
Introduction to NGO Diplomacy

Michele M. Betsill and Elisabeth Corell

The modern era of international decision making on the environment and sustainable development formally began with the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm. Representatives of more than 250 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) attended the Stockholm Conference, representing constituencies bound by common values, knowledge, and/or interests. These NGOs served as technical experts, helped develop the rules for NGO participation, participated in plenary sessions and committee meetings, and engaged in several parallel forums designed to strengthen their connections with one another. Willetts (1996b: 57) views Stockholm as a watershed event in terms of NGO involvement in global governance, marking the beginning of a “slow yet steady liberalization of the NGO system occurring over the following two decades.”

Since Stockholm, NGO involvement in international decision-making processes related to the environment and sustainable development has escalated, as demonstrated by their participation in the two subsequent global conferences. More than 1,400 NGOs were accredited to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, and more than 25,000 individuals from 167 countries participated in the parallel Global Forum, where NGOs negotiated alternative treaties and engaged in extensive networking (Chatterjee and Finger 1994; Dodds 2001; Kakabadse and Burns 1994; Morphet 1996; Willetts 1996b). One of the greatest achievements of the Rio Conference was *Agenda 21*, the action plan for sustainable development in the twenty-first century, which recognized NGOs as partners in the global struggle to promote sustainable development. In 2002, more than 3,200

organizations were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, where NGOs were central to the creation of partnerships for sustainable development (Gutman 2003; Speth 2003).

The dramatic increase in the number of NGOs over the past century has been well documented, as has the fact that these organizations increasingly participate in international political processes. Academic interest in the role of these actors in global environmental politics has exploded since the early 1990s, and a growing body of evidence indicates that NGOs influence government decisions to develop domestic policies to protect natural resources and to negotiate international treaties, as well as how individuals perceive environmental problems (see Betsill 2006). Despite mounting evidence that NGOs make a difference in global environmental politics, the question of under what conditions NGOs matter generally remains unanswered.

This volume addresses this question in the realm of international environmental negotiations. We contend that the increased participation of NGOs in these political processes reflects broader changes in the nature of diplomacy in world politics. In international relations scholarship, diplomacy is often viewed as something that states do; an important aspect of statecraft and foreign policy (e.g., Magalhães 1988). Alternatively, Sharp (1999) argues that diplomacy is better understood in terms of representation; diplomats are actors who act on the behalf of a clearly identified constituency. We find that Sharp's definition better captures the reality of multilateral negotiations on the environment and sustainable development. As the contributions in this volume demonstrate, international environmental negotiations cannot be understood in terms of inter-state diplomacy. Rather, these processes involve myriad actors representing a diversity of interests. In multilateral negotiations on the environment and sustainable development, NGO representatives act as diplomats who, in contrast to government diplomats, represent constituencies that are not bound by territory but by common values, knowledge, and/or interests related to a specific issue (see Starkey, Boyer, and Wilkenfeld 2005).

To the extent that NGO diplomacy has been considered in the past, the emphasis has often been on unofficial acts, such as hosting foreign

visitors or participating in cultural exchanges or scientific meetings (sometimes referred to as “citizen” or “track-two” diplomacy) (see National Council for International Visitors 2006; Starkey, Boyer, and Willkenfeld 2005). However, these discussions typically treat NGO diplomacy as something that occurs outside the realm of formal, inter-state politics. In contrast, the contributions in this volume illuminate the ways that NGOs engage directly in one of the most traditional diplomatic activities—formal international negotiations. In each of our cases, NGO diplomats perform many of the same functions as state delegates: they represent the interests of their constituencies, they engage in information exchange, they negotiate, and they provide policy advice (Aviel 2005; Jönsson 2002).

