ODID Working Paper Series: Focus on IBSA

An Introduction

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In recent years, emerging powers have received increasing attention, both in the media and in academic circles. In 2001, Jim O'Neil famously wrote a report for Goldman Sachs entitled 'Building Better Global Economic BRICs', which focused on the rising economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China.[2] This nifty acronym quickly slipped into common usage, shaping perceptions across the globe and also encouraging an alliance of sorts between the countries themselves, who gathered for their first BRICs summit in 2009. One year later, South Africa slipped into the acronym and the group have been keen to demonstrate their collective and individual political-economic power, recently re-stating their intent to launch a development bank and a currency stabilisation fund to cater to the needs of Southern states. Meanwhile, analysts have continued to play 'geo-political boggle' (Cooper-Knock and Jain 2013) penning acronyms like CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa) and MIST (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey) in an attempt to predict and describe other rising economic blocs (UNDP 2013:44).

Comparative work on these emerging powers has been fruitful, and research into BRICS in particular has expanded greatly in recent years (Becker 2013; Budd 2012; Brutsch and Papa 2013; Graham 2013; Muller 2011). Ultimately, though, the latter has been limited by the vast

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[2] http://www.content.gs.com/japan/ideas/brics/building-better-pdf.pdf last accessed, 15th November 2013.

differences between these five powers. Even just in economic terms, they diverge greatly: South Africa's GDP, for example, is only equal to that of China's sixth largest province.[1] Future growth prospects across the five countries also look radically different.

In this set of working papers, we have chosen to focus instead on IBSA – India, Brazil, and South Africa. As the papers in this series will demonstrate, there are much stronger comparative threads between these multi-ethnic, multi-cultural democracies and emerging economies than there are between the wider BRICS group (although the complexities and problems of cross-country comparison are also highlighted within the series). Furthermore, we shift the focus of discussions from primarily economic issues to primarily political ones, which have received far less attention in the comparative studies of emerging powers to date.

The working papers in this set each provide rich, insightful, but succinct comparative perspectives on central and contentious issues, including: formal politics, parties and elections; sustainable development; everyday politics and social movements; and the politics of mega-events. All of the papers have been written by three authors, each of whom is a specialist on one of the countries in question. These groups initially presented on panels together as part of a weekly 'IBSA: comparative perspectives' seminar series that ran in Queen Elizabeth House during Trinity Term 2011. The analysis that you read in the papers is the outcome of ongoing discussions between the authors over how best to make fruitful comparisons across the three countries. Comparisons can, of course, take very different forms - they may be technical, descriptive, analytical or theoretical - and the papers in this set play with these divergent forms of evaluation. They also continue to question the degree to which such comparison are feasible and desirable.

We hope that this set of papers will make an important contribution to the nascent comparative literature on emerging powers, and studies of IBSA in particular. As Series

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Working Paper Number 199
Sustainable development in India, Brazil, and South Africa

Elizabeth Chatterjee, Carl Death, and Laura Pereira[3]

Considering sustainable development as a discourse which, although global, is manifested with considerable variety and diversity across the world, this paper explores various dimensions of the politics of sustainability in India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA). We explore the contested meanings and implications of sustainable development as framed by these three emergent powers, both on the international level and within different levels of the Indian, Brazilian, and South African polities themselves. The first empirical section compares the countries' uses and effects of the discourse on the international stage in terms of international branding. The three countries have all played prominent, but slightly different, roles in the international contests over the discourse between the global South and North. Secondly, we examine the operation, adaptation, and evolving power dynamics of state institutions at different scales as they respond to the changing discourse. Thirdly, we look outside the state to compare the role of three key non-public constituencies—corporations, the middle classes, and marginalized resistance movements—in each country, and their own reshaping and subversions of the sustainable development mainstream. We conclude by echoing the call for the 'need to fashion new—or refashion old—analytical and political tools, tools for making the future natures that we wish to inhabit' (Braun and Castree, 1998: 35).

November 2013[4]

Introduction

Sustainable development has become a ubiquitous and central component of the environmental and international development lexicons since the Brundtland Report defined it as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987: 43). Like social justice and democracy, it commands near-universal support from diverse actors across the world. Altogether, these three terms seem almost 'beyond criticism, contemporary versions of motherhood and apple pie' (Adger and Jordan, 2009: 3; O'Neill, 2011: 137). The attractiveness of 'sustainable development' lies in its vagueness, internal inconsistencies and limited prescriptive value, for which it has been much criticized (Frazier, 1997: 182; Lipschutz, 2009: 137). Yet the power of sustainable development lies precisely in this slipperiness and contestability: it is a dynamic, heterogeneous discourse which establishes certain fields of visibility and concern, restructures development practice, and empowers specific actors (Dryzek, 2005: 145-7; Death, 2010: 36). Whilst the homogenizing, universalist tendencies of sustainable development have received much attention (e.g. Carruthers, 2005: 291-2; Dresner, 2002), the content and consequences of this discourse are locally translated and inextricably linked to particular political-economic contexts. More cynical commentators have likened our fascination with sustainable development to waiting for Godot, whilst we continue to squabble over the increasingly threatened state of the planet (Guimarães, 2004: 222).

This paper combines discursive and material evidence to compare the political uses and transformations of sustainable development within a particular, critically important context: the democratic 'emerging economies' of India, Brazil, and South Africa. The three countries are respectively the world's third-, thirteenth-, and twelfth-largest CO_2 emitters.[5] They have also all played prominent roles in the international contests over the discourse between the global South and North—forming the influential 'BASIC' climate change negotiating bloc (with China)—and have used the opportunity to buttress their national brands on the global stage. In each case, failure to convincingly combine environmental sustainability, economic development, and social justice for the many has generated similar social movements of those disillusioned with the 'big development' enterprise. Each country displays characteristics of 'advanced liberal government' regimes, emphasizing consensus and cooperative partnership with business, 'responsible' citizens, and 'civil society', whilst harshly disciplining those marginalized movements which resist the dominant model. Simultaneously, substantial variations in the rhetoric and practice of sustainable development exist across the three countries, not least as a result of their very different characteristics: population and economic size, natural resource endowments, political history, industrial development paths, and so on.

