

3. The Construction of Climate Justice Imaginaries through Resistance in the Czech Republic and Poland

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Today, the use of coal—and control over it as a resource—is increasingly contested. Environmentalists tend to demand a post-carbon transformation, while the coal industry and the state seek to secure the continued use of coal. According to Huber and McCarthy (2017), subterranean fossil resources enabled the shift from a derivation of power through control over land and territory, to its derivation through control over machines and labour. Yet regions of fossil fuel extraction remain crucial for the power of the state, where these regions carry at the same time the unevenly distributed negative consequences of mining (Frantál and Nováková, 2014). State energy sovereignty based around domestic production of coal fosters local extractivism, resulting not only in the destruction of the environment but also in a comparably worse quality of life in the regions of extraction.

Resistance to coal mining can alleviate or even reverse this extractive relationship. Resistance may lead to an articulation of views and alternatives around futures without coal, not only locally in coal-producing regions, but also by highlighting and questioning the uneven impacts of climate change caused by coal combustion. The nexus between energy metabolism and political and economic power has a ‘glo-cal’ nature, exemplified by Klein’s term “Blockadia” (2015), which connects local cases of resistance to fossil infrastructure as part of the same movement. Local conflicts are not just isolated cases but have global, political, and economic implications. They show the

power of participants to intervene in the mitigation of climate change, an endeavour in which global leaders have failed. Yet, in each place, resistance creates specific risks to local power structures, giving voice to new groups and creating new dynamics and dependencies—and also provokes new state responses and regulatory powers.

In this chapter I am following the narrow definition of an overt resistance mentioned by Hollander and Einwohner (2004). Resistance is not only an intended act—it also has to be recognised as resistance by observers. Protests against coal mining—as acts of resistance—politicise nature-society relationships, and can be seen as acts of citizenship (Rasch and Köhne, 2016), but also provide a distinction between civil and uncivil actors (D’Alisa et al., 2013). As with other ecological distribution conflicts, resistance to coal mining could become a driver of sustainability, but also a driver of climate change mitigation (Temper et al., 2018). “Politics occurs wherever a community with a capacity to argue and to make metaphors is likely” (Rancière, 1999: 60): the capacity to argue goes beyond mere participation in a public debate, such as setting demands for politicians, or calling for certain legislative procedures. It is the ability to create an argument as a new frontline of political conflict that cannot be ignored or disregarded. In the case explored here, it is an expression of disagreement and discontent towards the corporate-state-mining complex which fosters the dependency of energy metabolism on coal. Such ‘arguments’ are a vital part of the demands of a radical democracy with alternative imaginaries (Lloyd, 2009).

This chapter provides an overview of the protest events organised by climate justice movements across two regions of lignite extraction in Poland and the Czech Republic—namely the North Bohemian Coal Basin and the Konin Basin. Although we can talk of a global climate justice movement, its manifestation, actions and power to affect energy metabolism vary in different areas, and I will explore these in an eastern European (EE) context. We can understand the climate justice movement as a polycentric struggle, where simultaneous and mutually coordinated tactics and approaches are deployed around the globe and against various levels of governance (Tormos-Aponte and García-López, 2018). However, we can observe two different streams of the climate justice movement with regard to the hallmark of global climate politics, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

summits. First, there are the reformist organisations, who observe and participate in the climate summits, known as Conferences of Parties (COP). The second, more revolutionary stream is intent on creating a different, radical and bottom-up politics. Climate camps are an example of the latter stream, which does not mean that they create a homogenous space. On the contrary, other authors observe divergent streams within the climate justice movement, such as leftists and environmentalists, anarchists and formal NGO participants, and all these groups have been present at the camps under consideration here (Reitan and Gibson, 2012; Saunders and Price, 2009; see also Novák, Chapter 2 in this volume).

