

**TRANSNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS  
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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**ANUPAMA PAKALA**

**INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DIVISION  
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS,  
ORGANISATION AND DISARMAMENT  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI - 110 067  
INDIA**

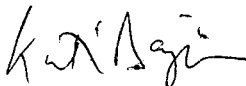
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CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS,  
ORGANIZATION & DISARMAMENT  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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**Certificate**

Certified that this dissertation entitled "*Transnational Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations in International Relations*" submitted by Ms. Anupama Pakala in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any University. This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.



DR. KANTI BAJPAI  
Chairperson



DR. VARUN SAHNI  
Supervisor

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**ANUPAMA PAKALA**

## **Introduction**

In the realm of international environmental politics, there has increasingly been a reworking of political space and democratic restructuring. This is largely a result of a number of actors, interests and institutions involved in the 'issue area' of environment. Prominent among them are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are assuming the role of agents of socio-political transformation. They relate directly to the individual, uniting and collectivising individuals across territorial borders, sharing common values, interests and goals. It is essential to locate these institutional processes as transnational environmental, non-governmental organisations (TENGOs), as they have acquired political and social currency diffusing across nations and appealing to the general citizenry. They play an important role in setting the agenda, influencing negotiations, regime formation and shaping the environmental politics of donor agencies towards developing countries. TENGOs are the institutional culmination of the social and environmental movements which are characterised by changes in notions of power and agency to bring about social change.

TENGOs gain influence by building assets based on legitimacy, transparency and transnationalism, assets that, states, inter-governmental organisations and profit making organisations are hard pressed to match in the environmental realm.<sup>1</sup> TENGOs are perceived as defenders of values that

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1. Thomas Princen and Mathias Finger, Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and Global (London: Routledge, 1994).

governments and corporations are frequently willing to compromise. They have the ability to enhance the transparency of dominant actors and are open to the larger public in their functioning. Their allegiance is foremost to the ecosystem and to the relevant management processes, thus building on their transnational character.

Given the number of social actors and fragmentations in today's world it becomes imperative to study the influence of microprocesses on macro phenomena. NGOs assume the role of agents of change in part because citizens alone or as an unorganised movement cannot do so. Organisation - legal, financial and political - is essential. To simultaneously reach up to the states and their international institutions and down to the local communities, such agents must establish themselves as independent actors.

TENGOs represent the more pronounced associational values and non-state led political action, thus subverting the traditional political structures (states, institutions and processes) into a terrain of 'new politics' and hence demanding scholarly attention. These societal and political forces shift analytical attention away from the state and towards changes in society at large. They are legitimate objects of enquiry for they represent powerful mechanisms governing the associational life and building civil society. TENGOs, therefore, are analysed under the rubric of 'non-state actors' in international politics.

TENGO emergence is indicative of a profound political transformation change, whether in the form of social learning or political transformation, is necessary particularly

in the issue are of environmental protection. A focus on change directs attention to the agents of change who envision a sustainable society, demonstrate alternative economic and social systems and raise public awareness of the trends and their consequences. TENGOS therefore emerge as key actors and it is therefore important to focus analytical attention on TENGOS *per se*. This study is important in that it visualises TENGOS as distinct, independent actors operating in the international political arena. It accords analytical significance to TENGOS and explores the character of the TENGO apart from attempting to understand the TENGO community at large.

In the fast growing literature on international environmental politics, there is insufficient work on the tremendous growth in the size and numbers of TENGOS. During the 1970s and 1980s much of the literature was contextual, explaining the sources of environmental degradation and the proliferation of environmental issues, most of it descriptive or presenting the views of particular agents.

Lynton K. Caldwell was probably the first to call scholarly attention to the NGOs and to document their rise.<sup>2</sup> He states that NGOs have been "absolutely essential to most international, environment action" and the "nature and extent of NGO influence on international environmental policy has not received comprehensive or detailed study".

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2. Lynton K. Caldwell, "Beyond Environmental Diplomacy: The Changing Institutional Structure of International Cooperation" in John E. Carroll, ed., International Environmental Diplomacy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Oran R. Young in his seminal work in the field of international environmental politics<sup>3</sup> devotes less than two pages to NGOs noting how regimes give rise to such groups and how NGOs defend the provisions of regimes. Thomas Princen and Mathias Finger has undertaken a thorough understanding of the "phenomenon" of environmental NGOs.<sup>4</sup> They have examined NGOs from two theoretical perspectives - political bargaining and social movements. They have critically assessed the origins, growth and politics of environmental NGOs apart from understanding change processes through empirical grounding. They have significantly contributed to building a logical theory of international environmental politics, grounded in the biophysical and social realities by critically examining the work of environmental NGOs as agents of progressive change.

The role of environmental groups in negotiations, protection of the oceans, the ozone layer and Antarctica have been studied by Andrew Hurrell and Benedict Kingsbury.<sup>5</sup> This work establishes the influence of the groups to enforce national compliance with international mandates. A selected work in highlighting the issue of environment has been that

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3. Oran R. Young, International Cooperation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and the Environment (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).
  4. Thomas Princen and Mathias Finger, Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and Global (London: Routledge).
  5. Andrew Hurrell and Benedict Kingsbury, eds., The International Politics of the Environment: Actors, Interests and Institutions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).



of Gareth Porter and Janet Brown.<sup>6</sup> They have looked at environmental issues and have written about sustainable development strategies, and global governance.

Paul Wapner's<sup>7</sup> recent work is especially important as it establishes the increasing influence of transnational environmental activist groups on states. He gives a sophisticated understanding of activist groups as part of a larger movement and the importance of civic politics and collective action in building a global civil society. He also calls for a fluid understanding of international politics. The global network of environmental NGOs will be an important area of study as NGOs continue to get larger and better organised into complex overlapping transnational coalitions on various issues. Maria Garner<sup>8</sup> gives a legal framework for the networks of acquire legitimacy from the International system.

TENGOs have not been sufficiently theorised in international politics and therefore it is essential to derive from certain theoretical constructs on Non-Governmental Organisations. NGOs for a long time have been seen as a function of hegemonic stability and increasing interdependence derivative of interstate behaviour and of marginal importance. Notwithstanding these arguments, by the 1980s NGOs had made

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6. Gareth Porter and Janet Welsh Brown, Global Environmental Politics (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1991).
  7. Paul Wapner, "Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics", World Politics, Vol.47, April 1995.
  8. Maria Garner, "Transnational Alignment of Non-governmental Actions for Global Environmental Action", Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law, Vol.23, p.1017.

their presence felt and scholars began to take them seriously as legitimate objects of study.

Raymond Vernon's<sup>9</sup> "Sovereignty at Bay Model" claimed that NGOs were eclipsing states as the key independent actors in international politics. The superior causal agency of the state was established with NGOs being studied with an eye towards 'institutional substitutability'.<sup>10</sup>

NGOs today are a part of the debate on the state centric model of studying International Relations. Interest in NGOs has emerged under the rubric of the "third debate" in so far as scholars have advanced a number of propositions regarding how, why and to what extent NGOs matter in international politics based on sophisticated understandings of power, knowledge and agency. James Rosenau's<sup>11</sup> sovereignty free actors and the influence of micro processes on macro phenomena and R.B.J. Walker's<sup>12</sup> insight into the critical components of Social Movements, along with Richard Falk's<sup>13</sup> 'emergence of global and civil society' has analytical significance in understanding NGOs in World Politics.

This dissertation is an attempt at comparing three

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9. Raymond Vernon, "Sovereignty at Bay: Ten Years After", International Organisation, Vol.35, Summer, 1981.
  10. John Gerald Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations", International Organisation, Vol.47, Winter 1993.
  11. James Rosenau, Turbulence in World Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
  12. R.B.J. Walker, One World/Many Worlds (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner, 1988).
  13. Richard Falk, Explorations at the Edge of Time (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

older, well established and significant institutional TENGOS: Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth (FOE) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). These organisations have acquired the distinct qualities and character of TENGOS and their functions in altering the international structures of power, transforming effects on World Political Economy, strategic interactions and symbolic resistance. These organisations are compared using four defining characteristics: Relative Autonomy, Organisational Structure, Action Strategies and Issue and Action Networks. This dissertation problematises the characterization of TENGOS as non-state actors, their collective mobilization potential, commitment to social movements and coordinating efforts towards coalitions and networks. This dissertation therefore seeks to present the first systematic comparative analytical study of three TENGOS on the parameters outlined above.

TENGOS cannot be analysed as a singular analytical construct. Each organisation is structurally and functionally distinct from the other and in its political role aims at creating an institutional niche of its own. A comparative study not only gives an insight into the particular nature of a TENGO, it also enhances our understanding of the complexities and interaction between them.

The research problem focuses on the 'non-statist character' of the organisation, its commitment towards strengthening environmental movements, and the coordination efforts towards a coalition or network. TENGOS derive their 'non-state actor' status from their flexibility of operations, functional independence and decisional autonomy from states. They are the institutionalised processes of collective

action and mobilization. Hence it is important to investigate the true character of a TENGO as a non-state actor and also in its operational commitment to the environmental movement, at large. This in effect would locate the feasibility and possible success of action networks.

Environmental movements depend on their resources, group organisation and opportunities for collective action. Grievances and protest are endemic to social structure and they cannot be seen as implanted stimuli from outside. The nature of protest and actions are rational responses to the costs and rewards of different lines of action. Economic resources, communication media, legal skills and unspecialised supporters are extremely important in mobilising people. This, in effect, establishes the importance of organisation to the movement. Therefore, when problematising action strategies and Issue and action networks, it is important to analyse the structural imperatives of the organisations.

Relative Autonomy of an organisation can be understood in terms of the functional independence, and decisionally autonomy of the organisation from the states and in international negotiations. It flows out of the transparent and independent character of the organisation. While comparing the organisation, it is essential to focus on financial stability and operations through membership, sources of funding, range of activities and ideological commitments.

Organisational structure reveals the internal management and decision making structures in the organisation. The organisations are compared on the extent of democracy

proffered to their members and in the efficiency of operations as a non-state actor. Internal democracy can be analysed by comparing decision making structures and levels of bureaucratization or decentralisation in the organisation. The ideological commitments and the source of funding determine the range of activities and concerns of the organisation, which are very crucial in mobilising for collective action.

Resistance has been a significant feature of environmentalism. With increasing learning and knowledge, popular movements have taken on non-violent forms of protest to pressure domestic political structures. The focus on Action strategies looks at the strategic planning of the organisation and its effectiveness in ameliorating the material and social conditions that underlie the threats to environment. Success of each strategy can only be determined by the nature of popular participation and change in policy framework. The range of issues handled by an organisation is determined by its structure. Alliances and coordination networks are formed from a limited set of available resources in order to promote mobilisation campaigns on issues that are not satisfactorily represented among more established political actors. The issue focus of an organisation and its efforts at coalition building are an indication of its commitment to the movement and its decision of outcomes.

The organization of the dissertation flows from the lines of inquiry delineated above.

The first chapter explains TENGOS through the prism of structure, power, agency and culture. TENGOS are theoretically formulated with expanding notions of power and public

sphere, knowledge-based collective action, mobilisation potential, shifts in cultural and symbolic values, and changing social structures in an interdependent world. This exercise accords sociological and political significance to the role of TENGOS as agents of socio-political change and emphasises their relative importance in international politics.

The second chapter analyses TENGOS from the perspective of relative autonomy. This defining characteristic suggests that TENGOS are functionally independent, self-reliant, procedurally transparent and decisionally autonomous of the state. A thorough assessment of their ideological commitments, membership, sources of funding and range of activities is undertaken to compare the three organisations in this study. This exercise enquires into their role as non-state actors. Their bargaining assets, like legitimacy, transnationalism and transparency in decision making are focused upon.

The third chapter explicates the organisational structure of TENGOS. The internal characteristics of a TENGOS, and with its various strengths and weaknesses, eventually determines its range of activities and concerns. This chapter focuses on structures and decision making procedures, size, constituents, membership and funding in order to compare the internal structures of the three TENGOS. It also looks at the various institutional processes which are instrumental in altering the character of these TENGOS from small groups to global non-state transnational institutions.

The fourth chapter deals with the range of collective

action strategies employed by the three TENGOS being studied. The nature of action strategies flows from the character of these organisations, their issues and concerns, and their strategic planning. It compares the three organisations on the range of their activities, their resource potential and the social and cultural content of their strategies. In other words, the chapter focuses on the mobilisation potential and commitment to these organisations.

The fifth chapter delves into the range of issues handled by the organisations and coordination efforts among the TENGO community. It establishes the necessity for alignment of potential, resources to initiation action, negotiations and regime change among the TENGOS at large. This effort is to try and explore various action networks formed by these organisations and their likely significance and impact to the larger cause of environmental protection.

The final and concluding chapter establishes the increasing importance of TENGOS as determining actors in the Global Environmental governance and policy making. It also looks into the significant assumptions made on comparing the three organisations in this study and the established features of TENGOS and their functioning. This chapter will attempt to address the following questions of enquiry: 1. The character of TENGO as a non-state actor; 2. The likely potential of TENGOS to mobilise collectively and also their commitment to the social movement; 3. The possibility of coordination efforts to create action networks and coalitions.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **Explaining TENGOS**

This chapter deals with a fourfold typology focussing on political, structural, cultural and action explanations for the rise of Transnational Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (TENGOS) in international politics. The TENGOS need to be understood not only because of their increasing importance to international politics, but also for their role in democratic restructuring as agents of political change. However, it is pertinent to mention that there are a number of theories which could accommodate all or some of these explanations, singly or in combination. We are therefore not bound by strict lines of enquiry.

When studying TENGOS as part of the new social movements, it is essential to explore new realms of political action, expanding notions of power and the public sphere, knowledge based action, shift in dominant values and the importance of changing international structures in an interdependent world. Structural explanations focus on changes in the structural bases and the consequent effect on collective action; cultural explanations highlight changes in values, ideology and the role of symbols in resistance; action explanations identify the scope of action and agency, the grounding of collective action and the importance of social movements; and finally, political explanations look at the role of sovereignty free actors in a transnational, interdependent world and the importance of issue areas in a global civil society.



While theorizing about TENGOS this typology ensures clarity and academic rigour. Scholarly attention on NGOs has thus far largely focused on attacking state-centric politics and ranking different agents that engage in politics. The present endeavour, however, is to accord sociological and political significance to NGOs with a thorough understanding of the emerging realities.

