Workshop Proposal

Outline of the Topic

As the politics of the environment have become increasingly inter-twined with issues of social justice, globalisation and development, environmental groups and organizations have broadened their agendas, and have sought to strengthen ties with allies in other countries, often crossing the North-South divide. The well developed national movements in the North and the fact that many environmental issues are trans-national make this instance of domestic-global political linkage in movement politics especially intriguing. The major aim of this workshop is to compare majority and minority world environmental groups through a mix of case studies, comparative analysis and theoretical work.

In general, trans-national networking is regarded as empowering groups in the majority world through the transfer of skills and resources from wealthier Northern groups, but this cross-boundary movement can also be invasive of local communities and agendas. Local agendas may be displaced by Northern cross-boundary ‘green traders’, a kind of elite in themselves (Baviskar 1995). In this manner, environmental movements which support the struggles of the powerless against the excesses of global development may recast the identity and the boundaries of these communities. At the broader level, sometimes the Northern-dominated agenda of environmental organizations results in engagement in technical debates at the expense of political argument and campaigning, and this sometimes leads to a weakening of ties with grassroots, Southern groups.

There have also been tensions within the environmental movement. For instance, WWF has been criticised by more radical environmental organizations in North and South for links to oil and mining companies being opposed by Southern grassroots groups. Of those groups working at an international level, FoEI has made been among those that have made significant efforts to adjust and respond to the increased significance of North-South ties. Whereas Greenpeace is a centralised organisation, with franchises in different states but under the control of the International Office, FoEI is a federation of autonomous groups from 68 countries linked by shared commitments to tackling environmental problems as related to questions of inequality, social justice, and democracy. And whereas Greenpeace has been likened to a corporation dominated by Northern agendas (Kellow 2000), FoEI, in contrast, has been increasingly driven by the major concerns of its Southern members, despite the wealthiest and largest groups being from Northern countries. Yet, despite FoEI’s best efforts, tensions emerged forcefully after the second Earth Summit in South Africa in 2002, and quickly developed following the resignation of Accion Ecologica (FoE Ecuador). Southern nodes of the network expressed concerns that there was too much northern-inspired emphasis on corporate accountability and climate change, with the result that Southern agendas were rendered invisible. It was argued that part of the cause of this invisibility was the dominance of the English language and the communication medium of the internet. Yet, the internet plays an important enabling role in many networks, insofar as it speeds and extends the diffusion of
information (reflecting the decentralised principles important to most of these groups), and facilitates the relatively cheap, frequent and unmediated communication among them that was previously so elusive. This gives a glimpse into the divisions among Southern environmentalists, and reflects the ways in which environmentalism in the South reflects the diversity of contexts and legacies of national politics and cultures and their present and historic relationships with Northern states and cultures.

These examples are indicative of wider issues that have the potential to reshape our understanding of environmental movements and environmentalism. For instance, on what terms can grassroots groups in the South be called part of an environmental movement? And when they are defied as such, in what ways are they defined? How far can NGOs from either North or South be said to be representative? What evidence is there that Northern groups are being affected by Southern agendas? Are those who have suggested that the Internet and easier travel mean that trans-national networks can develop without significant movement bureaucracy correct? Are most trans-national ties between professional activists? Are there different kinds of trans-national network emerging – for instance, those based on personal ties, particular campaigns, issues, or more institutionalised?

**Relation to Existing Research**

The workshop attempts to redress an imbalance in scholarly debate, reflected in the literature. There has been much work on the role of environmental NGOs in the international arena (Princen and Finger 1994, Smith 1997, Doyle and McEachern 1998, Aarts 1999, Newell 2000, Gaventa 2000.) but this has mainly focused on elite level negotiation. Other existing work is based on explaining the success or failure of trans-national advocacy coalitions in particular campaigns (Keck and Sikkink 1998). This analysis of NGOs leaves out a significant field of interaction, notably the development of new links between environmental groups campaigning on a broad political agenda across the North-South divide.