This diversity can be briefly illustrated, by way of introduction, in terms of the constructions and usages of the idea of 'nature' on the India-Brazil-South Africa ('IBSA') Dialogue Forum website. The three countries' self-profiles each make a virtue of their diversity of population and geographical uniqueness. But there are major differences between the hundred-word descriptions: South Africa chooses to emphasize the presence of the 'Big Five' animals and 'breathtaking scenery', whilst Brazil highlights its biodiversity and

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[5] *CIA World Factbook,* CO_2 emissions from fossil-fuel-based energy consumption (2010 estimates), accessed 31 October 2013 at https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2254rank.html. This masks variation: India's CO_2 emissions increased twice as fast as Brazil's between 1990 and 2012, while South Africa's emissions grew more slowly and its per capita emissions remained stagnant (Olivier et al., 2013).

especially the vastness of the Amazon rainforest. India, conversely, declares itself 'the sixth nation to have gone into outer space to conquer nature for the benefit of the people'.[6]

Taking its point of departure from these different representations of national natures, this paper is animated by what might be termed, to borrow Braun and Castree's formulation, 'a continuous vigilance to the sort of natures we are producing—to how reality is being remade' (1998: 35). We argue that India, Brazil, and South Africa are particularly interesting and vitally important sites in which the nature of twentieth-first century environmental challenges are being made and remade. It is in these three countries that the term's internal conflicts are played out, as the Brazilian *National Report to the Earth Summit* of 1992 aptly points out:

> [I]n situations of extreme poverty, an individual who has been marginalized from society and from a nation's economy has no commitment whatsoever to avoid environmental degradation, if society cannot prevent his or her own degradation as a human being in the first place. (Guimarães, 2004: 222)

The following sections explore the tensions between and the implications of sustainable development within different levels of the Indian, Brazilian, and South African polities. The first section compares the countries' uses and effects of the discourse on the international stage, and particularly analyzes their attempts—not always successful—to carve out a global identity and influence. Secondly, we examine the operation, adaptation, and evolving power dynamics of state institutions at different scales as they respond to the changing discourse. The penultimate section looks outside the state to compare the role of three key non-public constituencies—corporations, the middle classes, and marginalized resistance movements—and their own reshaping and subversions of the sustainable development mainstream. We conclude with a call, borrowed from Braun and Castree once more, for the 'need to fashion new—or refashion old—analytical and political tools, tools for making the future natures that we wish to inhabit' (1998: 35).

On the international stage

India, Brazil, and South Africa are all negotiating new roles in the international state system commensurate with their increasing economic and regional importance. Within the constraints and opportunities provided by the system, they face the question of what kind of power to become. One option (represented by China) is to imitate the older 'hard' great-power model that construes influence as the ability to deploy military, economic, diplomatic and nuclear force. India, Brazil, and South Africa have so far tentatively pursued an alternative path, which instead aims less at the structural transformation of the global system than at its reform and exploitation. This strategy prioritizes not only the international redistribution of wealth, prestige and power, but also qualitative processes of recognition aiming at the production of emerging powers as respected and esteemed members of international society (Nel, 2010: 963, 953). Continuing the postcolonial search for equality, this 'struggle for recognition' has centred on inclusive multilateralism, respect for the development needs of the global South, and the exercise of soft (cultural, ideological and persuasive) power on the global stage (*ibid*). Normative battles over sustainable development therefore play a fundamental role in contemporary Indian, Brazilian and South African foreign policy and national identity formation.[7]

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[6] 'Country profiles', IBSA website, accessed 28 September 2011 at http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=72.

[7] A similar IBSA claim for representational fairness might be seen in the demand for UN Security Council membership. Brazil and India have joined forces with Japan and Germany (as 'the G4 nations') to actively pursue elevation. South Africa has to tread more cautiously given the African Union's consensus position that the African seat should rotate, but supports the candidacy of India and Brazil

Nation branding

The first half of this iterative process of national identity construction on the global stage has increasingly come to revolve around 'nation branding'. This refers to image management that allows countries 'to attract the "right" kinds of investment, tourism, trade, and talent… [and] to attract international legitimacy, foster and maintain domestic loyalty, and reap the financial rewards on offer in the trade-liberalized global marketplace' (Aronczyk, 2008: 42). As self-declared representatives of the global South, all have had some degree of success in using sustainable development to stake out such an identity and a sphere of influence.

Brazil has enjoyed a good deal of success in recasting itself as an 'environmental powerhouse' stewarding vast natural resources, especially around forestry and the Amazon (itself a 'charismatic mega-forest'). It was one of the earliest countries to emphasize the Southern 'development imperative', repeatedly invoking claims to sovereignty over the Amazon and portraying Northern environmentalists—who wanted to 'save' the rainforests from the Brazilians—as a threat to national security (Dalby, 2009: 21). At the same time, it has profited from the portrayal of the Amazon as a global public good and a poster-child for conservation and biodiversity. The rainforest is important for the functioning of the global environmental system as a carbon sink and a regulator of the global climate and its conservation is therefore a central concern on a global level. Brazil is now decisively moving away from a purely expansionary development attitude to the Amazon as a 'huge, untapped reservoir of resources' (*ibid*)—deforestation peaked in 2004—to spearhead REDD+ efforts in the spirit of sustainable development. That being said, the development angle is always reinforced. At a seminar on the 'Strategic Vision of the Amazon' in Brasília (14 October 2010), environment minister Izabella Teixeira stressed that Brazil's development depended directly on the sustainable development of the Amazon, with then-president Lula da Silva emphasizing that 'It is possible to grow, to develop, without destroying it.'

In order to meet this developmental agenda with an environmental conscience, Brazil has adopted a focus on technological innovation to enable it to grow sustainably. It has been referred to as 'a natural knowledge economy… with an innovation system based in large part on its natural and environmental resources, endowments and assets' (Bound, 2008: 16). The message from Embrapa, Brazil's agricultural research corporation, is that 'the Brazil that you must know is one of technology, innovation and competitiveness' (Lopes, 2010). This has gone hand in hand with a reversal of the idea that comparative advantage based on natural resources is indicative of an immature economy (Bound, 2008). However, despite making inroads towards realising sustainable development, quite often this has not been accompanied by environmental law. There are complaints, particularly from farmers in the Amazon, that Brazil needs modern environmental legislation that combines agricultural production with environmental conservation. The implications of outdated legislation can be seen in the recent, slightly schizophrenic, move towards revisiting the Forest Code from 1965 that sets aside 80 percent of farmland in the Amazon biome for conservation (Schwartzman et al 2012).

South Africa's bid for environmental leadership was emphasised in 2009 when, days prior to the opening of the Copenhagen COP15 meeting, it announced an ambitious target of cutting CO_2 emissions growth by 34 percent by 2020. Michelle Ntab Ndiaye, executive director of Greenpeace Africa, observed that 'this makes South Africa one of the stars of the negotiations' (Greenpeace, 2009). It seemed that South Africa had successfully distracted attention from its coal-reliant energy profile, and per-capita CO_2 emissions, which were far

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(Nel, 2010: 955). This desire to join the hierarchical order of 'great powers' sits uneasily with the claim to represent the whole global South.

higher than Brazil and India and above even those of the UK (Raubenheimer, 2011).[8] This prominence in the climate change arena was furthered when Durban was selected as the host for the 2011 COP17 meeting, which was greeted by domestic media as 'both a mark of South Africa's growing diplomatic status and another opportunity to shine on the world stage' (Groenewalde, 2011). This was part of a longer tradition: as hosts of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, South Africa had set out its aspirations to be seen as 'the negotiating capital of the world' and 'custodian of sustainable development' (Death, 2010: 110-115), and it has consistently branded itself as a haven for charismatic mega-fauna and mega-diverse flora. Whilst international recognition and prestige have been an important part of the motivation for this branding, building upon the high international esteem for the country's negotiated transition from apartheid, tourism has also conditioned the role the environment has played in foreign policy. It was no coincidence that until recently sustainability was within the purview of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism,[9] and the presence of the 'Big Five'—the lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo—on the national currency communicates a powerful subliminal message.

