Conceptualizing Transnational Democratic Networks:
A Case Study of World Wide Views on Biodiversity

For Earth System Governance Conference,
December 15, 2015
Submitted by Desirée Fiske
Department of Political Science
Colorado State University

Abstract
Many earth system scholars argue that the Anthropocene requires new institutional structures and processes to confront the profound planetary changes underway. Consistent with the “deliberative turn” in democratic theory, scholars highlight the importance of citizen participation and dialogue in responding to problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss. Yet, we currently lack an understanding of how the theoretical ideals of deliberative democracy might be translated into practice. I seek to contribute to this discussion through a case study of World Wide Views on Biodiversity, a transnational citizen deliberation held in 2012 on a global scale. Drawing on International Relations literature, I identify three distinct variations of transnational democracy – cosmopolitan nationalism, (liberal) global cosmopolitan democracy, and discursive democracy – and argue that each contains different assumptions about how to organize institutions and processes to achieve transnational democracy. I use these perspective explore the how the World Wide Views organizers
and participants conceptualized their democratic goals and to assess the adequacy of the institutional structures and processes to achieve those goals. Drawing on interviews, participant observation, and a review of archival materials, I find that organizers at global and national levels and participants often had different views of what transnational democracy entails and that some of the structures and processes put in place made it difficult to achieve these goals. In conclusion, I provide recommendations for the network and the pursuit of global citizen voices in international negotiations.

Introduction: The Democratic Deficit

Capacity for societies to communicate has rapidly developed in complex ways for individuals to organize and identify. Because societies have advanced our capacities to communicate, the coalition of knowledge and power opens an opportunity for global change more than ever before. Increased interactions with political reach have moved beyond the bounds of citizen accountability creating a gap known in literature as the democratic deficit. In consideration of conditions of the Anthropocene, many scholars have argued that new applications and institutions to political decision making must be considered. Facing an Anthropocene that requires reconfiguration of the ‘political,’ this paper presents an analysis of World Wide Views on Biodiversity, a transnational democratic network hosting global citizen deliberations on biological diversity issues and policies around the world on a single day.  

1 For the purposes of this paper, the concepts of (1) Anthropocene and (2) global ecological crises will be accepted as a frame accepted by the Earth Systems Governance report (Biermann et al. 2012).
The Project

Democratic theory has most recently found itself in a ‘deliberative turn.’

Extending beyond the capacity maintained by state institutions, the deliberative turn of democratic theory may be understood as necessary for conditions of democracy to move beyond the bounds of the nation-state and incorporate conditions of a globalizing world. As global governance literature recognizes nuanced abilities to govern through private and public interactions, the democratic voice of citizen input is in a shift. In response to the changing climate, democratic theorists suggest the need for greater deliberative involvement of citizen input in important and pressing global policy issues (Dryzek 2000; Held 2003; Eckersley 2004; Dryzek and Stevenson 2011). Deliberative democratic theory has found its way into International Relations discussions, as it proposes methods for transnational democracy. Theoretically grounded in democratic theory, global governance, and transnational network literature, this paper informs an analysis of WWVB with theoretical discussions of transnational democracy.

Through content analysis and interviews with six organizers in the network, I develop my study to include seven indicators and three levels of analysis to differentiate between the theories and present a clear vision of ontological positions (see Appendix 1 and 2). The individual theories differ in prescription (or lack thereof) for institutional and actor organization and response. Moreover, they differ in processes of action, development, and influence, including questions of where legitimacy and accountability are found and leveraged. The discussion to follow identifies three core
concepts of transnational democracy present in global governance literature: cosmopolitan nationalism, (liberal) global cosmopolitan democracy, and transnational discursive democracy. Results are presented to align praxis with theory. I find all three theories present in perspectives of global organizers, national organizers, and in participant responses, although differences emerged in where each theory was emphasized. Citizens, regional organizers, and global organizers represented different theoretical perspectives, but the most frequently coded theoretical perspective throughout levels of analysis was transnational discursive democracy.

I began with a brief overview of the World Wide Views on Biodiversity, explaining its complexity as an event initiated by the World Wide Views Alliance network. I follow with a review of transnational network and transnational democracy literature as it contributes to the conversation of the global democratic deficit. Theories of cosmopolitan nationalism, liberal global democracy, and transnational discursive democracy are summarized. Research methods of the project are elaborated upon before presenting results of citizen, site host manager, and global organizer perspectives within reviews of theoretical perspectives. I conclude finding transnational discursive democracy most prominent as a guiding theory for the project and initiatives of similar aspiration.
The Case: World Wide Views on Biodiversity

On September 15, 2012, World Wide Views on Biodiversity (WWVB) conducted the second global citizen deliberation event. The launch of the project was orchestrated by the Danish Board of Technology Foundation (DBTF) and garnered support through transnational connections and networking. With 34 sites spanning across six continents, the event gathered approximately 3,000 citizens from around the world to advise biological diversity negotiations during a global “Day of Deliberation.” Lay citizens were chosen to reflect the demographics within each hosting region. Citizens were considered upon age, gender, geographic zone of residence, education level, occupation, and environmental organization affiliation. With a goal to obtain at least 100 citizens for participation per region, the ideal was to have a representative demographic of the region present at deliberations. For each site, deliberations were held at tables of 5-8 citizens over the course of eight hours. Citizens voted on the four thematic sessions on topics around biodiversity issues and policies, of two to four questions each, with the option of a national or local session as a fifth. Anonymous votes were casted and uploaded to the WWVB website live. As a transnational network, WWVB collected and presented the results of the citizen deliberations at the Eleventh Conference of Parties (COP11) of the United Nations Convention on Biological

