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Workshop: *Local environmental mobilizations* –dir.C. Rootes, University of Kent at Canterbury

Local Greenpeace groups in France: how to act locally when you are an international NGO[1]

Greenpeace in Lille and Rennes

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[1] Our survey has gathered interviews and ethnographic observation (meetings, Direct Dialogue programme on the streets) and was supported by the Scientific programme "transformation of activism" directed by Bruno Duriez (Clersé/Lille) and Frédéric Sawicki (CERAPS/Lille), funded by the Regional Council of Nord, Pas de Calais.

Local *Greenpeace* groups appeared in France at the end of 90s with the objective of strengthening ties between local, national and international levels. France is well-known as being the weak member of the Greenpeace "enterprise", especially at the beginning of 90s. Greenpeace International therefore wanted to create a new dynamic with the creation of local groups. The aim was to represent the international NGO at local level with the presence of volunteers implementing international Greenpeace campaigns at the local level and informing public opinion about these campaigns. Suddenly, the international NGO appeared in local French markets and on city streets, and the image of green T-shirts spread throughout French local activist networks. Although France saw huge movements during the 70's against nuclear energy and to protect environmental resources (water), French ecologism is far removed from the activist repertoire of *Greenpeace* and the model of entrepreneurial NGOs.

How do these new groups create links between local and global issues? How do these groups in France bring international issues to life locally? Are they still in an outsider position in the field of local activism? What is their relation to grassroots environmental associations?

In Lille (North) and Rennes (West), two French cities, we met with groups who have attracted volunteers sharing the same social profile and collective identity, and we discovered in their involvement a number of special incentives. We also noticed a sort of division of militant labour, which proves that NGOs mobilise special skills (technical expertise, writing or Internet skills linked to the specific socio-demographic profiles of the members). This new style of activism brings together a young generation of militants who share a feeling of critical anti-globalization, and long-standing ecologists. Greenpeace may be a very centralized NGO but the constraints at the top do not inhibit the creativity of such groups at local level; this invents new independency and with other partners, lends support to mobilization. The mobilization against GMOs (January-March 2005), mobilization against nuclear military areas (May 2005) in Brittany and mobilization to halt the import of illegally logged timber and promote the FSC logo to local government and firms (2002-2004) in the North, all illustrate how a new Greenpeace local group can create its own local position.

1: Being a local militant in an international NGO

To understand the activism of the NGO local groups, the analysis of the social background of the militants and the way they see their collective action gives us a different view to the way local mobilization is viewed centrally by *Greenpeace*. Militants are not just individuals who share the *Greenpeace* identity and are a part of International NGO. They use the *Greenpeace* identity to build their own identity. But, what is interesting is to see how *Greenpeace* builds ties between national and local levels within the constraints of its international agenda.
Our development is divided into two parts : firstly, the analysis begins with the survey carried out among 2 local groups (Rennes and Lille) : who are the militants involved in *Greenpeace*; secondly, the study focuses on the manners *Greenpeace* mobilizes from national to local level on the international campaigns (forest, Nuclear, GMO).

. Who are the militants?

7 individuals in Rennes (1 over 50 years old and 6 under 31 years old)
3 females and 4 males
9 individuals in Lille (2 over 60 years, 3 over 40 years, 4 under 30 years old)
5 males and 4 females

.importance of *Greenpeace's* media image

Throughout the interviews, militants explain their fascination or their desire to be a volunteer by the image they have of *Greenpeace.* The image of tiny boats battling against big ships to save whales or to protest against nuclear testing contributes actively to the "David vs. Goliath" myth of *Greenpeace.* During their childhood, these images appeared on French TV. Greenpeace's international media image is really what motivates these local members. This aspect has to be articulated with a hero image of the Green activist. The youngest volunteers imagine themselves as members of a form of resistance against the major lobbies. The oldest ones see the international image of *Greenpeace* as a means of continuing the struggle against capitalism, the nuclear threat or environmental crises in today's organizational repertoires of collective action. They began their struggle sometimes up to thirty years ago through other ways of action, like trade unions or local mobilization.

In Lille and Rennes, each militant under the age of 30 quotes the image of Greenpeace on TV as the first image they had of NGOs and sometimes of ecologist movements.

How did you become interested in Greenpeace?
-Through the TV news
- Not at all because you were in contact with people involved in Greenpeace
- No. Through TV news
(Volunteer, Greenpeace Rennes 2005, 24 years old)

Had you heard of Greenpeace before then?
- Euh! When I was small… I can remember seeing the picture of the dinghies getting between the whale and the whaler. So, well… I suppose they were heroes really (laugh)
(Manager of the local group, Rennes 2005, 30 years old)

.to be part of a big NGO

They enjoy taking part in the *Greenpeace* NGO at a local level because it makes them feel they are resisting industrial, chemistry and economic lobbies. They see themselves as the voice of the weak and they explain the international structure of *Greenpeace* by the constraints of the international arena. Action against the international lobbying giants has to be taken by a protest giant. Even the "protest business" is interpreted positively by the young volunteers who are socialized into the French myth of "désintéressement". The experienced volunteers argue that "the end justifies the means" and that the international level and the "protest business" forms of mobilization are solutions to going over the strong limits with which they were confronted in their former local commitment. This aspect is all the more interesting in that it testifies to a form of Anglo-American activism influence through the NGO. We need to underline that in the French field of environmental activism, *Greenpeace* is regarded as being far removed from local collective action and too "international" (sometimes too North American[2]). Here, business is synonymous with independency from the economic lobbies and the state. Business could be "good" if the values and the goals of the organization are good.

