**When corporations ruled the world - how it happened and how we can change it**

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Abstract

The elevation of transnational corporations was not anticipated by the framers of the United Nations Charter, nor contemplated by its initiating organs and agencies.  The international success of market-capitalism and TNCs has made accountability for unrelenting environmental destruction and climate change difficult to attach to the singularity causing these problems – that of development policies and consumption patterns in the first world.  Entrenched neoliberal policies in most first world nations and now inherent in all UN agencies, which along with the WTO predicate global environmental protection upon free-market capitalism, such that the ‘rising tide lifts all boats’. This position is at odds with reality, in which the rising tide of neoliberal globalization threatens to burst the banks.

International NGO efforts to constrain consumption and move from the neoliberal paradigm to date have been spectacularly unsuccessful, to the degree that some of the most serious human rights abusing and ecocidal corporations have cast a veneer of corporate social responsibility by involvement and engagement with UN bodies and institutions.  Governments and industry applaud soft international CSR initiatives precisely because they do not challenge the single greatest cause of global inequality and harms - neoliberal market fundamentalism.  A way forward is within the current UN system of international law, under attack by the corporatocracy. Civil society objections to environmental destruction were effectively silenced by TNCs by their support for the chimeric ‘sustainable development’ platforms at the 1992 Rio Conference. Two decades on, the success of social media may offer new solutions to the previously intractable problems of communicating in a world besmitten by celebrity on offer from commercial media outlets.

Speaker Biography

My paper is based on my LLM, which asserts that the international legal framework for a just society based upon human need, not human greed, is already in place, and it is up to civil society to reclaim.

I have an LLM in international law, on the fraud that is corporate social responsibility with a case study of Rio Tinto in the Asia-Pacific region. I have worked on laws to protect dugongs and turtles from humans, and advocate for animal, environmental and human rights issues - most recently supporting the Lake Eyre to West Papua Freedom Flotilla. I am particularly interested in food, and food security, and the impact mass food production has on the environment, on animals and on we as humans. I have worked briefly as a lawyer, but prefer environment, animals and poverty. I also have five children, three at home who take much of my days.