---

3 During the World Wide Views on Biodiversity project and this analysis, the Danish Board of Technology was defunded by the Danish Parliament. The Danish Board of Technology (DBT) then became the Danish Board of Technology Foundation (DBTF). Both names are used in the report according to appropriateness with the timeliness of the shift.
Diversity (CBD). The World Wide Views Alliance (WWViews)\(^4\) enhanced global citizen knowledge on biodiversity issues and provided a representative report of the *global citizen voice* in global negotiations.

The Danish Board of Technology and its ambition to host a global citizen deliberation on global warming in 2009 initiated the formation of WWViews. Hosting Danish and European citizen engagement projects (under a similar model of deliberation executed in WWViews since 1995), DBT aspired to capitalize on the opportunity of Copenhagen hosting COP15. Scaling up an instituted national and regional project, DBT organized WWViews on Global Warming in 2009 by building regional partnerships and credibility around the COP community. The WWViews on Global Warming network consisted of 50 partners of 38 countries. While the establishment of the network surrounds the initial WWViews event, the network has sustained itself through former partners retreating, new partners emerging, and committed partners returning.

Vast arrays of affiliates make up the network. For instance, WWVB sites included universities, non-profits, non-governmental organizations, government-affiliated agencies, and museums, each with different interests in engaging the project. Review of each sites' history and mission statements (as available) show interests ranging from poverty reduction and addressing environmental crises/vulnerabilities to initiatives for citizen participatory engagement in science and technology topics. Close

\(^{4}\) Throughout the analysis, World Wide Views on Biodiversity (WWVB) and World Wide Views Alliance/network (WWViews) are used in reference to two different entities: WWVB is the specific network and event around Biodiversity held in September 2012. WWViews refers to the network partners who have been involved with the project either before or since the Biodiversity event.
examination of the network reveals not particularly selective target venues within
different regions but rather self-selecting agencies and organizations willing to host the
event. Repeat partners such as the Museum of Science Boston and Saint Lucia National
Trust participated but new partners also emerged. Other former partners, such as
Russia, did not participate at all. Moving from site nodes to individuals constituting
these sites, we further see a breakdown of researchers, practitioners of deliberations,
financial and in-kind donors, and participants self-selecting to contribute to the project.
At the center, though, the Danish Board of Technology operates as the main node and
global coordinator. DBT sends frequent email updates to partners, answers specific site
questions, and provides the official acceptation to affiliate with the network and host
WWViews events. Due to the initiatives of the project, its affiliates, and coordination, I
refer to the WWViews Alliance as a transnational democratic network.

Transnational Democratic Theory and Global Governance

A rather unique phenomenon, World Wide Views on Biodiversity must first be
situated within global governance discussions. I identify WWVB as a particular
response to the democratic deficit, or the absence of citizen input in global policy
decisions. As regulatory and policy outcomes are increasingly made beyond the reach
of citizen measures for accountability, global governance scholars have begun to
address the question of the democratic deficit in the global public sphere (Dryzek 2010).
Scholars attribute the concept of transnationalism to the increasingly complex
movements beyond and between nation-state boundaries. The global economy and
accessibility of communication between global citizens has rapidly enhanced the process of globalization (Cox 1983; Rosenau 1995; Risse-Kappen 1995; Held and McGrew 2002; O’Brien and Williams 2010; Viotti and Kauppi 2010; Hay 2013).

Recognizing the increased influence of these interactions under preconceived notions of the state, scholars became interested in globalization as an altering force on state behavior (Haas 1964; Keohane and Nye 1977; Ruggie 2004). Michele Betsill (2006) traces the theoretical shift of transnationalism in three waves: functionalism (Haas 1964), transnational relations (Keohane and Nye 1977), and global governance (Keohane 2003). Global governance had become recognized as a new avenue for formal and informal social, political, and economic governance. John Ruggie (2003) cites the emergence of globalization as closely linked to the subsequent emergence of the *new global public domain*. The new global public domain is “an increasingly institutionalized transnational arena of discourse, contestation, and action concerning the production of global public goods, involving private as well as public actors” and moves beyond traditional decision-making bound-ness of the nation-state (Ruggie 2003, 504-505). Moreover, states become increasingly embedded in frameworks of sociality rather than acting as a system of powers (Ruggie 2003). In other words, as the process of globalization snowballed throughout the 20th century, an increasing amount of private decisions were made with public implications, prompting responses from the *global public domain*, unbounded by spatial or temporal restrictions and with the flexibility to move beyond state-affiliations.
Discussions of *transnational citizenship* have emerged in the literature, creating a space for the conceptualization of, what Jonathan Fox calls, the *multi-layered citizen* (Fox 2005, 175). The concept of multi-layered citizenship finds footing in cosmopolitanism and the individual’s relation to and function within the state (Fox 2005; Eckersley 2007). As national boundaries have blurred, identities have become multicultural and of multiple relations (Fox 2005). The liberal frame of basic human rights, observable cross- and trans-boundary, may be observed as a “cosmopolitan citizenship” (Fox 2005, 177). In a more traditional, neo-liberal sense, individuals may have maintained transnational citizenship through memberships with two or more states, observing access to legitimacy and accountability through national accreditation (Fox 2005).

