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Author(s): Ørnulf Seippel

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From Mobilization to Institutionalization? The Case of Norwegian Environmentalism

Ørnulf Seippel

Institute for Social Research, Oslo, Norway

ABSTRACT

A widespread view contends that, in due course, political mobilization gives way to institutionalization; that is, vibrant movements turn into rigid hierarchic organizations. In the aftermath of the political radicalization of the 1960s and 1970s, the literature on social movements announced that this 'impasse' belonged to the past: new social movements were taken to be anti-bureaucratic and anti-hierarchical; representing a new historical subject, beyond Marxist determinism, yet retaining a certain leftist-liberalist political imprint. More recently, an almost diametrically opposed contention seems to have gained hegemony: the (new) social movements are becoming institutionalized and are being incorporated, or even co-opted, by the 'establishment'. These general statements stand in glaring contrast to the theoretical progress made within contemporary social movement theory, and accordingly, the purpose of this article is to contribute to a more nuanced approach to the phenomenon of 'institutionalization of social movements', on both a theoretical and an empirical level. Against the backdrop of a short review of literature in the field, a theoretical framework is introduced: institutionalization as an open and multidimensional process, encompassing structural, normative and cognitive elements. Thereafter, this typology is applied in order to study institutionalization as part of a wider context. In one section the Norwegian case is introduced and includes the descriptive empirical analyses: how are Norwegian environmental organizations institutionalized? Thereafter, the context of institutionalization is studied: which strategies are chosen in order to gain influence, and what are the prevalent political ideological orientations? A final section summarizes and discusses the empirical findings in light of the theoretical framework.

Ørnulf Seippel, Institute for Social Research, Munthesgt. 31, NO-0208 Oslo, Norway (e-mail. ors@isaf.no)

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1. Introduction

One of the classic themes of political sociology is the intermediation of political issues: how values or interests are formulated, mobilized upon, and occasionally, end up as established interest-organizations or political parties representing true cleavages.¹ As part of such analyses of how interests and values are politicized, there is a developmental feature that is addressed time and again, often with a negative normative undertone: the tendency to institutionalize. The paradigmatic sociological view propounds that political mobilization generally proceeds in an almost law-like fashion, through the same process: from loose

spontaneous movement-like gatherings aimed at providing or securing a (collective) good, to hierarchic, bureaucratic organizations which in time become more concerned with themselves and their leaders than an original goal. Probably the most famous of such theories is Michels's (1962) theory of the 'iron law of oligarchy'. Nevertheless, for a long time, and especially following the political radicalization of the 1960s and 1970s, the literature on social movements was concerned with an alleged new trend of social protest – the new social movements (Touraine 1981; Offe 1985; Melucci 1985) – which was taken to be anti-bureaucratic and anti-hierarchical, representing a new historical subject beyond Marxist determinism,

yet retaining a certain leftist–liberalist political imprint. The appearance of the environmental issue on the political agenda was considered as both contributing to and resulting from this new radical political climate (Eder 1990, 1993). Implicit, was a belief, or at least a hope, that the ‘iron law of oligarchy’ had, somehow, been transcended. The last few years have, however, been marked by a concern with an almost diametrically opposed contention: that the (new) social movements are becoming institutionalized, and, as carriers of environmental issues, are becoming incorporated, or even co-opted, by the ‘establishment’ (Hajer 1995; Eder 1996; Jamison 1996; Rucht et al. 1997; Giugni & Passy 1998; Meyer & Tarrow 1998). A shift is taking place which indicates, allegedly, almost the opposite of what was greeted with enthusiasm only two decades ago. Michels’s prophecy again gains in prominence: institutionalization seems inevitable.

This situation in which the understanding of the process of institutionalization is dominated by rather one-dimensional approaches stands in glaring contrast to the more general situation within contemporary social movement theory where the trend has been one of increasingly elaborate theoretical frameworks (Tarrow 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam et al. 1996; Klandermans 1997; della Porta & Diani 1999). In line with this theoretical trend, the purpose of this article is to contribute to a more nuanced approach to the phenomenon of ‘institutionalization of social movements’, both on a theoretical and empirical level.

On the one hand, the aim is to take a closer empirical look at the present institutional structure of one segment of Norwegian ‘new social movements’ – the environmental organizations – and, thereby, it is hoped, contribute to a more elaborate picture of how institutionalization proceeds, both in general and within this specific context. Aside from describing one stage in this process empirically, the intention is also to interpret institutionalization as part of a wider context: in relation to structural, cultural and organizational aspects. On the other hand, the intention is to question some of the more or less implicit theoretical assumptions often found within studies of institutionalization, and accordingly, to introduce more appropriate theoretical tools than those usually employed within this discourse. Thus, the aim is to generate a fruitful interplay between theoretical assumptions, empirical findings and theoretical explanations with

respect to the phenomenon of institutionalization of political mobilization.

In the next section, a theoretical framework is introduced: institutionalization as a historically open and three-dimensional process encompassing structural, normative and cognitive elements. Thereafter, this framework is applied to study institutionalization as part of a broader context. The third section presents the data and discusses some methodological questions. The fourth section introduces the Norwegian case and includes the first part of the descriptive empirical analyses: How are Norwegian environmental organizations institutionalized? Thereafter, the context of institutionalization is studied empirically: which strategies are chosen in order to gain influence, and what are the prevalent political ideological orientations. The final section summarizes and discusses these empirical findings in light of the theoretical framework.