India, often bracketed together with the equally enormous China as the new villain of carbon emissions,[10] cannot draw on the same conspicuous abundance of resources for its international identity. For pragmatic and principled reasons, it has been a vociferous supporter of the Southern development imperative against Northern attacks on the idea of "common but differentiated responsibilities", lending it some of the older lustre of its Cold War-era anti-colonialist leadership. India was a key architect of international climate change architecture and norms, helping to shape the language of 'equity' embedded in the UNFCCC, and has earned a reputation as the most intransigent of the BASIC countries in international climate negotiations. Along with its potential nuclear independence, its peacekeeping activities, and its broad South-South diplomacy,[11] this goes some small way to answering the accusation that India is losing its identity as it grows, having abandoned 'principled non-alignment' in favour of a more pragmatic and pro-American orientation (Brar, 2005). Yet Indian policy elites also debate the merits of proactive domestic action, and of a 'responsible', pragmatic international stance commensurate with India's newly sizeable economy (Sengupta, 2012b; Narlikar, 2006).

Multilateralism, the lifeblood of this new international politics of recognition, reached its apotheosis in the pageantry of the great environment and development summits. If India captured headlines at the UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) with Indira Gandhi's emphatic declaration that 'poverty is the worst form of pollution' (Dresner, 2002: 8), then it was Brazil and South Africa who located themselves squarely at the centre of international debates on sustainable development as the hosts of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992, 2012) and the

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[8] Figures for the tons of CO_2 emissions per capita in 2010 were as follows: South Africa 9.2; India 1.7; Brazil 2.2; and the UK 7.9. Source: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC (accessed 27 September 2013).

[9] These were split by incoming president Jacob Zuma in 2009, and a new Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) was created.

[10] The Byrd-Hagel Resolution (1997) against the Kyoto Protocol, passed by the United States Senate 95-0, singled out India and China as particularly energy-hungry and dangerous rivals—interestingly, along with Brazil, Mexico, and South Korea.

[11] India is currently the third-largest contributor to United Nations peacekeeping forces in the world; the largest is its archrival Pakistan (second is Bangladesh; see http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2013/oct13_1.pdf). India took an early leadership role in the G20 coalition, alongside China and Brazil, as well as of IBSA. It has also pursued other South-South friendships aggressively, including with ASEAN (1996 and 2002), Putin's Russia (2000) and Mercosur (2004-5) (Hurrell and Narlikar, 2006: 432).

World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002). The summits succeeded not only in illustrating the capability of South Africa and Brazil to organize mega-events—particularly important in crowning the South African narrative of post-apartheid redemption—but also highlighted them as the representatives of the global South's environmental agenda in their respective regions.[12]

Transfer of resources
Along with recognition, redistribution has been a second pillar of India, Brazil and South Africa's stance on sustainable development (Nel, 2010). All are rhetorically committed to the cause of post-colonial, international, and intergenerational justice, especially in the field of sustainable development, and call for special treatment for the global South. As India's Eleventh Five-Year Plan stated:

> The burden for reducing energy emissions must fall largely on the industrialized countries… The challenge lies in determining a basis for collective action which is fair and provides equitable entitlement to the global environment space with burden sharing in a manner which recognizes the very different levels of development and also the very different degrees of historical responsibility for causing the problem in the first place. (Planning Commission 2008, vol. 1: x, 206)

Their reading publics are perhaps equally convinced that the responsibility and burdens of climate change mitigation ought to rest solely on Northern shoulders (Billett, 2009). To this extent, their environmental foreign policy might be characterized as idealist or emancipatory.

One of the IBSA Dialogue Forum's main demands is for significant technological and financial assistance from developed (Annex I) countries under the Kyoto Protocol to assist the global South in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Brazil has vociferously called for an aid-based REDD fund for developing countries, and has recently benefited from the financial flow towards sustainability. The establishment of the non-reimbursable EU- and G7-supported Amazon Fund in 2008 aimed to reconfigure economic incentives away from lucrative deforestation towards the preservation and monitoring of the Amazon biome. It was heralded as a 'paradigm shift' in Amazon management (Grudgings, 2008), and seems to indicate that the North is more willing to pay for direct carbon-offset schemes than for mitigation and adaptation activities in the South. India has had less luck with its consistent demands for sustainable technology transfer and a more relaxed international property rights regime as part of climate change negotiations, although several of its faster-growing states have successfully exploited the availability of cash through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), of which India has hosted more projects than any other country except China. South Africa has also been a high-profile location for CDM projects and accounts for over half of sub-Saharan Africa's total projects, albeit far fewer than either Brazil or India (Winkler, 2009: 232). The South African projects range from 'flagship' schemes such as the Kuyasa low cost housing project in Cape Town which retrofits township housing with solar water heaters, and has been awarded a 'gold standard' rating, to the controversial Bisasar dump methane-extraction and electricity generation project in Durban, which has attracted substantial local opposition and has divided local communities (Lohmann, 2006: 287-99). Funding for climate adaptation—such as through the Green Climate Fund—was one of the central issues at the 2011 COP17 meeting in Durban, and has emerged as a key plank of current discourses of 'green growth' and the 'green economy' (Death, forthcoming).

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[12] Whether the North gained a greater appreciation of the Southern case for international equity or the nuances of geography and politics seems doubtful, however (Dalby, 1996: 607-8).

Regional hegemons

Environmental issues are also closely entwined with the regional politics of the IBSA states, each of which lay more or less explicit claim to regional hegemony. While India's claim to dominance in its neighbourhood remains contested despite its vast size, South Africa's inclusion within the BRICS and BASIC groupings rests precisely on its claimed status as the 'gateway to Africa'.[13] Apartheid South Africa's policy of regional destabilization has been replaced since 1994 with discourses of 'African Renaissance', 'non-indifference', regional integration and trans-boundary cooperation. Encapsulating many of these discursive themes has been the development of more than 20 existing or proposed trans-frontier conservation areas (TFCAs) or 'peace parks' in Southern Africa (Duffy, 2006; van Amerom and Büscher, 2005). Their advocates stress the political, economic, ecological and social benefits of conservation areas which cross state boundaries, require multilateral cooperation, allow animals to migrate more freely, and involve communities in park management. However, in some cases existing power imbalances and tensions can be exacerbated, such as in the Greater Limpopo TFCA between South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where issues of migration into South Africa, and the sharing of economic benefits between the far wealthier South Africa and its less well-off neighbours have created considerable frictions (Wolmer, 2003).

Another potential environmental flashpoint between the IBSA states and their neighbours concerns shared water resources. According to the World Commission on Dams in 2000, India accounted for 9 percent of the world's total dams, after the USA and China; Brazil came ninth globally with 1.2 percent, and South Africa eleventh with 1.1 percent (WCD, 2000: 370). India's enthusiasm for dam building has been evident ever since Nehru's famous 'dams are the temples of modern India' speeches. Always an unpopular and overbearing regional hegemon, energy and resource concerns only worsen tensions with its neighbours, as in the case of the Farakka Barrage, completed in 1975 against Bangladesh's wishes, and the abortive Arun III hydroelectricity project in Nepal. India's poor relations within South Asia—the world's least integrated region—threaten to undermine its credibility as a global player, especially as China tightens its grip in the neighbourhood.

