The eyes of the world are watching us” was a recurring statement made by speakers urging an ambitious deal, so should these millions of news-reading eyes be left out of the equation of the Copenhagen Accord? And what about the tens of thousands of demonstrators, the cleaning ladies, the UN guards, and the policemen who were set the task of controlling all these humans during the critical process of assemblage? Should it not be argued that it took all these human actors to forge this deal even though it is obvious that the power to effect and form the Copenhagen Accord was unequally distributed among them?

Acknowledging the actor-network principle of symmetry I must at this stage admit a little space for the non-humans participating in the assembling process. It took thousand of cups of coffee, thousands of personal and public computers in the Bella Center connected to and sending messages to millions of computers and news systems outside. It also took a functioning Metro system, numerous hotels in both Copen-

hagen and Malmö, police dogs, a global airline system carrying all the participants in an ordered fashion, climate prisons, chairs, cell phones, scanners, all the rooms of the Bella Center plus for the occasion built cabins, the IPCC, the UN system, television screens, the Internet, economic figures, surveillance systems, pistols, outbursts of tears, diplomatically transferred anger, microphones, headsets, free chocolate, wardrobes, clothes, African cries, chanting by monks, melting glaziers, hungering polar bears, dying coral reefs, freight, the Kyoto agreement, hope and banners. Not to mention that all these entities can each be opened up to reveal that for instance the coffee cup in the president’s hand is only there as a result of soil and rain in Brazil, hundreds of coffee workers, a trading system, including a global monetary system, skills and water, ships and trucks, heating machines and the polite waiter.

It took all this and much, much more that I haven’t elucidated or named. So maybe the short version is that it took the world to materialize the Copenhagen Accord and maybe it even took more. For at COP15 the past, the present and the future of the world were all called upon in order to materialize a global deal on climate change.

The historic emissions of the industrialized nations and the future emissions of the developing world were ever present in the negotiations framing the emanating fear of a hot and furious future of the globe.

So in awe of all these humans and non-humans set in motion to assemble the Copenhagen Accord it is perhaps time to stand up beside the Maldivian President and his plea. If the world is what it takes to perform this small deal on cli-

mate change, then please keep this paper alive.

### *Micro and Macro Actors of COP15*

But is this a satisfying answer to how the Copenhagen Accord was assembled? Will pointing to all the unending and uncountable heterogeneous materials, objects, subjects and networks that had to function in order to forge this deal satisfy the curious enquirer? Was everything folded into this paper? Is there no outside to the



Copenhagen Accord? Didn't something or someone escape or contravene the assembling process? Is this explanation not as useless as the first short version of the pen, three pieces of paper and a hand?

What I am getting at here, is that I am searching for the level of simplicity or complexity which will give my account of the assembling of the Copenhagen Accord a satisfactory power of enunciation. I am trying to attune my account to a level of perception which seems to have explanatory power or potential.

For this I turn to a classical ANT article written by Michel Callon and Bruno Latour (1981). In *Unscrewing the big Leviathan* the authors explain how micro actors grow into macro actors as for instance multinational corporations or states, and they explain how these macro actors manage to act in the world. In other words they try to explain how for instance state formations allow many men to act as one (1981:279). In this sense Callon and Latour provide concepts for the analysis of global actors and the making of global assemblages as the Copenhagen Accord. The main point of the article is that a macro actor is no more and no less of a micro actor sitting on top of many (leaky) black boxes (1981:286).

A black box, they explain, consist of that which does no longer need to be considered, and an actor grows, they write, with the number of relations that he can put in black boxes.

Considering COP15 with this analytical tool, the attendants of the summit emerge as micro actors sitting on large black boxed networks. To start with a non-human, the coffee cup in the president's hand is of course a result of a long chain of relations and materials, but these chains do not need to be considered in the context of the COP15. In this setting the coffee cup and the network that sustain it, and has made its existence at COP15 possible, are black boxed and thus the President can enjoy his black cup of coffee without paying attention to them. The black box of coffee will of course be opened up in other political settings considering trading systems, price wars or the role of labor unions in society. But at COP15 the coffee cup remained black boxed and thus entered the assembling process of a global deal on climate change as a relatively stable and closed entity in the hand of a president. The large network that sustained it was concealed as the black box of coffee kept tight.

To continue with a human, the US President Obama for instance is a human being of course,

and in this sense he is at scales with you and I and our neighbors, but President Obama is also a human being (a micro actor) sitting on the black box of the American election system, and in this sense the Obama box had encompassed millions of American voters. But sheer body counts do not necessarily equal the size of an actor's influence, and with respect to body counts, Obama was easily outscaled by both India and China. But as a micro actor sitting on the black box of the world's largest (but declining) economy, and the world's largest military resources, President Obama attended the COP15 as a macro actor indeed.

The Chinese President Wen Jiabao also sat on black boxes; similar to Obama he represented the millions of people in his home country and as a leader of the coalition called – G77 and China – he also performed the leadership of most of the developing countries of the world. The size of President Wen Jiabao was also remarkable due to the fact that he had been able to place in his black box a booming Chinese economy in the middle of a global financial crisis, as well as growing infrastructure systems, greening energy systems and so on and so forth and therefore he was also an important macro actor in the COP15 setting.

The juridical framework of the Kyoto agreement scripted the representatives of the United States and China in leading roles. Obama and Jiabao were both sitting on the boxes of the world's two largest CO2 emissions, knowing that none of these emissions (together emitting over 50% of the world's CO2) were controlled or placed within the black box of the Kyoto agreement.

Obama's emissions were and are not restricted by the Kyoto agreement as the United States haven't ratified the Kyoto Protocol and Jiabao's emissions were and are not restricted by the Kyoto Protocol due to China's status as a developing country. In accordance with the Kyoto principal on common but differentiated responsibility, developing countries including China, India, South Africa and Brazil, can take on voluntary actions against climate change, but they are not obliged to make set targets or report on their CO2 emissions or reduction strategies as the developed countries ratifying the Kyoto Protocol must do.

Applying Latour and Callon's concept of macro actors, human and non-human attendants of the assembling process of a global deal on climate change can be seen as macro actors in so far as they are sitting on black boxes of relations



that are not open for negotiation. Using these concepts our analytical gaze leave be functioning and tight black boxes that sustain for instance the coffee cup in the President's hand. Instead this analytical tool suggests that in order to explain the making of the Copenhagen Accord it will be fruitful to turn the analytical gaze toward the leaky boxes that were actually brought into play during COP15, the boxes that kept surprisingly tight and the leaky boxes that haltered or contravened the assembling process of the Copenhagen Accord.

### *Black Boxes in Play*

The failure to reach the goal of a juridical binding deal on climate change set by the President of the COP15, Ms. Connie Hedegaard, makes the Copenhagen Accord look less like a folding of the entire world, and more like a small and unambitious box containing only the smallest denominator. In this light the Copenhagen Accord contains only a shared commitment to keep the global temperature rise at maximum two degrees, but it contains no suggestions or tools to attain this agreed goal or, should we say, aspiration.

During the first eight days of the COP15, the Bella Center hosted 20,000 NGOs and I

was lucky to get permission to visit the Bella Center as an observer from the University of Copenhagen during this time. The atmosphere was busy, hectic and tense but to my surprise there were actually more closed discussions in the COP15 negotiations than the two degree agreement; the black box of climate science was surprisingly strong despite of public mistrust and criticism. Not one nation made official statements casting doubt on the threat of anthropogenic climate change. Even Saudi Arabia complied with this discourse and declared itself for a climate change victim on the count of future droughts (in the desert). The urgency box also kept relatively tight at the discursive level. No one made statements issuing doubt about the historic chance of the Copenhagen conference. And no one casted doubt that the responsibility and power to act on global climate change lay in the hands of the assembled heads of state. No one stated that there was plenty of time to act. With respect to these two aspects the assembled politicians seemed more inclined to accept the findings of the science of climate change than the general public is according to surveys. The politicians also seemed less paralyzed by the idea of an-

thropogenic climate change than the average citizen going about her own business. But if these two boxes – the climate science box and the urgency box – were not questioned during COP15, why then did the politicians not act in Copenhagen?

According to the analytical lens of Latour and Callon (1981:284), the failure of the COP15 can be ascribed to the fact that the macro actors of the COP were unable to place enough materials, discourses, techniques, feelings, laws and organizations in black boxes; too many leaky boxes were too difficult to tighten, and too many discussions were left open for future negotiations.

### *To Open or Not to Open the Kyoto Box*

One of the massively leaking boxes at the COP15 turned out to be the Kyoto Protocol. From the second day of the conference it became clear to everybody attending the summit that the question of opening or keeping the Kyoto box closed was a matter of great stress and tension. Throughout the ten days of the conference the COP was suspended numerous times, negotiations were delayed, NGOs set up both angry, funny and sarcastic happenings and points of orders were cast

as nations disagreed on how to go about opening or keeping the Kyoto agreement closed. At the center of disagreement were the interests of China and the United States. The developing nations lead by China wanted to keep the juridical binding and let the Kyoto box stay closed, forcing the Americans to ratify the Kyoto as it was (more or less), and leaving the CO2 emissions of the large developing nations unchecked. American negotiators wanted to open the Kyoto box in order to redistribute its content in new boxes, and they stressed that they would not sign any agreement that would distort competition by reducing American CO2 emissions without reducing the emission of the large developing nations, most notably China. The battle of the Kyoto box went on for nine days and it was a fight played out in numerous settings and with numerous tools.

The fight of Kyoto broke out in the open as a journalist, most probably writing from inside the Bella Center, published an unofficial document on the Guardian website in the late afternoon on the second day of the conference. The “Danish text”, as it was called, slowly diffused to all corners of the Bella Center, as people noticed heated activity by members of the press

who suddenly started putting up cameras and microphones in the middle of everywhere and quite loudly started reporting live on the “Danish text”. Suddenly the Guardian website started popping up on the PCs just next to me, and sitting in the congress hall I realized the absence of the Chinese negotiators, as the journalist reporting live for Danish television pointed out to the viewers that he was now anxiously awaiting a furious reaction from China.

The unofficial document was by and large interpreted as an attempt by the Danish government to surpass the Kyoto agreement, and when the negotiations started on the following morning, the Chinese negotiator immediately asked for the floor and stated that he was very upset this morning as he had now realized that the UN and the Danish presidency was hosting this COP in a very unfriendly spirit. In front of all the assembled nations he reported that UN officials this morning had prevented the distinguished environmental minister of China to enter the Bella Center. Thereby he criticized the UN security system with its chains of security guards, queuing, individual photo shooting, issuing of identity cards, lists checking, body scanners and bag scanners, and he implied that this socio-ma-

terial entity embodied a racial or perhaps even a specific Chinese unfriendly attitude, as this was, he said, the second instance in less than two days that the security system had denied a Chinese high official access to the Bella Center. The UN Secretary Mr. Yve de Boer sitting at an elevated table in front of the assembled nations immediately flushed and stutteringly he apologized both for the incidence and for not having heard of the incidence yet, and he quickly sent out one of his nearest officials to look into the matter.

After this apology the Chinese negotiator still in an agitated tone demanded the Kyoto logo to be put up before the next meeting. The logo of COP15 he remarked did not in any way resemble or hint affiliation with the Kyoto agreement and therefore he took the COP15 logo displayed everywhere on walls, on banners, on websites, on the tables and on all official papers, as a sign of the Kyoto unfriendly atmosphere of the conference as a whole. The president of the COP, Ms. Connie Hedegaard, replied that the COP logo had been known for a year, and that unfortunately no one had told the presidency about the impasse of the logo, but she also replied that she would try to do something before the next meeting. Even though the negotiator from Saudi Arabia asked

for the floor to state that the G77 and China was against the change of Logo and demanded Kyoto logo to be put up, the Kyoto logo did, as far as I could see, not surface anywhere as a result of this instance, nor were the COP15 logos taken down. So perhaps the critique of the logo was only meant as a symbolic statement or perhaps the issue was settled in another manner. In any case, the Chinese negotiator angrily exploded the black box of the COP logo which until this moment had entered the assemblage process without much fuss, and he opened up the black box of the UN security system drawing these two entities into the negotiations as entities structured by and structuring the illegitimacy of the procedures and intension of the UN system as well as the Danish presidency. I was taken aback by the anger and the power that lay behind this outburst. To me it conveyed a heightened feeling that many things were at stake in this forum, as many humans and



non-humans could be brought into play. Suddenly all entities seemed to vibrate as negotiators fought to destabilize some versions of global orders and stabilize others.

