

**NORWEGIAN ENVIRONMENTALISM BETWEEN STATE AND
LOCAL COMMUNITY: WHY GREENPEACE FAILED IN NORWAY**

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Why is it that Greenpeace never succeeded in Norway? To answer this question, we have to examine the way organized environmentalism is configured in the Norwegian case. This is a case that does not easily fit into the general assumptions behind the definitions of environmentalism that has been generated by the bulk of ‘continental’ or ‘Anglo-Saxon’ literature (see Grendstad et al. 2006). We argue that the Norwegian case deviates from the mainstream definition of environmentalism due to two anomalies. The roots of the two anomalies are found at different but interrelated levels of analysis. The first anomaly is that the Norwegian political and social system differs when compared to systems in most other countries in that adversary actors or interests are not excluded from national politics, but, in general, are welcomed by the government. We label this anomaly the *inclusive polity and the state-friendly society*. In short, we refer to it as *the state-friendly society*. This anomaly, which has a long historical tradition, is primarily found at a *structural* level. But it also ties in with mainstream attitudes and beliefs that define part of the Norwegian political culture. The other anomaly is more *ideological*, although this, too, has strong structural ties because national environmental concern is influenced by a notion of social hardship and self-sufficiency as part of local living. The essence of this anomaly is the protection of man in nature. This anomaly has maintained its strength because of a relatively low level of urbanization in a geographically elongated and drawn out country. However, this anomaly has a long history too, expressed among other things by the historically strong tradition of local democracy in

the Norwegian polity. We label this anomaly the *local community perspective*. Both anomalies are essential to explain the fate of Greenpeace in Norway.

Although these interrelated anomalies make the case of Norway unique within international environmentalism, in isolation, however, the two anomalies are not unique. First, a state-friendly society is characterized by a specific type of close relationship between state and civil society. This societal type is found mainly in the Scandinavian countries and contributes to explain these countries' specific type of a universally based welfare state regime. The state-friendly society anomaly therefore excludes the vast majority of countries around the world.¹ Second, although the local community perspective might be found elsewhere, it is not found in the other Scandinavian countries to the same extent.² We believe that it is the *combination* of the state-friendly society and the local community perspective that makes the Norwegian case unique in the international context.

In this article we use this combined anomaly perspective to show the lack of space for an organization like Greenpeace in the environmental field in Norway. We start by giving a short overview of the organizational setting and the situation for Greenpeace in Norway, before we go deeper into the two anomalies within Norwegian environmentalism. Thereafter we analyze how members of Greenpeace Norway, in comparison with the Norwegian population as well as with members of other environmental organizations in the country, place themselves along the two dimensions of state-friendliness and the local community perspective.

¹ Something similar is supposedly found in Belgium and the Netherlands. See van der Heijden (1997).

² It is possible that the Norwegian view on nature resembles the view found in Iceland and in the Faeroe Islands. It is also possible that the Norwegian view is comparable with Asian and other non-European perspectives.

Our study is based on analyses of twelve environmental organizations in Norway, and takes advantage of a rich cluster of sources: Surveys of members of the organizations as well as the Norwegian population, interviews with the organization leaders, book-chapters written about the organizations by the leaders or other central placed persons, and other documents (see Appendix). This provides a rich empirical base that covers a more than 10-year period of organizational stability and change within the environmental field in Norway.

GREENPEACE AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

In the Norwegian society, voluntary organizations have had a prominent position for more than a century. Between the late 1870s and the late 1960s was the period of the traditional social movements whose purpose was broad and to which members were important. These movements were organized independently of the state, but this did not exclude even strong and long-lasting cooperation with, and financial support from, the state. At the same time, the social movements maintained close links to people living in the periphery of the country. The movements were crucial in the political and cultural transformation of the country, i.e., the nation-building and democratization processes (Rokkan 1970; Østerud et al. 2003).

During the 1960s, traditional movements' membership base declined, heralding changes in the way organizations operated. Traditional movements were also complemented with and challenged by organizations promoting leisure and special interests. These types of organization had slowly replaced their societal interest with those of their members. The 1960s is also the decade when "new politics" entered the stage. A new generation started to question central societal goals and consensual issues like economic growth, modernization,

and technological development. Among the range of new issues, such as those advocated by the peace movement and the women's movement, environmentalism has been considered the most typical example of new politics (Dalton 1994; Poguntke 1993).

Although nature conservation organizations were established at the turn of the 20th century, the environmental *field* emerged considerably later. It is not until the late 1960s or early 1970s that the Norwegian society can count several environmental organizations. Over the years, environmentalism permeated society and changed the language of politics, even if the number of members, or supporters, never became that high compared to those within other organizational fields. It is more than interesting to note that in a country with one of the most extensive voluntary sector there is (Salamon and Sokolowski eds. 2004; Sivesind et al. 2002),³ the number of organized environmentalist has continued to be low. While many of the voluntary organizations in Norway have memberships in the 100,000s, memberships in the rather few environmental organizations varies between approximately 1,000 and 20,000 members⁴ (for details, see Grendstad et al. 2006, ch. 3).

In the beginning of the 1980s, the role of the organizations' members changed. Many voluntary organizations gave in this period less priority to organizational democracy and member participation faded. The organizational field had become significantly different from that of earlier periods, and environmental organizations established after the middle of the

³ Almost three-quarters of the general Norwegian population between 16 and 85 years of age is member of at least one voluntary organization. Each person is, on average, a member in approximately two voluntary organizations. Among members only, the average number of memberships is 2.4 (Wollebæk et al. 2000:52).

⁴ The exception is the Norwegian Mountain Touring Association, which has more than 200,000 members. However, this organization is not totally comparable with the other environmental organisations. Its activities lies on the borderline of environmentalism as its main purpose is to organize outdoor recreation activities by marking and maintaining paths and trails and to operate tourist cabins.