2. Theories of institutionalization: formal structures, norms and cognitions

The theoretical paradigm of institutionalization

Some kind of protest takes place, spontaneously, without clear divisions of labour, simply as a reaction to something in someone’s quotidian life. Then, as time goes by, this spontaneity turns into something formal: an organization – with an explicit aim and with members – founded upon a certain division of labour, formal rules and stabile routines, backed by official control and means of sanction, with or without a firm ideological base. This is the common approach to understanding the development of collective action and social movements, and, *inter alia*, institutionalization of political mobilization. For some, this process proceeds in a linear fashion (Blumer 1946; Michels 1962), while others see it as occurring in waves or cycles (Downs 1972; Tilly 1978; Brand 1990; Weber 1993; Tarrow 1994). The best-known version of the linear approach is probably Michels’s ‘laws of oligarchy’, where the basic idea is that as the size of a collective movement grows, the leaders monopolize the power relations through a privileged access to knowledge and information, control over the means of communication within the organization, and by developing the necessary skills for mastering and running the organization. The other side of the coin is that lay participants

will neither be able to, nor be interested in, taking part in the decision-making processes in the organization, and thus, in time, will become passive members. Newer approaches allow fewer linear developments, but nonetheless, generally try to identify a certain determinant direction in the development of social movements.

An interesting, recent approach that focuses explicitly on the topic of institutionalization and social movements is presented by Rucht et al. (1997), where 'Institutionalization of movements implies the successive development and reinforcement of a movement structure' (p. 54). More specifically, institutionalization is taken to mean differentiation (division of labour and professionalization) and formalization (development of (in)formal rules). Rucht's approach has a broad, theoretical starting-point, and a historical and empirically sensitive perspective. Even so, when specifically dealing with the process of institutionalization, the attention is mostly on one dimension of the process of institutionalization: namely, structural and formal features.

However, if one steps back and asks what institutionalization basically implies, it seems clear that the concept involves, in accordance with Rucht's definition, more than structural or formal organizational features: Institutionalization hints at how something – a 'carrier' (Scott 1995) or a 'mechanism of reproduction' (Nedelmann 1995) – provides stability to processes of social interaction; how various social elements are internally integrated, and how diverse arenas of social interaction are made distinct from each other. This stability is supplied by various enabling and constraining carriers which motivate, give direction to and co-ordinate social interaction.² The fact that there are a multitude of factors involved in such processes of institutionalization of complex and contingent chains of social interaction is reflected in the current stream of social movement theories which – compared to the period marked by the contrast between 'new social movements' and 'resource mobilization' – contain a broad spectrum of perspectives and dimensions: ideology, (opportunity) structures and organizational 'mobilizing structures' (Tarrow 1994; McAdam et al. 1996; della Porta & Diani 1999). In short, theoretical approaches to social movements hold a potential for productive analyses that has not been fulfilled with respect to studies of institutionalization.

The three dimensions of institutionalization

Given this productive 'state of social movement theory', it appears paradoxical that most social movement researchers seem to interpret the process of institutionalization as synonymous with a process of structural and formal organization, whereas organizational analysts, on the other hand, have a broad perspective in which the multidimensionality of the process of institutionalization is emphasized (Powell & DiMaggio 1991; Crawford & Ostrom 1995; Scott 1995). In this study, I have found Scott's approach to the topic of institutionalization especially fruitful, and I will argue that institutionalization is provided by three kinds of 'carriers': (i) routines/regulations, (ii) norms and (iii) cognitive factors. The first dimension addresses the formal organizational and structural aspects most commonly associated with institutionalization: '... regulative processes involve the capacity to establish rules, inspect or review others' conformity to them and as necessary, manipulate sanctions – . . . – in an attempt to influence future behaviour' (Scott 1995:35). A second dimension emphasizes that 'institutions are primarily resting on a normative pillar' (p. 37) and is, in a structural-functionalist manner, concerned with what basically makes an institution possible, provides it with basic goals and purposes, and an integrated culture. A third perspective 'stresses the centrality of cognitive elements of institutions: the rules that constitute the nature of reality and the frames through which meaning is made' (p. 40). This dimension reflects, as in much social movement theory, the fact that values, knowledge and interests are framed differently within diverse contexts, at various levels, etc., and that this complexity and contingency of social constructions should be reflected in order to understand the operations of organizations and movements.

Formal structures imply that social interaction is ordered by rules and routines; there are clear expectations as to the goals and means of the organization and as to what is efficient and appropriate behaviour according to position and status within the group. This involves division of labour, formalization, control and sanctioning. Obviously, movements and organizations differ with regard to formal structures, but the common and paradigmatic assumption seems to be that as time progresses, movements develop into more formalized and structured organizations. Yet, it is important to notice that

even with regard to this one dimension, there are probably important differences between various combinations of formal sub-dimensions. With regard to environmental organizations, it is not difficult to detect features which correspond to these assumptions: there is a multitude of organizations in the field, of which some, though not necessarily the oldest, are obviously more formally structured than others. The assumption which leads the subsequent empirical analyses is that institutionalization in many – and perhaps most – cases implies formal structuring, but at the same time, we can expect to find a more complex institutional field than is often implied by the traditional theories: there are probably more dimensions involved, and it seems reasonable to expect variation with regard to how these dimensions are combined. Aside from this, it also seems sound to assume that various movements or organizations do not start out from the traditional starting-point – ‘spontaneity’ – or necessarily follow the trajectory suggested in the paradigmatic theories.

The second dimension addresses the normative foundation of an institution; some institutions have goals, norms, etc., which appear ‘unconditionally’ given and deeply internalized by its members; they motivate, co-ordinate and stabilize a specific set of interactions; these are the main vehicles for maintaining cohesion and operation. There is certainly variation in the degree to which various institutions depend on norms as carriers of social interaction, and in the kind of coherence and homogeneity such norms represent, whether alone or in combination with other institutional carriers (structures and cognitions) at various levels. Yet, in the paradigmatic approach, the assumption seems to be that the normative foundation is the most important ‘carrier’ in the initial phase of a mobilization campaign, as opposed to later, when more structural and formal elements take the lead; in other words, norms are perhaps more suited to providing motivation, than to the running co-ordination of social organizations. I will take a strong normative foundation to illustrate that institutions are somehow more vigorous than institutions with a weak normative foundation. With regard to environmental organizations, the normative dimension operates at two levels. First, the environment functions as a value simply by having a high priority: the environment is an important issue that should be given priority over other issues. Such a norm is, on a most general level, the posture that basically

justifies environmental movements. Second, there are of course other and more specific normative orientations associated with political environmentalism: for example, eco-centrism, eco-socialism, eco-feminism and nature preservation (Eckersley 1992; Barry 1999).

