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# **Shaming and Framing:**

## **Norwegian Nongovernmental Organizations in the Climate Change Negotiations**

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**Sammendrag:** Arbeidsnotatet diskuterer de strategiene miljøvernorganisasjonene har valgt i sine forsøk på å påvirke norske myndigheters adferd i forhandlingene under FN's klimakonvensjon (UNFCCC). Studien omfatter både norske miljøvernorganisasjoner og deres internasjonale allierte i paraplyorganisasjonen Climate Action Network (CAN), og fokuserer på deres aktiviteter under de viktigste forhandlingsmøtene. Organisasjonene valgte hovedsaklig *ikke* å forsøke å virke inn på forhandlingsutfallet ved å påvirke forhandlerne direkte (lobbyvirksomhet). I stedet brukte de forhandlingsmøtene som anledning til å forme den hjemlige politiske dagsordenen ved å levere informasjon og argumenter til mediene. Hensikten var å øve indirekte innflytelse over Norges utenrikspolitikk og forhandlingsposisjon ved å legge moralsk press på myndighetene ("shaming") og å legge premisser for den hjemlige debatten som var fordelaktige for organisasjonenes politikk ("framing"). Handlinger på de hjemlige og de internasjonale politiske arenaene var i dette tilfellet nært forbundet. Vi mener slike forbindelser bør tas i betraktning når man vurderer miljøorganisasjonenes eventuelle innflytelse i internasjonale forhandlinger. Mer spesifikt peker vi på to potensielt viktige kilder til innflytelse over utenrikspolitikk og dermed forhandlingsutfall: for det første organisasjonenes evne til å true en regjering's anseelse og omdømme. For det andre deres evne til å forme hjemlige aktørers oppfatning av internasjonale forpliktelser.

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the strategies chosen by Norwegian-based environmental non-governmental organizations(ENGOS) and their international allies in the Climate Action Network (CAN) in seeking to influence Norway's behaviour in the UN climate change negotiations. We focus on ENGO activities at the major negotiating sessions and find that the ENGOS for the most part chose not to try to affect negotiation outcomes through influencing the negotiators directly (i.e., lobbying). Instead, they used the negotiating sessions as opportunities to shape the domestic political agenda by transmitting information and arguments to the media. The aim was to indirectly influence Norway's foreign policy and negotiating position by shaming its government into adopting policies preferred by the ENGOS, and framing the domestic climate policy debate in terms favourable to the NGO's policies. We show how actions taken in the international and domestic political arenas were closely intertwined in this case, and argue that ENGO influence in international negotiations should be understood with such linkages taken into account. Specifically, we emphasise that the ENGOS' ability to threaten a government's legitimacy and popular image, as well as their ability to shape domestic actor's interpretations of international commitments, should be noted as potentially important vehicles of influence over foreign policy and thereby over negotiation outcomes.

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## 1 Introduction

Since the late 1980s, environmental NGOs (ENGOs) have sought to make governments in Europe and the rest of the industrialised world commit to and implement substantial and early reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. One of several political arenas where they have worked to promote this goal is the international negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The aim of this chapter is to throw light on the strategies ENGOs employ in seeking to influence international negotiations and foreign policy. To illustrate the discussion, we specifically examine how ENGOs attempted to influence Norway in the UNFCCC negotiations from 1995 to 2001. We look at the activities of Norwegian ENGOs as well as their international counterparts in the international ENGO coalition Climate Action Network (CAN) during the main negotiating sessions. Not surprisingly, Norway's behaviour was the main concern for the Norwegian groups, while multinational ENGOs such as Greenpeace International or WWF International gave attention to Norway more sporadically.

Our focus on *strategy choice* says little by itself about the environmental groups' actual results in terms of *influence* over outcomes (Betsill and Corell 2001). The NGOs' strategies could simply be a failure, and their actions irrelevant to outcomes. However, careful attention to the strategies actually chosen may help us identify potentially important forms and channels of influence. Specifically, we point out that even when attending the UN conferences, ENGOs spent much of their energy seeking to influence domestic debates and decisions on foreign policy – the government's negotiating position, as well as the interpretation and implementation of existing commitments – rather than trying to influence negotiators directly. Observers who assume that NGO influence over the outcome of international negotiations results only from direct lobbying at the international conferences could easily overlook the impact of the more indirect strategies we discuss here.

In the following section we start by showing how international relations and social movement scholars understand the role of NGOs in international negotiations and foreign policy, introducing some concepts useful for understanding the presentation of the case. The next section provides background on Norway's role in international climate policy and the NGOs in question. The main section then presents and discusses the NGOs' strategy choices at the international conferences. In concluding, we confront our findings with some assumptions frequently made in analyses of the influence of NGOs in international negotiations.

## 2 Background: NGOs, foreign policy, and international environmental negotiations

Thousands of individuals attend the main negotiating sessions under the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties ("COP" for short) that take place more or less annually. Official representatives of the states that are parties to the Convention and are thereby eligible to vote have frequently been outnumbered by registered observers who are there to gather information or seek some form of influence or attention. A majority of the observers represent NGOs, particularly environmental groups and business associations. Most of them are trying to influence the outcome of negotiations through one means or another.

In the literature on international environmental politics, much attention has recently been directed at the role of such NGOs. Opinions about the scope and degree of their influence are widely diverging. This chapter seeks to illuminate one aspect of this discussion, namely the various *strategies* non-state actors use to influence the outcome of ongoing negotiations.

While representatives of sovereign states hold a monopoly on formal decision-making power at international negotiations, it is increasingly recognized that other actors still may play crucial roles in facilitating and shaping international environmental cooperation. Particularly when it comes to bringing attention to issues and thereby shaping the political agenda, the role of NGOs is widely recognized. The forms and degree of NGO influence during the actual negotiations are, however, currently subject to considerable debate and research by students of foreign policy and international relations.

