Business, Biodiversity and New 'Fields' of Conservation: The World Conservation Congress and the Renegotiation of Organisational Order

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Abstract

Biodiversity conservation, in practice, is defined through the institutionalised association of individuals, organisations, institutions, bodies of knowledge, and interests. Events like the World Conservation Congress (WCC) constitute political sites where much of that institutionalisation is rendered legible and where struggles over the organisational order of conservation are acted out. Over the past decade one source of struggle has been the role of private sector actors and markets. This paper treats the WCC as a site where tension over market-based mechanisms of conservation becomes visible and where it becomes possible to watch durable institutional arrangements form and enter standard operational practice of organisations like IUCN. This paper builds upon recent work on the performative aspects of governance and analyses the WCC as an integral mechanism in achieving a renegotiated 'order' of conservation with 'private sector engagement' as a core operational practice. It describes how this performative work is predicated, in part, on the act of meeting; and the ways meetings serve both as sites for the formation of associations and as vehicles that privilege certain positions in renegotiating an organisational order under which the interests of capital accumulation receive an unparalleled degree of access and consideration in conservation planning and practice.

Keywords: business, biodiversity, event ethnography, meetings, transnational environmental governance, World Conservation Congress, organisational order, market-based mechanisms

INTRODUCTION

On October 8, 2008, three days in to the 10-day long World Conservation Congress (WCC), the blog *Green Inc.,* hosted on the website of the *New York Times*, ran this lead: "This week at the WCC in Barcelona, James Kantner takes note of a singular sentiment running through the participants: Conservation is failing because it has not embraced the fundamental tenets of business management". This statement is remarkable on a number of accounts. First, it is inaccurate. Having tracked the issue for over a decade, it is clear that what the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other conservation organisations label 'private sector engagement' is an extremely contentious subject within these organisations. Indeed, debate during the Members' Assembly component of the WCC and the 'contact groups' established in relation to several motions from members seeking to limit IUCN's 'engagement with the private sector' exposed a definite absence of 'singularity'.[1] More importantly, Kantner's piece is notable because it serves to communicate two of the primary messages that the convener of the conference—the IUCN Secretariat—sought to put into public circulation: that it is time for the conservation movement to seek out and work with 'new types of partners', - code for deepening interconnections with the private sector; and that the IUCN membership is unified in this pursuit.[2] That a journalist could identify these markedly political messages early on in the WCC is not particularly surprising.[3] Indeed, the purpose of this paper is to analyse the role of the WCC as a vehicle through which certain actors negotiate a new organisational order, reproducing the pseudo-social networks that are beginning to resemble, what Peter Haas (1992) and others have called, an epistemic community—directed through interaction among a set of common individuals who physically and ideologically migrate across the once well-defined boundaries separating governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations

(NGOs) and the private sector. A primary point of the paper is that we can attend to meetings like the WCC as instruments that facilitate and reveal the blurring of these boundaries, and as sites where the personal associations and ideological work necessary for the renegotiation of organisational order are acted out. But to do so we need effective analytic devices. In this paper, I build upon recent approaches to analysing the performative aspects of governance (see Hajer & Versteeg 2005; Hajer 2006) and suggest three such devices: structure, orchestration, and spectacle. I use these to analyse the WCC as an integral mechanism in achieving a renegotiated 'order' of conservation with 'private sector engagement' as a core operational practice. This paper contributes to ongoing work that situates the deepening integration of the 'private sector' and conservation NGOs in relation to neoliberal modes of environmental governance put in place over the past 20 years, and highlights the need to study the related and interconnected web of meetings to gain insight into the structuring of institutions and organisations engaged in the governance and practice of biodiversity conservation (MacDonald 2003, 2008).

'NATURE IS OUR BUSINESS': CONSERVATION, 'PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT' AND THE CULTURE OF MEETINGS

To understand the growing engagement between private sector actors and biodiversity conservation organisations and institutions, it is necessary to view modernist biodiversity conservation as an organised political project.[4] There are two important dimensions to this claim. First is the recognition that the organisational dimensions of conservation exist as coordinated agreement and action among a variety of actors that take shape within radically asymmetrical power relations. Second, the practical expression of that coordination exists as organised social groups—conservation organisations—that have emerged out of specific historical contexts. Both aspects of 'organisation' in this context imply the promotion of certain ideological perspectives that are worked out through processes of coordinated agreement, and implemented through the actions of conservation organisations. These are by no means exclusive processes. Indeed the actions of conservation organisations are directed through the ideological configurations brought to bear upon them by the coordinated agreement of relevant actors or what have come to be known as 'stakeholders' and, in some cases, 'partners'—the individuals, organisations and governments that help to define what 'biodiversity conservation' is and provide the conceptual tools, material resources, and political permission needed to do the work of conservation. This is not a new process. At different points in time, for example, conservation has been configured in relation to political projects of colonialism, nationalism, and science. The contemporary emergence of business, or the private sector, as a major actor in shaping contemporary biodiversity conservation is, in many ways, a reflection of the coordinating action of global capitalism, its

affiliated transnational capitalist class, and the need to redefine conservation in ways that accommodate, rather than challenge, the dominant ideological and material interests that underlie these broad political projects. As 'the environment' has become a transnational ideological formation with the popular capacity to challenge the interests of capital accumulation, it has become increasingly important for these actors to contain the capacity of emerging institutions and organisations to delimit and constrain access to the natural foundation of capitalism.

Even just 20 years ago, the reputations of conservation organisations would have been seriously compromised if knowledge of these 'engagements' had become public.[5] But today the logos of conservation organisations, like IUCN, Conservation International, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and Birdlife International appear side-by-side on the covers of reports or in advertisements, with those of extractive industries like Shell, Rio Tinto, Total and Holcim. Appearing in different vernacular guises—sponsorships, agreements, partnerships—these private sector engagements have become almost ubiquitous among conservation organisations, and it is increasingly common to see senior executives of larger organisations sharing convention stages and travelling with senior officers of companies historically engaged in environmentally and socially destructive activities. Conservation organisations ground their justification for these relationships in their mandate to influence society in ways that result in environmental sustainability. More nuanced perspectives point to the mobilising effect of neoliberalism in establishing 'public-private partnerships' as fiscal cutbacks opened the door for conservation NGOs to expand project-based activities, and encouraged them to turn to private-sector actors for material and political resources (Poncelot 2004). They also suggest that the effect of this 'engagement' is far from unilateral, that it has a significant effect in restructuring the ideological and organisational orientation of conservation organisations, and that this effect can be seen as an outcome of business organisations seeking to control an external institutional environment (Levy 2005; MacDonald 2010). Evidence of this shift is more clearly seen in the rise of organisational units inside conservation organisations dedicated to establishing, fostering and managing collaborative relationships with private sector interests; social and environmental responsibility programmes established within corporate sectors; and incentive programmes developed at state and supra-state levels to promote the establishment of such relationships (MacDonald 2008). These organisational shifts have led to an increase in conservation programming focused on market-based conservation incentives, many of them grounded in dubious equations between ecological modernisation and sustainable development (Bruno & Karliner 2002; Elbers 2004; Frynas 2005).

The speed with which these relationships have travelled from the backrooms to the public stage at major conservation events has been remarkable, but it has not occurred without resistance. As recently as 2003, a plenary session at the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa that included representatives

from Shell and the International Council on Mining and Minerals (ICMM)[6] caused vocal protests from the participants, leading the Director General of IUCN, Achim Steiner, to have the audience microphones shut off, presumably in order to quell the protest[7]. Supporters of 'Business and Biodiversity Initiatives' also confronted significant vocal opposition at the 2004 WCC in Bangkok, though this time it was tempered by the willingness of some IUCN members to allow the Secretariat to cautiously engage in discussions with the private sector. Recognising that the Secretariat was intensifying 'engagement' with the private sector, member-supported resolutions passed at the 2004 WCC were worded to ensure that this be done with due regard for principles of transparency and accountability to IUCN members. Four years later at the WCC in Barcelona, the public presence of the private sector had become much more apparent. But the voice of protest, at least during the World Conservation Forum, was much less apparent.[8] This silence is explained in part through promotion and presence. In the intervening years between 2004 and 2008, the promotion of 'partnerships' became much more prevalent at meetings, in funding programmes, and joint publications, and established a physical presence through mechanisms such as secondments of staff between the private sector and conservation organisations like IUCN.[9] Following the lead of government agencies and programme-defining organisations such as the United Nations (UN), increasing numbers of NGOs had embraced models of public-private partnerships in pursuit of their policy and project goals.[10] And, while there is continued organisational resistance to that presence among the IUCN membership, the leadership of the IUCN Secretariat, and certain other actors within the organisation, have assumed the obligation not only to defend, but also to extend, that presence by attempting to legitimise it. There are various ways in which this legitimation occurs. But, in this paper, I make the case that one primary mechanism is through what Van Vree (1999) has called the culture of meetings.

Why Meetings?

To a remarkable extent, and despite their centrality in 'professional' life, 'field-configuring' events in conservation—the conventions and congresses where people gather to debate and formalise the direction of conservation policy and practice—have escaped the ethnographic lens (but see Poncelet 1990; MacAloon 1992; Little 1995; Dahlén 1997; Reed 2001). Certainly, emerging concerns over international environmental governance and the application of regime theory and analysis over the past 20 years has highlighted the importance of international conventions. But, to a remarkable degree, this work is empirically distant from the physical sites where the actual negotiation occurs. And, while ethnographic work that might act as a guide has begun (e.g., Nader 1972; Rosen 1991; Fox 1998; Harper 1998; Riles 2000; Markowitz 2001; Mosse 2001; Lewis 2003), what I have called the 'organisation of conservation' remains understudied (MacDonald 2010). What little work that does exist is marked by disciplinary

and scalar divides. Typically, much of the research at the 'community' level is undertaken by anthropologists and geographers, while analyses of how conservation is structured through international institutions is seen to be the ambit of political science and sociology, meaning that those who work in 'the village' are rarely the same as those who study the 'international regimes' (Lahsen 2007). This is a worrying phenomenon given the increasing capacity of those regimes to shape the ideological and practical work of conservation organisations, draw together actors who seek to structure those regimes, and ultimately, to shape ecological dynamics.