Encountering new understandings of citizenship, therefore, highlights the *evolving role of citizens* and brings to light the *evolving role of democracy*. The evolution of transnationalism then leads us to ask what may be the most effective ways providing means for accountability as governance scales up transnationally and identities become less concrete in national bounded-ness? In practice, WWViews acts as a vessel for citizen voice in the global arena. To understand the existence of a global arena, we acknowledge the existence of transnational actors operating within and as a part of global civil society (O’Brien 2005). Within this framework, and building upon understandings of transnational relations, we can understand WWVB as a network of organizations, scientists, universities, governmental institutions, and non-profits working together to exercise democratic principles. As literature on transnationalism welcomes the place for WWVB, I identify the project as a transnational network.
Transnational Networks, Global Ecological Governance, and the Democratic Deficit

Observations of transnational interactions have propelled further inquiry into transnational actors and their collectivity via transnational networks within International Relations literature (Betsill 2006; Bexell et al. 2010). Broadly speaking, transnational actors are often accounted for as non-state affiliated actors (Ruggie 2003). The account of WWVB considers the roles of state-affiliated actors as vital to the project, though not acting particularly as representative or on behalf of a national government (Risse-Kappen 1995). I suggest WWViews operates as a transnational network, encompassing affiliates of epistemic communities and social movements (Haas 1989, Keck and Sikkink 1999, O’Brien 2000; Betsill 2006). Therefore, I refer to WWViews as a transnational democratic network.

Transnational networks have begun to organize in response to the complexity of ecological crises. While Peter Haas (1989) observes the formation of an epistemic community and its influence on Mediterranean pollution policies, Betsill and Bulkeley (2004) provide an analysis of a multi-city climate change advocacy network. The empirical studies observe the network under observation for their abilities to influence environmental policy. WWVB sought democratic legitimacy as a network. It was a strategic decision by the network to focus on environmental initiatives due to the perceived imminent need for citizen representation within international debates. Nonetheless, the focus of the project, biodiversity, speaks to the prominence and appeal of connecting globally on ecological crises. Studies, such as those aforementioned by
Haas (1989) and Betsill and Bulkeley (2004), further support the increased accounts of transnational networks forming under pretense of ecological issues.

Scholars have begun to examine the ways governance may react in institutional design to cope with problems of the environment (Bocking 2004; Bulkeley 2005; Speth and Haas 2006; Biermann and Pattberg 2012; Bulkeley et al. 2012). Moreover, as globalization transforms the ways in which the global public domain understands its relationship with the nation-state and citizenship, there have been increased discussions exploring deliberative democratic responses to ecological crises and issues of resources (Eckersley 2004; Baber and Bartlett 2005; Bäckstrand et al. 2010; Dryzek 2013). Ideals of deliberative democratic perspectives on ecological governance are in part due to the deliberative turn in democratic and critical theory (Dryzek 1990; Habermas 1992; Rawls 1997; Mouffe 2000). Within the scope of global environmental governance, therefore, the deliberative turn represents “…increased attention in environmental politics to procedural qualities such as participation, dialogue, transparency and accountability” (Bäckstrand et al. 2010, 3). Moreover, as supplemental forms of citizen representation and participation are sought to increase citizen input on matters beyond the state, global ecological scholarship calls for citizen participation as necessary feedback into the complexity of eco-socio-political debates.

The project enters into these discussions through its interest in the global democratic deficit. Simply stated, the WWViews Alliance believes that citizen input is missing from global decision-making processes. In fact, many scholars begin from this axiological standpoint, including the transnational democratic theorists discussed:
Robyn Eckersley, David Held, and John Dryzek. In relation to the scale of climate change, Dryzek and Stevenson (2011) state,

The rise of political pre-eminence of the climate change issue creates new challenges because the issue is so clearly global, and so clearly one that has eluded existing governments of all sorts, as well as existing transnational and global political processes. (Dryzek and Stevenson 2011, 1865).

Issues of this scale permeate through international affairs - from economic transactions to effects of climate change into questions of humanitarianism. Decisions on these scales are largely made beyond scope of citizen input. Furthermore, discussions of transnational democratic theory have begun to serve as ideological response to the global dilemmas presented. As a pragmatic attempt at global citizen input, or bridging the democratic deficit, World Wide Views on Biodiversity must be appropriately situated amongst prominent theories and debates of transnational democratic theory.

Transnational Democratic Theory

In efforts to understand the possible path for democratic citizen response to globalization and to place the WWVB network within a theoretical scheme, it is first necessary to identify the literature’s framing of conceptions and conditions for transnational democracy. Common threads throughout the literature include (1) acknowledgement of the democratic deficit in global politics, (2) demand for an increased role of civil society in global political decisions, and (3) avenues for increased democratic roles for civil society. I have identified three transnational democratic
theories within global governance literature: (1) cosmopolitan nationalism, (2) (liberal) global cosmopolitan democracy, and (3) transnational discursive democracy. These theories of transnational democracy are predominately developed from the work of Robyn Eckersley, David Held, and John Dryzek. While cosmopolitan nationalism (Eckersley) focuses on reforming current national institutions, global cosmopolitanism (Held) looks for global democratic reform through international institutions. Discursive democracy (Dryzek) emphasizes ideas and discourse through global interactions.

