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# Contours of the Czech Environmental Movement: a comparative analysis of *Hnutí Duha* (Rainbow Movement) and *Jihoceske matky* (South Bohemian Mothers)<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The two case studies, representing distinct strands of the Czech environmental movement, challenge contemporary claims that in the age of globalisation the significance of the national context in shaping protest and agency is declining. The specific context of post-communist political reform and economic restructuring is emphasised as a key determinant of environmental organisations' activity and behaviour. Strategic choices and actions of both organisations can be understood as responses to their dependency on external funding. Financial dependence on external agencies with their own agendas and interests can dis-empower and de-legitimise environmental movement organisations. Assumptions regarding the impact of resources on strategic choices and campaigns require qualification when applied to movement organisations beyond established capitalist democracies.

## Introduction

The academic literature on environmental mobilisation in central and eastern Europe (CEE) is now extensive. Research has focused either on the role played by environmental activists in the collapse of soviet-style communism [Fagin, 1994; Waller and Millard, 1992; Tickle and Vavrousek, 1998], or has offered general analysis of environmental movements, organisational development and the institutionalisation of protest during democratic consolidation [Szabo, 1994 ; Kubik,1998; Manning, 1998].

However, there has not yet been a detailed analysis of the breadth and diversity of environmental movement organisations (EMOs)<sup>2</sup> within CEE states to parallel the analysis that has taken place of western organisations.<sup>3</sup> We know about general trends towards professionalism and institutionalisation, but what about more radical organisations that have neither disappeared (as might have been predicted) nor become more 'professional'? As Meyer and Tarrow have noted, 'More important than the various trajectories, or their importance to different types of movements, is the recognition that the variety of organizational outcomes (within a movement) provides social movements with a wider range of possibilities for subsequent action than previous theories of social movements acknowledged' [1998: 19]. The depiction of general trends within a social movement can obscure the diversity of organisational forms within the movement itself.

This paper challenges the depiction of generalised trends within the Czech environmental movement by considering the extent to which professionalism and 'Europeanisation' have

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<sup>2</sup> We use the term EMO (environmental movement organisation) to describe organisations that form within the overall environmental movement and essentially constitute that movement. This is of course a broad classification within which there will be substantial variation in organisational forms and purpose. When dealing with the theoretical literature on social movement organisations we refer at times more generally to 'SMOs' (social movement organisations).

<sup>3</sup> Both analysis of national west European environmental movement organisations and comparative analysis is extensive. See Jamison et al, 1990; Diani 1995; Rootes, 1999; Kriesi et al., 1995.

become endemic features of EMO activity. We attempt to capture the diversity and breadth of the Czech movement by focusing on two quite different organisational types – the highly professional, globally connected and elite-focused Czech chapter of FoE (*Hnutí Duha*) and a locally-based non-hierarchic organisation, South Bohemian Mothers (*Jihoceske matky*), run by women. Though it is possible to differentiate between these two organisations in terms of the way they operate, their political efficacy, their location and their internal organisation, they have both campaigned against the nuclear power plant at Temelin in Southern Bohemia. This provides an empirical basis for comparing different organisational forms, approaches and strategies applied to the same issue. Beyond developing the study of Czech EMOs, the value of our empirical analysis is revealing about the political opportunity structure of the Czech Republic and the effect of externally generated resources on the building of indigenous organisations.

Our research also provides a critique of the extensive theoretical discourse on social movement organisations derived from the experience of organisations in established western democracies [Kriesi, 1995; Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Meyer and Tarrow, 1998]. Conceptualisations of openness versus closure, national versus local, formal versus informal access all gain new dimensions in the context of a young democracy undergoing rapid and far-reaching social and economic transformation at the behest of external organisations and global agencies. We conclude that the specific context of the ‘triple transition’ remains decisive in determining how individual EMOs develop and operate.

### **Theorising EMO activity in the Czech Republic**

The evolution of western environmental movement organisations from radical participatory ‘new’ social movements, to networks of formalised, professional mass membership organisations has influenced both the theory and practice of environmental politics in the Czech Republic. The perception of the environmental movement as being on a continuum from submerged oppositional social movement in the months prior to the ‘velvet revolution’ towards increased institutionalisation and professionalism remains the dominant discourse and underscores much existing analysis of the Czech environmental movement, as well as environmental politics in CEE generally [Pickvance, 1998; Jancar Webster, 1998].

Analysing the evolution of the Czech environmental movement over the past decade from the perspective of the western developmental model enables a classification of Czech EMOs based on levels of institutionalisation, bureaucratisation, repertoires of action, internal organisational structure, involvement of membership. It also offers a basis on which to monitor changes and progression as defined, in many cases, by the EMOs themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Yet analysing Czech EMOs from the perspective of a linear developmental course from radicalism to institutionalisation and professionalism is based on a somewhat inaccurate portrayal of developments within western EMOs during the past three decades. Whilst a general trend towards professionalism, resource endowment and institutionalisation may be characteristic of western environmental movements, their political capacity has always relied on the diversity of strategies and organisational forms *within* the movements [Meyer and Tarrow, 1998: 19]. Though some western organisations have become more professional and institutionalised, organisational diversity and grassroots activism have remained a feature of western environmental movements that have in some countries (e.g. the UK) become increasingly prominent in recent years [Wall, 1999; Crozat, 1998: 60]. Rather than seeing the

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<sup>4</sup> What we refer to here is that many activists within EMOs define their organisations in terms of following a western trajectory. They see increased professionalism and formalisation as objectives (Interviews with Daniel Vondrouš, *Hnutí Duha*, May, 1999, November 2000).

shift towards professionalism and the decline of radicalism amongst a core of Czech EMOs as evidence of westernisation, such trends should be recognised as a reaction to the specific structural context of the Czech Republic's transition from Soviet-style communism to neo-liberal capitalism [Fagin and Jehlicka, 1998].