1980s were also different from those established earlier. We see the development of a new generation of organizations, which is more professionalized, specialized, and centralized. They adopted market logics and cooperated more frequently with market actors (Selle and Strømsnes 1998). Staff became more professional and members became less important. When these new environmental organizations ask for funding, the argument is less the need to educate members in democracy and participation than to promote a vital societal cause through project support.⁵ Some organizations also depend heavily on financial contribution from businesses and market actors. This emerging pattern is typical for a general change of the voluntary sector, but it has been most conspicuous among environmental organizations (Selle 1996; Wollebæk and Selle 2002a).

Similar to other Western countries in the 1980s, Norway experienced conservative-led governments speaking the gospel of deregulation and liberalization. The environmental movement fought, in many ways, an uphill battle. Environmental ideology lost attraction and the movement declined (Gundersen 1996). However, the one environmental issue that received increased attention during the 1980s was pollution, which should prove powerful in combination with the increasing direct-action-oriented behavior among organized environmentalists (Berntsen 1994). In addition to processes inside the organizations and an increasing need for faster and more efficient solutions, the liberal political context paved the way for a new type of organization. Basically, this is the kind of organizations that Jordan and Maloney (1997) call “protest businesses.” Compared to previous organizations, these organizations were centralized and not linked to a membership-based organizational

⁵ “Members” in new organizations are sometimes referred to as “supporters,” “followers,” “participants,” and so forth by the organizations themselves. Here we refer to all members of both old and new organizations simply as “members.”

democracy. Accordingly, activists could strike against polluting factories and companies without being hampered with the internal bureaucracy of its organizations.

In Norway, two prominent organizations were founded in this period, both of which made pollution one of their most important issues (Gundersen 1996). First, The Bellona Foundation has been the most visible of the new organizations in Norway since the eighties and has been decisive for developing new tools in the environmental battle. The organization originated from Nature and Youth in 1986 as a high profile, direct-action organization. The Bellona Foundation is not a democratic member organization, but includes approximately 1,000 supporting members. Much of the organization's incomes are grants from businesses in addition to project support from the government. Accordingly, the organization doesn't depend on a high number of supporting members (see Nilsen 1996).

Second, the Norwegian branch of Greenpeace was founded in 1988. Ten years later it merged with the Finnish and Swedish branches, and in 1999 they were joined by the Danish branch. The new Greenpeace Nordic headquarter is located in Stockholm. Thus, the Norwegian branch of the organization has been dissolved, even though Greenpeace still holds a manned office in Norway. Greenpeace never became a strong organization in Norway, and at the turn of the century, it had only 200 supporting members (in 1998 and 1999 it didn't count any members at all). The Nordic organization now has about 105,000 members – approximately 68,000 members in Sweden, 19,500 in Finland, 15,000 in Denmark, and 2,500 in Norway (Greenpeace Nordic 2005). Even though the increase in Norway since 2000 is impressive, the

numbers still highlights the weak position that Greenpeace has in the country, and especially when compared to neighboring Sweden.⁶

In addition, Greenpeace is almost non-existent in the public debate in Norway. Harald Sævareid, the then campaign leader in Greenpeace Norway, described the situation in this way: “In Norway Greenpeace has a very low membership rate, praise is rare, and the impression is that the organization has very little legitimacy and respect in society” (Sævareid 1996:205, translated). Compared to Bellona, Greenpeace is also in a quite different position because it does not receive public or business funding due to its strict policy of independence (Sævareid 1996). Accordingly, the number of supporters is much more important for Greenpeace than it is for Bellona. As we shall see, this policy of independence also implies that the organization is not integrated in the state sphere to the same extent as other environmental organizations in Norway.

Some argue that the establishment of the Bellona Foundation two years prior to Greenpeace explains why Greenpeace never succeeded in Norway; that the Bellona Foundation captured most of the space for this type of organization in the country. It may be some truth in this, but we shall argue that the main explanation is to be found in how the two anomalies of Norwegian environmentalism – the state-friendly society and the local community perspective – define the opportunity structure for different types of environmental organizations. Let us take a closer look at the characteristics of the two anomalies that make Norwegian environmentalism unique.

⁶ Greenpeace is, however, in trouble in several countries. In Sweden the number of members has been reduced from a peak in 1991 when it counted 210,000 supporters, to 68,000 supporters in 2005. Also in the United States the decline in membership has been dramatic, from more than 1,8 million in 1990 to approximately 166,000 in 2005.

AN INCLUSIVE POLITY IN A STATE-FRIENDLY SOCIETY

In the Scandinavian countries, the states not only play a dominant role. They are also open to citizen requests, inclusive, and heavily influenced by societal groups. Inversely, the citizens of these countries are rather friendly and open-minded to the state in which they live. In Norway, the relationship between the state and environmental organizations (or any type of voluntary organization) cannot be understood without what has been coined as the “state-friendly society” thesis (see Kuhnle and Selle 1990, 1992; Tranvik and Selle 2005).

The links between state and voluntary organizations have been many and dense since the growth of a separate voluntary sector from the mid-1800s (Kuhnle and Selle 1992; Selle 1999). Voluntary organizations turn to the state for cooperation, funding, and legitimacy. As a consequence, an organization that seeks influence in the political process must turn *to* the state and not *away* from it. Cooperation with the state means that the organization increases its political influence, that it increases its legitimacy among the public, and that the organization is far more likely to receive financial contributions from the state (Selle and Strømsnes 1996; Tranvik and Selle 2005). However, it does not follow that the organizations should be discouraged from criticizing the state. Within this Scandinavian system, government and authorities are – within limits, of course – open-minded to criticism of their environmental policies. It is not the position of being critical that excludes an organization from being able to cooperate closely with governmental bodies; it is more the fact that certain organization and its members are not understood to fall within the overall definition of environmentalism itself. As a consequence they are not a part of the cooperating networks between the organizations and the government.

