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Mapping the public policy landscape

From local to global

Foreword

Although many people take an interest in issues that impact on their local communities, recent years have seen an unprecedented increase in mechanisms for rallying support for issues that are a concern worldwide. Advances in communication technologies have enabled the public to participate in debates and campaigns concerning global issues as well as those that are much closer to home.

In the past, there have been international social movements, such as that for the abolition of slavery, but a broadening of citizen action on global concerns drawn from local communities is a more recent development. Generous giving to disaster appeals, support for 'Make Poverty History', commitment to fair trade, cancellation of Third World debt, widespread condemnation of military action, and environmental campaigns are manifestations of public concern for issues that challenge people across the world.

This publication is intended to make a positive contribution to the debate about local participation, changing ideas about citizenship and the growth of interest in global issues. It draws on presentations given by John Gaventa of the University of Sussex and Christopher Rootes of the University of Kent for the fifth in a series of seminars entitled 'Engaging Citizens'.

The seminars are organised by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in collaboration with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). These events provide an opportunity for practitioners, academics and policy-makers to examine how people are helping build a society that is both inclusive and cohesive, and to identify the ways in which positive differences are being made in communities.

From local to global is the latest topic to feature in the ESRC's Public Policy Seminar Series, in which we present independent research in key policy areas to potential users in Government, politics, the media, and the private and voluntary sectors. We see such events as an opportunity to establish further dialogue with the users of our research, and we welcome any subsequent contact.

Professor Ian Diamond
Chief Executive
Economic and Social Research Council

From local to global

The researchers

JOHN GAVENTA, DPhil, is a professor and research fellow at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, where he is a member of the Participation, Power and Social Change team. He is also Director of the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability – a network of over 60 researchers and non-governmental organisation practitioners in eight countries. John's areas of specialisation include: participatory methods of research and learning; power and empowerment; citizen engagement and action; non-governmental organisations and civil society and South-North linkages. He is the editor of the Zed Book series *Claiming Citizenship: rights, participation and accountability*, and co-editor, with Michael Edwards, of *Global Citizen Action* (2001). John has also been closely involved with a number of non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations, and was director of the Highlander Research and Education Centre in the USA, that celebrates its 75th anniversary as a training centre for empowerment and social change this year.

CHRISTOPHER ROOTES, BPhil, is Professor of Environmental Politics and Political Sociology and director of the Centre for the Study of Social and Political Movements, at the University of Kent. His main research interests are in environmental protest, environmental movements and the interactions between environmental campaigners and industry and government agencies. Increasingly interested in the formation and implementation of environmental policy, he is currently researching the critique of democracy and the democratic practices of the global justice movement, and developing new projects on the empowerment of citizens and the networks concerned with policy on climate change. Central to his research work has been a comparative study (the TEA project) of the changing character of environmentalism in Western Europe. Christopher has been the joint editor of *Environmental Politics* for ten years and edited *Environmental Movements: Local, National and Global* (Cass, 1999) and *Environmental Protest in Western Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2003 and 2007).

Executive Summary

Introduction

If we stop to look at the state of the world, it is easy to assume there is little we can do that will have a positive impact on the major global issues of our time, such as South-North inequalities, injustice, poverty, armed conflict, famine, endemic disease, global warming and damage to the environment. We may be aware that 800 million people worldwide do not have enough to eat, although there is more than enough food for everyone, or that 40 million people are currently living with the AIDS/HIV virus; and we may even realise that the developing world spends $13 on debt repayment for every $1 it receives in grants. However, despite this we may still be tempted to say, 'I'm just one person, what can I do about it?'

Faced with such overwhelming global challenges, a feeling of powerlessness may seem an inevitable consequence, but it need not be so. There is a long history of individual effort and concentrated citizen action that have made a difference, from the parliamentary campaign that led to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire 200 years ago, to the success of the landmines campaign in the early '90s and the Jubilee 2000 Coalition and, more recently, the growing campaign for the regulation of small arms and light weapons.

Individually and collectively, citizens of the UK, along with those of many other nations, are responsive to campaigns calling for support of worthy causes and appeals in the aftermath of natural disasters, or are willing to change their purchasing habits in favour of fair-trade goods. Local and global responses can come together to address worldwide concerns, but it is not just the affluent citizens of the North that are involved in taking action. Increasingly, the actors are drawn from both North and South and are devising effective strategies and initiatives to tackle the challenges and issues that are global in their impact.

Advances in communication technologies are accelerating international engagement and mobilisation to causes and campaigns. These technologies are helping to redefine the stage upon which the actors play out their roles and they are contributing to an ever-increasing reach – drawing together the local and the global. However, while technologies may help raise global support for issues, there is still a need for face-to-face contact and real interaction locally, nationally, and globally. The question is, how can these best be achieved and, in the light of changing governance structures, what are the implications for civil society organisations and other activists?

The ideas in this publication explore how the links between local and global can form effective social movements for campaigning, advocacy and giving. It also highlights that social movements are assisted by a better understanding of the inter-relationships between the different forms of power, what some of the challenges are in efforts to achieve global engagement, and the realities of progress towards global citizenship.

Key insights and implications

- As power comes in many forms, guises and levels, John Gaventa outlines the need for civil society organisations and other activists to understand the changing nature of governance and accountability. This requires an understanding of the interactions between local, national and global forms of power – and how each impacts upon the other.

- Through his work, he is seeking to make 'implicit perceptions of power, more explicit' as this has considerable significance for decision-making. He suggests that the faces of power should be understood in relation to how spaces for engagement are created, and the levels of power (from local to global) in which they occur.

