

**“Fighting for crumbs under the table”: How The Nature Conservancy attains agency
and relevance within the disorder of earth systems governance**

Dallas Blaney
PhD Candidate
Colorado State University

Presented at the 2009 Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global
Environmental Change

December 2-4

Abstract

This research asks how The Nature Conservancy reconciles the coherence of its ecoregional perspective with the incoherence of the world political system. To answer this question, I argue in favor of an analytical strategy that grounds determinations of agency and relevance upon a systematic evaluation of the axiological, ontological, and political characteristics of the entity under consideration. This approach promises to yield a thorough, sound, and parsimonious assessment of agency and relevance in earth systems governance. I conclude by drawing links between the specific concern for the issues of agency and relevance in environmental governance and broader considerations of the role of global civil society in world politics. I wish to thank the Environmental Governance Working Group, the Political Science Department, and the Graduate School at Colorado State University for their support. I also wish to thank the members of the panel on Agency In Water Governance for their time and consideration.

In 1998, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) reluctantly initiated a global effort to conserve freshwater resources. According to one observer, The Conservancy had previously avoided water issues because they were “too broad, too complex, too many other parties involved” (Horton 1999, 16). Nevertheless, TNC set out to reconfigure the scope of water resources management by expanding the time and space dimensions of decision-making responsibilities. Whereas traditional approaches prioritized proximate and short-term interests, alarm at the decline in aquatic ecosystems fueled Conservancy demands for an integrated approach designed to satisfy the long-term interests of an entire river basin or watershed. In this paper, I ask how The Nature Conservancy has reconciled the coherence of this integrated approach with the incoherence of the world political system. This analysis exposes a rift within the literature on global civil society relating to the topics of agency and relevance. After briefly outlining the dominant theoretical positions on these issues, I offer an alternative theoretical account of agency and relevance that retains the strengths of these competing theoretical perspectives and discards their weaknesses. I then test this model by returning to The Nature Conservancy’s global water conservation efforts in order to assess more accurately its agency and relevance in earth system governance. The paper concludes with reflections on the lessons learned and offers suggestions for theoretical improvement.

Why The Nature Conservancy?

In many ways, The Nature Conservancy is the very model of the modern non-governmental organization (NGO). Having started life as a small grassroots NGO, in the short span of fifty years The Conservancy has developed into one of the largest and well-respected organizations in the world. Today, The Conservancy undertakes activities at over six hundred sites spread across thirty countries and five continents. States and international institutions frequently seek out its scientific expertise and conservation know-how. As a result, The Conservancy has achieved an extraordinary degree of influence over every aspect of environmental policy processes, including agenda setting, decision-making, and policy implementation. Irrespective of its success, at its core The Conservancy remains a member organization. Its one million plus members are The Conservancy’s largest source of revenue and primary constituency; however, it also draws support from a wide range of corporate sponsors and strategic investments. In sum, the non-profit Conservancy relies on these sources to generate over one billion in annual revenue.

Its core values are a key to its success. Throughout its history, The Conservancy professed its commitment to preserving the “plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and water they need to survive” (TNC 1990, 5). Until recently, The Conservancy understood this to mean that nature possesses *intrinsic* value, which is to say that all forms of species-life and all their interrelations possess a value that is inherent, and therefore independent, of any usefulness they offer for human purposes. Every extinction event and every reduction in the richness and diversity of nature signified no less than the severing of “strands from the web of life” (Sawhill 1995, 5). To guard against such losses, The Conservancy set out to preserve and protect threatened species and their habitats. Over time, these activities developed into a broader effort to restore and maintain the integrity of entire ecosystems.

The Conservancy’s other key values developed organically from this ecocentric concern for the intrinsic value of nature. For example, this foundation informs The Conservancy’s commitment to science, which functions as its secular religion: Spinoza’s gospel of systematic natural knowledge. Spinoza argued that God is everywhere and in everything. “Indeed, since Nature’s power is nothing but the power of God, it is beyond doubt that ignorance of natural causes is the measure of our ignorance of the power of God” (Spinoza 2001, 19). Like Spinoza, The Conservancy perceives the rigor of scientific method as a means of escaping the cave of ignorance and the penumbra of misperception so that we might eventually emerge into the light of wisdom and understanding. Science therefore guides every aspect of The Conservancy’s activities, from setting priorities to making decisions to taking action and measuring results” (TNC 2009b)

No less extraordinary is The Conservancy’s non-confrontation approach to conservation problems. This commitment to cooperation applies with equal measure to governments, the private sector and local communities. For local communities, it is The Conservancy’s perspective that, “conservation can never be imposed or mandated from outside; it will always emanate from the hearts and minds of local people”(McCormick 2000, 4). In its approach to corporations, The Conservancy argues that their participation is also key to achieving its conservation goals. Of course, they also point out that corporations often “have deep pockets, and they could provide a lot of conservation funding at what would be, for them, still a low cost of doing business” (Morris 2004, 42). Its preference for a non-confrontational approach to government relations began early on: “From our first

government "co-op" in the sixties to the state land-for-conservation bond issues of the eighties and since, it was increasingly plain that only in partnership with government could we hope to achieve some of our goals" (Blair Jr. 1991, 17). This is not to suggest, however, that The Conservancy fails to appreciate the contributions of more radical and contentious approaches. After all, "The Conservancy wouldn't be as effective if there weren't other people out there making landowners and resource users uncomfortable" (Milliken, Jr. 2009, 3).

Until recently, The Conservancy relied almost exclusively on its unorthodox strategy of land acquisition as a way of putting its values into practice. Simply put, The Conservancy sought out land containing representative examples of vital ecosystems and/or rare species then set about raising the money to buy and protect the land. Whenever possible, it also bought the land bordering core or vital areas in order to create a protective buffer zone between the core and the human activities that endanger it. When buying land was not an option, The Conservancy tries to buy or negotiate conservation easements instead. Conservation easements allow private landowners to claim tax deductions and receive other forms of compensation, in return, the land owners accept restrictions on the future development potential of their land. According to The Conservancy, these strategies enabled it to save over 119 million acres and 5,000 miles of river in the fifty plus years since its founding (TNC 2009a).

Why Water?

