

Power imbalances and claiming credit in coalition campaigns: Greenpeace and Bhopal¹

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Abstract

While the growth of transnational alliances and campaigns was originally welcomed enthusiastically, issues of power and resource imbalance between members in core and peripheral countries have been emphasised by more critical accounts. This article looks at these issues in the context of a transnational campaign involving one of the largest and most well-known environmental international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), Greenpeace, and a local movement in India, the movement for justice in Bhopal, examining claiming of credit for campaign activities and arguing that local movements are not powerless in alliances with core country partners.

Introduction

On 15 February 2003, coordinated political protests against the invasion of Iraq took place across the globe in more than 300 cities in 60 countries. (Walgrave and Rucht 2010). Prior to this the anti-globalisation movement (AGM) had mobilised around meetings of international financial institutions (IFIs), with demonstrations in 41 cities globally in May 1998 rising to demonstrations in 97 cities in November 1999 and 152 cities in November 2001. (Mac Sheoin and Yeates 2006: 363). These were the highpoints of innovatory political action which was seen as beginning in the 1990s and characterised the following decade –the growth of transnational political action by a variety of non-state actors which some scholars saw as the coming of ‘global civil society’ and others as counter-hegemonic globalisation (Chin and Mittelman 1997) or ‘globalisation from below’ (Falk 1997). Underneath these spectacular mass demonstrations lay a labyrinth of local, national and regional activity, as well as a large number of single-issue groups and networks. Within this new sphere of political action, alliances were formed between groups with significant differences in resources, cadre, policies and position in the world system. These differences invariably raised questions as to the division of power and labour within such alliances. This article

¹ Thanks are due to Pauline Conroy, Tim Enright, Fleachta Phelan, Satinath Sarangi, Indra Sinha, Nicola Yeates and Steve Zvestowski for either sharing their experiences of the MJB or for reading early drafts of this article. Particular thanks are due to Zeina Ahmed of Greenpeace International for answering a questionnaire on GP’s involvement with the MJB and for advice on sources.

examines one such encounter between a rich and powerful NGO, Greenpeace, and a local movement in India, the movement for justice in Bhopal (MJB), in the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB). It begins by looking at the literature on the growth in transnational alliances, in particular the market approach and the literature on coalitions. It then turns to describe the NGO and the peripheral movement before examining the record of their alliance as an example of transnational coalition campaigning. It concludes by examining one contentious area for coalitions, the reflection of power differences between coalition groups in the representation or claiming of joint actions.

Growth of transnational political activity

The last two decades have seen a huge growth in international and transnational political mobilisation by non-state actors variously described as global civil society (GCS) (Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor 2001), transnational social movements (TSMs) (Smith and Johnson 2002), transnational activism or transnational contention (della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Tarrow 2005), transnational advocacy networks (TANs) (Kekk and Sikkink 1998) or global social movements (GSMs) (Cohen and Rai 2000). This has prompted the appearance of a large social sciences literature, not just by scholars of social movements, but also of international politics and international relations (Wapner 1996), international political economy (Gills 2000), social policy (Yeates 2002), organisational studies and management. This growth in transnational political activity was associated with the spread of globalisation, both in the recognition that authority over various areas had moved from nation states to international institutions such as IFIs and regional formations such as the EU, and that regulation of commercial activity has increasingly moved away from state actors, leading to realistic presentations of the growth of private governance and to optimistic presentations of responses to such activity as global civil society or counter-hegemonic globalisation or globalisation from below.

While the initial response to this activity was positive and often close to uncritical, later work has problematised it, in particular questioning whether existing global inequality was reproduced in the new global networks: more realist analysts cast a colder eye on these movements, with the nature of relationships within transnational networks problematised (Jordan and Van Tuijl 2000) and voices were raised querying the virtualisation of struggles (Hellman 2000) and the lack of representativeness and accountability on the part of NGOs (Baur and Palazzo n.d.; Gray, Babbington and Collison 2006). Analysts focussed on imbalances in power and resources between core and peripheral members of these alliances, coalitions and networks, whether these coalitions involve prioritising core country over peripheral country goals, whether the search for transnational allies led peripheral movements to neglect local interests and whether within these coalitions and networks core country organisations exploited peripheral country organisations and

movements. These criticisms were mainly articulated in relation to NGOs, but were also raised in relation to other transnational alliances, such as People's Global Action (PGA), for example. Criticism of NGOs over accountability, representation and transparency came from both the left and the right, with some on the left seeing NGOs as 'agents of imperialism' (Bennett 2005:215; see also Petras 1999).

One aspect of this phenomenon was the growth of alliances between groups from core and peripheral countries. NGOs such as Oxfam, Amnesty and Greenpeace formed alliances with indigenous or peasant groups or mass people's movements in the periphery. Such alliances became ways for the peripheral movements to bring their concerns to fora outside the national arena in an attempt to bring transnational forces into the local equation on their side, in what has been described as 'forum shopping' or the 'boomerang effect' (Kekke and Sikkink 1998). These alliances have often involved dissension, disagreements and struggles over hegemony between the groups involved: as Jordan and Van Tiuijl (2000:2061) note 'relationships that emerge among NGOs engaged in global campaigns are highly problematic'.