### **POLITICAL EXPLANATIONS**

The notion of an NGO encompasses a large terrain of issues and constituencies with a large number of people and groups involved in a collectivity. It operates outside the realm of traditional political institutions (governments and parties) and works through mechanisms other than electoral processes. While it does engage in struggles for power and legitimacy, these struggles are not aimed at capturing State or bureaucratic power. The TENGO relates directly to the individual, uniting and collectivising individuals sharing common values, interests, and goals across territorial borders, thereby facilitating transnational interaction. Membership of the organisation is spatially universal, defined by their similarity and interaction processes in a sociofunctional rather than geographically defined space. They also represent the crystallisation of a movement, a collectivity to develop as a group, ideologically involved and committed to 'participatory action' and use of knowledge to form a strong political force.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Walter Fernandes, "Participatory Research and Action in India Today", Social Action, Vol.39, January-March 1989, pp.1-19.

NGOs are movements crystallising dissent and opposition to State policies and a whole ruling model of development. They are processes which redirect public discourse and redefine the agenda of politics, taking steps towards a more comprehensive effort at creating an alternative to the present system.

In essence, these movements represent three major points of departure:<sup>2</sup>

They are an effort to scale the grassroots and the national dimensions into the global dimension of `issue areas; cutting across national boundaries and forming a response to global tendencies.

Their solidarity goes beyond the traditional categories of left and right, liberal and Marxist, which seem to have failed to comprehend the massive erosion of the democratic ethos that has taken place all over the world. At base these movements converge on two things: restoring and revitalising the democratic process but at the same time not in the traditional framework of individual liberties, but in the new contemporary setting of marginalisation of entire classes, communities and `nations', thus providing a new definition of democratic praxis and democratic theory.

They are voluntaristic and seek to find roots in indigenous conditions of diverse peoples and cultures. Not by any means anti-state or anti-government but as non-state, non-party and non-governmental means to acquire political space.

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2. Rajni Kothari, "The Rise of People's Movements", Social Action, Vol.40, July-September 1990, p.236.

Therefore, a terrain of "new politics" is emerging demanding scholarly attention. This is largely a result of the appearance of more pronounced associational or non-state led political action. The new societal and political forces shift analytical attention away from the state and towards changes in society at large. The dynamics of the social forces represent powerful mechanisms for associational behaviour strongly motivated by ideas. Social forces do not operate in a vacuum, but have the ability to exercise power. This requires a more balanced consideration of both the capacities of states and the roles of a variety of social forces in shaping political discourse.<sup>3</sup> The dynamics of Associational life and the rise of 'civil society' entail the scholar to adopt a 'state in society' perspective.<sup>4</sup>

Political explanations therefore address questions like what factors contribute to the development of non-state actors, conditions encouraging the emergence of global civil society, the emergence of new social groups, their engagement in political discourse, the determinants of their action and the outcomes of their action.

Recent changes in the international political system

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3. Paul Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics", World Politics, 47, April 1995, pp.311-340.
  4. The 'state-in-society' perspective looks at states as parts of society and hence it requires a greater sensitivity to understand the mutually transforming quality of state-society relations. This has been analysed in Joel S. Migdal's "The State in Society: an approach to struggle for domination" in Joel S. Migdal Atul Kohli, Vivien Shue (eds.), State Power and Social Forces (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

have largely been a result of the emergence of issues like environmental protection, terrorism, trade and monetary policies which are direct products of new technologies and greater global interdependence. These changes are different from traditional political issues by virtue of being trans-national rather than national or local in scope. Concomitantly there is evidence of reduced capacity of states and governments to provide satisfactory solutions and also the increasing organisation of groups and collectivities to cope with new issues of interdependence and adjust to the new technologies of the post-industrial order. With their analytical skills enlarged and their orientations towards authority more self-conscious, today's persons in the street are no longer as uninvolved, ignorant and manipulable with respect to world affairs as were their forebearers.<sup>5</sup>

It is imperative to seek non-state centric approaches to understand the emergence of TENGOS as a part of the larger 'issue area' of environmental protection rather than stick to modes of established intellectual traditions which channel thinking along state centric, issue hierarchical and world order notions.

Richard Falk<sup>6</sup> analyses the emergence of NGOs as the strengthening of tendencies connected with world order

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5. James Rosenau delineating a generic conception of post international politics looks into the emerging changes and issues related to global interdependence in Turbulence in World Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
  6. Richard Falk, "The Global Promise of Social Movements: Explorations at the Edge of Time", Alternatives, Vol.12, 1987, pp.173-196.

values and transnational societal forces dedicated to specific issues. This is globalization from below, with an emergent capacity to balance the influence of globalization from above through the regulation of global economy and by way of accountability for those beyond the reach of the regulatory operations of states, also opening of pathways towards a cosmopolitan, transnational democratic ethos of renewal.

Territorial sovereignty is being diminished on a spectrum of issues in such a serious manner as to subvert the capacity of states to control and protect the social life. Non-state actors hold an increasing proportion of power and influence in the shaping of world order. States are losing their organisational advantage in the provision of public goods apart from losing territorial focus. This fluid setting gives shape to various transnational networks of social activists exhibiting diminishing regard for the boundaries of sovereign states.

There is less operational content associated with the application of the doctrine of sovereignty to the practice of politics on the global level. States conceived as governmental units rather than as territorial entities have increasingly challenged from within and below as well as from without and above.<sup>7</sup>

Civil society is the realm of spontaneously created social structures separate from the state that underlie democratic political institutions. These structures take

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7. R.B.J. Walker, Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

shape even more slowly than political institutions and are less manipulable by public policy and state power.<sup>8</sup>

The emergence of 'transnational civil society' is also held to have subverted the traditional agenda: by challenging the hegemony of statist world politics, by establishing a non-territorially based focus of political identity, by creating new forms of political organisation, particularly in areas where the unit of the state has quite literally ceased to run and by giving concrete embodiment to the idea of a global moral community.<sup>9</sup>

TENGOs work through transnational networks associated with cultural, social and economic life and forms of governance distinct from the instrumentalities of state rule. They derive their power in forging of voluntary and customary practices into mechanisms that govern public affairs.<sup>10</sup> TENGOs rely on their knowledge based power and strength of collective action. Central to their assets are the qualities of legitimacy, transparency and transnationalism. They derive their legitimacy from their single issue focus and "no compromise" position on environmental matters. They transcend narrow self-interest and use their knowledge based power for integrating societal forces across nation-states. They go beyond notions of sovereignty and owe their alle-

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8. Francis Fukuyama, "The Primacy of Culture", Journal of Democracy, Vol.6, No.1, January 1995, p.8.
  9. Richard Falk, "State of Siege: until Globalization win out", International Affairs, Vol.35, No.4, 1989, pp.122-135.
  10. David Korten, Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and Global Agenda (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1991).

giance foremost to the ecosystem.<sup>11</sup> TENGOS engage in activities to gain access to decision making -- government, inter-governmental and corporate -- and engage in the formation and reform of political institutions and legislation.

It is difficult to take up a singularly 'top-down' state centric approach or 'bottomup' approach (giving credit to grassroots and local activism). Unencumbered by territory, NGOs have access at the top and bottom and can create linkages at the local and global, thus using information and influence to create a niche in the international political arena.<sup>12</sup>

Sovereignty should be reconceptualised among several new realities like global interdependencies, strength of humans to intervene and alter Earth's life sustaining processes and the primacy of ecological security which calls for a functioning integrity of the Earth. NGOs from the invisible global polity, in their increasing interactions with the political space, are utilising new consciousness and reflective thought.<sup>13</sup>

The rise of TENGOS to significant importance in world politics has altered our notions of sovereignty, states as the only actors and traditional political space. The introduction of TENGOS as autonomous actors cutting across bound-

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11. Thomas Pricen and Malthias Finger, NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local & Global (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.9-11.

12. *ibid.*, p.232.

13. Patricia M. Mirsche in "Ecological Security and the Need to Reconceptualise Sovereignty", Alternatives, Vol.14, 1989, pp.389-427.

aries calls for a new intrinsically pluralist approach.<sup>14</sup> The transnational approach relativises the role traditionally assigned to the state without heralding its demise, disposes of the spatial factor without denying territorial realities and introduces a more global perspective without underestimating the contributions made by the analytical method. TENGOS therefore transform politics by redefining what constitutes its subject matter.

### **STRUCTURAL EXPLANATIONS**

Structural theories emphasize the development of collective action as part of a larger movement, resulting from changing economic or social structures. Features of social structure must theoretically and empirically be a part of any full understanding of protest and defiance.

The growth of environmentalism has been seen as a product of the growth of the 'new middle class'.<sup>15</sup> The movements have loosened traditional class based political allegiances and reduced the value of class as an economic category. Instead, they are replaced by more value based non-class cleavages and movements. The availability of middle class groups, in a society with a material existence conducive to post-materialist and environmental concerns provides a social basis for such concerns.

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14. Paul Ghils, "International Civil Society: International NGOs in the International System", International Social Science Journal, Vol.133, August 1992, pp.417-430.

15. Ronald Inglehart, The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).



Social movement theories have provided the structural and individual oriented approaches to collective action, mobilization and organization. Alain Touraine,<sup>16</sup> following the Marxist historical structural perspective, describes the shift from liberal to late capitalism as precipitating the use of social movements opposed to bureaucratic expertise and centralized corporate and state power.

Neil Smelser<sup>17</sup> determines collective defiance on structural conduciveness (the permissiveness of social arrangements to the generation of social movements), structural strain (the existence of ambiguities, deprivations, tensions and conflicts in society) and the breakdown of social controls.

Resource mobilization<sup>18</sup> theory formulates social movements at the organizational level. Grievances are endemic to social structure and see movement actions as rational responses to the costs and rewards of different lines of actions (like rational choice theories). The movements are contingent above all on resources, group organization and opportunities for collective action. Groups sharing distinctive identities and dense interpersonal networks are readily mobilizable.

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16. Alain Touraine, "An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements", Social Research, Vol.52, No.4, 1985, pp.749-87.
  17. Neil Smelser, Theory of Collective Behaviour (New York: Free Press, 1963).
  18. Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, eds., The Dynamics of Social Movements, Resource Mobilization, Social Control and Tactics (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers, 1979).

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Authors writing on global social movements have drawn on the analysis of the social movements and the phenomenon to the global scenario. According to Matthias Finger,<sup>19</sup> Marc Neifin's 'third system' theory encapsulates the main epistemological and theoretical elements shared by the schools of global social movements. Marc Nerfin observers a growing movement trying to control the development crisis and threats to common security and calls for 'global democracy' and 'people centred development'. It implies that people assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities. Control over resources and information lies with the people whose participational all levels of decision making in society make officials more accountable. Overall, third system theory operates within the same conceptual framework as the dominant social movement theories, i.e., citizens mobilize to participate in the political process (here local to global). The unit of reference is the global political system altered to suit aggregated collective action.

The Voluntary Action Networks<sup>20</sup> play critical roles like systems change, systems monitoring, implementing developmental programmes and attempts at reconciliation with justice. The movements are redefining politics, transforming institutions and helping people define, internalize and actualize a people centred vision.

TENGOs, therefore, cannot be explained by theories still embedded in a traditional concept of politics shaped

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19. Princen and Finger, n.11, pp.56-59.

20. Korten, n.10, pp.185-192.

by modernity and modernization.<sup>21</sup> Enlightenment, rationalization and continuous industrial development foresee TENGOS as enlightened participants in a thriving democracy. TENGOS are perceived as expressions of fragmentation of actors and worldviews, a phenomenon associated with 'post modernism'. With the process of a number of social actors, there is no common reference point to explain transnational communities building on collective endeavour.

It follows from the above, that the state is not the most important for explaining international politics. Defenders of the state-centric model acknowledge the proliferation of NGOs as a function of hegemonic stability and thus derivative of inter-state behaviour.<sup>22</sup> The neo-realists<sup>23</sup> view transnationalism as a result of increasing interdependence between states and hence restricting the capacity of states to control events. The debate over NGOs in such a scenario dies down prematurely, having demonstrated the superior causal agency of the state.

Globalization has led to increasing structural differentiation across borders and predominance of political and economic structures and processes that are frequently more transnational and multinational than the state. They are functionally independent having greater impact on outcomes

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21. Princen and Finger, n.11, p.64.

22. Robert Gilpin, "The Politics of Transnational Economic Relations" in Keohane and Nye, eds., Transnational Relations and World Politics (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

23. Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (New York: Random House, 1979).

in issue areas and hence, permitting actors to be decisionally autonomous of the state.<sup>24</sup> The international system is no longer simply a state system, rather it is becoming increasingly characterised by plural and composite or "pluvilateral" structure.<sup>25</sup> The heterogenous transnational structures have significant consequences for the logic of collective action. The state centric system now exists with an equally powerful, more decentralized, multicentric system.

Social movements from civil society are challenging state authority and on the other hand, transnational zones are eroding the autonomy of the state from the outside. In the midst of these challenges, the distinction between domestic and international is getting increasingly blurred.

Linkage politics<sup>26</sup> understands the continuity of domestic and international politics and regards the state as permeable. The world politics paradigm gives importance to issue areas, transnational zones and linkage politics. It in effect implies a state centric view to explain asymmetries and inequalities between states. According to Richard

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24. Philip G. Cerny, "Globalization and the Changing Logic of Collective Action", International Organisation, Vol.49, No.4, Autumn 1995, pp.596-597.

25. Paul Ghils, n.14, p.417.

26. James Rosenau conceptualises the notion of Linkage Politics as an environment leading to a reaction of a cumulative kind called 'border crossing responses' in Linkages Politics: Essays on the Emergence of National and International System (New York: New York University, 1969).

Falk,<sup>27</sup> states are losing their organisational advantage in the provision of 'public goods' (except in maintaining security) thus recognizing the proportion of power and influence non-state actors hold in the shaping of the world order.

The third debate in international politics concerns the proper paradigm for studying international relations.<sup>28</sup> The origins lie in questioning the state centric model and hence looking into the essential quality of political activity. New notions of power, sovereignty free actors, important dimensions of collective life and significant changes in micro processes force us to look at a non-state centric notion which accommodates new agents, significant political behaviour and gives relative causal weight to 'agency'.

Global environmental problems have largely been realised in terms of inter-state cooperation.<sup>29</sup> They are however problems related to disparities in distribution of power and wealth, necessitating a collective response and action across territorial confines. A communitarian re-

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27. Richard Falk in "Contending Approaches to World Order" in Richard Falk, Samuel S. Kim, eds., Toward a Just World Order, Vol.I (Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), pp.146-175.

28. Paul Wapner reflects on the third debate in International Politics raised by K.J. Holsti and R.B.J. Walker, n.3, p.319.

29. Literature on inter-state cooperation in this area has largely been theorized by neorealists. Kenneth Waltz believes that pursuit of relative gains precludes states from placing international concern above national interests and hence are unable to cooperate an important shared problems.

sponse<sup>30</sup> is required to interpret action, assign meaning, legitimate practices, empower agents and constitute a highly structured social reality.