The debate over water allocation and provision is one of the most divisive political issues of our time. All across the world, in every region, every state, every social class, in every industry and every institution, people argue over water. For many, if not most people, water is not a trivial matter. Water is fundamental to the pursuit of happiness, which consists of those things we struggle to achieve even in the face of adversity. People need reliable access to safe water resources in order to obtain an education, to raise a family, to be productive members of society, etc.. Water is also fundamental to the production of things that are instrumental to this pursuit. For example, industries require reliable water access to produce the goods that clothe us, educate us, feed us, and keep us healthy. And, water is fundamental to the integrity of natural ecosystems, of which humans are but one member of the larger natural-community. This makes human happiness covariant with the health of aquatic ecosystems. Thus, water allocation and provision issues are politically divisive

because, regardless of your vantage point, they are a key to determining our prospects for living well.

Contemporary debates over water allocation and provision all derive from a set of generally accepted empirical observations about the state of the resource. When viewed from a global perspective, it is clear that water resources are in a state of crisis. Although water covers the vast majority of the earth's surface, only a fraction of one percent of this amount is both freshwater and accessible for human use (Postel 1997, 27). The problem is that humans already appropriate one half of all accessible renewable freshwater resources, the vast majority of which we use for agricultural purposes. And these problems are growing more severe. According to one estimate, freshwater use worldwide will increase by as much as 40 percent in the next ten years, much of which must be allocated to satisfying the agricultural needs of a growing and more affluent global population (Gleick & Palaniappan 2009, 1). This means that the tension between human demands and ecosystem needs will likely grow more acute well into the foreseeable future. Given the fact that roughly one billion people already lack reliable access to safe drinking water and some five million people die each year from water related diseases, most of whom are children, the prospect of worsening water resource problems constitute a serious threat to the stability and viability of the world political system (UN 2009, 20; WHO 1996, 22).

Put simply, water allocation and provision is one those things that people feel passionately about, and for good reason. To tell someone "you cannot have the water you need" is to condemn that person to a life that is "poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes & M. Curley 1994, 76). Likewise, to deny water to an appropriate industry or natural ecosystem condemns these entities to an equally grim fate. Water is also a contested resource: decisions regarding its allocation and provision are bound up in socio-economic inequalities, power asymmetries, and other distributional factors (Mehta 2003, 556). Framing water resource problems in global terms may exacerbate these problems, since doing so means that individuals and groups will now have to advance their interests on a global stage, rather than a local or national one. Thus, calling attention to the global water crisis introduces a new set of theoretical problems; it requires us to go beyond asking general questions about the strategies and values non-state actors utilize to asking more fundamental questions about their agency and relevance within the world political system. Therefore, it is because water is an intensely personal and contested good, over which the appropriate location of authority

appears uncertain, that the issue of water allocation and provision offers a good opportunity to explore issues of agency and relevance in earth systems governance.

How has The Nature Conservancy reconciled the coherence of its global water resource strategy with the incoherence of the world political system?

By the 1990s, growing awareness of the global dimensions of natural resource problems led The Conservancy to reevaluate its strategic approach. As one observer put it, “What good does it do . . . to buy a forest unless you can protect it from acid rain? Why save a tidal marsh if it is going to be lost to rising oceans resulting from global warming? Who can worry about a piece of native tall grass prairie when we are destroying the atmosphere?” (Morine 1990, ix-x). To address these concerns, in 1992 The Conservancy commissioned management consulting firm McKinsey & Co. to study its international strategy. The study found that in its attempt to export a buy and protect strategy, The Conservancy had actually failed to permanently save anything. Rather than seek to expand its operational footprint, McKinsey recommended that The Conservancy “go deep” instead. By which, McKinsey meant The Conservancy should focus its then limited resources on developing demonstration sites, which it might then leverage to greater effect. To this end, McKinsey recommended that The Conservancy focus on improving local conservation capabilities, creating long-term funding sources, promoting public policies supportive of its conservation goals, and funding scientific research to guide conservation activities (Birchard 2005, 191-193).

With “going deep” as their new objective, TNC took on the challenge of aquatic biodiversity. After all, few things are as essential to any political, economic, social or ecosystem as water. However, to tackle this problem, The Conservancy would first have to overcome a few self-imposed constraints. First, its strategic preference for conservation through land acquisition was poorly suited for solving biodiversity problems involving large, politically fragmented, and/or highly developed river corridors and watersheds. More often than not, pristine land adjoining a river or stream is in short supply and expensive. As one Conservancy staffer put it, “there’s nothing in real estate that’s quite so appealing as water, and that’s what developers go for first” (Tanner 1988, 11). Second, it would have to place as great an emphasis on ecosystem restoration as it does on conservation. According to one study, human impacts on the hydrological environment have increased nine-fold since 1950 (Postel & Richter 2003, 199). Because many of the world’s river systems are heavily

developed and/or dammed, there are few pristine aquatic ecosystems left for the Conservancy to save. Third, The Conservancy would have to set aside its aversion of politics and confrontation if it hoped to achieve even the most modest success. Because freshwater resources are increasingly scarce, the competition to control these resources is often intense. And because water resource decisions are bound up in concerns for wealth and power, the goals of competing factions are often incommensurate. More and more, the competition to control water is a zero-sum game, which is another way of saying that The Conservancy's preference for apolitical and cooperative solutions are often difficult to achieve where water resource conflicts are concerned (Sawhill 1999, 5)

Undeterred, The Conservancy viewed freshwater resources and the aquatic biodiversity it sustains as problems that are simply too important to ignore. This was particularly true of its international work. As one observer put it, "Many people don't understand biodiversity here [in Ecuador], or even bird migrations, but where water comes from, they do" (Green 2001, 14)

Nonetheless, the challenges inherent to protecting aquatic ecosystems quickly thrust The Conservancy headlong into a paradigmatic crisis. Whereas its traditional approach focused on saving species and biotic communities by buying and thereby protecting critical habitat, the challenge of conserving freshwater ecosystems involved "managing the human uses in and around them" (Birchard 2005, 81). To meet this challenge, The Conservancy adopted a defensive compromise: it stopped promoting its ecocentric philosophy publicly in order to attain agency and relevance in the world political system (Naess 1995, 65). Whereas its previous strategy prioritized the needs of species and ecosystems, in its revised strategic plan, local communities are the priority and the key to the Conservancy's success (Sawhill 1998, 6). For The Conservancy, this change involved nothing short of adopting a new worldview. It required a view of the conservation mission that was no longer about protecting nature *from* people but *for* people (McCormick 2005, 5). Some within The Conservancy have been deeply critical of this transformational effort, calling it a clear sign of mission drift and just plain funding opportunism. According to this view, The Conservancy has never been in the business of helping people; rather, its mission and comparative strength has always been and should remain the business of conserving biodiversity (Weeks 1997, 15). Therefore, the needs and desires of local community members should have little

or no bearing on The Conservancy's mission, which is to maintain the ecological processes that sustain vital species and natural diversity.

