Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

Czech Environmental Discourse after a Decade of Western Influence: Transformation beyond Recognition or Continuity of the Pre-1989 Perspectives?

Petr Jehlicka, Philip Sarre and Juraj Poboda

RSC No. 2002/24

EUI WORKING PAPERS

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
All rights reserved.
No part of this paper may be reproduced in any form without permission of the authors.
PROLOGUE

In the past two years radical protest events have accompanied several top-level international negotiations on economic globalisation. In Seattle and Melbourne environmental groups were much in evidence as opponents of globalisation and capitalism. However, at another of these events - protests but also discussions - accompanying the IMF/WB meeting in Prague in September 2000 Czech established environmental groups remained largely silent on globalisation and environment. We do not necessarily expect Czech environmental groups to take an anti-globalisation stance.\(^1\) Instead, what seems striking is precisely the fact that Czech environmental groups have nothing to say about globalisation.

Two other major anti-globalisation events - the Global Street Party and Local Street Party - took place in Prague in May and September 1998. These were not, however, accompanied by any structured discussions between opponents and proponents of economic globalisation. Two features of these protests were worth noticing. First, a much higher turnout in the Global Street Party protest march than the authorities and journalists had expected, and an effort of the Czech established environmental groups to distance themselves from these protests. It seems then that there is a systematic pattern of behaviour of Czech environmentalists to avoid any discussion on globalisation, the phenomenon that many western environmentalists regard as the key issue of the world at present. Curiously, it is the same subject - globalisation - on which the Czech president Vaclav Havel organises an annual high-profile conference in the Prague Castle attended by thinkers and activists from around the globe.\(^2\)

The contrasting behavior of Czech environmental groups in Prague and western groups in Seattle and Melbourne (as well as in Prague) is striking both in itself and because it challenges a widely held interpretation of Czech environmental politics, namely that during the 1990s Czech environmental groups have been completely transformed by ten years of funding and contacts with groups and foundations from the west.

---

1 Two equally legitimate environmentalists’ perspectives on globalization exist according to Milton (1996). One perspective holds that more globalization is the best way of protecting the environment as a resource for human use. The opposing perspective holds that globalization is a major part of the problem, and the only way of living sustainably is to dismantle the global economy and allow local communities more control over their own resources (Milton 1996: 174).

2 Sponsored by the Japanese Nippon Foundation, Vaclav Havel has organized at Prague Castle since 1997 an annual conference called Forum 2000 that is concerned with various aspects of globalization and that brings to the Czech Republic some of the world’s leading thinkers, politicians and spirituals.
1. INTRODUCTION: CZECH ENVIRONMENTALISM, THE CONVENTIONAL VIEW*

Several authors have recently analysed the extent and character of changes of the environmental movement in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in the 1990s as a result of the western involvement in shaping environmental institutions, actors and policies:

The environmental movement in CEE has undergone profound transformation: the movement has shifted from being a mobilising agent for populist protest against the totalita of the Communist regime and in its place has emerged pragmatic, goal-oriented professional organisations. Western aid agencies and environmental peer groups have had a strong influence on this transformation. The transformation has brought advantages to environmental NGOs. However, it has also resulted in a loss of the local perspective, with its distinct modus operandi and bottom-up input, and this has impoverished political discourse in the transition states (Jancar-Webster 1998: 69)

Speaking specifically of the Polish and Czech environmental movements, Hicks and Carmin (2000) observe:

International foundations and funders from the West such as The Rockefeller Brothers Foundation and Milieukontakt Oosteuropa helped to shape the Czech and Polish movements by supporting specific types of activities and issues, making the movement more similar to their Western counterparts. They emphasized and provided funds for computer networking, professionalization of organizations, resource centers, and training programs to increase substantive knowledge of activists.

Elsewhere in the same paper, Hicks and Carmin conclude that “(t)he Czech and Polish environmental movements now resemble Western and increasingly other, transnationally linked movements”. While, in our view, the Czech case fully upholds the assertions about the dramatically changed form and function of CEE

* The research project from which this article arises was funded by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Open University, UK.

Petr Jehlicka is Jean Monnet Fellow at RSCAS, EUI, Florence, Philip Sarre is a senior lecturer in geography at the Open University, Milton Keynes, UK and Juraj Podoba is a research fellow at the Institute of Ethnology, Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. The authors are grateful to JoAnn Carmin, Duncan Liefferink, Matthieu Glachant and an anonymous referee for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. An earlier draft of this paper was presented to the workshop “European Environmental Politics Between Global Challenges and National Particularities“, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, 7 May 2001.
environmental movements, the events in Prague and results of our research conducted in the Czech Republic have led us to a more cautious interpretation concerning the change in activists’ substantive knowledge and the loss of local perspective. The existing academic literature on the Czech environmental movement deals either with the pre-1989 history of the movement and its immediate post-1989 transformations (Kundrata 1992, Fagin 1994, Tickle and Vavrousek 1998), or with early developments of the Czechoslovak Green Party (Jehlicka and Kostelecky 1992 and 1995) and more recently with de-radicalization of the movement in the mid-1990s (Fagin and Jehlicka 1998, Jehlicka 2001) and with international influences on the movement (Hicks and Carmin 2000). However, it contains very little, if any insights into what we call below the Czech environmental movement’s environmental discourse and its development during the last decade of the 20th century. Our contention in this article is that western involvement has had limited impact on worldviews, values and long-term goals held by the key Czech environmental activists and that their preferred ways of achieving these goals exhibit a remarkable degree of continuity with the pre-1989 period.

In the next part of the article we explain the relevance of discourse analysis for studying the contemporary Czech established environmental groups as a way of understanding their peculiar features manifested so vividly during the IMF/WB meeting. This is followed by the third part that describes the respondents of our interviews. We then go on to lay down in part 4 what on the basis of our research we identify as key features of the late 1990s’ Czech environmental discourse. The next part 5 compares these findings with the reconstruction of the main features of Czech environmentalism around 1989. The following sixth part of the article relates these findings to a broad explanatory framework of the continuity of the Czech environmental discourse. Wider implications of our findings for the future of the Czech environmental movement are discussed in the Conclusion.

