Globalization and Transnational Social Movement Organizations[1]

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Although few scholars devoted much attention to the phenomena of transnationally linked social movement mobilization prior to the 1990s, today evidence of transnational activism and organizing abounds (See, e.g., Willetts 1996; Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002). To what extent does such activism represent a qualitative change in the ways that people engage in collective efforts to promote social or political change? What are the connections between broad shifts in global economic and political organization and the social movement sectors of societies? This research outlines a framework for building upon previous understandings of social movements and the organizations that facilitate them in order to better understand the ways that global changes affect popular political mobilization and action. In addition, it provides empirical evidence about both the population of transnational social movement organizations and their internal processes.

Organizational Imperatives of Globalization

As governments turn increasingly to global institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations to resolve shared problems, social movement actors seeking to change local and national practices find that they must look beyond their national boundaries to do so. The global political context both expands and complicates the strategic choices available to those hoping to promote political and social change. Thus, we should expect that the nesting of states within a broader and increasingly influential inter-state system should change the ways social movement actors carry out their struggles.

In particular, we can expect that social movement organizations – viewed by many as key building blocks of social movements– will become increasingly transnational in structure. This process parallels the transformation of contentious politics during the rise of national states (cf. Tilly 1984; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001). For instance, within a global institutional setting, efforts to shape the practices of a particular government require international legal or scientific expertise, understandings of the rivalries and practices of inter-state political bargaining, and capacities for mobilizing protests and otherwise bringing simultaneous pressure against multiple national governments.[2] Activists thus need organizations that can facilitate cross-cultural communication and manage diversity in order to further a shared agenda. It should not be surprising, therefore, to find that social movement organizations devoted especially to transnational level organizing and political action play key roles in global level contentious politics.

A growing body of empirical evidence on transnational protests allows us to evaluate this assumption. For instance, we can examine key "episodes" in transnational or global contentious politics for the presence of transnational organizational forms. Table 1 does this by summarizing some of the central organizational actors and their various roles in the 1999 "Battle of Seattle" against the expansion of the WTO. This event has come to represent the first major – though by no means the first– confrontational protest at a global political site.

Table 1 About Here

The general pattern that emerges from this table is that groups with less routinized and formalized transnational ties were more involved in mobilizing local participation in the Seattle protest event. The educational activities in which they engaged drew largely from the strategic framing and information dissemination done by groups with more extensive transnational ties. In contrast, more of the work of groups with routine transnational ties or with transnational organizational structures was devoted to facilitating such mobilizing work by other groups.

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[2]For more on the political dynamics of social movements within nested national and inter-state politics see Rothman and Oliver (1999), Tarrow (2001a), and Smith, Pagucco and Chatfield (1997).

Groups with transnational ties enabled transnational exchange of various kinds by producing newsletters and websites that provided information about the work of activists in various countries as well as by bringing activists from different countries for speaking tours and other forms of direct transnational contacts. In the Battle of Seattle, for instance, People's Global Action organized a "People's Caravan" that traveled across the United States in the weeks before Seattle to participate in local teach-ins on the World Trade Organization and its effects on various peoples around the world. The People's Caravan relied upon and complemented local organizations, which provided the meeting venues, audiences, and resting places along their route. Groups like the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) provide funds, training, and otherwise enable activists from poor countries to attend global meetings and to speak at public rallies and to participate in organizing workshops like those held during the 1999 WTO meeting.

Broad changes in the organization of the state and society are seen as having substantial impacts on the ways that people might wage political struggles, and they have contributed to the professionalization of social movement organizations and to the now widespread formation of social movement organizations (SMOs) to advance these struggles (cf. Tilly 1984; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Zald 1988).[3] Alongside globalization processes, we find an expansion in the numbers of SMOs (and other types of organizations) that incorporate members from different countries (Boli and Thomas 1997; Smith 1997). SMOs and their transnational counterparts (TSMOs)[4] are carriers of movement ideas, cultures, and skills. They are not the only actors in social movements; they are joined during times of movement expansion by church and school groups, unions and other social groups (See McCarthy 1996). But by understanding their structures and discourses we can gain insights into broader social movement dynamics and

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[3]In practice, social movement organizations vary tremendously in the extent to which they adopt formal bureaucratic structures and hierarchical leadership. My use of the term "organization" includes both highly bureaucratic groups like Amnesty International as well as self-consciously decentralized and non-formalized groups such as Peoples Global Action.