Social structure is of consequence in understanding the changing power relations in society, the disparate interests among people indifferently situated in group hierarchies. 'Agency'<sup>31</sup> is any human action, collective or structural as well as individual, which makes a difference to social action. Environmental politics literature has focused on regimes, international organisations and epistemic communities. However at every stage of analysis, the state continued to remain the main frame of reference and non-state actors are not given independence of operations. TENGOS cannot be situated in this nature of analysis. The structural theories of realism and world economy approach view agency as a consequence of structure and all interaction goes in from the macro to micro level. The rational choice theorists privilege individuals as counting for everything in world politics, eliminating micro-macro processes relevant to the cause of events.<sup>32</sup>

James Rosenau in his turbulence in world politics calls for justifying jail breaks from traditional political analysis. In his view, it is essential to locate and identify actors from the authority structures, but not in terms of

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30. Richard K. Ashley, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics", Alternatives, Vol.12, 1987, pp.403-434.

31. Collins Dictionary of Sociology (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991).

32. James Rosenau, n.5.

sovereignty, and to cease to rank these structures of authority in a hierarchical order of importance. Interdependence is redefined as existing whenever two or more whole systems or subsystems have one or more of the same issues on their agendas and render the subnational and supranational free actors as comparable on the same analytical plane as sovereignty-bound actors.

Rosenau takes on Giddens's structuration theory to conceptualise a multilevel theory which can cope with the turbulence presently rolling the actors and structures of world politics. This analysis is found acceptable for our understanding of TENGOS because it is 'inclusive' and acknowledges the complexities of the current scene.

#### **CULTURAL EXPLANATIONS**

The category of explanations focus on cultural shifts and value changes in the society. The role of ideology and environmental thinking can help trace the growth of the movement as an opposition to prevailing cultural norms or the promotion of alternative cultural values or lifestyles.

The early explanations<sup>33</sup> are based on value changes in capitalist liberal democracies as rooted in economic changes. The key explanation which focuses on value changes draws on Ronald Inglehart's thesis on the rise of 'Postmaterialist values' since the early 1950s. The postmaterialist argument explains how with rising standards of living in the developed world the material wants of many people are being satisfied. Consequently, people are becoming more oriented

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33. Ronald Inglehart, n.15.

towards less acquisitive and nonmaterial goals, to do with factors such as quality of life, intellectual and spiritual development, political rights, participation and the environment. Inglehart located the shift in values<sup>34</sup> as a change among the younger generation who grew up with prosperity. The intergenerational shift which began during the student protest movement of the 1960s is seen by Inglehart as causing a fundamental change in values affecting the entire society as that generation matures. Public environmental concern and the broader environmental movement are linked to the large postmaterialist shift in cultural values.

However, there is a general agreement that environmentalism is a much more complicated phenomenon and should not be viewed singularly as a product of postmaterialist shift in values.<sup>35</sup> Notions of Environmentalism are also a result of the quest for environmental justice and social protest, role of mass media in diffusing environmental values, immediate perception of environmental change and degradation, institutional processes, and the shifts in thinking which view environmentalism as integral to the economic development process. The changing discourse on equitable developmental policies translated into environmental terms, the importance of environmental science findings and the values

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34. Ronald Inglehart, Cultural Shift in Advanced Industrial Society (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990).

35. Steven Yearly conceptualises environmental concerns as emerging out of the objective condition and the environmental necessity for protection. He takes a social problems approach to the role of green groups and the media in popularising environmentalism.



of global culture to protect the environment are all attempts at redefining environmental protection. Significant work by the international development community has been in the form of the Stockholm Conference in 1972, Burndtland Commission in 1987 and the Agenda 21 at the 1992 Earth Summit. Instead of being strictly a post-materialist value, environmental concern has now integrated itself with materialist values.

Culture is an important arena of understanding and has largely been understudied. It is essential to study the natural system - social system interaction to understand the global and local norms contributing to the larger environmental value. Cultural explanations of the TENGOS would take off from early explanations of environmentalism and build on the cultural context of social movements, new values related to alternative governance and restructuring. These explanations will not privilege the role of values in spreading environmental concern but see them as outcomes of social or environmental processes.

The problem with a fixed idea of basic material needs and the possibility of higher postmaterialist needs built on them makes it difficult to explain growing environmentalism in third world countries. Rather than being a post-industrial luxury, a healthy environment is now widely viewed as essential for a sound economic base.

TENGOS aim at engaging people at the level at which they feel the most immediate effects of their own local environmental and economic conditions. At this level, TENGOS use activism itself, rooted in actual experience of ordinary people as a form of governance. It can alter the

way people interact with each other and their environment, literally to change the way they live their lives.<sup>36</sup>

TENGOS are conceived as symbols which challenge dominant cultural codes.<sup>37</sup> The symbols and language of the movements are critical, oppositional and adversarial, vague yet simple and compact, visible and didactic. They include signs, badges, banners, charts and utterances calling for stops or bans and warning of danger. Symbols include clothes, taste, behaviour and diet - in short life styles. Demonstrations of meaning are public and visual -- marches, rallies, sit-ins, festivals and performances. The presentation of cultural meaning is often the substance and purpose of their activity, as much as it is the form for presenting a case or the means for achieving an end.

Cultural explanations aim at the community's norms, values, beliefs, practices; perceptions and orientation to the surrounding world. A desirable future informing latent consciousness, today, unfolds out of an altered cultural setting with an activation of cultural energies. Social movements are an important source of exploration and enactment relating to worldviews associated with the whole planet, spiritual and ethical solidarity with reverence for nature, an outlook of stewardship towards the future and new modes of governance.

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36. Paul Wapner, n.3.

37. Susan Eckstein talks of the cultural content of social movements in Eckstein, ed., Power and Popular Protest (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

Social movements according to Richard Falk<sup>38</sup> can create an altered cultural setting through the following manifestations:

- Silent evolutions in lifestyle and ambition.
- Cultural artifacts in the form of music, painting and literature.
- Rejection of violence as a means and state power as an end.
- New values and a culture of resistance representing a symbolic communication beyond the framework of lawful activity.

New values have represented the shared vulnerabilities at a global scale, and alternate basic life structures. The notion of security has thrown open the belief that security of the individual is important as it is essential to feel secure. The rejection of violence as a means and its inadequacy to protect in an acceptable manner especially at the international level have led to the idea of achieving security nonviolently in an altered cultural setting. New thinking is now hinging on sensibilities to think and act collectively and peacefully.

Development in an altered cultural setting would encourage efficient and sustainable use of resources to assure production flows that will satisfy basic human needs and will not cause too large a gap between classes, religions and societies. Developmental pluralism<sup>39</sup> contains a shared notion of human need and dignity giving importance to con-

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38. Richard Falk, n.5, p.175.

39. *ibid.*, p.184.

servation and indigenous grassroot movements.

The arena of environmental politics has brought forth perceptions of "Limits to Growth", preserving and enhancing the resource base of the whole planet and linking up environmental sensitivity with an open society and a democratic system. These grounds help deepen an affirmation of human solidarity, intergenerational equity and a genuine attitude of stewardship towards the future. The reorientations of citizenship that goes beyond local participation in a collective life of a society, beyond dimensions of space (territory of any state) and time (beyond the present, reclaiming past wisdom and intergenerational equity) have led to the notion of a 'world citizen' in a 'world society'.<sup>40</sup> Such a framework visualises the world citizen as one who is embarked on a journey of deliverance that is centred upon the ongoing struggle and to create a future that approaches normative horizons that now seem mere aspirations. It is quite farfetched to perceive of changes occurring in the world. However, it is quite evident that such worldviews can help strengthen 'issue areas' and look for non-formal means of change.

The notion of 'public good'<sup>41</sup> as related to survival, and artificial needs based on material prosperity, is the growing feature of most environmental policies. Public policy is an extension of the public good and also the organising force behind its enforcement. Global values like democratisation, egalitarianism, progress and materialism

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40. *ibid.*, p.192.

41. Princen and Finger, n.11, p.14.

have been seen as essential factors contributing to the public good.

The cultural particularity of environmental consciousness is also evident in new religious consciousness that endow nature with a sacred and spiritual quality, closely associated with human fulfillment and species conservation.<sup>42</sup>

NGO movements tend to reflect the values of the science establishment, a deep conviction that progress is desirable and relentless, the need to use science to conquer value, preoccupation with problems of conflict and understanding the notion of power as a societal force.<sup>43</sup> The relationship between the centres of societal control and societal units which specialise in the production of knowledge affect social activeness. Knowledge both as a product and in terms of the facilities for its production can be fruitfully viewed as a social asset and the distribution of this asset among collectivities and societies significantly affects their position in their stratification structure and their political interaction.<sup>44</sup>

Knowledge and thereby information regarding environmental concern is generated by the groups and used for collective mobilization. They utilise the existing cultural

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42. Steven R. Brechin and Willet Kempton, "Global Environmentalism: A Challenge to the Postmaterialism Thesis?", Social Science Quarterly, Vol.75, No.2, June 1994.

43. Princen and Finger, n.11, p.14.

44. Amitai Etzioni, The Active Society: A Theory of Societal and Political Processes (New York: Free Press, 1968).

symbols and participation to build the cultural arena for environmental action.<sup>45</sup> Knowledge in conjunction with religion and ideology provides 'meaning' an important bond that ties actions and actors to one another and affects societal commitments. Therefore TENGOS operate through cultural settings and create new values through action in the context of particular interests like structural conditions and power relations.

#### **ACTION EXPLANATIONS**

Reacting against the determinism of other explanations, action explanations seek to restore power to social movements themselves. They also attempt to define the scope and nature of action. A clear understanding of protest and the development of the social movement, its capacity to organize, mobilize and secure cohesion in pursuit of objectives will help in enlarging our notion of 'collective action'.

TENGOS relate to individuals where they are found, uniting individuals across territorial boundaries, disseminating an ecological sensibility and assuming a critical role as agents of social change. TENGOS insist on greater participation in decision making and strict accountability regarding the actions and decisions taken by governments. They also press for transparency in decision making and full access to information on which accountability depends.

The scope of action<sup>46</sup> of TENGOS in the international

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45. Alberto Melucci, "The Symbolic Challenge of New Social Movements", Social Research, Vol.52, Winter 1985.

46. Paul Ghils, n.14.

arena is varied and has led to the adoption of new international rules.

- The work of NGOs focus more on encouraging governments to act in ways that the public opinion perceives to be morally justified or on challenging the conduct of states when the legitimacy of their action is in doubt.
- NGOs intervene directly at the transnational level, either for the benefit of their membership or for that of individual social group.
- Another category of NGO initiatives concern arenas in which government action is nonexistent or imperative.

Therefore the scope of an NGO in the international arena is defined as a 'shaper of opinion', an 'autonomous actor' or an 'agent in competition with states'. NGOs rely on 'people power', the strength of popular agency to alter the existing power relations in the decision-making authority. NGOs especially rely on knowledge based action flowing from the realization that environmental threats can have serious socioeconomic and human costs, requiring multilateral decisions and a basic understanding of 'public good'. They therefore assume roles as politically active actors which research, publicize, expose and monitor environmental trends with little fear of offending established political 'constituencies' in order to promote fundamental change. The related reason for their active role is a result of the inadequacy of governments to promote fundamental changes in an ecosystem which has an ever decreasing resources potential.

Social movement theory originates in the sociological

theory of collective behaviour and collective action. Social movement theorists have been interested in the promoters of collective action - activists as actors for political and social change. It is essential to analyse social movement theories that focus on the individual to explain collective action.

Alberto Melucci views the social movement as an action system:<sup>47</sup> heterogenous actors, committed to the cause of environmentalism, are able to build collective identity and joint mobilization campaigns. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamiron<sup>48</sup> propose an action perspective that stresses the active role of personnel while also recognizing the role of external historical and political circumstances. The creative role of ideas and cognition contribute to the formation of a 'cognitive praxis'. The cognitive praxis involves the translation of scientific understanding of ecology into a political philosophy, using technological processes to evolve sustainable/alternative technologies and identification of a radical participating democracy as a goal. Thus this theory privileges the role of action, knowledge, intellectuals and movement actors instead of external, material and structural determination.

The emphasis is an 'action' and 'subjective agency' rather than structure and external determination. Steven Yearly in the 'Green Case' states that the use in public prominence of green concerns in Britain is a result of the

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47. Alberto Melucci, n.45.

48. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamiron, Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach (Chicago: Westview Press, 1990).



TENGOS defining and shaping certain environmental phenomena as problems. Environmental problems do not become such by virtue of their objective existence. They do not become problems until they are defined as such. Environmental issues, therefore do not merely reflect an objective reality or external social conditions but are shaped into environmental issues by green organisations, the role of modern science and the media. The mobilization potential therefore literally defines the action strategy of a TENGO. Neil Smesler<sup>49</sup> emphasizes the coordination of a group through its leadership, communication, resources and authorities social control and the response of authorities as the essential conditions for collective action.

The role of modern science has been an important factor in the identification and publicizing of environmental problems and the growth of the green movement. Therefore, environmental movements are seen as a construct of purposive social action which the TENGOS initiate along with utilising the media and modern science.

Social movement theories have also analysed the nature of defiance and protest of an individual to explain collective action. Persons who feel frustrated and deprived relative<sup>50</sup> to others with whom they compare themselves, and who are attracted to new norms and values, have all been defiant. Such persons are typically portrayed as non-rational or irrational in rebelling. Rational choice theo-

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49. Neil Smelser, n.17.

50. Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

rists like Mancur Olson argue that mobilization is a calculated response, based on the individual assessments of the costs and benefits of non-compliance with the status quo. Olson<sup>51</sup> points out that rational self-interested individuals are disinclined to assume the risks of mobilization for "collective goods" because they can "ride free". He contends that collective defiance is likely only when actors receive selective rewards for their participation in anti-status quo movements and when non-participants are penalized for their lack of involvement.

Rational choice theory cannot account for the group solidarities, moral commitment to collectivity and larger issues of environment which mobilize people to act independently of self-interest. The increasing cultural political and moral content of environmentalism either can enlarge the individual's self-interest to include environmental preservation, or can be manifest at the level of consciousness, thus accounting for mobilization and collective action in the membership of TENGOS. Charles Tilly<sup>52</sup> in his "From Mobilisation to Revolution" explains how economic decline is affecting the shared advantages and disadvantages of collective action.

However, from the social movement theories that give importance to action potential, one can understand that there are few action plans adopting overall patterns of political behaviour. This is manifest in policies like

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51. Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

52. Charles Tilly, "Models and Realities of Popular Collective Action", Social Research, Vol.52, No.4, 1985.

denuclearization, demilitarization, development and democratization. As Richard Falk suggests collectivities share values and symbols and these lead to action strategies for protest.