Evidence of Norway being a state-friendly society in Europe can for example be found in the level and rank of its citizens' trust in institutions and in social capital in general (Wollebæk and Selle 2002b). The European “Beliefs in Government” study shows that trust in political institutions (i.e., the armed forces, the education system, the legal system, the police, the parliament, and the civil service) was highest in Norway both in 1982 and in 1990. Seventy-six percent and 68% of the respondents had either “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in these institutions in 1982 and 1990, respectively. Norwegians ranked second only to Ireland on trust in more private institutions (i.e., the church, the press, the trade unions, and major companies). On a generalized trust score, Norway ranked number one at both points in time (Listhaug and Wiberg 1995). More recent and comparative studies show that trust is still high despite a weak decline in some of the measures (Listhaug 2005). Much of the citizens’ trust and the organizations’ trust in the state are accumulated in the process by which next to any group can be consulted in the state’s decision-making processes.⁷ The continuous conjunction between an inclusive polity and a state-friendly society yields a special structure by which the polity and the society grow even closer in an intricate net. The relationship between the two has, up to now, been based on mutual confidence and trust.

To what extent do Norwegian environmental organizations and their members consider the state an opponent or an ally in the environmental battle? Because of public financing and government backing, state proximity might be necessary for organizational survival. The advantage for the organizations is increased influence over policy, efficiency, and legitimacy. State proximity is not the problem but the *solution* for an organization whose interest is more than sheer survival. However, because the voluntary organizations are being tied to the state,

⁷ An example of openness and state–organization linkage is found when the Ministry of Agriculture permits NOAH – for animal rights, one of the most radical environmental organizations in Norway, the opportunity to inject the organization’s view into the state’s policy on animals (Martinsen 1996).

there is also a price to pay, such as responsibility, some loss of autonomy, less ideological purity, and that the organization also has to take into account the demands from the state, not only those from its members (Olsen 1983). However, not only the environmental organizations but also the rest of the voluntary sector and the population at large see the benefits as greater than the costs.

We argue that the prevailing state-friendliness tempers the environmentalists and pulls environmental organizations closer to the state and to the political decision-making. Whatever the organization's original and deeply based opposition to government, this proximity makes opposition not only more difficult but also less desirable if the organization is looking for political influence. This open political system provides both autonomy and influence to organizations concerning their decision-making and implementation of their environmental agenda. Generally speaking, we are dealing with a political system that in a comparative perspective definitely is a "thick" rather than a "thin" democracy and that includes a specific type of state – civil society relations.⁸ We hold that moderation and state-friendliness are not something that is almost forced down the environmentalists' throats by government bodies. Rather, in a comparative perspective, the overall political culture makes environmentalists and their environmental organizations moderate from the start. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that environmentalists and the general population do not diverge much in their attitudes and behavior, neither generally, nor when it comes to environmental concerns (see Grendstad et al. 2006, ch. 5 and 6).

⁸ However, this political system might now gradually become "thinner." In Tranvik and Selle (2003), we argue that although the state is as strong as ever and has not really been weakened by sundry globalization processes, it is the representative democracy that is losing ground. The general trend in this process is that public bureaucracies and specialized professions increase their power and influence at the cost of elected bodies (see also Tranvik and Selle 2005; Østerud et al. 2003).

The state-friendly society has moved Norwegian environmental organizations closer to the state and, to some extent, made the organizations dependent on the state. However, it has also moved the state agencies closer to the organizations. Due to the close relations between the state and organizations, the state is also influenced by the organizations. With the exception of foreign aid, in no other field is that more true today than within the environmental field, which is characterized by rather professionalized and scientifically based organizations working in close cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and other governmental bodies (Bortne et al. 2002). Norwegian environmental organizations are relatively weak when defined in terms of membership numbers and local branches. Even so, the environmental organizations really matter. They have been an important part in a process that has transformed the political language and strongly influenced how governmental bodies operate within this policy field.⁹

This cohabitation between the state and civil society, deeply embedded in the political culture, is a more sophisticated relationship than one of state domination only. Without the organizations, governmental environmental policies would have been less extensive and structured differently and the role of environmental thinking a less important part of the public discourse. Within another type of state, the organizational form, ideology, and repertoire of collective action of the environmental movement would have looked different too. That is why we so strongly argue for the understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between state actors and civil society organizations. In addition, as we shall see, in the case of Norwegian environmentalism the local community perspective is of particular

⁹ The fact that the Ministry of the Environment was established already in 1972 (as the first ministry in this field in the world) implies that the environmental field was co-opted early by the state.

importance, and influence the relationship between the state and the civil society organizations.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Nation-states are geographical entities that link central and peripheral areas in a common political system of governance (Rokkan 1970; Flora et al. eds. 1999; Tranvik and Selle 2005). The center is usually found around the capital, in which the most important political, cultural, economic, and financial institutions are also located. What is referred to as the periphery often moves beyond the smaller cities and larger towns and includes rural or non-urbanized areas located at some distance from the center. The nation-state therefore demonstrates a more or less clear hierarchical structure, with central bodies and organizations at the top of the political/bureaucratic food chain of governance and with regional and local peripheral bodies subject to central control. Nation-state democracy has developed in a process by which the people are integrated into the governing of the nation by being included at the various levels in the hierarchical system (i.e., central, regional, and local). The democratic organization of the nation-state is thus the stable hierarchical order: Popular demands and interests are communicated bottom-up, whereas binding decisions are communicated top-down. In most South and Central European countries, the justification for this hierarchical order is as follows: The center represents the modern and progressive, whereas the periphery represents the more backward and primitive. For this reason, the survival of the periphery must be ensured through its subjection to the political, cultural, and economic leadership of the center. Only in this way can the periphery be brought up to the developmental level of the center.

