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El Alcance Geográfico de los Problemas Medioambientales y el Impacto del Apoyo Interno en el Éxito de las Intervenciones Locales de las ONG Internacionales: El Caso de Greenpeace

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Résumé de l'article

Cette étude vise à mieux comprendre les impacts du soutien international dans la réalisation des interventions locales des ONG environnementales. Elle examine 102 interventions menées par 5 organisations nationales de Greenpeace en Europe. Les résultats démontrent que les avantages du soutien international dépendent en partie de l'étendue géographique des problèmes ciblés par l'ONG. Alors que les interventions ciblant des problèmes internationaux bénéficient du soutien international de l'organisation, les interventions ciblant des problèmes locaux présentent une plus grande probabilité de succès lorsque réalisées sans cet apport. Les implications pour la gestion des ONG et pour les théories managériales sont discutées.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how internal support benefits the local interventions of international environmental NGOs. It addresses this question by examining 102 cases of interventions conducted by 5 Greenpeace national organizations in Europe. The results indicate that the benefits of internal support partially depend on the geographic scope of the environmental problems targeted by the NGO. While interventions that focus on international problems generally benefit from internal support, interventions that focus on local problems are generally more successful without support. Implications for the resource allocation decisions of international NGOs and for the generalizability of international management theories are discussed.

Keywords: International NGOs, National and regional organizations (NROs), Internal international support, Local advocacy intervention, Resource allocation

Résumé

Cette étude vise à mieux comprendre les impacts du soutien international dans la réalisation des interventions locales des ONG environnementales. Elle examine 102 interventions menées par 5 organisations nationales de Greenpeace en Europe. Les résultats démontrent que les avantages du soutien international dépendent en partie de l'étendue géographique des problèmes ciblés par l'ONG. Alors que les interventions ciblant des problèmes internationaux bénéficient du soutien international de l'organisation, les interventions ciblant des problèmes locaux présentent une plus grande probabilité de succès lorsque réalisées sans cet apport. Les implications pour la gestion des ONG et pour les théories managériales sont discutées.

Mots-Clés : ONG internationales, Organisations nationales et régionales (ONR), Soutien international interne, Interventions locales, Allocation des ressources

Resumen

Este estudio examina cómo el apoyo interno beneficia a las intervenciones locales de las ONG medioambientales internacionales. Esta cuestión es abordada examinando 102 casos de intervenciones realizadas por 5 organizaciones nacionales de Greenpeace en Europa. Los resultados indican que los beneficios del apoyo interno dependen en parte del alcance geográfico de los problemas medioambientales a los que se dirige la ONG. Mientras que las intervenciones centradas en problemas internacionales suelen beneficiarse del apoyo interno, las intervenciones centradas en problemas locales suelen tener más éxito sin apoyo. Se discuten las implicaciones para la generalización de las teorías de gestión internacional.

Palabras Clave: ONG internacionales, Organizaciones nacionales y regionales, Apoyo interno internacional, Intervención local de defensa, Asignación de recursos



Over the past few decades, prominent international environmental NGOs like Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth (FOE) and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) have played a significant role in shaping public understanding of environmental problems (Stroup & Wong, 2018). They have put pressure on multinational corporations (MNCs) and governments around the world to bring about change through the adoption of more sustainable practices or through the adoption of more stringent regulations (e.g., van Huijstee & Glasbergen, 2010; Yaziji & Doh, 2009). They have also been seen as potential partners when it comes to addressing mutually relevant issues (e.g., Dahan *et al.*, 2010; den Hond *et al.*, 2015). However, although these lines of inquiry have generated considerable insight into the interface between business and society (see De Lange *et al.*, 2016; Kourula & Laasonen, 2010 for complete literature reviews on the topic), the multinational character of international environmental NGOs has received little attention in the literature. As a result, the benefits that these organizations derive from their multinationality remain poorly understood (Lambell *et al.*, 2008; Teegen *et al.*, 2004).

In this study, I shed light on this important topic by focusing on a specific type of advantage that multinational organizations have: the ability to leverage the resources of their network to create value locally (e.g., Brouthers *et al.*, 2008; Rugman & Verbeke, 2001). For environmental NGOs, creating value locally means successfully persuading local stakeholders of the saliency of an environmental problem. In that respect, the resources provided by an international NGO's network can help a national and regional organization (NRO) accomplish its mission in a host-country. Yet, while research has shown that international NGOs enjoy a resource advantage over other types of interest groups (Bloodgood, 2011; Longhofer *et al.*, 2016) and that their interventions are generally more impactful than the ones from local NGOs (e.g., Murdie & Urpeleinen, 2015; Longhofer *et al.*, 2016), it has not shown *how* internal international support—support provided by the NGO's international secretariat or by another NRO of its network—can help a NRO succeed in the conduct of its interventions. Internal international support often concerns political resources and capabilities, resources that are largely considered country specific (Boddewyn & Brewer, 1994; Oliver & Horzinger, 2008). Hence, this support can be beneficial to an intervention but it can also make an intervention less effective because the resources may not apply in the host-country.

Clarifying the precise nature of this relationship is important because not only do NGOs operate with scarce resources, NROs also play a key role in their strategies. This is especially true for NGOs like FOE and Greenpeace, which raise funds directly from the public, because NROs' interventions are part of their brand identity.

Specifically, I am interested in the role played by internal international support in the success of NROs' local interventions that draw on outsider strategies. Outsider strategies correspond to strategies that aim to influence decision-makers through the mobilization of public opinion (Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2017; Teegen *et al.*, 2004). Building on the literature on multinational organizations, which highlights the difficulty of transferring resources to different institutional contexts (Brouthers *et al.*, 2008; Oliver, 1997), and the literature on communication effectiveness, which stresses the importance of legitimacy and credibility of the message and the message bearer (Druckman, 2001; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Pornpitakpan, 2004), I argue that internal international support is generally beneficial to local interventions, but that the extent of these benefits depends on the geographic scope of the problem targeted by a NRO.

To investigate the effect of internal international support in relation to the scope of a problem targeted by a NRO, I conduct a case study of Greenpeace. Present in more than 30 countries, Greenpeace is known for its highly-mediatised interventions against governments and MNCs. My investigation draw on analysis of 102 interventions undertaken by five Greenpeace NROs in Europe. I have bolstered the findings with direct observations, interviews, and a review of the media coverage of these NROs. My results show that the benefits of internal international support partially depend on the geographic scope of problems targeted by the NGO. Interventions that focus on international problems generally benefit from internal international support, but interventions that focus on local problems are better undertaken without support. These results suggest that local problems are so deeply rooted in a geographic area that the resources provided to a NRO through internal international support are of limited use for addressing these problems. In the next section, I present the theoretical background, followed by the hypotheses, the methods and the findings. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

Environmental NGOs, advocacy and activist interventions

NGOs aim to promote solutions to major international social problems such as poverty, environmental pollution, and threats to world peace (Young, 1991). They address these problems either by substituting for governments and businesses or by pressing them to act (Teegen *et al.*, 2004). The ones that press others to act, either by making them recognize problems or by holding them accountable to commitments they have already made, promote or resist by engaging in activities such as arguing their cause, conducting research, gathering evidence about compliance with existing laws and policies, and pressing for new laws and policies that further their goals (Stroup & Wong, 2018). In the process of pressing their claims, they make various strategic decisions related to frames, targets and venues (Meyer & Staggenborg, 2012).

