Global Visions: Global Civil Society and the Lessons of European Environmentalism

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To illuminate the obstacles to the development of a global civil society, the experience of the most developed transnational social movement—the environmental movement—in the most developed supranational political system—the European Union—is considered. National differences are shown to be persistent and there is little evidence of Europeanization. It is argued that the impediments to the development of a global civil society are yet greater and that, despite the advent of antiglobalization protests, global civil society remains an aspiration rather than an accomplished fact.

KEY WORDS: globalization; civil society; environmentalism; European Union; social movements; protest.

INTRODUCTION

The processes we have come to call "globalization" have made the world a smaller place. More than at any time in recorded history, the economies of states are integrated into a single global system. Unprecedentedly, effective means of transport and communication facilitate interaction among the world's people and erode the distance between and distinctiveness of national cultures. The governments of nation-states struggle to come to terms with these developments and, increasingly aware of their interdependence and of the transnational character of many of the issues that confront them, enter into international agreements and subscribe to new or existing international institutions.

At least for educated elites, national boundaries increasingly appear as little more than irritating impediments to their free movement across the globe.

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Increasingly aware of our common humanity and of the abuses of power in some of the more or less remote parts of the planet, we talk with increasing ease about "universal human rights," and we support organizations that seek to promote or protect such rights. We have even begun to speak of "global civil society" not as a noble aspiration but as an emergent reality.

If, however, we are to advance that aspiration, it is necessary that we should be clear-eyed about the obstacles that lie in its path. This requires critical analysis of some uncomfortable present realities.

There are, of course, a number of promising signs. We have, in the United Nations (UN) and its associated institutions and conventions and in other international agreements, an embryonic global political regime, the beginnings of a system of global governance if not yet a global government. Nonetheless, the limitations of those developments are all too apparent. To state only the most obvious of them, the dominant superpower, the United States, honors only those agreements that it perceives to be in its interests and opposes the institution most fundamental to the establishment of global civil society—a court of human rights with universal jurisdiction.

In addition to the continuing construction of transnational institutions and the increasing frequency of transnational agreements, we have seen the rise of new global actors in the shape of transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). International agencies develop institution-building momentum of their own and seek to extend their remit beyond that envisaged by their patrons. Thus the UN has for some time sponsored or opened its councils to NGOs, recognizing that they deal with issues or reach constituencies that the UN itself and/or national governments do not or cannot, and encouraging NGOs to do what the UN or the member states cannot or will not do. The proliferation of NGOs and their increasingly accepted presence in international consultative arena fills some of the gaps in the emerging global political system, and NGOs are sometimes regarded as representing a putative global civil society. Nevertheless, NGOs do not themselves constitute civil society.[2] They are rarely democratic in their internal structures, and the extent to which they are representative of anybody beyond themselves is problematic (Yearley, 1996, p. 91). Indeed, especially at the international level, given the frequency of their dependency upon national governments or international institutions, NGOs might often more accurately be portrayed as adjuncts to the sphere of the state rather than as phenomena of civil society.

The terms "NGO" and "social movement" are sometimes used interchangeably, but "NGO," where the term is used simply to refer to any nonstate noncommercial organization, is quite undiscriminating (Rootes, 2001); social movements, as informal networks of actors linked by a shared identity and engaged in collective action (Diani, 1992), are rarer and more complex. They may include NGOs but they cannot be reduced to the organizations that constitute (part of) their networks,

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[2]On the limitations of NGOs and their relationship with the UN, see McCormick (1999).

let alone to any one such organization. Although it is at least implicit that social movements are critical of existing arrangements, there is less agreement about the extent to which, by definition, social movements are required to be oppositional, much less about whether they should be deliberately working for the structural transformation of societies, national or global.

CIVIL SOCIETY, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND THE STATE

It is, however, generally agreed that social movements are phenomena of civil society. Yet sometimes they are seen as the vehicles by which civil society is introduced, as democratic practices and politically relevant skills may be learned and trust built up in the course of mobilization in circumstances in which civil society is at best embryonic. Thus accounts of democratization in Spain (Castells, 1983) and Central and Eastern Europe (Pickvance, 1998) privilege the role of social movements in the building of civil society. Even in established liberal democratic states, social movements are seen as having the capacity to re-create civil society eroded by the intrusions of the market and the state (Brulle, 2000, p. 101). However, in the postmodern account of politics, social movements are not merely phenomena of civil society but their increasing importance, together with the progress of globalization, is claimed to be making the nation-state increasingly irrelevant (see, e.g., Nash, 2000).