The battle for Kyoto was also fought in the main hall by the NGOs. During day three of the conference, posters were produced in support of the Kyoto Protocol arguing that Kyoto was a

guarantee for a just deal, sheltering poor countries against the eco-colonial ambitions of industrialized nations. NGOs dressed up in white gowns and angel wings demonstrated the heavenly innocence of the Kyoto Protocol and the devilish ambition of the Danish text, and in this fashion numerous happenings were performed to catch the attention of the gathered negotiators and perhaps more importantly the gathered world press. Articles were written in the official

NGO newsletter ECO stating with Shakespearean tragedy that “Something really WAS rotten in Denmark” underlining a picture of the Danish

Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen with the words “To lead or not to lead: that is the question”.

The question of opening or not opening the Kyoto box lasted throughout the conference. It blocked attempts to negotiate specific or partial deals as the question posed was always “are we now negotiating inside the Kyoto agreement?”

(without the United States) or “are we now negotiating outside the Kyoto agreement?” (without the G77 and China).

The gathered press seemed to respond to the delays and breakdowns of the negotiations very differently. Apparently news surfing was a beloved activity among all delegates, and walking through the Bella Center one could learn from



the numerous PCs which news websites to visit, depending on the tone in which you wanted the news to be conferred. The American press was pessimistic about a global deal throughout the conference, the German press growing more and more pessimistic as the days went by, while the Danish press seemed to believe firmly in the decisive power of ministers and the heads of states that would arrive in the last days of the conference. Especially the arrival of “the mightiest man on earth” the American President Barack Obama was seen by the Danish press as a clear reason for optimism.

On the last day of the conference the much awaited president Obama finally did descend from the sky. Danish television reported from the airport hours before his arrival, and as soon as the presumed savior set foot on Danish ground, TV cameras locked onto his every move, the route of his convoy, the arrival at the Bella Center, and his speech and handshake with the queen were aired. But it took the Danish press almost 24 hours to notice that “the mightiest man on earth” had been down sized. The size of the Obama box was huge in terms of roads blocked, sewer covers sealed, police and security guards but it was not as big or as strong in decisive climate change action

as the Danish press had imagined, and it definitely leaked at the congress side. Still working on closing the healthcare reform, Obama did not have legislation in place, nor did he have support from the Congress to agree to strict restrictions on CO2 emissions.

I never quite got the Jiabao box, and maybe this was not just my problem. It seemed to come as a surprise to Western journalists, commentators and perhaps also politicians that China and the other big developing countries became protagonists of the negotiations. The sense that world powers were shifting before our eyes was abundant, and tellingly very many heads of states, including ones who used to see themselves as important global actors, were left outside the door as the United States and the large developing countries decided how to cut the deal.

### *Black Boxing the Copenhagen Accord*

The battle of the Kyoto box reopened the discussion of unequal distribution of global wealth. The box of the right to development opened up as a discussion of the right to future emissions, the management of the financial crisis underlined several negotiations, and global restrictions and the fear of a global governing body was left

leaking, as the UN system was a constant focus of discussions.

The Copenhagen Accord was a breakthrough in one very particular sense. The Accord does not tackle very many of the big boxes of climate change just mentioned, it is not juridical binding, it is not an ambitious global deal providing a framework for handling anthropogenic climate change. But it is the first piece of paper ever negotiated and signed by countries responsible for more than 50% of the world's CO2 emissions which has up till now not been restricted by the Kyoto Protocol. The Copenhagen Accord is the first piece of paper on the issues of climate change where the United States and the large developing countries China, India, Brazil, and South Africa have publicly acknowledged that they must take part in the efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

The black box of the Copenhagen Accord was temporarily closed by means of the heart-breaking plea from the Maldivian President, a bed for Lars Løkke Rasmussen and the hammer on the table. By now 122 countries responsible for more than 90% of all green house gas emissions have associated themselves with the Accord, but the translation of the it is still a subject to negotiation. In the official letters to the UN, China and

India have underlined that they associate themselves with the Copenhagen Accord as it does not supersede the Kyoto agreement. While the American government associating itself with the Accord expresses the hope that it will provide a first step towards a juridical binding agreement (outside the Kyoto Protocol).

On a last ANT note, it might be noted that the fuzziness and the leaking quality of the Copenhagen Accord might be the glue that makes this accord hang together. It might be the fact that it can be interpreted both as a supplement to the Kyoto Protocol and as surpassing the Kyoto Protocol that makes it prevail. On the other hand, this leaky quality is also what keeps up the doubt to whether the Copenhagen Accord will actually be a passing point, whether the tiresome efforts put into the dense and messy socio-material relations producing this accord did in fact manage to place anything inside the black box of the Copenhagen Accord. And this is still a question to be answered. At this moment in time, four months after COP15, the Copenhagen Accord is stabilized but it is not stable, and nations press and NGOs are still weighing up the pros and cons for siding with the Maldivian President in his efforts to keep this paper alive.

# The Day the Bike Became a Weapon

*Sebastian Ross, Anna Lawton & Ida Ravnholdt Poulsen*

Tuesday December 15, 2009 is a cold day in Copenhagen, albeit one buzzing with anticipation. Tucked away in the suburban Candy Factory, an autonomous activist hub, a group of artists, activists, engineers and bike freaks keep warm. Grafting and welding, they invoke inanimate objects from the scrapheap of over-consumption as new tools for the Reclaim Power action the following day with a view to delegitimizing the pencil-pushing inertia of the COP15, whilst embodying and physically demonstrating tenable solutions for sustainability. In the run-up to the COP, it had been rumoured that these artefacts were different kinds of bike machines intended to form part of a cyborg Bike Bloc, a rag-tag post capitalist velocipedal cloud of insurrectionary innovation. But to what ends?

*Politics is not solely, or even primarily, about reasoned thinking and rational choices; it's an affair of fantasy and desire. People are rarely moved to action, support, or even consent by realistic proposals; they are motivated by dreams of what could be. (Stephen Duncombe)*

With the rumours inevitably reaching the Danish police, a stand-off arises: the police arrive in large numbers and decide to confiscate what they call War Bikes, deeming them potential tools for civil disorder. The activists are quick to respond, announcing on the Internet that the discursive distortion of their bike machines as War Bikes is outrageous; the bikes are ostensibly intended as part art performance, part creative retort to the officialdom of the COP15 process. As far as the Bike Bloc is concerned, the sponta-



neous fluid swarm stands in tactical opposition to the monolithic militaristic strategy of authoritarianism.

*To engage in direct action you have to feel enough passion to put your values into practice: it is literally embodying your feelings, performing your politics. (John Jordan)*

The day arrives when the bike machines are supposed to be enacted either as art performance, built on a tradition of carnivalesque and thea-

trical activism, or as war bikes, weapons of active confrontation with the authorities. But with many of these bike installations having been confiscated the previous day, the Bike Bloc is left mostly with regular non-customised bikes: familiar, established and recognisable as harmless means of transportation in the city of Copenhagen, all the more fêted and lauded during the COP15 as viable emblems for a green capitalist agenda. Nonetheless, with the very act of transforming bikes from their usual status as a harmless form of transportation into tools for resistance, the



*Photo: Alexandre Buisse.*

bicycle undergoes a transformation as well. In the performance of the Bike Bloc the bike had gone from symbol of environmentally-friendly transportation to a marker of active insurrection opposing the COP15. On the Reclaim Power day of actions, bikes were refused entry to anywhere near the site of the congress; the bicycle had become a threat to public order, reified no longer as merely a totem of the egalitarian status-quo but as a potential for embodied resistance.

What then are the ramifications for green radical activism? If the performance of eco-conscious alternatives can have power beyond a mere theatrical performance of unattainable ideals, what then can we expect to see in future from the emerging global climate justice movement? How will strategies evolve and adapt in reaction to future battle cries? In retrospect, activist protest at COP15 may have appeared somewhat “tame”, with elements of the absurd, but a great deal of thought, preparation and sophisticated transnational organization was involved in its conception. Can lived green realities be performed through ever more nuanced and networked means? Will we see emergent protest forms that proactively demonstrate sustainable ways of living and being? Could existing entities like the

Climate Caravan evolve into ever more intricate models of sustainable dynamism and participation? Like the splitting of cells, will ever more imaginative constituent components spawn and evolve? Alongside bike blocs, can we expect to see housing blocs, learning blocs, building blocs? A mobile, fluid and visible web of embodied insurrection whose political visibility surpasses the rubric of “sending a message” of traditional protest forms. Whilst established political processes like the COP entail sitting on hands and inaction, embodied performances of emergent dissent might be green activism’s spark to the imagination and the crucible in which utopia and reality meet.

The energy and dynamic excitement that swept through the city before and throughout the COP15 is long gone and the city is back to status quo. Or is it? When looking around on the post-COP activities within the milieu of the activists, Copenhagen does to some extent seem transformed. The embodied resistance, the creativity and energy of the carnivalesque has left a palpable mark on the underground of Copenhagen, upped the ante for the grass-roots’ climate justice movement and stimulated the further evolution of its tactics and manifestations.

# Live-Feed Turned Green

*COP15 on Facebook*

*Mareike Glöss*

*These spaces are important as part of everyday life, not apart from it. (Miller & Slater 2001)*

I arrive home and log on to Facebook. Here I get to see what my friends are doing, what mood they are in and the events they are attending. The closer the date of the COP15 conference, the more my Facebook turns green. My activist friends and people who are involved in the conference are gradually transforming parts of their life online as their life gets increasingly influenced by the big upcoming event. The imaginary user Phillip is representing the people I interviewed, whose lives I followed on Facebook to find out how on and offline lives are interconnected. In what ways can Facebook influence an event like the COP15 conference?

*Phillip is now Friends with Anna*

Early cyber-research saw online identities as fluid, enabling users to create a completely new identity in virtual worlds from their real-world persona. Facebook is different. The online identity is not disconnected from the offline world. Everything that happens on Facebook, has its reference to the offline world. Phillip met Anna at a demonstration, but instead of exchanging phone numbers, they promised to add each other as friends on Facebook. Phillip is transferring and transforming his offline world via the online world of Facebook. The conference and his identity as an activist are embedded within this network.

*Phillip is Attending COP15*

But would it be the same without Facebook, without all the possibilities the interactive “web

2.0" has to offer? Miller and Slatder (2001) offer a concept for an interpretation. They point out that certain Internet applications can either expand the realization or the potential of how users "recognize themselves in the Internet" and how it provides "space for enacting core values, practices, and identities". What happens on Facebook: does it expand what Philip is or what he becomes?

#### *Phillip Joined the Group Climate Justice Action*

The live feed on Facebook is an overview of all the activities of connected friends in the form of a continually updated list. The live feed helps users orientate themselves in a chaotic online world. The tools come in the shape of symbols and formulas, which create the rules of conduct and the space for rituals. It turns the web into a stage on which the user is performing.

A friend, who is watching Phillip becoming a fan of that particular activist group could make several assumptions about him and could see him as a part of certain pattern. Other activist friends of Phillip, through their online connection, may join the group as well. Facebook is expanding Philip's and other activists' potential. They can exchange information about their

values and practices more easily, which changes what they want to become and what they want to express.

*Phillip: Can't believe how our world leaders can be so stupid!*

*Anna: I did not expect anything else*

*Tobias: It's so disappointing. :( At least we showed our disagreement*

*Phillip: Yes, but it is not that fulfilling if you know that the world will just go down...*

But is Facebook really that revolutionary? If it didn't exist, Philip would have perhaps called his friends or go meet in person. They would have discussed their opinions and exchanged ideas through a different forum. Philip would still be pessimistic, Tobias would still express a glimmer of hope and Anna would still address her cynicism. However, in many cases Facebook enables users to expand what they are. The options of expressing ones own opinions are increased through online communication.

