



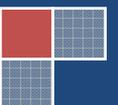
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**“Think Global - Act Local”:
A Descriptive Analysis of Environmental
Protest Organization - The Case of Greenpeace
Israel**

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a field-work based description of an Israeli environmental organization- Greenpeace Israel, focusing on its social structure and political-culture function. Being one of the leading brand-names in the 20th century history of environmentalism, Greenpeace has a dual identity since it has a major affect inside the Israeli environmental movement as well. This research presents a three levels observation: the individual, the organization and the state. The three findings from the interviews of the activists, the leaders of the organization and the decision makers in the political arena are analyzed according to leading theories from the social movements in general and environmental activism in particular. The Findings indicate that Greenpeace main arena is the media, and its strategy is based on non-violent direct action (NVDA) tactics. In addition to that, and in the cultural aspect, Greenpeace functions as a local revitalization group, by posting major issues on the environmental-political agenda of the Israeli society.

KEYWORDS

EMO's, Environmentalism, GreenPeace, Israeli environmentalism, non-violent-direct-action, NGO's, revitalization group, sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Public activity concerning environmental issues is assuming an increasingly prominent position on Israel's political agenda. Contributing factors include accelerated development over the last two decades, on the one hand, and heightened public awareness of the issues, on the other hand. This trend is manifested in the existence of approximately 100 environmental organizations operating in Israel today at the local, national, regional and international level, the majority of which were established during the final decade of the twentieth century (Karasin, 2001, Tal, 2011). These non-governmental organizations (NGOs) mobilize forms of local and international protest spearheaded by a demand for social and environmental justice. The blooming of these organizations in Israel is a relatively late manifestation of the global trend, which led to the rise of new social movements at the end of the 1960s. Among these movements, the environmental movement is considered the one that has most successfully infused its values and principles into political systems and local and global public discourse (Rootes, 1999). Illustratively, these organizations are almost never defined in the literature anymore as NGOs, but rather are termed specifically EMOs – environmental movement organizations (Rootes, 1999).

Approximately 100 environmental organizations are operating in Israel today at the local, national, regional, and international level.

Academic research examining social movements in a political and social context has focused for the most part on questions concerning the background to their emergence, the ideology motivating them and the interests in name of which they operate. As such, the primary issues dealt with by the research to date on environmental protest movements are similar to those associated with social protest studies in general (Hasson, 1993), and can actually be viewed as stages in the evolution of protest, as follows:

- a. The background and conditions for the emergence of the protest movement: what is the context in which the movement operates, in its political, social and individual dimensions?
- b. Organization and foundation: how are problems and conflicts in general society "translated" into the establishment of the organization?

- c. Pattern of protest: how are a worldview and ideology crystallized, and how do they shape the organization's methods of operation?
- d. Outcomes of activities: what are the results of protest and what is the scope of their influence?

The current article provides an in-depth ethnographic account of a specific environmental organization, with the intention of analyzing from a cultural perspective its structural and operational dimensions. Exposing the cultural "deep structure" of an individual organization can help us to see what normally remains implicit, and perhaps also to see the object of study as a representation of part of the general phenomenon of environmental protest in Israel.

The choice of Greenpeace Israel was made for several reasons. Firstly, Greenpeace is the largest environmental organization in the world (in terms of number of supporters and activists), and has brought about worldwide cultural change in all that applies to environmental protection (Castells, 1997). Secondly, Greenpeace Israel is one of the only organizations on the Israeli environmental scene whose reputation is based primarily on direct action (the others being Megama Yeruka and Peula Yeruka), even becoming a kind of brand name for militant environmental activity. If we add to this the fact that we are talking about a veteran global organization active for over 30 years and backed exclusively by a base of individual supporters and foundations (among all international environmental organizations centered in

Greenpeace is the largest environmental organization in the world in terms of number of supporters and activists. Greenpeace International was founded in Holland in 1979. Today it has over 2.8 million supporters and is active in over 40 countries.

Greenpeace Israel is one of the only organizations on the Israeli environmental scene whose reputation is based primarily on direct action, even becoming a kind of brand name for militant environmental activity. In Israel, the Greenpeace Mediterranean branch was established in 1995 and the main issues on its agenda are determined by the regional office in Malta.

Europe, Greenpeace is the only one that does not accept financial support from the EU), it is all the more clear that this is a fascinating research topic that has not been examined in sufficient depth to date.

Relevant studies to date have tended to relate to Greenpeace within the context of environmental organizations in general, and

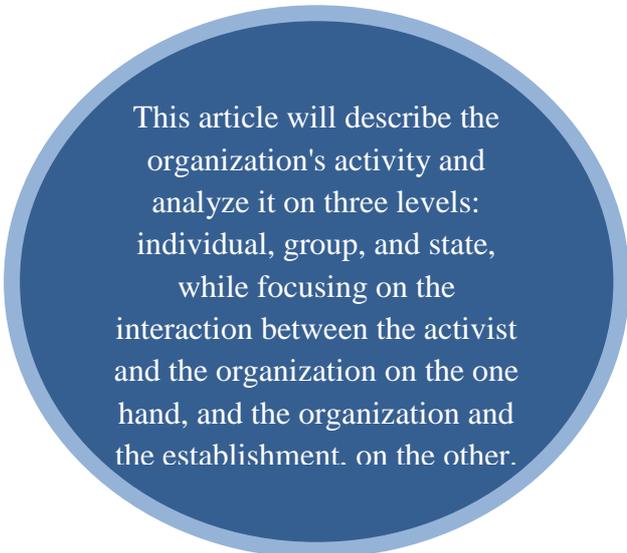
have for the most part presented it as an illustration or example of a larger activist body. Such is the case with Rootes, for example, who asserts that Greenpeace is the most influential NGO in the world (Rootes, 1999), or Castells, who terms Greenpeace activists "eco-warriors"

curbing the damage caused by accelerated development (Castells, 1997). Rossiter's empirical study on Greenpeace Canada (Rossiter, 2004) focuses mainly on the imagery used by the organization, and the manner in which they construct the space of protest, rather than dealing with its cultural aspects.

