

Going local: Calls for local democracy and environmental governance at Jumbo Pass and the Tobeatic Wilderness Area

Mark C. J. Stoddart and Howard Ramos

Abstract

Social movement and world society literatures argue that activism is increasingly becoming transnational, if not global. However, recent literature on environmental governance and local citizenship argue otherwise. Instead, these literatures find that the 'local' is valorized. We examine the ways in which Canadian environmental movements make use of 'the local' as they mobilize against the Jumbo Glacier Resort development in British Columbia, and Off-Highway Vehicle Use in the Tobeatic Wilderness, Nova Scotia. Using data from interviews with core environmental activists, environmental organization websites, and content analysis of media coverage, we explore why activists seek local governance and use local tactics. These cases show that the appeal of the local is rooted in the scale of the environmental problem, perceived exclusion from environmental governance, and the potential for successful mobilization in the local context.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, notions of globalization, world society, and transnational relations have increasingly dominated the pages of sociology journals. These concepts have also driven the bulk of new research on social movements and contentious politics (della Porta 2005; della Porta et al. 2006; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith and Wiest 2012). A recent search of the keyword combination 'social movement' and 'local,' versus 'social movement' and 'transnational' on SocIndex, a leading sociological search engine, showed that well over two times the number of articles retrieved mention social movement and transnational over social movement and local (see Appendix 1). Yet, when the same keywords were run on a Google search, the world's leading English language search engine, we find the opposite. In fact, we find that over five times the number of hits for local over transnational while also mentioning social movement. If the term global is used instead, the difference is much less stark but the term local still has more hits. Those familiar with the concerns of the Global Justice Movement (GJM) or of environmental movements would likely not be surprised by the popularity of the 'local' given that activists of both movements tend to valorize the concept and use it to promote alternatives to neoliberal forms of globalization (Adkin 2009; Park 2012). Their emphasis is often on consensus building as well as deliberative and participatory forms of local governance and democracy situated against policies imposed by national and international institutions that disregard the experiences and needs of

everyday people. Overall, these differences illustrate a disconnection between sociologists and the public at large, an observation echoed by Burawoy (2004).

The difference in focus is well documented by McAdam et al. (2005), who examined 1,000 Chicago-area protest events between 1970 and 2000, and found that social movement theory creates a distorted lens of everyday activism, which tends to be local in nature. Similarly, Andrews and Caren (2010) analyzed environmental organizations and environmental news coverage in North Carolina and found that localism works as a key criterion of social movement newsworthiness. They conclude that issues of concern and movement-media dynamics differ considerably between the national and local scales. They encourage researchers to move beyond analysing only prominent national organizations and media outlets to also consider the more numerous, and less exceptional, organizations and media that cater to municipal and state politics.

It is thus important for social movement scholars not to lose sight of local and small scale movements and to analyze why activists appeal to the local rather than national, transnational, or global scales. When movements 'go local' they operate in micro-political contexts, contest immediate municipally based grievances, and target municipal, regional, and provincial (or state) political actors. Our analysis engages these issues by looking at two local Canadian environmental conflicts over the proposed Jumbo Glacier Resort development in British Columbia and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use in the Tobetic Wilderness in Nova Scotia. We focus on comparing these two cases because they provide instructive examples of environmental movements that have successfully worked within local and provincial social milieu, rather than focused their attention on national or global political and public spheres. Our intention is not to measure the efficacy of their strategies and decisions to scale down rather than scale up, but rather to explore how going local operates in everyday activism and to illustrate why activists chose this route. Using data from news coverage, environmental organization websites, and interviews with core activists we show that the scale of an environmental problem, perceived exclusion from environmental governance, and the ability to achieve outcomes at the local level all contribute to whether or not activists 'go local.'

Going global or going local?

Since at least the 1990s, sociologists have theorized notions of globalization and transnational relations, and have used these concepts to understand changes in almost all social spheres (Steger 2003; Waters 1995). Some have argued that globalization and transnational relations have changed the scale of cultural identities (e.g. Castells 2004; Featherstone 1990; Melucci 1996), others argued they have engendered the rise of international political institutions and new forms of governance (e.g. della Porta 2005; Meyer 2000; Montpetit 2003), and yet others show that they have shifted the frames of social problems to global injustices (della Porta et al. 2006; Thorn 2007). In his recent plenary address, ISA president Michael Burawoy (2012) argued that contemporary social

movements work to bridge local and global concerns and political scales. The environment has been no exception, and it too has been characterized as a transnational problem (Macnaughten and Urry 1998; Spaargaren et al. 2006) as seen with concerns over global warming or biodiversity loss.

Scholars of contentious action and social movements have followed suit, devoting countless articles and books to transnational issues and actions. With the rise and expansion of neoliberalism during the 1980s, and its intensification after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, many social justice grievances shifted from individual nation-states to transnational regions of the globe. This is demonstrated by mobilization against international economic forums and policies, such as protest against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Smith 2007), the North American Free Trade Agreement (Ayres 1998), and institutions like the G7-G8-G20, European Union, or the World Economic Forum (Pianta and Marchetti 2007). The shifting scale of grievances can also be seen in a number of other movements, including Indigenous struggles (Khasnabish 2008) or the human rights and environmental movements (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Increasingly, a range of grievances and movements are united under the Global Justice Movement (GJM) banner, which is seen as an umbrella movement of movements (della Porta 2007).

