Chapter 16

Transnational Environmental Activism

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Introduction

While environmental politics was once considered "low politics" in international relations, much of the work of raising its importance has come not just from increasing scientific knowledge about environmental problems but overwhelmingly from the ongoing activities of concerned individuals, groups, networks, and movements. This chapter identifies the actors, aims, and agency that constitute environmental activism in global environmental politics. It does so in five sections: first, the variety of actors engaged in environmental activism is identified; second, the aims and activities of environmental activists are examined; third, the agency or ability of environmental activists to bring about change in global environmental politics is investigated; fourth, a review of environmental activism is undertaken in order to further improve environmental outcomes particularly in relation to climate change; and finally, the chapter reflects on the global policy implications of current environmental activist efforts.

Defining Environmental Activists

While individuals engage in environmental activism, the benefits of cooperation and coordination have been realized through the creation of non-government organizations (NGOs) to further environmental goals. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs from the beginning of the twentieth century (Princen and Finger 1994: 1–26 (Introduction); Sikkink and Smith 2002: 30). Scholars estimated that 6000 international NGOs were operating by 1990, increasing to over 50 000 by 2005 (Clapp and Dauvergne 2011: 80; UIA 2011).[1] The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) formalized the definition of NGOs and their role in

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world politics during the United Nation's inception (Gotz 2008: 238; Betsill and Corell 2008: 4). It currently recognizes 3500 NGOs, attributing them consultative status, with 2432 NGOs working on sustainable development (ECOSOC 2011). Relying on this data can be problematic, because there is no generally accepted definition of the term "NGO" and conceptual confusion continues (Gotz 2008). Our understanding of Environmental NGOs (ENGOs) is further hampered by the blurring of what constitutes the "environment" when problems cross a range of social, economic, and political areas (Conca 1996: 104).

At the most basic level NGOs include any organization that does not represent government. This may include trade unions, business councils, criminal organizations such as the Mafia, and religious orders such as the Catholic Church. While this definition of NGOs is widely accepted, others further distinguish NGOs from other non-state actors based on their purpose: between organizations whose aim is to maximize the material wealth or power of their members and those that aim to further altruistic public policy goals like conserving the environment for the common good. Accordingly, Chasek *et al.* define an NGO as an "independent, non-profit organization not beholden to a government or profit-making organization" (2006: 73). This means that the term "'NGO' is established as describing a broad range of private organizations serving public purposes" (Gotz 2008: 235).

Environmental NGOs

Environmental NGOs (ENGOs) promote the conservation of the environment. Chasek *et al.* (2006: 74) argue that ENGOs have international influence for three reasons. First, because they possess expert knowledge about their issue and can be innovative in thinking through how to respond to the problem; second, they are dedicated to the environment beyond national or sectoral interests compared to other actors; and finally, because NGOs represent citizens who can be mobilized to support environmental outcomes in traditional domestic political processes.

ENGOs vary in terms of their objectives and ideology, affiliation, structure, and funding. ENGOs have specific environmental objectives and a strategy based on the political philosophy which determines how they meet their goals. These may be divided according to NGOs that: undertake environmental projects and programs (otherwise known as operational NGOs, see Willets 2011); conduct environmental research such as collecting data and monitoring trends; provide education and raise awareness; undertake advocacy through political lobbying and networking; provide policy recommendations and draft treaty texts; or a combination of these. ENGOs may be research institutes or think tanks that conduct and publicize policy positions on environmental issues such as the World Resources Institute (WRI), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and the Centre for Science and the Environment (CSE) (Chasek *et al.* 2006: 74).

Other ENGOs target specific environmental issues. For example, Greenpeace International has seven issue areas: climate change, forests, oceans, agriculture, toxic pollution, nuclear safety, and peace and disarmament (Greenpeace International 2011). Ideology also informs how ENGOs establish strategies to meet their objectives (Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004: 56; Alcock 2008; McCormick 2011: 102).

Greenpeace began by opposing nuclear issues through a strategy of physical protest and publicity stunts to raise awareness of environmental harm underpinned by an ideology of bearing witness through non-violent opposition (Wapner 1995: 320). For example, Greenpeace raises awareness and advocacy via direct action including chasing and harassing whaling boats; monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions such as tracking the trade in toxic chemicals; and lobbying governments on climate change.

Other large international ENGOs operate differently (Alcock 2008). The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF; known as the World Wildlife Fund in the United States) focuses on biodiversity conservation at the local and international levels through undertaking biodiversity projects all over the world and lobbying governments. Ideology influences which environmental issues NGOs will target for their campaigns and how they will do so: Earthfirst!, an American NGO, is engaged in eco-sabotage to further its biocentric radical beliefs, whereas the Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL) lobbies government and intergovernmental organizations (IOs) on the legality of their practices in international and domestic law. ENGOs may work together on the same issue despite these ideological differences or their efforts might work against one another (Princen 1994; Jordan and van Tuijl 2000).

