

From Disruptive Action to Political Lobbying: Causes and Consequences of the Institutionalization of Forms of Contention in a Protest Campaign

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to analyze the causes of the gradual institutionalization of tactics and strategies of the antimilitaristic protest campaign Arms, or Human Rights? [Zbraně, nebo lidská práva?] in the period 1997–2007. The campaign's collective action evolved from an episodic contentious collective action to sustained interaction with opponents under the auspices of a newly formed social movement organization Nesehnutí and the campaign's forms of contention progressed from radical, disruptive actions against opponents to political lobbying and negotiations with political actors and allies within the political establishment. The analysis of interaction between the campaign's internal dynamics and its external conditions will clarify how the campaign's active appropriation of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and its politically binding criteria opened to the actors in the campaign an institutional access to negotiations of their claims with political actors and how the institutional access influenced interactive and communicative processes among the actors within the campaign and brought on the change in the campaign's forms of contention. Apart from analysis of written documents, the research relies on data collected by means of participant-observation from April 2005 to May 2007.

Key words: Campaign, Contentious Collective Action, European Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, Forms of Contention, Framing, Mobilizing Structures, Nesehnutí, Political opportunity, Social Movement Organization (SMO)

Introduction

Contentious collective action is an episodic, public interaction between groups of claimants, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and the objects of their claims, i.e. elites, authorities, and opponents (Tarrow 1998: 2-3; McAdam et al. 2001: 5; Tilly 2004: 12). The incentives for contentious collective action to be launched are provided by institutional conditions and structures in the external environment. Changes in institutional rules, political alignments, or alliance structures can set contentious collective action in motion by giving the claimants the opportunity to gain political support of their claims within the political system

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(McAdam et al. 1997: 153; Tarrow 1998: 79). Although political opportunities and threats² offer certain potentials for the claimants' collective action, it is the claimants' perception and interpretation of the opportunities and threats that realizes those potentials in the form of collective action (McAdam et al. 1996: 5; McAdam et al. 2001: 43; Tarrow 1998: 77). Thus the ultimate implementation of contentious collective action is conditioned by the interaction between structural factors, embodied by external political opportunities and internal mobilizing structures of the collective claim-makers, and cultural factors, denoting meanings and definitions of grievances and claims that people share, as well as their belief in their capability to redress the problem by means of collective action.

Mobilizing structures constitute both established organizations and informal networks "through which people come together and engage in collective action" (McAdam et al. 1997: 155). The existence of such social networks *per se* does not guarantee that collective action will take place. Activists and their sympathizers may draw on their mutual personal or public bonds and links when deciding about their participation in collective action, or their decision to take part in new collective action may be influenced by their previous or current involvement in other contentious collective action (Diani, McAdam 2003). Yet the prerequisite for collective action to take place is the existence of shared beliefs and worldviews that will motivate the actors and legitimize their collective action. Therefore, next to the political opportunities, it is mobilizing structures likewise cultural variables that account for collective action (McAdam et al. 1997: 157; Tarrow 1998).

The study of shared ideas and meanings and their social construction among actors in social networks is referred to as a framing process (Snow et al. 1986; Snow, Benford 1988; Benford, Snow 2000). Participants coordinate their collective action through collective action frames that help them underscore the injustice of a social situation, identify those who are responsible for the grievances and delimit the boundaries between their collective identity as claim-makers and those who are objects of their claims (Gamson 1992). By means of collective action frames protesters also convey meanings of their actions and goals to antagonists, authorities, and bystanders or observers (Benford, Snow 2000: 613). To communicate their ideas and meanings to the various publics, protesters use certain forms of contention, including rallies,

² The changes in the political structure can also be interpreted by activists as threats to their claims, e.g. when the activists are convinced that political actors will not acknowledge the existence of political problem the activists intend to address or when they refuse to recognize activists' claims. The activists may view this inaction on the part of political actors as a challenge to be addressed by contentious collective action (Klandermans 1997).