My focus is on international environmental NGOs. Environmental NGOs defend public goods such as clean water or air rather than recognized “rights” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). These NGOs include organizations such as FOE, WWF, and Greenpeace. Each of these NGOs has developed its own advocacy style (Carmin & Balser, 2002) that depends on a number of factors, including their origin (Stroup & Murdie, 2012), their institutional environment (Bloodgood *et al.*, 2014), and their geographic scope (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Longhofer *et al.*, 2016).

Organizational dimensions of international environmental NGOs

Within the environmental field, international NGOs represent a distinct category of actors. Contrary to advocacy networks, for which there is no formal legal relationship between member organizations (Hadden, 2015), the offices of international NGOs are formally connected to one another through articles of association (Brown *et al.*, 2012; Stroup, 2012). They can count on the presence of an international secretariat that helps coordinate national and regional organizations (NROs), although the nature of the relationship between the secretariat and the NROs can vary.¹ Because of this formal relationship, the activities of these NROs are interdependent. As such, these NGOs represent

“multinational enterprises in their own right, managing significant resources and complex organizations across national boundaries” (Teegen *et al.*, 2004:476).

Regardless of their form, the multinational character of international NGOs gives them several advantages over other kinds of interest groups. First, their presence in multiple countries allows them to enjoy more visibility, contributing to their reputation and fundraising capacity (Stroup & Wong, 2018). Second, and as theorized in the international business literature, they can leverage domestic resources for international advantage (Peng, 2001). Third, they can coordinate their interventions around defined policies, which gives their interventions more coherence across locations (Brown *et al.*, 2012). Fourth, their internationality gives them the flexibility to choose the political arena and the sites that are the most accessible for their interventions and the most likely to be successful (Bloodgood, 2011; Keck & Sikkink, 1998). Fifth, they can coordinate their actions to target MNCs or governments from multiple locations simultaneously (Murdie & Urpelainen, 2015; Yaziji & Doh, 2009). Therefore, through their position in multiple countries and the formal relationship between the secretariat and the NROs, international NGOs can help push an international agenda more effectively than other kinds of interest groups.

Interventions led by national and regional organizations (NROs)

Our focus in this study is on the interventions performed by NROs. NROs’ local interventions play an important role in the strategy of environmental NGOs. Because environmental problems do not stop at borders, global environmental change requires actions from a plurality of actors across multiple locations (Ferraro *et al.*, 2015). When NROs target a national government in support of an international campaign, they can help build momentum to influence the outcome of international negotiations (Rietig, 2016). When NROs target MNCs, their interventions can help push for normative change in the practices of corporations internationally (Bloomfield, 2014). When NROs capture media attention worldwide, they contribute to raise awareness about global environmental problems and to rally the public around salient issues (Dale, 1996). Thus, NRO’s local interventions are important contributors to the success of NGO’s international agenda.

The most important role of NROs’ local interventions, however, remain at the national level. Contrary to their international secretariat, NROs have a national and regional focus (Luxon & Wong, 2017). They concentrate their efforts on policy

1. Some NGOs like WWF where NROs operate as semi-autonomous organizations without a single policy concerning issues across the entire organization; other NGOs like Greenpeace operate as decentralized federations, with important functions centralized at the international secretariat (Stroup, 2012).

making by state or provincial legislature, and on the practices of firms and businesses in their jurisdiction. In that respect, local interventions can help develop legitimacy and credibility in a host-country, two conditions for making a successful entry into the national political space (Boddewyn & Brewer, 1994). Given that legitimacy and credibility are developed over time through “a history of events” (Suchman, 1995: 574), NROs’ local interventions can help gain acceptance for the NGO’s tactics and allow it to build the support base that it needs to obtain access to decision-makers (Berny, 2009). This support base can then be used to advance a more ambitious agenda and any success obtained at that level can later be leveraged to enhance the NGO’s reputation for effectiveness.

Internal international support and local interventions

Our focus in this study is on outsider strategies. In contrast with insider strategies, which are conducted behind closed doors, outsider strategies are public and include events such as press conferences, campaigns, and protests (Binderkrantz, 2005).² These strategies require extensive resources (Binderkrantz, 2005; Dür & Mateo, 2013). For NROs, benefitting from the resources of the NGO’s international network can provide important benefits. The brand of an NGO can help a NRO be recognized as a legitimate stakeholder and facilitate access to decision-makers (Bob, 2005). Financial resources can help pay for office space, campaigners, and the development of campaigning and fundraising activities. Knowledge accumulated about issues can help give a spokesperson credibility, especially if they speak on behalf of an organization that is recognized as a voice considered worthy of interest on a focal topic (Bob, 2005; Lecy *et al.*, 2010).

While the resources mentioned above contribute to the overall success of an NRO, they are not restricted to an intervention. They are part of the NGO-specific advantages which result from (and contribute to) its reputation. Internal international support goes beyond simply having ongoing access to the NGO’s brand or to organizational practices. When the secretariat or another NRO provides

its support to an intervention, it becomes involved in it. They can bring additional knowledge, capabilities, and specialized assets such as boats and equipment. These additional resources can help make an intervention more successful by giving means to the NRO that would not be accessible otherwise. Moreover, the fact that another NRO commits resources can help demonstrate the importance of the issue, providing additional weight to the activists’ claims.

There is evidence that resource availability has a positive impact on the success of confrontational tactics. For instance, protests organized by well-known, wealthy NGOs tend to receive more media coverage (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Protests and interventions organized by international NGOs also tend to have more impact than the ones organized by local NGOs (Murdie & Urpelainen, 2015), because of the pool of resources they have access to, and because of the added weight that is given to an NGO’s voice when they are involved in an intervention. Therefore, because of the advantages of having access to additional resources such as knowledge, expertise, and financial and operational means, I posit that:

Hypothesis 1: On average, local interventions that draw on outsider strategies will benefit from receiving support from the international environmental NGO’s secretariat or by another NRO of its network.