. "Raisons d'agir":"reasons for doing something" on the international level

In the same view, the international level is recognized as the best level to exert pressure and defend environmental issues. How can you defend local issues if you do not link them to a global protest against climate change, for example? These volunteers are as conscious of the links between local and global levels as other

[2] This image of Greenpeace as a foreign "francophobic" NGO was partly invented by the French government during the 1995 nuclear testing crisis. See Derville (1997)

ecologists are. These volunteers believe that environmental problems should be worked out at an international level. But they believe that international campaigns such as the protection of biodiversity (forests), resistance to the introduction of GMOs and climate change have to be spread at the local level by lobbying the local political system. On the other hand, local issues cannot be won by local activism alone. Resisting globalization demands an international perspective. These strategies enable volunteers to have more lobbying power when they are confronted with local politics. They use European environmental rules in local campaigns.[3]

- You mention the American Indians - .Have you been out there?
I lived in French Guyana for five year. First I was in the army and then I worked out there
- Were you a photographer? A professional photographer?
- No, I was a rum maker (laughs)
- Ah! (laughs)
- I am not a photographer.
- But you did mention photos …
I take a lot of photos, but I'm not a photographer
- And that's where it began, when you became concerned about American Indians.
-It was the fact of going elsewhere. It had already been an idea in my mind for a long time. Coming from an agricultural background and seeing how the agricultural sector can suffer, had made me a fairly questioning person, and given me a certain teenage rebelliousness. Teenagers are always a bit rebellious. And then came my encounter with the American Indians, especially the Whaana (?) on the high Marauny, far away from any consumer society, whose quality of life is, in my opinion, much better than ours. The day we arrived, - after going past a multitude of small gold digger boats for 3 days, after breaking the boat's propellers on the sand dunes left by the same gold diggers (irritated, tense laugh), and after seeing the social and environmental damage they could cause,- we reached the village on the very day that there had been a suicide. The tribal leaders wanted to talk about it with the army commander on mission who had come with us in a dug-out boat. They spent two and a half hours trying to skirt around the definition of the word suicide, because it does not exist in their vocabulary – there was something rather powerful about this that hit me at a time when I could see that little by little, westernization could have very heavy impacts on culture as well. And then there was the westernization but also the gold washing, a kind of wild socialisation but at the same time, a kind of destitution. It was a moment of revelation.
-About the environmental and social damage?
Yes about both …
(manager Greenpeace Rennes 2005)

.A way of choosing an identity: the youngest militants in particular

Another explanation of their involvement into *Greenpeace* NGO is the search for an identity that fits the way they see themselves. In other words, the youngest are on the dole and they are looking for a position. They have university diplomas, and are not just looking for any job, but for a position in keeping with

[3] On the capacity of "rooted cosmopolitans " to act as *brokers*, see Tarrow 2001

their activism. For example, young engineers want to find jobs in renewable energy (wind power) and to avoid any position which is too close to the Armed Forces or the industrial sector. They dream of their future as being independent and of devoting their professional skills to an ethical objective. Sometimes, they may pay the price of their choice when they qualify in a sector that has poor job prospects. For example, one bright young student would prefer to work in the renewable energy sector, which is a very weak sector in France, rather than carry in aeronautics, which offers many more job opportunities.
From the psychological viewpoint, we can explain this by the self-esteem of the individuals, who would rather lose their economic or social position and stay close to the good image they have of themselves. And, involvement in *Greenpeace* can help them to build their identity as a hero or future activist.

Your age and professional situation.
I am 23 years old, nearly 24. I am looking for a job. I finished my aeronautical engineering studies in September and I finished my course in the wind power sector. I would like to carry on in this area or in project management etc. and in renewable energy sources. My militant commitment has had an influence on this choice.
- And you can remember how you had the idea of becoming involved in a local group?
- It came about because I was wondering about where I was heading, what I really wanted to do with my life. I used to be a real fan of aeronautics. I went through preparatory school and then entered this school in Toulouse. And I was a bit disappointed by the way things were taught and all that. I realized that I did not really want to work in aeronautics as much as I used to, and at the same time, further back, my ecological and political conscience had begun to develop… I told you that I believe I have been anti-nuclear for a fairly long time, since I was relatively young. Films telling the story of Plogoff also had an effect on me, my sister without being really militant. It is rather hard. Not really my family but my sister and some friends …
(volunteer Greenpeace, Rennes, 2005)

We can see that a career in NGOs is possible and may be imagined as a future for the youngest.
But for the older militants, *Greenpeace* activism represents an involvement that carries on the ecologist identity they had in other ecologist or pacifist organizations – there appear to be various reasons why they do not persevere in their previous organizations.
The general point is that they have jobs in the public sector (education, health or social sector) but they construct their individual identities more through their activism than through their professional identity, even though they tend to mix their professional and activist identities (around education).