To assume that the Czech environmental movement is a stage or so behind western movements and is merely going through a necessary developmental phase of de-radicalisation and institutionalisation is also problematic insofar as this view is based on the belief that the CEE states are destined to follow a western course of development. The problem with such a perspective when applied to environmental politics is that it implies that Czech activists face the same political and economic scenarios that European campaigners faced a generation or so ago and that they must therefore go through the same stages of professionalism and institutionalisation. The persistence and re-birth of radical direct action within western movements is conveniently overlooked in the quest for evidence of organisational maturation. Yet Czech EMOs face aggressive foreign direct investment and an increasingly diffused power structure. Rather than replicating a bygone stage of western development, they face a political and economic context in which pro-growth neo-liberal consumerism and subservience to foreign direct investment is the accepted mantra.

### **Identifying organisational types**

Once freed from both the 'catch-up' approach to environmental mobilisation in the Czech Republic and the focus on professionalism and institutionalisation, recent attempts within the contemporary western theoretical literature to capture the diversity of social movements can be applied in order to locate Czech organisations within a comparative analytical framework. Diani and Donati's [1999] typology of western social movement organisations captures the transformation and the hybridised nature of their strategies and organisational logic that has resulted in a breadth of organisational forms. Challenging the rigid dichotomy between professionalism and grass-roots action that divided earlier research [Lowe and Goyder, 1982; Jordan and Maloney, 1997], their model offers a typology of activism that captures the dynamics and pragmatism of late capitalist protest. Diani and Donati's model identifies four broad organisational types based on two dimensions: professionalism versus participation, and disruptive versus conventional forms of activism:

- *Public Interest Lobby*
- *Participatory Protest Organisation*
- *Professional Protest Organisation*
- *Participatory Pressure Group*

Organisational forms are determined by the mix of strategies selected by particular organisations. Decisions are made regarding the mobilisation of time and or resources depending on the specific campaign and issues [1999: 16-17].

Diani and Donati's typology is useful to identify different strategies and organisational forms amongst Czech EMOs. Organisations could be classified rather superficially on the basis of an apparent shift towards professionalism, or resemblance to contemporary western organisations. However, many of the constraints on Czech EMOs are highly particular and relate specifically to the complexities involved in trying to establish civil society in a post-authoritarian state. Even when a trend towards westernisation is clearly discernible, the specific political context as well as dependency on external funding impose developmental constraints that may not be temporary or transitional, but endemic and long-term. Though there may well be a link between resources and strategies and organisational forms in the

Czech Republic, the dynamics of the ‘triple transition’ as well as the legacy of authoritarian rule and the events of the late 1980s are likely to mediate and moderate causal factors of organisational behaviour [Fagin, 2001].

### **Explaining the political role, function and strategies of EMOs**

In the theoretical literature on social movements, the ‘political process’ or ‘political opportunity structure’ approach [Eisinger, 1973; Piven and Cloward, 1977] focuses on the nature, culture, organisation and functioning of the national political system as a determinant of organisational activity [McAdam and Snow, 1996; Tilly et al, 1978; Gamson and Meyer, 1996; Kriesi et al, 1995]. The variables that are deemed to affect strategic choice and patterns of organisation amongst SMOs in western Europe are used here as the basis of a series of hypotheses to be tested by reference to the Czech EMOs studied.

### **The nature of the state**

It is widely assumed that strong, repressive centralised states produce strong well-organised movement organisations with radical agenda [Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 154; Kriesi, 1995: 51-52]. On the basis of a comparative study of social movement activity in four west European states, Kriesi et al [1995] conclude that weak and inclusive states give rise to high levels of mobilisation and moderate action repertoires. It is assumed that a decentralised state will provide more access and opportunities for contestation. Distinguishing between formal and informal activity, they claim that such political systems encourage strongly developed formal organisations. In contrast, strong states give rise to radicalism, lower levels of mobilisation which tends ‘to be concentrated in unconventional forms’ [Kriesi, 1995a: 51-2]. Moderately strong but highly inclusive states encourage strong SMOs committed to conventional forms of protest, but the lack of formal access means that unconventional forms of protest continue to be a feature of campaigns. Formal access breeds conventional protest, though the stronger the state the more radicalism.