demonstrations, organizing marches, disruption, vigils, and the like. The repertoire of contention signifies the culturally learned and transmitted conventions of contention used by particular groups (Tarrow 1998: 20-21). Repertoires evolve as a result of struggle with opponents and the protester's improvisation of the inherited repertoires by infusing them with new frames of meaning (Tarrow 1998: 20-21; McAdam et al. 2001: 49). The evolution of repertoire of contention marks the path from violence to disruption that further may become routinized into convention, i.e. culturally understandable and acceptable forms of contention (Tarrow 1998: 104). The use of repertoire of contention, mobilizing structures, and collective action frames are fundamental properties of social movements. Social movement is a distinctive form of contentious politics with the capacity to maintain sustained challenges against opponents. By means of campaigns and repertoire of contention social movements make possible sustained, organized, public, and collective claim-making on targeted authorities and opponents (Tilly 2004: 3-4).

The organizational underpinning of social movement, marked by the evolution from an episodic contentious collective action to social movement organization (SMO) and its sustained interaction with opponents, is a question for further research that sheds a light on how movement's internal dynamics interact with their external contexts (cf. Whittier 2002: 289-307). The collective action of social movements and their use of contention, ranging from rallies, public meetings and discussions to petition drives, official statements and press release, extend beyond the interaction between the groups of claimants and the objects of their claims and have an effect on third parties as well, such as constituents and various publics, including enemies, state authorities, and the media (Tilly 2004: 12). These contexts of interactions have influence on movements' collective action, their framing processes and repertoire of contention they use.

Movements' framing efforts are determined by broader political and social contexts. In order to frame social problems and injustice and convince a wide audience of the necessity to collectively address and redress them, social movement organizations draw on the reservoir of culturally shared symbols, values and worldviews from which they accentuate and clarify those cultural aspects that will resonate with the movement's views and ideas and that will invigorate the significance of a particular issue or problem for those who are targets of mobilization and/or objects of claims (Benford, Snow 2000). At the same time the framing process is the subject of intense contestation between SMOs and the media. The media frames the movements' activities in certain ways that are compatible with the media's intention to sell the news, but may be harmful to the movements' ideas and goals. Apart from the media the state authorities and

opponents frame the movements' claims in such a way as to belittle their political significance or refuse recognition of the political claims and problems (cf. McAdam et al. 1996: 16-17; Gamson 1992; Tarrow 1998). The SMOs respond to those competing and antagonistic frames by strategically implying collective action frames that will challenge the media's and opponents' interpretations and will straighten the movements' public reputation and legitimacy of their goals. The strategic framing may take the form of attributing empirical credibility to the collective action frames, their backing by various scientifically adequate expertise and their acknowledgment by politically recognized figures and authorities that will make together the frames culturally believable and politically legitimate (cf. Benford, Snow 2000: 620-621).

Part of the framing is not only the process by which movements identify a political problem and its causes, but also the negotiation and choice of solutions and strategies that movements find reasonable for redressing the problem (Snow, Benford 1988; 2000). The movement's use of strategies, or forms of contention, is conditioned by the movement's interaction with objects of their claims, opponents, and third parties. For example to mobilize support of bystanders, the movement may opt for public briefings or other informative activities that will persuade the public about the gravity of a political problem; as a response to authorities' ignorance or defiance to the movement's appeals, the social movement actors may decide to use more radical and disruptive forms of action to draw the public's attention to the behaviour of the state authorities and to convince the authorities to take the movement's claims seriously. At the same time, in order to establish itself as a serious social and political counterpart in the constant conflict and negotiation with authorities and objects of claims, the movement can use certain framing strategies to appropriate political opportunities and gain support of political actors and influential organizations.

This course of action and communication of social movement's actors with authorities and other objects of claims marks ongoing "borrowing and adapting each other's ideas, personnel, assistance, rhetoric, and models of action" (Tilly 2004: 14), which can ultimately lead to the institutionalization of social movement tactics characterized by establishment of "comfortable relations [of social movement actors] with authorities" and reliance on "support from the rich and powerful" (ibid.: 156). The movement's gradual replacement of disruptive forms of action with political lobbying, negotiation and compromise can have the consequences of transforming the movement into a party or interest group (Tarrow 1998: 101).

