

European Governance and Green Social Movements: Transportation and GMO Policies in Spain

Iñaki Barcena

Political Science Department
University of the Basque Country
Spain¹

Abstract

This paper is a reflexive exercise based in a current research project (<http://civgov.soc.unit.it>) in which the main question is to what extent do the activities of environmental associations, advocacy coalitions and green movements bridge the large gap between the European citizenry and European level policymaking in the areas of transport and GMOs (genetically modified organisms). The movements and advocacy coalitions studied in the project are organizations that have previously been or are currently engaged in protest events, such as movement organizations, yet they are broader than movements in composition, objectives, and methods.

This paper attempts to answer the following questions. To what extent do the agendas of the environmental movement and movement advocacy coalitions (MACs) reflect the preferences of citizens with regard to issues of transport and GMOs? What are the channels of preference transmission linking local, regional, state and European levels? How successfully are these preferences translated into the policy process and to what extent does the policymaking process distort the expression of citizens' preferences? How can differences, patterns, and successes of interest aggregation, articulation and implementation be explained in these two policy sectors, across regions and over time? Finally, how can we evaluate the different models of representation from the perspective of the construction of a democratic multilevel system of governance in an increasingly multicultural and multilevel identity policy community?

Keywords: *ecologists, sustainability, participatory democracy, GMOs, transport*

Introduction

This article is a part of a current research project focusing on the extent to which the activities of public interest associations, activist coalitions and green movements bridge the large gap between the European citizenry and the European policy making level. In studying the link between European civil society and the EU policy process, this project tackles the crucial problem of the *democratic deficit* within

the EU policy making process.

I will focus on the Spanish civil society and especially on the environmental movement (transport and GMO policies) to assess the extent to which groups concerned with this policy sector accurately reflect citizens' preferences. I will also assess the way that these preferences are acted upon in the policy making process at the regional, national and European level.

The movements and advocacy coalitions I am studying are organisations that have previously, or are currently, engaged in protest events, such as movement organisations, yet they are broader than movements in composition objectives and methods. Their movement' character survives as a voice of the organised civil society, but is complemented by other organisations, and has undergone a process of re-elaboration that utilizes broad-based advocacy coalitions and short-term social activism. In particular, these movement advocacy coalitions (MACs) can rely on institutional allies and institutional bases in bureaucratic and political formations, on the resources of sectors of the state, and on the support of parts of the mainstream press and television media.

This study explores the type of relations that have developed in Spain over the last decade among the institutional and administrative bodies, from the local sphere up to the European Union; public opinion; the Social Movements Organisations (SMOs); and the so-called Movements Advocacy Coalitions (MACs) that work on environmental issues.

It is important to note that at present, in the spring of 2004, the ruling party, which has been in power since 1996, has lost power because of the elections in the legislative chambers in Madrid. Obviously, this electoral failure and the loss of confidence in public opinion are also related to the way the government has dealt with the SMOs and MACs during this period.

The Spanish parliamentary system is one that makes it quite easy for the central government to pass all its legislative proposals when the party in office has an absolute majority of parliamentary seats, which has been the case since 1996. Party structures are quite monolithic. Factions and positions critical of the leadership are not common in the culture of Spanish political parties.

Because of that, perhaps the most significant characteristic of the Spanish political system is its autonomous or region-

al model that replaced the Francoist dictatorial regime (1939-1975). This involves a decentralised administration of 17 Autonomous Communities with different powers, different territorial and population sizes, different ruling parties from that of the central government, and different nationalist dynamics, especially in Catalonia and the Basque Country where linguistic and economic disputes are still alive. Even in the Spanish parliament there is a notable representation by nationalist parties from the autonomous communities (Galicia, Aragon, Andalusia, Canary Islands, etc.) where regional interests are present.

From the period when the Socialist party was in office (1982-1996) to the Popular Party (PP) government (1996-2004), we can observe an evolution in the relationship of the government with environmental, linguistic and anti-racist movements. This must be analysed, not only from an ideological perspective, but also in terms of the administrative use of the instruments of political participation, the open or closed character of the political system to the aspirations of the SMOs, and the campaigns organised to confront government policies.

Spain, a medium-size state (population 40 million) in the Mediterranean area that entered the EEC in 1986 under a Socialist government, has undergone significant economic growth and infrastructural development in the last decade. This has attracted a new immigrant population, principally from Africa and Latin America, while many Spanish people emigrated to European countries in the 60s and 70s. This means that anti-racist movements started later, because until recent years Spanish society did not experience a large flux of immigrants.

Environmental issues such as the catastrophes of Doñana Natural Park and the sinking of the petrol tanker Prestige off the Galician coast, mark the high points of a long list of grievances held by the SMOs against the Popular Party administration. The broad campaign against the Iraq War (almost 90% of the electorate had a negative view of the PP government line) was defeated in a parliamentary ballot with not a single dissident in the ruling party.

This form of political acting reached its culmination in the March 11th attack in Madrid and the recovery of central power by the Socialist party in the elections of March 14th. This is the start of a new political cycle in which SMOs' campaigns and the administrative responses will obviously change. My aim in this paper is to describe and interpret the forms in which the environmental SMOs have intervened in recent years to change transport and GMO policies.

Environmental Policies in Transport and Transgenics

The policies on transport and GMOs in Spain have been of unequal importance and relevance over the last five years. On the one hand, the transport of goods and persons has followed an unstoppable *in crescendo* curve, which has only

served to accentuate the conflicting social responses to these policies. On the other hand, the concept of sustainability has been incorporated into political and business discourse, and some administrations, primarily local ones, have, for the first time, been prepared to take part in discussions at round tables or councils on sustainable mobility on the topic of new policies that would make possible a reduction in road congestion. Traffic is an issue of great concern both for broad social sectors and for the political institutions but, with some exceptions, the only solution is the creation of new infrastructure, which is the source of new conflicts concerning infrastructure plans.

In the area of GMOs, the social polemic is not as widespread, nor has social protest brought about such a high level of social mobilisation. Nevertheless, the issue has acquired strength both in the mass media and amongst environmental and consumer organisations. Spain is not a relevant European State in the field of biotechnological research and production, but the PP Government has been an important source of support for North American interests and for the biotechnological transnational companies.

