INTEREST GROUPS AND INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question: Given the fact that it is states who ultimately have the authority to make decisions about international policy, what is the role of non-state actors[1] in the international policy formation process? It will be argued that while policy subsystem theories and interest group theories have separately tried to answer this question, when the two approaches are integrated, it is hypothesized that they will better account for the realities of non-state actor participation in international policy formation. This research will explore the foundation of these two approaches, and then use that discussion, to create a new framework for understanding non-state actor participation in international policy formation to answer the above research question. This framework will then be tested through a survey, interviews and field research at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties in New Delhi, India from October 23-November 1, 2002.

This research will create a bridge between two major theories in political science (policy subsystems, and interest groups), fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge about organized interests and determine the degree to which the dynamics found in domestic policy studies can also apply to the international arena. The proposed framework could have applications to other issue areas with large-scale interest group participation such as sustainable development.

II. CONTEXT

Historical Context

While the greenhouse effect was first identified and described in 1856 by Svante Arrhenious of Sweden[2], little systematic research on climate change took place until the late 1950s when systematic measurement of carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere began as part of the International Geophysical Year (1957-58) (Børsting and Fermann 1997). The first warnings that greenhouse gases could have a warming effect on the earth's climate leading to potentially negative impacts began as early as 1957 when scientists at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography discovered that the oceans were not absorbing very much of the CO_2 that was being released into the atmosphere (Dotto 1999).

By the end of the 1970s the scientific community had increasingly begun to see climate change as a real and potentially serious problem. In 1970 the Council on Environmental Quality issued a warning that industrial activity may be having an effect on the weather. Climatologists began addressing the possibility that carbon dioxide emissions as a result of the burning of fossil fuels was raising the temperature of the earth by creating the "greenhouse effect", as well as the possibly that dust and soot were clouding the atmosphere and therefore cooling the earth's temperature by blocking the sun (Hoffman 1998).

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) held the first World Climate Conference in Geneva in February 1979 marking the first time that climate change was recognized as a serious problem by a major intergovernmental organization, and the beginning of sustained attention to the issue by the scientific community. The World Climate Programme was established under the joint responsibility of the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the International Council of Scientific Unions to coordinate research on climate change(Børsting and Fermann 1997).

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[1] This research uses the terms organized interests, interest groups and NGOs interchangeably.

[2] See Svante Arrhenius. 1896. On the influence of carbonic acid in the air upon the temperature on the ground. *Philosophical Magazine*. 41, 237-275.

By 1983, a consensus was emerging that global warming was happening, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency released a report warning that it might already be too late to avoid the increase in atmospheric temperatures expected from rising greenhouse gas levels(Hoffman 1998). Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, a series of intergovernmental climate change conferences were held which helped to put the issue on the international agenda. In particular, the 1988 Toronto World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere culminated in a call for international political action and outlined preliminary emission reduction targets (Fermann 1997; Hoffman 1998)

In 1988 the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to scientifically study the issue of climate change. Comprised of 2500 scientists from around the world, the IPCC issues a series of reports on the state of the science of climate change, and the impacts of climate change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2002).

The 1990 Second World Climate Conference was significant as it culminated with a demand for an international framework treaty on climate change. The conference was sponsored by the WMO, UNEP and other international organizations, and featured negotiations and ministerial-level discussions among 137 states plus the European Community. In December 1990, the United Nations General Assembly approved the start of treaty negotiations. As a result the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed by 154 states (plus the EU) at Rio de Janeiro during the Earth Summit. The UNFCCC set out a framework for action to control or cut greenhouse gas emissions (Børsting and Fermann 1997). The objective of the convention is "to achieve … stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system ... to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner"(United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2002). The UNFCCC came into force in 1994 after being ratified by 50 countries. As of November 2002 186 countries have ratified the Convention. The treaty held developed countries and those with economies in transition to non-binding commitment to try to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions back down to 1990 levels by 2000. Annex 1 countries (including the U.S., Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and the Russian Federation agreed to transfer technology and monetary aid to Annex II countries (primarily countries in Asia, South American and Africa) to help them to reduce their emissions. This effort would be coordinated by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) within the World Bank. Annex II countries were not asked to make commitment to reduce their emissions (Dotto 1999).

Since the UNFCCC entered into force in 1994, eight meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) have taken place, as well as numerous workshops and meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. A Protocol to the Convention was adopted in 1997 at the Third Conference of the Parties held in Kyoto (December 1-12, 1997) that commits industrialized countries to achieve quantified targets for decreasing their emissions of greenhouse gases. To bring it into force, the Kyoto Protocol must be ratified by 55 nations responsible for 55% of greenhouse gas emissions. As of December 2002, 97 have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, representing 37.4% of greenhouse gas emissions (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2002).

Scientific Context

The climate change[3] debate is characterized by scientific uncertainty and conflict between economic and environmental interests. The Earth's atmosphere is comprised of gases that trap

[3] The popular press tends to refer to climate change as 'global warming,' however the phrase has fallen out of use in the scientific literature in favour of "climate change" which takes into account a range of possible effects on weather and climate as a result of increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases. Climate refers to the aggregated

heat from the sun and the earth, much like a greenhouse. This natural greenhouse effect maintains the Earth's mean temperature approximately 33 degrees Celsius higher than it would be otherwise. When the sun's rays hit the Earth, some of that heat is reflected back into space. The rest of the heat is absorbed by oceans and soils and warms our environment. The build-up of gases such as carbon dioxide, water vapour, methane and ozone in the atmosphere trap or reflect the heat that would otherwise be reflected. This imbalance raises temperatures at the earth's surface. These aspects of climate change are not considered controversial (Jacoby, Prinn et al. 1998). It is generally accepted by all parties involved in the debate that human activities such as energy production, transportation and agriculture have increased the quantity of these greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (Jacoby, Prinn et al. 1998; Morgan 1998; Lomborg 2001).

It is largely indisputable that humans have increased the quantity of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, in particular carbon dioxide. Approximately 80% of the extra carbon dioxide is due to oil/coal/gas combustion, and the other 20% is a result of land changes such as deforestation. It is estimated that the oceans, northern forests and plants that use carbon dioxide as fertilizer absorb 55% of carbon dioxide emissions, however the rest is released into the atmosphere. As a result, since the pre-industrial era, the concentration of carbon dioxide has increased by 31 percent (Lomborg 2001).

According to Lomborg, who aligns himself with the sceptic camp, "the fundamental principle of the greenhouse effect is really quite simple and entirely uncontroversial. That there should be some sort of anthropogenic greenhouse effect is also fairly uncontroversial"(Lomborg 2001) (p. 259- 260). Lomborg discusses the consequences of global warming. "Generally speaking the industrialized countries will gain both the advantage of a longer growing season and a CO_2 fertilizer effect. The developing countries, on the other hand, may also benefit from the fertilizer effect but the temperature increase will, all in all, have a negative effect." (Lomborg 2001) (p. 289). These changes will be gradual, if developing countries are more developed and richer by the time these changes begin to take effect, they may be able to respond by planting new crop varieties, extending irrigation or altering planting dates (Lomborg 2001).

The issue of climate change has evoked a passionate political debate concerning the validity of scientific data. Scientists argued over competing interpretations of scientific data and climate models (Hoffman 1998). The scientific community has had a significant role to play within the climate change regime. From the beginning of the negotiations, sceptics and opponents of emissions reductions have successfully kept the issue of scientific uncertainty at the forefront of the discussion. Lomborg argues that the debate has partially sidetracked with preoccupation over the issue of whether or not the climate is affected by human induced CO_2 emissions. He argues, "It would seem unlikely that there would not be some form of warming coming from increased CO_2. Thus, the important question is not *whether* man-made CO_2 increases global temperature, but *how much* – whether this effect will be negligible, significant or even devastating" (Lomborg 2001, p. 266). Determining the answer requires an understanding of a complex array of variables including for example population growth, greenhouse gas emissions, economic development, deforestation rates, energy supplies, environmental efforts, aerosols, solar sunspot cycles, solar irradiation, water vapour and clouds. Climate change models are not yet sophisticated enough to include all of the competing variables, and so there is a great deal of uncertainty as to the effect of various policy proposals and the range of warming that can be expected in a "business-as-usual" scenario.