- He represents diagrammatically (like a Rubik's cube) the 'forms of power', 'space' and 'place' relationships that are at play. John explains that the relationships are not fixed sets of categories and themselves consist of additional elements. The three relationships can be considered in any order and each of the elements that make them up are linked to one another horizontally and vertically. The model reflects research observations of local/global citizen action.

- His research also provides an indication of dynamism and identifies new forms and opportunities for citizen engagement. From his work on education with colleagues in India, John observed links between the local, national and global. He also found that those studied recognised the potential tensions within local/global coalitions and that, as a result, the structures put in place were designed to address imbalances, such as differences between North and South that are negotiated democratically.

- He makes five recommendations for effective global citizen action:
  1. Act at multiple levels (local, national, regional and global) and link this with vertical alliances
  2. Strengthen vertical alliances through horizontal cross-border networks and partnerships that are grounded in local reality
  3. Embrace a diversity of approaches and outcomes
  4. Strengthen actions through research, policy analysis and organisational learning
  5. Pay attention to internal forms of governance to ensure they are participatory, transparent and accountable.

- From his research, Christopher Rootes concludes that global citizenship has yet to develop, despite the world becoming a 'smaller place'. However, public engagement with global issues is strong and he points particularly to the successful actions of neighbourhood groups.

- Social movements are relatively un-institutionalised and operate through informal networks. Characteristically, they have shared concerns and engage in collective actions. They also consist of multiple players across geographical space, which 'transcend the merely local'.

- Yet research (the TEA project) into the incidence and forms of environmental activism and its relationship with environmental organisations in a number of European countries revealed that there was little 'Europeanisation' of protest. Even nationally reported protests were chiefly local, and environmental organisations were more likely to find partners within their own countries than across borders.

- As there is no global state, developing truly global movements and organisations informed by a genuinely global consciousness is difficult and, as a result, universal themes develop along nationally idiosyncratic lines that reflect specific national cultures, political systems, political cultures and political timetables. Christopher warns that peculiarities derived from diverse backgrounds and cultural, social and political contexts, which so often divide social movements, are challenges that need to be overcome.

- Although non-governmental organisations are regarded as strategic actors, their actions are less systematically strategic than is often supposed. Their identities, as well as their environments, shape their strategic choices. However, even when they choose pragmatically, they often prefer their habits, to their advantages, and so reproduce old patterns of action rather than seizing new opportunities.

- Christopher sees hopeful signs in the actions of some organisations that are building bridges between the South and North, particularly those that make a conscious effort to avoid simply reflecting and promoting the interests of the North. He exemplifies this by looking at an environmental organisation, which is linking the local to the trans-national. It has adopted a global social justice agenda, despite the reservations of some of its local members, but in line with wider membership polls that indicate a willingness to embrace the revised agenda.

- Trans-national activism and trans-national solidarity movements contribute to the broadening and deepening of the links that lay the foundations for global citizenship, but Christopher cautions that they do *not* constitute it.

Changing nature of power: Spanning the local, national and global

In an era of globalisation, John Gaventa explains how, with others, he is seeking to make implicit perceptions of power, more explicit. New understandings help explain the inter-relationships in the forms of power encountered in different political spaces and settings – presenting fresh challenges for non-governmental organisations and other activists.

"Politics is no longer to the same boundaries as before, and is no longer tied solely to state actors and institutions, the result being that additional players, new roles, new resources, unfamiliar rules and new contradictions and conflicts appear on the scene. In the old game, each playing piece made one move only. This is no longer true of the new nameless game for power and domination."

Ulrich Beck, Power in a Global Age, 2005

For many years, there has been an on-going debate about the changing nature of governance and accountability in the context of globalisation. Questions are asked about the extent to which rules, regulations, and policies are increasingly determined beyond the level of the nation state, (eg by regional structures such as the European Union, or by 'supra-state' organisations such as the World Bank). Also questioned is the extent to which global forms of governance, that transcend the nation state, have taken on responsibility for rule-making, co-ordination and problem-solving and, inevitably, what the implications are for democratic forms of accountability and the participation of ordinary citizens.

In the light of such questions, there are those who argue that the local has become less relevant in the context of globalisation, while others suggest that the global can be a distraction for local activists. There is also a view that the key to understanding the changing nature of governance lies in the interactions between the local, the national, the regional and the global – and the way in which each impacts upon and is in turn affected by the other. It is not so much a question of *either* the local and the national *or* the global, but of *both* the local and the national *and* the ways in which these interact with the global. This view has had particular relevance for IDS research.

There are implications, too, for citizen participation and democratic accountability at different levels. Globalisation has opened up new spaces for citizen engagement and it has been suggested that this offers greater transparency and enhanced opportunities for participation and democratic accountability. Although some see a 'global civil society' as too fragmented and diverse to wield much power, my research provides an indication of dynamism and of new forms and opportunities of citizen engagement.

Other issues of debate include: who is being empowered to speak for whom, particularly in relation to representation and accountability in North/South coalitions; and the extent to which globalisation is resulting in the development of global citizenship – especially in terms of how and where citizens see their own power, and capacity to exercise agency and voice.

Finding New Entry Points to Power

Changes in globalisation have tremendous implications for how we understand power, where and by whom it is held. Scholars of globalisation argue that two trends are particularly significant:

- *First*, changing patterns of globalisation have also changed the territorial or spatial relations of power, meaning that power increasingly must be understood not only at the local, the national, or the global level, but also in their inter-relationships. A focus on decision-making arenas in locality alone will rarely help us understand who really governs – nor of course will only a focus on the national or supra-national.