A recently proposed framework for analysis of NGO influence in international negotiations assumes from the outset that “tactics such as the granting of rewards or the threat of punishment (...) generally are not viable options during a UN negotiation on an environmental issue”, and that *information* therefore is “the key currency for NGOs in exerting influence” (Betsill and Corell 2001). Indeed, NGO influence is *defined* as occurring “when [NGOs] intentionally transmit information to negotiators that alters both the negotiating process and outcome from what would have occurred otherwise” (Betsill and Corell 2001). According to these authors, NGO influence is thus present when NGOs participate actively during the negotiations and have access to negotiators and the information or knowledge resources to make them listen – as well as when the information they provide can also be seen to have altered or shaped outcomes such as treaty texts.

The framework proposed by Betsill and Corell explicitly seeks to embrace both international and nationally-based NGOs, but is exclusively concerned with events on the political arena provided by international negotiations. Following the conventional distinction between international and sub-national levels of decision making, any influence NGOs might have over decisions regarding the relevant domestic and foreign policies of national governments is excluded from the analysis.

In contrast to this approach, we will in the following discussion stress the interconnectedness of political processes at the international and national levels regarding policies to limit greenhouse gas emissions. In taking this perspective, we follow authors such as Skodvin and Andresen (Skodvin and Andresen 2003), who entertain a broader understanding of NGO influence on negotiations, including influence through domestic politics. In other words, what Barkdull and Harris call *societal theories* of environmental foreign policy is a necessary supplement to theories focusing on the international system (Barkdull and Harris 2002). This also invites consideration of a broader set of means of influence than merely providing information. The case we present below provides support for the usefulness of this approach.

In Barkdull and Harris’ typology of foreign policy theories, we find that society-oriented approaches stressing the role of interests and ideas are particularly helpful in throwing light on the strategies employed by ENGOs seeking to influence Norway (Barkdull and Harris 2002). Specifically, a few concepts borrowed from the literature on international regimes and negotiations, and from the literature on social movements, prove useful in understanding domestic–international linkages in this case. Students of international regimes have observed that the *shaming* activities of NGOs can strengthen regimes. “Shaming” refers to an activity that “exploits the symbolic legitimacy of foreign pressure and international institutions to unleash domestic moral opprobrium” (Moravcsik 1995). By pointing to controversial government practices, international norms that condemn such practices, or international reactions to the practices in question, shaming strategies are intended to induce changes in government policy. Such strategies are frequently pursued by NGOs to put pressure on governments to keep agreements or to modify controversial domestic policies (Rengger 1997). Shaming activities could equally well be directed at positions taken in international negotiations, as will be illustrated below.

Students of social movements have also stressed the importance of *framing* activities – the interpretive work that activists do in presenting issues to the public and decision makers. The

framing that NGOs give their issues could simply reflect unconscious or taken-for-granted assumptions about the issues at stake. In many cases, however, activists use *strategic framing* as a tool to further their political or organizational goals (Zald 1996). When policy is made in a multi-level process, the interpretation of events at the international level of action becomes a key part of the efforts of NGOs to strategically frame the domestic debate.

A *two-level game* has been suggested as a metaphor for political processes where participants in intergovernmental negotiations also engage in negotiations with key sub-national actors at home regarding foreign policy. Analytically, one can distinguish between a *negotiation phase* where governments bargain at the international level, and a *ratification phase* where ratification (and thereafter implementation) of the outcome of the negotiations at the international level is considered and contested within each country. In practice, expectations about events at one level influence strategies at the other level (Putnam 1988).

Expanding on Putnam's perspective in the context of social movement studies, della Porta and Kriesi observe that non-governmental actors do not limit themselves to mobilisation at the domestic level. They offer a typology of social movement activities beyond the nation-state (della Porta and Kriesi 1998). Through *transnational* mobilisation, a national movement facing a difficult situation domestically could seek alliance with movements in other countries that will either support the movement or direct international pressure at the government of the country in question. *Cross-level* mobilisation refers to cooperation between a national movement and a foreign government. Finally, international levels of the political system represented by institutions such as the EU and the UN offer *new political arenas* for national movements, as well as opportunities and incentives to establish genuinely *transnational mobilising structures* that are often oriented towards influencing decision-making at the international level.

### 3 Norway, the Kyoto Protocol and the ENGOs

Compared to the situation in the United States, Russia and many developed countries, the Norwegian climate policy debate has been characterized by a relatively high degree of consensus that climate change is a real threat worth addressing through mitigation policies. At the same time, Norway's reliance on petroleum and other emissions-intensive industries for export income, as well as on road traffic for keeping a large but sparsely populated country connected, makes policy instruments such as environmental taxes or tradable quotas controversial.

During the 1990s, much of the climate policy debate in Norway – both regarding domestic policies and the Norwegian position in the UNFCCC negotiations – centred on the relationship between international cooperation and national action to limit emissions. Should the Norwegian government take ambitious measures to reduce domestic emissions regardless of what other countries did, or should such action be conditional upon international agreements? Was it crucial to reduce emissions domestically, or was financing of cheaper emissions reductions abroad through “flexibility mechanisms” (after 1997 also known as “Kyoto mechanisms”), such as international emissions trading or project-based cooperation, of equal value? The environmental movement favoured early action at home over conditionality and flexible international solutions (Kasa, Malvik et al. 2001; Hovden and Lindseth 2002). This position taken by the Norwegian ENGOs mirrored the views of their international counterparts, which stressed each country's responsibility to start reducing its own emissions without delay, and viewed “flexible” solutions with varying degrees of suspicion.

Our analysis in the following sections focuses on the years 1995-2001. Events in this period should, however, be understood in light of the earlier climate policy debates since the second half of the 1980s. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development

(WCED) headed by Norwegian Prime Minister at the time, Gro Harlem Brundtland, had presented its report *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987). Here, the question of human-induced climate change was highlighted as one of the main challenges facing the world. The report contributed strongly to attracting political attention to the issue internationally and even more so in Norway. Brundtland's prominent role in international environmental affairs made her government especially sensitive to embarrassment regarding its own environmental conduct. This sensitivity was eagerly exploited by the environmental movement.

