

Conflicts and Coalitions Within and Across the ENGO Community

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1.0 Overview

Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) have been the focus of a considerable amount of research that examines how these actors influence environmental policies and the conditions that allow them to be effective. Less attention has been paid to the diversity of opinions within the ENGO community concerning the content of those policies. There is a tacit assumption in much of the international environmental politics literature that ENGOS are united in their lobbying for environmentally progressive policies and that they stand in opposition to a distinct collection of economic interest groups that resist such policies. This depiction of ENGOS is misleading. For most issues of concern to the ENGO community there are a handful of policy options that states and intergovernmental organizations will consider as remedies. ENGOS do not always agree upon the core criteria by which they should evaluate policy outcomes or the preferred strategies for realizing their policy objectives. Fault lines and fissures in ideology cut across the ENGO community with ENGOS often finding themselves aligning with a variety of socioeconomic interest groups and in opposition to other ENGOS.

The next section provides a modest literature review of ENGOS with a focus on ENGO ideologies in terms of values, goals and strategies to attain stated goals. Section 3 reframes ENGO goals in terms of evaluative criteria and examines the degree to which different segments of the ENGO community reconcile their primary criterion of ecological sustainability with the additional criteria of economic efficiency and distributive equity – criteria that are highly valued by other socioeconomic interests. Section 4 discusses different institutional approaches for providing policy solutions to environmental problems and highlights three trends in which the state is deemphasized as the institutional loci for governance solutions. The trends include ceding authority to international regimes, devolving authority to lower levels of governance and placing a greater emphasis on market forces. Section 5 illustrates how the ENGO community reflects these tensions and trends as they manifest on two topics: property rights in fisheries and the Kyoto Protocol. Section 6 concludes with some tentative thoughts regarding the future.

2.0 ENGO Ideologies

There are a variety of conceptualizations of the environmental movement and the ENGO community and no shortage of terms to define the fault lines and fissures that characterize them. The most salient fault line that can be identified in academic literature on ENGOS is one that distinguishes between groups that work to affect change within established governance institutions and groups that adopt a confrontational stance with respect to those institutions and the actors that they empower. In her discussion of NGO strategies for promoting corporate social responsibility Winston (2002) categorizes this divide as occurring between engagers and confronters. Pulver (2004) uses a similar conceptualization in her dissertation on the battles between oil companies and environmental groups in the UN climate change as she paints a vivid picture that contrasts political strategies characterized by adversarial confrontation and a politics of blame vs. strategies based upon collaborative negotiation and a politics of partnership. In

their survey of European ENGOs working on marine issues Richards and Heard (2005) borrow from Grant (2000) in making a similar distinction in their discussion of insider and outsider groups.¹ The strategic divide described by these authors also seems to correlate with the ideological cleavage that is depicted between ecological and conservation perspectives within the West European ENGO community (Dalton 1994).² Groups with an ecological perspective are more likely to resort to direct action and other confrontational strategies (sometimes in combination with insider tactics) while groups with a conservation perspective work exclusively within the existing institutional framework.

More nuanced discussions of the environmental movement with the U.S. and Europe focus on ideological fissures, functional roles and issue-orientation. McCormick (2004) borrows from Rosenbaum (2003) in dividing the U.S. ENGO community into three groups: pragmatic reformers, deep ecologists and radicals. McCormick's depiction of pragmatic reformers is consistent with the above conceptualizations of engagers, insiders, and conservationists. Within the ecological camp, however, he distinguishes the deep ecologists who seek fundamental changes in human-environment relationships from similarly-minded radicals. The key difference between the two is the radicals' use of direct action and other confrontational tactics that sometimes include property destruction. Switzer (2004) sees a closer link between the philosophy of deep ecologists and radical tactics and considers the two simultaneously. For Switzer, more important distinctions occur among deep ecologists/radicals, mainstream environmental organizations and the environmental justice movement. Her consideration of mainstream environmental organizations seems consistent with previous discussions of engagers, insiders and pragmatic reformers. Brulle and Jenkins (forthcoming) go further in their ideological categorizations, identifying eight distinct environmental discourses and discuss a number of subtle variations within the most dominant discourses.³

The mainstream ENGO community is often differentiated by functional roles and issue-orientation McCormick (2004). With respect to issue orientation, Taylor (2001) borrows from an OECD (1998) report that distinguishes between two distinct periods in the environmental movement: the period from the 1960s to the mid-1980s and the period from the mid-1980s to today. The former period saw local and national issues dominate the agenda, with immediate threats to public health serving as the underlying driver and a relatively simple form of politics resulting. The latter period has witnessed a shift in orientation toward global issues with long term threats to ecological sustainability and a more complex set of political dynamics.

In addition to the temporal variation in issue-orientation an important geographic variation continues to persist between Northern and Southern NGOs (McCormick 2004).

¹ Richards and Heard ultimately conclude that conceptualizing ENGOs in terms of this strict dichotomy can be misleading.

² Dalton et al. (2003) discuss results from a Global Environmental Organization Survey (GEOS) that appears to support his earlier work.

³ Included in the forthcoming *Environmental Politics* article are wildlife management, conservation, preservation, reform environmentalism, environmental justice, deep ecology, ecofeminism and ecotheology.

Most Southern NGOs tend to be grassroots organizations focused on immediate threats to local communities although some do engage at the national and/or international level (Gardner 1996). Their agenda often reflects a broader set of concerns than ecological sustainability alone, often including economic and political marginalization.⁴ Although the environmental justice movement seems to be a discourse of northern origins, its premises sometimes mirror substantive concerns of Southern NGOs and the theme of environmental injustice underpins many of the transnational advocacy networks that bring together the two groups (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Finally, McCormick also makes reference to the relevance of NGOs representing views of socioeconomic groups with interests in the environmental debate. Such groups, along with NGOs that represent a broader set of social or economic concerns beyond the environment can be considered bridge groups. The remainder of the paper focuses on the underlying values, goals and strategies of ENGOs that are attempting to build bridges with other societal interests including the private sector.