.Local mobilizations viewed by an NGO

NGOs are analyzed and interpreted themselves like actors involved in the International Civil society arena. We could contest the notion of civil society as built by actors and especially its use by international actors to legitimize their presence besides states; nevertheless NGO are weak actors because they have to demonstrate their representativity to give voice.
More or less every NGO knows these constraints of legitimacy when they have to exert pressure to give their interests a chance. Greenpeace is viewed as an international enterprise of collective action based on media activism. But, does it represent people?
In France in particular, *Greenpeace* went through a very serious crisis during the nineties. At the beginning of the nineties, the Greenpeace France organization closed down because of internal rivalries and its weak image in French public opinion. After the mid-nineties, the French office re-opened but with new strategies of visibility, especially aimed at finding more donors. The international board chose to support the French office financially but strict lines of conduct were imposed on managers and fundraisers. Thus, they adopted the strategy of going out to meet new donors on the streets using Direct Dialogue methods. The French office also initiated the creation of local groups in France's main cities so as to construct a network to spread information and reach more people in their daily lives. After the mad cow crisis, Arnaud Apotheker, the most famous campaigner on the GMO issue, improved the French Greenpeace office's image in the eyes of both the Greenpeace network and French public opinion, which had become more involved in the food issue thanks to the activism of José Bové.
And so we saw new local groups appearing in France. There are now around 24 of them, some very local and others very huge, like the ones in Marseille, Toulouse and Paris.
The Rennes and Lille local groups appeared around 2000. The initiative came from the national office with the network of activists.

- The first question is, how were the local groups formed? How did the idea of the local group come about… I believe you had the experience of the local Rennes group …
- what happened was that at some point, Greenpeace said to itself that action in France or in Belgium could not work if there was not a clear and distinct arrangement in every region, in every department. There had to be a more visible and more effective tree structure, which is why the job of local group coordinator was set up. I think I arrived in 2000 in Greenpeace although I had begun meeting people in 1999. I think the coordinator had been there for 4 years. 3 or 4 years no more than that! There really was a desire to reach out to people in the regions, to be able to target them more, something that Greenpeace had never managed to do before. It was a kind of

facade without anything behind it. People saw Greenpeace as representing dinghies, whales and seals. Nothing else.

- And maybe they saw it as being far away?

- Really far away. That's clear. As soon as the local groups began to be created - Bordeaux, Marseilles, Lyon - gradually others were set up through the impetus of a coordinator, mostly women. The aim was to find someone local who knew about Greenpeace either because he or she was a member, or because they had some kind of link with the ecologist world, and to find other coordinators afterwards to constitute a local group. Really, the main function of the local group it is to delocalise information to every region, every department and every city, each centre …. and to spread that information around by means of the market, meetings. And then, the local group can do other things, such as spot actions, like labelling GMO foods on supermarket shelves. There has been quite a turnover of coordinators, since we are up to our 3rd local group coordinator within Greenpeace France. The last change was made two years ago; it's not easy for the coordinators of local groups

(Activist, one of the founders of the local Greenpeace group, 2005, 26 years old)

"Yes, I am from an activist family. My parents campaigned in the Communist Party from 1969 until the eighties. I was myself also in the Union of the Communists Students. Afterwards I ceased in 1985, for my thesis (PhD), for national service and because I practiced some sports in a rather intensive way. But I was dragged into environmental activism, in 1997 at the time of the Kyoto Summit. It triggered my activism, even if many things attracted my attention before, the Kyoto Summit was the defining moment that made me think: "Now this is enough, I have got to do something.". From this point, I tried to get in touch with several environmental associations like Friends of the Earth, WWF, France Nature Environement and Greenpeace. And surprisingly enough, only Greenpeace answered me in a positive way by suggesting that I create a local group in Lille! And in April 99, following a conference with Bruno Rebelle (Greenpeace director at the time), we launched a local group and I have been the coordinator ever since. "

(Volunteer and Direct Action Activist, founder of the Greenpeace local group in Lille, 2003, 43 years old)

The aim of these local organizations, which have no independency from the national office (no rights to raise money, very few opportunities to develop actions without the green light of the centre) consists in homogenising slogans, lobbying at the local level and being present in the local field of activism. This very centralized activism in the French environmental field, built by local actions (local naturalist activism and local Friends of the Earth groups) represents a new and unusual style of activism and sometimes disturbs local associations. They have new methods and they are more professional on the media action side.

The Internet is used routinely to spread information and follow up actions through e-mail listings or via the web site (with video footage of actions), and members have the privilege of access to the intranet to discuss or find out more information on campaigns or on expertise. This kind of repertoire appeals more to the youngest and the intellectuals who use computers as a usual tool. But, this constant access to information is coupled with a very centralized organization of collective action. Local groups are mobilized through the appeal at the national level.