The failure of ethnographers to attend to these sites is doubly troubling because of the abstract quality of much of the work in regime theory and transnational environmental governance. Rather than attending to questions of how the process of negotiation or interaction expresses a specific cultural-political history and shapes the outcome of conventions, agreements, or organisational mandates, regime work is primarily concerned with the outcome and is empirically grounded in textual analysis and representations of interaction rather than direct observation of those interactions. As a result, much of the work on governance regimes is poorly contextualised. It relies on the disassembling of text and individual memory, and helps to aggregate institutional facts in centres of accumulation that, much like laboratories, are configured around the dominant theoretical perspectives of researchers. Yet this work appears blind to its role in the creation of institutional facts (Latour & Woolgar 1986). Within conventional regime analysis, what counts as data and how they are sanctioned is grounded in the understanding and subsequent analytic treatment and representation of institutions or organisations as objects. But this is far from accurate; institutions and organisations are the dynamic product of intentional interaction among a group of actors with diverse interests. If we seek to understand the effect of institutional or organisational actions, we need to pay attention to the events that not only facilitate interaction but also serve as instruments that can be used to direct organisational and institutional structure.[11]

Despite the surprising degree to which regime analysis is divorced from empirical settings like meetings of conventions or organisations related to environmental governance, internal critiques have slowly developed. Litfin (1994: 177), for example, in advocating what she calls a reflectivist approach grounded in discourse analysis, notes that dominant approaches to the study of environmental governance regimes "fail to grasp the nonmaterial nature of knowledge-based power; nor do they dig beneath the surface to explore the process of interest formation". She finds similar flaws in work on epistemic communities, citing a serious underestimation of the degree to which the 'scientific facts' introduced to governance mechanisms are not divorced from political power but rationalise and reinforce existing political conflicts. Her analysis leads her to conclude that all of the dominant theoretical approaches to international regime analysis neglect the role of intersubjective understanding as the basis for international cooperation.[12] Vogler (2003: 27) amplifies

Lifton's points in deftly pointing out that "while regimes are social and intersubjective phenomena their contemporary analysis is distinctly positivist—setting up an apparent contradiction between ontology and epistemology".[13] In their critiques, Vogler and others question the analytical capacity of regime analysis—given its inter-governmental orientation and positivist bent—to assess and explain the emergence of forms of transnational environmental governance in which a diversity of actors, with very real material interests in the potential constraining or facilitating effect of policy and international environmental law, struggle to shape the policy process. While some work in regime analysis seems to have recognised the importance of the subjective quality of institutions and institutional facts, they have not grappled with what this means in terms of appropriate sites and scales of observation, methodological approach, the constitution of 'data', and how those data are sanctioned.

Regime analysis suffers from a failure to recognise that institutional facts do not exist *a priori* but are created through political contest and their separation from the social context in which they were created is only the final stage in their creation (Latour & Woolgar 1986). The point here is that, in failing to attend to the social relations and controversies involved in the reproduction of institutions and organisations, regime analysis plays a role in manufacturing institutional facts by effectively separating them from the political contests in which they emerge. Not being present at the sites where political contests are enacted means that the trace of associations that define these political contests is not seen. MacKenzie (2009: 33) and others have noted that this failure to pay due attention to these 'details' or 'technicalities' stems from a scale bias that reflects a tendency to divide 'social' phenomena into "small, 'micro' phenomena" (e.g., interpersonal interactions) and "big, 'macro' phenomena" (e.g., the international system of states) and to think only of the macro as political. But the work of MacKenzie (2009) and Latour (2007) among others has also effectively pointed out the dynamics of scale and how 'micro' and 'macro' matters can switch positions over very short spans of time. For regime analysis, then, institutions and organisations are objects of study and not sites of study. Accordingly they do not pay close analytic attention to the events and meetings that give them substance and produce their social context. The scale of analysis, mechanisms of abstraction, and the failure to interact with and observe real actors engaged in decision-making and the staking out of positions misses out on the ways in which such positions take shape across time and space, and the formation of associations that contribute to those positions.[14]

Attending to these events is important as the emergence of transnational environmental governance, the consequent threat of regulation, and the accordant possibility of subordinating some interests in 'the environment' have drawn previously separated actors together into spaces in which claims over 'nature' and the ideological and material struggles that lie underneath those claims become not only unavoidable, but more readily visible and subject to scrutiny (Latour 2004). Within (and beyond) these spaces actors intentionally seek to give substance to the institutions and organisations engaged in environmental governance in ways that express that interest. These locales, then, though not necessarily privileged, become important sites from which to compile accounts of these interests; places where the stakes of actors are articulated, where actions and associations formed in relation to those stakes become visible, where dissension within and between groups becomes apparent, and where contestation over the shaping of conservation policy and practice becomes clear. These will not be found in the transcripts of official sessions, or filtered through the metalanguage of the regime analyst, but in paying attention to the asides, in the observation of associations that are not subject to the official record, in the encounters that are not witnessed by interview subjects, and in the tone of voice that cannot be heard in the final report. By being present at the site, analysts are able to record the process of knowledge being translated and to observe how it gains traction in relation to particular interests. They witness meaning as it is being made, challenged, transformed, and translated. They are also exposed to the agency of those involved in that process. They are not restricted to the archives, whether textual or human, and are, in fact, better placed to evaluate the cogency of those archives.

My point here is that efforts to understand how transnational environmental governance is structured in relation to particular interests need to attend to the sites in which diverse actors come together to debate and produce the structure of the institutions and organisations that assume or are mandated with the responsibility for that governance. It is at these sites that the ideological and material struggles that underlie environmental politics are revealed. But we also need to be alert to the ways in which those sites (e.g., meetings and events) are malleable social phenomena rather than absolute ostensible mechanisms. Events like the WCC, for example, are not simply important for *what* they accomplish, but for *how* they accomplish it. As one of the few scholars to focus on the history and evolution of 'the meeting' Van Vree (1999) has described how meetings have come to provide an organisational mechanism and symbolic device to effectively regulate social behaviour and emotional life.[15] One of his key insights is that persistent meetings help to produce enough permanence and cohesion to create an organisational culture in which norms of individual and collective behaviour become easily known, learned, and circulated, and that meetings and the norms they invoke work to minimise the instability and uncertainty of random engagements, relegating such encounters to the category of awkward incidents.[16] Reed (2001: 133) commenting on Van Vree's work adds that:

> The enhanced power of the transnational intergovernmental organisations [from the mid-twentieth century onward] produced a meeting culture around the behavioural norms of a professional and business elite. These norms focus around more informal nodes of meeting behaviour where self-control and self-management are seen to be preconditions for the negotiation and renegotiation of the organizational order.[17]

Without invoking Foucault, Van Vree (1999: 331) effectively describes the disciplining quality of meetings—as learning meeting rules became an important component of societal success, the internalisation of appropriate meeting behaviour, which he describes as a relatively "precise, constant and smooth self-constraint of expressions of affect and emotion", was instilled. His point here, one that I build on below, is that the 'culture of meetings' serves to communicate modes of acceptable behaviour so that new ideas, circulated by dominant interests, can gain more purchase with minimal opposition. This insight helps us to situate meetings like the WCC and their role in what Reed (2001) calls the renegotiation of organisational order, for as new actors like the 'private sector', for a variety of reasons, become central to the organisational interests of conservation, it becomes necessary to reconfigure the organisational terrain in order to accommodate those interests. In the case of the increasing presence of controversial private sector actors in the day-to-day work of conservation organisations like IUCN, we can understand how dissent is minimised and contained by paying attention to the ways in which meetings and events rely upon the disciplined docility that characterises 'meeting behaviour' and can be structured and orchestrated in ways that effectively serve to legitimise the renegotiation of organisational order.

Meetings as a New 'Field'

While the application of ethnographic methods to conservation is not new, the study of conservation events that I, and others, advocate in this volume means reconsidering what we have usually referred to as 'the field'. To study conservation as a dynamic political project from an ethnographic perspective means bringing spatially and temporally distant conferences and meetings within the purview of 'the field'. This is strange ground for ethnographic practice, which has historically sought field sites that, while dynamic, tend to endure in time and space, can be revisited, and made subject to renewed interpretation. However, while events like the WCC are more limited in time and space than conventional field sites, it is an empirical and methodological mistake to assume that they are isolated and temporary events. When we think of meetings as locales in a translocal field—as nodes linked together across space and time by associations, common interests, long-term objectives, long-term agendas, and statutes—these events take on a temporal and spatial durability that is obscured by the physical space of the encounter. They extend and repeat across time and space, bringing the same and different actors together at regular intervals, and their temporal durability creates the ability to strategise and plan for the events in ways that bring specific actors and interests together, introduce new actors to the assemblage—as has happened with 'private sector' participants in the network of conservation meetings—and structure their encounters. As an example, preparing for one of the many meetings related to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) consumes the time and effort of large numbers of people inside government ministries, NGOs, indigenous communities, UN agencies, universities, and trade associations, among other groups. These people may only occupy a common space for 10 days every two years, but planning for 'the meeting', action based on 'the meeting', negotiations for structuring the next meeting, go on and push at the edges of what we typically think of as the temporal and spatial boundaries that contain the social encounter of 'the meeting'. There are seasons and cycles of activity that draw people together in ways that give life to the meeting but are not constrained to the 'time-frame' or space of the event itself.[18] 'Opening' and 'Closing' ceremonies are, in fact, no such thing; they neither 'open' nor 'close' the meeting for anyone directly associated with it. They are symbolic, an adherence to ritual—those 'civilised norms' that travel through history in the guise of protocol. As anyone who has participated in these meetings knows, 'the meeting' is constantly present: preparing presentations, following-up on delegated responsibilities, taking on new work as a function of 'the meeting', establishing networks, generating new facts—all of these tasks challenge the bounded quality of 'the meeting'.

