



“RECLAIMING THE WATER COMMONS: TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENTS FOR THE RIGHT TO WATER”

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- 
- HOW MANY PEOPLE LACK ACCESS TO POTABLE WATER IN THE WORLD?

- *Globally, one in eight people lacks access to potable water; more people die from unsafe drinking water than from all forms of violence, including war*

- UN DECLARATION, RIGHT TO WATER AND SANITATION (2010)
 - UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) (2015)
 - ...HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER REMAINS FAR FROM REALIZED, BOTH GLOBALLY AND AT HOME
 - TYPE INTO THE CHAT A WORD OR SENTENCE THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD “HYDRO DAM”
- 

POSITIONALITY/DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

- WHAT I TELL MY STUDENTS:
 - YOU ARE GOING TO HEAR PERSPECTIVES THAT YOUR GUT REACTION MIGHT BE TO DISAGREE WITH....I ASK YOU TO TRY TO PUT YOURSELF INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S PERSPECTIVE BEFORE DOING THAT
- IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORLD'S LACK OF ACCESS TO WATER IS DUE TO HUMAN CREATED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES. NOT A GIVEN.
- GOING TO SHARE EXAMPLES FROM THE "GLOBAL SOUTH" BUT ALSO CONNECT IT TO HERE AT HOME



Theory building is not absent of power
(Krishna 2006)


As Connell states, “where” matters because
“where” is related to voice, experience,
and perspective (2007, p. 368).

“social thought from the periphery” (Connell
2007)

- ASPECTS OF THE RIGHT TO WATER:
 - DAMS, WATER PRIVATIZATION, AND BOTTLED WATER—ALL LINKED!
 - WHILE THE FOCUS IS ON THE “GLOBAL SOUTH” , I WILL ALSO TOUCH ON THE U.S.
 - I THINK ESPECIALLY WHEN TEACHING KIDS AND TEENAGERS ABOUT WATER ISSUES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOT FRAME IT AS A PROBLEM OF “SOMEWHERE ELSE”. THE PROBLEMS “THERE” AND “HERE” ARE RELATED (CORPORATE POWER, WEALTH CONCENTRATION TO NAME TWO)
- WHY DO 1/8 PEOPLE LACK ACCESS TO POTABLE WATER?
 - NOT A “GIVEN”, BUT THE RESULT OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES...
 - IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US TO THINK ABOUT HOW THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS OF VIEWING THE WORLD. THE PERSPECTIVE OF BUSINESSES AND CORPORATIONS REPRESENTS JUST ONE SMALL PERSPECTIVE, BUT IT IS THE ONE THAT DOMINATES, TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE REST

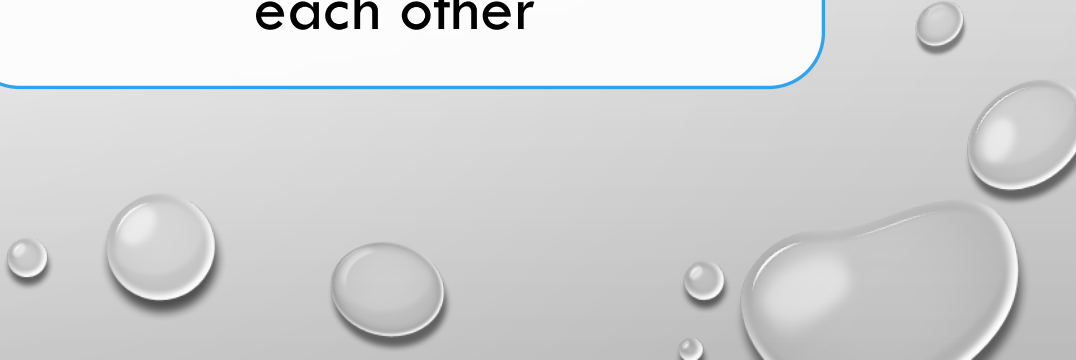
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS AROUND THE WORLD RESISTING LARGE DAM PROJECTS

- WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?
 - THE FAIR TREATMENT AND MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF ALL PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, OR INCOME, WITH RESPECT TO THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES. RESOURCE LINK (FOR K-12 RESOURCES) ON ENVIRO JUSTICE:
[HTTPS://WWW.LEARNINGTOGIVE.ORG/RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENTAL-JUSTICE-TOOLKIT](https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/environmental-justice-toolkit)
- ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS FOCUSED ON WATER—SOMETIMES CALLED BY THAT TERM AND SOMETIMES NOT—EXIST ALL OVER THE WORLD AND ON ALL CONTINENTS (EXCEPT ANTARCTICA!)