Thus, what sort of initiative might the local groups have? What are the specific constraints on the local groups even if they have to be involved in the local activism field? Between local and national constraints and with an international identity, what are the collective action and the militant activities of local *Greenpeace* groups?

2: Mobilization at local level with an international identity

Greenpeace volunteers feel more strongly obliged to promote an international identity in the local activism field, because the way local activists see *Greenpeace* contains an element of suspicion. Methods of collective action are viewed as being highly centralized without any independency or the means of expressing an alternative opinion. The synonymous terms used to describe *Greenpeace* are sects, enterprise or military enterprise. In the world of French associations, these synonymous terms are sharp and contain a very pejorative criticism because they portray an image that is different from the idealization of French associations held by terms such as “general interest”, “democracy” and “individual involvement”. In other words, *Greenpeace* represents the lobbying culture which is related to an Anglo-American political culture.

Local *Greenpeace* mobilizations are built at national level and reflect the international campaigns. Thus, local *Greenpeace* mobilizations could live cut off from the local agenda or the local interest. This conception of collective action is related more to an international agenda and to creating meaning between local and international interests.

In France, the first mobilizations involved the nuclear issue. The nuclear issue is of international interest because the consequences of using nuclear testing, for instance, do not stop at national borders. However, biodiversity and climate change issues come directly from the international level of international conferences held during the nineties and the beginning of the new century. Thus, we see the appearance of international issues promoted at the local level thanks to Greenpeace volunteers.

And, the promotion of international environmental issues at the local level reveals specific constraints on the way in which organizations can be part of the local activist field and on the activities of volunteers.

. Constraints of the local activism field

*alliances despite the NGO strategies

The *Greenpeace* organization is very top/down with little autonomy given to the local representative. But, the reality differs with the analysis of the interviews on mobilization.
The local representative may use opportunities to give local groups more independency.

No but that's normal. I meant in comparison with routine.
-but there is a certain strategy which is implemented in the relative long term. There is sometimes an image of what is known as "the one Greenpeace", which means speaking with one voice. Canvassing and investigation work are carried out to look for reliable information. Once we have reliable information, we make sure that activist A and activist B say the same thing. Because if a journalist comes down on us, we risk having major image problems if different people on the same side say different things. There is also the story of the rainbow warrior which caused a lot of heavy damage to the French office. A lot of rubbish was said about Greenpeace at that time, and the office even closed. So there is a certain caution at that level now. On the other hand we are allowed to make up our own minds about action, we joined the MCE. We asked Paris…
- At the same time …
- We're not waiting for an answer. Otherwise we wouldn't do anything, and anyway, I take my share of self-government. I warn that I am going to do such and such a thing, but that in any case, I am going to do it. I can remember when we carried out one action which was labelled Greenpeace where we were not associated with the Confédération paysanne or with whatever. It was Greenpeace. It was on April 17th, 2004 the day before the European regulation on the labelling of GMO foods came out. We went to a supermarket with their approval to distribute the new guide to products with or without GMO. There are only a few of us activists. It is not always easy to mobilize people. There was an anti-GMO group 35 in the Ille et Vilaine department which had wanted to take action for a some time already, which was trying…And there I had something to offer them, but we clearly said "it is an action Greenpeace". I said I have motivated people, organic farmers. Not necessarily those who cut down GMO crops, but "Living Brittany" organic farmers who look after birds and wildlife, members of "Waters and rivers of Brittany" and ATTAC… Each has its specialty, the agricultural side, the ethical and social side, the environmental side for us, the health side. We combined different areas of expertise, and on top of that, ATTAC will appeal to certain people, while we will appeal to certain people but also frighten others. Organic farmers appeal to everyone. Therefore for us there were only advantages. So I said, we would do it, and that was that. On top of that I had the OK of the GMO campaigners who told me it was a very good idea. Plus which, it was something they wanted to do themselves in the next few months, I just got a bit ahead of them. It was in line with their idea and it worked very well. I took this freedom for myself, quite deliberately. I know why they try to stop a certain number of decisions being made over-freely by the local groups. They try to control the things that are done but without tying down debate. They try to have control over what happens so as to avoid major problems and I can really understand why. I am aware of it and when I make a decision, I make it with full knowledge of all the facts. I am not in Greenpeace to place a bomb in the offices (laughs)
(Manager of Rennes Local group, 2005)

The debate over the independency of local groups sometimes divides the members of the local group itself. In Lille, we observe a major opposition between two sides. On the one hand, the local representative, who is also the

founder of the group, embodies Greenpeace: he is an experienced and athletic activist, doesn't belong to any other associations, has a PhD in engineering, and he strictly follows the guidelines of the national board. And on the other hand, other members who belong to the local group but also to other organizations (local environmental associations, ATTAC, Amnesty International), contest the dependence on the national board and argue for more cooperation with local associative networks.