As for research conducted in Israel, noteworthy in the field of public environmental activity is Benstein's study on narratives and the environment among the Jewish and Arab communities in Israel (Benstein, 2004), as well as a series of empirical studies dealing for the most part with the implications of environmental activism and its consequences, and to a lesser extent with the attributes of the organization and its patterns of protest. In this category, of note are the works of Talias, who discusses the philosophical-political aspects of environmental struggles in Israel (Talias, 1994), and de Shalit, who analyzes the struggle's characteristics in terms of the effectiveness of its outcomes (de-Shalit, 2002). In addition, Gottlieb's study, which examines in depth the extent of two organizations' influence on coastline planning policy, focuses mainly on the struggle's outcomes and effect on decision-makers, and only secondarily on the features of the organizations themselves (Gottlieb, 2004). A thorough investigation of a single environmental organization, based on long-term fieldwork, and illuminating the aspects of its structure and activity with the aim of specifying its cultural function and location in the social system, has yet to be undertaken in Israel.

Consequently, I have chosen to focus the present study mainly on the third issue presented above, namely, patterns of protest, and only marginally on the protest's aftereffects, both because this aspect, as aforesaid, has been studied less than the others and because the sociological-cultural dimension carries more weight. The main axis along which the present study proceeds is an in-depth examination of the organization's features, and its interaction

with other actors in the field, while in the background lies the dilemma between two forces, ostensibly diametrically opposed to one another: the activists' desire to act chiefly on the local level (i.e., action "from above") versus the organization's official policy of fostering action in the global context (i.e., direction "from below").



This article will describe the organization's activity and analyze it on three levels: individual, group, and state, while focusing on the interaction between the activist and the organization on the one hand, and the organization and the establishment. on the other.

The current article will go on to describe the organization's activity and to analyze it on three levels: individual, group and state, while focusing on the interaction between the activist and the organization, on the one hand, and the organization and the establishment, on the other hand. Afterwards, a number of theoretical and practical insights and implications emerging from the analysis will be discussed.

In light of the above, the object of the present article is to deal with the following questions:

- a. What is the structure of Greenpeace Israel? What place does the individual have in determining its ideological and organizational agenda, and what are the motives that propel him to act precisely within this organization?
- b. What are Greenpeace Israel's patterns of protest? I would like to present in this context the attributes of the organization's activity on a group and individual level, such as motives for participation and characteristics of the participants.
- c. What is the attitude of the environmental establishment and of professionals towards environmental protest in general, and Greenpeace Israel in specific?

The methodology is based on fieldwork carried out at the Israeli branch of Greenpeace International, from October 2004 until July 2005.

Greenpeace – Organizational Profile

History

Greenpeace was founded after a highly-publicized local action by a group of young anti-nuclear activists from Vancouver, who in January 1971 succeeded in causing the United States to postpone a number of times a planned nuclear test at the northern Pacific Ocean. This spontaneous action by the volunteers attracted public attention in the US and other Western countries, mainly because it was the first time that the issue of nuclear testing was raised in a moral-ecological context, rather than merely in the direct context of the inter-block political conflict that marked the Cold War period (Rabinovitch, 2000). The young organization continued its activity against governments and large corporations on issues such as toxic waste, whaling and seal hunting in addition to nuclear testing. Subsequently, various independent Greenpeace groups engaging in this form of protest sprouted up throughout the

US, northern Europe and Australia, leading eventually to the foundation of Greenpeace International in Holland in 1979. Today the organization is active in over 40 countries, and has over 2.8 million supporters. In Israel, the Greenpeace Mediterranean branch was established in 1995.

Strategy

Within time, a number of strategic principles were consolidated according to which the organization has consistently operated over the years:

- a. Non-violent action: the organization sharply opposes violent protest, although it does direct its activists to act assertively.
- b. Political independence: Greenpeace is an independent, non-profit global organization, and as such, it is neither affiliated with any political body, government, commercial company or financial corporation, whether local or global, nor does it accept support from them. All of the organization's activities are supported by individual activists and foundations alone.
- c. Global thinking: notwithstanding the existence of numerous environmental concerns on the local or regional level, Greenpeace acts to further global issues common to all regions of the world, including preventing distribution of hazardous and radioactive materials, halting pollution of oceans and seas zone and limiting global warming.
- d. Multi-disciplinary action: the organization promotes global issues through activities in a number of arenas: exerting public pressure on decision-makers, conducting scientific studies, educational and informational activities and media exposure of environmental hazards.