Belonging to the broad and diverse tradition of protest camps (Frenzel et al., 2014), climate camps emerged in the UK in 2006 (Bergman, 2014; Russell et al., 2017; Saunders and Price, 2009), and during the last few years have been organised by climate justice movements in other European countries, notably in Germany. In EE, a climate justice movement has emerged only very recently. This is due to the specific situation of environmental activism in these countries, historically driven by the dependency on coal, on the one hand, and a prevalence of liberal environmentalism and transactional activism dependent on institutional funding on the other (Císař, 2010; see also Novák, Chapter 2). Actions of mass civil disobedience were relatively rare for environmental movements in European post-socialist countries. This chapter explores how the organisation and arrival of climate camps have changed this.

Below, I provide an overview of disruptive and constructive aspects of resistance during climate camps organised in the Czech Republic and Poland. To do so, I will first briefly describe the importance of coal for energy production in these countries. I will elaborate on the regional characteristics of extraction and energy policy in both states, as well as previous public mobilisations against coal. The empirical part is then divided into two sections. In the first, I will provide an overview of disruptive elements of the resistance, conducted against the power that controls the use of lignite reserves. In the second, I will focus on the aspects and conditions through and in which the movement creates a space for new, counter-hegemonic imaginaries.

The Importance of Lignite for Poland and Czech Republic

The Czech Republic, Poland and Germany are called the “European coal heartland” (Osička et al., 2020) because of their importance to overall European coal production. Whereas in Germany state policies and contingent roadmaps have deliberately transitioned to phase out coal, both Poland and the Czech Republic are reluctant to follow this path. In these latter two countries a steady decline has been observed in recent decades in the share of coal within overall energy production, as well as employment. Since the late 1980s, the share of coal had decreased to 47% of installed capacity by 2017 for the Czech Republic, and 70% of installed capacity in 2018 for Poland. The share of lignite is more significant in the Czech Republic than in Poland, where hard coal is a dominant resource (ERÚ, 2018; Macuk et al., 2019). In absolute numbers, coal production peaked in 1984 at around 100 million tonnes of coal a year in the Czech Republic and at 201 million tonnes a year in 1971 in Poland, which made it the biggest coal producer in Europe at that time, excluding the Soviet Union (Andersson, 1999; Kuskova et al., 2008).

State energy policies and the national long-term strategies of both countries are showing no clear plan to phase out coal. However, in Czechia, State Energy Policy (SEP) is factoring in a decline of 11–21% share of coal in energy production (MPO, 2014). Meanwhile, in Poland, SEP aims to maintain 60% of electricity generation from coal (Ministry of Energy, 2018). A recent study conducted by Climate Action Network Europe (Flisowska and Moore, 2019) shows a contradictory approach taken by both countries, whereby they are involved in funding for a ‘just transition’ while at the same time lack a clear plan for coal phase-out.

Resistance to lignite mining emerged in the interplay between opportunities to influence and eventually stop mining, and was exacerbated by the local effects and scale of physical mining activities. This situation is different across coal regions, not only because of the extent of coal reserves, but also because of the prospects of the lignite mining companies. Some mines and powerplants are more vulnerable to closure than others—this vulnerability is determined partly as a result of legislative procedures, partly due to their economic prospects, and to the role of public opposition. Therefore, it is important to describe the

conditions in which climate camps are situated in the respective lignite extraction regions under consideration here.

Approximately 75% of overall lignite production in the Czech Republic comes from the North Bohemian Basin region, and most of the potentially extractable reserves of lignite are located there. Given the importance of lignite for domestic energy production, this makes the region crucial for the Czech Republic. There are three open cast mines operating in the area, two of which belong to a private conglomerate, Severní Energetická, which operates the ČSA mine, and its daughter company, Vršanská Uhelná, which operates the Vršany mine. The third mine in the region, Bílina, is operated by a national energy company, Severočeské doly (a daughter company of ČEZ). A renegotiated governmental resolution expanding the territorial limits to mining at Bílina mine will prolong mining there beyond 2035 and the overall amount of extracted coal is expected to be up to an extra 150 million tonnes of lignite (“Severočeské doly a.s.,” n.d.).

