



DIOS Global Minds Research project launch event “SDG – Governance”

Hybrid seminar
5 June 2023, 3.00 – 5.00 pm CET
Hasselt University, Campus Hasselt
Martelarenlaan 42, 3500 Hasselt, Belgium

Registration for in person and online participation required by 4 June [here](#)

Event programme

2.45 – 3.00 pm

Registration of conference on-site and online participants and coffee

3.00 – 3.10 pm

Welcoming words by Hasselt University Law Faculty Dean - Prof. Petra Foubert

3.10 – 3.30 pm

Project launch and introduction – Prof. Melanie Murcott and Dr. Matteo Fermeglia

3.30 – 4.00 pm

Keynote speech by Prof. Louis J. Kotzé: “Assessing the Transformative Potential of the SDGs - Old Wine in New Bottles?”

4.00 – 4.45 pm

Roundtable discussion on “Climate governance and SDG implementation in Europe and South Africa”

**Prof. Melanie Murcott
Dr. Matteo Fermeglia
Prof. Carole Billiet
Prof. Louis Kotzé
Ms. Lindlyn Moma**

4.45 – 5.00 pm

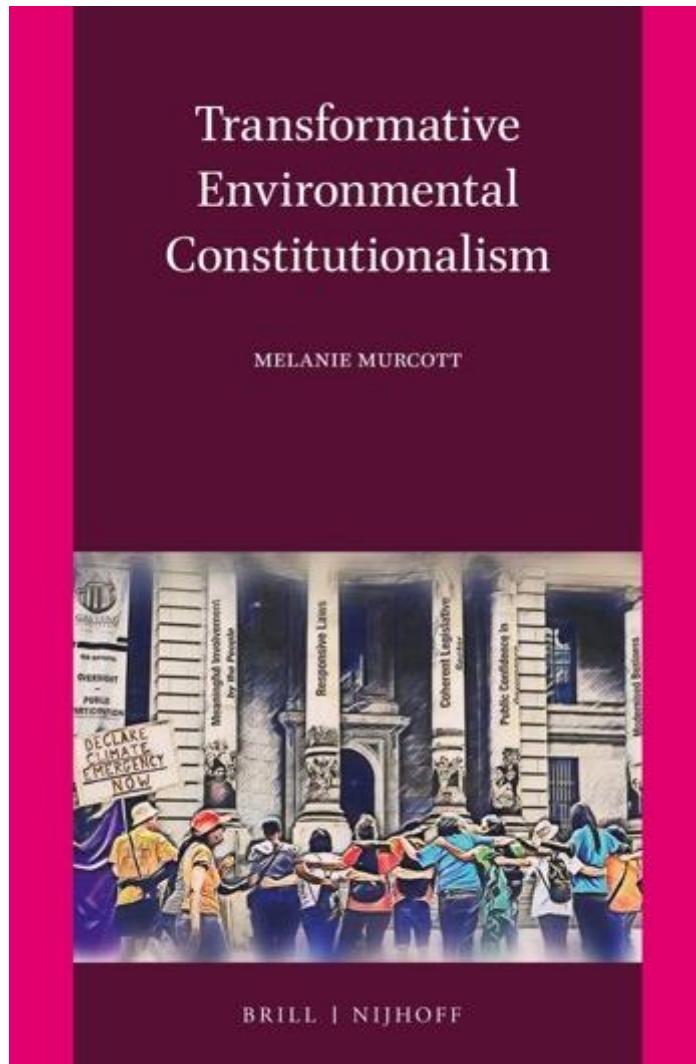
Presentation of the book by Prof. Melanie Murcott: *Transformative Environmental Constitutionalism* (Brill, 2022)

Book details:

Transformative Environmental Constitutionalism offers a novel justice-oriented framework within which courts could adjudicate environmental law disputes, developing law suited to the socio-ecological struggles of the Anthropocene, including the climate crisis.

According to James R. May, Esq. Haub Scholar, Elizabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University:

“It is no secret that the Earth is under siege. Prof. Melanie Jean Murcott’s *Transformative Environmental Constitutionalism* illuminates a path forward. It deciphers and distills in theory, practice, words, lyrics, and music how adjudication can transform and improve social justice and environmental outcomes. It concurrently highlights hope while sounding a clear-eyed call for action.”



Project overview:

Effective governance systems are key to addressing the global threat of climate change while ensuring equality and justice across the society. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for governance systems that embrace ecological integrity, sustainability and human rights as pillars of their core functioning and development before 2030. Furthermore, the global nature of the SDGs calls for sharing of knowledge and capacity-building across localities and Regions around the globe. The uneven distribution of climate change impacts based on differentiated vulnerabilities urges comparative knowledge development to prompt effective responses in the Global South as well as in the Global North. Yet, South-North collaboration to facilitate comparative legal analysis and knowledge exchange is limited, giving rise to a knowledge gap.

