

Political Parties and NGOs in Global Environmental Politics

HEIN-ANTON VAN DER HEIJDEN

ABSTRACT. With their development into cartel parties, political parties have lost many of their original functions (demand articulation, political socialization, etc.). Parties have become part of the state and increasingly are aimed at efficient and effective management, rather than at transforming society. This applies not only to the national level, but in particular also to the transnational (for example, the EU) and the global level. With respect to transnational and global environmental politics, transnational environmental NGOs (ENGOS) have taken over some of the functions originally belonging to political parties. Whereas interest groups were assumed to articulate sectoral demands and political parties to aggregate and weigh these demands, case studies of environmental impacts on EU infrastructure politics and on the Convention on Biological Diversity, suggest that the opposite seems to apply. Representatives of political parties are inclined to articulate national interests while ENGOS weigh these national demands against the background of increasing global environmental degradation.

Keywords: • Environment • European Union • Globalism • NGOs • Political parties

Introduction

In the era of modernity, covering the larger part of the twentieth century, nation-states functioned as the principal political entities, and within them political parties figured as the most prominent political actors. In Europe, many of the established political parties originated from the social movements of the nineteenth century (labour movement, farmers movement, etc.). During the twentieth century those movements have largely been institutionalized, and national level political parties have taken over many of their original functions.

From the late 1960s onward, many western countries experienced the

emergence of so-called new social movements (women's movement, peace movement, environmental movement, etc.). One would expect that new parties would adopt the demands related to the "new politics" or post-materialist cleavage, just as older parties had emerged to capture older cleavages. Partly this was the way it occurred: almost all western countries witnessed the emergence of new, Green parties.

Three factors, however, prevented the political processes from following the course western societies were used to: First, new social movements were not only concerned with the content, but also with the form of politics. Political parties with their hierarchical and bureaucratic features were conceived of as obsolete vehicles for doing politics. New movements did not want to institutionalize and adapt themselves blindly to the prevailing rules of the game, and in practice it was rather hard to accommodate them in party politics.

Second, contrary to conventional pressure groups, new social movements were not concerned with materialist, but with post-materialist, often universalistic values. As they did not deal with the usual politics of interest and compromise, it was hard to fit them into the existing political process.

Third, globalization and post-modernization, going along with the decreasing importance of the nation-state, the home domain of political parties, further weakened the position of parties in favour of the more global new social movements.

Of course political parties tried to resist these developments, for instance by readjusting the way of doing politics into a more participatory form, by assimilating some of the new, post-materialist demands, and by trying to acquire a role at the supra-national (for example, the EU) level. For different reasons, however, their success was limited and the result was a continuing loss of functions.

Both at the national as well as at the international level, new social movements and their movement organizations have therefore taken over part of the roles and functions which before were performed by political parties. However, which functions exactly, and which functions remain with the parties?

The question I want to deal with in this article is: to what extent are global environmental NGOs (ENGOS) able to perform the functions which until recently were held by political parties?

First, I shall discuss the emergence of a new, transboundary environmental cleavage, as well as the attempts to institutionalize this cleavage. Thereafter, I shall analyze the development of political parties from elite parties via mass parties and catch-all parties into, in some countries, cartel parties, and the concomitant loss of functions.

In global environmental politics ENGOS seem to figure more prominently than political parties, but they are not able to perform all the roles and functions traditionally belonging to political parties. In the second part of the article I shall explore this problem by presenting some research findings. First I will deal with the global environmental movement. What does its constituency and organizational structure look like, and what are its strengths and weaknesses compared to those of political parties? Then, I analyze the role political parties and ENGOS perform in transnational level environmental policy processes, in particular with respect to the environmental aspects of infrastructure politics at the EU level. A second case study deals with the role of political parties and environmental NGOs at the global level. This role will be clarified by means of a secondary analysis of the decision-making processes with respect to the UN Biodiversity Convention.