Sceptics have demanded proof that global warming is happening, that human activities are the cause and that there will in fact be negative consequences associated with global warming if it does happen. Such strategies were used in other controversies such as the depletion of the ozone layer, smoking and cancer and the controversy over CFCs (Dotto 1999). Climate change

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weather conditions over large regions and long periods of times (from seasons to millennia).

sceptics themselves represent a diversity of views. In a highly publicized book, Lomborg makes the provocative argument that accepts the presence of human-caused global warming but advocates extreme caution in the development of responses. He argues that

> "We should not spend vast amounts of money to cut a tiny slice of the global temperature increase when this constitutes a poor use of resources and when we could probably use these funds far more effectively in the developing world. This connection between resource use on global warming an aiding the Third World actually goes much deeper, because, as we saw above, the developing world will experience by far the most damage from global warming. Thus, when we spend resources to mitigate global warming we are in fact and to a large extent helping future inhabitants in the developing world. However if we spend the same money directly in the Third World we would be helping present inhabitants in the developing world, and through them also their descendants. Since the inhabitants of the Third World are likely to be much richer in the future, and since we have shown that the return on investments in the developing countries is much higher than those on global warming, the question really boils down: Do we want to help more well-off inhabitants in the Third World a hundred years from now a little or do we want to help poorer inhabitants in the present Third World more?" (Lomborg 2001, p. 322).

According to the United Nations Environment Programme "We must not expect a single, dramatic discovery to confirm 'global warming' once and for all. If we wait for that discovery we will wait for a long time – until well after it is too late to do much about it. There is no climatic counterpart to the Antarctic ozone hole"(Dotto 1999).

Political Context

The negotiation and implementation of the Convention and Kyoto Protocol involved a broad range of participants filling multiple roles. The Conference of the Parties (COP), which meets approximately once a year, is the highest decision-making body for the climate change negotiation process, and is comprised of all the countries that are Parties to the UNFCCC. The COP is responsible for reviewing the implementation of the Convention by assessing national communications and emission inventories submitted by the Parties. Each Party to the Convention is represented by a national delegation that is authorized to negotiate on behalf of their government.

The UNFCCC secretariat is made up of international civil servants and provides support to the various institutions involved in the climate change issue. Functions may include practical arrangements for meetings, assisting Parties with implementing their commitments, coordinating with other international bodies, and preparing official documents. There are also two permanent subsidiary bodies to the UNFCCC: The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). Their role is to provide advice to the COP in their respective areas. Participation on the Subsidiary Bodies is open to any Party, and governments usually send representatives who are experts in their fields.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization in 1988 to provide scientific input on climate change. The IPCC is not an institution within the Convention, but is considered an authoritative voice on climate change issues. (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2002).

A broad spectrum of 513 non-profit organizations such as think tanks, trade groups, advocacy organizations, public interest groups, and universities are involved in the Convention and Kyoto Protocol negotiations as accredited observers. In order to be accredited as observers, organizations must be legally constituted entities with "not for profit" status, and competent in the areas related to the Convention. Accredited organizations do not have voting rights, but they may

by special invitation address the COP and subsidiary bodies in plenary meetings, although they are encouraged to do so only on behalf of a broad constituency.

Why is climate change policy formation so politically contentious? First, it presents a formidable policy challenge because of the complexity of securing both international cooperation and domestic implementation. Second, the resolution of the climate change issue intersects with other complicated policy issues such as deforestation, international aid, nuclear power and economic development. Third, the technical challenges of forecasting and modelling have created conflicting estimations that may discourage a sense of urgency. Fourth, the connection between global warming and its effect on citizens is not immediately clear. There is not necessarily a clear connection between the increasingly volatile weather that we are experiencing and global warming. Perhaps the use of the term "global warming" has done a disservice to the cause, making it difficult to connect a severe blizzard or ice storm with the idea of 'warming'. Fifth, energy, especially reserves of cheap fossil fuel energy such as coal, oil and gas, are a major component of the global economy. Addressing climate change is perceived as an attack on the fossil fuel sector. Sixth, the time lines are particularly unclear. It is difficult for governments to justify spending money or potentially reducing economic competitiveness for problems that might occur in the future. It is difficult to conclusively identify cause and effect. If governments spend millions of dollars to reduce emissions, and climate change does not happen, then it is difficult to argue that it was directly because of government actions. Similarly if a weather related disaster does occur, was that money wasted or would the weather have been worse? Seventh, there is a significant free rider problem inherent in any international policy problem. With the withdrawal of the United States from the Kyoto Protocol, many feel that the efforts by other Annex I countries will be meaningless.

There are also many points of disagreements with the Kyoto Protocol itself, including:

- emissions banking and borrowing – emissions 'banking' would allow countries that have emissions below the target level in one period to use the difference to offset emissions above the target level in the another period. Borrowing emissions would allow countries to "borrow" emission against their targets for later periods so that they can emit more in the present period
- inclusion of gases – there is disagreement about which greenhouse gases should be included. On one side were those countries that wanted only the three major greenhouse gases included: CO2, methane, and nitrous oxide. Others wanted to add three halocarbons, arguing that while they are much less plentiful, they are much more damaging than the other gases (Dotto 1999). The Annex I countries wanted to include six gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydro fluorocarbons, perfluorcarbons and sulphur hexaflouride. The Group of 77 countries and China were opposed to "carbon dioxide" equivalent concept whereby all six gases would be lumped together by multiplying emissions from each gas by its global warming potential (GWP). Part of the controversy arose out of concern that Annex I countries would simply concentrate on gases with high GWPs, thereby leaving out problems associated with the energy sector. Annex A does include all six gases (Mitra 1998)
- emissions trading – trading has been proposed in order to take into account the fact that the costs of controlling emissions may differ among countries. Under a trading scheme countries with high emission control costs could buy a portion of the emissions allotted to a country whose costs are lower. This would be a voluntary exchange and both countries would have to agree. Both countries would have previously agreed to a binding emissions target that gives each country an allowable amount of greenhouse gases that it can emit over a particular period of time. The implementation of this proposal would require infrastructure to track trades, and technology for measuring, tracking and reporting emissions.

- joint implementation – under joining implementation, a country with a reduction target could get credit toward satisfying that target by taking action to reduce emissions in a country that does not have a target. It is argued that this approach will increase investment and the transfer of technology to less developed countries.
- compliance – ascertaining compliance will be difficult, somehow based upon country reports and an as-yet undetermined international mechanism to verify such reporting. At present the UNFCCC has a system of national inventories, national communications, and international review process that could serve as a foundation for monitoring compliance.
- dealing with non-parties – numerous proposals have been put forth on how to deal with free riders so as not to undermine the environmental integrity of the agreement such as differentiated obligations, but this remains contentious.
- binding targets and timelines - the European Union and many developing countries supported reductions of 15% or more below 1990 levels by 2010 during the Kyoto negotiations. The US argued for stabilization at 1990 levels. Australia and the oil-producing Arab countries wanted non-binding targets. Canada and Japan supported 3% and 5% targets respectively. Some countries argued for different emission targets per country based on economic circumstances, while others supported a universal target. The European Union opposed the notion of differentiated targets, yet wanted a "bubble" to apply to average out emissions among its own member states (Dotto 1999)
- developing countries participation - in the United States interest groups made the exemption of developing countries a major issue. The US delegation, cognizant of the fact that the US Senate would be unlikely to ratify a treaty that exempted developing countries from participating, demanded meaningful participation on the part of developing countries, including a willingness to accept joint implementation and emissions trading. They particularly wanted countries such as China. India, Brazil and Mexico to commit to reducing emissions (Dotto 1999).