The limits of internal international support

While it is reasonable to expect that internal international support is generally beneficial to local interventions that draw on outsider strategies, this support may not be equally beneficial to all interventions. Outsider strategies require important tactical decisions, such as choosing a target (Murdie & Urpelainen, 2015), deciding on a frame (Hänggli, 2012), and evaluating the timing of an intervention by identifying political opportunity structures (Meyer, 2004). They also require perfect orchestration on the day of the intervention to maximize framing effects. This is particularly important for interventions that contain illegitimate actions such as breaking the law or acting in a way that goes against accepted norms because during these interventions, activists must also preserve the organization’s legitimacy (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992). Involving participants who are less familiar with the institutional environment in the host-country creates important implications that can impact the benefits associated with internal international support.

2. In some instances, outsider strategies adopt a more confrontational tone and NGOs try to force change by “naming and shaming” a target, organizing protests or threatening of boycott. These interventions are not necessarily the most effective when it comes to advocacy but they can help advance a cause by promoting a dialogue with other NGOs that are more moderate in their position, what scholars refer to as the radical flank effect (Baron, Neale & Rao, 2016).

First, receiving support from the NGO's internal international network may imply that the NRO change the initial focus of the intervention. Most international NGOs operate as decentralized federations (Brown *et al.*, 2012; Young, 1991). They are "non-owned" organizations with a loose sense of hierarchy (Mintzberg & Westley, 2000). The absence of hierarchy complexifies access to resources outside the realm of a NRO because even the international secretariat cannot impose its will on the NROs (Luxon & Wong, 2017). In the absence of hierarchical control mechanisms (Bjorkman *et al.*, 2004), resources must be mobilized through persuasion. This means that when seeking help from another organization, a NRO may have to compromise on the focus of the intervention to persuade others to participate in it.

Second, and as theorized in the strategy literature, it is not only the availability of resources that matters but also their specificity (Barney, 1991). Some resources are location-specific and are valuable only within a particular institutional context (Brouthers *et al.*, 2008; Oliver, 1997). Other resources, such as knowledge and capabilities, are difficult to transfer (Anand & Delios, 1997; Szulanski, 1996). This is particularly true in advocacy where approaches must be adapted to an institutional environment (Bloodgood *et al.*, 2014)³ and where knowledge about key actors of influence is very specific to a local context (Lecy *et al.*, 2010: 245), limiting potential benefits in another context. Hence, the resources provided by other NROs or by the international secretariat may be of little use in a host-country.

Finally, and as highlighted in the international business literature, receiving support from an international network creates logistical challenges. To be successfully leveraged, the resources brought by the NGO's international network must be effectively combined with the ones from the NRO. Yet combining resources from different regions in the world—even when these resources all belong to the same organization—is challenging. There are few opportunities for face-to-face interactions, making communication more difficult (Hinds & Mortensen, 2005; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999). Although rapid progress in transportation and telecommunications has facilitated the work of international

3. This argument is well supported in the protest literature. In fact, Oliver and Myers (1999) show that the presence of non-local organizers in protests reduces the likelihood of media coverage. Our study is not limited to media coverage, but their overall findings suggest that international support does not always benefit local interventions.

NGOs, important barriers to effective operation remain, including those related to language and cultural differences (Young, 1991). Failing to overcome these barriers can lead to poor coordination and suboptimal orchestration on the day of the intervention, which can undermine the intervention's capacity to impact the local arena.

Taken together, the three issues stated above suggest that activists must carefully evaluate when international support will be the most beneficial to an intervention. I contend that an important determinant of the benefits provided by internal international support concerns the scope of the problems targeted by the NRO's intervention.

The scope of problems, internal international support, and the success of local interventions

Environmental NGOs generally focus on global issues (Stroup & Wong, 2018). Yet the urgency of global issues is hard to communicate because of their complexity. Environmental problems rooted in human activities have causes and consequences at different levels along multiple scales (Gibson *et al.*, 2000). This complexity challenges the ability of individuals and organizations to make sense of them (Bansal *et al.*, 2018; Weick & Van Orden, 1990). This is why it is effective to communicate environmental problems by defining them in terms of their geographic scope and focusing on more limited problems with causes and impacts in the local area or region (Rootes, 1999). For NGOs, defining issues in terms of their geographic scope can also help align an intervention with the targeted political arena (Bloodgood, 2011).

The geographic scope of the problems targeted by an NRO can affect two fundamental conditions for the success of local interventions: the legitimacy and the credibility of the message bearer. Legitimacy is essential to the success of political activities because it gives access to those who shape public policy and makes it possible to influence them, and also because it reduces opposition from other stakeholders (Boddeyn & Brewer, 1994). Although international NGOs are generally considered a legitimate stakeholder (Stroup & Wong, 2018), it does not mean that their actions are automatically considered legitimate. Moreover, the expectations that people have with respect to multinational organizations are not the same as the ones that they have with respect to

domestic organizations (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). For NGOs, this means that their actions to address a problem may be acceptable under certain conditions but not under others. As a result, the interventions of NGOs on certain issues may expose them to criticism from opponents, who may openly question their legitimacy to address a specific problem.

As for credibility, it depends on the perception that spokespersons possess relevant knowledge about an issue and on the degree to which the targeted audience believes that their statements reveal this knowledge adequately (Druckman, 2001; Pornpitakpan, 2004). This knowledge refers to technical expertise and to knowledge based on a significant awareness and understanding of the host country's institutions. Internal support can involve sharing expertise, but if the persons who bring in that expertise are not familiar with the host country, they may not possess the contextual and cultural knowledge required to capture the attention of the public in that country (Druckman, 2001).⁴ As a result, they may frame a problem less effectively, and the targeted audience may dismiss the message because those making claims do not appear credible.

Based on the above, I argue that the geographic scope of problems targeted by a NRO may impact the benefits provided by international support. For local problems, I argue that internal international support can be highly problematic. First, involving international participants in an intervention that targets a local problem can undermine the intervention's legitimacy by creating the impression that it involves outside interference in a matter of strictly national interests. Second, local problems have causes and effects that are limited to a specific area. For these problems, the knowledge and the expertise that is brought by the international team may be of little use, which diminishes the value of the knowledge advantage that internal international support can bring to an intervention. Thus, for interventions focusing on local problems, I argue that the potential benefits of receiving internal international support are likely to be insufficient to offset the challenges of orchestrating interventions with the help of that support and to overcome the legitimacy issues that may be raised by involving outsiders to the country. Therefore,

4. Although local members of a team can help members from outside understand important cultural differences, these members from outside may not be aware of their relevance when choosing which considerations to emphasize when they communicate in the host country (Haas & Cummings, 2015).

Hypothesis 2a: NROs' local interventions focusing on local problems and drawing on outsider strategies will have a greater probability of success if they are conducted without internal international support.