Existing work is mainly restricted to journal articles that tend to raise the questions that we have outlined above as an agenda for further research: For instance Rootes (1999) has argued that, given the disparities in resources and levels of activism between Northern groups and others, it is too early to be able to say that there is a *global* environmental movement. Haynes (1999) shows how weak judicial systems and civil society constrain the development of Third World environmental movements. Smith (2002) in a case study of EarthAction (1994, 2002) has done most to focus attention on power relations between Northern and Southern groups. Doyle (2004, forthcoming) also examines the differences between Northern and Southern environmental movements through comparative case studies. This is an emerging field of research that links existing studies of trans-national organizations, the study of globalization and internationalisation and the well established field of social movements (Smith et al 1997, della Porta et al 1999, Guidry et al 2000, della Porta and Tarrow 2004).
The workshop would have the potential to develop links in a new area between political scientists and researchers in geography and development studies. There have been many studies of individual environmental conflicts and campaigns in the latter fields, but much less use of comparative analysis based on social movements, comparative politics or political theory. We will make particular effort to encourage and recruit applications from younger scholars, including PhD researchers, using various newsletters and academic networks, including especially the Green Politics Standing Group.

**Potential Participants**

- Chris Rootes, University of Kent
- Florence Passy, Lausanne
- Manuel Jimenez, Cordoba & Juan March
- Mario Diani, University of Trento
- Donatella della Porta, European University Institute
- Hein-Anton van der Heijden, Amsterdam
- Andrew Dobson, Open University
- Jeff Haynes, London Metropolitan University, Dr Sanjay Chaturvedi, University of the Punjab, Dr Saied Khatizabah, IPIS, Iran
- Krishna Krishnadas, Keele University,
- Paul Routledge, University of Glasgow,
- Dieter Rucht, WZ Berlin,
- Richard Peet Clark University
- Joan Martinez-Alier, Barcelona
- Jackie Smith, SUNY Stony Brook
- Sid Tarrow, Cornell
- Felix Kolb, Hamburg / WZ Berlin
- Srilath Batliwala, Harvard
- Olivier Fillieule, Lausanne
- Isabelle Sommier, Paris
- Joe Foweraker, Essex
- John McCarthy, Pennsylvania State
- Michael Watts, Berkeley

**Type of Paper and questions they might address**

*Comparative:* What comparative frameworks are best suited for comparing environmental movements in North and South? Is North-South the best point of comparison? Is there empirical evidence to substantiate the case for an environmentalism of the poor, crossing the North-South divide? How useful are concepts developed for Northern social movements, such as political opportunities or resource mobilization, in explaining Southern cases? What new political opportunities and constraints exist in the international arena for environmental groups and are they different for groups from the North and South?

*Case Studies:* What can studies of particular conflicts and campaigns involving both Northern and Southern groups tell us about environmental movements in North and South? Case study papers might also cover Southern campaigns with no Northern involvement or links, but referring to the secondary literature on Northern environmentalism for comparisons.
Theoretical: Papers on social/environmental/global justice, globalization and movement discourses, bearing on North-South environmentalisms. If Southern environmentalism is growing, what are the implications for universalist discourses of environmentalism, such as ‘ecologism’?

Funding:
The Directors already have funding in place for their own expenses from an existing research project. This is a pilot project which will be the basis for an application to the Australian Research Council and the UK Economic and Social Research Council for work on North-South environmental movement relations. We will include in this bid funding for 3 scholars from Asia, Africa or Latin America to attend the ECPR workshop. While this would improve its geographic scope the success and feasibility of the workshop will not be dependent on securing this funding.

Biographical Note
Dr Brian Doherty (Senior Lecturer)
University of Keele, UK
Research Interests: Social Movements, Environmentalism, Ideology
Current Research Projects: 1. Study of Friends of the Earth International (funded Keele University and Adelaide University) 2. Consultancy for the Environment Agency (UK) on Understanding Special Interest Groups.

Dr Timothy Doyle (Associate Professor)
University of Adelaide, South Australia
Research Interests: Environmental Movements, Environmental Policy
Current Research Projects: 1. Study of Friends of the Earth International (as above); Environmental Security in the Indian Ocean.