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND RATIONALE

Survey

The primary source of data for this research is an international survey of UNFCCC Conference of Parties participants. The purpose of the survey is to develop an understanding of the activities of groups at the UNFCCC negotiation sessions, as well as background information on their organization and views on climate change. While many interest group studies face the challenge of identifying a sampling frame because no single source lists all the organized interests involved in a particular issue, this study is able to work with the entire population of interest groups accredited to participate in the negotiations. Many interest group studies such as Hojnakci and Kimball (1998), (Laumann and Knoke 1987) and (Salisbury, Heinz et al. 1987) have had to rely on other means such as selecting organizations mentioned in issue-related stories in the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* or *National Journal*, or if the *Congressional Information Service Abstracts* indicated that they have oral or written testimony at issue-related hearings, or if they appear under relevant subject headings in *Washington Representative* or *Congressional Quarterly's Washington Information Directory*.

Surveying an international population involves many challenges. It is difficult to provide domestic postage for mail back surveys, and the time involved may be prohibitive to actually completing the project. As a result, a web-based survey was chosen as the primary method to try to overcome some of these difficulties.

A list of the accredited organizations and the names of their representatives sent to each of the negotiations is available on the Internet at the UNFCCC web site. Initially the survey was going to be distributed to individuals who had attended at least one of the COPs since 1997,

however in a pilot test of the survey it was determined that there was an extraordinarily high rate of undeliverable emails. As a result, organizational email addresses were used instead.

The survey was posted on the Internet using Hosted Survey an Internet company that supports web based surveys and provides confidential services to protect the integrity of the study. An email was sent to each of the organizations with an embedded link that took the respondent directly to the survey. Each organization receives a unique password that is embedded in the link which prevents those not involved in the study from accessing the survey, as well as providing a way to track the respondents. A personalized message informed them of the purpose of the study, indicated the institutional affiliation and provided contact information in case they had any questions. Subjects were also given the choice of receiving the survey by mail or fax, which 4 chose to do. The first page of the web survey was the Human Subjects Information sheet. The rest of the survey was three pages long, and took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. After two and a half weeks a reminder email was sent only to those who had not yet taken the survey, again including the embedded link.

The survey questions address a range of topics including: views on climate change and the Kyoto Protocol, and organizational structure. The majority of the questions address the activities of groups during the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties. For example, questions are asked about coalitions/networks, goals, strategies, and interactions with government delegates. The survey questions were individually pretested at the Conference of Parties in India, and then the survey itself was pretested over the Internet. A few changes to wording were the only changes after the pretesting.

Compared with mail surveys, web surveys have a few advantages: it is a cost-effective means of collecting data, there is no need to include a prepaid and preaddressed response card, it eliminates the need to fold and stuff surveys, and transmission of the survey instrument is essentially instantaneous. Respondents may find it easier and more convenient to reply to a questionnaire sent by e-mail rather than by post. Replies can also be sent instantaneously and conveniently (Tse 1998; Couper, Traugott et al. 2001). This can be important when doing research overseas, or as anthrax scares and postal strikes have shown; when postal services are compromised.

One of the major advantages of web or e-mail surveys is the speed with which they are returned. In one study, by the end of the first day 30% of the total number of completed surveys had been returned, and by the third day 50% of all the completed surveys had been returned (Couper, Traugott et al. 2001). One hour after the survey was sent out, there were eight responses. In the first 24 hours, 35 responses were received. Although responses slowed dramatically after that, the final response rate was 49%.

A review of survey research on American organizations indicated response rates ranging from a low of 28% (Conger 2001) to a high of 64% (Berry 2001). According to Berry (2001) "the survey had an unusually high return rate of 64% in comparison to other studies of non-profit organizations, due in large part to repeated mailings of the instrument". There are very few studies that are based on international surveys. One survey of 295 international human rights organizations had a 52% response rate after 5 mail outs (Smith, Pagnucco et al. 1998).

Compared with mail surveys, e-mail surveys have a few advantages: it is a cost-effective means of collecting data, there is no need to include a prepaid and preaddressed response card, it eliminates the need to fold and stuff surveys, and transmission of the survey instrument is essentially instantaneous. Respondents may find it easier and more convenient to reply to a questionnaire sent by e-mail rather than by post. Replies can also be sent instantaneously and conveniently (Tse 1998; Couper, Traugott et al. 2001). This can be important when doing research overseas, or in the case of the anthrax scares and postal strikes have shown; when postal services are compromised. Finally, e-mail surveys may be perceived as being environmentally friendly. Disadvantages of the e-mail technique include the volume of "spam" mail or junk mail that may cause recipients to perceive the survey as irritating junk mail. Tse (1998) in his study of

e-mail and mail surveys found that both methods provided essentially the same information, thus there was no interaction effect between the nature of the study and the mode of delivery of the questionnaire (Tse 1998).

Interviews and Field Observations

Qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interviews were done at the 2002 meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP). While the Department of Political Science was approved as an accredited UNFCCC observer, the author attended the COP as a member of the Sierra Club of Canada in order to have access to the daily meetings of the Climate Action Network – a network of approximately 50 organizations who are active in the COP negotiations. University researchers are not permitted to attend those meetings unless they are affiliated with a network member. The choice of affiliation did not seem to have any bearing on the interviews that took place, nor did it appear to affect the willingness of participants to be interviewed as no one refused to be interviewed.

The field interviews were an opportunity to obtain impressions from government delegates and intergovernmental organizations who would not be receiving the survey. In a few cases, interviews were also done with those who expressed an interest in the research, or with those recommended by other interviewees. The purpose of the interviews was not to draw conclusions or to serve as a source of analysis, but rather to provide context to the survey results.

IV. POLICY SUBSYSTEMS

The policy process can be thought of as operating within partially segmented "policy subsystems" which are made up of institutions and actors that are directly involved in the policymaking process in a specialized policy area. The subsystem concept arose out of the "anti-traditionalist" movement of the 1930s and 1940s as authors such as E.S. Griffith (1939) criticized the traditional legalistic and institutionalist approaches to public policy and political science, and argued that in order to fully understand government, one must look not at the formal institutions, but instead the centres of activity, or "whirlpools," of special interests made up of legislators, administrators, lobbyists and scholars (Griffith 1939). Building upon this early research, policy scholars developed the notion of policy subsystems that are made up of interested participants with varying degrees of interest in a particular issue. According to Thurber, "American public policy results primarily from the activities of thousands of actors in hundreds of decision-making systems organized around discrete programs and issues. These decision-making systems operate within the constitutional, electoral, and political party structures of the American political system and, in effect, make it work. Interested individuals, businesses, and groups cluster naturally around the congressional committees and executive branch agencies whose decisions affect them either positively or negatively." (Thurber 1991, p. 319).

Policy subsystems are networks of actors in a particular issue domain engaged in various forms of decision-making. Their purpose is to make focused political demands and to influence particular programmes or policies. Subsystems are not organized to contest elections, but rather to work within the policy process. Their activities may include bringing issues to the agenda, developing and helping to pass legislation, formulating rules and regulations, preparing and passing budgets, administering and implementing programmes, and evaluating/revising programmes (Thurber 1991). "The thousands of clientele-oriented subsystems expressing many points of view from the web of the American public policy dominating the workload of congressional committees and subcommittees, interest groups, and executive branch agencies" (Thurber 1991). Subsystems develop in part because of a need for expertise in public policy. The division of labour within society and the complexity of many policies often result in the general public being excluded from the policy process (Thurber 1991).