This volume presents an analytical framework for the study of NGO diplomacy that takes into account the effects of nongovernmental organizations on both negotiation processes and outcomes and provides a basis for conducting systematic comparative analyses. Most current research consists of individual case studies, where scholars rely on different measures of NGO influence, different types of data, and different methodologies. As a result it is difficult to make assessments about where NGOs have had more or less influence and to examine the factors that may lead to variation in NGO influence across cases. In this volume, contributors use the framework to examine the role of NGO diplomats in negotiations on climate change, biosafety, desertification, whaling, and forests. Within these cases many different types of NGOs are considered—environmental, social, scientific, and business/industry organizations. These analyses demonstrate that it is possible to make qualitative judgments about levels of NGO influence and that comparison across the cases allows scholars to identify factors that explain variation in NGO influence in different negotiating situations.

In this introductory chapter we define what we mean by NGOs and clarify our focus on international negotiations. We then discuss the need for a systematic approach to the study of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations and outline the strategy we have used to conduct such research in this project. We conclude with an overview of the remaining chapters in the volume.

What Are NGOs?

Scholars and practitioners use the term NGO to refer to a wide range of organizations, which are often differentiated in terms of geographic scope, substantive issue area, and/or type of activity. Some authors specifically examine international NGOs working in at least three countries, while others focus on national or local grassroots organizations. Still others emphasize the various networks formed by these organizations. Studies of international environmental negotiations routinely highlight the involvement of environmental NGOs (ENGOs) as well as scientific organizations and NGOs representing business and industry interests. Finally, some scholars differentiate between NGOs based on the character of their primary activities: advocacy, research, and outreach.

In this project, the term “NGO” refers to a broad spectrum of actors from advocacy groups rooted in civil society to privately held multinational corporations and trade associations to research-oriented bodies that participate in international environmental negotiation processes using the tools of diplomacy.¹ We draw on Oberthür et al.’s (2002) thorough review of the legal and academic literature on NGOs, which identified three minimum criteria that are used in the accreditation process to determine who may participate in international policy making processes and thus to define an NGO. According to this study, an NGO is an organization that (1) is not formed by intergovernmental agreement, (2) has expertise or interests relevant to the international institution, and (3) expresses views that are independent of any national government. This is consistent with how the term is used in the UN, which also excludes organizations that advocate violence, are political parties, and/or do not support UN objectives (Oberthür et al. 2002; Willetts 1996b).

For the purposes of the present study, this broad usage of the term NGO is appropriate for at least two reasons. First, as stated above, it reflects the usage within the UN system, which covers the majority of international institutions in which multilateral negotiations related to the environment and sustainable development take place. Second, all NGO representatives can be distinguished from state diplomats in that they do not represent territorially defined interests. We recognize the di-

versity of actors that fall within this definition and have encouraged the contributors to make distinctions between types of NGOs (e.g., environmental groups vs. industry associations) as they see fit. However, we did not wish to exclude a priori any type of NGO, since the purpose of this project was to explore the significance of NGO diplomacy, broadly defined, on international environmental negotiations. We recognize, however, that there may be important differences between types of NGOs that affect whether and how they exert influence. The framework we develop to analyze NGO influence in international environmental negotiations may help illuminate these differences. We address the importance of the distinctions between NGOs in the conclusions and suggest areas for future research on this important question.

Why International Negotiations?

International negotiations are one political *arena* in which NGOs attempt to shape policy making related to the environment and sustainable development (see Betsill 2006). Other arenas include (this is not an exhaustive list): domestic policy making, the formation of global civil society, and decision making of private actors (e.g., corporations). While NGO activities in all of these political arenas may have implications for the global governance of the environment and sustainable development, we argue that each of these arenas is likely to involve different political dynamics that in turn shape the ways that NGOs participate, the goals they pursue, the strategies they use and the likelihood that they will achieve those goals (Betsill and Corell 2001).

