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## Analytical Framework: Assessing the Influence of NGO Diplomats

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This chapter introduces the analytical framework that is at the core of this project and is the starting point for each of the empirical chapters in this volume. With this framework we mean to provide a basis for conducting systematic comparative analyses of NGO diplomats' influence on international environmental negotiations. We begin with a discussion of how to define NGO influence, particularly in light of the relationship between power and influence. This section culminates with a definition of NGO influence specific to our political arena—international negotiations on the environment.

We present our analytical framework in the second section. First we suggest ways of collecting and analyzing data related to NGO influence in a more systematic manner. Specifically, we identify two dimensions to NGO influence—participation in international negotiations and the subsequent effects on the behavior of other actors (e.g., states)—and encourage scholars to gather data on these two dimensions from a variety of sources. We suggest that researchers examine how NGO diplomats shape the negotiation process as well as outcome using process tracing and counterfactual analysis to analyze their data. The second part of our approach consists of a set of indicators that scholars can use to assess the overall influence of NGO diplomats in a particular negotiating context. Results may range from low levels of influence, where NGOs participate but have little effect on either the negotiation process or the outcome, to high levels of influence where NGO diplomacy is linked to effects on both process and outcome. Finally, we encourage analysts to identify the conditioning factors that enable or constrain NGO diplomats in their

efforts to influence international environmental negotiations and to subject these factors to cross-case comparison.

Readers familiar with an earlier version of the framework (Betsill and Corell 2001) will note that the framework presented here has been revised. We made these revisions based on feedback from our contributors as they applied the framework to their respective cases and changes in our own thinking about NGO influence that came from ongoing conversations with scholars and NGO practitioners. We believe these revisions greatly enhance the utility of the framework in analyzing the influence of NGO diplomats in international environmental negotiations. Where appropriate, we highlight these changes and explain the reasoning behind them.

### What Is NGO Influence?

In considering whether NGOs matter in global environmental politics, scholars seek answers to numerous questions. Do NGOs facilitate the evolution of a global civil society concerned with protecting the natural world? Do NGOs place issues on the international political agenda? Do they shape the outcome of international environmental negotiations? In each case the objective is to determine whether NGOs *influence* global environmental politics. It is surprising that few scholars define what they mean by NGO influence—the dependent variable of the studies they are undertaking. It is simply a discussion that is left out in most works. Two notable and commendable exceptions are Arts (1998) and Newell (2000).

The implications of failing to carefully define influence are threefold. First, without a clear understanding of what is meant by influence, analysts have little guidance as to what types of evidence should be collected. They often appear to be presenting evidence on an ad hoc basis and to have a bias toward evidence suggesting NGO diplomats made a difference in a given political process while ignoring evidence to the contrary. Second, the validity of claims of NGO influence can be challenged because there is no basis for assessing whether the evidence actually measures influence. Finally, it becomes difficult to compare NGO influence across cases because analysts rely on different types of evidence that may

measure different aspects of influence. We thus begin with a more careful discussion of what we mean by NGO influence in this project.

### Power versus Influence

Although influence is a basic concept in political science, it is difficult to define, at least partly because it is intimately linked to another difficult to define core concept—power. Explanations of influence vary depending on how influence is perceived to relate to power and the context in which the influence is exercised.<sup>1</sup> Scholars of international relations most often discuss power in terms of *state* power: state A has power if it can make state B do something that B would not choose to do (Dahl 1957). For instance, Holsti (1988: 141) defines power as the “general capacity of a state to control the behavior” of other states. According to Scruton (1996: 432), power is the “ability to achieve whatever effect is desired, whether or not in the face of opposition.” Similarly Nye (1990: 25–26) defines power as the ability to achieve desired outcomes. Typical indicators of state power include gross national product, population, military capability or prestige.

Defining influence—and determining its relationship to power—has proven a challenging task. Holsti (1988), for example, views influence as an aspect of power, or a means to an end, but does not define influence. Scruton (1996: 262) states that influence is a *form* of power, but distinct from control, coercion, force, and interference:

It involves affecting the conduct of another through giving reasons for action short of threats; such reasons may refer to his advantage, or to moral or benevolent considerations, but they must have weight for him, so as to affect his decision. The influenced agent, unlike the agent who is coerced, acts freely. He may choose to ignore those considerations which influence him, and he may himself exert control over the influencing power.

But given his definition of power, Scruton clouds the difference between influence and power by including the possibility for the influenced agent to exert control over the influencing agent. It seems hard to discuss one without the other, but difficult to define them both so that they do not appear to be the same.