While this paradigmatic struggle still rages, it seems for the time-being that the anthropocentric viewpoint will prevail. To crystallize this transition, in 2007 The Conservancy adopted a new organizational symbol and a new motto. The symbol shows The Conservancy's green leaves enveloping Earth, signaling the global scope of its mission and activities. The motto, "protecting nature. preserving life" marks a clear break from the former motto, "we buy land". Although the emphasis on protecting nature signals the global scope of its conservation mission, the stress on preserving life designates the object of its conservation efforts and thereby acts to reinforce The Conservancy's new instrumental conception of nature, the value of which consists in the real or potential contribution nature offers to all life but especially human life.

To put these new principles into practice, The Conservancy is endeavoring to develop new strategic partnerships with key stakeholders in order to achieve tangible results, thereby minimizing costs while maximizing returns. Partnerships are therefore the key to The Conservancy's new global conservation strategy. As one observer put it, "partnering with industries and communities that most immediately impact nature is the face of conservation in the 21st century" (Tercek 2009, 3). Through these partnerships, The Conservancy set out to demonstrate "that rivers can be managed for ecological benefit while meeting human needs, and to then export the lessons to water managers across the country and internationally" (Taylor 2000, 13). Although important, industrial partnerships have not yet emerged as a prominent focus of The Conservancy's global water resource initiative. Rather, producer related activities have so far tended to revolve around reforestation projects on agricultural lands. For example, in Brazil, The Conservancy is attempting to protect threatened watersheds by paying farmers to replant trees along riverbanks deforested for soybean and cattle production. To fund this program, The Conservancy works with water utilities in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to levy a fee on water users there. The money pays upstream farmers "\$28 per acre, per year, for keeping their riverside forests standing" (TNC 2009d). The Conservancy has leveraged its success with this Brazilian case by its water producer program to other South American countries, including Ecuador, Peru, and Columbia.

The key to this strategy is viewing community partnerships as a more critical element of its broader global water conservation effort. To achieve its goals, The Conservancy endeavors to earn the confidence and trust of local communities by developing conservation strategies from the ground up. As one Conservancy staffer put it, “When they [water managers] ask how much water do critters need, we [The Conservancy] ask how much do humans need and figure out how to meet these needs with the least amount of damage possible” (Horton 1999, 16). For The Conservancy, “the answer in addressing problems in natural rather than political scales lies in community-based conservation” (McCormick 2000, 4). By allocating the resources necessary to elicit the preferences, perceptions and values of local stakeholders, The Conservancy strives to unleash and leverage the “latent power of a community’s love of place” (McCormick 2000, 4). For example, on the Micronesian Island of Pohnpei, The Conservancy supported a two year study of local village attitudes about water resources, and, having gained the trust of local stakeholders, was able to educate villagers on the negative consequences of particular activities on local watershed. This effort led to the creation of community management committees and the training of Community Conservation Officers, developments which promise to formalize the rules and regulations for watershed management within local communities and thereby foster local participation in water management decisions (Birchard 2005, 189-191; Raynor 1998). In Belize, The Conservancy works with the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment, a local conservation organization, to enlist and train indigenous peoples to monitor water quality within the aquatic ecosystems stretching between the Maya Mountains and the coastal reef (TNC 2009c). And in China’s Yunnan Province, The Conservancy provides low-cost methane production systems to local villagers in an effort to help prevent river contamination related to deforestation (Gaetz 1999; Sawhill 1999)

Due to these experiences on the ground, The Conservancy has gained key insights that shape its scientific models and policy prescriptions. Over time, The Conservancy has developed sophisticated systems to calculate the ecological limits of hydrological alterations and low cost methods for identifying the areas of critical need in any aquatic ecosystem. It has helped develop sustainable farming practices that lead to dramatic reductions in water withdrawals and watershed contamination. The Conservancy has also modeled an adaptive six-step water management system that strives to balance human demands for water with the requirements of aquatic ecosystems. However, it is not The Conservancy’s overarching goal

to reduce political decision-making to a scientific formula. On the contrary, it explicitly recognizes that “the process of balancing competing interests is not scientific but should be informed by science” (LCAOF 1995, 32). Ultimately, “local people have to provide the leadership to protect the natural heritage of these countries, and we [The Nature Conservancy] can best advance that goal by providing these people with training, tools and resources” (Sawhill 1997, 9).

By adopting a community-based strategy informed by the natural sciences, The Conservancy has quickly built up the reputation as a global expert on issues of freshwater conservation. Over time, this reputation enabled The Conservancy to enlist other organizations, powerful states, and international institutions to its cause. For example, The Conservancy receives funding and assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for a variety of watershed-related projects in Ecuador’s Condor Biopreserve and the Panama Canal watershed. As another example of its transnational influence, in 2002 The Conservancy developed an ecoregional conservation plan that guided World Bank funding to Guatemala. In 2004, The Conservancy hosted a conference of Latin American leaders entitled “Water: Source of Life, Development and Peace”, which featured discussions on the subject of water use fees and watershed conservation (TNC 2004, 55).

Thus far, The Conservancy has emerged as a global leader in two specific areas of freshwater conservation: environmental flows and green accounting. Environmental flow describes the quantity and variability of water to sustain vital ecosystem services. Implementation may include periodic life-sustaining floods, modifications in the flow regime to support the nesting and feeding habits of migratory waterfowl, or the removal of levies and other barriers that artificially separate rivers and floodplains. In 2007, The Conservancy led a coalition of bureaucrats, scientists, and water managers from around the world in an effort to attract global attention to this importance of environmental flow. This effort led to the Brisbane Declaration, which calls on the international community to integrate considerations for environmental needs into their water management decisions (TNC 2007). Endorsed by more than 800 delegates from 57 countries, the Declaration argues that “environmental flows are necessary for healthy rivers to benefit people and nature” (TNC 2007). Green accounting or natural resources accounting is an attempt to assess the full economic value of ecosystem services in order to “change the way governments and policy makers think about nature worldwide” (TNC 2006). To achieve this goal, The Conservancy

is currently collaborating with the World Wildlife Fund and Stanford University to develop the economic tools needed to accurately assess ecosystem services (TNC 2006; Meeks 2008). By thus “recognizing that ecosystems should be protected for their intrinsic values as well as their economic values”, The Conservancy argues, it will be better positioned to “prioritize the conservation of the world’s natural systems. This, in turn, can help improve the quality of life for people throughout the world” (TNC 2006).