My point here is that durable connections that stretch across time and space effectively challenge the idea of a meeting as an encounter that is isolated in time and space. This is made clear when the meeting is seen as a mechanism through which ideological perspectives can be circulated, gain traction and begin to structure both policy and the material practice of biodiversity conservation. The WCC, as an example, is an event that lends a consistent, if periodic, ability to observe the ideological and material struggles central to defining and operationalising the economic dimensions of biodiversity conservation—"making the business case for biodiversity and the biodiversity case for business" as IUCN's Chief Economist put it. But when it is combined with other conservation meetings, and considered in the context of broader research—in my case, a project devoted to an ethnographically informed understanding of the effects of neoliberalism on the ideological and material orientation of conservation organisations—it becomes a node in a translocal field site, one that is constituted not simply by individual sites but by the relations between mobile actors who, as they work in advance to plan meetings, come face-to-face at meetings, communicate between meetings, and pursue common objectives through the mechanism of meetings, lend shape and coherence to that field site. The 'field', in this case, is not neatly delineated and contiguous as, say, a 'village'—in many ways it mimics the rhizomic structure of transnational space—but it is just as coherent.

In my own work I have, in part, been tracking the 'associations'[19] of people who serve as business and biodiversity consultants: their patterns of collaboration, the events and objects that organise their work, the partnerships that evolve between particular individuals in relation to specific projects, particularly between those who circulate through organisations as consultants and those whom I call the anchors—the permanent organisational employees who share the ideological perspectives and facilitate the access of

consultants to organisations and project-based financing. It has now become obvious that in this work meetings play a key role in reproducing, solidifying, and extending these relations. The WCC, then, is one in a group of inter-connected meetings being 'followed'—a node in a network of events in which people, ideas and objects can be tracked to understand the ways in which they are orchestrated and configured and to identify the means through which these associations become far-reaching and durable—an element of which is, of course, the work that goes into producing the net*work*. As Hannerz (2003: 206) points out in his discussion of multi-sited fieldwork:

> ... sites are connected with one another in such ways that the relationships between them are as important for this formulation as the relationships within them; the fields are not some mere collection of local units. One must establish the translocal linkages, and the interconnections between those and whatever local bundles of relationships which are also part of the study.

Hannerz's point here is that 'the field' is constituted by the relationships that are being followed. As we try to grapple with applying ethnographic methods to ever more mobile people and ideas that ideologically and materially shape contemporary biodiversity conservation, it is important to focus on organisational actors like IUCN and their position within regimes that constitute transnational environmental governance. It is also important to focus on the seemingly temporary sites and events like the WCC, and situate those events within a process of longitudinal and multi-sited fieldwork that treats policy setting venues as one node through which to understand the formation and extension of associations, the circulation of certain ideological perspectives through those associations, and the interlinked material interests that such networks and venues support. This focus pushes research on the regulation and governance of biodiversity conservation to move beyond the abstract and to ground insights in direct observations of interaction and mobilisation as they occur.

SPECTACLE, ORCHESTRATION AND STRUCTURE: RENEGOTIATING THE ORGANISATIONAL ORDER OF IUCN

Approaching the Meeting

Studying meetings means something more than simply attending sessions and analysing the discursive content and intent of those sessions. It means situating that content within an analytic frame that better explains the constitution of the meeting as a political phenomenon designed in relation to the, often contested, ideological and material intent of its conveners. It is often difficult to solicit meaningful statements of intent from those conveners, which is what makes an ethnographic approach to meetings particularly valuable as it provides the capacity to align observations of the material structure of the meeting, and the symbolism deployed, with

the statements of participants in a way that yields insight into the processes of orchestration. In what follows I build on observations as a participant-observer at the WCC to develop a framework for analysis that provides insight into: the ways in which the event can be understood as an instrument used to better align organised conservation with global capitalism; concepts of ecological modernisation that underpin emerging market devices meant to allocate biodiversity conceived as 'ecosystem services'; and the direct integration of the private sector in new forms of environmental management. These shifts are not new. An initial tentative engagement of the IUCN Secretariat with concepts of ecological modernisation can be traced to the early 1980s but only became prominent in the early 2000s (MacDonald 2008). Dissent within the organisation became clearly apparent as the Secretariat began to establish mechanisms, such as the Business and Biodiversity Initiative[20], to integrate private sector actors within the organisation. While there was dissent among the Secretariat staff, this was easily stifled through the alienation of the dissenting personnel. But dissent within the membership quickly became a flashpoint at meetings and took the senior staff of IUCN somewhat by surprise. By 2003 IUCN had established staff secondment agreements with extractive industries such as Shell. One effect of this became apparent during the 2003 World Parks Congress, held in Durban, South Africa.[21] During the Congress, IUCN Secretariat staff, seconded to Shell, gave PowerPoint presentations bearing the Shell logo and encouraging protected area managers to establish partnerships with extractive industries, emphasising the resources that the private sectors could bring to protected area management, including skills in Geographic Information Systems, transportation capacity, and 'human resources'. The goal was clearly to encourage fiscally beleaguered protected area managers to see the material benefits of engaging in access agreements with the extractive sector. While these sessions occurred in small backrooms, a larger plenary panel featured executives from extractive industries including Shell, British Petroleum (BP) and the ICMM.[22] Following this session, audience microphones were ordered shut off by IUCN staff as the discussion period began to raise some troubling questions about the environmental impacts of these actors and the potential damage they could cause to IUCN's credibility as an environmental organisation. In subsequent sessions with the extractive industry, audiences were informed that there was no time for questions. The issue of what IUCN labels 'private sector engagement' was also contentious at the 2004 WCC in Bangkok. Two member-supported resolutions instructed the Director General on how to proceed with this engagement and required that it be done transparently and in consultation with IUCN membership. In the intervening four years between the 2004 and 2008 WCCs, I had begun to analyse the intensified process of 'private sector engagement' that had acquired a more concentrated focus within IUCN. It was clear from this work that while there was an explicit commitment of the Secretariat, with the support of the Director General, for more intensified relationships with the private sector, much of the membership disputed the mandate

of the Secretariat to pursue these relationships. The 2008 WCC marked an opportunity not only to 'track' the presence of business, but to follow the related associations and the tensions within and between the various components of IUCN over 'engagement with the private sector' and to observe how this tension would be managed in the context of the Congress. The origins of this work were clearly exploratory but through a combination of participant observation, discussions with key informants and interviews with participants, it became apparent that the WCC served as an instrument in the negotiation of a new organisational order; one that not only sought to legitimate the presence of new conservation innovations and actors (e.g., conservation finance partnerships and extractive industries), but also served to translate otherwise weak, unstable and provisional ties between individual actors into far more durable institutional elements of the organisation.[23] It also became clear that the instrumental character of the WCC, as a site where the personal associations and ideological work necessary for the renegotiation of organisational order occurs, could be read through a set of analytic devices that build upon recent approaches to analysing the performative aspects of governance: structure, orchestration, and spectacle (see Hajer & Versteeg 2005; Hajer 2006).

Structure

Meetings like the WCC are built on intent. Organisers envision objectives, desired outcomes, and seek to manage these in relation to the expectations of their intended participants and a wider audience that will look to the WCC for cues on how to understand IUCN's position within a broader institutional and organisational environment. The selection of the meeting site, the ability and entitlement to attend, the ways in which sessions are organised and designed, the spaces in which they are held[24]—all of these are a function of decisions made by organisers in relation to their objectives, all affect the ways in which knowledge is legitimised and transmitted, and all shape the kinds of interactions that are possible. Paying attention to structure, then, is important to understanding the instrumental qualities of meetings like the WCC.

The organisation of the World Conservation Forum (WCF) is, in some ways, not unlike many academic meetings, though it has more of an 'event-like' quality about it. There are opening and closing ceremonies, for example, but otherwise there are standard plenary sessions, and long days divided into sessions of varying types. During the 2008 WCC there were 972 'events' according to Jeff McNeeley, IUCN's Chief Scientist. Of these, and discounting social events, book launches and film screenings, business-related events made up about 10% of the primary sessions. The process for submitting an 'event' was also not unlike that for an academic meeting. IUCN Commissions were assigned a certain number of reserved slots for Commission-sponsored events, and the Secretariat structured its own events. Otherwise, members were free to submit proposal abstracts for 'Aliances Workshops'[25], 'Knowledge Cafés', and 'Posters', and asked to justify their

proposals in relation to one of the Congresses three themes: "A New Climate for Change", "Healthy Environments—Healthy People", and "Safeguarding the Diversity of Life". A committee within the IUCN Secretariat reviewed the proposals, and session organisers were later notified whether their proposals had been accepted. In the case of business-related events, 53% of the successful proposals were put forward by corporations, trade associations, or business support units within the IUCN Secretariat. The remainder originated from NGOs, and Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs).[26] Not surprisingly, many of these proposals were submitted by organisations with existing ties to the private sector such as the Rainforest Alliance Inc., the World Bank, and the World Resources Institute. The substantive presence of business-oriented sessions during the WCC reflects a substantive ideological shift within the Secretariat, but it also reflects a structural shift in the organisation of the event. In 2008, for the first time in IUCN history, the category 'partner' was included in the list of groups qualified to submit event proposals for a WCC and this led to the inclusion of events that were explicitly organised by private sector actors, who were neither IUCN member organisations nor Commission members.[27]