For international problems, that is, problems that cross national borders, I expect the impact of internal international support on local interventions to differ. First, international problems are experienced in several countries. This means that the participants who come from outside the host-country have likely acquired experience and expertise related to the problem targeted by the NRO. Therefore, the support that is provided is more likely to be relevant for the intervention. The expertise they bring can help identify the aspects of a problem that will capture the attention of the targeted audience, and this can lead to the development of a more effective strategy. Second, having international participants help plan and conduct an intervention that targets an international problem can enhance its legitimacy and credibility because these participants may have been directly impacted by the problem and their experience can give them more credibility when they engage directly with the public in the host country. These benefits should offset the challenges related to the coordination of an international team and help make up for any lack of contextual and cultural knowledge about the host country. Therefore,

Hypothesis 2b: NROs' local interventions focusing on international problems and drawing on outsider strategies will have a greater probability of success if they are conducted with internal international support.

Research design and methods

Because international environmental NGOs differ in their authority, strategy and influence (Stroup & Wong 2018), and because these NGOs use different strategies (Carmin & Balser, 2002), I adopt an embedded case study design using data from several NROs from the same international environmental NGO (Yin, 2009). This allows for isolation of the phenomena of interest while controlling for some organizational-factors associated with a NRO that may explain the success of an intervention. The organizational context for this study is Greenpeace. Registered as a Dutch Stichting since 1979, Greenpeace is structured as a federation (Brown *et al.*, 2012). Within this structure, NROs can plan and organize their own interventions as long as the latter are in line with the international priorities of Greenpeace.

TABLE 1

Description of greenpeace national and regional organizations (NROs), 1999–2000

National Organization	Administrative Expenditures	Funds for Campaigns	Interventions ^a	Supporters	Campaigners
Greenpeace Belgium	1,679,000 euros	472,000 euros	11	68,462	6
Greenpeace Germany	12,412,000 euros	12,075,000 euros	51	510,447	18
Greenpeace Luxembourg	194,000 euros	121,000 euros	10	6,804	2
Greenpeace Netherlands	6,987,000 euros	4,077,000 euros	23	628,500	12
Greenpeace United Kingdom ^b	6,474,000 euros	2,709,000 euros	5	176,000	12

Note on Greenpeace International: Greenpeace International is the international secretariat of Greenpeace. It has four main divisions, the Media Unit, the Science Unit, the Political Unit, and the Marine Division, which provide support to national organizations. It also coordinates issue areas for the international work of the organization.

Note on Greenpeace NROs: Greenpeace Belgium is located in Brussels. It was founded in 1981 and obtained a voting right on the Greenpeace Council in 1993. Brussels is home to both Greenpeace Belgium and Greenpeace Europe, which coordinates the lobbying activities of Greenpeace at the European Union. However, these two organizations are separate entities.

Greenpeace Germany was founded in 1981 and obtained a voting right in 1982. It is recognized for its logistical capabilities. The latter are often solicited by other NROs for logistically complex interventions.

Greenpeace Luxembourg was founded in 1985 and obtained a voting right in 1996.

Greenpeace Netherlands was founded in 1979. At the time, it was one of the original five NROs with voting rights, the others being Greenpeace Canada, Greenpeace France, Greenpeace United Kingdom, and Greenpeace USA. The head office of Greenpeace Netherlands is in Amsterdam. When the research for the present study was conducted, Greenpeace Netherlands and Greenpeace International had their administrative offices in the same building, but on different floors. However, despite their proximity, they operate independently. Greenpeace Netherlands is known for its financial resources and its skilled sailors.

Greenpeace United Kingdom was founded in 1979 and was one of the original five NROs with voting rights. Like Greenpeace Belgium, Greenpeace United Kingdom is more engaged in lobbying activities than in campaigning activities. This partly explains why it allocates a lower proportion of its budget to campaigning activities than other NROs do.

^aGreenpeace NROs also supervise chapters that are managed by volunteers. Although these chapters can organize interventions, the only interventions taken into consideration here are those that were organized by professional campaigners because they are the only ones that received support from other Greenpeace organizations.

^bThe data in the Inventory of Global Resources for interventions conducted by Greenpeace United Kingdom is incomplete.

To examine the hypotheses stated above, I investigate 102 local interventions conducted by 5 Greenpeace NROs between 1999 and 2000: Greenpeace Belgium, Greenpeace Germany, Greenpeace Luxembourg, Greenpeace Netherlands, and Greenpeace United Kingdom. These five NROs are all from Western European countries which are geographically close to one another and to Greenpeace's secretariat, and where there are few constraints on NGOs political activities (Bloodgood *et al.*, 2014). At the time of the interventions under study, the governments of the countries in which these NROs are located all showed similar degrees of openness to advocacy groups and environmental issues (Rootes, 2003; Rucht & Roose, 2003; van der Heijden, 2002).

Data sources

The data on these interventions comes from the Inventory of Global Resources (2001), located in the Greenpeace archives available at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam. The investigations for the inventory were

carried out by two Greenpeace investigators who had received their mandate from Greenpeace board of directors. The Inventory was commissioned to obtain a realistic portrait of Greenpeace resources and the impact of their use.⁵ The five NROs that were part of the initial study were selected because of their financial and operational importance for Greenpeace. Together they were responsible for about fifty percent of the interventions undertaken by Greenpeace in 1999–2000. Table 1 presents information on the number of local interventions that draw on outsider strategies (i.e., protests and direct actions) conducted by

5. The Inventory of Global Resources was intended as a pilot investigation for a more ambitious registry. The Greenpeace International Executive Director at the time was a proponent of greater collaboration across all member organizations. He favored the implementation of managerial practices intended to facilitate communication and coordination between NROs. The information collected as part of this report was part of this initiative. Ultimately, the Greenpeace board of directors decided not to create a registry because pursuing the pilot investigation would have required very extensive resources. This type of information is rarely shared outside of an organization, making this data set particularly valuable and relevant for exploring this research question.

these five NROs, on their number of local supporters, and on the financial and operational resources that were at the disposal of these organizations at that time.

The data sources collected by the Greenpeace investigation team for the Inventory of Global Resources include one-to-one interviews, email correspondence and telephone discussions. The authors of the Inventory triangulated these data sources with information from press releases, development plans of NROs, and internal communications between the affiliates and the international secretariat. The Inventory was intended for internal use only, suggesting that it should have a high level of reliability (Howell & Prevenier, 2001). Additional investigations of protests and direct actions in France, Germany, and the Netherlands conducted by the first author and two research assistants provide additional evidence of the reliability of the Inventory.⁶

In addition, I participated in the Fall of 2013 in a three-day training camp for Greenpeace activists to familiarize myself with the organization's interventions. I also conducted 22 semi-structured interviews with Greenpeace campaigners from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom between September 2016 and March 2017 to validate the information contained in the Inventory, provide additional context for the coding of the different cases, and clarify the underlying mechanisms revealed in the findings. I conducted these interviews with the help of a German-speaking research assistant. We identified the informants using information from the Inventory. Each interview lasted between 35 and 65 minutes and was transcribed within 72 hours. Seventeen interviews were conducted in English, four in German, and one in French. The questions were based on the descriptions of the events of the 1999–2000 period provided in the Inventory. Whenever possible, we obtained media reports of these events and sent them to our informants prior to the interviews to limit retrospective bias (Golden, 1992).