Features of Activity

The principles of operation expressed by Greenpeace in its initial maritime action in 1971, have become frames of action that have even influenced other environmental organizations. Some are of the opinion that Greenpeace's success as a brand-name international environmental organization, with the public image of an uncompromising militant body, stems inter alia from the originality, as well as the consistency, of its modes of operation (Brown & May, 1989), as detailed below:

- a. Daring and readiness for self-sacrifice: Greenpeace's activity has been distinguished from the start by a style of protest in which a small group of activists physically approach a source of danger, while being fully conscious of the fact that they may be

personally harmed either by the environmental hazard itself or the risk of being arrested. Accordingly, the actions of Greenpeace's activists have been particularly attractive to the written and electronic media, since the message is viewed as cogent while the medium of its transmission is taken as authentic.

- b. Focusing on a tangible "enemy": Greenpeace's actions have been directed at decision-makers in various governments and the CEOs of major corporations, which are portrayed as culpable for environmental hazards, and hence are held personally accountable for dealing with and putting an end to them. Use of images such as the "just underdog" versus the "cruel giant" comprise a "David and Goliath" metaphor that has guided Greenpeace in planning its actions, and helps to generate broad public sympathy for the cause (Ratner, 2000).
- c. The originality effect: Greenpeace activists were not the first to carry out social protest actions in bold and unconventional ways, but their choice to employ the tactic of direct action on global environmental issues was pioneering and original. Additionally, by binding environmental activism to an ideology of peace and brotherhood, regarding which there exists a broad consensus, they intensified public support for the organization and its goals. This combination of "environment" and "peace" fit perfectly with the socio-cultural climate that prevailed at the time in Europe and the US, thus Greenpeace's messages were well received.

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- d. Religious affinities: the initial seed group of Greenpeace in Canada was strongly influenced by two religious concepts. the first principle, termed "bearing witness", is a Quaker tradition according to which someone who has witnessed an injustice is morally obliged to choose whether to act against it or not, and the act of physically standing in the presence of "evil" is regarded as the most concrete evidence of its existence. The second principle is derived from the Cree tribe, one of the largest Native American groups in the American northwest. According to an apocalyptic prophecy in Cree folklore, the world stood to experience total ecological destruction as a consequence of which natural resources would be depleted, hence, in order to prevent that, all people should unite under the moniker "Warriors of the Rainbow,"

and fight together to save the world. Greenpeace's founding activists were profoundly influenced by these two spiritual principles, mainly due to their compatibility with the radical left ethos that reigned in North America at that time.

Analytical Framework

As indicated above, the current study is descriptive in nature, and seeks to examine protest patterns in order to gain an understanding of the structure and activity of the organization. Hence, I have elected to carry out an analysis at three levels: individual, organizational and state. For each level I will offer an ethnographic account of the object of analysis, while applying socio-theoretical approaches, and will examine the major issue emerging at each analytic level (figure 1).

Figure 1: Research Framework

Level of Analysis	Object of Analysis	Theoretical Approaches	Main Issue
Individual	Activists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rational – Social-Psychological 	Motives for action, environmental worldview, patterns of action and thought
Group	Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collective Behavior – Resource Recruitment 	Modes of determining policy for action, recruiting support, mobilizing activists
State	Environmental establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Functionalism – Structuralism 	Interactions between the organization and the establishment (state)

The Individual Level

One of the main messages that Greenpeace wishes to convey to its potential supporters is that field actions are the "beating heart of the organization" hence recruiting supporters and activists is of utmost importance, since "by virtue of them, we succeed" (from Greenpeace volunteer registration form). The questions that guided me in this fieldwork and encounters with activists dealt with the motivations that led volunteers to join Greenpeace, the expectations they had vis-à-vis the organization, and the action orientation they associated themselves with. I would like to contend that in Greenpeace there are two notable types of action: rational and emotional. Aspects of each of these types can be outlined along two parameters: worldview (ideology) and style of action. At bottom, one can point to the existence of three transformative values: altruism (greater concern for the welfare of others than for oneself), egoism (greater concern for one's own welfare than for that of others), and biospherism (concern for the biological, non-human environment). The presence of these values in varying intensities within the structure of the activists' personalities is what leads them to engage in different pro-environmental behaviors, an argument that has long been demonstrated in empirical psychological studies (Karp, 1996). Below these attributes are specified.

The Rational Type

An activist of the rational type joins Greenpeace due clear messages persuading him that it worthwhile to belong to a global ideological organization that matches his worldview. Greenpeace's succinct and logical arguments appear convincing to him as they are the product of research conducted by Greenpeace's scientific department. However, alongside the scientific dimension of these arguments, there is another factor that significantly contributes to the persuasion of the rational activist, and this is the manner of presenting the argument in a set format: phrasing the problem in the form of a slogan ("The Mediterranean is polluted"), identifying the guilty party (the Dan Region Wastewater Treatment Plant [Shafdan]), and assigning personal responsibility together with a demand for action on the issue ("Ron Huldai – Shut Your Sewer Mouth!"). Most activists indicated that a succinct presentation of things, while employing a "field court-martial" rhetoric (including defendants, a prosecution, a "well-based" indictment and an account of the victim's suffering), is persuasive even when they themselves did not personally confirm the veracity of the argument. The presentation of things in such a manner has a strong dimension of a demand for justice, and this is the most

A sense of injustice agitates the activist of the rational type, since he is conscious of the profound social injustice represented by regional environmental hazards, and draws parallels between environmental injustice and social and political injustice.

attractive thing about it as far as the rational activist is concerned. A sense of injustice agitates the activist of the rational type, apparently since he is conscious of the profound social injustice represented by regional environmental hazards (for instance, the construction of a coal-burning power plant in Ashqelon), and draws a parallel between environmental injustice, on the one hand, and social injustice (in this case – health damage to residents of the south) and political justice (the power of the Electric Corp. versus the weakness of the population of the south), on the other hand. We have now then a possible illustration of the bi-directional link between environmental injustice and socio-economic injustice (de Shalit, 2004).