An early example was seen in 1989, when activists from *Natur og Ungdom* (Nature and Youth – NU – a membership-based ENGO for people younger than 25 years old) got hold of a draft plan for the Brundtland government's work with the issues raised in *Our Common Future*. The draft suggested far less restrictive limits for national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than the environmentalists wanted. NU activists took the draft to an international environmental conference in The Hague. Their "goal was to draw international attention" to the unsatisfactory action taken by Brundtland's own government on the issues raised by the Brundtland Commission (Persen and Ranum 1997). They received attention in Dutch and Danish newspapers. Several international NGOs signed petitions demanding stronger environmental policies from Norway and expressing disappointment with Brundtland. This international attention in turn led to publicity on the issue in the Norwegian news media – and a prolonged, heated argument between the Prime Minister's office and NU (Persen and Ranum 1997; Nilsen 2001). The affair placed the question of a national CO<sub>2</sub> target firmly on the political agenda, where environmental issues were already getting increasing attention. In the pro-environmental political climate at the time, a broad majority in Parliament soon passed a stricter CO<sub>2</sub> target than that proposed by the Brundtland government, namely to stabilise emissions at the 1989 level by 2000 (Nilsen 2001; Reitan 2001).

About the same time, negotiations concerning a global regime to limit human contributions to climate change began. This process led to the adoption of the UNFCCC at the UN "Earth Summit" in 1992 (an event which again pitted Brundtland against domestic environmental groups). The Climate Convention set a non-binding target of stabilising emissions from industrialised countries at 1990 levels by 2000. In Norway a CO<sub>2</sub> tax was imposed on emissions from road transport, offshore oil and gas extraction and several other sectors, while export industries to a large degree were exempted.

During the first years of the 1990s, it gradually became clear that Norway would have a hard time fulfilling its national stabilisation target. Especially unforeseen growth in oil and natural gas output from fields in the North Sea led to increases in expected emissions growth. A controversy in 1990–1991 concerning industrial use of natural gas, the so-called *Heidrun* project, stemmed from the conflict between reaching the CO<sub>2</sub> target on one hand and industrial development on the other. The environmental movement and its political allies successfully opposed plans for a gas-fired power plant with considerable CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. During the summer of 1994, new plans for gas-fired power in Norway were launched. The company *Naturkraft* was established to develop and run two power plants on the western coast of Norway. The owners were the petroleum company *Statoil*, power company *Statkraft* (both owned by the Norwegian state) and partially state-owned *Norsk Hydro*.

The period in focus here (1995–2001) started with several important developments. In spring 1995 the first Conference of the Parties (COP1) of the Climate Convention was convened in Berlin, and issued a mandate ("the Berlin Mandate") to negotiate a treaty with legally binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in industrialised countries. In June that year, the Labour Government led by Gro Harlem Brundtland officially announced – in a long-awaited action plan on climate policy – that the stabilisation target was unattainable and therefore in practice abandoned. During the same year, FIVH (The Future in Our Hands), GPN (Greenpeace Norway), NNV (Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature) and NU joined forces under the umbrella *Klimakameratene* ("Climate Friends"). This alliance produced joint hearing documents criticising the government's action plan and

negotiating position, and lobbied and campaigned both jointly and individually against the two gas-fired power plants planned by *Naturkraft* that would increase domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by about 5 percent.

During the winter 1995–1996, the gas-power issue was singled out by the Norwegian environmental movement as a main target for protest in order to raise awareness and political pressure around the broader question of rising domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and Norway's contribution to global climate change before the Kyoto conference (Hesstvedt 2001; Nilsen 2001:221). The decision of whether or not build the two projected power plants was soon declared “the most important environmental issue of the 1990s” (Engeland 1996a). The movement's framing of a single industrial project as the symbol for the whole global warming issue was a conscious choice that enabled activists to mobilise broadly around a problem that could otherwise have seemed too abstract and distant. This was recognized as a strategic choice not only by movement leaders, but also by activists at the grassroots level (Carlsson and Tjernshaugen 2000:36). It allowed the complex, abstract and distant climate problem to be focused into an issue sufficiently tangible, close-to-home and simple to facilitate broad mobilization and crystallise political alliances and lines of conflict. This was clearly a case of *strategic framing* (Zald 1996).

In April 1996, *Klima-alliansen* (“the Climate Alliance”), a broader alliance against the *Naturkraft* project that included several opposition parties as well as the youth branches of the major pro-gas Labour and Conservative parties, was established. In May it presented its counter-report to the Government's white paper on gas-fired power. In June a clear majority in Parliament approved of the project subject to certain conditions to be considered by the government. At the COP2 meeting in Geneva, also in June, a surprise announcement by the American delegation that the US supported binding targets for greenhouse gas emissions added new momentum to the negotiations. In September *Klima-alliansen* announced a campaign to collect 100,000 signatures on a petition demanding that the authorities reconsider the project; the signatures were submitted in December.

During 1997, intense negotiations took place before the COP3 meeting in Kyoto, which was to finalise a treaty with binding emission targets. In January that year the NU congress announced its intention to use civil disobedience against the *Naturkraft* project if necessary. The ad-hoc *Fellesaksjonen mot gasskraftverk* (“Joint action against gas-fired power plants,” FMG) was established on an individual membership basis to organise protests in the event of any construction work, which was expected to start any moment. But in May 1997, Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland (Labour) made statements that in effect postponed the project until after the parliamentary elections and the Kyoto conference, both of which were to take place during fall that year.