One of them has been remonstrated by the local representative and the national board because he took part in a demonstration organized by Amnesty International and wore a Greenpeace T-shirt without asking the board's permission. A few months later, he took part in a collective mobilization organized by an anti-globalization network and represented Greenpeace against the advice of the local representative. But the national board congratulated him afterwards because the mobilization, and Greenpeace, gained good media coverage.

The recent decision of Greenpeace International to anchor its position in the anti-globalization movement[4] through collaboration with other NGOs has changed the political balance in the local group.

*alliances with the anti-globalization movement "Confédération paysanne", "Non aux OGM"

With the constraints to take part in the local activism field, the local representatives recognize their obligation to meet with other networks, particularly the anti-globalization movement, (*Confédération paysanne*). Increasingly thanks to their campaigns against GMO products, the local representatives in Rennes have a more local view of their action, and especially a regional view.

During January 2005, one particular international campaign had an impact on local campaigns against GMOs in Brittany. The *Greenpeace* boat, Esperanza with Arnaud Apotheker and José Bové, the famous leader of *Confédération paysanne*, followed a ship with a cargo of GM soya destined to be used as cattle feed in the Brittany region. The activists tried unsuccessfully to reach the ship but *Greenpeace* nevertheless succeeded in attracting media attention and in mobilizing local *Greenpeace* groups. On 28 January 2005, local *Greenpeace* volunteers and *Greenpeace* activists from the European network congregated at Lorient harbour (Brittany) and awaited the arrival of the GM soya cargo. But this campaign, linked with Greenpeace's anti-GMO crusade also took on a regional dimension, with the participation of regional representatives (Chairman of the Regional Council, Vice Chairman on Sustainable Development and Environmental Issues) and major trade-unions (*confederation paysanne*, on the rural side and

[4] See Freour, 2004

the CFDT and CGT on the worker side). Around one thousand people came to protest at Lorient. This time, *Greenpeace* mobilization took on a completely different shape. We can observe that the Greenpeace movement had less media coverage in local newspapers than José Bové and *Confédération Paysanne* did. This aspect has blurred Greenpeace's image in this case, despite the activists' "work" to paint the ship blue. Activists were put under arrest because of the blockade of the cargo but these aspects of the "cost" of their involvement were undermined or neglected by the press and the local media. It seems that getting arrested is seen as a routine part of their action repertoire and so has lost some of its power of attraction for the media. On the other hand, José Bové and his organization had a good media image and their declaration was taken by the media.

One activist who took part in this demonstration gives her feelings about this alliance between *Confédération Paysanne* and *Greenpeace*.

"You know Greenpeace and Confédération Paysanne have different ways of protesting…Greenpeace is non-violent and says "NO GMO" while Confédération Paysanne is more provocative. They insult police etc…and they said "GMO is shit". This is not Greenpeace's way."

(Greenpeace activist who took part in the demonstration in Lorient on January 2005, one founder of Local group Rennes, 26 years old, 2005)

In this case, the organization of mobilization took on a local resonance thanks to the local protest networks. Following the regional victory of the left wing (socialist party, Greens), the opportunities for international environmental issues to be well-received have grown. For example, the Vice Chairman of the Regional Council is a Green leader, a previous member of the city council of Rennes and she is involved in the sustainable development policy in Brittany. Her objectives are to promote the Agenda 21 and to control the introduction of GMOs in Brittany. She has initiated cooperation between Brittany and Brazil to sustain trade in soya, wheat, GMO-free corn and Fair trade. Criticism of globalization is attracting a wider and wider audience, reaching far into public opinion thanks to movies like "Darwin's Nightmare". Thus, local Greenpeace groups are no longer so isolated; they appeared at the local level at the same time as the rise in awareness of globalization.

However, although we can see that the local level is more independent when it comes to very local and small demonstrations, it is more constrained and only one part of the jigsaw during larger, centralized mobilizations. These types of repertoire stress the constraints on the volunteers' involvement. How can you be happy in the top/down repertoire and how can you resist the top, especially when you are an ecologist who likes to be independent in what you feel, believe and protest against?

.Constraints on militant activities

*military and media organization against the pleasure of activism ?

During the interviews, we met one militant who has criticized the Greenpeace hierarchy, in particular during an anti-nuclear demonstration (in Finistère near Brest).

(…)Greenpeace is very centralized?

- oh pffff it is very restricted yes. It is serious. We were on a demonstration, with 2 other people from Paris. I didn't even know they had already been in the local group for 2 weeks (laughs). It didn't really matter to me. They were students, about twenty years old. They were going 'yeah, it's a demonstration, got to sing, need slogans". I agreed a bit about staying, but if the truth be known, there was nobody there, nobody walking past us at all. There was only us and the old blokes from the nuclear power plant, the old usuals in that that's the only thing they've been doing for years. At first, we had fun churning out a lot of silly things. We didn't know any slogans to chant, so we just shouted all the usual things like "all as one, all as one" "and whatever, even "give us a penny" (laughter). Sometimes getting it not quite right. We were having a good time, brawling about, there were people every five metres; when they were close enough they could hear us, but not afterwards. Afterwards we came up with: "nuclear society, suicidal society" We were quite proud of it. People came closer to us and started joining in with it as well. We felt proud, and happy, but then we weren't going to shout just that; it was boring and repetitive; So we looked for something else and came up with "lawnmowers pollute on a Sunday, and so does nuclear power", things like that, that were a bit absurd; And then she turned up and said "careful what you say, remember that you're wearing a Greenpeace jacket, think of its image". And I said "Sorry, it might look a bit too much like we have fun in Greenpeace". It just came straight out, she really annoyed me…

- Perhaps there were cameras?