In Poland on the other hand, the Konin Basin used to produce approximately 13 million tonnes of lignite a year, out of 53 million tonnes of lignite total (Konin Basin is one of four areas in total, out of which Belchatów Basin, with 41 million tonnes of lignite a year, is the biggest) (Mazurek and Tymiąski, 2019). Lignite is not as important a fuel in overall installed capacity as it is in the Czech Republic. It constitutes a share of 21%, whereas hard coal accounts for 49% (“Energy Transition in Poland — Forum Energii,” n.d.). Several open cast lignite mines are located in the Konin Basin, which are nearing the end of their reserves. The mines in operation at the time of writing are Jozwin, Drzewce and Tomislawice. Whereas Jozwin and Drzewce are close to full depletion of their reserves, the Tomislawice open-pit mine—the only open cast mine to open in Poland after it joined the EU—is facing legal obstruction. Altogether, lignite production in the region decreased to approximately 6 million tonnes a year and thus there has been pressure to open the Oszczislowo lignite mine in the region. All of these belong to a private venture, ZE-PAK (Ministerstwo Energii, 2018). In sum, lignite mining is close to reaching its limits at several mines and there is a drive to expand the limits at existing open pits (at Bílina mine, for example) or to open new open-cast mines (for example at Oszczislowo).

Although the importance of the lignite mined in both regions is very different for the overall energy metabolism of the respective states (in the North Bohemian Basin it is rather crucial, unlike in the Konin Basin), there are commonalities in their “coal culture”. This term refers to the way that the region is strongly connected to the heritage of industrial lignite mining (Brown and Spiegel, 2019; Kuchler and Bridge, 2018). The term “corporate-state-mining complex” attends to the interconnectedness of market mechanisms and state power in public-private ventures, whereby the population is socially engineered through the creation of financial dependency on sponsorship and funding by mining companies on the part of municipalities (Brock and Dunlap, 2018). For example, fees and taxes distributed to the communities affected by mining provide an important source of finance, but they also play an important role in facilitating the approval of mining activity by local authorities and inhabitants (Badera and Kocoń, 2014).

At the same time, both localities share a strong history of resistance to mining. Participants of the climate camp identified local referenda as milestones in the struggle against coal, as their organisation and campaigning involved the public in the decision-making process about the prospects of coal mining. The size of the settlements, attendance, and questions posed in the referenda, differed in each case (see Table 1).

Local referenda held in Horní Jiřetín (CZ) and Babiak commune (PL) were both organised by municipal representatives and the results—in which more than 90% of attendees voted against the expansion of coal mining in both cases—became legally binding, as attendance reached the required quora. The referendum in Litvínov (CZ) was initiated by the local organisation *Kořeny* and did not meet the quorum necessary for a legally-binding result. Yet, 95% of attendees voted against coal mining expansion. Not only are the actual results of the referenda important, but the mobilisation of the public and collaboration with NGOs helped to establish personal connections between various actors. The importance of the referenda for overall decision-making processes has been rather limited, as the power of national authorities goes beyond the power of affected municipalities.

Table 1. Overview of local referenda against lignite mining in North Bohemian Coal Basin and Konin Basin.

Locality	Year	Attendance	Percentage voted against coal mining	Questions	Notes
Horní Jiřetín (CZ)	2005	75%	96%	Should the municipality use all legal measures to protect houses from demolition and inhabitants from eviction? Should municipal representatives enforce lignite mining limits as effective protective measures against state and regional institutions?	
Litvínov (CZ)	2006	38%	95%	Should the city of Litvínov actively use all means to prohibit lignite mining to come closer to the city, while breaching the lignite mining limits established by governmental resolution nr. 444/1991?	Did not meet the quorum
Babíak (PL)	2015	43%	90%	Are you for the construction of a lignite mine within the Babíak region based on the „Deby Szlacheckie” field?”	



Fig. 1. Front banner of the march leaving Klimakemp in 2018 reads: “Do not change the climate, change ourselves. End coal.” Photograph courtesy of Petr Vrabec (2018).