Predicted variable: intervention success

The local interventions of NGOs can include educational initiatives, government lobbying, public protests, and direct action (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Spar & La Mure,

6. For example, the number of events (51) reported in the Inventory for Germany in 1999–2000 is higher than the average number of events per year (12.8) reported by Rucht and Roose (2003) in their study of environmental protests covered in the German media for the period 1988–1997. This suggests that even protests that did not capture media attention were reported and that there is no self-selection bias in the Inventory.

2003). However, the dataset for the present study is limited to public-protest and direct-action interventions. The goal of these interventions is to find solutions to problems by provoking debate in the media, prompting change to corporate practices, and pushing governments to adopt legislation. The success of these interventions must be evaluated in terms of these objectives.

Information on the objectives and the outcomes of the interventions conducted by the five NROs under study was obtained from the Inventory of Global Resources. A panel of three individuals not related to Greenpeace looked at the stated objective and the outcome of each intervention to determine whether it was successful or not. We proceeded with three rounds of coding. In the first round, we identified 22 cases that led to unequivocal changes in corporate practices or public policy—the most verifiable measures of an NGO's effectiveness (Bloodgood, 2011). We coded these interventions as success. In the second and third rounds of coding, we re-examined the 80 interventions for which the outcome did not lead to a tangible change in corporate practice or in public policy. We looked at their stated objective and the description of outcome and re-examined the cases to determine whether they had in fact been successful given their stated objectives. When they did, we coded the cases as a success. When it did not, we coded the cases as not successful. After this second round of coding, there was a consensus about the outcome for a further 65 cases. We conducted a third round of coding for the remaining cases that did not reach an agreement. After this final round, there was agreement on all cases.

Organization-level predictors

The NROs that are the focus of the present study share many similarities, but differed in resources and capabilities. To account for these differences, I controlled for the predictors below.

Resource endowment

I controlled for the funds that the NROs had available for their campaigns to account for differences in the availability of resources. The assumption was that the more funds available, the more resources—including campaigners and staff—they could dedicate to campaigning activities. The amount of funds available was measured using a logarithmic transformation of the value of these funds in euros.

Organizing capability

I controlled for campaign experience by measuring the number of interventions that campaign leaders participated in over the course of a year to account for differences in organizing ability. The assumption was that the more interventions campaigners participated in, the more likely it was that they would become proficient at drawing the attention of targeted audiences to issues and problems.⁷

Support from the public

I controlled for the support that an NRO received from the public as a proxy for organizational legitimacy in the host country. This measure was obtained by dividing the number of donors to a national organization by the population of the country. The assumption was that the more support a NRO received, the more likely it would be seen by the public as a legitimate stakeholder in interactions with firms and government.

Intervention-level predictors

In advocacy interventions, Greenpeace adopts a more confrontational approach than other NGOs. However, its approach varies depending on the type of issue addressed, the scope of the campaign, and the choice of a target. Therefore, I controlled for the predictors below.

Internal international support

The data on international support from the international secretariat or other Greenpeace NROs was obtained from the Inventory of Global Resources. This predictor is coded 1 if the intervention was performed with international support. It is coded 0 if an intervention received no support.

Experience with a problem

Effective communication of a problem is best learned through trial and error—hence the need for controlling for previous interventions that addressed the same problem. This predictor variable was coded 1 if the NRO had conducted a previous intervention to raise awareness about the same problem and 0 if the NRO had not done so.

7. To achieve robustness, I considered using the total number of actions in a year and the total number of campaign leaders as alternative measures. However, because of the multicollinearity with the measure of the funds available for campaigns, I chose not to use these alternative measures.

Number of activists

The greater the size and the visibility of an intervention, the more likely it is that external actors will pay attention to it. To take this variable into account, I controlled for the number of activists engaged in an intervention.

Target

Greenpeace's interventions sometimes target governments and MNCs directly. To take this variable into account, I controlled for these two types of targets, with the assumption that these interventions will be less likely to lead to tangible results because these two types of organizations are more bureaucratic than other kinds of organizations. In the case of governments, the processes and procedures involved in political decision-making can drag on for several months before a policy change is introduced. In the case of MNCs, they can usually withstand the relatively high degree of negative media coverage provoked by Greenpeace interventions. Moreover, because their decision-making centers are often located in other regions of the world, there is often a significant physical and emotional distance between protesters and corporate leaders, so that the latter are less likely to comply with the demand for change.

The geographic scope of problems

The scope of a problem is determined by its spatial scale (Gibson *et al.*, 2000). In the present study, I distinguish between local problems, which are ones whose scope is limited to the territory of a NRO, and international problems, which are ones whose scope extends beyond the territory of a NRO. Table 2 provides precise definitions of these two types of problems as well as examples of both.

Because the scope of problems is primarily important for hypotheses 2a and 2b, I have adopted a “fit as matching” theoretical approach (Venkatraman, 1989) and included two dichotomous variables representing two distinct combinations: local problem—no internal international support and international problem—internal international support.

Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, I used a probit estimation model to account for the dichotomous nature of the predicted variable (Hoetker, 2007; Wiersema & Bowen, 2009). The interventions under study were associated with NROs, which means that the data on these interventions violates