Unfortunately, much of the current literature tends to treat all studies related to NGOs in the area of environment and sustainable development as a single body of research, without differentiating between these different arenas of activity. While NGOs may be central in the development of a global civil society, it is entirely possible that they are less successful in shaping new international institutions to address environmental issues. Scholars need to employ a multifaceted view of the role of NGOs and the arenas in which they participate in world politics. At the same time there is great demand for general conclusions about

NGO influence in international politics. It would be also useful to be able to consider whether NGOs are generally more influential in particular arenas, and if so, why.

The purpose of this project is to better understand these dynamics within one arena—international environmental negotiations. We examine negotiations aimed at creating a new agreement outlining general principles, commitments, and/or decision-making procedures as well as post-agreement negotiations that address questions of implementation and/or new conflicts that arise under an existing treaty (Spector and Zartman 2003). International negotiations are a particularly interesting arena in which to consider NGO influence since they are largely the domain of states. As UN members, only states have formal decision-making power during international negotiations. They establish rules for who may participate and the nature of that participation (e.g., through formal interventions or by directly engaging in floor debate), and ultimately it is states that vote on whether to adopt a particular decision. In contrast, NGOs often participate in these processes as observers and have no formal voting authority, making it difficult for NGO diplomats to influence the negotiating process. Thus findings of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations present an interesting empirical puzzle.

In this volume we specifically analyze NGOs who attend international negotiations for the purpose of influencing those negotiations. Many NGOs attend negotiations to take advantage of the opportunities to network with other NGOs; they show very little interest in engaging in NGO diplomacy (Friedman, Hochstetler, and Clark 2005). While the development of such networks may have significant implications for global environmental politics more broadly, we are primarily interested in the more immediate effects of NGO diplomacy on specific negotiating situations.

We wish to clarify two points related to our understanding of multilateral negotiations. First, negotiation processes and outcomes are shaped by more than just what happens during isolated, two-week formal negotiating sessions.² NGO diplomats may influence multilateral negotiations during the pre-negotiation/agenda-setting phase, so it is important to consider how the negotiations came about in the first place. In addition NGOs may influence the negotiation process during formal interse-

sional meetings, through domestic channels and/or in more informal settings as well. Therefore, in assessing the influence of NGO diplomats in international negotiations, we have encouraged contributors to consider all activities related to multilateral negotiations, not just those that occur during the official two-week sessions.

Second, our conception of political arenas should not be confused with levels of analysis. The dynamics within the political *arena* of international negotiations are shaped by things that happen at different *levels*, including the domestic level.³ To the extent that NGOs engage in activities within a domestic context that are clearly *targeted* at influencing international negotiations, these activities should be considered in the analysis of NGO diplomacy.

A Systematic Approach

Despite mounting evidence that NGOs make a difference in global environmental politics, the question of under what conditions they matter remains unanswered. Specifically, it is difficult to draw general lessons about the role of NGO diplomacy in international negotiations on the environment and sustainable development because the current literature suffers from three weaknesses.⁴ First, as noted above, there is a tendency to treat all studies related to NGOs in the environmental issue area as a single body of research without distinguishing between the different political arenas in which they operate. It is important not to collapse conclusions in the literature about these different spheres of activity. Students of NGOs need to employ a multifaceted view of the role of NGOs.

Second, there is a surprising lack of specification about what is meant by “influence” and how to identify NGO influence in any given political arena (two notable and commendable exceptions are Arts 1998 and Newell 2000). Progress in our understanding of the conditions of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations depends on more careful consideration of what we mean by NGO influence and how influence might be identified. While we recognize that defining influence can be a complicated matter, it is highly important because it forces analysts to think carefully about the types of evidence needed to indicate NGO influence. Without a clear understanding of what is meant by influence,

scholars often appear to be presenting evidence on an ad hoc basis. As a result such studies run the risk of overdetermination as scholars look for any possible sign that NGOs made a difference in a given political process while ignoring evidence to the contrary. In other words, defining influence has implications for the robustness of research findings. Moreover lack of consistency in the types of evidence used to indicate NGO influence in international environmental negotiations makes it difficult to compare the role of NGO diplomats across cases, to make assessments about where NGOs have had more or less influence, and to examine the factors that may lead to variation in NGO influence across cases.