The following part of the paper presents the result of research that accounts for the causes of gradual change in forms of contention in the campaign *Arms, or Human Rights?* from

radical and disruptive forms of action to political lobbying and negotiations with actors within the political system. By using certain framing strategies and with the cooperation of influential, international non-governmental organizations, the campaign eventually appropriated political opportunity and attained the support of certain political allies who assisted the social movement actors in bringing forward their claims and ideas to the political actors. This process accompanied successive institutionalization and structuralization of interaction between the campaign and the objects of their claims. The institutionalization of relations had a direct influence on interactive framing processes and negotiations among the actors within the campaign, their collective action frames, and use of forms of contention. Although the antimilitaristic campaign does not constitute the social movement organization as a whole, its formation substantially contributed to the origination of the organization Nesehnutí. Therefore, the first part of research explains how certain factors within mobilizing structures and collective action frames, that set in motion the collective action of actors in the forming campaign *Arms, or Human Rights?*, helped initiate the goals, ideas, and structure of newly formed social movement organization.

Conditions of the establishment of the protest campaign and SMO

The platform of collective action's mobilization was formed around a group of actors originally participating in the environmentalist SMO Hnutí DUHA. The actors' effort was to decentralize the organization and extend the area of their ecological interests to social causes accounting for undesirable changes in the environment. Unable to put their ideas through in the original organization, they decided to realize their intentions by establishing a new non-governmental organization. The mobilizing structures and collective action frames contributing to the onset of the movement's formation epitomized network of actors who, building on knowledge and experiences they had gathered in the previous movement, shared ideas about the new structure and face of organization. The actors likewise had a common understanding of new frames linking environmental protection with social issues and problems and encompassing the protection of environment, human rights, and animal rights.

Other important factor behind the formation of SMO Nesehnutí was provided by then episodic contentious politics targeted against the International Defence and Security Technology Trade Fair (IDET) in Brno in spring 1997. A group of protesters, including Milan Štefanec and other actors originally involved in the activities of the movement Hnutí DUHA, launched disruptive activities to express their disapproval with the IDET. Following the protest and prior to the formation of the organization Nesehnutí, the participants decided to go on planning and

implementing similar activities highlighting social and ecological problems in a way extending beyond isolated protests. As a result, an antimilitaristic group was formed that began to oppose the holding of IDET on regular bases and that became a springboard for the creation of the campaign *Arms, or Human Rights?* The contentious collective action targeted against companies and enterprises involved in the arms and defence industry and exhibiting their products at the IDET became the first object of action of the campaign as well as the newly shaping organization Nesehnutí. Campaigning provided the means for sustained interaction with the object of claims and at the same time mirrored the idea of a decentralized form of organization based on the democratic process of decision-making. The evolving organizational structure along with the collective action frames opened an opportunity to other groups of people aggrieved by particular social injustice and problems falling under the umbrella of the broad master frame of human rights and ready to mobilize to a collective action through protest campaigns.³

External sources of the campaign's collective action

The collective action in the campaign *Arms, or Human Rights?* further developed as a consequence of conditions offered within the broader political context and appropriation of those conditions by the actors in the campaign. In view of the campaign, the revitalization of the arms industry, growing arms export and sale of redundant and discarded arms from the Czech Republic created economic and political conditions favouring uncontrolled proliferation of Czech arms and their potential as well as real misuse in the violation of human rights and the escalation of conflicts within the final destinations of the arms export.

Next to the political threat to transparency and public control of the arms export, the collective action of the participants was influenced by certain political opportunity and its appropriation by the campaign. In 1998 the Czech Republic endorsed the principles of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports that represents a strong recommendation of the EU to responsible state authorities to enforce high common standards in control and

³ Following the antimilitaristic campaign, other campaigns dealing with human rights sprang to existence (Women's rights are human rights [Ženská práva jsou lidská práva], S.O.S. Chechnya [S.O.S. Čečensko], Safety for Refugees [Bezpečí pro uprchlíky]) as well as campaigns involved in the environmental protection and addressing its social causes (Focused on Hypermarkets [Zaostřeno na hypermarkety], Against the Highway 43 [Proti R43], and For the Preservation of Wilson woods [Za záchranu Wilsonova lesa]); (<http://www.nesehnuti.cz>).