Cosmopolitan Nationalism

The cosmopolitan nationalist approach to transnational democracy accepts the platform for cosmopolitan ideals but bounds them to the institutional frame of the nation-state, albeit not exclusively (Eckersley 2007). Robyn Eckersley’s approach extends itself beyond the boundaries of states but adopts a global, cosmopolitan, ideal. The role of national institutions remains as a political vessel to the international sphere. Citizens reason through the deliberative process in conditions of reciprocity, publicity, and accountability (to constituents and other citizens, to citizens of other political systems, and to future generations) (Dryzek 2000, 17; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Eckersley 2007, 675). Eckersley’s position for civil society, therefore, influences foreign policy, legislation, and embeddness of national institutions. Furthermore, Habermasian conditions for communicative rationality and consensus are intended to appeal to national institutions (Habermas 1997; Rehg 1998; Dryzek 2000).
The concept behind Eckersley’s *Green State* (2004) foremost lays out its priority for instituting ecological ideals into the democratic state. The “green state” seeks to assert ecological responsibility in the political realm through constitutional structures. Establishing an ontological starting point, Eckersley approaches the theoretical design with emphasis in theoretical traditions of critical, ecological thought (Eckersley 2004). Building upon an immediate reaction to global ecological crises, cosmopolitan nationalism rests upon national institutions, as established, based on reliability and prioritization. Eckersley suggests capitalizing on institutions in place to address immediate concerns of social and ecological justice and based off of citizen membership of nation-states. Eckersley adapts a Habermasian approach towards consensus-building within a specified territory, pivoting on the concept of membership, as it encompasses overlapping and contesting interests (Eckersley 2007). With a cosmopolitan ideal of citizenship, Eckersley emphasizes a conception of all-affected within the jurisdictions of national institutions and furthermore represented globally. As the public sphere is observed to be in consistent interaction with national institutions, Eckersley relies on national identity to bound citizens to one another for purposes of consensus and humanitarianism.

*(Liberal) Global Cosmopolitan Democracy*

*(Liberal) global cosmopolitan democracy emerges from the liberal-institutionalist approach to democracy observed in democratic nation-states but seeks to ‘scale it up’ to accommodate the international sphere. Proponent of global cosmopolitan democracy,*
David Held supports the formation of democratic procedures to conform to a role within international institutions and institution-building (Held 2003; Held and Patomaki 2006). Similar to Eckersley, Held adopts a cosmopolitan ontology in that all those who are affected should be represented in the democratic process. Moreover, the theoretical tradition is strongly communitarian⁵ and liberal in its pursuit of justice (Rawls 1997; Goodin 2003). Recognizing cosmopolitan elements embedded in global institutions, Held believes they have not served the purpose well to date and have “… by no means generated a new deep-rooted structure of cosmopolitan accountability and regulation” (Held 2003, 172). The primary actors within Held’s theory are representative of public cosmopolitan liberal ideals, including concepts of liberty, prosperity, and individualism, devised from agreed upon notions of justice.

Held emphasizes Rawlsian ideals of public reason and ration to build the concept of justice as means to verify democratic procedures, and democratic institutions reciprocally verify justice through the belief and ability of the public to establish and constitute reason (Rawls 1999; Held 2003; Baber and Bartlett 2005). Institutions such as courts and legislative bodies that directly contribute to constitution-building are the main fora for democratic development and influence (Dryzek 2000). Institutions responsible for democratic evolution require and constitute liberal rights as means to influence the democratic processes (Dryzek 2000; Held and Patomaki 2006). In building a foundation for democracy on these agreed upon principles, higher-level institutional venues (and officials) advise the democratic process with the rationale of common good

⁵ While a theory of communitarianism maintains factions and contestations within the theory at its own right, we may generally understand communitarianism as a relationship of mutual support of and for the “community” (Bronner 1999, 41-54).
in mind. Citizen deliberation is, therefore, not a normal process of government arrangements but may effectively contribute to the democratic process through mechanisms of voting and prioritizing the pluralistic components of a democratic society (Rawls 1997; Dryzek 2000; Held and Patomaki 2006). Held offers the opportunity to increase legitimacy in international institutions, such as forums and subdivisions of the United Nations and international courts. Furthermore, legitimacy is given to particular populations affected by events or phenomena, and accountability is provided through constitutions supported by institutions and judicial processes. In consideration of the conditions of transnationalism, public reason would be demonstrated and reflected in regional and international institutions in response to legal procedures founded by public reasoning and shared ideals.