As an extremely water-scarce country, South Africa has jealously guarded its water security, sometimes to the point of military action. In 1998, what appeared to be an incipient coup in Lesotho was accompanied by rumours that the insurgents were planning to sabotage the Katse Dam (Africa's highest), part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, an '$8 billion, multi-phase water supply infrastructure project designed to divert rain water and runoff from the Senqu/Orange River through a series of five dams and tunnels, across the mountains of Lesotho to the urban and industrial heartlands of South Africa hundreds of kilometres to the north' (Bond, 2002: 130). South Africa, claiming Southern African Development Community authority, responded to the plea of Lesotho's collapsing government by sending troops in its defence, but instead of securing order in the capital Maseru, troops were deployed first to

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[13] Economically and demographically, South Africa may seem an odd match for India and Brazil. Its population is one-quarter the size of Brazil's, and less than one-twentieth that of India (UN *World Population Prospects: the 2012 Revision*, accessed 31 October 2013 at http://esa.un.org/wpp/Documentation/publications.htm). Its economy is one-sixth the size of Brazil's and one-fifth of India's (2012 nominal GDP; see http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-ranking-table, accessed 31 October 2013). When South Africa officially joined the renamed BRICS in December 2010, the grouping finally corrected the embarrassing absence of any African partner. Unlike the economic logic of Goldman Sachs' BRIC grouping, the IBSA collective is based on a richer political definition: the three are all 'large pluralistic, multicultural and multiracial societies'—although again the fact that they represent three different continents is stressed (www.ibsa-trilateral.org, accessed 31 October 2013).

Katse Dam, killing between 16 and 27 of the Lesotho Defence Force troops (*ibid*: 131). The international fallout was embarrassing to South Africa, especially at a time when the World Commission on Dams was being launched under the Chairmanship of Kader Asmal, then South Africa's Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry.

Despite the success of its economic growth trajectories and capital differentials, Brazil has not wielded its regional power asymmetry to the environmental detriment of its neighbours. Sitting on one of the largest bodies of trans-boundary groundwater in the world, Brazil entered into the Tupi-Guarani agreement with Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina, but due to increased commercial interest and political contestation between the four countries, pollution and rapid depletion pose a serious threat to this resource. Mercosur is responsible for controlling exploitation and sustaining its equitable utilization. Regional co-operation is typified by the Itaipu hydroelectric power station at Iguaçu Falls, the largest in operation in the world, which is jointly operated by Brazil and Paraguay. Originally, the negotiation, completed in 1966 whilst both countries were under dictatorships, gave Paraguay a raw deal; it was forced to sell its excess capacity to Brazil at preferential rates. However, these terms were renegotiated in July 2009 when President Lula da Silva agreed to triple Paraguay's income from the project as well as allowing the country to sell excess capacity to Brazil at market rates. Thus, Brazil's president willingly sacrificed approximately $240 million a year to aid the broader goals of calming tensions with the country's neighbours, promoting regional integration and asserting Brazil's leadership in the region (Barrionuevo, 2009). Brazil therefore uses its environmental resources in order to reinforce its regional clout. For all three countries, the high moral rhetoric of fairness and solidarity on the global stage must contend with the more prosaic, asymmetric realities of relations with their neighbours.[14]

Tension: partners or outsiders?
At least since 2002, sustainable development has been seen as reframing a once-radical debate in terms of consensus, partnership, and cooperation. The rise of the three as spokesmen of the global South in contradistinction to the developed North, however, begs the question: are India, Brazil and South Africa 'responsible' (or docile) members of the international status quo, or are they reconfiguring the international state system? Evidence from sustainable development is mixed. India has demonstrated a consistent, stubborn willingness to pursue a high-risk, highly defensive, hard-line strategy in a variety of international negotiations—in part because of its diplomats and strategists' continually strong anti-imperialist mind-set (Narlikar, 2006: 72). Brazil has also had an active role in developing-world coalitions, exposing the hypocrisy of the North. Likewise, post-apartheid South Africa has become 'markedly more bold in its distributional demands' on behalf of the region since the launching of the IBSA Forum in 2003 (Nel, 2010: 959). As the IBSA Forum, G20 and G77 show, they are all major players in the institutionalization of strategic South-South cooperation.

On the other hand, the potential radicalism of this 'Third-Worldist' grouping can be overstated today: *Realpolitik* may, rather, be the order of the day. Firstly, the influence of the IBSA countries is not a new phenomenon. Their impact on global sustainable development discourse precedes the most dramatic phase of their rise. Emergent powers have acted as 'norm makers' in international climate change negotiations since at least 1992: 'the striking feature' of the original Earth Summit was their influence upon both the agenda and

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[14] Assessing the IBSA countries' foreign economic policies, Nel and Taylor (2013) contrast the rhetoric of South-South solidarity with their policies' tendency in reality to 'bugger thy neighbour'. The greatest losers from IBSA economic development and their climate change stance are small island states, several of which lie in India and Brazil's broader spheres of influence (the Maldives, Mauritius, and the Caribbean), though the BASIC group has at various times sought to win their support.

institutions of the climate change regime (Hurrell and Sengupta, 2012: 466). Secondly, it is not at all clear that the three countries have retained intact their older commitment to a unified and uncompromising Southern stance. Economic growth and the rise of new domestic actors threaten to complicate the older North-South framing of climate change politics on the international stage.

Brazilian and South African ambitions are less global than regional; all three countries still nurse closer relations and trade links with the North than each other; and some aspects of policy reflect the sense that these emerging powers have more in common with other actual or would-be powers than with the 'Global South' as a whole (Hurrell and Narlikar, 2006: 431). India's hardline defensive stance has also shown signs of wavering. Far more resource-poor than Brazil or South Africa, it has less political room to manoeuvre, and increasingly approaches climate change from a distinctly pragmatic direction. Moreover, its triumphs on the energy front have stemmed largely from bilateral rather than multilateral initiatives. One notable example of such agreements is the victory provided for possible energy portfolio diversification (yet to materialize) through the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal and non-proliferation waiver.

The formation of the BASIC group just before COP15 located the IBSA countries (with China) 'in a league of their own' within the global South (Hallding et al, 2011: 103). Yet, while the BASIC countries acted in unison in Copenhagen, in retrospect COP15 may have marked the high-water mark for IBSA cooperation within the narrow arena of global climate negotiations—though not necessarily for trilateral cooperation or national action. Even then, the BASIC bloc was already beginning to show signs of strain. Brazil pioneered voluntary, *ad hoc* commitments for Southern countries, a principle South Africa (and China) chose to support, against India's longstanding policy. By COP16 in Cancún, 2010, India, previously with China the most active architect of the BASIC bloc, was looking beyond IBSA or BASIC for support in its amendments to the negotiation text's 'Shared Vision' (*ibid*: 14-15). A year later in Durban, India found itself isolated and unable to prevent a virtual dismantling of the 'firewall' between developed and developing countries that had existed since 1992:[15] the large emerging powers agreed to legal constraints on emissions growth. BASIC, like IBSA, may survive as a forum for dialogue and cooperation—but it is not clear that united action by the countries on global sustainable development has a consistent future.