After the elections, a minority coalition of three centrist parties that were all against the *Naturkraft* project and members of *Klima-alliansen* took over the government offices. The majority in parliament still supported the project. At COP3 in December, Norway was therefore represented by Minister of the Environment Guro Fjellanger (Liberal), who opposed the *Naturkraft* project but otherwise disappointed the activists.

The Kyoto Protocol was finalised as planned, and set a target of maximum one percent increase in total Norwegian emissions of six greenhouse gases compared to 1990 within the period 2008–2012. But crucial rules regarding implementation of the protocol were left open for later meetings. This also meant that the prospects for gas-fired power in Norway were not definitely settled by the outcome of the negotiations. An announcement during spring 1998 by *Norsk Hydro*, one of the *Naturkraft* partners, that it would give priority to developing its own technology for gas-fired power with reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions represented a major setback, and low producer prices on electric power kept delaying the project. Environmental activists tried to keep the threat of massive mobilisation alive during the next years, while the formalities regarding *Naturkraft's* permission to build power plants and to emit CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> was again



haggled over by various government agencies after complaints from environmental groups. During the same period, several new gas-fired power projects were proposed by other commercial actors. In March 2000, the centrist coalition Government resigned on grounds of being instructed by Parliament regarding the use of environmental legislation in this matter. Although Norwegian authorities have since granted the necessary permissions for the planned gas-fired power plants, the plants have not yet been built. The activities of Norwegian ENGOs clearly delayed the building of the *Naturkraft* project, in conjunction with economic factors. This issue constituted a major part of the Norwegian ENGOs' climate policy agenda in the years 1995-2001.

After President Bush's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001, Norway joined the EU and others in seeking to save the Protocol. At the seventh Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention (COP7) in Marrakech in late 2001, Norway supported a compromise proposed by the EU and the developing country group G77 and China. Norway explicitly opposed demands from Japan, Russia, Canada, and Australia for easing the rules on several accounts, including how to include "forest sinks" in emissions budgets. This stance with respect to fellow members of the so-called Umbrella Group (an alliance of non-EU industrialised countries which also includes the US) gave the Norwegian government a somewhat improved standing with the ENGOs. In 2002, the Norwegian Government ratified the Kyoto Protocol, which has not yet entered into force.

### 3.1 *The organisations*

International as well as nationally based ENGOs cooperating under the umbrella of the Climate Action Network (CAN) are a well integrated part of the community of officials, experts and lobbyists that gather regularly at UNFCCC negotiating meetings (Walk and Brunnengräber 2000; Gough and Shackley 2001). Below, we describe and discuss the political strategies used by CAN members – both nationally-based groups and their international allies – in seeking to influence one national government's behaviour.

The four Norwegian ENGOs that participated actively in the CAN network during the relevant period were

- *Framtiden i Våre Hender* ("The Future in Our Hands" - FIVH),
- *Greenpeace Norway* (GPN),
- *Naturvernforbundet* (NNV, Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature; since the early 1990s the Norwegian branch of Friends of the Earth International, FoEI), and
- *Natur og Ungdom* (NU, Nature and Youth, an independent youth branch of NNV, also affiliated with FoEI).

Representatives of these four groups followed the international negotiations as observers, and established formalised cooperation among themselves on domestic climate change policy from 1995. NNV, NU and FIVH are membership-based organisations with local branches and an internal democratic structure. They all receive considerable funding from the Norwegian government. Greenpeace Norway was the Norwegian branch of Greenpeace International until 1998, when the Nordic branches of the organisation were joined in a common Nordic organisation. Greenpeace has had remarkably little success in establishing a foothold in Norway, with a few hundred members compared to more than 70 000 in neighbouring Sweden (Bortne, Grendstad et al. 2001). In the climate change issue, however, Greenpeace Norway played an important role as a representative of the international environmental

movement in the national debate. Generally, only a handful of representatives from the Norwegian ENGO's headquarters participated at the COPs. An exception to this rule was the COP1 meeting in Berlin, where a busload of NU activists participated in an alternative conference and demonstrated against the Norwegian Minister of the Environment (Carlsson and Tjernshaugen 2000; Walk and Brunnengräber 2000).

All the four *Klimakameratene* organisations participated in CAN, a broad network of environmental NGOs primarily active in and around the negotiation process (Walk and Brunnengräber 2000). The network also includes key lobbyists from big international groups who are intensely involved in the negotiations down to the level of technical details. The most visible multinational CAN members were

- Greenpeace International
- Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)
- WWF International

CAN members at the COPs even included well as some activists from other countries than Norway taking part in their country's official delegations.

The daily CAN meetings that took place during COP meetings have been a crucial source of information for the Norwegian activists. In addition, NNV and NU are members of FoE International. Perhaps more important was the linkage between Greenpeace Norway and Greenpeace International. Kalle Hesstvedt, the leader of the Norwegian branch's climate work during much of the 1990s, had worked in Greenpeace International for some time. For the rest of the organisations, the Norwegian climate change activists never delved deeply into the world of international negotiations, and did not occupy central roles in the CAN or FoEI networks.