An additional conceptual dimension that applies to activists of the rational type is transference of the environmental problem from the global to the local level, since doing so entails an element of pragmatism, and this then motivates the activist to support a given action. The logic guiding him is that he himself cannot "change the world" and that it is much more practical for him to express, as an Israeli, resistance and protest towards the activity of the Israel Electric Corporation than to try to affect US policy on the Kyoto Treaty.

Nevertheless, and despite his total identification with the argument and general concept of the organization, Greenpeace's *modi operandi* do not always dovetail with the rational activist's individual character, and he may prefer, therefore, to contribute different types of knowledge and skills, such as office work or lecturing, rather than actively participating in the militant direct actions staged by the organization. This may be an instance of the "hitchhiker" phenomenon described by Olson (1977), although from my interviews it emerges that the rational type of activist does not in fact regard himself as a "hitchhiker," and not only because of the negative image of the phenomenon, but also because Greenpeace states as policy that it is open to all types of volunteers, and not just extreme activists. Moreover, the majority of activists possessing the attributes of the rational type claim that some of Greenpeace's actions are illegitimate (e.g., welding shut the sewage pipes of the plants on the Kishon River in 2000), and even childish and stupid (e.g., presentation of the puppets to satirize others).

Hence the question arises as to what draws this type of activist to a militant organization such as Greenpeace. It turns out that the very fact of belonging to the organization, and the feeling

that one's non-activistic contribution is welcomed by the organization, are the primary motives for continuing to support Greenpeace "from afar".

In the opinion of the present author, and on the basis of the interviews conducted for this study, the "hitchhiker" phenomenon (in the sense meant by Olson, that is, "users" or "the unenterprising") not common among the majority of Greenpeace activists that I have classified as "rational types." Regarding the question why there are nevertheless activists in Greenpeace who have consciously chosen to be "non-activists" two other, psycho-social explanations can be posited, which have their roots in prospect-expectancy theory.

Firstly, there is a desire to belong to a group considered both prestigious and pioneering ("Greenpeace is a brand name") given the social advantage derived from such, as the same activists noted proudly their being members of Greenpeace, even when their actual contribution assumed the form of minor financial support or help with random office work. Secondly, on the psychological plane, these "non-activists" have high expectations regarding the organization's capacity to have an impact, due both to the high number of participants involved (Greenpeace's activity in Israel is always part of an integrated campaign on a global level) Greenpeace's long history of achievements around the world. Such high expectations engender in the individual a sense of efficacy, of having the ability to make a difference, and this is what motivates him to join precisely this organization, as it will enable him to feel that he has done his part should the anticipated success indeed be achieved.

“Emotional type” activists are willing to make profound personal sacrifices in order to realize the organization's goals. Such self-sacrifice may find expression in an arrest and criminal record, something which hardly deters these activists, most of whom are young adults in their twenties.

The Emotional Type

From the interviews I held with activists that I have chosen to characterize as "emotional types" it emerges that Greenpeace's militant modi operandi are not only not regarded by them as being violent, but are even perceived as legitimate; hence these individuals are willing to make profound personal sacrifices in order to realize the organization's goals. Such

self-sacrifice may find expression in police arrest or a criminal record, something which hardly detracts these activists, most of whom are young adults in their twenties, and are fully aware that a criminal offense may negatively affect them in the future. There is also an aspect of justification and high degree of readiness to engage in militant protest.

The question of whether Greenpeace's direct actions constitute a violation of the law bothers activists of the emotional type less because, in their words, these actions have a legal backing, are carried out only after meticulous, clandestine planning, which sometimes continues for several months. Mainly, what deterred mostly the activists is the concern for their own physical safety.

One of the principles that Greenpeace lays emphasis upon in planning and executing its actions is abstention from violence. The main tool of the organization as trained to its activists is "Non-Violent Direct Action" (NVDA). This tactic that has its source in the French anarchist movement, which promotes exemplary direct action as a means of catalyzing change, and is distinguished by self-sacrifice on the part of the participants, a high degree of visual attractiveness, and a message with universal content (Castells, 1997).

It should be noted that, with only a few exceptions, almost all Greenpeace activists who engage in direct actions are willing to be arrested, but they will not to act in a violent manner that could cause direct harm to human beings, infrastructures or property.

From a social-psychological perspective, we can suggest here another factor that induces activists to engage in extreme protest actions: social utility. For the majority of activists, their involvement in Greenpeace comprises a primary social framework in which they find ideological and sociological kinship with other members, mainly because of the fact that most of the activists are young people (18-28), whose financial situation allows them to devote time on a regular basis to protest actions. From my observations it emerges that Greenpeace's directorate attributes great importance to group cohesion, which sometimes is done in an "artificial" way: there are activists, including those of the emotional type, for whom Greenpeace is merely an ideological framework and not a social one. Accordingly, they

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refrain from participation in social encounters outside the boundaries of protest. In some cases, there were activists who actually voiced discontent over the "waste of time" entailed in social gatherings not directed related to Greenpeace activism.