Norwegians, however, have traditionally held a slightly different view of the relationship between center and periphery. True, Norwegians have also imagined that the farther away you get from the Oslo area, the further back in time you go. However, instead of going back to a primitive culture with no tomorrow, the voyage to the periphery has been interpreted as a journey back to the future: to a place where Norwegians found what is original and genuinely Norwegian (for instance, the idea of a glorious Viking past). One has to remember that for approximately 400 years, Norway was subject to Danish rule. In 1814, Denmark, fighting on the losing side during the Napoleon wars, ceded Norway to Sweden, and a personal union with Sweden was declared. This union lasted for more than 90 years. In 1905, Norway gained full independence as a constitutional and hereditary monarchy.

However, 500 years of foreign rule left its mark: The urban merchant and administrative centers were thought to have been contaminated by outside influence. The proper basis for a new national identity and culture was, therefore, believed to be hidden in the dimly lit rural peripheries – the parts of the country where the tentacles of alien supremacy had made little contact. This means that for Norwegians, the periphery was both primitive and modern at the same time in the sense that a reconstructed and synthesized version of periphery backwardness was catapulted to the apex of Norwegian nationhood. Consequently, preservation of the periphery has been seen as the proper defense of the nation. The idea that the periphery is the cultural cradle of the nation has been manifested in, among other things, Norway's regional and agricultural policy, the temporal migration of Norwegians during vacations and weekend to their cabins in the mountains and along the fjords, Norwegian skepticism of the European Union, anti-urbanism, and the wide acceptance of whaling and sealing. It is an intimate part of the rather hostile environment of an organization like Greenpeace.

The Norwegian hierarchical order has, as an outgrowth of this view, maintained three key features. First, the time frame has been one of historical continuity; that which is particularly Norwegian is found in the idea of the periphery's popular traditionalism rather than the center's avant-garde, elitist culture. Second, the ideological legitimacy of the periphery has led to political and economic power being spread out relatively evenly. In Norway, the area around the capital has not held the dominant political, cultural, and economic position that it has in many other European countries. Third, in a mountainous country where the center is looked at with askance and where human dwellings are few and far between, the nurturing of intermediaries like voluntary organizations and local government has been crucial for maintaining political unity. All this has had direct consequences for the structure of civil society and for the organization of state–municipal relations.

The period during which Norway was subject to Danish rule (1397 to 1814) is still tongue-in-cheek referred to as the night of 400 years. The year 1814, with the nascent country's constitution in place, symbolically marks the start of a national awakening. However, with the end of Danish rule, there was not much upon which one could build a national culture and identity. Fortunately, Norway rediscovered its heroic past of the Viking Age in which Norwegians (admittedly along with its Danish and Swedish brethren) ruled large parts of Northern Europe, and where Viking ships reached even further.¹⁰ The Viking Age is still considered with awe and holds a dominant position in Norwegian history and mythology.

¹⁰ Norwegians argue that Leiv Erikson, who preempted Columbus' discovery of America by about 500 years, was a Norwegian, whereas Icelanders argue he was one of them. Following in the Erikson tradition of exploration, Fridtjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen, and Otto Sverdrup, among others, also contributed to nation-building and cultural consciousness raising by exploring the arctic areas (see e.g., Bomann-Larsen 1995; Huntford 1993, 2002).

Being a people that, in its national myths, overslept the Renaissance makes it hard to construct a past of intellectual, cultural and civilizational progress. However, two significant survivors, or comparative advantages, of the 400-year night, one cultural and one natural, merged into a phenomenon of paramount importance. The first was the cultural one. For whatever reason, during their rule, Danish kings, compared to contemporary financial suppressors elsewhere in Europe, undertaxed the free Norwegian farmers to a degree that made them emerge buoyant when the new country gained independence. One cannot speak of an affluent class of independent farmers. Toil and moil on small farms was the daily routine. However, in the absence of a brokering nobility, free and independent farmers provided the country with a profound and almost unalterable egalitarian social foundation. In many ways, the nation had the history, culture, and geography on its side, and even under foreign rule, we can talk about a conscious awareness of Norway as a nation from the Middle Ages.

Second, the natural advantage became evident when the young nation started to compare itself with the land of its former ruler. It lifted up its eyes to the hills and wondered from where help could come. There it was. The key characteristic of Norwegian natural landscape was mountains and fjords. Mountains reach for the sky. They contain the glaciers during summer, and they permit waterfalls to cascade down its walls and into the fjords below. In contrast to the flat Danish topography, mountains had a nationalistic potential that can not be overestimated. Between the mountains of the land and the long surf-tormented shoreline of a vast ocean, the free and independent farmer, who toiled on meager soil, crystallized the image in which culture and nature coalesce.

Nina Witoszek, a Polish historian working in Norway, argues, when discussing the role of nature in Norwegian knowledge and identity in the 19th century, that Norwegian patriotism at

this time "... celebrated Nature as a source of national identity ..." and that "[s]o strong was the equation between nature and nationality that in the 'politically correct' images of Norwegianness of the time, there was little room for an urban imagery." "Urban culture, associated with extraterritorial (i.e., Danish) clergy, bureaucracy and townsfolk, was alien to the folk spirit. It was nature, not culture, that was national" (Witoszek 1997:214-215). Put simply, nature becomes culture. This is a lesser romantic view of nature than, for example, the German preservationist tradition. A consequence of this perspective is that nature does not become a museum of unused or unspoiled nature (Setreng 1996). Rather, it is a territory designed for the benefit of human beings.

The special relationship to nature and its links to national history are also noted by David Rothenberg who observes that Norway's "entire history is interwoven with the land. Norwegian national identity is nothing without nature" (Rothenberg 1995:201). This, in Rothenberg's opinion, provides one of the reasons for the Norwegian whaling. Witoszek observes that "[f]rom the organic perspective of dwellers in the land, their natural surroundings were less a romantic landscape and more a 'task-scape' ... , a dynamic man-in-nature gestalt imbued with action." And she adds that it "is not Nature seen through romantic lenses, but through pragmatic lenses, a nature that will deliver as long as we heed her and know exactly the horizon of limits to our interventions" (Witoszek 1997:220, 222).

