

Doherty, Brian, and Timothy Doyle. 2014. *Environmentalism, Resistance, and Solidarity: The Politics of Friends of the Earth International*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

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The transnational nature of many environmental problems may demand international collaboration, but whether environmentalists supply such cooperation depends on political factors. Doherty and Doyle examine such processes at one of the world's leading environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In *Environmentalism, Resistance, and Solidarity*, they use the case of Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) to explore whether and how activists from North and South can develop "common responses" to global problems (p. 25).

The book's major contribution is its detailed look inside this major NGO. Doherty and Doyle were granted access by senior leadership, allowing them to amass a wide array of resources. They designed a survey of the NGO's national chapters that allowed them to trace the flow of resources and information. Using site visits, observations of international meetings, and archival material, Doherty and Doyle offer a rich understanding of what it means to "think globally, act locally."

This close perspective allows them to explore how Northern and Southern chapters have shaped FoEI over time. David Brower founded the organization in the United States in 1969, but its center of gravity quickly moved to Western Europe, where national chapters employed a mix of tactics, including public demonstrations, expert research, and traditional lobbying. In the 1980s, the focus moved from mostly local environmental concerns to a more international perspective. The authors identify the jointly conducted rainforest campaign (orchestrated by the English and Malaysian chapters) as an important milestone in the NGO's transnational campaigning.

Doherty and Doyle explain how resistance from Southern chapters has pushed FoEI to embrace a more radical and less strictly environmental sensibility. In 2002, Ecuador's national chapter resigned from FoEI, decrying the domination of Northern groups. This "bombshell" (p. 49) rocked the weak federation and led to a reexamination of its structure and mission.

Three elements of the federation's new mission are noteworthy. First, people and nature now receive equal treatment. Many Southern chapters work closely with indigenous communities on land rights and pollution, and FoEI has strategic alliances with La Via Campesina (a small farmers movement) and the World March of Women. Second, national chapters of FoEI do not agree on whether capitalism is sustainable. Latin American chapters adopt explicit critiques of neoliberalism, while European chapters prefer the more moderate language of economic justice; FoEI provided a forum for debate on these matters but found no resolution. Finally, FoEI is fairly united in resistance to corporate power. The different national chapters have abandoned the reformist agenda of corporate social responsibility and targeted specific corporate practices. In sum,

of the many possible frames within the environmental movement, FoEI comes together around the frame of environmental justice.

Doherty and Doyle argue that, compared to other major environmental NGOs like Greenpeace and WWF, Friends of the Earth is engaging in a more “emancipatory environmental politics” (p. 212) by providing an international forum at which North and South can meet. They argue that the weakness of the Friends of the Earth brand (most national chapters do not use that name) is actually a strength, allowing FoEI to build effective networks and set aside potentially distorting concerns over securing donors. Against these optimistic assessments, however, the authors hint at important questions about the efficacy of the group’s international structure. The forum model reveals conflicts but does not resolve them. The ties among national chapters are weak, so that no one chapter is challenged to alter its practices or redistribute its resources. Resources are still concentrated in Europe, which also has its own strong regional-level organization (FoE Europe). The capacity of the international secretariat is limited, and relatively few staff in the global federation work on international issues. In short, FoEI’s egalitarian and decentralized structure has created space for Southern voices but failed to challenge underlying inequalities.

A more extensive assessment of FoEI’s political impact could have complemented the book’s insights into the group’s organizational structure. Doherty and Doyle explore two campaigns that are widely pursued across the FoEI federation, but the cases of food security and climate change reveal a diversity of strategies with mixed results. In food security, for example, the call for “redressing fundamental imbalances” (p. 159) is most needed but least apparent in the North, as Northern chapters largely neglect the question of rebuilding global structures of food production. Doherty and Doyle focus their attention inside the organization, but a full assessment of organization’s political achievements likely requires interviews and data gathered from the external targets and partners of FoEI.

Those interested in international NGOs, Southern environmentalism, and organizational structure will all find valuable insights in this book. Problematically, a book that seeks to inform actual practice is being sold at a price point (more than US\$95) that is inaccessible for most practitioners and individual scholars. A paperback release would increase its accessibility and readership.

For Doherty and Doyle, Friends of the Earth today “remains a coalition of largely autonomous national organizations rather than a single global NGO, and the price it pays for this is possibly that its impact on international politics is therefore weaker than that of other more centralized NGOs” (p. 211). The key question is whether a structure that favors long-term engagement of Northern and Southern voices is a path towards the resistance politics that NGOs are often thought to embody.