TABLE 2
Local and international problems addressed by Greenpeacea

Scope	Examples of Problems	Examples of Interventions
Local Problem^b	The destruction of an ecosystem (e.g., a lake or a forest) located in a single country	- "Protests in Korbach for the permanent protection of the ecologically unique Kellerwald" (Forestry, Greenpeace Germany, No internal international support, August 1999)
	The commercialization of products that are considered unsafe and/or the issuance of permits for activities that are considered unsafe but that are not yet banned	- "Targeted the three largest supermarket chains to go GE free" (GMOs, Greenpeace Luxembourg, No internal international support, October 1999) - "Action against field trials for genetically modified brussels sprouts—the action targeted the Ministry responsible for issuing the permit to companies" (GMOs, Greenpeace Netherlands, No internal international support, October 1999)
	The release of banned pollutants into the environment by local factories	- "Hamburg dockyard action. Problem: lack of technology to provide appropriate environmentally friendly working space" (Toxics, Greenpeace Germany, With MV Greenpeace from Greenpeace International, September 1999)
	The absence of national regulations for known pollutants	- "Confront government on the issue of sludge dumping to obtain a ban on TBT" (Toxics, Greenpeace Netherlands, With MV Greenpeace from Greenpeace International, June 1999)
	Government or corporate funding of a local project that contradicts a commitment to effect change related to global issues	- "Blocked a gas turbine construction site. Site in early stage of development. Activists occupied the trenches in which the company planned the to lay the gas pipelines" (Climate, Greenpeace Luxembourg, No support, July 1999)
International Problem^c	The destruction of an ecosystem (e.g., a lake or a forest) located on the national territories of more than one country	- "Protest to preserve the Wadden Sea from gas drilling. Occupied a drilling location for four days" (Oil and Gas, Greenpeace Netherlands, With internal international support from Greenpeace International, July 1999)
	The international trade (import and export) of controversial products (e.g., GMOs, plutonium, or products from endangered areas)	- "Twenty activists protest against the import of the new soya-crop from the USA in Hamburg harbor" (GMOs, Greenpeace Germany, No internal international support, December 1999) - "Symbolic action in Barrow against plutonium shipment." (Nuclear energy, Greenpeace UK, With internal international support from Greenpeace International, July 1999) - "Illegal wood brought in to the port of Zeebrugge. Demonstration to attract the media" (Forests, Greenpeace Belgium, No internal international support, August 1999)
	The funding of controversial projects abroad by the government or local firms	- "Protest to demand that financing for construction of nuclear power plant not be made available to Ukraine" (Nuclear, Greenpeace Germany, With internal international support from Greenpeace International, October 1999)

^a Problems are used by Greenpeace to anchor interventions and make global issues more relevant to the general public. They are specific issues that fit into the broader context of global issues such as, toxics, oceans, forests, biodiversity, the atmosphere, nuclear energy, and climate change.

^b Local problems are problems whose causes, effects, and/or potential solutions are limited to a single country.

^c International problems are problems whose causes, effects and/or potential solutions concern more than one country.

the assumption of observation independence. To counter this, I used fixed effects that clustered the error term, using NROs as the group of reference. Table 3a and Table 3b present the descriptive statistics for the NRO-level and intervention-level predictors. The variance inflation factors were below the threshold of 10 for all the models, with the highest value being 4.72, so that multicollinearity did not appear to be a concern.

In the second stage, I reexamined the interviews to clarify the findings and ensure that the regression results had face validity (Kaplan, 2015). This made it possible to elaborate more fully the relation between internal international support and the success of local interventions. The interviews were then used to supplement the statistical analysis carried out in the first stage.

TABLE 3A
Descriptive statistics for organization-level variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	1	2	3
1. Resource endowment measured in terms of funds available for campaigns (log)	6.17	0.79	5.08	7.08	1		
2. Organizing capability measured in terms of the number of interventions per campaigner per year	2.44	1.67	0.42	5	-0.53	1	
3. Support from the public measured in terms of the proportion of population giving to Greenpeace	14.20	15.24	3	40	0.06	0.22	1

Pearson's correlations are based on 5 NROs using two-tailed test; * indicates significance at the 0.05 level; ** indicates significance at the 0.01 level.

TABLE 3B
Descriptive statistics for intervention-level variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Intervention success (DV)	0.30	0.38	0	1	1							
2. Internal international support	0.38	0.37	0	1	0.13	1						
3. Local problem—No support	0.27	0.47	0	1	0.37**	-0.47**	1					
4. International problem—With internal international support	0.19	0.19	0	1	0.44**	0.60**	-0.29**	1				
5. Number of activists involved	14.54	10.57	3	50	-0.00	0.03	-0.11	0.05	1			
6. Experience with the problem	0.60	0.49	0	1	0.17	0.21*	-0.12	0.12	0.17	1		
7. Government target dummy	0.48	0.50	0	1	-0.36**	0.05	-0.17	0.14	-0.08	-0.09	1	
8. Multinational target dummy	0.16	0.24	0	1	0.01	0.06	0.04	0.10	0.20	0.12	-0.24*	1

Pearson's correlations are based on 102 observations from 5 NROs using two-tailed test; * indicates significance at the 0.05 level; ** indicates significance at the 0.01 level. The VIFs are all below 5, far from the critical threshold of 10.

TABLE 4
Fixed-effect probit estimation results for intervention success

Variable (coefficient)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)
Intercept	-2.26 (1.48)	-2.46 (1.30)	-6.60 (0.34)***	-2.61 (1.07)*	-7.19 (0.79)*
Organization-level predictors					
Funds available for campaigns (log)	0.10 (0.07)	0.11 (0.07)†	0.08 (0.02)***	0.10 (0.05)*	0.07 (0.02)**
Number of interventions per campaigner per year	0.34 (0.14)**	0.34 (0.12)**	0.03 (0.60)	0.44 (0.13)***	0.16 (0.21)
Proportion of population supporting Greenpeace in the host country	-0.03 (0.00)***	-0.03 (0.00)***	-0.04 (0.00)***	-0.03 (0.00)***	-0.03 (0.00)***
Intervention-level predictors					
Number of activists involved	-0.01 (0.00)†	-0.01 (0.00)†	-0.02 (0.01)†	-0.02 (0.00)*	-0.02 (0.00)***
Experience with the problem	0.41 (0.33)	0.30 (0.37)	0.42 (0.58)	0.51 (0.28)†	0.82 (0.42)*
Government target dummy	-1.12 (0.21)***	-1.19 (0.19)***	-1.61 (0.16)***	-0.99 (0.33)**	-1.28 (0.54)**
Multinational target dummy	-0.26 (0.52)	-0.38 (0.50)	-0.98 (0.66)	-0.50 (1.00)	-1.20 (1.22)
Hypothesis					
Internal international support		0.55 (0.25)*	6.44 (0.44)***	0.84 (0.55)	4.93 (0.72)***
Local problem—No support			6.69 (0.42)***		6.72 (0.51)***
International problem—With internal international support				2.39 (1.02)**	2.51 (0.86)**
Model Fit					
Log-Pseudo likelihood	-46.14	-44.69	-40.74	-36.24	-22.72
Pseudo R ²	0.22	0.25	0.49	0.38	0.62

The results are based on 102 observations from 5 NROs; † indicates significance at the 0.10 level; * indicates significance at the 0.05 level; ** indicates significance at the 0.01 level; *** indicates significance at the 0.001 level.