*Tom: Hey! Are you ok? That was so insane yesterday! There are already videos online!!!*

How would the public reception of the conference be altered, if videos could not have been exchanged in seconds, with the click of a mouse; if opinions could not have been shared immediately to the world; if networks could not have been formed and maintained so sustainably? The border between expanded potential and expanded realization is blurred. Facebook offers plenty of opportunities to expand our realizations and to express our values and ideas, but this wide range of possibilities also changes what Facebook users want to become. Users are aware of the fact that their stage has a high degree of visibility. Philip's friends are able to see a video posted on his wall. Philip copies the link and posts it on his friends' wall, which in turn enables their friends to see it in their live-feed. Thus the video moves from one live-feed to another. It is not just a piece of information but also a vehicle that transports identities and values with high speed through the online social landscape.

When the conference concluded, glimpses of green in my live feed diminished and discussions moved on to other topics, but the fact remains that COP15 will be remembered as the first "Facebook climate conference". Green activists have appropriated Facebook's online codes and symbols and integrated into their everyday performances. And although it allows an expression of whom we are on and offline, the transformation of identities from offline to online is not just an exact copy. The virtual technological possibilities can directly affect real-world practices, identities and values. Philip tells me that COP15 would not have been the same without Facebook. He regards the flow of information around him as a powerful way of expressing the feelings of those who are not sitting at the conference tables. But it is not the information itself that is powerful but the values, ideas and identities that accompany it that are transformed by Facebook.

*Green branding is a tricky business, stretching from minimalistic messages ("keep it simple") to complex mixes of icons and symbols.  
(Photo: Billy Ehn)*



What does it mean to portray oneself as nature-loving, eco-friendly or part of a sustainable economy? Different ways of doing green arise in the processes of branding. COP15 had all kinds of new actors entering the field: corporations, organizations and government institutions all needed to show a green profile. That however, turned out to be a difficult balancing act. In Copenhagen an activist group plastered the windows of some companies and stores with green 500 dollar bills, accusing them of green washing. This was of course not good publicity. What then is a true green profile and not just tactical window dressing? Not to be green enough could be a problem but so could too much green. There was a constant calibration of credibility.

There seems to be inscribed a strong trend of scepticism on the side of consumers towards green branding. This can be illustrated with the remark of a Norwegian tourist when asked about green tourism: "Most of the time when somebody raises the green flag, it's just a marketing stunt." On the other hand tourists also find it hard to recognize certain practices or services as

green if they are not clearly labelled as another tourist claims: "They say it's green, but there is no way to find green. So it's a bit tricky." Green practices are often invisible or hard to distinguish from traditional ones. Therefore forms of materializing the greenness or symbolic markers such as colours (i.e. grey unbleached paper napkins) or labels and stickers on everything become important.

The following four papers discuss such branding processes from very different angles. Orvar Löfgren starts out by looking at the ways in which the Öresund region has been branded green over time, noticing the often quick changes in ideological climates. Here it is very much a question of trying to create a positive vision of the future. Maiko Shibuta and Siri Shaddock look at the strong nostalgic feelings they encountered in the debates around COP15 and provide a contrast by looking at a French rural setting, where people don't talk green but live green. Beth Benedict discusses what a green hotel may represent, while Andrea Dankic and Rikard Edbertsson look at the paradoxes within the marketing of ecological jeans.

# Regional Green

*Orvar Löfgren*

Copenhagen city could not house all the conference visitors, but thanks to the bridge across the Sound (Öresund), opened in 2000, hotels in nearby Swedish cities could accommodate the additional guests providing rapid transport to the event. In 2009 the Öresund transnational region was well established as a transnational area, with both Danes and Swedes crossing the border in search of jobs, housing, education, shopping or leisure.

For over a century before the bridge was opened there had been visions and plans for creating a transnational region, by building a bridge or a tunnel across the water. These visions also mirror perceptions of nature and environmental concerns as well as ideas of economic growth.

One of the arguments put forward for the 1930s plans for a bridge was that the rapid auto-

mobilization of Copenhagen soon would mean that the surrounding vicinities would be overcrowded by cars on leisure tours. By opening the vast and empty spaces of Scania across the Öresund, Danish motorists would have ample space to roam the countryside on Sunday outings and holidays. In the 1930s, ideas of modern and mobile leisure had a central position in the visions of the future. The plans did not materialize, but in the early 1960s the time was ripe for a new vision.

What will the Öresund region look like in the year 2000? This was the topic for a booklet from 1966 where Sten Samuelsson, a famous Swedish professor of architecture, presented his visions for a new and thoroughly planned region (see Arvaston 2010). In 2000 three bridges would connect Sweden and Denmark across the Sound,



a fourth one was planned but the arrival of new kinds of flying cars could make it superfluous, the author says. A new division of labour emerges separating the rapidly growing city centres from the countryside. Gigantic glass domes cover these urban centres, creating a year-round pleasant Mediterranean climate. Hanging gardens are suspended in the air, also providing parking spaces for the flying cars. The marshy Öresund coast and its shallow waters are turned into new urban settlements with large salt water swimming pools.

The countryside is above all an arena for leisure. Gigantic motorway now criss-cross the landscape, sometimes built underground, making transports quick and easy. Danes and Northern Europeans flock to the beautiful Scanian countryside and for those urban dwellers who fancy skiing there is now artificial snow covering the Scanian ridges all year round, providing a constant winter paradise.

This is a totally planned environment, where nothing has been left to chance. Instead of what he calls the “old nostalgic projects” of trying to protect traditional landscapes, Samuelsson advocates a modern and active re-creation of nature – remodelling it to fit the demands of industry,

housing and leisure. No nostalgia whatsoever.

Dreamscapes like these were taken further as the project ÖreCity launched in the late 1960s. It was a vision of urban growth where the Öresund region was developed not only by bridges and motorways but by new airports and urban centres. It was a science fiction dream of international cosmopolitan life where agrarian regions, as well as coastal landscapes, are to be covered by tarmac, industries and housing estates. By now, however, the ideological climate had changed. A new environmental consciousness blocked these dreams of urban growth. The timing was wrong.

It was not until the 1990s that the bridge and a region building project became a realistic plan again, fierce debates about environmental questions swiftly followed. When the new region was branded great care was also taken to point to its specific “natural qualities”. The colours of Öresund were blue and green, and unlike many other urban centres in Europe this was a place that offered people lots of green spaces, clean air and water. In the branding program, “The Birth of the Region” the slogan was: “Where business is hot and life is cool!” It was illustrated by a young businessman in an Armani suit happily pedalling through the cityscape on an old bike, his brief



*In the imagery of the Öresund future visions it is usually summer, as in this suggestion for a new coastal development from 2007. (Bystrup Arkitekter og Designer)*

case fastened on the bike rack. Öresund is different. The message was and the use of the bike as symbol for a green region came to be used in many situations – and it was very present in the

marketing of COP15.

In 2000, green language was different – long before CO2 debates and climate worries entered public discourse. The focus remained on simple

living and green leisure, or as the branding leaflet put it: “We have a special relationship with the environment... We often use natural materials... nature is never far away. We enjoy our time off, soaking up nature... the natural way of life has become a characteristic of our society. We enjoy a special relationship with our environment.” The blue of the surrounding waters and the vast green fields has shaped life in this region into something unique: this was the message.

In 2007 a competition was launched to present new visions for the region in 2040. Sixty teams of architects, planners and scientists participated with new plans and ambitions for the region. In many ways they illustrate the changing situation in the environmental debate. Here the focus is on sustainability and low carbon emissions. Public transport is also a priority and one team even suggested wind tunnels for rapid biking.

There is however a tension in many of the visions. On the one hand, urban sprawl is the main enemy. The time has come to halt suburban expansion in the region, with urban density and high mobility the antidote. This is the return

of the compact city; the small town, often surrounded by vast green areas or newly planted woodlands. This vision of the future is seen as polycentric, with many urban centers connected by fast trains. On the other hand there is the celebration of “natural lifestyles” with small scale rural values, small scale production and gardening. From reading the material, one is struck by the fact that sustainability is still often attributed with a symbolic (and sometimes nostalgic) aura – a dreamscape, separated from the mundane problems of transportation, globalization and large scale structures.

Following the visions of the Öresund region spanning almost a century shows the ways in which problems and expectations are framed within very different cultural landscapes. Green living is imagined very differently in 1930s, 1960s or 2000, but even more striking are the rapid changes in scenarios over the last decade – from 2000 to 2010. One thing we may learn from this is to expect even swifter changes in both planning ideals and priorities of economic growth and social welfare. What will the perfect green region look like in 2020?

# Nostalgia for Mud

*Siri Shadduck & Maiko Shibuta*

*The Weight of the World = CO2*

After COP15, climate failure became a climate of failure. Tuvalu, a small island nation lying midway between Hawaii and Australia, is sinking and the world looks restlessly on, unperturbed. Copenhagen, in search of a viable climate future, seemed to cast its eye backwards. Climate change displaces us from our homes, even if we remain stationary. Because we remain inert, our roots are ripped out from beneath our feet. Or, in Tuvalu's case, flooded.

Nostalgia clouded the post-COP15 atmosphere. In Copenhagen it was a lingering turn of mind. For each protest, every signature rendered, there seemed to be a latent desire cast towards the past; a sense that the past anticipated a rosier future. It's something we carry with each new invention, from hybrid super cars to

water pumps activated by the click of the phone pad. Nostalgia was and remains conspicuous. Or perhaps, it'd be more apt to call it solastagia. A phrase coined by philosopher Glenn Albrecht to describe the anxiety that accompanies environmental changes which afflict your home, the place you reside and love.

To solastagia we can add even more eclectic terms like eco-anxiety and ecoparalysis or even psychoterratic syndromes that have been introduced into wiki-parlance and academic discourse. This new fangled vocabulary is an extension of eco-nostalgia, which has conveniently become the umbrella term to describe environmental concern. These terms remind us that COP15 embodied a mood, and a fleeting one at that (who remembers Tuvalu today?).

After the event, what remained? Paper cups littering the street, the ostensible evidence of a climate protest gone awry? COP15 was characterized by wishful thinking- like leaning out the window and spying out a falling star. Yet the question remains: how do we save the world and live in it at the same time?

To get at Copenhagen and the climate conference, you can be in the thick of it and try to understand from within. Alternatively, you can look at it from the outside. A change of perspective, a twist in context, can be a breath of fresh air from the pollution of political and bureaucratic dialogue. Take a trip to the village of Belley in rural France, for instance. Leaving behind the anxiousness and disenchantment left in COP15's wake, we sought respite from the city and its urban politics. Belley offered something else, but was it pure nostalgia or a hint of the future, a convenient interpretation or an attempt at making ecological amends?

### *Vive La France*

Watch the French: open air markets, wicker baskets... Call it nostalgia for mud, nostalgia for naivety. The basket may be a metonym for the slow life, the green life, but in France it's just a bas-

ket. Perhaps salvation lies in the act of picking up that basket, baguette in tow, under the arm. COP15 ended on a dour note. The false hopes which go hand in hand with the politics and the largely disingenuous feel good (green) attitude of the moment were largely momentary. COP15 wound up being a side note in the city's ledgers. Compared to rural France, which doesn't think green, but simply does green, Copenhagen was an epigone, a poor imitation, a peasant touse-red crank that tries too hard. In the French countryside one relaxes into green; it's not a state of mind, it's a way of being.

Consider the communal ovens found throughout French villages in past times? People would bring dough and bake bread every day of every week, year after year. Their labour, time and daily routine would be centred on the ovens. Firewood and flour is too precious to be splurged. The very act of saving energy could be witnessed around it. It is illustrative of the state of life in a traditional French village: sincere and viable.

Bottles were regularly refilled with wine from a tank in the cellar. In the cellar there was also a barrel for making grapefruit soda. Naturally, they would repeat the process. What is the

difference between this process and wine bottles dressed up by elegant labels for a few hours for dinner discarded soon after, and grapefruit juice packed in tight tetra packs flown across the Atlantic Ocean from Florida to Europe? Think about the consequences of these two: isn't it a way of being, holding out another possibility for our future?

### *Future Perfect*

The vestiges of distant lifestyles we encountered in Belley and the emotions they elicited within

us seemed to echo a vague, endemic nostalgia. It communicated a convenient sentiment to avert our eyes from the even more distant outcry of the world. Tuvalu is still sinking, and wicker baskets, despite their rustic charm can't stop that. Is it no more than a touch of pathos that we had lost something we wanted to retrieve? For the French it was simply mundane, life as usual. "Nostalgic feeling is almost never infused with (those) sentiments we commonly think as negative – for example, unhappiness, frustration, despair, hate, shame, abuse" (Davis 1970:14).