Much of the literature consists of case studies, though broader and more inclusive reviews have begun to appear, including work attempting to integrate the perspectives of more than one subject area.² Bob (2005), for example, is mainly illustrated by two detailed case studies. Other case studies in the literature report a variety of arrangements and power relationships at variance with Bob's presentation of dominant core NGOs and subservient peripheral movements. There are examples in the literature of NGOs competing to be the main transnational representative for indigenous movements: for instance, in the case of opposition to mining in the Napali mountain range in India Kraemer, Whiteman and Banerjee (2010) report competition between Action Aid and Survival International to represent local indigenous interests. In other cases differing local social movements had different levels of power and influence in transnational coalitions. In the case of the biofuels/palm oil campaign, Pye (2010:863) reports 'the key role of WALHI [Indonesian environmental group] transnational activists in the campaign is not matched by similar influence by transnational activists from the peasant movement (i.e. SPI or La Via Campesina), the indigenous movement (i.e. AMAN) or the workers movement (i.e. FSPM or the IUF).'

The majority of contributions to the literature has concentrated on campaigns and coalitions whose aims were to influence policies of states, inter-state organisations or international financial institutions (Yanacopulos 2005). Less documented are struggles against corporations and business firms, though attention to this area of contention has grown: as Soule (2009:29) notes cautiously 'If scholarship on this topic is accurate, in the past few decades there has been an increase in activism directly targeting firms'. The area

² For example Soule 2009 attempts to integrate literature from both social movements and organisational studies, though primarily in the national context of the USA.

which has received most attention has been apparel, footwear and textiles: these are areas where attacks on products allow the threat of consumer actions such as boycotts, and impacts may be created by effects on share price and corporate reputation (Bartley and Child n.d.). Less work has been done on non-consumer product corporations: here the major target has been resource extraction corporations, particularly in forestry (Gritten and Mola-Yodego 2010), mining and oil (McAteer and Pulver 2009, Widener 2007).

One approach to this issue has been to examine relations between core country INGOs and peripheral country movements in market terms (Bob 2005). While this approach has the benefit of granting agency to peripheral movements (who are able to shop around for a suitable NGO) it may be limited by the emphasis it places on the more powerful structural position of core NGOs which are able to pick and choose from a large number of peripheral movements, only a small number of which can expect their causes to be taken up for campaigning purposes. A less harsh view of these relations is shown by the developing literature on coalitions which examines the formation and operation of coalitions, with the – at least partial - intention of recommending ways in which coalitions may function more efficiently and guard against the exploitation of weaker coalition members (Bandy and Smith 2005a).

Alliances with NGOs: the market approach

The growth of NGOs was crucial to the development of transnational activism. The early presentation of NGOs as principled international organisations involved in international norm-making and norm-enforcing activities was later balanced by a more critical view of them as interest-driven groups operating in a competitive environment. Lecy, Mitchell and Schmitz (2010: 229) note the change in one field of study: 'The majority of early studies in the academic field of international relations viewed advocacy organisations as altruistic actors seeking to advance universally accepted principles. More recent scholarship responding to the principled advocacy literature has argued that transnational non-governmental organisations (TNGOs) are better understood as interest-driven actors motivated primarily by the imperative of organizational survival in a competitive environment.' Lecy, Mitchell and Schmitz (n.d.: 6) critique the current literature as tending 'to reduce TNGO behaviour to either principled or instrumentalist motives, providing little insight into the complex decisions TNGOs continuously confront'.

A useful contribution was made by Bob (2005), characterising the search for NGO support in market terms, arguing that alliances between NGOs and local movements were characterised by power relations, with local struggles adapting themselves to fit the NGO agenda. The relationship between NGOs and local struggles appeared to reproduce core-periphery power relations on a micro scale, with NGOs utilising local struggles to advance their own agendas and local struggles competing with each other for NGO patronage. Bob argues

there are a multitude of local groups engaged in struggles around the world which are searching for overseas support and only a limited number of NGOs and solidarity groups providing this support. In this situation where the power balance between local groups and NGOs is skewed towards the international, power inequalities are inevitable. To put it bluntly, NGOs can pick and choose which local groups to support. Even with the best will in the world, NGOs are limited (due to resources) in the number of campaigns they can run and groups they can support. They will choose to support whichever local group(s) best fit their current requirements or priorities. Bob also emphasises the specific interests NGOs have. While he persistently reiterates that NGO decision-making takes place in an ethical context and NGO cadre care about and are motivated by their causes, he notes that NGOs are not the same as social movements:

NGOs at their roots are organizations – with all the anxieties about maintenance, survival, and growth that beset every organisation. In the formation of transnational relationships, these realities create frictions. No matter how cohesive their networks, local movements and transnational NGOs have distinct objectives, constituencies, and approaches, operate in disparate political settings, and are motivated by divergent needs (Bob 2005:14).

A further strand of the literature proposing a market approach to NGOs suggested that they be analysed as analogous to commercial firms. (Smillie 1995) Lecy, Mitchell and Schmitz (2010: 231) suggest that this analogy may be more appropriate to service NGOs than to advocacy NGOs. We are lucky to have an analysis of the NGO which is our subject, Greenpeace, (Ledgerwood and Broadhurst 2000) which treats Greenpeace as a transnational corporation (TNC), a franchising operation whose product line is environmental and which responded to over-expansion in the 1980s by following normal TNC restructuring practices: it cut costs, dropped unprofitable product lines and retrenched staff, while closing uneconomic national branch offices. While this analysis is useful, it cannot account for certain decisions which Greenpeace made: here the obvious example would be Greenpeace opposition to the first Gulf War, taken on ethical grounds, despite the organisation knowing that it would affect support in the USA.