Activists, NGOs, and interest groups have increasingly re-packaged their issues as transnational (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005). Tilly and Tarrow (2007) call this scale shift and argue that it is a process whereby social movement action moves outwards from local sites of action. Although they recognize it can occur by scaling down, which is a fragmentation of large-scale mobilization, much more attention is offered to scaling upward and this is in line with recent attention to the rise of transactional activist networks. Scaling up or going transnational allows activists to tap into a wider range of resources and political opportunities. The rise of new communications technology and increased travel produces transnational, if not global, ties. Some argue that this has increased the currency of information, sparking an age of 'information politics' (Castells 2000, 2004; Keck and Sikkink 1998), where naming and shaming, observing, and producing counter-hegemonic positions are core tactics.

Information politics are largely sustained through international networks and are linked to international organizations, such as those associated with the UN. They also create a transnational civil society and lead to the diffusion of information, grievances, and tactics (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Tarrow 2005). Much of this literature does not view globalization or transnational activism as replacing local or national contentious action, but views it as a new set of opportunities for movements to amplify their grievances to a wider audience. Domestic actors gain the ability to circumvent local authorities by shifting scales. Keck and Sikkink (1998) call this a 'boomerang effect,' where nation-states face pressure from international authorities and other states because activists tap into transnational networks and opportunities. Bob (2005),

however, shows that not all movements are equally successful at producing this scale shift. Smith (2007, p. 314) also cautions that many transnational activists are concerned with the 'democratic deficit' of international institutions. This leads some to conclude that the turn to international authorities has led many activists to valorize national and local sites of action in response (Park, 2012). This is especially the case with issues of governance and citizenship participation.

At the same time that transnational and global pressures have challenged nation-states as citizenship regimes, nation-states have also faced internal challenges. Many have noted the increasing importance of 'sub-politics,' which includes ongoing political participation through social movements and interest groups as vehicles for social change, rather than engaging representative democracy through party politics (Beck 1992; Castells 2004). Benjamin Barber (1995) cautions that globalization challenges democratic governance and exacerbates nationalism and ethnic conflict. He recognizes that transnational capitalism does not require democratic governance, an observation echoed by GJM activists who call for 'globalization from below' and demand new participatory forms of governance (della Porta et al. 2006). Likewise, in addition to ecological protection, many environmentalists are interested in fostering new forms of citizenship that are 'participatory, expansive, solidaristic, and ecological' (Adkin 2009, p. 4). Some even contend that the environmental movement may pose the biggest threat to global capitalism (Sklair 2002, 275). As environmentalists pursue ecological wellbeing they increasingly demand more local democracy that includes meaningful deliberation, the voices of everyday people, and consensus.

Some argue that non-state actors are gaining increasing access to – and power within -- processes of environmental governance, particularly in the spheres of public lands and protected areas management (Bardati 2009; Betsill and Bulkeley 2006; Mascarenhas and Scarce 2004; Parkins and Davidson 2008). Analyses of 'policy networks' shows that environmental policy-making is not limited to national governments and involves an increasingly wide range of actors, including all levels of government, industry representatives, social movements, scientific experts, and ordinary citizens (Compston 2009; Montpetit 2003). There are new opportunities for social movements in governance processes and new opportunities for participatory democracy. At the same time, several researchers observe that social movement engagement in environmental governance processes is bound by the need to adhere to the market-based logic of neoliberalism (Adkin 2009; Gareau 2012; Goldman 2007). However, few have fully engaged questions of why activists pursue local opportunities.

A number of academic literatures engage issues of local democracy and governance. These issues, however, are often missed by social movement scholars. Research on local democracy is largely found in urban planning, geography, and political science. Much of this literature attempts to clarify notions of democracy, participation, and governance (e.g. Bucek and Smith

2000; Haus and Sweeting 2006; Melo and Baiocchi 2006). A key focus is on deliberative processes that involve participation by local citizens. Much of the literature focuses on cities as sites of local democracy and governance (e.g. Betsill and Bulkeley 2006; Boudreau 2003; Isin 2000; Purcell 2006). There is next to no literature on smaller locales, like neighborhoods or rural areas. Another common observation is the increasing role of social movements, NGOs, and public interest groups, which Bucek and Smith (2000) call the 'third sector,' in the facilitation of participatory democracy.

The appeal to the local, however, is not without its critics. Purcell (2006) warns against the 'local trap,' which is more open and participatory than at larger scales but less influential (also see Parkins and Davidson 2008). Park (2012) similarly notes that the valorization of the local comes at the cost of cosmopolitanism and openness. Others warn that it is important not to overstate the powers of either locales or the federal and transnational scales. In many countries, power and governance operates at the meso level, that of provinces or sub-states, a political sphere neglected by many activists and social movement scholars (Boudreau 2003). As a result, for our purposes we treat the local polity and democracy as including micro and meso politics of municipalities and regions or provinces as well as the processes at these levels that incorporate the voices of people living in them.