Another problem associated with the failure to define influence is that the evidence presented may not be an appropriate proxy for NGO influence. If NGO diplomats truly influence international environmental negotiations, then it should be possible to observe the effects of that influence (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Scholars frequently 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). However, these types of evidence primarily tell us *how* NGOs engage in international environmental negotiations but do not give us information on the subsequent *effects*.

Third, most studies stop short of elaborating the causal linkages between NGO activities and outcomes. Gathering evidence of NGO influence in a more systematic fashion is clearly an important first step to enhancing our understanding of how and under what conditions NGO diplomats matter in international environmental negotiations. However, researchers still run the risk of confusing correlation with causation. If a particular proposal for discussion or wording in the agreement text corresponds to views of NGOs, does that necessarily reflect the success of NGO diplomacy? It could be the case that other actors involved in the negotiations were promoting similar views. Plausibility claims can be strengthened by linking NGO participation and influence in international environmental negotiations.

In sum, progress in understanding under what conditions NGOs matter can be achieved by more carefully recognizing the distinct political arenas in which NGOs operate, by defining what we mean by NGO “influence,” and by elaborating the processes by which NGO diplomats influence multilateral environmental negotiations. In this volume we further theoretical development on the role of NGOs in global environmental politics by proposing an analytical framework for assessing their influence in one sphere of activity—international environmental negotiations. The framework, which takes into account the effects of NGO diplomats on both negotiation processes and outcomes, provides a basis for conducting systematic, comparative analyses, which in turn allow us to make some claims about the conditions under which NGOs matter.

Research Design

This volume is the culmination of a project begun in 1999. The objectives of the project are twofold: (1) to develop methodologies for strengthening findings of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations, and (2) through comparative analysis, to identify a set of conditioning factors that shape the ability of NGO diplomats to influence such negotiations. At the core of the project is an analytical framework for assessing NGO influence in international environmental negotiations, which was originally published in 2001 (Betsill and Corell 2001; Corell and Betsill 2001). Shortly thereafter, project participants began developing case studies to both test and refine the framework as a tool for assessing NGO influence and to begin discussions of the conditioning factors that shape NGO influence.

The cases have been selected based on the availability and interest of scholars with significant prior knowledge of NGO diplomacy in international environmental negotiations. Three cases (climate change, bio-safety, and desertification) examine single agreement negotiations over a fairly short period of time. The other two cases (whaling and forests) analyze several negotiations on a single issue over a decade or more and often in different institutional contexts. These latter cases provide the opportunity to consider how NGO influence changes over time, across

institutional fora, and/or as negotiations pass through different phases. The cases cover negotiations of initial agreements as well as post-agreement negotiations focused on how to achieve an agreement's goals and address ongoing or new conflicts that arise (Spector and Zartman 2003). The cases are heavily weighted toward natural resource issues as opposed to pollution.

Regarding our first objective—developing methodologies for analyzing NGO influence in international environmental negotiations—our approach to case selection is unproblematic. The cases are appropriate in that in each instance NGOs were actively engaged in international negotiations, giving us the opportunity to evaluate the utility of the proposed analytical framework for assessing NGO influence in this particular political arena. We are, however, more limited in terms of our second objective—to identify a set of conditioning factors that shape the ability of NGO diplomats to influence such negotiations. Our opportunistic approach to case selection precluded us from engaging in a “theory-testing” exercise in our cross-case analysis, since we made no determination about the appropriateness of the cases at the outset (see George and Bennett 2005). Instead, we took a more heuristic approach whereby each of the case authors inductively identified the key conditioning factors that enabled or constrained the ability of NGO diplomats to influence international negotiations in their respective issue areas. We then conducted a plausibility probe by examining eight of these factors across the cases to identify those factors warranting further research. This should not be seen as an exhaustive list of the factors that might shape the ability of NGOs to influence international environmental negotiations; the general literature on NGOs suggests many others that need to be analyzed more systematically (see chapter 2).