[4]TSMOs are at least minimally formalized organizations that involve participants from more than one country whose purpose is to "change some elements of the social structure or reward distribution, or both, of a society" (cf. McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1218). Prominent examples of TSMOs are Greenpeace and Amnesty International.

capabilities. The consistent rise in the numbers of TSMOs during the latter half of the 20th century suggests that political challengers see sufficient benefits in developing and formalizing transnational ties to justify the relatively higher costs of long-distance organizing. As was seen with the rise of national SMOs in the 18th century, we would expect that these transnational organizations and their interactions with other global actors will have important influences on the ways that people engage in politics in the global political arena (cf. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001).

The Changing Population of Transnational SMOs 1970s-2000

The argument outlined above would lead us to expect that the quickening pace of global integration will generate more extensive efforts by social movement actors to develop formal transnational organizations to defend against unwanted forms of global integration and to shape global processes in ways that complement their goals. Below we examine changes in the population of TSMOs in order to assess the extent to which this expectation is borne out. Table 2 presents the counts of TSMOs identified in various editions of the *Yearbook of International Associations* (Union of International Associations), the most comprehensive census of all international organizations, including governmental, business, and civil society groups.[5]

Table 2 About Here

The population of TSMOs has expanded dramatically in the past three decades especially. While fewer than 200 TSMOs existed in the 1970s, there were nearly one thousand such organizations by 2000. However, the latest period suggests that the very rapid growth in the population that was seen during the 1970s and 1980s has slowed. We examine some reasons for this below, but first we should consider the issues around which these TSMOs organize. Human rights TSMOs constitute the largest segment of the TSMO population, and they remained a consistent 25% of all TSMOs during the three decades examined here. In contrast, we found fairly rapid growth in the environmental and economic justice movement "industries," particularly in the most recent decades. The most dramatic change, however, is in the number of TSMOs that adopted "multi-

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[5]For more details on this source and its relevance to these claims, see Smith (1997); and Boli and

issue" goals such as "environment and development" or "human rights to development" rather than the more traditional, single-issue focus. The number of multi-issue groups doubled during the 1990s (growing at twice the rate of the overall TSMO population), and in percentage terms, it rose from less than 10% of all groups in the 1970s to 17% in 2000.

I want to explore some of the reasons why we are seeing these two broad shifts in the TSMO population, namely, a declining rate of growth in the sector and a shift from single-issue to multi-issue organizing frames. When considering why the sector's growth rate has slowed, we must account for the important development at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that allowed more direct access by national and sub-national groups to the United Nations. Before that time, only international organizations could obtain "consultative status" with the UN, which allowed them access to international meetings as well as to important documents on international negotiations and UN practices (see Willetts 1999). This effectively reduced the benefits of transnational association for some groups, which may have found it easier to make direct appeals to international organizations rather than to submerge their own organizational interests within a broader transnational framework. Moreover, once the UN began to credential national and sub-national groups, this paved the way for their greater access to other international organizations.

Another factor in the slowing TSMO growth may be the organizational structures adopted by TSMOs. Transnational organizing requires substantially greater resources than does more locally-oriented action. Not only is this due to larger communication and transportation costs, but it also results from the need to bridge linguistic and cultural distances within the organization. We can expect to find organizational structures aimed at limiting these transaction costs. The *Yearbook* data allow us to determine the ways that TSMOs structure their relationships with members. Table 3 displays the changes in these organizational structures. The more centralized, "federated" structure involves the division of the organization into national sections that relate to the international secretariat. Typically national sections have a national monopoly on the organization's name (e.g., Amnesty International-USA), contribute a pre-determined share of their resources to the international secretariat, send national delegates to international meetings, and agree to follow a set of international guidelines regarding political

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Thomas (1999).