Subsystem actors develop expertise in the area and form relationships with other participants. Subsystems tend to be dominated by those with technical expertise in the particular issue area, in part a reflection of the growth of the division of labour and specialization within society. Such specialists may come from interest groups, think tanks, academia, Congress, executive agencies or state and local government (Thurber 1991).

Within government, subsystems can play an important role; "policy subsystem serve to structure the agenda of government to focus the attention of policymakers through a routinized division of labor. As products of past decisions, they represent legitimated formulae for accommodating established interests. By structuring participation and by providing preexisting decisional premises, subsystems serve to limit the conflicts and uncertainties that must be dealt with at any one time, therein facilitating the development of the type of consensus necessary for decision" (Cobb and Elder 1981). As a result, subsystems may develop significant independence in developing, implementing and evaluating policy (Baumgartner and Jones 1993).

There have been many attempts at refining the idea of policy subsystems. An early refinement of the subsystem concept was the idea of the iron triangle. Iron triangles are made up of interest groups, congressional committees and government agencies that exercise "iron-clad" control over the policy process. Iron triangles develop around areas of public policy dealing with complicated matters of concern, and the participants administer public policy within its narrow realm without significant opposition from elsewhere in the governmental or economic system(Cater 1964)They are essentially closed arenas made up of a limited number of participants with stable relations. Iron triangles have been criticized for capturing the policy process and being self-serving, thereby circumventing the principles of democracy (Hanks 2000).

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, several authors began to question the accuracy of the iron-triangle concept in representing the true nature of public policy making in the United States (Jones, 1979). Heclo (1978) developed an alternative approach based on the idea that much of contemporary American politics took place in environments that were ad hoc, open and unstable rather than regular, closed and stable. Heclo referred to these policy-making milieus as "issue networks". Issue networks have disaggregated power and many participants with varying levels of commitment and dependence on others flowing in and out of decision-making. These are fluctuating networks with no one group or participant setting the agenda or controlling the problem definition process (Heclo 1978).

The issue network is a more amorphous relationship than an iron triangle. Participants become involved in the policy process until they achieve their goals, which usually involve victory over those who have an opposing agenda. Coalitions will form within the policy area and dissolve either when the coalitions feel that there has been a resolution, or when it is felt that their actions are no longer worthwhile (Berry 1989).

Issue networks can be an effective means of transmitting information quickly, serving as a means for research and for advocacy for both policymakers and interest group participants. The flow of information allows for alliances to develop within the issue network comprised of those working towards a common outcome. Issue networks as a result are characterized by both a high degree of conflict and a high degree of cooperation (Berry 1989).

The problem with issue networks is in identifying a structure or relationship among participants as an issue network. Political and public policy scholars tend to use the issue network term although to date no one has been able to identify a specific issue network as there are no identifiable boundaries for issue networks. Issue network participants come and go at will; there are no mechanisms or demand for developing a permanent relationship to control a specific policymaking process. The issue network is comparable to an r-square equal to one. When all variation is accounted for, prediction cannot exist. The same limitation can be said of the issue network, it does not predict but explains everything. It does not provide for the study of causal effects of behaviour. The issue network is more of an ad hoc descriptive approach to the study of policymaking process. This is not to criticize the issue network as not providing a mechanism for

understanding policymaking process; it just is not a good tool for discovering causal effects. The issue network explains public policymaking and linkages among organizations and groups in a descriptive ad hoc style. Participants come together to address a single issue and dissolve when the issue is resolved (Hanks 2000).

In part to try to address some of these critical problems with issue networks, the subsystem concept has been defined and redefined using a vast array of terms such as include policy communities (Jordan 1990), discourse coalitions (Singer 1990), policy networks(Rhodes 1990), advocacy coalitions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999), .subgovernments (Cater 1964), issue niches (Browne 1988), policy community and policy monopoly (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Essentially these terms all refer to the idea that policymakers form issue alliances that cut across institutional boundaries, and are made up of both governmental and nongovernmental actors. Table 1 provides a brief comparison of four of the most discussed refinements.

Table 1: Modifications of Policy Subsystems

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	AUTHOR	DECISION MAKING	PARTICIPATION
Iron Triangle	Made up of interest groups, congressional committees and government agencies that exercise "iron-clad" control over the policy process		Closed (regular meetings and a system of rules)	Restricted
Subgovernment	A stable groups of a limited number of interest groups, legislators and their aides, and agency personnel who interact regularly and dominate policymaking in a particular issue area	Douglass Cater (1964)	Closed	Limited
Issue Network	Issue networks have disaggregated power and many participants with varying levels of commitment and dependence on others flowing in and out of decision-making. These are fluctuating networks with no one group or participant setting the agenda or controlling the problem definition process	Hugh Heclo (1978)	Open (lack of common rules and hierarchy)	Boundless
Advocacy Coalition	Participants share a particular belief system (basic values, causal assumptions, problem	Paul A. Sabatier (1987)	Restricted	Limited

	perceptions) and have a fair degree of coordinated activity			
Issue Niches	Each group works within a particular issue niche or set of issues. Groups are isolated into narrow constellations.	William P. Browne (1990)	Restricted	Limited
Policy Community	There is a common view of the rules of operation, frequent interaction between a limited number of participants, with a few groups or individuals consciously excluded. The community is characterized by bargaining over resources between members, and the ability of policy leaders to bring others to agreement.	Rhodes and March (1992)	Closed hierarchy	Limited
Policy Monopoly	Decisions are dominated by a limited number of participants who develop a common understanding of the issues in the subsystem. . Participants share policy goals and are largely removed from public scrutiny	Baumgartner and Jones (1993)	Closed	Limited

There has been a lot of critique of the "proliferation of concepts attempting to capture different kinds of communities, networks and associations that often intersect, overlap or operate at different levels of analysis" (Howlett 2002). Howlett's concern is not with the notion of taxonomy construction, but rather with the construction of taxonomies with unclear purposes and categories that are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Thurber (1991) is a rare exception in this literature, creating typologies of both the policymaking system and policy subsystems that deserve further study.

SUBSYSTEMS AND INTEREST GROUPS

Subsystems are a macro level of analysis, however attention must also be given to the individual groups that make up the subsystem; "pluralist and interest group theories of politics closely fit the subsystem approaches." (Thurber 1991) (p. 324). Interest groups play a variety of different roles in American society including:

1. *Representing constituents* before government Interest groups can serve as an intermediary link between citizens and governments, providing the means through which members can voice their opinions and influence the political process.
2. *Providing opportunities for participation*. In American political culture participation is a virtue, and those who want to participate beyond voting or becoming involved in campaigns, interest groups can be a vehicle. In particular, interest groups may provide a way for people to participate more actively and specifically in areas in which they are passionate beyond voting and becoming involved in campaigns.
3. *Education*. Through advocacy efforts, publications and publicity campaigns interest groups can make people more aware of issues and the range of solutions. While these groups typically present only one side of an issue, opposing groups may provide a balance. Interest groups may offer a valuable service to policymakers by providing credible information and policy analysis.
4. *Agenda setting*. Interest groups are often active in bringing issues to the attention of citizens and government. Labour unions have been successful in bringing specific occupation health and safety issues to the agenda.
5. *Programme monitoring*. Interest groups may draw attention to problems with government programmes, or even go to court in order to promote compliance with a law (Berry 1989).

Decisions about interest group strategies and tactics to fulfil these roles are not ad hoc. Rather, at the domestic level they are conditioned by decisions about structure, process and budgeting. "The organizational capacity of a lobby reflects these resource allocations. These decisions tell us something about what an organizational thinks it is good at and how it thinks it might best influence public policy. Interest groups search for ways of being valuable (or threatening) to policymakers; to maximize their influence they must develop qualities that attract the attention and respect of those in government."(Berry 2001, p. 11).