Global Environmental Problems, NGOs and Political Parties

The story has been told over and over: in most western countries political parties developed from the social divisions that evolved out of the national and industrial revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These revolutions brought about the four cleavages that until recently structured party competition: center vs periphery, church vs state, urban vs rural, and workers vs employers (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

From the second half of the 1960s onward a new cleavage has become manifest in many western countries: the “new politics” or post-materialist cleavage (Dalton, 1996). “New politics” is a multi-dimensional phenomenon; it not only refers to “new,” post-materialist issues (for example, the position of women, nuclear disarmament, the protection of the environment) but also to alternative forms of political organization (grass roots instead of bureaucratic), modes of participation (unconventional instead of orthodox), attitudes to the political system (critical instead of supportive), etc.

At an institutional level, the “new politics” manifested itself in two forms: new social movements, among which the environmental movement soon became the most important, and Green parties.¹ Originally environmental problems were mainly framed as local or, at the most, national problems. During the 1970s in many western countries new environmental organizations at the national level were founded. At first they were intended merely to coordinate the activities of local groups, but in the course of time they took over much of the initiative and became the most important actors.²

From the late 1970s onwards, Green parties were founded in most West European countries. Some of them, for instance the British Ecology Party, had a radical, “deep ecology” orientation, and pleaded for de-industrialization, a “no growth” (or even negative growth) politics and a conserver rather than a consumer society. Others, for instance the German Green Party, were more pragmatic, although the conflict between realists (*realos*) and fundamentalists (*fundis*) dominated the scene for many years (Richardson and Rootes, eds., 1995).

Although at the start of the new millennium three out of the four largest West European countries (France, Germany, and Italy) had a Green minister for the environment, Green parties have only partly succeeded in accommodating the new, “post-materialist” or environmental cleavage. First of all, the problem definitions and solution strategies for the environmental problematic, as formulated by and within the different Green parties, were too divergent (ranging from ecosocialism and ecofeminism to ecological modernization and green capitalism). Secondly, the insight grew that political parties operating at the national level, as well as individual nation-states, had too limited capabilities to solve large-scale, often transboundary, environmental problems.

From the second half of the 1980s onward, therefore, it became more and more common to frame the issue of environmental degradation as a global problem. “Our Common Future,” the 1987 report of the Brundtland Commission, can be seen as the turning point, and a high point came at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Both in the Brundtland report and at the Rio Conference, global environmental degradation was defined as one of the unintended consequences of globalization.

Globalization has been conceptualized as one stage in the process of modernization (Giddens, 1991). Reasoning along this line, it has been argued that

modernization and global environmental degradation have coincided historically. As Saurin puts it, "Modernization entails a fundamental severance between production and consumption: increasingly we produce what we do not consume, and we consume what we do not produce" (Saurin, 1993: 47–48). Environmental degradation could be conceived of as one of the consequences of modernity.

What role can political parties and ENGOS play in solving global environmental problems? With respect to the role of individual nation-states and political parties, one could maintain that these states at the same time are too big and too small. Too big because many environmental problems manifest themselves as problems at the local level; too small because many environmental problems have developed into (or better, have been defined as) global environmental problems: desertification, climate change, ozone layer depletion.

During the last two decades, the international community has called into being a number of global environmental regimes, that is, systems of norms and rules that are specified by a multilateral agreement among the relevant states to regulate national actions on an environmental issue or set of issues. Most regimes take the form of a convention (a binding agreement or legal instrument) such as the Conventions on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (Porter and Brown, 1996: 16).

Unfortunately, most international regimes have not been very effective in bringing environmental degradation to a halt. Many of the most important "decisions" with respect to the environment are not being taken by (groups of) states, but result from technology and from the production and trade strategies of a small number of powerful transnational corporations (Hurrell, 1994: 154). Secondly, the capacity of most individual states, in particular in third world countries, to implement the regime decisions is very poor. The growth of doubts about the state's capacity to develop a viable environmental policy has given rise to an alternative "community approach" favored by many NGOs especially, but not exclusively, in third world countries. As the state (and its accompanying political parties) are so implicated in the generation of environmental problems that they are unlikely to serve as the vehicle for their solution, it is argued that grass roots and people's organizations must now play the predominant role in the transition towards a more sustainable society (cf. *ibid.*: 157).