*A communal oven in rural France – a reminder of earlier traditions of sharing and pooling resources. In a new sustainable economy we might see the reinvention of sharing and leasing systems – from carpools to domestic appliances. (Photo Phil Wahlbrink)*

Nostalgia “just ain’t what it used to be”. We romanticize the idyllic French past and it becomes, in our eyes, like a fairy tale.

But through lime-lighting CO2, the mundane way of being seems to gain validity. Sleeping Beauty must awake, and we must realize that through looking backwards, we also have to look

forwards. Saving the world isn’t simply a matter of taking up signs and marching on the streets of Copenhagen, nor is it a matter of open air markets, communal ovens, and recycled wine bottles. We can take note, however, and contemplate the French because they simply do green, without nostalgic reflections.

# Doing Green

## *Practices and Choices at Copenhagen Hotels*

*Beth Benedict Christensen*

What is green? What is not green? Green is a term frequently used to denote environmental consciousness, indicating that green practices are better than non-green practices. Depending on the situation, it is also a concept evoking pride, common sense, or economic priorities. But what does green look like in practice? This is the question I wanted to answer, in order to understand if and how “green” could be integrated into the daily experiences of tourists in Copenhagen. If one wishes to promote green practices via user-driven innovation, one must know how the user thinks and within tourism, the users are not only the tourists, but also the hotel managers and staff whom are responsible for the daily implementation and promotion of green policies. Therefore, I conducted brief, semi-structured interviews with hotel staff – managers, receptionists,

and cleaners – as well as tourists in Copenhagen, to see what the current perceptions, policies and practices are. Does green mean the same thing to the two groups?

If there is one prevailing statement to be made about “green” tourism in Copenhagen, it is that every tourist defines it differently. “Green” is diffuse, intangible and malleable; it can seemingly encompass almost any idea, practice or action, to the point that it is perhaps easier to define green by what it is not, rather than what it is. Among respondents, definitions ranged from “being conscious of actions,” “the world,” “recycling,” “sustainability,” “being environmentally friendly,” “health,” “happiness,” “not over-eating,” and “always taking the green choice.” The problem, made apparent from my fieldwork, is that these words neither define nor delimit the



possibilities of what “green” is in practice. As one respondent aptly stated, “green is a catch-all phrase for anything that sounds good towards the environment...”

### *Doing “Danish Green”*

Initially, it seemed as if the only answer to my question about “what is green?” was the fact that a plethora of meanings existed. However, gradually a common theme emerged. When Danish respondents were asked to define “green,” they frequently used the words “common sense” no matter if they were tourists or hotel staff. I listened to them recount stories of growing up and being taught to turn off the light or television when leaving the room, to take short showers, to conserve energy. They admitted that in the beginning – referring back to the 1970s and 1980s – it was neither common sense, nor just about the environment, as energy costs were quite high. Today, costs are still high, and thus doing green in Denmark is not just a question of being cost-friendly or environmentally-friendly.

Perhaps it is the concept of “selfish altruism” which helps to reproduce and ingrain green thinking in daily lives, whereby making it common sense. To Danes, doing green is not only about



*This Co2 certificate was on display at the reception area of one hotel where fieldwork was conducted. Most guests neither realized they were staying at a Co2 neutral hotel, nor that they had the opportunity to lessen their carbon footprint by purchasing a carbon quota.*

environmental savings, but also about economic ones – making green practices beneficial for the environment as well as oneself. While it would be wrong to unequivocally state that all Danes are equally environmentally-minded, fieldwork



revealed that Danes typically incorporate green actions into their daily lives, whether that means biking, recycling bottles for “pant,” taking public transportation, or being conscious of water and electricity consumption. In many ways, doing “green” is a culturally, socially-constructed phenomenon and to Danes it appears that it is indeed “common sense.”

*The policy at one hotel is to always set the heat at “two.” However, as I learned during fieldwork, this sometimes means turning the heat up from “zero” to “two,” although heat may not be necessary or guests may not currently be staying in the room.*

### *Choosing Green Hotels in Copenhagen: A Conscious Decision?*

It should then be no surprise that hotels in Copenhagen would want to transfer these common sense practices from everyday into hotel life – not just for environmental savings, but also to be business-savvy. One manager with a reserved pride about his hotel’s policies stated his belief that tourists will soon start punishing hotels that don’t do green by taking their business elsewhere, citing a similar trend that occurred when there was no adequate fire detection system in hotels in Denmark. But is this too idealistic? Do tourists care – or even notice – if a hotel has “green” practices such as buying carbon quotas to remain carbon neutral, postings about towel-replacement, or the possibility for VIP guests to exchange their luxury welcome basket for a CO2 quota to off-set their own stay? And

how would guests react if staff members tried to encourage green practices amongst guests at their hotels?

Danes may believe that being green is “common sense” or the “natural thing to do.” However, when I asked people regarding their knowledge of towel-replacement policies and bathroom



signs stating “a towel hung up means I will reuse, a towel on the floor means please replace”, half of the ten people who did not know such policies currently exist were Danes, clearly illustrating that “common sense” knowledge and practices vary. When tourists were asked how they would feel if hotel staff tried to promote visitors being greener during their stay, one American replied: “I would be annoyed if staff tried to teach me instead of doing their job – just give me a pamphlet,” clearly missing the irony in his answer.

There is of course no simple national pattern in attitudes to green tourism. Even those respondents who stated that they integrated environmental consciousness into their daily life often stated that being green while travelling is not a

*The oldest eco-message in the hotel business is probably the sign found in most bathrooms:*

*Dear Guest, If towels on a hanger, it means: “I will use it once again.” Towels on the floor means: “Please change”.*

*Most people are aware of this message, but not all and some don't want to comply – they are on holiday and want fresh towels every day.*

priority, or often becomes something they will pursue “as far as my wallet allows.” It seems that “the relaxation of being away and not wanting to think about too much” or the desire to “indulge” in things like fresh towels every day is the factor most affecting their actions, rather than any cultural background.

In the article “Environmental-friendly Tourists: What do we really know about them?” (Dolnicar, Crouch & Long 2008) the suggestion is made that there is a “distinct group” of tourists with a “distinct profile” who possess a “willingness to pay a price premium for environment-friendly accommodations” (ibid.:199). Is this particular profile the motivation for selecting a particular green hotel in Copenhagen? My fieldwork suggested otherwise. When I conducted semi-structured interviews at a “green” hotel, I was surprised by some findings. Not even one respondent was aware that they were staying at a CO2 neutral hotel. Their decision was motivated by location, price, or aesthetics, as respondents stated that they were drawn to this particular hotel because it was “minimalistic and special,” “unique,” “the location looked good,” or that they “got a good deal on the Internet,” clearly indicating other priorities when selecting a hotel.

### *Doing Green in Hotels – Theory and Practice*

At the same hotel, I had the opportunity to interview the manager about the hotel’s policies, finding out what makes them CO2 neutral and eligible for the “Green Key” program, denoting environmentally-friendly practices. I was told of their policies, for example, how four towels are placed in each room, two in the bathroom and two in the room hidden away to discourage overuse, as well as the fact that the cleaners are told to turn the heat setting to “2” (on a scale from “0” to “5”). It seemed like doing green was already entrenched into their daily practices, with more possibilities on the way.

Immediately following this interview, I did a “walk and talk” interview with a hotel cleaner, which allowed me to not only conduct an informal interview, but to observe how hotel policies translated into practices. Via the combination of ethnographic methods – observation and interviewing – the differences in policy versus practice, in saying and doing were more clearly illuminated. While the cleaner went about her tasks, I asked: “Is this what your normal cleaning process is like?” She confirmed this, taking me through the steps as she did them – placing all towels in the bathroom and turning the heat

setting up from “zero” to “two,” explaining with what I took to be a sense of pride that she was following the policies of the hotel as they were communicated to her.

The potential split between stated intentions and behaviour makes it important to question everything – even those questions one may already have the answers to. The difference in what people (or policies) say and what people actually do are what make ethnographic methods so significant – taking nothing for granted. It may sound as if green is mainstreamed into daily hotel tasks, but when combined with fieldwork, one realizes that even green hotels may not be that green in practice.

### *Conclusion*

What is definitively possible to say about doing green is that it is a choice that never exists alone;

rather it is negotiated in relation to many other possibilities. One final example which demonstrates this is the goal stated on the internet to give “customers the opportunity to participate in the climate cause,” and the desire for “guests to be part of these initiatives.” When I questioned how this was implemented in daily practices, the hotel manager replied: “We could tell them, but check in would take longer.” This answer indicated that in this situation, time and the desire to conduct check-in as quickly as possible, is prioritized above green. And thus, while green tourism is not always about or even just about being green it is important to remember that green exists among a myriad of possibilities of time, money, accessibility, information, and convenience. All actors involved in doing green in Copenhagen tourism prioritize green according to many other available options at any given time.

# Green Jeans in a Grey Industry

*Rikard Edbertsson & Andrea Dankic*

It is probably the most common clothing item in the Western world, and maybe one of the strongest symbols for fashion and identity. Jeans have a long history, and there are many histories about jeans – this is one of them. DEM Collective is a small company in Sweden focusing on producing clothes on an organic, ecological and ethical basis. DEM in the company name stands for “Don’t Eat Macaroni”, which is specifically a critique of the fast food industry but also a critique of mass consumption in general.

In this article we want to critically review the company’s storytelling about one particular jeans collection named “One in a thousand” by using five dichotomies based on metaphorical thinking (material on DEM Collective was found on [www.demcollective.com](http://www.demcollective.com)). It seems to us that DEM represents an interesting upcoming

trend in society, in which green shopping, social entrepreneurship (producing clothes for social change) and corporate responsibility meet.

*“One in a thousand” vs. “One in a million”*

The name of the jeans collection is a metaphor, hinting at the commonly used saying when something is rare: one in a million. “One in a thousand” refers to its limited edition making them unique in a market of unlimited jeans editions. There are only a thousand pairs, all with their own unique number, and DEM is inviting us to buy them before others beat us to it. It is a critique of the mass production process, instead taking on a more designer/artistic approach that aims at creating a desire: which of these thousand pairs of jeans will become yours? At the same time we are reminded of the fact that the

price of ownership is high since we will have to pay more for them than for most other “standard” pairs of jeans.

The limited number is also interesting from another perspective. If the aim is social change, maybe an unlimited production would have been more appropriate? If the production process that the company is applying in practice is ethical and “green” in every aspect, why is it not possible for everyone to get the chance to buy these organic jeans? The goal here seems to be to achieve social change through the limited edition-jeans collection, but is that even possible?

### *Transparent vs. Secretive*

The entire process of the jeans production is transparent, which is a political and ethical statement reflecting the importance of being open and honest. This includes everything from the cotton fields and the natural grown indigo to the workers, who are paid fair wages and have working conditions different from those in sweatshops. The production process is explained in what we choose to refer to as a type of “manifesto” for the jeans but also on the homepage through short descriptions and accompanying

photos, which give an insight that most other companies have not been able to accomplish in year 2010.

Transparency is an important metaphor and a key aspect of the company’s approach to production, which includes the “One in a thousand” jeans collection. The DEM Collective is trying to be an example of the possible: if we can do it, so can you. They might be paving the way for others and stating with their actions that it can be done. The production of the “One in a thousand” jeans is transparent, making the jeans

**This is not a standard pair of jeans.**

Their cotton is organic, harvested only once a year.

The color is natural, dyed with pure indigo.

The fabric is woven by hands free to join any union.

And although the price is higher, the cost is less.

**No pesticides or chemicals.**

No dried lakes or poisoned drinking water.

No genetically manipulated cotton fields.

No exploited workers in sweatshops.

This should be a standard pair of jeans.

**Sincerly/DEM COLLECTIVE**



*Photo:*  
*Emilia Bergmark-Jiménez.*  
*DEM*



themselves transparent, while many other production processes and companies remain secretive, closed and difficult to trust. Consumers in the 21st century want to know much more about the production process than the consumers in the past, and considering this, it would probably be wise for any company to get on the transparency train. There is more to win than to lose.

