Transnational diffusion of a high-cost protest method: open field destructions in France, Germany and Spain

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Abstract

This contribution analyzes the cross-border diffusion of the radical protest method of open field destruction, i.e., the destruction of fields cultivated with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) coram publico. *Open field destruction was a key protest method in France's relatively successful anti-GM movement. The analysis elucidates how this method has been adopted by activists in Spain and Germany, in order to shed light on the mechanisms involved in the cross-boundary diffusion of movement repertoires. Through a review of the literature this study specifically analyzes the diffusion of a practice that incurs high costs, because activists who engage in this practice can be held accountable in a court of law and often face severe penalties. While the protest method's cross-border transmission is shown to be based on simple emulation, the reasons for its relative success or failure in a new environment are shown to depend on local factors such as public responsiveness and the severity of state repression. It is found that the social context created by actors, discourses and practices within the receiving anti-GM movement is of particular importance.*

1. Diffusion of high-cost protest methods: the case of open field destruction

Movements assert their claims by employing a range of routines, actions, methods and tactics the entirety of which has become established in the literature by the term 'repertoire of contention' (hereinafter repertoire) (e.g. Tilly 1995: 26-27). A repertoire is historically contingent and alterable; it changes as a result of adaptation, innovation and learning processes. One central learning mechanism is based on 'diffusion', that is, the adoption of ideas and practices by movements from other, geographically or temporally distant movements. Diffusion within and between movements is a ubiquitous phenomenon. Protest movements do not entirely reinvent themselves with every new conflict; rather they are influenced by other movements. Observing the link between diffusion and movements therefore gives us a clearer picture of their interconnectedness, allowing us to perceive them as a common flow rather than distinct entities (McAdam and Rucht 1993, Soule 2004, Kolins Givan et al.

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2010). It has been hypothesized that transnational diffusion processes increase as social movements adapt to economic, legal, and political globalisation by engaging in activities that cross national boundaries. With the interaction between national arenas intensifying, movements are expected to increase their inclination to adopt ideas and practices from one another, thus allowing nationally fragmented movements to become more homogenous (Della Porta and Kriesi 1999: 6-10).

Against the background of this far-reaching claim this study explores, in detail, the diffusion of a protest method which is *not* expected to diffuse smoothly across country boundaries as it burdens adopters with particularly 'high costs'. According to the prevailing school of thought in the study of social movements, some practices are adopted more easily than others since "(m)ovement actors will make their strategic choices on the basis of their appreciation of the specific chances of reform and threat, and the specific risks of repression and facilitation they face" (Kriesi 2004: 78). Consequently, practices and ideas that spare potential adopters significant costs or risks will be more easily adopted than practices presumed to require a substantial amount of resources and commitment, or that are feared will provoke repression by state authorities or counter reaction from opponents. By the same token, the diffusion of low-cost practises can be thought of as a regular and straightforward process. The spread of Guy-Fawkes masks among Occupy and Anonymous activists in the U.S. and Western Europe may serve as an example. Provided there are no bans on face coverings, the cost of wearing these masks equals their purchasing price. Unhampered by costs or constraints, the identifying mark for smart subversion spreads quickly.

Comparatively, the diffusion of a high-cost practice should occur rarely, for example, exposing oneself to state reprisals or excessive police violence through acts of civil disobedience. These practices, too, sometimes set precedents and find imitators abroad but it is obvious that movement actors need strong reasons for engaging in them. While the diffusion of 'low-cost' practices appears to be straightforward, the diffusion of 'high-cost' protest calls for further explanation. Is the collective grievance that gives rise to the movement constructed in a way that calls for heroism and self sacrifice? Or is the method expected to generate a high 'pay off' in terms of public resonance and political impact that justifies its costs and risks? How does the diffusion process of such a demanding practice work? Does it require more than mere imitation as, for example, in the case of the Guy-Fawkes mask? Does the adopted practice spread in the new environment, or turn out to be a non-starter? Does it deliver the desired pay-off? What are the reasons for success or failure?

In short, the adoption of a high-cost practice can be expected to be a relatively rare, demanding and therefore complex process. Consequently, the exploration of such a process promises to yield insights into the social mechanisms that form the basis of diffusion in general. The analysis of just one specific, 'improbable' case of diffusion is not designed to test the general hypothesis of a general rise in diffusion between national movements. It does, however, help to

develop a realistic understanding of such a process by shedding light on the problems that arise when activists, under the impression of their successful fellow campaigners abroad, decide to adopt their methods in order to make a difference in their own countries.

I will examine a particular high-cost practice within the European anti-GM movement- the open destruction of fields cultivated with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Within the anti-GM movement's repertoire the practice of open field destruction is arguably the most confrontational and the one that entails the highest costs for activists. An open field destruction is when activists, within the public eye, vandalise GMO-fields that are set up for commercial and/or experimental purposes and thereby take on the full responsibility for the consequences in terms of police repression and legal repercussions. The activists use the mass media and public attention thus generated to launch their political criticism of the technology and the state support it garners. Open field destructions must be distinguished from covert or anonymous field destructions, which, however, also constitute an important direct action method within the repertoire of the anti-GM movement in various countries, mostly the UK and Germany. While activists sometimes combine these action forms, they are nevertheless distinct: covert action does not burden activists with the same costs and risks as does open protest (unless they are caught), nor is covert action designed to create the same amount of publicity since the perpetrators remain anonymous and cannot stage their message openly at public trials, nor do activists enjoy the same amount of legitimacy as they refuse to be held accountable for their actions.

While most countries have never been confronted with open GMO field destructions, in France the method was of key significance. In using this method, activists dominated the public debate over a period of ten years, thus significantly contributing to the fundamental reform of France's biotechnology policy. Impressed by the campaign's impact in France, certain activist groups in Germany and Spain engaged in the same practice in their countries. As these cases present clearly defined instances of diffusion, an analysis based on these three countries provides a rare occasion to study the diffusion of a high-cost practice. The analysis examines the emergence, continuance and effect of this practice, focussing on its transfer from France to Germany and Spain. It enquires into the ways by which the concept of open field destruction travelled to its adopters, and into the qualities of the receiving environments that proved responsible for its relative success or failure.

The study contributes to both the general literature on diffusion of protest repertoires (e.g. Kolins Givan et al. 2010) and to the growing body of research focussing on the method of open field destruction (Heller 2002; Hayes 2006; Bonneuil et al. 2008; Doherty and Hayes 2012). It also goes beyond the last-cited studies, most of which focus on France (Doherty and Hayes compare activism in France and the United Kingdom) by adding evidence from Germany and Spain. So far, studies on GM-field destructions in Germany in particular, and the anti-GM movement in Spain, in general, are lacking.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: to begin with, the term diffusion will be explained along with an overview of materials and methods given (Chapters 2 and 3). Chapter 4 covers the EU-wide anti-GM movement while Chapter 5 outlines the anti-GM movement in France, which will be followed by an account of the diffusion process involving Spanish and German activists in comparison to France (Chapters 6 and 7). In conclusion, there will be an analytical discussion of the diffusion of open field destruction (Chapters 8 and 9).

