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The Transnational Repertoire

During this seminar, I have presented my current research. My

purpose has not been to have a strong and totally finished development. My purpose has been to summarize my own conclusions and to open the new perspectives of my works.

I have analysed the French environmental movement in France: especially, the discourse of the activists and their form of collective action. I have noticed the transformation of their repertoire. Some elements have appeared during the eighties: the use of the media, the emergence of the expertise, the decline of the huge demonstrations (like demonstrations in Brittany, at Plogoff or in Rhône-Alpes near Lyon/Grenoble at Creys-Malville against the nuclear power stations), some demonstrations like in the Pyrénées Vallée d'Aspe were rarely huge during the beginning of the nineties and a little radical group maintains the pressure by very offensive strategy (destroying bulldozers...) or symbolic acts inspired by native Indians' culture like dancing around machines with axes.

Another aspect is very noticeable: the support and the incorporation into the activists frame (we use frame, theorizing by the interactionnist theoreticians) of a supranational values and strategy. We must remember the very well-known slogan « *Act locally, think globally* » which is part of the ideological discourse of the environmental movement in France and in the world. But, the humanitarian movement or an organisation like OXFAM uses this slogan. Another aspect is important: when I interviewed an environmental activist in a little village in the North of Isère, I heard a discourse on the biodiversity or on the rights for future generations which is closed to the discourse of an environmental activist in Paris or in London. This diffusion of ideology and the strange proximity of strategies could be explained by the support of transnational environmental organisations. I can propose this explanation by my research into the archives of the organisations. When I wrote about the history of the French environmental organisations, in particular, those which are viewed the most radical (*Friends of the Earth /Amis de la Terre*; the new association

generating after the May 1968 events), I observed the links between the transnational movements, the importance of the *Friends of the Earth* (International) and *Greenpeace*.

The following development is divided into three parts. Firstly, I will recall what a repertoire is, a notion elaborated by Charles Tilly. Secondly, I will put my reflexion back into the reflexions which are at the center of current researches and will propose to analyse the repertoire through the movement analysis: in this manner, I will offer a new point of view to understand the répertoire. And finally, I will present my hypothesis of the spreading of the new form of repertoire: the transnational repertoire. What sort of repertoire is it ? What is the importance of the supranational level ? How do we resolve the blind point between the sociology of international organisations and the analysis of the activism transformation ? It is a challenge. I do not have the ambition to resolve this question here, but to clarify the researches that are being conducted and the beginning of explanations, we could give.

1 : The notion of Repertoire by Charles Tilly

The notion of repertoire is an important and well-known notion elaborated by an historian, Charles Tilly. It is important to underline the fact that Charles Tilly is an historian. The importance of time in the description of the repertoire could be explained.

1-1 : Analysis of the « French contentious »

My aim is to enrich the notion of repertoire elaborated by Charles Tilly. In his massive work, « *The French Contentious* »⁴⁷, he wrote of the « *repertoire of contention* », defining it as « *the whole set of means (a group) has for making claims of different kinds on different individuals or groups* ». (...) « *The repertoire is at once, a structural and a cultural concept. Tilly's «well-established actions» are not only what people do when they are engaged in conflict with others ; it is what they know how to do and what others expect them to do.* »⁴⁸ suggests Sidney Tarrow. As an historian, Charles Tilly makes a distinction between repertoires thanks to his historical knowledge of the context in which they were created. During

⁴⁷ C.Tilly, *The French Contentious*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1986.

⁴⁸ S.Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, Cambridge, University Press, 1994, p.31.

the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France and Great Britain, the repertoire was seen as *local/patronized*. Rebellions were usually provoked by increases in taxes. Relying heavily on the patronage of immediately available power holders, they often exploded at public celebrations using rich, irreverent symbolism drawn from religious rituals and popular culture. During the nineteenth century, a new repertoire arose named *national/autonomous*. Interests begin to become homogeneous thanks to associations and organizations, and the claims are addressed directly to the national level. The representatives of programmes support and defend interests. Action is now in the public field.