Still, DEM Collective is a small company with (so far) a small production comparing to other companies. Is it possible to be as transparent if you are a global multibillion corporation? Does size matter in this context? That is an important aspect to consider.

### *Clean vs. Dirty*

Let us look at the “One in a thousand” jeans through the dichotomy of Clean/Dirty. As a commodity, jeans are dirty in many ways. On a basic level it is a commodity with aesthetic values resulting in dyeing something that is naturally clean; namely cotton. Denim, the garment that jeans are made of, can in itself be said to be the fusion of both clean and dirty. On a more symbolic and sociopolitical level, the very production of denim can be seen as a dirty business.

Not only is it an chemical process in which the producer dyes cotton with indigo which in turn results in using huge amounts of water, polluting the environment, which in turn may harm communities, ecosystems, etc. It is also a production that is often allocated to countries where wages are low and working conditions inhuman. In the same way that jeans often lose color in the first wash, leaving marks on other clothes in your wardrobe, the denim factories pollute the surrounding areas.

Coming back to the “One in a thousand” jeans, it is difficult to see the cleanliness of a commodity that is in so many ways is associated with dirtiness. But DEM Collective tries to deconstruct the image of the denim industry through their “manifesto”; “No dried lakes or poisoned drinking water” means clean on the organic level. “No genetically manipulated cotton fields” means clean on the ecological level and “No exploited workers in sweatshops”, means clean in the ethical sense. Clean jeans in an otherwise “dirty” business stands out.

### *Cheap and Expensive – at the same time*

The “manifesto” also includes the statement: “although the price is higher, the cost is less”. The

cost and price are here differentiated in the sense that the price is referring to the amount of money you pay for them, while the cost is the ethical part of the price – the bigger picture. In this sense the main argument is that you are getting a good deal involving a chance to take care of yourself and the rest of the world for a higher price. You can save the world and gain a clear conscience in the process.

The “One in a thousand” jeans are, just like other jeans today, consumed for both global and local reasons, which Miller and Woodward discuss in their article about jeans as a common everyday garment (2007). In the context of cheap and expensive, the cheap aspect is represented by the global reasons (helping the world and the people who are making the jeans, even if I may never meet them) while the cost aspect is expressed through the locality (contributing with my money through the consumption of these jeans today which may be part of my own identity formation).

### *Social Clothing vs. Ordinary Clothing*

“One in a thousand” jeans are not only about clothing. The “manifesto” states that “This is not a standard pair of jeans”. This together with the

name “One in a thousand” signals uniqueness. It also hints that there must be something like standard jeans. But what exactly is a “standard pair of jeans”? What makes DEM Collective’s jeans different?

DEM Collective play with the idea that their jeans represent something bigger, that the commodity in itself binds the buyer to the producer through the transparency concept. Through the “One in a thousand” concept, the buyer is also connected to other buyers and represents, by wearing the jeans, a unique community of one thousand. In this sense, clothing is about belonging. It is about belonging to the same group of jeans buyers, but also about belonging to the worker that made your jeans. In this sense, the clothing is not just about identity, class, status or profession as with “standard” jeans, it also grants the consumer a moral membership. Moral, in the sense that production and consumption is humanized and made visible through its transparency.

The “manifesto” ends with the sentence “This should be a standard pair of jeans”. This is implying that their way of producing and consuming should be the standard. The question remains if this actually produces social change, or if it is

not just simply a moderation of today's capitalistic system. Even though the "One in a thousand" jeans do not represent the standard jeans, the brand still operates in a system where commodities continue to be produced in the East but consumed in the West.

*In the growing market for green living commodities become moral activists as well. The car sticker proudly states "I am an eco-friendly car!"  
(Photo Billy Ehn)*



Climate politics struggle with the problem of making abstract knowledge about CO2 levels come alive and make an emotional impact, but also in installing hope and faith in the future. Formal language simply falls short of rallying interest and commitment.

One striking difference between the Copenhagen and Kyoto climate conferences was found in the cultural communication of both political and individual messages. In Copenhagen, the cultural technologies of art work, performances and rituals were widely employed. Artists were everywhere: in green exhibitions, street performances, meeting events, demonstrations and even online (e.g. web blogs). Interestingly, many has adopted a religious rhetoric. Contemporary art makes holier-than-thou ideological offerings, and apocalyptic stories of climate change are thematized in films and art installations. The concept of “climate sinners” more than illustrates how doing green has become a moral imperative bey-

ond the societal obligations of the citizen, as environmental responsibility goes beyond national borders and the here and now of everyday life.

The following articles look at ways in which religious language, emotional ritual and symbols were set to work. They show that there has been a changing mode and mood of political engagement. “Can green politics at COP15 be understood as a kind ecumenical movement and ideology?” Samantha Hyler and Paul Sherfey ask in their paper. Mette Klessen Wagner and Ditte Bjarnild look at the confession booth placed in the middle of the town square, where ecological sinners had a chance to repent. Marie Amstrup Møller, Mette Birck, Helene Rendtorff and Ditte Hørlyck Campbell explore another green ritual, as economic growth is buried at the “free state” of Christiania. Finally Tine Damsholt investigates the concept of “green churches” and the growing entanglement of Christianity and the new “green religion”.

# Ecological Ecumenism and Emotional Politics

*Paul Sherfey & Samantha Hylar*

## *Climate Science: Which “truth” to follow?*

How much does the COP15 climate conference have in common with the Council of Nicaea – the first congress of Christian churches – held almost 1,700 years prior in AD 325? Could one compare a council regarding religious matters – such as debating Jesus’ divinity – to a climate conference in any respect? The answer is yes, in terms of the manner through which matters of great importance are collected and processed.

Religious traditions hold long-standing and divergent beliefs about the relationship between humans and nature, and as nations can have particular dominant religious traditions, national discourses about nature and the environment often become informed by their respective religious heritage. If we understand that beliefs cannot be switched off, is it reasonable to assume that

belief systems (spiritual, religious or otherwise) influenced the positioning of representatives at COP15, despite aims to formulate agreements set upon a common goal?

In a world conference such as COP15, many differing (and possibly contradictory) standpoints towards nature and humanity were present. On the matter of climate change, there are a plethora of theories which offer solutions to combating global warming and its effects. For example, various climate temperatures that have been cited as ideal or realistic goals, or emphasis on parts per million (PPM) relative to CO2 emissions, have been suggested. COP15 became an arena through which different scientific beliefs were negotiated by the nations of the world. The aim was to arrive at a consensus based on the requirements of sustaining acceptable pol-

*Hoping for a climate “solution,” or rather, a unified world decision regarding climate science.*

*(Photo: Samantha Hyler)*



lution and temperature levels, and to proscribe the practices of nations to adhere with such guidelines. But do disagreements on the interpretation of data and the relevance of methods – as came about December 2010 at Copenhagen’s Bella Center – make it difficult to believe that science can be seen to have a singular, correct and objective nature? Just as religions exist with divergent systems of beliefs and claims to represent reality, is science – despite its claims to objectivity – any different?

### *Ecumenism: a (new?) Perspective on the Political Process*

Religious traditions are commonly associated with institutionalized spiritual beliefs and practices (Taylor 2009:3). Most, if not all, religious traditions organize and structure spirituality, delimiting the “right” or “good” in opposition to what is “wrong” or “bad”. Differing practices and discourses are intimately bound to divergent approaches to understanding the world, just as many religions have sects wherein different

interpretations of shared scriptures and consequential events have developed.

Throughout history there have been meetings aimed at promoting greater cooperation and ideological cohesion between these various groups, referred to as ecumenical councils. As an ecclesiastical process, ecumenism attempts to overcome these differences to create a degree of “unity” by agreeing upon shared values and deciding courses of action. At the first ecumenical council of Christian churches, convened at the request of the emperor Constantine at Nicaea in AD 325, church leaders sought to decide the nature of Christ’s divinity, among other issues concerning belief and doctrine. Resulting from this council was the Nicene Creed, establishing a consensual doctrinal stance on the matter for the majority of churches, while labelling those who dissented as heretics. But ecumenism can be understood as any movement which unifies an inhabited world, or *ecumene*. Thus, the process of ecumenism need not be limited to our understanding of traditional religious structures.

How then, might we gain a new perspective on an event such as COP15 – which sought unity among the nations of the world to esta-

lish a climate change “creed” based upon a common belief in science – through the ecumenical process? The conference was attempting, like a church council, to establish a common belief and practice among peoples across the boundaries of nation states and therefore across the distinct belief systems found within each. Such consensus building, as a political act, is an ecumenical process, because both the church and the climate change council are convened to address differences of belief and work through them. Both religion and science construct “knowledge” of reality – ways of understanding the world and its phenomena – so rather than questioning the factual basis of a belief, we should instead focus upon the strength of facts to compel specific beliefs and practices. Instead of asking “Is it true?” we must ask “How does it become true?” (Latour 1999:274). At the Council of Nicaea, for example, it was through the authority of an emperor that religious doctrines, persisting to this day, were established. What processes are at work when religious or scientific beliefs are debated? How are arguments being made, and whose interests do they serve? Who might they work against? And what role might self-interest play?



*For protest groups an important media technology was stickers in public places all over the Øresund region, as on this lamp-post in Lund. (Photo: Samantha Hyler)*



### *Media Culture: Emotionalizing Politics*

Science is being emotionalized by the infusion of spirituality from multiple religions, transforming scientific and mathematical models about climate change into something real, something tangible, something personal and affective. Journalistic accounts depict the ecumenical sentiments of the conference in order to affect individuals globally. In short, culture emotionalizes science. So what happens then, when we explore a political conference such as COP15 as an event in which the emotionalizing impact of the media works towards an ecumenical process?

The culturalization of climate change politics was heavily factored into the promotion of COP15 in order to induce certain emotional responses. This created a world event centred on Copenhagen, creating a complex exchange between the local and the global through the medium of generally-termed “creativity”. This was enhanced through the use of cultural software – the digital underpinnings of much artistic visualization present. These creative expressions transformed the everyday space of Copenhagen into a ritualized, performative space during COP15, where people from across the world joined together in following the conference th-

rough the media culture. In this way, COP15s council was not only a meeting between high-ranking officials with specific country-designations, but a council followed by, and involving, the lives of individuals in Copenhagen and around the world.

In the case of COP15, an ecumenical spirit attempted to bring the world together through creative media in order to establish a common belief about climate change science and a common direction to follow in addressing it. Finding a solution became problematic due to the differing interests of so many nations and organizations lobbying to have their suggestions adopted. Emotions, and the ability to elicit them to aid political objectives through the means of media culture, became an important factor in the positioning of individuals towards the conference. The heavy media presence which surrounded the island nation of Tuvalu after its representative called for a suspension of negotiations is perhaps the most noteworthy example. Exploring the ecumenical process, and the factors at work within such a congress, thus offers another perspective on politics and science, and presents one possible reason why an agreement in Copenhagen was unsuccessful.

# Confessions of a Climate Sinner

*Mette Klessen Wagner & Ditte Bjarnild*

During COP15 the Copenhagen City Hall Square was transformed for 12 days into a climate arena called “Hopenhagen Live” in order to promote awareness of the need to change human climate behavior and to illuminate the Danish hope and belief of a global climate agreement.

In 2009, Danish society experienced an increasing focus on human-induced climate changes. The message of climate awareness was introduced to the public through newspapers, commercials and exhibitions among others. This article examines how the increased climate awareness can be viewed as a new kind of religious movement: the Green Religion. Focusing on the event Sorry at the art gallery Art and Confession in Hopenhagen similarities are drawn between the event and the catholic tradition of confession and absolution.

## *Green Religion*

The recent times, climate awareness can be viewed as a new kind of religion, where people have to structure their lives in a certain way, to follow the rules of the religion. The basis of any religion is a general acceptance of a common truth. In the case of the Green Religion, the followers believe that the biggest challenges the world is now facing, namely climate change, are caused by human action. Whereas “the Fall of Man” in the Catholic religion took place thousands of years ago, the same thing cannot be said about the Green Religion. In this religion “the Fall of Man” can be said to occur during the industrial revolution in the 19th century with the exploitation of nature. Ever since the industrial revolution, the climate sins of our forefathers have been inherited by us and Nature is now punishing us for all our sins.