- In fact, there were journalists but they didn't have cameras. If there had been one with a camera we'd have seen it. And we'd have kept quiet; we wouldn't have said such silly things. Quite the opposite; when I see the television, generally I hide and keep quiet. You don't understand what I mean. "Yes! Yes! I understand that you have to keep quiet because the words you were saying had not been published by the office." (laughs) I was disappointed. That's it; it hadn't been approved by the office. I felt like I was with the communists. It was a pain, because there we were, cheerful, having a good time and everything. One minute we didn't know each other and then suddenly…

- Everything was going really well.

- People all around us were joking with us. Does not say more nor less then they had understood that they made the bloody idiots a bit and that when they found a serious knack they made it. They were only people « Sortir du nucléaire » around us.

It was the same family?

That's what it looked like to me because they were people from the "Sortir du Nucléaire" (get out of nuclear technology) network. Well, that really annoyed me. And then the girl from Paris came back at one point because somebody had said there were journalists there. She said :" you see. Wait for the guy from the Télégramme de Brest (local newspaper)", In fact, he was around but without his camera. But the girl was afraid….Stupid girl!

(Volunteer, Greenpeace Rennes, 31 years old)

This aspect is important because we see two sides of Greenpeace. Their attitudes to the media place an obligation on demonstrators who represent the NGO's image. Greenpeace's image has to be the same wherever it is on the earth, and so Greenpeace volunteers also have to be the same, follow the same screen play, say the same slogans and have the same serious and non-violent attitude.
On the other hand, Greenpeace staff sometimes have a very bad ecologist image because they do not put green values into practice: eating organic food, using public transport or being aware of the organization money.

This clash between the putting into practice of green (ethical) values and the actual way of life could be one reason to dismiss the NGO, especially, when the hierarchy is so strong and does not compromise with the local volunteers. The costs of involvement in Greenpeace are seen as being very high for very few advantages.
But, what are the advantages of being a local Greenpeace volunteer? They do not have any money, but they give time and money to the organization. They wear the Greenpeace T shirt and they have to represent an NGO which does not have a very good image in the local field. (Some volunteers do not tell their parents and friends that they are involved in Greenpeace). They are aware of its bad reputation and they avoid quoting their involvement in a Greenpeace group on their CV (curriculum vitae) to improve their chances of getting a job. These various aspects testify to the constraints placed on the activists but why then do they stay and continue in this local group?

*hope of being an "activist" for many of them

The main response of volunteers is the objective of being an activist or being part of a network that could be their first step towards entering the Green professional world (organic farmer or organic expert, wind turbine engineer). For the youngest, being a member of Greenpeace is a way to dream of and prepare for their professional life.

-No, no. It is because it is in Paris. But, I saw a job I do not know. Campaigners are really specialists, like GMO campaigners. (…) I still do not have the skills…What I'd like is to manage local groups, or else help activism. But I'm still a bit independent, although I'd like to earn a living like that and be 100% in it. I know that I'll stay in the environment and energies sector.
(Militant Greenpeace and now activist on the boat of Greenpeace, 24 years old)

I am going to wind up with the usual questions: your age, professional situation: in search of job.

- reconversion to be completed and search for a job as an organic farming consultant in environmental management. In a job where there is mutual respect between people, and between people and the environment.

- What training did you have to begin with?

- BTS (professional degree after A Level) in food processing, specialising in the dairy industry

(Manager of Greenpeace Rennes 2005)

This example contributes to consideration of the new ways of being a militant and the new overlap between professional career and militant career (Ollitrault 2001, Siméant 2001). It is no longer a matter of having a career as a professional militant in a trade union or political party; expertise is called for and new profiles are required (Wagner 2005), like being a fluent English speaker, or having good Internet skills. New academic teaching on environmental studies is creating new profiles of young people who embody both the militant and the professional field. The newness of the involvement could be explained by this transformation in the militantism offer (poor image of political and union field) and new individual experiences: the youngest French students may have spent part of their academic programme in a foreign country (Erasmus programme for example). They do not have a national view of their own destiny and their militantism: they have a more or less-good view of the international agenda (international conference, international norms, industrial lobbying), they consider their future professional position in France or in a foreign country. Sometimes they prefer to escape from their national space because they do not see living in Paris as a social promotion (as their parents did in the past).