Shortly, when the Socialist Party recovers the central government in Spain, the environmental groups will draw up a balance of eight years of Popular Party government. Eight years ago, the Popular Party started the Ministry of Environment as a ministry that was separate from Public Works or Tourism. With Isabel Tocino at its head, this new ministry seemed to have real powers (in Water Policy for example) and a style that went further than the Socialist scheme.

Unfortunately, the first three Ministers of Environment in Spanish history, Isabel Tocino, Jaume Matas and Elvira Rodríguez will be not remembered as defenders of environmental causes by *Ecologistas en Acción*, but as actors in other political concerns such as, respectively, competing with Aznar, searching for immunity and protection to escape justice, and obtaining European funds for the Hydrologic Plan.

During these eight years, some environmental disasters of worldwide renown occurred in Spain, such as the accident of the oil-tanker Prestige off the Galician coast (November 2002) or the breakdown of a chemical dam of the Swedish multinational Boliden in Aznalcollar (Cadiz 1998). In both cases the ecologist organisations criticised the negative way in which the right-wing government tried to hide the catastrophic situation by arguing that the problem was not very big and using their control over the mass media to convince public opinion that they were acting with diligence and care.

With regard to climate change and specifically the Kyoto Protocol, Spain had the chance to decrease CO₂ emissions by 15% of the 1990 level. Environmental SMOs, however, saw this area as lacking governmental policy. In 2003, the rate of emissions was 38% above the 1990 figure. In 2001 the Spanish Parliament approved the ratification of the Aarhus Convention on "Public Participation, Access to Information, and

Justice” in environment matters, but five years after the signature of this covenant the Popular Party had not ratified it. The Socialist Party’s government did it the 29th of March, 2005.

These are some facts that demonstrate the relationship between the Popular Party administration and environmental affairs. The Hydrologic Plan has perhaps been the most controversial issue, with SMOs and much of the general public mobilised against it.

Turning now to the two topics which I will be investigating, transport and Genetically Modified Organisms, things do not seem so different. As the environmentalists say, the logic of economic growth without limits is incompatible with care of the environment and the Spanish experience over the last eight years has only brought some improvements at the regional or local levels. According to ecologists, the Spanish government receives a very low evaluation in the area of environmental policy.

Transport Organizations and Campaigns

Some people think that transport is the *Gordian knot* of the ecological crisis. Transportation is a human activity that

has a heavy impact on nature, but is also seen as the normal way to control and domesticate nature in order to maximize the transportation of materials and market opportunities.

In the last three decades the growing dynamic of transportation has shown the radical distinction between nature and society. While nature is organised in vertical structures in proximity, society is increasingly developing in horizontal structures, demanding unlimited transportation. Motorised transport is, in this sense, a generalised use of materials and energy in extraction, transformation and consumption processes, which involves big amounts of waste, in solid, liquid and gas forms, which are overcoming the capacity of the ecosystems for recycling.

The list of externalities produced by transportation is a long one. Pollution emissions affect air quality, acidification, ozone problems, and obviously, the global climate change. Infrastructure and construction for transport have important environmental impacts such as the fragmentation of landscapes, threats to biodiversity, artificial changes of natural soil, and usage of raw materials (EEA 2002).

But the externalities produced by transportation and motorization do not only have a natural or health dimension.

Table 1. Nature and Structure of MACs in the Environmental (Transport) sector.

Organisation	Type of organisation	Relationship to each other		Style of leadership	Accountability to members +/- democratic	Funding	
		Institutional networks	Societal networks				Horizontal
Ecologistas en Acción	Ecologist Grassroots	T&E Europe A SEED		Horizontal	More than 200 groups in all Spain	Democratic	Membership Public institutions
AHT-Gelditu Elkarlana	Single-issue Umbrella	Wide societal network Local authorities also No institutional relations		Horizontal organizations	More than 20	Local groups and unions, leftwing parties and ecologist groups Local councils also	Membership Local municipalities
Kalapie	Local bicycle group Donostia-S. Sebastian	Societal networks Institutional networks		Horizontal Public funding	Some hundreds	Democratic	Membership fees
Plataforma por el TREN	Single-issue Umbrella	Wide societal network Institutional relations also		Horizontal	A lot of organisations	Democratic	Membership
PTP	Single-issue Association	Wide societal network Institutional authorities also		Monthly assemblies Democratically elected executive	140 members	Democratic Voluntary	Public funding for programs
COPALTAV	Single-issue Platform	Societal networks		Assemblies Horizontal	Cluster of organisations	Democratic Voluntary (500 voluntary) + 100 employees	Membership fees No public funding
A PIE	Single-issue Association	Societal networks		Horizontal	150 members	Democratic Voluntary	Membership
ADEGA	ECOLOGIST GROUP	Societal networks Institutional networks			900 members	Democratic Voluntary	Membership fees Public funding of programs
NUNCA MAIS	Single-issue Platform	Societal networks Institutional networks		Horizontal	Thousands of people	Democratic Voluntary	Membership donations

Traffic congestion has a big economic cost that should be added to infrastructure, noise, air pollution, global warming and accidents in reaching an amount of transport related externalities close to 7% of the European GDP.

In Spain, the record of conflicts and campaigns related to transport issues is a very long one. In this list special relevance is held by the protests against the new High Speed Train projects, mostly in Catalonia, Valencia, Madrid and Basque Country and the rejection of other infrastructure works such as building new roads and enlarging airports. In this sense, personal and merchandise transport is a big issue that invites institutional reflection, new regulations, plans and laws, mostly at the regional or autonomous level, to solve the problematic situation created by the permanent growth of traffic. Some changes at the local level together with some good practices are the contribution of interactive processes between the administration and SMOs at the local level, promoting pedestrian zones, bicycle lanes and non-motorised means of transport that are welcomed by local populations.

Due to the broad spectrum of campaigns and responses that transport issues generate, and taking into account that the approaches of the SMOs are diverse and complementary, the social protest against the current transport policy in Spain can be described as a broad repertory ranging from the radical refusal of infrastructure projects (H.S. Trains, motorways, airports, sea or recreational ports, etc.) to education and the alternative promotion of public transport and non-motorized ways of moving, with a lot of NIMBY campaigns opposed to specific projects (new roads, enlarging airports, etc.) found in the middle of these two extremes together with the demands of local institutions or labour unions related to transportation. Thus, the variety of campaigns and movements is very broad.