Such claims are at variance with the accumulated evidence of a generation of studies of social movements, the great majority of which have addressed demands to the state and very often have advanced their demands by means of alliances, explicit or tacit, with formal political actors (see, e.g., Kriesi et al., 1995; Tarrow, 1998a). Social movements are indeed phenomena of civil society, but the development of both is dependent upon the state.

The idea of a global civil society has developed by analogy with, and is an extension of, the idea of civil societies that have developed in a relatively small, if growing, number of nation-states. For that reason, if we are to assess properly the prospects of soon realizing a global civil society, we need to consider carefully the conditions under which those national civil societies have developed.

Political scientists have long observed the relationship between the forms of the state and the development of social movements. Broadly, the relationship is curvilinear: social movements flourish neither in states where the apparatus of repression is highly developed nor in those where it is scarcely developed at all; it is in, broadly speaking, liberal democratic states where the apparatus of repression is sufficiently developed but where its use is relatively restrained that the conditions for the development of civil society are optimal and the incidence of social movements is greatest (Rootes, 1997a).

The experience of Third World states demonstrates clearly that the development of civil society is dependent upon that of the state—more precisely upon the

development of a liberal democratic state with institutionalized avenues of political participation and legal protection for human rights (Haynes, 1999a,b). Only under such conditions does the ensemble of relationships that constitute civil society become fully developed. As Walzer (1998, p. 305) puts it, "only a democratic state can create a democratic civil society" (cf. Kumar, 1993, p. 191).

It is often claimed that the increased number of NGOs and social movement organizations (SMOs) operating on a transnational basis is a sign of the emergence or, at least, a step in the building of a global civil society. Perhaps it is, but political action is shaped by the opportunities offered and constraints imposed by political institutions. The international institutions that have so far been constructed are almost always just that—inter-national, or even simply inter-governmental; there is as yet no global polity analogous to that of a nation-state. The pattern of action adopted by transnational NGOs and SMOs is an adaptation to an international political milieu dominated by intergovernmental negotiations and agreements.

Despite the postmodernists' assertion that social movements are phenomena of civil society and that their prevalence makes the institutions and politics of nation-states less and less relevant, it is clear from empirical examination of the experience of actual social movements that they are much more oriented toward the state than such theorists allow. The development of social movements is a drama played out in an arena well peopled by conventional political actors. Indeed, in many respects it is an arena structured by the state itself. Not the least obstacle to the development of global social movements—and to the development of global civil society itself—is the absence of a global state. Indeed, establishing a truly global social movement or even the more limited ambition of establishing a truly global social movement *organization* is almost impossibly difficult in the absence of the supporting infrastructure of democratic global political institutions.

But would the establishment of formal political institutions on a truly global scale remove all the obstacles to the development of a global civil society? Differences of language, culture, and history would, at the very least, present impediments to the full development of a global civil society capable of maintaining effective democratic control of a global executive. To advance such debate, it is instructive to consider the experience of the most globally conscious social movement—the environmental movement—in the most highly developed supranational political institution that yet exists—the European Union (EU).

AN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

There has undoubtedly been an increase in awareness of global environmental issues and an increase in the number of organizations, including environmental movement organizations (EMOs) that address those issues, as well as increased linkage between environmental organizations of North and South. However, notwithstanding recent protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO),

International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank, it is only if we use the term "social movement" rather loosely that we can speak in the present tense about the existence of a global environmental movement.

But how much environmental movement activity is there at the level of the EU? The EU still bears strong institutional legacies of its origins in agreements between the governments of nation-states, but its experience nevertheless offers the best available insight into the likely impact of a supranational global political system upon environmental movement activity. However, as we shall see, despite the development and increasing powers of EU institutions, especially with regard to environmental policy, it is at best questionable whether there is yet a truly European environmental movement.

Adapting the concept of "social movement" proposed by Diani (1992), an environmental movement may be defined as a loose noninstitutionalized network that includes, as well as individuals and groups who have no organizational affiliation, organizations of varying degrees of formality, that is engaged in collective action, and that is motivated by shared identity or, at least, shared environmental concern (Rootes, 1997b, p. 326). In respect of each of these three elements—network, engagement in collective action, and shared concern—the existence of a European, let alone a global, environmental movement is problematic.

NETWORKS

There are a number of signs of the Europeanization of environmental movements in the formation of new pan-European or, at least, pan-EU organizations. One stimulus to the formation of these new organizations was the recognition of the limitations of what could be achieved without them. It is increasingly acknowledged that environmental problems cannot simply be solved within the boundaries of nation-states, but so long as it was *ad hoc*, effective cross-national collaboration between environmental campaigners was rare. In most cases, "cooperation was sporadic, limited and informal" (Rucht, 1993, p. 80).