Observers are increasingly concluding that 'there is not going to be any *serious*, legally binding, international, and enforceable, deal for at least a decade, and possibly never' (Helm, 2012: 170). Instead, national action on climate change appears more promising. Each of the IBSA countries is moving beyond a simply defensive international stance to develop more or less ambitious national programmes. Yet their deployment of sustainable development is rooted in their own particular local interests and domestic politics, as the following sections explain.

Within the state

Public bureaucracies in India, Brazil and South Africa retain much discursive and material influence over the shaping and implementation of sustainable development. The nation-state in IBSA has survived the onslaught of global sustainable development discourse and environmental regulation largely unscathed—although one could argue that the state has been transformed in interesting ways by these discourses. Whilst literatures on ecological modernization and the 'greening' of states have tended to focus almost exclusively on so-

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[15] This isolation perhaps should not have been surprising given the pathological understaffing of India's foreign ministry. At Durban the Indian delegation comprised only 34 members, compared with 167 from China and 228 from Brazil (Sengupta, 2012a).

called 'advanced liberal states' in Europe, North America and Australia (Barry and Eckersley, 2005; Sonnenfeld and Mol, 2002), state transformations in the areas of resource management, energy and food security, and environmental regulation are also evident in varied forms in the IBSA states (see Conca, 2005; Oelofse et al, 2006; Weidner, 2002). Changing relationships and shifting terrains between state authorities and institutions, the private sector, civil society groups, and social movements are a common feature of environmental governance across the three countries.

Administrative rationalism
The dominant set of 'solutions' prescribed by state sustainable development diagnoses cleaves to the typical 'problem-solving' mode of administrative rationality. As Dryzek (2005) notes, few if any governments have genuinely moved beyond 'prosaic', 'reformist' approaches to sustainable development, which legitimate only moderate technical and economic reforms and not wholesale political, social or cultural transformation. In this mode, the favoured types of state intervention are devices such as model environmental legislation, regulatory agencies, national strategies for sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and white papers.

In each of the IBSA countries there are many examples of such statist approaches to sustainability planning. Brazil has a well-established Ministry of the Environment (MMA) and since 1981 has also established CONAMA, the national environmental council, which consults and debates on national environmental issues. It has also passed a national plan on climate change (MMA, 2008) and formed a working group looking at climate change mitigation efforts. Its 'solutions', however, often develop out of a technocratic discourse relying on technological innovation to overcome the barriers to production (and development). This scientific discourse has frequently failed to take into account the social and political dimensions of environmental issues. Economic incentives to cut down forests, for example, remain skewed. Instead it attempts to square the circle, depicting the drive towards technological innovation as a means to 'green growth' and build synergies between the economy and the environment: 'Natural resources must be seen as the basis for a revolution in the frontier in science… as well as a unique opportunity to build harmony between development and environmental conservation' (Lopes 2010: 143). This innovation has been left in the hands of well-funded public research institutions like Embrapa, which then stipulate the areas of focus for research.

In 2008, the Government of India also produced its *National Action Plan on Climate Change*. It outlined eight national 'missions', two of which—those on solar energy and energy efficiency—have proved genuinely dynamic. This testifies to a shift that may bring its foreign and domestic politics into somewhat greater alignment, helping to introduce climate change considerations into domestic policy. At the same time, the generally technocratic emphasis of Indian policy ignores the very *political* obstacles it faces in climate change mitigation, such as high levels of electricity theft (including by industrialists), and huge subsidies for fertilizers, kerosene, and agricultural electricity, which are being only slowly and painfully addressed.

For its part, South Africa launched a national climate change response strategy in 2004, and discussions at a climate summit in 2005 eventually led to a government team being assembled and mandated to produce a Long Term Mitigation Scenario exploring different development paths for South Africa, a process which has attracted much interest nationally and internationally (Raubenheimer, 2011). Environmental governance in South Africa is supposed to take place at national, provincial and municipal levels, and whilst capacities vary considerably across these levels and across the country, some cities such as Durban and Cape Town have amassed a considerable body of experienced, dedicated and knowledgeable

technocrats (Oelofse et al, 2006: 76; Roberts, 2008). These capacities were invoked and given something of a boost with the 'greening' programmes organized around the 2010 FIFA World Cup (Death, 2011). The Green Economy Accord was published by government in 2011, and a Green Environment Fund was set up with R800 million aimed at helping achieve a stated goal of 300,000 'green jobs' by 2020 (Death, forthcoming; Mthembu-Salter and Cullinan, 2011: 48-9).

The oxymoronic tensions within sustainable development find their concrete expression in the organization of the bureaucracy in all three countries, as development is prioritized over sustainability. The universalizing, integrative aspirations of sustainable development cannot overcome the bureaucratic logic of sectoral compartmentalization, which segregates the 'environment' away from growth and other priorities, typically in weaker ministries. In South Africa, for example, a de facto two-tier hierarchy of ministries means that sustainability strategies emanating from the Department of Environmental Affairs are often ignored by the more influential Department of Minerals and Energy. The ultimate inability of the World Cup greening strategies to have much impact on the sustainability of the mega-event was a reflection, at least in part, of the junior status of the environmental ministry and departments in the organising committee (Death, 2011). Environmental officials have acknowledged that 'officials in other departments, within all spheres of government, often do not see climate change as a priority and some even see it as working against national development priorities' (DEAT, 2004: 9-10). In India too, the Ministry of Power and other powerful, well-resourced ministries have typically dominated the smaller Ministry for New and Renewable Energy and (bar a recent period with a high-profile incumbent) the Ministry for the Environment and Forests, a favourite media scapegoat for sluggish industrial growth.

In Brazil, by contrast, the Ministry of the Environment has often proved to be an effective organ. Recently, however, it has come up against stronger agendas emanating from the agricultural and energy sectors. Just as South Africa's powerful mineral-energy complex dominates the political agenda there, Brazil is guided by a powerful agro-energy agenda with a strong focus on rural agricultural development under Presidents Cardoso and Lula. However, until her resignation in early 2008, Brazil had an ardent environmentalist in their Minister of the Environment, Marina Silva. As a former rubber tapper, she was often at odds with a development agenda in the Amazon, particularly around issues of expanding farming in the forest. Unfortunately, due to the pressure of losing too many battles over development in the Amazon, she resigned her post to be replaced by Carlos Minc, a founder of Brazil's Green Party and former environmental secretary for the State of Rio de Janeiro in what has been seen as a setback to halting deforestation in the country. Although not explicit, these internal power plays shape the particular angle of 'sustainable development' that is pursued in the country.