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claims, governance, and activities. In contrast, the "coalition" form reflects a more decentralized and informal structure. While coalitions vary tremendously in the extensiveness of ties between organizational affiliates and the international headquarters, the main feature of this form is that affiliates are asked to adopt a relatively limited shared ideological framework, and they maintain fairly wide autonomy within the coalition framework.

Table 3 About Here

The most dramatic change in the TSMO population over the past three decades is that these groups are adopting the more decentralized and informal coalition form. It is probably no coincidence that this same phenomena is happening in the corporate sector, as firms seek to maximize the ability of their diverse regional and national operations to adapt quickly to changing market forces (see, e.g., Sklair 2001). The coalition form accelerates decision making and therefore adaptability of groups by decentralizing authority within the organization. In a rapidly changing and uncertain political context, such flexibility is essential.

One other change that we might expect but that we did not see in these data is a shift towards the most decentralized structures, namely an increase in groups that allow individual participation. Technological advances of the personal computer, fax, and Internet should facilitate individual participation in TSMOs. However, we do not see any real changes in the percentages of groups with individual members. Nevertheless, we should expect that the *quality* of individual participation in transnational groups has been enhanced by technological innovations and the expansion of information about global realities.

How can these changes in the organizational structure of TSMOs help explain the patterns of growth we found in table 2? First, the more common, decentralized coalition structure would allow more national groups to participate in transnational associations without major changes in their pre-existing routines and agendas. Joining transnational coalitions brings rather minimal financial costs, and for many groups, the commitments of time and other organizational resources can be determined by the affiliate organization itself. The returns on coalition membership include access to strategic information and frames generated by the transnational organization as well as the enhanced solidarity that comes from being part of a transnational

6

collectivity of diverse local struggles. For some groups, there may be even greater benefits such as assistance with global-level mobilization and attendance at international conferences, financial and strategic resources for global work, greater local and international legitimacy, and enhanced opportunities to participate in transnational meetings. In sum, the coalition form can reduce the start-up costs to groups seeking to extend their work into the global arena. With an almost unlimited capacity for expansion, coalitions can absorb new participants into the sector more readily than can the more rigid and centralized federation structure.[6]

Coalition structures also encourage the framing of goals and issues in ways that extend their possibilities for attracting the broadest possible base of affiliates. Thus, the shift to multi-issue frames may reflect this need to organize from a constituency of activists that crosses major geographic, political, cultural, and ideological divides. By limiting the degree of ideological conformity among affiliates to a limited consensus around a specific set of aims, coalitions create spaces where a more diverse range of organizations can join transnational collective efforts without abandoning their own organizational constituencies and missions. Thus, with fewer organizations, coalitions can accommodate a broader and more diverse constituency.[7]

Another dimension of TSMO organizational structure is the extent to which they are organized on a global versus a regional level. To measure this, we examined TSMO memberships in terms of their locations within the global North, the global South, or in both Northern and Southern regions. Table 4 presents the distribution of TSMOs according to their regional scope.

Table 4 About Here

We see in this table that most TSMOs are organized inter-regionally, that is they incorporate

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[6]Interestingly, an unsystematic survey of the foundings of transnational groups suggests that quite a few of them were formed by activists who began their careers in major transnational federations like Amnesty International or the International Confederation of the Red Cross, but left these groups because of their rigid and hierarchical structures. The former helped spawn many groups, including Equality Now and Peace Brigades International, the latter inspired Medecins Sans Frontiers (see, e.g., Smith, Pagnucco and Romeril 1994).

[7]Whether or not this enhances political effectiveness is a separate question. Looking at national groups, for instance, Gamson (1990) found that more formalized and centralized organizations (i.e., federations in this study) were more successful at achieving their goals.

members from both the global North and South. However, the growth rates among *intra-regional* organizations exceed that of the inter-regional groups. While nearly one-half of North-only TSMOs and more than one-third of South-only TSMOs were formed during the 1990s, only one-fifth of all inter-regional TSMOs began their work in the 1990s. This pattern could reflect a growing *polarization* within the transnational social movement sector along the major structural divide in the world system, meaning that social movement actors have been unable to mitigate or overcome the major lines of inequality in the global system.