If increasing recognition of the need for more effective transnational cooperation was one driver of the process of Europeanization at the organizational level, opportunity was another. New European EMOs have almost invariably been established in direct response to the existence of the European Commission (EC), to the perception of its increasing power, especially in matters concerning the environment, and to take advantage of the opportunities that the EU and its institutions present.

Most European-level EMOs take the form of more or less stable transnational alliances consisting of loose networks of *national* organizations. Some are not strictly European organizations but the European branches of more extensive international organizations whose presence in Brussels is dictated by their recognition of the efficiency of concentrating their European lobbying activities in one

place and, increasingly, by the recognition that in matters of environmental policy the EU is now considerably more important than any of the member states.[3] Thus CEAT, the European coordination of Friends of the Earth (FoE), established an office in Brussels in 1985, followed by the Climate Action Network in 1989, not least to prepare policy advice for the European Parliament (Rucht, 1993, p. 81). In some cases the connection with the EC is even more direct; the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) was formed in 1974, with financial assistance from the EC Environment Directorate General, as a direct response to the EC's first Environmental Action Programme and the EC's need of a broadly representative forum bringing together environmentalists from across Europe. By 1999 it encompassed 130 member organizations in 24 countries. However, alongside it other, more specialized networks established representation in Brussels. To mitigate the fragmentation that might otherwise result, a "super umbrella" network, initially comprising the EEB, FoE, Greenpeace, and WWF, but now expanded to the Group of Eight, was formed to coordinate their activities (Rootes, 2002).

Although the growth of transnational SMOs such as Greenpeace and FoE has been dramatic since their establishment in and since the 1970s, it has, in most countries, stagnated or declined in recent years. Greenpeace, in particular, has closed national offices and consolidated branches in response to a decline in its global income. Moreover, in all but a few European countries, such avowedly globalist EMOs remain minnows by comparison with the established national nature and wildlife protection organizations. Although the latter organizations may be—and increasingly are—loosely linked by international umbrella organizations to other, similar organizations in other countries, they remain primarily national as well as specialized in their scope and orientation. Thus although in most of the advanced industrialized world the environmental movement has grown in organizational complexity as well as popular support, the most globally conscious part of that movement remains in a minority and may have ceased to grow.[4]

Within the EU, the transnational networking of environmental groups is more limited than might be supposed. Ward and Lowe (1998) found that many of the 30 British environmental organizations they surveyed in 1998 reported that they were heavily reliant on one other when dealing with EU matters, the smaller organizations especially so. But if this encouraged networking among environmental organizations *within* the United Kingdom, it does not appear to have produced dense or overlapping networks or to have stimulated any very extensive collaboration with

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[3]Former British Environment Secretary John Gummer's 1994 estimate that 80% of United Kingdom environmental legislation originated in Brussels (Lowe and Ward, 1998) is probably an overestimate but, for smaller EU member states, such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland, 80% would be an underestimate.

[4]The decline has been most marked not in Europe but in the United States. Greenpeace, which in 1990 was much the largest US EMO with 2.35 million "members," was by 1998 reduced to 350,000 "members." It appears to have been the principal casualty of the increasing localization of environmentalism in the United States (Bosso, 2000).

European organizations. Although four fifths of the 30 groups surveyed claimed membership of a European network, 20 different networks were mentioned. Although a third claimed membership of the most frequently named network, the EEB, most saw its function as limited to the exchange of information.

A more extensive survey of British environmental groups undertaken as part of the Transformation of Environmental Activism (TEA) project produced similar results.[5] Of 86 environmental groups surveyed in 1999, only 22 even so much as claimed to have exchanged information with EEB, and only 7 claimed ever to have collaborated in a campaign with EEB. Figures for the Climate Action Network, the only other frequently mentioned network, were similar. The results of similar surveys in six other EU states do not suggest that EMOs elsewhere in the EU were any more likely to be actively involved in EU-level networks.

What this suggests is that environmental movement networks within the EU are neither very dense nor very active. Most are highly specialized and most EMOs remain primarily oriented toward the national rather than the European stage. Cross-nationally collaborative *action* tends to be confined to the larger multi-national organizations such as FoE (Ward and Lowe, 1998, p. 162). Otherwise, British EMOs appear to prefer to deal with the familiar milieu of British politics and have not focused their energies upon EU institutions they perceive as being "greener" than national institutions, but to which they feel outsiders. There is nothing to suggest that the British experience is in this respect dissimilar from that of other EU member states (Long, 1998, p. 117).