Expressions of defiance that fall short of revolution, in intent and effect are much more frequent. James Scott<sup>53</sup> argues that peasants frequently engage in everyday forms of resistance, such as foot-dragging, non-compliance, deceit, pilfering, slander, sabotage and arson. Drawing on his thesis, we can analyse the action of TENGOS as acts of defiance taking on cultural, political and social expressions. Whether they employ direct action, strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations, riots or protests, is largely dependent on the nature of mobilization potential, organizational resources, successful use of local cultural symbols, use of media and the preparedness of actors. TENGOS are trying to create alternative views, symbols and meanings. The manifestations can result in changed perceptions among people who relate to the environment differently in their every day lives. The cultural content, potential of education and the use of science and media are useful means to strengthen action plans. However, it is important to note that protest need not always take on manifest forms. Non-participation, non-compliance with government policies, adoption of alternative modes of thought, reinforcing local and distinct cultural traditions, all contribute to collective defiance. This would lead to the erosion of legitimacy and account-

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53. James Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1986).

ability of existing structures, thus retaining the meaningful content of defiance or protest, even after conditions that gave rise to them are no longer of consequence.

TENGOs free themselves from traditional politics, change the reference point and privileged means of action, grow in number and interconnectedness, and became increasingly transnational. They contribute to societal change and transformation by mobilising and influencing the 'new politics'. TENGOs build communities, set examples, and increasingly substitute for traditional political actions. Social movements imply the role of the actor as an agent of political change. TENGOs also take on the role of agents of social learning, thus producing knowledge and use it collectively. The role of knowledge is in providing 'meaning', an important bond that ties actions and actors to one another and affects societal commitments. The knowledge that the societal units command significantly affects their collective action.

Therefore, the role of TENGOs and action potential has posited a functional self-sufficient, self-controlled collectivity with a tremendous social impact. This is crucial for global environmental politics which has proved the inadequacy of nation-states to regulate, protect and coordinate politics of conservation. Reactions for protection involve the response of social movements in civil society to garner support at the level of community. According to Kenneth Boulding, the contemporary movement has the ability to harness the emerging social tendencies (e.g. communal and transnational growth) which favour it within its present social character and has the potentiality to become a perma-

ment and global movement.

Therefore action explanations have strengthened the status accorded to collective action and movement potential in an increasingly transnational world. TENGOS are not seen as part of macrostructural phenomena, but as events spurred by actions of a microunit, here a local group, organization and the individual as an agent.

TENGOS so far have been analysed with respect to analytical constructs like structure, agency, power and culture. Having formed the theoretical grounding for the TENGOS, it is essential to empirically examine the performance of TENGOS and the characteristics of some of the well established organisations. The next four chapters will deal with variables like Organisational Structure, Relative Autonomy, Action Strategies and Issue and Action Networks. Three TENGOS, who are the oldest and well established in Environmental Politics viz., Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and World Wide Fund for Nature are being considered to critically analyse and compare them along the aforementioned variables. This exercise would involve situating them as independent non-state actors working across and within state boundaries. This in effect will reaffirm their claims as non-state actors and also accord them analytical significance. This is essential to understand the transnational, non-state and collectivist organisational character of these organisations. It seeks a comparative analysis by holding the institutional context of the biophysical conditions constant and varying the nature of NGO and its intervention.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Relative Autonomy**

The notion of an NGO is ambiguous. It is often and widely used to refer to a variety of non-profit organisations. NGOs are mostly defined as a wide variety of groups and institutions that are entirely or largely independent of government and are characterised primarily by their humanitarian and cooperative rather than commercial objectives.<sup>1</sup>

TENGOs differ widely in style and strategy but, share a common orientation towards saving the earth, a centrality of mission and values. They share a common public policy environment in which privatisation, and the offloading of what were previously governmental responsibilities on to private groups, is a universal theme.<sup>2</sup> The ideology of voluntarism builds an argument that nation states are unable to act effectively in international environmental arenas and hence the task of environmental protection and management belongs to the 'independent sector' and voluntary organisations. They target government and try to change state behaviour to further their aims at the national level. They also work through transnational economic, social and cultur-

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1. David Bills and Joy Mackeith, "Growth and Change in NGOs: Concepts and Comparative Experience" in Michael Edwards and David Hume, eds., Making a Difference - NGOs and Development in a Changing World (London: Earthscan Publications, 1992).
  2. Carrie A. Meyer, "Environmental NGOs in Ecuador: An Economic Analysis of Institutional Change", Journal of Developing Areas, Vol.27, No.2, January 1993, pp.191-210.

al networks to achieve their ends. Thus, they redefine politics above, below and beyond nation state politics.

TENGOS aim at greater participation in decision-making, strict accountability regarding actions and decisions taken by government and press for transparency in decision-making. They assume the critical role of the agents of social change, functionally independent and decisionally autonomous of the state and disseminating an ecological sensibility which has greater impact on outcomes of policy-making. Thus they engage in new forms of public participation with a certain degree of autonomy from traditional politics and develop new relationships with emerging international environment and development establishments.

TENGOS are defined with reference to NGOs (non-governmental organisation) only to the extent that they are voluntaristic and do not align with any political party or governments. Therefore TENGOS can be understood to represent the larger issue area of Environment and work in knowledge and action centred perspectives.

TENGOS are most effective at the international level to the extent that they exploit transnational opportunities. And whereas NGOs of all kinds - human rights, women's, public health and so forth - also exploit transnational linkages, transnational environmental NGOs inject scientific and earth-centred concerns into political and economic situations which would otherwise relegate such concerns to the margins. In this transnational mode, TENGOS transform politics by redefining what constitutes its subject matter.

Environmental action transcends national frontiers and

embraces more frequent non-governmental contacts. Environmental advocacy is no longer the separate concern of a distinct individual constituency fighting for limited government attention. It pervades every sector of each national constituency to take a transnational approach. Environmental protection as a matter of public interest rises above class and party. TENGOS forego political alignment and hence enjoy a high degree of trust and credibility with the public.

Relative autonomy of a TENGO from state control and the decision-making processes of the state determine its true character as a 'non-state actor'. Since their bargaining leverage is not built on traditional power resources of territory and armies, it is essential to locate their assets in order to understand their role in the independent sector. Central to NGO assets are their qualities of legitimacy, transparency and transnationalism.<sup>3</sup>

Legitimacy of a TENGO is established by the manner in which activists transcend narrow self-interest and remain committed to the environmental cause. Their strength is determined by their accuracy and credibility of work, and the respect and recognition they acquire in the international community. According to Robert Dahl<sup>4</sup> 'a group has to be seen as legitimate in some sense, in order to gain entry into the system'. Legitimacy is fundamental to the ability

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3. Thomas Princen and Mathias Finger, International NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and Global (London: Routledge, 1991).

4. R.A. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1956), p.145.



of organisations to affect policy and exercise their right to public participation. The source of legitimacy lies in increasing membership, expanding resources, sustainable collective action and their role as non-profit seeking organisations. This, in effect, determines the amount of power and control the TENGO possesses as an organised group in the bargaining game with the different arms of the state.

TENGOs are self-constituted and autonomous, and once they become an 'estate of the realm',<sup>5</sup> they are a legitimate matter of public interest. It is essential for them to maintain transparency in their operations, since they are accountable to not only their membership but also to the larger public having acquired the status of the 'estate of the realm'.

TENGOs are transnational in their allegiance to the ecosystem and in their concern for broader ecological interests. At the functional level, they seek access to decision-making at the governmental, intergovernmental and corporate level, engage directly in the formation and reform of international institutions and attempt to link local needs with the challenges of the global ecological crisis. This may encompass a wide range of activities, from projects on the ground to the lobbying of governments, from monitoring institutional performance to facilitating foreign assistance negotiations, from regulating international trade

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5. Michael Fogarty, "Efficiency and Democracy in Large Voluntary Associations", Policy Studies, Vol.II, Autumn 1990, p.42.

to protest and direct action.<sup>6</sup> They encompass relations with a wide range of actors from major powers to small states, from global, regional and binational intergovernmental organisations to supranational organisations, from multinational corporations to producer cooperatives, and from well financed, well connected international NGOs to tiny, ephemeral grassroots groups.<sup>7</sup>

Because TENGOS are non-profit organisations part of their financial instability stems from an inability to be self-funding. Most TENGOS finance their operations mainly through project grants, membership drives or contract work. The source of funding is very crucial for understanding the degree of financial independence and functional autonomy that an organisation acquires. Given the nature of their activities, assets and expected role, the relative autonomy of the TENGOS can be understood in relation to their funding sources, ideological commitments, range of activities and contributions to the environmental movement. However, while analysing relative autonomy of an organisation, it is inappropriate/misleading to link operational criteria like effectiveness, efficiency, viability and impact to functional independence and autonomy. These criteria do not reflect on conditionalities, influence and dependency that exist in the project-donor framework, a crucial part in structuring organisational objectives.

The three organisations being studied in this dissertation -- the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Greenpeace and

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6. Princen and Finger, n.3.

7. *ibid.*

Friends of the Earth (FOE) -- are older, well established, and have strength in terms of resources (human, institutional and financial). However, each one of them has acquired distinct characteristics of its own. It is therefore essential to look at the aforementioned criteria in relation to these TENGOS to understand the nature of their relative autonomy.

### World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

WWF has grown from a small grant-making organisation concerned merely with conservation to a fullfledged TENGO with offices in 84 countries. Its activities range from preservation of biodiversity to species preservation, pollution and climate change to training members of governmental and non-governmental institutions around the world to conserve and introduce sustainable development plan and implementing or improving existing international treaties. WWF has been working with local people, informing, educating and empowering them to undertake sustainable development and species preservation. The organisational mission believes in building partnerships with the public, community groups, other conservation organisations and institutions in order to achieve lasting conservation results.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the organization works through dialogue and partnership to multiply its effort in influencing policy, awareness and education programmes. It is funded by membership, government grants, aid agencies, corporate funding and its projects are often

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8. WWF Annual Report, 1994.

funded by the international donor community.<sup>9</sup>

WWF lays great emphasis on building close relationships with these donors, on keeping them informed of the issues and on showing the successes achieved with their support. WWF was created with support from wealthy individuals and corporations and the endorsement of members of the British royal family. It appealed to the financial benefits of conservation, especially from linking, hunting and tourism.

The activities of WWF have included setting up a game management system in Zambia, working with local people in Cameroon to develop reforestation and in St. Lucia to protect coastal regions. WWF's tourism and hunting strategies were in conflict with the norms of international conservation. This was especially so in the enforcement of the ivory trade ban as part of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).<sup>10</sup> The reluctance of WWF to push for the ban was assumed to be due to the enforcing influence from its donors. However, a good deal of soil searching took place in the 1980's and it was reflected in the policies - promotion of hunting hindered fund-raising and hence promotion of tourism in national parks became a mainstay.<sup>11</sup>

Organisations whose intellectual horizon and animating vision are largely derived from the world of projects and

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9. Changing Worlds - 35 years of WWF (a WWF International Publication).

10. Princen and Finger, n.3.

11. Fred Pearce, Green Warriors: The People and the Politics behind the Environmental Revolution (London: Bodley Head, 1991), p.7.

donors are often handicapped when it comes to designing innovative approaches. WWF's loss of initiative during the ivory trade ban revealed that the project donor framework is characterised by various forms of dependency. In such a scenario, NGOs can easily lose their identity and integrity.

The principle of directing First World resources to Third World conservation has long been important in organizations such as WWF, and the notion that the one who pays the piper calls the tune is being greatly extended by new ideas of 'debt for nature' swaps.<sup>12</sup> These arise from the exposure of First World banks to Third World debt and their willingness to sell off those debts at a discount to conservation organizations, who use them to bargain for expenditure on conservation in local currency. Because large amounts of foreign capital flow into environmental activities, there are possibilities and means for the north to dictate its environmental agenda to the south. By making funds conditionally available, donors influence the kind of work being done.<sup>13</sup>

In recent times, WWF's participation in the United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development (UNCED) was to spread the message of Brundtland report and establish a 'centre for our common future'. It struck mutually agreeable bargains with major actors in UNCED. As the conference unfolded, it increased its access to the secretariat and to

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12. W.M. Adams, Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in the Third World (London: Routledge, 1990), Ch.9, pp.192-199.

13. *ibid.*

the delegates of the northern countries. It was seen as a consulting partner and had representatives at crucial positions in the UNCED process.<sup>14</sup> Such a performance likens it to a prototype of the international environmental organization which has gone beyond traditional state-centred politics and the environmental movement. With increasing credibility with governments, it has been coopted into the inter-governmental process, thus isolating itself from the rest of the environmental movement.<sup>15</sup>

### **Friends of the Earth (FOE)**

Friends of the Earth is essentially an international campaigning organisation focusing on the most urgent social and environmental issues, apart from attempting to construct sustainable societies. FOE's initial contribution was to address a number of issues on which other organizations had yet to focus.<sup>16</sup> It began the first serious study of alternative energy policies and work against acid rain, and traces its origins to the anti-nuclear movements. FOE and thirteen other organisations formed the coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economics (CERES) which produced a ten point environmental code of conduct for corporations (also known as the Valdez Principles).

FOE exerts pressure on development banks to assess the environmental impact of their projects and contributed to

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14. Linda Starke, Signs of Hope: Working towards our Common Future (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.7.

15. Princen and Finger, n.3.

16. Paul Wapner, "Environmental Activism and Global Civil Society", Dissent, Summer 1994.

the establishment of a Global Environmental Facility set up by the World Bank. FOE's campaigning is also guided by personal contact and solidarity which the federation provides. It is also looking out for greater political acceptance by setting up a Council of Patrons, which unites prominent thinkers, activists and celebrities who support the work of the federation.<sup>17</sup> It has taken up issues like anti-nuclear campaigns, toxic waste dumping, deforestation, multilateral debt and ozone depletion. It organizes international networks for action on environmental consumer protection and peace issues. It regularly participates as an official observer at the meetings of a large number of international institutions. At International Maritime Organisation meetings, FOE is the only environmental NGO adviser with full intervenor status.<sup>18</sup> It focuses on local and national actions and lobbies governments and international institutions. It has developed campaign strategies with distinct political agenda to mobilise the public and exert influence on decisions taken by governments and business.

FOE's whole approach to campaigning is based on a marketing ethic rather than an academic or practical background. It is set on coordinating and building coalitions and does not always clearly define an enemy (a government or a corporation). This is essentially so because it sees itself as a distinct social movement organisation committed to mobilization.

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17. Ann Doherty, "Mobilising Ourselves for the Environment", Link, Issue 73, July/August 1996, p.14.

18. Wapner, n.16.

FOE's role as a political environmental NGO in UNCED was to keep close ties with the environmental movement. Trying to establish links between the environmental movement in the north and environmental oriented NGOs in the south, it has worked on lines similar to its internal organisational structure.

FOE is increasingly fulfilling a double role: as a public watch dog, not shunning confrontation on the barricades for the benefit of a more sustainable society, and as a governmental partner in policy development and implementation.