1-2 : The limits and the interests of the Repertoire

Charles Tilly⁴⁹ has underestimated two phenomena which influence the repertoire at the end of the Twentieth Century. Firstly, the integration of interests in the decision-making process is a notable phenomenon. The forms of collective action are internalized in the process as the interest groups are consulted. Demonstration is used with another connotation. At the same time, part of and distanced from the decision-making process, interest groups do not react to decisions as they did at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Their proactive or reactive action is integrated but they have a double strategy of visibility as a legitimated group and as representatives of a movement. Charles Tilly has continued to analyse the second aspect and has forgotten the first. The author neglects the importance of an evolution started in the mid-Twentieth century: the increase in use of the media as an instrument of collective action and means of knowledge of the political opportunity structure. The production of the « shows » is important. Creating a media show is as essential as representing the voice of democracy. And the visibility generated by the media produces a homogeneization of the interest and a cognitive dimension of the struggle. We could argue that these new forms are not simply variations; but, new forms of collective action, that these are homogenized thanks to the media. As far as the environmental movement is concerned, this example is significant. In fact, the forms of collective action have borrowed the Anglo-Saxon (perhaps Anglo-American) forms used successfully by pressure groups and the social movement. A

⁴⁹C.Tilly, « Les Origines du répertoire de l'Action Collective contemporaine en France et en Grande-Bretagne », *Vingtième Siècle*, n°4, 1984, p.89-108.

homogenization of slogans (« *Small is beautiful* », « *Rights for Future Generation* », « *Think globally, Act locally* ») permits the identification of the Green groups beyond national frontiers.

The interests of the Tilly's notion are various. Briefly, we can underline the adaptability of a répertoire to the identity of a group, to the context and to the aimed weapon. Thanks to his approach, he could observe the moving of the places of power : from local place to national place. On the other hand, he could analyze the transformations of the society and their implication on the interest groups and their strategies.

Theses characteristics are useful for the researcher of collective action.. Following this approach, we can study the forms of collective action in a society. We can observe the influence of the structure of the society and the importance of the group identity. It is a junction between the macrosocial level and microsocial level. This research focuses on the current studies which have the purpose to explore the new way between the weight of the social structures and the importance of the motivation of individuals or groups. But this theoretical interrogation is reinforced by my data collected during my survey in France on the environmental movement and my current study in Great-Britain.. An observation is dominant, we see *the transformation of the repertoire*. Some groups involved in collective action have new identity (they differ from the tradition of Trade-Unionism) and the context is transformed by the growth of an international level which generated new places of power and decision-making.

2 : The Transformation of the Repertoire

Now, at the heart of the reflexion is understanding the contemporary répertoire, to open this black box.. In others words, the elements which a form the repertoire. Authors establish different categories of repertoires. These two different types of collective actions in France have their own characteristics, concerning their use, their links with the collective identity of a group. For example, a group such as ACT-UP have a répertoire dominated by the use of symbolic action : sit-ins, disruptions during trials, conferences or media events: for example, AIDS Night on the French channels.

Michel.Offerlé⁵⁰ has ditinguished three categories of repertoires. The first categorie is demonstrations *la mobilisation du nombre*, the second is symbolic forms, *le recours au scandale* (sit-ins ; a new form of

⁵⁰ M.Offerlé, *Sociologie des groupes d'intérêt*, Paris, Montchrestien, 1994

hullabaloo during trials, conference ; interruptions etc ; collective action to interest the media) and the third is the using of expertise, *les discours d'expertise* (contesting law or application of law ; skills to produce the attention of the media). We see that collective action couldn't be summed up by the demonstrations on the streets. There are various forms and nowadays, we have the introduction of the media and the importance of the legislation to defend the rights which complicate the previous form of collective action and enrich the repertoire.

Olivier Fillieule⁵¹, another French researcher, has focused his study on the demonstrations in France during the eighties. He wanted to identify and to isolate the demonstrations which he has called *action manifestante*, a demonstrated action from the other forms. The demonstrated action is the occupancy of a public or private space during a moment by a group which expresses directly or not a political opinion. These could be defined as protesting actions, *action protestataire*. This general form is a concerted action directed to the State or a sector of State.