What do these activities contribute to our understanding of the world political system?

The State continues to dominate our imaginings of the world political system. Whether our conversations turn to the recent economic downturn or terrorism and the withering prospects for world peace, we tend to find ourselves weighing the costs and benefits of one public policy or another. For most of us, the state system continues to retain value because we perceive it as an expedient for stability and order in an anarchic world political system. For good or ill, the state and its territorial boundaries still demarcate the water’s edge of shared obligations and imaginings of collective identity (Anderson 1991; Risse 2006, 36).

What makes global environmental problems so disconcerting is that they force us to revisit our fundamental assumptions about the world political system. When we ponder problems like global climate change or the global water crisis, we are made to confront the shocking realization that states and markets are not only inexpedient for securing order and stability in the world political system but that they may be destructive of these ends. Deepening economic concerns and other systemic insecurities limit the possibilities for interstate environmental cooperation and economic globalization (Newell 2008, 22), which has thus far produced a vicious circle of worsening environmental degradation and rising insecurity. Worse still, these state and market systems have been directly implicated in the production of environmental harms; their internal dynamics tend to promote commodification, military competition, and the normalization of hierarchy and domination, all of which inflict significant environmental damage (Paterson 2000, 43-50).

The concept of a global water crisis is particularly disturbing because it exposes the failure of state and market systems to resolve what are largely domestic environmental problems. Whereas climate change, acid rain, and other environmental concerns are global because they involve environmental harms that spill beyond state boundaries, the

manifestations of most water resource problems are contained within a particular local, state, or regional area. What makes these problems global are their indirect effects on biodiversity, the frequency of water resource problems and their implications for the satisfaction of human rights, and the threat water-related complications pose to the viability of dominant political and market systems. Thus far, states and markets have either been unable or unwilling to solve these domestic problems, thereby creating the occasion for civil society actors like The Nature Conservancy to play a more prominent role in matters of global water governance.

What this change signifies for the world political system remains an open question. One particular point of concern relates to the nature of agency and relevancy in earth systems governance. Given the peculiar nature of these transnational non-state actors, how should we assess agency and relevance in the contemporary context? We might begin by asking what, if anything, makes these non-state actors distinct? Do they, for example, act in accordance with their own volition or are their activities constrained or determined by external forces? If we determine that these organizations possess agency, precisely what are they the agents of? Furthermore, by what criterion can we assess relevance? Are these transnational non-state actors only relevant when their activities influence institutions or the configuration of the world political system? Or, alternatively, do they attain relevance when they advance some particular objective? By what means do they pursue their objectives and which of these means has proved most effective to enhancing their relevance?

What are the dominant theoretical positions on global civil society and how do they address the topics of agency and relevance?

Thus far, academic interest in issues of agency and relevance has coalesced around the concept of global civil society. Within the literature, the concept of global civil society (GCS) operates both as a measuring stick and a lightning rod. As a measuring stick, GCS gives scholars a conceptual means of evaluating the extent with which individuals and groups act “against the depredations of the self-regulating markets of global neo-liberalism as well as the states that organize the political economy in which these markets function” (Lipschutz 2007, 304). In other words, GCS provides a conceptual means of evaluating variations in agency and relevance within transnational civil society. As a lightning rod, the very notion of GCS has been the subject of intense controversy and derision. Yet even in this capacity, the concept of GCS galvanized widespread interest on the topics of agency and relevance

within the world political system. Over time, this debate over GCS fragmented into three dominant positions: transformationalist, pragmatist, and critical political economy.

The Transformationalist Thesis

The most controversial and optimistic of the three positions, transformationalists argue that global civil society de-centers and decentralizes state authority, thereby fundamentally transforming the world political system by. The problem, according to transformationalists, is “that the state system, as the context within which states operate, impose constraints that render states incapable of working for genuine global well-being” (Wapner 1996, 18). This concern, coupled with more specific evidence of deepening global environmental crises, are enough to generate demands for a viable social and political alternative to the self-interested state, an alternative that offers “a real possibility of choice between doing what is right and doing what is in one’s own interests” (Dower 2007, 8). To succeed, transformationalists argue, such an alternative must “motivate agents, even in the face of conflicting interests” (Dower 2007, 9). Success from this perspective means “the transformation of the state, the emergence of a new kind of global politics in which the state is one actor among many; and this in turn has profound consequences for the content and functioning of democracy” (Kaldor, Anheier, & Glasius 2004, 1).

To focus on the transformational changes occurring in the structural configuration of the world political system, transformationalists begin with a set assumptions or propositions about the preferences, perceptions and values that define GCS. According to one scholar, these characteristics are what makes GCS a coherent political and social formation. That is, the presence of “common norms or codes of behaviour that have emerged in reaction to the legal and other socially constructed fictions of the nation-state system” (Lipschutz 1992, 398). These norms and behaviors include a strong sense of “solidarity and compassion for the fate and well-being of others, including unknown, distant others, a sense of personal responsibility and reliance on one’s own initiative to do the right thing; the impulse toward altruistic giving and sharing; the refusal of inequality, violence, and oppression” (de Oliveira & Tandon 1994, 2-3). Because of its apparent strong commitment to progressive values, transformationalists credit GCS with the ability to motivate and sustain agents in the face of adversity, to provide the appropriate incentives for shaping a new and more cosmopolitan sense of identity (Keane 2001; Wapner 1996), and to ultimately

reconstruct, re-imagine, and re-map world politics in accordance with its core values (Lipschutz 1992, 239).

Furthermore, transformationalists interpret the recent growth in transnational social movements, transnational advocacy networks, and transnational NGOs, as signs that GCS is rapidly developing into an autonomous and self-directed third sphere of the world political system. According to this view, its recent growth has functionally ruptured the old state-centric world order; today, GCS crowds out the self-interested state system and is ushering in a new more democratic world political order. Accordingly, states are increasingly made to compete against markets and GCS for control over matters of earth systems governance. From the transformationalists' perspective, if states no longer enjoy monopoly control over the channels of global finance or communication, what reason is there to expect they might retain monopoly control over the institutions of global environmental governance (Keohane 2005; Wapner 1996).