For all that there has been a proliferation of EMOs represented in Brussels, they have simply had too few personnel (fewer than 30 at their peak) for them to be very effective (Long, 1998, p. 115; Ruzza, 1996, p. 217). Their lack of resources is a major constraint upon collaboration among European EMOs. Their resource bases are mostly at the national level, and so they tend to devote resources to strengthening their national organizations rather than providing the substantial resources required by disproportionately expensive organization at the European level. In any case, it is usually difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of investment in such European activities; access is informal rather than institutionalized, and it often appears that the EC sets the agenda.

The largest and most general obstacle to the success of EU-level EMOs, however, is the persistence of national differences that impact the relationship between EMOs and the EC as well as EMOs themselves. The EC, although it may set the environmental agenda, is insulated from public opinion because the political debate about environmental issues occurs mainly within nation-states and has only limited direct impact upon EC policy-making. Environmental movement organizations, however, are not so insulated. They depend for their legitimacy and

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[5]A project coordinated by Christopher Rootes and funded by the EC Directorate General for Research (contract no. ENV4-CT97-0514). A description of the project may be found at www.ukc.ac.uk/sspssr/TEA.html

their resources upon their ability to command public support, and, in the absence of a genuinely European public opinion, it is public opinion at national level to which EMOs must be responsive.

Relations among EMOs at the European level may be more cooperative than at national level, not least because they are not, at EU level, competing for public support and visibility (Rucht, 1993, p. 91), but cooperation is impeded by the very diversity of the groups and their national backgrounds. They differ in their organizational forms and styles, in their policy styles, in their perceptions of the relative importance of various environmental issues, and in the magnitude of their expectations. In all these respects, the imprint of national experience lies heavily on EMOs in Europe.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Environmentalists have staged a few, mostly small and symbolic transnational demonstrations in Brussels or Strasbourg and at recent EC summits. For the most part, and certainly until very recently, these demonstrations have been mounted mainly to attract the attention of national media. Apart from the lobbying undertaken in Brussels and Strasbourg, the collective action of environmentalists occurs overwhelmingly *within* nation-states in the form of mobilizations confined to the local or national level.[6] It is, moreover, mainly focused upon local or national issues and aimed at local or national targets. Examination of environmental protests reported in one leading national newspaper in each of Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Sweden over the years 1988–97, undertaken as part of the TEA project, discloses only very small numbers of environmental protests that were European in their level of mobilization, the scope of the underlying issues, or their targets.[7]

Protests mobilized at the EU level ranged from 0.4% of all reported environmental protests in Britain to 4% of the much smaller number reported in France. Only in three states (Britain 6.4%, France 5.7%, Germany 7.5%) was the EU identifiable as the scope of the underlying issue behind the protest in more than a handful of cases. Even the small number of cases in which the EU was the level of the target (ranging from 0.8% in Italy to 4.6% in Germany) included protests whose targets were companies, associations, and governments of other EU states.[8]

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[6]This observation is based on perusal of the British press over recent years, and the activities of Greenpeace. Rucht (1999, p. 210) makes a similar remark on the basis of German media. Of course, in a media-saturated age, token, symbolic action designed to attract the attention of press and television cameras is not necessarily any less effective than larger scale mobilization.

[7]I am indebted to those of my collaborators in the TEA project—Olivier Fillieule and Fabrice Ferrier, Dieter Rucht and Jochen Roose, Maria Kousis and Katerina Lenaki, Mario Diani and Francesca Forno, Manuel Jiménez, Andrew Jamison and Magnus Ring, Sandy Miller, Ben Seel and Debbie Adams—who were responsible for the data on which discussion is based.

[8]On the basis of data drawn from different newspapers, Rucht (1999) reports that in Germany less than 1% of pro-environmental protests reported during 1970–94 were EU-related.

Of the 52 British protests whose target was at the level of the EU, only 12 (less than 1% of the protests for which a target could be identified) were targeted at the EU itself. Moreover, there was no evidence from any of the EU countries whose environmental protests were examined in the course of the TEA project of any trend toward increasing Europeanism, let alone internationalism, over the decade; rather, the picture was one of trendless fluctuation (Rootes, in press).[9]

This finding is only surprising because we have been led by years of rhetoric about globalization, about global environmental problems, and even about the global environmental movement, and, in Europe, by talk of the construction and extension of the EU (no longer merely a "Community" much less a "Common Market"!), to neglect the fact that, except at the most elite levels, politics is still very much *national* politics. Mass environmental movement activity, in particular, occurs almost exclusively at local, regional, or national level *within* nation-states.