The oldest volunteers have already experienced living far away from their birth country because of their professional career. They are also often experienced worldwide-travellers. They have often lived abroad and the international dimension of Greenpeace allows them to go beyond a national frame which seems too restrictive from their point of view.

The perspective of becoming an activist "enlightens" and enhances the value of their commitment. This *illusio* (Bourdieu) limits the costs of their involvement (jail experience, under arrest, resistance without violence, high risky protest). Activism is viewed like a part of their self-esteem; being the young David against the "bad" Goliath. This picture of themselves relieves activism and explains a good part of their involvement as local volunteers without independency.

3: Local NGO groups and the internationalisation of local issues

Local NGO groups are not so unusual in the French association field. We could quote many examples (Amnesty International, Médecins du Monde etc…) but with a form of internationalisation of local issues and the constraints placed by the global agenda on the local agenda, the presence and the power of attraction of

NGOs must be analyzed as a variable of the transformation of local mobilizations.
With the *Greenpeace* example, we can see that an international NGO has been conscious of the fact that a network of local groups creates exposure and proximity to people in their daily lives. Greenpeace is not only an image on TV: it is an NGO involved in the local political field.
Thus, we might underline two aspects which explain in part a form of global/local collective action: the spreading of ways of being a militant at the local level which could be innovative from the point of view of the usual behaviour of being a volunteer. How might an NGO repertoire have consequences at the local level? The second aspect to explore consists in understanding how this local NGO group spreads international norms and supports the implementation of international declarations on sustainable development or biodiversity.

.the diffusion of a "transnational" repertoire at local level

Johanna Siméant (Siméant 2005) has analyzed and reminded us that transnational movements and the spreading of an international/transnational repertoire is an NGO specificity. And, national forms of protests continue. Charles Tilly's analysis has underlined the division between the level of participation during protests and the transformation of states and the rising of modern capitalism. We must be aware of the transformation of states which are constrained by decentralization reforms and the building of European institutions. The transformation of the economic system has consequences on people's everyday lives, even farmers, workers or civil servants. In France today, reforms of the system built up after the Second World War and the defiance against the political system constitutes the environment of collective action. This is the reason why some *Greenpeace* volunteers are, for example, inspired by local action which is related to lobbying on the European level, because they know that economic and environmental decisions are taken at a supra national level and must be initiated by the citizen.
They consider political parties as inefficient on these issues and too spoiled to be a good network to give voice.
In their representations of a good and efficient action, *Greenpeace* volunteers have the feeling that pressure exerted through media action, by petitioning or by direct action to express their anger is the better repertoire. For example, being a *Greenpeace* volunteer means being part of the *Greenpeace* NGO with the same repertoire all over the world, and this homogenization represents the strength of the NGO: one voice the world over, without the difference of national identity. It is a representation of world protest related to the

international agenda or international interests and it represents a way of standing strong in the face of strong industrial lobbying or states (mainly United States).

Volunteers know the constraints of each public sphere and the constraints on certain specific "ethnic or indigenous groups". Making their voices heard in a democratic public sphere is a way of relating to and focusing on dramas occurring on the other side of the planet. For example, *Greenpeace* France put pressure on the French government during the Clemenceau crisis; the Clemenceau, a former military ship containing asbestos, was to be de-contaminated in India by Indian workers without any protection. They knew their "weight" as a white, well-educated voice on their government and the weak position of the Indian workers. Like the anti-slavery network during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *Greenpeace* exploits its capacity to express voiceless interests. The repertoire has this dimension and it appears with more visibility in the French local activism field, which itself does not have the automatic reflex of using the media, speaking with one voice or lobbying the local political system in a homogenised way. The idea is to convince at the local level that *Greenpeace* volunteers exist and are in a watchdog position in the political system. Local mayors might receive letters from local volunteers on the agenda 21, the boycott of rainforest timbers or GMO crops.
This "transnational" repertoire, which has international targets, with a transnational alliance between groups sharing the same identity is specific to NGOs and represents the ideal-type of the transnational repertoire. (Even with its specificity and without to express the prophecy of the irresistible spreading of this repertoire). This kind of repertoire with the support of media takes its place in the offer of repertoire in the activism field. Some of *Greenpeace's* ways could inspire groups into mobilising direct action, or local groups might form alliances with Greenpeace because the NGO attracts the media and goes about collective action in a professional way.
Greenpeace volunteers first learnt about *Greenpeace* through its media image and its repertoire has attracted new militants without any reference to national space. This aspect is important because these individuals do not have any reference to a national space or national political system or a national industrial lobby. They have the capacity to link problems and have solutions for resolving them at the international level. Volunteers have the experience of travelling, of meeting people with other cultural backgrounds and they have new social skills (capital) which fit this "transnational" repertoire. As Olivier Fillieule (Chraïbi, Fillieule 2002) underlined, a repertoire works because people have confidence in their collective action and project their identity into strategy. We could see with our volunteers that their actor trajectory testifies to their poor

confidence in a national repertoire and that they might employ their skills and their "feelings" in a transnational repertoire closer to their view of their position on the Earth. And the local repertoire could be invested with a transnational repertoire without any operational difficulty.
Agenda 21 from global to local and global can't exist without local implementation. National agenda and legislation are viewed like tools to implement without any independency or any particular respect.