Cox and Jacobson (1973) attempted to avoid this problem by distinguishing more clearly between power and influence. They define power

as “the aggregate of political resources available to an actor” (Cox and Jacobson 1973: 4). Power thus refers to *capability*. Cox and Jacobson (1973: 3) define influence as the “modification of one actor’s behavior by that of another.” In contrast to power, which can be calculated for any actor at a particular point in time, influence is seen as an emergent property that derives from the *relationship between actors*. Importantly Cox and Jacobson argue that power may or may not be converted to influence in any given political process. In other words, power does not necessarily guarantee that an actor will exert influence in its interactions. The key then is to understand the conditions under which an actor’s capabilities result in influence.

### NGO Influence in International Environmental Negotiations

Historically discussions of power and influence in international relations have focused on states. States are seen to possess military, economic, and political resources (power) that they use to exert influence. There is, however, growing awareness that non-state actors also possess capabilities that can be used to shape international outcomes. Mathews (1997: 50) argues, “(n)ational governments are not simply losing autonomy in a globalizing economy. They are sharing powers—including political, social and security roles at the core of sovereignty—with businesses, with international organizations, and with a multitude of citizens groups . . . .”

Like states, NGO diplomats have access to a number of resources that give them power in multilateral negotiations. Although they rarely possess significant military capabilities, some NGOs have considerable economic resources, particularly in the private sector. Some argue that it is not their economic resources per se that make business/industry actors powerful but their central position in national economies and the international political economy (Levy and Newell 2000; Newell 2000; Rowlands 2001). This seems to have been the case in Burgiel’s discussion of industry groups in the biosafety negotiations (chapter 4). Alternatively, Chatterjee and Finger (1994) argue that business/industry has a privileged position in international environmental policy making simply because “money talks.” In their contribution to this volume, Andresen and Skodvin contend that this may hold for environmental NGOs as well. They note that Greenpeace reaped substantial financial resources from

their campaign to generate public concern on whaling, which they reportedly used to shift the balance of power within the International Whaling Commission.

For many scholars and practitioners, knowledge and information are a key source of power for NGOs in world politics (e.g., Keck and Sikkink 1998; Corell 1999a).<sup>2</sup> In international environmental negotiations NGO diplomats often use their specialized knowledge in the hope of modifying actions taken by state decision-makers and/or altering how they define their interests. Such knowledge is a particularly valuable resource as international environmental issues are highly complex, and decision-makers often turn to NGO diplomats for help in understanding the nature of the problems and the implications of various policy alternatives under consideration. Knowledge and information enhance NGOs' perceived legitimacy in negotiations and may open up opportunities for influence. Each of the cases in this volume highlights the importance of knowledge and information as a crucial resource for NGO diplomats in international environmental negotiations.

As noted above, the relationship between power (capabilities) and influence is not direct. For states and non-state actors alike, the question remains *how* capabilities are translated into influence. Holsti (1988) identifies six tactics that states can use to exercise influence: persuasion, the offer of rewards, the granting of rewards, the threat of punishment, the infliction of nonviolent punishment, and the use of force. We find that many of these tactics are also used by NGO diplomats to exert influence in international environmental negotiations. Persuasion is perhaps the most widely used; NGOs spend considerable time trying to influence talks by persuading government representatives, who have the formal power to make the decisions, to accept the non-state actors' perspective. NGO diplomacy may also involve more coercive measures, such as threats and/or infliction of nonviolent punishment against states seen to be uncooperative. For example, many NGOs use a strategy of "blaming and shaming" in the hope of getting support for their positions by publicizing actions that interfere with the negotiations and/or noncompliance with previous commitments. NGOs may also threaten to interfere with economic activities in uncooperative states through boycotts (environmental NGOs) or by withholding investment (business NGOs). We see

examples of such coercive tactics in some of our cases. The use of force is generally not a viable option for states or non-state actors during international environmental negotiations.

For the purposes of this project, we argue that influence occurs *when one actor intentionally communicates to another so as to alter the latter's behavior from what would have occurred otherwise*. In the earlier version of the framework, we used Knocke's (1990) definition of influence, which emphasizes information as the primary means of exerting influence within political networks. After many discussions with project participants on this matter, we concluded that this definition was too narrow and ran the risk of conflating power and influence. Information is one of many resources that NGOs may draw upon in their efforts to influence international environmental negotiations. Moreover project participants agreed that a definition of influence should be separate from the tools (power) used to achieve that influence. In this project we seek to analyze the observable effects of NGO participation in international environmental negotiations, regardless of the resources used by NGOs to bring about those effects (determining the relevant resources should be one foci of the research using the framework). Communication is a broader term that better captures the range of resources that NGOs use to influence international negotiations. Whether that communication occurs at the international or domestic level, in the form of technical information, claims of legitimacy, or threats, is for us to determine in each of the cases. We continue to emphasize that our definition of influence is tightly linked to a particular political arena—international environmental negotiations—and that it should not be read as a definitive statement of NGO influence in all areas of political activity.