2. The concept of diffusion

Diffusion is an established concept in movement research (Kolins Givan et al. 2010). As a general social phenomenon, diffusion denotes the dispersion of practices and ideas. From an analytical perspective, diffusion always runs from a sender to a receiver or adopter. From an empirical standpoint, diffusion entails contents as diverse as behaviours, strategies, world perspectives or material and technical objects. Diffusion operates through social mechanisms such as contagion, emulation, social learning, or deliberate dissemination. Diffusion takes place between or within movements as they learn from each other and serve as models for one another. Diffusion crosses temporal and geographic gaps, which might imply a transnational adoption process.

The concepts prevailing in the literature look into the social mechanisms underlying diffusion from two angles. Firstly, they deal with the media and channels of diffusion; secondly, they seek to explain the reasons why adoption processes succeed or fail. In regards to the first aspect, the main differences here are between hierarchical and proximate diffusion models (Soule 2004). In the hierarchical model, diffusion emanates from actors on a higher ranking level, whereas in the proximate model contents are being adopted mainly as a function of geographical proximity (ibid., 295). McAdam and Rucht (1993) draw a further distinction between 'relational' and 'non-relational diffusion'. The first type denotes diffusion processes in which movements are 'learning' from each other through direct, that is personal, ties between activists. In the second type adoption processes take place without personal contact between actors. Instead, adopters receive information about action models circulates through the mass media or digital networks. McAdam and Rucht (1993) describe this as relational as opposed to non-relational diffusion; however, while they argue that direct contact decisively facilitates diffusion, they also acknowledge that relational and non-relational mechanisms work mostly in tandem.

Regarding the second aspect, Giugni emphasizes that "once information about events abroad is available through direct or indirect channels, organizational, political, and cultural factors may facilitate the diffusion of protest from one country to the other" (1995: 188). The key organizational condition to be met is the presence of a movement subculture at the receiving end. "If no political potential is available for mobilization, diffusion cannot take place" (ibid.). The major cultural factor that facilitates diffusion is the attribution of similarity

between adopters and transmitters: if potential adopters recognize their counterparts abroad as being 'of the same kind', they are more prone to adopt some ideas and practices of the transmitter's repertoire. Finally, political opportunities and constraints in the receiving environment improve or limit the chances of success of any innovation in repertoires, including those adopted from movements abroad. In the presence of favorable political opportunities, diffusion is likely to occur, while weak opportunities or constraints have the opposite effect. Political opportunities influence an imported innovation's chances of success by creating a repressive or facilitative environment, by constituting a threat, which renders mobilization necessary, or, conversely, by inducing a reform pocess that renders protests unnecessary.

These concepts, both on the channels of diffusion and the organizational, cultural and political factors that influence the adoption process, guide the empirical exploration of how the protest method of open field destruction found its way from France to Germany and Spain, respectively. As a background hypothesis it is assumed that social movements are subject to a trend towards transnationalisation and–by means of diffusion–transnational homogenisation.

3. Materials and methods

This analysis employs qualitative as well as quantitative materials and methods. The qualitative approach makes use of available online media material from the three countries involved, information materials from the movement scene, as well as qualitative interviews and notes taken during participant observation and field research among radical activists in Germany, France and Spain. In Germany, I participated in a gathering of anti-GM activists preceding an open field destruction that took place in Kitzingen (Bavaria) in June 2008 (see Photos 2 and 3), and a public trial held against activists who had participated in open field destructions in Aschersleben (Saxony-Anhalt) in 2010; furthermore, I attended a strategic activist workshop in Leipzig (Saxony) in 2011. In France, I took part in the annual meeting of anti-GM activists committed to open field destructions near Lyon in July 2008. In Spain (Photo 1) I conducted field research, meeting Spanish anti-GM activists over a two weeks period in April 2009 in Saragossa (Aragon), Bilbao (Basque Country), and Barcelona (Catalonia) (Photo 4). The qualitative data gained on these field trips constitute detailed sources for understanding activists' appraisal of adopted action repertoires, contextual factors influencing success or failure of the adopted method, and internal decision-making processes.

The quantitative approach allows for an objectified comparison of national movements and the assessment of the relative weight of radical protest forms within these movements. For this purpose, the method of comparative protest event analysis is employed, which constitutes a standard method in social movement research (Koopmans and Rucht 2002). According to research questions, protest event analyses are designed in various ways; however, generally, they are geared toward the creation of quantitative data sets whose

unit typically is the protest event or, generally speaking, a concrete example of movement action. The given protest event analysis builds on the basis of pertinent articles published in the widely read periodicals *El País*, *Le Monde* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, spanning the entire range of the respective anti-GM movement's activities during the years 1995 to 2009. These progressive, qualitative periodicals of national standing are frequently analysed for like purposes as they count as comparable (ibid.; for a critical appraisal of the method see also Fillieule and Jimenez 2003).

In the analysis at hand, a pre-selection on the basis of comparable key words in the respective languages was executed. All protest events, which are defined as the units of analysis, were drawn out of this population of articles (N = 1,341). From these protest events, 138 occurred in Spain, 590 in Germany and 612 in France. The database encompasses a broad range of movement actors and repertoires, for example events as diverse as street protests, political lobbying, hunger strikes, but also court trials or activists' arrests. For each event, information regarding the time, place, actors, co-operations, methods, goals, targets and counter actions were coded. The analysis and categorization of these multi-facetted events will follow according to the research questions.

4. The European anti-GM movement

The European anti-GM movement started in the summer of 1996 when Greenpeace began to campaign against the importation of unlabelled GM corn and soybeans from the US. In the following years, public opinion shifted in several EU countries and brought about key changes of national policies. The EU-wide approval process for the commercial release of GMOs stalled and, in summer 1999, was finally blocked by a group of member states that vetoed any further authorization. In the years that followed, the EU regulatory framework underwent a profound overhaul focusing on food labelling and risk management. After the authorization process, which allows companies to seek permission to grow and sell GMOs, resumed in the year 2004, the conflict between GM-averse member states and the European Commission lingered on.