Clearly the existence of the EU and the increasing breadth of its environmental remit create new opportunities, and these opportunities encourage actors who are prepared to use them (Marks and McAdam, 1999). Nevertheless, even if environmental policy is now largely European, there remains an important residuum that remains the province of national and local governments. More significantly, at whatever level policy is made, policy *implementation* is still national and local. A great deal of environmental movement action is not addressed to the grand scheme of policy-making but to battling over the particular ways in which and the sites at which policy is implemented. Even semi-institutionalized national EMOs are well aware of the extent to which their vitality depends upon their ability to keep faith with those engaged in local campaigns (Rootes, 1999a). So the objects of contention that are most important to the environmental movement remain largely local and national. Even to the extent that real power lies in Brussels and national governments appear increasingly as the mere agents of the EC, environmental activists will tend to mobilize against those local tokens of European power rather than against the EC itself, and they will do so not least because the logistics of

[9]Imig and Tarrow (1999) found that, although the number and proportion of EU-related protests was very low, it rose significantly between 1983 and 1995. However, their data and ours are not comparable for several reasons: their data covered all protests whereas ours were restricted to environmental issues; their data were aggregated for 12 EU states whereas ours were unaggregated and for 7 states; their data were derived from Reuters reports, probably selected for their national/international importance and their interest to the business community, whereas ours were drawn from all environmental protests reported in one national newspaper in each country. On Imig and Tarrow's own account, it is likely that the Reuters data were biased toward the "more important" and higher level protests. Moreover, it is likely that as the business community has become increasingly persuaded of the importance of the EU, so Reuters, as a news service selling its services primarily to business, will have become more assiduous in its coverage of EU-related protests. However, if Imig and Tarrow's data probably exaggerates the relative incidence of EU-related protest, particularly in more recent years, our own, because it is limited to protests occurring on the territory of just seven states, might tend to underestimate it. Unfortunately, we have no systematic evidence for the incidence of EU-related environmental protests in Brussels, but casual observation and anecdotal evidence suggest that it has not been sufficiently frequent to contradict our conclusions.

doing otherwise are so intimidating. The resources of EMOs—the money and the presence of their supporters—are local and national and are not easily transportable to Brussels or Strasbourg.[10]

SHARED CONCERNS

Even if effective organizations and mass mobilization at the European level prove elusive, a more subtle form of Europeanization may yet occur in the development of common conceptions of environmental politics and of common issues among the various national movements. Clearly this is something that the EC itself has been concerned to encourage, not only for its own administrative convenience but also as part of the process of building a common European political culture.

Previous research has shown that there are considerable north–south and east–west differences in the conception of environmental problems amongst European populations, and that these are reflected in the policies and actions of national EMOs (Dalton, 1994).

If the issues associated with environmental protest from 1988 through 1997 in the seven EU states covered by the TEA project are considered, the pattern is broadly consistent with that revealed by 1980s surveys that concluded that, while in northern Europe "postmaterialist" concerns were more evident, southern European environmentalism was disproportionately one of "personal complaint" (Hofrichter and Reif, 1990). Issues of pollution and the effects of environmental degradation upon human health were more frequently raised in the southern European countries (Italy, Spain, and Greece).[11] More surprising was the diversity of the kinds of issues raised in the four northern European countries (Germany, Britain, France, and Sweden). In Britain and Sweden there was a relatively even spread among nature conservation, pollution and urban/industrial issues, transport, and animal rights, but in France, protests concerning nature protection and, especially, animal welfare were relatively rarely reported. Most strikingly, in Germany over half of all protests involved nuclear energy, an issue that was only relatively infrequently raised elsewhere, particularly in the more recent years. Not only was there no common pattern, but also, apart from a modest decline in the distinctiveness of environmental protests in southern Europe, there was no apparent trend toward convergence (Rootes, in press). If there is shared environmental concern among the citizens and environmental activists of EU states, it is concern shared only at

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[10]Rucht (1997) suggests that the environmental movement's influence at EC level is limited by the formidable obstacles to transnational mass mobilization. This may be too pessimistic; even mobilizations restricted to the national—or even the local—level have the power to disrupt EC-favored projects and, by putting pressure on national governments, may tip the balance within the Council of Ministers.

[11]To label concern with pollution and health as an environmentalism of personal complaint is not, however, to suggest that they were any less capable of sustaining collective action, albeit that such action was more concentrated at the local level than was environmental protest in the northern countries.

the most general and abstract level. It is the particular concerns of the citizens of particular nation-states that predominate.