This organic way of looking at the relationship between humans and nature is based on the way small local communities can survive in close relationship with nature. The local community perspective is based on an understanding of humans and nature that is neither purely anthropocentric nor purely ecocentric. Although human beings can be regarded as being in the center, it is more of an equalization of humans and nature that can be labeled

either “ecohumanism” (Witoszek 1997) or “humans-in-nature.” Nature is neither sacred nor divine. It is a place where people make a way of living and where they harvest and survive. Nature must not be exploited, and one must not extract resources beyond one’s carrying capacity.

The free Norwegian farmers not only bridged the independence in 1814 with the strong Norwegian nation-state in the Middle Ages, they also accorded the peripheral rural areas a high degree of legitimacy.¹¹ In a sense, independent Norwegian farmers fueled a certain anti-urban sentiment and tension in the Norwegian society. Cities have been regarded with considerable skepticism. Urban movements have never gained any kind of momentum against the rural periphery, and it is first during the 1990s that we can see the contours of a more specific urban policy. On the contrary, “opposition to central authority became a fundamental theme in Norwegian politics” (Rokkan 1967:368). Indeed, the center–periphery conflict is constituent for Norwegian politics, along with the left–right and the cultural/religious cleavages (Flora et al. eds. 1999; Rokkan 1967, 1970; Tranvik and Selle 2003; Østerud et al. 2003).

Even within a rather centralized unitary state, this means that a strong grassroot-based and politicized civil society historically has delivered extensive input into the political system from below. This has contributed to strong cross-level integration. However, when we look closer at the environmental movement, a somewhat paradoxical situation emerges. Compared to the voluntary sector in general, the environmental organizations have been more centralized and more professionalized and maintained a weaker organizational base at the local level.

¹¹ It is interesting to note that in a country “almost without farmland”, farmers are held in high regard in contrast to fishermen, who have been held in somewhat lower regard despite oceans that never have been in short supply (see also Sørensen ed. 1998).

Even so, a strong cognitive or ideological orientation toward the local level still exists, also among organized environmentalists (see Grendstad et al. 2006, ch.5).

Today, Norway has a population of 4.6 million people. It has a density of 13 people per square kilometer, which is among the lowest in Europe. Many small communities are found at the bottom of remote fjords and on remote islands. Comparatively, Norway is still more of a rural country than most European countries even if the proportion of people living in so-called urban areas is 75%. However, one should keep in mind that “urban” in a Norwegian setting does not really mean urban living similar to what you find in large part of the European continent. More than 77% of the 434 Norwegian municipalities have less than 10,000 inhabitants. Only nine municipalities have more than 50,000 inhabitants, their total population of 1.3 million inhabitants being equal to the total population of the 337 smallest municipalities.¹² The largest Norwegian cities are rather small in a European context. The capital, Oslo, has approximately 500,000 inhabitants (with an addition of 1.5 million inhabitants in the wider southeastern region). The second, third, and fourth largest cities range between 222,000 and 103,000 inhabitants.

With a large territory and a dispersed population, small and medium-size cities in Norway often find themselves as asphalt islands in a rural sea. As a consequence, city dwellers often find the traveling distance between city life and untouched nature comfortably short. Nature is found immediately outside the city limits. In addition, a late but incomplete urbanization has resulted in a high degree of city residents being able to recount close ancestors whose lives or outcomes are or have been based on farms (Grendstad et al. 2006). One consequence of the frequency of these rural roots is that, cognitively, nature’s primary basis of livelihood is

¹² These numbers have shown a remarkable stability (SSB 1975, 1985, 1995).

difficult to uproot. In addition, city dwellers often take advantage of recreation in nature and in general Norwegian voluntary organizations emphasizing recreation have high membership figures. This accounts for the alleged puzzle that city residents still can hold a genuine rural and local orientation.

We also see another important structural feature that explains the strength and continuity of the local community perspective. There is a strong tradition of local democracy where municipalities have retained autonomy from the state on important matters (even though local autonomy has decreased over the last 20 years, see Tranvik and Selle 2005). Notwithstanding being a unitary state, the Norwegian system of government must be characterized as relatively decentralized. The municipal level is providing many of the most important welfare services and local governments have traditionally held the power to adjust national welfare schemes to the local conditions. In addition, the Norwegian Municipality Act of 1837 for a long time held a special position in the collective Norwegian consciousness. In the peripheries, it established and institutionalized local self-rule through democratic elections. This self-rule was not a smokescreen where local communities simply implemented public policies that had been decided at the top of the political food chain. This local autonomy is not only important for the survival of the local community perspective but also for the survival of the state-friendly society. Government is not something distant. It remains close to the inhabitants because it actually takes care of tasks that are important for their daily life (welfare, education, social security, etc.).¹³ This political arrangement implies that a possible weakening of the local community perspective and of local government might, in the long run, have consequences also for the amount of state-friendliness.¹⁴

¹³ For an interesting discussion of the role of central and local government in these important matters, see Strandberg (2006).

¹⁴ For a discussion of this, see Grendstad et al. (2006, ch.9); Tranvik and Selle (2005).

One important consequence of the local community perspective is that animal rights have a weak position within Norwegian environmentalism. An example of this is found at the level of national policy on predators. Norwegian predators include the wolf, bear, lynx, and wolverine.¹⁵ During the summertime, many farmers in the southeastern parts of the country allow their herds of sheep to graze in unfenced parts of nature. Unsurprisingly, here the sheep are easy prey. Because the predators seriously interfere with the livelihood of farmers, it is maintained that the predators should be killed or, alternatively, especially the wolf, be firmly relocated in neighboring Sweden, where there is even more unpopulated wilderness.¹⁶ In the winter of 2001, the then minister of the environment, Siri Bjerke, ordered hunters to track down and kill 15 wolves in Norway. The justification behind this policy was to protect farmers' livelihood in nature and, furthermore, to secure local influence on the local decision-making process.¹⁷ There have been strong conflicts between central and local governmental bodies in these matters. Whereas the central level seeks to balance the interests of wildlife and local communities, local government argues for having the right to decide itself, almost always deciding to the benefit of the farmers.