- *Second*, while many of the earlier debates on power focused on who participated in decision-making arenas of government, either at the local level or vis-à-vis the nation state, increasingly discussions of public authority have moved from *government to governance*. Governance is characterised by multiple intersecting actors, arenas and networks. Its decision-making arenas, in which power may be found, have become increasingly more varied and porous.

Political power may be understood not only in the state arenas, be they city halls, parliaments, or the World Trade Organisation, but also through a variety of other quasi-state and non-state spaces for decision-making. For researchers, this broadens considerably where we study power, and for activists seeking to confront power relations, it challenges received wisdom of where and how they should focus their attentions on changing the status quo – as Beck's quote at the beginning of this section illustrates.

My earlier work as a scholar and as an activist focused on understanding power at the local level. More recently, however, and with colleagues in the Power, Participation and Social Change team at the Institute of Development Studies, I have been searching for new ways to analyse and understand the forms of power, and how they are manifested in different types and levels of political space.
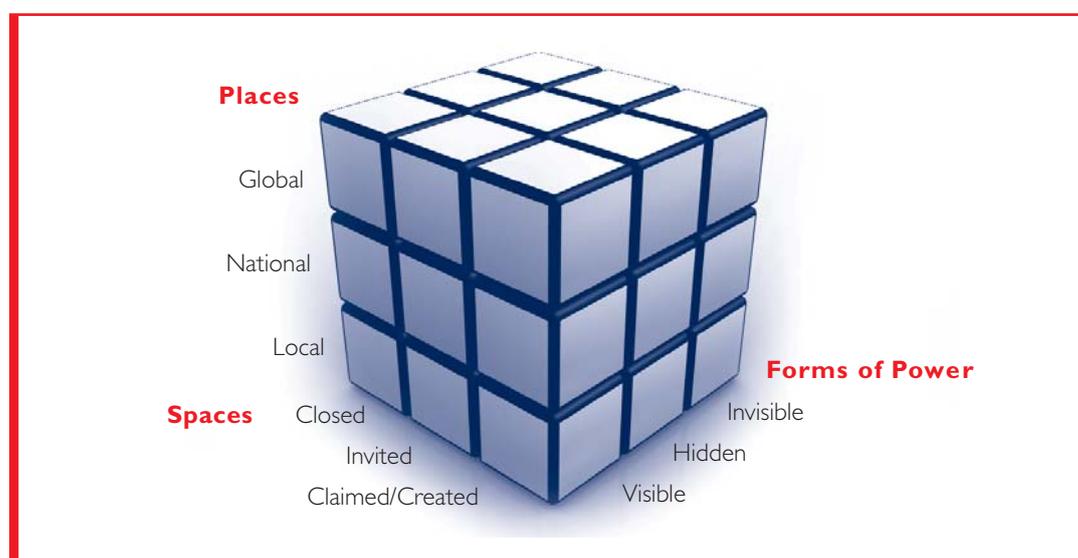
Building on my previous work based on the different forms of power (Lukes, 1974), I suggested that they must be understood in relation to how spaces for engagement are created, and the levels of power (from local to global) in which they occur. It was necessary to understand that the spaces, the levels and the forms of power (three separate but inter-related dimensions), had at least three additional components within them too, as the diagram that follows shows.

These dimensions can be visualised as a cube, rather like a Rubik's cube, in which all of the dimensions are joined together. It is important to think about each side of the cube as a dimension or a set of relationships – not as a fixed or static set of categories. In the model, the blocks within the cube can be rotated, any of the blocks or sides may be used as the first point of analysis, but each dimension is linked to the other.

The following diagram is taken from *Making Change Happen: Citizen Engagement and Global Economic Power* (2006) (See: **Further reading**).

Figure 1: The Power Cube

Places — Global, National, Local

Spaces — Closed, Invited, Claimed/Created

Forms of Power — Invisible, Hidden, Visible

Forms of Power

A conventional understanding of power assumes that contests over interests are visibly negotiated in public spaces and addressed equitably. Much of current advocacy and campaigning focuses on these **visible** faces and arenas of power such as polices, legislatures, government agencies, or court systems and emphasises such strategies as lobbying, media, litigation and research and analysis.

But power is not just about 'winning' but also, keeping other issues off the agenda. Moving beyond the uni-dimensional view of power, **hidden power** is exercised when certain actors or issues are explicitly excluded from the political agenda and public decision-making processes. Strategies to overcome these forces include combining community/union organising, leadership development, movement building and participatory research – ways to build the organisational strength, legitimacy and voice of the poor and excluded.
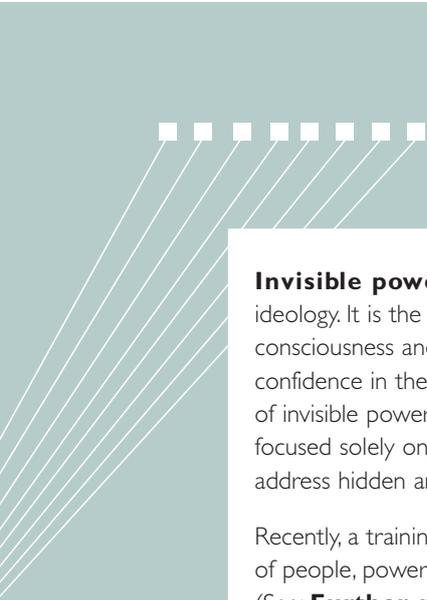
Invisible power is the internalised sense of powerlessness. It operates through belief systems and ideology. It is the most insidious because it not only works to control the agenda but also shapes people's consciousness and understanding of their roles, needs and ability to act. Strategies that strengthen people's confidence in their experience, sense of rights, solidarity and critical thinking help overcome the mechanisms of invisible power. To be successful in dealing with global economic power over the long-term, strategies focused solely on the visible arenas of decision-making need to be accompanied by strategies that also address hidden and invisible aspects of power.