Other authors take a more moderate point of view. Despite the rhetoric regarding new forms of authentic democratic action and political practice, NGOs cannot themselves fulfill the core functions of the state. On closer inspection many of the anti-statist arguments of the environmental movement turn out to be a call for reformed and more democratic states. This brings us back to the role and functions of political parties.

Political Parties

In the development of political parties in western democracies from the mid-nineteenth century onward, four different phases or periods have been distinguished: elite party, mass party, catch-all party, and finally, the cartel party phase (Katz and Mair, 1995). These four phases can be discerned by a different conceptualization of the relationship between state, civil society, and political parties.

In the first period, parties were basically committees of those elites who jointly constituted both the state and civil society. Mass parties (1880–1960), on the other

hand, explicitly claimed to represent the interests of a single segment of society, and to be open to all members of that segment. State and civil society were relatively separated, and parties served as a bridge or linkage between the two. As each party represented its clearly demarcated segment of society, the level of electoral competition was relatively low. Catch-all parties, the type representative for the third period in political party development (1945–1970), functioned as competing brokers between civil society and the state. As the big battles for political and social rights were over, the distinctiveness of experience of the original social constituencies was further reduced by the increased mobility and the development of the mass media.

From the early 1970s onward, Katz and Mair observe a fourth phase: the cartel party period. As ideological differences have waned, the goals of politics increasingly become self-referential with a strong emphasis on politics as a profession in itself. The limited inter-party competition that does take place is based only on competing claims to efficient and effective management. No longer simple brokers between civil society and the state, parties now become absorbed by the state. From having first assumed the role of trustees, and then later of delegates, and then later again, in the hey-day of the catch-all party, of entrepreneurs, parties have now become semi-state agencies. In this new shape parties need not be in competition for survival in the same way that they once competed to determine policy. The conditions become ideal for the formation of a cartel, in which all the parties share in resources and in which all survive (*ibid.*: 16).³

Given the nature of the conditions that facilitate the emergence of cartel parties, this kind of party system has developed most rapidly and obviously in those countries in which state aid and support for parties is most pronounced, and in which political cultures are marked by a tradition of inter-party cooperation and accommodation. The Scandinavian countries, Austria, and Germany have gone the furthest in developing cartel parties, while in a country such as the United Kingdom the process is likely to be least developed (*ibid.*: 17). In more general terms one could hypothesize that democracies of Arend Lijphart's consensual type are more favorable to the development of cartel parties than majoritarian democracies (Lijphart, 1999). It can also be argued that transnational political systems like the European Union have favorable conditions for a cartel party system and that global political regimes also show cartel party-like features. In the case studies I will come back to this.

What are the consequences of the emergence of cartel parties for the development of democracy? According to Biorcio and Mannheimer (1995), political parties from the early 1980s onward have troubles translating social demands and boosting identification, solidarity, and consensus, resulting in an increasing dealignment of citizens and parties. As party programs become more similar, there is a shrinkage in the degree to which electoral outcomes can determine government actions. Democracy becomes a means of achieving social stability rather than social change, and elections become "dignified" parts of the constitution (Katz and Mair, 1995: 22). In this sense cartel parties even could be conceptualized as one of the institutional expressions of Fukuyama's "end of politics" thesis (Fukuyama, 1992).

What does the emergence of cartel parties mean with respect to the roles and functions originally attributed to political parties? In the literature, traditionally three different roles (organizational, parliamentary, and governmental) and six

different functions have been distinguished: recruitment and selection of political leaders; articulation of interests and demands; aggregation or weighing of interests and demands; mobilization of the electorate; integration and socialization of the citizenry; communication with the electorate and the constituency.

Whereas up to now cartel parties—like elite, mass, and catch-all parties in the past—are still playing their three roles, it can be argued that the six functions are not performed by all kinds of parties in the same way. Indeed, the list seems to have been derived mostly from one specific party type: the mass party. From the emergence of the catch-all party onward, however, many of the six functions have changed, eroded, or have been taken over by other political and social actors.