2. THE RELEVANCE OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

A discourse is a shared way of apprehending the world. Embedded in language, it enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts (Dryzek, 1997: 8). As Dryzek (1996: 10) also argues “(environmental) discourse conditions the way we define, interpret, and address environmental affairs”. Borrowing Miltons’s concept of cultural perspective (Milton 1996: 173), we believe that discourse analysis is a particularly useful approach to examining the extent to which external influences shaped Czech environmental movements’ cultural perspective and its components - assumptions, values, norms and goals.
Apart from this concept our approach to studying the current Czech environmental movement is also based on Holy’s (1996: 3) assumption that politics should not be conceptualised simply as the pursuit of group or sectional interests independent of any particular culture, but as an aspect of the overall cultural system. All political actions, including those taken by environmental movements, are embedded in a wider cultural context. Therefore in our analysis of environmental discourse of the Czech environmental movement in the 1990s we do not look only for explanations internal to the movement, but we take into consideration broader historical, cultural and social factors and experiences that shape the views of the movements protagonists.

According to Milton (1996: 167), environmental discourse is simply communication about the protection of the environment. The importance of this analysis rests in the fact that the Czech environmental movement is the major source of communication on the environment in the country. Due to the absence of alternative actors, such as university research programmes, think tanks, German-style “ecological institutes”, the Academy of Sciences research institutes and programmes (those that exist focus exclusively on scientific or technical dimension of environmental issues), that would participate in environmental discourse and structure the process of social learning on the environment, it was mainly the environmental movement that shaped the public environmental discourse in most of the 1990s. While it is obvious that environmental discourse of the Czech environmental movement cannot be distilled down to a set of components that would capture its full variety and heterogeneity, we nevertheless believe that it is possible to identify some distinctive features of environmental discourse that are applicable to the majority of Czech environmental groups.

3. RESPONDENTS

In order to identify contours of Czech environmental discourse we conducted in winter 1998/99 a series of 21 in-depth interviews with leading activists from established environmental groups. The respondents were people who were active in the movement for several years and who were nationally known at least within environmental circles. In fact, several of them are publicly known personalities, as they are regularly present in the media. We left out from the research other activists who were concerned with single, local and temporary issues. NIMBY activism, for instance, was not part of our research.

3 We define established environmental groups as groups that have are officially registered with the Ministry of Interior, that have at least one part-time employee, that have been active for at least five years and that are well-known at least within the environmental movement.
On the whole, with the exception of the Brno-based group NESEHNUTI (Czech acronym for “Independent Socio-Ecological Movement”) that represents a more radical current in the movement, we are convinced that the information and opinions provided by 21 respondents captures the variety of Czech environmental activism in the late 1990s. We spoke to leading figures from a typical conservation organisation, from campaigning groups that are the backbone of environmental movement at present, with people whose activity can be best described as consultancy, with a director of an organisation that serves as an intermediary between environmental groups and state central authorities as well as with a veteran activist whose work can now be characterised as applied ecology research with consequences for public policy.

The average age of the respondents was 33 and only three of them were below 25 at the time of the interview. The majority of them joined the movement before 1989. Fourteen respondents were men, seven were women. Only two interviewees did not have a university degree or were not studying at a university at the time of the survey. Twelve activists were full-time employees of their environmental organisations. We are confident that our research covered all important centres of Czech environmental activism, as the interviews took place in Brno, Prague, Plzen, Olomouc, Usti nad Labem, Liberec and Ceske Budejovice with respondents representing 13 environmental groups. The majority of the respondents (15) were in the past members of one of (or both) environmental groups that legally existed in the 1970s and 1980s - Cesky svaz ochrancu prirody (Czech Union of Nature Protectionists; CUNP) (8) and Brontosaurus (9).  

4. ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE IN THE LATE 1990s: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Czech environmental discourse as set out below is a collection of features shared by the majority of our respondents rather than an exhaustive list of elements to which all respondents would subscribe. We do not deny that, just as everywhere else, a variety of environmental discourses exist in the Czech environmental movement. We have encountered a broad range of views whose elements would span what Dryzek (1997) calls survivalist, economic rationalist and radical romantic perspectives. However, at the same time we believe that it makes sense to attempt to define a „Czech environmentalists’ dominant discourse,” consisting of several key beliefs, symbols and ideas shared by the

4 Another, but more exclusive professional organization officially existing in the 1980s was the Ecological Section of the Biological Society of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. See section 5.1 for more details.
majority of them. Organising our argument in a similar way to Dryzek’s approach to environmental discourse analysis, i.e. identifying the basic entities of the discourse, assumptions about natural relationships, agents and their motives, and the key metaphors, we describe the Czech environmental movement’s environmental discourse as follows:

**Basic entities**

Environmental problems as the result of inappropriate technologies, subject to scientific analysis and rational decision making. Liberal democracy, the free market and the government as the main regulator and enforcer of regulation. Change as requiring individuals to change - a striking feature of the discourse is the almost complete absence of social, political and economic structures more nuanced than state and market.

**Assumptions about natural relationships**

The absence of structures is also manifested in the separation of the social and ecological dimension of environmental issues. The possibility that environmental problems have their roots in the way society, economy and politics are structured is often explicitly rejected. Environmental degradation is usually seen as arising from business activities that are supported by local or national politicians, but this almost never amounts to the identification of some structural features of liberal capitalism as causes of these problems. Nature is perceived in a clearly anthropocentric perspective, in which it is subordinated to humans’ well being. One of the main reasons for the importance of fighting for better environmental protection is the potential of health risks to the current and future generations arising from industrial pollution or other types of environmental degradation. Nature itself however, is seen as robust within limits, i.e. the environment will tolerate a certain degree of damage. Scientific evidence and expert knowledge are the main criteria according to which environmental disputes should be resolved.

**Agents and their motives**

Apart from “civil society” very few collective actors are recognised. The central components of civil society are activist groups such as the environmental ones. The desired role for environmental groups is that of a mediator between individual citizens or preferably locally based informal groups of citizens and the government. While environmental groups should be consulted by central authorities and treated as partners, for local citizens environmental groups act as educators and providers of know-how and assistance. However, the main agents are human subjects. More specifically, the
end-product of environmental groups’ activities at the local level is an individual who through a conscious value-based change of the lifestyle helps to create a more harmonious relationship between society and the environment. According to the emphasis placed on the free market and the individual, an important role is ascribed to green consumerism guided by self-interest. The state has a part to play here too though, as it should guarantee that individuals have a choice between environmentally harmful and environmentally friendly consumption, the latter seen as economically more beneficial. As far as the environmental movement is concerned, without forcing the members to share the same views, the members of individual groups are nevertheless expected to create a community of friends who can trust each other.