Emphasizing the normative dimension of social institutions hints at a classic structural-functionalistic sociology. However, more recent research has demonstrated that there are more socially constructive elements at work than the general values and norms associated with this school; both in organizational analyses (Powell & DiMaggio 1991; Sackermann 1992), in cultural analysis (Swidler 1986) and in environmental politics (Hannigan 1995; Eder 1996). The focus here is, as the chosen term indicates, upon the cognitive elements: How do we understand a phenomenon? What do we know about various phenomena? Which labels do we apply to classify our world? How do we explain events? The cognitive dimension addresses type and degree of factual knowledge concerning the environmental problems.

How such a cognitive dimension might have an institutional effect is not clear from the paradigmatic perspective, and this dimension is not as easy to include in a model as the two former ones. A possible scenario might be that (i) the cognitive level is low in the beginning (where norms are more important) but increases as time goes by, (ii) alternatively, it may be that knowledge of an issue is what provides the initial impetus and that the interest decreases with time, or (iii) perhaps more interestingly, and in accordance with Michels's traditional theories, important cognitive differences emerge within each organization as they develop.

So, of these three dimensions of the process of institutionalization, structural formalization and norms are most readily combined and placed in relation to each other, and the common way to do this is to assume that formalization and enchantment (norms) constitute a dichotomy: the more structural forms there are, the fewer norms there will be; the stronger the norms, the weaker the structural formalization. In practice however, there should also be an opening for other institutional forms: structural features combined with vigorous norms, or loosely structured movements without vigorous ideologies. Hence, an interesting aspect of this study is the search for cases that do not correspond to the ‘paradigmatic’ picture. Figure 1 indicates how political mobilization

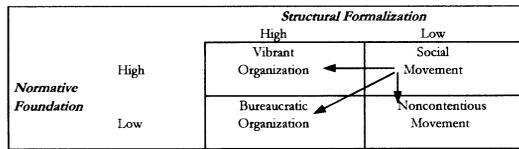


Fig. 1. On institutionalization of political environmentalism: structural-formal and normative dimensions.

might develop with respect to structural and normative institutional dimensions.

There are, as the figure shows, three ways for an institution to develop according to this model. The traditional way is to move from a loosely ordered movement to a more or less bureaucratic organization: losing in normative foundation, and gaining in formal structures. Another possibility is to retain the normative foundation, but at the same time develop organizational structures: 'vibrant organizations'. The third route is to become less normatively based without developing organizational features, to become a 'non-contentious movement'. It is also a question of how these forms are combined with the cognitive dimensions. In addition to the possibility of combining diverse elements and moving in various directions, it should not be taken as given that the 'social movement' position is the starting-point of all modern movements or organizations.

Institutionalization in context: strategies and ideologies

One of the aims of this article is to describe the current array of Norwegian environmental organizations as 'institutions', and as part of the process of 'institutionalization'. Although institutional form is in itself an interesting topic, part of the relevance of the question of institutionalization stems from the question of how institutionalization is assumed to function in a given context; as the result of something in the past and with consequences for something in the future. Hence, the intention of this article is also to study institutional types within a context and to see how institutional forms relate to other important characteristics of social movements.

Among the most notable features of the 'new social movements' was their innovative understanding of how to influence the development of modern societies and, consequently, the introduction of new modes of action repertoire and shifts in strategy. Rather than addressing

the established political system or the corresponding corporate organizations, their aim was principally to cause a shift in civil society or the basic cultural layer of modern society. To achieve this, it became of uttermost importance to visualize their standing in the public sphere, to gain attention through provocative or controversial means, to introduce alternative values and new cognitive knowledge (Jamison 1996). An underlying assumption within this new-social-movement discourse was the existence of a relationship between the institutional form of a movement and how it works to achieve its aims, or even more 'radically', that the aims are intrinsic to the action (Melucci 1996). It is obviously difficult to say in which direction these effects are working; whether institutional form leads to new modes of action or new modes of action result in institutional changes. Nonetheless, the assumption is that more formal and structural organizational forms complement more traditional strategies and behaviour, whereas more movement-like institutional forms might involve fewer conventional strategies. In spite of such hypotheses, the present approach will be relatively open because, to repeat, the idea is that there is probably a broader scope of institutional forms than those routinely addressed by studies in the field. Owing to relevant theoretical questions and available data, I have chosen to analyse this question along two dimensions: How do genuinely divergent 'environmental institutions' act? What in their surroundings do they consider important to influence?

Another characteristic of the new social movements was their ideological orientation which, at least for some, represented an attempt to establish a critical discourse beyond classic political ideologies such as Marxism and liberalism. On the one hand, they were sceptical to the capitalistic organization of the economy and positive to the state as a counterweight. On the other hand, scepticism was extended to bureaucratic organizational forms as such, and thereby also to the modern liberal-democratic welfare state. As a result of such scepticism, their new-social-movement ideology could be described as left-liberal or postmaterial, implying a certain reluctance towards established institutions such as the liberal-democratic political system, the capitalist economy and modern culture and values. The assumption is, rather straightforwardly, that the more formally organized the less radical in ideology, and, conversely, the more dynamic in form, the more

radical, ideologically speaking. Again, it is difficult to distinguish between cause and effect.

3. Data and methods

The data applied in this article stem from 'The Environmental Survey 1995' conducted by the Norwegian Research Centre in Organization and Management, which is a comprehensive survey of the members of twelve Norwegian environmental organizations (Strømsnes et al. 1996).³ The core of the survey comprised a random sample of 3,683 members from the member files of these most important environmental organizations. The response rate was 59 per cent, probably owing to the size of the questionnaire (32 pages) and its relatively specialized and demanding questions. This level of response probably also implies that the sample consists of what could be called 'core members' of the organizations who are more aware of and concerned with environmental problems than more peripheral members. It is hoped that this bias is more or less proportionally distributed between the organizations in a way that makes the comparisons between them reasonable.