Local resistance with tangible results, such as local referenda, creates a fertile ground in which new forms of resistance can then take root, especially when certain forms of injustice remain. Lignite combustion contributes enormously to carbon dioxide emissions and thus to climate change. Climate camps thus contest the causes of climate change in the very areas where fossil fuel extraction takes place and usually share several common objectives: 1) they are an open and horizontal, self-organised space; 2) they are a sustainable, prefigurative event; 3) they foster communication among people in the movement; 4) they provide a safe space near fossil infrastructure for organising direct action against it. Mass direct civil disobedience is one of the defining traits of the climate justice movement and provides a substantial point of differentiation between separate streams in the climate movement (Kenis and Mathijs, 2014). Direct action has moved from global climate summits to the ground-zero of fossil fuel extraction (de Moor, 2020). Unlike the goal of civil disobedient action during the summit—that is, to block and disrupt negotiations during formal meetings (Chatterton et al., 2013)—the goal of direct action during camps is to block the operation of the mining machines.

More than that, they provide a place to contest worldviews through the solidarity-based interactions on which they are literally built

(Kaufmann et al., 2019). Each climate camp is a site- and context-specific event, altering its name according to the local context. In the text, I refer to the Polish climate camp as *Obóz dla Klimatu*, and to the Czech one as *Klimakemp*.

Methodological Approach

This chapter is based on ethnography and participant observation. My participation in climate camps varied in terms of time and intensity, from being involved in the long-term preparation of the event, to participation in the event only. I understand my research approach as a ‘militant’ one (Russell, 2015; Urla and Helepololei, 2014), where I consider myself part of the political struggle, reflecting autoethnographic moments and co-producing knowledge together with research partners. Militant research might be criticised as failing on objectivity, due to ready bias on behalf of the preferences and political allegiances of the researcher. However, no research is produced in an apolitical vacuum. The pretense of objectivity in research might therefore reproduce and reinforce unjust status quos. Militant research may also fall short if it does not provide a salient critique of the movement it studies, even though it might create valuable knowledge for the movement (Halvorsen, 2015). Militancy could provide a novel point of view from within the movement, to help understand and position why anti-coal resistance matters for the wider climate justice movement. During this research I have conducted informal and semi-structured interviews, and I have also participated in the production of media outcomes created by the movement (Müller and Morton, 2018).

This chapter is a comparative inquiry as I focus on four events: climate camps organised in two consecutive years in two localities of lignite extraction. Gingrich and Fox (2002) emphasise the importance of an engaged approach in comparative anthropology that reflects power relations and personal trajectories. Comparative inquiry is based on engaged anthropological research in the vein of the classical environmental slogan “think global, act local” (Peacock, 2002). I also understand it as related to Giri’s (2006) call for ontological epistemology, where multi-sited fieldwork is important for a comparative effort that acknowledges partial connections rather than amplifying wholesale systemic differences.

Environmental and climate justice scholarship is sometimes criticised for being too connected to the movement and particular case studies. For example, Jenkins (2018) sees climate justice as an all-encompassing and incoherent framework to be sufficiently translated to legislative procedures and mechanisms and thus not effectively delivering justice to affected social groups. In the following section, I focus on events where climate justice is formed as the political subject on the ground, where actions transgress resistance beyond geographic location and across scales. To conduct resistance against lignite mining includes political meaning and is part of “social processes, through which people make sense of their world” (Simmons and Smith, 2017). I follow the work of Carl Death (2010) on counter-conduct; that is, the moments of interaction with various layers of state power through which contentious subjectivity emerges. It is not only material and historical conditions that shape contentious interactions, and emotions also constitute the performativity of these actions (Houston and Pulido, 2002; Juris, 2008). In other words, acts of resistance matter for participants too. Contentious activities have a profound importance for a collective identity as it creates space for the cooperation of various social groups, where cooperation would have been hardly imaginable in earlier times (Polletta and Jasper, 2001).