Recently, a training manual on these forms of power has been published in the UK, 'A new weave of people, power and politics: The action guide for advocacy and citizen participation' (2006). (See: **Further reading**).

Spaces

Power can also be analysed in terms of the different spaces in which decision-making takes place. A **closed space** is one that is controlled by an elite group such as government officials and is not open to public participation. Civil society often works to challenge and open up these kinds of closed spaces to create **claimed spaces**.

Civil society also creates **autonomous spaces** such as the World Social Forum. They provide groups with the chance to develop agendas, knowledge and solidarity without interference or control by corporate or government power-holders.

With growing pressure from civil society over the last few decades, policymakers at many levels have created **invited spaces**. A select few from civil society are 'invited' to participate in a policy process although the agenda and process often remain in the control of the elites. While such spaces offer some possibilities for influence and may allow social justice groups possibilities for organising, it is questionable whether these invited spaces actually create opportunities for any real long-term social change on critical issues. The danger is that they may even serve to legitimise the status quo and actually divert civil society energies from working on more fundamental policy-related problems.

All these spaces are constantly shifting in terms of power and opportunity. Thus, civil society groups need to be strategic about when and how to engage (and disengage) in policy spaces and be realistic about what they can gain or lose from them.

Levels

All of these different forms of power and spaces of engagement play out across many different **levels**. The power cube looks at global, national and local levels but other levels are also relevant and can be added, depending on the context. For example, a feminist analysis would add household, community and personal levels. Also, even though we may be working at the local level, we still confront elements of the global. Thus, we have to look at all these levels together.

Understanding power this way challenges the false dichotomy between 'evil global power holders' and 'virtuous social movements' – unequal power relations are present in civil society and social movements as well. For example, women's concerns have often been marginalised in popular organisations and social movements. Struggles over resources and leadership between non-governmental organisations and community groups are also common and internal tensions around decision-making and democratic process are present throughout civil society organisations.

While this framework helps analyse different spaces, levels and relations of power, it is not intended to serve as a tool for designing concrete strategies. Instead, it is a valuable way to reflect on how the dynamics of power create different obstacles and entry points and require a comprehensive set of overlapping strategies to be effective. It can serve to help groups assess their actions in relation to the current types of power they are facing and thus help them better choose and combine different strategies in response.

Effective local, national and global links

As the Jubilee 2000 Coalition so powerfully illustrated in the run-up to the Millennium, trans-national social justice movements, advocacy coalitions and campaigns for development, human rights and the protection of the environment illustrate the potential for the emergence of a global civil society and global social movements. Yet in some quarters, there has been controversy about the extent to which such campaigning at the global level is grounded in the voices of those at the local level. Others argue that in fact the national level has been by-passed, yet the nation state remains a key actor in addressing social justice.

In a current research project I am conducting with Professor Marj Mayo of Goldsmith's College, we are exploring the tensions and possibilities for linking local, national and global advocacy to challenge power relations. This work is part of a larger programme on Citizen Engagement in a Globalising World being conducted by the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability. As part of this research, we have most recently been focusing on the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), which, in the drive to achieve the ambitious Millennium Development Goals, illustrates the potential relevance of advocacy and campaigning that links local, national and global levels together.

As a result of the increasing success of the GCE, non-government organisations and trade unions from around the world have gained recognition as legitimate policy actors that have established a space for civil society participation in the development of national action plans. The reasons for this success lay in its roots in civil society organisations – locally and nationally – as well as having the support of international non-governmental organisations, such as Oxfam and ActionAid.

The Global Campaign for Education
With its aim of removing the 'scourge of illiteracy and ignorance' for future generations worldwide, the Global Campaign for Education is made up of a coalition of civil society organisations linked to national coalitions of non-government organisations, child rights activists and teachers – including their unions. Education International, UN agencies and most importantly, parents and school children in over 100 countries, support GCE. It mobilises over six million campaigners in more than 120 countries during the 'Global Week of Action' in April of each year. GCE's actions have led to 37 million more children globally attending school over the past five years.

Further details about the Global Campaign for Education are available at:

www.campaignforeducation.org

GCE research project in India

Some 35 million children between the ages of 6 and 14 are out of school in India, almost two thirds of whom are girls. This represents a third of the global total. There are also major problems with the quality of education, such as teacher/pupil ratios of up to 1:94, and two thirds of schools lacking furniture for pupils.

In order to understand the dynamics of the campaign more closely, we focused on India, and within it, the state of Andhra Pradesh. We conducted interviews with participants of the Global Campaign for Education, including those involved at national, state and local levels. Interviews were also conducted with those involved in advocacy coalitions, (eg international non-governmental organisations and trade unions).

Interviews focused on three related areas:
1. How those involved saw the links between citizen advocacy at different levels, (eg local, national, regional and global)
2. The types of structures and approaches that enabled citizens' voices to be heard effectively – locally and/or globally. Where, at what levels and how citizens exercised their voice effectively
3. How engagement in local/global advocacy coalitions impacted upon the participants themselves. How participants viewed themselves as active citizens.