Such conclusions are partly endorsed by the Czech case. The environmental movement lacked informal access during the Klaus period (1992-97), but has regained such links since 1998 with the advent of the CSSD minority government, which has consulted with activists from the main EMOs and has encouraged informal as well as formal links. The dividend appears to be that the main EMOs have become more professional and have fashioned themselves as partners in the EU-inspired policy process. Yet, rather than stimulate radical actions and agenda, the repressive style of the Klaus government – at one point three of the main EMOs were placed on a list of subversive organisations to be watched by the security services - prompted a de-radicalisation of EMOs and a decline in ideological diversity at a time when far-reaching policy decisions were being taken. A centralised, closed and exclusive state did not lead to more radical repertoires or encourage direct action. The dependency of Czech EMOs on the state and on foreign donors for funding<sup>5</sup> acts as a constraint on their political adventure and mediates their interaction with the political process.

Though constitutional reforms have brought a measure of decentralisation, the Czech state remains centralised. Yet the impact of the state on EMO access has to be seen as contingent on the influence of the IMF, WTO and other international financial organisations. The centralisation of the Czech state is more a remnant of the past than an expression of

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<sup>5</sup> Though state funding for EMOs has always been small compared to foreign donations, funds from privatisation and other state funding represent an important source of income. At the local level, volunteer-based EMOs often depend upon the goodwill of the local authority to provide office space. In the absence of sustainable levels of private donations, there is still a higher level of state dependency compared to western European EMOs.

contemporary power. The veneer of empowerment is used by peripheral states to mask a 'soft' state that can do little about the direction or nature of economic activity [Strange, 1994: 7].

The relationship between the Czech government, external political and economic organisations, and social movements is structured by the dynamics of economic and political transformation and is distinct from the situation in developed liberal capitalist states. In particular, the dominance of the EU in the field of Czech environmental policy impacts upon the relationship between organisations and the state. Rather than organisations demanding concessions from a relatively empowered state, there is a 'dependency triangle' in which the state's subservience to the EU weakens its capacity to offer concessions or to take decisive action [Stadler, 1994]. As the main provider of funding to organisations, as well as dictating legislation and regulatory structures, the EU has altered the relationship between the state and EMOs. Dependent on EU funding, the larger Prague-based EMOs have largely accepted the ecological modernisation agenda, whilst the centre-left government remains steadfastly committed to implementing the import-led enlargement programme devised by the chief executives of Europe's largest corporations [Monbiot, 2000].

This triangulation of power alters the impact of the domestic political process. Though the EU could potentially provide alternative opportunities for political access, it has weakened the political efficacy of EMOs who are forced to accept and work within agendas set by the European Commission.<sup>6</sup> The activities and strategies of environmental organisations in western Europe are undoubtedly affected by the EU and other external organisations, but strong national governments play a more critical role in agenda -setting both domestically and at EU level and this enables established EMOs to exercise influence. The situation is very different in the Czech Republic where, in the run up to accession, the government has little capacity or inclination to resist foreign direct investment regardless of its ecological impact.

There are other more general problems with applying the political process approach to the study of EMO activity. The approach generally fails to identify or quantify the degree of impact exerted on EMOs by changes in the political system, or indeed how quickly the impact is likely to occur [Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 198-9]. This is particularly problematic for new democracies, where institutional processes and procedures may not yet be embedded. Moreover, as a set of variables the political process approach is less effective at explaining differing degrees of success amongst individual EMOs operating within the same political opportunity structure. In order to better understand why some organisations in certain contexts are able to mobilise support and orchestrate vibrant campaigns and others are not it is necessary to consider the factors that stimulate collective action.

### **The impact of resources**

The resource mobilisation approach [Zald and McCarthy, 1987; Tilly, 1978; Oberschall, 1973] portrays activists as rational actors who consciously decide to organise and mobilise on the basis of available resources; 'the type and nature of the resources available explain the tactical choices made by movements and the consequences of collective action on the social and political system' [Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 8].

In the Czech case, the approach helps to explain why EMOs with access to resources have been better able to adopt a professional veneer and to gain political access than have others. Yet as with the political process approach, the danger lies in making deductions about the

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<sup>6</sup> The Brno and Prague offices of *Hnutí Duha* spend considerable time applying for EU funding, either indirectly through the Regional Environmental Center, or through Phare via the Czech organisation NROS (Civil Society Development foundation). Arguably this is a distraction from campaigns and political activism. Funding rounds are announced based on specific themes and issues decided by the Commission in accordance with the accession agenda. EMOs are then set the task of putting in bids based on projects.

impact of resources on the capacity of EMOs without acknowledging the specific structural context in which they operate. Resource Mobilisation theory assumes a linkage, based on the western experience, between the availability of resources and action that is not necessarily replicated in a post-authoritarian context. For Czech EMOs resources come from external donors, who invariably impose particular agenda on recipient organisations. Moreover, the supply of resources (including know-how and technical assistance) is invariably temporary and cannot be deployed successfully without more long-term training and indigenous resources being available in the first place. In short, resources are a dependent rather than independent variable. How they can be used and what conditions are attached to them is critical.

### **The Framing approach**

In understanding the different strategies and successes of Czech EMOs the framing approach is particularly useful insofar as it combines the impact of resources and political opportunities with the impact of the structural context [Gamson, 1995; Benford, 1993].