The European anti-GM movement has been described as a multi-level movement whose actors also seek to influence the policy process beyond the national arenas (Ansell et al. 2006). A key role is played by international environmental organisations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth whose operational scope ranges from national arenas to supranational organisations and whose engagement was decisive in the political change of the EU and global environmental agreements (ibid., 100). These and other transnational NGOs who coordinated campaigns across national borders also acted as vehicles of transnational diffusion processes. An example of this would be Greenpeace's Europe-wide campaign against unlabelled GM food. The coordination of these Europe wide campaigns by transnational movement organisations also brought about a diffusion of protest methods whereby transnational organisations, in this case, either hierarchically instruct their local

organisational branches or act as mediators of transnational diffusion processes. However, despite these examples of the movement's transnationalisation, evidence suggests that both national states and national publics continue to constitute the essential context of movement action.

This specifically holds for radical protest methods such as the damaging of GM fields. Studies that compare GM field trashing campaigns in France and the UK, where this radical method became a key tactic of anti-GM activism, highlight the idiosyncrasies of these national campaigns. They argue that their radicalization follows from national political opportunity structures, while the way the anti-GM movement made use of field trashing was shaped by specific movement traditions (Doherty and Hayes 2012). Yet, despite this radical method's rootedness in local contexts, traditions and repertoires, the following paragraphs will show that even the method of open field destruction diffuses across national boundaries.

5. France's anti-GM movement and open field destructions

There are two features that distinguish the French anti-GM movement from respective national movements: the initially prominent role of the *Confédération Paysanne* (subsequently *Confédération*) and the charismatic leadership of the farmer activist José Bové (Seifert 2009). The left-wing *Confédération,* founded in 1987, advocates small scale, sustainable agriculture and denounces agriculture's industrialisation and liberalisation respectively. The *Confédération* has its roots in the national protest movement against the setting up of a military precinct in the Larzac, a limestone plateau in Southern France (1971 to 1981).

José Bové is one of the founding members of the *Confédération* and acted as its spokesperson from 2000 to 2004. He ran in the French presidential elections of 2007 and received 1.3 percent of valid votes (generally considered a modest outcome). In 2009, he became elected as a Member of the European Parliament for the alliance *Europe Écologie*. Bové is widely famous in France. He owes this popularity to his spectacular engagement against agricultural biotechnology. The initial event, however, which catapulted him into the media spotlight was his arrest and subsequent three week long incarceration for damages caused to a McDonald's restaurant in the city of Millau during farmer protests against the WTO in the summer of 1999. This incident triggered a wave of public solidarity, which turned him into a national celebrity overnight. In later controversies, the rural activist made good use of his newly gained reputation in a skilful combination of activism, provocation and polemic, for instance by his appearance in the WTO protests in Seattle in November 1999 (Heller 2002: 29-33), or by his prominent participation in the campaign regarding the referendum over a proposed EU Constitution in May 2005. The lion's share of Bové's fame, however, can be attributed to the controversial methods he used during his engagement against agricultural biotechnology, namely the method of open field destruction.

These two key actors - José Bové and the *Confédération* - entered the debate after 1997 when the decision within the *Confédération* to actively engage with agricultural biotechnology was taken.[2] After a first field destruction in June 1997 went largely unnoticed by the public, in January 1998 a crowd of about a hundred activists, among them the then still unknown José Bové, invaded a Novartis storehouse in Nérac (Aquitaine), where they proceeded to render GM seed stored there unusable. The event was the first to receive any amount of public attention. Even more intense was the public interest in the trial that followed in February 1999. Three activists were convicted to suspended sentences of several months and ordered to pay a considerable amount of money for damages to Novartis.[3] The activists' strategy was to turn the trial into a trial against the genetic technology, for which they were even prepared to receive higher sentences. At the same time the legal defence, who called prominent critics of biotechnology as witnesses, insisted that the actions were legitimate. According to this argument, the true offence did not consist of a damage to private property but of the fact that a harmful technology was being introduced for the sake of corporate profit (Heller 2002: 16-18). Over the following years, legal complications stemming from this trial generated a series of further protests.[4]

These events mark the beginning of a field destruction campaign by the *Confédération* lasting several years. Two fields were destroyed in 1998 and seven in 1999, each modelled upon the same pattern. A protest in June 1999 conducted jointly with a group of peasant activists from India marks another highlight. About 50 peasant activists associated with the 'Intercontinental Caravan' and *Confédération* respectively, once again under the leadership of Bové and others, entered the precincts of the *Centre de cooperation internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement* (CIRAD, International Centre of Cooperation for Agronomical Research for Development) in Montpellier where they destroyed a trial of transgenic rice. Yet another protest action against the *Centre technique interprofessionel des oléagineux métropolitains* (CETIOM, Technical Center for Oilseed Crops and Industrial Hemp) in Gaudiès followed suit (ibid., 21-23).

Public research facilities were deliberately chosen as targets. In the course of the ensuing trials, the activists denounced the, according to them misleading, distinction between private, profit oriented research and research for the public good. According to the activists, what was legitimized as research in the public interest was in fact industry's Trojan horse. The destruction of state-funded

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[2] This corresponds to the period when François Dufour was spokesperson for the *Confédération* (1996-2000). Dufour together with the founding members Bové and René Riesel had a decisive part in designing the organisation's radical strategy.

[3] 500,000 Francs which equals €76,000.

[4] There are 50 follow up events directly related to this trial that are registered on the data-base, at least half of which represent demonstrations and acts of solidarity with the convicted activists.

trials served as both material and symbolic acts designed to cause damage to industry and the abundant state support from which industry benefits.

Open field destruction established itself as the central protest method, combining several functions. Beyond the material damage it inflicts on field trials and related facilities, the ensuing principled debate on the uses and dangers of biotechnology sought to force a change of perspectives on both the public and decision makers. Activism in the leftist tradition of civil disobedience and 'active Republican citizenship' (Doherty and Hayes 2012: 14-15) won the favour of major parts of the French public and served as justification in court. Moreover, Bové's concomitant anti-neoliberal engagement, addressing both national and transnational publics, coupled the GMO issue with the rapid rise of the French alter-globalization protest cycle (Heller 2002; Bonneuil et al. 2008: 219; Seifert 2009).

In the following years, the *Confédération* activists continued their direct action campaign whereby the popularity of the 'activist star' José Bové helped turn the public eye toward the campaign.[5] Sympathizers of the movement frequently participated in field destructions, such as representatives of the alter-globalization think tank *Attac* and France's Green Party. Noël Mamère, well known in France particularly after he ran for president in the 2002 presidential campaign, can serve as an example of the latter. Others are the vice president of the European Parliament Gérard Onesta, or Gilles Lemaire, who was secretary of the Green Party from 2003 to 2005.