Findings

Links between citizen advocacy at different levels
Our research suggested that people involved in GCE do see links between advocacy at different levels and that these are potentially mutually reinforcing spheres. In consequence, effective advocacy involves campaigning for resources to achieve the global goal of Education for All; while at the village level, working with children, their parents and teachers to ensure that children do go to school and that schools provide quality education.

Types of structures and approaches enabling citizens' voices to be heard
There also appeared to be widespread recognition of the potential tensions within local and global coalitions, both North and South. The structures developed by the GCE are specifically designed to address these imbalances as effectively as possible. For example, particular emphasis is placed on ensuring differences are negotiated democratically. In this respect, GCE provides lessons for those concerned with local/global coalitions more widely. Despite evidence documenting the significance of interconnections between citizen advocacy at different levels, local and national levels still emerge as being of central importance. Global advocacy can, and does, support and strengthen active citizenship at the local level; and it certainly does not mean bypassing the need for campaigning at local and, especially, at national levels.

**Impact of advocacy coalitions on the participants**

While there was limited evidence from the global South, the evidence from the international non-government and trade union organisations suggested that involvement in local/global advocacy and campaigning has potentially powerful effects on those concerned. Without suggesting that this indicates the formation of a global justice movement as such, there seemed to be evidence of increasing awareness of international issues – and their interconnections with more local concerns. There is an increasing identification with the ideas of global citizenship, especially among some sections of younger people. Such awareness, and the need for shared understandings and mutual solidarity can be, and, in a number of instances, is being, built on in a number of ways. This too has potential implications for those concerned with building local/global advocacy coalitions and campaigns, especially those concerned with learning for active citizenship.

Raising further questions

These findings raise further questions about the Millennium Development Goals. If local people are to be empowered to make their voices heard and to realise the goal of Education for All, they need access to education themselves, in other words, 'active learning for active citizenship'. While the campaign for Education for All has its own particular features, its implications are also applicable to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. From the work of the Commonwealth Education Fund to the work of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, capacity building programmes have already demonstrated their potential value – both locally and beyond – enabling people to know their rights and with the skills to work together to attain them. In future, Education for All needs to be more broadly defined as, 'lifelong learning for global citizenship'.

Further details about the research project are available at: **www.drc-citizenship.org**
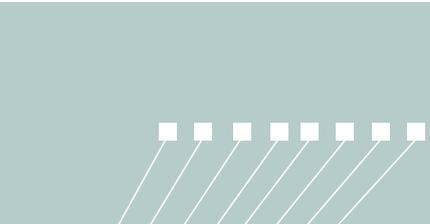
Lessons for good practice

In conclusion, I would like to set out five principles that stand out significantly from the work that we have been undertaking, each of which carries specific implications for good and effective practice.

1. Global citizen action implies action at multiple levels, local, national, regional and international, that must be linked through effective vertical alliances

The most effective and sustainable forms of global citizen action are linked to constituency building and action at local, national and regional levels. It is equally important that such actions be vertically aligned so that each level reinforces the other. Alignment of action at multiple levels, particularly action that is synergistic and mutually reinforcing, does not happen without the creation of 'vertical alliances' that allow the different levels to communicate about – if not coordinate – their work. Building vertical alliances often requires people to learn to work together across boundaries of geography, culture, and power.

Such partnerships require the development of relationships of mutual trust and influence that are usually built through face-to-face encounters – often in informal spaces.

2. Vertical links are strengthened through 'horizontal' networks and partnerships which themselves are strongly linked to local realities

In developing and promoting horizontal links, rapid communications, especially the Internet, have a valuable role to play in the support of information sharing and coordination of action. However, face-to-face communication is still critical for developing mutual trust, reaching agreement on common principles and for clarifying differences. Community-based, people-to-people exchanges are also important in building global networks. Horizontal exchanges can change the focus of power between Southern and Northern civil society organisations by circumventing the filtering of resources and information that often occurs when networks are coordinated through the North. Direct people-to-people exchanges can also contribute to new forms of South-North interaction based on mutual learning and solidarity.

3. Global citizen action implies, and must embrace, a diversity of approaches and outcomes

As a principle, there is no single blueprint, no universal pathway, through which global citizen action can occur. At one level, this lesson has to do with choices about strategies and tactics; the goals and strategies that are possible will vary from context to context, based on differences in values, organisational forms and capacities, leadership and political space. A campaign that assumes that 'one size fits all', that one solution is best in all cases, may mean domination by more powerful actors who design the size and shape of the organisation.

4. Global citizen action is strengthened by participatory forms of research, increasingly sophisticated policy analysis, and continuous organisational learning

To be credible, effective and accountable, global citizen action must pay attention to its own knowledge and learning strategies. Knowledge strategies can be important tools for linking micro and macro realities, for policy advocacy on complex issues, and for building continuous organisational responsiveness and flexibility.

One of the key issues facing the legitimacy of international non-governmental organisations is that of voice. How do they link their own voices as advocates with the knowledge and voices of local people on whose behalf they sometimes claim to speak? One important strategy that has emerged to answer this question is the use of participatory research methods to ensure a stronger link between the views and realities of local people and those being articulated by global policy actors – non-governmental organisations or international institutions.