On the other hand, this pattern could also reflect a *bridging* role for transnational organizations. Such structures might facilitate the aggregation of diverse interests of local actors in order to more effectively integrate local and regional interests into global-level negotiations. Indeed, inter-governmental conferences may encourage region-specific organizing by the fact that they hold regionally-based preparatory meetings before major global conferences and by their emphasis on regional representation in their formal structures and negotiation processes. Further research is needed to assess the underlying dynamics behind this organizing pattern, but certainly this regionalization of TSMO structures will impact the nature of transnational mobilizations yet to come.[8]

Organizational Integration & its Challenges

The net effect of the growth and organizational development of the population of TSMOs is that a much larger societal infrastructure exists for the transnational dissemination of information and exchanges between people from different national backgrounds. If we can view each organizational unit as an indicator of a variety of social interactions across national borders, then these figures reveal substantially more frequent transnational communication and dialogue in the 1990s than in earlier decades. Such transnational dialogue is essential to cultivating ideologies and identities that will appeal to an international movement constituency.

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[8]An analysis of the variations in issue focus of North-only versus South-only groups suggests support for the "polarization" hypothesis. A slightly higher percentage of intra-regional groups were organized in the area of human rights, and this is an issue along which Northern and Southern activists tend to be divided between an emphasis on civil and political rights versus economic and social rights. More North-only groups were organized around environmental issues, whereas South-only groups were more likely to focus on development and economic justice issues.

But how <u>global</u> are these associations? Do they serve to reinforce the "opportunity hoarding" (Tilly 1998) found across many societies, where already privileged groups reinforce their influence and advantages, while weaker groups see minimal gains as they fall further behind? Western Europeans and North Americans are clearly over-represented in TSMOs, and most organizational headquarters are based in those regions (principally in Western Europe). However, there was some evidence of a gradual shift towards greater representation of Southern citizens in TSMOs (Smith 1997; Sikkink and Smith 2002). Case studies also suggest that, within TSMOs and other transnational coalitions, the influence of Southern activists has been increasing (Fox 2000: 8; Wirth 1998; Gray 1998).

Regardless of their geographic scope, the extent to which TSMOs can produce transnational relationships that are meaningful for political contention depends upon the types of activities taking place within them. Does the transnational character of these associations "trickle-down" to affiliates in different countries? International organizations in particular must overcome distinct challenges to cultivating a unified organizational purpose that can motivate collective action. Organizational *integration*, in other words, cannot be assumed by the mere presence of a transnational organizational structure, but rather it varies in the degrees to which an organization can overcome diversity, distance, economic barriers, and political fragmentation (Young 1991). Young argues that both technological advances and changes in perceptions of global interdependence will make the internal cohesion of transnational associations less problematic.

To assess the internal dynamics of transnational SMOs, this study draws from two different mailed surveys of TSMO leaders and their local and national affiliate organizations.[9] One survey addressed leaders of transnational human rights SMOs and the other, the organizational affiliates of EarthAction, a TSMO working on global environment, development, and human rights issues. The human rights survey, conducted during 1996, examines the transnational headquarters of all human rights TSMOs, providing evidence about the human rights frames, contacts with inter-state institutions, resources, and geographic make-up of human rights TSMOs. The survey response rate was just over 50% (144 responses), and there was no systematic difference in the response rates of groups based in the global South as compared with Northern based groups (see Smith, Pagnucco and Lopez 1998). However, most human rights TSMOs were based in the

[9]Further details on these surveys and additional findings from them are available in Smith

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North (103 Northern versus 41 Southern TSMO respondents).