Findings

Table 4 presents the results from the regression analysis. Model 1 corresponds to the base model. It only analyzes the effect of the control predictors. At the organization level, this model shows that the proportion of the population supporting Greenpeace is negatively correlated to the probability that an intervention will be successful ($b = -0.03$; $p < 0.001$). This result must be carefully interpreted because the five NROs under study have very similar levels of acceptability and recognition in their respective countries. One explanation for this result is that individuals support Greenpeace in reaction to their government's failure to prioritize environmental issues.⁸ The two additional predictors at the

organizational level are resource endowment and organizing capability. Resource endowment is not significant but organizing capability is ($b = 0.34$; $p < 0.01$). These findings support the idea that entering a political space requires organizing capability but not significant wealth (Boddewyn & Brewer, 1994).

At the intervention level, Model 1 indicates, as predicted, that targeting a government directly leads to a lower probability of success ($b = -1.12$; $p < 0.001$). Other variables include the number of activists involved, the experience with the problem, and the decision to target an MNC to address the problem. The number of activists involved in an intervention is marginally significant and the magnitude of the effect remains small ($b = -0.01$; $p < 0.10$). The minus sign may be explained by the fact that the more activists are involved in an action, the more difficult it is to control the message. The direction of the two remaining control variables is as predicted, although they do not appear to be significant in Model 1.

8. This was corroborated by a Greenpeace fundraiser who stated in one of the interviews that the number of supporters increases when governments fail to prioritize environmental issues.

Model 2 investigates hypothesis 1 concerning the effect of internal international support on an intervention's success. It shows that support from the international secretariat and/or other NROs contributes, on average, to a greater probability of success ($b = 0.55$; $p < 0.05$). Overall, when two interventions are similar, but one has internal international support and the other does not, the one receiving support has a 14 percent higher probability of success than the other.

Models 3, 4 and 5 investigate hypotheses 2a and 2b. Model 3 adds the variable local problem—no support. In line with hypothesis 2a, this predictor suggests that interventions focusing on local problems have a greater probability of success when conducted without internal international support ($b = 6.69$; $p < 0.001$). Model 4 tests for the effect of internal international support when the problem is international. In line with hypothesis 2b, receiving internal international support for interventions that address this type of problem is a significant predictor of the probability of success ($b = 2.39$; $p < 0.01$), but internal international support is no longer significant under other circumstances. Model 5 includes all three predictors for hypotheses 1, 2a and 2b. It is the model that has the highest capacity to indicate the probability that an intervention will reach its stated goals. It shows that the success of an intervention will be very positively impacted if it addresses a local problem locally or if it addresses an international problem with the support of Greenpeace's international network.

Post-hoc analysis and investigations of possible alternative explanations

Although the specification of the order of causality involves a time lag, endogeneity may still be an issue. For instance, a NRO could decide only to support the interventions of other NROs when it believes that they can succeed. Similarly, a NRO could ask for support only when it believes that they have a good chance of success. Since there were no strong instruments to rule out these possibilities, I conducted supplementary qualitative investigations to examine the potential for a spurious relationship (Kaplan, 2015). First, I analyzed the correspondence between Greenpeace's international secretariat and the NROs to determine when and how support for local interventions was requested. Second, I conducted interviews with campaigners and activists. Based on these supplementary investigations, it appears

that the availability of resources and the need to keep activists motivated⁹ are the two predominant factors underlying requests for support.

Another consideration examined in the supplementary investigations was the potentially negative effect of internal international support on an intervention. To examine this possibility, I analyzed Greenpeace media coverage in Germany for the period under study to determine to what extent media reports on Greenpeace interventions had distinguished between Greenpeace Germany and Greenpeace International. These analyses revealed that what the public had seen in the media was Greenpeace, but that there had been no reference to the presence of organizers or activists from outside Germany. I also questioned the informants about the potentially detrimental effect of being associated with an international organization. The informants made it clear that the international status of Greenpeace can be both helpful and harmful and that it can be associated with very polemical attitudes (there are "those who hate us and those who love us"). However, the informants also indicated that this international status is advantageous because it means that organizers and activists have no need to explain what they stand for.

Supplementary interviews to clarify the mechanisms

Earlier, two complementary explanations were offered to account for why local interventions focusing on local problems have a better chance of success when conducted without internal international support. To illustrate how these explanations complement each other and to validate them, I invited Greenpeace campaigners to reexamine them in relation to specific interventions.

For the first explanation, it is important to stress that while legitimacy, credibility, and access are key resources for entering a political space (Boddewyn & Brewer, 1994), legitimacy and access are easier to acquire when embedded in the local context. Greenpeace campaigners explicitly mentioned these points during interviews. One informant described an intervention where all the members of the Greenpeace team were considered outsiders because they did not come from the area, and this had a negative impact on the success of the intervention:

9. For instance, interventions requiring climbing skills are rare. To keep activists engaged and to help develop the set of routines required to keep these interventions safe, teams that need these skills are managed on a European basis.

We [were] seen as strangers ... it is a very negative effect ... if you come with your forest expert who does not live in Bavaria but by his accent it is clear that this person's from Hamburg and does not know the local mayor and all the usual stuff ... it doesn't make sense to have an NGO like Greenpeace helicoptering in when they don't know anybody from the local people (Research and Investigations Specialist, Germany).

Another informant highlighted a similar issue when talking about an intervention in Siberia when the Greenpeace team had limited knowledge about the concerns of the local inhabitants in a region with high unemployment. This lack of knowledge about the local context explained the inability of the team to communicate their message. These examples show that not having sufficient knowledge of the local context can impact credibility by limiting a team's capacity to emphasize considerations relevant to the targeted audience.

With respect to the second explanation—that receiving support creates logistical challenges—several informants highlighted the issue of collaboration. For example, a former member of the German political unit said that “Greenpeace’s work across borders is often a struggle [because] there are language barriers [and] different time zones.” A former campaigner from the Netherlands stated that “with other Greenpeace offices ... it’s more complex than going alone” and that “there are cultural issues [and] geographic issues.” The Inventory also provides evidence that international collaboration negatively impacted some interventions. For example, a report on an intervention conducted in Germany with the support of the international secretariat explicitly mentions that the outcome was “not that good” because of “internal difficulties with planning and communication” (Inventory of Global Resources, 2001: 33).

Finally, the interviews with the informants revealed that international support has broader strategic implications, for it can change the focus of an intervention, sometimes for the better but not always.¹⁰ I pursue this issue in the discussion section.

10. For instance, for an intervention that concerned an ecosystem on the border of Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, Greenpeace Netherlands sought support from the two other NROs. However, both refused to support the intervention because it did not fit with their priorities. The international secretariat was willing to provide support, but it wanted the intervention to focus on the dangers of climate change instead of the dangers associated with the practices of the natural gas industry. Because “no one knew about climate change back then” (former communications specialist, Greenpeace Netherlands), the campaign organizers were not initially willing to make a compromise. In the end, the intervention focused on the dangers of extracting natural gas, but Greenpeace used it as an opportunity to introduce the public to the issue of climate change. Greenpeace Netherlands organized protests on land and at sea. Parallel to this, the international secretariat organized an exhibition on climate change on the Rainbow Warrior that used Greenpeace’s iconic flagship to increase public awareness of this issue.