The integration and socialization of the citizenry in the original sense has been completed, and the original communication function has been taken over by the “independent” mass media. The mobilization of the electorate has changed from mass membership mobilization to electoral campaigning, accompanied by a sharp decrease in party membership in most European countries (Katz and Mair, 1992). The articulation of interests and demands has become the domain of interest groups, while the aggregation of interests and demands is increasingly left to bureaucratic professionals and participants in corporatist arrangements (Williamson, 1989). With just a little bit of exaggeration one could claim that in cartel party systems only the recruitment and selection of political leaders has remained the exclusive domain of political parties.

The articulation of interests and demands and the mobilization of the citizenry, going along with collective identity formation (Cohen, 1985) has become the domain of a myriad of interest groups and social movement organizations. Among these ENGOS play a prominent role. Furthermore, they perform this function not only on the national but also, and perhaps even more, on the transnational and the global level. It is to these levels that we shift our attention now.

The Global Environmental Movement

The last decade and a half has shown the gradual rise of what can be called a global environmental movement. After the settlement of the nuclear energy conflict in most western countries, and with the coming to hegemony of neoliberalist discourse, the environmental movement entered a period of professionalization and membership growth. Some environmental organizations developed into mass membership organizations with hundreds of thousands of members.

In the United States, for instance, between 1980 and the mid-1990s the total constituency of the National Audubon Society (the most important national conservation organization), Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) together increased from half a million to more than three million. In the Netherlands, Greenpeace, WWF and the largest conservation group quintupled their total constituency from 400 000 to two million, while in the federal state of Germany the constituency of these three national level organizations rose from 50 000 to one million (Van der Heijden, 1997, 1999).

At the same time party membership in most European countries decreased dramatically. Nowadays, the total number of party members in the EU countries amounts to about ten million, a number substantially smaller than the more than fifteen million ENGO members in those countries.⁴ In the UK and Germany, the

ENGO constituency is twice as large as the total number of party members, while in the Netherlands the total ENGO constituency is more than ten times as high as the total number of party members: 3.7 million vs. 294 000 (from a total population of 16 million) (Van der Heijden, 1999). All these figures reflect a shift in the relevance of political parties and ENGOS as vehicles for identification, solidarity, and political involvement of individual citizens.

Local action committees attacking the use of spray cans, the extension of airports, or even the consumption of meat, deal with global environmental problems (depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, and acid rain respectively) and hence can be labelled as parts of the global environmental movement. The same applies to the farmers in an Indian village resisting the construction of a dam, and to the tens of thousands of local groups all over the world fighting against deforestation.

However, transnational environmental problems that are explicitly dealt with at the transnational level are mostly tackled by six types of transnational environmental organizations: global environmental mass organizations; large national organizations which have developed international programs; environmental think tanks; international umbrella organizations; national-level NGO-coalitions in third world countries; and, broad international coalitions working on a specific environmental issue.

Yet such transnational organizations cannot and do not act alone. Indeed, the strength of the global environmental movement depends on the continuous interplay between the transnational environmental organizations on the one hand, and local groups and their action campaigns on the other. This is one of the most important differences between ENGOS and political parties. The transnational environmental movement as a whole has been conceived as one of the most significant pillars of an emerging transnational civil society (for example, Lipschutz, 1996). We are witnessing, says Hurrell, the emergence of new forms of non-territorially-based political identity and new mechanisms of political organization and action that go beyond the nation-state and which challenge the hegemony of statist world politics (Hurrell, 1994: 14).

These new transnational environmental organizations belong to six major types.

Type 1. Global environmental mass organizations are mass constituency-based environmental groups with national branches all over the world. The three most important are Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund and Friends of the Earth.

Greenpeace has about two and a half million members in thirty countries. Among the largest national branches are the Dutch (600 000 members), the German (500 000) and the British (400 000) ones. Although media directed public action campaigns constitute the most visible part of the work of Greenpeace, the organization is also heavily involved in scientific research and lobbying activities. The activism of Greenpeace is almost completely performed by professionals, whereas the role of the rank and file is limited to annual membership payments and purchasing Greenpeace T-shirts. With its spectacular actions, Greenpeace optimally seems to meet two needs which are not fulfilled in our disenchanted world, paralyzed as it is by its politics of compromise: a desire for heroism and for purity (Thränhardt, 1992: 229).