Some of the questions applied in this study, such as the left-right scale (Fuchs & Klingeman 1990), are well known and have stood the test of time, while others are fairly straightforward and relatively direct questions concerning activity. Some of the variables, however, are based on evaluations of statements which, until this survey, had not previously been tested on samples that were representative of either the environmentalists or the general population. Even though most of them appear reasonably satisfactory in terms of validity, one should take this novelty of the questions seriously, and should bear the wording of various questions in mind when reading the following analyses.

It is also important to remember that the data are based on an individual level, whereas the analyses deal with an organizational level: organizational characteristics are illuminated through individual responses. Moreover, there are also obstacles concerning how to approach the topic of institutionalization – involving a process – through cross-sectional data. There are two answers to this challenge. The first is to consider the age, history and characteristics of the organizations in question and interpret the empirical findings according to available knowledge about these organizations. A second

strategy is to interpret the empirical findings according to the picture of the organizational field as a whole as it emerges from the analyses and from previous knowledge. The statistical methods to be applied are fairly simple comparisons of means (ANOVA-based significance tests). In addition, the analyses will rely on some more qualitatively constructed comparisons between the organizations involved.

4. Institutionalization of political environmentalism: empirical analyses

In this section I first introduce the Norwegian case and briefly present the environmental organizations that will be part of the analysis. Next, I examine how the various environmental organizations vary according to the three dimensions of institutionalization introduced above and discuss possible ways of classifying these organizations that make sense theoretically. Finally, I analyse these institutional characteristics and typologies as part of a wider context.

The Norwegian case

From a historical perspective, the structure of the field of Norwegian Environmental organizations is parallel to most other Western countries (Dunlap & Mertig 1992; Rucht 1994; Diani 1995). There are a few old, traditional organizations originally oriented towards nature preservation. Then, the wave of radicalization sweeping the Western world in the 'sixties-seventies' gave rise to new radical organizations consequently changing the profile of some of the already existing organizations. A final segment of environmental organizations without any apparent common characteristics are late-comers to the arena who differ from the old and radical organizations in a number of ways: topics addressed; political profiles; allies and enemies involved; strategies; ideology; and not least; organizational forms (Seippel 1998, 1999).

From the first and classic period, the most typical organization in our sample is 'The Norwegian Mountain Touring Association' (NMT) which, although never actually intended as an environmental organization, is clearly devoted to questions of nature conservation. 'The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature' (Norwegian FoE) was originally rather narrowly concerned with the preservation of nature. It was reorganized in 1962; has covered



Table 1. Norwegian environmental organizations (1995).

Name of organization (abbreviation)	Year of foundation	No. of members
The Norwegian Mountain Touring Association (NMT)	1868	182,000
The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature (Norwegian branch of Friends of the Earth: FoE)	1914/1963	28,000
World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF)	Int:1961,Norw:1970	6,000 (supportive mb)
Nature and Youth (N&U)	1967	6,000
The Future in our Hands (FIOH)	1974	16,000
Bellona	1986	3,000 (supportive mb)
Greenpeace Norway	Int:1971, Norw: 1988	1,000 (supportive mb)
NOAH - animal rights	1989	700
The Environmental National Guard (ENG)	1991	75,000 ('participants')

most environmental issues; but has for many years been riddled with a tension between 'radical environmentalism' and 'nature preservation'. It has been the largest and most important environmental organization in Norway; based on traditional members and local units. Lately, it has lost a large proportion of its members and has been challenged, according to leading newspapers, by Bellona as the most important environmental organization.

The 'Future in Our Hands' (FIOH) and 'Nature and Youth' (N&Y; formally the youth organization of FoE) are the best representatives of 'radical environmentalism'; FIOH, having placed the environmental issue into an 'alternative' and global context, and N&Y, having adopted more radical forms of action. Both organizations are organized in traditional ways (participating members, local branches, etc.).

Bellona is an offshoot of N&Y; based partly on the same action repertoire, but over time, increasingly directed towards cooperation with the establishment, especially private business corporations. The organization combines an unfamiliar mixture of radical means with collaboration with the 'elite', and has an explicit a-political ideology and supportive members rather than ordinary members. One person, Frederic Hauge, has successfully fronted the organization from the beginning. Greenpeace, and its Norwegian section, has some traits in common with Bellona: emerging (in Norway) at the same time; with supportive members; and at times with a dependency upon rather dramatic forms of action in order to attract media coverage. In Norway, they have been without a distinct personal or ideological profile, and because of the Norwegian whale policy, Greenpeace has been confronted with a certain scepticism.

NOAH works with animal rights and the Environmental National Guard (ENG) – having a very misleading name – works with consumption at the household level. NOAH, seemingly the most 'lively' movement in the sample, has been in the media because of its direct and provocative actions and opinions, and in general has mostly fairly young members. ENG is probably the least political organization in the sample; and its 'members' are not members but participants. Interestingly, ENG represents the success story of current Norwegian environmentalism in terms of numbers and is today said to have 75,000 participants, which is more than twice as many members as FoE. WWF is a Norwegian branch of the international organization (Table 1).

Institutionalization as structural formalization

The approach to 'institutionalization' in this article builds upon a three-dimensional framework, and in this section I address the structural or formal elements in the process of institutionalization of environmental movements. These elements are measured by three indicators referring to various patterns of interaction within the organizations. Formal differentiation means that the participants are assigned different roles in the organization; i.e. a kind of division of labour. In practice, this means that formal institutionalization implies the opportunity for lay members to remain as members without doing much 'organizational work'; to take part in the social networks of the organization only to a very limited extent; to operate at a distance from the leaders or employees of the organization. Thus, in this sense institutionalization implies, first, that as the organization develops, a relatively small proportion of the

Table 2. *Formal and structural differentiation within environmental organizations: elected positions, friends in organization and level of activity. Percent. Difference between organizations on all three questions: $p < 0.001$.*

	NMT	FIOH	Greenpeace	ENG	Bellona	N&Y	NOAH	FoE	WWF
Have/have had elected position ^a	4.3	4.9	1.6	1.9	0.0	19.3	5.5	10.5	6.8
Regularly meeting other members ^b	31.4	7.8	9.2	24.0	2.8	40.6	24.3	20.7	8.6
Passive member ^c	46.4	76.7	77.2	70.4	91.8	67.0	43.6	71.4	81.5
Being active at least once a month	7.9	3.9	6.0	16.7	0.9	11.5	23.2	6.3	3.9
(N)	140	206	185	103	109	181	218	304	176

^a 'Do you hold, or have you held, on elected position in the organization?' Respond categories: 'Yes' and 'No'.