Of course ENGOs vary in size, structure, and funding as well as the level at which they operate: local, national, regional, or international. ENGOs include small-scale grassroots organizations that operate at the community level. They may be national and focused on environmental problems domestically, with or without a focus on the international or global dimension of the problem, such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Britain, the Bund fur Vogelschutz in Germany (McCormick 2011: 103), and the Australian Conservation Foundation in Australia (ACF 2011). Well-known domestic American ENGOs include the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and Environmental Defense (ED) (Chasek *et al.* 2006: 75). ENGOs may also operate at the international level, or be affiliated with international NGOs. WWF is based in Switzerland, operates in over 100 countries, and has 5 million supporters. Based in the Netherlands, Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) is a confederation of 76 independent national member groups composed of over 2 million members. With headquarters in the Netherlands also, Greenpeace International operates in 41 countries and has nearly 3 million supporters.

Interactions between NGOs and governments vary depending on the political institutions in place and whether a state is open or closed to influence from groups that might be considered "enemies of the state." In Asia and Eastern Europe ENGOs have been one of the means to channel opposition to the state (Lee and So 1999), and in the case of the former Soviet Union were able to help change the political system (Fisher 1992). ENGOs' relationships with the state varies but it also influences how they are funded, which in turn shapes their operations. Some states will only accept state-sanctioned NGOs. Some "quasi-NGOs" are wholly or partially funded by official donors, states, or even transnational corporations (TNCs) (which may in fact advocate continuing environmental degradation; see Rowell 1996). As a result, ENGOs may engage in strategies of confrontation, collaboration, or complimentary

activities with the state in which they operate to achieve their objectives (Najam 1996). The degree of state openness can also affect the efforts of transnational networks to bring about global environmental change (Newell 2000: 134).

Environmental Movements and Networks

While the focus thus far has been on ENGOs, there are of course a wide variety of other looser associations where activists have come together to fight for the environment. Many groups do not constitute NGOs in a formal way, with a charter or constitution, formal legal standing as recognized by the state, an office, logo, and budget. Many local grassroots organizations are informal, and many larger movements do not have formal members (see Pradyumna and Suganuma 2008). There is fluidity between the distinctions between ENGOs and environmental movements, where environmentalists have come together to protect the environment. Examples of environmental movements include the Green Belt movement in Kenya, the Chipko movement in India, and the Rubber Tappers movement in Brazil, all of which have pressed for the sustainable use of natural resources for community survival and began as informal associations (Chasek *et al.* 2006: 77). Informal grassroots organizations may become more formal and hierarchical over time, just as domestic NGOs may grow to become, or join, large international ones.

Above and beyond these classifications larger umbrella organizations may be established to pool resources. Third World Network is an example of an international umbrella NGO comprising individuals and organizations that aim to "contribute to policy changes in pursuit of just, equitable and ecologically sustainable development" for developing countries (TWN 2011). Owing to the dramatic increase in telecommunications (Wapner 1995: 317) such as the mobile phone, the internet, and social media, environmental movements and ENGOs do not need to scale up to achieve international campaign support.

Beyond intermediary NGOs that facilitate and amplify the operations of national and sub-national organizations and associations, informal NGO *networks* have also emerged around particular issues in order to discuss and legitimize the aims and strategies of environmentalists. A prime example is the Climate Action Network (CAN), which formed in 1989 and is dominated by Greenpeace International, the WWF, ED, and Friends of the Earth (Newell 2000: 126). It is a network of over 700 NGOs from over 90 states that "promotes government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels" (Alcock 2008: 82; Betsill 2008; CAN 2011; Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004: 61). CAN plays an "indispensable role in the coordination of strategy and campaigning activity, by orchestrating common positions among NGOs and keeping them informed of the latest developments in climate policy debates" (Newell 2000: 126–127).

The experience of CAN is comparable to the emergence of the environmental movement Climate Justice Now! (CJN!), which was launched on the final day of the Conference of the Parties 13 (COP 13) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali in 2007. Comprising groups and individuals that "were dissatisfied with the positions and processes of CAN," CJN! is critical of market solutions to climate change, while raising justice as a major concern in climate negotiations. In preparation for Copenhagen in 2009 (COP 15), other European and

Southern radical groups formed another association, the Climate Justice Action network (Fisher 2010: 15; CJA 2011; CJN! 2011; Guerrero 2011: 121). CAN has different priorities in climate negotiations on sustainability, efficiency, and equity (Alcock 2008: 82).