Most of the business-related events fell under the label 'Aliances Workshops'. These, however, were typically organised more along the lines of panel sessions, rather than workshops, with presenters sitting at the front of a large room sharing knowledge or experiences with the audience. Other events, given the label 'Knowledge Cafés', were much smaller and typically involved groups of 12 or so people sitting around tables arranged in an open hall. Events were heavily descriptive with little analysis or discussion of the relations between production processes and effects on biodiversity, or of the biodiversity outcomes of private sector/NGO partnerships or the application of 'market-based' mechanisms to conservation. On the contrary, events were typically performative and celebratory, or designed to promote particular projects, initiatives, or 'partnerships'. For example, one session with the not-so-cryptic title of "Buy, Sell, Trade!" consisted of participants testing the beta version of an interactive role-playing game designed to teach people how to engage in biodiversity offset markets. This game had been jointly developed by the staff of the IUCN Secretariat and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD), under an advisory board of staff from Earthwatch Institute, World Resources Institute, Katoomba Group/Forest Trends, the US Business Council on Sustainable Development and Fundacion Entorno, as well as a number of WBCSD member companies (Figure 1). Another session, entitled "Transforming Markets: The Private Sector's Role in Securing a Diverse and Sustainable Future", did not deal at all with the constitution of sustainability or diversity, but served largely as a green marketing opportunity for the corporate executives on the panel, and as a means to promote the nature of partnerships between those corporations and the sponsors of the session: TRAFFIC, IUCN and WWF. The session, in essence, became a vehicle for the performance of mutuality and the promotion of partnerships by those who had already heavily invested in partnerships, rather than a mechanism

Figure 1
Sessions like 'Buy, Sell, Trade!' sponsored by the WBCSD and IUCN forestalled debate over issues like biodiversity offsets by focusing participants' attention on specific tasks
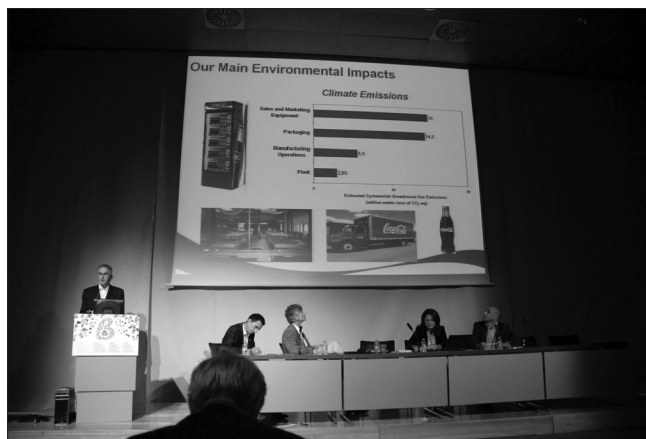

Figure 2
Aliances sessions like 'Transforming Markets: The Private Sector's Role in Securing a Diverse and Sustainable Future' served as a vehicle to promote 'private sector engagement'

for evaluating the effect of those partnerships (Figure 2). Similarly, a Knowledge Café with the provocative title "The Role of Corporations in Biodiversity Conservation, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Greenwashing?" organised by a Spanish environmental consulting firm, became a discussion of the means to access private sector organisations and barely addressed 'greenwashing' until, towards the end of the session, a graduate student observer intentionally asked an apparently provocative question: "Isn't this session supposed to be about greenwashing?" (Figure 3). This simple question brought an awkward silence upon the group, followed by a quiet nervous laughter, but not a response to the question. Again, the audience was a mixture of NGO and private sector employees who had already invested heavily in the promotion of NGO–private sector partnerships and seemed reluctant to question the degree to which NGO/private sector partnerships potentially threatened the capacity of NGOs to claim to be operating in support of the broader 'public interest' in biodiversity conservation.

In addition to the regular sessions, there were also ancillary events. The WBCSD, for example, hosted two of these. One was the 'Business Night School', organised because "the private sector thought it was important to share some of our skills and experience in building bridges with NGOs and with governments. We ran 12 sessions... in business basics, communication, partnerships, and in business impact..., business-led, business experience-sharing in a very successful program" (WBCSD representative, field notes, Barcelona, October 2008); and the 'Future Leaders Team', a programme in which young management trainees of global corporations spent four months piloting and testing a tool developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI), called the Corporate Ecosystem Services Review:

> ... all of us took that methodology back into our companies so basically 25 pilot projects within a four-month period which is a, hopefully, an important contribution to the, to the tool itself, and so that, I guess, commercialization of

this ecosystems thinking, this ecosystem services thinking can happen. So we are very happy to be a part of that. The second part of our program involved preparing for the, this World Conservation Forum. And so hopefully you guys have seen the video, the 'Ecosystems: Everybody's Business' video[28] that was prepared by one half of our team. The other half worked on a scenarios planning session, which was run on Tuesday of this week. Which really just involved trying to project a vision of the future and get people in the room to think about collaboration was going to be needed between the social side and governments and business. So the tool was scenarios planning and scenarios building, but really the objective was to look at the future and how these three groups within society would have to interact to get things done. (WBCSD Future Leaders Team participant, field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).[29]

Apart from the disturbing way in which this young manager has learned to separate 'the social side' from 'business' and 'government', this remark is insightful for the unintended way in which it reveals a commonality that ran through much of the business-oriented sessions of the WCC. Despite the fact that the different types of sessions offered by the organisers were intended to mobilise different forms of engagement among participants, they showed a remarkable tendency to bring together actors and perspectives in ways that facilitated the enactment of coherent discursive configurations. The idea of 'balance' achieved by 'working together' referred to by this young manager was particularly notable, and likely not surprising given the 'team-building' exercise he had just been through. But the exclusion of dissent and the absence of any recognition of the ideological basis of struggles over biodiversity conservation that were apparent in the work of the 'Future Leaders Team' was reflected in the remainder of the sessions I attended during the Forum. During the feedback portion of the "Buy, Sell, Trade!" session, for example, people gladly provided suggestions on the performance of the game,

Figure 3
Participants in the Knowledge Café—'The Role of Corporations in Biodiversity Conservation, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Greenwashing?'

but no one raised a substantive question over the issues that the game eludes, such as the efficacy of offsets in conserving biodiversity. These observations point to the ways in which the artefacts of meetings—the use of PowerPoint technology, the arrangement of seats in a room, the format within which interaction is structured, the actions of a Chair—can act to control the circulation and reception of information, encourage the suppression of dissent, and encourage the disciplining practice of self-control. But the opportunity for engagement, the type of interaction that results, and the possibility of dissent depends, to a large degree, on who is in the room. At the WCC, structuring who was in the room was a highly orchestrated affair.

   One of the most notable aspects of the structure of the World Conservation Forum was the difficulty of navigating through the sessions. Unlike academic meetings, the presenters in each session were not listed by name or affiliation. Sessions were given titles, and locations were provided, but it was impossible to know in advance who would be in the session and what they would, in fact, be speaking about. There were no abstracts. However, the sessions were lent some structural coherence through their organisation into 'Journeys'. 'Journeys' consisted essentially of thematic subprograms—such as the 'Markets and Business Journey', which assembled all the individual presentations related to business, ecosystem services and the private sector, into one coherent programme.[30] Each 'Journey' had 'Guides'; IUCN senior personnel who were responsible for 'charting' the journey and managing a staff who made sure things ran smoothly. While only two 'Guides' were listed for the 'Markets and Biodiversity Journey'—Joshua Bishop, IUCN's Chief Economist, and Saskia de Koning, listed as Advisor, Business and Biodiversity Programme, but actually a secondee from Shell—the 'Journey' was, in fact, guided by a host of employees from the IUCN Secretariat, Shell, and the WBCSD, along with independent business and biodiversity consultants contracted to help with organisation
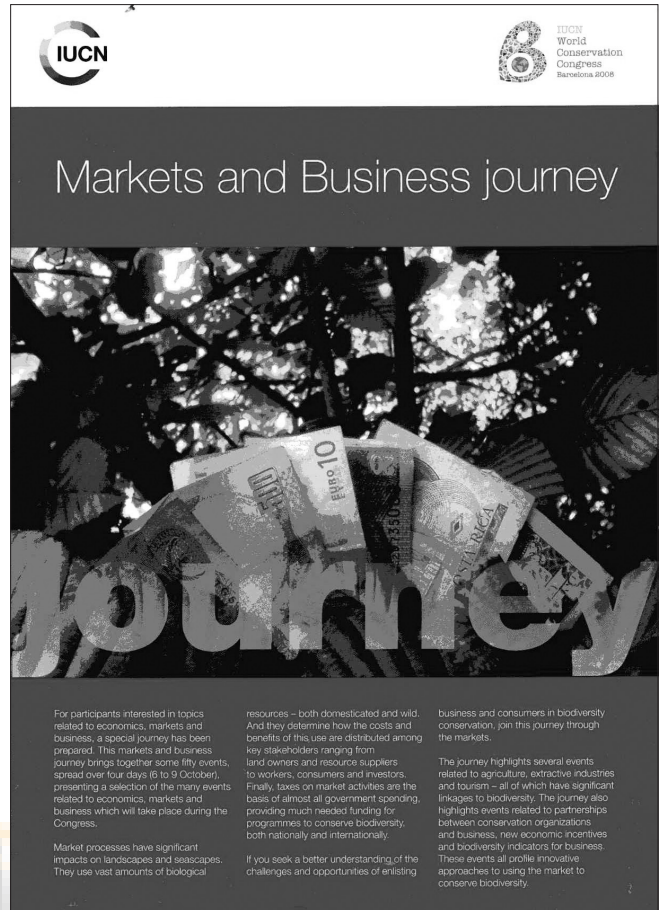

Figure 4
The cover page of the 'Markets and Business Journey' suggested a reworking of the old English idiom 'Money does not grow on trees'

and reporting.[31] Notably, however, journeys were not simply disaggregated events that pieced together random sessions, they were highly coordinated. And it is this coordination, exposed in part through elements of structure, that provides certain insights into the ways in which events like the WCC are orchestrated, the outcomes sought through that orchestration, and how such orchestration can open windows into the ideological and material struggles occurring within the organisation.