3.0 Evaluative Criteria

My primary focus in this paper is to illuminate conflicts and coalitions within and across the ENGO community. Existing literature discerns a clear cleavage between organizations that work within existing governance institutions and those that challenge them. Within the former group, most of the existing literature that I have reviewed differentiates organizations in terms of their issue-orientation and/or functional roles. With respect to broader policy debates on issues of sustainable development and global environmental governance, however, one can discern differences of opinion regarding the primary values that are emphasized in espoused policy objectives. In the following section I briefly define three evaluative criteria that help to demarcate competing values in these debates. I then discuss the interface between what can be considered as the primary value of the vast majority of the ENGO community (ecological sustainability) and two values that might be considered secondary to most of the ENGO community but that are primary for other actors involved in policy debates (economic efficiency and distributive equity). Some actors emphasize the tensions between these competing values while others see possibilities for reconciliation or harmonization. Different perspectives on the interrelationships between evaluative criteria help to illuminate the contours of these policy debates as well as the coalitions which cut across the ENGO community and link different segments of this community to the rest of society.

3.1 Ecological Sustainability

While the section on ENGO ideologies noted a number of important divisions within the ENGO community regarding strategies and tactics I will assume that the primary value or goal of all ENGOs is reflected in the term ecological sustainability, broadly construed. Sustainability is a contested term with numerous definitions (Conca and Dabelko 2004). I define ecological sustainability as a condition pertaining to a given human-environment

⁴ See <http://www.twinside.org.sg/>

relationship that denotes a state of mutual health. What constitutes health for a given human community or ecosystem is in some respects subjective and different. NGOs may define ecological sustainability as narrowly as steady-state preservation or as broadly as sustainable exploitation. But all will likely subscribe to a primary goal that falls within a broad definition of ecological sustainability.

3.2 Economic Efficiency

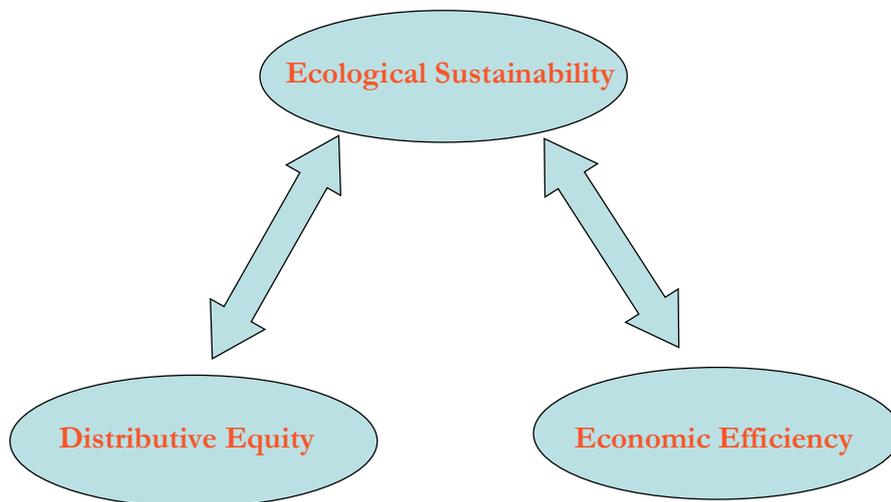
As with sustainability, there are multiple definitions of efficiency. Economic efficiency typically denotes the minimum cost for a given level of output or production. Narrowly defined from the perspective of a given actor anything that increases the cost of production could be considered inefficient. However, broadly defined from the perspective of society as a whole, economic efficiency can be viewed in terms of socially optimal levels of production and consumption. Externalities are costs or benefits that accrue to bystanders or non-parties to a given transaction or production process. Externalities typically lead to market outcomes that are socially inefficient (Mankiw 1998). So while actors sometimes invoke economic efficiency concerns in response to policy initiatives that seek to protect the environment the act of internalizing externalities can be also viewed as efficiency enhancing in most circumstances.

3.3 Distributive Equity

Distribution concerns the allocation of costs and benefits. Equity concerns justice and/or fairness. Distributive equity can be defined as a value that seeks a fair and/or just distribution of the costs and benefits of an economic activity. Like many other values, distributive equity is largely subjective. There is no consensus on precise standards of distributive equity. An important distinction lies in defining equity in terms of process vs. outcomes. Equity can but need not be equated with egalitarianism. Another important distinction lies in the baseline for equity claims: status quo conditions vs. distributive impacts of a proposed policy reform. Most groups that highlight equity as an avowed goal characterize status quo conditions as inequitable and thus consider redistribution of costs & benefits as a means of enhancing equity. Groups that resist policy reforms may frame their resistance in terms the “unfairness” of bearing a disproportionate amount of the costs associated with such reforms. That said most private sector firms resist environmental reforms simply because they have negative distributive impacts regardless of whether or not those impacts are perceived as equity enhancing by broader segments of society. In such cases resistance is more a matter of distributive self-interest than of distributive equity.

Figure A depicts the three aforementioned evaluative criteria and highlights the relationships between ecological sustainability (the primary criterion for NGOs) and economic efficiency and distributive equity (secondary criteria), respectively.

Figure A



3.4 The Sustainability – Efficiency Interface

A historical tension can be discerned between ecological sustainability and economic efficiency narrowly construed to reflect the increase in production costs associated with many environmental regulations. Efficiency claims have often been framed in terms of regulatory impacts on the economic competitiveness of regulated actors. As noted in the discussion of efficiency, however, such claims are often made hollow when considering efficiency in terms of socially optimal levels of production and consumption. Efficiency concerns can also be invoked with respect to the choice of regulatory tools (Portney and Stavins 2000, Keohane et al. 2000). Such claims often do not take issue with the goals of environmental regulation but rather with the form of regulation. Ecological sustainability and economic efficiency are not viewed as inherently incompatible but the latter is seen as needlessly sacrificed in practice. A related efficiency concern often targets the state and its fallibility in determining optimal levels of natural resource exploitation and/or pollution and in administering environmental regulations. These claims emphasize markets as the ultimate arbiter of economic activity. Again, such claims do not see ecological sustainability and economic efficiency as incompatible but emphasize the perils of failing to take in consideration the latter in pursuit of the former.