If we refer to the type of organisations organizing the transport debate in Spain we discover, curiously enough, that Greenpeace, the biggest environmental organisation with some 80,000 members, is not active in transport campaigns, despite having declared that this area was to be incorporated into the organisation as soon as possible.

On the contrary, *Ecologistas en Acción* has a long and ongoing campaign promoting alternatives to transport plans and helping to organise sectorial and local protest dynamics, such as the “Platform for the Railway” created recently with train trade unions and other social groups at the Spanish state level, by incorporating many local and provincial groups and single issue campaigns.

Basically, we have found three types of SMOs in this field. There is a short list of ecologist groups or unions at the state level (EeA, CGT, CCOO, etc.), which collaborate in campaigns that are usually local or regional, with the exception of the “Platform for the Railway” that operates in all of Spain. At the autonomous or regional level the list of ecologist, union or consumer groups would be larger (ADEGA in

Galiza, Eguzki, *Ekologistak Martxan* and *EHNE*- Basque Country, etc.). In a second category, we find a lot of local or regional campaigns dealing with infrastructural projects where opposition to the High Speed Train is the most relevant (COPALTAV in Catalonia, AHT-Gelditu Elkarlan in the Basque Country, but we also found coordination groups in Valencia, Madrid, etc.). And thirdly, there are local or regional groups, such as PTP (Platform for Public Transport of Catalonia), A pie (Madrid) or Kalapie (Basque Country) that promote alternative forms of transport.

As the majority of these organisations have an assembly-based way of functioning, in every group there are some “experts” or more relevant speakers such as academics, scholars, professionals, and experienced activists, who act as representatives. But campaigns are mainly collaborative, among many groups and mostly against a particular project or policy for which they have agreed upon a common critique. Obviously in regional and Spanish-level campaigns we found disagreements and disputes among organisations depending on their ideology and the type of proposals.

Despite there being big organisations, such as labour unions, involved in transport campaigns, transport related campaigns at the local, regional and state level are usually organised in coordination with other social actors. That leads to a movement involving a low professional dynamic, many voices, and few regular structures that permit a permanent debate on strategy among all of the coordinated groups. Also, there are less full time workers dedicated to the issue. Leadership is also collaborative and this “assembly” based model means a slower decision making process.

Transport campaigns give rise to a long list of issues due to the large dimension of this human activity. Personal and merchandise mobility increases day by day and the opposition to their consequences could be classified by territories or by subjects. At the local level, there are NIMBY campaigns confronting single projects of transport, but there are also coordinating bodies working and looking for alliances to stop infrastructural mobility plans. In recent years, two very special and broad campaigns have been related indirectly with transportation. One is the big protest organised after the catastrophe of the oil tanker *Prestige* off the Galician coast. Solidarity movements and demonstrations flourished in all of Spain but mostly in Galicia where a mass civil movement called “*Nunca Mais*” (Never again) was created to work for recovery from this disaster and to demand that responsibility be taken for the accident. The second is related to the great grassroots movement against the participation of the Spanish government in the Iraq war, pointing out to the public that a petrol based economy and our society’s dependence on it implies oil transportation needs and war in order to obtain oil.

The issue that has provoked the most opposition and mobilisation, however, is related to the seven High Speed Train

projects that the Popular Party government in Madrid is implementing according to the Infrastructures Plan (2000-2007) that dedicated 28,910 million euros to the construction of 7,700 kilometres of railway lines. Today the amount is approaching 40,000 million euros.

Coordinating groups against the HS Trains first began in Catalonia (COPALTAV) and in the Basque Country (AHT-Gelditu Elkarlana) and later in Madrid and Valencia to oppose the central administration plans. Their arguments were territorial, ecological, as well as economic. First of all, the new railway (for some ecologists a “plane at ground level”) signified a worsening of the territorial imbalance among the regions and cities depending on the location of stations (more or less accessibility, attraction of investment capital, incentives for the real estate market, etc.). The opposition generated a long list of potential environmental damages including territorial and biological fragmentation, deviation of water resources, acoustic pollution, visual impact on landscapes, vibration, big energy consumption, etc.). Finally, the new railway would give rise to disadvantages for a social economy in the opinion of the opponents.

Furthermore, and beyond the opposition to the building of new motorways, ports, or HS Trains, SMOs have been promoting an alternative mobility. In a medium size city like Bilbao (375,000 inhabitants) only one person in four uses a private car and 40% of car trips are under 2 kilometres of distance (Basque Government 2004). This type of data is the basis for campaigns in favour of public transport (integrated travel cards, public transport access to industrial estates, intermodality, etc.) for bicycle and pedestrian ways, and for the defence of the railway. The state company RENFE was privatised on May 14th, 2005, and according to the Platform for the Railway this will mean an increase in insecurity with more accidents, more expensive fees, and more public expenses for a privatized service with less quality.

The Spanish Public Opinion and Responsiveness of the Political System

Activists for a new model of transport accept that it means a big cultural and ideological social change, but they also think that a significant part of society accepts their critique and supports their views. In general, these are the views of the local people they represent in their respective cities rather than the whole society. They are aware that the big media and the “general interest” supported by governing political parties at the regional or central level are aligned with the idea that more and better transport is a condition for economic growth and social well being.

Transnational European projects, such as the HS train, are symbolic of development and every provincial authority mobilizes public opinion, asking for a station in the provin-

cial capital. So SMOs have to act in a controversial arena where mobility rates are similar to a thermometer of economic safeness. But the public also notices negative aspects, when congested roads became an everyday panorama and the new infrastructures (metro or subway, motorways and tunnels, etc.) are very costly and only offer partial and short term solutions because the number of cars and trucks goes up every year and European Union transport numbers do not show any significant change for the next decade.

In this negative atmosphere with a lot of interest in demanding more public works to give room to coming mobility needs, the SMOs' strategy towards public opinion is based on a social perspective to put in the front line of the transport debate the interest of the majority of the population, those who move on foot and utilize public transportation. This part of the population supports new developments in non-motorized systems, the reduction of cars in the city, and new fiscal reform.

This strategy is directly related to local interest, aided by local and alternative media and based on local alternatives. So, the focus on the local dimension of new mobility plans is the chosen way to overcome a negative situation where the private car is a symbol of freedom and a mark of social status, where the consumption and production model is based on cheap transport and the use of the roads as stores and warehouses with a permanent traffic of trucks. Because of that, SMOs are divided over whether or not to support NIMBY-style local initiatives that only seek to avoid and prevent transport damages and externalities in their own village or quarter, without any broader view or general critique of transportation policy.