Defying the Power around Lignite

Resistance to lignite mining was performed and articulated in different ways during protest events. Here I focus on the elements of the resistance that are disruptive to the power that enables and causes lignite mining to endure in an EE context. The existing power structures counter the resistance to lignite mining by deploying precautionary measures as part of a repressive apparatus against participants of climate camps. In turn, climate protests and activities attempt to overcome these silencing measures to disrupt the mining operation and the discourse that justifies it. Participants attempt to respond to the policies and legislation that influence energy metabolism.

Undoing the Extremist Label

Before the first climate camp in the Czech Republic in 2017, the Ministry of the Interior listed *Klimakemp* within their report in the section on 'Leftist Extremism'. As a response, the climate justice movement released an open letter addressed to the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, where not only the legitimacy of the listing but also the understanding of the term extremism was contested ("Otevřený dopis," 2017). In the open letter, the term 'extremism' was reinterpreted as a means of assuming a 'business-as-usual' approach to fossil fuel extraction. The letter also argued that when participants build and maintain a space for climate justice, they demonstrate that protection of the climate is not a crime, but part of the common, public interest. This counter-conduct to the imposed label of extremism could be seen as part of the creation of the subjectivity of the movement, as the action of the movement showed the fossil fuel industry as the real threat to society, rather than the peaceful protests (Kurik, 2016).

During the protest actions, police used the opportunity granted to them by precautionary measures against activists, to cause inconvenience and spread uncertainty. In 2019, police searched buses carrying protestors to the legally announced and permitted demonstration in Kleczew, checking the technical state of the buses, but also the personal information and identification of the passengers. The material aspects of precautionary and repressive measures also changed. Throughout the route of the demonstration at the Bílina mine in 2018, police accompanied protestors using various kinds of equipment, including horses, quads, a helicopter and other vehicles. Technological and power dominance was a clearly visible part of police conduct, such as when approximately half the protestors, who broke rank *en route* to the mine, were caught within a few metres. Despite their technological dominance, officers acted in a physically aggressive way, notably against a participant who suffered broken ribs, and to whom they did not provide immediate medical help.

Yet the 'precautionary measures' of the repressive apparatus also had protective consequences for the movement. The presence of the police hindered the threat of direct physical violence by opposition groups, which in the case of Poland were associated with the Facebook page *Odkrywkowo*. After the action, *Odkrywkowo* posted an acknowledgement

of police work. On the one hand, they lamented the use of batons and tear gas against protestors, while, on the other, the post ended with the implication that without police presence, the protest could have ended up as a violent confrontation between miners and participants of the protest: “If there would be an open confrontation with miners—green extremists would collect financial contributions for other purposes...”—implying the need to cover medical expenses for those beaten.

The above-mentioned preventative and repressive measures show a part of what it takes to preserve the operations of lignite infrastructure. The costs of social resistance to mining operations can also be expressed financially, as for instance when the mining company *Severočeské doly* claimed an economic loss of more than 660,000 CZK (approximately €25,800) against several dozen activists. Economic loss calculations reflect how the mining company values mining operations, but also show the costs that direct action can cause. One of the central slogans of the movement—“We are the investment risk”—is financially expressed by the mining company and the claim could be perceived as an attempt to externalise the burden on the participants of the resistance. However, at the same time, the claim has become one of the mobilising arguments for the movement. The action of the movement has caused economic loss to what was perceived by protestors as illegitimate extractive activity, and thus sought to make less profitable. At the same time, the movement provided solidarity and support to prosecuted participants, which also served to attract new participants, who may have been scared of the costs and consequences of future actions.

Contesting Coal Politics: Protests as Reaction to Decision-Making

To question certain procedures publicly also highlights the disenfranchisement and lack of meaningful opportunities for participation in the extant procedures of ostensibly ‘democratic’ government. When, in 2015, the Czech government renegotiated a key resolution known as ‘limits to lignite mining’, the most extractive scenario incorporated the need to demolish the city of Horní Jiřetín (Lehotský and Černík, 2019). Nation-wide public mobilisation against this emerged around the slogan “*Limity jsme my*”—“we are the limits”.