Environmental organizations in Norway, except for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), have been very passive in these matters. This passivity would have been difficult to understand had it not been for the local community perspective. We cannot always decide

¹⁵ In the mid-1990s, the quantities of these animals were estimated to be 20–40 wolves, 26–55 bears, approximately 600 lynxes, and 130–190 wolverines (Knutsen et al. 1998:64; Miljøstatus 1999).

¹⁶ Wildlife preservationists argue, however, that predators should not in any way be removed from their natural habitat and that it is the responsibility of the farmers to keep their sheep away from predators, who only follow their natural instinct.

¹⁷ The hunters had a field day because they were permitted to use helicopters during the hunt. The government-authorized wolf hunt reached the airwaves of CNN and other international television channels and did not really give Norway the kind of publicity that it had anticipated.

whether this passivity stems from not really being interested in the predators or whether it is better explained by being afraid of coming into conflict with local interests. Nevertheless, there have been deeper conflicts within different governmental bodies than between the state and the environmental organizations on this question.

Another example is the defiant Norwegian views on whaling, which must be understood in both a historical and a local context.¹⁸ The support for small-scale, local-community-based whaling, and seal hunting too, is based on an organic way of life in which the local community is linked to nature through its use of the resources conferred by nature. Thus, the supportive and mainstream Norwegian opinions of whaling and sealing should be understood as protection of Norwegian local communities as well as a rational harvest of nature.¹⁹ In addition, one can also view Norwegian whaling as a symbol of independence and self-determination, as it is difficult for the central government to bypass the local government in these matters.

Whaling has also strong support in the environmental organizations, illustrating the low distance between organized environmentalists and the population at large on environmental issues in Norway (Grendstad et al. 2006, ch. 5). It is illustrative of the Norwegian environmental organizations sentiments on this issue that the then leader of Nature and Youth, an environmental youth organization strongly influenced by the “ecosophy” and “deep

¹⁸ Norwegian whaling was a large industrial business in the Antarctic area from the beginning of the 20th century. Such whaling is significantly different from whaling based in or strongly linked to local communities.

¹⁹ In our survey, about 80% of the general Norwegian population said that to prohibit the Norwegian seal and whale hunting was either “not very important” or “not important at all”. In a 1993 national public opinion poll, two in three of the Norwegian population said that the relaunch of the scientific hunt for minke whales – the Norwegian in-your-face position toward the international whaling commission as well as the international community – was a correct government decision. (Source: Public Opinion Archives at Norwegian Social Science Data Services, June 1993).

ecology”, stated that “as long as there are enough whales, we can harvest them in the same way as we harvest elk and reindeer” (Haltbrekken 1996:159, translated). Haltbrekken also willingly admitted that Nature and Youth had supported sealing at the beginning of the 1980s even though the toll for killing seals was so controversial. From an international perspective, support for whale and seal hunt is a somewhat surprising position for an organization that claims to be part of the deep ecological movement (Haltbrekken 1996:157). From a local community perspective, we do not think this position should raise any eyebrows. However, it underscores the limited space for an organization like Greenpeace in such an environment. Let’s take a closer look into the fate of Greenpeace in Norwegian environmentalism.

THE ANOMALIES AND THE FAILURE OF GREENPEACE IN NORWAY

Few Norwegians share the popular view found in other countries that whales are part of a charismatic megafauna whose intelligence is second only to that of man. To most Norwegians, whaling is simply a way of harvesting from the ocean. In addition, it provides fishermen from small coastal communities with an additional source of income, which increases their community's chances of survival in the often inhospitable arctic climate. This view makes it easier to understand why Greenpeace didn’t have much success when it tried to establish a local branch in Norway in the 1980s and 1990s. Greenpeace’s animal rights policy fell on rocky places because few Norwegians understood why animals outside of man's interests should be attributed a privileged position.

The Norwegian brand of environmentalism, contrary to environmentalism in most other countries, excludes animal rights. Christopher Rootes (2003), in his important analysis of

European environmentalism, also finds that animal rights are not always fully integrated into the overall environmental movement, especially in Britain. However, this partial absence stems mainly from the lack of coordinated action across different environmental fields. In the Norwegian case, exclusion of animal rights from environmentalism takes place on a more general and profound level. Most of the time when people think of environmentalism, animal rights are cognitively not included in the concept. Neither within the environmental organizations is protection of animals part of the definition of environmentalism, with the exception of two organizations – NOAH – for animal rights and Greenpeace (Grendstad et al. 2006).

In Norway, you can be a true environmentalist, profess environmental concern, and still support whaling and sealing. Our survey shows that animal rights, in the meaning of conflict with the local community perspective, are endorsed neither by the general population nor by organized environmentalists (Grendstad et al. 2006, ch. 7). In addition, leaders of the environmental organizations, in our interviews with them, underscored this lack of endorsement of animal rights (Strømsnes 2001). Unsurprisingly and consistent with the goals of their organizations, members of NOAH – for animal rights and, to a lesser extent, members of Greenpeace, evaluate animal rights as more important than do members of any other organization in our survey. It follows that members of NOAH and Greenpeace are less oriented toward the local communities than are members of the other organizations. In general, if there is a conflict between local communities and animal rights, both the general population and organized environmentalists, with the exception of members of the two said organizations, strongly side with the traditional interests of the local communities. As we shall see, members of these two organizations differ dramatically from other environmentalists in this respect.