We suggest that the intermediate position advanced by Lecy Mitchell and Schmitz is more useful: this sees resource issues and decisions as constraints on NGO operations, rather than as determining: 'advocacy organizations are driven by both a principled regard for mission accomplishment and a highly salient concern for organizational growth and survival... financial concerns represent a significant constraint, rather than a competing goal... Most scholarship subscribing to purely principled or self-interested views fails to take into account the long-term behaviour of organizations continuously balancing both concerns.' (Lecy Mitchell and Schmitz 2010:231). This chimes with Bob's position which allows for ethical decision-making.

A look at coalitions

Bob mainly looks at the relationship between one NGO and one local movement: the issues become more complicated when a coalition is involved. Here further perspectives are available in the literature on NGO coalitions, which have been studied nationally (Barasko 2010, Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001), bi-nationally (Brooks and Fox 2002, Fox 2002) and transnationally (Bandy and Smith 2005, Fox 2009, Kekk and Sikkink 1998, Tarrow 2005). While coalitions represent a threat to the 'brand image' of individual NGOs, a large number of NGOs nevertheless take part in coalitions for a variety of reasons, including increased effectiveness: 'allying with the like-minded may dramatically extend an advocacy organisation's reach and resources in addition to maximising opportunities for policy success.' (Barasko 2010:162). Coalition building is a popular and growing practice among NGOs. For the environmental field, there is evidence of strong coalition activity, both nationally and transnationally. Barasko (2010:170) reported 69% of surveyed environmental organisations in the USA participated in coalitions, an increase on Shaffer (2000:166) who reported 64% of surveyed environmental organisations in the USA often engaged in coalition activity. A survey of 248 environmental groups across 56 nations found 'a majority of NGOs say they are fairly active in exchanging information and in coordinating their activities with groups or agencies from other nations' (Rohrschneider and Dalton 2002: 519). However these authors also noted that 'these patterns of international action among environmental groups appear to follow many of the same asymmetries that are present in the international system. This is not a network of equals, with identical norms and goals as is often implied by the global civil society literature.' (Rohrschneider and Dalton 2002: 529). O'Neill and Van Deever (n.d.: 287) concur on this point: 'The large Northern groups, as compared to smaller and/or poorer groups in the South and the North, retain many of the instruments of hegemonic power within the arenas of transnational environmentalism: more funding, more voice, more access to state power, etc. To state the obvious, environmental NGOs can practice their own kinds of hegemonic domination of agendas and discourses.'

As the quote from Rohrschneider and Dalton shows, the literature on coalitions is alert to the problems implicit in the different levels of power and resources available to different coalition members. Here we may cite, as one issue, Doherty and Doyle's warning that 'we need to be aware of the financial dependence on transnational funding of most environmental organisations outside the wealthiest countries' (Doherty and Doyle 2006:699). Even in the case of transnational alliances that explicitly acknowledge and work towards removal of the power imbalances between core and peripheral groups, such as People's Global Action, core country activists still dominate the network (Wood 2005). Among other difficulties coalitions face 'it is often a challenge to develop mechanisms for mutual accountability and transparency' (Fox 2009:489).

The NGO – Greenpeace

Initially a social movement which grew out of the North American peace and environmental movements, Greenpeace grew in a haphazard fashion with the opening of independent offices in North America and Europe leading to conflict over control and direction of the organisation. This conflict was resolved in 1979 by the establishment of Greenpeace International in Amsterdam in 1979, after which Greenpeace developed into the centralised, hierarchical and professional organisation it is known as today. Currently Greenpeace reports that it is present in 40 countries across the world while, as of January 2009, 2.9 million people had taken out or renewed their financial membership in the previous 18 months³.

Greenpeace's international prominence is due to its successful interaction with the mass media through the production of highly visual and spectacular images of confrontation with environmental villains, first in the form of photo opportunities for the print media and later the production of high-quality video for television (Pearce 1996). Summarised in the phrase 'mindbombing the media', the importance of image production to Greenpeace's strategies can be seen in the heavy investment Greenpeace made to develop its own means of production. This enables Greenpeace to provide 'its own photographs to picture editors and has facilities to distribute, scripted and narrated video news spots to television stations in eighty-three countries within hours.' (Wapner 1996: 52)

Greenpeace membership peaked at just under five million in 1991 and then began to decline. (Eden 2004, Ledgerwood and Broadhurst 2000:91). Greenpeace over-expanded in the 1980s, leading to restructuring as markets contracted in the 1990s. (Ledgerwood and Broadhurst 2000:84-85). Greenpeace responded to this crisis as other TNCs did: by restructuring and outsourcing its operations in core countries while expanding into new and promising markets in peripheral countries: by closing down offices and cutting staff numbers; insisting that national offices in OECD countries become self-sufficient; adopting new fund-raising techniques pioneered by Greenpeace Austria, adopting solutions campaigning with a new approach to business and industry, expanding into new markets and abandoning some campaign areas. The crisis was not a unitary one and different national offices restructured at different times.