At its core, what interests transformationalists is the intersection of global non-state actors with the dominant sources of political and economic power in the world political system. There is a tendency within the literature, therefore, to perceive GCS as a contentious political agent. Indeed, its contentious behavior has come to define what it means to be a member of GCS. According to Keane (2003, 15), GCS primarily functions to serve "as a brake or potential check upon various forms of government, and especially absolutist political rule". This behavior can be manifest in two ways: contentious leanings can be directed against the state or they can be directed towards non-state targets, like education and environmental restoration (Wapner 1996). This observation, however, often leads adherents and skeptics to the flawed conclusion that transformationalists perceive GCS as a progressive political sphere. On the contrary, contemporary transformationalists advise us to perceive GCS as the product of a global liberal governmentalism, which means that it "largely serves to reproduce that form of governance within the structures of power and discourse rather than change it" (Lipschutz 2006, 110-111). In the end, GCS emerges as little more than a fierce defender of the status quo. We might, therefore, assess its agency and relevance within the world political system by calculating the ability of GCS to perform this conservative function.

The Pragmatic Thesis

Whereas transformationalists focus on the ontological implications of GCS, pragmatists focus on its political or strategic manifestations. Pragmatists are ultimately interested in the intersection of GCS with international institutions and states. Gone are the grand theories of autonomy and self-directed action. Instead, pragmatists offer a thoroughgoing examination of strategic innovations and the dynamics of action repertoires. Pragmatists make the ontological assumption that GCS is firmly embedded within dominant state and capital structures, yet argue that GCS possesses the unique capacity to exploit weaknesses in the edifice of these large and slow moving systems. Because there are numerous organizations like The Nature Conservancy, all of whom lay claim to some expertise within their given area of interest, former concerns about legitimacy and accountability no longer seem as salient. For the international institutions and powerful states struggling to come to grips with an assortment of dire global problems, what matters most is that these organizations can deliver measurable and practical solutions that work. Thus, for pragmatists, variability in agency and relevance is a function of strategic innovation and the efficacy of political interactions between transnational non-state actors and the dominant institutions with whom they interact.

Pragmatists are principally interested in “social relationships, the patterns they form, and their implications for choices and behavior” (Anheier & Katz 2005, 207). Pragmatists want to understand how these relationships form, under what conditions they enable non-state actors to overcome political barriers, and, when successful, whether they cause a backlash from the target state or institution. Yet the most important feature of these relationships, from a pragmatist’s perspective, is that they lead to the production, exchange and strategic deployment of information (Keck & Sikkink 1998). Knowledge therefore emerges as the key to attaining agency and enhancing relevance within a system dominated by states and capital.

From a pragmatic perspective, global civil society exhibits agency when it interrupts the abuse or suppression of information, reframes debates by changing their terms, forces an alteration in the sites of debate, and/or prompts a reconfiguration of the participants. Global civil society exhibits relevance when it gains influence over international negotiations and international institutions (Betsill & Corell 2001; Friedman, Hochstetler, & Clark 2005), as well as state agencies (Keck & Sikkink 1998; Sikkink 2005). Because The Nature

Conservancy is a primary producer of knowledge about natural resource problems and because the scientific knowledge it generates conforms with the discursive frameworks of dominant institutions within the edifice of earth systems governance (Luke 1996), pragmatists might therefore argue that The Nature Conservancy is positioned to break the oppressive cycles of history, to create and proliferate alternative channels of communication, and to empower the voices of the powerless. What makes this possible is The Conservancy's unique capacity to serve as the intermediary between the nodal points of power and the diaspora of the disempowered, between the needs of nature and human desires, and between the local and the global.

Pragmatists distinguish global civil society from the other prominent features of world politics on the basis of its "voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange" (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 8). At first glance, this emphasis appears to position global civil society in stark contrast with "markets and hierarchies as they have less uncertainty than the former and less complexity than the latter" (Henry, Mohan, & Yanacopulos 2004, 842). Indeed, such observations have led some scholars to mistakenly narrow the scope of pragmatist inquiry to such phenomenon as "the World Social Forum (WSF), as well as a web of regional, national, local, and thematic forums modeled on the WSF's horizontal, "open space" format", all of which are unified by their opposition to neoliberal globalization (Reitan 2007, 445). Yet, underscoring the voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal characteristic of global civil society does not preclude the participation of state and market actors. On the contrary, the pragmatist perspective can accommodate a wide range of actors, including intergovernmental organizations, government agencies, the media and firms, many of which are fiercely committed to the project of neoliberalism (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 9). From the perspective of a pragmatist, an actor's preferences, perceptions and values are less important than its willingness to "commit resources to mutually acceptable objectives, sharing risks and long term collaboration" (Henry, et al. 2004, 843). That The Conservancy forms coalitions with powerful states and industry does not necessarily mean it lacks agency and relevance since in the end what matters most is that these relationships advance a shared objective.

Critical Political Economy

Finally, critical theorists determine the agency and relevance of global civil society by referencing its relative position within the broader global political economy. Thus, the

agency and relevance of transnational NGOs is ambiguous, as some actors are complicit in the production of power asymmetries, others struggle against these injustices, and still others vary from issue to issue.

Pragmatists and transformationalists operate under the assumption that political entities possess a consistent set of preferences, perceptions and values and that they then act opportunistically and instrumentally in response to external stimuli. Transformationalists portray GCS as a cosmopolitan and middle class phenomenon engaged in a continual struggle to preserve and expand its property and rights. Pragmatists are seemingly indifferent to an actor's preferences, perceptions and values, opting instead to focus on the shifts in political opportunity structures in order to explain the political strategies deployed by local and transnational actors to overcome state and institutional barriers. In contrast, a critical perspective engages in discussions of agency and relevance by challenging widespread axiological assumptions about the origins of preferences, perceptions and values. In short, critical theorists point out assumptions of rationality often function to normalize a dominant ideological, institutional, or economic perspective by presenting rationality as an apolitical and unproblematic truth. However, claims of rationality are "time and space specific, and the product not of reason, but recurrent practices and instituted belief systems" (Amin & Palan 2001, 564). Thus, mainstream axiological assumptions about the rational origins of preferences, perceptions and values can only lead to flawed conclusions about the nature of agency and relevance in earth systems governance.

Building from this argument, critical theorists move on to confront the claims of rival theoretical perspectives. What they propose is a strategy "capable of grasping the orderings of practices that are intersubjective, historicized, socially embedded, and non-cognitive" (Amin & Palan 2001, 560). This means that the world political system is always in flux, that it is contingent and in a steady state of renewal. Its contingency rests upon the particular ordering of class relations at a particular moment in time. This is not to suggest that states no longer matter; on the contrary, critical theorists contend that states remain the "institutional condensation of class relations" and are, therefore, the dominant and central actors within the world political system (Görg & Hirsch 1998). In contrast to the ontological imaginings of many transformationalists, this means that global civil society "is constituted in relation to and as a check on, rather than a replacement for, the state and the state system" (Pasha & Blaney 1998, 428).