Looking at the table below, we observe that in Spain the SMOs' efforts are mainly implemented at the local level, perhaps because their allies are there. Some contacts and common campaigns have been organised together with European green federations (for example, with the European Environmental Bureau (Adega, EeA, etc.), Transport & Environment (PTP and EeA), and the European Cyclist Federation (Kalapie)) mostly to lobby and petition at the European level.

Campaigns at the national level are few. Apart from the defence of the railway, with some major mobilisations like the demonstration in Zaragoza in October (2003), which consisted of 20,000 people, we can find some general campaigns of Ecologistas en Acción on transport and air pollution or on the occasion of the European Car Free Day (22nd of September). The tragedy of the petrol-tanker Prestige in Galicia (November 2002) also provoked some general mobilisations across the country.

Normally SMOs prefer to gear their proposals and search for collaboration with public powers and other possible allies at the autonomous-regional level and the local level. Even for their confrontational campaigns with direct action protests against new transport infrastructures, SMOs usually

Table 2. Strategies employed by SMOs/MACs.

	Local level	Regional level	State level	EU level
Direct action	1,2,6	1,2,6,7,9		
Pressure through demonstration	1,2,3,4,7	1,2,4,6	1,4,9	
Petitions	1,2,3,5,7,9	1,2	1,4,9	1
Media campaigns	1	1	1	
Lobbying				3,5
Judicial	1	1,2	1	2
Participation in formal consultation	3,5	5,8		
Participation in decision making				
Experts	1,3	1,4	1,4	
Public meetings	1,2,6,9	1,2,4,9	1,4,9	
Other				

Ecologistas en Acción-1; AHT-Gelditu-2; Kalapie -3; Plataforma por el Tren-4; PTP-5; COPALTAV-6; A PIE-7; ADEGA-8; NUNCA MAIS-9

prefer to work at the local level. Media campaigns are rare because of a lack of economic means and SMOs normally prefer to act primarily with non-conventional media. The media work is limited to press conferences, opinion articles, and some radio programs.

In the political system in Spain, there is a decreasing level of openness to the claims of the SMOs and their allies in transport issues as we ascend the administrative scale and as we move from the periphery to the central administration as well. This does not mean that all local authorities and administrations are open to the SMOs' views, but it is at that level where social movement campaigns have the opportunity to directly contact the institutions and obtain some support, even when campaigns suppose a total rejection of transport infrastructure plans proceeding from higher administrative bodies. Thus, at the local level we found some openness and opportunities to collaborate, mostly in Catalonia and in the Basque Country and also a few cases in Madrid. Pedestrian zones or school itineraries, bike lanes or the amelioration of public transport are subjects for common contributions in places such as Donostia and Barcelona, when the degree of closure to social inputs is the norm in this study, in the rest of the cases in municipalities.

When we go further into the regional or autonomous field, in Catalonia alone we could speak about some degree of openness and responsiveness. The best example of that is the Sustainable Mobility autonomous law that integrates proposals made by the PTP association (Association for the Promotion of Public Transport). This *rare* participatory experience is unique to Catalan political culture and the administrative bodies and political parties in power make an effort to integrate popular demands in the new law instead of responding with silence to everyday transport conflicts.

Recently, in the Basque case, ecologist groups and single issue campaigns such as AHT-Gelditu criticized the Sustainable Transport Plan elaborated by the Basque regional government for being non-participatory as well as for being a whitewash exercise without providing any solution for growing motorised mobility and especially for promoting the controversial HST Basque "Y project," without any public discussion with SMOs. In Galicia the openness is no greater and there is only a single experience of participation in the so-called Galician Council of the Environment, which organisations such as ADEGA abandoned after its first meeting because of its inefficiency.

The Ministry of *Fomento*, similar to "Public Works," in the central administration maintains responsibility for big infrastructural projects (ports, dams, roads, and H.S. Trains). These are highly criticised plans and the only way of acting against them is for the public administrative right to make allegations in the legal period of claims. The normal answer to the social movement's petitions in Spain is administrative silence.

With such a closed panorama for environmental inputs in the administrative bodies, the strategy of the SMOs is oriented towards the building of civil alliances for an alternative mobility. Nevertheless, the Catalan experience marks an exception to this degree of closure. The regional government is ready to introduce new forms of mobility, accepting the SMOs' views despite the logic of building more roads to respond to the growing motorisation and to promote a Catalan Council of Mobility with all the administrative bodies and social and civic organisations. A similar path was taken in the Balearic Islands until the arrival of the PP in the autonomous government (June 2003). In the same year in Madrid, a coalition of social organisations (the Federation of Neighbours Associations, the Unions UGT and CCOO, EeA and Friends of the Earth, A Pie and Madrid Camina, Pedalibre and other social groups) wrote a document with a proposal for a "Civil Covenant" on mobility, but the answer has only been silence from City Council.

The Basque experience is similar to Madrid. Only in some municipalities is there a little space for interlocution, normally on the occasion of the Car Free Day (September 22nd) that is organised in more and more towns every year, but that after the two first years of collaboration is becoming a day for denouncing the 364 days of automobile invasion of the city in the opinion of the ecologists of Bilbao. At the national level, the 2003 Car Free Day was considered a great failure by Ecologistas en Acción. The results were less than 10% in traffic reduction and the causes, in their view, were the lack of interest, political will, and coordination among the central government and the regional or local authorities.

In relation to the High Speed Train projects, Madrid, Catalonia and the Basque country represent three different SMO styles and ways of acting. While in Catalonia we were able to find several positions among the COPALTAV collec-

tive coordination body. Some participants were more pragmatic and looking for some interlocution and feedback before the final decision on the itinerary and stations. Others totally rejected the HST and proposed an alternative conventional train network. The Catalan parliament opened its doors to this alternative and voted against it.

For a decade in the Basque country, the Assembly against the HST was the social group that kept this conflict alive. In 2001, the Basque nationalist unions made a wider proposal to unify more groups, but the only common point for this new alliance was the opposition to the Basque Y project. At present these unions (EHNE, LAB, HIRU, and ELA) want to introduce a new line of discourse to promote some transport alternatives to the HST before the first stone of this work is laid, but it is certain that this will provoke a split in the AHT-Gelditu Elkarlana co-ordinator that was created solely to bring together oppositional voices.