We urge readers to exercise caution in generalizing our findings beyond these case studies. The majority of our cases examine environmental NGOs; thus we are limited in what we can say about differences in the conditions under which different types of NGOs are likely to influence international environmental negotiations. In addition more than half of the cases used in the cross-case analysis are related to forestry negotiations. We strongly encourage scholars to subject the issues raised

in this volume as well as hypotheses from the broader literature to rigorous analysis based on a more careful selection of cases.

The framework and case studies have been presented at two annual meetings of the International Studies Association where we received many helpful comments from fellow academics. In August 2003 we held a workshop in Stockholm, Sweden, which brought together project participants and NGO practitioners with extensive experience in the negotiation processes under analysis.⁵ The Stockholm Workshop provided an excellent opportunity to ground the scholarly research on NGO influence in international negotiations in the actual experience of NGO diplomats. The practitioners offered many valuable insights that might not otherwise be available to academic researchers. Prompted by the framework, practitioners also had the rare opportunity to reflect on their own efforts and their organizations' impact on international environmental negotiations. Through the dialogue that took place over the weekend, members of both communities gained a better understanding of one another.

Overview

Chapter 2 elaborates the analytical framework at the core of the project. The framework provides a basis for conducting systematic comparative analysis by addressing many of the weaknesses in the current literature noted above. It begins by identifying two dimensions of NGO influence: participation in international negotiations and the subsequent effects on the behavior of other actors (e.g., states). Scholars are then encouraged to gather data on these two dimensions from a variety of sources, including primary and secondary documents, interviews, and where possible, participant observation. Using the analytical techniques of process tracing and counterfactual analysis, researchers should identify whether and how NGO diplomats shaped both the negotiation *process* (through issue framing, agenda setting, and/or by shaping the positions of key states) as well as the final *outcome* (procedural and substantive elements of the final text). By considering the range of effects NGO diplomats may have on international environmental negotiations, scholars can make a qualitative assessment of the overall influence of NGOs. Results may range from

low levels of influence, where NGO diplomats participate but have little effect on either the negotiation process or outcome, to high levels of influence, where NGO diplomacy is linked to effects on both process and outcome. Chapter 2 concludes with a discussion of conditioning factors that make NGO influence more or less likely in any given negotiating context.

The empirical chapters apply the framework in five case studies of international environmental negotiations. Although the authors exhibit different styles in using the framework, each chapter consists of a detailed narrative in which the authors present evidence related to NGO participation and subsequent effects, assess their overall influence on negotiation processes and outcomes, and identify several factors seen to have either enabled or constrained NGO diplomats in their efforts to influence the negotiations.

In chapter 3, Michele Betsill analyzes the role of environmental NGOs in the first phase (1995–1997) of the Kyoto Protocol negotiations on global climate change. Betsill examines negotiations on the issues of targets and timetables, emissions trading, and sinks and assesses whether NGOs were successful in achieving their goals on each of these issues. Overall, she concludes that the environmental community had a moderate level of influence on the negotiations. They had little effect on the outcome of the negotiations; NGO positions on each of these issues are not reflected in the Kyoto Protocol text. Environmental NGOs did, however, shape the negotiation process by working behind the scenes to raise concerns about issues on the negotiation agenda and to influence the positions of key states. Betsill identifies NGO coordination and creativity as important enabling factors related to NGO influence. At the same time significant contention over the economic aspects of controlling greenhouse gas emissions, a focus on finding technological solutions, and the expectation that the Protocol would include binding commitments limited the political space available to the environmental community to achieve their objectives.