The Organizational Level

At the organizational level of analysis, I have chosen to examine two dimensions: organizational structure and patterns of action, while the main questions here relate to Greenpeace's support base: How does the organization recruit support and mobilize activists? Does it succeed in maintaining this support over time? And what is the nature of the interaction between Greenpeace's activists and directorate? In other words, what are the dimensions of the organization's collective activity? In this context, it is important to stress the difference between two leading theoretical approaches that interpret collective action: the collective behavior approach and the resource mobilization approach. While the former approach views collective action as an emotional mass action, in which the leading factor involved is being carried away by a charismatic leader, ideology or the desire to belong to a group, the latter approach sees it as an unmistakably positive manifestation of democratic public action. In my estimation, we are talking here about two different interpretations of the same type of action, which are a function of the eye of the perceiver and context. It should be noted that the fundamental difference between the two theoretical approaches is also manifested in how they relate to the motives of the actors (Turner & Killian, 1957). According to the collective behavior approach, the rational type is representative of the first kind of motivation for action, namely, the issues and ideas taken up by the organization, as opposed to different kinds of motives, such as the very fact of belonging to the group or the need to join in some form of collective activity regardless of its goals – a description more appropriate to the motives of the emotional type.

Base of Support

On a three-part concentric circle diagram, Greenpeace activists can be divided up as follows: within the largest, outer circle are the majority of activists (approx 15,000), which might be

Over the years Greenpeace has increased its base of supporters in Israel, which stands today at approximately 15,000. However, only about 40 of them comprise the "activists," who perform administrative work and help to mobilize protest actions. Of these 40 activists, there is a core group of a mere 10 people, who are the ones who actually carry out the protest actions in the field.

termed "non-activistic, occasional supporters" who, while they contribute financially and ideologically to the organization, have no intention of taking part in protest actions. This group is in effect Greenpeace's main base of support, which grants the organization's leaders

and activists the legitimacy to act and present demands to the establishment, as they represent "Greenpeace supporters". Within the medium circle, then, are the rational activists (approx 40), while the smallest, innermost circle contains just a handful of activists (approx 10) of the emotional type. Quantitatively, the outer circle of the "supporters" has grown at a slow rate, while from time to time there is a "trickling" of a few supporters into the circle of the rational activists, in accordance with media reverberation from Greenpeace actions: the more 'activistic' the actions are, the greater the demand is for support, and vice versa.

Nature of Actions

The source of inspiration for Greenpeace's protest style is the Quaker principle of "bearing witness," and this finds expression on the ground in the components of the action itself, which constitutes a theatrical framework for a "field court-martial" staged by Greenpeace: the activists themselves serve as witnesses, holding the direct action at the hazard site serves as "presentation of evidence," and the victim is represented by a real group of people or artificial representational figures (puppets). This "bearing-witness" style of direct action is attractive to both the media and the public, since it lays out the topic, the problem, and its solution in a short time. Technically, we can point to two types of direct action of the "field court-martial" style:

The source of inspiration for Greenpeace's protest style is the Quaker principle of "bearing witness." and this finds expression on the ground in theatrical frameworks such as the "field court-martial." In this activity, the activists themselves serve as witnesses, while holding the direct action at the hazard site serves as the "presentation of evidence," and the victim is represented by a real group of people (children, pregnant women) or artificial representational figures (puppets).

1. Sign-hanging: Actions of this kind entail intense risk-taking on the part of activists, thus they undergo special training by professional teams. Hence, for example, in the aforementioned case where a massive sign was hung on the façade of Tel Aviv City Hall in September 2004, the activists reported that they clashed with municipality security guards, who threatened to cut the rappelling rope they were using to scale the building.
2. Theatrical presentations: creative use of scenery, actors, makeup and cinematic effects to stage a colorful and impressive presentation, which may be viewed as a childish "gimmick" designed for the media, but at the same time is meant to bring home the organization's message in a direct and original way. Examples include: an actor dressed as the sun imprisoned in a cage at the entrance to a hall where an international conference on energy was being held; emblemization climate changes by erecting a "snow-covered beach" at the entrance to the Tel Aviv Cinematheque, where "The Day After Tomorrow," a science-fiction disaster film depicting the effects of global warming, was being shown

Deficiencies in Organizational Functioning

The fact that the Israel branch is in effect managed remotely by foreign administrators contributes to a sense of belonging to a strong and established international organization, but over time this state of affairs has posed a certain difficulty manifested in the following respects:

1. A high rate of turnover of coordinators, regional managers and other functionaries, both foreign and Israeli, makes for a lack of continuity in the activity of the branch, and results in the fact that any group dynamic that is established is unsustainable in the long term.
2. Language and cultural differences between Israeli activists and foreign functionaries result in a sense of remoteness and alienation, since the majority volunteers are young and lack of English, a fact that turns off some of the volunteers, especially when considering professional topics.
3. One of Greenpeace's political worldview is to bridge the political gap in order to advance common environmental interests, which in the Israeli case is a restrictive factor, due to the political situation in the Middle East. The advantages of rapid online

Greenpeace activists, as well as the majority of environmentalists in Israel, are still not psychologically or politically ready to engage in environmental cooperation with other countries in the region, and the idea of it is viewed in their eyes as utopian.

communication do not help in this case, since most of the Israeli activists lack the feeling of an ideological, cultural or political kinship with their counterparts in Lebanon, Turkey or Malta. It is possible that Greenpeace activists (and even the majority of environmentalists in Israel) are still not psychologically or politically ready to engage in environmental cooperation with other countries in the region, and the idea of it is viewed in their eyes as utopian.