Groups do not necessarily do these things in isolation. Interest group coalitions, defined as "explicit working relationships among groups for the purpose of achieving a public policy goal"(Bosso 1987), may be an effective complement to individual strategies. According to Hula, groups are pursuing more coalition strategies as a result of various factors including growth in interest group numbers, increasing policy complexity and government decentralization. The increase in the number of subcommittees has also meant that there are more political actors to contact, and so interest groups may be better served by pooling their efforts through coalitions (Hula 1999). Coalitions can be an effective way to make use of strengths and compensate for weaknesses. Ad hoc arrangements may be established to fulfill a specific purpose, and then dismantled when the issue is resolved or irreversibly defeated. Permanent coalitions, although occurring less frequently may have more structure. According to Hula (1999), coalitions can take many different forms. Formal, long-term coalitions may be similar in form to an interest group itself, with a formal membership. Other coalitions may be much less formal, such as forming in response to a specific piece of legislation (Hula 1999).

In order for a group to pursue its goals and use the strategies that were discussed above, it must have access to decision makers. Access can be direct, such as through personal conversations or presentations before officials, or testimony before a congressional committee/department/agency hearing. It can also be quasi-direct, such as conversations through intermediaries such as legislative staffers or other policymakers staff. Access may also be indirect such as through the mass media. Thus "access to political decision-makers is a key to group activity and the nature of this access (i.e., the number of points of access, the ability to reach 'key' players, and the receptivity of policy-makers) is directly related to the resources of the group and how it uses them" (Echols 1987, p. 41). Access may also depend on the resources available to a group, including physical, organizational, political and motivational resources.

In sum, the roots of power are more than just money and numbers. While these factors are important, organizational skills, insider relations with policymakers, public appeal and the formation of coalitions may be just as important (Thomas and Hrebenar 1999).

While subsystems may provide opportunity for representation of diverse interests, the question remains whether this is limited to those interests with resources and favoured access to decision makers, or whether subsystems are tied to democratic ideals and checks on government (Thurber 1991). This research is an attempt in part to try to answer that question, while refining our understanding of the subsystem as a concept.

SUBSYSTEM CRITIQUE

Many models of the policy process are based upon the idea of subsystems, however the concept is often criticized as being both under-specified and over-inclusive (Rhodes 1990; McCool 1997). Research on subsystems is weak on the details of what participants actually do, and there is also a poor understanding of what holds them together.

> Many students of policymaking found the subsystem approach useful in overcoming problems with earlier approaches – such as Marxism, pluralism or corporatism – which unnecessarily reified social relations or ignored institutional and structural variables in their analyses. However, the network approach was not without conceptual and methodological problems of its own, and by the mid-1990s some of its central tenets and hypotheses began to be called into question. Specifically, critics such as Keith Dowding argued that network studies tended to be overly descriptive and somewhat tautological in their reasoning and analysis. Although not denying that the network perspective could provide a useful heuristic for students of policy making it was asserted among other things, that the links alleged to exist between subsystem structure and policy outcomes were not proven… If the network approach was to move beyond metaphor, it was posited, network studies had to move beyond thick description and classification, and demonstrate that structural aspects of political life actually had a predictable effect on policy outcomes (Howlett 2002).

A significant problem with the subsystem literature is that it over-exaggerates the degree of internal coordination. This has really impeded the subsystem literature from moving beyond the descriptive level and accurately capturing the reality of the policymaking process. McCool says that "each subsystem strategy is designed to responds to conflict in the political process"(McCool 1998). I disagree with this point. This ignores the fact that participants within the subsystem may be there for entirely separate reasons that have little to do with responding to conflict, or even to influencing policy. Groups may be trying to establish a reputation in the field, raise the profile of their organization, do research.

The subsystem literature is also facing a crisis of "units of analysis". When we talk about subsystems, we are talking about a macro level entity. However, it is difficult to ascribe a particular "strategy" to such a large group lacking any authority figure or supranational structure. This presumes a high degree of coordination that has not been proven to exist in reality. By pursuing a largely macro-level of analysis, the subsystem literature has been reduced to over-generalizations and an ignorance of the realities of participation within policymaking. Yes organized interests do work together, however by and large they are most concerned about their own survival and reputation.

There is also debate over what the goal of a subsystem is. According to McCool "First the principal goal of subsystems is to develop a strategy to control conflict in policymaking. There are different levels of conflict and different kinds of conflict, and there is a discernible set of preferences regarding those levels and kinds of conflict. By arranging these types of conflict

into a preference hierarchy, we can increase the validity and usefulness of the subsystem concept" (McCool 1998, p. 588). Again, this seems to exaggerate the degree of internal coordination within the subsystem. The notion that there is a concentrated goal ignores the fluidity of participation, the competition between participants and the general self-interest of organizations. However, the mechanisms be which a subsystem controls conflict in McCool's model is unclear. Ascribing a goal to a loose collection of groups presumes a higher degree of command and control than has been shown to exist.

The longevity of the subsystem concept is due in part to the fact that it simplifies a very complex reality. Of course, in many cases it oversimplifies, but it does direct attention to the actors and relationships that were not addressed by traditional institutional models of government. These concepts also make what might otherwise be seen as irrational behaviour in an economic sense, into rational behaviour from a political perspective (McCool 1998).

The iron triangle concept has been critiqued as an inadequate metaphor for politics, both because the nature of politics has become more open and less rigid (McCool 1998) and because the concept itself became greatly oversimplified (King and Shannon 1987). "In other words, the iron triangle concept described n extreme set of conditions that were so specific and unyielding that very few political phenomena matched the description; it was valid for only a very limited number of cases. As policymaking became more open and less rigid, the iron triangle retained its validity for an even smaller portion of the policymaking milieu" (McCool 1998, p. 554). According to McCool, the iron triangle concept has been misapplied outside of the distributive context, which it was intended.

One of the most significant problems with issue networks as a concept is in identifying a structure or relationship among participants as an issue network. Because issue networks lack identifiable boundaries, it is difficult to identify them in the real world, although there has been limited success in the area of agricultural policy (Hanks 2000). As issue network participants come and go at will, there are no mechanisms or demand for developing a permanent relationship to control a specific policymaking process. As a result, the issue network is more of an ad hoc descriptive approach to the study of policymaking process(Hanks 2000).

Hula (1999) builds on this theme "…at an empirical level, Heclo's description of issue networks is a 'theory of non-structure' for interest group interaction, featuring an atomistic view of interest groups as a set of independent actors who interact unpredictably on the basis of shared expertise and knowledge about issues…. the interaction between groups under the network model is (and under Heclo's premise must be because of its very nature) uncharted, imprecise and undefined" (Hula 1999, p.59).

INTEREST GROUPS AND NGOs

Traditionally the subsystem literature has been confined to discussions of 'interest groups', while international relations scholars discuss non-governmental organizations (NGOs[4]). The discussion that follows is an attempt to establish that these differences are now simply rooted in nomenclature, and that in fact these terms can be considered to be synonymous. "The idea that international NGOs resemble traditional interest groups to such a degree that theories about the behaviour of on might apply to other is not new" (Bloodgood 2001, p. 9).

One area in which it has been suggested that NGOs and interest groups differ is that NGOs are not nationally bounded (Bloodgood 2001), however the vast majority of the groups identified as NGOs by UN bodies are in fact nationally bounded. Only a select few are truly international such as Greenpeace. Perhaps, this is in part due to the expansion of participation by

[4] Other terms have also been used such as pressure groups and non-state actors. Pressure groups places too much emphasis on the idea of influencing policy. 'Non-state actors' does not have the same stigma attached, however it is too broad of term including participants such as media, consultants, technical experts.

organizations in the international system. While participation in the beginning may have been limited to a particular type of group that was a large multi-national entity, now the UN system is crowded with small, national organizations that are broadening their activities to include international activities such as conference participation. This is facilitated by the rapid growth in UN Conferences and the opening of negotiations to non-state participants. International relations scholars, and interest groups by public policy and American politics scholars now refer to the same groups as NGOs.