Critical theorists are principally concerned with the axiological dimensions of global civil society. Because they see themselves as defenders of the marginalized and disempowered, they are highly critical of transformationalist and pragmatist approaches that appear to assimilate rather than incorporate these people, issues, and ways of knowing. Critical theorists problematize transformationalists' axiological claims that attempt to normalize those policies and practices that purport to defend human rights, the articulation and enforcement of international law, the integration of transnational society, and the production of a cosmopolitan identity. Critical theorists are equally suspect of pragmatists' attempts to reduce cultural differences to patterned strategic processes and mechanisms, the sum of which function to deny the co-evalness of peoples and cultures. This intent is perhaps best illustrated by the pragmatist assertion of horizontal and reciprocal relations, which, critical theorists argue, functions to depoliticize the power inequities within global civil society. Because they are inattentive to the axiological particularities of global civil society, critical theorists charge transformationalist and pragmatist perspective with reifying the dominant hegemony. In the end, these positions take global capitalism and the nation-state system for granted without paying sufficient attention to the inequalities and alienating relationships these systems produce. Inequalities are only deemed problematic to the extent that they threaten to undermine the project of liberal modernization.

In contrast, critical theorists look to the points of interaction and opposition as opportunities to deepen agency and relevance, not as threats to manage and challenges to overcome (Blaney & Inayatullah 2002; Pasha & Blaney 1998; Stevis 2002). Agency and relevance, when viewed from this critical perspective, are "not a type of constitution, nor a form of society" but are considered instead as acts of interrupting the social edifice by those who lack the capacity to govern (Rancière & Corcoran 2006, 47)

What are the most fundamental functions and characteristics of global civil society and what can they tell us about the nature of agency and relevance in earth systems governance?

For all their strengths, these arguments share one common weakness: they fail to grasp the covariant nature of agency and relevance. In the end, agency merely signifies the capacity for meaningful action. The emphasis on capacity exposes the janus-faced nature of agency: since capacities are contingent and finite, they are also contested. Agency is at once the expression of a potential to act and, simultaneously, the calculation of negative forces aligned against the realization of this potential. Viewed from this vantage point,

determinations of agency answer the question of reconciliation by weighing the desirability of preference, perceptions, and values, on one hand, against the constraints of rules, norms, and decision-making procedures, on the other. Therefore, a determination of agency coincides with a determination of relevance, which speaks to the issue of meaningful action. Relevance signifies the relation of actions to an agent's particular preferences, perceptions and values, and, in this context, to the function of earth systems governance. Thus, the concern for relevance underscores the political or strategic behavior of an agent.

Transformationalists improve our understanding of this phenomenon by exploring the intersection of GCS and the rules, norms and decisionmaking procedures that structure the world political system. Its strength therefore lies in its ontological concerns for the configuration of this system and the possibility that GCS may function as a vehicle of structural transformation. That such an outcome appears unlikely to some does not undermine the more fundamental point, which is that GCS can function as an agent of ontological change - that it possesses the potential to reconfigure the structural composition of the world political system - albeit one that tends toward more incremental than radical change. Its weaknesses consist in its axiological and political assertions. For example, the propositions that GCS is inherently rational or progressive have been widely refuted. Additionally, political or strategic behavior tends to be a second order concern. For example, transformationalists have difficulty accounting for coalitions of state and transnational non-state actors just as they also have difficulty accounting for hybrid transnational NGOs whose membership roles consist of states and international governance organizations.

Political or strategic behavior is certainly no problem for pragmatists. Their interests in the intersection of GCS and institutions makes them well equipped for assessing the efficacy of strategic interactions and the proliferation of action repertoires. Clearly, institutional power is a key objective for most transnational NGOs, which makes the pragmatic focus on influence helpful for understanding the nature of relevance in earth systems governance. However, its axiological and ontological assumptions emerge as critical shortcomings of the pragmatic position. Because they treat the configuration of the world political system as a static quantity, the pragmatic position is blind to the possibility of significant ontological transformations. Because pragmatists are also unconcerned with axiological issues, they are often ill equipped to address questions of agency.

Critical political economy perspectives run little risk of missing the axiological characteristics of global civil society. Indeed, their primary contribution is to point out the flaws in mainstream assumptions about the origins of preferences, perceptions and values within GCS. What is most crucial, they argue, is that we “acknowledge the contradictory features of associational life as a site of both inequality and movements to redress inequality, of seemingly incommensurable identities and values and the negotiation of commonalities, of imposition and domination and the possibility of conversation and democracy” (Pasha & Blaney 1998). The weakness of this perspective consists in its ontological and political assumptions. Critical theorists reduce the world political system to a theater of global class conflict, wherein the disempowered struggle to attain agency and relevance against the structural constraints of the dominant global class. For all its insight, this ontology blinds critical theorists to the possibilities of positive incremental change and the benefits of moderate or non-radical strategic innovations. Instead, it tends to assess agency and relevance in absolute terms: an entity possesses agency and relevance only to the extent that it promotes axiological diversity within the world political system. Otherwise, it is merely perceived as the pawn of dominant and oppressive structural forces.

To achieve a more coherent understanding of agency and its relevance in earth systems governance, we should begin by assessing the axiological, ontological, and political characteristics of the actor under consideration. What are the actor’s preferences, perceptions and values? How is the actor positioned in relation to the dominant structural features of the world political system? What strategies does the actor employ to negotiate the gap between its preferences, perceptions and values, on one hand, and the structural configuration of the world political system, on the other. In addition, we should also assess the covariance of these variables. For instance, we might ask if the agent has modified its axiological characteristics to accommodate ontological pressures, and, in turn, the extent with which these axiological adjustments reconfigure the structure of the world political system. We might also ask how well the agent’s strategic activities conform to these axiological and ontological variations.

How might this revised model of agency and relevance explain The Nature Conservancy's approach to freshwater resource problems?

How has The Nature Conservancy reconciled the coherence of its integrated approach to freshwater resource problems with the incoherence of the world political system?