Beyond this opposition to the infrastructure plans in Valencia, the Platform for the Railway wrote a Plan for the Railway in the Valencian Country, and the Spanish Co-ordinator for the Defence of the Railway has moved from the slogan "Train yes, HST no!" to proposing a change in the Infrastructure Plan (2000-2007) requesting interlocution and exchanges with unions and social movements towards a sustainable train model.

The European Union

As happens in other environmental fields, SMOs and their allied MACs look to Europe, and more precisely to the European Union, for change. Progressive legislation, such as the White Book on "The European Policy on Transport 2010," has been evaluated by the activists as an important analysis to be taken into account in all countries and regions, but the European priorities and investment policy in transport infrastructure, such as the Transeuropean Networks, is in contradiction with this White Book (EeA, COPALTAV, Kalapie, PTP, etc.).

Most of them believe that the EU structures and decision making institutions are under pressure from car multinationals and other public works enterprises that bring considerable pressure to bear in Brussels, but without transparency and legitimacy. Thus Europe is the hope for juridical opportunities to stop some projects because of procedural irregularities or environmental damages. Spain is the member state that has been most denounced in the European Commission because of environmental reasons and sometimes there have been sentences to stop infrastructural developments. AHT-Gelditu Elkarlana, for example, has an international demand before the European government in Brussels on the environmental damage that the HST Bilbao-Gasteiz-Donostia will provoke. The project has been an European one since 1993, despite not

being incorporated today into the "Quick List" of November 2003. It lacks international status as the French government has no interest in building the railway from Bordeaux to Baiona, they hope that the European Commission will stop that project and back their preference for an alternative railway policy without high speed conditions (more than 250 kms/hour).

Privatisation, HSTs, structural funds and other transport policies of European origin are viewed with concern, but European environmental standards and regulations also represent a source of optimism due to the existence of more opportunities and more room for alliances. Some SMOs' representatives are able to evaluate their gains after years of campaigning. For example, the speaker of the NUNCA MAIS Galician popular movement tells us that they have obtained 10% of their demands.

Transport is one of the key issues in our globalized economy and its' acceleration is presented as an improvement to the economy. Beyond this economic perspective, SMOs' voices point to the necessity for a cultural change. In their view, quality of life and standard of living are not the same (AHT-Gelditu) and if it is true that mobility is a core activity of the economic system, SMOs have to link transport campaigns with other issues — energy, infrastructures, dams, etc. in a global perspective.

In the last decade, sustainable development was a kind of marriage between economy and ecology, or better put their son/daughter, but relations among the economic tendencies and the conservation of the ecosystems are no better than 10 years ago. Environmental indicators are very useful for seeing the negative evolution of this relation, and transport is one of the human activities that increasingly generates more unsustainability.

This is the reason why most of the interviewees talk about a mentality or cultural change that our society needs in order to recover from environmental crisis. Some of them think that if this does not occur, the chaotic situation will destroy our civilization.

Transport is a subject that has been central for human activities. It should also be the crucible for an alternative model showing that another world is possible, as the anti-globalisation movement claims.

Campaigns against Genetically Modified Organisms

The Spanish debate on GMOs in recent years has mainly been related to three areas of public discussion: the policy on food, agriculture, and science. In the first domain I found an ecologist movement's attempt to persuade public opinion that the introduction of GMOs could lead to new and bigger food risk and scandal. Ecologists and consumer or-

organisations asked enterprises and administrations to stop the insertion of GMOs in the human and animal diet because they have not yet proven that GMOs are harmless. Through epidemiological studies for example, they have not yet proven that this food will be not be malign for human health. The increasing food insecurity is alleged by environmental SMOs and MACs to be the result of a progressive privatization of resources and means of subsistence, and this process is one of growing commercialisation based on the logic of profit.

In a second domain, the public debate is led by farmers' and agricultural unions that oppose the European agricultural policy (CAP). They argue that the introduction of transgenic seeds marks a departure from farmers' biotechnology, based on an ecological logic, and a move toward an industrial one, based on the logic of profit and the market. Furthermore, they argue that it represents a rupture with a long tradition of considerations and relations, for example with the earth, which under the market logic, is only seen as an inert support for human profit that can be treated with chemical products.

The third domain of controversy concerns the criticism directed at university experts and scientific groups because of their defence of GMOs as a solution for world hunger. Environmental activists also refuse to accept the delimitation of this field as a very special one, where only a few specialists

of genetics and molecular biology are able to speak. Ecologists, unionists, farmers, and consumers opposed to GMOs reject this type of scientific approach because they are aware that universities and scientific institutes are under considerable pressure. Private research exercises control over scholars through financing, private cooptation of academic power, mass media control, and a lack of job security.

Among the Spanish social movements, the GMO issue is a new one that has led some social movements to act very cooperatively. Despite that, every group and organization has employed a particular way of acting and campaigning. The alliance between all the opponents of the introduction of GMOs is the main characteristic of this issue. Since the beginning of the controversy over GMOs, ecologist groups, agricultural and workers' unions, consumer organisations, left-wing and green parties, and some groups of scientists have united their criteria and basic commitments in order to act together to influence public opinion on a new and subtle topic.

Genetics is a complex field and since the start of the opposition to GMOs the main organizations (CCOO and Greenpeace, Ecologistas en Acción and Amigos de la Tierra, Sodepaz and Vida Sana, Plataforma Rural and Izquierda Unida) jointly produced a Spanish version of the special issue of the magazine *The Ecologist* entitled "The Monsanto Files" that

Table 3. Nature and Structure of MACs in the Environmental (GMOs) sector.