While Ledgerwood and Broadhurst emphasise business reasons, a more generous interpretation, emphasising the ethical context of Greenpeace decision-making, would see Greenpeace's expansion as an attempt to continue its struggle against pollution in new areas where pollution was increasing. In an interview in 2000, Greenpeace executive director Gerd Leopold explained that Asia and Latin America were priority areas for Greenpeace 'not only because environmental problems in Latin America and Asia are so prominent, but because economic development is becoming much stronger in these

³ <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/faq/> accessed 2/2/12.

regions. If we want to have an impact, that is where we have to work.' (Lasso 2005) Greenpeace was responding to the globalisation of toxic industry by globalising itself. Whether one accepts the more cynical or more charitable explanation, it is within this context that Greenpeace's embrace of the Bhopal struggle may be situated. Bhopal initially presented Greenpeace with one of its entry points to India, while also illustrating the dangers of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), against which Greenpeace was campaigning. However, when Greenpeace's involvement went global, other policy reasons were added. Greenpeace was able to use Bhopal as a prime example of the need for corporate accountability. Similarly Dow's involvement gave Greenpeace an additional motive for involvement, given the long history of conflict between Greenpeace and Dow. (Greenpeace 2011)

Greenpeace and coalitions

Greenpeace is generally seen as resistant to joining coalitions due to its desire to maintain its brand identity: for example, Rucht and Roose (2000:16) report Greenpeace Germany has a 'policy of keeping its brand name distinct and separate. As a rule, Greenpeace prefers to act on its own rather than to join alliances.' Yet Greenpeace increasingly engaged in coalition work during the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially in its engagements with regulatory and policy-making bodies such as the International Whaling Commission and the London Dumping Convention, and in campaigns against the ocean incineration of toxic waste (Bunin 1997), the dumping of toxic waste at sea (Parmentier 1999) the international trade in toxic waste (Smith 1999) and GMOs, where in the 1990s Greenpeace was a core group in major anti-GMO coalitions in Europe. (Ansell, Maxwell and Sicurelli, n.d.) What is interesting about Greenpeace's coalition work is that it was not confined to allying with other NGOs or local movements, but also extended to allying with governments of peripheral nations (Bunin 1997:80) and also with fractions of capital, both on policy issues (climate change, Hohnen 1999) and new product development (refrigerants, Hartman and Stafford 2006). We should note however that in most of these coalitions Greenpeace appears to have operated as the dominant group: it undertook actions and published reports in its own name and not in the name of the coalitions.

Coalition formation and other alliances were important in the expansion of Greenpeace globally. Eden (2004: 599) reported Greenpeace's expansion outside core North American and European areas was more successful when, as in Brazil and Argentina, it involved coalition with local environmental movements and organisations. Similarly Greenpeace India is reported as considering itself skilled in bringing together a variety of different interests in temporary coalitions (Bownas 2008: 11,12), while Thilo Bode Greenpeace executive director, opening the Bhopal campaign, said "We are happy to send our ship, the Rainbow Warrior, as Greenpeace's ambassador of peace to Gandhi's country. She will join hands with the gas victims of Bhopal in their demand for justice" (AFP 1999).

The local movement: the movement for justice in Bhopal (MJB)

The MJB arose in response to the toxic gas leak from a pesticides factory operated by an Indian subsidiary of the American TNC Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), which led to 7000-10,000 deaths immediately and a further 15,000 deaths over the following 20 years, while many of the half million exposed to the toxic gases suffered lingering illnesses. A settlement was reached between UCC and the government of India in 1989.

Dissatisfaction with the settlement, with the disbursement of compensation and with the inadequate medical and rehabilitation programmes were the main motivations behind the continuation of protest among the *gas peedit* (gas affected) of Bhopal. In 1999 a report by Greenpeace on toxic waste abandoned at the factory and resulting water contamination gave further impetus to the movement while the targeted TNC changed when Dow took over UCC (Amnesty International 2004).

The MJB has operated on three scales: locally in the city of Bhopal itself and in relation to the state government of Madhya Pradesh; nationally within India; and transnationally in a varied series of alliances targeting the responsible TNC, first UCC, then Dow Chemical. The movement developed in three stages (Sarangi 1996): the first stage of spontaneous protest was quickly followed by the formation of a broad front group, the Morcha. Following intense repression the Morcha demobilised and the movement became based on organisations of survivors with local leadership, in particular organisations of women working in workshops set up as part of the government rehabilitation programme, a large organisation (BGPMUS) and a small trade union (BGPMSKS) supplemented by a local claimants' union which extended its reach to include the gas-affected (Gas Peedit Nirashit Pension Bhogi Sangharsh Morcha -GPNPBSM) and later by youth organisations (Bhopal Ki Awaaz). Initially organised to deal with threats to rehabilitation programmes, the organisations extended their concerns to other issues involving gas victims, while they also operated in a clientelist manner, assisting survivors in their interactions with the state and the various bureaucracies. Groups intervened in legal cases, opposed the collusive settlement between the government and UCC, organised medical surveys and undertook a wide variety of protests using the full action repertoire of traditional Indian protests, including hunger strikes and long marches.