The World Wildlife Fund has about twice as many members as Greenpeace (5 million), spread over 28 countries. Among the largest national branches are the American (1 million), the Dutch (700 000) and the Swiss subsection (550 000

members). The focus of this 1961-founded organization is the protection of wildlife; its central goals include enlarging protected areas and encouraging sustainable forms of exploitation. Like Greenpeace, WWF is a highly professionalized organization, thoroughly oriented toward mass communication, media and marketing.

Friends of the Earth (FOE), founded 1971, is the smallest of the three global environmental mass organizations: its constituency amounts to less than one million, most of them living in Britain and Germany (each 220 000) and Switzerland (90 000). FOE, however, is represented in the largest number of countries, 54—most of them in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Contrary to Greenpeace and WWF, FOE International has a decentralized structure; it is made up of autonomous organizations, many of which were established before joining the federation. In order to protect the earth against further deterioration, FOE aims to increase public participation and democratic decision-making and to stimulate grass roots activism, it maintains a decentralized structure in many countries. The German branch, for instance, has 2000 local groups.

Type 2. The second category in which the transnational environmental movement can be subdivided are the national, most of them US based, mass membership environmental organizations which have developed international programs. Groups belonging to this category are the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the National Resources Defense Council. These five organizations have a total constituency of about 2.5 million, a thousand staff members and an average annual budget of 40 million dollars each. EDF and NRDC have played an effective role in the negotiations on climate and ozone and have also helped reshape the policies of the multilateral development banks (Porter and Brown, 1996: 52). The Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, and the National Wildlife Federation are highly involved in international conservation issues, for instance the protection of tropical rain forests.

Type 3. The third branch of the transnational environmental movement is constituted by environmental think tanks. Characteristic examples are the Oeko-Institute in Germany, the International Institute for Environment and Development in Britain, and the Worldwatch Institute and the World Resources Institute (WRI) in the United States. WRI studies have been used as the basis for many of the negotiations on ozone depletion, climate change and biodiversity (Jamison, 1996). Reports of the Worldwatch Institute, including the yearly “State of the World” have often identified new problems and suggested alternative approaches to international environmental issues.

Type 4. The fourth branch of the transnational environmental movement is formed by international umbrella organizations. Examples are the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The European Environmental Bureau, founded 1974, is a confederation of about 140 environmental NGOs from the EU member countries, with a combined membership of more than 14 million. It is the lobbying branch of the West European environmental movement at the EU level and it has direct access to the European Commission.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), founded in 1956, includes 732 member groups. It is a so-called hybrid NGO in which conservation groups, government agencies and scientists from all around the world cooperate. Its aim is to design multilateral programs and laws as well as guidelines for national policies to promote the conservation of nature. IUCN has had a major influence on global agreements regarding wildlife conservation and species loss.⁵

Type 5. The fifth group of transnational environmental organizations consists of national-level NGO-coalitions in third world countries. Examples of this type of coalition, very common in developing countries, are the Brazilian NGO Forum with over 1000 organizations affiliated; the Indonesian environmental forum WALHI which unites more than 450 environmental organizations countrywide, and the Kenyan Environmental Non-Governmental Organization KENGO which includes 68 environmental groups (Porter and Brown, 1996: 53).

Many third world NGO coalitions have a broader issue definition than their western counterparts. They tend to be as much concerned with poverty and other development issues (land-use, forest management, fishing rights, redistribution of power over natural resources), as with strictly environmental issues. In post-colonial Africa, ENGOS have been involved in environmental development and basic service delivery, largely as a result of the inability of governments to provide such services.

Type 6. The sixth and last category of transnational environmental organizations is constituted by broad international coalitions working on a specific environmental issue. Examples are the Climate Action Network, the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition and the Rainforest Action Network.