Efforts to find harmony along the sustainability-efficiency interface emphasize a set of common themes that stem from the above concerns. They include the pursuit of the least-costly (or most efficient) methods for attaining environmental objectives (Keohane

et al. 2000, Coglianesi and Cash 2001), internalizing externalities and “getting the price signals right” (World Bank 2003), eliminating environmentally damaging subsidies (Myers and Kent 2001, Schorr 2004) and harnessing the power of markets through certification programs, tradable permit schemes and privatization initiatives (Tietenburg 2002, Anderson and Hill 1996).

The most salient manifestation of ENGO activity seeking harmony between ecological sustainability and economic efficiency is the research conducted within ENGO programs explicitly dedicated to this mission. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) Economics and the Environment program⁵, Worldwatch’s Sustainable Economics library⁶, The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Macroeconomics program⁷ and the Friends of the Earth’s (FOE) Economics for the Earth campaign⁸ are but a few examples of targeted initiatives within mainstream ENGOs. Other ENGOs like the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)⁹, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)¹⁰, the World Resources Institute (WRI)¹¹, Resources for the Future (RFF)¹² and Environmental Defense¹³ would appear to integrate the aforementioned themes throughout many or all of their campaigns and research programs. ENGOs like the Property and Environment Resource Center (PERC)¹⁴ that promote free-market environmentalism represent the far-end of the spectrum with respect to their emphasis on property rights and market efficiency in harmonizing economic and environmental goals.

Green business alliances are another manifestation of ENGO activity that seeks the harmonization of ecological sustainability with economic efficiency. Many of the prominent ENGOs within the engager segment of the ENGO community are involved in one or more partnerships with the private sector. Few if any ENGOs from this segment of the environmental community would reject such partnerships as a matter of principle. Greenpeace¹⁵ does reject them as a matter of principle but I would classify Greenpeace as a confronter organization as opposed to an engager. Many green business alliances and ENGO-private sector partnerships take the form of an NGO that may or may not be considered an ENGO. The purpose of such organizations is to serve as bridge between the environment and business communities. In some cases these organizations reflect efforts on the part of the business community to reach out to the environmental community as in the case of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)¹⁶ and/or redefine its mission and in a matter that incorporates broad ecological

⁵ <http://www.iucn.org/themes/economics/work.html>

⁶ <http://www.worldwatch.org/topics/economy/economics>

⁷ http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/policy/macro_economics/index.cfm

⁸ <http://www.foe.org/camps/eco/index.html>

⁹ <http://www.iisd.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.iied.org/>

¹¹ <http://www.wri.org/>

¹² <http://www.rff.org>

¹³ <http://www.environmentaldefense.org/home.cfm>

¹⁴ <http://www.perc.org/>

¹⁵ <http://www.greenpeace.org/>

¹⁶ <http://www.wbcsd.org/>

and/or social concerns in the case of the corporate social responsibility movement.¹⁷ In other cases like Environmental Defense's corporate partnerships¹⁸ and the WWF-backed Forest¹⁹ and Marine Stewardship Councils²⁰ it is the ENGO community that is the impetus for the creation of a bridge organization. Within the engager segment of ENGO community the distinction between groups that support green business alliances and those that don't is probably less relevant than the stringency and/or integrity of the standards to which each ENGO subscribes and the rigor with which they pursue such business alliances. Few mainstream ENGOs would shun an alliance with private sector partners if the terms were attractive enough but few are as proactive in forging corporate alliances as Environmental Defense.

3.5 The Sustainability – Equity Interface

The most salient historical tension between the goals of ecological sustainability and distributive equity can be seen in Southern or developing world perspectives on global environmental problems (Najam 2004, Williams 2005). Southern countries argue that many of the global environmental problems that Northern countries concern themselves with arise from activities associated with their development. Attempts to constrain the development of the South for the sake of the global environment are depicted as unfair. In addition to reflecting perceived tensions between environment and development this North-South debate is framed in terms of a tension between ecological sustainability and distributive equity. This tension is not inherent for all dimensions of ecological sustainability as issues of desertification, access to natural resources and local air and water quality remain salient issues for developing country governments and their societies. However, the North's focus on global commons issues like climate change, protection of the ozone layer, and biodiversity do not reflect Southern priorities and imply that the South must constrain its development and/or develop with a degree of environmental sensitivity that exceeds their existing capacity. The South's perspective on what should be the guiding principles of sustainable development can thus be viewed as an attempt to harmonize the values of sustainability and equity as well as one that seeks to reconcile sustainability with development objectives.²¹ Especially important among these principles are common but differentiated responsibility, the polluter pays principle and the principle of additionality, or increased technical and financial aid and assistance in conjunction with any new commitments from developing countries (Najam 2004).

Within the developed world equity concerns are rarely invoked to justify resistance to environmental reforms aside from those sectors that argue that the cost of such reforms fall disproportionately upon their shoulders. Instead, equity is often invoked as an important reason to undertake such reforms. One of the most salient movements in the

¹⁷ A more critical perspective might interpret these efforts as mere public relations ploys, or "greenwashing."

¹⁸ <http://www.environmentaldefense.org/partnerships.cfm>

¹⁹ <http://www.fsc.org/en>

²⁰ <http://www.msc.org/>

²¹ See <http://www.twinside.org.sg/> for an overview of Southern perspective.