We are in this context of the refinement of this notion of repertoire. Jacques Roux⁵², Johanna Siméant⁵³ are interested by the special repertoire: hunger strikes. In Great Britain, we have a reflexion about the transformation of repertoire. Brian Doherty is working on the new forms of activism: *Earth First !, Donga Movement*. These Radical groups are very famous since the Newbury mobilization. Chris Rootes is carrying out two closely linked studies: the emergence of radical groups and the strong expertise of the environmental groups like *Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth* which were previously radical groups, and are integrated into the political decision making process.

Michel Offerlé and Olivier Fillieule share the same perspective: we could say an analysis which puts the State like a weapon of the collective action. But, the reality is different when we interview activists or study the archives and the leaflets of a movement. It is the point that I would like to discuss: which tools people really use in movements. It is a theoretical

⁵¹ O.Fillieule, *Stratégies de la rue*, Paris, Presses de la FNSP, 1997

⁵² J.Roux, « Mettre son corps en cause: la grève de la faim, une forme d'engagement public », *Engagement Public et Exposition de la Personne*, Paris, Aube, 1997, p.111-135

⁵³ J.Siméant, « La cause des « sans-papiers ». Mobilisations et répertoires d'action des étrangers en situation irrégulière en France et de leurs soutiens, 1970-1992 », phd thesis, Paris, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, 1995 (supervisor: J.Leca)

hypothesis rooted into a survey with empirical materials. It is a sociological analysis with perspective historical.

2-1 : The Repertoire : perspective through the state resources

The limits of the analysis through the state resources are to focus on collective action made against the state at the expense of the collective action oriented at European or International level. Observing the repertoire from this point of view consists in analysing the various forms of collective action without underlying the transformation of the target. For example, the state archives made by the police detailed the various forms of demonstrations or the importance of violence but in the state context. These resources are unable to describe the concomitance of various collective actions, especially those which do not have the State and the national context as an exclusive goal.

The Environmental movement is the best example: the demonstrations could be national and at the same time, it could be in terms of involving the European Court or European Legislation and an international mobilization of the media.

Considering the national archives from the state could constitutes a sort of bias which gives the wrong impression of the exclusive existence of a national repertoire. When we follow a movement during his actions, we transform our point of view and we limit the bias of the only state resources. And we could enrich the notion of repertoire because we can register the forms of collective action which are really used.

2-2 : The Repertoire : perspective through the movement analysis

The transformations of collective action are really observed when we study a movement. This point of view reverses the perspective and we could notice the new forms of collective action.

For example, in the middle of eighties, the French environmental organisations used the media in two manners. Firstly, the goal was to introduce the use of the media, modelled on Anglo-saxon forms, particularly with *Greenpeace* support, the purpose is to organise an empathy with the victims. The victims are new and specific (animals, vegetals...) or totally abstract (the ozone layer, the forests...). Often, the victims are not directly related to human beings and the welfare of human beings. It was necessary to mobilize public opinion on this new subjects. It is important to present a story which involves people on the side of the

victims and with the organization.: *Greenpeace*, since the beginning of its actions, prepare these scene : a little boat with the whales against the hunters (the killers !)... Another way of gaining the interest of the media consists in disturbing conferences, meetings or to carry out illegal actions to focus on the limits of the legality. Even, in small towns, activists are very impressed by the actions which work very well because they have an audience. I can remember Jean Sivardière, the founder member of an association in Grenoble: he declared that at the beginning of the seventies, he spent two years in the United States near New York and he was very impressed by the collective action strategies of the environmental groups. They were efficient. He admitted during the interview that his goal in Grenoble was to model his actions on these Anglo-saxons forms. And, another aspect consists in popularizing the green issues by TV programmes. I would like to analysis this aspect: the forms of awareness campaign made with the publications of articles, and TV programmes. It is not presented as an activists' programme but more as a scientific programme. But, the secondary function is to act as a consciousness-raising campaign: being with the victims as well as being supported by scientific assessment.