5. Global citizen action requires constant attention to internal forms of governance that are participatory, transparent and accountable

The legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of global citizen action is affected not so much by the quality of *external* strategies and linkages, as by attention to the ethics and consistency of *internal* behaviours and practices. In an era of globalisation, when messages and symbols are created and transmitted instantaneously, corporations and other global actors have learned that one or two examples of socially irresponsible practice can do enormous damage to their credibility on other issues and in other places. As a result, they are committing greater resources to monitor and improve the quality and ethics of their work.

Civil society actors must be willing to do the same.

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Global civil society: Just a noble aspiration, or an emergent reality?

Despite the strength of international responses to humanitarian and environmental issues, Christopher Rootes has reservations about the development of 'global citizenship'. His reservation is based on his research that includes a study of the incidence and forms of environmental activism in Europe, and his current work on the movement for global justice.

The path to global citizenship is littered with contradictory tendencies in both public attitudes and political responses – and these are not simply linked to different actors and/or constituencies.

Communications through the use of new media has made the world a 'smaller place' and brought remote events closer to home. A personal experience illustrates this. At the time of the Asian tsunami in December 2005, I was in Cuba. Watching TV in my hotel room I was impressed by the similarities of the news coverage given to the event by US, French and German TV networks. Equally impressive was the immediacy and scale of the worldwide public response to the outcome of this devastating natural disaster.

Historical perspective

International public response to appeals for help is not, however, just a recent phenomenon. The Red Cross, inspired by Swiss dismay at the suffering of sick and wounded soldiers abandoned after the Battle of Solferino in 1859, was founded in 1863. In the UK, Oxfam's origins were in response to the famine in Greece following its occupation by the Germans in 1941. The Freedom from Hunger Campaign in 1964 sought to alleviate Third World suffering. Its most active members were Christian Aid, Oxfam, Save the Children, War on Want, the Friends Service Council, the UK Committee for UNICEF and the UN.

Over the last twenty-five years, the outcome of Live Aid and Live 8, or the response to the Ethiopian famine of 1985 following Michael Buerk's moving report for the BBC, are indications of public engagement with the plight of others in the world. Since then, public response to events has become increasingly more organised and has grown in scale. Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History have shown how the strong presence of neighbourhood groups, both faith-based and secular, can bring the local and global together.
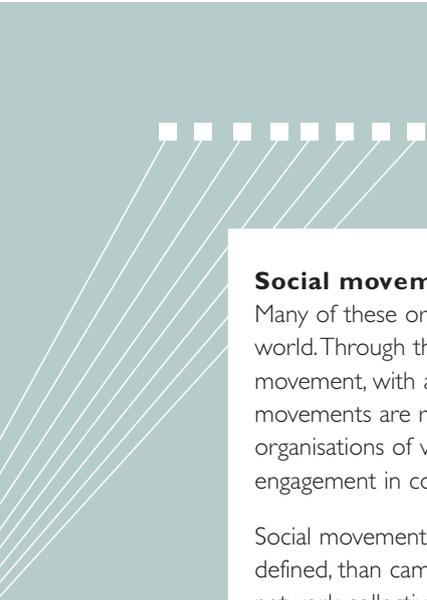
Social movements

Many of these organisations cooperate collectively with others nationally, or with others elsewhere in the world. Through their activities and those of individuals, they may contribute to a more encompassing social movement, with aims such as the elimination of social injustice or action on climate change. Social movements are relatively un-institutionalised, informal networks of actors that include individual actors and organisations of varying degrees of formality. Despite this looseness, social movements are distinguished by engagement in collective action that is based on a shared identity or concern.

Social movements always consist of more than a single organisation and are more extensive, and less clearly defined, than campaign coalitions, such as Make Poverty History or Stop Climate Chaos. They usually network collective action across geographical space and, in that sense, transcend the merely local. However, just as 'all politics is local', similarly, all social movements are local too; at least in the sense that all activity is geographically located.

Apart from a clutch of national organisations which serve as rallying points for the environmental movement even in quiet times, the mainstay of environmental activism is the plethora of local campaigns, variously networked and unreliably reported, that are waged, year in, year out, in villages, towns and cities across the industrialised world and beyond. Sometimes stigmatised as NIMBY (not-in-my-back-yard) protests, many of these local struggles to preserve human and/or non-human habitat, mobilise around issues of much wider significance – and some of them develop to articulate local concerns as universal issues.

However, local campaigners are scarcely to be blamed if, faced with issues of great scientific complexity, and hampered by limited resources, they concentrate their efforts on the backyard, which is at least familiar territory. In the global South, lack of resources and limited access to scientific knowledge are often compounded by inhospitable political conditions, with the result that episodic protests often fail to cohere into trans-formative social movements.

Aspirations to global social movements are increasingly common, especially among activist elites, but in reality, both at national and local levels, social movements are riven by particularisms – divided by the peculiarities of individual and collective statuses, conditions and circumstances. The challenge is to overcome these particularisms in order to forge global consciousness and action, to build solidarity between the relatively fortunate inhabitants of the global North and the less fortunate, and often increasingly desperate, inhabitants of the global South.

Considerable obstacles

The obstacles to global consciousness and action are considerable. Social movements have developed in relation to political systems, and the development of civil society has been dependent upon the development of the state. But there is no *global* state.

Even in the best-developed trans-national polity (system of government), the European Union, social movements mobilised around universal themes have developed along nationally idiosyncratic lines. In consequence, as our research on environmental movements has shown, these reflect the specificities of national cultures, national political systems, national political cultures and national political timetables. Even with respect to matters as clearly trans-national as environmental issues, there is no European, let alone global, social movement. The persistence of linguistic, cultural and political differences presents challenges to be overcome.