**Key metaphors**

Administrative regulation as well as infinite economic growth are stigmatised. Rational arguments and behaviour are preferred to emotionally motivated behaviour. The key metaphor is sustainable living as opposed to sustainable development. Technology is a means that both creates and solves problems and it is up to people how they choose to use it. It can be a partial solution to the current problems, along with the employment of market-based and flexible instruments of environmental policy, but what ultimately matters is the value change guiding the life of an individual towards a lifestyle more harmonious with nature.

**5. CZECH ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE IN THE 1980s**

Holy (1996: 5) points out that the discourses which have emerged in a situation of dramatic social change brought about by the post-socialist transformation of society either have explicitly invoked discourses current in pre-socialist Czech society or have been constructed in conscious opposition to the official discourses current during the socialist period. It should be added that both types of discourses were already constructed before 1989. Furthermore, part of the oppositional discourses was based on juxtaposing the realities of the socialist period with perceptions of the western liberal democracies. This certainly held true for environmental discourse.

**5.1 Tramps, brontosauri and environmental organisations as groups of friends fighting pollution and landscape degradation**

While in the sphere of the environment the invocations of the pre-socialist (i.e. pre-1948) discourses can at best be only indirect, we would nevertheless argue that some features of the current environmental discourse are derived from deeply rooted traditions and long-term worldviews that precede the beginning of
the socialist period. They were maintained throughout the 1948-1989 period precisely because they invoked the memory of brighter times in Czech history. For instance, the propensity to perceive individual environmental groups as circles of friends, while certainly reinforced during the previous regime by fears of persecution, is probably also related to the phenomenon with which many Czechs are familiar under the term “tramping”.

The same phenomenon may be partly responsible for the dominant anthropocentric perception of nature, as well as for the emphasis placed on the role of individual lifestyle that are important elements of the current environmental discourse. Tramping and its culture, while encouraging positive attitudes to nature, perceived nature in oppositional contrast to society as a refuge from society, thus separating the social and the environmental. None of our respondents held views that could be described as eco-centric. Tramping experience has also taught its adherents that it is possible to lead a modest lifestyle with very limited means, at least for several summer days or weeks. That may partly explain the emphasis placed by environmental activists on changes in individual lifestyle as a means of the shift towards an environmentally more benign society.

When asked to identify influences that they thought had a formative effect on their current views, five interviewees mentioned their tramping experience and four their membership in boy scouts. Given the age of our respondents, only a few of them could actually have been members of boy scouts, as during the socialist period boy scouting was legally allowed only between 1968 and 1970. Tramping on the other hand, is a loose movement whose origin date back to the period after the First World War, but which was never banned by the socialist authorities, except for a short period in the 1950s. Its origin is linked to the spread of American values and culture as communicated through literature and westerns about the 19th century American West (Waic and Koessl 1992).

Tramping has gone through several major transformations. Associated initially with the process of modernization of Czech society, tramping provided a temporary escape from constraints of the urban, bureaucratic and industrial society. Thus in the 1920 and 1930s it was a moderate protest movement and an alternative lifestyle to bourgeois society. During the decades of socialism tramping enabled people to find a refuge from the oppressive every-day reality

---

5 The English word „tramping“ is actually used in the Czech language to describe this distinctively Czech cultural form. „Tramping“ in the Czech sense thus should not be confused with any English synonym.
with a group of like-minded friends in their log cabins or forest campsites. Despite the universal familiarity of Czechs with tramping’s cultural dimension (music, jargon, and literature), its social base has been somewhat limited. Tramping has always appealed mainly to urban dwellers with a technical orientation in terms of education and employment.

Escape to nature, the emphasis on personal freedom provided by the time spent in nature, mutual trust of members of individual camps and the internal democratic practices of these communities, all construed against the official dogma of social life before 1989, are directly manifested in the current environmental discourse. Its explicit references to the US Wild West mythology were attractive as a direct oppositional discourse to the official ideology of the socialist system. This may have been tramping’s more important influence for the current environmental discourse than semiconscious references to the distant pre-1948 period.

In several cases, this unique blend of tramping, boy scout experience, American West mythology and involvement in Brontosaurus activities (more about Brontosaurus below) as a source of the current environmental activism, was supported by the choice of literary influences. Four interviewees mentioned as their favourite childhood reading books by authors such as Karl May (19th century German writer of romantic books about Wild West), Ernst Thompson Seton and primarily Jaroslav Foglar, the Czech writer of books on boy-scouting. With the exception of the 1968 - 1970 period, the books of the latter were removed from the public libraries and could not be published.

While tramping has never evolved into an organised movement, three legally existing environmental organisations were active in the 1980s: Brontosaurus, CUNP and the Ecological Section of the Biological Society of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Activities of the first two were related to what the socialist apparatchiks labelled “small ecology” as opposed to “big ecology”. Unlike “big ecology”, which encompasses the decision making processes on strategic and politically charged issues that were reserved for the Communist Party and state administration, “small ecology” meant activities which from the Party’s point of view were harmless and non-political. At least initially, in the early 1970s, the regime saw little danger to its legitimacy in citizen’ participation in nature conservation. Hence, CUNP’s members were typically engaged in cleaning streams of rubbish, looking after protected areas, disseminating knowledge on functioning of ecosystems and educating young people in ecology in strictly scientific terms. Brontosaurus was engaged in a range of activities, the most popular of which were summer camps that started in 1975. The camps were located in romantic places - in ruins of castles or near nature reserves, where the participants carried out maintenance work.
Participants worked there as volunteers for two weeks, yet the demand highly exceeded the number of available places.

The only legal environmental organisation that perceived and discussed “big ecology” issues was the Ecological Section. This professional environmentalists organisation evolved from a group of friends and colleagues, most of whom held jobs in various institutes of the Academy of Sciences and had contacts with some dissidents from Charter 77. As most members of the Section worked as researchers in the Academy of Sciences, they enjoyed privileged access to environmental data, most of which were treated by the regime as top secret information. The Section's activities largely consisted of organising seminars and lectures open to the public. It also prepared a number of expert reports commissioned by various government institutions.

