

Climate chaos (and an excess of Hopes and Mbappes)

In the face of a succession of climate catastrophes, we continue to find ourselves mired in a media quagmire in which the opinions of experts and denialist politicians are pitted against each other.

Juan Bordera

We live in times (and especially climates) of terrifying contrasts. While Pakistan is suffering the worst floods in its recent history - more than a third of the country is underwater and more than 1,200 people have already died - Europe is experiencing the worst drought in 500 years and a series of overlapping heat waves that leave little time for a brief respite. China's heatwave has also been, like Europe's, historic. The longest since records have been kept. The lack of water threatens crops and the production of goods—even energy production by affecting the hydropower sector. And at the same time, spoiled millionaires are laughing at the possibility of not using a private plane for a short trip that would take 2 hours by train. Thank you, Mbappé. Thank you, Galtier. Be careful; in France, we already know that a few ill-timed statements can quickly change many things. Maybe that's just what we need, more like you. Thank you.



Screenshot from the film 'Don't Look Up', considered a metaphor for the climate denialist discourse.

In Germany, the Rhine is no longer easily navigable, which affects the transport of raw materials and goods. In the Czech Republic, famine stones have been uncovered. "If you see me, weep", reads one of these rocks, the inscriptions on which were made in times when drought was an even more decisive factor than today. But we would be wrong to ignore all these signs that point to something the scientific consensus has warned about for a long time: the climatic stability that allowed contemporary civilisations to flourish is coming to an end.

The climatic stability that allowed contemporary civilisations to flourish is coming to an end.

In Spain, beyond the suffocation of living between heatwave and heatwave, we also see signs that point in this direction: ice projectiles bigger than tennis balls during a storm in the Baix Empordà have caused a fatality - how big do we need them to be to react? -; the Mediterranean is boiling at temperatures beyond all logic, not expected until decades later by the most pessimistic models; the forests are burning like never before; Doñana is dry, affected by the suffocating heat and by bad policies that protect more golf courses and illegal wells; and now Danielle, a storm threatening to arrive from the Atlantic in the form of a hurricane. As I write, it is unknown whether it will hit the Spanish coast or do so in the form of a cyclone or a hurricane, but this is not the most important thing. It would not be the first to do so if it finally hits the Peninsula. Still, it does mark the beginning of a very worrying phenomenon: a new hurricane track seems to be developing at higher latitudes than usual. The frequency of these events is increasing in proportion to the rise in North Atlantic surface temperature, which has been 1.5°C since 1870.

In the face of this succession of climate catastrophes, which are undeniably on the increase, one of the recent controversies has arisen because a television programme has pitted the opinion of an environmental publicist, Javier Peña, against that of Esperanza Aguirre and Fran Hervías, two politicians who have shown - once again - that they have no idea what they are talking about. Hervías' arguments are so ridiculous and have already been analysed that there is no point in devoting more than a few lines to them. So, although it is very crude, let's go with them: Hervías reasons with the classic troglodyte argument that "climate change has always happened". And so have fires, Mr Hervías: there have been natural fires since before the homo that calls himself Sapiens existed, and there have also been arson fires since humans populated the Earth.

It is the same with climate change: of course, it has always existed, caused by natural factors such as orbital variations that determined the Earth's radiative balance, and of course, the huge anthropogenic emissions are responsible for this, of which we are now beginning to suffer the consequences. There has been no scientific doubt about this for decades. Not even the oil companies that hid the data and financed climate denialism - a billion dollars a year in the United States alone in the past decade - doubted this already in the 1970s. What is still in doubt - legitimately - is whether Einstein was right and human stupidity is the only thing that can grow infinitely in our universe - and be promoted by the mass "media".

At least Esperanza Aguirre acknowledges that she has no idea about this issue on the air and spares us the consequent lines of counter-arguments.

That we are close to the point of no return - at best - and still have to be mired in such media hot air does not bode well for a timely and adequate response. It is imperative that accountability is established so that such damaging voices cannot spread hoaxes and lies on such crucial issues. The media must educate us about the most critical challenges of our

It is imperative that accountability is established so that such damaging voices cannot spread hoaxes and lies on such crucial issues.

time if we want to mitigate their effect. Still, the opposite is the case: they confuse and manipulate, trying to equate scientific consensus with the opinions of a drunken brother-in-law in a bar.

In fact, we are still being too soft, too "optimistic". If the outlook is terrifying for this generation, imagine for the next. As this scientific study pointed out a few years ago, hope-laden messages have a paralysing effect - although curiously enough, the excessively pessimistic ones are accused of the same thing. We have too much false hope of all kinds. And we lack creative anger.