The framing approach emphasises the way issues are presented and articulated by an organisation as the basis for explaining the success or failure of specific campaigns. Not only does it allow a distinction to be made between campaigns over the same issue, but also the varying success of the same issue over time. Thus, it focuses not just on the availability of resources (e.g. access to the media), but how such resources are deployed [Gamson, 1995]. Political and cultural values of the society, plus the structural context in which an environmental issue has arisen become significant. How EMOs frame their campaigns, and how they are perceived by the public is critical.

The advantage of the framing approach in the Czech case compared to political process or resource mobilisation theories is that it allows the specificity of the political and economic transition to be recognised as potentially moderating EMO activity. Rather than seeing organisational activity as the product of either the availability of resources or domestic political opportunities, the framing approach sees both as dependent on how the strategy and issue interact with specific political values and cultural context, as well as acknowledging the influence of the agenda of external donors whose framing of a particular issue may well prove decisive.

Having critically reviewed the problems associated with the application of the various theoretical approaches to the study of EMOs to the Czech case, we are now in a position to further explore these issues by considering two case study EMOs: *Hnuti Duha*, the Czech chapter of FoE, and *Jihoceske matky* – South Bohemian Mothers.

They have been selected because whilst they both campaign on the same issue, have embarked upon professionalism, and been the recipients of external funding and assistance, their organisational structure, campaign style and use of resources differs markedly. It is our aim to account for such differences and to explain how the specific political and economic context shapes the behaviour of two different organisations.

### ***Jihoceske matky* – (South Bohemian Mothers)**

## **The formation and profile of SBM**

Apart from the Prague Mothers,<sup>7</sup> South Bohemian Mothers (SBM) is the only Czech women's environmental organisation that at least to some extent combines environmental with feminist concerns. It was established by a group of former school friends in 1990, though its roots date back to the period before November 1989. The organisation began as one woman's response to nuclear activity and gradually grew into an informal, and subsequently more formal, group of female activists. Its headquarters is in Ceske Budejovice, the capital of the peripheral South Bohemian Region, some 40 kilometres from the Austrian border, and near the controversial Temelin nuclear power plant against which it campaigns. SBM have consciously decided to campaign in this region rather than establish an office in Prague.

The combination of the fact that SBM is a women's group operating in a peripheral region with the highly technical nature of the major issue they address) puts SBM in a particularly difficult position as the public discourse on almost all aspects of social life, and especially nuclear energy, is dominated by technocratically oriented men. This is magnified by the fact that most leading SBM activists are women educated in the humanities.<sup>8</sup>

Although SBM's database currently contains 2,000 names, the group has about 150 members who pay 100 CZK (3 euros) annual membership fee. The vast majority of these members are passive supporters, with an active core of 10-15 women. Members include women of all ages between 20 and 65. Most have secondary level education or are university graduates. However, though Ceske Budejovice is a large university town with a large student and academic population, the organisation has not significantly widened its membership.<sup>9</sup> As a consequence of the severe reduction in its external funding, the group has recently cut back the number of employees to five, three of them part-time.

## **Funding and resources**

Not long after their formation, SBM were approached by the Upper Austrian Anti-nuclear Platform (UAANP) with an offer of funding for SBM's campaign against Temelin. There followed what members describe as a 'happy time'. The money enabled SBM to rent spacious offices and, in co-operation with the Czech Foundation Against Nuclear Danger, to open an information centre in Ceske Budejovice, to expand the range of their activities beyond the anti-nuclear campaign, and generally to adopt a more professional demeanor. They took part in a series of public inquiries concerning all sorts of environmentally damaging projects throughout the South Bohemian region.

As a result of the curtailment of financial support from UAANP in 1997, SBM ran into serious difficulties that threatened the continued existence of the organisation.<sup>10</sup> Activists were forced to look for more modest offices and reduce the scope of their activities, to close the information centre and to discontinue their newsletter. They have maintained the core activities directed against Temelin such as lodging complaints to the district office for failing to force the investor - Czech Energy Company (CEZ) - to subject substantial change in the project to the EIA procedure, taking the district office and the company to court.

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<sup>7</sup> The Prague Mothers is an organisations that was set up before 1989 to campaign against the health effects of air pollution on young children. The organisation still operates today, though it is less politically engaged than SBM.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the chairwoman is a secondary school teacher of foreign languages and a freelance translator

<sup>9</sup> This is a marked contrast with, for example, the Olomouc branch of *Duha* which is run almost entirely by student volunteers from the large multi-disciplinary Palacky university in the town.

<sup>10</sup> Whilst UAANP have continued to provide some money for SBM, this is on a much reduced scale and strictly on a project basis.



Though the situation in which SBM now found itself was not dissimilar from that faced by other Czech EMOs, the organisation's outright opposition to nuclear energy and the Temelin plant meant that they found it much harder to secure the support of foreign foundations, many of which endorsed nuclear energy as an alternative to burning brown coal. Similarly, there was no prospect of the organisation receiving any domestic funding from government-sponsored sources whilst they vehemently opposed Temelin. Rather than develop their fee-paying membership base, SBM concentrated on securing other sources of external funding and as a result, 90 per cent of their funding still comes from abroad.<sup>11</sup>

### **Campaigns and strategies**

SBM is the only organisation in the Czech Republic to have actively and continuously campaigned against Temelin on health and ecological grounds.<sup>12</sup> Other EMOs that at the start of the 1990s vehemently opposed Temelin ceased to campaign actively largely because nuclear energy was popular amongst citizens and politicians alike. At times SBM was a lone voice battling against national-level apathy and local hostility. Unlike other green activists, SBM refused to dilute or qualify their outright opposition to nuclear energy and the ill-fated plant.