Stanley Burgiel compares the influence of environmental and industry NGOs in the negotiations of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (1995–2000) in chapter 4. Burgiel focuses his analysis on four major issues in the negotiations: the agreement's scope, trade-related concerns, decision-

making criteria, and exporter responsibilities. He concludes that both groups had moderate influence on the negotiations, with greater success in shaping the negotiation process than outcome. Environmental and industry NGOs both exerted influence by shaping the position of (different) key states and shaping the agenda. Interestingly Burgiel finds that environmental NGOs often focused on getting or keeping issues on the agenda, while industry NGOs worked diligently to keep issues off the agenda. He argues that alliances with key states were a crucial factor enabling non-state actors to exert influence in the Cartagena Protocol negotiations.

In chapter 5, Elisabeth Corell examines the influence of environmental and social NGOs in the negotiation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1993–1997). These groups worked together to encourage the use of a “bottom-up approach” to implementation, and to ensure that the Convention recognized the social and economic consequences of land degradation for affected populations and provided additional resources for dryland management projects. She contends that NGOs had a high level of influence on the Convention negotiations as their activities had observable effects on both the negotiation process and outcome. Corell finds several instances where NGO proposals made their way into the treaty text and notes that NGOs were effective in securing participation rights in the negotiations, which in turn gave them the opportunity to shape the negotiation agenda. She attributes the high level of NGO influence in this case to three factors: the link between the bottom-up approach and NGO participation in implementation, the homogeneity of NGOs participating in the negotiations, and the fact that NGO participation was actively encouraged by the negotiators.

In chapter 6, Steinar Andresen and Tora Skodvin assess the influence of the scientific community and environmental NGOs in two major negotiations within the International Whaling Commission: the adoption of a new management procedure in 1974 and a ban on commercial whaling in 1982. Andresen and Skodvin assess non-state actor influence through two channels: directly at the international level and indirectly via the domestic channel. They contend that the scientific community had a moderate degree of influence on the 1974 decision to adopt a new management procedure, primarily by framing the debate at the international

level through the provision of technical information. This influence was facilitated by the political demand for advanced knowledge on whale stocks and scientific consensus on the need for more restrictive management procedures. Moreover there were no other non-state actors competing for influence as the environmental community had not yet mobilized on the whaling issue. By the 1980s, the environmental community had become an active player in whaling negotiations, and Andresen and Skodvin argue they had a high level of influence on the 1982 moratorium decision. Factors that helped environmental NGOs achieve their goal include heightened public concern, which opened up important domestic channels of NGO influence in key states, and the availability of significant financial resources. Andresen and Skodvin contend that the increased influence of the environmental community came as the influence of the scientific community declined, largely due to polarization among scientists on the need for a moratorium.

Finally, David Humphreys traces attempts by environmental NGOs to influence international negotiations on forests from the mid-1980s through 2001 in several different institutional contexts in chapter 7. He examines forest negotiations at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, under the auspices of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the consultation process that led to the creation of the United Nations Forum on Forests. He also considers two negotiation processes on forest products, namely negotiations on the international trade of tropical timber in the International Tropical Timber Organization and the discussions on forest products that took place within the World Trade Organization in the late-1990s. Overall, Humphreys concludes that NGOs had a high level of influence on international forest negotiations during this period, although their influence on negotiation processes in the different institutional contexts varied. He argues that the prospects for influence increased when NGOs shaped the negotiation agenda early on. At the same time, the deep North–South division on forest issues has often limited the political space available to NGOs during the negotiations. Humphreys concludes by arguing that environmental NGOs' most important contribution occurred over time rather than in any specific negotiation; they have succeeded in reframing

the issue of forest conservation from a purely economic issue to an ecological and human rights one.