Here, we will use the animal rights issue to make inroads into *the local community perspective*. We use an animal rights index based on 10 questions about animal rights and protection from our survey. This additive scale, ranging from 0 to 1, includes items related to biotechnological improvement, the use of laboratory animals, painful extermination of vermin, the use of animals for entertainment,²⁰ protection of wild animals, restrictions on industrial farming, hunting, fur trade, sealing, and whaling. Higher scores are associated with a greater commitment to local community.²¹ We use an index of trust in institutions (the environmental authorities, the political system, and political parties) as a measure of *the state-friendly society*. Higher scores are associated with a greater degree of trust (see Grendstad et al. 2006, ch. 7 and 8). In figure 1, the 12 organizations included in our survey, as well as the general population, are placed within the two anomalies. The figure shows the mean scores of the 13 groups on the two dimensions.

²⁰ To a Norwegian respondent, animals in sports and entertainment include circuses and horse racing. Because they appear more exotic and are found in other countries, cock fights, fox hunts, and bullfights, for instance, are in this context most likely not associated with sports and entertainment. There is no tradition for barbaric animal shows in Norway.

²¹ First, we distinguished between questions measuring animal protection (prevention from suffering and pain) and animal rights (which can come into conflict with the survival of local communities). With the exception of the item “banning animals in sports and entertainment,” there is a high agreement with animal rights as to prevent suffering. When animal rights are framed within a local community perspective, the level of agreement drops. We have, however, chosen to employ one single scale of animal rights and animal protection attitudes. When we cast all ten animal rights and protection items into principal component analyses in order to determine degree of dimensionality, they yielded one moderately strong first unrotated factor to which all variables contributed significantly. Eigenvalues and Cronbach’s alphas for organized environmentalists and general population were 3.9 and .82, and 3.4 and .77, respectively. For details, see Grendstad et al. (2006, ch. 7).

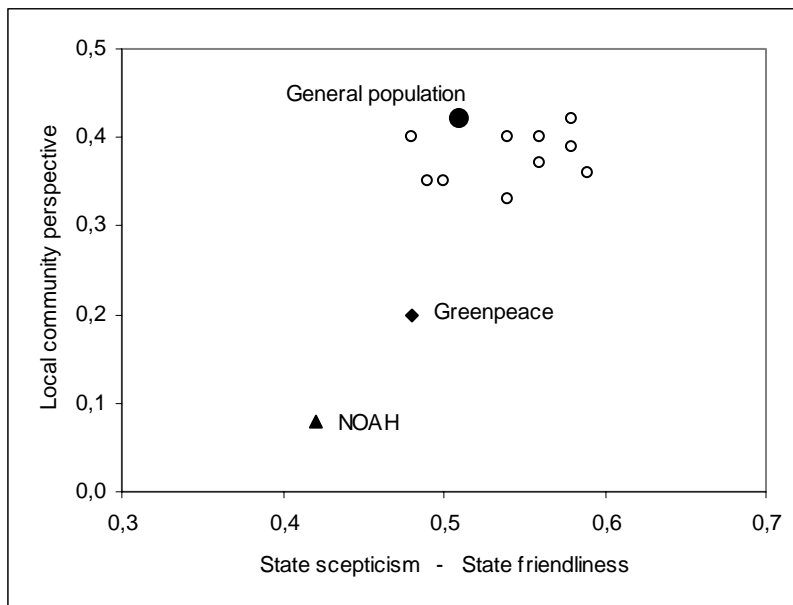


Figure 1: The local community perspective and state friendliness

The pattern shows that members of both NOAH and Greenpeace deviate significantly from all environmental organizations and the general population in Norway (marked with the solid bullet). The two organizations are found to combine a moderate state skepticism with a strong rejection of the local community perspective. It is interesting to note that the general population and the 10 groups (other than NOAH and Greenpeace) primarily show variance along the state-friendliness dimension but not the local community dimension. On the local community dimension, the 10 organizations show a high degree of consensus as well as agreement with the population at large. NOAH and Greenpeace deviate from this pattern in that they also show variance along the local community perspective.

Overall, Figure 1 underscores the deviance of Greenpeace, as well as NOAH, in Norwegian environmentalism. It shows quite clearly the political distance that they have established between themselves and the environmental mainstream, as well as the population at large. We believe that the local community perspective can account for the weak position of animal

rights in Norwegian environmentalism, and that it is a necessary element in explaining why Greenpeace never managed to establish itself as an environmental organization with any strength in Norway. The roots of the local community perspective can be found in the attempts of nation-building and the democratization process of the late 19th century, and it is deeply interlocked with the development of Norway becoming a state-friendly society, with strong support given to the value of local government.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article we have argued that the failure to graft the internationally successful environmental organization Greenpeace in Norway stems primarily from it being at odds with the local community perspective, as well as the state-friendly dimension. As a consequence of the latter, the organization never became part of the important networks of individuals that have developed through the generally extensive communications between state agencies and environmental organizations (see Bortne et al. 2001; Strømsnes 2001). In addition, Greenpeace Norway and its parent organization failed to understand or could not adapt to the fact that whaling and sealing have a long tradition in the survival of small communities, for whom harvesting from the fauna is a valuable source of income and employment. A conspicuous and important effect of the two anomalies is that Greenpeace, one of the most important international environmental organizations, finds it so hard to establish a bridgehead in Norway.

Because of the state-friendliness and the local community orientation, the environmental movement is pragmatic and moderate and does not hesitate to work closely with

governmental bodies. When the organizations are in conflict with governmental bodies, which is not at all that uncommon, it does not seem to have any long-term consequences for the integration between government and organizations. With few exceptions, this way of life resulted in a rather moderate and nonfundamental type of environmental organization. The local community orientation simply keeps this tendency in place. The local orientation is an essential part of the political culture in a political system that lacks strong subpolitical groups of any type (i.e., groups that for ideological reasons are unconnected to the government).²² Environmental organizations operate in a civil society where there is little room for an organization to present itself as an alternative to the state if the organizations nourish ambitions of achieving political influence.²³ The state provides money through financial support and legitimacy through cooperation. Without the state financial support, the survival of most voluntary organization would be jeopardized unless the organizations scaled their level of organizational activity down to a minimum. However, the organizations' proximity to the government goes beyond the organizations' simple need for money. The proximity and cooperation is of a deeper cognitive orientation.