*Hopenhagen is a movement, a moment and a chance at a new beginning. (Picture provided by Arkitekturministeriet)*

Whereas the Catholic sin in only harmed the individual sinner, resulting in eternal damnation in hell, the individual sin in Green Religion causes collective damage. The fear is a living hell, an extermination of humankind and the end of

the Earth. As a part of the shared truth is the belief that the apocalypse can only be prevented by human actions.

In the Green Religion, as in Catholicism, the followers must abide to certain rules and gui-

delines of how to lead a proper life according to the religion. Believers in Green Religion acquire these guidelines through the media. Consequently, the media represents the Catholic vicar and accordingly act as representatives of the highest court – in this case Nature. Considering that the media functions as a mediator between human and Nature, it is then via the media that the followers of Green Religion must therefore confess their climate sins. By letting people confess these sins, they will hopefully change their everyday behaviour, which is expected to improve the condition of the world.

To illustrate the relationship between the media and the believers we now turn our attention to art gallery Art and Confession at Hopenhagen, where the event Sorry could be viewed as an example of a ritual in Green Religion.

### *Apologizing to Nature*

Just like a miniature city, Hopenhagen had small neighbourhoods, each with elements such as a community centre, tourist information, and a restaurant as well as a vibrant cultural scene with free concerts and exhibitions. In Art and Confession, located in the centre of Hopenhagen, the event Sorry allowed people to confess

their climate sins and apologize to Nature. This was a sacred place. At the back of the room a camera was placed facing the audience like a vicar would his congregation. Here the repentant could confess his climate sins and obtain absolution. After confessing ones sins, the absolution came in a little white envelope containing marigold seeds. When planted, Nature would show it's forgiveness by allowing the seeds to germinate and bloom into beautiful flowers.

After a while three young boys loudly entered the gallery and placed themselves in front of the camera. With a hint of irony, they admitted their Nature damaging faults. The confessions were recorded and were to be revealed to the public at big screens in the gallery, thus the boys participated in a public ritual.

After the confession the boys were offered the absolution. Somewhat surprised they accepted and left the gallery laughing.

### *Confession of Climate Sins*

In early Catholicism a public confession of sins and acknowledgement of errors would lead the sinner to the state of repentance and restore the purity of baptism (Foucault 1988). In much the same way the confession ritual in the gal-

lery is designed to leach the confessed sins. The boys' confessions must therefore be visible and viewed by others; it must be showed and viewed at the screen or at the homepage. Through the media, the boys' confessions turn into a theatrical and symbolic act, where the importance is not what is actually being confessed, but the act of confession. The nature of the sins itself is not important, but the fact that the boys are confessing, is (Foucault 1988). In the early catholic ritual the sinner deeply repented his sin and through voluntarily publicizing the confes-

sion, he openly shows humility and shame. This suffering leads to the longed absolution.

As the three boys confessed their sins, they also acted out the ritual. However, their con-



*After confessing ones sins, the absolution came in a little white envelope containing Marigold seeds. (Picture provided by Karna Maj, Havenyt)*

duct as they confessed did not indicate remorse. The event was open to believers as well as non-believers of the Green Religion and it is possible that the boys were not true followers of the movement, considering they were surprised by the offering of the Marigold seeds. The boys were therefore not likely to receive Nature's forgiveness. The three young boys did confess their sins and voluntarily acted out the ritual, however, they might have been longing for "15 minutes of fame" rather than absolution. Nevertheless, the art installation could be used by true believers in order for them to realise their destructive climate behaviour and is thus an example of a green religious ritual acted out in public.

### *The Future of the Green Religion?*

In this article, we have examined how the focal point of climate awareness in the autumn of 2009 was manifested through the concept of a Green Religion. Like in Catholicism, the cornerstone in this religion is shared beliefs of truth of man as a sinner and of the cleansing of his sins. Ho-

wever, where the Catholics strive for worthiness to an afterlife in Heaven, the final reward of the followers of Green Religion is not allotted them but their descendants. In the past year or so the Green Religious movement has become popular, however, only time can tell if the Green Religion is here to stay or if it was only a passing thought.

# Celebrating a Funeral

*Marie Amstrup Møller, Mette Birck, Helene Rendtorff &  
Ditte Hørlyck Campbell*

The funeral participants had started gathering at two o'clock and were standing in their warm winter clothing chit chattering, drinking beer, and waiting for the funeral to commence in the raw December afternoon. An elderly grey-haired man entered the grave yard carrying a white Mac Book. He seemed confused and a chaotic atmosphere emerged, an important item was missing.

A traditional funeral can be conceptualized as a ritual. A ritual is an event where a specific course of action is followed by the participants. Often, particular objects are needed for the ritual to be fulfilled. In this way, time, space and the actions of the involved parties can be transformed into a symbolic performance. The ritual that was about to begin followed the traditional rules of a funeral, however it turned the ordinary meaning of the burial ritual upside down.

As an alternative to the bureaucratic COP15, the free city of Christiania held a "Climate Bottom Meeting" in a casual and relaxed atmosphere presenting new and radical "windows of hope" for the world. During the two weeks of the meeting, activities with different themes took place. One particular activity was a daily funeral in which an outdated concept of "the old and polluted world" was buried. The graveyard was placed in a corner of a meadow where several impressive gravestones stood, suggesting that these burial rituals were an important practice for the activists in Christiania. Egoism, the American Dream and Global Trade had already been buried – each with a gloomy sculpture as a tombstone, symbolizing the deceased. The graveyard fitted well into the surroundings. During COP15, "the Meadow of Peace" was turned into



a carnivalesque performative space subverting Western norms through humour and chaos. By looking around the circular grass meadow, the eye was drawn to a huge sculpture made of waste. In the centre an old oil heater had been rebuilt into a pellet burner running on waste materials from wooden furniture production. It functioned as the main heat source for a big circus tent in the background, where activities, such as lectures and concerts took place. In another corner, two Mongolian yurts - tents made out of wool - invited visitors in. This was the scene of the “Meadow of Peace” in the free city of Christiania during the Climate Summit in Copenhagen, December 2009.

The funeral rituals held in Christiania were performances transforming time and space. The different material components – bodies, Mac Books and beer bottles – have to be taken into consideration when trying to grasp what happened. The objects and the place itself have agency, because they do something. When an item is involved in a ritual it changes from being just an object and it becomes a material subject with transformative potential. This was why the funeral could not commence until the missing item had been retrieved. Finally, a woman involved in

the activities, came running with a green hooded cloak with a flower-patterned lining, which was the missing ceremonial accessory, essential to the funeral. As the old man carrying the Mac Book donned the cloak he thus became the priest. The woman carefully instructed him to keep the hood on; making sure the floral lining was visible, underlining the importance of the cloak as a material subject confirming his divinity. Now that the funeral could finally begin, it was time to say farewell to another Western concept: Economic Growth. As an introduction to the ritual, the priest told a personal story starting with the events of 9/11. After sharing his heartfelt tale, the priest began his sermon, reading out loud from his Mac Book.

The Mac Book could be seen as a symbol of global capitalism, an opposition to the content of the burial and the Climate Bottom Meeting. But this paradox was not commented on by any of the participants. On the contrary, the laptop did what it could to make the funeral successful as it was a necessity for the priest to perform his sermon. Holding the laptop in his hand gave him authority and transformed into a form of pulpit. He moralized, that the Economic Growth is a myth, fiercely defended by the rich countries.



Therefore it should be buried alongside the excessive consumption and worldwide transportation of goods. In the spirit of the Free City the solution was revolutionary. The old world had to be left behind and a holistic, all-embracing, and life-changing alternative had to replace the existing order. Locally anchored production and consumption was put forward as the solution. For this reason concepts and phenomena of a corrupt and polluted past had to be left behind or even destroyed. In this case it was through a funeral ritual whereby a myth was shovelled under ground accompanied by cheers and applause – celebrating a funeral.

Clearly this performance did not constitute a “normal” funeral ritual but a more carnivalesque one. It iterated some of the norms for a funeral, but at the same time it functioned as a pastiche of it. The solemnity of the performance appeared almost as a caricature as the participants were happy – drinking beer and cheering. There was no sadness in burying the Economic Growth. This way the funeral became subversive – citing

norms and at the same time turning the given and expected upside down.

An important feature of a ritual is the processional aspect: a beginning and an end, restoring normal time and space. Finalizing the funeral the priest passed around the corpse; an oversized dollar bill depicting the date 9/11 instead of the dollar value and a caricature of George W. Bush Jr. printed on it. Digging into the ground the priest recited the Danish version of “ashes to ashes” ending with the proclamation of resurrection. The small crowd watching the ritual was thrilled – clapping enthusiastically. Someone shouted: “Resurrected as something new and better!” The priest added “I wanted to burn it, but that’s not necessary,” as he threw dirt on top of the bill. “No, it is better that it rots away!” a middle-aged woman in the audience exclaimed. Finally Economic Growth was buried safely in the cold soil of the “Meadow of Peace”. The audience laughed relieved, drank upon it and applauded. The funeral had come to an end and the ritual in time and space was dissolved.

# The Greening of Christianity?

*Tine Damsholt*

On December 13, 2009, Christian church bells all over the world chimed. In the event inspired by COP15, each bell rang 350 times in reference to the 350ppm (parts per million) which according to the United Nations is the maximum level of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The synchronised ringing was a global event beginning at 3 pm local time starting in Fiji in the South Pacific, where the day began, continuing in Copenhagen and across Denmark, then Europe, on to the United States and Canada, and finally concluding again in the Pacific, where the day ended. The bell-ringing marked the hope and resolution for the world to act.

In Copenhagen, the bell-ringing was also the concluding part of an ecumenical celebration in Copenhagen's Lutheran Cathedral, Vor Frue Kirke. This service was hosted by the National Council of Churches in Denmark and the World

Council of Churches. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, well known for his deep commitment to the issues of climate changes, and Archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu were both part of an international group of clergies performing the event aimed at addressing nature and climate issues explicitly in prayers and preaching and implicitly through the choice of hymns. The Danish Queen and Prime Minister also attended the celebration, together with political and religious leaders from all over the world. As Christians they would unite in praying for a successful and fair solution to the COP15 negotiations for the benefit of the world. Was this simply a global Christian congregation or the emergence of a new green religion?

Certainly this was not just another day of mundane service in the Danish cathedral. A

special liturgy for an ecumenical and climate centred celebration had been arranged including a procession carrying three symbols of climate change. First a piece of bleached, dead coral from the Pacific Ocean was presented. It symbolised rising sea temperatures, the polluted, suffering and dying ocean worlds. It was followed by some desiccated African maize, symbolising drought and desertification, of failed crops, human hunger and suffering. Finally, some uncovered glacier stones from Greenland completed the selection. They represented the melting polar worlds, rising sea and river levels and the loss of life-giving, mountain water sources. Three reverends representing the respective origins of the sacred objects made prayers holding their associated symbol of climate change, following an introductory prayer: "Lord, we lay in your hands these symbols of your suffering creation. Forgive us our part in the destruction of your carefully balanced world, our home and community. Help us heal and reconcile your earth". The prayer's message alludes to the central justification of involvement in climate politics that many churches and theologians have adopted: combating climate change is a way to celebrate and take responsibility of God's crea-

tion. If the earth is destroyed, then so is mankind. To take care of and celebrate the creation is to celebrate God.

The religious dimension of climate change was also symbolically materialized outside the church. The melting polar bear Trude – an ice sculpture from Svalbard by a Norwegian artist – had taken the prominent place on one of the two pedestals surrounding the portico of the cathedral, the former place of the psalmist King David (the statue had recently been stolen). Christianity and green politics had merged. Were we witnessing a green branding of Christianity, a sacralisation of climate change or an entirely new green religion emerging?

From a secular point of view, politics and faith should be kept apart. Thus the deep entanglement of Lutheran Christianity and climate politics has not been without its critics both outside and inside the Danish church. From the inside it is argued that climate change does not need a religious argument and that environmental behaviour in the name of God tends towards new versions of the "righteousness of deeds". Some right wing theologians even argue that the "green version" of Christianity is simply a new manner in which left wing reverends and congregations challenge capitalism and the present



*The melting polar bear Trude outside the cathedral in Copenhagen by the artist Olaf Storø.  
Foto: Olaf Storø.*

Danish government: “Green churches are like water melons – green on the outside but red inside” (Hauge 2009). From outside of the church the involvement into environmental concern is

often regarded as an attempt of green washing: a strategic green branding of Christianity currently facing a declining following amongst Danish citizens. Is it simply a way to lure non-believers back to the church?