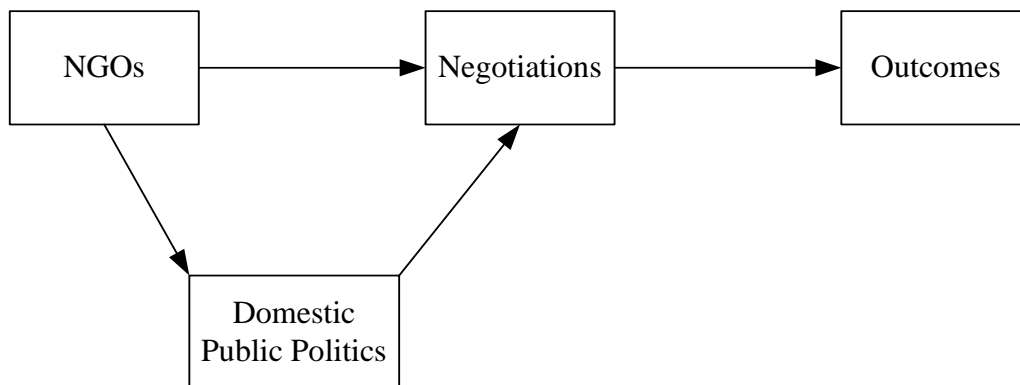
The Norwegian environmental movement has traditionally been strongly oriented towards national institutions in its political strategies (Gundersen 1991; Seippel 1999). A recent study based on survey data concludes that Norwegian environmentalism – manifested both in the views and strategies of environmental movement organisations and in popular attitudes – is a unique case (Bortne, Grendstad et al. 2001). One defining trait is the inclusive political system shared by Scandinavian countries, which goes along with a “state-friendly” society where NGOs can cooperate closely with the state and receive public funding without losing their credibility as critics of public policy, and where citizens have high levels of trust in government institutions, but where the state also tends to co-opt new social movements. The other characteristic trait is a cultural orientation toward local, rural communities, which goes along with a pragmatic, use-oriented view of nature with little room for issues such as animal rights within the domestic environmental movement. Bortne et.al. claim that not only is this combination unique, but that it also explains why attempts to establish a viable Greenpeace branch or Green party in Norway have been unsuccessful.

They also stress that the “state-friendliness” of Norwegian society makes it difficult for a movement or an organisation to grow while keeping its distance from the state (Bortne, Grendstad et al. 2001). Norwegian climate change activism has certainly been shaped by state acceptance of the legitimacy of the movement and its activities: The Ministry of the Environment financed the participation of leading activists as observers at the COP meetings, and the police had advance meetings with activists planning civil disobedience against the building of new, gas-fired power plants, in order to exchange information and build mutual trust. It would, however, be mistaken to assume that there was a confluence of views on climate policy between the Norwegian Government and the environmental movement, as Kellow has observed for certain European countries (Kellow 2000). Rather, the views on such crucial questions as CO<sub>2</sub> taxes and rules for burden-sharing between countries and implementation of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol have tended to diverge strongly. In championing strict regulation of domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions both through international treaties

and national legislation, the Norwegian environmental movement has met massive resistance from energy-intensive industries with strong ties to state bodies and the political establishment, especially in the Labour and Conservative parties (Kasa 2000; Nilsen 2001). The Norwegian delegations to the climate change negotiations have not included NGO representatives, as several other national negotiations have done (Walk and Brunnengräber 2000). This may relate to the fact that Norway's roles as major oil exporter and as self-proclaimed environmental leader since the 1970s are hard to reconcile in the climate change arena, and that the domestic environmental movement is certainly not making it any easier for the government.

In the following section we move on to an analysis of the strategy choices of the ENGOS. The work of two important Norwegian ENGOS – WWF Norway and the Bellona Foundation – will not be discussed here. WWF International is also a part of CAN, and has an active Norwegian branch. WWF Norway, however, did not engage actively in the international climate policy process during the time period in question. The Oslo-based Bellona Foundation did attend some of the meetings in question and were active in the domestic climate policy debate, but was not part of the international or other joint ENGO initiatives discussed here.

#### UN Climate Change Negotiations



**Figure 1: Channels of NGO influence in international negotiations.** NGO activists may seek to influence negotiation outcomes either through influencing diplomats during the negotiations (lobbying) or by using appeals to the domestic public through the news media (the “shaming” and “framing” strategies described below) to influence government officials responsive to public attitudes and perceptions.

## 4 Strategy choice

We now turn to the strategies chosen by the ENGOs seeking to influence Norway's behaviour in the climate change negotiations. Their efforts may be categorized under three headings: Lobbying (which in fact formed a minor part of their efforts), shaming, and framing (see figure 1).

### 4.1 *Lobbying*

ENGO representatives clearly had ideas about what they wanted the Norwegian negotiators to do, but in fact they rarely spent much energy during the meetings trying to influence them. Mostly the Norwegian NGOs used the formal briefings with the Norwegian delegation (which were open to NGOs representing business, environmental and scientific interests in Norway that were present at the COP meetings) and even their more informal contacts with members of the delegation at and around the conference venue, mainly to gather information. A simple reason for this was that the government and the ENGOs were usually well aware of each other's points of view long before the COP took place. The ENGOs usually prepared and published lists of demands and proposals to the Norwegian delegation well ahead of the conferences, and attended advance briefings by the Ministry of the Environment in Oslo. At any rate, based on earlier experience, the ENGOs usually considered their opportunities for exercising direct influence to be very limited.

There are exceptions. At the Kyoto conference, ENGO representatives tried intensely but unsuccessfully to lobby the Liberal environment minister Guro Fjellanger, who had once been employed by NNV, and who had previously expressed opinions closer to the ENGO's positions than the official Norwegian line.

If lobbying the Norwegian delegation was not the key preoccupation of the activists, neither was influencing other delegations or the overall agenda of the COPs. The Norwegians usually attended the CAN meetings and took part in discussions on common strategy. However as will be elaborated on below, even here they were to a large degree seeking support in their domestic struggles rather than trying to influence overall CAN strategy. Direct attempts to influence the COP agenda, such as organizing "side events" (open seminars for delegates and observers), making statements at formal sessions or to the international press, or engaging in the detailed negotiations on sub-issues such as forestry practices or emissions trading rules, was for the most part left to CAN colleagues specializing in the UNFCCC process, usually representatives of the international offices of multinational organizations such as FoEI, Greenpeace and WWF.

The general attitude of Norwegian NGO representatives was summed up by the president of NU in an interview in advance of COP3 in Kyoto: "When we meet with (...) the Norwegian delegation, we don't really try to persuade them. They have their instructions from the Norwegian government. The point is to put as much pressure as possible on the politicians" (Tjernshaugen 1997, author's translation).