In order to understand the influence of this global environmental movement in transnational and global environmental politics, as compared to the role of political parties in this same domain, we turn now to two case studies.

European Union and Trans-European Networks

The European Union is, and will be for a long time, an emerging political system. Its three main policy-making institutions are the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament.

The European Commission serves as the executive of the EU and can be compared to a cabinet. It consists of twenty members, each with a specific ministerial responsibility, appointed by the governments of the member states. In practice, the Commission is a coalition that unites the left, center and right of the political spectrum in Europe. The same applies to the European Council, consisting of the ministers from the governments of the member states. The 626-member European Parliament (EP) has always had a weak position. It must approve, and has the power to dismiss the European Commission and has relatively strong budgetary powers, but its other legislative powers are extremely limited.

The EP has eight officially recognised parties, the largest of which are the Party of European Socialists and the European People's Party (mainly Christian Democrats). Competition between the main political parties about substantial

issues, however, is at a relatively low level. Much time is spent on struggles and debates about the position and competencies of the Parliament itself (the self-referentiality of politics). While a highly visible European Parliament is needed for the legitimation of the European Union, thus far the EP definitely lacks this visibility.

The main functions performed by the parties at the European level are the recruitment and selection of leaders and the articulation of national interests and demands. The articulation of specific or universalistic (for example, environmental) interests and demands is to a large extent left to interest groups.

The environmental lobby at the EU level is composed of seven different groups: the European branches of three global environmental mass organizations (Greenpeace, WWF, Friends of the Earth); two international umbrella organizations (the European Environmental Bureau and Birdlife International), and two European coalitions working on a specific environmental issue (Climate Network Europe and the European Federation for Transport and the Environment) (Webster, 1998: 178ff.).

Although the financial resources these organizations have at their disposal are very modest compared to those of other groups such as the business lobby, their influence in EU politics is considerable. Their main strength is their legitimacy in European civil society, as reflected in the membership numbers of the national-level groups they represent. For instance, the European Federation for Transport and the Environment (T&E), the most important organization in this specific case, at present has 35 member organizations covering 21 countries and representing several million individual members. Mainly due to T&E, the issue of the environmental impact of European transport networks has been politicized, and this has been reflected in the development of the EU transport policy.

Efforts towards the realization of a single European market from the early 1990s onwards contributed to an avalanche of policy plans, among which were a renewed and widened aim for a common transport policy to provide the infrastructure for projects related to European integration. At the European Council in Essen in 1994 the EU heads of state and government picked out 14 priority projects that should facilitate this integration, 14 Trans-European Networks (TENS). Most of them were high-speed rail links, for instance the one between Paris, Cologne and Amsterdam, or the ones connecting Madrid and Montpellier and Lyon and Turin. The list, however, also included conventional motorways, the extension of the Milan-Malpensa airport and a rail/road link between Denmark and Sweden.

The main objective was to support economic growth in the Union but originally little attention was paid to the environmental impacts of the networks. Although, generally speaking, high-speed trains can be seen as (relatively) environment-friendly means of transport, they nonetheless have a tremendous impact upon the landscapes and nature reserves they cut through. Furthermore, the TENS project embodies a transnational policy discourse on economic growth which is not automatically shared by most environmental and other public interest groups. The European Parliament did not have the legal competency to play a role in the decision-making process with respect to the 14 individual projects, and the only thing it achieved was the inclusion of an unsatisfactory environmental article in the final decision, requiring member states to carry out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for all TEN-projects (Tengstrom, 1999: 168).

EIAs are intended to monitor and mitigate effects of individual infrastructure

projects, but they often come too late in the planning process and the wider questions at the level of corridors, programs and policy assumptions are never raised. For that reason the ENGO T&E pleaded for the legislative creation of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA). T&E maintained that such an assessment, which covers the total environmental impact of infrastructure investments, should be applied to transport plans and programmes as well as to single projects.