5.2 Access to data and better science and technology as solutions to environmental problems

It is now generally accepted that environmental movements in the late 1980s in most of the socialist countries of CEE (and in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia in particular), were to a great extent the only relatively safe articulation of protest that was not necessarily motivated only by worries about the damaged environment, but was also an expression of wider dissatisfaction with the socialist regime. In socialist Czechoslovakia, environmental activism was thus perceived as a major expression of the effort of a small group of citizens to hold the regime’s authorities accountable. Thus, environmental activism was a nascent form of what later became called “civil society”.

Similarly to other socialist countries, but perhaps in a more pronounced way due to the technocratic orientation of the Czech educated elite, another key feature of the Czech pre-1989 environmental discourse was that “environmental problems were primarily viewed through the twin lenses of science and technology” (Tickle and Welsh, 1998: 157). Indeed, it was critically important to formulate environmentalists’ critique in scientific terms as this was the only way for activists to steer in relatively safe waters. As long as the causes of environmental problems were seen as temporary and asyntemic failures of the economic management, and the proposed solutions were couched in scientific and technological terms, the debate was played out in rational terms. This type of environmental discourse did not contradict the official ideology of social advancement based on scientific-technological progress. Another reason for placing emphasis on rigorous scientific arguments was that they could be presented as a value-free and apolitical reasoning, something of crucial importance for environmentalists vis-à-vis the Communist Party and state apparatus.
The perception of environmental problems in the late 1980s was thus profoundly reductionist. It was confined to the visible impacts of local industrial pollution that was deemed to have a detrimental effect on human health. The international dimension of environmental problems was limited to the transboundary effects of pollution. The global dimension was absent. As a result, environmental discourse was by and large confined to questions of what was the best way of preventing further air and water pollution and soil degradation. To be able to mount an effective critique that could lead to the improvement of the situation, one had to have access to environmental data. A lot of the effort of the early environmental movement was centred on gaining access to the data. It was the scientists, who enjoyed the privileged access to these data and played a key role in the environmental mobilisation before 1989. The following quotation summarizes the two goals of Czech environmental activists of the late 1980s:

During the Stropnice campaign in 1988 I realised that two things were missing. The first was information, it was difficult to gain access to it. I was told a couple of things only because I worked in the Academy of Sciences... The second was an independent platform for activity… (INTERVIEW 11/2/99)

However, officially the solution to environmental problems rested in better scientific understanding of the problems and application of a less damaging technology. Hence, in the environmental movement perception, the environmental debate was reduced to a conflict of rationally arguing subjects in which the side that was able to submit better evidence based on scientific analysis should win. The key battle was about gaining access to the data, which would enable environmental movement to enter the dialogue with the authorities on more equal terms. This would lead to persuading the authorities to enforce the already existing regulation based on the emissions reduction principle. Thus, as far as the instruments employed for the amelioration of environmental degradation were concerned, the environmental movement of the late 1980s demanded the thorough application of what would today be somewhat pejoratively called command-and-control measures through the installation of end-of-pipe devices.

6 A classic example of a Czech group that originated out of these concerns that Holy (1996) also mentions in his book are Prazske matky (Prague Mothers). Another are Jihoceske matky (South Bohemian Mothers) founded by a woman whose child was born handicapped after the Chernobyl fallout.

7 See Jehlicka (2001) for more details.
6. EXPLANATION OF THE CONTINUITY OF CZECH ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE

6.1 Formative experience of the 1980s’ environmental movements

Our first explanation of the remarkable continuity of the Czech environmental discourse rests in the fact that the majority of leading activists of the established environmental movement are people who spent their formative years during the socialist period and who joined the movement already in the 1980s. Hence they hold views that originated in that period. For example, they often still perceive the movement as a group of good people who trust each other. At present this attitude functions as a barrier for the expansion of the environmental groups’ membership. The following quotations illustrate the extent to which current views about the recruitment policy of some environmental groups are still influenced by this pre-1989 experience:

We have had long debates about how to recruit new members. I am a sceptic by nature and hence I have always argued that when people who we do not know, want to join us, we should be cautious. We do not know how they behaved during the previous regime and we cannot know what they would do as members of our group (INTERVIEW 20/1/99).

You need a recommendation of three current members of the organisation if you want to join us... I don’t think it is a bad idea, as we have several times encountered a situation when people notoriously known for their anti-ecological deeds wanted to join... (INTERVIEW 29/3/99).

Holy’s remark on public discourses being constructed in conscious opposition to the official discourses current during the socialist period (Holy 1996: 5) fully applies to environmental discourse of the late 1980s. It was common knowledge in the 1980s in Czechoslovakia that in west European countries, excessive air or water pollution with which so many Czechoslovak citizens were intimately familiar was a matter of the distant past. At the same time however, communication with western environmental activists or academics was almost non-existent and the critical literature on environmental problematic in western democracies was not accessible, partly due to a poor knowledge of foreign languages. As Kundrata, himself a veteran environmental activist noticed already in 1992, “even within the environmental movement there are few people who have a deep knowledge of the works of the Club of Rome; the names of E.F. Schumacher, A. Toffler, F. Capra and others are almost unknown” (Kundrata 1992: 34).

However, even in the absence of the language barrier, it is doubtful that Czech environmentalists would be greatly influenced by ideas critical of western countries achievements in combating environmental problems, as it
would contradict the domestic environmental groups’ discourse. Thus, to environmental activists in the then Czechoslovakia, for whom environmental issues were reduced to the problems of local pollution or threat to the landscape, the optimal solution was often simply seen in adoption of market economy and liberal democracy. Some respondents admitted that they initially found it difficult to comprehend that the arrival of liberal democracy did not automatically lead to the reversal of detrimental approaches to the environment:

I was really taken by surprise when after the revolution, politicians and economists were attacking the ecological movement, in particular Vaclav Klaus in 1992 and 1993. It became sort of dichotomy, in fact economic arguments were used against the nature protectionists (INTERVIEW 11/2/99).

(I)n 1990, we did nothing against (the construction of the nuclear power plant) Temelin. We thought: There is a new government, the government of our heart, democratic, and they will certainly close Temelin down. But a year passed and nothing happened, so we got a bit angry and decided to do something against it (INTERVIEW 20/1/99).

6.2 Educational structure of Czech society

The framing of environmental issues and their solutions solely in scientific and technical terms before 1989 was not simply a political concession to the regime and a way of avoiding possible casualties among the activists. The activists themselves were primarily scientists or experts with technical background who, while certainly being dissatisfied with the socialist system as a whole, would not have anyway extended their analysis of environmental problems to the social and political dimension. Aside from political constraints, the educational structure of Czech society, determined by scientific-technological dogma, was another decisive factor that shaped environmental discourse.