In the remainder of the paper we thus ask: Why do environmental activists 'go local'? We answer this question by looking at looking at two Canadian environmental conflicts, one over a proposed ski resort development in British Columbia and the other over Off-Highway Vehicle use in the Tobetic Wilderness in Nova Scotia. Although both cases are regional, receiving little national or international attention, they provide important insights on why activists demand local participation in democracy and governance.

Methodology

We engage the question of why movements 'go local' with a mixed-methods approach that combines textual analysis of news media coverage and environmental activist web sites with semi-structured interviews with core members of local environmental organizations.

The textual analysis of news coverage includes articles published in major Canadian national and provincial newspapers. We look at two national newspapers, the *Globe and Mail*, which is viewed as centrist in political orientation and the *National Post*, viewed as more conservative. Both papers have a wide circulation with average daily print circulations of 315,272 and 156,646 respectively. In addition, we examine two regional papers, the *Vancouver Sun* and *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, with average daily circulation rates of 175,572 and 107,353 respectively (Canadian Newspaper Association 2009).

The Factiva database was used to sample 132 articles from the four newspapers. Keywords were selected in order to return the broadest range of articles

possible. A keyword search of the terms ‘Jumbo Pass,’ ‘Jumbo Glacier,’ and ‘Jumbo Resort’ produced a sample of 25 articles about Jumbo Pass (16 from the *Globe and Mail* and nine from the *National Post*), published between 1983 and 2009 (23 of these were published between 2003 and 2009). A similar keyword search for the term ‘Tobeatic’ produced a sample of only nine articles (eight from the *Globe and Mail* and one from the *National Post*), published between 1992 and 2005. Factiva was also used to produce a sample of ten articles on Jumbo Pass from the *Vancouver Sun*, published between 2002 and 2005, as well as 88 articles on the Tobeatic from the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, published between 1999 and 2009. Every article was checked to confirm it dealt with land use in the Jumbo Pass and Tobeatic regions and all relevant texts were analyzed.

An internet ethnography was also carried out, focusing on twelve websites produced by environmental organizations cited in news coverage of the conflicts. This approach involves treating the internet as a research field and creating detailed notes based on observation of the websites. (A list of organizations examined can be obtained by correspondence with the authors.) A semi-structured protocol was used to guide note-taking on the websites, with a concentration on movement claims, key words, and imagery used on home pages and throughout the websites. Notes also focused on protest tactics, whether the websites reflected news media discourse, and the use of web-links. Website observation and note-taking was carried out by a graduate student research assistant between November 2009 and February 2010.

Newspaper articles and website notes were imported into NVivo software and were manually coded and analyzed. Representatives from each of the environmental organizations cited in the textual analysis were contacted and asked to participate in interviewing.

Interviews were carried out with five Jumbo Pass and three Tobeatic activists. All interview participants were ‘core’ activists who dedicated a significant amount of time, effort and emotional investment to these organizations. Interviews with core activists were semi-structured and questions were formulated on the analysis of news articles and websites. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and were carried out between March and May 2010.

Participants describe different routes to becoming involved in the Jumbo Pass and Tobeatic conflicts. The most common narrative was personal recreational experiences in Jumbo Pass or the Tobeatic Wilderness that were central to deciding to become involved in campaigns to protect them. The core activists who participated in interviews largely had a “preservationist” orientation to environmentalism, with a broad emphasis on the value of wildlife and wilderness protection, and appreciation for environmental science (Brulle 2009). At the same time, they were also “democratic pragmatists” that value of citizen engagement, public consultation, and dialogical forms of policy-making (Dryzek 1997). There was little evidence that core activists interviewed held other key environmental standpoints, such as deep ecology, environmental justice, ecofeminism, or ecological modernization.

We next turn to an analysis of news media, website, and interview data to explore why activists ‘go local.’ Overall, we find that environmental activists demand local democracy and governance when the scale of the environmental problem is immediate and not readily translatable outside a specific context, when they perceive a failure of participatory democracy and governance, and when successes can be found in local and regional institutions.

Results

The scale of the environmental problem

Both cases are Canadian environmental conflicts where environmental organizations and activists have appealed to local decision making, governance, and democracy. The Jumbo Glacier Resort conflict centers on the proposed construction of a ski resort in south-eastern British Columbia. The area where the resort would be built is public land that is not part of any protected area, though it is in close proximity to the protected Purcell Wilderness Conservancy. Conflict over the development has been ongoing for over 20 years. The dispute involves resort developers, the provincial government, environmental organizations, activists, and local residents. A major point of conflict is the resort’s potential impact on local wildlife, particularly grizzly bear populations. Other environmental concerns relate to impacts the development will have on glaciers and glacier-fed creeks and rivers as well as the environmental impacts road construction will have on the region’s eco-system.