### Analytical Framework

Our definition of influence serves as the basis for the analytical framework at the core of this project. Zürn (1998: 646) argues that “[a]lthough there is a lot of good evidence about the role of transnational networks in international governance, more rigid research strategies are needed to determine their influence more reliably and precisely.” The approach we introduce here represents such a research

strategy. The framework begins by offering guidance for gathering and analyzing data related to NGO influence in a systematic fashion. We then develop a set of qualitative indicators that can be used to differentiate between three levels of NGO influence. Finally, we encourage scholars to consider the conditioning factors that enable or constrain NGO diplomats and help explain variation in NGO influence across cases.

One of our biggest challenges has been to develop an approach that simultaneously explains individual cases and helps us draw general lessons across cases. As with any research endeavor, this necessarily requires trade-offs. Mitchell (2002: 59) argues, “Carefully designed case studies often generate compelling findings that fit the case studied quite well but usually do so by sacrificing the ability to map those findings convincingly to many, if any, other cases” (see also Mitchell and Bernauer 1998). He adds that quantitative approaches usually have the opposite problem; they identify findings that hold relatively well across cases but do not explain any single case very well. Our aim is to give scholars the opportunity to highlight the unique aspects of each case while also providing a foundation for drawing more general lessons across cases. As a compromise we have chosen the method of structured, focused comparison for our cross-case analysis (George and Bennett 2005). We do not want to sacrifice the rich details that come forth in qualitative case studies. At the same time we have attempted to identify a set of general questions related to our research objectives that can be asked of each case study (structure), and we asked our contributors to focus on particular aspects of their cases (focus). The framework encouraged all contributors to ask questions both about what NGOs did in a given negotiating context as well as the observed effects, in particular, focusing on issue framing, agenda-setting, the positions of key states, and procedural and substantive outcomes.

Our framework relies heavily on triangulation—the use of multiple data types, sources and methodologies to analyze NGO influence in international environmental negotiations. “Triangulation is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, do not contradict it” (Miles and Huberman 1994: 66). Triangulation can also help correct for the likely introduction of researcher bias in the development of indicators for assessing NGO

influence. By the time a researcher gets to the point of identifying a set of possible indicators of NGO influence in a particular case, that person has likely spent a great deal of time studying and/or participating in the negotiation process. There is a danger of only looking at instances where NGO diplomats successfully exerted influence and ignoring failures (Arts 1998). Through the use of triangulation, researchers can develop qualitative confidence intervals about their conclusions on the level of NGO influence in multilateral negotiations on the environment.

### Gathering Data

As discussed above, claims of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations can be strengthened by being more systematic in collecting data. In reviewing the literature on NGO influence in international environmental negotiations, we found that much of the evidence presented only indirectly measures influence, leading to validity concerns. Most scholars tend to rely on evidence regarding NGO *activities* (e.g., lobbying, submitting information or draft decisions to negotiators on a particular position), their *access* to negotiations (e.g., number of NGOs attending negotiations and the rules of participation), and/or NGO *resources* (e.g., knowledge, financial and other assets, number of supporters and their particular role in negotiations). Collectively this tells us a great deal about how NGO diplomats participate in international environmental negotiations. However, it is important to remember that participation does not automatically translate into influence; thus over-emphasizing data on what NGOs do gives us an incomplete picture. To get a more accurate measure of NGO influence, researchers must also consider whether their efforts to shape multilateral negotiations are successful. If NGO diplomacy truly results in influence in international environmental negotiations, then it should be possible to observe the effects of NGO activities independent of those activities (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994).<sup>3</sup>

Our definition of influence highlights two dimensions of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations: (1) how NGO diplomats communicate with other actors during a negotiating process, and (2) alterations in the behavior of those actors in response to that commu-

nication. Given this definition of influence, researchers must look for evidence related to how NGOs participate in a specific negotiating process as well as evidence related to the behavior of other actors in the negotiations to assess whether influence has occurred (table 2.1). Data regarding participation (e.g., activities, access to negotiations and resources) address the first dimension by demonstrating whether and how NGOs diplomats communicated with other actors and identifying the specific content of such communication. We suggest that analysts may get at the second dimension by evaluating NGOs' *goal attainment* (see also Arts 1998; Biliouri 1999; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Williams and Ford 1999). A comparison of goals with observed effects speaks both to what NGO diplomats were trying to do when they communicated with other actors and whether those actors responded by altering their behavior.