In 1999 three additional field destructions followed, four in 2000, nine in 2001, and twenty-one in 2003. Anonymous groups carried out the majority of these actions. 2003 was a key year: the public debate peaked anew, since Bové had to serve a prison sentence regardless of many attempts to avert this. In this year, 64.4 percent of all protests revolved around Bové. Moreover, the 30-year anniversary of the Larzac movement (rallying 200,000 followers) brought about the foundation of the *faucheurs volontaires* ('voluntary mowers', henceforth *'faucheurs'*). In subsequent years, the organisation that committed itself to the non-violent struggle against agricultural biotechnology by means of civil disobedience and open field destructions grew to 6,700 (*Faucheurs volontaires* 2007). The founding of this specialised organisation combined several functions. Firstly, it expanded the basis of activists beyond the *Confédération* into urban milieus. Secondly, the growing financial pressure from past convictions and fines should be taken off the *Confédération*. Finally, the support for Bové within the *Confédération* was no longer divided. Even though the proverbial 'Bové-effect' boosted the *Confédération's* popularity, the media savvy activist also divided his rural following (Seifert 2009: fn. 12, 25).

Since 2004, the *faucheurs* claimed responsibility for most of the field destructions as well as the ensuing trials. The data set between 2004 and 2007

[5] In no other country did the anti-GM movement focus so greatly on a central figure as it did in France. Almost a third of all protest events (32.4 percent) actually centred on José Bové, a further 10.9 percent involved Bové in one way or the other.

yields 72 field destructions, of which 43 were claimed by the *faucheurs*. The majority of the attacks were directed towards field trials used for pre-commercial, industrial cultivation, which therefore became a risky undertaking. While the number of field trials decreased, the amount of field destructions increased. In 2001 one of six field trials was destroyed, the figure was one of three in 2003, and in 2004 it grew to half of all field trials (Bonneuil et al. 2008).

The *faucheurs* proceeded peacefully. Aggression was directed against test fields or facilities only, never against people. Only of the side of the *faucheurs* were there ever injuries. At the protest in Valdivienne in 2004, 500 *faucheurs* were confronted by 300 anti-riot officers from the Mobile Gendarmerie who guarded the trial field with the use of tear gas and shock grenades, injuring 15 people (Kempf 2004). The campaign took a confrontational turn when after the end of the moratorium it began targeting commercial fields. On these few occasions, *faucheurs*, proprietors and agro-biotech supporters clashed.

Photo 1: June 17th 2008, Simandres (Rhône). After the annual meeting of the faucheurs in 2008 Grigny (Rhône) near Lyon, activists come together at a field supposed to be cultivated with GM maize. As there was no other way to identify GM-fields, a DNA test had to be conducted on plant material. After the samples tested negative the activists desisted from invading the field. The episode illustrates that not even the very act of an open field destruction is as straightforward as one might imagine. Photo by the author.

The actions were followed by a series of consequences. In the course of the campaign "the police response evolved from initial watchfulness to prevention and intervention" (Hayes 2006: 834). This brought about several instances of severe police action against activists involving the employment of "barricades, tear gas, stun grenades and baton charges" resulting in injuries among activists such as "burns, broken bones, shrapnel wounds, and punctured eardrums" (ibid.: 831). As regards legal consequences, from 2004 until 2009 the activists appeared before court twenty-four times, often with much media coverage. Activists were convicted fourteen times; on nine occasions (mostly suspended) jail sentences and fines were imposed on single individuals or groups respectively. Actual jail time was served in only four instances from 1999 to 2003, affecting both José Bové and his fellow campaigner René Riesel. Since the prosecution only held the instigators or organizers responsible, they were soon charged with a virtually unmanageable amount of penalties. The attempt of the *faucheurs'* lawyers to set up the movement of the '*comparants volontaires*' (voluntary accused), with hundreds of activists claiming penal responsibility for the acts, failed in court. Sometimes reluctance to cooperate in the course of repressive measures resulted in additional penal consequences, thus multiplying legal procedures and generating further media reports.[6]

In the end, the campaign of the French anti-GM activists proved an outstanding success. Even though France's biotechnology policy had been a cautious one since the summer of 1998, when France had played a leading role in establishing the EU-moratorium on GM-product authorizations, in the mid-2000s France began to turn away from GMO releases in general. Beginning in 2001, a growing number of communities issued local bans against field trials on their territory (Bonneuil et al. 2008: 222). In 2004, France's Socialist Party (*Parti Socialiste*, PS) adopted a critical stance on biotechnology (ibid. 221). In 2007, presidential candidate Ségolène Royal (PS) made a moratorium on GMO releases a promise of her campaign. In late summer 2007, the summit conference *Grenelle Environnement*, deciding on the future directions of France's environmental policy, set the course to the prohibition of the only GM corn variety approved for commercial cultivation in the EU. In January 2008, president Nicolas Sarkozy enacted the prohibition of the GM corn MON 810 marketed by Monsanto. Remaining field trials were destroyed in 2008 and 2009.

The direct action campaign against GMO releases led by the *Confédération* and, since 2004, the *faucheurs* constituted the driving force and outstanding feature of the French anti-GM movement.[7] The reasons for the strong public resonance,

[6] For example, the categorical refusal of many activists to deliver saliva samples for the purpose of 'DNA fingerprinting' resulted in fines and (suspended) jail sentences. In 2006, the refusal to pay the compensation fee of €63,000 to the seed company Pioneer led to the closure of Noël Mamère's private account. Since 2006, Gilles Lemaire was threatened with the forced sale of his Parisian apartment in order to satisfy the compensation claims of the company Biogemma (sans-gene.org 2012).

[7] This is reflected in numbers: the *Confédération* took part in 38.7%, the *faucheurs* in 23.7% of all protest events, almost always in a leading position, while the third most important actor, Greenpeace France, appears in only in 14.5 %.

thus, political influence, that these groups and their key protest method attained are, first, the activist genius of José Bové who positioned himself as a dramatic focus in France's public arena; secondly, the skillful framing of open field destruction as a legitimate defence against corporate domination, ecological degradation and neo-liberal globalization and finally, the consistency and intransigence with which the method was applied in spite of, at times, harsh police repression and penal sanctions.

6. The broader anti-GM movements in Spain and Germany

Groups in Spain and Germany have adopted the method of open field destruction. However, both the method and the groups that make use of it are only a few elements among many in wider national anti-GM movements. In order to better understand the course and eventual success of this adoption process, it is pertinent to first take a look at the wider anti-GM movements in these countries.

6.1 Spain's anti-GM movement

Spain lies at the permissive end of the European spectrum in national biotechnology policies. Only in Spain is large scale commercial cultivation of GM crops taking place. Currently, this is happening on about 8,000 ha, mainly in the autonomous communities of Catalonia and Aragon. Spain also belongs to the few EU member countries where field trials have not been reduced significantly in the past ten years.