*Transnational Discursive Democracy*

John Dryzek is a proponent for a bottom-up based response to transnationalism through methods of discursive democracy (Dryzek 2000). Transnational discursive democracy theoretically bridges the critical components of Habermasian democracy, such as the relevance and significance of communicative action, with Chantal Mouffe’s discussion of agnostic pluralism (or radical democracy) (Dryzek 1990; Habermas 1992; Mouffe 2000). He gives prominence to values of inclusion and pluralism within the ideal of democracy as people come together through experiences and interactions. Similar to Habermas, Dryzek suggests public spheres remain an important venue for democratic discussions (Dryzek 2000). Dryzek, though, establishes a much more
flexible structure and expectation for democratic processes – unconstrained by institutional foundationalism and relevant in social and cultural life in forms of public action including protests to formal deliberations (Dryzek 2000). Discursive democracy is not bounded by institutions of state or identity, but rather, is founded in a communicative base of similar interests.

Civil society is therefore engaged as the venue for appropriate discursive breakdown of intersubjectivity and the generation of public opinions as outcomes of contestations (Dryzek 2000). The communicative power of citizen discourse has direct influence on the process and can inform and transform democracy as it finds appropriate, unbounded by institutional expectations (Dryzek 2000). Moreover, there are no vivid distinctions and expectations for what democracy should look like; rather, it is embraced as a continually evolving process (Mouffe 2000). Consensus, in the Habermasian prescription, is not theoretically sound as citizens’ deliberating are constantly within a paradigm of antagonism and contestation (Habermas 1992, Mouffe 2000). Instead, essential to transnational discursive democracy is its deliberative and communicative core (Dryzek 1999). The deliberative component not only fosters democratic evolution but also perpetuates democratic identity as it reaches beyond boundaries of nation-states and encompasses contesting ideals of identity (Dryzek 1999; Dryzek 2000). The process of reasoning is founded on the politics of identity, contestation, and dialogue as citizens work through differences to address social disputes, and consequently, evolving the democratic process. Civil society organizing
in forms of networks, protests, and deliberations is legitimized as it dialectically influences institutions and push for changes.

Cosmopolitan nationalism, (liberal) global cosmopolitan democracy, and transnational discursive democracy all present distinct approaches to pursue or conceptualize transformations into transnational democracy. With different values prominent – ecological justice, global liberalism, and pluralism – each pave a different path with different goals for how to readdress the limitations of state-based democracy.

The three approaches to transnational democracy are presented to inform the WWViews project. The process of analysis will be elaborated on in the following section as I present the differences amongst perspectives and shed light on the practicalities of transnational democratic exercises in lieu of the authors’ discussions.

Methods for Analysis

This study of WWVB seeks to provide a holistic overview of the network structure and ideology behind the project. I designed semi-structured interviews with the Global Coordinator of WWVB and site host managers from around the network based on previous content analysis research. I utilized available web-based content to review, open code, theoretically code, and inform the developed theoretical and pragmatic typologies (Appendices 1 and 2). Collecting data from WWViews’ documents, citizen deliberated responses, press releases, manuals, as well as information on the affiliated organizations of the network (such as mission statements, as available), results
from content analysis were coded and extrapolated to inform interview platforms with six transnational site host managers.

I began by using the three theories of transnational democracy as parameters for analysis, developing seven indicators to extract main concepts from the theories (See Appendices 1 and 2 for application). The indicators include:

(1) Ideological values – the axiological starting point of the theory;
(2) Theoretical traditions – ontological grounding and concepts theories build upon;
(3) Institutions, venues, and actors – expose questions about design;
(4) Influence – the epistemological outlines of the theory;
(5) Processes for power – indicates where legitimacy, accountability, and participation support the theory;
(6) Process of reasoning - suggests the methods used by citizens to feedback and act within a democratic process;
(7) Conditions of the public sphere – expectations for social/public relations in the democracy.

These indicators are then assessed through the three levels of analyses identified - citizen, project (site) manager, and global organizers – as correspondent with data accessibility and the practical organization of the project. After review of the network, it became apparent that these three roles were the main actors and points of perspective as citizens were the participants, project managers organized per location, and global organizers saw a grand theory and goals for the project.
As a qualitative research project, the scope of my analysis remained within and among the transnational network. The qualitative methodology used for the project was chosen as most suitable to address the research questions posed, allowing space for the flexibility and creativity necessary to conceptualize and interpret discourse in lieu of theoretical concepts of transnational democracy while narrowing my focus on the project as a specific case study. Conducting qualitative research allows for a dialectic experience with the project and organizers, fundamentally building into the theoretical understanding of the project. Through the process of research, the qualitative role evidently solidified its necessity as it led to new opportunities for content access, snowball interviewing, and networking opportunities within the WWViews network for the researcher. The following section reviews the differences and similarities between levels of analyses as perspectives and represents the theoretical orientation involved in conceptualizing an effort in global citizen deliberations.

**Theory in Praxis**

I find all three theories – cosmopolitan nationalism, liberal global democracy, and transnational discursive democracy – present within the perspectives of citizens, site host managers, and global organizers. Citizens display ecological citizenship and interest in promoting increased national policies on biodiversity. Site host managers frequently sited the communication core of the project as ability to organize. Furthermore, while global organizers aspire for an institutionalized and formally recognized process for global citizen deliberations in international negotiations there is
also recognition of the process as unfolding, evolving, and fundamentally based on the discursive input of all participants of the project. *Table 1* illustrates these perspectives:

*Table 1: Theory in Praxis, Levels of Analysis Applied to Theory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cosmopolitan Nationalism</th>
<th>Liberal Global Cosmopolitanism</th>
<th>Transnational Discursive Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>• Ecological citizenship • National policy changes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Host Managers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>• Communication core • Bottom up approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Organizers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>• Scale up to international • Formal recognition</td>
<td>• Evolving process • Reliant on discursive input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I proceed to elaborate on the outcome of these results using the theories as guiding points to integrate perspectives.