These groups were supported by the Bhopal Group for Information and Action (BGIA) which was a crucial initiator and supporter of national and transnational networks, while it also set up a health and documentation clinic, Sambhavna, with transnational financial support. The movement also received support from other Indian groups, such as the National Coordination Committee and student group We for Bhopal, as well as from the Indian radical health and science movements. None of the local Bhopal groups was dependant on transnational funding sources, with membership subscriptions providing the main funding source. While BGPMSKS eventually received

transnational funds when two of its leaders won the Goldman Prize, the prize money went not to BGPMSKS, but to set up a new organisation, The Chingari Trust. While Sambhavna was dependant on funds raised in England, Scotland and Wales, Sambhavna did not engage in political activity but confined itself to health work. Thus the grassroots nature of the Bhopal group and their integration with the local gas-affected population, ensured their survival without the need for transnational funding.

Coalitions and the MJB

As Zavestowski (2009:386) notes the MJB is one 'in which transnational activism is not simply a tool, but rather necessitated by the origins of a movement's grievance.' The Bhopal movement had to act transnationally because of the location of the culprit corporation in the USA. This need was reinforced when UCC pulled out of the Indian market and absconded from the Indian courts. The MJB was initially suspicious of foreign involvement: the first international efforts were organised in isolation from the movement in Bhopal, with NGOs in Asia and the US undertaking actions and setting up coalitions. Later a section of the MJB engaged in continuing transnational activity, mainly through the brokerage of the BGIA: this included the formation of Asian victim group networks, cooperation with US-based groups such as Communities Concerned About Carbide, formation of the International Medical Commission on Bhopal and mobilisation of the Permanent People's Tribunal to address environmental and industrial hazards. Thus by the time Greenpeace became involved, the MJB had extensive international coalition and network experience.

The campaign

Greenpeace's initial involvement with Bhopal was as a national aspect of its global POP campaign and as one of the issues taken up during the setting up of Greenpeace India. The campaign was initiated with the arrival of the *Rainbow Warrior* in Mumbai, the launching of the report on continuing toxic contamination of land and water in Bhopal and the Indian leg of the Asian Toxics Tour which took place from November 1999 to January 2000 coinciding with the 15th anniversary of the gas disaster and pinpointing three toxic hotspots in Ankleswar, Nandesari and Vapi. Thus Bhopal, while one of the main foci of the campaign, was not its exclusive focus: Greenpeace also produced less extensive reports on other toxic locations in India. Initially this led to the formation in India of a national coalition AaCcTt (Alliance Against Corporate Crime and Toxic Terrorism).⁴

⁴ This is described in footnotes to GP press releases as an international coalition including BGPMSKS, BGPNM, and BGIA (all Bhopal), Corpwatch, NCJB (Mumbai), TOM (New Delhi) and GP.

Greenpeace's involvement in Bhopal escalated from the national to the global level 'when Dow Chemicals took over UCIL, Greenpeace decided to ramp up the international campaign in 2001 with some global objectives on corporate campaigning and decided to make Bhopal part of its priority work on toxics.'⁵ According to Greenpeace during preparatory planning meetings in 2001, the ICJB was formed, with '5 local groups and over 35 international groups' involved.⁶ For Greenpeace, '[i]n the run-up to the Earth summit of 2002 in Johannesburg, the Bhopal campaign was the face of a global Greenpeace campaign calling for a global mechanism on corporate accountability'. Greenpeace's policy aim was the development of global and national legislation on corporate liability for hazardous chemicals: Bhopal represented an ideal example of the failure to impose liability on TNCs. Bhopal became the top focus of the international Greenpeace toxics campaign from 2000 to 2002, with a moderate estimate of resources devoted to the campaign by Greenpeace being half a million dollars. Similarly a cyberaction in Bhopal in August 2000 signalled the launching of the Greenpeace India website. As can be seen from these examples, in each case Greenpeace utilised Bhopal in the service of a broader Greenpeace campaign (just as later Bhopal was mobilised as an issue in the chemical plant safety and security campaign in the USA (Greenpeace 2004), where both Greenpeace and ICJB joined hands with other organisations in the No More Bhopals Alliance (NMBA 2004).

From the point of view of the development of the MJB, Greenpeace's involvement coincided with and contributed towards the mobilization of a new group of activists through the formation of the identity of *pani peedit* (water affected), joining the existing base of those identified as *gas peedit* (gas affected). (Scandrett and Mukherjee 2011:199-200). While the issue of water contamination had previously been raised both the year after the gas leak and later in April 1990 when the National Toxics Fund, Boston, issued a report prior to UCC's annual shareholders' meeting, with the Greenpeace report it became a new strategic focus of the movement, raising new issues of contention (such as site cleanup), as well as providing a new claim on the responsible TNC which was not addressed by the Government of India/UCC settlement, which Dow was using to claim the Bhopal issue had been resolved.

⁵ This quote, and all following quotes from Greenpeace, not otherwise referenced, comes from the response to a questionnaire on Greenpeace involvement in the Bhopal campaign provided by Zeina Ahmed, Toxics Organiser with Greenpeace.