We generally look upon non-governmental organisations as strategic actors, seeking opportunities effectively to advance their claims in the most appropriate arenas and by the most efficient means. Our research on environmental non-governmental organisations suggests, however, that they are less systematically strategic actors than we commonly imagine them to be.

For some, usually smaller organisations and groups, their choice of strategy is constrained or dictated by their conception of their identity; for groups for whom participatory democracy is a fundamental principle, opportunities to make gains by negotiating with oligarchic or representative actors or institutions are unlikely to be seized. Identity and ideology constrains the choice of strategy and tactics.

Larger, more formally organised non-governmental organisations may be more pragmatic, but they too are constrained by considerations of identity. More generally, as actors in broadly political processes, they are *embedded* actors, embedded, that is, in national and local contexts that shape their perspectives, their preferences and their prejudices. For instrumental reasons, such organisations cannot afford to ignore – and, even more generally, they *believe* they cannot afford to ignore – the contexts within which they are embedded, for it is from them that non-governmental organisations derive their resources, and it is there that the possibilities of influencing policy and practice are most immediate and transparent. Even at a time when the great bulk of national environmental policy is formed in, or imported from, the EU, in Britain and Germany alike, national environmental non-governmental organisations tend to follow their habit rather than their advantage by cultivating contacts and concentrating their activities at the national rather than the trans-national level.

There is hope
Nevertheless, positive and encouraging examples of trans-national action proliferate. Environmental organisations, such as aid, trade and development non-governmental organisations, are increasingly and effectively aware of the risks of ethnocentrism and cultural imperialism. Organisations such as Earth Action and Friends of the Earth International try with some success to build bridges between North and South without simply privileging the perspectives and interests of the North.

Friends of the Earth in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FoE), provides an especially interesting example of the linkage between the local and the trans-national. A relatively decentralised national environmental organisation, FoE is a member of a trans-national federation of autonomous organisations – Friends of the Earth International. At local, national and international levels, FoE has increasingly adopted a social justice agenda. At local level, this has sometimes been controversial among members who believe environmental organisations should maintain their focus upon strictly environmental issues. More generally, however, when organisations such as FoE and WWF (formerly the World Wildlife Fund) have polled their members, they have found them to be more willing to embrace a global justice agenda than the organisations' leaders supposed.

The global justice movement

The term 'global justice movement' is used to identify the loose network of organisations and other actors that are, on the basis of shared concerns, engaged in collective action designed to promote social, economic, political and environmental justice among and between peoples across the globe. The actors involved vary considerably in the degree of formality of their organisation, ranging from political parties and campaign coalitions orchestrated by long-established non-governmental organisations, to self-consciously 'disorganised' anarchists and unaffiliated individuals.

The forms of their action range from:
- Lobbying of governments
- Highly organised public campaigns
- Instances of direct action designed to disrupt the activities of the powerful.

By no means all the activists that my fellow researchers and I have identified as part of the global justice movement would so identify themselves. Indeed, there is still some reticence among activists to acknowledge the term, and some radical activists are disparaging of tactically moderate 'reformist' coalitions such as Make Poverty History. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence of networking, shared concern and collective action oriented toward a common purpose, to make it meaningful to speak of the existence of a global justice movement in Britain.

The various manifestations of the global justice movement also encourage a broadening of perspectives by sharing information and examples of alternative democratic practices for 'a new world order'. Examples include: the World Social Forum and its regional offspring such as the European Social Forum and the various local social forums that are more common in southern Europe than in the UK.

The social forums have not, of course, fully realised their proclaimed aspirations to greater democracy. As our research on the global justice movement has found, the internal practices of the organisations concerned and the organisation of the social forums themselves are rarely fully democratic or transparent. The acrimonious conflict surrounding the organisation of the European Social Forum in London in 2004 is a case in point. Nevertheless, the movement has shown a well-developed capacity for self-criticism and for learning from experience, with the result that past errors are not simply repeated.

In addition, there are processes that encourage hope. Increased ease of communication, the impact of television and the expansion of higher education make global solidarity easier to realise in practice. Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History have deeper roots, but their popular success was made possible by such processes.

Appeals to compassion, common humanity and morality are bolstered by considerations of self-interest. It is recognised that social deprivation on a global scale is actually, and potentially, a driver of massive migration – especially as climate change accelerates desertification in Africa and Asia – and it may be easier to mobilise to address the causes of such problems abroad than to cope with their consequences at home.

Still a long way to go

We have a heightened sense of our common humanity but, as yet, no developed sense of global citizenship. On the contrary, in the UK and elsewhere in Europe we cling to ideas of national citizenship even as we lose, or pool, national sovereignty in the European Union. Even within the European Union we reluctantly, if at all, extend the benefits of citizenship to our fellow Europeans, although they can in most cases now vote in European Parliament elections, and in some states in local elections too. But citizens of other European Union states (Irish and Commonwealth citizens aside), even when resident, cannot vote in UK national elections.

We have long subscribed to the United Nations Charter of Human Rights, but we do not imagine that it extends to global citizenship. It is simply muddled thinking to talk about global citizenship in the absence of a global polity, and the United Nations system is not that, however often it may be said to prefigure it. Even the European Union, which *is* a successful trans-national polity, has not resolved the citizenship issue; indeed, it wisely sidesteps it.

Trans-national activism and trans-national solidarity movements do indeed contribute to broadening and deepening the links that lay the foundations for global citizenship – but they *do not*, and *cannot*, constitute it.