Chapter 8 returns to the project's two main objectives. We begin by reflecting on the analytical framework's utility in strengthening claims of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations. The empirical chapters demonstrate that the framework can be used to strengthen claims of NGO influence by elaborating some of the causal links between NGO activities and observed effects on negotiating processes and outcomes. We conclude that the framework works best for analyzing NGO influence in discrete sets of negotiations rather than in multiple negotiations in an issue area as assessments of NGO influence in such cases may be overdetermined by aggregating data over a longer period of time. The cases also demonstrate that it is possible to make qualitative judgments about levels of NGO influence, differentiating among low, moderate, and high levels of influence. However, we found that it was not always straightforward which category was most appropriate in any given case. International environmental negotiations cover numerous highly technical issues simultaneously, and NGOs may influence negotiation processes and/or outcomes on some issues but not others. In the future we suggest that analysts may find it more useful to assess NGO influence at the level of individual issues rather than on the overall negotiations.

Next, we discuss how comparison across cases allows identification of factors that explain variation in NGO influence in different negotiating situations. As mentioned above, we asked the case authors to identify the key factors that enhanced or constrained the ability of NGO diplomats to influence international environmental negotiations. We conducted a cross-case analysis of the eight factors that came up most frequently, resulting in a number of findings warranting future research:

- *NGO coordination* has a neutral effect on influence. In our cases, NGO diplomats achieved all levels of influence under conditions of coordination, and in one of our cases of relatively high influence, NGOs had no coordinated position or strategy.
- NGO influence does not necessarily decline as *rules of access* become more restrictive because NGO diplomats are often quite innovative

in finding alternative strategies. At the same time opportunities for NGO influence may be enhanced when state delegates and convention secretariats take steps to actively facilitate NGO participation in the negotiations.

- For environmental NGOs, influence in the early *stages of negotiations* (e.g., debates over the negotiation agenda) may be necessary though by no means sufficient for achieving influence in later stages (e.g., debates over the specifics of the agreement text). This finding may not hold, however, for industry NGOs.
- Higher levels of NGO influence are more likely when the *political stakes* of the negotiations are relatively low, as in negotiations over non-binding principles and/or framework agreements with few demands for behavioral change. NGO diplomats can enhance their ability to influence negotiations with higher political stakes by developing close personal relationships with state diplomats and/or convincing negotiators that NGOs are essential partners in achieving the agreement's objectives.
- *Institutional overlap* offers opportunities for NGO diplomats to influence a given negotiation process indirectly by exerting influence in a related institutional setting. However, overlap with the World Trade Organization and the international trade regime may constrain the ability of environmental NGOs to exert influence while enhancing opportunities for NGOs representing business/industry interests.
- *Competition from other NGOs* is not necessarily a constraining factor because NGO influence in international environmental negotiations is not a zero-sum game. Different types of NGOs often focus on different issues within the negotiations so that each may exert influence on particular issues without taking away from the others.
- Opportunities for influence appear to be enhanced when NGOs form *alliances with key states*. However, such alliances may be less useful in negotiations where states are highly polarized (e.g., along North–South lines).
- Where there is a high *level of contention* over entrenched economic interests, environmental NGOs may have greater difficulty exerting influence on the negotiations. In contrast, contention over the economic

aspects of an environmental problem may open up opportunities for business/industry NGOs to influence the negotiations.

The volume concludes by discussing the broader contributions of the project. The cases demonstrate the changing nature of diplomacy in the international system, highlighting the ways that NGO diplomats participate in and influence international negotiations on the environment and sustainable development. We also consider the relationship between the findings of this project and current debates about restructuring the existing system of global environmental governance, specifically the role of NGOs in the realm of international decision making, and efforts to democratize global governance.

Notes

1. This differentiates our study from the social movements literature, which analyzes networks and organizations that tend to mobilize their constituents through protest or disruptive action and are interested in opening up opportunities for mass participation (Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002; Yearley 1994).
2. Thanks to the participants at the August 2003 Stockholm Workshop for pushing us on this point.
3. We are particularly grateful to Tora Skodvin and Steinar Andresen for helping us clarify this distinction.
4. These critiques are elaborated in greater detail in chapter 2 and in Betsill and Corell (2001).
5. The workshop was held at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and funded by the Swedish Research Council and the US National Science Foundation (SES-0318165). The Workshop Report is available from the editors.