Orchestration

While a discussion of the structure of the WCC might seem mundane, it is in the close attention to structure, the individual events, links between them, the organisers, and the participants, that we find the markers that begin to outline the contours of association and coordination.[32]

   And it is in recognising the connections between events that insights into the intent of orchestration become clearer. There is little doubt that the organisers of 'Journeys' at the WCC had intent. The 'Markets and Business Journey', for example was clearly coordinated among people and organisations who have collaborated over the past decade to promote IUCN's Business

and Biodiversity Programme and have served as major anchors in the ideological shift occurring within the organisation. As Frank Vorhies, a consultant brought in to help coordinate the 'Journey', but also the first employee of IUCN's Business and Biodiversity initiative, put it at the 'Opening of the Business and Markets Journey':

> What we're trying to do with this market's journey, is, we've tried to look at three sectors as priority sectors for IUCN. And then three issues related to the economy. The three sectors are agriculture, tourism, and extractive industries... Plus we're looking at three issues. One of the issues is partnerships. The second we call incentives. You might call it measures, instruments, regulations. And the third one is indicators. The first one on partnerships, we're looking at ways in which the IUCN community can work with business and with business actors. The second one on incentives is the IUCN community working on the regulatory and the voluntary frameworks in which businesses operate. For example, international payments for ecosystem services is being talked about today. The third one on indicators is an interesting one for the business journey because how can we take the information in the traditional IUCN community, protected areas indicators, ecosystem resilience indicators, indicators on the status of species, species survival and so on, and use those indicators as instruments for, for business to be better in their biodiversity performance. So you see, three sectors, three themes of economic indicators, and hopefully if you go through some of these events you will come out with a better understanding of how IUCN's community is and could be addressing conservation through addressing market processes, regulation of market processes, business practices and business standards, and so on (field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).

What Vohries does not say here is that the 'Markets and Business Journey' is also a coordinated exercise that has been constructed through existing associations between actors within the IUCN Secretariat, private sector organisations, and government agencies, to extend models of private sector engagement and, as such, is specifically designed to draw actors together in an effort to generate associations around the innovations he describes. A look at the schedule for the 'Journey' clearly delineates the kind of channelling intended by the organisers, as does the description from the journey programme[33]:

> If you seek a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities of enlisting business and consumers in biodiversity conservation, join us on a journey through the markets!
> Throughout the Congress there are many events related to economics, markets and business. Our journey takes you to a cross-cutting selection of these, focusing broadly on major market sectors and key market tools.

> Our journey highlights several events related to agriculture, extractive industries and tourism—all of which have significant linkages to biodiversity. Our journey also highlights events related to partnerships between conservation organisations and business, new economic incentives and biodiversity indicators for business. These events all profile innovative approaches to using the market to conserve biodiversity.
> When you need a rest, you can always stop off at the WBCSD Pavilion and learn more about what the WBCSD member companies are doing to improve their environmental performance. You can also stop off at the Futures Pavilion where fellow travellers will also be congregating to discuss market challenges and opportunities for IUCN.

In some ways the concept of 'Journeys' is akin to 'threading' in online computer conferences or forums. They work through sorting 'posts' into coherent threads to eliminate confusion from competing topics (Kean 2001). But 'threading' relies on the existence of an online archive through which users can, after the fact, read within and across threads to gain a fuller sense of the 'discussion'. The same is not true of channelling tactics like 'Journeys'. Participants are corporeal and limited to the cognitive space of their body. They either attend a session or they do not. If they miss a session, there is no archive to refer to. To the extent that 'Journeys' are designed to 'channel', they orient like-minded people along a path of least resistance that allows them to engage with others in ways that minimise conflict and dissent. It was obvious in a number of ways that the leadership of IUCN anticipated the possible effect of this channelling. The Director General's address, for example, just before closing the opening plenary, described the conference 'Journeys', but encouraged people to engage in what she called 'creative collisions' and to get out of their comfort zone during these days of the Forum.

> It's really important to move in between the different streams and the discussions that arise in them. We depend, IUCN and all of you depend on the cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences and solutions that this forum is going to offer to you. So, this is the only way that we will save the world, change the world, which is really why we're all here with our optimism and energy (field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).

But those 'creative collisions' were hindered in a number of ways. 'Journeys' at the WCC had coordinators, they had booths where participants could congregate, and they had opening sessions in which participants were encouraged to follow the 'Journey' schedule and to provide feedback to the coordinators. Interaction between fellow 'Journey' members was encouraged. Identifying markers were handed out, participants were encouraged to follow specific 'Journeys' by brochures and events programmes that identified the time and location of each relevant event, (as opposed to the full Congress Programme which was only available online) and

they were encouraged to socialise in 'rest areas' explicitly connected to each 'Journey' (Figure 4). All of this created a tendency for each of these sessions to encourage participants to think of themselves as part of a coherent group. During the 'Opening of the Markets Journey', for example, Saskia de Koning had a markedly different message than the Director General:

> [In the Markets and Business Journey programme] you'll find the highlights of the program and the events that we have selected for you; various events around markets and business. But, of course, there are a lot more events related to this topic. But if you want to see those you have to use your guide and find them. The other thing that we have done is we have made this button—you can see them—'nature is our business', but what we want is, we want to create a community related to markets and business so if you might take a pin and have a pin—and you're more than welcome to grab one—and please leave your business card if you can, it would be very helpful to us. So that you will find that if you wear this pin you'll find other people who are part of this journey and you'll be able to recognize them. If you need a rest, like you are doing right now, if you want to stop, if you want to have a break, come over here and you'll find people who are interested in markets and in business, or over there [pointing to another seating area across the Hall] you have the pavilion of the World Business Council on Sustainable Development. You've probably seen that already. They also have people who have an interest in markets and business (field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).

The message here is clear, 'we have prepared a path for you to follow; we have prepared markers that signify an identity, so that you can identify, and identify with like-minded people; we have provided space for you to socialise with like-minded people; and we want to translate personal ties into durable associations that can be sustained after the Congress'. Indeed that seemed to be the effect of the 'Journey'. Following and observing the 'Markets and Business Journey', I consistently found myself in rooms with many of the same people as they followed the journey programme from session to session. In the sessions I attended, there were little if any contentious comments.[34] This was facilitated, intentionally or not, by a programme that failed to identify speakers or the subjects of the presentations. Not knowing that a senior executive from, for example, Coca-Cola, or Shell was going to be giving a presentation in a particular place at a particular time, simply made it much more difficult to target protest, or to challenge the claims that they might make during their presentations. And this absence of dissent made it much easier for participants in the 'Journey' to conceive of themselves as part of a 'community'.

If we define orchestration as the coordination and the intentional act of organising individual elements of larger assemblages such that those individual elements work towards a predefined endpoint, then it seems clear that the organisational tactic of arranging sessions into 'Journeys' was an element in a clear strategy of orchestration, a strategy that involved: coordination over time and space outside of the physical bounds of the meeting space; the channelling of interaction and discussion; and the scripting of narratives and configuration of space in ways that enhanced the likelihood that the desired endpoint would be reached. But in a meeting like the WCC, orchestration occurs across scale and it is productive to ask how the 'Markets and Business Journey' and its coordinating themes, link directly to the broader renegotiation of the organisational order of IUCN that I alluded to above. In some ways, this renegotiation of the organisational order is already clear. When conservation is treated as organised political practice, the empirical evidence showing the degree of 'private sector engagement' with the IUCN Secretariat, the conflict among IUCN members around that engagement, and the actions of both the Secretariat and the Director General in pursuing new paths of private sector engagement firmly set the tone of the Congress before the meeting even convened. From the opening ceremony onwards, one after another, in major addresses during the Congress, the senior leadership of IUCN, in their tone as much as their words, sent out the key message of embracing business that James Kantner very quickly picked up on in his blog[35]:

> Julia Marton Lefevre (Director General): If we want to influence, encourage and assist the world to change, we can only do so when we work together in an efficient and seamless manner, and allow *new partners* to join us.[36]

> Bill Jackson (Deputy Director General): With *biodiversity as our business* we have new people, ideas, but we also have resources.[37]

> Jeff McNeely (Chief Scientist): We've also demonstrated the value of reaching out to *new partners*. Having 7000 people here from many different parts of life has been a very powerful indication of how popular our issues are becoming. Following calls from you, our members, to *work with the private sector*, the forum has attracted the expertise, the resources, the perspectives from numerous parts of the private sector…

> Joshua Bishop (Chief Economist): …*we need to bring in the private sector*, the consumers, the business community generally to support conservation and ecosystem management. And we can't do it alone we have to work together to make this happen.

In these remarks, the senior leadership of the IUCN Secretariat sent a coordinated and clear message to the membership and the private sector regarding both the role of the private sector at the Congress and the future direction of IUCN.[38] In order to legitimise their engagement with the private sector, it was important for the organisation to disseminate a clear message

on the direction they would like to pursue. But to solicit those new partners, it was also important that they convey a sense of a coherent membership uniformly agreed on that direction. This message was also clear in the addresses of the IUCN executive, but it was articulated in a more hesitant tone:

For Jeff McNeely, the WCC was an

> ... illustration of the merging of members, commissions, the Secretariat and partners. Truly a celebration of the one program approach that we've all been advocating… different events sort of merged together, they float together in a seamless action of ideas demonstrating yet again the essential unity of what we all stand for; the importance of not drawing boundaries around the work that we do but *bringing it all together*. Conservation has been demonstrated again as a unifying force, not a collection of silos standing in lonely splendor.

For Bill Jackson,

> ... one of the outcomes of nearly every session of this conference was a sense of how the urgency of our situation was no longer seen as isolated by geography or gender or class or education. *We are all in this together*.

For Julia Marton-Lefevre:

> ... as environmentalists, our time has come. The level of awareness is higher than it has ever been. And while some just talk green, nobody can ignore environmental concerns now. So, in a way, yes, our time has come, but we also have to seize this occasion. We can always do better, but *let's recognize together that we are moving in the right direction* (field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).

Orchestration then, extended far beyond the sessions and the 'Journeys', which were to some extent reflective of the internal politics of the IUCN Secretariat, where different units jockey for position and authority. It was also reflected in the intentional, pre-scripted, and prescriptive narratives of the senior leaders of IUCN who sought to communicate the direction of the organisation, set the tone of the meeting, and establish the basis for a 'new normal' within organised conservation. The message from senior leadership regarding engagement with the private sector was clear in their remarks. Yet for orchestration to gain affect, it requires not just an audience, but also a stage for articulation, in both senses of the word. It requires the production mechanisms of the meeting: the opening ceremonies, plenary addresses, the welcoming of dignitaries and celebrities. This is the realm of spectacle.