Organisation	Type of organisation	Relationship to Institutional and Societal networks	Style of leadership Horizontal/ Hierarchical	Membership	Accountability to Members +/- democratic	Funding Private State Public/other
Ecologistas en Acción	Ecologist Grassroots	GRAIN, ETC Network in transgenic Field (FoE, EeA,WWF)	Horizontal	More than 200 groups in Spain	Democratic	Membership Public institutions
MON VERD	Cooperative distribution of ecological products	Societal Networks	Horizontal	More than 20 organizations	Local groups, unions, leftwing parties, and ecologist groups. Local councils also.	Membership/ Local municipalities
LAVERDE	Ecological Farm Cooperative	Both societal and institutional networks	Horizontal	17 members	Democratic	Membership fees Public funding of programs
EHNE	Agrarian Union	Wide societal Network, institutional relations also	Horizontal	A lot of organisations	Democratic	Membership
Greenpeace	Ecological	Network in transgenic field (FoE, EeA,WWF)	Executive Professional Designed campaigns	80,000 members	Professional Voluntary	Public funding for programs
Plataforma Rural	Single-issue Platform	Societal networks	Assemblies Horizontal	A lot of organisations	Democratic Voluntary	Membership fees No public funding
ISTAS	Foundation	Wide societal network, institutional relations, mostly unionist	Executive body	25 members	Professional	Donations
Dantzaki Taldea	Grassroots	Few	Horizontal	20 members	Democratic	Membership

was destroyed due to pressure from the Monsanto company (1998). This collaboration is just an example of mutual understanding and efforts to fight in a shared strategy.

The main reason for collaborating and designing a common strategy among all the opponents of GMOs (environmentalist, unionists, solidarity groups and some consumer organisations) is the perception that only with a broad spectrum and organisational alliance will it be possible to counterattack the strength of the powerful transnational firms. The scientific and university sector was invited to collaborate against the GMOs, however, there was a very scarce number of scientists and academics who actually got involved. Only a few members of the Spanish university have been involved in the criticism of GMOs.

A broad alliance, meaning a heterogeneous mixture of groups acting together in common campaigns, entails quite different structures, sizes and discourses. In the campaign against GMOs, the alliance includes professional organisations, such as Greenpeace, radical small groups of students or activists, the biggest workers' union in Spain (CCOO), and small parties such as the fragmented Greens. Single local and horizontal cooperatives work hand in hand with large umbrella organisations such as Plataforma Rural, a coalition of many groups in favour of an alternative agricultural model. To summarize, there is collaboration, diversity, and several styles of functioning, from professional bodies to grassroots radicals.

Information

The campaigns on GMOs started with a shared conviction that the first step to be taken was an effort to inform the broad public about this new subject. Due to the specific difficulties for the majority of the activists to learn and understand the basic fundamentals of genetics, at the beginning, umbrella organisations such as Ecologistas en Acción organized seminars and courses to prepare activists on this topic by city.

If 1997 was the year in which ecologists and unions opened the debate on GMOs, 1998 was the year of the solidarity campaign with *The Ecologist* (Monsanto Files). Afterwards in 2002, Greenpeace published a guide to transgenic food, with a long list of red marks against companies that do not guarantee that their products have no transgenic maize or soya among their ingredients and, on the contrary, the green list of the companies that assure that they do not make products with transgenic powders.

Patents

A second moment of joint work was the campaign on the patents of GMOs, which was both Europe-wide and at the national level in Spain, trying to influence the parliaments to prevent and stop the appropriation of public knowledge and the privatisation of life.

Imports

A third point of activism was to denounce and protest against the import of transgenic soya and maize, which occurred mainly in the sea ports (Barcelona and Bilbao, principally). This campaign was related to the consumers' campaign on transgenic products because soya and maize are the basic elements that will enter the food chain after their conversion into powder. The campaigns against transgenic animal fodder and the monopoly of import companies in the commercialisation of soya and maize for animal feed are similar and simultaneous in time.

Cultivations

As Spain is the only EU country that has transgenic cultivations in her soil, one special campaign has developed denouncing this agricultural model and sounding the alarm on the danger and evidence of contaminated crops. Navarre, Castille and Catalonia are places where the campaign against transgenic harvests have been most significant. The protests have taken four different directions: the demand made to the Agriculture Ministry asking for information on the location of the transgenic fields that remain unknown; the symbolic attack on some discovered crops; the denunciation by affected owners because of GMO contamination; and, finally, opposition to the introduction of new types of transgenic farm products.

Transgenic Free Zones

As a proposal of ecologists (EeA, FoE and Greenpeace) and agricultural unions in a number of localities, the municipal council approved a declaration of the town as a transgenic free zone that signified that the local authorities reject the presence of these foods. The problem in the application of this agreement is to discover which foods employ and which do not employ transgenic feed, which is a very difficult task, as the ecologists have said.

GMOs and Public Opinion

Winning over public opinion against the introduction of transgenic food has been the main objective of the SMOs. But they have found some difficulties in this attempt. The first difficulty is the complexity of the subject. As the ecologists have said, just as 30 years ago at the opening of the nuclear debate it was argued that only with a scientific knowledge of the matter was it possible to have an opinion on nuclear power stations, the genetic field is not an easy one for the majority of the society. Even for a large part of the activists of green organisations an understanding of the subject has represented an obstacle to becoming interested in this campaign.

The second difficulty is the lack of public debate on the GMOs. There is evident unrest among the ecologists because

of the strategy designed by the big GMO companies (Syngenta, Pioneer, Monsanto, etc.) which, at the beginning of the campaign, refused to hold face to face public talks with ecologists or farmers' organisations and afterward decided to use some scientific researchers and academics as advisers, in order to hide their economic interests in this field.

The public opinion data indicate that 70% of the population in Spain will not eat vegetables that contain GMOs. And as many as 80% of these people report that they will not eat vegetables when GMOs are present, even when those products are substantially cheaper (CIS) on a comparative scale. According to Greenpeace, that is the reason why labelling is so important.

In all the environmental campaigns and debates, ecologists have to counteract the powerful and well prepared economic and political actors, but with this issue the manner in which they have to prepare and articulate their arguments is especially subtle because in such a complex matter, the opinion and the speeches of "white coat" experts have prevalence and specific weight. In several interviews the opponents to GMOs argue that the call made by the US government to the World Trade Organisation to punish the new regulations of labelling GMOs established by the European Union will be an opportunity to reinforce European public opinion against the GMOs.

The strategies used by SMOs and MACs in Spain are very similar for all the actors. As the following table shows, apart from Greenpeace that offers a broader spectrum of activities and action range, strategies have a local or regional dimension, which is a common characteristic of environmental activism in Spain. What is clearly significant in this campaign is the strategy of working with public opinion. That means that the novelty and complexity of the subject makes it less useful to call demonstrations or to use public and political institutions for their purposes and intentions, and for this reason the first aim of the campaigns is to influence public feeling and thinking about GMOs.