SBM is also involved in a campaign for the use of alternative energy, and a campaign to protect the South Bohemian landscape. On the nuclear issue, their strategy has mainly been to focus on the legal process demanding, for example, that EIA procedure is applied at least to the changes to the original project (the whole plant has never been subjected to EIA assessment). They have also taken part in public inquiries on the location of radioactive waste storage in which they questioned the safety of the proposed alternatives. In the campaign on alternative energy, SBM's strategy has been to organise exhibitions, give lectures at schools, call press conferences and publish articles mainly in the regional press. As one activist commented:

'It became impossible to do just Temelin. It is impossible to fight one great evil and at the same time ignore other evils. We had to do something as well against felling oaks or building an incinerator' (Interview, 23/3/99).

SBM also address various threats to the South Bohemian landscape arising mainly from private-sector initiatives and foreign investment schemes. Such proposals are usually backed by local politicians and mayors as they potentially offer employment opportunities to local people. Foreign investments are usually accepted on the basis that liberalisation is a basic tenet of economic restructuring. SBM in the mid 1990s opposed a project to build an incinerator in Mydlovary, a Dutch-sponsored project to convert a vast area of natural beauty into a recreational and leisure park to attract foreign tourists, and German-sponsored projects for large-capacity poultry farms, which would take advantage of much more lenient Czech regulation .

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<sup>11</sup> The sources are quite diverse. Apart from UAANP, the Dutch foundation Milieukontakt OostEuropa provides funding, as well as a Swiss association of Christian women and an ornithological society from Germany. The Czech foundation Nadace Partnerství, whose sources of funding all originate from abroad, has recently granted 150,000 Czech crowns for SBM's participation in public inquiries (Interview, SBM, 23/3/99).

<sup>12</sup> This is a contrast with other EMOs (such as Greenpeace CR and *Duha*) that did not campaign actively against Temelin through much of the 1990s. In the case of *Duha*, their more recent campaigns have tended to stress the economic and fiscal problems of the power plant.

What is particularly significant in the context of Czech politics and society is that SBM frame their environmental aims and objectives from a feminist perspective and actively strive to strengthen women's participation in politics and public life. Especially at the beginning, SBM activists experienced gross insults from their opponents simply because they were women; they were accused of being lay people meddling in the highly technical issue of nuclear energy, and of employing irrational and emotionally laden arguments.

After an initial stage in which SBM was a purely participatory protest group engaging in demonstrations in front of the Temelin gates, the organisation came to resemble an organisation close to the professional protest organisation type identified by Diani and Donati [1999]. SBM employed a broad range of activities from classic lobbying in the Czech parliament to demonstrations. Apart from publishing their own newsletter *Ztuha*, they ran seminars on renewable energy, including wood-burning boilers and small hydropower plants. They also organised excursions for mayors to places where renewable energy was already used. At the same time, however, they were still organising demonstrations against Temelin in Ceske Budejovice or by the construction site.

Due to the close co-operation with several groups from the Austrian anti-nuclear movement in the early 1990s, SBM were able to adopt their know-how and thus speed up the learning process that was taking the majority of regionally based EMOs a great deal longer. Nevertheless, SBM's leading activists interviewed in 1999 still critically evaluated their ability to act as a fully professional organisation in the first half of the 1990s. They lacked not only organisational skills and the ability to work effectively with the media, but also scientific and technical expertise. However, they believe they have learnt how to reach the public sphere through the media. To resolve the problem of inadequate expertise, they have gradually built up a circle of experts to whom they can turn for technical and scientific advice.

The case of SBM illustrates the variety of factors influencing the strategies and organisational logic employed by an EMO. First, the content of the main policy issue they address (the construction of a nuclear power plant), combined with the character of the group (a women's group), puts them in a disadvantaged position. Second, during the whole decade in which they have been campaigning against Temelin, they have not expanded their operations beyond the South Bohemian region. SBM have adopted lobbying as a major method of their campaign, but political lobbying in the highly centralised Czech state is effective only if it is systematically employed in Prague. This seems a fundamental strategic barrier to the success of SBM in the anti-Temelin campaign, given that all institutions involved in the decision-making process - the Czech energy company, the Ministry of Trade and Industry which is the regulator of the energy sector, the State Office for Nuclear Safety and the government and parliament - are based in Prague. As one SBM activist acknowledged:

'We rarely manage to penetrate national newspapers because...if you are not in Prague and do not know the right journalists, you simply won't make it in to (Prague based) papers. You may send out a hundred faxes, we tried to hold a press conference in Prague, but if you don't have contacts that you cultivated for years, you have almost no chance (Interview, 23/3/99).