Axiological Characteristics

To reconcile its integrated approach with the realities of the world political economy, TNC undertook a radical reformulation of its preferences, perceptions and values. Whereas TNC previously articulated an ecocentric ethic and therefore viewed itself as an agent of nature, to aggressively pursue its global agenda The Conservancy abandoned its ecocentric position in favor of the more mainstream anthropocentric view. In addition, by initiating its global freshwater initiative, TNC signaled a radical departure from its conservative political perceptions. Whereas TNC previously avoided water resource issues because they were too complex and too deeply political, The Conservancy adopted a more direct and forthright political mission. While The Conservancy retained its preference for scientific and solution-based approaches to problems of biodiversity, its global outlook made it acutely aware of the limitations to scientific rationality. Throughout, The Conservancy has remained fixated on the singular mission of preserving the diversity of life on earth. Yet the preferences, perceptions and values that inform and guide this mission have undergone radical and transformative changes in a calculated move to attain agency and enhance its relevance within the context of earth systems governance.

By accommodating its axiological characteristics to the world political economy, TNC has hewn closely to its preference for non-confrontational solutions. Consequently, TNC has not sought to radically reconfigure the roles of states or markets. Rather, The Conservancy opts instead to fight “for crumbs under the table” (McKibben 1989, 179). In other words, it made a strategic decision to effect positive environmental change from within the existing order rather than attack the operating system of world politics head on. Nevertheless, The Conservancy has had a positive and dramatic, albeit indirect and incremental, effect on this system. These effects are most evident in The Conservancy's role in advancing the Brisbane Declaration, which calls on states and managing agencies to incorporate environmental considerations in their water management plans, particularly those dealing with flow regimes. The Brisbane Declaration arms states, markets and non-

state actors with the ammunition needed to shame and even coerce non-compliant states. Additionally, The Conservancy indirectly attempts to recalibrate global capital through its continued support of natural accounting techniques. If fully implemented, these capital forces would have to integrate many of their environmental externalities. The Conservancy has developed a model of these financial instruments in its water user fees. Although these efforts are so far only early or experimental attempts to reconfigure the governing principles of global water governance, these small and incremental changes nevertheless promise to yield profound environmental, economic, and political implications over time.

The degree with which its recent political strategies are consistent with its larger conservation mission remain an open question. There are several skeptics that view its recent engagement in development issues as clear signals of mission drift. This is particularly true of long-time Conservancy members who still hold fast to The Conservancy's former ecocentric position. Yet for others, its new political and community focus is appropriate and relevant to its conservation mission. Because land acquisition alone will not protect the integrity of threatened freshwater ecosystems, The Conservancy has had little choice but to work through local communities, political institutions and market mechanisms to achieve its goals. However, this also means The Conservancy is forced into the unfamiliar position of playing a supportive rather than a leading role in implementing water conservation initiatives. To retain relevance, The Conservancy relies heavily on its scientific expertise as well as its long experience in demonstration sites to compound the effects of its site specific activities. The Conservancy has had substantial success in leverage these strengths in its interactions with states, institutions, and transnational advocacy networks.

Conclusion and suggestions for theoretical improvement

To reconcile its global freshwater conservation activities with the incoherence of the world political system, The Nature Conservancy has undertaken a comprehensive restructuring of its axiological, ontological and political character. This change, although detested by some, has been effective in attaining agency and increasing its relevance in earth systems governance specifically and within the world political system more broadly. Yet this outcome is not anticipated by the dominant theoretical accounts of global civil society. In this paper, I attributed this shortcoming to a kind of the theoretical specialization of labor. In brief, the three dominant theoretical perspectives outlined above failed to fully account for the axiological, ontological and political characteristics of global civil society but chose

instead to privilege just one of these attributes as the leading indicator of agency and relevance within global civil society. In this paper, I suggested that a satisfactory accounting of agency and relevance should grant these features of transnational non-state activity equal weight. Further research is required, however, to determine whether such an approach can reveal, in general terms, the degree of agency and relevance within the totality of global civil society.