For example, a 2004 *National Post* article summarizes contention over the resort as follows:

Environmental groups like the Jumbo Creek Conservation Society complain the development would disturb a wilderness area and disrupt the local grizzly bear population. There is a lot of support for those ideas among local residents. Many communities are also concerned they would end up footing the bill for improvements to roads and other infrastructure that would be necessary if the resort goes ahead (Greenwood 2004, FP5).

Environmental organization websites also focus on grizzly bear impacts as the key ecological risk posed by the development, arguing that grizzly bear research in the area is flawed, and that mitigation plans for grizzly displacement are inadequate (Jumbo Creek Conservation Society 2009; Valhalla Wilderness Society 2009; Wildsight 2009). The websites also argue that new resort development makes little sense as climate change is shrinking glaciers in the area, and that the resort will contribute to water pollution in downstream creeks and rivers (Jumbo Creek Conservation Society 2009). Similarly, a core activist sums up their organization’s concerns with the ski resort as follows: ‘We’re very concerned about loss of wildlife habitat, we are very concerned about any damage that might occur to the watersheds up there. ... We also claim that this

is nothing more than a land grab to get cheap crown land at tax payers' expense for real estate development' (Jumbo 02).

None of these environmental concerns translate to global threats, not to mention ones that resonate nationally. While environmental websites link the development to climate change, this is done with reference to the local impacts of climate change, rather than defining the resort as a contributor to this global issue. As a result, the scale of the environmental grievances that environmental organizations and activists are engaging is regional and local. Much of activists' efforts are based on getting the provincial government to amend its position with respect to the resort. Until March 2012, environmentalists were successful in stalling the development, but then the provincial government granted approval for the resort. Appeals to local politics and process have been key elements of the Jumbo Resort conflict, which we expand upon in the next section.

Environmentalists' concerns over the Tobeatic Wilderness are different. Rather than being conflict ridden, they are more focused on processes of environmental management. The Tobeatic has long been a popular destination for canoeing, hunting and fishing, with professional outfitters operating as tourist guides. It also contains rare remnants of old growth forests. The main target of environmental mobilization has been Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use because it damages vegetation and contributes to pollution. Noise pollution from OHV's may also disrupt local wildlife, including endangered species like mainland Nova Scotia moose and Blanding's turtles. After several years of environmental activism and public consultation, the Tobeatic Wilderness was designated as a protected area in 2006, with the introduction of a provincial "wilderness management plan."

A 2006 op-ed piece written by members of the Ecology Action Centre was published in the Halifax *Chronicle-Herald* shortly before the provincial government released the final management plan for the Tobeatic. The op-ed summarizes the issue as follows:

Later this month, the government will have the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to nature conservation when it releases the long-awaited management plan for the Tobeatic, the largest wilderness area in the Maritimes. A strict prohibition on OHV use, consistent with the recommendations of the OHV Task Force and the Tobeatic Advisory Group, needs to be front and center ... To do anything less would be to go backwards ... (Plourde and de Gooyer 2006, A7).

Environmentalist-produced web content also focuses on the ecological harms of OHV use, including soil and vegetation damage, and air and water pollution (Sierra Club of Canada 2010; Tobeatic Wilderness Committee 2010). A core activist describes the reasons why OHV use should be excluded within the Tobeatic as follows:

I think that when you go on an ATV [All-Terrain Vehicle], first of all, you've got an engine running and you can't hear the beauty, the interaction of the birds, and the wind in the trees and the leaves and everything. And secondly, it scares all the wildlife away. And then they damage all the trails that they're on if they cross them when they're muddy. So I would just prefer to have the ATVers stay on the roads (Tobeatic 01).

While environmental websites value canoeing and other forms of non-motorized recreation, they generally call for the exclusion of motorized recreation and permanent structures in the wilderness area (Tobeatic Protection Alliance 2010; Tobeatic Wilderness Committee 2010).

These environmental grievances center on the Tobeatic region and are not transnational threats. Like the Jumbo Resort conflict, much of the focus of environmental activists is on regional and local politics. The Tobeatic was protected through a Protected Areas Management Plan in 2006, and much attention was on how activists could participate in its governance. In both cases environmental organizations and activists have paired environmental concerns with demands for local participation in environmental governance. The scale of the environmental grievances is local and in both cases appealing to local political opportunities has come with rewards. In the next section, we expand on demands for democracy and local governance.

Demands for democracy and local governance

Local decision making and public consultation are highly valued in both cases, but in different ways. In the Jumbo Resort conflict activists are concerned that the development will be imposed on their community without consultation and despite broad opposition. In the Tobeatic case local decision making is prized because of the political opportunities that public consultation processes introduced to environmental governance in the region.

The importance of local decision making in the Jumbo Resort conflict can be seen in a 2005 *Globe and Mail* article, which noted that:

The proposed development at Jumbo Glacier has already stirred considerable controversy in the Kootenays, where thousands of people have signed petitions, calling it an unwanted commercial intrusion into a wilderness area. But despite those protests, the project got a major push forward... (Hume 2005, S1).