The second survey addressed the organizational affiliates of EarthAction, a TSMO working on global environment, development, and human rights issues. EarthAction's principal focus is on supporting multilateral solutions for global environmental and economic justice problems. It distributes "action kits" to its affiliate or "Partner Organizations," providing them with background information and action suggestions. EarthAction actively solicits input from affiliates as it plans its campaigns. EarthAction campaigns include global negotiations like those on Climate Change and local struggles like the Ogoni people's resistance to the Nigerian government and multinational oil companies. The survey was conducted during 1998, and achieved a response rate of 52% (N=209). Comparisons of the pool of respondents with non-respondents found no systematic differences in organizational location, size, structure, or duration of ties with EarthAction. However, as one might expect, respondents tended to be somewhat more active Partners than were non-respondents.[10]

Internal Communications Transnational SMOs vary tremendously in the intensity of interactions they represent. Some TSMOs may only have quadrennial meetings of national representatives of their members, while others may have bi-weekly conference calls among leaders and/or frequent electronic communications with local individual or organizational members. Some may have the resources to conduct extensive electronic and mailed communications, while others may have more uneven electronic contacts and infrequent postal exchanges. For instance, the frequency of EarthAction contacts depends to a large extent upon its success at fundraising for its various campaigns. So what can we say generally about the significance of the transnational linkages represented by this collection of groups? Table 5 displays the responses of human rights TSMOs to questions about the frequency of contacts with organizational affiliates.

(Forthcoming, 2002).
[10]The measure used here was a dummy variable indicating whether or not the group had made any contact with EarthAction (e.g., by sending newsletters or news clippings about their campaigns or returning post cards indicating that they took action on an EarthAction campaign) or responded to earlier attempts by EarthAction to contact them prior to the survey. Thirty-five percent of respondents and 22% of non-respondents had made prior contact with EarthAction's

Table five shows that most groups maintain fairly frequent contact with their affiliates at the
local and national levels. Ninety percent of all transnational human rights organizations
responding indicated that they have at least quarterly contacts with members through background
papers, action alerts, or other contacts. Seventy-nine percent indicated contact with members
beyond quarterly communications. In addition, most TSMOs are actively engaging in contacts
with other organizations in their environment. The human rights survey showed that more than
half of all groups engage in at least monthly contact with other NGOs. Such contacts indicate
relationships that link actors and identities to global human rights frames and arenas.

   Certainly the rise of electronic communications over recent years has facilitated transnational
organizing. Indeed, Warkentin argues that progressive groups advancing global agendas helped
pioneer the application of these technologies in the service of a global civil society (Warkentin
2001). Nevertheless, given the wide disparities in access to Internet communications even
within the highly industrialized countries, we should expect great inequity in the use of
electronic communications by Northern and Southern TSMOs and their affiliates. The data we
have in these surveys supports this contention, although the gaps may not be as wide as some
might anticipate. Among the human rights TSMOs surveyed in 1996, just 44% reported use of
electronic communications (e-mail and/or Internet). Comparing geographic differences, we see
that 30% of Southern-based groups and 49% of Northern based groups reported access to
electronic communications.[11] A somewhat higher percentage of EarthAction affiliates reported
access to electronic communications.[12] Overall, 59% of respondents reported that they use e-

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international offices (T=3.23, p < .01).

   [11]Differences were statistically significant at the .05 level (t=2.13).

   [12]Some of this difference might be due to expanding access to electronic communications
as the 1990s progressed. Also, the different sampling frames of these two studies may account
for some differences. The transnational organizations may be more heavily reliant upon
electronic communications than some of the many more locally organized groups in the
EarthAction survey. Indeed, a comparison of EarthAction affiliates that transcend national
boundaries shows that a significantly higher percentage of transnational affiliates than local and

mail, and half (50%) reported use of the Internet. Here again, geographic differences were not as great as one might expect. While 80% of Northern groups use e-mail, about half (51%) of Southern affiliates reported doing so. Disparities on Internet usage were greater: 77% of Northern groups, compared with 39% of Southern ones reported using the Internet. Eighty-two percent of European and 79% of North American Partners reported that they use e-mail, and African Partners reported the least access to e-mail, 35%.   Asian groups were next at 41%. Nearly three-quarters of Latin American Partners and 62% of Partners in the Pacific have e-mail.[13]

One thing that is clear is that the "digital divide" between Northern-based and Southern-based TSMOs is far smaller than that for the general society. The 1999 UN *Human Development Report* showed that more than 26% of the U.S. population and around 7% of the populations of other industrialized Northern countries were Internet users, compared to less than 1% of the populations of countries in the South (UNDP 1999:63). But without further knowledge of the class backgrounds of groups with access to communications technologies, we cannot say whether or not the comparatively small technology gap between Northern and Southern TSMOs is simply a result of their location within an educated cosmopolitan middle class (see, e.g., Tarrow 2001b).