Another important aspect is the emergence of a sort of legal expertise. In fact,. these organisations were supported by the legislation concerning the preservation of Nature⁵⁴. They work as a «watchdog» and replaced a resourceless Ministry of the Environment. Furthermore, activists became new experts to support their point of view during trials or during political decision making. Some examples are very famous in France: the problem of the turtledove hunting in the South West is at the center of a strong struggle between environmental activists who want the European Directive application and have a huge scientific argument (decline of species...) and the local hunters with their traditions. This example is not isolated, because in daily works, associations have to control the abidance of the law. Recently, in Brittany, an association *Eaux et Rivières* « Water and Rivers » specializing in waterquality succeeded in sentenced mayors because of the contamination. In France, another famous story about water shows this role of counter-power with the using of the legislation.. In Grenoble, a green local leader succeeded to sentence the mayor Alain Carrignon about corruption. More radical and political, or strictly associative one, the environmental or green activists use the same tools:

⁵⁴ K.Moore, « Organizing integrity: American science and the creation of public interest organizations: 1955-1975 », *American Journal of Sociology*, n°6 May 1996, p.1592-1628. The author observed the same phenomenon in the United States.

legislation (European one), the media to touch the public opinion, disruption to create a scandal. In any aspect, we can consider the *re-using* of the previous symbolic forms contained in the local/patronized repertoire. The media forms a new scene and transforms the presentation of a cause.

These forms are not totally specific to the environmental movement. Others authors who works on the homosexual movement, ACT UP for example have the same conclusions. But, with these authors, I share the same points of view. The purpose is to follow movements and mobilizations and not just analyse the classical state archives. They can consider the various forms, not only the disturbance of the streets or the public scene.

At the end of this second development, I can summarize the challenge that these few elements comprised. To know and to understand the renewal of the repertoire and the new forms of activism, (what we might call the figure of the expert-activist !) it is necessary to focus our attention on the analysis of movement and the mobilisation of activists.

Another aspect is the strong fluidity of the forms of strategies and the support of the transnational organisations. This sort of homogeneization requires discussion of the "National" elaborated by Charles Tilly. That is not to say that the *national/autonomous* repertoire is a dead or useless repertoire. But, it is not the single one. We can conclude that two forms exist and overlap. The idea is that several repertoires exist. We continue the image developed by Charles Tilly : For example, a singer or a musician can play classical repertoire and jazz repertoire, it depends on the context and the ambition of the artist. But, the two repertoires exist. It is the same for the repertoire of collective action. The choice depends on the context, the identity of the groups, the cause they want to promote, the goal they desire to reach.

Thus, now, I propose the key point of my development: the emergence of *the transnational repertoire*. Previously, in my thesis, I have discussed the character of national of the French environmental movement. With the comparison I made with the British case, I could, with the difference of culture, observe a common phenomenon.: homogeneization of the strategies, of the slogans and the ideology, the growth of the new media like Internet, the petition on the net, the diffusion of information by the net.

3 : The Transnational Repertoire

Firstly, I summarize the elements which compose the repertoire that I called *the transnational repertoire*. Secondly, I suggest the importance of transnational organisations like the non-governmental organisations. They generate strategies and ideologies which support the local struggles and also, diffuse a homogenization of the environmental movement (and I would say the humanitarian movement). Finally, another aspect could be presented here: the weight of the International conference as a moment of the transnational repertoire the example of Kyoto the last december 1997 will illustrate this phenomenon.

3-1 : Elements of the transnational Repertoire

-Strategies : Media-Expertise-Forms of symbolic action.

For example, Green or environmental Movement could be identified thanks to a strategic identity. Their repertoire is noticeable: we know its peaceful meanings and tools and its will to be close the victims it defends. The radicalism of any recent forms is more a variation on the same theme than a real modification. In Great Britain, at Newbury for example, we observe some radical groups who deploy technical meanings to climb trees and to struggle against police. These activists protested to preserve trees against bulldozers and more widely against the road policy in England. But the same scene has been observed in France in Vallée d'Aspe. And the strategies are very similar: reaching the public opinion by attracting the media interests, peaceful meanings to identify the activist with the victim and to relate the struggle with those of the native tribes (for example, American native.). But, these aspects that everybody has observed thanks to newspapers or TV broadcasting are implicated in a second, more hidden element: work on expertise. For example, during the demonstrations, the leader of *Friends of the Earth* participated to the discussion to limit the building of new motorways and make a strong pressure on MP to support their views. Using the European legislation is a very common tool to protect and promote the conservation of environment. After the Rio Conference in 1992, Mickael Redclift⁵⁵ highlighted the transformation of the agenda of the UK Environmental policy. The activists with the support of these

⁵⁵ Michael Redclift, « The UK and the International Environmental Agenda: Rio and After », *UK Environmental Policy in the 1990s*, Macmillan Press, 1995

international declarations or these new international agenda, construct an expert strategy which uses a double aspect: make a fuss to attract the interest of public opinion, and work with scientific evidence to promote their views. This technique is used during the national struggle but also during local struggle. The mobilization of La Hague shows us clearly that a media mobilization and a expertise discourse are used like the main strategy of the local groups reinforced by *Greenpeace*,⁵⁶an International Organisation.