4. The present state of affairs in which the Israeli branch lacks administrative, planning and budgetary independence causes activists to feel that they are not given sufficient freedom of expression in terms of raising new ideas, protest methods, or initiating independent actions. Against this background, there developed during the period of my research a crisis between a group of activists and the directorate of the organization, which I would like to expand upon below, as it will enable a deeper understanding of the nature of the organization.

The Crisis

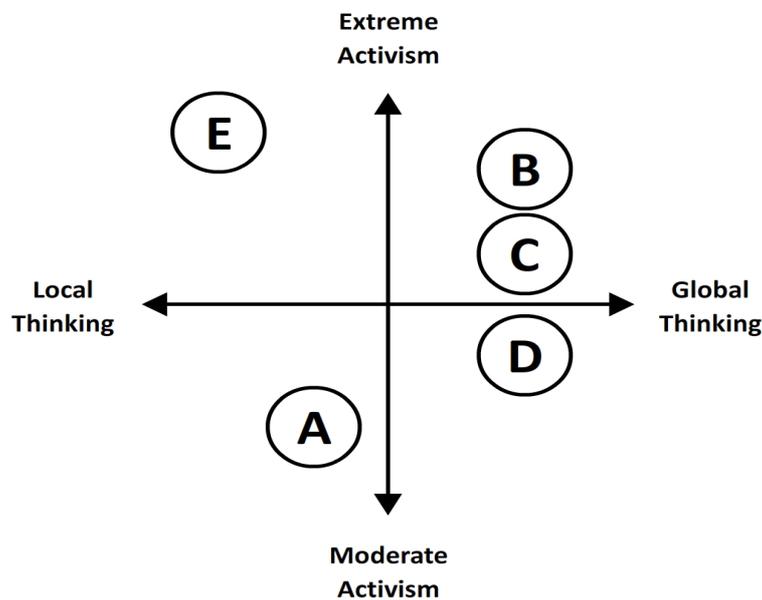
At the end of 2004, one of Greenpeace's Israeli campaign coordinators was fired against the background of a dispute with the regional directorate over what should be the proper complexion of the organization's protest activity in Israel, which centered at the time on the issue of environmental pollution related to hazardous materials (toxins). The dismissal caused a group of veteran Greenpeace activists from the Haifa area to come together in defense of the fired coordinator, and mainly to express support for his conception of protest, which was more extreme and effective in their view. The regional directorate of Greenpeace refused to grant these activists free hand in carrying out protest actions that were planned in the Haifa area, and therefore they decided, as an act of protest, to resign from Greenpeace. The main claim of "Haifa Group" was that Greenpeace was obliged to implement in a different way the "Think Global – Act Local" concept, which is one of the basic principles of the sustainable development agenda. In their view, the organization's regional directorate should allow activists greater creative freedom in planning extreme actions at the local level, and not just against decision makers or large public bodies. This cohesive group, which until its resignation comprised the vanguard of Greenpeace Israel volunteers, was of the opinion that the organization in Israel was losing the unique identity that characterized Greenpeace on the global scene, namely, uncompromising militant activity.

I would like to suggest that the crisis that developed between the "Haifa Group" and the regional directorate of the organization led to a trend shift in the organization's functioning, since, as a result of the crisis, membership declined and its protest style turned moderate and less daring – e.g., distribution of flowers in the street, holding a press conference upon the publication of an energy report, professional dialogue with the establishment – actions that lacked the militancy they had in the past. Moreover, the crisis explicitly brought home the gap between Greenpeace's official policy of thinking and acting at the global level and the authentic desire of the "Haifa Group" to act more intensively at the grassroots level.

Conclusions at the Individual-Organizational Level of Analysis

At this point, the results of the analysis of Greenpeace Israel's activity at the individual and organizational level can be presented in the following diagram, which shows the relative location of actors in the system examined along two axes (figure 2): degree of activism (moderate or extreme) and conceptual orientation (global vs. local action).

Fig. 2: Location of Actors in Analytic Framework



Key: A – Rational Type; B – Emotional Type; C – Organizational Policy (Abroad); D – Organizational Policy (Israel); E – The "Haifa Group."

An examination of the above diagram allows us to formulate a number of conclusions. Firstly, there is an internal divide between the two sub-cultures within the organization, namely, between the rational activists and the emotional activists, as far as their worldviews on desirable action are concerned, a fact that causes one to wonder what actually unifies them as members of Greenpeace. We can hypothesize that the common denominator between them is the psychological desire to belong to an international organization with an activist image, an image that not always stands up to a reality test.

Secondly, there is an internal gap between the vision of the organization abroad and the vision of the Israeli directorate as to the desirable degree of activism to be pursued: regional policy sees the Israeli branch as a vehicle for realizing its global objectives, while the Israeli branch is forced to moderate its activism to suit the level of effort that the activists are willing to invest.

Here I conclude that the "Haifa Group" represents a different, extreme voice, which calls for a more efficacious use of the "Greenpeace" brand name in order to carry out militant actions exclusively on a local level, and therein to have an impact on a global level. Their desire to act creatively, together with their non-reconciliation with the organization's policy, resulted in the crisis described above. Another possible conclusion, which emerged from observations of a similar crisis that occurred within Greenpeace UK in 1995, is that one of the causes of the crisis, in the course of which a group of activists resigned in protest, was the large gap between the high expectations that the organization instilled in them (regarding their ability to have a global impact) and their limited ability in reality (on the local level) to effect the desired change (Rootes, 1999).