It is also worth emphasizing that new communications technology alone cannot produce the kinds of commitment and understanding that is essential for sustained collective action. "The revolution will not be e-mailed," according to People's Global Action (2000). Jocelyn Dow, founder of a women's organization in Guyana and a board member of the international Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) argued:

> . . . [I]f we are not careful, we lose the texture of information. One of the most important things for women is to continue to meet globally, because there is nothing that better challenges any misguided notion you might have than to meet a person in her actual skin. We have to live each other's reality. [Global] conferences have a capacity for energizing what

national affiliates used email (72% vs. 52%) and the Internet (69% vs. 41%) (mean differences are significant at .01 level for both comparisons).

[13]Use of the Internet was again less common: only one-quarter of African and Asian Partners reported use of the Internet, while around three-quarters of European, Latin American, and North American Partners are Internet users.

I call the agenda of defiance (quoted in Thom 2000:32)

My own contacts with affiliates of transnational organizations corroborate this widespread desire for human connections and its importance to solidarity-building. EarthAction affiliates, for instance, quite frequently ask the organization to organize conferences for their Partners to meet each other. And directories of affiliates have been very popular within the organization as a means of promoting more direct exchange.[14] In short, despite the vast distances between activists, the need for personal contact remains important for motivating and sustaining collective action. Transnational organizations facilitate this contact.

In sum, despite the higher costs of transnational activity, this evidence suggests at least a capacity for fairly routine transnational communications between the headquarters and the local or national affiliates of TSMOs. Without more qualitative data we cannot say much about the content of these communications, but at the very least they suggest that TSMOs actively incorporate routine information exchanges that are necessary for effective transnational cooperation to develop.

Perceived Obstacles to International Cooperation. The following two tables explore some of the obstacles that participants in transnational organizations perceive in their efforts to build transnational cooperation around social and political change goals. Table 6 lists items from the survey of transnational headquarters of human rights groups regarding perceptions of financial, linguistic and cultural obstacles. Responses to similar questions by EarthAction affiliates appear in table 7.

Tables 6 & 7 About Here

These responses indicate that financial limitations are perceived as a relatively small obstacle to transnational work by human rights groups. In contrast, the EarthAction affiliates were more likely to report strong financial constraints on their abilities to participate in transnational

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[14]Brown and Fox (1998:455-6) report similar conclusions from their study of transnational coalitions working to oppose World Bank projects and policies.

campaigns. The contrast between the two surveys is probably explained by the fact that the human rights groups are transnational associations whose principal purpose is to promote global organizing around human rights goals. Therefore, their organizational budgets are likely to account for the expenses involved in maintaining regular contact with widely dispersed affiliates. In contrast, many affiliates of EarthAction are small, local groups attempting to address the global dimensions of their local concerns or trying to connect their local efforts with those of other activists. Few have very large budgets, and much of the efforts taken on behalf of global campaigns must come out of regular organizational budgets that leave little room for new outreach or campaign efforts.

Not surprisingly, Southern affiliates were considerably more likely to report having financial limitations on their activities than were Northern groups. This is at least partially related to the fact that Southern groups were more likely than Northern ones to be local or national in orientation and that the more locally oriented groups also tended to report greater financial limitations on their transnational participation.[15] Organizations oriented towards local and national activities can be expected to face difficulties in shifting scarce organizational resources to global campaign efforts.

Linguistic differences were reported to be a much smaller problem for all groups involved. This may be because EarthAction's produces materials in three languages, and many human rights organizations reported the use of multiple working languages. One additional reason may be that the infrequent and written communications representing many of the interactions taking place within most TSMOs do not require the same facility with language that direct interactions or verbal exchanges do. It might also reflect a rather limited engagement of affiliates or members in decision making or complex negotiations about organization strategy and activities.[16] Further research is needed to assess the relevance of language differences as a barrier to organizational integration.