Third, SBM have always been active only in a peripheral region of Southern Bohemia, but at the same time they are engaged in a deep conflict with the local political elite, including the city hall in Ceske Budejovice. Large sections of this elite are in one way or another linked with Temelin. The mayor of Ceske Budejovice is a former employee at Temelin. This means that SBM encounter deeply rooted hostility even when they campaign on matters other than Temelin. Local power holders do not miss any opportunity to close access for SBM and

prevent them from participating in regional or local environmental conflicts. The situation was summed up by an SBM activist:

‘A commission that is supposed to supervise the preparation of the plan of strategic development of the South Bohemian region has recently been established. It is connected with the European Union's structural funds and will affect the development of the whole region on a long-term basis. We as SBM wanted to be a member of the commission...but the reaction of the mayor of Ceske Budejovice was: from ecological groups, anybody except SBM’ (Interview, 23/3/99)

Fourth, the ability of SBM to mobilise Czech domestic resources has remained limited throughout the 1990s. They have not managed, nor have they made a serious attempt, to expand the size of membership of their organisation. They still have only about 150 members paying a small annual fee in quite a large, relatively prosperous region, in which there are many academics, students and others likely to be concerned about environmental issues. Like most Czech EMOs they have developed a dependence on foreign financial resources, which in the case of SBM were initially quite generous. However, SBM's dependence on mostly Austrian sources of funding diminished their ability to integrate into the post-communist Czech polity. It discouraged them from moving beyond the region (their centre of gravity was in many respects Austria rather than Prague), and allowed them to function without the support of fee-paying members. Furthermore, while they were forced to co-operate with experts on nuclear energy due to the complicated nature of the issues, they apparently failed to tap local research potential in Ceske Budejovice on questions of nature conservation and land use planning, issues on which SBM also launched campaigns.

### ***Hnuti Duha*<sup>13</sup> – Rainbow Movement – FoE-CR**

*Duha* is perhaps the most prominent and successful EMO in the Czech Republic today. Its activists appear regularly in the media, and the organisation now recruits highly-paid professionals to run its various campaigns. *Duha* is widely recognised as the main voice of environmentalism in the country. Compared to other EMOs that emerged on the eve of the revolution, *Duha* is unique in the way it has developed, particularly in its internal organisation and strategy. In less than a generation *Duha* has moved from being a radical amorphous non-hierarchical movement to a highly professional mainstream organisation employing conventional strategies. *Duha*'s ‘professionalism’ is in part due to its international links (it is officially the Czech branch of FoE) but also due to particular strategic choices. What distinguishes *Duha*'s campaigns from those of other EMOs is their capacity to link environmental issues to financial and social problems, whilst at the same time emphasising the ethical dimension of environmental degradation.<sup>14</sup>

Yet despite many of the trappings of a western-style professional protest organisation, *Duha*'s strategies and internal organisation still reflect the context in which the organisation emerged and in which it operates. The legacy of authoritarian rule and the circumstances of its collapse, the particular nuances of post-Communist Czech political development (particularly the

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<sup>13</sup> The information obtained on *Hnuti Duha* was obtained from several interviews during the period April 1993-May, 1999 by both authors.

<sup>14</sup> For example, their campaign in 1999 successfully emphasised the financial cost of Temelin to the Czech tax payer. They portrayed the plant as an inefficient example of old-style communist investment that made little economic sense.

legacy of the Klaus era), the funding situation, and the relationship between the indigenous environmental movement and international western-based EMOs have shaped *Duha*'s development.

### **The formation and profile of *Duha***

Established in Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic, during the summer 1989, just prior to the 'velvet revolution', *Duha* was typical of environmental organisations during this period. It comprised a few young activists (secondary school students) who had previously been involved in party-sanctioned conservation organisations such as CSOP (Czech Union of Nature Conservation) or Brontosaurus (affiliated to the youth section of the Communist party). In the months prior to the revolution these activists formed part of the growing chorus of discontent that surrounded the decomposition of the party's political authority. What distinguished *Duha* from the rest of the fledgling EMOs was their stated intention to address the causes and not just the consequences of unpropitious human actions. Though they were still some way from becoming a professional protest organisation, this immediately set the organisation on a distinctly political course.

### **Funding and resources**

Although *Duha* has experienced periods of financial uncertainty, it is now relatively well-resourced. It is able to offer reasonable salaries to its employees and to recruit in the national press for highly-trained professionals to work in the Brno and Prague offices. Local chapters are often small, self-funding operations which rely entirely on volunteers. Yet, *Duha* remains heavily dependent on external donors and the EU in particular. Though *Duha* has always raised revenue from its professional activities and services and also from the sale of published material, it has only recently established a fee-paying membership<sup>15</sup> amongst Czech citizens and has begun to employ direct marketing techniques. *Duha* argue that a financial strategy based on donations from the Czech public was not previously realistic whereas now, almost a generation after the collapse of communism, levels of disposable income amongst sections of society most likely to give donations (public sector professionals, middle classes) make such a strategy more feasible.

### **Internal organisation and strategies**

Initially *Duha* activists rejected a formal hierarchic organisational structure and the notion of non-active supporters, preferring activists to work independently on particular issues that were broadly defined by the 'centre of operations' in Brno. It rejected a 'parliamentary' strategy in favour of direct action based on a global agenda and an amorphous cell-like internal structure. However, by the mid-1990s this had altered. A feature of *Duha* is the development of its activities around two basic pillars: centres in Brno and Prague whose task is to coordinate nation-wide political campaigns and a web of local groups involved in particular local issues. This enables the organisation to pursue grassroots protest campaigns alongside lobbying and participation in the policy process.<sup>16</sup>

The transformation of the organisation during the 1990s is quite remarkable. Rather than radicalise the organisation, *Duha*'s response to the demise of movement-based politics from mid-1991 and the adversarial political climate of the first Klaus administration was to adopt a

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<sup>15</sup> *Hnutí Duha* has about 500 fee-paying members at present.