NGOs, individuals, local social movements, the media, foundations, churches, trade unions, consumer organizations, intellectuals, professionals, and parts of governments and IOs may also come together on particular issues to form transnational advocacy networks or TANs (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 9). Environmental TANs may form around issues such as deforestation, anti-oil and anti-dam campaigns (McAteer and Pulver 2009; Park 2010; Rodrigues 2004), as well as changing the practices, policies, and identities of IOs such as the World Bank Group (Park 2010). The emergence of TANs is based upon the coming together of a range of concerned actors around a particular issue, particularly where the international aspect of the network can bring pressure to bear on governments where domestic ENGOs have no leverage. This is known as the boomerang pattern (Keck and Sinkkink 1998: 12). TANs use four methods to achieve their goals: symbolism; generating and spreading information; holding actors accountable; and using leverage to assist less powerful actors (Keck and Sikkink 1998). However TANs may fail to form despite ripe conditions (Botetzagias *et al.* 2010) and inequality and tensions may arise in TANs, particularly where Southern NGOs become dependent on Northern NGOs or where the environmental problem is viewed differently along North–South lines (Jordan and van Tuijl 2000; Newell 2000: 126; Rohrschneider and Dalton 2002; Alcock 2008).

Global Civil Society

Overlaps exist between what some scholars call social movements (O'Brien *et al.* 2000; Khagram *et al.* 2002) and Keck and Sikkink's TANs. There is a lot of conceptual confusion over these categories. The main difference between social movements and NGOs, Sidney Tarrow argues, is behavioral, such that social movements are engaged in

> sustained contentious interaction with states, multinational actors or international institutions, whereas INGOs are engage in routine transactions with the same kinds of actors and provide services to citizens of other states (Tarrow 2001: 12).

Further, TANs may contain NGOs and social movements that work towards a common goal, where TANs are "informal and shifting structures" through which these and other actors interact (Tarrow 2001: 13).

Others go beyond identifying movements and networks to speak of a global civil society (Wapner 1995; Lipschutz 1996). Wapner, for example, argues that transnational activist efforts are evidence of a "world civic politics" where the activities of environmentalists go beyond pressure group politics and advocacy, through, for example, Northern NGOs funding conservation projects in developing countries (1995: 312). Global civil society captures these activities that are above the individual but below the state and take place across state borders (1995: 312–313). Lipschutz similarly locates activists within global civil society in order to counter the dominance of thinking about environmental politics through the Westphalian

sovereign state system (1996). Others argue that using the concept global civil society does not give enough room for the role of agency (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 33), while Tarrow goes so far as to say that the global civil society thesis is "unspecified, deterministic and undifferentiated" (2001: 14; see also Rohrschneider and Dalton 2002). Bearing in mind these classificatory pitfalls, we can readily identify how environmental actors change world politics.

Aims and Activities of Environmental Activism

Environmentalists have been concerned with not only conservation, but, beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, actively challenging everyday economic, political, and social practices that contribute to environmental degradation. Environmentalists have had a number of high-profile successes in challenging the activities of TNCs, IOs, and states to take account of their environmental impacts.

Changing Corporate Practices

Much of the literature highlights the increasing role of TNCs as actors in global environmental politics based on their global reach and influence over industry activities (Cashore *et al.* 2004; Levy and Newell 2005; Falkner 2008; see also Chapter 17 in this volume). Yet there has been an "activist discovery and manipulation of economic means of power" (Wapner 1995: 330). This section highlights six targets of successful environmentalist campaigns against: (1) specific types of industries (the extractive industries); (2) specific companies; (3) products; (4) environmentally harmful international trade; and in favor of proscribing and prescribing TNC activity through (5) shareholder and investor activism; and (6) the promotion of voluntary environmental codes of conduct.

First, environmentalists have attempted to halt the environmentally degrading extraction, production, and trade of goods. Transnational activist campaigns have been undertaken against the extractive industries of oil, gas, and mining (Jordan and van Tuijl 2000; McAteer and Pulver 2009; Park 2010). The extractive industries provide energy for industry and individual consumption but are dirty industries in terms of extraction, transportation, waste, and their impact as fossil fuels on the global climate system. Measures that environmentalists have used include: direct protest at the site of extraction and production and corporate headquarters; social media and online as well as traditional media campaigns for spreading information, raising awareness, and advocating for change; boycotting the product and the company; filing law suits against corporate practices that break domestic law; linking harmful practices to international treaties; promoting domestic and international regulation over industry practices such as minimum pollution levels and safe waste disposal. In the case of anti-oil campaigns in Ecuador, TANs used investor activism to change TNC policy and limit some of their dirtiest activities, with mixed success (Jordan and van Tuijl 2000; McAteer and Pulver 2009).