Complex governance
As this suggests, the IBSA states are characterized by a proliferation of governmental and quasi-governmental organizations—panels, working groups, expert committees, advisory bodies, missions, independent regulators—in the sustainable development arena. Rarely are older organizations wound down; instead, jurisdictions are parcelled out and mandates duplicated or contradicted, complicating the institutional assemblages of environmental governance. India, for example, is extremely unusual in that since 1992 it has possessed no energy ministry; with energy policy fragmented amongst at least five ministries (including those specifically representing the interests of coal and natural gas managers) and a plethora of other bodies. Dramatic action to integrate sustainable development concerns appears extremely difficult.

This dynamic is exacerbated in the larger countries by federalism. In India, 'provincial Darwinism' between its various states has created something of a race to the bottom in resource-rich states, and enables the central government to blame subordinate levels of the polity for the failures of its policies. Other states have shown dynamism in attracting investment into renewables (for example, solar parks in Gujarat), however. In Brazil, each level of government has the right to individually create its own legislation on nature conservation, soil and natural resources management, environmental protection and pollution control. The existence of doubled-up administrative domains and lack of coordination has historically (i.e. since the 1989 rewrites of state constitutions) posed considerable challenges to the current national political context. Unlike India, though, Brazil has exhibited an increasing level of integration amongst its diverse bodies at the federal, State, and municipal levels. The National Water Agency of Brazil (ANA), for example, was established in 2000 to serve as an executive-regulatory agency to coordinate and finance action and arbitrate conflicts amongst its multiple level of users. The creation of ANA, which initiated a general improvement of water resources management in Brazil, has encouraged stronger participation amongst varying bodies; enabled more flexibility and dynamism in planning and solving key problems; and is highly reputed as a new, unified water management paradigm.

Generally, though, the profusion of institutions, sites, practices and technologies of governance is not confined to the IBSA states: it is a wider characteristic of environmental governance. Indeed, standing somewhat at odds to the organizing logic of this paper, it is often difficult to identify clear boundaries between the global, regional, national and local levels, or between state and non-state, public and private forms of governance. Complex and hybrid forms of governance are emerging in environmental arenas, targeted at producing responsible and self-governing individuals, families, communities, companies, and state institutions, monitored by transnational centres of knowledge production.

Three examples illustrate this. Brazil's *bolsa floresta* pays forest households with monthly payments into credit-card accounts for practising 'farming without fire' (which is monitored by satellite). It therefore contributes towards the regulation and sedentarization of local populations, bringing them within the ambit of state and transnational environmental governance. Secondly, in the aftermath of the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, the *Indalo Yethu* legacy project was established in South Africa as an 'endorsement brand promoting greening and eco-friendly practices as a way of life', intended to 'enhance' and 'encourage' green products and services among the broader South African public through changing corporate and consumer behaviour (Death, 2010: 114). Thirdly, in Kumaon, in Northern India, Arun Agrawal argues that schemes to involve communities in local forest conservation and management have created 'governmentalized localities' and 'regulatory communities' which have redefined state and local relationships and created 'the environment' as an object of power and control (Agrawal, 2005).

Abundance and scarcity

One of the strengths of such perspectives, drawing upon the recent burgeoning of Foucauldian governmentality literature on environmental politics (see Chatterjee, 2004; Conca, 2005; Death, 2010; Dryzek, 2005; Goldman, 2001), is their attention to the way in which environmental policy and discourses do not float free of the 'real', physical world, but rather are anchored in the concrete politics of natural resources, populations, and economies. Brazilian, South African and Indian attitudes to sustainability are conditioned by very different allocations of natural resources: the two former by forms of abundance, although South Africa is water-scarce, and the latter by its role as a major hydrocarbon and mineral importer, which leaves the economy vulnerable to price fluctuations, as policymakers are

keenly aware. In addition, the three countries' approaches to sustainability are accompanied by socioeconomic inequality: South Africa and India are becoming more unequal as they grow, while Brazilian inequality is diminishing but from an extremely high level. Their rhetoric and practice of sustainable development is inseparable from the politics of allocation conditioned by these endowments and histories. For all their talk of 'greening' their economies, their current development trajectories have not shifted loose from these older constraints.

In Brazil, the environment is frequently conceptualized as a never-ending resource, permitting permanent industrial, productive and population expansion. Thus, the country has the environmental capacity to remain 'green' and environmentally aware whilst maintaining economic development, should it so choose. As well as its enormous rainforests and prodigious agricultural output (between 28 and 32 percent of GDP between 2003 and 2010), it now also boasts recently discovered oil, and is the world pioneer in efficient ethanol production from sugarcane. Consequently, it uses its energy matrix to prove its commitment to sustainable development, with 47.3 percent of Brazilian energy coming from renewable sources—and a mere 4.8 percent from coal—in 2009 (Embrapa 2010). However, Brazil's internal inequalities become reinforced with the stark differences between the semi-arid, under-developed northeast contrasted with the well-off southern regions that boast abundant natural resources. In fact, the construction of the controversial Belo Monte hydroelectric dam stemmed from a need for more energy generation for the northeast of Brazil, which had suffered a series of blackouts reminiscent of those experienced by South Africa in the late 2000s. With such a clear agenda of development as a means of rectifying unequal access to services, the environmental arguments often get left behind, as was the case with this project, which was approved despite heavy opposition.

South Africa relies heavily on a cheap and profligate coal-fired power sector, and the economy is driven by energy-intensive and environmentally damaging industrial and mining sectors (Bond, 2002). Coal accounts for 75 per cent of the country's primary energy supply, and over 90 per cent of electricity generation (Winkler, 2009: 15). Crises in electricity supply from the parastatal utility Eskom have led to power shortages, at the same time that the company is seeking to expand its grip over continental energy markets. Solutions to the power shortages include two major new Eskom coal-fired power stations at Medupi, near Johannesburg, and Kusile, in Mpumalanga. The Medupi plant would emit 25-30 million tonnes of CO_2 per year, and has accordingly been a target for critics, with even the USA, Netherlands, and the UK refusing to support the World-Bank-funded project. The Kusile plant is even larger; forecast to be the world's largest coal-fired power plant according to some calculations when it is completed in 2017. Alternatives include long-running off-and-on plans to expand South Africa's nuclear power industry, which have proved just as controversial with local communities and environmental activists. Commentators have described South Africa's development trajectory as, at best, a 'weak ecological modernization' pathway, with an 'implementation deficit' that further hinders reform (Oelofse et al, 2006: 62). The national macroeconomic strategy has been consistently directed toward achieving higher levels of gross economic growth and consumption, in search of reducing chronic un- and under-employment, encapsulated in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy of 1996 and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) of 2006. Neither of these paid much attention to questions of environmental sustainability.