Spectacle

Research on the analytic utility of spectacle and celebrity for understanding the cultural politics of contemporary conservation is just beginning (Igoe *et al*. 2010), but it is useful to think of theoretical approaches to spectacle in relation to the work being accomplished by the WCC simply because so much of the Congress is grounded in spectacle and performance. Debord (1967), in his original work on the role of spectacle in mediating social relations, made a number of propositions including the following: Spectacle imposes a sense of unity onto situations of fragmentation and isolation; and spectacle is an omnipresent justification of the conditions and aims of the existing system (i.e., it is an instrument in processes of ideological and material domination which condition people to be passive observers).

From Debord's perspective, the WCC was nothing, if not spectacular. The configuration of visual and aural experiences was clearly designed to impose a sense of unity upon a fragmented audience. The foyer of the conference centre was filled with a series of pavilions, each with their own speaker's platform, sitting areas and video screens. Images of nature abounded, but so did a prevalent visual message: As participants entered the convention centre they looked straight ahead at an image of the globe littered with the names of what are conventionally thought of as some of the most environmentally damaging companies in the world—Shell, BP, Dupont, Newmont Gold, Dow Chemical, Chevron, Mitsubishi. This was the pavilion of the WBCSD. To their right was the visibly trademarked 'Red List™' printed across the wall of the IUCN species pavilion. To their left was IUCN's Forest Conservation Program pavilion with a prominent banner in the foreground proclaiming, "Private-public partnerships can achieve sustainable and equitable development". The mediating signs of a renegotiated organisational order set the tone of the Congress even before participants set foot in the meetings or in the plenary hall.

But it was in the plenary hall that the mediating effect of spectacle took over. The first evening of the Congress began with an opening ceremony steeped in references to a feudal past as the presence of European royalty was announced to an assembled audience who were then made to wait while royalty were 'received' outside of the main hall. The seating of royalty was followed by a procession of VIPs, distinguished by the red neck straps attached to their identification badges (as distinguished from the green of regular attendees). The ceremony itself made a nod to royal courts of the past as musicians accompanied 'larger-than-life' video presentations on the main stage and 'players' planted in the audience 'magically' appeared under soft spotlighting to 'debate' different ideological approaches to what one of them called "the environmental crisis that we all face", their voices reeking with earnestness, suspicion, contempt and crisis. Tumblers whorled across the stage and acrobats spun gracefully as they climbed and wound themselves around five long, red, cloth banners hanging from the ceiling of the stage. One of these was turned after each performance to reveal a reverse side emblazoned with a word, gradually exposing the sequence: SUSTAINABILITY, AWARENESS, EQUITY, BIODIVERSITY AND ACTION. Celebrities like Mohammed

Yunus, David Attenborough (by video), and 'lesser' figures like the Spanish Minister of Environment appeared on stage to address the audience, assuring them that they were doing essential work.[39] In all of this, the orchestrated narrative of the organisers lay under the surface: 'we' are all in this together; 'we' must 'move forward'; 'we' must work with the private sector.

The next morning's opening plenary was equally spectacular. Ted Turner served as the key celebrity[40]; an IUCN partnership with Nokia was highlighted as a way to use mobile communication technology to engage youth in the environmental movement[41]; and a *faux*-debate between panellists, moderated by a South African television host and former CNN International anchor, Tumi Makgabo, was clearly designed to articulate the key conservation conflicts as they are understood by the Secretariat leadership. Indeed, this 'debate' is a useful empirical device in an analysis of the work accomplished by spectacle. For, as much as spectacle serves to mediate, the combined use of sound, image, and space that constitute spectacle also have to be mediated and orchestrated. In this case the use of a television host as 'moderator' of the 'debate' was wholly appropriate as the entire event felt like a skilled television production and watching the 'debate' unfold on stage was much like watching a television programme. Indeed, the entire event came off like a talk show, and was in all likelihood intended to. Further, like a television programme, in which the medium itself defines the limits of interaction, it was made clear from the beginning that the audience at the WCC was there simply to view. The panellists, prompted by the scripted questions of the moderator, could say what needed to be said, and any thoughts or input that the thousands in the assembled audience might offer were of little value. There would be no substantive debate, the audience were not allowed to engage with the panellists, and the moderator controlled the flow and posed the questions. She made this clear from the beginning: "unfortunately, there is no time to open the floor for dialogue but the experience on stage is enough to answer any question". A structured format had been developed and deviation from that 'script' implied excessive risk to the production quality of the spectacle. It also threatened the ordered messaging of a narrated script that ended on a very specific note put forward by Achim Steiner, former Director General of IUCN and current Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and Bjorn Stigson, President of the WBCSD: 'business is part of the problem and part of the solution'. This is a standard line in the rhetoric of business and biodiversity engagement that quite obviously obscures different ideological and material interests between conservation interests and business. But far more important is where this line sits in terms of orchestration. This was the last message that emerged from the opening plenary, leaving people with the role of business in biodiversity conservation on their minds as they went off to engage with the rest of the forum.

Here is an example of the alignment of structure, orchestration and spectacle. The panel was positioned to be one of the key agenda setting items of the Congress, as it drew most of the participants together in a common meeting place. While it had the appearance of a debate, it was effectively scripted in a way that privileged the role of business in biodiversity conservation as one of the key themes of the Congress. The effect of this scripting was reinforced by production practices—the mimicking of a television programme—that imposed a sense of unity on an isolated and fragmented situation by isolating interaction among actors on the stage from actors in the audience. This emphasised the performative aspect of the 'debate', bringing out the latent qualities in an audience accustomed to adopting a docile position when interacting with the medium of television or theatre, and assuring greater control over the messages emanating from the stage as the audience was precluded both by instruction and proclivity from introducing dissent to the scripted narrative. But what is particularly striking is that all of the large plenary sessions of the Congress were orchestrated in similar ways in which moderators, often the Director General, acted as brokers for the audience: transitioning us away from the 'show' of the discussion with the help of a musical and visual interlude, a commercial; and bringing us back in with introductions to subsequent events. Through all of this, the audience sat politely, applauded at appropriate moments and exercised the self-control and self-discipline characteristic of meeting culture. We, as an audience, were part of the spectacle—spectators watching a programme, consuming celebrity in the guise of 'expertise'. But more importantly, we were—in an environment that encourages passivity and reinforces the exercise of self-control and self-regulation—consuming the symbols and narratives designed by the conveners to communicate and justify new aims of the organisation and changes in the organisational order.

Spectacle, orchestration, and structure, as analytic devices, are obviously intertwined. In a world in which image and volume are hyper-valued, spectacular domination acquires a capacity to convey authority and aids in securing legitimacy and position within institutional power relations. Meetings like the WCC have become, in many ways, a theatrical stage upon which actors play out roles designed to advocate positions that they believe are important in the repositioning of the organisation and its ability to secure greater resources. In this world, the legitimisation of actions and authority increasingly requires spectacle, and organisations like IUCN strategically use spectacle to attract the attention of media, circulate self-representations, and, hopefully, their message, and secure the interest of the private sector.[42] They do so in the belief that engaging certain private actors will not only confer legitimacy with superordinate institutions like the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations agencies, but also extend the media presence of the organisation and its capacity to secure new 'partners'. This is one of the reasons for inviting keynote speakers like Ted Turner and Mohammed Yunus to speak at the opening ceremony.[43] They can tell the assembled audience nothing about biodiversity conservation, but their presence can communicate 'importance' and provide access to new sources of material support and credibility desired by

IUCN leaders for both personal and organisational reasons.[44] Ironically, however, the production of spectacle is an expensive proposition and IUCN consistently has trouble securing private sector funds to actually mount the WCC. As one consultant put it to me, a senior IUCN staffer came to him in the months leading up to the Congress and confided "you know we've got these two pavilions, climate change and energy and we don't have sponsors for them. We're in trouble for the Congress. We wanted to have these pavilions, and we don't have any sponsors. Can you help? If we brought you in on a contract could you help us with these pavilions?" (field notes, Bonn, Germany May, 2008).

This relationship between spectacle—designed to secure the interest and the material support of the private sector, and to communicate the message of shifting alliances within the organisation—and orchestration needs to be made clear. The orchestrated narrative, one in which senior leaders of IUCN work to convey the impression of a coherent organisation with uniform objectives which all members of that organisation agree on, is meant to disguise the degree of dissent that exists within IUCN—the ideological and material struggles that take place on an ongoing basis.[45] But my point here is that the desire on the part of Secretariat to convey the impression of a union with common purpose, and uniform agreement on the means to achieve that purpose, is designed to appeal to a corporate model of business management that brooks little internal dissent, especially if it is publicly expressed. In many ways, that model does not understand the kind of debate and ideological and material struggles that legitimately go on within the IUCN—which is, after all, a Union. Rather than read it as a sign of healthy participatory engagement in a debate over organisational direction, they see it as a symptom of dysfunctional leadership. As one oil executive casually said to me when I asked him about his impression of the meeting, "IUCN's a dysfunctional organization, they don't have their act together." When I asked why he thought this was so, he replied, "If they had their act together they wouldn't allow a motion to terminate their agreement with Shell."[46]

It is this desire to secure and engage 'new partners', and to fend off the 'risk' evident in the executive's remarks, that drives the coordination of the script asserting commonality with an IUCN membership, and that fuels the (highly energy-consuming) development of spectacular conservation. Those IUCN leaders engaged in performance know that they are acting; they know that in asserting a commonality, they are engaging in deception; but they also know that frank and open debate and the ongoing presence of dissent within the organisation does not secure legitimacy with those 'new partners' they seek to cultivate. From a corporate perspective, ongoing dissent within the organisation is considered a risk, a potential source of liability and instability, and an ongoing threat to the pursuit of organisational objectives. In a severely restricted funding environment in which private funds have become increasingly important to conservation organisations, it has also become a significant liability for IUCN (cf., Brechin & Swanson 2008). Orchestration and spectacle, then, both

serve to reinforce the self-regulation and self-discipline of conditioned behaviour typical of meeting culture and of effectively limiting dissent through the application of structure. It was no accident that the plenary sessions that brought thousands of IUCN members with vast accumulated experience in biodiversity conservation together in the World Conservation Forum provided no opportunity for those members to speak. It was not accidental that the names and affiliations of speakers and the times of their presentations were not listed in the Congress programmes. It was also not accidental that the opportunities for those members to speak were restricted to random encounters in hallways or in meeting rooms during sessions that were organised into 'Journeys' designed to channel and contain Congress participants. No doubt some individuals broke out of these 'Journeys' and some sessions did engage in substantive debate, but this involved the work and the additional energy of 'swimming against the stream'. All of these elements of structure and orchestration required conscious deliberation, decision, and intent by actors in the IUCN Secretariat and their broader network of associations.