A similarly diverse pattern is evident if one considers the issues that have been raised contemporaneously in several EU states. It might at least be expected that there should, as a consequence of the embedding of common institutions and policies at the EU level and the increasing frequency of cross-national communication within the EU, by now be some evidence of convergence upon a shared repertoire of political action from institutionalized consultation through lobbying to protest, or at least of some diffusion of tactics.

It does appear that diffusion of repertoires of collective action is occurring. There have been an increasing number of instances of cross-border emulation of protest tactics as, for example, in 1999 when, drawing inspiration from their French counterparts, Welsh farmers blocked the passage of trucks carrying Irish lamb, and British truckers blockaded motorways around London. But more often, even when the citizens of European states mobilize on the same issue, they do so in different ways.[12] Thus in 1995, the German, French, and British publics reacted quite differently to Shell's attempts to dump the Brent Spar oil platform at sea (Jordan, 2001) and the French nuclear tests in the South Pacific. Indeed, in Britain the salience of both these issues was dwarfed by protests against the export of live animals, an issue that was met with incomprehension in many other EU countries.

In reported protests in the years 1988–97, moderate actions predominated everywhere, and only in Germany and Britain were as many as one third of reported protests more disruptive than demonstrations. Large demonstrations became less common everywhere, but otherwise there was little evidence of convergence of repertoire. In Britain, confrontational action became markedly more common during the 1990s as the number of protests increased, whereas in Greece, where confrontational tactics were also relatively common, they declined. Confrontation was relatively uncommon—and declined—in Sweden and Italy. Germany was the only other country where the relative incidence of confrontation increased but this was principally associated with protests against the transport and processing of nuclear waste, an issue that rarely arose elsewhere.

It is clear that the activities of EMOs at the EU level are not independent of their more frequent activities at the national level. However, national political opportunities are not fixed; they change in the course of dynamic relationships whose structure and timing is nationally idiosyncratic. We have found no evidence that the trajectories of environmental protest within EU member states are converging; rather, the evidence is that they respond chiefly to national political timetables, events, and opportunities (Rootes, 2003).[13]

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[12] As they did in 2000 with the wave of protests against high road fuel prices in France, Britain, Germany, and Spain.

[13] Thus, in Britain the incidence of environmental protest was relatively stable before rising significantly following the reelection of an environmentally unresponsive Conservative government in 1992 to a peak in 1995 before falling sharply in 1997, the year in which a Labour government pledged to "put

Although there has everywhere been a trend toward the institutionalization of EMOs, the extent to which it has occurred and the forms it has taken have varied significantly from one European country to another. Comparing Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and France, van der Heijden (1997) found the first three to be highly institutionalized but the last scarcely institutionalized at all. There are important differences in the specific features of institutionalization in each of these countries, as there are in the other European countries that have recently been studied systematically (see [on Germany] Brand, 1999a,b; Rucht and Roose, 1999a,b; [on Spain] Jiménez, 1999a,b). The imprint of nationally specific institutional structures, prevailing constellations of political power and competition, and of political culture is evident everywhere (Tarrow, 1995). The national peculiarities of environmental movements clearly testify to the persistent impact of national cultures and political structures (Faucher, 1998, 1999; Imig and Tarrow, 1999; Rootes, 1997c). Whether and how EMOs lobby or mobilize in Brussels will be influenced by the way they are used to behaving at national level, and it appears that there are significant, albeit temporally variable, differences among the patterns of action employed by EMOs in the several EU states (Koopmans, 1996; Kriesi et al., 1995).

As far as European citizens are concerned, there is evidence of increased global environmental consciousness among the better educated in the more affluent countries. But that consciousness is largely limited to those better-educated citizens (Witherspoon, 1994), and there remain considerable differences from one country to another in the predominant forms of environmental consciousness of mass publics. It is not, however, simply that people are more concerned about environmental issues in the north and west than in the east and south. Environmental concern is nearly universal and at very high levels. Where Europeans differ is in the *kinds* of concern they voice, the *priority* they attach to environmental issues, and the *forms of action* they are prepared to take in the expression of their environmental concerns.