Either way, the moral imperatives of Christianity and climate responsibility seem to complement one another. The deep ethical dimensions of climate concern and environmental awareness that many analysts have highlighted, find a natural domicile in Christianity (and other religious movements). Doing good and doing green have become synonymous in the global political arena of the 21st century. If you don't do good (green) deeds you are either a (climate) sinner acting against your conscience or a non-believer, a heretic in an environmental as well as a religious perspective. Sinners and heretics must repent and be brought back into the flock, and the double bind of this new “green pastoral power” – in the Foucauldian sense – is that salvation lies simultaneously both in the next world and the present. Worldly and religious aspirations have merged and a new hybrid “conduct of conduct” (Foucault 1984) has emerged. As such the greening of Christianity can be interpreted as part of the ongoing de-secularisation, as several scholars have noted (Berger 1999).

The new green moral imperatives are not just for Sunday rhetoric or ecumenical celebrations but also intended for everyday practices in the Danish churches. The recent initiative “Green Church” has devised a European checklist consisting of 48 measures organised into 6 categories of environmental behaviour in the everyday church life. To be registered as a “green church” the church council must agree to at least 25 of the measures including 2 within each category. The 6 categories span a wide ranging field, from church services content to waste handling. Services are required to have Creation as a theme, be held in open-air at least once a year and incorporate the environment and justice where appropriate. Information, education and social care arrangements should include the same themes as well as making collections for the benefit of the Third World. Church purchases should be limited to fair-trade, locally-produced and environmental-friendly products when possible. It is also important that a “green church” should use eco-friendly energy and implement energy-saving technologies. Bikes rather than cars are to be the means for “green church” transport, both for attendees and personnel, and finally waste sorting and recycling are to be enforced.

If the church can agree to the minimum of 25 measures and annually report on its ongoing improvements, a diploma and certification will be awarded. The incentives are clear but perhaps “green churches” will also experience some of the difficulties other sectors implementing green certification and labelling, such as hotels, have experienced: that customers expect the green option to be visible and materialized. Will labels or stickers on churches and special versions of services be the future? Will we be able to order a “green baptism” or a “green funeral service”?

Doing green also requires the negotiation of certain difficulties and dilemmas. Following COP15 and the hyped greening of Copenhagen and Denmark, some people mentioned the hypocrisy that some of the “green churches” with an explicit agenda of saving energy nevertheless maintained the traditional Christmas illumination throughout December (Revsbech 2009). Not exactly energy saving. This illustrated one of the inherent dilemmas in the new green version of Christianity: greenness as well as religion has to be practiced, celebrated, and made visible to be convincing. Thus doing green and doing good are not always synonymous. And it is not easy to be a faithful and trustworthy green church.





Where do green politics become visible in everyday life? Food is one such arena. Ecological grocery shopping has been one of the most rapidly expanding consumer trends, especially in Scandinavia. Eating green not only becomes a moral or ideological act, but also a personal investment in a healthy life style, but “tasting green” can mean many things. What is green and what is not? In the past it was much simpler, green food stood for vegetarian alternatives or ecological produce. Then came the CO2 debate and all of a sudden green was also about local production and short transports. Ecological vegetables flown in from distant producers became problematic and the meat industry started feeling nervous when it was pointed out how a simple beef steak called for a lot of carbon emissions. Restaurants are one arena where such trends and developments in green thinking can be observed.

The 27 of April 2010 was a great day for Copenhagen. When the prestigious list of the 50 best restaurants in the world was announced in London the Copenhagen restaurant NOMA came out as the winner. NOMA is not your average Michelin restaurant, it is an eating place that is “green” in many ways, and its success tells you something about the ways in which gastronomy has become an arena where environmental concerns are sta-

ged. NOMA is part of a green trend in many ways, primarily by focusing on ecological produce but also by focusing on the local. If it isn’t produced in Scandinavia, NOMA won’t serve it. A look at the menu on the winning day tells a story of what local green farmers can supply at the end of the winter and in early spring. Restaurant guests find things like kale, birch syrup, biodynamic grain, winter carrots, dill and lovage on their plates.

NOMA is an example of the greening of the Öresund region in many ways. Like other trendy “Nordic” restaurants it depends on a network of ecological farmers on both sides of the Öresund. A new economic niche has emerged for ecological farmers in the regions surrounding urban centres. They supply produce for high-class restaurants but at the same time they become a local attraction, for example, Österlen in Eastern Scania, which attempts to market itself as a kind of Scandinavian Toscana.

The following three papers on green restaurants do not concern high gastronomy but rather everyday eating. What does a shawarma stand in a Copenhagen street, the Hard Rock Café and the eco-restaurant BioMio have in common? In different ways they have reacted and adapted to the growing interest in green cuisine.

# The Greening of Two Hard Rock Cafés

*Vasia Moragianni*

Three years ago I walked into the Hard Rock Café in Athens in order to ask for a student job. A week later I got the job and started working in this international company that sells millions of burgers all over the world. Three years later I ended up in Copenhagen, pursuing a degree in Applied Cultural Analysis and still working part time for the same company. What I had never expected is that one day I would write an article about the process of “greening” of a Hard Rock Café. But as people say, life is full of surprises!

Hard Rock Café (HRC) is an American company that was established in 1971. Since then hundreds of Cafés have opened throughout the world, and millions of tourists visit the cafes every year. But someone could sincerely ask: “what does a Hard Rock Café has to do with

green and eco friendly?” When clicking on the official website of the HRC ([www.hardrock.com](http://www.hardrock.com)) one can notice one of the four mottos that the company uses and promotes; that is “Save the Planet”. In the restaurant world this was a very early eco-slogan, but how do they pursue this obligation and do all Hard Rock Cafés employ the same strategies?

Having experienced working in two different Cafés in Europe, one in Athens and later in Copenhagen I was interested in exploring the world of a big international chain and spotting the differences between the two cities. Copenhagen tries to promote itself as a “green city”, especially before and after the COP 15 event. With a range of green hotels, restaurants and cafes as well as the Danish green lifestyle Copenhagen is aiming in becoming the first CO2 neutral city in

2025. While Athens is a big city that is far from becoming CO2 neutral any time soon.

The green branding of Copenhagen has caused many touristic attractions to adopt a more eco-friendly outlook and this also includes the HRC

of Copenhagen. How green is the Copenhagen Café compared to the one in Athens? The café in Copenhagen is using recycled paper, instead of plastic, bags and a range of eco-friendly products are sold in the merchandise store. In a recent ini-



tiative seeds are given to kids that come into the restaurant so they can plant a tree – a classic eco-symbol. Such strategies are visible to customers, but what about the differences one can only notice as an “insider” (Labaree 2002). What is not visible to the customers in Copenhagen are the recycle bins for paper, glass and food in the kitchen, and the use of sustainable growth napkins and blue recycled/biodegradable cleaning paper. The invisible parts are invisible simply because they are not promoted by the company.

In Athens it was different. When it comes to what I mentioned before as “visible parts” the policy is the same in every café all over the world. What makes the cafés different are the “invisible parts”. Here there is a space for different local policy and it is up to each café to decide whether they will use sustainable growth napkins, for example. The green climate is different in Athens, where the promotion of green living is not so popular and widely used. Also the fact that going green might mean higher overheads further discourages its implementation.

Having worked in two Cafés in two different

cities and experienced their respective lifestyles has made me realize that the reason why the HRC in Copenhagen is trying to be more eco-friendly, especially in invisible ways, is not just because the Café tries to promote itself of being green. There is a bigger and more complex explanation.

In a world where more and more people want to be green, Copenhagen tries to be even greener. The competition becomes tougher, and both national and international companies in Copenhagen, as well as individuals try to become more eco-friendly and develop a sustainable lifestyle. To be green in Copenhagen it is not enough to market a few eco-friendly products in the restaurant gift shop. In order to “Save the Planet”, a company like HRC Copenhagen will have to work harder and spend more in order as to be considered green enough, especially in the backstage regions of production. Being green in Copenhagen and Athens might mean different things. A chain like Hard Rock Café has to carry out the tricky balancing act between its global, standard brand and local demands.

# Eco-shawarma

## *Local/Global Green Fast Food*

*Betina Riis Asplin*

On my way from the central train station in Copenhagen one afternoon during the COP15 Climate Conference I stumbled upon a sign outside a shawarma stand: Christmas offer, eco-shawarma, only 15 Dkr. The handwritten sign on the stand suggested that this eco-shawarma was a recent offer, timed to coincide with Denmark's focus on environmentalism and green products at the outset of the Climate Conference. The vendor proudly informed me that they were the only shawarma-stand in Copenhagen that used ecological meat in their shawarmas. Other than the home-made sign and the ecological meat, nothing else seemed to say "green". They also sold baked potatoes, however nothing was mentioned about their ecological background and the napkins and cutlery were not made from recyclable materials. What could be the

story of this eco-shawarma, I wondered.

The shawarma has its origin in Turkey and is related to the kebab; however its popularity extends all across the Middle East. Globalization has led to a miniaturization of the world, making distant cultures and exotic cuisines available to anyone interested. As such, shawarma stands are now a common sight in the streets of Copenhagen, as common as the traditional hot-dog-stands. We are constantly introduced to new exotic food products from all the corners of the world which means that you can have "the world on one plate" (Cook 1996). Increasingly, there is a cultural materialization of the global economy, meaning culture is what is ultimately being produced and consumed. Roland Robertson suggests that "cultural diversity sells!" (1994:29), therefore one can argue that the meaning of



*What does a green hot-dog stand look like? This one has Danish symbols for ecological food all over the stand.*

food, which has been the focus of many anthropologists, no longer merely depicts cultural values, but is attributed significance through factors such as geographic origin and technologies of food processing. The labeling of the shawarma as an ecological product is a way of adding extra value to a food product and thus an example of culturally materializing the economy.

Globalization has fuelled the development of much environmentalist discourse. This has

been hugely important in Denmark, as well as the other Scandinavian countries, where “green” branding and “green” products are increasingly prevalent. New strategies are emerging in order to compete in the new global economy, resulting in a fusion of culture and the economy. This has stressed the cultivation of cultural values in order to stand out in the global market. Green is clearly a treasured value in Denmark, with the branding of Green Copenhagen and focus on

green culture, so ascribing an ecological value to a Turkish shawarma might seem like a strategic move in order to stand out in the Danish food market, especially in the outset of the Climate Conference.

The ecological shawarma can be seen as a hybrid: a global food product that enables you to indulge in exotic cuisine, but also a green food product which reflects the heavy emphasized environmentalist focus prevalent in Denmark. In this sense, you can have a little bit of Turkey and a little bit of Denmark on your plate in the very same shawarma.

Through continuing my culinary investigation, I found that shawarma is not the only ecological fast-food you can find on the streets of Copenhagen these days. In a busy shopping street you can find an ecological hot-dog-stand if you feel like biting into something greasy, yet green. The stand advertises with “eco” and “green”, but that makes you wonder: what does green really taste like? Apparently, an eco hot-dog is a fat-reduced sausage in multigrain bread wrapped in recyclable napkins, that not only enables you to

be a friend to the environment, but also healthy. Whether the green food trend is a way of taking care of the planet or taking care of our health, it is apparent that this global force helps shape local (in this case Danish) habits and awareness of ecology.

Robertson argues that globalization does not actually involve global processes but rather particular processes of which the global and the local interact. Thus, the global environmentalist discourse is not one coloring the world in the same shade of green. Rather, the local-global dichotomy calls for what Robertson terms “glocal” processes, where the local shapes the global and the global shapes the local.

A Danish shawarma and a global hot-dog illustrate the glocalization of the world. Either way we look at it, it is apparent that the global and the local are mutually constituted within the global discourse of environmentalism and that food consumption is succumbing to the twin forces of universalism and particularism (Bell & Valentine 1997:19). The world is actually on our plates. Bon appétit!