.Diffusion of international norms at local level: sustainable development, biodiversity

The local *Greenpeace* groups sustain international issues that are dominant on the international agenda, such as the preservation of biodiversity, sustainable development and the problem of climate change.
If the *Greenpeace* NGO reinforces its legitimacy through its presence at the local level to give an image of proximity, local groups place importance on the international agenda at local level. The implementation or the non-implementation of international environmental norms becomes a reason to exert pressure. In the local field, local associations have proven their ability to use international norms to win trials or to promote their interests (like *Eaux et Rivières* in Brittany) but the local *Greenpeace* groups promote international campaigns and international conferences overall. Thus, the links with the anti-globalization movement are easier, particularly with the local ATTAC groups, than with local environmental associations.
We are also seeing the appearance of *Greenpeace* in the regional arena on the GMO, biodiversity and sustainable development issues. For example, at Lorient during a conference in March 2005, Greenpeace was in the audience when the Vice Chairman of the Regional council, Pascale Loget quoted the expertise of the NGO and a short leaflet on GMOs was distributed among the conference audience. The local *Greenpeace* group is increasingly becoming a partner and a true local militant group at the regional level. This partnership and their constant lobbying on local political representatives results in spreading and maintaining attention on the international level and gives diagnoses on the local consequences of the international decision.
These *Greenpeace* groups in westernized countries help to maintain the attention of public opinion on dominant interests (natives, preservation of tropical species or social exploitation of workers). In fact, since the Johannesburg conference in 2002, there has been a central definition of sustainable development, and *Greenpeace* and other NGOs, more on the environmental wing than on the social or human rights wing started to link the environmental issue with the social issue. To sum up, it is impossible to consider

the preservation of the environment without taking care of social conditions. Human beings are embedded into a natural, economic and social environment and more and more, westernized decisions or attitudes are determining the future of the Earth and the living conditions of inhabitants from the South hemisphere. This dimension of being a member of one planet is strong among the ecologist militants but *Greenpeace,* with its international identity, strengthens this appearance of being linked to the same environment, at the local level.
This international identity might sometimes be viewed as a constraint by the local militants. *Greenpeace* militants have an identity of members of a sect or a super enterprise which is far away from the French idea of being a volunteer. Their capacity for mobilization and their resources (money, materials) disturb the French ecologist's home-made ways of mobilising. Sometimes, we have heard criticisms made by other ecologists. Although *local Greenpeace* groups have resources, they have failed on the networking side. We see young local groups which seem to have fewer social networks with the local green party or other associations. And, this aspect limits their capacity to convince or to mobilize. Their strategy must mix alliances with other groups during mobilization and be present during meetings to exert pressure. But, this strategy is possible only if the group gathers many members because local groups like those in Rennes and Lille with 10 members and 4-5 very active members are too small to really be part of a local network. They seem more active on one-day mobilizations with a media strategy to attract local press or media.
This aspect seems interesting to analyze because we could not focus on local environmental movements without considering Greenpeace although it was possible until the mid nineties.

Conclusion:

This survey invites us to think about our way of analyzing local or transnational mobilizations. Rather than focusing on the newness of repertoire, or strategies, we have analyzed the circularity between different levels of collective action. Certain tools like networks and observation of the actor's socialization optimises our understanding of this phenomenon: the rising of international issues on the local agenda. Individuals, even the middle class, are more educated, know how to use new techniques like internet and have the experience of being a stranger in another country thanks to student exchanges or professional careers abroad. We see in France, a broad young generation interested in the planetary management of environmental and social issues. Even in France, during preparations for the Johannesburg Summit, we saw a rise in protests on the

social side in the environmental NGOs (Ollitrault,Chartier 2005). Because young French students and people are experiencing difficulties in getting jobs, jobs they may have dreamt of and jobs with career prospects, we are seeing an increased level of protest. The poor image of political parties and trade-unions is strengthening the appeal of NGOs and their lobbying capacities; raising money for a good "cause" is viewed more positively than it was in the past, when the French tradition tended more towards the capacity to gather people in to be volunteers.

On the other side, NGOs during the nineties exerted pressure so as to gain international recognition, they were just beginning their civil society careers and gained position and exposure, but had poor legitimacy, especially during controversies, because of their more expert than democratic identity. Local groups and local militants give NGOs more visibility and greater proximity. In France, we are seeing a new cultural way of protesting, with importance given to exerting pressure through petitions, collecting money for an organization and routinely using the media.

Without militants with a "rooted cosmopolitans" profile (Tarrow 2001, 2005), NGOs like *Greenpeace* could not be rooted at local level. However, ecologist militants, since the beginning of their action, have not shared the profile of "rooted cosmopolitans"? The objective is to isolate generations of "rooted cosmopolitans" with their specific representation, and their specific experiences in their daily life.

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