^b 'Do you meet other members of the organization regularly?' Respond categories: 'Yes' and 'No'.

^c How active are you as a member/supportive member in the environmental organization? Respond categories: 'Active every day', 'Active at least once a week', 'Active at least once a month', 'Active a few times a year', 'More seldom', 'Passive member'. The table reports the 'passive' option, and the three most active levels added into one category.

members will function as elected officials; whereas a true movement will involve a higher turnover of personnel in leading positions. Secondly, formal institutionalization might imply that fewer members are actually active in organizational work at all. Thirdly, it could also mean that less time is spent together with other members of the organization. Thus, from the point of view of the members of the organizations, formal structuration could be experienced as: (i) looser formal commitments to the organization (i.e. not having elected positions); (ii) less participation in activities related to the organization and (iii) weak social networks within the organization (Table 2).

What is obvious from Table 2 is that there are noticeable differences between the organizations in the proportion of members drawn into elected positions. While at the one extreme, N&Y has as much as one-fifth of its members in elected positions, Greenpeace, ENG and Bellona at the other extreme have only between zero and 2 per cent in elected positions; most of the organizations are somewhere between 5 and 10 per cent. Concerning the everyday life of the organization – meeting other members regularly – N&Y again stands out as the most vigorous organization; followed by NMT, NOAH, ENG and FoE. With the exception of Bellona, where only 3 per cent of the members meet regularly, the remaining organizations are around 8 per cent. A most striking impression emanating from the empirical analyses is the generally large, though differing, numbers of passive members. Looking at those most active, NOAH appears to be the exception with only

close on a quarter of its members being active at least once a month. ENG stands out with a high proportion of active members; but it must be pointed out that this is a rather unpolitical kind of activity not commonly associated with social movements. N&Y also has, compared to most other organizations, a high level of activity. The rest of the organizations have a level of activity between 4 and 8 per cent; with the exception of Bellona, where less than one per cent is active 'at least once a month'.

Institutionalization as norms and cognition

The two other dimensions of 'institutionalization' that I take into consideration are often neglected in studies and discussions of institutionalization. In accordance with Scott and with regard to environmentalism, I assume that these institutional 'carriers' cover, first, a certain cognitive knowledge of environmental problems, and, secondly, a normative perception of environmental problems (whether the environment should be prioritized ahead of other issues or not).

With regard to the cognitive framing of environmental problems, the variable applied in this article is based on an index built upon five specific questions covering various aspects of environmental problems. The index reflecting the normative framing is based upon the degree of importance given to environmental problems, both in general, and in relation to politics (democratic values) and economic matters. Table 3 presents the mean values of these two indices: i.e. they indicate the level of cognitive

Table 3. *Cognitive and evaluative framing of the environment. Mean values. $p < 0.01$ on both variables.*

	NMT	FIOH	Greenpeace	ENG	Bellona	N&Y	NOAH	FoE	WWF
Cognitive Frame ^a	2.55	3.30	3.25	2.33	3.12	3.20	2.56	3.25	2.78
Evaluative Frame ^b	2.29	3.24	3.41	2.72	3.05	3.17	3.48	3.05	2.71
N (Cogn./Norm.)	146/ 132	210/ 202	188/ 181	114/ 104	118/ 111	183/ 177	224/ 209	306/ 293	180/ 174

^a The respondents are asked to say whether they consider five statements on environmental questions – greenhouse effect, ozone-layer, radioactivity, pollution from cars, chemical pollution – as definitely true, probably true, don't know. The respondents are given three point for a correct answer, two for almost correct, and one for other answers. The variables are added and reduced to a five-point normally distributed scale.

^b This index is based on three variables. First, the respondents are asked to indicate which of three statements they agree mostly to: 'Environmental concerns must be prioritized, even at the cost of economic growth', 'It is possible to combine environmental concerns and economic growth' and 'Economic growth should be prioritized, even at the cost of environmental concerns'. Moreover, they are asked to say to which degree – from disagree very much to agree very much (five-point scale and DK option) – they agree with the following statement: 'It is more important to solve the environmental problem than to secure democratic rights' Finally, the respondents were asked 'How serious do they think the environmental problems are today', respond categories spanning from 'Very serious' to 'Not serious' (four options +DK). Each of the three variables is reduced to three categories, added, and the final variable is made into a five-point variable.

and normative institutionalization of environmentalism within Norwegian environmental organizations.

With relatively high levels of cognitive framing, we find FIOH, Greenpeace and FoE; in other words, one group from each of the historical periods associated with environmentalism. Low levels of cognitive framing are found among ENG, NMT and NOAH. Amongst those with strong normative bases, we find, first and foremost, NOAH and Greenpeace, followed by FIOH. NMT, WWF and ENG. The latter are all characterized by a weak normative frame. By combining insights from the two symbolic carriers of institutionalization in a rather tentative manner, we find the results presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Organizations classified according to scores on cognitive and normative institutionalization of the environment.*

	Normative framing		
	Strong	Medium	Weak
Cognitive framing			
High	Greenpeace	FoE	
Medium	FIOH	Bellona, N&Y	WWF
Low	NOAH		NMT, ENG

Again, we are presented with a pattern of institutionalization – defined by the two cultural dimensions of the process – which reveals a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. There are both pure types with respectively high and low scores on both norms and cognition: Greenpeace on the positive side; NMT and ENG on the negative side. Furthermore, there are various combinations involved: NOAH with a strong normative position and a low cognitive framing; Bellona and N&Y with medium values on both dimensions.