A telling story is related to publishing a semi-official Czech translation of Limits to Growth shortly after its publication in the West. Bedrich Moldan, a leading figure of the Ecological Section and later the first Czech Republic’s post-communist environment minister, who was mainly responsible for this act, bitterly recalled in an interview for Nova prítomnost monthly at the beginning of the 1990 that this effort had no impact on Czech environmental discourse as it met with no response.

In the Czech conceptualization, the link between the market and freedom is construed differently than in the West. It is not so much freedom in the sense of the exercise of choice as freedom in the sense of an unconstrained expression of human nature that is linked to the concept of the market. If private property is construed as part of human nature, only a free market economy based on private ownership of the means of production offers people real freedom, for in contrast to the planned economy, it does not constrain their natural propensity toward it (Holy 1996: 158).
As Kundrata (1992: 32) pointed out “one has to take into consideration the fact that since the 1950s, at least 90 per cent of university graduates received a highly specialised education not based on a holistic or global approach”. Moreover, during the socialist period the structure of university education was heavily biased in favour of technical and scientific disciplines.\(^{10}\) Graduates in these disciplines, if we count medicine as science, made up about 80 per cent of all university graduates.\(^{11}\) The result is that the majority of decision makers at all levels are still people with technical or scientific background who are willing to accept arguments of environmentalists only on condition that they are formulated in the categories and language with which they are familiar, as the following quotation documents:

Well, at the beginning we were those, who stand somewhere with a protest banner and at the same time have a few arguments. There was a lot of enthusiasm in it then, but I think that over the years we have managed to change the image of our organisation in the eyes of the public, officials and investors so that they are now accepting us as partners. The reason is that we started to co-operate with experts, to think more about the problems and also to look for a compromise (INTERVIEW 17/2/99).

The educational structure of the Czech society also explains the emphasis that is in public debates placed on reason and rational argumentation:

When we lost the funding from Greenpeace International, we had to adjust our operation to the views of the Czech public. That meant more emphasis on scientific arguments (INTERVIEW 28/9/98).

As Holy observes, in Czech conceptualisation “emotions” connote an unsuitable or inappropriate expression of feelings. The word “emotion” acquires its meaning in opposition to “reason”. Particularly in political rhetoric, politicians, political commentators, and ordinary people commenting on political events and decisions condemn as irresponsible the appeal to emotions by extremists, both ultra-left-wing and ultra-right-wing populists, and they negatively evaluate “emotional solutions to problems” and “emotional answers to complex questions” (Holy 1996: 181 - 182). The following quotation documents that a peaceful demonstration already bears a connotation of a radical and hence undesirable behaviour:

We did not manage to explain to our German and Austrian colleagues that going somewhere to demonstrate is not part of the Czech national character. They did not understand it. They long thought that it was possible to persuade Czechs to take part in a mass demonstration. But

---

\(^{10}\) Nine out 21 respondents to our questionnaire completed their full time education including university before 1989.

\(^{11}\) More details about this aspect of Czech environmentalism are in Jehlicka (1999).
it is impossible, we simply do not have it in our character. People are against Temelin nuclear
power plant, but they will not go out to demonstrate, because it would be a shame (INTERVIEW 23/3/99).

The important point is that the 1990s brought little change as far as the access to
non-technical and non-scientific education is concerned. Out of 19 respondents
who had a university degree or were currently studying for it, 7 had a
background in scientific disciplines, not surprisingly including four who studied
biology or ecology. Seven were graduates of polytechnics or agricultural
colleges,\(^{12}\) two respondents were lawyers, other two studied linguistics and only
one did sociology. Interestingly, two respondents whose first degree was either
in science or agricultural studies, were at the time of the interview completing a
second degree in social and political sciences. As one of them explained:

I felt that biology or ecology is not enough, that what is needed is to have a background in
social science, to understand the political system for example, because an environmental
activist is not only an expert - ecologist, but also a citizen, who needs to have a knowledge of
law...(INTERVIEW 12/2/99).

The same interviewee added:

As far as I know, my colleagues from the other two major environmental groups mostly do
sociology or political science... and particularly here in Brno, everybody is now studying
these disciplines (INTERVIEW 12/2/99).

The fact that Czech environmental activists are only cursorily acquainted with
literature on social and political analysis of environmental problems is
documented by the choice of authors our respondents mentioned as having
influence on the formation of their views and attitudes. While there is a
considerable variety of literary genres, the strong representation of philosophy
and psychology corresponds with the belief of many activists in the decisive
role of individuals’ consciousness. The most frequently mentioned foreign
environmentalist literature authors (in most cases translated into Czech) are:
Erich Fromm (3), Robert Jungk (3), Al Gore (3) and Konrad Lorenz (2). The
Ecologist magazine was mentioned twice, another magazine - Resurgence -
onece. James Lovelock, E.F. Schumacher, Peter Singer, Herbert Marcuse and K.
G. Jungk appeared also once, along with another two well-known books The
Limits to Growth and Factor 4. The only three Czech authors, who gained
recognition among the respondents were Jan Keller (4) and Hana Librova (4)
(both taught sociology at Brno university at the time of the interviews) and

\(^{12}\) Most of those who studied at an agricultural college explained to us that this was only their
second choice, as they were either not accepted or thought had no chance of being accepted to
study biology or ecology.
Erazim Kohak (2), professor of philosophy from the United States, who returned for his retirement to the Czech Republic. It has to be stressed though that all this literature was published or the respondents gained access to it only in the 1990s. That means that it could not play any role in earlier phases of formation of their views. The following statement illustrates an almost complete absence of literature on social and political analysis of environmental problems before 1989:

I realised that I was anti-nuclear only in 1991, until then I was not interested. But in 1991 I simply got the information, read a pile of materials and in 1993 we even published the book “The Nuclear State” by Robert Jungk. So until 1991 I did not know that nuclear energy was a problem because I was engaged in geology and ecology in an expert or scientific rather than political sense (INTERVIEW 12/2/99).

It was quite revealing that many activists who we interviewed perceived with great suspicion, that sometimes bordered on the outright rejection, the ideas of the only major Czech group - Hnuti DUHA (Rainbow Movement) - that explicitly links environmental issues with the social problems and whose strategy is based on the social scientific analysis of environmental issues.