⁶ There does not appear to be a full listing of ICJB members that give details of these 35 groups. In notes to Greenpeace press releases the following organisations are listed as ICJB members: Association for India's Development (Austin, Ann Arbor and Bay Area) (USA), BARC (USA), BGPMSKS (India), BGIA (India) Bhopal Information Network (Japan), Calhoun County Resource Watch, Seadrift (USA), Center for Health and Environment (USA), Corpwatch India (India), Essential Action (USA) Ecology Center of Michigan (USA), Environmental Health Fund (USA), Environmental Health Watch (USA), Justice for Bhopal, Ann Arbor (USA), NCJB (India), PAN (USA), TOM (India) CJB (England). It may be noted that none of these organisations are in any way comparable to Greenpeace in resources.

Figure 1: Greenpeace participation in the Bhopal campaign to January 2005

Date	India	Outside India
Pre-November 1999	Testing of soil, groundwater and wells in Bhopal by Greenpeace	
November 1999-January 2000	Greenpeace toxics tour in India	
	Greenpeace <i>Bhopal toxic legacy</i> report published	
August 2000	Greenpeace cyber action launched in Bhopal	
May 2002		Delegation from Bhopal tours USA
May 2002		Greenpeace launch Bhopal Principles of Corporate Accountability
August 2002		Bhopal raised at World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), action at Dow factory in South Africa by Greenpeace
October 2002		Survivors tour Europe with Greenpeace
November 2002	Greenpeace India 'No More Bhopals' Jatha ⁷	
18 November 2002	Containment action at solar evaporation ponds	
25 November 2002	Attempt to contain toxic waste leads to arrests	
January 2003		Protests at Dow facilities in Brazil, Honk Kong, Netherlands and Switzerland (R2S (Return to sender) of Bhopal toxic waste)
March 2003		Greenpeace deliver contaminated water to Dow, Houston
April/May 2003		Delegation from Bhopal tours the USA
November 2004		Greenpeace issues recommendations on site clean-up
January 2005		Greenpeace protest against Dow at WEF Davos

⁷ A jatha is a long march, usually aimed at spreading a message.

Greenpeace actions during the campaign showed the organisation's global reach. Previously Greenpeace had coordinated action on a European scale when, for example, in the 1980s 'to protest against acid rain, a Greenpeace team climbed the chimneys of power stations in Belgium, West Germany, Austria, Britain, Netherlands, Denmark, France and Czechoslovakia.' (Susanto 2007:11) Now Greenpeace's actions could claim to be global: contaminated material from Bhopal – ranging in size from bottles of water to barrels of toxic waste - were delivered to Dow in Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Thailand and the USA. Similarly Greenpeace's cleanup guidelines were presented to Dow in India, Europe and the USA on the same day in October 2002, while an exhibition of Raghu Rai's photographs debuted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa, before moving on to Italy and Switzerland with further stops planned for Argentina, China, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines and the USA. Greenpeace also undertook actions on Bhopal at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland (2005) and the World Social Forum in Brazil (2003). Thus Greenpeace's involvement extended the scale of the campaign from the transnational to the global.

There are different versions of how Greenpeace's involvement in the coalition ended. Zvestowski (2009: 400) reported 'the movement's relationship with Greenpeace was terminated after a number of incidences in which Greenpeace activists failed to respect the ICJB's request for Greenpeace's actions to be promoted under the banner of the ICJB.' According to Greenpeace 'Greenpeace never withdrew or stopped being a member of ICJB. But like other members of the ICJB, Greenpeace eventually stopped being proactive, due to other organisational priorities.' According to an ICJB source, Greenpeace's involvement was suddenly curtailed when funding for the campaign was switched to another campaign.⁸

In its avowed aim, to force Dow to take responsibility for the legacy of toxic waste and the resulting contamination at Bhopal, including cleaning up the site, the campaign failed. Greenpeace says 'the objective wasn't so much to change Dow's behaviour as it was to expose the company and highlight its irresponsibility...We wanted governments to take action to improve environmental regulations and to protect communities.' The first of these aims was successful but the second was less so, as the Global Compact agreed at the Earth Summit 2002 resulting from Greenpeace's campaigning was voluntary. Here we may see the differences between aims of the local movement and the NGO, which has larger fish to fry. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the local movement, the campaign succeeded in placing the issue on the agenda of UCC's new owners, Dow. Greenpeace's involvement and mobilisation of resources magnified the effectiveness of the local

⁸ Tim Enright, personal communication.

movement and gave it new weapons to pursue the TNC and the Indian government, in the shape of the Greenpeace contamination report.

Thus both sides used each other: the MJB used Greenpeace to obtain increased media attention for its cause, while Greenpeace used Bhopal to draw attention to policy issues such as POPs, toxic waste and corporate accountability. The MJB came out of the alliance with authoritative and legitimacy-enhancing reports on toxic contamination which they continued to use years after the alliance ended. This was another example of what is reported to be a key tactic of the MJB, forming a symbiotic relationship with the global anti-toxics movement: 'the global antitoxics movement could use the idea of Bhopal to push for regulation of industrial hazards and the rights of the victims of industrial disasters...While the global anti-toxics movement was using the Bhopal disaster to lobby for international standards, the Bhopal movement used the network of the global anti-toxics movement to ensure that the rest of the world would not forget the Bhopal disaster.' (Zavestoski 2009:391)