One way, then, of interpreting the WCC is as an expression of the intent of the IUCN Secretariat, but that would be a mistake. It is more accurate to look at it as an outcome of struggles within and between organisational actors, including different units and actors within the Secretariat, Commissions, State and NGO members, and actors, like the private sector, who see IUCN as an organisation sufficiently important, either as a threat or a resource, that they feel the need to attend to it. Therein lies the value of attending to the WCC as a site and object of study, for as much as it can be treated as an important vehicle in organisational change, it also serves as an opportunity to witness the development of associations and to weigh what was said and acted out by individual actors against later representations of the event. Given that the WCC can be read as a reflection of struggle within the organisation, and that there was substantive evidence at the WCC of membership opposition to the way that 'private sector engagement' was being pursued by the Secretariat, the way in which structure, orchestration and spectacle combined to legitimise 'private sector engagement' suggests that substantial ideological shifts are occurring within the organisation and that attending to these changes could provide a greater understanding of how the organised political project of conservation is likely to unfold in the near future. Much of this was in fact foreshadowed by sections of the WCC in which it became apparent that spectacular domination, like hegemony, can never be complete.

THE INCOMPLETENESS OF SPECTACLE AND ORCHESTRATION

Notably, the WCC does contain a component where it is difficult, though not impossible, to invoke spectacle, employ orchestration, and manipulate structure. This is the Members' Assembly, which, unlike the Forum is structured by statute, and where discontent, dissent, and the significant degree of tension between IUCN members and the Secretariat become

readily apparent. This does not mean that the Secretariat, in association with certain members and partners, did not try to use the Members' Assembly to maintain their push for a new organisational order. In her opening address, for example, the Director General continued in the tone she established during the Forum:

> We can take the known path, a familiar and comforting one, where we discuss and argue among ourselves. Where we do interesting work, raise red flags and have a moderate influence. Or we can take the other road, the proverbial 'less-travelled' one, where we embrace rather than resist change. It is a road where we travel with new partners because they represent our reality as parts of the society we were set up to influence, encourage and assist. It is a road where IUCN builds bridges—not necessarily consensus—between diverging interests. It is one where IUCN leads a massive movement, which is the only way to affect the kind of changes needed to save the only planet we have. We don't need to change our mission statement in order to achieve this. We just need to realize that progress is not always linear; that we have to be smart and strategic in the way we make the case for Nature to an ever widening audience; and that we are so much stronger when we work together (field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).

But the Members' Assembly is also where members have the opportunity to speak, within the rules, and challenge this renegotiation. During the 2008 Members' Assembly the overarching point of contention surrounded a number of motions related to the way in which the IUCN Secretariat had engaged with the private sector since the 2004 WCC, but primary among these was a motion to terminate an agreement that IUCN had struck with Shell.[47] While the behavioural qualities of 'meeting culture' held during the Assembly—with members waiting their turn to speak and demonstrating at least minimal respect for the views of other members—there was a definite loosening of self-regulation and self-discipline, particularly in the contact groups designed to establish whether consensus could be reached on the text of motions.[48] Some supporters of the resolution made a clear point that although the Secretariat was worried about their reputation with the business sector if the motion should pass, they did not seem worried about their reputation and obligations to the membership of the union.

Ultimately, the motion was defeated, even though it secured the support of over 60% of the membership. The reason for the failure is revealing. IUCN operates on bicameral principles. One 'house' of the membership is made up of NGOs, while the other 'house' is composed of state members. According to statute, for a motion to pass, it must secure a simple majority in both 'houses'. Despite support from some states, the 'Shell motion', as it came to be known, was voted down by a vast majority of state members. The failure of this motion encapsulates in many ways, the way in which the WCC exposes to view insights into the renegotiation of organisational order

within IUCN that would otherwise be hidden from view. Much of this change is contained in a simple unwritten statement made by Joshua Bishop, IUCN's Chief Economist, at the close of the 'Markets and Business Journey', hosted at the pavilion of the WBCSD:

> We call this the markets and business *journey* to remind people that four years ago in Bangkok we had a markets and business *theme*, and even before that the business community was involved in IUCN Congresses and General Assemblies. And I think I can safely say that it's probably now a permanent fixture; that markets and business are not going to go away in the IUCN agenda and are likely to go from strength to strength (field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).

One effect of the shift in organisational order which, ironically, also contributes to facilitating even greater change, can be found in the reactions of some members, particularly Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), a primary sponsor of the Shell motion, which withdrew its membership in IUCN shortly after the close of the conference, citing their "belief and experience that partnerships between transnational corporations such as Shell and conservation organizations such as IUCN have a disadvantageous effect on community struggles to protect their environment…" and their disillusion with a process that allows states to block the vote of a majority of the membership of IUCN (Bassey 2009). The remarks of IUCN's Chief Economist and the departure of FOEI are indicators that the WCC is an effective vehicle in the renegotiation of organisational order, allowing for declaratory statements and performances of intent and achievement that establish ideological boundaries of 'belonging' for the membership of the organisation. But the FOEI withdrawal is also a sign that the internal contradictions of organisations like IUCN become more apparent and visible through pressures exerted by their external environment.[49] Among other things, this departure serves as a sign that "the restraints, compromises, and accommodations defining the institutional core and rationale" of an organisation like IUCN are subject to failure in networked organisational forms that can dispense with much of the highly formalised systems at the core of bureaucratic organisations (Reed 2001: 142).

CONCLUSION

Conservation is typically treated as ontological, both as practice and as an ostensible movement. At sites like the WCC, leaders of conservation organisations insist that this movement is constituted by the force of some set of relations oriented toward a common objective, and that it is into this movement and its common aims that others, such as the private sector, must be brought. But what becomes clear through turning the ethnographic lens on conservation organisations and institutions is that conservation, in practice, is defined through association—the association of individuals, organisations,

institutions, bodies of knowledge, and interests, that often become most clear in the wake of new innovations. In many ways, 'conservation-in-the-making' is visible only by the traces left as these new associations are being produced—as the implications of innovations for different actors become clear, and as personal ties are institutionally reconfigured into more durable associations. Events like the WCC constitute the political sites where much of that reconfiguration is rendered legible; where the political future of conservation is negotiated; and where struggles over deciding what binds 'us' all together are acted out. It is where, for example, the tension over the articulation of market-based mechanisms of conservation practice becomes visible; where it becomes possible to watch the personal social ties that have been formed around 'private sector engagement' be converted into much more durable institutional arrangements—to become in Bishop's words 'a permanent fixture', no longer so heavily reliant on the vagaries of personal relationships, but written into standard operational practice of the organisation. In this paper, I have suggested that this performative work is predicated, in part, on the act of meeting and the ways in which meetings serve both as sites for the formation of associations and as vehicles that can be structured, orchestrated and represented in ways that privilege certain positions in renegotiating organisational order and accommodating the presence of new actors. In many ways, then, the WCC can be treated as a site in the neoliberal restructuring of conservation: a site where organisational agency can be seen to work towards achieving and articulating the configuration of a new organisational order in which the interests of capital accumulation receive an unparalleled degree of access and consideration in conservation planning and practice; and an event that, in an effort to secure institutional legitimacy, has succumbed so much to the logics and mechanics of spectacular domination that it requires the material resources of the private sector simply to come into being.

While these empirical insights are helpful in contextualising the organisational and, therefore, the operational direction of biodiversity conservation, an equally salient outcome of this work is the way in which it reveals ethnographic practice as a useful means to comprehend events like the WCC, and the normative behaviour they invoke, as a central instrument in the configuration of the organisational order of a movement like conservation in relation to dominant political projects like capitalism.[50] As large meetings have become a key mechanism in the negotiation of transnational environmental governance, and as the stakes in the form of that governance have increased, meetings have also become a site where struggles over the configuration of biodiversity conservation practice play out and a vehicle that can be used to favour certain outcomes in those struggles.

This work also situates the WCC as one node in a broader field site, the spatial and temporal dimensions of which are defined by tracking the relationships that serve as the basis for associations. That such meetings increasingly serve as sites of struggle over conservation policy and practice, and come into being as a function of emerging associations, positions them as important sites for ethnographic fieldwork. It also highlights a need not to focus on congresses or conventions as isolated events but as devices in a repertoire of mechanisms involved in the formation of associations that subsequently acquire the strength and durability to alter organisational order. After all, ideological shifts within organisations occur incrementally, and while congresses, conventions, conferences and similar events serve as crucial sites to witness the interests behind such incremental shifts, associations that facilitate them, and the ways in which meetings can be used as instruments to achieve incremental shifts while creating the impression that these shifts are consensus-based, the only way to acquire a comprehensive view of this process is to situate these events in relation to broader political projects of capitalism and the state. The WCC, after all, was not a 'neutral' event constituted in a vacuum of agency. It had purpose and intent, assigned by individuals differentially situated within, between, and beyond the IUCN Secretariat, its 'partners', and member organisations. Further, there is little doubt that the meeting can be interpreted as a reflection of the current configuration of ongoing ideological and material struggles within IUCN and, by extension, the conservation 'movement'. According to one IUCN senior staff member interviewed during the Congress, the shift to market-based dialogue is dominant in the IUCN decision-making bodies, there is substantial support for 'private-sector engagement' and market approaches, and a group's visibility and credibility within IUCN can be enhanced by aligning with those decision-makers, particularly the Chief Economist and staff dealing with markets and business. This is an important insight because it points to the ways in which the WCC can be read as an expression of influence and authority not just within IUCN but between IUCN and more dominant actors in its institutional environment (e.g., GEF and UNEP). Recognising these translocal relationships and the ways in which associations form in those translocal contexts helps to understand their relative influence in biodiversity conservation policy making. The 2008 WCC provided a notable window into the consolidation of such relationships, perspectives, and processes and their role in shaping the new organisational order of IUCN; one which situates markets, business, and private-sector actors firmly at the core of the Secretariat, if not the membership, of IUCN.