If consciousness of environmental deterioration is a necessary condition of collective action of an environmentalist or ecological kind and/or support for environmental movements and Green parties, it is by no means a sufficient one. Rüdig (1995) reports cross-nationally comparative data for knowledge and concern about global warming. At first glance, the pattern of the results is paradoxical. In 1993 about one third of southern Europeans had not even heard of global warming, yet their levels of concern were all above the EU average. In Denmark and the Netherlands the pattern was reversed: levels of knowledge were high but concern was relatively low.

the environment at the heart of government" came to power (Rootes, 2000), only to rise sharply in 1998 as new issues emerged and EMOs sought to hold Labour to its promises. In Germany, protest peaked in 1990 and fell sharply thereafter before rising again from the mid-1990s, the twilight years of the CDU-CSU government, to sustained high levels from 1995 through 1997.

Clearly, more than 30 years of broadening and deepening the EU have not produced a common European environmental consciousness. It may not matter too much that mass publics do not share global environmental consciousness if the educated elites who are mobilized by EMOs do, but there is evidence that, despite their best intentions, the thinking and values of even EMO elites are heavily imprinted with the peculiarities of the national cultures from which they come.

PROSPECTS FOR A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

If such obstacles exist to the development of a truly transnational environmental movement within the EU, they are writ large when we consider the prospects for a *global* environmental movement. Environmentalists may be enjoined to "think globally, act locally" but, because political thinking, no less than political action, is contextualized by the peculiarities of national cultures and institutions, citizens of different states tend to think differently even when attempting to think globally. It is apparent that when would-be global movement actors do attempt to think globally, they tend to do so in terms heavily freighted with the assumptions of the cultures from which they originate (Bramble and Porter, 1992; Yearley, 1996, pp. 92, 137).

As a result of increasing contacts with activists from cultures other than those of the North, Greenpeace, like other transnational EMOs, has become more sensitive than it was to differences of perspective and balances of interest. Yet it is clear that Greenpeace's agenda has generally reflected the views and assumptions of an ecological elite in those countries where it is strongest (Kellow, 2000), and that the various national branches of Greenpeace reflect national peculiarities and not simply a global agenda (Dalton, 1994; Shaiko, 1993).

Easier communication and more frequent interaction will continue to erode the distinctiveness of national cultures, aid the diffusion of political repertoires, and diminish the obstacles to their universal adoption. This will, however, be part of a long, and no doubt contested, process of cultural globalization.

In his pessimistic prognosis for an effective democratic global environmental movement, Sklair (1995, p. 498) cites Michels on the likelihood that revolutionary goals will be subordinated to bureaucratic means. However, although Michels believed that the inescapable price of the organization of democratic mass parties was an unequal distribution of power within them, he did not suppose that the *degree* of that inequality was immutable. On the contrary, he suggested that, with increased levels of education, a larger proportion of the citizenry would be capable of effective political participation, and he identified social education as an urgent task to combat the oligarchical tendencies of the working-class movement (Michels, 1911/1959, pp. 406–407). The surge of aspirations to democratic participation that has been the general experience of advanced western societies during the past three decades encourages optimism. The highly educated are everywhere an increasing

proportion of the population, and a more educated population may be better able both to understand global issues and to sustain democratic organizations capable of addressing them.

CONCLUSION

The past two decades have been remarkable for the speed with which new transnational agreements on environmental protection have been forged and new institutions to implement them have been developed. Informed by considerations of economic and environmental justice as well as concern for environmental protection, new institutions—such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)—have become arena for interaction between environmental NGOs and the economically dominant powers.

The opening of new arena does, however, have consequences for those who would act in them. Groups which enter negotiations with the powerful become domesticated both to do so and as a result of so doing. Yet those who remain outside do so at the expense of limiting their influence. The dilemmas that confront SMOs at the national level are thus reflected at the transnational level. Indeed, they are magnified because the resources required to play on a global stage are so much greater than those required at national level. To a much greater extent than is true at national level, SMOs that seek to be international players are dependent upon international, and often intergovernmental organizations, not least for the funding required to participate in international meetings.

Whether we are talking about organizations such as Greenpeace or about any of the plethora of smaller and more specialized groups that address global fora, action on global issues is almost always elite action and seldom is it mass direct action of the kind we have conventionally associated with social movements. Social movements and SMOs have often been regarded as prefigurative of a participatory democratic society, but the organizations that act at transnational level are not democracies, nor even bureaucracies; rather, as young organizations in a new institutional environment, they are *ad hocracies* (Young, 1999a,b). The possibilities for genuine democratic accountability of any kind are limited, and especially so if the public to whom they might be held accountable is a global one. There is no democratic global state and, if there is a global civil society, it is one in which the possibilities of effective communication remain infinitely greater among elites than among the masses.