The slogan expressed a willingness to put protestors' own bodies in the place of insufficient governmental considerations. While governmental renegotiation of the position of 'limits' resulted in a victory for Horní Jiřetín, limits were still breached at a different open-cast mine, Bílina. Two years after the renegotiation, the slogan transferred to the movement that organised the first *Klimakemp* at the saved Horní Jiřetín. The camp questioned the broader consequences of lignite mining that were not appropriately taken into account during the renegotiation, particularly the mine's contributions to climate change.

The first *Obóz dla Klimatu* was organised in summer 2018, half a year before Poland hosted the UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties in Katowice. Polish dependency on coal was in the international spotlight and people resisting domestic lignite mining highlighted their cases amidst large international protests, notably the *March for Climate*. These resistances ruptured the image of Poland that its President Andrzej Duda had tried to claim (Berendt, 2018). The following summer, in 2019, the protest gained greater legitimacy as an EU infringement procedure was raised against Poland for continued mining operations at the Tomislawice mine. According to the European Commission, this mine was working without a valid hydrological permit ("Fundacja RT-ON—Komisja Europejska: odkrywka Tomislawice narusza prawo," n.d.). Protests during the second *Obóz dla Klimatu* attempted to block mining operations directly, when neither regional nor national authorities acted against the mine despite its infringement of legal requirements.

Building Counter-Hegemonic Imaginaries

In the previous section, we have seen how protests created ruptures in the power networks that sustain lignite extraction. However, the resistance also creates ground for new demands. Protests connect various actors and open up possibilities for their future cooperation and for the building of alternatives. In this section, I will provide examples of the construction of counter-hegemonic alternatives during protest. First, this relates to internationalisation, whereby symbolic means and tangible acts connect local struggles against lignite mining with the global climate justice movement. Second, I will focus on the acts connecting previous struggles at the sites with the emerging climate

justice movement. Finally, I elaborate on moments in which various contemporary social and emancipatory struggles have converged with the ecological.

Internationalisation

Climate camps appropriate internationally recognised symbolic and visual instruments from the global climate justice movement and translate them into a local context. During the *Klimakemp* in 2017, participants formed a red line, joining hands in a human chain at the edge of the Czechoslovak Army Mine with a red line sprayed along the sleeves of their white overalls. Chanting “*Limity jsme my*”, the human red line embodied a governmental resolution. A red line was also formed during “picketing”—showing statements on banners and pickets—on the first *Obóz dla Klimatu*, serving as an object for cameras and media images, with the Patnow powerplant in the background. The year after, another red line served as a meeting point for all previously separated action groups as participants met again in the park in Krzyszkowice, where they started to spread alongside the road on the edge of the Tomislawice mine, going through demolished parts of the village. The large red ribbon stretched several hundred metres, connecting groups of participants previously separated by different action levels (those engaged in civil disobedient action and those who were not).

Similar to the red line, white overalls became a symbol of the climate justice movement in Europe, notably in Ende Gelände actions in Germany (Sander, 2017). They contrast with black bloc tactics, bearing a different meaning and historical legacy of non-violence (Juris, 2008). In these civil disobedient actions, white overalls created a collective body, as individuals were hardly distinguishable from each other in the crowd. Along with respiratory masks, white overalls provide protection from dusty environments, but also make it harder for police to act against the uniformed crowd and to identify each participant.

International participants are directly involved in activities at all climate camps. At *Obóz dla Klimatu* in 2018, anti-coal activists from Colombia shared their very different experiences of struggles: first in a workshop, and then, during the protest, one of the activists became

a spokesperson to the media. When replying to a TV reporter's question about why she does not protest at home, she articulated the protest as part of the struggle for Mother Earth ("*Protest ekologów przed konińską elektrownią*," n.d.). The slogan, which translates as "Enough compromises in the protection of Mother Earth", provides a counterpoint to the nationalist discourse on energy security based on domestic lignite production and expands the notion of citizenship—not only citizens or locals become seen as having the right to intervene in the domestic regime of extraction.