FOE is largely funded by its membership. It also regularly receives funds from governments UN agencies and increasingly from foundation grants. There is a great deal of ambiguity in terms of its operations in a social movement capacity and also in its commitment to grassroots activism at the local, political campaigns at the national level and coordination and lobbying at the international level. This ambiguity is largely a result of the organisation's network capacity and a tendency towards decentralisation and autonomy of its constituents. Despite its strength in the less developed countries, the organisation is largely Eurocentric and attempts at cultural diversity have not really fructified.<sup>19</sup> It is inclined towards consensus building among stake holders on a common agenda and avoids confrontation whenever necessary, hence not prioritising campaign and direct actions.

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19. Doherty, n.17, p.15.



FOE is running into difficulties because, the first generation of FOE groups came out of a progressive, leftist and western context in which capitalism was seen as a part of the problem. This view was reinforced with the increasing the presence of southern organisation. But the changes in the 1980s -- the opening of Eastern Europe, privatisation of economies -- has affected discussions within FOE. Central and Eastern European groups look very differently at the concepts of equity and privatisation because of their history. Part of the difficulties continue to lie in the complexity of North-South relations.<sup>20</sup>

FOE views its relationship with bilateral and multilateral agencies as a 'dialogue' on policy, but it is not easy to overlook the donor's compulsions as implementors of a project. The pressure of funding trends is revealed in older TENGOS redefining their projects to incorporate the language of environmental stewardship and sustainability. The rural development programmes of thirty years ago are now repackaged as sustainable agricultural projects. With the increase in green funding even established TENGOS have succumbed to the availability<sup>21</sup> of project grants. The context of protests in the third world differ from those in the Europe and North America and hence FOE increasingly focuses its action to reforming and modifying the policies of aid agencies.

FOE increasingly follows a bottom-up approach and hence misses out on an international agenda. It builds on its

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20. *ibid.*, p.15.

21. Adams, n.12.

strengths of diversity in composition and 'good image' with people and governments. FOE's ambiguous position as an NGO therefore translates from its own structural constraints and its change of image during its growth owing to resource and funding' compulsions.

### **Greenpeace**

Greenpeace is an independent, campaigning organisation which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and to force solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future. It chiefly wages its campaigns through 'direct actions'. None of its activities have involved lobbying a government *per se* or calling for a particular policy change on the part of specific countries. It does not ally with any political party or business corporation and relies exclusively on funds from membership and sales of merchandise.<sup>22</sup>

From the Amchitka nuclear tests to Mururoa in the South Pacific, Greenpeace has fought against nuclear testing. It seeks to end all nuclear threats, protect biodiversity and prevent pollution and abuse of the Earth's resources. Greenpeace exerted influence disproportional to its non-state status by setting up a legitimate scientific research base, which would otherwise qualify states to join the 'exclusive club' of the Antarctic Treaty system and establishing a world park.<sup>23</sup> Greenpeace has acquired an 'anti-establishment' image and has been equated with radical also

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22. Wapner, n.16.

23. Princen and Finger, n.3.

activist groups. However, the organization also performs activities like scientific research and empowering local communities to perform sustainable use of resources.

Greenpeace had to alter its role in Russia and Eastern Europe and also take on notions of social justice and the plight of indigenous communities in developing countries. Its knowledge base and negotiating potential has been utilized by the Norwegian and Swedish governments in the preparatory committee meetings during the UNCED process.<sup>24</sup> Greenpeace has had to alter its position in different countries and has shown increasing flexibility in changing its means of protest and campaign strategies. It is evident that Greenpeace continues to maintain an image of targeting governments or corporations and hence acts with a definite 'enemy' to oppose or protest. Greenpeace remains an activist organisation trying to maintain its autonomy, even while altering its image to changing circumstances.

From the above analysis of the three TENGOS, it is evident that many TENGOS are undergoing self-examination as they make the shift from narrowly funded campaigns to comprehensive sustainable development programmes. There are sound reasons for TENGOS to enter into a positive and creative relationship with the institutions of both the state and government. Governments remain largely responsible for providing the health, education, agricultural and other services on which people depend and the state remains the ultimate arbiter and determinant of wider political

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24. *ibid.*

change.<sup>25</sup> TENGOS do not build alternatives to the state, but build on the civic power which forges voluntary and customary practices into mechanisms that govern public affairs.<sup>26</sup>

NGO's flexible stances with governments have largely been a result of their considerations of 'impact' and the costs and benefits of strategies. However, it can be difficult to operate simultaneously as an agent of social mobilization and as an advocate for fundamental change in social and political structures or to work with governments. The result could be in an ambiguous stance, co-optation or an anti-establishment position. It is also difficult to assess their role as non-profit NGOs and the extent of donor will in influencing decision-making and bargaining capacity with states or corporations. Relative autonomy may not essentially focus on independence from states, but might be a measure to assess the capacity building of NGOs in disseminating an ecological sensibility, sustainable use of resources and nature of protest, essential to building their 'civic power'.

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25. Adams, n.12.

26. Princen and Finger, n.3.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Organisational Structure**

An organisation is a formal structure established for the pursuit of relatively specific objectives. As a formal structure it has both size (e.g. number of members) and shape (e.g. levels of authority). It is a social group with explicit rules, roles and responsibilities. An organisation influences the behaviour and attitudes of the people who participate in it.<sup>1</sup>

NGOs are part of movements which mobilise human, financial and institutional resources to help rational actors participate effectively in the political system through the organisation. NGOs are not so much about participating and influencing existing structures and decision making processes, but about creating and inventing them.

In fact, at the organisational level, a defining characteristic of many big NGOs may be that they are constantly redefining themselves.<sup>2</sup> Unlike most governmental and business organisations, NGOs must constantly adjust to the varying patterns of resource mobilisation, changing political and economic environment and challenges presented by ever more extensive and complex environmental problems.

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1. W. Scott, "Theory of Organisations" in E. Francis, ed., The Handbook of Modern Sociology (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), p.488.
  2. Thomas Princen and Mathias Finger, International Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and Global (London: Routledge).

NGOs derive their strength from their non-governmental status, in which they are distinguished by the flexibility of operations, willingness to innovate, emphasis on non-hierarchical values and relationships. NGOs are premised on the assumption that social order can be achieved without recourse to authority relations.<sup>3</sup> This form of organisation presupposes the capacity of individuals for self-disciplined, cooperative behaviour.

This dissertation focuses on three TENGOS that have grown from small, localised activist groups into full-fledged international organisations. Since they are non-governmental non-profit entities, their primary mission is to reverse environmental degradation or promote sustainable forms of development, not to pursue the objectives of governmental or corporate actors. The organisational structure focusses on the critical micro-level, the internal management and organisation of the NGO. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the size, growth, constituents, membership, decision-making and funding that comprise the organisations. It is difficult to understand NGO politics in terms of an NGO's organisation and the tensions and contradictions it experiences as a non-profit entity.<sup>4</sup> This approach poses problems because NGOs typically do not open their files for outside inspection. For understandable constituent and financial reasons they guard their privacy closely. NGOs are private organisations and are accountable

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3. Daniel Guerin, Anarchism: From Theory to Practice (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

4. Princen and Finger, n.2.

only to their supporters. It is therefore difficult to know-how well these organisations represent popular concerns.<sup>5</sup> It is imperative to mention that the power of the TENGOS has rested more on their well argued case and their large and growing membership than on the details of their constitutional practice.<sup>6</sup>

Organisations like Greenpeace, FOE and WWF are an established presence in the international scene carving an institutional niche of their own. Comparable data on TENGOS are not available, but indirect indicators can be found while studying their organisational growth and operations in the international environmental arena.

These organisations have a primary orientation towards international issues and the spur in their growth towards transnationalisation has been noticeable only in early 1980s. (WWF was founded in 1961, Greenpeace in 1971, FOE in 1969). Although international, they remained predominantly northern in membership, with offices in and members from developed countries, until strong groups from Asia, Latin America and Africa joined in 1980s. TENGOS have started looking towards the south for more ideas to establish their own international credibility.<sup>7</sup> Greenpeace is the first TENGO to open an office in Russia and campaign in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s.

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5. Marie Price, "Ecopolitics and Environmental non-governmental Organisations in Latin America", Geographic Review, Vol.84, No.11, 1994.

6. Michael Fogarty, "Efficiency and Democracy in Large Voluntary Associations", Policy Studies, Vol.II, No.3, Autumn 1990, pp.42-48.

7. Princen and Finger, n.2.

WWF has 24 national organisations, 5 associates and 26 programme offices, Greenpeace has 43 offices in 30 countries and a research base in Antarctica. FOE is a worldwide federation of 51 national environmental organisations. WWF and FOE have a significant presence in the third world; Greenpeace operates in Asia through its International secretariate, but does not have fullfledged offices in any of the countries (India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and China). FOE still does not operate in India, China and Russia.

FOE is a unique decentralised federation of NGOs from 51 countries, thereby uniting nearly 5,000 local grassroots activist groups worldwide. The main decision-making body is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which elects an Executive Committee to oversee the work of the International Secretariat in Amsterdam and on the nature of issues and their commitment to the organisation.

Campaign strategies and individual programme activities are all autonomously handled by the National Organisations. AGMs are week-long structured events covering multiple issues like membership criteria, grants to member groups and appointments.<sup>8</sup>

The electoral process is structured to ensure that candidates will come up through local or regional groups where they are known and their work has been tested. The essence of membership lies in participation in the organisation and its activities, and participation leads on natural-

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8. Friends of the Earth, International Annual Report, 1995.



ly to democracy in the straight forward sense of voting rights and control. Thus, it evolves into a very effective forms of 'corporate' or 'federal' democracy based on voting in successive layers of small units where candidates are likely to be well known. The competencies which elected volunteers bring to governing bodies may be supplemented through co-option or nomination by the parent organisation.<sup>9</sup>

Greenpeace is a closely knit network of national and regional offices coordinated from the headquarters in Amsterdam. The Greenpeace Council (the Council of Greenpeace International) is the major decision making body. Each Greenpeace office appoints a representative to the Council which meets once a year to approve the budget of Greenpeace International for the following year and to make decisions on the overall direction and policy especially for the longer term. All Greenpeace affiliates are significantly influenced by the decisions of the Council. The national organisations have responsibility and control of their activities and decisions.<sup>10</sup>

Formal democracy in the sense of voting rights is absent. Decisions become authoritative to the extent they derive from a process in which all members have the right to full and equal participation and hence are binding on the collective.<sup>11</sup> Individuals may be delegated circumscribed areas of authority, where authority is delegated and defined

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9. Marie Price, n.5.

10. Greenpeace International Annual Report, 1995.

11. Joyce Rothschild-Whitt, "The Collectivist Organisation: An Alternative to Rational Bureaucratic Models", American Sociological Review, Vol.44, pp.509-527.

by the collectivity.

WWF International Network's International Secretariat at Gland, Switzerland, leads the network, develops joint policies and standards, coordinates activities, fosters global partnerships and provides services to National Organisations. The National Organisations carry out conservative activities in their own countries and contribute technical expertise and funding to WWF's international conservation programme. Five WWF associates are independent non-governmental organisations that work closely with WWF and promote shared conservation objectives but who do not contribute financially to WWF's international conservation. 26 WWF's programme offices implement WWF's field work and advise national and local governments and raise public understanding of conservation issues.<sup>12</sup>

WWF represents a network of national affiliates with a centralised structure and a decision making body comprising of a board of trustees and senior professional staff. It has become increasingly formalised, operating hierarchical systems within bureaucratic structure. The organisation with its fund raising activities and close cooperation with government, has shown similarities to International Organisations.

It is essential to understand that the TENGOS have developed bureaucratic characteristics such as rules, regu-

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12. Cruz Torres, William Alex McIntosh and Mary Zey, "The Effects of Bureaucratization and Commitment on Resource Mobilization in Voluntary Organizations", Sociological Spectrum, Vol.II, 1991, pp.19-44.

lations and positions of authority that order the behaviour of their volunteer work force. Structural control within the organisation is manifest in forms of hierarchy of authority which limits autonomy, centralisation of decision making and formalization.

Centralisation of decision making and formalization are alternative forms of structural control.<sup>13</sup> Thus administrators who wish to decentralise decision making to participants at lower levels of the organization often formalize the parameters of decision to such an extent that the outcome of decisions are predictable. For example, Friends of the Earth has decentralised network and grants autonomy to its constituent bodies. However, structural controls exist in the formalisation of rules and strategies at the secretariat.

These TENGOS have undergone processes of considerable institutionalization and bureaucratization. They have developed an institutional identity and are engaged in transforming and reformulating macro policy, a level of action that is often institutional in nature. They have developed organisational structures comparable to business organizations with corresponding marketing, fund raising and development departments. Organisational growth in these TENGOS reveals the increased functional specialisation between parts of the organisation. There are professionals handling campaigns, finance, communication, scientific research and media operations. Governance and composition

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13. Peter M. Blau, "Decentralisation in Bureaucracies" in M. Zald, ed., Power and Organisation (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970), pp.150-174.

of boards have changed owing to the growth in the agency and increasing professionalism. They have also shown an increased capacity to raise resources, material and human, which is evident in the increased membership and funding, unprecedented in the early stages of organisational growth.

All organisations and their affiliates are linked by fax, telex or electronic mail, improving information exchange, representation and advocacy. Greenpeace, for instance, has its own Marine Services, the 'economy' which consists of 8 ships, hot air balloons, a helicopter and its own media facilities (which can distribute edited, scripted and narrated video news spots to television stations in 88 countries within hours. WWF also has access to the media with its professionalised communication facilities.<sup>14</sup> However, a more professionalised workforce forms the strength of the northern TENGO rather than the southern TENGO.

The general membership of the organisation i.e., the social support for environmentalism, is mostly middle to upper class, educated citizens or students. Most members are moderately to strongly liberal on political issues and active in other political matters as well. They are often charged with striving for elitism. For example, contrary to WWF and Greenpeace's claims of being primarily grassroots organisations, their employees are not part of the local communities they serve, nor do they share the socio-economic standards of the poor or working class people they often attempt to reach.

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14. Paul Wapner, "Environmental Activism and Global Civil Society", Dissent, Summer 1994, pp.389-393.

Greenpeace identifies a problem area, enters for a direct action protest, gets the media coverage and then disappears. WWF funds a conservation project, sends technical advisors and tries to make the project self sustaining.<sup>15</sup> WWF has set up a '1001: Nature trust' to manage large subscriptions from individual donors and to promote the organisational image. It has the Duke of Edinburgh for its President. FOE has mooted the idea of FOE Council of Patrons, which would involve finding 25 environmentally aware individuals of high international standing to lend their name to their organisation.