Websites run by local environmental organizations reflect the same concern. For example, the Jumbo Creek Conservation Society and Wildsight routinely link the environmental problem with calls to 'keep the Jumbo decision local,' which is viewed as more democratic than provincial decision making that is responsible for approval of the development (Jumbo Creek Conservation Society 2009; Wildsight 2009).

Like the news coverage and websites, activists also herald the importance of local decision making. One participant asserts that opposition to the resort is not limited to a small group of dedicated environmentalists, but is grounded in widespread local concern that people in the region are being ignored. As one activist reported:

We are talking about thousands and thousands of people writing tens of thousands of letters over two decades saying we don't want this because, and there are thousands of different reasons. So that's the local level opposition (Jumbo 03).

Another felt that local decision making about the development was as a 'matter of paramount importance':

There have been many polls and surveys and the responses have come in every time between the mid-sixties and the nineties of those who were in opposition to it. So there's been a long term and a very general opposition to the whole project ... (Jumbo 01).

Activists in the Jumbo case view local decision making as something that has been denied, which they perceive as an affront to democracy. The lack of participation in governance is seen as a wrong that must be overcome and motivates much of their activism.

The importance of local decision making is also emphasized in the Tobeatic case. A *Chronicle Herald* article, for instance, describes the Tobeatic Advisory Group as follows:

In the fall of 2002, the Environment Department, responsible for wilderness protection policy, said the Tobeatic advisory group would collect ideas, concerns and solutions from the public as a first step toward creating a strategy for the wilderness area (Medel 2004, A5).

Whereas the provincial government was seen as denying local participation and decision making in the Jumbo case, it was viewed as a generator of political opportunities in the Tobeatic case. The provincial government not only initiated the advisory group, but also a series of public consultation sessions to engage the public in dialogue about the future of the region ('Deadline Extended for Consultation' 2004; 'N.S. Invites Comments on Tobeatic Plan' 2002).

When conflict with government emerges in the Tobeatic case, it is not because it fails to incorporate citizens, but instead because of delays in process. For instance, letters to the editor in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* repeatedly express concerns with the provincial government 'dragging its feet' on finalizing

and implementing the management plan that was formulated through the Tobeatic Advisory Group and public input processes (Dodaro 2006; Hutt 2006; Smith 2006).

Environmental organization websites reflect the same concerns. The provincial government is accused of stretching out the timeline to create a management plan, making decisions behind closed doors, and failing to make information open to the public (Sierra Club of Canada 2010; Tobeatic Protection Alliance 2010; Tobeatic Wilderness Committee 2010). Again, the concern is not about outright exclusion, but instead on more meaningful and timely participation. Whereas environmental organizations in the Jumbo case are positioned against the British Columbian provincial government in their demands for local decision making, in the Tobeatic case organizations are positioned with the provincial government.

As one activist describes the Tobeatic governance process, ‘The whole process was meant to include a broad spectrum, geographically [of the five counties bordering the Tobeatic] as well as ideologically, and I think that was important’ (Tobeatic 01). Despite publicly expressing misgivings about government delays in the media and on organization websites, in interviews activists appreciate the ways in which public consultation and local participation were integrated into environmental governance for the Tobeatic. Much of activists’ talk centers on the Tobeatic Advisory Group, which is valued because it brought together a diversity of perspectives in a face-to-face setting at a local level. The long timeline of the process and animosity with OHV users are discussed, but the TAG process is viewed in a positive light despite these shortcomings. It was a process initiated and facilitated by government, and it provided space for local stakeholders to shape the ecology of the region. As one core activist describes the TAG:

It was very lengthy ... it was a long process and anything that is a process that’s worthwhile is probably lengthy. And very important in terms of saying that there was a collaboration. Even if there were people who went away and said we didn’t get what we wanted or were angry about this, even though maybe people felt that they weren’t well represented they still were represented (Tobeatic 01).

While environmentalists generally emphasize the importance of local democracy, some speak of the Tobeatic as a place whose protection is in the interests of the ‘greater good of all Nova Scotians’ (Jackson 2006, A1). There was some frustration for activists from outside the local area who were excluded, but who understood the Tobeatic as a place of ‘provincial significance.’ As one core activist noted, ‘It should not just be local input, the management plan ... [The] consultation was only with local groups, so our organization, which has over a thousand members and is province wide, was not allowed to participate in that planning process and we felt we had a legitimate interest and should have been there’ (Tobeatic 03). Ironically, the Tobeatic case was local to the point that it excluded activists from other parts of the province,

not to mention national or transnational organizations. Even so, as we will see in the next section, both movements had relative success because of their appeals to local democracy.

Success and power in participating in local democracy?