6.3 Systemic change replaced by individuals’ changed lifestyle?

How can we then explain the paradox between the ideas of (often the same) activists, who once, before 1989 associated their desire for better relationship between the society and the environment with the change of the social system and who now fiercely resist such ideas? Instead, they tend to believe that what suffice is the value or lifestyle change of individuals which will trigger all other necessary changes:

We do not see the solution in the change of the social system because other systems would also cause (environmental) problems. In the long-term perspective, the solution is in ecological education leading to the changed individuals’ consciousness (INTERVIEW 30/9/98).

We believe that both the paradox and the tendency to see the changes at the individual level as decisive are both partly attributable to the educational background and partly to the broader pre-1989 socialization experience. The absence of systematic social scientific educational background makes the social analysis difficult to the Czech environmentalists and prevents them from seeing the importance of social, political and economic structures. The paradox between the pre-1989 conviction that environmentally positive change was unambiguously related to the replacement of the socialist system by liberal democracy and today’s rejection of much smaller alterations to the social design need not be explained by changes in social and political analytical abilities of
the activists. In the 1980s the fight for the environment was part of the protest against the socialist system and/or for the fight for democracy. Furthermore, as argued in section 6.1 prior to 1989 for many environmental activists the panacea for the environment was seen in the adoption of liberal democracy. A more subtle explanation is offered by Holy (1996), who makes the distinction between how Czechs value natural and deliberately designed things.

According to Holy, in the Czech conceptualisation, things are perceived either as having emerged naturally, or as the result of deliberate human design. The evolution of human society and of its specific institutions is itself seen as “natural” in the sense that these institutions cannot be attributed to particular human agents as their conscious or deliberate creations. The market economy is seen as “natural” because “nobody created it” (Holy 1996: 180). Ultimately, the rejection of socialism as a system alien to Czech culture derives alternatively from its excess of deliberate social engineering and planning or from its lack of cultivation (Holy 1996: 184). The market economy is seen as superior to the planned socialist economy, as natural things often have a higher value.

The strong individual lifestyle current in thinking of Czech environmentalists can be again explained by the type of education and by the pre-1989 experience. It also has to be pointed out that an influential figure of the pre-1989 environmental movement, Josef Vavrousek, who held the post of the Czechoslovak federal minister of the environment between 1990 and 1992, had always stressed the role of the individuals’ value change. Furthermore, one of very few Czech original books on environmentalism, Librova’s (1994) “Pestra zeleni. Kapitoly o dobrovolne skromnosti” (The colourful and the green. Chapters on voluntary modesty), that was recalled by four respondents of our survey, may also have played a role in shaping the Czech environmental discourse in this direction. Its main thrust could be interpreted as reaffirming the traditional belief within the Czech environmental movement about the importance of the individual changes towards environmentally less damaging lifestyle based on a voluntary modesty.

6.4 Transitional political context

Fagin and Jehlicka (1998) noticed a strong trend towards moderation and de-radicalization of Czech environmental groups in the mid-1990s. Although environmental groups never posed a threat to democracy, their behaviour (however moderate) and arguments were still questioning the dominant social paradigm of the transitional period: development, economic growth and catching-up with western countries in terms of levels of affluence. After the short revolutionary “movement politics” period 1990 - 1991 major political parties became obsessed with “stabilisation” of democracy. This effectively
meant the attempt to close the political system to all political actors other than political parties. This policy was particularly targeting environmental groups that were deemed by political parties to be representing the main threat to the doctrine of unfettered economic growth stimulated by the introduction of the free market and privatisation. Furthermore, the environmental groups’ attempts at opening the environmental policy-making sector to civil society actors, although still mainly on grounds of scientific and rational argumentation, were at odds with the tendency to perceive this policy sector as basically technical and the domain of experts.

If the core and long-term planks of the Czech environmental discourse are the idea of the movement being a partner for the government and commitment to liberal democracy, the fact that the movement was in the mid-1990s portrayed by leading politicians and the media and treated by the government as an element subversive to democracy, must have shaken the confidence of many in the movement. The appearance of four environmental groups on the 1995 Intelligence Service’s list of subversive elements along with skinheads and anarchists certainly had a strong influence on reconsidering the movement’s mode of activity. It was then when the Czech groups definitely abandoned direct action, which was, from today’s point of view, an early 1990s’ temporary import from western environmental groups. After the backlash from the government and the media, environmental groups removed direct action from their repertoire of actions and returned to their traditional educational and consultative activities.

6.5 The nature of western involvement

The demise of the socialist system in CEE broadly coincided with the culmination of the most significant shift of the western environmental governance over the last 30 years characterized by Bernstein (2000) as convergence of environmental and economic norms towards “liberal environmentalism”. As Bernstein further argues, in the form of the concept of sustainable development the 1992 Earth Summit institutionalized these norms, which predicate environmental protection on the promotion and maintenance of liberal economic order. Collier (1997) described this shift in the more specific context of the EU, which is from the perspective of CEE countries the most influential actor shaping domestic environmental policy and politics. As Slocock (1999) explains, the less were the western governments willing to shift

---

13 An interesting parallel with the transitional period in Portugal in the 1970s and 1980s, including the initial two years of enthusiastic and “movement politics”, can be found in J. Gil Nave (2000).
their domestic political priorities sufficiently to find space for the costs of funding an effective and smooth transition process in CEE, the more enthusiastic they became about an alternative approach to influencing the process of transition. This alternative was

“to focus western efforts on influencing the management of the transition process. This has been done in many fields, but nowhere more notably than in the area of environmental policy, where a thoroughgoing transnationalization of environmental policy process began in 1991” (Slocock 1999: 155).

As indicated in quotations in the Introduction, western influence led to far-reaching changes of the Czech environmental movement in terms of professionalization of staff, equipment of offices with information technology, dissemination of information, fund-raising and conflict resolution:

Of course, I took part in courses on mediation, on rhetoric, on drafting speeches and so forth. We simply paid for a three - five days course on mediation that is normally designed for companies (INTERVIEW 17/2/99).