Greenpeace has been accused of being 'giants with mud feet' due to their lack of grass roots activities, WWF for not appealing to public imagination or having the power to really mobilize people and FOE for its ambiguous stands and tendency towards self centredness.<sup>16</sup>

Organisational activity is usually a function of the resources controlled by the members. No organisation is capable of generating internally all the resources necessary to sustain it. Since most NGOs are non-profit, part of their financial instability stems from an inability to be self-funding.

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15. *ibid.* Princen and Finger, n.2, p.32. This is with reference to Greenpeace International and WWF international. Their local chapters continue to find local solutions and work at the grassroots, which cannot be said for their international work and in their changing roles.

16. Humberto da Cruz, "A New Phase for FOE I" in Link, Issue 73, July/August 1946, 25th Anniversary issue.

FOE is funded through a combination of membership fees, private donations and various grants from governments and foundations all over the world.<sup>17</sup> WWF relies on funds from membership, governments and aid agencies apart from working in creative and innovative ways with business and industry to raise funds and spread the conservation message.<sup>18</sup> Greenpeace has a strict policy of soliciting no government or corporate funding. It is funded by contributions from members and sales of merchandise.<sup>19</sup>

The focus of Greenpeace is on issues like nuclear disarmament, toxic waste dumping, ocean ecology, atmosphere and energy. It allies itself with no political party and takes no political stance except for the protection of the environment.<sup>20</sup> It is therefore best characterised as an activist TENGU which focuses on direct action to undo environmental damage.

WWF's overriding concern is the preservation of the world's biological diversity, apart from environmental education, capacity building and in promoting policies of sustainable development in local communities.<sup>21</sup> WWF is essentially a fund raising and research oriented-organisation working in close association with national governments.

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17. Friends of the Earth International Annual Financial Report, 1994.

18. WWF Annual Report, 1995.

19. Greenpeace Annual Financial Report, 1995.

20. Greenpeace 1996 Year in Review (A Greenpeace International Publication).

21. Changing Worlds, 35 Years of WWF (A WWF International Publication).

FOE is essentially a campaigning organisation with a political agenda. It works towards a sustainable society, a governmental partner in policy development and implementation. It also presents alternative policy measures and focuses on ill-considered nuclear projects, product labeling, climate change and in reforming various international financial institutions. FOE therefore focuses on local grassroots activism, strengthening and politically empowering communities and lobbying governments and international institutions at the global level.<sup>22</sup>

From the above analysis of organisational size, governance, funding, membership, focus and growth, it emerges that each of the three TENGOs are functionally different from each other. Though they share a few structural similarities, they are consciously trying to maintain a niche of their own. Their growth has revealed their increasing impact and importance to international environmental politics. FOE has emerged as the TENGO which offers greater autonomy for its constituents regarding operations. It is evident that there is increasing bureaucratisation and institutionalisation of the organisations and they continue to remain middle class groups despite their grassroot activities. In particular, financial resources are crucial to the operations of an NGO. There is a general belief that activist organisations can survive a reduction in operational costs, unlike research NGOs which cannot afford to do so owing to administrative and research constraints. This is

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22. Ann Doherty, "Mobilising Ourselves for the Environment", Link, July/August 1996, Issue 73, p.14.

relevant to a certain extent, but given the institutionalised imperatives, it is difficult to conceive of an organisation giving little importance to fund raising. In fact, all these organisations have started concentrating on the financial aspects of organisation.

Growth and change within non-profit making TENGOS is a highly complex process in which activities, mission, structure, governance and resources are knit together in a complex and mutually dependent web. The durability of the TENGO is probably a function of the salience of the targeted issues as well as an NGO's capacity to organize, raise funds, and integrate into large networks and institutions.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Action Strategies**

Action Strategies are crucial to our understanding of Transnational Environmental Non-governmental Organisations (TENGOs). Since TENGOs have been visualised as agents of political change involved in social and political transformation, it is essential to look at the strategic planning and action orientations of these organisations. It has been established that TENGOs have definite organisational structures with specific ideological orientations and are trying to create an institutional niche of their own. TENGOs contributed to societal change and transformation by mobilising and influencing the 'new politics'. TENGOs build new communities, set examples and increasingly substitute for traditional political actions. The action potential of NGO can take varied forms and it is dependent on various factors like resources, funding, ideology and history of the organisation. The range of activities are from on-the-ground projects to lobbying of governments, from monitoring institutional performance to facilitating foreign assistance negotiations, from regulation of trade to protest and direct action. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the various action strategies of WWF, FOE and Greenpeace and to understand the social and cultural content of such activities.

#### **World Wide Fund for Nature**

WWF's activities as a conservation organization in its initial years was mainly in the form of small grants for

protected areas, species protection, education and research. It was later visualised as an organisation with broad based objectives. The 'Deed of Foundation' lists among other things: "The conservation of world fauna, flora, forests, landscape, water soils and other natural resources, by the acquisition and management of land, research and investigation, education at all levels, information and publicity, coordination of efforts, cooperation with other interests parties and all other appropriate means"<sup>1</sup> and turn around those forces which precipitate the decline. WWF, today, attempts preventing the further decline of our environment.

WWF has six action strategies:<sup>2</sup>

- It sets up protected areas and involves the participation and empowerment of all stake holders in safeguarding species habitats and ecosystems.
- It informs local communities about the benefits of conservation through education.
- It advocates the introduction of the concept of sustainability into the development plans and activities of governments, international agencies and the private sector.
- It works with consumers, governments, business, and industry to eliminate pollution and the wasteful use of resources.
- It works towards implementing or improving existing treaties, introducing new ones and developing national

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1. Changing Worlds - 35 Years of WWFI (Gland, Switzerland: WWF International, 1996).

2. ibid.

legislation to enforce international agreement.

- It runs formal and informal education programmes to promote capacity building and training members of governmental and non-governmental institutions around the world to enable them to address conservation issues within their their own spheres of influence.

Within the past decade WWF has established a wildlands and human needs program, as a method of conservation to be applied to all WWF projects linking human economic well-being with environmental protection. It has structured a game management system in Zambia which involves local residents in anti-poaching and conservation efforts and the channeling of revenues from tourism and safaris back into the neighbouring communities that surround the preserves.<sup>3</sup>

WWF has initiated and continues to support the Kilum Mountain project in the Cameroon that is developing nurseries for reforestation, reintroducing indigenous crops, and informing people about the long-term effects of environmentally harmful practices.<sup>4</sup> It is operative in a project in St. Lucia, where WWF has lent technical assistance to set up sanitary waste disposal sites, improved marketing of fish to reduce over-fishing and protected mangroves from being used for fuel by planting fast growing fuel woodstreets.<sup>5</sup>

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3. WWF, The African Madagascar Program (pamphlet), April 1994; and Roger Stone, "Zambia's International Approach to Conservation", World Wildlife Fund Letter, no.7, 1989.
  4. Roger Stone, "The View from Kilum Mountain", World Wildlife Fund Letter No.4 (1989).
  5. Roger Stone, "Conservation and Development in St. Lucia", World Wildlife Fund Letter, No.3 (1988).

WWF is also instrumental in establishing a World Heritage Site at Lake Malawi National Park and undertaking 350 forest projects in more than 50 countries with sustainable management techniques. It supports the Forest Stewardship Council, a body of established foresters, timber traders, forest certification agencies, indigenous people's groups and environmental institutions to promote good forestry practice in Brazil. WWF's 'Living Rivers' campaign restores damaged fresh water ecosystems and works in close association with private industries, other organisations and governments in Europe. In all its work WWF strictly engages in dialogue and avoids unnecessary confrontation. WWF sees itself as a 'dialogue partner' in most environmental policy legislations with governments and intergovernmental and International organisations.

### Friends of the Earth

FOE aims to increase public participation and democratic decision making. The member groups are united by a common conviction that these aims require both strong grassroots activism and effective national and international campaigning and coordination.<sup>6</sup> When David Brower following his disenchantment with the Sierra Club founded the Friends of the Earth, he aimed at increasing the scope of the activities and to work internationally. Its genesis was in the antinuclear movement and it advanced to the forefront to oppose nuclear power on the global level. Its initial contribution to environmental activism was to address a

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6. FOE, 25 years of the planet for people (Amsterdam: A Friends of the Earth, 1996).

number of issues on which other organisations had yet to focus. FOE began the first serious study of alternative energy policies, pushing for a soft energy path relying on non-nuclear renewables. It was the first group to work against acid rain and it was one of the first to define the threat of nuclear war as an environmental issue.

FOE has focused on issues like nuclear energy, multilateral debt, rainforests and indigenous people, air pollution, river waters, sustainable development and ozone depletion. FOE believes in a planned campaign.<sup>7</sup> According to Richard Sandbrook, former Director of FOE UK, "The key strategy was visibility with radicalism at the lowest cost." It does not believe in the conservationist approach of pleading for protection laws and finding western funds to maintain protected areas, which would in effect lead to ignoring social consequences.<sup>8</sup> FOE concentrates its energies on the local population and sees them as important for its scope and responsibility.

FOE groups have campaigned against nuclear energy by pushing for referenda on nuclear power. FOE Austria was active in a referendum that rejected the opening of the already completed Zwentendorf power plant. FOE Sweden and FOE Italy were active in national referenda resulting in Moratoria on the development of further nuclear capacity, and FOE Netherlands and FOE Poland played major roles in

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7. Paul Wapner, "Environmental Activism and Global Civil Society", Dissent, Summer 1994, p.391.

8. Ann Doherty, "Mobilising Ourselves for the Environment", Link, July/August 1996, Issue 73.

catalysing national energy debates which led to Moratoria on nuclear energy. FOE activists commemorate annual Chernobyl anniversaries with processions, silent vigils, 'die-ins' balloon releases and international bike tours. The resistance of FOE groups in many countries to the Mochovce nuclear power plant in Slovakia forced the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to withdraw its funding.

FOE has exerted pressure on international financial institutions to weigh the environmental implications of their activities. FOE groups around the world collaborated with Amazonian forest peoples in a series of actions which ultimately forced the World Bank to cancel its proposed US \$500 million loan for a series of dams on the Xingu River. Twenty FOE groups and affiliates joined hundreds of other NGOs in signing a letter (which appeared in The Financial Times, The Washington Post and The New York Times) to the World Bank President calling for the cancellation of funding for the Sardar Sarovar Project in India. Similar protest was organised to influence the World Bank to cancel funding for the Arun III dam in Nepal.

In the preservation of forests and upholding the rights of indigenous people, FOE Malaysia has collaborated with Penan tribes in Sarawak to preserve their homelands including participating in a series of non-violent blockades in an attempt to hinder logging activities. Radio Amazonia, is the largest nongovernmental communications network in Latin America has been started by FOE Italy to install 93 radio stations in remote communities of the Amazon. In addition to providing forest inhabitants unprecedented opportunities to access local markets with their sustainable

forest products, the radios also help the Council of Rubber Tappers and various indigenous associations to prevent invasions by illegal loggers and settlers.

In 1993, Chico Mendes' successor as president of the Brazilian Council of Rubber Tappers demonstrated 'empate' (meaning deadlock, a form of peaceful protest) thousands of kilometres from home. Atanagildo de Deus Matos and other rubber tappers, members of FOE affiliate Grupo de Trabalho Amazonico, offered empate training to British citizens defending Oxleas Woods, a site of Special Scientific Interest earmarked for a new road.<sup>9</sup>

FOE investigated into the damages in order to implicate guilty European companies (who were recipients of aid and credit from multilateral and bilateral agencies) by generating negative publicity. FOE Indonesia launched an unprecedented court challenge against President Suharto in 1994 and charged him of diverting funds allegedly intended for rain-forest rehabilitation to the state-owned aircraft industry.

FOE groups have been lobbying for the ratification of the Montreal Protocol worldwide. They have also continued to lobby for deeper, faster cuts and the ban of specific ozone depleting substances such as methyl bromide. FOE has taken part in actions such as parading in penguin costumes, offering environment ministers of Norway, Spain and Netherlands ozone friendly, CFC-free special suits, creams, sunglasses and banners. They have used aforementioned symbols to plan the action against ozone depletion.

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9. FOE, n.6,

FOE has prepared a set of environmental recommendations for the United Nations, the G-7, the European Commission and other governmental bodies following the aftermath of the Gulf War and the oil spills. It has also been tracking and exposing the illegal dumping of European toxic waste in Nigeria and has released a survey on toxic releases from European and US chemical industries.

The Sustainable Europe Campaign unites 27 national FOE groups, three other NGOs and the German Wuppertal Institute in an unprecedented effort to identify strategies towards sustainability which take global equity into account. Dialogues with various sectors and national debates have been launched in 30 countries, and the European Union has shown its appreciation for the initiative by providing substantial financial support over a three year period. The Danish government has adopted the concept of 'environmental space'.<sup>10</sup>

FOE has focused on corporate accountability and has campaigned against Shell for many years, by demonstrating at Shell stations on international action days. When Nigerian environmentalist and human rights activist Nnimmo Bassey was arrested in June 1996 as he was leaving the country to attend a West African FOE meeting in Ghana, many feared that he would meet the same fate as Ken Saro Wiwa (who led the fight against Shell's operations in Ogoniland). FOE groups coordinated an urgent campaign which was influential in setting Nnimmo Bassey free after several weeks in prison.

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10. "Sustainable Societies Programme", Pamphlet issued by FOE Netherlands.



## Greenpeace

Greenpeace chiefly wages its campaign in world civic politics through "direct actions". These include positioning activists between harpooners and whales, plugging up industrial discharge pipes, parachuting from smoke stacks and floating a hot air balloon into a nuclear test site. None of these activities involves lobbying a government *per se* or calling for a particular policy change on the part of specific countries. Instead, the aim is to instill a sense of outrage among the largest audience possible. Greenpeace's direct actions are based on the notion of "bearing witness". This type of political action, originating with the Quakers, links moral sensitivities with political responsibility. Having observed a morally objectionable act, one cannot turn away in avoidance of injustice or standby and attest to its occurrence.<sup>11</sup>

When Greenpeace confronts whalers on the high seas or blocks railway cars carrying toxic substances or plugs up discharge pipes, it bears witness in the most public way possible to ecological injustice. The idea is to invite the public to bear witness as well, to enable people throughout the world to become informed about ecological dangers, to pique their sense of outrage and to spur them to action.

"Greenpeace's actions rarely come with messages to call your Congressperson or pressure local government officials. In fact, in many of the countries in which Greenpeace operates, such political expression is not an option. Rather,

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11. Michael Brown and John May, The Greenpeace Story (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1989).

Greenpeace is attempting to inculcate and disseminate a sensitivity to environmental affairs and inspire people to take action in the service of environmental protection."<sup>12</sup> Greenpeace has received wide media attention owing to its antinuclear protest, from Amchitka to the Rainbow Warrior in Mururoa.