The environmental movement has been important in Norwegian politics. This can only be understood properly by studying how voluntary organizations act in a state-friendly society. The all-encompassing and inclusive Norwegian state has close ties to the civil society and voluntary organizations. The state-friendliness among the citizens legitimizes this relationship. However, the distinction between state and civil society is blurred. There is a large area of cooperation as well as exchange of ideas, information, expertise, and resources

²² Were the Norwegian society to have such groups at all, they would most likely be found within the religious rather than within the environmental field (Wollebæk et al. 2000).

²³ With the possible exception of certain religious organizations that are part of the layman's movement, as well as some immigrant communities, there have not been strong alternative movements since the labor movement was incorporated in the 1930s (See Sivesind et al. 2002; Wollebæk et al. 2000).

between the state and the civil society. The cooperation is close and familiar on a broad level. The organizations are able to influence the state and still maintain their organizational autonomy. Those who fail to see this mutual influence also fail to see the important role of voluntary organizations in this type of society. We are talking about a rather extensive public space in which both governmental bodies and voluntary organizations operate. Indeed, we hold state-friendliness accountable for the fact that organized environmentalists, more than the general population, trust the national political system and political parties (Grendstad et al. 2006: 133-135). However, state-friendliness is more than a question of co-optation. It also simply means that organizations can exert influence on environmental policies.

Greenpeace don't fit in with the state-friendly society. If we compare Greenpeace with the Bellona Foundation, we find a lot of similarities. However, an important distinction between the two is that members are financially less important in the Bellona Foundation than in Greenpeace because of Greenpeaces strict policy of independence. This also implies that the organization is not integrated in the state sphere to the same extent as other environmental organizations in Norway.

In addition, Greenpeace face an uphill battle in Norway because their ideology runs counter to the local community perspective generally held by the inhabitants of the country. Greenpeace Norway's fight against Norwegian whaling and sealing is just one example illustrating the fact that the organization does not understand, or is unwilling to accept, that in Norway, environmentalism is important only to the extent that it does not threaten the survival of local communities.

The fate of Greenpeace Norway has sharpened our understanding of the content and implications of the local community perspective. Specifically, the local community perspective, in which culture and nature coalesce, *excludes* animal rights from Norwegian environmentalism. Greenpeace Norway's confrontational and independent approach, such as its anti-whaling campaigns, collided both with the Norwegians' state-friendliness and with the local community tradition of proud and defiant, albeit frugal, self-sufficiency. The organizers behind Greenpeace in Norway failed to gain access to the existing and rewarding political networks that, in return for cooperation, dole out funding from the government. Greenpeace International did not want to sacrifice its stance on whaling. Because they refused to swallow the whale, they did not receive any government pork. The ideology and political strategy of Greenpeace was simply anathema to the general public; they worked on the outside of the more overall political culture. The fate of Greenpeace in Norway, we think, shows the importance of the anomalies, i.e., of a specific political culture, in explaining important political outcomes.

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APPENDIX

The Survey of Environmentalism (“Miljøvernundersøkelsen”) consists of two sets of extensive postal surveys carried out in 1995. One survey was administered to a randomly drawn sample of the Norwegian population ($N = 2,000$) age 15 and above. The response rate was 52.4% ($N_{GP} = 1,023$). The other survey was administered to members of 12 Norwegian environmental organizations, the selection of which had taken place during initial research and an extensive read of documents and secondary sources, as well as several visits to the organizations. These organizations are representative of the environmental field in Norway. At the time of the surveys, their population sizes ranged between 140 members and 180,000 members. The 12 organizations are The Norwegian Mountain Touring Association (Den Norske Turistforening); The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature (Norges Naturvernforbund); Nature and Youth (Natur og Ungdom); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF – Verdens Naturfond); Norwegian Organization for Ecological Agriculture (Norsk Økologisk Landbrukslag)²⁴; The Future in Our Hands (Framtiden i våre hender); The Bellona Foundation (Miljøstiftelsen Bellona); Greenpeace Norway (Greenpeace Norge); NOAH – for animals rights (NOAH – for dyrs rettigheter); Women–Environment–Development (Kvinner og Miljø); The Environmental Home Guard (Miljøheimevernet, now called Green Living Norway (Grønn Hverdag)) and Green Warriors of Norway (Norges Miljøvernforbund). Approximately 300 respondents were randomly chosen from each organization’s member list. From the organization Women–Environment–Development, all 140 members were used. The questionnaires for both surveys were mailed in early May 1995 and the sampling process was closed late June 1995. Funding and national legislation allowed one reminder (by postcard)

²⁴ In 2001, this organization merged with two other organizations to form Oikos – økologisk landslag.

and two follow-ups to nonrespondents (cover letters with replacement questionnaires). The response rate for this survey was 59.2% ($N_{OE} = 2,088$) (Strømsnes et al. 1996).

In addition to the surveys, the authors organized a conference in November 1995 to which representatives of all 12 organizations were invited. Key personnel of the organizations candidly briefed one another, as well as the authors, on issues like membership policy, organizational model, strategy, and ideology. These proceedings (Strømsnes and Selle eds. 1996) offer valuable insights to the organizational field in addition to what could be obtained in the membership survey. In 1997, more formal interviews were conducted with the leaders of the organizations. The interviews lasted for about 90 minutes, focusing on a range of topics such as information about employees, income, expenses, membership development, work methods, organizational structure, and organizational decision-making processes. In 2000, leaders of the organizations were interviewed again (Strømsnes 2001).