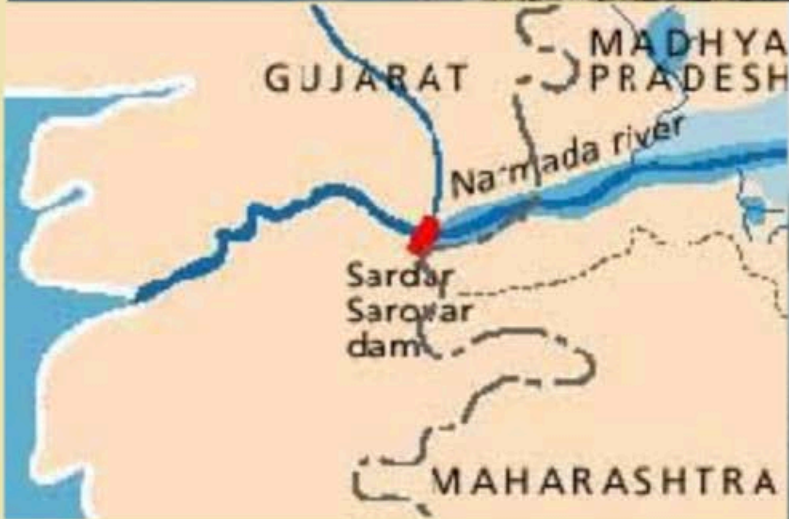


Since the 1980s, discussions about the social, agrarian, and environmental impacts of large dam projects have been ongoing

There have also been large scale resistance movements (for environmental justice) led by those impacted. Many of these movements have—and continue to—network with each other



Sardar Sarovar Dam



BUILT ON NARMADA RIVER IN GUJARAT, INDIA

- FOR THOSE READING MORE ON DAMS, INCLUDING THIS ONE: ESHA SHAH, JEROEN VOS, GERT JAN VELDWSCH, RUTGERD BOELEN & BIBIANA DUARTE-ABADÍA (2019): ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS IN GLOBALISING NETWORKS: A CRITICAL DISCUSSION ON SOCIAL RESISTANCE AGAINST LARGE DAMS, THE JOURNAL OF PEASANT STUDIES, DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2019.1669566

Amita Baviskar's Work

- *IN THE BELLY OF THE RIVER: TRIBAL CONFLICTS OVER DEVELOPMENT IN THE NARMADA VALLEY* (2004 [1995])
- “Ironically, the bulk of development policies, justified in the ‘national interest’, actually *diminish* poor people’s ability to control and gainfully use natural resources” (P. 32).
- “Efforts to bring about socially just and ecologically sound ‘sustainable development’ must be seen both as a response to, and a departure from, the shortcomings and contradictions in the present model of development” (p. 33).
- “The project of national ‘development’ is not limited to the Indian state alone, but is embedded in contemporary global structures such as the arrangement of the world into nation states, and the expanding system of international capitalism” (p. 35).

- From the book's postscript: "In the contentious politics of place-making in the Narmada valley, the terminal geography of dams seems to have triumphed. The rising level of water in the reservoir, that was once a river, is a physical manifestation of the state's success in swallowing adivasis into the belly of the nation-space" (p. 258).
- "The first shock was the river itself. On the long walk downhill to Anjanvara, the first glimpse of the Narmada had always been a delight. Spirits soared at the sight of that vast, boulder-strewn river, the clear flowing water gleaming in the sun. Now the Narmada had stopped flowing. At Anjanvara, the river was still, its stagnant water muddy. Dead, diseased livestock that was disposed off in the river now floated and festered. Cattle trying to get a drink of water got submerged and died. The corpses attracted crocodiles..." (p. 261).



MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DAMS (MAB) IN BRAZIL
Linked to struggles around dams all across the Americas, as well as Europe

What does MAB fight for?