Second, environmentalists have challenged industry-wide practices through targeting a *specific company*. The largest company in an industry may be targeted to change industry-wide operations. For example, in the late 1980s activists were successful in changing McDonald's, the world's largest fast-food provider at the time,

use of ozone-depleting Styrofoam packaging of its burgers. Activists included the Citizens' Clearing House for Hazardous Wastes, the Earth Action Network, and Kids Against Pollution. They organized a "send-back" campaign in which people mailed McDonald's packaging to the national headquarters. In 1991 McDonald's bowed to activist pressure by stopping the use of its traditional Styrofoam hamburger boxes, despite not seeing Styrofoam packaging as an ecological problem (Wapner 1995: 327). This changed McDonald's practices in its 11 000 restaurants around the world as well as changing the packaging practices of its competitors.

Third, environmental campaigns have also targeted *specific products*. An international campaign began in 1985 to stop the accidental killing of dolphins while catching tuna. The Earth Island Institute, Greenpeace, and FoE among others campaigned to stop the use of drift-net and purse-seine fishing by tuna fleets in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean that entangle dolphins. They advocated boycotting all canned tuna, demonstrated at shareholders' meetings, and held rallies against the Tuna Boat Association. The Earth Island Institute then assisted in producing a documentary, *Where Have All the Dolphins Gone?*, which was shown throughout the USA and across the world. The documentary promoted the idea of dolphin-safe tuna labeling to market environmentally sensitive brands. Environmental activism was crucial in stopping the slaughter of dolphins by tuna companies. This action has contributed to a sea-change in the tuna industry, stopping fishing practices that might accidentally catch dolphins and contributing to protecting dolphin populations around the world. Of course this success was undermined by the increasing strength of the global trade regime, where environmentalists' efforts to protect the environment ran up against the rules of the World Trade Organization (see also Chapter 24 in this volume).

Fourth, environmentalists have also aimed to *prohibit international trade*. The emergence of the IUCN and later the WWF were critical for the creation of the Convention on the Trade of Endangered Species (CITES). Much of the work on conservation has been led by ENGOs. ENGOs were key in promoting specific bans on engendered species products such as ivory through CITES and mobilizing public opinion, which helped contribute to a collapse of consumer demand (Princen 1994: 143). Activists were also instrumental in establishing the 1989 Basel Convention Controlling Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Ford 2005: 323). Greenpeace played a vital role in shifting states' position in favor of ratifying Basel by monitoring and reporting on the trade in toxic waste (Chasek *et al.* 2006: 131), while the International Toxic Waste Action Network and the Basel Action Network continue to campaign for states to sign the Basel Convention and to oppose the trade of toxics between developed and developing states (Clapp 2001; Ford 2005: 232). Lastly, environmentalists such as the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) comprising over 600 organizations and individuals from over 60 countries, and the International POPs Elimination Network made up of over 700 public interest NGOs (IPEN 2011), have played an ongoing role in lobbying for the phasing out of chemicals such as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) while mobilizing grassroots support for the 2001 Stockholm Convention (Chasek *et al.* 2006: 80).

Fifth, environmentalists have attempted to stop TNCs from getting financing for their operations. They have done so through engaging in shareholder activism, investor activism, and investor screening to limit environmentally and socially

damaging corporate behavior. TANs target institutional shareholders such as pension funds and socially responsible investment firms that hold shares in companies, to hold the company to account for any decision they make that may negatively impact on the environment. Shareholder activism is on the increase, with 359 resolutions being filed against publicly listed US corporations by shareholders on socially responsible topics in 1997 (McAteer and Pulver 2009: 4). There are currently 67 investor advocacy networks, most of which have emerged over the last decade. Investor activism tends to be single-issue driven, for example the Carbon Disclosure Project, which aims to promote companies that reduce carbon emissions in order to tackle climate change. Further, investor screening also occurs where investors exclude from their portfolio corporations that engage in negative practices such as knowingly damaging the environment (MacLeod and Park 2011: 54).

Finally, activists have also challenged corporations to establish market-based voluntary environmental codes of conduct (Alcock 2008). Corporations have responded with elective public reporting (Gleckman 2004), which is often done on a firm-by-firm basis, and varies considerably in terms of what information is provided on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and environmental and social governance (ESG) measures. TNCs have also created the International Chamber of Commerce's (ICC) Business Charter for Sustainable Development, and the World Sustainable Development Business Council. Environmentalists such as Greenpeace and FoEI pushed unsuccessfully for an international environmental accountability treaty to govern TNCs in the run-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 (Clapp 2005: 293–294). As a result, efforts to mitigate the environmental impact of TNCs remain voluntary, although they do accord with international guidelines for corporations such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN Global Compact, and the ISO 14000 environmental management standards.