ENGO community that places a dual emphasis on sustainability and equity is the environmental justice movement (Lester et al. 2001). Environmental justice is defined as the unfair distribution of environmental costs and is depicted as a form of social injustice. Societal groups that tend to bear the burden of environmental degradation are often poor and marginalized. Given that poor and marginalized groups often consist of ethnic minorities some within the environmental justice movement see environmental injustice as a form of racism (Bryant and Mohai 1992). Others within the movement do not see racism as an underlying cause but nonetheless concern themselves with the institutional processes that generate inequity in both the benefits of resource exploitation and the burdens of environmental degradation (Lester et al. 2001).²²

Whereas a substantial portion of the engager segment of the ENGO community seems to be embracing the harmonization of sustainability and efficiency to a greater or less extent the same can be said for the confronter segment of the ENGO community with respect to harmonizing sustainability and equity concerns. On the radical side of the confronter segment of the ENGO community groups like Earth First!²³ and the Earth Liberation Front²⁴ clearly privilege ecological sustainability as their overriding objective but will adopt the rhetoric of social inequity when it suits their cause. Other groups like Environmental Rights Action²⁵, EcoEquity²⁶ and organizations involved in the climate justice movement²⁷ appear to base their mission on the harmonization of these twin values. Organizations in this latter group often target their activity against multilateral oil & gas corporations as they perceive them to be the perpetrators and/or beneficiaries of environmental injustice. The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)²⁸ represents another variation of the sustainability-equity linkage. WEDO stresses the importance of gender equity and the role of women in crafting sustainable environmental policies. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth represent organizations with broad environmental mandates that have equity as a prominent or cross-cutting theme. Within the engager segment of the ENGO community most organizations will acknowledge equity as a valid criterion even though they may or may not place as much emphasis on it as they do the criteria sustainability and/or efficiency. Even Environmental Defense, with its strong emphasis on harmonizing ecological sustainability, lists equity as one of overarching goals of its mission.

Dual emphasis on the values of ecological sustainability and distributive equity are also reflected in the agendas of grassroots organizations that comprise the bulk of the NGO sector in the developing world. In a survey of literature on grassroots environmental organizations Gardner (1995) notes that these groups typically form in response to a threat to their resource base. She notes that the fault lines of conflict are often based on race or class and pit local communities against international corporations and developing country officials and elites. Partnerships between these indigenous grassroots NGOs and

²² <http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/>

²³ <http://www.earthfirstjournal.org/>

²⁴ <http://www.earthliberationfront.com/>

²⁵ <http://www.eraction.org/>

²⁶ <http://www.ecoequity.org/>

²⁷ <http://www.corpwatch.org/>

²⁸ <http://www.wedo.org/>

international ENGOs lead to the type of transnational advocacy campaigns depicted by Keck and Sikkink (1998). The pressures these campaigns exert upon developing country governments raise an interesting irony. Developing country governments often portray themselves as the victims of North-South inequity in conflicts over global environmental governance while being portrayed as the perpetrators of inequity in conflicts over national and local environmental governance.

Similar to the way green alliances between ENGOs and the private sector portray environmental accountability as a component of corporate social responsibility, partnerships between ENGOs and broader-based social movements portray environmental equity and environmental rights as a subset of human rights and taken up by the human rights and anti-globalization movements.²⁹

The discussion of the sustainability-efficiency and sustainability-equity interfaces is not meant to suggest that ENGOs and other interested actors do not seek to balance all three evaluative criteria in determining their policy preferences. Most profess concern for all of the criteria and many organizations explicitly include or implicitly allude to all of them in their mission statements. This is easier said than done, however, and few institutional strategies and/or policy remedies have made a persuasive claim to enhancing ecological sustainability, economic efficiency and distributive equity with equal vigor. Most contemporary institutional trends are appealing to their advocates on account of their perceived ability to harmonize sustainability concerns with either efficiency or equity concerns but not all three simultaneously. Resistance to these trends comes from those that feel they marginalize at least one of the three criteria.

4.0 Institutional Approaches

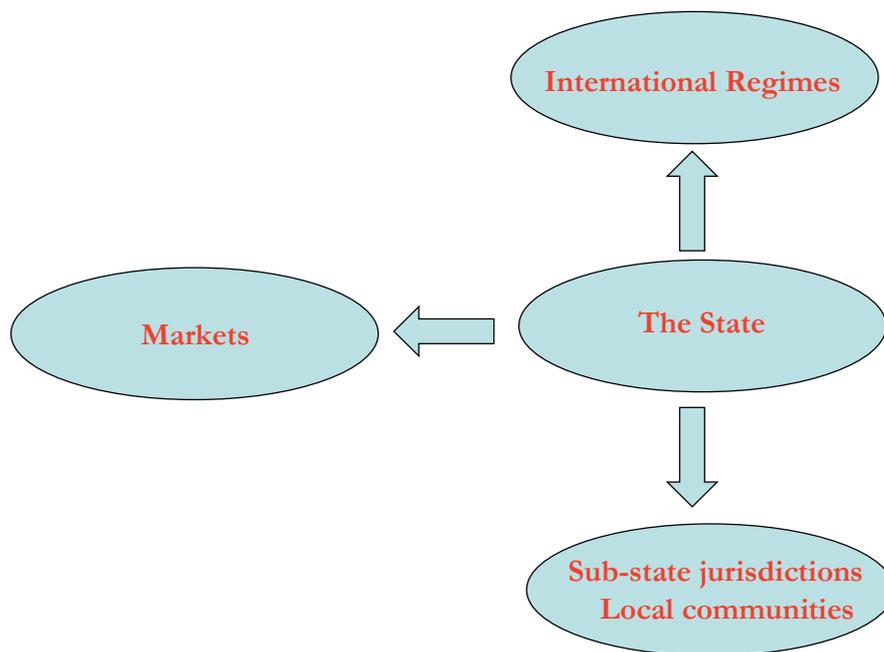
The preceding section entertained a discussion of the values and criteria that underpin the policy goals of segments of the ENGO community. This section will focus on divisions within the ENGO community with respect to best approaches to solving those problems. More specifically, this section looks at different approaches to locating authority within governance institutions.

Mancur Olsen's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1968) and Garrett Hardin's *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968) were landmark pieces of literature that established a basic tenet of collective action theory: the combination of externalities and individual rationality leads to suboptimal outcomes with respect to providing for public goods and preserving common pool resources. Hardin's solution was mutually agreed coercion administered by the state. Hardin's command and control approach has since been the traditional default solution to environmental problems. Many ENGOs have a successful history with their advocacy for national legislation that has authorized the state to elevate pollution standards, protect wildlife and manage natural resources. More recently, however, the state has come under attack for various quarters. Arguments have been put forth that all three of the aforementioned criteria (ecological sustainability, economic

²⁹ <http://www.globalexchange.org/>

efficiency, distributive equity) would be better served by alternative institutional arrangements. The proposed alternatives can be depicted along two dimensions. A vertical dimension highlights a top-down approach that calls for the ceding of authority to international regimes as well as a bottom-up approach calling for devolution of authority away from the state down to lower levels of government. A horizontal dimension highlights a market-oriented approach that calls for less administrative control and greater reliance on market mechanisms. Figure B illustrates these pressures.

