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April 12 Reaction Paper

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Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest"

Kitschelt provides a framework for how social movement strategies and impacts are determined by the political opportunity structures of the countries they are in, specifically by applying this framework to explain the anti-nuclear movements in France, Sweden, the U.S. and Germany. He classifies each country by their political input (open or closed) and political output (strong or weak). He categorized activities as assimilative or confrontational and impacts as procedural, substantive, and structural depending on their political opportunity structure. How does this framework hold up with non-democratic regimes? Is there a more specific analytic framework than the boomerang effect within the closed and weak category, specifically authoritative and communist regimes?

Singleton, "Collaborative Environmental Planning in the American West"

Singleton evaluates collaborative environmental planning in Washington state with three cases. She suggests that collaborative planning is clearly the way to go, but it has problems for many of the same reasons that it is effective. These relate to leadership, local addressing of the problem vs. nonlocal source of the problem, devolution, and bringing together stakeholders. The latter is an interesting dilemma and solution. It suggests that by bringing together all the parties we are likely to find some common ground. In today's climate, I wonder how quickly the common ground crumbles away. It seems to me that environmental leaders on a national level must frame the problem in a way that relates beyond environmental to the economy, jobs, and security, thus not making it environmental at all, but social and economic. What happens with collaborative planning when there are stalemates, essential parties who refuse to negotiate? Today's polarized political mood would produce many of these, I would imagine.

Ho, "Greening With Conflict?"

The author catalogues the rise and issues of environmentalism in China by contrasting it to Eastern Europe and other socialist states and taking us through 5 cases. He talks about some of the unique problems that Chinese environmental organizations have. Mainly, China is worried about a group like Falun Gong infiltrating and taking control. The chief dilemma is that the state would like to devolve some of its processes and establish groups that appear to have legitimacy while maintaining control. Ho repeatedly states that this is one of the key factors in shaping the Chinese environmentalism. It is a sort of carrot and stick approach where the state tolerates but also maintains strict control. Another interesting point are GONGOs which are basically extensions of the government run by people, like a public contractor. Even NGOs are organized by those close to the government.

Hallstrom, "Eurocratising Enlargement?"

Hallstrom charts a course of environmentalism through the EU as it pertains to the traditional role of environmental groups and those that reside in the CEE countries. The article "... focuses on how environmental policy functions in Brussels, the perceptions and experiences of EU policy elites, and their perspectives on the role for CEE interests and interest groups at the European level" (175). Environmentalism has a large share of problems in the EU. I wonder, is the EU actually against CEE environmental groups altogether? That seems like a bizarre phenomenon given the allegedly environmentally conscious Europe. Perhaps it does not expand the Eurocracy and that is why.