The main campaigns and activities have a local perspective, trying to influence the public by acting in local supermarkets, local cultivations, or in the ports against the import of transgenic grains. This type of direct action at the local level also shows the necessity of using local resources to stop the influence of big transnational companies. In this sense, the anti-global dimension of the movement against GMOs is borne by a local or regional based strategy to stop their arrival. Pressure and mobilisations have been designed to be effective on the local public and local media because, on the one hand, the central government in Spain has been "the great ally" of transgenic multinational enterprises and, on the other hand, GMOs have not, until now, been a major issue for social mobilisation or a social controversy of the first order. This is the main reason for the design of a strategy looking to special population sectors (farmers, consumers, mothers,

etc.) and based on activities at the local or regional level.

Despite a lot of disagreements with the Spanish administration's way of working and the transposition of the European legislation on GMOs, the juridical path has not been employed by the anti-transgenic organisations, apart from some denunciations for crop contamination. The mainstream work of the SMOs and MACs on GMOs has been performed in front of the doors of big stores or in magazines and public meetings where, step by step, more and more people are moving from a passive and an uninformed position to one of open criticism of the GMO market.

Table 4. Strategies employed by SMOs/MACs.

	Local level	Regional level	State level	EU level
Direct action	1,3,4,5,7,9	1,3,4,5,7,9	3	3
Pressure through demonstration	1,3,4,5,9	1,3,4,5,9		
Petitions	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	1,2,3,4	1,2,3
Media campaigns			1,2,3,4	
Lobbying	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4
Judicial				
Participation in formal consultation		2		
Participation in decision-making				
Experts			1,2,3	
Public meetings	1,4,5	1,4,5		
Other	7,8		1,2,3	

Ecologistas en Acción-1, ISTAS-CCOO-2; Greenpeace-3, Plataforma Rural-4, EHNE-5, La Verde-6, Mon Verd-7; Dantzaki-8, Hemen eta Munduan-9

The political opportunity structure for the anti-GMO movement in the last eight years has been very closed and in this respect it has not been too different from other campaigns organised by ecologist groups. The rightwing government of the Popular Party has probably been the most pro-transgenic government in the EU.

The possibility of some inputs in the policy of the Spanish central institutions has been small and almost non-existent since the origin of the GMOs debate. The interviewees from Ecologistas en Acción (EeA) and Plataforma Rural talk about *involution* more than evolution in the relationship between political institutions and popular movements. Involution, due to a negative development of the relations between activists and the central administration, which means less and less public information, no formal contacts and negotiations, and a policy dedicated to privileging the transnational genetic companies.

We have found some openness and more flexible relations in Andalucía and the Basque Country, autonomous communities where regional political power (Socialists -

PSOE- and Basque Nationalists -PNV-) has followed a more elusive policy and made some concessions.

GMOs' opposition has been quite critical of the lack of responsiveness from the central authorities, which have mostly acted with silence as an answer and with only some written responses to letters from SMOs, from time to time. This tactic implies that ecologists and unionists have access to the official positions through the media and through the information obtained in European institutions and not through any sort of contacts with the agriculture and environment ministries.

The degree of closure of the political system also means the degradation of the process observed in the only central institution for public environmental participation by civil society. The so-called C.A.M.A. (Consejo Asesor de Medio Ambiente — Environment Consulting Body) has been inoperative for several years and recently after the resignation of the majority of environmental groups and unions, the PP government decided to reduce the presence of the ecologists from 11 seats to only two (EeA). The spokesman of the ministry of agriculture recognized that relations with civil society groups, and especially the services of information they were demanding, was a problem that the administration was attending to as a priority.

Environmental information is a disputed point with difficulties in obtaining it. When formalities and information are a terrain of controversy, arriving at a common arena of understanding is much more difficult. Ecologist organisations such as *Ecologistas en Acción* are asking for a seat on the Spanish Commission of Bio-security and the response was that this body is only for scientific experts. This corporative position was rejected by the green groups that view the involution of the relations between the central administration and SMOs as a strategy of disrespect for any criticism or avoidance of any correspondence with the SMOs.

When in 1996 Isabel Tocino started as the first Spanish environment minister, lobbying on GMOs' policy was still a possibility and she voted, once and never again, against a GMO proposal in Brussels, in the same direction that the ecologist groups had asked her to. But it was a unique occasion. Never again has the voice of the ecologists been represented by the Spanish institutions; on the contrary, in the opinion of the SMOs, the central administration has become the best European ally for the GMO companies. Other types of contacts and audiences have taken place in Andalucía and the Basque Country where, despite the fact that environmental powers in this field have not been decentralized, the political leaderships in these autonomies have come closer to meeting the demands of civil society and have approved some declarations to control the development of GMOs.

The Contradictions of the European Union

The European Union is, according to most of the activist interviewees, a contradictory institution, in which they have hopes, and against which they also have criticisms. The European parliament and the Commission in the final years of the moratorium have tried to take some measures about the de facto coalition formed by the US government and the transgenic transnational companies, Europeans included. On the other hand, they observe with disapproval the so-called "business Europe," in which lobbies and the executives of enterprise act in an easy manner. They remember the ballots in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, for example, and reject the manner in which Monsanto and other firms influenced the politicians and civil servants.

In this sense, they consider the EU Commission to be a pro-transgenic institution. In their view, most of the time they transform these socio-political and environmental debates into mere technical discussions, and resolutions are elaborated by technical-scientific councils without political control, in an effort to avoid debates among the Commission, the Parliament and the Council. This is a big democratic gap in their view. Countries such as Austria that have an anti-GMO position in the SMOs' line, are punished by the EU while others, such as Aznar's government in Spain, are carrying out illegal activities in the area of GMOs and the European government in Brussels is looking the other way. In any case, Spanish organizations campaigning against GMOs think that if regulations were only to be implemented in Spain by the rightwing executive, the last five years moratoria would be non-existent.

Europe then signifies an important place for decision making, where it is necessary to be present and to apply pressure, and, on the other hand, it is a bureaucratic institution close to entrepreneurial interests, where any single socio-environmental input is difficult. Europe is also the place for building up alliances and gaining allies in this environmental campaign. Austria, Italy, France, Germany and Great Britain are the places where Spanish groups have made links with networks of ecological farmers, ecologist organisations, and scientific services that have been crucial aides in the campaign against GMOs. Information, good practices and some positive experiences in the field promoted by European organisations offers a glimpse of a future without GMOs.