# 100% Green?

*Kenneth Mujih Fobezih Mungu*

Why do we eat what we eat? The primary reason is to satisfy the energy needs of a living organism. Like other animal species, humans must submit to this necessity throughout life, but they distinguish themselves from other animals by their practice of elected periods of abstinence (voluntarily, to save money, or in periods of shortage) that can go so far as the observance of a rigorous and prolonged fast (Ramadan in Islam, Lent period for Christians or African rites of initiatory purification) or as far as a steadfast refusal of all food. Human diets also stand out by the choice of food and how they consume. It is not only to satisfy the biological need but also cultural ones.

Right in the middle of the old slaughterhouse district of Copenhagen – “Meat Town” – is a restaurant that claims to be “100% ecological”:

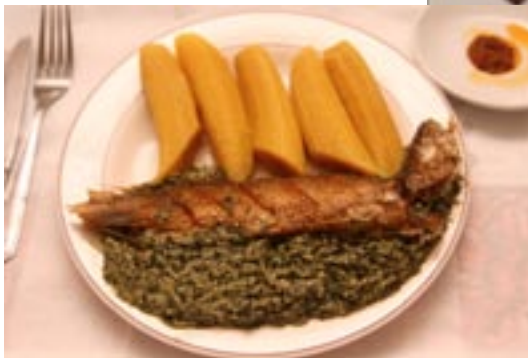
BioMio. The windows are full of eco-symbols and flyers assuring the guests that not only is the food ecological, the chef is also assisted by a dietary expert. This is healthy stuff. Inside the interior design echoes the same ecological message as its product.

During my visit, the clientele was as international as the menu: combining dishes from Europe, Asia and America. But in certain respects, the place reminded me of the Cameroonian cuisine – a country often branded as Africa in miniature. Cameroon has a population of more than 17 million people who are divided in ten regions, each having their specific culture and respective trademark dishes. This diversity in unity is often celebrated and branded through local restaurants, but at BioMio it was not a local Danish culture, but a cosmopolitan mix that was celebrated.



In a sense BioMio is an example of over-branding. The guests are bombarded by messages about the virtues of ecological and nutritional

cooking, and the result is a feeling of datedness. Today when green gastronomy is commonplace, BioMio resembles something from yesterday – the old pioneer era. Nowadays, green has its own trends and fashions. You only have to compare the two settings of BioMio and Noma to see that.



*Green reminders and advices turn up in all kinds of contexts – in public as well as private spaces. Here's a new suggestion for the bathroom.  
(Photo montage Jon Seidman)*

## *The Feel of Recycling*



As stated earlier, green is not an unambiguous concept, there are many shades of green and green comes in many versions. To many, one of the strongest connotations to green is 'clean' – the fresh, clean and non-polluted environment on a large scale but also waste handling on a smaller scale. Waste handling and practices of recycling are not universal but culturally specific and often part of the tacit and local knowledge which makes it hard to handle as an outsider. What is recyclable and what is accepted as waste? Should waste be sorted in different bins? And how and where do you recycle? A Spanish tourist visiting Copenhagen emphasised this cultural dimension:

*Every place has its own structure, has its own culture. So when you visit a place, you have to respect it in every aspect. For example in some culture or in some countries, it is possible that when you throw away something it may be acceptable. But in other countries it may not. You have to watch, to see the environment, you have to in a way imitate them, so you can fit in that culture and you don't create any kind of integration problems.*

Thus the wish to do green in a foreign context can evolve into a cultural analysis or field work

to be able to “do as the Romans when in Rome”.

Recycling is not only a way of managing waste but also a symbolic and emotional act – demonstrating a concern for the environment in the small scale of everyday life. Take the situation at the recycling station for example. It carries a special atmosphere of exhilaration. One visitor compared it to a secular Sunday Mass; another said “I am just feeling like such a good citizen”. Dumping stuff produces feelings of relief; you drive away with a lighter load, both in the car and in your light-hearted body. Lynn Åkesson has discussed the moral moods found at the disposal station. What is actually recycled here, trash or emotions? She suggests that refuse sorting may become an invocation. Without always being sure of what kind of recycling actually benefits the environment, people keep sorting, “because it feels good and is morally right. In some way it works as a disciplining task” (Åkesson 2006:40).

The two papers on recycling address this emotional aspect in different ways. Neal Storan watches people recycling bottles and discusses the moral dilemmas that accompany it, while Leila Valoura, Jenny Holmqvist, and Karen Paulsson wander around Copenhagen looking for trash cans. “Why is public recycling an important issue?” they ask.

# Message in a Bottle

## *Recycling in Everyday Life*

*Neal Storan*

Recycling bottles is a simple process, isn't it? You buy your drink and enjoy it at your leisure. And then you return the empty bottle back to the store. Simple. But here's the tricky part: why?

This is the question awaiting recyclers when they use a bottle recycling facility found in most Danish supermarkets. These machines reimburse the user with a monetary incentive (1–3 DKr) for every bottle returned; however, many recyclers are also confronted with a further decision: whether or not to donate the cash to charity.



Bringing bottles back to the store requires a certain amount of time, effort and inconvenience so surely the recyclers are entitled to

some compensation for their efforts. However, the donation button challenges this financial reward solution by accompanying it with issues of ethical merit and environmental responsibility. Is an empty bottle a couple of kroner in your pocket or is it a container for

moral action? Can it be both? I approached recyclers in a Copenhagen supermarket to try and get the bottom of this dichotomy.

### *“Why should I recycle?”*

From an environmentalists' perspective, it is obvious why people should recycle. Recycling, among other environmental benefits, saves energy, helps mitigate climate change, reduces pollution, and reduces waste in landfills (Lund 2000). But to many, the environmental reasons why they should recycle are not so clear, indeed many of the people I asked were sceptical that their recycling efforts would have any effect in combating climate change. One explanation for this ambivalence is that recycling (and more generally environmentally responsible behaviour) concerns future risk on a global scale (Giddens 2009). However, these are unfathomable consequences that no one can truly appreciate. Furthermore, this future risk is based on largely contradictory scientific theorising; some scientists prophesize a bleak future of rising global temperature and melting icecaps, whereas others point out that we simply inha-

bit a planet with a historical tendency towards natural climate fluctuations. What is consistent is that an accurate scientific study of the global climate situation is extremely difficult which leaves the individual with a personal dilemma whether or not to act on it.

### *Idealism vs. Realism*

Many authors have spoken about the power of environmentalism beyond its obvious climatic concerns. It is heralded as a way of life that transcends everyday tasks and puts more emphasis into why you do something rather than what you are doing (Hulme 2009). One respondent said that recycling “makes me feel good” and after recycling she feels like she “has done something positive”.

Could recycling then be perceived as a form of self-gratification rather than an act of genuine ecological concern? Does it matter? If people are recycling, then why should motives have any importance?

*“Climate change is not just an environmental or economic issue; it is a moral and ethical one.”*

– David Milliband, Former UK Environment Secretary, speaking at the Vatican, May 2007

Many recyclers however subscribe to the environmentalists' utopia, in which identities and relationships are centred on a vision of the future embodied through cooperation over competition, solidarity over disillusion, and hope over despair. This pseudo-religious doctrine seems infallible, but in the real world people also have to contend with more practical concerns. It is precisely this collision between ideological convictions and everyday practical concerns that confronts the bottle recycler.

The uncertain scientific evidence of climate change may discourage some potential recyclers, but respondents in my study unanimously agreed that being environmentally responsible is a good thing: "If everybody does their bit we can make a change". However, there are also countless practical barriers which complicate recycling tendencies. People may acknowledge the potential long term and widespread benefits of an eco-friendly lifestyle, but they might be less convinced of its more practical everyday pay-offs. For most it comes down to the issue of money, and financial rewards for recycling have shown a dramatic increase in participation in many cases (De Young 2000). However, could it be envisioned that a monetary incentive alie-

nates people from more fundamentally green motivations or does it simply help promote environmentally responsible behaviour whilst providing compensation for an individual's practical efforts.

Understanding peoples' attitudes to recycling is vital for implementing successful policy and intervention schemes (Williams 2006 in Miafodzyeva, Brant & Olsson 2010). The bottle recycling case study suggested that users are caught between two major motives, namely altruism and self-interest. This dilemma is multiplied by the lack of solid scientific evidence for the benefits, or indeed the extent of the problem, of environmental concern. Similarly, considering there are few observable effects of being environmentally responsible many people begin to question its worth and the extent of the problem generally. However, it is though a more symbolic discourse, one of ethical and moral responsibility increasingly being bestowed upon people that is regarded as a more potent motivator. As such it is perhaps ironic that in an era in which behaviours and actions are dominated by reason and scientifically grounded knowledge, people are urged to act environmentally due to an ethical and moral responsibility.

# “Trash-can of Worms”

*Jenny Homqvist, Leila Valoura & Karen Paulson*

Have you ever thought about trashcans in great depth? Of course, if there are none around when you need one, then you will miss them greatly. You may consider littering on the street or dropping your trash “by mistake” when there are no witnesses about. There seems to be a great deal of shame and guilt involved with trash in everyday life. What would happen if someone “caught” you throwing your trash around?

Trash (and trashcans) tells us intimate details of one’s life, which we may not want anyone else to know. Do you want anyone to know what you ate for dinner last night? The way we relate to trashcans seems detached



from us. We buy a product, then we consume it, and finally we throw it in a trashcan. Opening a soda can, is like opening a can of worms – trash neither keeps anything hidden nor gives an explanation. What you see is what you get. Throwing out trash can expose oneself to unwanted attention.

If trash can reveal so many details about us, should we now get closer to it and change our view of trashcans as a magic box, where our responsibility ends because some magic will happen once we close the lid?

Everyday we make many choices (some without even realizing it) and “being green” is one of the choices that one can make. During

the UN Climate Change Conference (COP15) in 2009 we witnessed a strong presence of a green tendency in contemporary society. Recycling seems to be everywhere. While doing fieldwork in Copenhagen we were struck by the fact that there is no public recycling system, just a trash can for everything. This is still the case in most cities in Europe as well as the rest of the world.

Trash has the transformative ability of guiding us to another layer within consumer habits. In opening this “trashcan of worms”, cultural processes in both the private and public realms are revealed. If there are no opportunities to recycle, then why recycle? We cannot expect people to carry trash around all day just so that one can recycle it at home, where people have separated bins for recycling collection. If there is a strong practice at home, then the next logical step is to bring this practice out in the open. However, “if there are no new recruits, practices fade away” (Shove et al. 2007:70).

During our fieldwork, we kept asking ourselves: what is our relationship with trashcans? Do we

see them as containers of “magic disposal” where we throw something in we no longer want, close it and forget about it because inside some magic will happen? The trashcan as interpreted as a “magic box,” in which its contents are out of sight and out of mind, actually reveals so much about people’s everyday life. “The reproduction of everyday life involves actively and effectively configuring and integrating complex assemblies of material objects – It is not a matter of appropriating or of being ‘scripted’ by isolated artefacts” (ibid.:143). But what exactly does trash symbolize that goes beyond the garbage itself? Do we know where the garbage goes after we throw something into a trashcan?



Trash is a part of our everyday life and intrinsically linked to our everyday habits, class differences and consumerism practices. Miller (2001:51) argues that there is no such a thing as “a dichotomy of person-thing”, but as we try to separate trash from our lives, it tells us an awful lot about who we are, what we consume, and our cultural processes. When the option to separate recycling is



offered in public trashcans, cities send a consistent message of awareness and participation in the way people deal with public trash as they do at home.

People are making the effort to buy green products (i.e. recyclable) but since public recycling is lacking, all this packaging is mixed in the public trash. The effort of shopping green goes to waste.

Being green should not be a hard choice, and it should be something that you “just do” without much effort. When it becomes difficult, for example if you have to plan where and when to recycle, the practice of recycling can become complicated, tiresome, and a burden. As Shove says, “practices only exist if they are regularly reproduced and enacted” (Shove et al. 88). There-



fore, if public initiatives don't “invite” people to recycle in public settings, this practice will fade and not become a habit.

### *Conclusion*

The “trashcan of worms” is sending a message of non-participation within the realm of recycling in the public space. Many European countries maintain and promote a strong developed habit of recycling at home, and this cycle should not be broken once a person enters the public space. There is a great need for public recycling in Europe and the Western world, as we have noted in Copenhagen. Perhaps a fresh attempt at introducing public recycling options will lead to new public practices and inspire a fresh interpretation of cities' role in the greening of society in general.

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