**Cosmopolitan Nationalism**

The WWVB network exhibits characteristics of cosmopolitan nationalism predominantly through the citizen level of analysis. Although the network had an international policy focus, citizens and sites identified through national or regional association. Citizen responses indicated strong support for national reforms in biodiversity policy, aligning with Robyn Eckersley’s axiological positioning in ecological thought. Global citizen participant results also strongly support enforcing existing or establishing new national and international policy agreements for further
protection of biodiversity (WWVB Results Report 2012). While 46% of global participants think “establishing new protected areas on land should have higher priority than economic aims unless these are very important,” 31% of participants believe “protected areas should have the highest priority in all circumstances” (WWVB Results Report 2012). Because citizens identified under national sites, results appear to affirm a cosmopolitan nationalist ideal with loyalty to humankind and solving global biodiversity issues.

Observations of the individual network sites show foundational interest in the initiatives of WWVB through environmental concern, as many missions address environmental initiatives – a fundamentally interesting characteristic but not of significance in results. Of the affiliated organizations, 18 (more than half) have an environmental focus. Missions include issues of sustainability, biodiversity, climate vulnerability, and environmental protection and restoration. Awareness of environmental issues around the network supports the ideology of engaging ecological consciousness. In addition, at least seven regional partners were directly affiliated with, subdivisions of, or partnering with national institutions, including South Africa, China, Palestine, India, St. Lucia, and Japan. As Eckersley’s theory suggests national institutions as the most effective tool for transnational democracy, slightly more than a fifth of the sites were affiliated with national institutions. The case of Palestine provides an interesting take on national identity as political circumstances have created difficult conditions for Palestinian national identity. Emphasizing identity, the Palestinian deliberations were supported by citizens and media.
(Liberal) Global Cosmopolitanism

David Held’s conception of transnational democracy offers a ‘scaling-up’ of liberal democracy to international institutions. (Liberal) global cosmopolitanism is mostly visible in the DBT’s design of the process. The designs of deliberations align with the (liberal) global cosmopolitan conception of deliberation through voting procedures. Citizens deliberated at tables throughout the day but were asked to vote on a set of questions after each deliberative session. The procedure has both practical and ontological implications as it suggests (1) voting as a presentation of representation and (2) representation may be accounted for through ordered values of individuals. The reasoning of procedure offers a similar take to Held’s belief in rational individuals and their ability to order values in a holistic representation of public-reason. For pragmatic reasons, the DBT developed a structure in accordance to the CBD initiatives and feasibility of presenting citizen participant results at the COP. Reflecting upon the first WWViews, global coordinator Bjørn Bedsted recalls the DBT’s reaction, “The COP is going to be here! We need to do something.” The network was established under the condition of democratic deficit in international policy-making procedures. Held identifies the problem of international institutions tackling concerns of the global population without the filtration through citizen deliberative processes. The environmental focus of WWViews was incidental to international reach. WWViews on Global Warming in 2009 was a direct response from the DBT capitalizing on the opportunity of Copenhagen hosting COP15. The link is a pragmatic result of the DBT’s initiative to ‘scale-up’ citizen deliberations.
In addition, WWVB specifically identifies as a response to the CBD’s Aichi Biodiversity Target 1 of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for making global citizens more aware of biodiversity loss (WWVB Results Report 2012). The CBD has encouraged the continual process of WWViews and invited the network back in 2020 for a follow up on citizen views (WWVB Results Report 2012, 6). As the October 31, 2012 WWVB press release reports,

The Conference of Parties (COP) encourages Parties, relevant organizations and stakeholders to support and contribute to communication initiatives, such as the World Wide Views on Biodiversity, which combine the implementation of Strategic Goals A and E regarding mainstreaming of biodiversity, participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building. (WWVB Press Release, 31 October 2012)

The CBD supported the citizen deliberations and interaction with negotiators, proposing its continued legitimacy for future COP negotiations. Utilizing the target as a catapult for recognition at COP11, WWVB found legitimacy through international institutions that it did not necessarily find in national institutes or civil society.

**Transnational Discursive Democracy**

Of the three theories of transnational democracy, the results showed strongest alignment with concepts of John Dryzek’s transnational discursive democracy, although most strongly in global and regional perspectives. Embedded in a bottom-up approach, the formation and foundation of the network may be understood in its complex and
diverse formation in civil society. As a result, the network’s ongoing work is evolving, trying new methods, and recruiting new participants to engage in the process. Methods of communication are at the foci of the project, fixing its values in the deliberative components of democratic participation. Interviews and content analysis, including internal newsletters from the DBT to site host managers, reveal the capacity of the network’s ability for organization, coordination, and outreach. Site hosts frequently cited the internal newsletters as a good resource for direction and communication. The most fruitful exercise for expanding the network’s capacity and reach was through a snowballing effect of partners, colleagues, and affiliates. Through interviews it becomes apparent organizers came on board through connections to the network or invited partners in themselves. There were discursive connections and enrollment around to expand the network. For instance, the Chinese partner was only contacted by the DBT after being connected by a friend who thought it might be of interest. While the DBT organized to help initiate support for sites with greatest need of financial support, most were left to their own capacity to find support, financial and in-kind.