It is important to note that the goals of NGO diplomacy may focus on both the *outcome* of the negotiations—such as the text of an agreement—as well as the *process* of the negotiations—such as the agenda (see Arts 1998; Betsill 2000). Perhaps the most obvious evidence of NGO influence is a connection between the text of the final agreement and NGO goals. If NGO diplomats influenced the negotiations, it is logical to expect congruence between ideas communicated by NGOs during the negotiations and the ideas embedded in the text of an agreement. An agreement may contain specific text drafted by NGO diplomats or reflect a general principle or idea introduced by NGOs during the negotiations. We argue, however, that researchers should not solely rely on evidence focused on the outcome of international environmental negotiations as a way to identify NGO influence. One problem is that there is frequently a gap between what NGO diplomats publicly demand and what they privately hope to achieve. For example, environmental NGOs often promote extreme positions as a strategy for pushing state decision-makers in new directions or for distracting their attention. They may have no expectation that these positions will actually appear in the final text. Moreover we may also observe the effects of NGO diplomacy on the negotiating process. For example, ideas communicated by NGO diplomats may show up in individual country statements, whose issues are (or are not) on the agenda, in the terminology used to discuss the issues

**Table 2.1**

Strategies for gathering and analyzing data on NGO influence (cells contain examples of questions researchers might ask)

Triangulation by:	Intentional communication by NGOs/NGO participation	Behavior of other actors/goal attainment
<i>Research task: Gather evidence of NGO influence along two dimensions</i>		
Data type	<p><i>Activities:</i> How did NGOs communicate with other actors?</p> <p><i>Access:</i> What opportunities did NGOs have to communicate with other actors?</p> <p><i>Resources:</i> What sources of leverage did NGOs use in communicating with other actors?</p>	<p><i>Outcome:</i> Does the final agreement contain text drafted by NGOs? Does the final agreement reflect NGO goals and principles?</p> <p><i>Process:</i> Did negotiators discuss issues proposed by NGOs (or cease to discuss issues opposed by NGOs)? Did NGOs coin terms that became part of the negotiating jargon? Did NGOs shape the positions of key states?</p>
Data source	<p><i>Primary texts</i> (e.g., draft decisions, country position statements, the final agreement, NGO lobbying materials)</p> <p><i>Secondary texts</i> (e.g., ECO, <i>Earth Negotiations Bulletin</i>, media reports, press releases)</p> <p><i>Interviews</i> (government delegates, observers, NGOs)</p> <p>Researcher <i>observations</i> during the negotiations</p>	
<i>Research task: Analyze evidence of NGO influence</i>		
Methodology	<p><i>Process tracing</i> What were the causal mechanisms linking NGO participation in international environmental negotiations with their influence?</p>	<p><i>Counterfactual analysis</i> What would have happened if NGOs had not participated in the negotiations?</p>

under negotiation, and/or in the general way the environmental problem is framed. Ignoring the effects NGO diplomats can have on the negotiation process simplifies and overlooks instances of NGO influence.

Contributors to this volume collected data from a variety of sources. We encouraged them to use as many different sources as possible, recognizing that each has different biases and/or strengths (Miles and Huberman 1994). Examples of primary documents used in this volume include the final agreement text, drafts negotiated along the way toward the final version, the official reports of each negotiation session, country statements, and NGO lobbying materials. Our contributors also made use of secondary documents, such as *ECO*, a publication produced by environmental NGOs during negotiating sessions to make their positions known, the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, which contains detailed daily and summary reports from the negotiations, as well as media reports and press releases. Several of our contributors also interviewed participants in the negotiations. For the most part these were conducted for other research purposes prior to constructing the case studies for this volume. Ideally, to control for potential bias, researchers should interview several different types of participants, including NGO diplomats, national delegates, and other observers who participated in the negotiations. As a rule, NGOs can be expected to overstate their influence on negotiations, and delegates can be expected to understate NGO influence (Arts 1998). Observers (e.g., UN agency staff) can therefore function as a control group. Finally, several of our contributors relied on evidence obtained by participating in and/or observing international environmental negotiations.

The particular conditions prevailing in the arena of international environmental negotiations give rise to some challenges in collecting data on NGO goal attainment. For example, as a result of failed efforts NGOs may revise their goals during the process, so the question becomes which of the goals should be considered as obtained? In addition NGO diplomats involved in an international environmental negotiation may not be coordinated enough in the beginning of the negotiation process to share common goals, so then, can goals acquired over time be considered to be obtained and at what point can the diverse group of NGOs be considered to have developed shared goals? Furthermore there are numerous

groups involved in an international environmental negotiation, so whose goals should be examined, each individual organization's or the goals of the collective? While we recognize the complexities involved in applying this approach to NGO diplomacy in international environmental negotiations, a complementary approach that combines evidence on NGO participation with evidence related to goal attainment provides a richer picture of NGO influence by looking at the ways NGO diplomats communicate with other actors in multilateral negotiations as well as the subsequent effects.