supervision of arms export and to increase transparency among EU states on arms exports.⁴ The EU Code and endorsement of its principles by the Czech Republic became the source of the campaign's collective action framing. The second criterion of the EU Code obliges the member states to prevent arm exports to areas where they could be used for internal repression and violation of human rights. This criterion corresponds with the master frame of human rights defence recognized by both the campaign and the SMO and provided legitimacy to the campaign's collective action. Since 1999 the campaign has used the EU code criterion for framing their claim on the government's withdrawal of official political support to holding of the arms fair IDET, alleging that companies exhibiting their products in the IDET sell their arms and defence technology to countries involved in the violation of human rights (Nesehnutí 1999). Since 2003 the campaign has further utilized the principles listed in the EU code to target another objects of their newly framed claims on transparency in the process of applying for and issuing of export licence for military equipment and on the establishment of parliament and public control of arms export. Thus the campaign extended the scope of the collective action from protest activities against the IDET to sustained interaction with the political authorities responsible for the trade in military equipment.

Although the EU Code is politically binding, its legal liability is challenged by the national policy regulating arms sale and export.⁵ Due to the national regulations and low level of government co-operation with administrative bodies and non-governmental organizations on European level, the Czech endorsement of the EU criteria did not secure for the campaign an institutional access and political support to negotiations of trade in military equipment with

⁴ The European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports is available at the website of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.mzv.cz/kontrolaexportu>). An English version of the EU Code can be downloaded from the website of the campaign Arms, or Human Rights? (<http://zbrane.ecn.cz/cz/doc/eucode.rtf>).

⁵ Arms sale and export is regulated in the Czech Republic by Act no. 38/1994 Coll., on Foreign trade in military equipment. The Act defines the roles and responsibilities of state administration bodies in the administrative procedure. The Ministry of Industry and Trade issues permits and export licenses and is therefore directly responsible for foreign trade in military equipment. In order for a permit to be issued, an approval must be given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic that judges the application from the view of foreign policy and by Ministry of Defence and The Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic that take into consideration possible impacts on security. For each export of military equipment a licence is issued by the Ministry of Industry and Trade with the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign trade in military equipment is supervised by the Ministerial Licence Committee that ensures that arms export from the Czech Republic respects international agreements and embargoes applied by the United Nations, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

political actors. The campaign nonetheless actively used the criteria of the EU Code to open the political opportunity.

The process of opening of the political opportunity accompanied gradual change in the campaign's forms of contention from radical and disruptive actions to political lobbying, co-operation with allies in the political system, and systematic co-operation with well-known non-governmental organizations. While the protest activities against the IDET in the years 1999 and 2001 characterized the use of disruptive action on the part of the campaign, the IDET of the following years 2003, 2005, and 2007 saw the campaign's gradual retreat from blockade and picketing and their replacement with happenings, organized marches, and informative campaigns for the general public. The shift in the forms of contention is also apparent in comparisons of the campaign's contentious collective actions targeted at the Czech ministries responsible for the trade in military equipment. In the years 2003 and 2004 the campaign resorted to radical disruptive actions against the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Defence. As a result of the campaign's interaction with other ministry responsible for the arms trade and export, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by the beginning of 2005 the campaign's forms of contention gradually succumbed to their institutionalization.

The campaign's forms of contention and their development

During the opening ceremony of the IDET 1999 a group of activists from the campaign and SMO Nesehnutí broke into the area of the IDET fair ground and disrupted the press conference (Nesehnutí 1999). In the year of the following IDET 2001 the activists realized picketing and happening in front of the gates of the fair ground and their protest concluded with the march through the centre of the city Brno (Nesehnutí 2001a; 2001b). In 2003 and 2005 the venue of the campaign's collective action moved to the centre of Brno, where the activists performed happening, distributed leaflets and press releases, and took part in the organization of protest marches through the city to the fair ground of IDET (Nesehnutí 2003a; Nesehnutí 2005). In 2007 the campaign's activity was limited to the issuing of press release (Nesehnutí 2007).