The conventional definition of an interest group is that it is a "political organization with autonomy from both government and political parties"(Bloodgood 2001). They are distinct from spontaneous social movements as they are formal organizations. They are also involved in politics, broadly defined. One of the indications of the difficulty in narrowing down the definition of interest groups any further, is the challenges that interest group scholars have in identifying samples to survey. While in the United States, there are official regulations for groups that wish to lobby and make large political donations (i.e. forming a Political Action Committee, and registering with the Federal Election Commission), there may also be politically active groups who pursue their goals using alternate means such as community activism, and as a result may be harder to identify.

Increasingly, researchers are linking the activities of both interest groups and NGOs. According to Peter Spiro "in additional to working the proverbial hallways in the same way that domestic interests lobby the Congress, NGOs have managed to insinuate themselves into [international] decision-making contexts" (Spiro 1995, pp. 49-50). According to Princen and Finger "NGOs do disseminate important information. But the information is not politically neutral; it is used to promote a political agenda by, among other things, enhancing the transparency of powerful actors"(Princen and Finger 1994, p. 12). This has also been found to true in the interest group literature (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Russell Dalton's study of environmental NGOs in Europe revealed that in fact NGOs use the same tactics as traditional interest groups, such as lobbying at different levels of government, public protest, public information campaigns and legal challenges (Dalton 1994). Other authors have drawn on this analogy. According to Raustiala "like lobbyists in a domestic setting, NGOs act as conduits for ideas and political pressure"(Raustiala 1997, p. 728).

Part of the reason for this discussion, is the lack of precision in the NGO literature as to what an NGO really is. Are NGOs grass roots organizations? Are they engaged in the delivery of services such as humanitarian aid delivery? Are they groups with an international membership? Or are they, as their name implies, simply groups outside of the government sphere. NGOs may be defined by the larger international bodies within which the organizations choose to participate. Within the UNFCCC, business groups and environmental groups are eligible for accreditation provided they meet the criteria of expertise and non-profit status. Perhaps this is one difference in that traditional domestic interest groups may include corporate lobbyists such as DuPont. In the case of the UNFCCC, business interests may participate through their business/professional organizations, or in the case of some of the fossil fuel companies in the United States, through a separate organization set up specifically for that reason. The Climate Council was set up specifically by the fossil fuel industry to participate in climate change negotiations.

For the purposes of this research, the preferred term for the alternative framework is the phrase "organized interests". Organized interests are formal organizations involved in activities related to policy issues that are of salience to them. This term emphasizes the self-interested purposes of the organizations involved, as well as the fact that they are not simply ad-hoc arrangements. Organized interests could be economic organizations, humanitarian groups, activist networks or professional organizations. Organized interests represent limitless possibilities with respect to goals, strategies, structure, and philosophy. Most importantly the phrase is not tainted by pre-conceived notions.

V. AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

It would seem that one way to enrich our understanding of organized interests is through the integration of multiple areas or sub-fields of political science. For example, as Baumgartner and Leech (1998) suggest; "a vast and venerable literature surrounds the concept of the policy subsystem …although these works all discuss direct contacts between interest groups and members of Congress or the bureaucracy, these studies are not cited in recent interest-group research as often as one would expect. An invisible line seems to be drawn between these 'policy studies' and 'interest-group studies' and there is little cross-reference between the two bodies of research. This is a serious flaw in the more recent literature, because policy studies have much to say about the ways in the which interest groups are involved in the policy process" (Baumgartner and Leech 1998, p.121). The proposed framework build on the advances made in these fields to develop a comprehensive framework of organized interests and international policy.

STRUCTURAL FOUNDATION OF ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK

The structural foundation of the proposed framework is the organized anarchy literature. Based on their study of universities, Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) identify an *organized anarchy* as characterized by problematic goals/preferences, unclear technology and fluid participation. Rather than an organized set of goals and preferences, organizations have an assortment of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences lacking any coherent structure. Organizations have unclear technology when, rather than operating according to rational procedures, the organization relies on methods such as trial-and-error or imitation. Members of the organization may have only a basic understanding of their role within the organization Participations come and go, and vary with respect to their commitment and interest in the organization. This is significant because the mix of who attends a meeting or who is invited has significant implications for the outcomes (Cohen and March 1986).

At the core of the organized anarchy literature is the notion of the garbage can which is filled with problems, solutions, choice opportunities and participants: "An organization is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work" (Cohen and March 1986). In contrast to the rational model of behaviour, solutions exist independent of problems, and in fact problems may be created in order to create an opportunity for a particular solution to be put into use. The particular mix of participants at any given time will have an impact on the prevailing definitions of problems and solutions (Sproull, Weiner et al. 1978).

ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework which will be used in this research builds upon the work of policy subsystems and interest groups, and is structured using a modified form of the organized anarchy garbage can: participants, choice opportunities, problem definition and solutions. This is not the first research to use the organized anarchy model as a structural foundation for other work. Like Kingdon (Kingdon 1995), the following framework builds upon the logic of the model and revised the inherent ideas. This framework is comprised of five pieces: participants, choice opportunities, problem definition, goals and strategies.

Participants

In order to apply the subsystem concept to the international arena, there are some necessary modifications that must be made. Issue networks are conceptualized as being open, ad

hoc arrangements, however at the international level participation is much restricted than at the domestic level. There is a single entry point through the accreditation procedures, and as a result there is a defined boundary of participants. In order to participate in the negotiation sessions of the UNFCCC, organizations much contact the United Nations for an accreditation package, demonstrate expertise in the area, and provide proof of non-profit status. This restricts participation to the highly motivated and recognized experts in the field. As well there are significant costs of participating. UNFCCC meetings have been held in locations such as Kyoto, Bonn, and Morocco covering the expenses to send representatives is much more costly than most domestic ventures to influence policy and make demands on the political system. Thus, in order to participate in transnational policymaking, organizations must have not only resources, but also a higher degree of commitment than would be necessary to participate at the domestic level.

The identification of the role of organized interests during international policy formation builds upon the work done by both theoretical approaches. With respect to the United Nations and climate change, Article 7, paragraph 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides inter alia, that "any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which is qualified in matters covered by the Convention, and which has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the Conference of the Parties as an observer, may be so admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object." Organizations that comply with the above and provide proof of their not-for-profit (tax exempt) status in either a State Member of the United Nations, or in a State Party to the International Court of Justice, or is a specialized United Nations agency (as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency) may be considered for accreditation. Only accredited organizations can nominate members to attend the sessions of the Convention bodies, or may apply to hold side events or set up exhibits at these sessions.

In order to apply for accreditation, organizations must submit a letter of application, copies of official documents containing the mandate/scope/governing structure of the organization, evidence of not-for-profit (tax-exempt) status, proof of competence of the organization in relation to the Climate Change Convention, information on affiliation with other non-governmental organizations or institutions involved in climate change activities, main funding sources, and brochures/publications related to the Convention process. Once the documentation is received, it is screened by the secretariat for fulfillment of the necessary requirements. Successful applicant organizations, following consultation with the appropriate bodies of the Convention are then provisionally admitted for the sessions of the subsidiary bodies or the Conference of Parties, and are then formally admitted unless at least 1/3 of the parties object.