It is difficult to see this lack of democratic accountability as a merely temporary stage in the development of a global civil society. Yet, given the accumulated evidence of the limited effectiveness of purely local or even national attempts to secure redress of environmental grievances (see, e.g., Rootes, 1999c,d), there is no alternative for committed actors but to attempt to play on the global stage. However,

the experience of environmentalism in western Europe suggests the magnitude of the obstacles to the development of an effective global social movement. If it has been difficult to achieve common purpose even in western European states that have a broadly shared heritage in the culture and institutions of western Christendom and that are increasingly closely connected by transnational movements of people and commerce, and in a policy domain in which the transnational character of the issues is so clear, how much more difficult will it be to achieve political integration on a global level, especially with respect to issues where the necessity of a transnational approach is less apparent?

It may be thought that this pessimistic conclusion is a consequence of our adopting an unduly restrictive definition. Surely, if we were only to relax the requirements of the definition, we would see that there is already a global environmental movement? As Sidney Tarrow (1998b, p. 234) has observed, it is always possible, by relaxing the strictures of definition, to find more evidence of a phenomenon. But there are in this case very good reasons for not doing so. "Shared environmental concern" may not require identity of consciousness or values, but the demonstrable differences in consciousness and values that exist both within and between countries are clearly obstacles to effective concerted action. "Collective action" may take many forms but the forms of collective action conventionally associated with social movements are uninstitutionalized actions characterized by mass participation. Networks may be more or less loose but they are generally effective in proportion to their density and activity, and the evidence is that, even under relatively favorable circumstances, transnational environmental movement networks are neither very dense nor very active. To be sure, even weak links are better than none, but strong links would be likely to lead to more impressive results.

It is, of course, possible that, as Sklair (1995) suggests, global organizations may, for a relatively ill-resourced constituency, require more energy and resources to construct and to maintain than could be justified by the results. If so, then the present form of environmental movement networks in the EU may, given existing resources, be optimal and may provide a model of loose transnational association deserving of emulation in other policy domains and on a global scale. It may even be that the facilitation of exchanges of information is sufficient to maintain the coordination of activists' efforts across the EU or the globe while action is limited to bringing pressure to bear where it may be most effective—at the national level and on national governments. Perhaps, but it is nevertheless the case that even the coordination of separate national actions would be more effective if transnational movement networks were more dense and more active.

It might be thought that the argument developed here is contradicted by the advent of campaigns like Peoples' Global Action and the succession of "Global Action Days" and attempted disruptions of the WTO summit in Seattle in 1999 and the IMF/World Bank meeting in Prague in 2000, and the demonstrations against globalization at more recent EC and global economic summits. But neither protests

nor erratically maintained websites themselves constitute a social movement. Indeed, the frustrations of many of the Prague demonstrators and the users of such websites would seem only to emphasize the difficulties of constructing a genuine and effective global movement.

Jubilee 2000, the transnational campaign for Third World debt relief, is more difficult to discount because it has clearly involved a network, collective action, and shared concern. It was, however, a coalition of diverse groups, in which aid charities and church groups were especially prominent, assembled to campaign on a single, important but circumscribed issue. It is not in any way to disparage the achievement of Jubilee 2000 to describe it as a campaign rather than as a social movement or, more precisely, as a network of campaigns each operating on the terrain of the civil society of a particular nation-state (Collins, Gariyo, and Burdon, 2001). It was an impressive practical demonstration of solidarity across national boundaries, and it demonstrated the potential of new communications technologies to facilitate transnational campaigns, but it is too soon to declare that it has inaugurated a global civil society.

Some interpret the spread of universal conceptions of human rights as evidence of the development of civil society beyond the confines of the nation-state, and the development of a postnational citizenship based on "deterritorialized notions of persons' rights" (Soysal, 1994, p. 3). "Universal personhood replaces nationhood; and universal human rights replace national rights" (Soysal, 1994, p. 142). In view of the fact that Soysal develops her argument in the context of a discussion of the treatment of immigrants in the EU, it is especially ironic that there is so much evidence of the weakness of any tendencies to the transcendence of nationality in the EU. Indeed, as another writer by no means ill disposed to ideas of the postmodern transcendence of the nation-state observes, "the link between nationality and citizenship is reproduced rather than undermined in the current conception of European citizenship" (Nash, 2000, p. 209).

International and supranational institutions clearly find it difficult to transcend the categories of inclusion and exclusion that have been institutionalized by nation-states. As the history of even so deliberately transnational a social movement organization as Greenpeace suggests, it seems improbable that they can simply be bypassed by "world civic politics" (Wapner, 1996). We have made some progress, but a global civil society remains a noble aspiration rather than an accomplished fact.

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