<sup>16</sup> For example, the local Olomouc branch of *Duha* runs campaigns against Schweppes for no longer using returnable bottles and generally involve themselves in community issues, whereas the Brno and Prague offices are engaged in lobbying and policy (Interview with activists from *Duha* Olomouc, May 1999).

strategy based around lobbying on less-controversial issues, to deny that they were a political organisation, and to seek closer contacts with the political elite. Such a strategy was pursued despite the lack of a political dividend and the denial of political access to EMOs. A more hierarchical structure was adopted based on a clearly defined division of labour and an agenda of policies and issues on which the organisation would focus. The national centre in Brno and the Prague office deal with political campaigns whilst local offices would develop links with the public as well as working within local political structures. Though the 15 local branches retain a degree of autonomy, they operate within the confines of national campaigns and strategies. By 1999, *Duha* had 14 full-time employees.

During the mid-1990s the focus of *Duha*'s campaigns became less esoteric and more focused on policy and regulation at the national level: to save and protect forest and nature reserves; opposition to gold processing and the activities of mining companies in Kasperske Hory; saving railways and opposing motorway construction. Reflecting their close involvement with FoE International, *Duha* has sought to relate 'global' campaigns such as ozone depletion to the specific 'local' context - the enactment of Czech legislation regulating the use of CFCs. Indeed, what has come to distinguish *Duha* from other Czech EMOs is the extent of their international contacts, largely with other national branches of FoE (particularly FoE-UK) but also with Greenpeace Austria. *Duha*'s carefully developed management of their campaigns is modelled on FoE-UK: *Duha* now has strategic plans that are subject to updating every three years, and which form the basis of their strategy. The strong influence on *Duha* of a particularly British type of environmentalism is clearly evidenced by regular features reprinted from *The Ecologist* in *Duha*'s monthly journal.

In contrast to their approach in the early 1990s, the organisation is now more willing to cooperate with other indigenous EMOs, and *Duha* activists all express the benefits of co-operation and an informal division of labour amongst EMOs. This change in attitude reflects *Duha*'s confidence in its own strengths and also its strong individual identity within the Czech environmental movement. It is no longer a 'catch-all' environmental movement.

Apart from attending the annual Temelin blockade (which from the mid-1990s ceased to be a radical direct action protest) and openly supporting anti-globalisation protestors,<sup>17</sup> *Duha*'s strategy centres on lobbying and challenging environmentally-damaging actions through the publication of scientific reports and through participation in the EIA process. Indeed, *Duha* differs from the rest of Czech EMOs by its close links to social science academic circles, mainly in Brno. Most activists working in *Duha*'s main office in Brno are past or current students of sociology, political science or law. Leading Czech academics working in the field of environmental studies within various social science disciplines regularly publish articles in *Duha*'s monthly journal.

*Duha*'s effort to shed its image of radicalism and become a professional lobbying organisation is reflected in the activities of the Prague office. *Duha* staff are recruited for their professional skills and, as a result, the organisation has become particularly adept at lobbying and holding press conferences. The inclusion within *Duha*'s council of patrons of well-known artists, journalists and scholars, plus the internationally renowned Czech writer Ivan Klima, is also indicative of the organisation's aspiration to be the leading professional environmental organisation, enmeshed within the institutional structure of the political process. Leading figures of *Duha* frequently discuss issues of radicalism and pragmatism in *Duha*'s monthly journal, whose change of name in 1998 reflects the concerted effort of the organisation to build for itself an image more acceptable to the general public and the media. The original title *The Last Generation* (*posledni generace*) was replaced by the less controversial *The Seventh Generation* (*sedma generace*). In a recent article the former chairman and co-founder

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<sup>17</sup> *Duha* supports anti-globalisation campaigners, though it does not join in direct action.

of *Hnutí Duha*, Jakub Patočka, addresses a long-term dilemma with which *Duha* has always been confronted: whether to operate within or outside the system (Patočka, 1999). The dilemma resurfaced with increased poignancy in the aftermath of the leak of the 1995 list of extremists that included *Duha*. The answer that Patočka gives is to ‘sit on the fence’ and to blockade Temelin as well as lobbying parliament and publishing expert reports. Yet in practice, and despite the growing wave of direct actions employed by EMOs elsewhere in Europe, *Duha* is reluctant to organise such campaigns in the Czech Republic, though they support direct actions initiated by other EMOs.