While there are certainly barriers to participation at the domestic level, those barriers are magnified at the international level. The United Nations accreditation system limits participating groups to those non-profit organizations with a demonstrated expertise in the area. Groups must first contact the United Nations for the accreditation application, fill it out, meet all of the requirements, be approved, and then travel to the negotiations which are held all over the world. Attending a two-week negotiation session in a foreign country is likely out of the budget of many organized groups. So they must be fully committed to being involved in the process.

Although the focus of this research is on organized interests, the participants in the international subsystem are wide ranging: heads of state, staffers, elected representatives, political appointees, civil servants, consultants, academics, media and scientific/technical experts are all participants. Participants in international policy represent a vast array of perspectives and have wide-ranging motives and motivations for being involved. Not all of the organized interest participants are concerned with influencing policy. Rather their activities include monitoring, networking, exploring business opportunities, raising profile of organization, providing technical consulting services or research.

Participation and Climate Change

Based on the survey data, the most organized interests are think tanks (24.5%), followed by trade and professional groups (18.4%). Surprisingly, only 5.5% self-identified as activist groups. Although, given the accreditation process and costs of travel to COPs, this may in fact not be very surprising. Only 25.2% reported that climate change was the primary focus of their organization, reflecting the high number of general environmental/sustainable development think tanks, as well as the professional and trade groups. With respect to annual budgets, 51% of the respondents indicated that their annual budget was less than $3 million. Only 20% indicated that their budget was greater than $10 million. So we have a picture of the participants in general as being medium sized organizations with broad interests and an interest in research and professional activities.

The wide-ranging perspectives brought to the international arena cannot be easily compartmentalized. In the case of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the technical complexities and scientific uncertainty limit the degree to which there are identifiable coalitions that consistently support each other. Groups may be united in their desire for the Untied States not to withdraw its support, but may conflict on other aspects such as whether the agreement should be voluntary or whether developing countries should be required to reduce their emissions as well. Thus, the idea of advocacy coalitions may obscure some of the subtleties of participant beliefs.

Institutional Choice Opportunities

According to Cohen, March and Olsen, a choice opportunity is "a garbage can into which various kinds of problems and solutions are dumped by participants as they are generated. The mix of garbage in a single can depends on the mix of cans available, on the labels attached to the alternative cans, on what garbage is currently being produced, and on the speed with which garbage is collected and removed from the scene" (Cohen, March et al. 1972) (p.1). This framework however takes a narrower view of choice opportunities, directing attention to the institutional environment.

In the context of international policy formation, choice opportunities direct attention to the institutional context in which policy negotiations take place. Of particular interest here is the role of norms, principles, rules and decision-making procedures, emphasized by regime theory, in structuring choice opportunities. The UN negotiations are characterized by a high degree of regularization and procedural rules including accreditation procedures and rules for participation during the actual negotiations. For example, limiting who can participate on various committees and working groups, and who can participate in the formal negotiation sessions.

Institutional decision such as access to decision makers, rules of conduct, transparency of negotiation process determine the context in which organized interests operate. These choice opportunities reflect the policy nature of the environment in which policy is formulated. The word opportunity highlights that fact that the institutional environment structures the work of participants. By using opportunities instead of constraints, the focus is directed to action and activities rather than strictly on the limits imposed on organized interests.

In order for a group to influence policy, it must have access to decision makers. Access can be direct, such as through personal conversations or presentations before officials, or testimony before a congressional committee/department/agency hearing. It can also be quasi-direct, such as conversations through intermediaries such as legislative staffers or other policymakers staff. Access may also be indirect such as through the mass media. Thus "access to political decision-makers is a key to group activity and the nature of this access (i.e., the number of points of access, the ability to reach 'key' players, and the receptivity of policy-

makers) is directly related to the resources of the group and how it uses them" (Echols 1987, p. 41).

Institutional Choice Opportunities and Climate Change

The UNFCCC has a significant impact on the participation of organized interests. The accreditation process limits the participation of organized interests from the beginning. Security concerns also limits the activities that such groups can engage in. In addition, the Secretariat closes some of the negotiation sessions to organized interests, limiting them to government delegates only.

In terms of contact with government delegates, 56.8% indicated that they met with delegates from their own country twice or less at the COPs. And 69% said that they met with foreign delegates twice or less. This is not what the interest group literature would have predicted.

Problem definition

Deborah Stone has argued, "Problem definition is a process of image making, where the images have to do fundamentally with attributing cause, blame and responsibility. Conditions, difficulties or issues thus do not have inherent properties that make them more or less likely to be seen as problems or to be expanded. Rather, political actors deliberately portray them in ways calculated to gain support for their side…[and] compose stories that describe harms and difficulties, attribute them to actions of other individuals or organizations and thereby claim the right to invoke government power to stop the harm". (Stone 1989) (p. 282).

One of the interesting contributions of the organized anarchy literature, and further developed by Kingdon (1995) in relation to agenda setting, is the idea that problems can be defined in a multitude of ways, and that the defining of problems and development of solutions is not necessarily a linear process(Kingdon 1995). Problem definition is a major source of conflict within the climate change subsystem. The climate change decision-making process has been divided by conflict over problem definition, in particular with respect to the existence of climate change, the severity and causes.

Problems can become recognized through a number of ways: systematic indicators, changes to government expenditures, focusing events such as crises or disasters, a symbol, personal experiences by policymakers, failure to attain a particular goal. Systematic indicators may include surveys or statistics. Expenditure changes may reflect changing needs and priorities. Focusing events such as crises or disasters may include a snowstorm that draws attention to a cities lack of preparedness. A symbol such as a starving child may draw attention to a famine or humanitarian crisis. Personal experiences such as a health crisis for a policymaker may result in the policymaker identifying a problem that requires a public solution. The failure to attain a goal may bring attention to a problem – for example failure to meet test score expectations in education may bring attention to problems such as understaffed schools (Kingdon 1995).

According to Kingdon, conditions become problems through values, comparisons and categories. "The values one brings to an observation play a substantial role in problem definition. A mismatch between the observed conditions and one's conception of an ideal state become a problem" (Kingdon 1995, p.110)(p.110). Problems may also involve comparisons. "If one is not achieving what others are achieving, and if one believes in equality, then the relative disadvantage constitutes a problem" (Kingdon 1995, p.111). For example when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the fact that the United States had fallen behind in the space race was identified as a problem (Kingdon 1995). "…Much of the struggle over problem definition centres on the categories that will be used and the ways they will be used. You may not be able to judge a problem by its category, but its category structures people's perceptions of the problem in many important respects" (Kingdon 1995, p. 111). For example, the recent linking of climate change

with poverty at the 8th Conference of Parties (2002) suggests a movement away from solely the environmental category, into the sustainable development category of policy as well.

With respect to the Kyoto Protocol, from the beginning, the climate change debate has been directed by issues of proof, uncertainty and risk. The debate has been distracted by attempts to come up with legal definitions of proof, a refusal to accept scientific uncertainty, and a struggle to deal with risk (Dotto 1999).

This research proposes a spin off of the problem definition concept. The climate change research suggests that in fact there exist two different problem definitions. The first is the 'institutional problem definition', which is the generally accepted problem definition by the institution, in this case the UNFCCC. In contrast, there is an organizational problem definition, which is the definition of accepted by a particular organization. It is where these two conflict and differ, that determines the goals and goal-oriented activities to be pursued by the organization. If the problem definitions are congruent, than organizations will likely take on a more supportive role and will focus on other priorities such as networking. If the two conflict, it is more likely that organizations will engage in activities such as lobbying and protests.

The institutional problem definition indicated that climate change is both a serious problem and primarily the result of human activities. The IPCC has acknowledged natural processes in determining their institutional problem definition. Despite the high degree of media attention that climate change sceptics have received, in fact only 1.5% of the respondents said that climate change is not a problem. 59.4% identified it as a very serious problem. Interestingly, when asked about the causes of climate change, 26.7% said that it was solely a result of human activities, while 46.6% said that it was primarily due to human activities. Only 3.1% said that it was a natural phenomenon.