### **Linking Participation to Influence**

Evidence suggesting a connection between NGO activities in a particular negotiating context and observed effects enhances the plausibility of claims that NGO diplomats exerted influence. Such a connection raises the possibility that NGOs had some role in bringing about that effect. However, the risk of confusing correlation with causation remains. If a particular wording in the agreement text corresponds to the views of NGO diplomats, it does not necessarily follow that they were responsible for getting that text inserted into the agreement. It could be the case that other actors involved in the negotiations were promoting similar views. Giugni (1999) notes a similar challenge in the study of social movement consequences and argues that the problem of causality can be addressed, at least in part, by making careful methodological choices. Specifically, there is a need to elaborate the causal link between NGO participation and observed effects and to rule out alternative explanations. We contend that claims of NGO influence can be strengthened through the use of process tracing and counterfactual analysis (see table 2.1).

The fundamental idea behind process tracing is “to assess causality by recording each element of the causal chain” (Zürn 1998: 640; see also George and Bennett 2005, 206).<sup>4</sup> In the specific case of NGOs in international environmental negotiations, process tracing requires building a logical chain of evidence linking communication from NGO diplomats with other actors, actors' response/nonresponse, and the effects/noneffects of that communication. The first step is to demonstrate that NGO diplomats did engage in intentional communication with other actors. For instance, did they make an effort to provide negotiators with

information about the nature of the problem, particular proposals, and so forth? As Knocke (1990: 3) notes, “influence is possible only when communication occurs.” Communication is a two-way process. We must also consider whether the targeted actors were actually aware that communication had occurred and if so, how they responded. For example, if state delegates are unaware of an NGO proposal and/or if they do not consider the proposal to be politically viable, this suggests NGO diplomats have not been very effective at communicating their position. Analysts must thus question whether influence has occurred, even if there is a correlation between NGO participation and an observed effect.

Process tracing can take many forms (George and Bennett 2005). In this volume our contributors construct detailed narratives, often organized around hypotheses specific to the case. Process tracing helps analysts make causal inferences in single case studies and strengthens claims of NGO influence in any given negotiating context. Moreover, by specifying the causal links between NGO diplomacy and observed effects, process tracing can help scholars identify the conditions under which NGOs exert influence. Scholars can also use process tracing to rule out alternative explanations by trying to construct causal chains connecting the activities of other actors to an observed effect (see also Giugni 1999). If such a link cannot be made, the claim of NGO influence is strengthened.

Researchers should also consider whether the process and outcome of a given set of negotiations might have been different in the absence of NGO diplomats through the use of counterfactual analysis (Biersteker 1995; Fearon 1998; Miles and Huberman 1994; and Tetlock and Belkin 1996). Counterfactual analysis is an “imaginative construct” that considers what *might* have happened if one examined variable were removed from the chain of events (Biersteker 1995: 318). If the negotiations would have been the same regardless of the efforts or presence of NGOs, then it is more likely that they had little or no influence. If the negotiations would have been different had NGO diplomats not been involved, then the claim that they were responsible for an observed effect would appear to be strengthened. As Jon Elster has noted, “To distinguish causation from correlation we may point out that the former warrants the statement that if the cause had not occurred, then the effect

would not have occurred, whereas no such counterfactual is implied by the latter” (quoted in Biersteker 1995: 318). We recognize the myriad difficulties related to constructing counterfactuals and have taken a fairly casual approach to counterfactual analysis in this project (George and Bennett 2005). We have encouraged authors to use counterfactual reasoning as one component of a broader analysis (along with process tracing) to help rule out alternative explanations and strengthen claims of NGO influence.

### **Assessing NGO Influence**

One of the goals of our analytical framework is to encourage scholars to collect and analyze data on NGO influence in a more systematic fashion, and we believe that doing so will produce more robust claims of influence. In addition we believe it is possible to develop a set of indicators that enables us to assess the influence of NGO diplomats more precisely and that such assessments can serve as a basis for comparison across cases. We are not, however, in favor of a quantitative measure of NGO influence. We believe that precise quantification is futile and would only create a false impression of measurability for a phenomenon that is highly complex and intangible. Instead of “measuring” influence, we suggest that the influence of NGO diplomats can be qualitatively “assessed” in terms of high, moderate, or low levels of influence, by combining different types of evidence of NGO influence as illustrated in table 2.2 (for a similar approach, see Arts 1998: 74–85).

This is another example of how the framework has been revised since its earlier publication (Betsill and Corell 2001). We originally proposed a list of seven indicators, four of which addressed the ways that NGOs participate in multilateral negotiations and three which considered the subsequent effects. As contributors began using these indicators to assess NGO influence in their respective cases, a number of problems became apparent. First, the participation indicators were heavily biased toward information provision and left out other types of strategies and resources used by NGOs in some of the cases. Second, there was no clear link between the two types of indicators. Third, we realized that assessments of NGO influence ultimately rely more heavily on the indicators relating to the effects of NGO influence so these needed to be given greater weight.