Problems within the coalition

Given that the MJBG is fragmented and fractious, with difficult relations between leaders of various groups (BSMS 2009), it is interesting that leaders of the two main groups have criticised Greenpeace, with BGIA's Sarangi reporting the relationship 'was ever fraught with tensions because Greenpeace's corporate structure offered no space to the needs and opinions of local organisations' (BSMS 2009:121), while the BGPMUS's Jabbar had the following to say: 'We have refused to work with Greenpeace in Bhopal for various reasons. We would have been quite happy if they had limited their involvement to technical and scientific expertise, and let the grassroots movement take the lead. But Greenpeace started to make statements on behalf of the movement with the intention of taking a lead. In a way Greenpeace used Bhopal to keep itself in the limelight.' (BSMS 2009:81). In response to such criticism Greenpeace accepts that 'some incidents...seem to have created tensions between Greenpeace and the ICJB representatives in Bhopal': however, it attributes these problems to individual personalities 'rather than any genuine attempts by any organisation to undermine the goals and/or strategic objectives of ICJB or Greenpeace'.

Claiming credit

The major problem within the coalition related to whether coalition actions were claimed in the name of the coalition or of Greenpeace: this was to be a consistent line of tension during Greenpeace's active involvement in the campaign, with arguments over the use of the Greenpeace or ICJB name and logo at different actions, with the ICJB objecting to Greenpeace's use of terms such as 'Greenpeace and local activists' and 'Greenpeace and Bhopal

survivors'. The issue was first raised during the formation of ICJB during which principles for working together and the varying roles of local, national and international organisations were agreed. The issue was raised again on several occasions and a written agreement was eventually produced in which varying arrangements for naming ICJB or Greenpeace were agreed in September 2002. However ICJB members criticised Greenpeace for not keeping this agreement. One major bone of contention arose in November 2002 when a joint action, in which Greenpeace and ICJB activists entered the factory premises to contain the toxic waste there, was reported as a Greenpeace action (AFP 2002).

These problems eventually led to MJB activists presenting written statements to cooperating Greenpeace groups on the issue in advance of some joint actions:

'Radhida Bi presented the Greenpeace activists with the following text before the action in the Netherlands on Jan 7th as a condition of participation. "It has long been decided, and confirmed yet again at the ICJB meeting on September 7, 2002 at Bhopal [in which XX from Greenpeace International and XX, XX⁹ from Greenpeace India were present] that ALL events and activities organized on the issues of Bhopal disaster in which Bhopal organization's representatives are participating will have to be organized under the banner of ICJB [not 'Greenpeace and Bhopal activists' nor 'Greenpeace and Bhopal survivors' – none of that please]. ALL press releases, photos, banners, statements to the media for the events in Europe MUST be accordingly made. Please sign these papers so we know you have read and understood the contents. If you disagree with this, please note that down too."

Greenpeace members kept the statement with them but did exactly what the above text forbade during the Netherlands action. The banners in the Netherlands stated "People of Bhopal and Greenpeace" and the press release went so far as to describe Rashida Bi as one of the Greenpeace activists'. (Extract from email from ICJB February 2002)

While undoubtedly Greenpeace are not responsible for exactly what gets reported by the press, Greenpeace strongly influence this by issuing press statements. Therefore, I examined GP press statements to see if coalition complaints regarding branding were justified. Following advice from Zeina Ahmed, current Toxics Organiser with Greenpeace, I used Google to search the Greenpeace international archive on Monday May 2, 2011 under the headings Bhopal and press release producing 207 results. In typical Google fashion as the search was implemented these results were reduced to 168 as Google omitted some entries it described as very similar to the 168 displayed. When Google allowed the chance to access all 207 results, including those which it had omitted, the search again came to a halt at 174. Of these results

⁹ Names of Greenpeace cadre omitted to avoid personalisation of issue.

only press releases were downloaded for analysis, and when press releases which cited Bhopal in other contexts were removed, 60 press releases remained for analysis.

When the main text of these releases, including photo captions but excluding notes, was analysed for mentions of organisations, Greenpeace was mentioned 234 times, Bhopal survivors, survivors' organisations and similar terms were mentioned 93 times, the ICJIB was mentioned 58 times, BGPMSKS 13 times, BGIA 7 times, AaCcTt 5 times, National Coalition for Justice in Bhopal and Bhopal Ki Awaaz 4 times each, Sambhavna and BGPMUS two times each, and We for Bhopal and GPNPBSM once each.

Ms Ahmad gave an example of Greenpeace signing its press releases with a note to editors that Greenpeace is a member of the ICJB. However, while this practice was followed in some of the press releases examined, they were a minority: this occurred in relation to AaCcTt 4 times and ICJB 13 times. Thus less than a third of press releases contained coalition information in their notes. Furthermore, while academics might be expected to pay attention to such footnotes, we may expect busy news editors do not.

Finally I examined the sources of quotes in the press releases, to see whose voice was privileged to speak. Here again Greenpeace predominated with 72 quotes from Greenpeace cadre, followed by 23 quotes from BGPMSKS leaders, 9 from "survivors", 5 from the BGIA, 3 from the ICJB and one each from BGPMUS, Bhopal Ki Awaaz, Sambhavna, National Campaign for Justice in Bhopal and GPNPBSM. The predominance of quotes from BGPMSKS sources may be attributed to the higher international standing of that organisation after its leaders won the Goldman Prize.