Water expert Lyla Mehta (2010) speculates that scarcity acts as a totalizing discourse of modernity in the global South in the way that risk does in the North (cf. Beck 1992). Although scarce finance is the most prevalent of these, colouring all North-South debate and the complex and frequently painful politics of allocation at home, South Africa and Brazil

have both seen big anti-sustainable development projects forced through due to blackouts. Indian attitudes to sustainable development certainly cannot be understood without reference to pervasive fears about generalized scarcities of energy supplies and other crucial resources. Energy security is the watchword in New Delhi, marked by the establishment of a dedicated unit in the Ministry of External Affairs in 2007. In Indian policy literature, images of scarcity are widespread: in terms of finance, oil, coal, human resources, and private investment. These discussions of scarcity legitimize particular policy choices, with efficiency arguments typically prevailing over equity ones, especially on big dam or nuclear power plant construction; the justification of fairly aggressive resource pursuit in Africa; and the priority given to (dirty, low-calorie) domestic coal. As in South Africa and Brazil, parastatal energy producers remain powerful, producing a hybrid state-market system. Meanwhile, the state remains typically quiet on the groundwater-guzzling, subsidized tubewells of owner-cultivators, who still form powerful lobbies in some States even after liberalization. At the same time, energy security concerns may potentially bolster the narrative of climate change mitigation: improved energy efficiency and portfolio diversification through renewables promise gains on both fronts (Dubash, 2011).

Outside the state
State initiatives and official visions of sustainable development in all three countries look very different from the vantage point of other social classes and interest groups. The concept is flexible enough to be appropriated—and subverted—by corporate capital, reconfigured by the urban middle classes into discourses of urban beautification and pristine Nature, and its very premises contested by grassroots movements.

Capitalism and 'economic rationalism'
Sustainable development in its contemporary form does not question the infinitely expansionary logic of capitalism. Instead, the market is confirmed as a major mechanism, and business as a major participant, in the discourse (Dryzek, 2005: 150). India, Brazil, and South Africa have come to rely increasingly on market mechanisms, within the context of state regulation, the targeting of investment, and global environmental governance. 'Sustainability' has become ubiquitous in the rhetoric of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which has strong historical roots in all three countries. High-profile conglomerates such as the Tata Group have taken the lead in India, with business efforts culminating in a voluntary emissions reporting scheme.[16] At the same time, corporate capitalists benefit from state assistance in the form of the creation of special economic zones, state finance, and access to natural resources—including land grabs and evictions. The rise of sustainable development discourse matched in reality by processes of primitive accumulation.

In Brazil, public pressure for more active corporate participation culminated in the creation of Bovespa's (Brazilian Stock Exchange) Corporate Sustainability Index, which since 2005 has functioned as an investor tool to identify companies that are socially responsible, sustainable (and lucrative) (Pereira et al., 2013). Brazil recognized the Amazon's unique importance with the 1965 Forest Code, which made it imperative for 80 percent of the forest to be set aside as reserve whenever pioneering farmers moved into forest areas. However, this is currently being revisited in a controversial move towards agribusiness and reflects the tension between 'sustainability' and Brazil's developmental expansionism, particularly in the agricultural and forestry industries. Against this can be set the mid-2008

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[16] A national emissions trading scheme is also planned, and a clause of the 2013 Companies Bill requires large companies to devote 2 percent of after-tax profits to CSR, including 'ensuring environmental sustainability'.

decision of a Brazilian court to fine the agro-industrial corporation Veracel US$12 million for clearing an area of Atlantic Forest to make way for its plantations, marking a belated increase in regulation in a land dominated by a *latifundista* (wealthy landowner) mentality. Brazil's often-contradictory approach to deforestation and protection of the Amazon indicates the dual pressures that it faces: on the one side a strong agribusiness lobby and economic development agenda puts pressure on the government to ease entry into the Amazon whilst, on the other side, they face international pressure to conserve the forest and have themselves spearheaded the REDD+ agenda, part of which is aimed at creating compensation mechanisms for those who have avoided deforestation, in order to mitigate against the economic incentives to deforest.

In South Africa, there has been strong interest from some private sector actors in broader social and environmental responsibility, following the post-apartheid revision of corporate governance and the widespread recognition that business has a role to play in rebuilding a damaged society. Corporate governance principles have been institutionalized both in the King Codes (1994, 2002, and 2009)—the latest of which incorporated sustainability as a key pillar—and in statutory requirements for companies to engage in Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and environmental impact assessments (EIAs). Both these have faced criticisms: the former for inappropriate appointments and crises of expertise in some sectors, the later for a process of rubber-stamping which rarely overturns ecologically degrading developments. Business support for large conservation organisations—such as the Endangered Wildlife Trust—has often been substantial, although this often coexists with a reluctance to reform core business models and the maintenance of an arms-length relationship between business and community environmental justice groups. As such, David Fig concludes that 'corporate voluntarism has not dealt effectively with the problem of redress and… more regulatory mechanisms may be needed to effect genuine reconciliation' in post-apartheid South Africa (2005: 599). Despite public commitments to sustainability from organisations like the National Business Initiative, and a very visible business presence at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, many of South Africa's traditional core industries—especially in the mining, energy, and petro-chemical sectors—continue to see environmental concerns as niche middle-class interests threatening jobs and economic growth.

Middle-class and urban environmentalism
The rise of the new middle classes and their occasional, qualified embrace of sustainability is a relatively neglected topic in developing countries. Middle-class leadership and media exposure has frequently proved useful in bringing greater exposure to environmental social movements. In India, the older leftwing middle classes have long supported environmental causes, as the support of radical academics and students for the Chipko 'tree-hugging' movement demonstrated—albeit erasing indigenous tribal communities' desire for *some* development from their anti-development narratives (Rangan, 2000).

Today, however, the environmentalism of neoliberalism's new middle classes more resembles the issue-based, so-called NIMBY ('not in my backyard') environmentalism of the West in the 1970s. The middle classes have scored notable victories on air pollution in Delhi, and the advance of 'urban beautification' schemes. These lead to authoritarian state measures against the livelihoods and settlements of the urban poor, including slum clearances and the closure of small industries in advance of the mega-event of the Commonwealth Games in 2010. The concern to preserve a pristine 'Nature' is increasingly articulated through the rise of domestic ecotourism, the policing of parks, and the cooptation of environmental causes by the Hindu right. Very occasionally, these middle-class concerns have overlapped with those

of marginalized groups, as in the case of the most successful phases of the Narmada dam agitations. More often, such activism appears as a veiled assertion of class power over space.

In South Africa environmental concern has traditionally been seen as the province of white, middle-class, English-speaking groups, and campaigns around climate change, recycling and biodiversity protection fail to attract widespread popular support (Cock, 2006; Raubenheimer, 2001: 11). Analysis of the 2005 South African Social Attitudes Survey concluded that 'collective action in the name of environmentalism in South Africa is lacking' (Struwig, 2010: 200). Interviewees were asked whether people generally worry too much about the future of the environment and not enough about jobs, and almost half (49.3 per cent) of South Africans agreed with this statement (*ibid*: 201). However, the South African government defines 'the environment' as 'everything that is around us',[17] and this broader conception of environmentalism has fuelled popular grassroots movements that campaign on environmental justice issues such as land rights, urban pollution, air and water quality, sanitation, and electricity prices (Bond, 2002; Cock, 2006).