-Ideologies : Rights of Future Generations, Sustainable Development

Some key words or slogans could be defined as a common ideology of the Green Movement. «*Act Locally, Think Globally*», «*Rights For Future Generation*»...And now, «*sustainable development*» translated in French, le *développement durable*. This latest key word was constructed during the Rio Conference in 1992 and was imposed on the national agenda. But, the noticeable consequence on the local struggle consists to framing the problem through the sustainable development. For example, at Trafalgar Square, the last September 1997, during a demonstration against the pollution in London, I heard an inhabitant from an island of the South Pacific (near Mururora) who underlined that the Western Governments do not follow their responsibilities about the programme to protect the layer ozone. It is not only a local struggle; suddenly, it becomes a global problem framed by the ideology conceived at Rio Conference, the ideology of «*sustainable development* ». Another aspect could be important to observe in the future: the emergence of the links between the Environmental and the humanitarian organisations and see growing homogeneization of strategies.

-Resources of activism : skills (experts...)

There are several consequences for activism with these sorts of repertoire. The skills required to be an activist differ from the skills required by an organisation which defends the rights of workers, for example. Jacques Ion⁵⁷, a French researcher, asked about the end of the previous forms of activism. We could say that these organisations need people with

⁵⁶ Current research led in the programme PIREN 1997-98« sustainable development and ecological development » (University Rennes I, Centres de Recherches administratives et politiques)

⁵⁷ J.Ion, *La Fin des Militants ?*, Paris, Editions de l'atelier, Editions ouvrières, 1997

appropriate skills: in the media, in legal or scientific knowledge. For instance, I interviewed a founder member and a leader of the famous organisation in Grenoble, FRAPNA (Fédération Rhône-Alpes de Protection de la nature). He declared to me that he wanted a good law student as conscientious objector to help the organisation to enforce the law for protecting the mountains.

When you complete the application to become a new activist, you have usually to declare your skills in the media, legal or scientific area. That is not to say that you cannot be an activist, if you have no skills, but your role is minor. You do not have any responsibility and some rank-and-file individuals declare to me their disappointment to have very little responsibility and sometimes, this leads to them withdrawing from organisations.

Internet technology or the weight of the International Law may well construct another type of activist. For example, Computer technicians are welcomed and International Lawyers too. It is not clear if these organisations require activists or professionals who have interests in Green Issues..

These aspects have to be analysed in relations to the transformation of the repertoire because it is a symptom of the transformation of activism and underlines the identity of this form of activism, a sort of intellectual mobilization.

3-2 :The importance of the supranational level : the Transnational organisations:

Overlooking the analysis of the Non-Governmental Organisations as supports of national movement constitutes a blind point. Rather; three levels of action must be identified into three levels: local, national, supranational (in other words the importance of the International and European level).

Three main transnational organisations have to be mentioned because of their efficient support of the European birth of the Environmental Movement. *World Wide Fund, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace*. Very briefly, we could focus on the French and British case and the influence of *the Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace*. *Friends of the Earth* was founded in San Fransisco in 1969, through the impetus of David Brower. Since 1952, Director of the «*Sierra Club*», an American conservationnist organisation, he had come into conflict with his organisation : he had led a campaign against plans for building in the Grand

Canyon which meant that the *Sierra Club* had lost the advantage of tax-exempt status. Brower was dismissed and founded *Friends of the Earth* with the philosophy that the solution to environmental problems does not depend upon temporary remedies but upon radical change. He adopted vigorous campaigning methods as a result of the publicity he enjoyed and of the extent to which he dramatized the situation. In 1970, he went to Europe and made contacts in Paris and London. In August of the same years, Edwin Matthews, from Great-Britain, met a journalist Barclay Inglis, while on holidays, and they decided to form *Friends Of The Earth* (Great-Britain). In France, at the same time, journalists and future celebrities of the world of ecology, such as Brice Lalonde set up Friends of the Earth France in Paris, translated *Amis de la Terre*.