Greenpeace investigates environmental abuse, confronting corporations and governments with evidence and demanding change. In 1992 Greenpeace commissioned a domestic fridge to replace the traditional design which damages the ozone layer. 'Greenfreeze' uses ozone and climate friendly technology and is now being widely produced in Europe. In China - the second largest supplier of domestic fridges in the world - two of the largest refrigeration manufacturing sites have been converted to 'greenfreeze' technology. Greenpeace has protested against largescale driftnetting and antiwhaling operations. It has acted against the killing of baby seals for commercial gain, and has alerted government to the alarming rise in children's asthma caused by Car exhaust emissions.

In 1987, Greenpeace became the first and only nongovernmental organisation to establish a base on Antarctica dedicated to preserving the environment and had made the concept of a 'world park' acceptable to many states. It also has helped establish a whale sanctuary in the Southern Ocean, protecting the great whales from commercial whaling all around Antartica.

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12. Paul Wapner, "Environmental Activism and Global Civil Society", Dissent, Summer 1994, pp.390-391.

Greenpeace's recent actions in Russia and Eastern Europe needed to develop new strategies, ones that were not based on the existing style of direct action campaigning, as this made little sense in a society with no tradition of peaceful civil protest. Greenpeace took to providing information for public and government officials and to offer positive solutions to specific environmental problems in the region. It also launched the East-West Educational Project involving children aged between 10 and 14 years. The project was an action oriented Teacher/Student Guide designed to nurture an environment ethic. Children were involved in identifying a local environmental problem and protesting against the perpetrators of environmental crimes. Therefore, Greenpeace's actions were placed on the need for constructive projects, arguing for change in a positive way. The action plans in Eastern Europe involve an energy efficient house in Czechoslovakia, promoting ecological alternatives to chemical intensive agriculture in Poland and also plans to establish an East-West Information Exchange Centre.

"Greenpeace is an independent, campaigning organisation which uses nonviolent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and to force solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future."<sup>13</sup> Greenpeace seeks to protect biodiversity, prevent pollution of Earth's ocean, land's air and fresh water, end all nuclear threats and promote peace, global disarmament and violence. Though at the outset Greenpeace's agenda was essentially directed towards nuclear matters, it has expanded its scope gradually by including ocean ecology, toxic trade (especially the

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13. Greenpeace 1994, Annual Report.

chloride industry), protection of rainforests and work on energy conservation and the atmosphere in its roster of concerns.<sup>14</sup>

It follows from the information on the activities of these organisations that there are two basic approaches to environmental activism.<sup>15</sup> The conventional ecology approach, adopted by WWF, involves the intransigent preservation of the national environment as well as urban and architectural masterpieces. This strategy of action relies on fostering the growth of environmental consciousness among public authorities as well as in the larger public opinion, and calling on citizens to make their contribution to nature preservation through some kind of voluntary work (such as taking part in summer camps to keep natural resorts clean). The political ecology approach, followed by Greenpeace and Friends of Earth, associates commitment to the preservation of nature with commitment to wider social change, the latter being treated as an essential precondition for the former. Generally speaking, this action strategy approach shows a greater interest in direct participation in the political arena and is more likely to adopt unconventional techniques of action than the conventional ecology action strategy approach.

The political ecology groups eschew the corrupting

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14. Anirudh Bhattacharya, "Greenpeace: The Triumph of Environmental Activism", The Pioneer (New Delhi), 28 May 1995.
  15. Mario Diani, "The Network Structure of the Italian Ecology Movement", Social Science Information, Vol.29, No.1, 1990, pp.5-31.

influence of the state, corporate or foreign assistance. This is specially true of Greenpeace which is an independent organisation with no affiliations to any government, organisation or political party. Friends of the Earth is more pragmatic, and courts a diversity of benefactors including state and international donors. It is more inclined to cooperate with government than to oppose it. It is a campaigning organisation which believes in symbolic means of protest and helps strengthen civil societies. FOE has had an ambiguous position in the kinds of issues handled and campaigns undertaken. Most often, the organisation does not have a set action strategy, which leads to ambiguous positions on environmental issues.<sup>16</sup> WWF is a mainstream conservationist organisation with its objectives of preserving biological diversity, environmental research and education, environmental advocacy and diffusion of sustainable technology.

It is important at this stage to trace the significance of the political action *per se* of these organisations and to interpret its meaning independent of the relative causal weight of each action. Greenpeace believes in direct action, which involves nonviolent protest and 'bearing witness' of an environmental crime.

The concept of direct action<sup>17</sup> may be understood very broadly to denote all forms of active nonviolent struggle

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16. Richard Sandbrook, "Guitars, Homebrew and Anarchy: Romanticising FOE's early days", Link, July/August, 25th Anniversary issue 1996, Issue 73.
  17. April Carter, Direct Action and Liberal Democracy (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

for rights or for justice through means which involve assertiveness, open confrontation of oppression or exploitation and risk to those undertaking the action. Direct action is based on two strategies. The first is simply to bring what are often hidden instances of environmental abuse to the attention of a wide audience. Through television, radio, newspaper, and magazines transnational activist groups bring these hidden spots of the globe into people's everyday lives, thus enabling vast numbers of people to "bear witness" to environmental abuse.<sup>18</sup> Second, the organisation engages in dangerous and dramatic actions that underline how serious they consider certain environmental threats to be. People appreciate such acts because those doing it are risking arrest, injury and even death - and all for a cause that transcends narrow self-interest. This perhaps explains why images of *Rainbow Warrior* are always associated with Greenpeace. The overall interest is to use international mass communication to expose and anti-ecological practices and thereby inspire audiences to change their views and behaviour vis-a-vis the environment.<sup>19</sup>

Greenpeace has access to media facilities and has its own resources to provide photographs and videos within hours. FOE, on the other hand, does not take on the dramatic aspect of direct action and finds itself short of media attention. FOE suffered loss of human lives in Costa Rica in 1995 while indulging in direct action.

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18. Robert Hunter, Warriors of the Rainbow: A Chronicle of the Greenpeace Movement (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979).

19. Rik Scarce, Eco Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement (Chicago: Noble Press, 1990).

These two strategies aim to change the way vast numbers of people see the world by dislodging traditional understandings of environmental degradation and substituting new interpretative frames. These strategies involve convincing all actors from governments to corporations, private organisations and ordinary citizens to make decisions and act in deference to environmental awareness.

Direct action has had the maximum impact in terms of access to people, creating a sense of outrage and in gaining media coverage. It acquires popular support apart from symbolically altering images and visions related to environment and protest. In protest politics, it stands out as one of the most successful action strategies. Greenpeace's strength of image lies in its deep commitment to Direct Action strategies.

FOE and Greenpeace have targetted multinational corporations through protest, research, exposes, orchestrating public outcry and organizing joint consultations, and have forced corporations to bring their practices in line with environmental concerns. The levers of power in these instances were found in the economic realm of collective life rather than in the strictly governmental realm. It is essential to look at action strategies which see the economic realm as furnishing channels for effective widespread changes in behaviour. They force to some degree a sense of corporate accountability by establishing mechanisms of

governance to shape corporate behaviour.<sup>20</sup>

TENGOS like WWF and FOE have a crucial role to play in empowering local communities. In these kinds of efforts, they are not only trying to galvanize public pressure aimed at changing governmental policy or directly lobbying state officials. Rather, they work with ordinary people in diverse regions of the world to try to enhance local capability to carry out sustainable development projects. The guiding logic is that local people must be enlisted in protecting their own environments and that their circles of social interaction to affect broader aspects of international environmental politics.<sup>21</sup> Independent of the content of specific projects, they have facilitated the organization of people into new forms of social interaction and associational life. The hands-on eco-development projects stimulate the release of popular energies in support of community goals."<sup>22</sup>

TENGOS also promote communication and muster support or opposition for environmental policies. On a given issues, a TENGO can reach concerned constituencies that many governments may be hardpressed to reach through their usual press outlets. FOE's role in campaigning against the key World Bank vote on an Amazon development project reveals the

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20. Paul Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and Global Civic Politics", World Politics, 47, April 1985, pp.311-340.

21. Vandana Shiva, "North-South Conflicts in Global Ecology", Third World Network Features, 11 December 1991.

22. Michael Bretton, "The Politics of Government - NGO Relations in Africa", World Development, Vol.17, no.4, 1989, p.574.



strength and reach of concerned constituencies to rally support for state policies. TENGOS also provide scientific and earth-centred knowledge via their own research and their ties with the scientific and land-based, often indigenous or agricultural communities. Because governments and international organizations tend not to acquire such information routinely, and because their responses to environmental problems are often reactive and crisis driven, the ready availability of such information is valuable to governments and international organizations when they do act.<sup>23</sup>

WWF wields enough economic clout to change the behaviour of government or other NGOs. In early 1990s, WWF contributed \$62.5 million to more than 2,000 projects worldwide.<sup>24</sup> Few developing countries, agencies or grassroots organizations can ignore such sums of money. The clout this brings to NGOs vis-a-vis both aid recipients and agencies can be significant.

TENGOS are also associated with biophysical and social change through institutional transformation and social learning. Institutional transformation refers to the changes in organisations and regimes in response to environmental decline. TENGOS are increasingly turning into prominent forces in framing environmental issues. They help establish a common language and sometimes common worldviews. Indeed, the history of international environmental politics shows that new ideas have not come from governments or even

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23. Peter M. Haas, ed., "Knowledge, Power and International Policy Coordination", (special edition), International Organisation, Vol.46, no.1, Winter 1992.

24. WWF, Annual Report, 1991.

designated international organisations, but from environmental lobbies and activist groups. It was IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) that carried the term 'sustainable development' in its 1980 World Conservation strategy which eventually became the conceptual basis of the Brundtland Report and the entire UNCED process.<sup>25</sup> It was Greenpeace and the Sierra Club that introduced the concepts of zero discharge and pollution prevention in the Great Lakes area in the US. It was Greenpeace in the case of Antarctica that was instrumental in making the idea of a World Park acceptable.

Therefore, TENGOS contribute to societal transformation by setting examples and substituting for governmental action. Institutional transformation and social learning help account for the dynamic dimensions of NGO interactions. By supplementing, replacing, bypassing, and sometimes even substituting, for traditional politics, TENGOS are increasingly picking up where governmental action stops or has yet to begin. TENGOS do not merely lobby and persuade and provide information. Rather, they act as agents of social learning by linking the biophysical conditions with political concerns while simultaneously acting locally and globally.<sup>26</sup>

Action strategies, therefore, acquire significance in understanding the politics of protest and the means of

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25. International Union for the Conservation of Nature, The World Conservation Strategy (Gland: IUCN, 1980).

26. Thomas Princen and Mathias Finger, International Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and Global (London: Routledge, 1994), p.228.

disseminating an ecological sensibility. Action strategies form the realms of collective action and it is essential to explore the political potential of a strategic decision.

It is implicit from the study of these TENGOS that action strategies are a function of their relative autonomy and organisational structure. An organisation is bound by its ideology, funding sources, history of action and its internal structure in making strategic decisions. These causative factors will also influence the relations between TENGOS and the possibilities for coordination in international politics.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Issue and Action Networks**

So far in this dissertation, TENGOs have been visualised as important actors articulating global environmental change and transforming the traditional environmental politics. It is important to note that TENGOs are a part of a larger environmental movement and owe their origin to the environmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s. They represent collective concerns that span state borders and socioeconomic differences. Their strength lies in their transnationalism, legitimacy and bargaining assets. They are an intrinsic part of the non-governmental sector which is associated with promoting values of self-reliance, social justice and countervailing power. Here, it is essential to understand that an individual TENGO cannot by itself champion such values. At best, states can provide a conducive political, social and economic environment in which action takes place through a mixture of private and public endeavours. Where freedom of association, participation and empowerment are valued, it is civil society that creates the necessary normative framework.<sup>1</sup> It is within the Global Civil Society that we locate the need for collective, coordinated policy-oriented action by the TENGOs as a whole. This is precisely the unique role that a strong international association, council or collaborative network of TENGOs can play.

There is very little data available on the complex set

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1. Jon Bennet, ed., Meeting Needs: NGO Coordination in Practice (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1995).

of ties linking the different organisations devoted primarily to environmental issues. Similarly, it is difficult to assess the relative impact of personal networks, ideological proximity and instrumental opportunities on the shape of the overall interorganizational network. However, given the understanding of the three TENGOS it is possible to draw conclusions from the notions of ideological proximity and instrumental opportunities. TENGOS are more likely to exchange information and coordinate action when they can mobilize greater resources with minimum additional effort or when they share similar issue orientations.<sup>2</sup>

Transnationalism is the preeminent vehicle for building global environmental consensus. An environmental consensus requires research, coordinated collective action and information. To facilitate this consensus, a centralised entity, such as an international network of TENGOS could function as a clearing house and focal point for environmental issues. Operating outside the confines of national sovereignty, an independent, transnational, function-based TENGOS network could be a palatable alternative to more radical change and would allow for more immediate action on behalf of the environment. The narrow and intense focus of the network would act as a catalyst for the proper functioning of the existing system.<sup>3</sup>

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2. Mario Diani, "The Network Structure of the Italian Ecology Movement", Social Science Information, Vol.29, No.1, 1990, pp.5-31.

3. Maria Crainer, "Transnational Alignment of Non-governmental Actions for Global Environmental Action", Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law, Vol.23, p.1017.

Friends of the Earth is a network of independent, free thinking and varied sister groups from different cultures, each sharing a common name and purpose. In 1989 FOE and thirteen other environmental organisations formed the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economics (CERES). CERES produced a ten-point environmental code of conduct for corporations. The aim was to establish criteria for auditing the environmental performance of large domestic and multinational industries. The code called on companies, among other things, to minimize the release of pollutants, conserve non-renewable resources through efficient use and planning, utilise environmentally safe and sustainable energy sources and consider demonstrated environmental commitment as a factor in appointing members to the board of directors. These commitments have become known as the Valdez Principles, inspired by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.<sup>4</sup>

What is significant from an international perspective is that the signatories include at least one Fortune 500 company and a number of multinational corporations. The CERES principles are valuable for a number of reasons. In the case of pension funds, the code is being used to build shareholder pressure on companies to improve their environmental performance. Investors can use it as a guide to determine which companies practice socially responsible investment. Environmentalists use the code as a measuring device to praise or criticise corporate behaviour.

Taken together these measures force some degree of

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4. Paul Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics", World Politics, Vol.47, April 1995.

corporate accountability by establishing mechanisms of governance to shape corporate behaviour. They have not turned business into champions of environmentalism nor are they as effectual as mechanisms available to governments. What is at work here is activist discovery and the manipulation of economic means of power.<sup>5</sup>

Another global initiative of the 1980s was the founding of the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) in 1982 by FOE groups in Malaysia, Brazil and the United States. Today, PAN links over 300 organisations in some 50 countries which oppose the misuse of pesticides, genetic engineering and support sustainable agricultural methods.