Formally founded under the name MAB in 1991 as a national movement against dams. MAB leads the fight against the removal of families from their homes and opposes the privatization of water, rivers, and natural resources—resources upon which the communities depend for their livelihood. They do have partner movements/non-profits/unions who will sign on as partners in supporting their efforts and fighting against the privatization of water and sanitation services.

Vale Mining Company to Pay \$7 Billion in Compensation for Brazil Dam Collapse

The disaster in the city of Brumadinho killed 270 people, and 11 others are still missing. It also led to murder charges for company officials.

The New York Times



An aerial view of mud and waste from the 2019 disaster caused by a dam collapse in Brumadinho, Brazil. Antonio Lacerda/EPA, via Shutterstock

By Manuela Andreoni and Leticia Casado

Feb. 4, 2021

**PROFIT IS NOT
WORTH LIFE**



**NOTE | AFTER THE AGREEMENT ON
BRUMADINHO BETWEEN VALE AND THE
STATE GOVERNMENT OF MINAS GERAIS,
MAB WILL APPEAL TO THE FEDERAL
SUPREME COURT**

The movement does not accept reduced values, lack of participation in the negotiations and is considering legal action before the Federal Supreme Court (STF) to guarantee full reparation to those affected in the Paraopeba river basin

por [Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens](#)

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DAM ISSUES IN THE U.S.

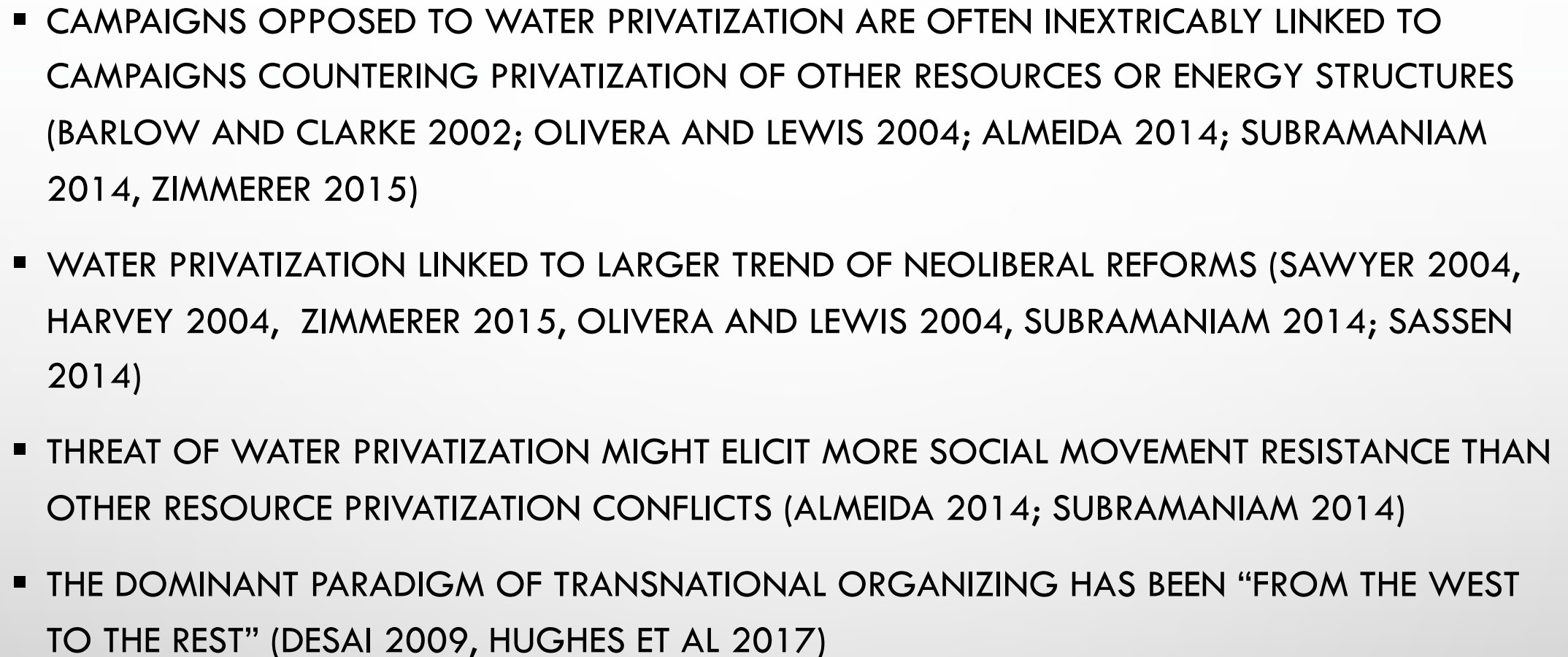
- COULD A DAM BREECH HAPPEN IN THE U.S.?
- IN 2017, THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS (ASCE) GAVE A “D” GRADE TO THE COUNTRY’S 91,000 DAMS,
- DAMS HAVE RECEIVED FAILING GRADES 1998 WHEN THE ASCE BEGAN GIVING REPORT CARDS.
- AROUND \$45 BILLION DOLLARS NEEDS TO BE SPENT ON REPAIRS ON DAMS “WHOSE FAILURE WOULD THREATEN HUMAN LIFE”; TO FIX ALL THE DAMS THAT ARE IN NEED OF REPAIRS WOULD COST OVER \$64 BILLION DOLLARS.
- CLIMATE CHANGE COMPOUNDS THESE CHALLENGES
- MAY 20TH, 2020 WHEN TWO DAMS BREACHED IN THE U.S. STATE OF MICHIGAN.