We should be grateful that climate change is a non-linear phenomenon. It allows us to anticipate trends tangibly, and the latest warnings should be taken as the last ones to react because, indeed, they are. We are all canaries in a mine full of potentially lethal gas. That's why some of us canaries are singing louder and opting for civil disobedience. More legitimate than ever in times of extinction, such as ours.

In truth, the answer to the debate about how to communicate the problem is straightforward: if you were diagnosed with cancer - climate chaos is that serious - would you want a doctor to tell you that you'll get through it if you think you can, or to take any placebo and everything will be fine? No. You would want a doctor who would diagnose you with what you have, without looking around, and prescribe whatever might be effective.

Maybe now we need something like that. Something realistic enough to not fall into false solutions that make us waste time we don't have, something sufficiently exciting so as not to have doubts about starting to walk. Naomi Klein summed it up crystal clear: fear only paralyses if you don't know where you have to run.

So, speaking of appropriate recipes to run towards, let us return to the Global South, to Colombia and Pakistan. In Colombia, degrowth activists are pleasantly surprised by the clarity with which President Gustavo Petro is campaigning on the degrowth economic theory following statements by his Minister of Energy and Mines, Irene Vélez.

Here, where we have much more to learn and apply in this respect, we are still anchored to the unbeatable steak and growth as the mantra of a dogma of faith that is cracking at a rapid pace - with illustrious chroniclers of the End of Abundance, such as Macron - mainly due to the energy and supply crisis.

Finally, the misfortune of Pakistan - a country responsible for less than 1% of emissions - should make us understand something: there will be no solution that does not consider economic and responsibility imbalances. The debt of the countries of the South must be cancelled so that they can free themselves from the shackles that chain them to extractivism and unsustainable development. This is where the Debt for Climate campaign proposal stands out, which sets out a path that we need to follow to end economic neo-colonialism. Without achieving this, it will be challenging to achieve a just transition.

We cannot become accustomed to and insensitive to disasters. No Pakistan flags are hanging from the balconies of city halls, no social media profiles. It seems that no one is Pakistan. Perhaps what needs to be realised is that either we react in a coordinated manner, or soon we all will be Pakistan.



Related links:

- The Jus Semper Global Alliance
- Juan Bordera and Antonio Turiel: [The End of Abundance](#)
- Juan Bordera, Agnès Delage and Fernando Valladares: [The Time for Civil Disobedience is Here](#)
- Juan Bordera – Ferran Puig Vilar: ["Growth is Going to Stop, for One Reason or Another"](#)
- Juan Bordera – Antonio Turiel: [Nuclear green, nuclear gas](#)
- Alejandro Pedregal and Juan Bordera: [Toward an Ecosocialist Degrowth](#)
- Álvaro J. de Regil: [Is Population Crucial for Degrowth?](#)
- Álvaro J. de Regil: [The Deceptive Delusions of Green Capitalism](#)
- Álvaro J. de Regil: [Transitioning to Geocratia the People and Planet and Not the Market Paradigm — First Steps](#)
- Álvaro J. de Regil: [Marketocracy and the Capture of People and Planet](#)
- The Editors of Monthly Review: [Leaked IPCC Reports](#)
- Jason Hickel: [Degrowth is About Global Justice](#)



- ❖ **About Jus Semper:** The Jus Semper Global Alliance aims to contribute to achieving a sustainable ethos of social justice in the world, where all communities live in truly democratic environments that provide full enjoyment of human rights and sustainable living standards in accordance with human dignity. To accomplish this, it contributes to the liberalisation of the democratic institutions of society that have been captured by the owners of the market. With that purpose, it is devoted to research and analysis to provoke the awareness and critical thinking to generate ideas for a transformative vision to materialise the truly democratic and sustainable paradigm of People and Planet and NOT of the market.
- ❖ **About the authors: Juan Bordera** is a scriptwriter, journalist and activist at Extinction Rebellion and València en Transició.
- ❖ **About this Brief:** Climate chaos (and an excess of Hopes and Mbappes) was originally published in Spanish by CTXT in September 2022. This paper has been published under Creative Commons, CC-BY-NC 4.0. You are welcome to reproduce the material for non-commercial use, crediting the author and the original publisher.
- ❖ **Quote this paper as:** Juan Bordera: Climate chaos (and an excess of Hopes and Mbappes) — The Jus Semper Global Alliance, October 2022.
- ❖ **Tags:** capitalism, democracy, climate chaos, sustainability, degrowth, social justice, anthropocene, denialism, mass media.
- ❖ The responsibility for opinions expressed in this work rests only with the author(s), and its publication does not necessarily constitute an endorsement by The Jus Semper Global Alliance.



Under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

© 2022. The Jus Semper Global Alliance
Portal on the net: <https://www.jussemper.org/>
e-mail: informa@jussemper.org