The reasons for this exceptional position are, first, the relatively early authorization of GM corn in 1998, immediately after EU-wide approval, while other EU member states still hesitated and eventually withheld the authorization. Secondly, Spain persistently maintained a permissive policy regarding biotechnology product approval and regulation, upheld by both the conservative government under José María Aznar (1996 – 2004), and the socialist government under José Rodriguez Zapatero (2004 – 2011). Another important factor is Spain's weak anti-GM movement, which up to today has hardly any public support. The environmental group most consistently involved in anti-GM activism is *Greenpeace España*.

In the early years the movement's activity level was low and, after an intermitting mobilization in the year 1999, remained so in subsequent years, with a concentration of most protest events in Catalonia. Greenpeace did not step up its campaign until 2002. In 2006, Greenpeace, together with the Catalan peasant organisation *Assemblea Pagesa* (Catalan: Peasant Assembly) and the Catalan anti-GM group *Transgènics Fora* (Catalan: GMOs out!) presented an internationally recognized study which demonstrated that interbreeding of conventional and GM varieties was inevitable, thus rendering the coexistence of both cultures impossible. From 2007 to 2008 the initiative *Som lo que sembrem* (Catalan: We are what we sow) rallied the public in

Catalonia to a popular initiative demanding a prohibition of GM technology in agriculture. The initiative culminated in 106,000 supporting votes, yet yielded no conclusive decision in Parliament. In April 2009, the first and only nation-wide anti-GM demonstration took place in Saragossa (Aragon), rallying 4,000 activists (Photo 4). In sum, however, the Spanish movement, in spite of the best efforts of some of its propagators, never succeeded in sensitizing Spain's public, igniting a nation-wide debate, or impacting Spain's biotechnology policy in any considerable way.

6.2 Germany's anti-GM movement

In Germany, a critical domestic debate had begun already in the 80s, which resulted in Germany's early promotion of strict biotechnology regulation at the European level. The issue, however, declined in importance in the early 90s. Germany only reluctantly fell in line with the dynamic of the general European policy change since the mid 1990s. Consequently, for a long period Germany's policy course lingered between the positions held by supporting and critical countries. German authorities, for example, did not support, rather criticized, the collective of countries who supported the European moratorium. Furthermore, it was not until April 2009 when Federal Minister of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Ilse Aigner, then under pressure from the Free State Bavaria, decreed a prohibition of the GM corn variety MON 810. Since then, commercial GM-cultivation is practically, albeit not officially, banned in Germany.

Similar to how Germany's public debate reached back farther into the 80s, the country's anti-GM movement has a lengthier history than in other countries. Against the backdrop of the general European dynamic, however, a new mobilisation did not come to pass until 2004, which is relatively late. Furthermore, unlike in France, the alter-globalization movement in Germany did not create a culturally persuasive, symbolic link between GMOs and corporate globalization (Rucht and Roth 2008). While the movement was slow to gain resonance with Germany's public, the prominent professional environmental organisations BUND (Federation for the Protection of Environment and Nature) and *Greenpeace Deutschland* figured as pivotal actors throughout. Apart from this, a 'hard core' of activists remained engaged over the years, committing direct actions against GM field trials. However, it is not until the second half of the 2000s that a particular group adopts the method of open field destruction.

6.3 The wider anti-GM movements in comparison

Protest event analysis can give us an idea about the distinct character of national movements in Germany and Spain. Tables 1 and 2 summarise specific features related to the predominant choice of methods employed in a national movement and its relationship to the state.

	Demonstrative	*Informational*	*Political*	*Legal*	*Confrontational*
Spain	36	88	3	5	6
France	125	202	13	130	142
Germany	182	229	4	75	100

Table 1: Aggregated Protest repertoires of three national movements

Table 1 aggregates the diversity of protest methods into five categories. Movements are usually associated with demonstrative methods such as group demonstrations, sit-ins or hunger strikes. Of even greater significance are various forms of disseminating information such as blacklists, whistle blowing, declarations and petitions, critical books or documentaries etc. Among political methods are lobbying, the initiation of referenda, popular initiatives or parliamentary commissions etc. Legal forms of action comprise reports to the police, complaints, litigations or threatening to litigate, standing public trial etc. Among confrontational actions are, for example, clashes with police forces or opponents and destruction of, or damage to, third party property.

Table 1 illustrates that the French movement is deeply involved in confrontational and legal conflicts while in Germany and, even more, in Spain, demonstrative and informational methods prevail. These differences mirror the key importance of open field destruction in France.

	State Repression	*Counter Repression*
Spain	10	1
France	99	126
Germany	43	17

Table 2: State Repression and Counter Repression

Table 2 reflects the fact that social movement action often provokes or meets with repressive state reaction, be it through police, in court or the penal system. State repression as it is used here generally refers to constraint or force exercised by the state, or the threat of punitive action with the goal to prevent or sanction undesired behaviour. State repression is generally exercised assuming conformity with valid legal norms and derives its legitimacy from legality. The identity of legality and legitimacy, however, frequently become a matter of political dispute. The percentages in Table 2 indicate actions related to state repression. In turn, movement actors respond to state repression by counter repression in various ways, for instance through displays of solidarity for activists in custody. The highest percentages for both state repression and

counter repression are observed in France. Yet it is worth noting that even in Spain acts of state repression occur relatively frequently.

7. Open field destructions in Spain and Germany

7.1 Spain

The case of Spain is a short story to tell. In 1999, a group of about twenty organic farming and environmental organisations, mostly from Catalonia, gathered to establish the activist group *Transgenics Fora!*. Inspired by the 'International Caravan' the new group chose, among others, direct and confrontational action as their method. Together with members of the *Assemblea Pagesa* the group proceeded to openly destroy a GM trial field in the Catalan town of Gimenells (province Lérida) in July 2003. An estimated 70 activists clad in white overalls wearing face masks and 'biohazard' badges used scythes and reaping hooks to destroy GM wheat in a trial field maintained by the public research institute IRTA (*Instituto de Investigación y Tecnología Agroalimentaria,* Institute for Research and Technology in Food and Agriculture). A similar action followed course in September of 1999. When activists of the *Assemblea Pagesa* cut down an unregistered trial field of the company Syngenta, police and activists came head to head, which allegedly left a policeman injured.