- APPROXIMATELY 225 KILOMETERS FROM DETROIT, 11,000 RESIDENTS FROM EDENVILLE, SANFORD, AND MIDLAND, MICHIGAN WERE EVACUATED.
- THE DAMS THAT BROKE IN MICHIGAN ARE OWNED BY BOYCE HYDRO, A PRIVATELY OWNED COMPANY THAT THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION LISTS AS “CHRONICALLY NON-COMPLIANT WITH REGULATORY REQUESTS TO UPGRADE THE DAM”.
- 97% OF DAMS IN U.S. PRIVATELY OWNED
- IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE: [HTTPS://MAB.ORG.BR/2020/06/08/COLLAPSE-THE-SITUATION-OF-DAMS-IN-THE-UNITED-STATES/](https://mab.org.br/2020/06/08/collapse-the-situation-of-dams-in-the-united-states/)



WATER AND ENERGY...COMMODITIES OR RIGHTS?

- TYPE INTO THE CHAT IN A FEW WORDS WHAT THE PHRASE “THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER” MEANS TO YOU.
 - SOME SCHOLARS CRITIQUE THIS TERM FOR THE REASON YOU ALL ILLUSTRATED—IT CAN MEAN A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS.
 - BUT AS LIMITING AS WORDS OR PHRASES ARE, WE ALSO USE THEM TO ORDER OUR LIFE...
 - AND THIS TERM MATTERS BECAUSE MOVEMENTS AROUND THE WORLD FIGHTING FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE ACCESS TO WATER USE IT!
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- CAMPAIGNS OPPOSED TO WATER PRIVATIZATION ARE OFTEN INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO CAMPAIGNS COUNTERING PRIVATIZATION OF OTHER RESOURCES OR ENERGY STRUCTURES (BARLOW AND CLARKE 2002; OLIVERA AND LEWIS 2004; ALMEIDA 2014; SUBRAMANIAM 2014, ZIMMERER 2015)
 - WATER PRIVATIZATION LINKED TO LARGER TREND OF NEOLIBERAL REFORMS (SAWYER 2004, HARVEY 2004, ZIMMERER 2015, OLIVERA AND LEWIS 2004, SUBRAMANIAM 2014; SASSEN 2014)
 - THREAT OF WATER PRIVATIZATION MIGHT ELICIT MORE SOCIAL MOVEMENT RESISTANCE THAN OTHER RESOURCE PRIVATIZATION CONFLICTS (ALMEIDA 2014; SUBRAMANIAM 2014)
 - THE DOMINANT PARADIGM OF TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZING HAS BEEN “FROM THE WEST TO THE REST” (DESAI 2009, HUGHES ET AL 2017)




A BIT ABOUT WATER HERE IN OUR CITY...