Finally, the original set of effects indicators did not fully capture the range of potential effects we are likely to see in international negotiations on the environment and sustainable development. Table 2.2 is not necessarily a set of “new” indicators of NGO influence; it still contains data on participation and effects but the data is presented in a different format in an attempt to address some of the limitations noted above.

Our framework now identifies five indicators that can be used to assess the overall level of NGO influence in a particular set of negotiations. These indicators rely on the data and analytical methods outlined in table 2.1 and cover the range of effects we might expect to observe if NGO diplomats influence international environmental negotiations. The first three indicators focus on the potential effects of NGO diplomats on the negotiation process. *Issue framing* refers to how the environmental problem was conceptualized prior to and/or during the negotiations. A frame is “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action within one’s present or past environment” (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). By framing (or re-framing) environmental problems, NGO diplomats can highlight particular aspects of a problem such as the driving causes and/or who has the responsibility to act, thereby establishing the boundaries within which states must formulate their responses (Betsill 2002; Chatterjee and Finger 1994; Humphreys 2004; Jasanoff 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Williams and Ford 1999). For example, the problem of biosafety could be framed as a health issue or a trade issue, with implications for the types of information desired by negotiators and alternatives likely to be considered. If NGOs have an effect on issue framing, we would expect to see a correlation between the frames used by NGOs and those used by negotiators in their statements and/or as reflected in the final agreement. Issue framing may occur prior to the negotiation phase of the policy process (as in the case of desertification negotiations) or frames may change over the course of negotiations (as in the whaling and forests cases).

Another potential effect of NGO diplomacy relates to *agenda setting*. We view agenda setting as both a specific phase of the policy process (prior to the negotiation phase) and an ongoing process that occurs during the negotiation phase. Many scholars have found that NGOs

**Table 2.2** Indicators of NGO influence (cells contain examples of the types of evidence analysts should include in the table and/or accompanying narrative)

Evidence		NGO influence? (yes/no)
Influence indicator	Behavior of other actors...	...as caused by NGO communication
Influence on negotiating process	<p>Issue framing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was the issue understood prior to the start of the negotiations?</li> <li>• Was there a shift in how the issue was understood once the negotiations were underway?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did NGOs do to bring about this understanding?</li> </ul>
	<p>Agenda setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the issue first come to the attention of the international community?</li> <li>• What specific items were placed on or taken off the negotiating agenda?</li> <li>• What were the terms of debate for specific agenda items?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did NGOs do to shape the agenda?</li> </ul>
	<p>Positions of key actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the initial position of key actors?</li> <li>• Did key actors change their position during the negotiations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did NGOs do to shape the position of key actors?</li> </ul>

<p>Influence on negotiating outcome</p>	<p>Final agreement/procedural issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the agreement create new institutions to facilitate NGO participation in future decision making processes?</li> <li>• Does the agreement acknowledge the role of NGOs in implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did NGOs do to promote these procedural changes?</li> </ul>
	<p>Final agreement/substantive issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the agreement reflect the NGO position about what should be done on the issue?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did NGOs do to promote these substantive issues?</li> </ul>

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catalyze international action by identifying to an environmental harm and calling upon states to do something about it (Charnovitz 1997; Newell 2000; Raustiala 2001; Yamin 2001; Gemmill and Bamidele-Izu 2002). Although our primary concern is on NGO influence during the negotiation phase of the policy process, we recognize that NGOs can open up opportunities for influence by drawing attention to a problem in the first place. We therefore encourage scholars to consider whether there is a link between NGO activities and how a particular problem came to the attention of the international community prior to the negotiation phase. At the same time the negotiation phase typically begins with setting up a framework for negotiation, which involves identifying the specific items to be addressed. For example, the Kyoto Protocol negotiations on climate change began with debates over the inclusion of developing country commitments and emissions trading. We therefore suggest that scholars consider whether NGO diplomats succeeded in placing issues on (or keeping issues off) the negotiating agenda.

Finally, we may observe the effects of NGO diplomacy in the *positions of key states* during the negotiations. Since state delegates ultimately decide on the text of an agreement, shaping the position of a key state or group of states can be an effective mechanism for NGO influence. Scholars may consider whether the initial positions of key states have been shaped by NGO diplomats. Moreover there may be evidence that a key state changed its position during the negotiations as the result of NGO activities. Andresen and Skodvin's chapter on whaling highlights the fact that NGO diplomacy aimed at shaping the position of key states may occur in the domestic context (e.g., by conducting public awareness campaigns or participating in domestic discussions) as well as in the international context (e.g., by lobbying state delegates at the negotiations).