The Brazilian case also reflects an emphasis on environmental justice issues, closely aligning social issues of the working class with environmental degradation (Barca 2012). Brazil's history shows more of a domestic struggle between powerful elites usurping resources and polluting the environment and the working class - both urban and rural- suffering the consequences. In the 1980s, Brazil was seen as one of the countries with the most profound 'socio-environmental' degradation due to uncontrolled exploitation by elites (Viola 1988: 211). Thus, the environmental problem was seen to stem from 'rapid and predatory' economic growth from the 1960s (and through the dictatorship) where 'first-world pollution-producing companies' had been invited into the country by politicians who then argued at the Stockholm environment conference that a focus on environmentalism was just a mask for 'imperialist interests aimed at blocking the upsurge of developing countries' (Viola 1988: 212). After the dictatorship, with the establishment of the Green Party in Rio de Janeiro in the mid 1980s, it became aligned most strongly with the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores- the Worker's Party) forming an 'eco-socialist' alliance (Viola 1988). This alignment together with Chico Mendes' rubber tappers movement against Amazon deforestation in the 1980s and then the Landless Worker's Movement (MST) from the 1990s has given Brazil a 'working class vision of ecology' (Barca 212: 74). Thus, in contradistinction to India and South Africa, the (mainly urban) elite have been seen to be the cause of environmental degradation, rather than the source of an environmental movement, which has from the beginning aligned itself with social issues, such as health and sanitation in cities and the use of chemicals and deforestation in rural environments.

Grassroots resistance to mainstream sustainable development
Sustainable development began as a radical, counter-hegemonic discourse that challenged the very Enlightenment-tinged, optimistic premises of 'modernization' with its discussions of scarcity and limits. Not only did it suggest that duplication of the Northern path was not viable for the South and that distributional issues (not permanent growth) were key to equitable development, but it also articulated a 'broader disenchantment with the development enterprise' (Carruthers, 2005: 285-6). The creative potential of this radical perspective was jettisoned with the taming of sustainable development discourse. At the same time, the concept's oxymoronic nature has given marginal groups the discursive tools to point out the hypocrisy and failures of their own governments.

As elsewhere in the developing world, much of this environmental resistance is 'classed', rather than taking the form of the identitarian, anti-materialist green 'new social

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[17] See http://www.environment.gov.za/enviro-info/env/rights.htm, accessed on 29 September 2011.

movements' of the contemporary West. Such 'environmentalism of the poor' unites economic demands with ecological issues (Guha and Martínez Alier, 1997), and presents a critique of large-scale state development projects and corporate capitalism. In all three countries, movements started largely around land and resource use rights and then expanded to include ecological and environmental foundations. Examples include the famous Chipko movement, primarily drawing on tribal women in the Indian Himalayas (Rangan 2000), and the struggle of rubber tappers in Brazil, who are seen as initiators of the turn to political ecology in the social movements around land issues (Rothman and Oliver 1999: 53). At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, over 20,000 protestors marched from Alexandra township to the conference centre in the luxurious suburb of Sandton to raise their concerns about unsustainable development. The marchers comprised activists from groups including the Landless Peoples Movement, Earthlife Africa, and the Anti-Privatisation Forum who had campaigned against water and electricity cut-offs (Death 2010). Since 2002, these groups and others like them have formed the hub of a 'brown' environmental justice movement who have campaigned against the racist legacies of urban pollution in the poorer communities of South Durban and the Vaal triangle (Cock, 2006). Jacklyn Cock argues that this represents 'a new moment in the history of environmentalism in South Africa. The environmental concerns of the past—preservation and conservation—driven by a largely white, middle class constituency, are being supplanted by new struggles with a different social base' (*ibid*: 213).

Other mass agitations were provoked by 'big development' projects such as the huge, high-profile Belo Monte and Sardar Sarovar dams in Brazil and India. Although hydroelectricity is often viewed as 'clean' energy (accounting for up to 85 percent of Brazil's electricity generation), the concomitant social and environmental impacts – such as the displacement of thousands of citizens and disruption of diverse ecosystems– are often not considered by its advocates. The building of both dams has been further criticized for lack of transparency in the environmental licensing process, specifically with regard to information on how impacts were assessed and on the mitigation measures being implemented.

Yet such grassroots movements have frequently found themselves disciplined, coerced, repressed or co-opted by the state, and related assemblages of global environmental governance. Twin dynamics of overt suppression and active inclusion threaten to tame some of the radical, counter-cultural challenges of these social movements. For example, at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, movements were infiltrated by the South African intelligence services and 196 activists were arrested and detained during the summit (eventually all were released without charges). The police used stun grenades and rubber bullets against protestors with candles and placards, and the social movements were frequently portrayed as naïve, irresponsible, criminal or foreign-influenced by the state and media (Death, 2010: 127-8). On the other hand, pressures for inclusion and 'responsibilization' can be seen in the World Bank requirement for affected parties to participate in environmental and social impact assessments. Michael Goldman explains how the 'Narmada effect' within the Bank—the legacy of the Bank's withdrawal from the Narmada Dam project in 1990 due to social movement pressure—has led to a process of 'eco-government' which 'specifically targets resource-based populations, putting them in the centre of public inquiries, accounting for them and the quality of their environments in the new discourse of ecological improvement, and compelling them to participate in a new global environmental governing process' (2001: 194). If corporate capital and the middle classes have attempted to colonize sustainable development discourse, the state has often collaborated, unintentionally or otherwise.

Conclusion
One of the few clear outcomes of the COP15 Copenhagen climate summit in 2009 was the disintegration of the familiar assumption that global environmental leadership would come

from the industrialised North. The failure of the hitherto leading environmental bloc—the EU—to craft a negotiated outcome at the conference opened the door for new leaders, such as the IBSA states, to join the US and China in announcing the Copenhagen Accord (Greenpeace, 2010). This outcome merely confirmed to a broader audience what those working on and in countries like India, Brazil and South Africa are well aware of: environmental politics is alive and vibrant in the powerhouses of the global South, and many of the most crucial questions in the fields of global environment governance, sustainable development, and ecological modernization are being asked, fought over, and decided far away from Washington, London and Amsterdam, in cities like Delhi, Rio, and Johannesburg.

These new sites of struggle over the meaning and future of global environmentalism require new analytical tools and new ways of conducting research. Existing theoretical frameworks—such as ecological modernization with its often unquestioned fidelity to the Kuznets curve, the assumption that serious environmental movements and serious environmental regulation are only possible in industrialised and 'developed' countries, and the trajectories of capitalist and middle-class engagement with discourses of sustainability (Barry and Eckersley, 2005; Sonnenfeld and Mol, 2002)—seem inadequate to grasp the emerging and transforming constellations of global environmental governance, and the role of growing powerhouses like Brazil, India, and China within them. This is certainly not a suggestion that the IBSA countries have all the answers, represent a 'new way' of doing politics, or even that they form a unitary bloc. As this paper has shown, there are many problems, concerns, and issues arising from their engagement with sustainable development discourse. It is, however, a suggestion that serious consideration of the environmental politics of the emerging economies in 'the rest of the world' might have something important to contribute to studies of global politics.

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