### 4.2 *Shaming*

If the Norwegian ENGOs were not trying to influence delegates, what exactly were they up to at the COP meetings? First and foremost, the Norwegian climate change activists sought – rather successfully – to influence the domestic public's perception of what was going on in the negotiations through their role as sources for the national news media. International ENGO representatives in the CAN network backed them in these efforts. The ENGOs' hope

was that this would put pressure on the government to move its policies in the direction they favoured.

During each of the COP meetings, Norwegian newspapers reported the reactions of ENGOs to the latest developments, particularly the Norwegian negotiators' role. During COP3 in Kyoto, for instance, NNV alone was referred to as a source by the media more often than the Norwegian Confederation of Business and Industry (NHO) – an organization representing most of Norway's private business sector – which was also represented at the meeting. Access to the media was one of the main resources of the activists.

The considerable knowledge gained through participation at the UNFCCC negotiating meetings as observers, and especially through participation in the international NGO networks, made leading activists very useful for journalists trying to make sense of confusing and technically complex negotiations. (As the Norwegian delegations to the UNFCCC meetings are well-staffed and experienced, the same resource did not translate equally well into access and influence with respect to the delegates.) The environmental organizations' willingness to speak in media-friendly sound bites makes them attractive media sources. They also enjoy a high level of trust from the Norwegian population in environmental issues (Bortne, Grendstad et al. 2001). Similarities in background and outlook between activists and journalists covering the field may also have played a role in this connection.

Their position as news sources gave the activists some control over an important political resource: the public perception of Norway's role on the international scene, and thus the evaluation of the overall environmental performance of the government. The picture the environmental activists – Norwegian and foreign alike – painted of Norway was that of a petroleum-dependent economy protecting its narrow self-interest and thus endangering the prospects for international climate cooperation, as well as its own reputation in the international community. This portrayal of Norway as a "climate villain" by environmentalists was at times linked to specific issues, such as the plans for gas-fired power or increased extraction of petroleum, or the insistence on certain positions in the international negotiations. The statements by environmentalists were obviously intended to put pressure on the government, to induce it to demonstrate willingness to contribute to climate protection by adjusting its negotiating position and domestic policies. Whether or not this strategy was able to influence climate change policy decisions, it probably had some bearing on Norwegian voters' perception of the government's environmental conduct. The hope of the Norwegian ENGOs was that this would influence the shifting governments to adjust some policies to improve their green image.

Moral support from the international NGO community gave the Norwegian climate change activists increased credibility at home. Both in terms of mobilising for protest, and in terms of access to the media, the credibility gained by being seen as national representatives of a global environmental movement was important. The Norwegian activists contributed actively to pulling international ENGOs into the domestic debate. Throughout the 1990s, Norwegian environmentalists would repeatedly solicit statements from allied groups abroad, leading to reports in the Norwegian press about international environmental opposition to the government's domestic policies and negotiating position. The episode with the leaked draft from 1989 (see above) may have served as inspiration. It is likely that later activities in the international arena by Norwegian climate change activists were inspired by the success of this appeal to international opinion in grabbing media attention at home, embarrassing authorities and thereby influencing the national political agenda.

During COP1 in Berlin 1995, the Norwegian delegation was, for instance, presented with a statement from several international environmental groups criticizing the Norwegian position on emission reduction targets and so-called flexibility in the implementation of targets (Hjorthol 1995). At the Kyoto conference (COP3) in 1997, representatives of the World Council of Churches criticised the position of the Norwegian government led by ordained

priest Kjell Magne Bondevik, in line with the environmentalist framing of the debate described in the next subsection below. One of the sources of the newspaper article was an observer from the Church of Norway who was also a member of the board of FMG (Furuly 1997). Foreign environmental activists' characterization of oil-rich Norway as a nation of "closet Arabs" was reported in the national press (e.g. Hegtun 1995). Norway has also been nominated or selected for the "Fossil of the Day award" presented by CAN organizations during the negotiating sessions on several occasions (Fossil of the Day website, CAN website).<sup>2</sup>

In della Porta and Kriesi's terms, these are instances of transnational mobilisation of support, where a national movement appeals for help from movements abroad (della Porta and Kriesi 1998). However, in this case the transnational contacts in question were of a quite different character than in della Porta and Kriesi's example from the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. It does not seem that raising the pressure on the Norwegian government by influencing the actions of foreign governments (cross-level mobilization) was an important strategy for the Norwegian activists; the intended audience for their actions in the international arena was mainly the public back home. The support solicited from foreign NGOs by Norwegian climate change activists was purely symbolic, in the form of statements, with no material resources being provided or withheld by the international allies. The support given by members of the international NGO community cost those groups a negligible amount of effort, time and money. Apparently the work with joint statements on Norwegian policy was carried out by activists from Norwegian organisations.

On the other hand, one might equally well say that in putting pressure on the Norwegian government to accept strict targets, limited flexibility and strict rules in other regards, the Norwegian activists acted as local representatives of the international coalition of ENGOs cooperating under the CAN umbrella. CAN organizations made similar demands to other industrialized governments. The ENGOs' strategies on the international and domestic arenas were in fact closely related.

### **4.3 Framing**

Closely related to the shaming activities were activities to *strategically frame* the domestic debate on international commitments and their domestic implementation. While criticizing Norway's negotiating position and the outcomes of negotiations, the Norwegian ENGOs and their allies abroad also continuously sought to promote an interpretation of Norway's existing commitments under the UNFCCC, and later under the Kyoto Protocol, that fit their agenda of promoting early and substantial emissions reductions at the domestic level. At every turning point, including the COP meetings, they have argued that Norway is morally obliged to abide by the spirit and intentions of these agreements as well as their formal requirements, and highlighted passages that emphasize industrialized countries' responsibility to reduce emissions domestically.