The remaining two indicators consider the effects of NGOs on the final agreement, distinguishing between procedural and substantive issues. *Procedural issues* address how decisions are to be made in the future. NGO diplomats often wish to enhance opportunities for participation in future decisions by creating new institutions (e.g., advisory boards) and/or securing a role in implementation. NGOs may also shape the final text on *substantive issues* that make specific demands on member states. NGO diplomats typically have strong positions on what should be

done to address an environmental problem, and these positions may be reflected in the agreement. In some cases we may find evidence that specific text proposed by NGOs appears in the agreement. More likely we may find elements of an NGO proposal and/or ideas consistent with NGO positions.

For each indicator, analysts should explicitly link evidence on what NGO diplomats did during the negotiations (i.e., how they participated) to evidence on how other actors behaved (subsequent effects). Determinations of NGO influence on any particular indicator require that analysts be able to provide specific evidence on both dimensions of influence (showing correlation) *and* that the data be analyzed using process tracing and/or counterfactual analysis to elaborate the causal link between NGO participation and observed effects (showing causality). Individually, no single indicator can point to a specific level of influence, but when aggregated, the indicators enable us to distinguish between high, moderate or low levels of NGO influence (table 2.3). In instances of low influence, NGO diplomats participate in negotiations but without effect. In other words, we find no evidence of NGO influence on any of the five indicators. Moderate influence occurs when NGOs participate and have some success in shaping the negotiating process. In these cases, we observe NGO influence on issue framing, agenda-setting and/or the positions of key actors (NGO diplomats need not influence each element of the process). The critical distinction between moderate and high levels of NGO influence relates to effects on the outcome of the negotiations. When NGO diplomacy can be linked to specific effects on the agreement text, NGOs can be said to have exerted a high level of influence in a particular set of negotiations.

### Conditioning Factors

Finally, we encourage scholars to consider the factors that facilitate and/or constrain NGO diplomats in their efforts to influence international environmental negotiations. In this project we used an inductive approach to identify eight factors for the cross-case analysis: (1) NGO coordination, (2) rules of access, (3) stage of the negotiations, (4) political stakes, (5) institutional overlap, (6) competition from other NGOs, (7) alliances with key states, and (8) level of contention (see chapter 8). These factors

**Table 2.3**  
Determining levels of NGO influence

	Low	Moderate	High
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs participate in the negotiations but without effect on either process or outcome.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs participate and have some success in shaping the negotiating process but not the outcome.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs participate in the negotiations and have some success in shaping the negotiating process.</li> <li>• NGOs' effects of participation can be linked to outcome.</li> </ul>
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs engage in activities aimed at influencing the negotiations.</li> <li>• NGOs do not score a yes on any of the influence indicators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs engage in activities aimed at influencing the negotiations.</li> <li>• NGOs score a yes on some or all of the process indicators.</li> <li>• NGOs score a no on all of the outcome indicators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs engage in activities aimed at influencing the negotiations.</li> <li>• NGOs score a yes on some or all of the process indicators.</li> <li>• NGOs score a yes on one or both of the outcome indicators.</li> </ul>

were derived from our contributors' detailed understandings of their respective cases as well as their general knowledge of the literature on NGOs in international environmental negotiations.

As discussed in chapter 1, our opportunistic approach to case selection precluded us from "testing" the explanatory value of any factor, since we made no determination about the appropriateness of the cases at the outset. However, as discussed in chapter 8, our analysis did identify a number of findings warranting future research. This should not be seen as an exhaustive list of all possible factors that condition NGO influence; the general literature on NGOs in international environmental negotiations suggests many others that could be examined systematically based on a more careful approach to case selection. In the following discussion, we review this literature in order to put our discussion of conditioning factors into context and to identify additional factors that could be analyzed using our framework.

Analysts frequently distinguish between those factors that emphasize the behavior or characteristics of NGOs (agency) and those that highlight the importance of context (structure) in explaining variation in NGO influence across cases. Most scholars combine elements of both structure and agency in their explanations of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations, and the distinction between agent-based and structural conditioning factors should not be overstated since they are often connected. Where structural factors are recognized, NGO diplomats may be able to act so as to take advantage of potential openings and/or avoid obstacles. Moreover, through their actions, NGOs may be able to change structural factors and open up new opportunities for influence.