The communicative core is apparent in both the snowballing efforts of the network coming together for the sake of the project to the expansion of media reports and educational materials throughout the grander public sphere besides those at the deliberation tables. Citizens reported positive feedback of the material and the information disbursed, not only for self-educational purposes but also for an educational reach beyond participants at the table. For example, Saint Lucian students used the manual for replicating side projects for youth education and outreach on
biodiversity issues. Furthermore, each host site networked regionally and transnationally to organize the Day of Deliberation. The discursive elements of networking, again, prove to be a crucial method for successful organizing. National and international institutional recognition only evolved with the bottom-up persistence of the civil society network to pursue such outlets. There was no formal avenue for support or collaboration. Rather, the organization of the network was solely dependent upon the reach of the network and its ability to extend to like-minded affiliates.

As the idea of the global consultation took form and spread into a network, the frequency of discussion and idea shifting naturally causes the process to evolve and respond to network needs. Because the network is creating its own way, it must remain adaptive and resilient to changes, limitations, and in recognition of successes. As global coordinator Björn Bedsted noted during the interview:

I think in many ways it’s a door-to-door battle. I think in many ways citizen participation comes in different forms in shapes... even if it’s written somewhere that citizens should be consulted and citizen participation should take place, it’s not guarantee that it would be done in a meaningful way. *But it has to constantly be reinvented, constantly applied* (emphasis added). People and public administrations change all the time, so it also depends on the people in the system, whether they can see the point or not. (Bedsted 2014)

There are a multitude of pushes and pulls of which may shape the network, providing though, it does not lose its main objective to raise the global citizen voice. The binding force of the network is the democratic appeal of the initiative. Although the DBT did implement a design ideal, ultimately, the project happened through the layers of voices and interests reverberating throughout the network. There is an immediate relation to
pluralistic ideals and radical democracy, as encompassed by Dryzek. WWViews continues to organize, readjusting and accommodating when necessary.

As I have shown above, perspectives about what is happening as a participant of any level during the deliberations are not agreed upon. While citizens may see national and ecological advantages to the project, site managers recognize the communicative core and execute a bottom-up approach. Global coordinators idealize the pursuit of instituted global democracy but are reflexive and dependent on the evolving, discursive process. Moreover, all three levels of analysis seem to represent and suggest evolution in the process, based on a communicative core.

**Conclusion: Lessons in Transnational Discursive Democracy**

WWViews is the first network of its kind with regards to deliberative design and scale. Raising voices of global citizens and fulfilling a democratic deficit long acknowledged in academia, the network offers a nuanced outlet for political change. The change being advocated is to constructively navigate ‘the political.’ ‘The political’ is understood in the context of Chantal Mouffe: “the ineradicable dimension of antagonism which exists in human societies” (Mouffe 2005, 119). Not one value is granted above another; rather, there are competing power dynamics always at play in discourse.

Results of the WWVB case study inform, not only future WWViews initiatives but also experiments of global citizen deliberation and democracy. Considering the role of transnational democratic networks and theoretical perspectives at play in the three
levels of analysis, it becomes clear that the organization and design input should also be incorporated within these initiatives. In the context of WWViews, adjustments could include input from all involved, representing greater reflexivity in the project. For instance, project managers could share input on how these deliberations could be beneficial in their national/regional context. The network could also embrace its communicative core as not defined by COP events, but rather as a network connected around ideals of deliberative democracy. While WWVB was a novel ideal, its influence on international negotiations is relatively limited. In other words, lessons from WWVB suggest the organizing network may be better served by welcoming input for change in structure, disconnecting from goals of institutionalization at the international level, and welcome more of a bottom-up initiative. Allow the process to evolve without expectations for international outcomes; global change can manifest at varying levels of formal and informal governance.

Lessons from the project show a core dependence on communicative action and discursive contestation and input. Although global organizers provide and present a frame to be legitimate to international negotiations, the organizing and coordination of the sites is much messier on the ground without being formally institutionalized as it interacts with the public sphere. Each site organized the public sphere in the capacity available. The WWVB experiment is relatively unconstrained by institution, and perhaps for its beneficiary as it expands beyond the bounds of a single day of deliberation. The deliberative component echoes beyond the network and beyond the table deliberations. The ambition of the project, at its center, is dependent on the
bottom-up, evolving, and discursive approach. While ecological citizenship and intentions to institute deliberations are elements of the project, it is built on the shoulders of the capacity to organize and get the process off ground.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Michele Betsill, Dr. David McIvor, and Dr. Dimitris Stevis, for all your guidance and wisdom in seeing this project succeed.

A sincere thank you to all the global partners interviewed for this project. Thank you to ECAST and WWViews Alliance for your support.