Local social movement conflict encompasses several dimensions, including being initiated and led by locally- or regionally-based movement organizations, adopting local frames for articulating complaints and demands, and targeting local political institutions (e.g. Municipalities, Regional Districts and Counties). In writing about Jumbo Glacier Resort, reliance on ‘the local’ is understood by *National Post* columnist George Koch as a mechanism for environmentalists to assert influence over regional governments to a degree that would not be possible with the provincial government. His articles warn that developers are at risk from ‘expropriation by local government buckling to activists and ideological bureaucrats’ (Koch 2006, FP21), and describe environmentalists who are ‘bullying local politicians into sabotaging Jumbo’ and who are ‘pressuring the regional district to impose death-by-zoning’ (Koch 2007, FP19). However, framing localism as a tool for environmentalists to wield a disproportionate amount of power over land use is less typical than framing localism as a more democratic alternative to higher-level political decision-making.

In the Jumbo conflict, the main political opportunity to participate in environmental governance has been through public input processes related to the project’s provincial Environmental Assessment. Otherwise, environmental organizations have generally been marginalized from decision making over the resort. As a result, just as resort developers appear as environmentalist opponents, so is the provincial government interpreted as an opponent by environmentalists. Environmental organization websites repeatedly claim that the provincial government has ignored the interests of communities surrounding the resort development, providing data from opinion polls and plebiscites that demonstrate local opposition to the resort (Jumbo Creek Conservation Society 2009; Valhalla Wilderness Society 2009; Wildsight 2009). The province is also accused of making decisions about the resort without public visibility or accountability. Throughout the conflict, environmental organization websites encourage viewers to contact provincial politicians about their opposition to the resort, but have simultaneously encouraged viewers to write letters to members of the local Regional District of East Kootenay as a parallel and complimentary political strategy (Jumbo Creek Conservation Society 2009; Wildsight 2009).

A core activist describes his group’s interactions with the provincial government as follows:

With this government in particular we really have very limited access to any of the ministers. It’s just very much a pro-development, many people characterize it as

an anti-environment government. I'm pretty sure it's not anti-environment, they're just so pro-development that a lot of the other concerns that we have just get swept under the table and lost in their quest to minimize red tape and fast track approval processes (Jumbo 04).

The provincial government appears closed to activists; however, the local Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) presents a political field open to activist engagement. When asked about interaction with provincial and local government, one participant responded, 'Well we do have a good relationship with some of the people, directors, on RDEK. A very good relationship with them' (Jumbo 02). Activists also describe the importance of the shifting political opportunity structure. In the Jumbo case, the main turning point was the transition from New Democratic Party (NDP) to Liberal provincial governments in the early 2000s. Both governments supported the resort, but activists felt that they had greater access and more open communication under the NDP. A participant describes the shift as follows:

You know, governments changing and so on, changes the response you get and the interest you get. Back in '95 or '96 up to 2000, goodness gracious people in the environmental assessment office were very objective, they mailed us copies of anything that was of interest, we phoned up every week or two to people in the office and they would chat and tell us things, and then somehow after 2002 that kind of contact totally ceased. All groups opposed to the Jumbo Resort were shut out. If you wanted to know something you had to do a freedom of information thing ... so it appeared to be a deliberate attempt by some bureaucrats, at least, if not some government members to limit our impact on the decision making process (Jumbo 01).

Since the Liberals took power provincially, activists emphasize connections with opposition Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), who wield less influence than members of the governing party. As another participant noted, 'The MLA who's in opposition, Norm MacDonald, for the area that Jumbo's in, we're in very regular touch with him. ... We get phone calls, we update him when we can and feed him questions that we'd like to have answers to that maybe he can get from questions in the question period' (Jumbo 04).

In the Jumbo case power was gleaned through activists' use of local institutions, as well as laments of failed democracy and lack of participation at the provincial level. This contributed to the stalling of the Jumbo Resort development, but the closure of these opportunities, more recently, appears to have led to failure for the movement as the resort was approved in March 2012. Similar trends in the appeal to local and provincial institutions can be seen in the Tobeatic case. However, in the Tobeatic the provincial government did not shut out local environmental organizations, but instead facilitated local participation. This was done particularly through the formation of the Tobeatic Advisory Group,

which brought together stakeholders from local communities, environmental and recreational organizations, industry and others.

A brief 2002 *Chronicle Herald* article describes opportunities for input into the environmental governance of the Tobeatic as follows:

The Environment Department is asking the public to help prepare a management plan for the Tobeatic Wilderness Area. The department and the Tobeatic advisory group will collect ideas, interests and concerns during four weeks of consultation this fall, the first step in the development of a strategy for the wilderness area ('N.S. invites comments on Tobeatic plan' 2002, A3).

Two years later, opportunities for public input into the process continued as the Tobeatic Advisory Group prolonged its work of formulating policy recommendations. For example, a 2004 notice from the *Chronicle Herald* advises that government has extended of the deadline for public input because Environment Minister Kerry Morash 'said there has been a lot of public interest in the plan and some concerned people needed extra time to complete their comments' ('Deadline extended for consultation' 2004, B4).