Climate camps also provide opportunity and inspiration to develop the struggle. The idea of organising a climate camp in Poland was raised during the first climate camp in the Czech Republic. As one participant describes it: "I was in *Limity* in the Czech Republic last year, with two other Polish people who are also in the organisation group. We were sitting, drinking beers and thinking: Hey, let's do something like this in Poland next year," (personal interview, 2018). This is what Tormos-Aponte and García-López (2018) describe as mutual learning in the movement, bringing recognition of the struggle to other localities.

Building on Previous Struggles

If we understand the building of international connections as horizontal, with relations to the history of previous and future resistance forms as interconnected, then there may also exist vertical connections located in particular places. In both regions, across Poland and the Czech Republic, a history of struggle against lignite mining exists, notably conducted by local inhabitants against its direct effects. Climate camps enable people who are also affected by other aspects of lignite mining to find common ground within this heritage.

By 2015, there were various forms of resistance ranging from referenda to a tractor blockade against the plans of the mining company, ZE-PAK, to expand open cast mining in the region. Protests highlighted the exploitative nature of the enterprise, often personified by the owner of the company, Zygmunt Solorz-Zak. Pickets, banners and slogans addressed to the owner, such as "Mr. Zygmunt, not on our land" also appeared at the climate camp. Although not all the participants and organisers of the previous protests attended the climate camp in person,

some of the representatives of the initiatives joined climate camps and held speeches during protests at *Obóz dla Klimatu*.

During the 2019 *Klimakemp*, connections to previous struggles were made directly during the protests. On the march, for instance, protestors walked through Libkovice, the last village demolished because of lignite mining in 1993. At that time, civil disobedience blockades attempted to stop the demolition and the actions were some of the first by the emerging environmental movement in the Czech Republic. Participants of the original blockade also joined the march in 2019 and spoke about their experiences at the spot where the first round of speeches had taken place. Through such moments, the resistance of the past was felt in the present, commemorating the history of the environmental movement and resistance against coal mining in the country.

Convergence Nodes of Emancipatory Struggles

Apart from historical and regional struggles, current social resistance also creates conditions in which climate justice movements emerge. Connections between various emancipatory struggles form an imaginary of viable alternatives to the injustice connected with lignite mining. The emerging climate justice movement in Poland was founded from the very beginning on delicately balanced cooperation between various groups, including local farmers, anarchist groups and NGOs. *Obóz dla Klimatu* in 2018 set a goal to create a safe space, a laboratory where different groups of people can meet in a respectful atmosphere to create an easily accessible entrance point into the movement for new participants and, to that end, refrained from civil disobedient action.

During the protests at *Klimakemp* and *Obóz dla Klimatu* significant solidarity was expressed with workers of the lignite mining companies. Protesters brought their translation of the just transition, which was originally a unionist concept (Stevis and Felli, 2015). The expression of solidarity with workers was evident through slogans in the protests, such as “*in solidarity with workers, but never with open-pit mines*”, or “*four-day working week*” as a rather desirable, one-sided plea. Employees or union members of the mining companies did not participate in the debates organised during the camp’s programme, despite their invitation. After the first *Obóz dla Klimatu*, the concept of just transition was contested

by *Inicjatywa Pracownicza*, an independent unionist magazine in Poland (Urbanski, 2018). Both *Obóz dla Klimatu* and *Klimakemp* attempted to discuss democratisation of the energy sector. Common ground for an imaginary beyond coal mining, that included both workers of the mining industry and the climate justice movement, remained elusive both inside and outside of climate camps. Currently both regions are involved in the EU Platform for Coal Regions in Transition and it is questionable whether this platform will provide an opportunity to move beyond an approach to just transition based on a 'green economy'.