The legal consequences for those involved were extremely severe which sympathisers generally regarded as politically motivated and intended as intimidation. The activist Albert Ferré who publicly claimed responsibility for the first action was ordered to pay damages of €470,000, received a fine of €24,000, and a jail sentence of fifteen months. The accused perpetrator of the second action, the renowned peasant activist José Pàmies, was facing three years of prison time and payment of damages up to €50,000. Ferré was acquitted due to lack of evidence. Pàmies received a fine of €22,000 in a trial which attracted severe criticism from civil society. While displays of solidarity followed mainly in support of Pàmies, the activists were not successful in reversing the legal arguments put forth by their opponents in their favour, i.e. transforming the court trial into a trial against genetic engineering. In the years that followed no further field destruction occurred.

7.2 Germany

The German case requires a more detailed account. It has been mentioned that Germany's anti-GM movement goes back farther than in the other two reference countries, which also holds for the prevalence of direct action methods. Beyond professional 'mainstream organisations' such as BUND and Greenpeace, over the years a 'hard core' of activists employed direct action methods such as field occupations or anonymous field destructions. In Germany, activists carried out field destructions or caused damages to research facilities such as greenhouses

already in the early 1990s. Occupation of GM fields is a development that is specific to Germany (Photo 2).

It began in 1993, when a crowd of teenagers and young adults occupied a field in Northeim (South Lower Saxony) where Germany's first trial with a potential GM crop was scheduled to be conducted. A field occupation in Melbach (Middle-Hesse) by a group that called itself '*die Wühlmäuse*' (the voles) dragged on from 1995 to 1997 and was effective as publicity. Often the field occupations were accompanied by a mobilization of the neighbouring communities, damages to third party property, brawls and evictions by police. Occupants sought to ward off the dissemination of GM seed. When it happened nevertheless, open field occupations were accompanied by nighttime field destructions. Between 1995 and 2009 five field occupations of that kind, and 74 anonymous field destructions took place (Table 3).

In 2005, the method of open field destruction was employed for the first time. The demonstrative act in itself and the resulting legal persecution was thus mobilized to attract public attention. The idea was born during the planning of a mass demonstration that took place in 2004 in Stuttgart (10,000 demonstrators) and marked the beginning of a revitalized anti-GM movement in Germany because, with the end of the EU-wide moratorium on GM-product approvals, the gates were opened for the commercial cultivation of GM-crops in EU-member states. A core of about twenty individuals emerged from the demonstration's organisational network with the aim of launching an action campaign which emulated the French model. The activists came from various regions of Germany, with a large number coming from an alternative rural community who live in Tonndorf castle (Thuringia, near Weimar).

After a year of strategic discussions the group, which had named itself *Gendreck weg!*, (Gene-crap get lost!) launched its first action. It targeted the field of a farmer in Strausberg (Brandenburg, near Berlin) who cultivated GM corn for commercial distribution. The approach was carefully considered. Firstly, the damaging of an experimental field trial, because of its high developmental costs, would have resulted in payment of damages far beyond the group's meagre resources. Furthermore, the action intended to draw public attention to the introduction of commercial GM-cultivation. The plan combined elements of the French model with the established German field occupation tradition. In the time leading up to the event, a website appealed to potential sympathizers, successfully recruiting 200 to 300 people, to participate in an '*Aktionscamp*' (action camp) close to the field. On the eve of the scheduled '*Feldbefreiung*' (field liberation) the farmer was given the opportunity to justify his decision to grow GM corn to the (highly partisan) activist audience attending the event. The next day, a crowd of activists, in strictly pacifist manner and mostly in vain, sought to break through a police cordon to get on the farmer's premises. A police dog caused injuries, and 70 activists were taken into police custody.

In the court trial that took place the following year, prosecution brought the charge of 'call to a criminal offence' (*Aufruf zu einer Straftat*) against two activists, the beekeepers Michael Grolm and Jürgen Binder. Like the French

faucheurs, the German activists sought to turn the trial into a trial against biotechnology, but the strategy hardly paid off as the judge disqualified arguments that were brought forward against the technology. Neither displays of solidarity nor media interest came close to the nation-wide debates in France. Like the French *faucheurs*, the German activists justified the action as an act of self-defence- 'GM-contaminated' honey can be considered a threat to a beekeeper's livelihood. However, the attempt to reframe the issue in legal terms failed before the court. The judge handed out minor fines. The activists refused to pay and lodged an appeal.

Subsequently, *Gendreck weg!* proceeded to stage one open field destruction each year. In the summer of 2006, one such event took place in the vicinity of the village Badingen (Brandenburg). Some hundred activists joined the *Aktionscamp*. According to activists' accounts, on the day of the 'field liberation', some 80 persons succeeded in circumventing the police cordon and entered the field, whereupon 64 activists were taken into custody and 24 arrested (freie-radios.net 2006). In the following summer, *Gendreck weg!* was active in Oderbruch (Brandenburg). In spite of massive police presence, activists incurred damages to a commercial GM-field, provoking clashes and arrests. In 2008, the *Gendreck weg!* activists shifted their focus to the relatively agrarian *Land* of Bavaria, which for the same year, scheduled the large scale introduction of GM corn for commercial cultivation. After several hundred activists and sympathizers had congregated over some days in an *Aktionscamp* near Kitzingen (Lower Franconia), and in a night-time action activists destroyed a tightly guarded GM-maize field. (Photos 2 and 3)

In addition, two atypical open field destructions occurred in the years 2006 and 2008. At Pentecost 2006, a handful of activists broke into the guarded precincts of the Justus Liebig University in Gießen (Hessen) and attempted to uproot GM-plantlets, while being filmed by a TV team they had contacted. In April 2008, in an unannounced nighttime raid, six activists entered a guarded facility of the research centre IPK (Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research IPK) in Gatersleben (Saxony-Anhalt) where they destroyed a GM wheat field trial. In both cases police stepped in immediately and legal consequences followed.

Photo 2: June 29th, 2008, Kitzingen (Bavaria). Activists instruct participants in how to set up a 'tripod', i.e., a simple high stand that is often used in 'GM-field occupations' to foil attempts by the police to remove activists from the fields. A month later, I was present when a German activist presented this protest method in a meeting of faucheurs *in France where it had been unknown till then: another case of cross-national diffusion? Photo by the author.*

From 2006 to 2009, *Gendreck weg!* activists stood trial another ten times. Vandalism of commercial GM fields mostly resulted in (usually moderate) fines. In 2009, however, activists had to serve prison sentences on four occasions. The most spectacular case is the one of the beekeeper Michael Grolm. (Photo 3) For ignoring a prohibitory injunction Grolm received a fine of €1,000. Rather than paying the fine, Grolm, insisting on the rightfulness of his action, decided to serve the equivalent of two days in prison. As he refused to make the mandatory oath of disclosure, however, the court imposed coercive detention on the activist. Thus, in autumn 2008, Grolm actually served 27 days, until a constitutional complaint ended his stay in prison. In an act of solidarity the activist Christian Pratz also served two weeks in prison. In August 2012 the activist Erasmus Müller served 23 days in coercive detention for having participated in the 'field liberation' in Kitzingen in 2008 and, like Grolm, refusing to pay the fine. The 'field liberation' in Gießen also resulted severe legal repercussions. A trial that stretched over two years led to a prison sentence of half a year for the activist Jörg Bergstedt.