Most of the activists look at the future with pessimism, at least in the short term. The main reason that they cite for their pessimism is the enormous strength of the GMO companies that have a vital interest in introducing those products into the market as soon as possible to recover the big sums of money they have invested in the last two decades. So, in coming years, they foresee an increasing pressure and an unequal

fight that is not only about the introduction of new “dangerous” seeds and powders into our diet, but also about the strengthening of a model of industrial and agricultural production and consumption that only values monetary profit.

Some activists suggest that victory against this model will come from the South. It is in this part of the world where this model is throwing thousands of impoverished peasants into the megacity’s suburbs. More than a new model of farming and nutrition, GMOs are a model of industrial production that is responsible for the unemployment and marginalisation of millions of farmers in Brazil, Argentina, India and Bangladesh.

Now it is the European consumers’ turn, and a *de facto* moratorium is the expression of this social rejection, but because of that, the pressure and new attempts for a bigger list of GMOs and even the withdrawal of this moratorium is the new scenario that we will probably see in 2004. Politicians and the administration of the European Union are receiving a lot of demands to open their markets and “liberalisation” is one of the sacred words to be respected.

The recent defeat of the rightwing government of the PP in Madrid should be a small step towards a more anti-transgenic position in the EU, but the GMOs, as the activists have said, are only one of the lines along which the neoliberal model is developing. Nanotechnologies, the radiation of food, and other lines of experimentation demonstrate the use of science and technology for the privatisation of life. The lack of democracy in this commercial project, the obscurity of this global tendency towards taking decisions outside of the elected institutions is a neoliberal dynamic that the movement against GMOs has to confront in a combined local and global perspective.

In Spain the opposition to GMOs started later than in other countries. Spain is the only place in the EU with GMO cultivations and, until now, has been the best political ally of the US and the multinationals for this propose. The new political cycle starting now in the Spanish central institutions and the denunciation of the WTO by the US government to stop the labelling obligations on GMOs could be the opportunity to influence public opinion more positively, helping the political actors increase regulation of GMOs.

Some Conclusions

In 1996 when the Popular Party — with a delay in respect to many other countries — created the Ministry of the Environment in Spain, it seemed that environmental affairs would have a relevant role. Eight years later the environmentalists recognise that this was a false impression arising from some personal interests and that the environmental situation has worsened.

The numerous campaigns originated by the green SMOs and their results in the face of the PP government’s environmental policy have clear negative effects for environmental organisations. According to their critique, the present economic model is unsustainable both socially and environmentally. The logic of economic growth without limits is incompatible with care of the environment, and this is not only an idea held by the ruling party, it is a viewpoint shared by a broad political spectrum. For that reason the ecologists ask for a political and strategic compromise to rethink the present socio-economic model and, to that end, calls for transparency and political participation are two basic tools. Participation is a right and transparency is an obligation in their words (FoE, EeA, Greenpeace, SEO-Birdlife, WWF).

In the ecologist’s view, last year’s environmental disasters demonstrate the negative way in which the rightwing government tried to hide these catastrophic accidents, trying to minimise the problem and using the media to convince the public that they were acting with diligence and care. Precaution and prevention are not implemented as principles of environmental importance and the logic of profits is simply becoming the real enemy of nature.

While this is the picture and general panorama of the central administration’s environmental policy, in the Autonomous Communities the situation is diverse. The latter have powers concerning environmental policies and normally a consideration of economic growth logic similar to the leading parties. Transport and GMOs are two subjects over which central and autonomous governments share powers and have disputes due to their respective interests. In general, we can say that there are no contradictions and the developed lines are similar and coherent.

Having a political opportunity structure so closed to input from environmentalists, in both cases they opt for collaboration and design a common strategy amongst all the opponents (environmentalist, unionists, solidarity groups, consumer organisations, women and students, local towns, etc.) of GMOs, HS Trains and other motorised projects as they think that only a broad organisational alliance will be able to make some changes in the official policy and counterattack the strength of the multinationals.

In terms of the resources of MACs, two related elements must be highlighted: the importance of the media for the organisations and the prominent role of new technologies, especially the internet. The media are capable of reproducing political discourse, and in some cases, they are able to centre the debate on certain key aspects. According to some MACs, they have an important ethical role to play in educating the population and advancing a more democratic society. The internet has become, on one hand, a very useful element to connect distant organisations (it is not necessary to travel to

meetings to know what is happening far away), and at the same time it has become an alternative source of information to the media, used by more people everyday, especially the youth. There is a democratic potential in internet for those who can access it (most people in Europe). The possibility of creating and maintaining networks has strongly increased with the internet. The internet is crucial for MACs.

In the environmental sector we distinguish between transport and GMO foods. In the first policy, transport, the influence on public policies is low, although in maritime traffic, because of the disaster of the Prestige, it was possible to influence the EU. The EU is closer to SMOs/MACs on GMOs, and the Spanish national level appears, with the PP in government, as the main defender of GMOs within the EU. The future is uncertain and in 2004 the moratoria on GMOs will be over and decisions about their production will be made in the EU.

In this perspective Europe's role is becoming less and less helpful for environmentalist purposes and because they perceive that in the EU the pressure of the transnational lobbies is much more powerful, the allies are at the local level, in the civil society and in the so-called Third World where sustainable models are more necessary than in developed countries.

We can observe an ambivalent vision of the European Union. On the one hand, it is a level where you can have some influence if you have the resources to do so (this is often the limiting factor) or if there is a special situation that allows you to, i.e. the tragedy of the Prestige allowed *Nunca Mais* access to the European Parliament. On the other hand, this positive element is strongly counteracted by the belief that the EU has not real power in the face of individual member-states, and the transposition of European directives is a mechanism to slow or to eliminate some measures. The overall perspective on Europe is not negative. They think that the capacity of real influence vis-à-vis the power of member-states is limited. Perceptions of the EU level as a relatively open level predominate among MACs.

As we have stated, at the national level there has been a closed political opportunity structure, and the capacity to influence the administration varies among levels. Lower levels (local and regional) seem to be more open to the ideas of these organisations, and the European-level, although open, is distant and access to it is difficult. In some cases access depends on the person the organisation is dealing with, or on the importance of the issue to public opinion, especially if it can provoke a political cost.

Endnote

1. Author to whom correspondence should be directed:
E-mail: inaki.barcena@ehu.es

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