Key individuals in the CAN network were at least occasionally briefed on domestic issues such as gas-fired power by Norwegian activists to ensure that they backed up their colleagues when interviewed by national news media. One important contact between the Norwegian and the international NGO community was between Greenpeace International and Greenpeace Norway. For instance, Bill Hare from Greenpeace International and Kalle Hesstvedt from the Norwegian branch co-authored a chapter on "international perspectives" in the "counter-report" against the *Naturkraft* project (Klima-alliansen 1996). Bill Hare is the Climate Policy Director of Greenpeace International, and the international environmentalist perhaps most frequently interviewed by the Norwegian media during international climate change meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> see <http://www.fossil-of-the-day.org/> or <http://www.climatenetwork.org/eco/>

One particularly interesting form of strategic framing deserves closer scrutiny, namely the ENGOs' attempts to exploit their role as news sources to influence domestic expectations about the outcome of the negotiations. From 1995, negotiations under the Climate Convention had as their explicit goal to define legally binding limits for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from individual countries. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 provided such limits for industrialized countries in the years 2008–2012, but left crucial rules for implementation of the commitments to be decided at later meetings. The prospect of regulations on GHG emissions from 2008 was relevant for a number of domestic actors, including businesses considering investment in emission-intensive industries, government agencies considering policies for emission reduction, and various interest groups with a stake in the outcome of such policy decisions. At the same time, the lingering uncertainty about the exact nature of the international regulations and about the measures the government would eventually take to implement those commitments, made it difficult to anticipate the consequences.

In this situation, actors who wanted to influence either domestic investment in emission-intensive (or emission-reducing) industry and infrastructure, the formation of domestic political coalitions around climate-relevant policy decisions, or even public opinion concerning such issues, could try to influence the expectations about the emergent climate regime held by other actors. This strategy was tried by Norwegian climate change activists and their political allies. They repeatedly claimed that the Kyoto Protocol meant grave problems for the planned gas-fired power plants: Either the Protocol would simply make the plants unprofitable (because implementing the emissions target through CO<sub>2</sub> taxes or emissions trading would make CO<sub>2</sub> emissions costly), or building the plants with the Kyoto regime in place would impose extra costs or emissions restrictions on other sectors such as road transport.

The premise for these claims was that the Norwegian economy would have to adapt to an absolute ceiling for national emissions, either because further international negotiations would lead to a quantitative limit to the use of international emissions trading and the other flexibility mechanisms in the Protocol, or because of a decision by Norwegian authorities to limit the use of these mechanisms.

This would, in turn, mean that the domestic allocation of emission rights to firms and households would become a zero-sum game, leading to considerable conflicts of interest between different sectors of the economy. Allowing one sector to increase emissions would imply forcing others to reduce theirs. This would be the case whether emissions were regulated through tradable quotas, non-transferable permits, technical standards, or emissions taxes. In other words, the expectation of an absolute ceiling on national GHG emissions would tend to split emission-intensive sectors in competing camps, and thereby counteract political alliances between the potential opponents of the environmental movement.

During the crucial meeting in Geneva in the summer of 1996 (COP6), the environmentalists tended to simply ignore the discussion about flexible implementation. As soon as the US delegation had made their historical statement that they supported binding emission reduction targets, Norwegian climate change activists were quick to offer their view of the consequences. A spokesperson for Greenpeace Norway said there would “probably not” be room for emissions from the planned power plants if the American proposition of flat percentage cuts was carried out. The president of NU added it would be embarrassing for Brundtland if an international treaty forced her to improve a failed environmental policy (Bjørkeng 1996; Hjorthol 1996; Dagbladet 1996). The environmentalists dominated the news reports after the American announcement, although a spokesman for the Minister of the Environment was quoted as questioning their conclusions and pointing to the American enthusiasm for emission trading. In the following days, more representatives of the Labour government as well as the CEO of *Naturkraft* referred hopefully to the US support for flexibility mechanisms (Bonde 1996; Bull 1996; Stoltenberg 1996).

A couple of days after the news from Geneva, an economics professor explicitly presented a choice between losing jobs in heavy industry or cancelling the plans for gas-fired power to fulfil emission reduction targets in an interview (Engeland 1996b; NTB 1996). During 1997, this zero-sum argument (often referring to permanently parking a substantial number of private cars to make room for emissions from the power plants) would be used by climate change activists as well as by their political allies in the struggle against gas-fired power. It was used very actively both by environmental activists and oppositional candidates during the campaign for the parliamentary elections in the fall of 1997. After the new minority centrist government of gas-power opponents came into office, it became a mainstay of their rhetoric.

A newspaper report from fall 2000 gives a hint that this strategy at least created some uncertainty. Here, the president of NHO and the energy spokesman of the right-wing Progress Party say that the gas-fired plants may have to be stopped if the Kyoto rules turn out to be very strict in order to avoid placing too heavy burdens on industry and car-owners (Ellingsen 1997).

During the Kyoto meeting, the new Liberal Minister of the Environment used every opportunity to warn against starting the tough job of complying with the Kyoto Protocol by building new gas-fired power plants that would put an increased burden on other sectors. Although bitterly disagreeing with the activists on almost all other issues in the negotiations, the Minister took over their arguments in this respect. As the Kyoto Protocol did not provide exact rules for the use of flexibility mechanisms it left the issue open for interpretation and speculation. The FMG used the zero-sum argument again immediately after the Kyoto conference. But it was generally politicians that used it with greatest enthusiasm. The three parties of the centrist government stuck with it through their fight with the majority in parliament, and their eventual loss and resignation.

*Naturkraft* and their political allies, on the other hand, envisioned an international climate regime where businesses could freely buy emission quotas on the international market. The company itself was active in tree-planting projects in developing countries, with the expressed goal of eventually obtaining emission rights under the international climate regime (Alstadheim 1997). Labour politicians expressed confidence that it would be possible to buy the necessary quotas abroad. With domestic firms operating on international quota markets with little restrictions, increased emissions from one domestic activity would not have to be offset by corresponding domestic reductions. This would render the zero-sum argument more or less invalid.