Agent-based conditioning factors suggest that NGOs diplomats control their own destiny and can enhance their influence by adopting particular strategies and/or accumulating resources. For example, Dodds (2001) points to the importance of professionalization, arguing that NGO diplomats familiar with the technical language and procedures of multilateral negotiations are more likely to be successful in influencing the negotiations. Similarly many scholars stress that direct/insider tactics (e.g., lobbying) are more effective in the negotiation context than indirect/outsider tactics (e.g., protest; see Kakabadse and Burns 1994; Newell 2000; Gereffi, Garcia-Johnson, and Sasser 2001). Coordination among non-state actors is also seen to enhance their influence by amplifying their voice and promoting greater efficiency in gathering and disseminating information (e.g., Biliouri 1999; Chatterjee and Finger 1994; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Corell and Betsill 2001; Dodds 2001; Duwe 2001; Betsill 2002). Finally, some scholars contend that NGO influence is positively related to the possession of key resources, such as money and expertise (Chatterjee and Finger 1994; Kakabadse and Burns 1994; Biliouri 1999).

Alternatively, structural factors imply that NGOs are enabled or constrained by elements of the negotiating context. These factors help explain why, despite employing similar strategies or exhibiting similar characteristics, NGOs may have different levels of influence across cases. One set of structural factors underscores the institutional setting, or what

social movement scholars refer to as the *political opportunity structure*. While there is considerable variation in how scholars define and operationalize political opportunity structure, McAdam (1996) finds that most emphasize the formal organizational/legal structure and power relations of a political system at a given time. There is some debate about whether this concept, which has been developed in the domestic context, travels to the international arena (see McAdam 1996; Kay 2005). However, we agree with Khagram, Riker, and Sikink (2002) that international institutions have identifiable political opportunity structures and contend that the ability of NGOs to influence international environmental negotiations may be shaped by both aspects of the formal organizational structure in which the negotiation takes place and power relations among participating actors. Rather than construct a single measure of political opportunity structure, we find it more useful to think of political opportunity structures as clusters of variables and to analyze whether and how specific aspects of the institutional context shape NGO opportunities for influence (see Gamson and Meyer 1996).

In the context of international environmental negotiations, many scholars point to the rules for NGO access as an element of the organizational structure likely to constrain NGO diplomats. Where rules for access are restrictive, NGOs may be less likely to exert high levels of influence, since they have fewer opportunities for direct interaction with state delegates as well as limited access to information related to the negotiations (Corell and Betsill 2001; Raustiala 1997; Williams and Ford 1999). Moreover access rules may change as negotiations move from a general discussion to bargaining over specific text. In the latter stages of negotiations there may be less political space available to NGOs, since talks are more likely to be held behind closed doors with fewer participants in the room out of practical necessity. Finally, the legal nature of the negotiations may affect opportunities for NGO influence. NGO diplomats may be more influential in negotiations of framework agreements or nonbinding declarations where the political stakes are relatively low, since such agreements tend to articulate general principles and require few behavioral changes from states. In terms of power relations, opportunities for NGO influence may be constrained

where there are significant cleavages between states (e.g., North–South conflicts) and/or other non-state actors promoting a conflicting agenda but enhanced by the availability of states allies (Arts 2001; Corell and Betsill 2001; Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004).

Another structural factor that is more cultural than institutional relates to the way issues under negotiation are framed. Frames may enable or constrain NGO diplomats by creating a demand for particular types of information, thereby privileging some actors and limiting which proposals delegates consider seriously. For example, Corell and Betsill (2001) contend it is difficult for environmental NGOs to exert influence when environmental problems are linked to economic concerns because decision makers are more likely to focus on short-term economic costs than longer-term environmental costs. Similarly Williams and Ford (1999) found that the prevailing discourse of free trade within the World Trade Organization limited the political space available for environmental NGOs to promote their concerns about the environmental consequences of trade.

## Conclusion

As we discussed in the introductory chapter, this volume has two central objectives. First, we seek to develop methodologies for strengthening claims of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations. The analytical framework we present here contributes to this objective by encouraging analysts to collect and analyze data on the influence of NGO diplomats in a more systematic manner. Moreover we argue that this systematic approach can be used to make more nuanced, qualitative assessments of NGO influence, which in turn allow for comparison across cases. The ability to compare across cases of NGO influence is essential to achieving our second objective: identifying a set of factors that condition the ability of NGO diplomats to influence international environmental negotiations. Such analysis is necessary to advance our theoretical understanding of the role of NGOs in global environmental politics by moving beyond the question of whether NGOs matter to examining under what conditions they matter.

## Notes

1. This discussion draws heavily on Corell (1999a: 101–106).
2. We regard information as a set of data that have not been placed in a larger context. When information is placed within such a context, by relating it to previously gained knowledge, it becomes knowledge and can be used at a general level as the basis for assessments and action (Corell 1999a: 22).
3. For examples where this is done, see Arts (1998) and Newell (2000). Unfortunately, these represent the exception rather than the rule.
4. For examples of process tracing in the NGO literature, see Arts (1998), Close (1998), and Short (1999).