The reason for the change in the campaign's forms of contention following the radical action of the activists in 1999 was the ensuing safety precautions on the part of the IDET organizers, which made the risk of launching similar radical activity within the area of the fair ground unbearable. The overall change in the forms of contention, their diversification and subsequent limitation to informative campaign and press releases between 2001 and 2007, can be accounted by the campaign's intensive work on appropriation of the EU Code. In 2003 the

primary focus of the campaign's activities turned from the isolated protests against the IDET to strategic and organized persuasion of the political actors and opponents to abide with the criteria of the EU Code. Consequently the protests against the IDET eventually lost their priority on the campaign's agenda and had to yield to the campaign's institutionalized interaction with other opponents and political actors. The year 2007 thus marks the campaign's use of political lobbying and the withdrawal from broad and intensive protest activities against the IDET.

The way towards the campaign's use of conventional strategies was not straightforward. In years 2003 and 2004 the campaign repeatedly resorted to disruptive actions against those political opponents who, in view of the campaign, failed to recognize a significant role of the EU Code in the national control of arms export or in their actions directly violated the criteria of the code.

The political problem framed by the campaign was the non-transparent and uncontrolled sale and export of arms that the campaign decided to redress by implementing certain forms of action: by means of intensive monitoring the participants in the campaign gathered necessary information about the arms export, briefed the media on the result of their scrutiny and made them public through press releases. To draw the general public's attention to the issue of arms sale and export, the actors organized and took part in rallies, blockades, and happenings targeted at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, that is responsible for issuing export licences for military equipment, and the Ministry of Defence, that due to the NATO's demands on the modernization of the Czech army realized the sale of obsolete defence technology and arms.

The building of the Ministry of Industry and Trade became a target of disruptive actions in 2003. A group of volunteers from the campaign and the SMO Nesehnutí blocked the entrance to the ministry's building and managed to display the logo of Nesehnutí on the balcony of the building. The objective of the blockade was to persuade the ministry to respect the criteria of the EU code. The activists delivered their claims to the minister who promised to take them into consideration (Nesehnutí 2003a). Thanks to the media coverage, the protest gained certain public attention.⁶ The ministry eventually rejected the campaign's claim in an official press release stating that it could not ensure that the export of Czech military equipment would not result in misuse of the arms by people in the final destination of the export (Nesehnutí 2004a). The campaign considered the ministry's response as a sign of disrespect of the criterion two of the EU Code

⁶ E.g. "Aktivisté viseli na budově ministerstva" (iDnes, 17.3.2003). Alarm 19/2003 informs that the program "Fakta" of the Czech national television voiced their interest to invite representatives of the campaign and Nesehnutí to a filming of reportage on arms export from the Czech Republic.

and escalated their collective contentious politics by organizing petition drive and happening in front of the ministry's building in December 2003 (Nesehnutí 2003a; 2004a).

The reason for the campaign's radical protest activities targeted at the Czech Ministry of Defence in 2003 and 2004 was an uncontrolled sale of obsolete and discarded military equipment by the ministry. The campaign's intensive monitoring and gathering of information revealed that the sale was not done according to proper inventory and that the Czech ammunition and military equipment were re-exported to areas under international embargoes.⁷ The ministry rejected the campaign's allegations and refused responsibility for the re-export of Czech military equipment to conflicting areas (ibid.). The campaign interpreted the action on part of the ministry as a direct violation of the EU code and launched a blockade of the ministry's building in 2003 and again in spring 2004 to thwart ministry's plan to continue with the sell of military equipment (Nesehnutí 2004b).

The campaign's use of radical and disruptive actions against the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Defence can be accounted for by the lack of will to co-operate on the part of the ministries, consequent denial of institutional access to the campaign's negotiations with the ministries, and the ministries' disrespect and violation of obligations stated in the EU Code.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) chose to cooperate with the campaign and other non-governmental organizations by means of issuing an annual national report on foreign trade with military equipment realized in the Czech Republic. This opening of the institutional access to the campaign in the end of 2004 had an impact on the campaign's forms of contention and framing process. Despite the fact that in view of the campaign the annual reports revealed ongoing non-transparency and deficiency in control of the arms export, the campaign did not opt for disruptive actions but instead agreed to written communication with the ministry and regularly voiced their criticism through press releases. The resulting structuralization of relations between the campaign and MFA further affected communication and negotiations among the actors participating in the campaign.