Figure B



4.1 International Regimes: A Top-Down Approach

Locating authority in international regimes reflects a shift in focus to environmental problems that are global in scope. Much of the same logic in state-centered solutions to environmental problems applies. When an environmental problem is contained within national boundaries the state is naturally looked upon as the entity with the incentive and means to fix the problem. When the causes and consequences of environmental degradation span the boundaries of multiple states then an overarching authority must be created to address the problem. As a substantial portion of the ENGO community has turned its attention to regional and global commons problems that include transboundary air pollution, regional fish stocks, climate change, ozone depletion, and the loss of biodiversity a groundswell of international regimes has arisen (Porter et al. 2000, Taylor 2003, Soroos 2004). But with a few notable exceptions like the Montreal Protocol and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) the agreements that underpin most international regimes have lacked depth (Downs et al. 1996, Downie

2004). Understandably, the ENGO community has expressed frustration with the lack of impact of international environmental regimes on global environmental problems.

Despite the slow progress of building effective international regimes at the global level, European countries have relocated a considerable amount rule-making authority on a number of environmental policies above the state within European Union governance institutions. The pace at which progressive environmental policymaking seems to have slowed during the last decade in the face of compliance issues, economic stagnation, EU enlargement and appeals to the subsidiarity principle but the overall trend in the EU demonstrates significant progress in terms of harmonizing and strengthening environmental regulations throughout the region (Axelrod, Vig and Schreurs 2003). The EU remains the leader in global environmental governance both in terms of its internal institutions as well as its advocacy for international regimes.

Most of the mainstream ENGOs that focus on global environmental problems appear supportive of efforts to negotiate international environmental regimes. Given the increased access and influence ENGOs have realized within the EU institutional structure it should come as no surprise that many would like to replicate the EU experience on a global level. But progress at the global level remains elusive. Importantly, few ENGOs stress a top-down approach as an effective means of promoting the criteria of efficiency and equity. Instead these groups work to infuse efficiency and equity into the terms of a given international regime through their advocacy efforts. While some of the more confrontational ENGOs have been known to challenge the integrity of one or more international regimes on the basis that they reflect the interests of corporate elites few of mainstream organizations adopt such rhetoric.

4.2 Decentralization: A Bottom-Up Approach

The argument for devolving authority down to local levels of governance is based on a variety of claims that emphasize equity, legitimacy, and efficacy. Elinor Ostrom's (1990) *Governing the Commons* has served as rallying cry for a cadre of academic scholars that challenge Hardin's claim that an overarching authority in the form of a state administrator is a necessary condition for effective management of a common-pool resource. Commons scholars³⁰ have provided both theoretical and empirical support for the claim that communities can form self-governing institutions that effectively manage resources under certain conditions (Ostrom et al. 2002). Conditions conducive to effective commons management typically include rules that are perceived as equitable, legitimate and consistent with the broader institutional structure in which they are embedded. The commons literature is one component a broader movement among academics and policymakers advocating bottom-up approaches to governance. Ostrom's work emphasizes self-governance within a community of resource users in the absence of an overarching authority. Other bottom-up approaches include notions of co-management (where decision-making authority is shared between resource users and government officials) and more generic notions of decentralization (where decision-making authority is devolved to a lower-level authority regardless of whether the

³⁰ <http://www.iascp.org/>

authoritative entity is a resource user or sub-state government officials). All of these approaches are critical of top-down, command and control systems of environmental regulation. Top-down approaches administered by central governments are said to disrupt local institutional processes, marginalize specific socioeconomic groups (typically the poor and disenfranchised) and lead to outcomes that local communities perceive to be inequitable.

In developing countries the above concerns are often invoked by grassroots NGOs in their demand for greater decision-making authority over natural resource management issues. Greater equity in terms of procedural fairness and substantive outcomes (socioeconomic as well as ecological) is a core demand for such groups. To a significant extent national governments are accommodating these demands. The World Resource Institute (2003) notes that 63 out of 75 developing or transitioning countries with populations over 5 million indicate that they are undergoing some form of decentralization. Importantly, the role most often played by ENGOs in developing country devolution initiatives is not one of advocacy but rather one of building capacity and providing services in lieu of the state (Gardner 1995, Miraftab 1997, WRI 2002). Developing country ENGOs are implementers of decentralization as much as they are advocates for it.

Decentralization is also a popular theme in American politics. Taking power away from Washington and giving back to states and local communities is pillar of conservative political discourse that has made substantial inroads on the political agendas of moderates and some liberals as well. The discourse resonates not so much because of perceived inequities in federal regulations but rather a general endorsement of the principle of subsidiarity, or allowing governance functions to be carried out at the lowest level that they can be effectively enforced. Local discretion is widely perceived as a more legitimate and effective means of governance than rules imposed from outside authorities. To date it would appear that ENGO perspectives on decentralization within the U.S. are cautious. ENGOs within the environmental justice movement with ties to local grassroots organizations are likely to applaud reforms that empower local communities in a manner that allows them to ward off environmental threats, remediate past environmental damage and/or hold accountable those who are responsible for it. However, state and local government officials are sometimes less likely privilege principles of social justice and environmental equity than their federal counterparts and it is quite likely that indiscriminate decentralization of federal power in the U.S. could exacerbate rather than ameliorate local inequities. It is also true that U.S. federal environmental regulations are often more stringent than state and county preferences. As such, it would appear that U.S. ENGOs that target national legislation in the advocacy campaigns currently defend against efforts to repeal existing federal regulations with environmental implications more often than they seek to decentralize regulatory functions in order to advance their objectives.