In France, I carried out survey into two areas Rennes and Grenoble⁵⁸, and I found the same organisations *Amis de la Terre*. But it is not the case of simply importing the organisation and having the same objectives ; there is also genuine co-operation and a homogeneization of forms of collective action. By piecing together the history of French regional groups, one is able to see the kinds of collaboration involved. For example, the internal mail which can be consulted at the CIELE (Center for information about Energy and Environment) shows the help received from les *Amis de la Terre Paris* and the relationships with foreign organisations, based for the most part in North Europe and more widely in the Anglo-saxon countries.

In the internal mail of the FRAPNA, I observe that letters were exchanged with Greenpeace from the seventies. They give indications that the transnational organisations oversee the forms of collective action that are appropriate to the various objectives: enquiries asking for information, the use of scandal and the establishing of a strategy for pressure groups.

This aspect appears obvious for the environmental movement but my project tested this aspect on the other movement: the humanitarian one which seems to develop the same shape of activism with a process of homogeneization.

⁵⁸ S.Ollitrault, *action collective et construction identitaire, le cas du militantisme écologiste en France*, phd thesis 1996, Rennes I, (supervisor: E.Neveu)

3-3 : International Conference, time for protesting : Kyoto December 1997

An international mobilization about the Summit of the Climate in Kyoto December 1997 could illustrate this *transnational Répertoire*. I highlight on ly a few of the aspects:

-the fluidity between the Greenpeace communication and the newspaper presentation of the summit. A slogan become the title of the newspaper.

-the mobilization preparing the Summit: several articles were published in the newspapers : in France *Le Monde*, in Great Britain, overall in *the Gardian* and *the Independent*. We can observe here the importance of the links with the journalists-activists (in France, Jean-Paul Besset). These cause could mobilize intellectual and scientific networks.

-Mobilization of *Greenpeace and Friends of Earth* : on the web, we had the opportunity to sign a petition or to send email to Bill Clinton.

- Demonstrations in several western towns: Paris-London-Bonn-Berlin....with the same slogans.

-Finally, social science surveys were done to support the mobilization but we could observe the limits: WWF said the world supported its action. In fact, it was only public opinion in the United States. With this latest point, we can underline that this *transnational repertoire* is modeled by independent organisation, in other words NGOs; but these organisations were founded in an Anglo-Saxon cultural context. There are consequences for the creation of the idea of a global public opinion. Is it a global public opinion or an anglo-saxon (precisely, anglo-american) public opinion ? This aspect must be introduced in the comprehension of this transnational repertoire, because the cultural context in which the strategies and the ideologies are conceived and framed, influences the représentation of what is a legitimate and efficient collective action ?

Conclusion :

New forms of activism: Jacques Ion drew a difference between former forms with strong organisations and the currents one with fluid networks. Alain Touraine⁵⁹ has explained this phenomenon, by the concept of New Social Movements born thanks to the spreading of a New Intellectual Class. The limits of this theory are numerous, but we couldn't deny that new forms exists. We must not rely simply on a theory of post-

⁵⁹ A.Touraine, *La Production de la société*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1973

materialism to explain them, as this neglects the reality of a movement. Environmental movement, Women Movement etc... were new because they use new forms and they are supported by the media or intellectuals who defined them as new. Here, we refuse to follow the prophecy because Olivier Fillieule demonstrated clearly that the Trade-Unions demonstrations continue to be active and in December 1997, January 1998 in France, Unemployed people make demonstrations and have very materialistic claims: « *More Money to live* ». The purpose is not to neglect these demonstrations, but to understand the existence of two forms without any project of minimizing or maximizing a form.

The analysis of this repertoire shows us that new collective actions are used by a population with skills, intellectual skills and we can say that a population without these skills is excluded by these organisations.

This research has two aspects: one is to understand the new forms of collective action, the other consists in analysing the transformation of activism (network forms, scientific or academic activism and the dilution of activism into the way of life :...) and the rank-and-file individuals (they are considered like consumers or simply donators).

Sylvie Ollitrault,