The best-known voluntary code of conduct is the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES). Previously known as the Valdez Principles after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989 (Wapner 1995), CERES is a non-profit coalition of 130 member organizations that aims to "help business transition to a sustainable economy." Its members include NGOs, Fortune 500 companies, and institutional investors. CERES launched the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which is considered to be the most successful voluntary corporate environmental code and is used by over 1800 corporations for reporting on environmental, social, and economic performance (Levy *et al.* 2009; CERES 2011). The CERES Principles, the GRI, and the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) are general codes of conduct for corporations.

Voluntary environmental corporate codes of conduct tended to be based on an industry or product (Vogel 2008: 269). Opposition from environmentalists contributed to corporations creating self-defined implementation standards (Gleckman 2004). For example, protests against banks like Citigroup contributed to change in the finance industry, leading big private banks to create the Equator Principles for project finance. These are voluntary environmental and social guidelines for private sector financiers of major infrastructure and industrial projects. Environmentalists have pushed corporations to create self-financed certification standards such as certificates for forest and marine products, as well as cocoa, coffee, and flowers (Cashore *et al.* 2004; Vogel 2008; Bostrom and Hallstrom 2010).

Businesses and NGOs have together created sector-specific codes and labels. For example, the international Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) forest certification system was created by environmental groups such as WWF, in conjunction with industry and landowners (Cashore *et al.* 2004), and WWF was instrumental in establishing the Marine Stewardship Council for certifying marine products with Unilever. While standards such as the FSC aim to create stability between landowners and environmentalists, it remains difficult to identify the extent to which corporations follow standards like the Equator Principles for project finance (Wight 2012).

Changing International Organizations

In terms of IOs, environmentalists have been most successful in challenging their business-as-usual approach to incorporate environmental considerations in relation to the World Bank Group (Rich 1994; Wade 1997; Park 2010) but less so for the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (O'Brien *et al.* 2000). Placing the greening process in context, large-scale bureaucracies driven by sovereign states have difficulty implementing environmental ideas into their activities even without pressure from environmentalists (on the UN, see Conca 1996).

While pressure from environmental activists has been crucial in bringing about policy change, the overall discussion has been focused on whether IOs can become green or whether they have merely green-washed their operations. Evaluating the greening of IOs incorporates two factors: the push for IOs to address environmental issues and the extent to which IOs have responded to environmental pressure. Overwhelmingly, debates on why IOs have become green have focused on the World Bank. The World Bank initially adopted environmental concerns in the 1970s for a mixture of economic, political, and intellectual reasons, yet the "push" for a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Bank's environmental concerns came from mass environmental campaigns in the 1980s.

Yet scholars surmised that the Bank had not internalized environmental concerns. For example, Wade (1997) argued that while the Bank had shifted from "environment versus growth" to "environmentally sustainable development" it had not changed its internal incentive system, thus undermining environmental rigor (which some called "green neoliberalism": Goldman 2005). Environmental activist Bruce Rich (1994) agreed that the Bank had only green-washed its operations because its environmental criteria had not been implemented properly and that the Bank's loan approval culture confounded attempts to further environmentally sustainable development.

Alternatively, Haas and Haas (1995) argued that the World Bank had analyzed how environmental concerns fit within its organizational aims through a re-evaluation of its beliefs about cause and effect, resulting in a change of the organization's goals to employ new environmental criteria rather than superficial operational changes. They argued that only the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Bank were capable of integrating environmental considerations into their traditional responsibilities. While recognizing that the Bank has substantially incorporated environmental ideas, the distinction between adaptation and learning tends to separate an organization's tactical responses to states and non-state actors on

the one hand, and complex learning on the other. Yet tactical concessions are often seen, in longer-term analysis, to be the first step in a process of norm adherence (Park 2010).

Gutner (2002) also found that the World Bank was a greener bank, because it "finances projects with primary environmental goals and attempts to integrate environmental thinking into the broader set of strategic goals it develops." Others agreed that the World Bank had become greener, as evinced by an increase in environmental projects and loans, and an increase in environmental staff and environmental monitoring. The cause of the greening was the result of increased oversight by the Bank's member-states and targeted action by Bank management that aligned with the culture and incentive structure for staff within the Bank (Nielson *et al.* 2006). Yet this approach overlooked significant input from environmentalists that determined that the World Bank should change, including how it should do so, both through direct interactions with the World Bank and indirectly through powerful member-states. As a result of concerted environmentalist pressure, these standards would be diffused to the private sector through the project finance and political risk insurer arms of the World Bank Group, be taken up by the OECD for its political risk insurers, and by private banks through the Equator Principles (Park 2010).