Responding to this pressure, in 1996 the European Commission and the European Parliament developed a proposal to require SEAs in connection with the TENS-program. The amendments to the Commission's proposal submitted by the European Parliament were particularly strong and offered real prospects for environmental integration. They were met, however, with an uncompromising negative reaction from the Council of Ministers (*ibid.*). This political response has been interpreted as a defense of national sovereign power: "In the Council's position can be seen the resistance of several member states to handing-over decision-making power to the EU on what were regarded as, essentially, national projects" (Richardson, 1997: 339).

Two conclusions can be drawn from this case. First, the environmental movement rather than political parties managed to put the total environmental impact of infrastructure investments on the European political agenda and weigh this impact against other demands. Second, the weak position of the European Parliament and its own political parties, as well as the national-interest orientation of the party representatives in the Council of Ministers, was sufficient to prevent the adoption of significant and needed environmental protections (here in the form of Strategic Environmental Assessments).

ENGOS and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Biological diversity refers to the richness of genes, species and ecosystems. The notion brings together three different areas of concern: problems relating to genetic erosion and genetic engineering (for example, those caused by modern agricultural techniques); the endangering and extinction of species; and, finally, the destruction and loss of whole ecosystems.

The origin of the biodiversity treaty goes back to recommendations of the 1984 meeting of the General Assembly of the ENGO IUCN. In 1987 the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) recognized the relevance of a global instrument on biological and genetic diversity, and in 1990 negotiations began with a view to the adoption of a new global framework convention. At the 1992 UNCED in Rio more than 150 countries signed the Convention, but the United States did not, arguing that the provisions on biotechnology, intellectual property rights and finance, did not sufficiently address the needs of American economic interests.

With respect to global political regimes (for example, environmental regimes), the most powerful representatives to international meetings are often representatives of individual political parties. However, in this context they are expected to stand "above" the parties and defend the national interest, with the result that they are more directed towards efficient and effective management than towards articulating party-political positions.

Originally, the participation of ENGOS in the bringing about of the Convention on Biological Diversity was limited. At the first expert meeting (November 1990 in

Nairobi) WWF was the only NGO participant. Later the number of NGOs rose to about ten, among which were IUCN, Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN) and the World Resources Institute. The low participation of NGOs in the meetings could be explained by the fact that those conservation NGOs that were interested (IUCN, WRI, WWF) generally had good access to UNEP and governments. Rather than attend the meetings, they may have believed it was sufficient to distribute their papers and ideas among the delegates through domestic and international channels in advance of international negotiation sessions (Arts, 1998: 169).

ENGO participation, however, grew to almost 100 in the implementation phase. One reason why ENGOS “discovered” the CBD after Rio was the US refusal to sign the Convention (ibid.: 170). Important ENGOS which started to participate now were Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth International, the Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI) and Birdlife International.

What was the influence of the NGOs in the different phases of the UN Biodiversity Convention? With respect to the formation phase it must be repeated that the very idea for a Biodiversity Convention came from the transnational environmental movement. As for the text of the Convention itself, however, the influence of the global environmental movement was very limited. The most important influence ENGOS exerted had to do with the mentioning of the intrinsic value of biodiversity and of the role of women in the Preamble of the Convention. Contrary to the current anthropocentric point of view, the CBD claimed to be “conscious of the intrinsic value of biological diversity and of the ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational, and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its components” (ibid.: 173) and committed to “recognising also the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirming the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation” (ibid.).

With regard to the period after the adoption of the treaty text (1992–95), NGOs somewhat influenced decisions on indigenous and local communities, marine biodiversity and financial institutions (ibid.: 228). All in all, however, as may be concluded from the data provided by Arts, in none of the ten subcases in which the decision-making process can be subdivided, did ENGOS exert “much influence.” In one case (the Preamble aforementioned) they exerted “substantial influence” and in four cases “some influence.” However, in the five most important cases, among which were those concerning access to genetic resources and forests, they exerted “no influence.”

Conclusion

In this article an attempt has been made to answer the question to what extent global ENGOS are able to perform the functions which until recently were held by political parties. With their development into cartel parties political parties have lost many of their original functions. Besides, political parties are closely connected to individual nation-states, while many environmental problems require transnational or global solution strategies.