Typology of institutionalization?

Having studied the three dimensions more or less in isolation, an interesting question is how these three dimensions might co-vary. While the paradigmatic approach to the topic suggests one such typology, the purpose of this article has been based on a more complex theoretical framework, to approach the topic in a more open manner than implied in this traditional perspective. Thus, an interesting question is whether something more than, or other than, the traditional view of 'movement' versus 'organization' types emerges. I have, rather tentatively, chosen to divide the organizations into three groups – high (H), medium (M) and low (L) – with respect to each of the three dimensions of institutionalization: structural, normative and cognitive. The result of this classification is presented in Table 5.⁴

Table 5 again gives clear indications of the

Table 5. Ranking of environmental organizations with respect to three dimensions of institutionalization.

Organization:	Institutional Dimensions			Form of institution
	Structural	Nominative	Cognitive	
NMT	L	L	L	Noncontentious movement (NM)
FIOH	H	H	H	Vibrant organization (VO)
Greenpeace	H	H	H	Vibrant organization (VO)
ENG	M	L	L	Noncontentious movement (NM)
Bellona	H	M	M	Bureaucratic organization (BO)
N&Y	L	M	M	Social movement (SM)
NOAH	L	H	L	Social movement (SM)
FoE	M	M	H	?????
WWF	H	L	M	Bureaucratic organization (BO)

complexity of the topic of institutionalization, and it might be suggested that we can find four general types of institutionalization among environmental organizations. On the one hand, there are the two classic cases. First, as 'bureaucratic organizations' we have WWF and Bellona with high scores on structural formalization and relatively low scores on both of the symbolic dimensions. Secondly, as 'social movements', we have NOAH and N&Y with low levels of formal structuration and high levels of normative institutionalization, but relatively little cognitive framing. On the other hand, there are some significant deviations from the classic model. First, there are two organizations – FIOH and Greenpeace – with high scores on all three dimensions; formally structured; high normative and cognitive scores: what I will call 'vibrant organizations'. It is also interesting to note that these organizations are experienced by most people as opposites: the former is a traditional radical and national organization, whereas the latter is international; without traditional members and at times appearing more like a capitalist firm than a political movement. Secondly, we have those with relatively low scores on all three dimensions; not very formally structured in the sense that the term has been defined in this study, but also without strong symbolic frames. The initial impression is that these organizations – NMT and ENG – are the least political or contentious organizations: 'noncontentious movements'. Having classified the organizations according to this scheme, one organization remains. FoE, which is commonly supposed to represent the core of Norwegian environmentalism, is, in terms of institutional features, the least distinctly environmental organization in our sample. This might reflect and explain its centrality and

popularity, as well as its difficulties in attaining a distinctive profile.

5. Institutionalization in context: modes of protest and political ideology

It is often assumed that formal organization of environmental concerns goes hand in hand with a certain narrowness, both in scope of strategic action repertoires and political-ideological orientations: The less formally organized, the more strongly oriented towards direct action; the more organized, the more keen on establishing relations with other elites, and hence, the less politically radical. As examples, one could look at how the new social movements (allegedly) attempted to cause societal change by influencing cultural identities (Melucci 1985), whereas more formally organized institutions are akin to traditional interest organizations in influencing through direct links to public authorities or commercial business. This section focuses on the relationships between institutionalization and (i) modes of action and (ii) political ideology.

I approach the first topic by way of two questions, wherein the first addresses how one 'protests' politically; through demonstrations, petitions/boycotts, giving money or through writing to newspapers.

With respect to taking part in demonstrations – direct action – N&Y and NOAH (the two 'social movements') are by far the most active organizations, and Greenpeace (a 'vibrant organization') appears in an intermediate position. The rest of the organizations have fairly low scores on this variable; that is, their members, especially within the 'bureaucratic organizations', very seldom take part in these

Table 6. Scores (mean values) on four dimensions of 'repertoires of political action'^a.

	Demonstration	Signing, boycott	Giving money	Writing in newspaper
NMT (NM)	1.02	1.31	1.48	1.07
FIOH (EO)	1.05	1.67	1.99	1.13
Greenpeace (EO)	1.11	1.75	1.78	1.21
ENG (NM)	1.02	1.57	1.42	1.09
Bellona (BO)	1.03	1.56	2.05	1.10
Nature & Youth (SM)	1.40	1.86	1.61	1.25
NOAH (animal rights) (SM)	1.34	2.35	1.98	1.47
FoE (??)	1.07	1.70	1.84	1.16
WWF (BO)	1.01	1.43	2.09	1.07
Mean	1.14	1.77	1.86	1.20

^a The respondents are asked what kind of political actions and participation they have participated in during the past three years. There are three response categories to each alternative 'Never', '1–2 times', '3 times or more' and the means are reported. The first category in the Table is based on two questions – reflecting normal demonstrations and illegal demonstrations – which is added and then divided by two to keep to the same scale as the other forms of action.

NM = Noncontentious Movement, EO = Enchanted Organization, BO = Bureaucratic Organizations, SM = Social Movement. $p < 0.000$ for all forms of action

kinds of activities. A more indirect or restricted form of political protest is signing petitions or boycotting. The same organizations (the 'social movements') appear to be most active, followed by Greenpeace (the 'vibrant organization'). Trying to influence the political agenda via newspapers again shows a pattern similar to the direct protest events: 'Social movements' appear ahead of 'vibrant organizations'. The exception is in 'giving money', which reveals a pattern that is almost the inverse: WWF and Bellona ('bureaucratic organizations') have the highest scores. In sum, the results seem to concur with the typology of organizations developed above: N&Y & NOAH ('social movements') have the highest scores for direct actions, Bellona and WWF ('bureaucratic organizations') donate money, while Greenpeace as the 'vibrant organization', is more direct in its action than all but the 'the social movements'.