Works Cited

- (LCAOF), Liz Claiborn and Art Ortenburg Foundation (1995). "The Man with the Spear". *Nature Conservancy*, 49(1), 29-32.
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (1990). "1990 Annual Report". *Nature Conservancy*, 40(6), 5.
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (2004). "Landmarks: Ecuador". *Nature Conservancy*, 54(3), 55.
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (2006). The Nature Conservancy, WWF and Stanford University Launch the Natural Capital Project Retrieved October 20, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.nature.org/pressroom/press/press2701.html>
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (2007). World Leaders Sign Brisbane Declaration to Protect the Planet's Freshwater Systems Retrieved October 27, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.nature.org/initiatives/freshwater/press/press3195.html>
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (2009a). About Us: Learn More About The Nature Conservancy Retrieved October 26, 2009, 2009, from www.nature.org/aboutus/?src=t5
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (2009b). About Us: The Nature Conservancy's Core Values Retrieved October 26, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.nature.org/aboutus/features/>
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (2009c). Maya Mountain Marine Corridor Retrieved October 17, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/centralamerica/belize/work/art8603.html>
- (TNC), The Nature Conservancy (2009d). South America: Creating Water Funds for People and Nature Retrieved October 12, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/southamerica/misc/art26470.html>
- (UN), World Water Assessment Programme (2009). *Water in a changing world*. London: UNESCO and Earthscan.
- (WHO), World Health Organizations (1996). "Water and Sanitation". *Regional Health Forum*, 1(2), 21-22.
- Amin, Ash, & Palan, Ronen (2001). "Towards a non-rationalist international political economy". *Review of International Political Economy*, 8(4), 559-577.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G (1991). *Imagined communities : reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. and extended ed.). London ; New York: Verso.
- Anheier, Helmut, & Katz, Hagai (2005). "Network Approaches to Global Civil Society". In Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, M. Kaldor & Fiona Holland (Eds.), *Global Civil Society 2004/2005*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Betsill, Michele M., & Corell, Elisabeth (2001). "NGO Influence in International Environmental Negotiations: A Framework for Analysis". *Global Environmental Politics*, 1(4), 65-85.
- Birchard, Bill (2005). *Nature's Keepers: The Remarkable Story of How the Nature Conservancy Became the Largest Environmental Group in the World*. Jossey-Bass.
- Blair Jr., William D. (1991). "A Look Back". *Nature Conservancy*, 41(5), 17.
- Blaney, David L., & Inayatullah, Naem (2002). "Neo-Modernization? IR and the Inner Life of Modernization Theory". *European Journal of International Relations*, 8(1), 103-137.
- de Oliveira, M.D., & Tandon, R (1994). "An Emerging Global Civil Society" *Citizens: Strengthening Global Civil Society*. Washington D.C.: Civicus.
- Dower, Nigel (2007). *World ethics : the new agenda* (2nd ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Friedman, Elisabeth J., Hochstetler, Kathryn, & Clark, Ann Marie (2005). *Sovereignty, democracy, and global civil society: state-society relations at UN world conferences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gaetz, Ron (1999). "Great River of the Yunnan: Conservation in a Changing China". *Nature Conservancy*, 43(3), 10-16.
- Gleick, Peter H., & Palaniappan, Meena (2009). "Peak Water". In Peter H. Gleick, Meena Palaniappan, Mari Morikawa, Jason Morrison & Heather Cooley (Eds.), *The World's Water 2008-2009: The Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Görg, Christoph, & Hirsch, Joachim (1998). "Is International Democracy Possible?". *Review of International Political Economy*, 5(4), 585-615.
- Green, Martha Hodkins (2001). "Leap of Faith: How birds - and instinct - led pennsylvanians to Ecuador". *Nature Conservancy*, 51(2), 12-18.
- Henry, Leroi, Mohan, Giles, & Yanacopulos, Helen (2004). "Networks as Transnational Agents of Development". *Third World Quarterly*, 25(5), 839-855.
- Hobbes, T., & M. Curley, E. (1994). *Leviathan: with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co Inc.
- Horton, Tom (1999). "Apalachicola: Making Choices in a Well-Watered World". *Nature Conservancy* 49(2), 12-17.
- Kaldor, Mary, Anheier, Helmut, & Glasius, Marlies (2004). "Introduction". In Fiona Holland, Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius & Mary Kaldor (Eds.), *Global Civil Society 2004/2005* (pp. 1-25). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.
- Keane, John (2001). "Global Civil Society? A New Cosmology". In Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius & Mary Kaldor (Eds.), *Global Civil Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Keane, John (2003). *Global civil society?* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Keck, Margaret E., & Sikkink, Kathryn (1998). *Activists beyond borders : advocacy networks in international politics*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Keohane, Robert O. (2005). "Global governance and democratic accountability". In Rorden Wilkinson (Ed.), *The Global Governance Reader* (pp. 120-138). London and New York: Routledge.
- Lipschutz, Ronnie D. (1992). "Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society". *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 21(3), 389-420.
- Lipschutz, Ronnie D. (2006). "The Struggle for Democracy". *International Studies Review* 8, 109-111.
- Lipschutz, Ronnie D. (2007). "The Historical and Structural Origins of Global Civil Society". *Globalizations*, 4(2), 304-308.
- Luke, T. (1996). *Generating Green Governmentality: A Cultural Critique of Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation*. Virginia Tech.
- McCormick, Steven J. (2000). "Listening to Local Voices". *Nature Conservancy*, 55(4), 4.
- McCormick, Steven J. (2005). "Conserving Our Well-being". *Nature Conservancy*, 55(3), 5.
- McKibben, Bill (1989). *The End of Nature*. New York: Random House.
- Meeks, Stephanie (2008). Nature's Bounty. *Nature Conservancy* Retrieved October 29, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.nature.org/aboutus/about/art23699.html>
- Mehta, L. (2003). "Problems of publicness and access rights: Perspectives from the water domain: In: Kaul, I. Conceicao, P. Le Goulven, K. and Mendonza, R". *Providing Global Public Goods. Managing Globalization*.

- Morine, David E. (1990). *Good Dirt: Confessions of a Conservationist*. Ballantine Books.
- Morris, Ruth (2004). "Refining the Search for Crude". *Nature Conservancy*, 54(3), 42.
- Naess, Arne (1995). "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects". In George Sessions (Ed.), *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century: Readings on the Philosophy and Practice of the New Environmentalism* (pp. 64-84). Boston and London: Shambala Press.
- Newell, Peter (2008). "The political economy of global environmental governance". *Review of International Studies*, 34, 507-529.
- Pasha, Mustapha Kamal, & Blaney, David L. (1998). "Elusive paradise: The promise and peril of global civil society". *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 23(4), 417.
- Paterson, Matthew (2000). *Understanding global environmental politics : domination, accumulation, resistance*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Postel, Sandra (1997). *Last oasis: facing water scarcity* (1st ed.). New York: W.W. Norton.
- Postel, Sandra, & Richter, Brian D. (2003). *Rivers for life: managing water for people and nature*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Rancière, Jacques, & Corcoran, Steve (2006). *Hatred of democracy*. London New York: Verso.
- Raynor, Bill (1998). *The Pohnpei Community Natural Resource Management Program*. The Nature Conservancy.
- Reitan, Ruth (2007). "A Global Civil Society in a World Polity, or Angels and Nomads Against Empire?". *Global Governance*, 13(3), 445-460.
- Risse, Mathias (2006). "What to say about the state". *Social Theory and Practice*, 32(4).
- Sawhill, John (1995). "The Last Unicorn". *Nature Conservancy*, 45(4), 5.
- Sawhill, John (1997). "Pushing the Boundaries". *Nature Conservancy*, 47(1), 5-10.
- Sawhill, John (1998). "The Good Neighbor Policy". *Nature Conservancy*, 48(1), 6.
- Sawhill, John (1999). "The Fate of Freshwater". *Nature Conservancy*, 49(2), 5.
- Sikkink, Kathryn (2005). "Pattern of Dynamic Multilevel Governance". In Donatella Della Porta & Sidney Tarrow (Eds.), *Transnational protest and global activism*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Spinoza, Benedictus de, Shirley, Samuel, & Feldman, Seymour (2001). *Theological-political treatise* (2nd ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co.
- Stevis, Dimitris (2002). "Agents, Subjects, Objects, or Phantoms? Labor, the Environment, and Liberal Institutionalization.". *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 581(May 2002), 91-105.
- Tanner, Ogden (1988). "Of Tiger Beetles and Wedge Mussels: Protecting Connecticut River Riches". *Nature Conservancy*, 38(5), 4-11.
- Taylor, Richard (2000). "Green to the Corps: Engineer works to build aquatic balance". *Nature Conservancy*, 50(5), 12-13.
- Tercek, Mark (2009). "Working Landscapes". *Nature Conservancy*, 59(3), 3.
- Wapner, Paul (1996). *Environmental activism and world civic politics*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Weeks, William W. (1997). "Beyond the Ark". *Nature Conservancy*, 47(2), 10-15.