Figure 2: Analysis of Greenpeace press releases

	Mention of organisations	Quotes from organisations
Greenpeace	234	72
Generic terms	93	9
ICJB	58	3
BGPMSKS	13	23
BGIA	7	5
AaCcTt	5	
NCJB	4	1
Bh Ki Awaaz	4	1
BGPMUS	2	1
Sambhavna	2	1
We for Bhopal	1	
GPNPBSM	1	1

Our analysis of Greenpeace press releases confirms there is a basis for ICJB complaints regarding Greenpeace attempts to claim for itself credit for coalition actions as well as for complaints regarding the elision of the coalition identity and identity of local Bhopal groups behind generic descriptions (Bhopal survivors etc.) which reduce local activists to auxiliaries of Greenpeace. Mentions of Greenpeace (234) outnumber mentions of others components in the campaign (190): when the latter are disaggregated, we find the number of generic descriptors (93) is almost the same as the number of specific mentions of organisation or of the coalition (97). It is obviously less possible to follow similar strategies in describing sources for quotes in generic terms but even here – where local sources for quotes would expect to be in demand for describing the disaster’s effects - there was almost double the number of quotes by local organisation leaders attributed to Greenpeace cadre, with 72 quotes from Greenpeace cadre, 36 from specifically identified organisations and 9 from generic descriptions.

Discussion

We can look at what was in contention here from either Bob’s perspective of the interaction between powerful NGOs and local movements or from the perspective of the literature on coalitions. Whichever perspective we embrace, it is obvious that there is a major imbalance of resources within the coalition, with Greenpeace’s estimated half a million dollar investment of a much higher order than the resources any of the other coalition partners could mobilise. In the first case what is at issue is hegemony over the campaign: to a certain extent the issue of Bhopal was being annexed by Greenpeace from the local movement. We can see the demands of the local ICJB groups for identification as the owners of the campaign as a desire to avoid a situation where local groups lose their name, their identity and autonomy and simply become auxiliaries of Greenpeace.

In the context of coalition politics, what we are seeing is a tussle over the agreed rules of the coalition. In this case the local movement has set up basic conditions for all groups participating in the coalition and, in response to what it sees as repeated violations of this agreement, has attempted to enforce these rules by sanctioning a powerful transnational ally. Our example also shows the difficulty in enforcing sanctions in coalitions voluntarily entered into. The February 2002 email quoted above was signed by all other ICJB groups: while an apology was received from Greenpeace, the organisation again broke the agreement. The question arises how sanctions (or agreements) can be enforced if one member of a coalition continues to break the agreed rules? In our case the coalition continued without successfully resolving the problem. What is interesting from both these perspectives is that despite the asymmetries of power between the NGO and the local movement and between the different groups in the coalition (whether AaCcTt or ICJB) the less powerful group was happy to sanction the more powerful NGO.

We suggest two reasons for this behaviour on the part of the local movement. The first would be the long history of transnational coalition-building the MJB has, compared with other movements relatively unexposed to and inexperienced in working with such coalitions. The local movement was not dependent on Greenpeace as a transnational partner, as it also had other transnational partners with whom it could work. Thus, even during Greenpeace's most strenuous period of involvement, the ICJB also formed temporary action coalitions with other NGOs, such as the Barrage Dow Day organised for 10 May 2010 by the ICJB and INFACT, while the following day's protest at Union Carbide's annual general meeting involved INFACT and other groups. At the same time the movement was searching for alliances within the anti-globalisation movement, with speakers at Social Fora in Prague (2000), Naples (2002), Hyderabad (2003) and Mumbai (2004). Similarly when Greenpeace's changed priorities led to its withdrawal from active involvement in the ICJB the coalition moved on to involvement with another major TNGO, Amnesty International. In another example, Soule (2009: 122) reports 'In 2003 students from the University of Michigan travelled to the homes of Dow executives (for instance, then CEO William Stavropoulos) and presented them with contaminated water from Bhopal in the hope of encouraging Dow to clean up the site.'

Secondly we may note in relation to the resources available to the NGO and the local movement, the latter has major symbolic capital through the unique nature of the injustice it is attempting to remedy. While Greenpeace had the advantages of a major INGO, ICJB had control over local resources, which were essential both for legitimacy purposes and for access to toxic material from the contaminated site for the campaign. (Access to toxic waste in Bhopal for return to Dow was dependant on cooperation from local organisations.) The involvement of Bhopal survivors granted Greenpeace's actions legitimacy, while also supporting Greenpeace's policy positions. Here the unique nature of Bhopal as the world's largest industrial disaster favoured the power of local groups in the transnational network: Greenpeace were unable to replace Bhopal as the world's number one industrial disaster in the way one indigenous community opposing oil exploration could be substituted for another.

This case study functions to qualify Bob's suggestion that hegemony in NGO/local movement alliances rests largely with the NGO: indeed, local struggles may be increasingly of importance to NGOs for legitimacy and expansion purposes. From the point of view of coalitions, the story of the ICJB confirms that one of the major areas of contention within transnational coalitions is over branding, i.e. in whose name actions are taken. It suggests that, as well as varying resources (cadre, funds, research capabilities) groups in transnational coalitions also possess something equivalent to cultural or social capital which we may call 'struggle capital' or 'legitimation capital': this gives otherwise weaker coalition partners in peripheral countries greater bargaining power with core country partners in transnational alliance and coalition formation and operation.

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