When it comes to the second question, (importance attached to various instruments regarding their influence), these are categorized into three groups. The first question concerns influencing public authorities, either through lobbying or by taking part in public bodies. The second instrument simply has attaining media coverage as its goal. The third device represents demonstrations, both legal and illegal.

Again, we get a picture, which for the most part, reflects the above typology: WWF and Bellona ('bureaucratic organizations') joined by

FIOH and FoE are the most vigorous in influencing the public authorities, N&Y and NOAH ('social movements'), together with Greenpeace (a 'vibrant organization') prioritize demonstrations. NOAH, ENG and N&Y assign highest value to asserting influence through the media.

As with action repertoires and strategies for influence, it is difficult to decide whether differences in political ideologies are caused by, or cause, institutional characteristics. There is, nonetheless, an implicit assumption in much social movement literature that the more institutionalized an organization is, the less politically radical it is. In this analysis, I have chosen to examine how members of the organizations place themselves according to rather traditional political value-dimensions, and I have taken Kitschelt's (1994, 1995) analyses of the political landscape of late modern society as constituted along two main lines (a left–right scale and a libertarian–authoritarian scale)⁵ as my starting-point. In this way, we will get a direct indication of the political positioning of our environmental organizations within a political space. The results are presented in Fig. 2.

These findings support the previous analyses, and there appears to be a relationship between institutional form and political ideology. The two 'social movements' (N&Y and NOAH) are clearly left–liberal, as are the two

Table 7. Scores (mean values) on three dimensions of 'attitudes toward policy instruments'; $p < 0.000$ on all three variables^a.

	Influencing public authorities	Influencing through media	Legal and illegal demonstrations
NMT (NM)	3.56	3.43	3.17
FIOH (EO)	3.68	3.44	3.45
Greenpeace (EO)	3.49	3.18	3.51
ENG (NM)	3.44	3.54	3.24
Bellona (BO)	3.64	3.17	3.48
Nature & Youth (SM)	3.41	3.47	3.54
NOAH (animal rights) (SM)	3.57	3.60	3.68
FoE (??)	3.69	3.39	3.40
WWF (BO)	3.69	3.52	3.33
Mean			

^a The respondents are asked to say how important they consider various political instruments are for their organization; answers for each instrument spanning from 'Very important' to 'Not important' (four options, no DK).

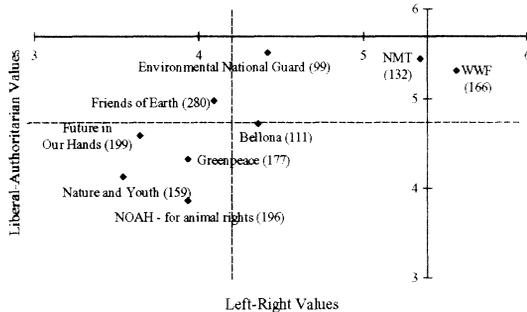


Fig. 2. Political values in the environmental organizations. The unbroken lines are the mean values of these two values in the population; the broken lines are the mean values of these two values among all members of the environmental organizations. N in parentheses.

'vibrant organizations' (FIOH and Greenpeace). At the opposite pole we find that WWF lies furthest to the right and is second in authoritarianism only to ENG. Bellona (the other 'bureaucratic organization') is also to be found in the right-authoritarian quadrante, along with the two 'noncontentious movements'. FoE's idiosyncrasy – i.e. lack of specific contours – is confirmed by the fact that it is the only organization in the left-authoritarian corner, but at the same time, the organization closest to the ideological centre of the movement population. As a final caveat, it is clear that this interpretation of political ideology orientation is relative to the environmental organizations; with the exception of WWF, all environmental organizations are found within the left-liberal section of the general population.

6. Summary and discussions

The starting-point for this article was provided by theoretical queries and empirical assertions with respect to the topic of institutionalization of social movements. On the one hand, a predominant theoretical paradigm has had a tendency to, first, focus rather one-sidedly on the structural or formal features of this process, and secondly, to approach the process of institutionalization as a more or less determined – linear, cyclical, or 'waves' – process. On the other hand, empirically speaking, there has been an inclination to vacillate between the enthusiasm associated with the 'new social movements' which had, allegedly, more or less transcended the institutional constraints associated with formal organizations, and more recent verdicts proclaiming that institutionalization is in some way inevitable to all political mobilization. While recent social movement theory has produced elaborate and nuanced theoretical frameworks (Tarrow 1994; McAdam et al. 1996; Klandermans 1997; della Porta & Diani 1999), these results have not yet really made their way into studies of institutionalization of social movements. Hence, the purpose of this article has been to pave the way for more complex and nuanced analyses of the phenomenon of institutionalization of social movements. A primary goal has been to develop and apply more suitable theories. A second aim has been to use Norwegian environmental organizations as an empirical case. The empirical part of the study consists of a basic description of the contemporary institutional makeup of these environmental organizations

and of this situation as part of a larger context: institutional form related to modes of action and political-ideological orientation.

Basically, the assumption guiding this study has been that the field of institutionalization of political environmentalism, and probably also other organizational fields, contains more variation than allowed for in the predominant theoretical and empirical approaches and, accordingly, that less restrictive theories are needed to analyse institutionalization of social movements. Taking institutionalization to mean that which stabilizes social interaction, it becomes evident that 'institutional carriers' are not only formal structures in the form of controlled and sanctioned rules and routines, but also, norms and various cognitive factors that contribute to stabilizing social interaction (Powell & DiMaggio 1991; Crawford & Ostrom 1995; Scott 1995). Thus, the theoretical challenge has been to indicate how these three dimensions of institutionalization might covary, whereas the empirical analyses have been aimed at establishing which of these theoretical possibilities might actually become manifest in the real world.