4.3 Embracing the Market

In addition to the institutional trends which have pulled at the sovereign discretion of nation-states from both above and below there has been considerable pressure placed on states to adopt a more market-oriented approach in crafting environmental policies. The sustainability-efficiency interface discussion is directly linked to this increased emphasis on markets as an alternative to central government administration. An increased market-orientation is depicted by its proponents as the means to achieve the goal of economic efficiency that accommodates ecological sustainability.³¹

The sustainability-efficiency interface discussion covered a range of the institutional reforms that reflect market logic. Evaluating alternative regulatory tools on the basis of their cost and efficiency is perhaps the most widely endorsed in principle in the ENGO community although in practice it might be challenged by groups if alternative options embody significant distributive implications. Internalizing externalities through taxes and subsidies is also consistent with the logic of correcting for market failures and inappropriate price signals that lead to environmental degradation (World Bank 2003). In practice taxes and subsidies are often resisted by free market proponents as they are widely perceived to be market-distorting.³² Tradable permit schemes and privatization initiatives are highly popular among free-market environmentalists but they tend to garner the least support among within the ENGO community (especially privatization).

ENGO concerns about privatization focus on distributive equity and to a lesser extent ecological sustainability. Creating exclusive, compensable property rights in natural resource domains can create strong incentives for better stewardship and more efficient resource use. However, privatization limits public access to ecosystem services and often concentrates the economic rents that result from resource exploitation in the hands of property owners. The end result can be more efficient resource management that enriches a small group of private actors while marginalizing large portions of the public that depend upon ecosystem services for their survival. Also, when property rights are defined in a manner that fails to internalize the full range of social costs associated with ecosystem degradation then they can create perverse incentives that result from increasing the value of some ecosystem services at the expense of others. These perverse incentives can be exacerbated by the low discount rates and short time horizons that are common for the capital-intensive, mobile segments of resource extraction industries that are most capable of purchasing property rights in an unrestricted market.

Finally, the related issues of certification and ecolabeling reflect a greater emphasis on markets for achieving environmental objectives. Both practices seek to provide consumers with more information on the ecological sustainability of a given commodity and its associated production processes. Rather than rely on state authorities to mandate

³¹ Although the fervor with which some free-market proponents embrace property rights and markets call into question whether they consider them means to an end or an end in and of themselves.

³² At issue is whether a status quo market outcome is viewed to be a market failure in need of correction or a natural market outcome that is distorted by efforts to internalize externalities. Technically, the former argument is often correct.

or regulate private sector activity the logic of these practices suggest that greater leverage can be applied to the behavior of firms via the purchasing practices of informed consumers. Sustainable practices are rewarded and unsustainable ones punished through price signals. There is widespread endorsement for these certification schemes in principle. In practice, however, a number of implementation issues generate controversy within and across the ENGO community, the private sector and governments. These include the most appropriate entities for certifying industry practices, certification standards, certification costs and the resolution of potential conflicts between certification standards and WTO rules (Gudmundsson and Wessels 2000; Fischer et al 2005).

Gereffi et al. (1998) differentiate between first, second, third and fourth party certification systems. First and second party systems are those involving internal monitoring and reporting on the part of a firm or industry, respectively. Third-party certification involves an external certifier, often an NGO. Fourth-party certification involves government or multilateral agencies. Given that first, second and fourth-party certification systems often lack credibility in the eyes of many ENGOs third-party systems may become a norm. Still, highly regarded ENGOs like WWF and its Marine Stewardship Council are not immune to criticisms from environmental community.³³

5.0 Conflicts and Coalitions on Particular Governance Issues

This section attempts to further illuminate the above discussions regarding competing evaluative criteria and institutional approaches. Two issues are briefly examined: property rights in fisheries and the Kyoto Protocol. Although both issues give rise to debates over competing evaluative criteria and different institutional approaches the controversy over property rights is chosen to illustrate the tensions between ecological sustainability, economic efficiency and distributive equity while the controversy over the Kyoto Protocol is chosen to illustrate the controversy over different institutional approaches.

5.1 ENGO positions on Property Rights in Fisheries

Overfishing and the health of fisheries is popular campaign topic for ENGOs operating at local, national and international levels. Despite an oceans enclosure movement that saw more than 90% of the world's commercially caught fish under the jurisdiction of individual coastal states indicators of ecological sustainability and economic efficiency of global fisheries have worsened during the past 25 years (Alcock 2003). Thirteen out of fifteen of the world's major fishing regions are experiencing declines in production and seventy-five percent of commercially caught species are categorized as fully exploited, overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion (FAO 2004) Global fishing capacity, measured in terms of vessel tonnage, increased by 90% between 1970 and 1990, double the rate of increase in fisheries production. When technological improvements are considered the effective rate of fishing capacity increased by 330% during this period:

³³ <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/InNews/green2004.htm> ;

that's more than seven times the rate of increase in fisheries production (Garcia and Newton 1997).

The most common explanation for the troubled state of world fisheries links the observation of "too many boats chasing too few fish" to Garrett Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons" metaphor (Hardin 1968). In Hardin's example, the inability to exclude users of a common resource creates a situation where each individual user bears only a small fraction of the cost of his or her exploitative use. Those inclined to use the resource conservatively witness the dissipation of benefits by those who exploit it. In the absence of institutional constraints, the rational choice for individual commons users is to exploit the resource before it's gone. This ensuing race for the fish leads to overinvestment and a glut of capacity in pursuit of dwindling fish stocks. This is typically the point of departure for a large body of work that addresses the topic of property rights in fisheries. The issue of property rights in fisheries is one of the most controversial in contemporary fisheries management discussions around the world. Often taking the form of individual fishing quotas (IFQs, or ITQs where rights are transferable), exclusive rights to harvest fish have either been implemented or seriously debated in nearly every OECD country with significant fisheries resources. Although IFQs might be less applicable to artisanal fisheries in developing countries a broader discussion of property rights reforms is certainly part of fisheries policy discussions in these countries as well.