Global ENGOS, on the other hand, now often perform at least four of the six functions originally belonging to political parties: articulation of interests and demands; socialization and mobilization of, and communication with the

constituency. In many countries the membership number of ENGOS surpasses that of political parties, and one can maintain that these ENGOS, rather than political parties, constitute an important part of an emerging global civil society.

Our first case study explores the role political parties and ENGOS play in the policy making process regarding the environmental aspects of infrastructure politics at the EU level. Organizations like the European Federation for Transport and the Environment, as representatives of a considerable number of national groups, have a large legitimacy in European civil society. It was found that the European Parliament did not have a say with respect to the choice of individual Trans-European Networks, and that it did not succeed in enforcing Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAS). As predicted by cartel party theory, political parties in the European Parliament were more concerned with their own competencies than with the long-term environmental aspects of TENS. The Brussels based European ENGOS made a more substantial contribution by putting on the agenda the need for an integral weighing of economic and environmental interests.

The second case study dealt with the UN Biodiversity Convention. While many of the representatives to the decision-making meetings were formally elected representatives of political parties, they manifested themselves as national, rather than as party representatives. However, the influence of ENGOS on the text of the Convention was also very limited.

In sum, one could conclude that in the field of global environmental politics the presence of ENGOS is more prominent than that of political parties. A reversal of this trend is hard to imagine. On the other hand, one cannot conclude that ENGOS have acquired a powerful position. They have taken over, and are able to fulfill most of the functions originally belonging to political parties, but as they are not part of the state they cannot play the most essential party role, that is, the governmental role. However, as participants in processes of global environmental governance their future looks more promising than that of political parties.

Notes

1. It should be noted that the relative weight of political parties and new social movements varies from one country to another and is determined to a large extent by national political opportunity structures. For an elaboration of this see Kriesi et al., 1995; Kitschelt, 1986; Van der Heijden, 1997.
2. For an overview of the modern environmental movement in the United States see, for instance, Dunlap and Mertig, 1992; Dowie, 1996; on Western Europe, Dalton, 1994; Van der Heijden, Koopmans, and Giugni, 1992; and, with respect to the anti-nuclear part of the movement, Flam, 1994; on the green movement worldwide, McCormick, 1991: 32; Princen and Finger, 1994; Rootes, 1999; Van der Heijden, 1999.
3. The concept of cartel party has not remained uncontested. According to Koole, the application of a term derived from the level of the party system ("cartel") to individual parties does not seem to be a happy choice, while the reality of western party systems does not show an effective cartel of parties. Instead of trying to formulate (again) an alleged dominant party type for the present time, it seems more fruitful to develop a classification scheme for parties that allows for different types of parties to coexist at the same time (witness parties, programmatic parties, cadre parties, etc., (Koole, 1996: 507ff.). In their "Rejoinder," Katz and Mair (1996) reply that the relationship between participation in an inter-party cartel (a systematic characteristic) and the characteristics of the individual parties participating in the cartel is strong enough to generate a "cartel party" as a party type. Their claim is that these phenomena, which previously were

regarded as aberrations, are now becoming more widespread, in much the same way as Lijphart once hypothesized that “depoliticized” democracy would develop into the prevalent European model.

4. Figures based on Katz and Mair, 1992; Rootes, 1999; Van der Heijden, Koopmans, and Giugni, 1992; and on own additional research findings and updates.
5. It was also IUCN that coined the term “sustainable development” in its 1980 World Conservation Strategy, which eventually became the conceptual basis of “Our Common Future” and the entire UNCED process.

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Biographical Note

HEIN-ANTON VAN DER HEIJDEN is a lecturer in political science at the University of Amsterdam. His research includes work on social movements, political discourse analysis and comparative politics. His latest book is *Between Adaptation and Resistance: The Environmental Movement and Environmental Discourse* (2000, in Dutch). ADDRESS: University of Amsterdam, Dept. of Political Science, Oudezijds Achterburgwal 237, 1012 DL Amsterdam, The Netherlands [e-mail: vanderheijden@psc.w.uva.nl].