Bibliography


Cox, Robert W. “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations.” *Journal of*


Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. "Transnational advocacy networks in


Appendix 1:
*Transnational Democratic Theory Typology*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COSMOPOLITAN NATIONALISM (ECKERSLEY)</th>
<th>(LIBERAL) GLOBAL COSMOPOLITAN DEMOCRACY (HELD)</th>
<th>TRANSNATIONAL DISCURSIVE DEMOCRACY (DRYZEK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDEOLOGICAL VALUE</strong></td>
<td>- Justice</td>
<td>- Justice</td>
<td>- Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ecological Ideals</td>
<td>- Liberal Ideals</td>
<td>- Pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Humanitarianism</td>
<td>- Affectedness Principle</td>
<td>- Communicative power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Membership</td>
<td>- Legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEORETICAL TRADITION</strong></td>
<td>- Communitarian</td>
<td>- Communitarian</td>
<td>- Post-Structuralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Deliberative Democracy</td>
<td>- Critical Theory</td>
<td>- Discursive Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ecological Theory</td>
<td>- Liberalism</td>
<td>- Critical Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Deliberative Democracy</td>
<td>- Deliberative Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSITUTIONS, VENUES, ACTORS</strong></td>
<td>- Republics: Provide basic rights and constituted by institutions</td>
<td>- International Institutions: Provide protection of rights through Courts and interact with regional institutions</td>
<td>- Civil Society: Social and cultural life (inclusive of protests, networks, and deliberations) dialectically interact with institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFLUENCE</strong></td>
<td>- Foreign Policy with Cosmopolitan Justice</td>
<td>- Constitution-building</td>
<td>- Discourse in civil society: social choice theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Embedded in National Institutions</td>
<td>- Legislative</td>
<td>- Discursive shifts can influence public policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legislative</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicative power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCESSES FOR POWER</strong></td>
<td>- Communicative power</td>
<td>- Representation through elections</td>
<td>- Intersubjective communication generates public opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Administrative power</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Outcome of contestation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Consensus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCESS OF REASONING</strong></td>
<td>- Reciprocity</td>
<td>- Public reason</td>
<td>- Politics of identity and difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Publicity</td>
<td>- Public rationality</td>
<td>- Deliberative and communicative core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Accountability</td>
<td>- Democracy is pluralistic: Layered belief system</td>
<td>- Democratic evolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicative rationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONDITIONS OF A PUBLIC SPHERE</strong></td>
<td>- Interacts with National Institutions</td>
<td>- Participation by those affected</td>
<td>- Relatively unconstrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Justice determined by consensus</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Discursive impacts possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- National identity with loyalty to humankind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2:  
_Transnational Democratic Practice: World Wide Views on Biodiversity_6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEOLOGICAL VALUE</th>
<th>COSMOPOLITAN NATIONALISM</th>
<th>(LIBERAL) GLOBAL COSMOPOLITAN DEMOCRACY</th>
<th>TRANSNATIONAL DISCURSIVE DEMOCRACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missions of institutes in the network included environmentally-focused and nationally-affiliated institutes</td>
<td>Network founded to address democratic deficit of citizen recognition in international policy-making</td>
<td>Structure requirements for demographic inclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional demographic representation</td>
<td>Missions of institutes in network include citizen participation in science and technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEORETICAL TRADITION</th>
<th>Network developed around international environmental dialogue</th>
<th>Network established under tradition of deliberations</th>
<th>Network established as an ‘idea’ by the DBT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Missions of institutes in the network included environmentally-focused and nationally-affiliated institutes</td>
<td>- Practicality to establish citizen recognition on international level</td>
<td>- Expansion of previous initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Regional demographic representation</td>
<td>- Network founded to address democratic deficit of citizen recognition in international policy-making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSITUTIONS, VENUES, ACTORS</th>
<th>Missions of institutes in network include citizen participation in science and technology</th>
<th>Network established as an ‘idea’ by the DBT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some actors identify as national institutes</td>
<td>- Contribution to reaching Aichi Biodiversity Target 1 of the CBD Strategic Plan</td>
<td>- Expansion of previous initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong encouragement to use results to appeal to national policy</td>
<td>- DBT as central to network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional sites organized/regional or national identities</td>
<td>- Sites join through snowballing outreach through partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFLUENCE</th>
<th>Missions of institutes in network include citizen participation in science and technology</th>
<th>Network established as an ‘idea’ by the DBT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen support for national policy on biodiversity conservation - One case used results for city planning</td>
<td>- Official recognition from the CBD and supported to continue as an international project</td>
<td>- Material and reports dispersed to policymakers, citizens, media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some cases directly associated with national institutions</td>
<td>- Results/Material used for side projects including youth outreach and research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official recognition from the CBD and supported to continue as an international project</td>
<td>- Strong reliance on informative video and material</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Processes for Power | - Structure provided uniformity and opportunity to influence national legislation  
- Consensus not enforced | - Voting procedure by citizens  
- Quantitative, comparable results  
- Strict voting structure for presentation of representation | - Deliberative conversations (qualitative responses) not recorded  
- Design of structure critiqued for lack of qualitative results |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Process of Reasoning | - Desire for process and opinions to be reflected upon by citizens and policymakers within the political system | - Citizens reflect on deliberation, order values, and vote | - National results express differences in culture  
- Process understood to be ‘constantly reinvented’  
- Evolving |
| Conditions of a Public Sphere | - Citizens identified by nationality with loyalty to solving global biodiversity issues  
- Citizen results support for ecological value over economic | - Citizens value biodiversity loss as a global crisis  
- All-affected | - Varying reasons for individual citizen participation |