Part II

Situations and Decisions

"For it is only criminals who presum e to damage other people nowadays without the aid of philosophy." This sentence from Robert Musil's famous novel *The Man without Qualities* would apply perfectly to current corporate and government decision-making. Just substitute "philosophy" with "vested interest," and among those, chiefly by economic interests. From there the permutations could proceed endlessly. The chapters in part II provide worthy examples of how, in different places and situations, decisions are made across the globe with one main common goal: economy first.

This section of *Cooling Down* explores different issues facing a variety of places, including migration and housing in crowded cities of Bangladesh; a slowly vanishing coastline in the United States; disputed urban planning in New Zealand; environmental crisis in the East African countries of Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia; and finally to melting glaciers and fake snow in Austria.

Tasneem Siddiqui, Mohammad Jalal Uddin Sikder, and Mohammad Rashed Alam Bhuiyan examine migrant movement and living conditions in one of the most vulnerable countries of the world, Bangladesh. The Anthropocene as described by the authors is both overwhelming and particularly informative for the understanding of how climate change relates to other socioeconomic variables, in particular life-threatening impoverishment. As the research team writes, "Climate change does not displace people directly but, rather, exacerbates various forms of vulnerability," which contribute to their displacement. Climate-driven migrations may create new roofs and jobs, but they do so by forcing already deprived people to "environmentally hazardous regions, coupled with inadequate facilities for food, shelter, sanitation, and healthcare."

The chapter authored by Brian Orland, Meredith Welch-Devine, and Micah Taylor reveals that issues of social inequality occur everywhere, but not in the same manner. Their research details how people, compelled into forced displacement directly following increasingly intense hurricanes, on the coast of Georgia, United States, perceive the transpiring climatic phenomena, envision the near future, and calculate forms of adaptation. What in Bangladesh is a matter of survival instead entails concerns of well-being and freedom of choice in Georgia. The decision on whether to move or not involves not only the effects of climate change but also distinctions of income, gender, education, and age.

Based on very long fieldwork, Paul Schneider and Bruce Glavovic offer a brimming description of how residents of the Coromandel Peninsula, Aotearoa New Zealand, deal with ongoing climate change manifestations. Coromandel is inhabited by people of European and Maori descent. It is a place, therefore, in which different worldviews are ingrained. In addition, some of the villages on the peninsula swell by some 600 percent during summer. Contested interests on land ownership, urban planning, culturally diverse landscape features, coastal erosion, erratic local authorities and policies, sea level rise, and disputed access to the seafront and beaches contribute for continuously deferred actions and decision-making concerning the evolving effects of global warming. Here the present and looming climate conundrum is the outcome, not merely in terms of inequalities in status and income, but also in social and cultural complexities, native and colonial, resident and tourist, leisure and labor, and tottering contestation.

Africa is notable in its exposure to climate change. Severe droughts and concomitant infestations of locusts, deforestation, and a growing number of overpopulated cities contribute to this situation. Meanwhile, as in Bangladesh, poverty and all forms of power privation tremendously magnifies virtually all imaginable climate change consequences. A. Peter Castro brings to us "tales of conflict and displacement" taking place in Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia. In Kenya, green policies such as those related to carbon sequestrating are justifying unjust initiatives and indubitably harkening to colonial pasts. In Somalia and Ethiopia, where both droughts and floods are occurring more frequently, millions have recently been displaced, and famine lingers. At the same time, global "environmental refugees" actually propelled by such dire circumstances are yet devoid of legal status and are yet being portrayed by the media as political or economic refugees or, worse, human invaders.

As temperatures in the Alps continue to climb, causing glacier melt, the government of Austria is trying to keep winter tourists coming, a major asset in their economy, by creating manufactured snow. Herta Nöbauer's

chapter about "the cryosphere environment of the Austrian Alps" is an account of how climate change, national environmental policies, local entrepreneurs, fake snow, jobs, landscapes as national identity symbols, and tourism shape an anthropological picture of the Anthropocene. Nöbauer takes us to Pitztal Valley, with its surrounding mountain peaks, ski slopes, and glaciers, through an ethnography of snow and "vertical globalization." In the valley, the melting glacier is the preeminent symbol of the rapid process of global warming. Shifting meteorological conditions are affecting daily lives, relied-on landscape, and the identities of hundreds of ski resort workers. The rising temperature is at the same time changing what used to be a hospitable and predictable future with long-assured economic security into one that is no longer guaranteed.