Discussion and conclusion

The core contribution of the present study is its identification of the factors that determine how and when the NROs of international NGOs benefit from internal international support. Building on the case of Greenpeace, I have argued that internal international support can benefit local interventions, but that it does not always do so. Internal international support is particularly beneficial to interventions focusing on international problems. With local problems, interventions have a greater chance of success if they are conducted without internal international support. These findings provide evidence that the value of resources depends on the institutional contexts in which they are used (Brouthers *et al.*, 2008; Oliver, 1997). This means that NROs must evaluate carefully whether using outside resources will benefit their interventions. They may have little or no utility in specific local contexts.

Beyond these findings, the present study highlights two complementary issues related to the work of international NGOs. First, these NGOs do not have ownership structures that centralize authority, and this has an important impact on resource allocation. Their secretariat cannot manage assets in the same way as the head office of an MNC. This means that to secure support, NROs must persuade other NROs or the international secretariat to help them. As a result, support often comes with constraints that can change the original purpose of an intervention. Some NROs may be better than others at obtaining support without making compromises to strategic elements that they consider crucial to success. These questions fall outside the scope of the present study, but they deserve further research.

Second, some NROs may be tempted to frame local problems as international or to target international problems to secure support and legitimize interventions without alienating stakeholders. This strategy can also be used to leverage the strengths of other NROs in the NGO’s network. This second point is in line with the position of Yasiji and Doh (2013), who highlight the malleability of the claims that social movements make to obtain resources. Although not all NGOs’ actions are designed to spark a social movement, our study demonstrates that NROs’ can adapt their framing of issues to secure resources internally, to manage societal expectations with respect to the type of problems they address, to build up a history of events that consolidates their status as legitimate stakeholders, and to obtain small wins that gradually allow them to increase their impact in the areas they prioritize.

Contribution and implications for strategic management research and practices

The present study highlights the importance of resource allocation decisions for NGOs. Despite calls for a greater focus on the strategic management of NGOs (e.g., Bloodgood, 2011; Lambell *et al.*, 2008; Lecy *et al.*, 2010; Teegen *et al.*, 2004), the few studies that have examined the effect of resources on advocacy interventions have focused on the differences between local and international NGOs (Murdie & Urpelainein, 2015), or on the allocation of resources at the transnational network level (Hadden, 2015). In contrast, the present study examined the impact of internal international resources on specific local interventions. By focusing on the success of NGOs at the local intervention level, the findings presented here demonstrate the limits of the transferability of resources for this type of activity. They also show that successful interventions are not merely based on developing frames to sell issues to the public, but also on determining how to define the geographic scope of the problems targeted by NROs with respect to the logistical and other organizational resources that are available locally and internationally.

The present study also has implications for the literature on multinational organizations, as it clarifies the impact that resource-based advantages can have on political activities. Although resource-based advantages have long been recognized as a competitive advantage of MNCs (Brouthers *et al.*, 2008), the assumption has been that political resources and capabilities tend to be country-specific (Boddewyn & Brewer, 1994; Oliver & Holzinger, 2008). The findings presented here show that although some competencies are relatively unique to a local context, outside resources can help advance a political agenda as long as their use for this purpose is aligned with the scope of the problem targeted by the organization. At a time when MNCs are increasingly engaged in institution building and when global issues like climate change are receiving increasing attention in the field of management (Buckley *et al.*, 2018; Howard-Grenville *et al.*, 2014), this finding offers insights into how multinational organizations can leverage their worldwide resources to help find solutions to these issues.

Boundary conditions, limitations, and avenues for future research

The research for the present study was limited by several boundary conditions. First, the results were obtained for outsider strategies that draw on protests and direct actions tactics to pressure firms and governments to act on

environmental problems. The effects of internal international support may not apply for insider strategies, for other types of issues, and for NGOs that follow a substitution strategy. Indeed, one can reasonably assume that NGOs adopting a substitution strategy will undertake less controversial actions than NGOs adopting a “pressure” strategy, and because of that, the effect of internal international support on an NRO legitimacy and credibility will not be the same. For instance, interventions made by Doctors without Borders in Iraq, Burma and Sierra Leone would be impossible to undertake without the support of its operations centers located in Europe and North-America.¹¹

Second, this study focused on interventions conducted by five NROs located in Europe. In this region, the role of NGOs in the political landscape is well established and it is common to see NGOs collaborate to promote pan-European policies. Moreover, the support received came from other NROs in Europe, which affects our findings in two ways. First, because the NROs were proximate to one another, the effects of distance may be less problematic. Second, because the support came from countries that do not share a colonial past with the receiving hand, it may have been better received than if there was already tension between the nations involved. The support provided by NGOs from the north to the south is a more contentious issue and it is possible that internal international support may have a negative effect in that context, even when the problem targeted by a NRO is an international problem.

Third, the five NROs that provided the context for this study were well established in their host-country. They were well respected by the public, they had a formal voice in politics, and the issues that they promote were considered important. Not all countries have the same regulatory approach to NGOs, the same openness to dissent, or recognize the importance of environmental issues. In fact, some countries have restrictions in place for NGOs (Bloodgood *et al.*, 2014), and some countries even have restrictions for the transfer of resources from abroad (Berny & Rootes, 2018). For instance, Greenpeace India had its registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act revoked by the Indian government, so that it is now prevented from obtaining funds from abroad. Greenpeace China finds itself in a similar situation. Hence, institutional restrictions limit the type of support that NROs can receive.

11. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this observation.

Fourth, it focused on a single environmental international NGO that is structured as a federation. This limits the generalizability of the findings. International NGOs vary a great deal in their structures (Brown *et al.*, 2012; Young *et al.*, 1999). Some structures are assumed to promote greater effectiveness under certain conditions (Young, 1991). Future research may look at how the structure of an international NGO may facilitate or hinder collaboration across NROs.

Additional research areas may look more deeply at the resource-based advantages of NGOs. Based on our interviews, it appears that each NRO developed unique capabilities. Future research may look at how NRO-specific advantages emerge from location and how the internal advantages of NROs are linked to the NGOs global activities. Another future research direction concerns how NROs can secure that internal international support and how international NGOs can mitigate the effects of distance to take full advantage of internal support. Finally, the concept of success in advocacy can be hard to define. This study measured success based on observable information extracted from organizational documentation. Success may be perceived differently by individuals depending on their culture, their affiliation, and their role within the organization. Future research could explore how these dimensions impact the perception of success.

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