The participatory nature of environmental governance in the Tobeatic is highly valued by environmentalists. This is illustrated by a front page article, published shortly before the government released a final management plan, which quotes a member of the Ecology Action Centre as follows: 'This is the largest wilderness area in the Maritimes. If native wildlife is going to persist over time, then it needs to be something that has a plan to do that - and this is a very good plan, and it was arrived at in a very democratic way' (Raymond Plourde quoted in Jackson 2006, A1). Environmentalist-produced web content related to the Tobeatic does not rely on discourses of local decision making or local democracy to the extent seen in the Jumbo Pass case. However, these websites also promote citizen participation through letter writing to provincial politicians (Tobeatic Protection Alliance 2010; Tobeatic Wilderness Committee 2010).

By contrast with the Jumbo case, activist engagement in environmental governance was facilitated by the provincial government in the Tobeatic case. For example, one participant was directly invited by government to sit as a representative on the Tobeatic Advisory Group (TAG), which made suggestions based on dialogue and public feedback. He describes his experience as follows:

The government people who are going to have to implement it [the management plan], were active participants, they were facilitators. The groups were often mediated by a facilitator, which was a bit of a nuisance sometimes when I wanted to yell and scream but anyway, it's healthy to yell and scream once and a while. ... I think we got a lot, every group, pro or con, got a lot more out of listening to real people debate. And it was a consensus model too, which was a pain in the ass. I don't know if that's the best way, well that's the way it was (Tobeatic 02).

Compas (2012) suggests that environmental organizations are effective at leveraging power at the local level when government perceives them as a source of valuable resources, such as expertise and information. This dynamic seems to play out in the Tobeatic case, where environmentalists enjoyed greater access and power within environmental governance processes.

Core activists also describe a changing political opportunity structure in the Tobeatic case. One activist describes a ‘two phase’ governance process for the Tobeatic as follows:

When I look at the Tobeatic there’s almost two phases, the first being to get it designated, and the second is the management plan. And the first one with the designation was really fighting with the bureaucracy at department of natural resources and the logging companies. ... Because even though it was the government policy to move ahead, at a high level, there were bureaucrats trying to undermine that and screw it up along the whole way and that was trying to ... get around the old guard foresters who just didn’t understand why you would want to set anything aside, just the ideology of it’ (Tobeatic 03).

Here the focus is not on transitions of the party in power, but on initial resistance of the civil service to attempts to open up policy-making. This resistance was overcome by the government when it established the Tobeatic Advisory Group and public hearings as mechanisms of environmental governance.

Engagement in environmental governance assumes the ability to effect change (Mascarenhas and Scarce 2004). By that standard, environmentalists have never been fully engaged in environmental governance at Jumbo Pass. The Jumbo issue is largely driven by regional, rural organizations, with limited connections to provincial organizations that may be better linked to provincial networks of political power. While the Tobeatic is also largely driven by local, rural organizations, their claims receive much greater ‘amplification of voice’ from larger provincial organizations based in Halifax (Reed and Gill 1997). A Halifax-based core activist describes this separation of roles as follows:

We were not as involved, the local groups did their thing and our role was to be an echo for what they said when we met with Ministers. We would say, ‘respect the local process ... and if that’s what they [local environmental organizations] say, this is what they’re asking for and we think that’s reasonable and we think you should listen to them (Tobeatic 03).

The success of local organizations participating in the provincial environmental governance process of the region meant there was little incentive for local environmentalists to escalate their concerns and shift the scale of action upward and beyond the region. Rather, power and successes were found in engaging local and provincial institutions.

Conclusion

Despite the disproportionate amount of attention that social movement scholars have placed on transnational activism, the Jumbo Resort and Tobeatic cases remind researchers that many environmental and social justice causes are fought on much smaller scales. These cases offer insight into why movements 'go local' instead of attempting an upwards scale shift by appealing to broader national and transnational networks. Specifically, the cases remind researchers that the scale of many social conflicts is local in nature. Such conflicts, as McAdam et al. (2005) suggest, are far more common than dramatic national campaigns, but receive far less attention by social movement scholars. This is despite the common framing of social movements at local scales by non-academics.

For many social movements, targeting action at the local level makes sense. Going local is not necessarily a failure of social movements to scale up their grievances and campaigns, and does not necessarily reflect failed attempts to connect local and global movements. Remaining local is also distinct from the process of 'downward scale shift,' wherein "widely coordinated contentious action fragments" (McAdam et al. 2001 331-332). Our analysis suggests at least three reasons why movement organizations and activists 'go local,' including the scale of the grievance, perceived exclusion from governance and decision-making, and political opportunities that offer the potential for successful mobilization in the local context.

In both the Jumbo and Tobeatic cases, the environmental grievances were highly local in nature. In the Jumbo case, the proposed resort development would affect local wildlife and involved local tourism and the economy. The environmental problems caused by the development do not easily translate transnationally and do not readily appeal to universal moral dilemmas. The same can be said for the Tobeatic case, which centered on the governance of a remote environment in a marginal region of Canada. In both cases environmental organizations and activists would face significant cultural work to translate their grievances to a wider context creating a cost that might be unwarranted given the scale of the grievances and success in engaging municipal and provincial polities.