Influencing Global Summits and Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Environmentalists have not just targeted TNCs and IOs; they have taken an active role in global environmental summits and international treaty negotiations. Clark *et al.* (2005) argue that the number of NGOs has increased in relation to global summits: 250 accredited NGOs attended the UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, while 1400 attended the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. At the WSSD in 2002, 3200 were accredited (Betsill and Corell 2008: viii). While their involvement in the official proceedings is determined by states, parallel NGO forums have been operating since 1972 – 18 000 NGOs attended the parallel forum at UNCED in 1992 and over 20 000 attended the WSSD (Clark *et al.* 2005: 298, 297).

Since 1992 ENGOs have been involved in national and regional preparatory processes in the lead-up to environmental summits, although as with specific environmental treaty negotiations, the preparatory committee meetings became more exclusionary the closer they were to the summit (Clark *et al.* 2005: 302). Newell argues that the "UNCED System" privileges the better-resourced, primarily Northern ENGOs while encouraging the "the formulation of common positions by groups of interests," which has led to the reduction of "very disparate demands to the status of a lowest-common-denominator set of diluted policy suggestions." The end result has been, he argues, that governments find it easier to reject these proposals or to respond "via tokenistic, incremental policy changes" rather than substantive policy change (Newell 2000: 139). While there is little agreement on what influence ENGOs have had at global environmental summits, the WSSD signified a shift in the activities of ENGOs, states, and IOs with the move towards working together in public–private partnerships for achieving sustainable development (see Andonova 2010).

In relation to specific multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), much of the environmental lobbying is done at the domestic level in preparations for negotiations (Newell 2000: 128; Betsill and Correll 2008; McCormick 2011). Environmental NGOs have been able to influence states' positions and have been active in negotiations on transboundary air pollution, regional stocks, climate change, ozone depletion, and biodiversity (Wapner 1995; Alcock 2008: 78; Betsill and Corell 2008; McCormick 2011). While states retain the ability to sign and implement MEAs, since the mid- to late 1980s ENGOs have focused on incorporating environmental concerns into the outcome of interstate negotiations, often through shaping public opinion (Newell 2000: 128, 136).

For example, ENGOs were able to use public pressure to press the US government to be part of the UNFCCC (Newell 2000: 130). ENGOs such as Greenpeace also played an important role in establishing the 1982 moratorium on whaling, thus helping to shift the whaling regime from pro- to anti-whaling. Greenpeace has continued to play an influential role in interstate whaling politics, arguably as a result of paying state membership dues and being part of states' delegations to the International Whaling Commission (Skodvin and Andresen 2003: 80). Typically, ENGOs may have "access to the conference venue, presence during meetings, interventions during debate, face-to-face lobbying of delegations, and [receive the] distribution of documents" (Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004: 59). Often they are given observer status, which may or may not entail the opportunity to interject in debates. Some ENGOs have been included in official state delegations, giving them a greater opportunity to influence proceedings (Newell 2000: 137).

Betsill and Corell (2008) have attempted to identify the extent of ENGO influence in MEAs. Through participation ENGOs can frame the issue, set the agenda, and influence the positions of key states. Yet ENGOs have had varying levels of influence over the outcome of environmental treaties (Betsill and Correll 2008: 11). They argue that ENGOs may have low influence in international negotiations if there is no observable effect of their activity on the negotiation process or outcome despite active participation. ENGOs may have moderate influence if they can shape the negotiation process but did not affect the outcome, as was the case with negotiations over the Kyoto Protocol of the UNFCCC. ENGOs have a high degree of influence if they are able to shape the negotiation process and the outcome, as witnessed in the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (1993–1994) (Betsill and Correll 2008; McCormick 2011: 108).

Global Policy Dimensions: How Do Environmentalists Impact Climate Change?

While many everyday practices continue to have harmful effects on the natural environment, evidence provided above demonstrates that environmentalists can bring about positive change by challenging the practices of TNCs, IOs, and states in MEAs. Activists can do so because they are able to create new categories of meaning and action, such as establishing a consensus in favor of a moratorium on whaling and establishing projects and programs to protect the biosphere with state, corporate, and IO support. Environmentalists have soft power, which enables them to create these new categories and to spread environmental ideas and actions to other

actors through framing issues, setting agendas, engaging in persuasion, symbolism, cognitive and social influence, and legitimacy and accountability politics (Princen and Finger 1994; Wapner 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Newell 2000: 124, 129; Bostrom and Hallstrom 2010; Park 2010).