It is important to note that the two competing conceptions of the restrictions Norway would face under the Kyoto Protocol were each compatible with negotiating positions held by major players in the international negotiations. The environmental movement favoured the view also championed by the EU and several developing countries that the right to buy quotas from abroad should be restricted. The pro-gas coalition favoured the American view that use of the mechanisms should be unlimited. Both sides tended to simply assume that their view would be the outcome of the negotiations. It is reasonable to interpret this debate at least partly as strategic argumentation from both sides. In Putnam's terms, the activists (just as their opponents) tried to use expectations to the outcome of the negotiation phase to influence positioning in preliminary rounds of the ratification phase. Again, we are seeing an instance of *strategic framing* (Zald 1996). Any ENGO influence which may have stemmed from such a strategy was clearly constrained by the fact that Norwegian media, government and business representatives were also present at the meetings and that their organizations thus had independent access to information.



## 5 Conclusion: What are green players in two-level games up to?

In concluding, we will briefly recapitulate the findings on ENGO strategies reported above, and then point to some implications for the understanding of, first, environmental foreign policy and, second, the role of ENGOs in international negotiations. Regarding strategy choice, we have seen that ENGOs pursue several different strategies to reach their political goals in ongoing international environmental negotiations. Members of the CAN coalition – including both nationally-based and multinational environmental groups – to a large degree pursued joint goals with regard to the negotiation outcomes and the behaviour of individual governments. What linked the joint CAN position papers and “Fossil of the Day” awards at the COPs to the ENGO campaigns against gas-fired power plants in Western Norway was a goal of making each industrialised country government commit to and implement stringent targets for their domestic emissions of greenhouse gases. While lobbying at the international conferences was one strategy to promote these goals (particularly pursued by multinational groups such as Greenpeace, WWF and FoEI), strategies directed at domestic publics and decision makers were also important.

In the ENGOs’ efforts to change the behaviour of the Norwegian delegation, attempts to influence delegates directly through lobbying at the international conferences only played a minor part. The ENGOs’ main strategies at these meetings could rather be summed up as *shaming* and *framing*: Shaming the Norwegian government into changing its policies, and framing the domestic debate over international commitments in terms that underpinned their own policies. In both these respects, NGO action at the international and domestic levels was intimately connected. The Norwegian ENGOs’ activities at the international meetings were mostly geared toward influencing the domestic public and thereby, hopefully, the national government. In these activities, the activists were advancing viewpoints shared by the wider CAN network, and were actively supported by their fellow CAN members.

For our understanding of environmental foreign policy, the lesson from the above discussion is, first, that ENGOs do engage in influencing foreign policy and could potentially be one of the actors shaping actual policies. In Norway, ENGO’s opinions strongly influence public *debate* on environmental foreign policy, and it is not unreasonable to assume that this could have some bearing on foreign policy *decisions*. By harshly criticizing Norwegian governments, ENGOs tried to make it politically costly to pursue policies they disagreed with. As in other countries in North-Western Europe, a Norwegian government’s green credentials usually matter to a considerable proportion of the electorate. The shared assessment of the Norwegian government by domestic organizations such as NNV, FIVH and NU and multinational groups such as Greenpeace and WWF, presumably carried some weight for environmentally-minded Norwegians. Our discussion underscores that the resources ENGO have at their disposal are mostly symbolic rather than material. When foreign policy relates to international environmental agreements, the strategic interpretation and framing of existing or proposed international commitments is one available strategy, as well as influencing public perceptions of the government’s performance in international arenas. Finally, both domestic groups and organizations based abroad could play a role in foreign policy-making, and they do sometimes (as in this case) form transnational alliances with the purpose of influencing domestic and foreign policy, as well as negotiation outcomes.

These strategies and their potential impact are unlikely to be limited to the Norwegian case. In any country where governments are at least moderately inclined to listen to the environmental movement, the influence of ENGOs is likely to be one of the many factors determining foreign policy regarding climate change. Generally, governments and public opinion in the North-Western part of Europe have been relatively susceptible to arguments from environmentalists.

The preceding discussion of ENGO strategies also has implications for the understanding of their influence in international environmental negotiations, precisely because of the ENGOs' involvement in foreign policy processes. Our case suggests that the assumptions that information provided to negotiators is the predominant vehicle of NGO influence, and that influence at the international and domestic political levels can be viewed separately, are both highly problematic. A *societal* understanding of environmental foreign policy processes is in fact crucial to understand NGO influence even in international negotiations (Barkdull and Harris 2002).

In other words, the framework for analysis proposed by Betsill and Corell (2001) would not be suitable to assess the overall outcomes of the NGO activities discussed above, and similar NGO work directed at the governments of other countries. One "key currency" in the Norwegian ENGOs' dealings was indeed information. The information was, however, rarely provided to negotiators. It was rather one of several resources which helped the ENGOs gain access to the national news media and other domestic players in their efforts to *strategically frame* the domestic debate on the government's performance and the content of Norway's international climate policy commitments. In this effort, the Norwegian ENGOs and their foreign allies cooperated. The stressing of Norway's obligation to reduce its domestic emissions was a part of CAN's wider effort to ensure that developed countries did commit to reduce their own emissions substantially, instead of relying strongly on so-called flexible solutions such as financing emissions reductions abroad or planting trees.

While information was important, an equally important "currency" for the ENGOs was *legitimacy*, which is the issue at stake in strategies of *shaming*. The environmental movement's popular credibility in defining who and what is helping the environment is perhaps its most important resource, which enables it to dispense and withhold environmental credibility to governments, politicians and other actors. In this symbolic sense, grants *are* continually rewarded and threats *are* made by NGOs during UN environmental negotiations – not in terms of money or physical resources, but in terms of governments' reputation among domestic constituencies.

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