Starting with formal structures, the empirical findings indicate that there are significant variations with regard to this dimension: some of the organizations are close to 'bureaucratic organizations', whereas others appear to have a form normally associated with social movements. With respect to the normative foundations of the environmental organizations, the empirical results again indicate variation. What is interesting to note is that the combination of normative and formal carriers does not merely follow standard expectations. While we found the expected cases (Bellona as a 'bureaucratic organization' with a weak normative backing and strong formal structures, N&Y as a 'social movement' with a solid normative foundation and less formal structure), we also came across, perhaps most interestingly, Greenpeace, which exhibits strong formal structures combined with vigorous normative frames: a 'vibrant organization'. With the inclusion of the cognitive dimension, a tentative typology of institutionalized movements consisting of 'bureaucratic organizations', 'social movements', 'vibrant organizations' and 'noncontentious movements' was introduced.

The analyses of the relationship between the various organizations' institutional forms and their modes of action and political ideology indicate that the organizations closest to a

'social movement' form or to the 'vibrant organizations' – both with strong normative backing – apply the less conventional means for influencing societal development. In much the same manner, we find that the political orientations of the organizations' members seem to covary with the institutional form of the organizations: the stronger the normative foundation, the more left-liberal their orientation. In sum, we find that applying a three-dimensional framework to studying the process of institutionalization of social movements reveals interesting and consequential differences between the many environmental organizations; both with regard to institutional forms in themselves and with respect to the relationships between institutional form and other aspects of organizational life.

To answer the question of why the environmental organizational field has taken the form that it has according to the above empirical results, it seems important to emphasize three problems with the paradigmatic approach to the topic. First, what is often ignored in this framework is what the phenomenon of institutionalization basically implies, as well as its multidimensionality. Secondly, one should not assume that all political mobilization necessarily follows the process implicit in such models; the process might, theoretically, start or end at any point in the theoretical model, and it might follow various trajectories. Thirdly, the paradigmatic theories underemphasize the multitude of both internal and external factors involved in institutionalization. According to recent theories on social movements, three main aspects should be taken into account: structural opportunities, cultural frames (ideology) and mobilizing structures (organization, social networks etc.). As an example, the Norwegian political opportunity structure 'already' consists of many actors, both potential allies and opposition involving environmentalists and others (political, commercial, voluntary organizations). With regard to ideology, the environmental issue itself is relatively open: there are many facets to the problems, many ways to diagnose them, many possible solutions to the various diagnoses, many ways to construct the issue socially and politically. There are also many existing ideologies – meta-frames – to which specific environmental affairs can be linked: e.g. leftism, conservatism, liberalism, religion and feminism. When it comes to the many organizational and social characteristics of social

movements, both the age of an organization, its size, its social constituency (age, gender, class, political culture) and its goals have repercussions for the development of the organization and the outcomes that it may achieve.

The purpose of this article has mainly been to introduce a theoretical typology illustrated by one empirical case. A thorough explanation of the development of various existing organizational forms is beyond its scope. Nonetheless, it seems useful, very briefly, to resort to three social mechanisms (Hedström & Swedberg 1998) that are well known from the social-movement-organization literature and which together can throw some light on the dynamics of the process of institutionalization in the field of movements and organizations. First, there is Michels's clearly appropriate theory concerning the internal structuring of organizations: the overall pattern indicates that organizations have a tendency to develop formal structures as time goes by.⁶ Second, it seems reasonable to assume that Powell and DiMaggio's (1991) isomorphic mechanism – the tendency to imitate each other – is evident; owing to common challenges and understandings of a field, there is a tendency to develop similar organizational patterns, strategies and ideologies. This is more applicable to some organizations more than others, and for some periods more than others. However, as is suggested at a more general theoretical level, the tendency for isomorphism might function in parallel with a proclivity to stand out as different (Elster 1989). With regard to social movements, Neidhardt and Rucht (1993) have argued that inherent to modernity is a propensity for differentiation which also yields social and environmental movements. Together, the mechanisms functioning in the context outlined above result in an organizational field that is shaped by (i) the iron law of oligarchy as we know it from classic sociology, (ii) Powell and DiMaggio's isomorphic tendencies and (iii) the differentiation inherent to modernity.

Finally, this study points out at least four implications for further research into the topic of institutionalization of political environmentalism or political mobilization in general. First, the theoretical work on institutional types should be continued and refined, and, secondly, the cognitive dimension, in particular, ought to be better integrated into the overall theoretical framework. Thirdly, it is important to develop research designs more appropriate for this

particular topic. Finally, institutionalization should be analysed within a specific context, comprising organizational, structural (external and internal) and cultural factors.

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Notes

¹ What is implied in a true cleavage is political mobilization comprising both structural, cultural and organizational elements (Bartolini & Mair 1990).

² Basically, this implies that it is a misunderstanding to speak of a process of institutionalization in the traditional sense: first, because there is no phase in the study of a phenomenon such as social movements that does not entail some kind of institutionalization. Second, because eventual developments do not entail more institutionalization, but rather, a shift in importance of various dimensions of institutionalization.

³ Three of these organizations have been removed from the following analyses because they are too specific to be of general interest.

⁴ Factor and cluster analyses did not yield interesting results in this case.

⁵ The two variables are constructed as follows:

The Left-Right scale:

In politics there is often talk of a conflict between the right and left. Below is a scale leading from 1 on the left side, i.e. for those standing at the very left side of politics, to 10 on the right side, i.e. for those standing at the very right side of the political spectrum. Where would you put yourself on this scale?

Political Values: Libertarian versus Authoritarian

Assertion: A problem today is that people too often complain about/question authorities

Available answers: 'Strongly disagree', 'Partly disagree', 'Both agree and disagree', 'Partly agree', 'Strongly agree' and 'Don't know'.

Assertion: 'We best take care of future generations by sticking to our customs and habits'

Available answers: 'Strongly disagree', 'Partly disagree', 'Both agree and disagree', 'Partly agree', 'Strongly agree' and 'Don't know'.

Those answering 'Don't know' are removed from the analysis and the two variables are added to one index. Correlation is 0.30, $p = 0.000$.

⁶ The exception is N&Y, which, in this context, is not a young organization, but has a system whereby membership is continuously shifting; with a few exceptions, people above 25 years of age are not allowed to take part in the activities of the organization.

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