

There's an old saying in the policy community: "He who controls the agenda controls the outcome." It's a bit of an overstatement, but contains much truth. Methodological choices affect outcomes. If research agendas can be controlled, then certain types of information won't be obtained. Sensitive subjects may be downplayed or even kept off the table entirely.

Choices of research methodology always require making decisions favoring one set of values relative to another. For example, individuals concerned about the intrinsic value of eagles may well feel that a study of windmills formulated in pure benefit/cost terms overemphasizes monetization at the expense of species and intergenerational equity. A research agenda designed to look only at the effects of individual chemicals will systematically exclude synergistic effects. Bocking provides numerous examples, ranging from valuation of ecosystems to decisions over siting of hazardous facilities in places where minorities live.

The fact that outcomes can be influenced by research agendas means that science can be a significant tool for maintaining social power. Bocking explores this theme from many dimensions, one which is the question of whether objectivity is achieved if scientists are required to disclose funding sources (no disclosure is desirable but is not sufficient).

Bocking uses a broad range of examples, among them management of natural resources, international environmental disputes including global climate change, and environmental health risks. His focus is not on the science itself, but on how science is developed and used. Extensive references make it easy for the interested reader to learn about the actual science relevant to the cases examined.

*Nature's Experts* provides an excellent introduction to the kinds of questions non-scientists should ask of scientists, and the questions that scientists need to ask themselves when their work touches the policy world. The material should be a part of every environmental science curriculum. This book offers a good way to get it there.

Rootes, Christopher, ed. 2003. *Environmental Protest in Western Europe*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

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This first of three volumes to emerge from the Transformation of Environmental Activism Project (TEA) confronts the claim that western European environmental movements have been in decline since reaching a peak in the late 1980s. Edited by TEA coordinator Christopher Rootes, *Environmental Protest in Western Europe* provides an overdue examination of protest activity from 1988 to 1997 in Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Basque Country, and Sweden. Following in the footsteps of previous efforts to trace the evolution of protest using newspaper records, the empirical analysis makes a significant contribu-

tion to recent debates about the fate of environmentalism. It demonstrates that the movement is far from moribund and argues instead that it is undergoing a transformation involving the institutionalization of established groups and concerns, as well as the (re-) emergence of new, more radical forms of protest. The volume's primary, but not exclusive aim is descriptive and as such is accessible to a wide readership. The more scholarly inclined will wish for a sounder conceptual footing and greater explanatory leverage.

The country chapters reveal a significant variety in protest incidence, issues, and targets, as well as movement tactics, coherence, and organizational infrastructure. Three decades of European institution building, Rootes notes in his introduction, have not resulted in transnational harmonization. Indeed, one of the key findings is that mobilization in opposition to European or international targets was minimal and evidence of growing protest transnationalization could not be found (data coverage ends prior to the onset of worldwide anti-globalization protests). Although overall protest activity remained relatively stable, each country experienced visible annual fluctuations. Organizations seemingly maintained or increased their "conscience constituency" but lost the ability to mobilize people for mass protests. Dominant protest issues included transport (Britain, France, Sweden, Basque country), animal welfare and hunting (Britain, Italy); urban and industrial pollution (Italy, Greece, Spain); nature conservation (Spain, Greece, Sweden); and nuclear energy (Germany). With the exception of Britain and Germany, where violence occasionally accompanied emerging forms of radical environmentalism, protest activity gradually assumed more conventional forms. Rootes concludes that environmental movements consist of two strands: professional national movement organizations and local campaigns. He argues that the diminishing involvement of the former in northern Europe and their growing importance in southern Europe indicates that institutionalization is occurring later in Spain and Greece, due to the later consolidation of democracy in these countries.

Because these insights are based on newspaper reports, Rootes and colleagues are quick to warrant caution. Protest event analysis has been a prominent method for more than 30 years, yet newspapers remain far from accurate or reliable, as a sizeable critical literature and similar protest analyses attest.<sup>1</sup> In order to assess selection bias caused by uneven territorial coverage, over-representation of violent or novel events, and prevailing national issue relevance, the authors interviewed environmental journalists and editorial staff. This innovative approach proves especially valuable as only one newspaper was analyzed per country, including such widely differing sources as France's conservative *Le Monde*, Germany's alternative *die tageszeitung*, and the Basque country's nationalist *EGIN*. Moreover, some authors parsed every single issue, others a fifty percent sample; some chapters considered regional coverage, others only national editions; and in two cases police reports and a monthly environmental periodical were used as points of comparison. Adding to this that the analysis is based

1. Rucht et al. 1999; and Kriesi et al. 1995.

on reported, rather than actual protest incidence, the authors admit that there is no absolute certainty of whether environmental protest increased, stabilized, or declined. Protest event analysis nevertheless remains the only reasonably practical and economical method for the systematic study of large-scale protest. Even though the data does not favorably lend itself to the purpose, it is also used for a network analysis to show the extent of interorganizational links, including with political parties and trade unions.

*Environmental Protest* does an excellent job describing and analyzing protest reporting, but it would benefit from somewhat greater conceptual clarity and consistency, as well as explanatory leverage. Although the introduction by Rootes defines the key concept of "institutionalization," the chapter authors use it in different ways. It relates to organizational staff and budgets in Rootes' chapter on Britain, state co-optation in Fillieule's chapter on France, and increased division of labor among organizations in Mario Diani's and Francesca Forno's chapter on Italy. More seriously, the various dimensions are not empirically assessed, so that institutionalization is assumed, rather than demonstrated. Similarly, the notion of political opportunity structures remains vague and largely disconnected from the social movement literature whence it originates. Rootes argues that political opportunity structures fail to explain variation in movement patterns across and within countries. He proposes, as others have before him, that the concept be broadened beyond inert institutional variables to include "more contingent and conjuncturally variable" dimensions, including changing balances of political competition caused by electoral cycles. Given the observed diversity in European protest activity, that is a fair assessment. Without systematic data on political opportunities, however, it remains a hypothesis to be examined.

Despite these shortcomings *Environmental Protest* is recommended reading for anybody concerned with the well-being of environmentalism. The promised sequels on movement organizations and local activism should provide equally interesting and timely insights. In particular, one hopes that they will take up what Andrew Jamison and Magnus Ring hint at in their chapter on Sweden. Protest event analysis, they note, can detect significant changes but misses more hidden and less publicly accessible aspects of the transformation of environmental activism, especially its increasing embeddedness in local sustainable development efforts.

## References

- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Marco G. Giugni. 1995. *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rucht, Dieter, Ruud Koopmans, and Friedhelm Neidhardt. 1999. *Acts of Dissent: New Developments in the Study of Protest*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.