In general, both the actions and the resulting proceedings attracted the attention of several national media and some support among sympathisers, yet

public resonance never came close to the magnitude of the debate in France. Around the year 2008, when the intensity of the German anti-GM movement generally began to rise, mostly in Bavaria, wherefrom local politicians started to put pressure on the Federal government, local field destructions also captured more attention. In September 2008, the left-leaning daily *die tageszeitung* (taz) elected Michael Grolm '*Held des Alltags*' (everyday hero) in recognition of his outstanding political engagement. Yet, this did neither come close to the nation-wide waves of solidarity José Bové set in motion in France, nor did the group's direct action campaign spawn any imitators within Germany's anti-GM movement. In August 2012, *Gendreck weg!* disbanded. The activists justified the move by explaining that since the end of commercial GM-cultivation was brought about through the banning of GM corn variety MON810, their major objective had been achieved. Political reform had thus rendered protests unnecessary.

Photo 3: June 30th, 2008, Kitzingen (Bavaria). Michael Grolm in a workshop on conflict management in the Aktionscamp *in Kitzingen. In his appearances as anti-GM activist Grolm consistently dressed as bee-keeper. He thus embodied an authentic rural occupational group that is directly affected by biotechnology's advance (since 'GM-contamination' makes the sale of honey virtually impossible) while enhancing his recognition value. We are reminded of José Bové's iconic, somehow 'Gallic' features. Photo by the author.*

8. Discussion: diffusion of open field destruction

Groups in Germany and Spain have adopted the method of open field destruction, which had been so successfully put to work by the French movement. How did the adoption of this high-cost method come to pass? How can the differences in the diffusion processes in the two countries be explained?

8.1 Adoption as emulation

The analytical concepts regarding the media and channels of diffusion, which have been presented before, are only of help in addressing the first question. In both Spain and Germany the adoption processes correspond to the proximate model, i.e., the adoption or, in a wider sense, emulation of the open field destruction method. This model was not based on a common organisational structure, but on the receiver's attribution of similarity with the model actor. To be sure, by coordinating transnational campaigns, organizations such as Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth have considerably stimulated the diffusion protest objectives and strategies across Europe; however, they have not been involved in the diffusion of the open field destruction method. Furthermore, diffusion came to pass in a non-relational manner. Adopters in Spain and Germany planned and conducted their actions without having prior contact to their French role models. This is true in spite of the fact that, during my field research, I observed that in all major activist rallies in Germany, France and Spain delegates from the respective other countries were present and actively involved. This occurrence of international networking among advocates of open field destruction, however, took place in 2008 and 2009. Interviews with both the Spanish and the German activists clearly indicate that they made contact with the *faucheurs after* having conducted their first open field destructions. Not until 2006 did the *faucheurs* begin to make regular visits to the German *Aktionscamps*. This same year the Catalonian activists started to attend reunions of the *faucheurs* in France after their operation in *Gimenells* and the ensuing trials. It can be concluded that the mere example of the successful *faucheurs* sufficed in inspiring the emulation processes in Spain and Germany with personal contact occurring later.

8.2 Spain: failed emulation

While ideas lightly travel across national boundaries, it depends on contextual factors whether they can be implemented successfully. The striking difference between the Spanish and the German experience illustrates this. However, why did the Spanish direct action campaign, in contrast to that in Germany, soon fade out? The reasons for the failure of the Spanish venture are not only in Spain's socio-political context but also in its wider anti-GM movement. In the first instance, it seems obvious to hold the harsh legal reaction responsible for the method's early failure. Interviews with Spanish activists confirmed that direct action in Spain was often met with severe state repression. Reasons include the historical influence of Franco's dictatorship as well as more recent

anti-terror legislation directed both against Basque separatism and militant Islamism. On this legal base, according to those interviewed, state repression often hinders civil society protest (see also Todt 1999: 203; O'Brien 2009: 153).

A further, more significant reason is that the anti-GM movement never caused any serious public resonance with the Spanish public. Consequently, the court trials did not raise a great deal of public attention beyond activist circles. Several reasons account for the low public resonance attained by anti-GM campaigns. Despite their importance, food issues rarely become controversial in Spain and are still not as prominent as in most West European countries (see also Jiménez 2007). Even though, in the first decade of the 2000s, various movements in Spain adopted the alter-globalization discourse (Martínez 2007), GMOs never became a symbol for neoliberal globalization as they did in France. Finally, the progressive *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, Socialist Workers' Party of Spain) is not prone to technological criticism.

In addition to these factors, however, the conditions within Spain's broader anti-GM movement are not conducive to open field destructions. Thus, Spanish, in particular Catalan, activists lack important allies in the rural sphere similar to the *Confédération* in France. For example, the left-leaning farmers organisation *Coordinadora de Organizaticiones de Agricultores y Ganadores* (COAG, Umbrella Association for Farmer- and Stock-Breeder Organisations) opposes the use of biotechnology in agriculture, but does not support field destructions (open or covert) because a great number of COAG members grow embarked on GM-crops in the late nineties. A protest campaign based on field destructions therefore would provoke considerable internal conflicts. Taking pains to avoid infighting the COAG settled with this contradictory position on GMOs. The critical farmers organization's dilemma shows that the quick and early onset of GM cultivation in Spain had decisive consequences for the later anti-GM movement: once in mass use, the technology became entrenched in Spain's agriculture and thus pre-empted the formation of any decisive farmer resistance in later years.

Photo 4: April 14th, 2009, Saragossa (Aragon). On this day the biggest, nation-wide anti-GM demonstration in Spain took place since a (weak) oppositional movement emerged in the mid 1990s. It rallied a great number of collectives and about 4,000 activists from the entire country. The picture shows COAG union leaders. On the one hand, the progressive farmer organisation advocates an anti-GM position; on the other it opposes the use of radical protest methods as these might raise conflicts among its members. Photo by the author.

8.3 Germany: moderate success

Even though Germany's 'field liberators' were more successful than their Spanish counterparts, we still might ask why the public resonance, provoked by their actions, lagged so far behind the publicity of the *faucheurs'* activism. This is particularly remarkable given the high costs carried by the activists, in terms of police force and legal procedures endured, fines and jail sentences. In France, José Bové served jail sentences on four occasions, which in the end totalled two months spent in prison. In addition, his former fellow campaigner René Riesel (who, as a matter of principle, refused to be granted privileges for political reasons) served a jail sentence of six months. No other *faucheur* activists had to serve time in jail. In Germany, by contrast, four activists were kept in jail for considerable periods, with Jörg Bergstedt serving half a year.