A greater difficulty for transnational affiliates was in relating their local concerns to global campaigns. Southern affiliates and local groups especially reported much more frequent

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[15]Seventy-two percent of the survey sample of Southern affiliates, compared with 38% of Northern affiliates were organized at the local or national levels.

[16]The finding could also be a result of the fact that response to the surveys was more likely from

difficulties in this area. Certainly this disparity hinders equitable North-South integration into transnational organizations. It suggests a need for greater efforts to articulate and develop strategic connections between local interests and relevant global political processes. In other words, if they are to better integrate groups that are most dependent upon their transnational organizing work -- local and Southern affiliates – TSMOs like EarthAction must make efforts to enhance strategic frames so that they better demonstrate local-global connections and suggest feasible local actions. Comparing responses to this question by groups that were less active in EarthAction campaigns with those that were more engaged revealed that groups engaging more frequently in global campaigns found fewer difficulties making global-local connections. Thus, efforts to assist groups to make local-global connections may encourage them to take more concerted action on EarthAction's transnational campaigns.[17]

Conclusions

This study set out to explore the ways that a changing global environment affect the dynamics of social movement organization. The processes of global political and economic integration alter the political contexts in which social movements operate, and even locally-oriented social movements require some level of awareness about, if not involvement in, global-level political institutions. This is especially true for activists in the global South, at the periphery of the global economy, where the policy autonomy of national governments is increasingly limited (see, e.g., Walton and Seddon 1994; Robinson 1996). Thus, we expected that transnationally organized SMOs would fill a particular niche in this sector by providing specialized information and articulating global strategic frames.

For the transnational social movement sector, the expansion of global institutions has encouraged the rapid growth of transnationally organized social movement organizations. These

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groups with leaders who speak or read English, French or Spanish.
    [17]Comparisons of mean responses by groups taking part in at at least half of the campaigns listed in the survey with those taking up fewer than half suggest, not surprisingly, that more active groups found greater benefits from EarthAction resources and campaigns. Differences between the more and less active affiliates reached or approached significance on the following claims: that "EarthAction helps us link local issues to global negotiations," (p. < .10); that their work relating to the UN has increased since joining EarthAction (p < .05); and that EarthAction materials aided their work with other NGOs and the media (p < .10).

TSMOs reflect the key conflicts at work in the global political economy, as most groups focus on issues of human rights, environmental preservation, and economic empowerment/justice. Over the past several decades, the form of transnational SMOs has become more decentralized and adaptive, indicating that these organizations are responding to a changing and uncertain global environment.

Within transnational SMOs, we find that language and cultural differences constituted a relatively minor obstacle for organizers, but that financial limitations were of greatest significance to the affiliates of TSMOs rather than to the transnational organizations themselves. Moreover, affiliates in the global South and locally-organized affiliates had the most difficulty relating to global organizational initiatives.

In summary, the global political context has important consequences for social movement challengers, not the least of which is the problem of devising organizations that are effective at mobilizing a broad and diverse global constituency and providing them with significant avenues for participation in global political debates and decision making. In the absence of democratic infrastructures for popular participation in global-level policy debates, TSMOs provide some of the few opportunities for popular scrutiny of and participation in decisions that increasingly affect their day-to-day lives. Understanding these organizations and their operations will help uncover the likely dynamics of global change and of the routes to greater democratization of global institutions along lines similar to those seen with the rise of the modern democratic states of the West.