Goals

Goals in this framework are an expression of self-interest and reflect organizational priorities conditioned by the institutional choice opportunities. The development and expression of goals is a rational process, and organized interests engage in a constant reassessment of their goals, in part as a reaction to changes in choice opportunities. In contrast to what the subsystem literature suggests, goals are not necessarily linked to influencing the policy process. Rather, goals are about self-interest that may in fact be entirely separate from policy. Hula supports this argument: "although it can be assumed that a fundamental goal of interest group activity, it cannot be assumed that thus every group action is single-mindedly intended to having policy outcomes or gaining a policy advantage. "But the whole logic of the interest group tradition – and, indeed, of virtually any mode of political theory and analysis – rests on the assumption that political action is purposeful and that the purposes are ultimately served by the substantive policy decisions of governmental authorities"(Heinz, Laumann et al. 1993).

When asked why they attended the COP, while many of the participants did mention influencing policy, the most common reasons mentioned were: networking, simply to observe proceedings, to do research and to disseminate research.

Goal Oriented Activities

Within subsystems there are multiple participants pursuing multiple strategies so that their particular solution wins. The mix of proposed solutions reflect the inherent biases of groups, and as such provide an opportunity to study the range of perspectives and assumptions that dominate policy negotiations. Solutions may be conditioned by choice opportunities, so attention must be paid to the linkages between the two.

While the most visible work on international policy usually takes place within the confines of international meetings and conferences, organized interests pursue important strategies and work outside of that context. Institutional choice opportunities will have a weaker,

and less obvious effect on strategies when negotiations are not in session, but will still have an effect nonetheless.

Group resources are important to determining the goal-oriented activities. Group resources include: physical, organizational, political, motivational (such as ideological commitment), and prestige or status (Echols 1987). The roots of power are more than just money and numbers. While these factors are important, other factors such as organizational skills to organize a lobbying campaign, good political timing is also important. Long-term insider relations with lawmakers is important, as is the ability to join coalitions and being able to catch public interest (Thomas and Hrebenar 1999). Earlier research has identified a number of organizational characteristics that seem to affect lobbying influence. The most influential seem to be the effects of size, wealth, expertise and the ability to mobilize members. While each is a distinct organizational attribute, scholars have not yet been successful in determining the relative value of each in determining lobbying success (Berry 2001). Perhaps as suggested by V.O. Key (1961) Sheer numbers are a contributing factor, perhaps in granting an organization 'moral authority when it claims that it speaks for an interest in society. Wealth is also considered to be key to success as the wealthier a lobby, the more likely it is that it has more access (Berry 2001).

Groups may be successful in achieving their goals, but do so with a very low profile. This may be because they are only occasionally active when it has decided to pursue an issue. Or it may be that the group is an ad hoc group that has formed for a specific issue, and then dissolves once the issue is resolved or success is achieved. Or it may be that the group is active on an issue that is not in public view and is of minor public concern such as dentist licensing regulations (Thomas and Hrebenar 1999).

Noones and Freeman suggest that groups without money, connections or access must use outside strategies such as protesting or making use of the media. Politically disadvantaged or marginalized groups may turn to the courts for assistance (Nownes and Freeman 1998). Nownes and Freeman found no significant variation across group types for the following techniques: testifying at legislative hearings, contacting government officials directly, having influential constituents contact a legislator's office, alerting legislators to a bill's effect, attempting to shape implementation, attempting to influence appointment to public office, shaping government's agenda by raising new issues, consulting and planning legislative strategy, engaging in informal contacts with officials, doing favours for officials who need assistance, helping to draft legislation, helping to draft rules and regulations, and entering into coalitions with other groups. This suggests that there are a large number of techniques that, at least at the state, groups generally do regardless of whom they represent. They also found however, that corporate and intergovernmental groups are less likely to use grassroots lobbying, media-based techniques and protest than union, citizen, religious/charitable and trade/professional groups. As well, intergovernmental groups were less likely than the other types to run advertisements (Nownes and Freeman 1998).

Nownes and Freeman also find that "while some minor differences exist in the sue of 'outside' grass-roots and media-based techniques, the data indicate that corporate and trade/professional groups – those most likely to be labelled "insider groups" – do lots of the same things that "outsider" public interest groups do. Many of them, for example, advertise, engage in grass roots lobbying and utilize the media" (Nownes and Freeman 1998, p. 100).

Kollman's interview and survey evidence suggests that lawmakers pay most attention to interest group actions that appear least orchestrated; that require the most effort from individual members such as a handwritten letter vs. a computer generated form letter. He argues, "public opinion is a serious constraint on interest group strategies" (p. I), and that the "use of outside lobbying is on average a good indication of popular support (p. 157). However, this does not necessarily translate into legislative action, as his two case studies on NAFTA and the 1994 health care debate illustrate.

Decisions about interest group strategies and tactics are not ad hoc. Rather, at the domestic level they are conditioned by decisions about structure, process and budgeting. "The organizational capacity of a lobby reflects these resource allocations. These decisions tell us something about what an organizational thinks it is good at and how it thinks it might best influence public policy. Interest groups search for ways of being valuable (or threatening) to policymakers; to maximize their influence they must develop qualities that attract the attention and respect of those in government."(Berry 2001, p. 11) .

Goal Oriented Activities and Climate Change

Table 1 illustrates the range of activities that organizations participate in at the Conference of Parties. What is clear from the data is that most of the organizations do not participate in traditional lobby activities. Networking was the most frequently cited activity, followed closely by 'consulted with delegates'. But only 40.5% indicate that they lobbied foreign delegates and 37.5% lobbied domestic government delegates. So in fact, groups are participating in a much broader range of activities than either the subsystem literature or interest group literature would have predicted.

TABLE 1: COP ACTIVITIES

Activity	Percentage of Organizations
Observed formal working sessions	70%
Consulted with delegates	68.1%
Participated in a protest or ally	12.9%
Published a newsletter	17.2%
Distributed literature	58.3%
Networked with other organizations	71.8%
Attended an NGO forum	60.7%
Served on a government delegation	13.5%
Organized a side event (i.e. panel presentation)	62%
Set up an exhibit or display	32.5%
Research	34.4%
Lobbied government from own country	37.4%
Lobbied foreign government	40.5%
Sent our press releases/talked to the press	48.5%
Negotiated business contracts	15.3%
Went sightseeing	22.1%
Attended a social event	40.5%

N=163

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the preliminary data analysis supports the idea that subsystem literature and interest group literature should be integrated as a way to develop a better understanding of the participation of organized interests in international policy formation. Organized interests are attending the Climate Change Conference of Parties for a variety of reasons, many of which have nothing to do with influencing policy outcomes. The institutional environment seems to have a direct impact on each item in the model: participation, problem definition, goals and goal-oriented activities. Figure 1 proposes a visual model of the alternative framework, which

highlights the influence of the institutional environment on each stage. This is a highly rational model, suggesting that organizations pursue rational, largely pre-meditated activities in pursuit of their goals and self-interest.

[Figure 1 here].

Although further testing and refinement is necessary, this model has the potential to serve as a bridge between the interest group and subsystem literatures, and to direct attention to both the macro and micro aspects of organized interests' participation in international policy.

In trying to answer the question posed in the introduction regarding the role of organized interests in international policy it is clear that there are in fact no easy answers. Organized interests represent diverse perspectives and are engaged in a myriad of activities. What we do know is that there role is much more than simply traditional lobbying government delegates. They provide research and technical expertise, they raise controversy and draw attention to linkages with other issues, they help to attract media attention to various issues, and of course they continually work to support their own self-interests. There are no easy answers.

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