It is not surprising to think of environmentalists as diffusers of ideas, helping to create and shape international conventions on whaling, biodiversity, POPs, the trade in toxics, and CITES. They are able to influence states' positions in international negotiations and as members of IOs, and as domestic regulators for TNCs. Yet they also have material power using their financial resources from membership and donations in order to undertake technical specialist research, monitoring, and advocacy for achieving change in order to protect the environment. In many cases, ENGOs technical expertise has been able to determine (developing) states' policy in areas like climate change (Newell 2000: 132, 142). Some even allege that ENGOs use their financial position to back states in international negotiations such as in the IWC (Skodvin and Andresen 2003).

How are we to evaluate the success of environmentalists in world politics? We can examine the extent to which they have contributed to a change in government policy; strengthened a regime through the inclusion of environmental provisions in treaty texts; advocated stricter positions in international negotiations; and monitored and shamed state, TNC, and IO activity in relation to international treaties, standards, and commitments. We can assess whether their efforts at the international level have led to an improved environmental outcome overall (such as a reduction of carbon emissions), or for a period of time (such as the moratorium on whaling, the ban on ivory, and the recovery of species to sustainable levels on the CITES endangered list). Parsing out the influence of ENGOs is crucial, however, in order to evaluate the extent to which environmentalists have played a catalytic factor in improving environmental conditions.

Scholars have done just this in relation to climate change negotiations. Peter Newell highlights how ENGOs played an important role in setting the climate agenda in the late 1980s by organizing international workshops, leading governments to respond with the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Newell 2000: 131). ENGOs were excluded from meetings where key decisions were made by states in the lead-up to the UNFCCC in 1992, and later at COP 2 in Geneva, although "climate negotiations were regarded as being at the forefront of attempts to open up international negotiations to NGO participation" (Newell 2000: 137). Yet ENGOs have played an important mediating role between states, persuading countries like Brazil and India to negotiate, leading to a developing country position that enabled the Berlin Mandate in 1995 for a binding protocol to the UNFCCC (Arts 1998; Newell 2000: 144).

Michele Betsill (2008) argues that ENGO influence was moderate in negotiations to create the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC between 1995 and 1997. The Climate Action Network was able to mobilize the support of India and China for a Protocol (Newell 2000: 144). CAN, spearheaded by Greenpeace, FOEI, and WWF, "served as the voice of the environmental community during Kyoto negotiations" (Alcock 2008: 82; Betsill 2008: 46), through lobbying governments, producing a daily newsletter, and establishing a "fossil of the day" award for states that had been the most obstructive in negotiations to shame them. They also provided

technical information and detailed knowledge on the draft negotiating texts for states, despite being increasingly excluded as Protocol negotiations progressed (Betsill 2008: 47–49).

CAN had four objectives throughout the negotiations: to push for strong targets and timetables for emissions reductions; CAN was split on favoring or opposing emissions trading; they opposed including sinks in the negotiations; and they wanted strong monitoring and compliance for the Protocol, although the latter was not on the agenda (Betsill 2008: 50). ENGO influence on Kyoto was moderate, because CAN's "positions are not reflected in the Protocol's texts." However, CAN was able to shape the negotiating process by "catalyzing debate over emissions trading and sinks" and by influencing the "position of key states on the issue of targets and timetables." Counterfactually, the absence of ENGOs may have made states' positions on the Protocol weaker (Arts 1998: 110; Betsill 2008: 44–58).

Gulbrandsen and Andresen (2004) take up where Betsill left off in examining whether ENGOs were able to influence the implementation measures for the Kyoto Protocol in relation to compliance, flexibility mechanisms, and sinks. These were negotiated from the COP 6 and COP 7 leading to the Marrakesh Accords in 2001. They argue that ENGOs were able to see some of their ideas on compliance adopted, such as being able to submit technical and factual information to the enforcement branch of the Kyoto compliance system, but their participation in compliance negotiations was restricted, and the compliance system was less participatory than they had advocated (2004: 64). In relation to the flexibility mechanism to supplement domestic emissions reductions, contra other CAN members, Environmental Defense (ED) was able to help influence the US position on market mechanisms for emissions reductions, which ultimately led the EU to agree to introduce emissions trading (2004: 65). While the majority of ENGOs in CAN did not get their preferences for compliance on Kyoto adopted, ED was aligned with the US position and therefore did, although this was not because of the persuasive efforts of ED (2004: 66). In short, ENGO activities in the Kyoto negotiations demonstrate that environmental activists have limited influence on outcomes but are able to maintain pressure on decision-makers to achieve the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol.