There is an internal gap between the vision of the organization abroad and the vision of the Israeli directorate as to the desirable degree of activism to be pursued. Those who formulate regional policy regard the Israeli branch as a vehicle for realizing the organization's global objectives, while the Israeli branch is forced to moderate its activism to suit the level of effort that the activists are willing to invest.

There is an internal divide between two sub-cultures within the organization, namely, between the "rational activists" and the "emotional activists," who differ in their respective worldviews regarding desirable actions to be taken. The common denominator between them is the psychological desire to belong to an international organization with an activist image, an image that does not always stand up to a reality test.

By contrast, it is interesting to note the situation of the activists of the rational type, who espouse moderate activism and global thinking, but who would prefer to channel the organization's energies into local action. This type may possibly represent

more authentically the original concept of "Think Global – Act Local," as this mode of thinking is highly pragmatic as far as having an immediate impact on the issue of environmental protection is concerned.

The State Level

Up to this point, analyses of structure and action have been presented at an intra-organizational level. In order to complete the analysis, we should expand our perspective at this stage and deal with questions regarding the professional-environmental establishment's attitude towards Greenpeace's activity as well as the cultural function of Greenpeace in the social system.

Attitude of the Establishment

Based on conversations I had with parties involved in environmental management in Israel, it emerges that Greenpeace Israel's visibility is not particularly high. One possible reason for this is that most environmental actions occur at the local level, while only a few take place at the national one (Highway 6, the Eilat fish cages, Safdi master-plan in west Jerusalem), with the global dimension being almost completely off the agenda of Israeli environmentalists.

Another explanation for the underdominance of Greenpeace in Israel from the perspective of the establishment is the fact that we are living in a "scientific age", that is, in order for an environmental struggle to succeed, there is a need to focus on scientific-empirical facts, legal procedures and the political interests involved. In most cases, Greenpeace's actions are regarded by the public as short-term media "gimmicks," which are not based on a full knowledge or comprehensive understanding of the issues, and hence do not succeed in influencing decision-makers. On the other hand, there is greater effectiveness and credibility among those associations and organizations focused on the local level (e.g., Sustainable Jerusalem, Toshavim Lema'an Zoran, Yarak Bagalil), the topical level (e.g., the Society for the

The organization's activity on the research and scientific level is certainly positive, but that is no longer exclusive to Greenpeace, as it was some twenty years ago.

Protection of Nature in Israel's campaign to prevent the establishment of new settlements and to protect the beaches) or the professional level (e.g., Adam, Teva Ve'Din, Tzalul).

It can be said with a certain degree of reservation that Greenpeace's traditional protest patterns of non-violent direct action may no longer be relevant, given both their incompatibility with the environmental protest culture in Israel and their insignificant impact on decision-makers. The organization's activity on the research and scientific level is certainly positive, but it is no longer exclusive to Greenpeace as it was some twenty years ago, since today the majority of environmental protest organizations in Israel are characterized primarily by conservative methods of action such as education and public awareness, conferences, petition-signing, interaction with the media, and submission of legal appeals (Karasin, 2001, Tal, 2011). This being the case, the present author is of the opinion that organizations of the Greenpeace type still have a meaningful place and function in the current social system, upon which I will elaborate below.

Greenpeace as an Agent of Cultural Change

Informed by Merton's non-totalizing functionalist approach (Merton, 1968), we can say that Greenpeace makes a positive contribution to the social structure as a whole (in this case, Israeli society), since it fulfills a certain social function, both explicit and implicit. The explicit and intuitive function of the organization is naturally to initiate and realize environmental protest actions, whereas its implicit function is to revitalize environmental issues, as I will explain below. Moreover, and on the basis of Giddens' structural approach (Giddens, 1979), I would like to argue that there is a bi-directional structural link on the individual-organizational level, which finds expression in the fact that the organization's activists execute actions while the actions themselves allow for the realization of the individual's ideological values.

One of the attributes of the functionalist approach is the understanding that any single component of society has a particular function that it fulfills, as long as it exists. My major claim is that environmental protest organizations have a central function, which is to serve as agents of cultural change, that is to say, revitalization of environmental issues and their placement on the public agenda. I am of the opinion that organizations such as Greenpeace meet the criteria of a revitalization group, as we are talking about a social agent that assumes

the role of revitalizing an idea in such a way that its implementation brings about desired change, both in society (social change) and among decision-makers (political change). It should be emphasized that the social function of revitalization is not exclusive to Greenpeace, and yet this organization has a strong potential to have such an effect due to its prestige and image, and this leads to high expectations from without.

It should be stressed that, in addition to their role as revitalization groups, Greenpeace and other environmentalist organizations help to empower civil society, as their success is indicative of a high degree of public participation, which significantly promotes environmental discourse (de Shalit, 2000, 2004). Here we should mention that this social function of empowering civil society vis-à-vis the state is one of the characteristics (and goals) of the new social movements that emerged in the 1960s, among which Greenpeace is the quintessential example (Offe, 1990). Now I would like to go back and elaborate upon the phenomenon of cultural revitalization.