The controversy over IFQs can be mapped directly onto the aforementioned discussion of ecological sustainability, economic efficiency and distributive equity. IFQs offer an opportunity for substantial efficiency gains but they come with significant distributive implications. Evidence on their ability to improve ecological sustainability is mixed but there is little reason to believe that their introduction has made fisheries worse off than what would have been observed in their absence. Importantly, the impacts of property rights reforms will vary with their programmatic details. Property rights can be designed to reduce or protect against distributive inequity at the expense of economic efficiency or they can privilege efficiency without regard to equity considerations. Numerous possibilities for balancing these criteria lie in between. Ecological sustainability is largely a function of a complimentary set of regulations.

With respect to the ENGO community's views on IFQs, consensus has proved elusive. Environmental Defense has been a strong proponent of IFQs for fisheries since the early 1990s and a number of think tanks that are favorably disposed to free-market environmentalism have published literature touting the merits of this regulatory option.³⁴ Alternatively, Greenpeace has a record of working with local grassroots NGOs to lobby against IFQs and think tanks demonstrating greater sensitivity to issues of environmental equity and social justice have countered with their own literature (Jennings 1999).

While a number of larger-scale business interests tend to support IFQs around the world and a number of grassroots organizations of small-scale fishers tend to resist them this simple dichotomy is misleading. In the Pacific Northwest region of the U.S., IFQ programs have been designed in a manner that empowers independent boat owners to the

³⁴ www.ifqsforfisheries.org/

detriment of the processing sector's market power. As a result the National Fisheries Institute, an umbrella interest group for the U.S. fishing industry that largely reflects processing, distribution and retail interests, has resisted wholesale introduction of IFQ programs unless accompanied by a program of processor quotas that would limit the harvesting sector's ability to sell their fish to the highest bidders and protect the processing sector's share of rents from the fishery. So there are instances of grassroots NGO support for IFQ programs that are resisted by industry associations.

The Marine Fish Conservation Network (MFCN) is a coalition of over 170 U.S. organizations (including U.S. affiliates international ENGOs like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth) concerned with fisheries conservation. The MFCN supported a 1995 moratorium on new IFQ programs that was established in conjunction with the reauthorization of the 1995 Magnuson Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MFCMA) and extended for two years in 2000. In 2001 MFCN Executive Director Lee Crockett argued that the moratorium should be kept in place until Congress established a set of "standards" for IFQ (Crockett 2001). The moratorium was lifted in 2002 and a variety of industry and environmental groups continue to lobby for legislation that will shape future IFQ programs in the U.S. The standards MFCN seek largely consist of distributive firewalls and conservation requirements that reflect tradeoffs of economic efficiency in the name of distributive equity and ecological sustainability.³⁵

Varying degrees of emphasis on competing criteria remain at the core of worldwide controversy over property rights in fisheries and ENGO positions are suggestive with respect to their views on which criteria they privilege. Despite the palpable tensions, there appear to be signs of converging opinion on greater use of IFQs in fisheries subject programmatic standards that protect against inequitable outcomes and reinforce ecological priorities.

5.2 ENGO Positions on the Kyoto Protocol

Fault lines of conflict with respect to property rights in fisheries have cut across the ENGO community since this issue first manifested on fisheries policy agendas. On the issue of climate change, however, the fault lines of conflict appear to reflect the conventional wisdom of an ENGO coalition vs. industry coalition dichotomy. The Climate Action Network (CAN) is a worldwide network of 340 NGOs "working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels."³⁶ CAN is organized around 13 regional networks and includes a majority of the world's ENGOs with active climate change campaigns. Pulver (2004) suggests that CAN's strategy is largely directed by three major ENGOs (Greenpeace, FOE and WWF). Since it was established in 1989 CAN has been actively monitoring and seeking to influence the climate negotiations as well as climate-related policies and measures at the national and international levels. CAN was influential in the negotiations that led to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol and has been an ardent supporter of the latter ever

³⁵ <http://www.conservefish.org/site/capitolhill/fishissues/>

³⁶ <http://www.climatenetwork.org/>

since. The lone segment of the ENGO community that engages in campaigns related to climate change but is not a part of CAN and does not support Kyoto is a loose network of 100 or so organizations that Pulver (2004) associates with the climate justice movement. Prominent among this latter group of ENGOs are a US-based network known as CorpWatch³⁷, an Ecuador-based network called Oilwatch³⁸, the Rainforest Action Network³⁹ and the Third World Network.⁴⁰ Relationships between these organizations and CAN tend to be congenial if not supportive as two of the leading organizational leaders of CAN (Greenpeace and FOE) have informal ties to climate justice groups.

Until its dissolution in 2002, CAN's primary archrival was the Global Climate Coalition (GCC), a Washington-based lobbying group with close ties to the fossil fuel industry.⁴¹ In contrast to CAN the GCC has been a staunch critic to the Kyoto Protocol. The GCC engaged in an aggressive disinformation campaign during the Clinton and Bush Administrations that sought to discredit the science behind the findings of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and prevent U.S. participation in the regime. The GCC disbanded in 2002 claiming that its goals were largely met with the Bush Administration's withdrawal of the U.S. as a party to the Kyoto Protocol.

On the surface, then it would appear that conflicts and coalitions on the climate change issue are consistent with conventional wisdom. The primary fault line seems to lie between ENGOs and industry with a division within the ENGO community between mainstream ENGOs seeking to constructively engage negotiations on governance institutions through CAN and more confrontational ENGOs affiliated with the climate justice movement that rely on direct action. A distinction between CAN and climate justice organizations can also be made with respect to the latter's greater emphasis on equity concerns vis-à-vis the former's emphasis on ecological sustainability.