⁷ The campaign and SMO Nesehnutí backed the credibility of their informative sources by the United Nation register, customs lists from the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic, and the report of the Supreme Audit Office of the Czech Republic from 16.12.2002 that voiced concern with the stage of inventory of the military equipment subject to sale by the Ministry of Defence. Drawing on the Act no. 106/1999 Coll., on Free Access to Information, the campaign also obtained information from the Ministry of Defence on the number, type, and quality of the Czech army ammunition, including the list of military equipment that was exported to Afghanistan (Nesehnutí 2003a; Alarm no. 24, February 2004; Nesehnutí 2003b).

The institutionalization of the campaign's forms of contention: its causes and consequences

Whereas the Ministry of Industry and Trade is directly responsible for the control of arms export from the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) acts in the process of issuing export licenses as an advisory body, considering possible impact of arms export on the foreign policy. The campaign's objective was to convince the ministry of the political binding force of the EU Code and to find accord among both actors in the question of incorporation of the Code's obligations into the national regulations of trade with military equipment.⁸ The ministry granted institutional access to the campaign's representatives by inviting them to a seminar with the goal of discussing the potential of making information on the Czech arms export public.⁹ In accordance with the provisions of the EU Code the MFA pledged to make transparent the trade with military equipment and to inform, on yearly basis, the public on military trades in the Czech Republic (Nesehnutí 2004c). The first report, entitled Annual Report on Export Control of Military Equipment and Small Arms for Civilian Use in the Czech Republic in 2003, informed on military trade realized in 2003 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic 2004). The annual reports of 2004 and 2005 became the hub of interaction between the MFA and the campaign that by means regular press releases commented on each of the MFA's report and criticized its content. Although the campaign in its press releases repeatedly emphasized that the data published in the MFA's annual reports revealed violation of the EU Code principles by the Czech Republic, the MFA insisted on the contrary, claiming that the reports clearly manifested adherence to the EU Code.

In comparison to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which admitted that military trade cannot be fully regulated by the criteria of the EU Code because it would be in discrepancy with the protection of classified information, and the Ministry of Defence, whose sale of discarded military equipment directly violated the Code, the MFA through their annual reports declared that arm exports from the Czech Republic did not violate the criteria of EU Code. The campaign responded to the MFA's assertion by intensive monitoring of the countries listed in the MFA's

⁸ By national regulations is meant the Act No. 38/1994 Coll. on Foreign Trade in Military Equipment and on Amendment to Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trades (Trades Licensing Act), as Amended, and Act No. 140/1961 Coll., the Criminal Code as Amended.

⁹ Next to the representatives of the campaign and SMO Nesehnutí, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also invited the representatives of the NGO Transparency International to the political negotiations.

report as recipients of Czech military equipment in the year 2003 and brought forward evidence pointing at the violation of human rights and civil wars taking place in the areas that obtained military assistance from the Czech Republic. The campaign framed the gathered information in a way so as to challenge the MFA's statements and convince both the ministry and the public of the continual infringement of the EU Code on the part of the Czech Republic. The campaign voiced their beliefs and concerns in the press releases in 2004 and again in 2006 following the MFA's annual report of 2005 (Nesehnutí 2004d; 2006).¹⁰ The MFA repeatedly refused the campaign's allegations and kept on insisting that the Czech Republic strictly followed the principles of the EU Code.