Apart from the state and EU actors who exercised their influence mainly through funding priorities, it was also western environmental groups which through the contacts and information exchange shaped the development of the Czech environmental movement. Particularly at the beginning of the 1990s, Czech environmental activists had an ample opportunity to visit their western counterparts. However, this learning opportunity served to Czech participants mainly as an inspiration for changes in the form and function of the movement and as access to information rather than as a source of substantive learning:

JP is a typical example, he took part in several visits abroad at the beginning of the 1990s. But it was not anything like a structured training programme, we simply came there and discussed with similar organisation in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands about what they did, where they had money from and so forth (INTERVIEW 21/1/99).

Increased skills and a professionalization were not accompanied by the expansion of the movement’s support base, as the groups did not depend for income on their members or supporters, but on their ability to apply for grants at one of several grant agencies. Politically, foreign assistance was aimed at “strengthening civil society” (the name of a Czech intermediary foundation that finances non-profit organisations is “Foundation for the Development of Civil Society”) a mission from which environmental groups have always greatly benefited. Ironically, the result of the decade of western nurturing of civil society is a small group of professionals with a tiny support base. The title “In

14 The combined membership of all Czech environmental groups was at the end of the 1990s
Pursuit of Fundable Causes?” (Flam 2001) of the introductory chapter of a book on CEE social movements identifies the main factor that shapes the agenda of the majority of Czech environmental groups. The activity of most groups is thus effectively structured by the preferences of the donors. Funders, whether private foundations, western governments or various EU intermediaries, want to see tangible results of their decisions. Thus, they support projects aimed at awareness raising, education, co-operation with other (private and public) actors, activities that can be, borrowing from Waller (1998: 41, 42), best described as “integrative” and “issue-raising” rather than mobilising. The following activities are typically funded:

- public ecological libraries and their networking,
- ecological counselling for the public,
- participation of NGOs in environmental decision-making processes, in particular through the EIA process,
- strengthening of co-operation of NGOs with state authorities and local governments,
- collecting information (e.g. mapping installations of renewable energy in a region),
- publications of information brochures and leaflets (rarely publication of books, either original or translated),
- drafting policy proposals,
- projects on nature conservation (applied ecology).

Waller’s description of the involvement of WWF-US in CEE as one of the important sources of assistance to CEE environmental groups is an accurate summary of the nature of assistance provided by western agencies to the Czech environmental movement:

Since the launch of the Environment Training Project (ETP) for CEE, WWF-US’s principal role “has been organising and overseeing conflict resolution, skills training workshops for NGOs, and promoting development of environmental library and information centre networks”, the central goal of the ETP being “to improve the capability of people in CEE to address environmental problems in the context of a competitive market economy” (Waller 1998: 29).

almost certainly lower than at the end of the 1980s. Many members left traditional conservationist groups immediately after 1989 as environmental movement lost its anti-regime protest attraction. New campaigning groups attracted only few more supporters in the course of the 1990s. For instance, Deti Zeme (Children of the Earth) had 60 members in 1989 while a decade later could count on 300 members.
While it is true that western aid, expertise, and advice brought an element of tutelage which has influenced the evolution of the environmental movement in the region, substituting itself for grass-roots activism (Waller 1998: 29), it is also true that projects that western agencies choose to fund correspond with the Czech perception of what constitutes worthwhile environmental movements’ activities and are in accord with the Czech dominant environmental discourse. In other words, most of the western institutional import was conceptually in line with the pre-1989 environmental discourse of the Czech environmental movement. That also applies to its profoundly apolitical character. Czech environmental groups are making a considerable effort to present themselves and to behave as not only being independent of political parties, but also as actors who consciously avoid any possible association with all types of vested political, economic and ideological interests. This is also something the activists are accustomed to from the pre-1989 past.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Our main assertion is that unlike the organisational and operative aspects of functioning of the Czech environmental groups that have been profoundly modified as a result of western involvement, the main ideational tenets of what constitutes today’s environmental discourse of established Czech environmental groups were in place already before 1989 and have not significantly changed in the course of the 1990s. To the contrary, we would argue the influence of western involvement has, through the selection of fundable activities, preserved and in some cases further strengthened the Czech environmental discourse as it existed in the late 1980s.

While there has certainly been a shift to the recognition of the global dimension of the environment, the environmental problematic is still largely perceived by Czech environmentalists as a collection of individual and localised threats to the beauty of the landscape or to human health. A deeply anthropocentric perspective of the environment has been maintained. The transnational or global dimension of the Czech established environmental movement is limited to the search for funding and occasionally exchange of information. Some groups are members of transnational coalitions, but this remains at a very formal level. With few exceptions, the role of social, political and economic structures is underestimated or neglected. Instead, a lot of hope for the change for the better is still placed, as it was in the late 1980s, on individuals’ consciousness changes effected by the exposure to ecological education.
Other features that have changed little are the perception of environmental issues as problems that can be understood primarily through science. Scientific and technical expertise for which the access to scientific data and information are crucial remained of utmost importance to the environmental groups. There has been a change though as far as the preferred instruments of environmental policy are concerned. Instead of the proper enforcement of the government regulation aimed at emissions and pollution reduction for which environmentalists called in the 1980s, the result of the current western involvement, as well as of the ideological association of this form of environmental policy with the socialist system, activists now rely primarily on market-based and flexible instruments. The former is usually interpreted as taxation reform. The latter takes various manifestations ranging from integrated pollution registers, publicly accessible libraries, ecological counselling centres and leaflets and brochures disseminating information. They should guide a conscious individual to consume in an environmentally less damaging way. This is also an element that corresponds with the traditional emphasis on individuals’ life-style.

The demise of socialism and the beginning of western involvement in CEE broadly coincided with the arrival of sustainable development and deregulation in western Europe. Hence the message of western agencies that took part in shaping environmental reform in the Czech Republic that placed emphasis on the role of non-governmental sector, development of civil society, access to information and flexible instruments of environmental policy fitted with the existing perspective of environmental affairs. It did reinforce some elements and tenets of the existing environmental discourse, but did not lead to anything like a complete revamp or a new beginning. The activities that western donors were willing to fund were exclusively related to the increased institutional effectivity of environmental groups. They were not geared towards providing a more thorough analysis of environmental issues or broadening environmental perspectives held by activists. As to the activists themselves, whose formative experience in most cases fell in the 1980s, they were always busy during the 1990s with learning the right procedures for a successful project writing skills and funding applications as well as with newly emerging local and regional environmental threats.