However, an additional fissure has arisen within CAN and cross-cutting partnerships can be observed between Environmental Defense and a number of corporate firms, including oil companies. Environmental Defense played a pivotal role in facilitating international scientific negotiations on climate change in the late 1980s and is credited as one of the founders of CAN (Betsill 2000, quoted in Pulver 2004). As the intergovernmental negotiations evolved toward Kyoto tensions began to arise between Environmental Defense and the rest of the CAN leaders. Environmental Defense pushed heavily for a market-oriented Protocol framework with economic efficiency serving as one of the primary evaluative criteria for considering alternative Protocol options. In particular, Environmental Defense advocated for the liberal usage of an emissions trading regime that it helped to design. CAN leaders, in particular the Europe based ENGOs, maintained their emphasis on ecological sustainability and argued for a principle of complementarity in which nations would only use the emissions trading regime as a supplement to substantive measures taken to reduce emissions within their borders. Environmental

³⁷ <http://www.corpwatch.org/index.php> (formerly known as the Transnational Resource & Action Center).

³⁸ <http://www.oilwatch.org.ec/english/>

³⁹ <http://www.ran.org/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.twinside.org.sg/>

⁴¹ <http://www.globalclimate.org/>

Defense exacerbated these tensions in 1997 when it agreed to partner with British Petroleum (BP) to create an internal emissions trading system within the oil company. This initial partnership has since developed into the Partnership for Climate Action, a consortium of ten major corporations known who have all pledged to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the respective facilities. The dispute over what many CAN members perceive to be the privileging of economic efficiency as a primary evaluative criteria and Environmental Defense's market-orientation eventually resulted in the latter group's informal withdrawal from CAN (Pulver 2004).

In addition to the horizontal pull toward market-based solutions in the Kyoto debate arguments exist that suggest a downward pull away from this international regime may be emerging. David Victor (2001, 2004, 2005) has criticized the top-down approach to global environmental cooperation embodied within the Kyoto Protocol and instead proposes a bottom-up, Madisonian approach to building a global regime. Victor's argument draws on insights from academic literature on international cooperation to highlight a number of unresolved bargaining issues that have significant distributive implications along with the historical inability of international regimes to ensure compliance with costly commitments. In short, Victor does not think the Kyoto Protocol can overcome its unresolved bargaining and enforcement problems. Victor's alternative approach draws analogies to building currency markets and argues that credible institutions must first emerge within states before an effective trading regime can be developed that links them together. Victor does not call for the wholesale dismantling of Kyoto but instead suggests salvaging the parts that work while focusing on building the institutional foundations for a successor regime. The most glaring weakness of Victor's approach is that it is not likely to induce significant emission reductions in the near term. Any emissions reductions that it does induce may prove too little and too late to avert the most damaging consequences of climate change. But it may very well offer the most politically viable course of action and its emphasis on decentralization and market construction would take advantage the institutional trends discussed in this paper.

To date I am unaware of any ENGOs that have embraced Victor's approach but I would not be surprised to see segments of the ENGO community adopt portions of it. Much of its market construction logic consistent with the approaches used by Environmental Defense with the exception of this organization's political investment in the international emissions trading framework. And Victor's championing of local and regional innovation should resonate well with grassroots ENGOs and green business alliances in the U.S. Internationally, Victor's approach does not provide developing countries with promises of aid and investment or an emissions windfall but it calls for collaboration with them on their terms and it does not impose any constraints. Support for Victor's approach from developing country NGOs is not out of the question. However, even if a significant component of the ENGO community were to accept the logic of a bottom-up, market-oriented approach to developing a climate change regime it remains quite likely that a substantial number of committed CAN members would resist. With respect to criterion of ecological sustainability, the Madisonian approach falls short of what these groups hope the Kyoto Protocol can eventually deliver.

6.0 Looking Ahead

The bridging trends that can be observed between segments of the ENGO community and interest groups representing broader socioeconomic interests should continue and I see little reason to believe that the environmental movement will return to a parochial approach in pursuit of its goals (Schellenberger and Nordhaus 2005). I do not see a grand alliance between the bulk of the ENGO community and a strategic partner from the broader spectrum of socioeconomic interest groups. Rather, I suspect that the emerging cleavages within and across the ENGO community that reflect competition between different evaluative criteria and preferred institutional approaches will become more pronounced.

With respect to evaluative criteria I believe that ENGO coalitions that seek to harmonize sustainability with efficiency objectives and sustainability with equity objectives will overshadow those that place an equal emphasis on all three. This is because the most likely bridges between the ENGO community and other socioeconomic interest groups are those that connect groups that are relatively insensitive to one of the three criteria. Coalitions that focus on the sustainability-efficiency interface tend to ignore the issue of distributive equity while coalitions that focus on the sustainability-equity interface tend to ignore the issue of economic efficiency.

With respect to institutional approaches it would appear that the trends toward market-orientation and decentralization have the greatest momentum. The trend toward embracing markets is the preferred institutional approach for groups that privilege economic efficiency. The trend toward decentralization is a popular approach for groups that privilege equity although it is important to note that decentralization by no means assures greater equity.⁴² Decentralization initiatives such as land tenure reforms, co-management arrangements and investment in local capacity offer a means of enhancing equity especially in concert with a broader set of market-oriented initiatives. Decentralization trends also benefit from commonly held perceptions that they enhance the legitimacy and efficacy of governance institutions.

Importantly, embracing markets and devolving authority away from the central government are themes that have considerable political resonance in the United States. This will likely affect the form of future US environmental regulation as well as the US's disposition toward international environmental regimes (DeSombre 2004). If the US is to seriously reengage the international community on its global environmental agenda it will likely occur under the auspices of a bottom-up, market-oriented approach. An increasing number US-based ENGOs would likely endorse such an approach as a matter of political pragmatism if not a genuine belief that it offers the most effective governance solutions. But a significant portion of the US-based ENGO community will likely resist due to their preference for strong environmental regulations that are codified in law at the highest level of authority possible. The EU and EU-based ENGOs will also likely resist due their

⁴² WRI's (2002) discussion of decentralization notes a number of conditions under which decentralization can exacerbate inequity.

growing comfort level with top-down approaches and their desire to replicate this approach at the international level.

A unified alliance of ENGOs pushing for environmentally progressive policies will be less discernable as a cohesive advocacy group in the future battle over global environmental governance. Fault lines of conflict will reflect tensions among ENGOs and a broad range of coalition partners regarding what criteria should be privileged and the most appropriate institutional approach to achieve them.

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