Other coalitions of FOE with other environmental NGOs include the pan-European campaign for the taxation of air traffic, the 'sustainable Europe campaign' uniting 27 national FOE groups, three other NGOs and the German Wuppertal Institute and the International Rivers Network, an affiliate of FOE playing a coordinating role in a series of infrastructure projects.<sup>6</sup>

International treaties play an important part in safeguarding the environment. WWF works towards implementing or improving existing treaties, introducing new ones and developing national legislation to enforce international agreements.<sup>7</sup> WWF has been a part of the Convention on the

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5. Jack Doyle, "Hold the Applause: A Case Study of Corporate Environmentalism", Ecologist 22, May-June 1992.

6. Friends of the Earth, 25 Years for the Planet for People (Amsterdam: A Friend of the Earth, 1996).

7. World Wide Fund for Nature, Annual Report 1995.

International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which currently regulates the international commerce of some 34,000 animals and plants. WWF works in close association with the TRAFFIC (Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce) Network, which plays a key role in monitoring the trade in endangered species and identifying illegal activities. WWF's financial support for the CITES secretariat is conditional upon 50 per cent of the monies coming from government sources. WWF lobbies for more effective implementation of the CITES agreement by fundraising and utilises the TRAFFIC network to gather first hand data on trade in endangered species. CITES is a trade regulation regime and is often cited as an exemplary international regime.

One hundred plus countries of disparate interests manage to agree to regulate their trade in wildlife. National behaviour, including management practices and customs procedures is coordinated through the functions of the secretariat, the standing committee and the biennial meetings. The CITES regime is very much a product of non-governmental forces and strictly acts as a prohibition regime. Whereas, international regimes are typically convened as a product of interstate or intergovernmental relations, this biodiversity regime suggests that it is necessary to conceptualise a regime in terms of multiple actors and multiple activities.<sup>8</sup>

Non-state Actor participation in Antarctic policy

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8. Thomas Princen and Mathias Finger, International Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and Global (London: Routledge, 1994).



making began when the Antarctic Treaty was negotiated in late 1950s. TENGOS have continued to focus attention on the norms of peaceful use and the protection of the region embodied in the Antarctic Treaty. Greenpeace, the Antarctic and Southern Ocean coalition and the IUCN have been the most visibly active.

The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) was formed in 1977 and has some 200 TENGOS members like Environmental Defence Fund, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, American Cetacean society, Canadian Nature Federation and others. The coalition has enabled a variety of NGOs to both participate in and become knowledgeable of Antarctic issues.<sup>9</sup> Some groups that are part of the ASOC also act independently on Antarctic topics.

Greenpeace is one such example. It has invested the greatest amount of resources in Antarctica, both financially and in human terms. Greenpeace has held public demonstrations to keep the issue alive and has used its field station to provide research, information and alternative resource use methods to build its Antarctic base. Greenpeace is the only TENGO to have acquired a independent status to operate in the world park and monitor the activities of participating states.

The existence of a single coalition organisation like ASOC however prevents likeminded individual groups from working against one another. ASOC has had observer status at the special consultative meetings and has earned a repu-

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9. P. Beck, The International Politics of Antarctica (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p.314.

tation for collecting accurate information and for enthusiastically pressing for environmental protection of the region. ASOC is also responsible along with the Antarctica project, Greenpeace, WWF and the Cousteau Foundation, for the Antarctic edition of ECO, an 'occasional newsletter' published by Friends of the Earth.

The purpose of ECO is to "provide ideas and alternative proposals for benefits of delegates to intergovernmental meetings and to clarify issues for the media."<sup>10</sup> ASOC also disseminates information through the "Antarctica Project" an international citizens network with a quarterly newsletter.

TENGOs in this case clearly expanded their activities beyond the traditional activist roles of public demonstrations and public education. They served as key agents of change, defining and disseminating ecological concepts. They did not create all the conditions for regime change, but they did provide a key conceptual ingredient, one consistent with existing institutional norms. Their ability to promote such a concept depended largely on their legitimacy, based not on protest and constituent pressure, but on their active and credible participation in the regime itself.

The TENGOs have shown an increasingly common "shift from the strictly (or self-avowedly) scientific to the scientific and political."<sup>11</sup> The TENGOs not only conducted research and disseminated their findings, they went that one political step further by monitoring and exposing member

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10. ECO 80(2), 22-30 April 1991, Madrid.

11. Princen and Finger, n.8.

states for violations of the rules the member states themselves devised. The scientific NGO will play an important role in Antarctica, but to the extent that issues arise within political dimensions, the niche carried out by the TENGOS will be critical.<sup>12</sup>

The nature and kind of participating TENGOS in ASOC is highly diverse and as a result, the potential of conflict within the community is great. The Antarctica collaboration suggests, however, that differences can be overcome. The TENGOS here are working to preserve a common property resource and have proved their enhanced ability to resolve conflicts. This high degree of cooperation among them is related to the nature of the issue. In a region that has no indigenous human population or a population that is politically weak and under-represented, TENGOS will be critical to expand the interests represented from the merely economic and scientific to the full range of environmental issues including biophysical, cultural and political. "When the mission is straightforward, the promotion of environmental protection, whether in a mineral convention or in an environmental protocol and little home turf is at stake these differences can be overcome. Under other conditions where, for example, the livelihood or moral sensibilities of constituents are at stake, such cooperation may not be so forthcoming."<sup>13</sup>

The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) heavily involved TENGOS in providing the input,

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12. *ibid.*, p.181.

13. *ibid.*

exercising substantial influence as they drafted the documents that were to be negotiated in the Prep Com (Preparatory Committee) meetings. UNCED forced TENGOS to mobilise their constituencies and organise themselves in order to have a chance to make an input into the process. The creation of NGO coalitions to mobilise or facilitate access to UNCED was indeed the most striking phenomenon in the environmental NGO community. In its scope and nature, this coalition building was unprecedented. Two major efforts at the UNCED was the creation of International Facilitating Committee (IFC) and the Environmental Liaison Committee International (ELCI).

IFC was a coalition or a patchment of various independent sectors, represented by particular organisations such as IUCN, European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the Asian NGO coalition and a few others. Consequently, it was very difficult for the IFC to agree on anything substantive except the call for sustainable development and the active participation of independent sectors in the UNCED process. The second effort, the ELCI, was a reaction from some NGOs against the IFC's efforts to build a parallel social movement or a citizen's summit.

The International Steering Committee set up to guide the ELCI's work decided that it would sponsor national and regional consultations on environment and development. This Committee was cochaired by FOE and the Brazilian NGO forum. Its main focus was to identify local solutions to global problems that can contribute in particular to change in lifestyles and consumption patterns. The ideological orientation of this effort was radical compared to the IFC. The

focus was on a grassroots and people-oriented initiative, much of which would be in opposition to governments. The approach was therefore also much more confrontational.

The most telling presence of TENGOS in world politics is in their increasing presence in international conferences. From Stockholm Conference, 1972 to the 1992 Rio Conference, there has been a pattern of parallel NGO conferences. TENGOS also aim their activities at shaping international laws and institutions, apart from pushing the environment on the international development agenda (especially in framing policies of aid giving institutions).

The contact of TENGOS with the wider structures they seek to influence is often too limited to effect any real change. Although lobbying networks do exist (organised around debt and environmental issues), they are yet to make a concerted effort to work together on a common agenda. TENGOS need to organise themselves as stable players, working as partners of the environment and the development establishment.

TENGOS will be more effective if they develop common interests and personal relationships with the range of individuals the TENGOS are attempting to influence. Common interests can be nurtured and promoted to encourage the development of an international regime of environmental problem solving. The network is like an institution implying a stable pattern of behaviour recognised and valued by society. Networks in an institutional preserve can exert themselves through rules, norms and values that influence

people's lives.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to note that most of the coordination is dependent on the scale of needs, ideological orientations and the underlying policies of donor states. A single issue focus gives strength and credibility to the network. Most of the cases cited in this chapter have been coalitions and actions focussing on a single issue.

However, most TENGOS focus on diffuse environmental issues and package their work broadly to address the multifaceted issues and to retain popular commitment and credibility (there are instances of donor pressure to alter issue focus as well). By broadening their issue focus, TENGOS broaden the definition of a 'stake holder'. The range of people with reasons to participate in decision making is enormous and strengthens the argument for governments listening to a wider range of public voices than those typically involved in resource issues.

In this study it is implicitly understood that the FOE works as an international networking organisation, much of its character emerging from the federating and autonomous nature of the organisation. FOE has had networks on numerous issues with other TENGOS and opens its membership to organisations with similar ideological leanings. WWF, in its capacity of a funding agency, helps create networks and has also formed part of many coalition-building exercises. This is in part a result of the new image of the organisation focusing on "capacity building", "resource strengthening" and "sustainable development". WWF has networks with

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14. Jon Bennet, n.1.

other conservation organisations, owing to its commitment to issues like endangered species and forest conservation.

Greenpeace on the other hand has few allegiances with other groups. However, it has been instrumental in combining efforts to influence the International Whaling Commission, London Dumping Convention and the Anctartic World Park concept. Greenpeace of late has been forging alliances with local groups and indigenous groups to strengthen its 'grass-roots' image. From the above, we understand that the impact and success in the realm of environmental activism cannot be understood merely in terms of protest politics or social learning. An NGO needs to focus on institutional reform and coalition building to effect policy coordination. Thus, while TENGOS have acquired an institutional niche of their own, their continued strength and influence will largely depend on their capacity to build networks and draw on their mobilising potential. Single issue networks are bound to be the norm in the future. It is imperative that TENGOS coordinate their efforts to strengthen the global environmental movement.

## **Conclusion**

This study has attempted to establish the increasing importance of TENGOS as significant actors in global environmental governance and policy making. So far, this enquiry has attempted to address three questions:

1. The character of TENGOS as non-state actors.
2. The likely potential of TENGOS to mobilize collectively, and also their commitment to social movement.
3. The possibility of coordination efforts to create action networks and coalitions.

TENGOS have been compared using the characteristics like relative autonomy and organisational structure to assess their character as non-state actors and collective action strategies and issue and action networks to enquire into their mobilisation potential, commitment to the social movement and the possibility of networks and coalitions.

### **TENGOS as non-State Actors**

TENGOS can be characterised as non-state actors as long as they possess relative autonomy and financial independence from governments and corporations. It is also essential to analyse the nature of the internal organisation and the transparency of the TENGO in its operations.

Greenpeace's role as an independent campaigning organisation with no political affiliations accords it the functional and financial independence in relation with states. This study of the internal dynamics of the organisation reveals that despite being an independent organisation,



Greenpeace does not grant autonomy to its constituents and is characterised by a hierarchical and highly centralised structure. FOE acquires an ambiguous position as it shuns confrontation on the barricades for the benefit of a more sustainable society and partners governments in policy development and implementation. FOE's funding sources include a few European countries and aid giving institutions. Despite being a campaigning organisation, it does not fulfil the role of autonomy from the state structures. Its internal structure, however, is a loosely structured federation and grants greater autonomy to its constituents.

WWF, on the other hand, has been coopted into the traditional political structures with its role as a fundraiser and dialogue partner of governments. WWF, in its internal structure, operates as a networking organisation granting functional (but not financial) autonomy.

This study reveals that TENGOS try to acquire the character of non-state actors. This is so, because they often collapse the borders between the state and non-state realms of political action and in the process resemble states themselves. This is especially true of FOE and WWF. However, the compulsions from resource scarcity and donor will force them to adopt policies akin to donor's policy views. Transparency in the operations of the organisation is amiss in all the three TENGOS despite they being an 'estate of the realm' and hence, open to public scrutiny. From this analysis, it emerges that Greenpeace maintains its independence, despite lack of internal democracy, that FOE holds an ambiguous stance and WWF often resembles an international organisation working with governments.

### TENGOS as Collective Mobilisers

TENGOS owe their origin to the new social movements of the 1970s. They are the agents who collectively mobilise for sociopolitical transformation. TENGOS adopt various collective action strategies. Each strategy whether lobbying, conservation, education, protest, direct action or sustainable resource use is of significance to the organisation and its mobilisation potential. Action strategies are conditioned by the leadership, resources, voluntarism, ideological orientations and issue focus of each organisation.

TENGOS have become increasingly professionalised and well planned campaigns form the basis of strategy. This diminishes the role of the volunteer in the organisation. Action strategies are significant features of any organisation, either conservationist or activist. WWF, a conservation organisation for instance, relies on fostering the growth of environmental consciousness through education and capacity building measures. The political ecology groups like Greenpeace and FOE indulge in protest politics and direct action involving confrontation and risk WWF's stance has largely to do with the issue of conservation and its role in raising funds for campaigns. FOE undertakes strategies like public protest, symbolic resistance and direct action but avowedly stays away from confrontation. Greenpeace's main strategy has been direct action encumbering risk to life and injury. Resource compulsions and donor will prevent any confrontation or radical strategy in organisations seeking financial assistance.

TENGO's strategising their range of activities into conservation, campaign or direct action emphasises their role in collectively organising and mobilising people to pursue an environmental cause. Most action strategies involves the public and the organisational members and this in effect, increases the collective mobilisation potential of the TENGO. Therefore the nature of action strategies does not hamper mobilisation, but extraneous factors like funding and leadership can alter the character of mobilisation.

#### TENGOs as Network Organisations

TENGOs seek to form coalitions and coordinate action through regimes, coalitions and associations. They build the civil, associational life of the society to strengthen the TENGO community and collective response. TENGOs collaborate and coordinate action strategies, resources, leadership to form networks and coalitions. The momentum to the environmental movement is acquired through the mobilisation potential and the collectivised efforts of TENGOs.

TENGOs are more likely to exchange information and coordinate action when they can mobilise greater resources with minimum additional effect or when they share similar issue orientation. Single issue action networks are more feasible for they are based on the immediacy of the issue and do not compromise the other features like ideological orientations, leadership, and sharing of resources among organisations. Each organisation's inclination to form networks flows out of their internal structures. For instance, FOE forms the most number of networks for it is a

loosely coordinated network, itself. WWF forms networks with its associational organisations focusing on similar issues. Greenpeace has forged alliances with organisations wherever it lacked institutional presence. Action networks and coalitions strengthen the issue focus and help building governing structures. The strength of the voluntary sector in international environmental politics lies in the coalition forces emerging among TENGOS.

This comparative study of the three TENGOS accords the relative causal weight to the subjective agency in international environmental politics. This enquiry has in part, tried to question the defining characteristics, efficiency and efficacy of the operations and processes in the TENGOS. Each TENGO has acquired an institutional niche of its own and cannot be seen as a homogeneous entity as part of a larger TENGO community. TENGOS are the political forces constantly redefining themselves to retain characteristics of non-state actors. This line of enquiry will remain and continue to have significance as long as the TENGOS exist.

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