Can Institutions and Processes Be Made to Work Better?

There continues to be discussions as to whether there are better ways of managing environmental issues at all levels (locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally). Two trends shape these discussions: the shift away from the state towards both market mechanisms and the power of TNCs (Newell 2000: 125), and towards global governance (Alcock 2008). As detailed in the earlier section on "Global Policy Dimensions: How Do Environmentalists impact Climate Change?" environmental activists have played important roles in challenging the operations of TNCs, IOs, and states to mitigate the worst environmentally damaging activities that result from globalization and to make global environmental governing processes more effective. Environmentalists have therefore been able to have some influence in world politics, despite not being able to change the overall trend towards greater environmental degradation globally.

While arresting the degree to which globalization trumps environmental concerns remains key to much transnational environmental agency, scholars have also examined how the structure of global environmental governance could be made more effective. While there is a large literature on the democratic deficit of global governance in international relations, environmentalists have been playing an increasing role in governing environmental problems, particularly in market-driven governance mechanisms such as the FSC (Jordan and van Tuijl 2000; Cashore *et al.* 2004; Bostrom and Hallstrom 2010). However, environmentalist participation tends to reflect rather than overcome the unequal structural power in the exchange (Bostrom and Hallstrom 2010: 57). Some MEAs have had strong ENGO influence owing to their access and capacity to drive solutions to the specific environmental problem, but these have often been in areas of low importance to powerful states (Betsill and Corell 2008). While environmentalist influence in climate negotiations has been moderate (Betsill 2008), scholars have been looking at how global governance and MEAs can be made more democratic in order to be both more effective and more legitimate (Dryzek *et al.* 2011).

Deliberative democratic processes involving individuals from across the globe, as opposed to states representing their citizens in international negotiations, could overcome institutional barriers that stem from the construction of the climate regime, for example. The dramatic increase in the number of environmentalists attending the climate negotiations at COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009 revealed how unwieldy international negotiations could become. Over 12 048 NGOs were registered at COP 15 in 2009, compared to 979 at COP 1 in 1995 (Cabre 2011: 11). At most negotiations, half of those registered are NGOs, at Copenhagen two-thirds were. Fisher argues that the "the massive expansion of civil society participation at Copenhagen was not only accompanied by civil society disenfranchisement, it actually contributed to it" (2010: 11, 12). Precisely because of the sheer volume of observers, access was limited for many environmentalists, thus preventing their involvement in negotiation.

Opportunities for environmentalists to deliberate over the future of global environmental problems such as climate change may shift the dynamics away from the short-term interests of states and TNCs. In short, having ENGOs at the negotiating table is not enough as states predetermine their "political goals that are not amenable to significant modification though international bargaining, and hence the degree of influence NGOs can exercise remains restricted" (Newell 2000: 137). Making international negotiations on climate change more democratic would also render "lobbying, bargaining, threats, and inducements" that are part of the current system obsolete (Dryzek *et al.* 2011: 40). Recasting the nature of decision-making could therefore improve global environmental governance and change the balance of power between states, IOs, TNCs, and environmentalists.

Conclusions

This chapter has discussed how environmentalists expend a great deal of energy to bring environmental concerns to international attention. It first identified the variety of actors engaged in environmental activism; second, it examined the aims and activities of environmental activists in relation to changing the activities of TNCs, IOs, and states through global summits and environmental treaties; third, it investigated

the agency of environmental activists to bring about global environmental change in relation to industries, specific corporations, products, and codes of conduct; fourth, it reviewed how environmental activism is undertaken to improve environmental outcomes; and finally, the chapter reflected on the global policy implications of current environmental activist efforts in relation to climate change.

The chapter demonstrated that environmentalists are on occasion able to stop TNCs, states, and IOs from engaging in environmentally harmful activities but that their successes are outweighed by the overall structure of the international economic and political system. ENGOs have been ingenious in devising tactics and strategies to prevent environmental harm, ranging from investor screening, to YouTube clips, to traditional protests and boomerang politics. These actions sit alongside environmentalist efforts to influence multilateral negotiations on issues like climate change. New ways of making global environmental policy-making more legitimate and effective were identified through introducing alternative institutions such as deliberative democracy. Transnational environmental activism continues to evolve through combining traditional protest politics with new methods of online social campaigns and investor activism. While there is no magic bullet, environmentalists are using combined strategies to harness soft power in relation to environmental problems like climate change.

Note

1 On the difficulties of collecting data on international NGOs see Sikkink and Smith (2002: 26); McCormick (2011: 101).

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