- Our Water Campaign: brief background
 - Lead water crisis
- Veolia no longer engaging in ppps in the U.S.
- Water currently public, lead levels before minimum, lead line replacements continue
- For various reasons, Pittsburgh was able to mobilize and use the idea that “we don’t want to be another flint” to a) argue to keep the water public and b) get the public authority to clean up its act
- OWC has fought off attempts of a new PPP and continues to monitor and organize around issue
- Pittsburgh and Lagos: connected because of Veolia



....AND GLOBALLY

- Veolia and Nigeria
 - Harm caused by IMF/WB policies that cause austerity
 - Water situation in Lagos actually better decades ago than now
 - Public opinion polls show people don't want it privatized--there, here, anywhere (even people that support privatization in other realms don't think water should be)
 - Trend of remunicipalization
 - Baltimore banned water privatization in 2018 and Uruguay was first country to do so country wide in 2004
 - Just as transnational corporations work globally, movements resisting privatization do the same. The water wars in Cochabamba, Bolivia in the early 2000s are example that is used as a "success" story of hope in water struggles around the globe
- 



- NATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER HELD IN ABUJA, NIGERIA



“The only way to defeat corporate power is people power”—
Summit Participant

“All of the polluted waters in this country have been privatized
by polluters”— Summit Speaker

Lack of access to water = a form of “slow” violence (Rob Nixon
2011)



GLOBAL SOLIDARITY



“We can’t drink the water here...or in Flint...or in Pittsburgh...

That is shared. So we need to think about it globally...

I’m thinking about what’s going on and

How I’m going to put a global spin on everything now.”

“A DIFFERENT WAY OF SEEING THE WORLD...LEADS TO A DIFFERENT WAY OF ORGANIZING”



“Water is life, sanitation is dignity!”

“CORPORATIONS WANT US TO FEEL SMALL AND LIKE WE DON’T HAVE POWER BUT
WHEN WE COME TOGETHER WE DO HAVE POWER.”





ABUJA, NIGERIA
NESTLE PLANT VISIT



Pakistan water crisis: Nestle, PepsiCo and Coca-Cola amongst companies summoned for water usage

By Pearly Neo

20-Sep-2018 - Last updated on 20-Sep-2018 at 05:33 GMT



Several beverage giants have been summoned by Pakistan's Chief Judge with regard to their water usage in the country. ©Getty Images

BOTTLED WATER A GLOBAL PROBLEM

- NESTLE, PEPSI-CO AND COCA COLA SUMMONED BY CHIEF JUDGE IN PAKISTAN FOR DEPLETING WATER
- [HTTPS://WWW.FOODNAVIGATOR-ASIA.COM/ARTICLE/2018/09/20/PAKISTAN-WATER-CRISIS-NESTLE-PEPSICO-AND-COCA-COLA-AMONGST-COMPANIES-SUMMONED-FOR-WATER-USAGE](https://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/article/2018/09/20/pakistan-water-crisis-nestle-pepsico-and-coca-cola-amongst-companies-summoned-for-water-usage)

Indian traders boycott Coca-Cola for 'straining water resources'

Campaigners in drought-hit Tamil Nadu say it is unsustainable to use 400 litres of water to make a 1 litre fizzy drink

Vidhi Doshi in
Mumbai

Wed 1 Mar 2017 09:57
EST



630



▲ Water usage by Coca-Cola and PepsiCo in India was highlighted after low rainfall in the last monsoon.
Photograph: Tengku Bahar/AFP/Getty Images

More than a million traders in India are boycotting fizzy drinks including [Coca-Cola](#) and Pepsi after claims from two Indian trade associations that foreign firms are exploiting the country's water resources.


Traders in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which has a population bigger than the UK, will replace big brands with locally produced soft drinks.

NOT JUST NESTLE

- 
- DEBATES AROUND BOTTLED WATER IN BRAZIL (WHICH HOLDS 12% OF THE WORLD'S FRESH WATER)
 - PROBLEM IN THE U.S.— FROM MICHIGAN, TO MAINE, TO CALIFORNIA...[HTTPS://WWW.STORYOFSTUFF.ORG/MOVIES/NESTLE/](https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/nestle/)



SIGNIFICANCE

- ATTENTION TO WATER IS CRITICAL IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE
 - CONFLICTS AROUND WATER ARE ALSO ABOUT EQUITY, POWER, AND ACCESS.
 - THIRD, MOVEMENTS FIGHTING FOR THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER TODAY REPRESENT A RADICAL GRASSROOTS POSITION FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY AND DEMANDING TRANSPARENCY AND DEMOCRACY
- 



THANK YOU!

- QUESTIONS?
- 