*Duha*’s strategic choice over the Temelin campaign reflected a pragmatism and a capacity to frame protest in a way that will have maximum political impact at elite level whilst also obtaining public support. Though *Duha* remains resolutely opposed to the expansion of nuclear energy, during the mid-1990s they rejected a campaign of high-profile opposition in favour of a more pragmatic stance of opposing the storage of nuclear waste through NIMBY-based campaigns in the areas likely to be affected. Similarly during 1999, when a critical government decision regarding the future of the Temelin plant was to be taken, *Duha*’s high-profile campaign focused on the economic arguments against further state subsidies for the plant and argued that there was no need for the extra energy capacity. This approach was justified by only moderate levels of public support for the anti-nuclear campaign and a general lethargy amongst campaigners. Particularly revealing is that, despite having previously mounted a campaign against the polluting effects of coal production, part of *Duha*’s campaign focused on the negative economic impact that the completion of Temelin would have on northern Bohemian mining communities.

What the Temelin case also revealed was just how far *Duha* had travelled along the road to professionalism, and how successful the organisation had been in gaining political access and proximity to the political elite. When President Havel decided to intervene openly in the debate surrounding Temelin, *Duha* activists from the Prague office provided him with information. They were also consulted widely in the media and their arguments formed part of the general discourse within which the debate occurred.

However, the departure of many of the core activists of the Brno group in 1997 to form their own *independent social-ecological movement (nesehnuti)*, is evidence of a major crisis in *Duha*. The activists had become deeply dissatisfied with its lack of radicalism. Yet *Duha* has not completely lost its radical edge and ideological integrity. In 1998 *Duha* was the most vocal opponent of the intention of *Nadace partnerství* (Partnership Foundation), one of the main sources of funding for Czech EMOs, to accept grants from Monsanto. *Duha* launched a high-profile campaign accusing *partnerství* of betraying basic principles of the environmental movement. In a cash-strapped environmental movement, this was a particularly controversial conflict and *Duha* deserves credit for opening the debate.

## **Conclusion**

Our objective in this paper has been to identify the factors shaping the organisational logic and strategic choices of two quite different Czech EMOs. SBM is a local organisation, dependent almost entirely on foreign donors, reluctant to expand its membership, and reliant on a small core of volunteers. *Duha* directs its campaigns at elite level, has (quite recently) begun to expand its fee-paying membership base, and has become increasingly professional in its operations. Both campaign against the Temelin nuclear power plant. On a theoretical level, our objective has been to consider the extent to which hypotheses regarding the impact of resources and the political process on organisations are applicable to Czech EMOs.

Concerned to avoid assumptions that EMOs in CEE states are all on a trajectory towards professionalism, institutionalisation and formalisation, and rejecting the notion that the Czech movement is necessarily on the same developmental course as environmental movements in established democracies and thus need to ‘catch-up’, we have emphasised the specific context of post-communist political reform and economic restructuring as a key determinant of EMO activity and behaviour.

*Duha* and SBM in many senses represent poles of the formal movement – professionalism and institutionalisation, versus more ideologically radical regional protest organisation. Though quite different, the strategic choices and actions of both organisations can be understood as responses to the underlying dependency of EMOs on external donors for resources. Both have been encouraged by foreign donors to become more professional in their operations and campaigns (SBM expanded its protest operations, hired experts and took on other issues during the mid 1990s), yet in each case such ‘professionalism’ or the move towards the Professional Protest Organisation model, is a hybrid form, moderated by the fact that dependency on external funding removed the need to establish mass memberships and to deepen links within Czech society. Assumptions regarding the impact of resources on strategic choice and campaigns require, therefore, careful qualification when applied to movement organisations beyond established capitalist democracies.

The case studies also illustrate that assumptions regarding the impact of various aspects of the political process on organisations require qualification in the context of a new democracy undergoing profound social, political and economic change. A strong, centralised and exclusive state, hostile to the environmental movement during much of the 1990s did not radicalise *Duha* as the theoretical literature might have led us to suppose. Other factors, such as the absence of funding, the legacy of authoritarian rule, and the political immaturity of the Czech movement explain why *Duha* jettisoned radical strategies and ideas in response to their exclusion by the Klaus government. Similarly, when applying theoretical assumptions regarding the impact of particular types of state and organisational behaviour, it is important to recognise the role of the EU and other external agencies in setting policy agenda and funding EMOs. This fundamentally alters the relationship between organisations and the political process.

The case of SBM also suggests that decentralisation of state power does not necessarily deliver a dividend in terms of political access. SBM’s campaign against Temelin was conducted entirely at the local level, despite the fact that decisions regarding the plant were ultimately taken centrally. Yet it seems unlikely that greater decentralisation would have augmented SBM’s position, as the specific local opportunity structure was particularly hostile and more closed and exclusive. SBM’s exclusion was based on their gender, political and social attitudes, and the powerful influence of TNCs, the capacity of which to exert an impact on local politicians and to exclude environmentalists proved to be greater at the local than at the national level.

Whilst both Diani and Donati’s model and the theoretical literature identifying political variables that shape organisational behaviour in western democracies are broadly useful in understanding Czech EMOs, our case studies suggest that similarities in behaviour between Czech EMOs and western organisations are somewhat superficial. In the cases of *Duha* and SBM, the explanatory factors are more complex and varied. Professionalism or reliance on conventional strategies cannot be explained solely in terms of the availability of resources, or by the nature of the issues involved. Cultural and political legacies of the recent past, plus the peculiar context of the economic and political reform agenda transmute the impact of recognised variables and exert a specific impact on the strategic choices of EMOs.

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