The impact of the jail sentences on the public (which the activists seem to have provoked at times), still fell short of the respective events in France. In France, activists staged 114 protest events in order to display their solidarity with activists threatened by or actually serving a prison sentence. Of these protest

events, 94 (82 percent) focused on José Bové, and 85 (75 percent) took place in 2002 and 2003, when public debate mainly revolved around his looming incarceration. In Germany, a total of only 17 displays of solidarity took place, out of which 15 occurred in 2008 and 2009, the years of the trials and jail sentences. Of the activists involved, no one ever came close to José Bové's 'heroic' celebrity status. In sum, the German 'field liberators' appear as a smaller model of the French *faucheurs*. They paid a relatively high price for a comparatively small 'pay off' in terms of movement mobilization and generated public attention.

How can these differences be explained? One possible way would be to argue, that the protest method of open field destruction was still at an infant stage in Germany when its desired result–the banishment of GM crops from German soil–was attained so that the cause for radical action ceased to exist. Then again, in the evolution of movement in France the large waves of mobilisation and solidarity also took place at an early stage. Furthermore, Germany's biotechnology policy has proved responsive to some extent. The virtual end of commercial GM crop cultivation in 2009, for example, was followed by a drastic reduction in GM field trials.[8]

It is therefore instructive to examine the contextual factors, particularly those that are elements of the wider anti-GM movement in Germany. Firstly, it needs to be stressed that the open field destruction method never was pivotal to the German anti-GM movement whose supporting pillars are professional NGOs such as Greenpeace and the BUND. Greenpeace Germany was involved in 30.2 percent of all protest events, mostly in a leading role, the BUND participated in 17.8 percent. By contrast, *Gendreck weg!* was involved in only 8.8 percent. Neither of the big, professional NGOs made open field destructions a strategic priority. BUND was never openly involved in such an action and mostly engaged in informational activism (83.2 percent of BUND's activity). Greenpeace focussed on demonstrative and informational measures (43.6 and 46.9 percent respectively). Yet, Greenpeace at times targeted experimental and commercial GM-fields, mostly by conducting demonstrative actions, although they also sometimes employed direct action tactics, for example by preventing the planting of GM seed. In a few cases these actions were accompanied by field destructions, which however, were conducted anonymously. Only in one case did Greenpeace perform an open field destruction. In August 2006, fifteen Greenpeace activists invaded a GM field in Wölsickendorf (Brandenburg) as part of a campaign against the use of GM feed in dairies, where they uprooted maize plants and were temporarily detained by police. No noticeable juridical process followed.

Then again, while these few Greenpeace-led actions remained isolated events, *anonymous* field destructions are common practice in Germany since the first field trials in the early nineties. As Table 3 illustrates, this action method by far

[8] While, in 2007, 81 open trials took place in twelve federal states, in 2011, their number shrank to 15 in four federal states (most of them in Saxony-Anhalt).

outweighs open field destruction. In France, the *Confédération* and the *faucheurs* respectively carried out 71 percent of all field destructions, the remainder was carried out anonymously. In Germany, the majority of field destructions were anonymous acts. Most of the cases listed in the category 'not specified' can also be assumed to be anonymous field destructions. Since 2005, a public database that discloses the locations of field trials made it easier to launch anonymous attacks against such trials. To a considerable extent, the drop in the number of field trials since 2007 is due to the increase in anonymous crop trashing. Against this background, and also taking into account the established German tradition of field occupations, the relatively few cases of open field destructions appear as a marginal phenomenon.

	France	*Germany*
Not specified	15	49
Anonymous field destruction	9	74
Confédération paysanne	16	.
Faucheurs volontaires	43	.
Field occupations	.	15
Gendreck weg!	.	4

Table 3: Crop-trashing in France and Germany (protest event analysis El País, le Monde, SZ *1995-2009)*

To be sure, open field destruction constitutes an 'action package'. The act of civil disobedience is meant to cause a series of follow up events such as police and legal repression as well as protests against repression, all designed to attract media attention. The package's function is to challenge and reframe the way the technology is commonly understood. The German 'field liberators', however, were lacking the influential allies their French heroes could fall back on. Unlike their French counterparts, they were not supported by the Green Party or any other influential social group. The French activists, through the *Confédération,* had roots in France's rural world. The *Gendreck weg!* activists, by contrast, while stressing their connection to beekeeping, hardly represent a rural constituency. The mobilization potential of the group, which might be dubbed 'young idealists', hardly reaches beyond activist circles.

9. Concluding remarks

It has been demonstrated that even high-cost protest methods travel easily across national boundaries. Personal contact via transnational networks certainly facilitates adoption. Indeed, activists engaged in open field destructions sought to establish transnational contact networks but it is not

required for it to take place. The mere existence of a successful and visible role model abroad suffices as a motive for adoption. Both, in Germany and Spain, adopters began to establish contacts with their French role models only *after* having conducted their first open field destructions. Moreover, these networks emerged independently from transnational organizations such as Greenpeace, which, if at all, only marginally took part in GM-field destructions.

However, as predicted by current concepts about diffusion, whether the *implementation* of the high-cost practice under different circumstances succeeds, depends on the opportunities and constraints provided by the new context. This study has shown that, in addition to general features of the national political system, particularly the level state repression, contextual factors within the wider movement are of decisive influence. Two questions emerged as being of specific importance. Firstly, how do other actors within the wider movement receive the innovation? While sharing with adopters their general commitment, these actors often diverge in their short-range objectives, strategies and repertoires. They may become allies, even adopt the novel practice from them, but they might also remain indifferent or favour competing repertoires and strategies.

Secondly, does the general movement generate public and political resonance? The cases of Germany's and Spain's anti-GM movements seem to suggest that the likelihood of a successful adoption of a high-cost practice increases with the wider movement's success. While in the finally successful German movement the new high-cost practice could be sustained for several years, it did not survive a single attempt in Spain. Yet this suggestion needs to be further examined. As argued by this study, the diffusion of high-cost practices follows other routes than less costly tactics. What holds true for one class of protest methods does not necessarily apply to others. Furthermore, movements that fight for the same cause in different countries look quite different in terms of actor composition and prevailing strategies. Whether a new practice strikes roots and diffuses within another national movement does also depend on its specific characteristics peculiarities. We thus conclude that, in spite of a supposed trend towards transnationalisation of social movements which manifests itself through diffusion among other things, movements, particularly if they resort to high-cost practices, still unfold and evolve depending on the opportunities and constraints they face within their national boundaries.

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