The DIOS Global Minds SDG-Governance project will contribute to bridging this knowledge gap by engaging in a comparative legal analysis of the key climate governance instruments and institutional structures of Belgium and South Africa. To this end, it will address specific legal and institutional issues, such as: the protection of human rights, access to information and access to justice, distributional impacts of climate policies across national territories and different vulnerable groups.

Speaker bios:

Louis J. Kotzé is Research Professor of Law at the Faculty of Law, North-West University, South Africa where he teaches International and African Regional Environmental Law in the LLM programme. He is also Senior Professorial Fellow in Earth System Law at the University of Lincoln, United Kingdom. His research broadly encompasses three interrelated themes that he approaches from a transnational perspective: human rights, socio-ecological justice and environmental constitutionalism; law and the Anthropocene; and Earth system law. He has over 175 publications on these themes. He is assistant editor of the journal *Earth System Governance*; a member of the South African Academy of Science; co-chair of the Earth System Governance Network's Scientific Steering Committee; and co-convenor of the Network's Taskforce on Earth System Law. In 2016 he obtained a second PhD at Tilburg University, Netherlands. He is the recipient of several research awards including, among others: the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the German Exchange Service, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation; the Austrian Exchange Service, and the South African National Research Foundation. More recently he was awarded a European Commission Horizon 2020 Marie Curie Fellowship to lead a research project during 2018-2019 at the University of Lincoln titled: *Global Ecological Custodianship-Innovative International Environmental Law for the Anthropocene*. He served as the Klaus Töpfer Sustainability Fellow at the Potsdam Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in 2022; and is currently Programme Chair of the project *Governing the Planetary Commons: A Focus on the Amazon* at The New Institute in Hamburg.



Melanie Murcott is an Associate Professor of law at the Institute of Marine and Environmental Law (IMEL). Her research focus includes climate law and governance in the Global South, and she is co-leading a project titled “Climate Litigation in the Global South” with Dr. Maria Antonia Tigre at the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law of Columbia Law School. Before joining academia in 2012, Melanie practised as an attorney, including at Hogan Lovells (South Africa) where she was a partner. From 2012 to 2023, Melanie taught and engaged in research at the University of Pretoria. Building on her doctoral research, she authored [Transformative Environmental Constitutionalism \(Brill, 2022\)](#), a significant monograph which develops a novel approach to the adjudication of disputes concerning environmental protection, given that we face a planetary crisis with myriad justice implications. Melanie believes, as Maya Angelou says: “no one of us can be free until everybody is free”. Importantly for Melanie, a flourishing environment creates the necessary conditions for freedom since humans and the environment are fundamentally connected.



Matteo Fermeglia is Assistant Professor in International and European Environmental Law and Post-Doctoral Assistant at Hasselt University, Faculty of law, where he teaches European Environmental Law and European Climate & Energy Law. His main research interest lies in the interplay between international investment law and the climate change legal regime. In 2017, he was visiting scholar at Columbia Law School, where he collaborated with the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law and the Columbia Centre for Sustainable Investments. He regularly (co-) authors internationally peer-reviewed journal articles in the field of environmental and climate law, and was awarded the Raúl Estrada-Oyuela Award for Emerging Scholars in Climate Law in 2017 by Lexxion publishers.



Carole Billiet is Professor of Environmental Law and the head of the Environmental Law Unit at the UHasselt. Her main research interests today focus on climate change litigation and the valuation of biodiversity in permitting and sanctioning decisions regarding actions causing legal and illegal biodiversity damage. She combines her academic work with practice. She is the lead lawyer in the Belgian climate case and is involved in other strategic litigation cases.



Lindlyn Moma combines her human rights law background with her passion for tackling the climate crisis and promoting ecological justice. She currently serves as the advocacy director of the Laudato Si Movement, and she believes that by joining the movement, she combined her faith with her vocation. Lindlyn has over 20 years of strategic leadership within the environmental justice sector, most recently serving as Africa Program Director of Greenpeace Africa and WildAid. She is a trained developmental industry executive leader from the Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Leadership Program and the Robert Gass Transformational Leadership Program. Lindlyn is a member of the Board of Advisors at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) based in Sweden and is keen on advancing democracy amidst the climate crisis. She is also completing her legal doctoral thesis at the University of Pretoria on “The right to a healthy environment in achieving a just energy production transition in South Africa”.



For any questions, please contact the organising committee at:

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