The concept of "revitalization" has its roots in the study of religious-ethnic groups, and refers to the cultural aspects of the activity of (mainly extremist) religious groups, which act to implement dramatic cultural reforms after they have despaired of the existing system (Haviland, 1999). In order to understand the role of Greenpeace as a cultural revitalization group, we need to examine its activity in relation to the process of revitalization described by Wallace, as follows: (Wallace, 1970):

- a. The status-quo: the physical conditions and cultural values in society are stable; there are virtually no internal conflicts or external threats imperiling the existing "balance."
- b. Individual tension: as a result of a social crisis, a shortage of physical resources or changes imposed by human beings, tension and restlessness emerges among individuals in society.
- c. Collective tension: the existing normative and cultural system fails to provide a response to individual and collective tensions; subsequently, revitalization groups are established, which demand reforms.
- d. Cultural revitalization: action groups seek to reconcile the new crisis situation and existing cultural values, by integrating primordial values into existing cultural systems.

- e. The new state of affairs: institutionalization and routinization of revitalization; the cultural and political system operates according to norms shaped in the previous stage.

In the context of Greenpeace's global activity, the process of the movement's growth may be interpreted as the emergence of a revitalization movement that called for a return to a respect for the natural environment and for conservation of natural resources, against the background of the worldwide political crisis that characterized the 1970s with the inter-block struggle and nuclear arms race. The revitalization phase then included masses of people being carried away by the ideology of Greenpeace, which was part of the rising tide of the global environmental movement. As a result of this revitalization process, which in some countries is still at its climax, the environmental issue became an inseparable part of the political and social system, even if it was not given proper priority (as is the case in Israel). It is important to emphasize that Greenpeace laid stress on generating change in the socio-cultural context, and not just changes and reforms aimed at localized elimination of environmental hazards. They aspire to revitalize the old values of a positive relationship between man and environment, and to imbue these values among the majority of people in the world.

Theoretical Implications

A. Greenpeace can be classified according to two aspects relevant to the field of extra-establishment public participation: in the political context, it is classifiable as an organization espousing direct action but also conventional politics that walk the fine line between legal and illegal. If we apply Marsh's model of political participation (Marsh, 1977), Greenpeace would be located in the transition area of the third threshold marked by (direct) action that is clearly illegal but non-violent. In the second context, the historical one, Greenpeace is undoubtedly one of the quintessential examples of the new cultural movements that began to emerge in the 1960s, and which have contributed to the shaping of contemporary civil society (Offe, 1990).

- B. In reference to the basic premises of the structuralist approach, Giddens notes three options for observing social structures: synchronic, asynchronous and diachronic (Giddens, 1979). The present study was conducted using the fieldwork method of synchronic observation of all the relevant actors: the activists, the Greenpeace directorate, the establishment, and the interaction between them.
- C. The common denominator between most scholars dealing with the study of social structures is that for them we are talking about an element with a hidden and ambiguous dimension whose exposure demands that the researcher "peel back," as Geertz suggests, the visible layers, namely, the explicit action. Here I would like to argue that there is in fact an interdependence between the two components of the social framework, structure and action, which is clearly manifested in the case of a protest organization such as Greenpeace. In other words, the organization as a social structure is based on the input of its activists, who become integrated within it and shape the social structure according to their own subjective resources (albeit not entirely, as I have shown in the case of the "Haifa Group"). The interaction between structure and action in a protest organization is dynamic and changes over time, since the social context between the agents (activists) and the organizational framework depends on the individual attributes of the activists and the context of action.
- D. On an anthropological level, I sought in this study to provide an ethnographic account of one of the prominent environmental protest groups in Israel, and to bring to bear upon it available theories. In addition to the arguments and conclusions presented here, I would like to propose viewing the discipline of anthropology as a means of examining the cultural dialogue between the three main actors, whom I term NAT: NATure, NATives, NATion. Analyzing the cultural dialogue between these actors has the unique benefit of enabling a deep interpretation of the dialogue between the geographical dimension (geobody) and cultural dimension (political culture) of the framework of action, i.e., the state (Brosius, 1999). The uniqueness of the discipline of anthropology in this respect finds expression in the accounts it provides of the peculiar facets of native cultures, and as I have shown in this study, this has profound implications as far as environmental action and environmental protest are concerned.

The present article has offered an ethnographic account of the structure of an environmental protest organization in Israel and its mode of action. Methodologically, analysis was conducted on three levels corresponding to the process of the researcher's entry into the role of participant observer: firstly, I began to learn about the organization from the mouths of the activists themselves, and then I moved on to active participation in the organization's collective activities (e.g., workshops, lectures, meetings). Afterwards, I attempted to observe the organization from a broader perspective and to examine how the establishment views the organization's activity and objectives.

The advantage of this study lies in its in-depth focus on a single protest organization, but therein also lies its weakness, as lacking is a comparative perspective in which the present findings could be examined against those for a similar organization, or a different Greenpeace branch. Only such a comparative analysis could tell us whether the characteristics I described here are unique to Greenpeace Israel, or whether they are universal. Conclusions from such a comparative study could serve both as a theoretical tool for gaining a fuller understanding of environmental protest culture in general and that of Greenpeace in specific, and as a practical tool for improving the functioning and effectiveness of environmental protest organizations. As for Israel, it appears that the fact that Greenpeace's policy deals virtually exclusively with global issues makes for a kind of missed opportunity to take advantage of the public protest potential in Israel, which at the moment is channeled mainly into local protest avenues. It is possible that in due course the environmental vision in Israel will expand beyond its own backyard, and thus will enable organizations such as Greenpeace to realize to a greater extent their policy as global organizations. We can only hope that this will happen as a consequence of a transformation in the political climate in the country, and that this will be accompanied by a long-sought cultural change in the environmental field.

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