The publicity of the campaign's claims met with a partial success thanks to the cooperation with the Czech branch of Amnesty International. Jan Winkler, the former Deputy Foreign Ministry for the Security Policy of the Czech Republic, accepted the criticism of AI in an interview for the Czech BBC when admitting that the MFA did not succeed in making arms export fully transparent and consistent with the EU Code obligations. At the same time, though, he denied that the Czech Republic had breached the EU criteria. (BBC 2005)

The reasons for the MFA's ambiguous stance to the role of the EU Code lie in the structure of relations between the ministry, other state administrative bodies, and authorities involved in the trade with military equipment. The MFA has to face the pressure of the pro-export policy facilitated by the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Defence Industry Association of Czech Republic that together criticize the MFA for obstructing their interests. While the Licence Department of the Ministry of Industry and Trade resists the claim on transparency of the arms trade because of its demand on the disclosure of classified information, the MFA has to attend to the reputation of the country abroad, which, among others, has a bearing on the country's acceptance of EU policies, including those specified under the EU Code (*ibid.*).

The MFA is subjected to a situation in which it is forced to seek compromise between the actors who call for open trade with military equipment and those who oppose these tendencies. The resulting structure of diverse interests in the Czech political scene interferes with the NGOs' demand on putting the criteria of the EU Code in practice. This also explains why the campaign's convincing strategies targeted at the MFA did not meet with acceptance and failed to forge

¹⁰ The annual reports listing the export of military equipment in the years 2003 and 2004 were issued in the end of the years 2004 and 2005 respectively. Consequently, the campaign could not release the press statements to the respective MFA's reports no sooner than in December 2004 and February 2006 respectively.

collective interest in incorporating the EU Code and its provisions into the national regulations of arms export. The campaign achieved only certain procedural success by having been granted an institutional access to the negotiations with political actors, which enabled the campaign to sustain interaction with the MFA. On the other hand, the institutional access did not provide the campaign with an opportunity to influence structural relations and interests of the participating political actors. Quite contrary, the structure of the political relations heavily affected the collective action, interaction, and communication among the actors within the campaign.¹¹

The institutional negotiations between the campaign and the MFA were initiated and remained under the control of the ministry. The MFA determined the structure of the communication: the communication was to take the form of written opinions, proposals, and comments that could be delivered for examination to the editor of the MFA's annual reports on export, Petr Kaiser. The MFA appointed Kaiser as the only contact person in the discussions between the ministry and the campaign's representatives. This consequently limited the campaign's use of contention to political lobbying and deliberation. The forms of contention and possible alternative suggestions to their use were not a subject of discussion among the actors in the campaign, which indicates the structural relations set by the MFA. The yearly cycle of releasing the MFA's reports on arms export, which in its content repeatedly defied the legitimacy of the campaign's claims and allegations, eventually inhibited the campaign and its participants in strategic framing that would interpret the political problem and the campaign's stance to the MFA's reports in more innovative way. The low level of flexibility in use of strategies and framing processes reflected the routinization of the campaign's collective work on press releases and statements to public media.

The campaign's utilization of institutionalized forms of contention: political lobbying

Although the structure of the institutional negotiations in its consequences reduced the campaign's forms of contention to statements to public media, press releases, and political lobbying, it eventually helped the campaign to master and gain confidence in the strategy of political lobbying. The institutionalization of the campaign's forms of contention, triggered by structural relations with the MFA, thus contributed to the campaign's utilization of the political

¹¹ The assessment of the influence of institutional negotiations on the collective action, deliberation of strategies, and framing processes among the actors taking part in the campaign relied on the author's participant-observation in years 2005 and 2006.

lobbying with the goal to convince other political actors to accept the campaign's newly framed claims.

The process of approving the Czech annual reports on export and trade with military equipment has been entirely under the control of the government and the MFA that presents the reports to the public in press conferences. The campaign decided to bypass this political structure by seeking allies on the parliamentary level who would help the campaign to put through the claim on parliamentary control of the arms export. By means of intensive lobbying and with the cooperation of the Czech branch of Amnesty International the campaign succeeded in opening a political opportunity when they gained an ally in the Czech Senate, the Senator Jaromír Šetina, who promised to act on behalf of the campaign's claim.