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Table 1: Mobilizing Structures & Divisions of Labor
in the "Battle of Seattle"*

Type of Transnational Tie	Movement Mobilizing Structures[1]	Major Roles
<u>No formal TN ties</u>	Local Chapters of National SMOs (e.g., NOW) Neighborhood Committees United for a Fair Economy	Public education Mobilizing participation in protest Localizing global frames
<u>Diffuse TN ties</u>	Direct Action Network Reclaim the Streets Ruckus Society Coalition for Campus Organizing	Public education Mobilizing participation in protest Localizing global frames Tactical Innovations & diffusion
<u>Routine TN ties</u>	Public Citizen Global Exchange Rainforest Action Network United Students Against Sweatshops Council of Canadians Sierra Club	Public education Facilitating local mobilization by others Tactical innovations and diffusion Articulating and disseminating global strategic frames Research/publication of organizing materials Facilitating transnational exchanges Monitoring International Institutions
<u>Formal Transnational Organization</u>	Greenpeace Friends of the Earth International Forum on Globalizat'n Third World Network Peoples Global Action 50 Years is Enough Network Women's Environment & Development Org.	Public education Facilitating local mobilization by others Articulating and disseminating global strategic frames Research/publication of organizing materials Facilitating transnational exchanges Monitoring of International Institutions Coordinating transnational cooperation Cultivating & maintaining global constituency Global symbolic actions

Adapted from Smith (2002).

*This list is illustrative, not comprehensive.

[1]Organizations vary a great deal in their levels of formalization and hierarchy. For instance, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have well defined organizational structures and institutional presences while groups like Peoples Global Action resist forming an organizational headquarters, and Reclaim the Streets seeks to sustain a loose, network-like structure relying heavily on electronic communications.

Table 2: Growth & Issue Focus of
Transnational Social Movement Organizations   (Percentages in bold type)

	1973 N=183	1983 N=348	1993 N=711	2000 N=959
% Change from Prior Decade	30%	90%	104%	42% (*Est.* to 2003)
Human Rights	41 **22%**	89 **26%**	200 **28%**	247 **26%**
Environment	17 **9**	43 **12**	126 **18**	167 **17**
Peace	21 **12**	37 **11**	82 **11**	98 **10**
Women's Rights	16 **9**	25 **7**	64 **9**	94 **9**
Development/ Empowerment	8 **4**	15 **4**	52 **7**	95 **10**
Global Justice/Environment	7 **4**	13 **4**	30 **4**	109 **11**
Multi-issue organizations*	18 **7%**	43 **12%**	82 **12%**	161 **17%**

Source: *Yearbook of International Associations*
*This categorization overlaps some of the categories above- especially the global justice category.

Table 3: Organizational Structures of TSMOs

	1973	1983	1993	2000
Federation	50%	38%	28%	18%
Coalition	25	31	43	60
Individual Membership Only	23	30	29	22
Any Individual Members	48%	46%	51%	50%

Source: *Yearbook of International Associations*

Table 4: Sub-Regional vs. Trans-Regional Organizations

	North-Only N=211	South-Only N=87	Both North & South N=531
Number of Organizations	211	87	531
% of all Organizations (Valid N=829)	25%	10%	64%
Age (Mean years)	18.6	17.5	32.6
(Median)	12	13	22
Formed during 1990s	45%	36%	20%

Source: *Yearbook of International Associations,* 2000

Table 5: Frequency of Transnational Communications

Activity	Number of times group engaged in activity during 1995*	
	Quarterly or less	**Monthly or more**
Issue background papers or action alerts to members	40%	23%
Contact organizational sections or members	28%	40%
Contact other NGOs	20%	54%

Source: Human Rights TSMO survey, (N=144)

*No statistically significant differences were found between groups based in the global North and those in the global South.

Table 6: Organizational Integration Survey Items: Human Rights TSMOs

	% "Often or Always True"
Our organization has difficulty maintaining contact with some members because of the costs of transportation and communication	20%
It is difficult to involve many of our members in decision making because of language differences	10%
Cultural differences among our members make it difficult to agree on joint statements or actions	6%

Source: Human Rights TSMO Survey (N=144)

Table 7: Organizational Integration Survey Items: TSMO Affiliates

	% "Often or Always True"			
	North N=56	South N=156	Reg/ Global N=79	Local/ Nat'l N=130
Financial limitations prevent us from taking action on EarthAction campaigns	51%	64%	44%	62%
Language differences make it difficult for us to use EarthAction materials	14	14	12	15
We have difficulties relating global issues to people's everyday concerns	26	42	27	45

Source: EarthAction Survey (N=209)