Global citizenship and climate change

Recent talk about 'environmental citizenship' has focused upon the responsibilities of individuals to act in ways that respect and protect the environment. Much discussion of climate change, however, joins assertions about the responsibilities of the rich North with considerations of the rights of people in the poorer South. But we have to ask ourselves:

- Do we need 'global citizenship' to address climate change?

- Alternatively, would a mere sense of our interdependent fates suffice and a recognition that any climatic default anywhere will impact upon all of us?

- Would a simple awareness that climate catastrophe in Africa and/or Asia will impact upon us as a result of increased pressure for migration and greater political instability, appeal sufficiently to our self-interest?

Even if we take the moral high ground, out of compassion for the suffering of fellow humans, and act to mitigate the effects of climate change upon them (whether or not we are likely to experience directly such adverse impacts ourselves), we would not need to extend 'citizenship' to them.
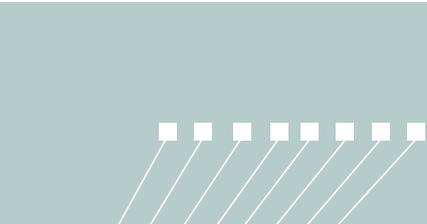
Activism and collaboration: TEA project

The Transformation of Environmental Activism (TEA) project, coordinated by Christopher Rootes and funded by the European Commission Directorate General for Research, was undertaken between 1998 and 2001. The project studied the incidence and forms of environmental activism and its relationship with environmental movement organisations in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, France, Spain, Greece, and Sweden, and at the level of the EU itself.

The project's aim was to:
- Examine the various forms of environmental activism
- Map changes in relative incidence of environmental activism over time and from one EU member state to another
- Examine changes in environmental organisations and their relationships with other actors within and outside the wider environmental movement
- Advance explanations for the patterns of variation that were found.

Of the environmental protests reported in the decade 1988-1997 in the six European countries other than the UK, the great majority were local, regional or national in the scope of the issues and the targets they addressed. European and international issues and targets accounted for only a small minority, and there was no trend toward the 'Europeanisation' of protest.

If environmental protest has remained a prisoner of local and national circumstances, the same is true of national environmental movement organisations. Of 86 British environmental groups surveyed in 1999, only 22 even so much as claimed to have exchanged information with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), and only seven claimed ever to have collaborated in a campaign with the EEB. Figures for the Climate Action Network were broadly similar. The results of parallel surveys in the six other countries did not suggest that environmental organisations elsewhere in the EU were any more likely to be actively involved in EU-level networks than were their British counterparts. When it comes to finding partners and allies, environmental organisations in these European countries are much more likely to choose among those in their own countries than to look across borders.

Further details about the research are available at:

www.kent.ac.uk/sspssr/tea/

Obscuring or enlightening?

In his seminal essay on citizenship and social class in post-war Britain, T. H. Marshall famously extended the concept of citizenship beyond formal political rights to include *social* rights. He observed that extreme social inequalities undermined the substance and meaning of formal political citizenship for the poorest. But he was arguing for an expanded concept of citizenship *within* the nation state. It is a much greater and more problematic leap to extend the concept of citizenship to embrace people who are not even formal citizens of the nation state.

Citizenship is not merely a matter of rights, but a combination of rights *and* responsibilities. Even if we were to extend rights to non-nationals, how could we conceive of, let alone compel their performance of, the corresponding responsibilities?

'Global citizenship' is a rhetorical flourish that, like many a rhetorical flourish, serves both to enlighten and to obscure.

Using the language of 'citizenship' may actually undermine progress toward recognition of our common humanity. If citizens of Northern states fear that they will be swamped and that their rights will be compromised by the extension of citizenship rights to vast numbers of potential immigrants from the global South, there is the risk that increased (economic, military, energy and environmental) insecurities in the global North might lead to a fortress mentality that would undermine the bridges now being built between North and South.

Environmental Protest in Western Europe

'Environmental Protest in Western Europe', edited by Christopher Rotes, poses a number of questions, such as:

- Has the institutionalisation of established environmental organisations demobilised their supporters and reduced them to a passive, credit card waving 'conscience' constituency?
- Has direct participation in environmental protest become the specialised activity of smaller numbers of people?
- Has there been a decline in the total volume of environmental protest, or is it merely that the forms of protest have changed?
- Have the protest repertoires of established groups moderated over time, or have they been stimulated by the emergence of more radical groups to adopt more challenging tactics?
- Has environmental protest become more confrontational?
- Do protests employ different repertoires of action according to the issues at stake?
- How does the incidence of protest vary over time and from one country to another?
- Is there evidence of Europeanisation of either the issues or the forms of environmental protest?

The book is based on an analysis of the protest events reported in one quality newspaper in each of eight EU countries during a ten-year period.

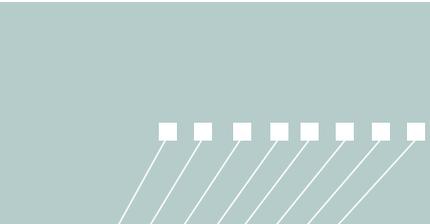Oxford University Press
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The National Council for Voluntary Organisations
The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is the umbrella body for the voluntary sector in England. It works to support the voluntary sector and to create an environment in which voluntary organisations can flourish. It represents the views of the voluntary sector to policy-makers and Government and consults with the sector to inform policy positions on issues generic to the sector. It also carries out in-depth research to promote a better understanding of the sector and its activities. NCVO has a growing membership of over 5,000 voluntary organisations, ranging from large national charities to small local community groups.

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