In February 2006 the representative of the campaign and SMO Nesehnutí, Milan Šefanec, was invited to the meeting of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Security. The Committee was inspired and drew on the campaign's claims and ideas when writing a text of resolution to the "EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition" (Výbor pro zahraniční věci, obranu a bezpečnost 2006). In negotiations with the Senator Jaromír Šetina the campaign achieved the following: the SMO Nesehnutí and its representatives were offered the service of the Parliamentary Institute for research in the field of arms trade and export and were also invited to participate in creation of materials to be dealt with by the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Security.

The political opportunity resulted in further professionalization of the campaign's activities. The sustained co-operation with political actors had to be met with a systematic work, professional management of strategies and activities, support of broader coalition of NGOs, and financial aid that in turn could be secured only by designing and implementing a project. The project entitled "Public control – Safeguard to Human Rights" [Veřejná kontrola – záruka lidských práv], financially supported by the foundation NROS (2006), brought together Nesehnutí, Amnesty International, and the Ecumenical Academy in Prague whose participants joined their efforts to lobby the political actors in question of public and parliamentary control of the trade with military equipment.

The objectives and strategies defined in the project as well as division of activities among the project participants have prompted further transition in the campaign's forms of contention and influenced the structure of interaction and communication among actors taking part in the

campaign *Arms, or Human Rights?*¹². The determination and division of activities among the participating organizations have limited space for *ad hoc* activities and ruled out disruptive and radical strategies whose use would be incompatible with the ideas outlined in the project. In addition, the project activities have been accomplished predominantly by the project's representatives who had taken the responsibility for fulfilling the project's goals and the related financial liability linked with the requirements of the project. Thus the centre of collective action, deliberation of strategies, interactive framing processes, sharing of new ideas and beliefs in what should be done and why have moved from the meetings of the campaign's participators to a coalition circle of non-governmental organizations and their representatives.

Conclusion

Revitalization of the Czech production and export of conventional arms raised a political issue of uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of the Czech arms for violation of human rights and the escalation of conflicts in the final destinations of the arms exports. The antimilitaristic campaign *Arms, or Human Rights?* appropriated the criteria of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports to frame the political problem and raise a claim on transparency and public control of the arms trade and export.

The campaign's collective action grew from an episodic contention targeted against the IDET 1997 to the implementation of regular protest activities in years 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007. Within those years the forms of contention developed from a radical disruptive action to diversified forms of contention, yet in 2007 the scope of the campaign's protest activities against the IDET narrowed to the issuing of press release. From 2003 on the campaign's attention occupied the sustained interaction with the political actors who wielded considerable influence on the military trade and arms export. The radical and disruptive actions targeted against the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Defence were followed by the institutional negotiations with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The structure of interaction established between the campaign and the MFA resulted in the routinization of the campaign's activities and the final replacement of disruptive actions with conventional strategies.

¹² Among others, the project "Public control" lists the following objectives: 1) creating materials for the Members of Parliament (with the emphasis on stating reasons for parliamentary control of the trade with military equipment); 2) political lobbying; 3) creating leaflets and other informative materials, organizing public discussions; 3) monitoring of the Czech and foreign media sources for information on arms trade and export and their archiving; 4) regular releasing press statements; 5) organizing press conferences with the possible participation of political allies.

The gradual institutionalization of campaign's tactics was highlighted in 2006 when the campaign, by means of political lobbying and intensive framing of the EU criteria, obtained political support of the claim on parliamentary control of the arms export. By the year 2007 the campaign's activities fully concentrate on political lobbying and professional project work, leaving little space to organizing protests activities against the IDET.

The campaign's collective action progressed from disruptive actions to the use of conventional strategies, negotiated and agreed upon within a circle of antimilitaristic activists, and finally to the institutionalized forms of contention and systematic work on projects, performed by actors in a broad coalition of non-governmental organizations. This process suggests successive professionalization of the social movement organization Nesehnutí since 1997 to present. Next to the campaign *Arms, or Human Rights?*, professionalization of collective action distinguishes today also other campaigns in Nesehnutí, such as *Women's rights are human rights* [Ženská práva jsou lidská práva] and *Focused on Hypermarkets* [Zaostřeno na hypermarkety]. Analysis of the process of professionalization of the social movement organization is, however, a question of further research that would focus on activities of all the main campaigns of Nesehnutí and their development.

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