Critique of green growth or market-based solutions is contentious in the environmental movements of post-communist countries, where liberal environmentalism has been prevalent (Jehlička et al., 2005; Novák, 2015). However, groups identifying themselves as anti-capitalist also participate at climate camps. The Polish slogan "People first, profits later", or the front banner at the *Klimakemp* 2018 saying "Don't change the climate, change ourselves. End coal", emphasise the importance of systemic critiques articulated during protests. Rather than silencing anti-capitalist voices, careful translations of the overarching central slogan of the climate justice movement—"System Change, Not Climate Change"—situate the systemic critique and vocabulary of these movements in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Various voices are present in climate justice resistance in the regions of lignite extraction, some of which might not be perceived as directly connected to the issue of lignite mining and climate change. After their return from the protest to the 2019 camp at *Obóz dla Klimatu*, participants learned about violent attacks on the Białystok LGBT Pride March. Shocked and shaken, participants immediately organised a solidarity group picture, taking a clear stand for the value of diversity—a controversial topic in contemporary Poland. Such tangible acts of inter-movement spill-over serve to broaden the realm of justice (Hadden, 2014).

Conclusion

Climate camps in the Czech Republic and Poland have politicised the dependency of both states on coal and the extraction of lignite. Through resistance, the area of extraction becomes a place of contestation, but also becomes connected and intertwined with the global scale of the



Fig. 2. Group picture at Obóz dla Klimatu in solidarity with Pride in Białystok. Earlier that day, on 20 July 2019, the Pride march was violently attacked. Photograph courtesy of Ewa Bielańczyk-Obst (2019).

climate crisis. Resistance is not a monolithic activity—each event is situated in specific conditions that make it significant. In this chapter, I have identified two aspects of the resistance: disruptive and constructive. I have looked at certain moments that made resistance significant for the participants, but also for the opponents of the climate justice movement.

The disruptive force of resistance is evident in the precautionary and repressive measures deployed against the protestors before, during, and after climate camps. From discursive efforts, such as framing the resistance as extremist, to the technological dominance of police during the protests, or the calculation of the economic loss caused by the protests—all of these tactics demonstrate a concerted effort to contain the disruption caused by the resistance. Such resistance is also situated within the political and legislative context that influences lignite mining. Protestors politicised specific government resolutions in the case of lignite mining limits in the North Bohemian Coal Basin and the infringement of water permits in the Tomisławice mine, in Poland, or disrupted the national discourse of energy security based on domestic coal production.

Climate camps in Poland and the Czech Republic are also examples of constructive resistance. In these camps local cases are symbolically bound to the global and international context, with visual means of sharing amongst members of the global climate justice movement being deployed. Climate camps are open to international participation and thus expand energy citizenship beyond the nation-state. The camps also acknowledge and build on previous struggles, introducing knowledge about the previous protests to new participants and expanding their awareness of contemporary issues of climate justice. The resistance at climate camps also broadens the realm of justice, which might not be perceived as directly related to coal mining or climate change. It opens up debates about the democratic imaginaries of nature-society relationships within the movement, for example by contesting the meaning of any singular 'just transition'.

Although we can understand climate camps in both countries as events of the same global climate justice movement, in this chapter I have also interrogated important differences in the translation of tactics and organisation of camps to their respective contexts. The movement reacts to broader social problems to challenge hegemonic power. Probably the most notable difference between the Czech and Polish cases emerged in Poland, where climate resistance was extended to encompass support for the LGBT Pride march in Białystok. This was in response to violent threats from those opposing the messages of the climate camp. Such broad social- and identity-entanglements have not as yet been a characteristic of the Czech environmental resistance context.

Climate camps in both Konin and the North Bohemian Coal Basin create a leverage point that pushes for an earlier coal phase-out in their respective states, both of which are considered part of the coal heartland of the EU. These events matter to participants as they empower them to participate meaningfully in shaping society's energy metabolism by intervening in the dynamics of lignite mining. This resistance to lignite mining at climate camps seeks to rupture a socio-technological imaginary based on coal dependency. It also sparks a debate about broader socio-ecological transformations, politicising the issue of justice, and opening up new possibilities of a post-carbon future. More than a decade after the first climate camp in Britain, *Klimakemp* and *Obóz dla Klimatu* show how this way of organising has travelled and expanded to new regions and has been adjusted to EE contexts.

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