To sum up, western involvement in Czech environmental politics meant at the discursive level the strengthening of the inherent tendency of the established environmental movement to co-operate with the state and to become actively involved in the state’s environmental policy agenda (whose current attention to international environmental concerns beyond the issues of EU accession is negligible) and to build scientific and consultative skills of environmental groups rather than being engaged in building a more political,
radical and grass-roots structures capable of widespread social and political mobilisation. Western involvement did not in any way help to overcome the fundamental problem of the Czech established environmentalism, which is its consistent inability to conduct a coherent analysis of structural conditions and constraints.

Provided that our above conclusions are correct, we see a major practical implication of our findings for the future development of the Czech environmental movement. Some frames of reference, still influenced by the past, probably do not resonate with the views held by people involved in a recently emerged new generation of socio-ecological movement, who do not share the formative experience of the socialist period and while maintaining international connections, have not developed financial dependence on western donors. Movements, whose discourse is not shaped by the pre-1989 experience, will most likely continue to develop outside the current established environmental movement. Recent Prague events may have thus marked the beginning of a new cyclic epoch in the development of the Czech environmental movement.

Petr Jehlicka, European University Institute, Florence, Open University, UK
Philip Sarre The Open University, UK
Juraj Podoba, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava
REFERENCES:


APPENDIX

Questionnaire

A. Basic Information
1. Name of NGO, address, telephone number, fax, email
2. Name of respondent and job description and social and educational background
3. Date and place of interview

B. Organisation of the NGO
4. When was your organisation established? What is a territorial definition of your organisation?
5. Who started it, and for what purpose? How did you get involved?
6. How would you describe your organisation? What is the structure of this organisation?
7. What is the membership of your NGO and how many active members do you have?
8. In your view, what sort of people are the members (age, education, occupation, social status)? Who are its leading personalities?
9. Where do you raise your money from?
a) membership subscription
b) REC or domestic foundations
c) financial gifts
d) foundations outside CR/SR
e) other, please state
10. Has the nature of your organisation changed over the years? If yes, how and why?
11. What do you think was the most important or critical event in the history of your organisation?
12. Private history of the respondent (focused on his/her commitment to the environmental movement).
13. Have your opinion, value orientation and the way you view problems which you are involved with and which are tackled by your organisation been influenced by certain environmentalist books or magazines (or other publications)?

C. Nature of NGOs’ Work
14. What are the long term aspirations of your organisation?
15. What are short term objectives of your organisation?
16. Do you aim to influence public opinion or institutions (or both)?
17. What short or long term activities do you engage in to try to achieve your aims and objectives?

18. Which of these statements best fit your view?
   a) Environmental problems can be solved through current political processes.
   b) Solving environmental problems requires a more participatory form of democracy.
   c) Environmental problems will not be solved without a more forceful government.
   d) Environmental problems can be solved only by a strong government of environmental experts.

D. Issues

19. What environmental issues does your organisation focus on?
20. Why do you regard these issues as problems which are suitable and should be urgently solved?
21. Do you perceive these problems differently from other NGOs? (e.g. you stress different aspects of the same problem than other NGO do). If yes, in what way (do you differ in its perception)?
22. How should these issues be resolved? Why is that the best way?
   Prompt: primarily by “market” instruments (green taxes)
   primarily by stricter regulation (standards, command and control)
   better planning (e.g. wider use of EIA or strategic EIA)
   limitations of market, economic freedom, consumption etc. (what else)

E. Target Institutions

(If Q12 stated that institutions were targets.)
23. What are you main target institutions?
24. What are you main reasons for focusing your attention on these particular institutions?
25. Do you think that individuals who are accountable to the voters through the electorate are more amenable to influence/more sympathetic to NGOs' concerns than unelected officials?
26. In what ways may your campaign/lobbying tactics vary according to the nature of the target institution?
27. Have target institutions changed their policy or actions as a result of NGO activity? (Give examples.)

F. Networking

28. Is your organisation a part of a formal or informal NGO network and/or coalition?
29. Has your organisation ever worked with other NGOs for a short term campaign or over a specific policy? If yes, what effect did this have on your organisation's influence? (Give examples.)

30. What were the main reasons your organisation has collaborated with other NGOs? (e.g. shared vision, common values, shared ideology, cost effectiveness, pooling of expertise or of other resources, tactical reasons)

31. Does your organisation have international links? If yes, what sorts of links are they? What have been the intended and unintended effects of these links/collaboration, relationship? (E.g. Has the relationship led to increased or decreased influence with target institutions? How has the relationship affected the domestic legitimacy of your organisation?)

G. Values

32. Would you say your organisation has a distinctive set of values? Are they stated explicitly anywhere? (in some documents or publications?) Can you put them into words? Who is the supporter of these values in the organisation (leaders, activists, “ideologists” or the identification with certain values is regarded as a necessity when a new member is admitted)

33. How do you personally fulfil these values in your own life?

34. Are the organisation's values, or those of a substantial proportion of the members, influenced in any way by religion? If so, which ideas from which religion?

35. To help me to understand what you have said, can I ask you about what your organisation would think about a few important environmentalist ideas:
   a) sustainable development
   b) technology - source of problems or solution?
   c) are environmental problems best tackled at local, regional, national, European or global levels, (prompt for view of third world as problem or victim)
   d) economic development- cause problems, need it to afford solutions, needs redefinition
   e) intergenerational responsibility

36. Which of these statements best fit your view of nature?
   a) Nature can deal with certain forms and quantities of pollution.
   b) Any amount of pollution is dangerous to nature.
   c) Nature is robust and will adapt to any amount of pollution.
   d) Nature is unpredictable: we just have to cope as well as we can.

37. Which of the following statements comes closest to summing up your private long term aims:
   a) preservation of species and/or ecosystems for their own sake
   b) preservation of natural areas for recreation
   c) building the best living environments for people with minimal pollution
   d) conservation of resources to prevent shortages
38. If you had to choose among the following, which are the two that seem most desirable to you:
   a) maintaining law and order in the country
   b) giving people more say in important political decisions
   c) fighting rising prices
   d) protecting freedom of speech

H. Contextual Questions

39. Has your NGO been harassed by the police or other people in authority? Has your NGO experienced difficulties in collecting signatures for petitions, organising demonstrations and protests?
40. What is your perception of the presentation of environmental activities in the media, how does it affect your work in the NGO, in your private life, when negotiating with institutions and state administration? What do you do to overcome these problems?
41. Is there anything important we should have asked you, but haven't?
42. How often do you do a similar interview?