Instead, environmental grievances were linked to demands around participation in decision making and governance processes of particular environments. Such demands are common among many movements, even at the transnational scale, as documented by della Porta et al. (2006) with the GJM. Interestingly, such demands are framed as appeals to 'local democracy.' However, there is little evidence (at least in the Jumbo and Tobeatic cases) that activists fully appreciate the variants of governance structures democracies present. Attention is paid on deliberation and participation. Largely absent, however, are discussions of institutions and procedures that influence local democracies. Instead, at the core of activists' demands are desires for increased participation and power for local citizens to influence the decisions that will affect their lives. The framing of grievances in this manner, as seen especially in the Tobeatic

case, not only contributes to preventing a scale shift to the national or transnational level, but may also exclude activists, organizations, and bystanders outside of the local context. Yet, the relative successes of the movement has meant that such exclusion has not come at the cost of obtaining the movement's goals.

Last, the desirability of 'going local' can be seen in the success of movements that do so. As Boudreau (2003) rightly highlighted, many forget that much governance in federally organized nation-states comes at the state or provincial levels. In both cases, provincial governments play a large role in how organizations and activists engage environmental problems. In the Jumbo case appeals to failed local consultation and participation led to a stalling of the resort development for two decades. In the Tobeatic case, appeals to increased local participation shut out environmental organizations from outside the region. In both cases movements gained disproportionate power because of their appeals to micro (municipal) and meso (provincial) level institutions rather than escalating their grievances to national and international arenas. Largely, as with many grievances, these issues can be resolved in more immediate political contexts. As classic work by Morris (1981) or more recent work by Keck and Sikkink (1998) suggests, grievances only need to escalate, shift up, when blockage is met in smaller-scale political arenas. During our time frame of analysis neither movement faced such blockage and that is largely correlated to their successes and local activism. However, with provincial government approval of Jumbo Glacier Resort granted in March 2012, it remains to be seen whether social movements involved in this conflict will continue to 'go local' or will face pressure to scale up their opposition from the local to the national or even transnational arenas.

While our findings are based on a comparison of two specific cases, they point to a more theoretically generalizable contribution to social movement scholarship. Focusing on movements that 'go local' leads to different stories about movement framing, interaction with governments and opponents, and movement outcomes than narratives based primarily on studies of national and international social movements. For many social movement issues, the local scale should not be ignored in favour of analysing how movements work to attract national or international media and political attention. It is time for movement scholars to pay more attention to everyday and local activism. Overall, we believe the Jumbo Resort and Tobeatic cases show that small-scale, local, and regional movements can offer important insights to social movement scholars. They help illustrate at three of the mechanisms that drive movements downward in their political challenges and remind scholars to not forget about the everyday activism that shapes contemporary societies.

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Appendix 1

Search of Keywords on Social Movement, Geographic Scale and Democracy		
Search engine	Keyword search	Count
SocIndex	'social movement*' AND local	1,174
	'social movement*' AND local AND democracy	82
	'social movement*' AND global	1,242
	'social movement*' AND global AND democracy	146
	'social movement*' AND globalization	892
	'social movement*' AND globalization AND democracy	93
	'social movement*' AND transnational	2,748
	'social movement*' AND transnational AND democracy	238
Google	'social movement' local	5,220,000
	'social movement' local democracy	151,000
	'social movement' global	4,180,000
	'social movement' global democracy	1,980,000
	'social movement' globalization	2,060,000
	'social movement' globalization democracy	1,410,000
	'social movement' transnational	984,000
	'social movement' transnational democracy	642,000
Google Scholar	'social movement' local	104,000
	'social movement' local democracy	56,800
	'social movement' global	68,100
	'social movement' global democracy	37,600
	'social movement' globalization	30,400
	'social movement' globalization democracy	23,300
	'social movement' transnational	24,500
	'social movement' transnational democracy	18,600

Note: SocIndex search is based on Boolean searches and the database ranges from earliest to present. Google Scholar uses a 'Google Scholar' search and was 'anytime' with respect to period. Searches were conducted on 10/01/2012. Google search included 'everything' and 'the web' and was conducted on 10/03/2012.

About the authors

Mark C.J. Stoddart is an Assistant Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland. His research encompasses three inter-related areas: the eco-politics of outdoor sport and nature tourism, media representations of environmental conflict, and the cultural dimensions of environmentalism. He is the author of *Making Meaning out of Mountains: The Political Ecology of Skiing* (UBC Press). His work has also appeared in *Social Movement Studies*, the *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, *Sociological Spectrum*, and *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*. He can be contacted at mstoddart AT mun.ca

Howard Ramos is an Associate Professor at Dalhousie University. He has published on political sociology, Canadian Aboriginal mobilization, transnational human rights, and immigration. He is currently working on a project looking at the discursive opportunities and political impacts of Canadian Indigenous, LGBT, and environmental advocacy groups as well as the advocacy of transnational environmental organizations. He is the co-author, with Karen Stanbridge, of *Seeing Politics Differently: A Brief Introduction to Political Sociology* (Oxford). His work has also appeared in *Social Forces*, the *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, and the *Journal of Peace Research*. He can be contacted at Howard.Ramos AT dal.ca