I do not want to overstate the importance of meetings as field sites here. There are many locales in which the reconfiguration of organisational order might be studied. Long-term fieldwork within a conservation organisation, for example, would undoubtedly yield useful insights into the interests behind shifts in organisational priorities. My point here is not to privilege any one field site over another, but to highlight the ways in which the ethnographic study of meetings across time and space offer the opportunity to longitudinally track and document the actors, interests, and processes involved in the renegotiation of organisational order; to identify the ways in which associations that give rise to new innovations stretch across a broad range of conservation actors and organisations; and ultimately to improve the ability to link those processes,

across scale, with ecological dynamics in particular sites.[51] As innovations proliferate in conservation, the boundaries of the 'movement' shift and, for some, create uncertainty about their position within that 'movement'—the 'conservation community'. Questions of belonging arise and assertions of crisis are lobbed. Those who once thought of themselves as being at the core of effective action, find they have been marginalised and those who once thought of themselves as excluded become central. In many ways, the introduction of new innovations to conservation organisations, and the crises of identity they invoke, exposes the degree to which those organisations are sites of ideological and material struggle, and the idea of 'conservation' fraught with conflict. To explain and understand the implications of this struggle, it is important to be present as the relationships and associations that have constituted active conservation over the past decades shift and reassemble, (as they always do), and to engage in what Latour (2007: 11) calls 'the costly longhand of associations'; to track the processes and actors involved in the reassembly of conservation; to attend to events and spaces, like the WCC, where one can track the shape, size, heterogeneity and combination of associations engaged in producing new fields of conservation.

Notes

1. The WCC is divided into two primary sections: the World Conservation Forum (WCF) and the Members' Assembly. The World Conservation Forum is somewhat akin to an academic conference with a variety of organised panel sessions and roundtables, and is accompanied by a trade show of sorts in which conservation organisations and related enterprises display their 'wares'. Following the closure of the Forum, which is open to non-IUCN members, the IUCN Members' Assembly convenes to elect new officers, receive reports from the Secretariat and vote on member-sponsored motions designed to direct policy and practice of the IUCN. The motions process also involves the formation of contact groups around controversial motions in an attempt to reach consensus on a final text before the motion is put to the vote. Historically, access to the Members' Assembly has been limited to IUCN members and Secretariat staff. But at the 2008 WCC it was opened to non-voting observers.

2. James Kantner, is a primary contributor to Green Inc., a blog on NYTimes.com, the website of the New York Times, and was the sole reporter for the New York Times covering the WCC. Of the eight posts he submitted from the WCC, five related to the role of business in addressing environmental issues. Two of those were interviews with the CEOs of Rio Tinto and Shell. There were no interviews with conservation scientists or social scientists, and no coverage in the Science section of the newspaper.

3. Of course, there is always the possibility that the narrative was pre-scripted and developed in conjunction with certain WCC participants. Notably this emphasis reflects Kantner's background as the International Herald Tribune's primary correspondent for European Business Affairs and what he calls the 'business of green'.

4. By modernist conservation I mean the policies, programmes and projects of large international conservation agencies, and national governments. This is not to assign any priority to this work but to distinguish it from the many small-scale conservationist practices that fall outside of this domain.

5. Notably the willingness to expose these 'engagements' is geographically variable. For example, an extremely well-known international environmental organisation which is open to advertising their relationship with a dominant soft drink manufacturer in the US is very reluctant to openly promote it in Europe because of a feared backlash from what it perceives is a more 'radical' and anti-corporate membership base (field notes, Barcelona, October 2008).

6. Since renamed the International Council on Mining and Metals.

7. Steiner has since become Executive Director of the UNEP.

8. Dissent was much more apparent during the Members' Assembly as some NGO members accused the Secretariat of having ignored the constraints the membership placed on IUCN engagement with the private sector through resolutions passed at the 2004 WCC. A number of members I spoke with at the 2008 WCC claimed that this was evidence that the Secretariat did not feel bound by resolutions passed during the Members' Assembly; felt free to pick and choose the resolutions they would act upon and those they would ignore; and would continue to expand private sector engagement regardless of resolutions adopted by the membership.

9. This has become common practice at IUCN, which now has secondment agreements with Holcim Cement, Shell, and the WBCSD. Indeed, one of the organisers of the 'Markets and Business Journey' at the WCC, who was listed as "Advisor, IUCN Business and Biodiversity Programme" is actually a Shell employee seconded to IUCN for two years.

10. This includes groups like the Sierra Club that, while critical of IUCN's agreements with oil companies such as Shell, have established their own partnerships with chemical product manufacturers like Clorox. Notably this agreement became an element in a discursive struggle between camps at the WCC, with supporters of the Secretariat's position on private sector engagement instrumentally referring to the Clorox partnership to question the credibility of Sierra Club-sponsored criticisms of IUCN partnerships.

11. Part of the reason for this failure to grapple with the intersubjectivity of institutions stems from the theoretical and methodological 'path dependency' of the early work in regime analysis (Young 1982, 1994, 1998). It is notable that, even as organisational and institutional ethnography was becoming prevalent in anthropology and sociology, regime analysis was slow to recognise the theoretical and methodological benefits of an ethnographic approach to understanding environmental governance. Some of the reason for this can be found in disciplinary policing that accompanies 'path dependency'. In her own interview-based work on knowledge production in the International Monetary Fund, for example, Martha Finnemore felt that some of her colleagues saw her depth-interview approach, let alone ethnographic fieldwork, as methodologically radical (Finnemore pers. comm. 2004; see Barnett & Finnemore 2004).

12. Notably in her own analysis she continues to adhere to textual analysis and to avoid engaging in sites of interaction in which discourse is not only produced and deployed, but in which the production of intersubjective meaning might be observed. Her focus on intersubjective understanding is also problematic as it avoids engaging with the very real social controversies that are involved in the process of negotiating institutional and organisational order, and analysing how meetings are structured to facilitate intersubjective understanding as a mode of masking those controversies (cf. Nader 1995).

13. Vogler's work represents the very late coming of regime analysts to social constructivist perspectives on nature, again pointing to the constraining quality of disciplinary perspectives.

14. For example, in work that I am undertaking on the CBD, being present at a series of meetings and getting to know activists and state delegates makes it easier to identify when NGO delegates are sitting at the delegates' table and acting as advisors to state delegations, and to track these associations through the process of negotiation. It also makes it possible to recognise that the ability of NGOs to structure certain state positions is partially a function of lack of state resources (or interest) but also a function of personal relationships between sets of actors. In my case, being able to make these identifications has come about by going to dinner with these actors, listening, and learning of the multiple ways in which their lives have connected through space and time; in fact it has helped to understand how the very existence of the CBD called

some of these relations into being and drew people together.

15. Van Vree's (1999) work focuses exclusively on Europe and North America. This is one of its most useful contributions as it highlights that meetings, at least as they relate to negotiations over international environmental governance, have specific cultural origins and that the international negotiating process contains within it very specific traces of European political history. The practices and protocols that govern international negotiations invoke culturally specific norms revolving around relations of authority that are not at all universal, but have spread over time through processes such as imperialism and capitalism.

16. Reflections of this insight abound in popular culture, e.g., the novels of David Lodge or Jason Reitman's 2009 film Up in the Air.

17. One of the most ironic scenes during the WCC occurred towards the end of the opening ceremonies when two young environmental protesters appeared on stage with a banner opposing the destruction, through urban sprawl, of a natural park north of Barcelona. They were quickly rustled off-stage by security. So, here we had environmental protesters being physically removed from the stage of one of the world's largest gatherings of people who self-identify as leaders of the 'environmental movement'. Following Van Vree (1999), this removal would have occurred not because of their message but because of the way in which it was presented, the breach of meeting protocol; in essence the form of the meeting, and the coherence of the spectacle (which was defended by force), superceded the substance of the protester's message.

18. Riles' (2000) ethnographic study of Fijian bureaucrats and activists as they prepare for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing provides a richly grounded analysis of the transcendent social life of 'the meeting'. Thanks to Jessica Dempsey for introducing me to Riles' work.

19. In using the phrase 'association' I am following Latour (2007: 65), who does not use the term to mean some formalised collective of individuals, but to signal "the social", in which "social is the name of a type of momentary association which is characterised by the way it gathers together into new shapes" facilitated by effort, intent and mechanisms that work to shift weak and hard-to-maintain social ties into more durable kinds of links. It is the creation of these durable links—associations rather than social ties—that we see happening through events like the WCC.

20. Later renamed the Business and Biodiversity Program.

21. The World Parks Congress is a gathering of international actors and organisations involved in protected area research and management. It is convened by IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) once every ten years.

22. Formerly the International Council on Mining and Minerals.

23. E.g., to convert the arrangements reached through the fickle personal relations between often-transient staff members and consultants in different organisations into a process for codified agreements seen to be sanctioned by the organisation's membership.

24. With a registration fee that hovered around EUR 400 for most people, the WCC is very much a middle-class affair. Aside from the need for an institutional affiliation to qualify for admission, much of "the world" is excluded simply because attendance is beyond their means.

25. In a nod to the location of the WCC, Aliances, the Catalan word for alliances, was used in the place of workshop.

26. Notably, only one business-oriented proposal was submitted by a governmental agency.

27. Previously, the private sector had gained access through events organised by units with the IUCN Secretariat. The presence of private sector actors as partners at the WCC also represents the 'taking-of-a-stand' by the IUCN Secretariat in a long-running debate between members and some Secretariat staff over a statute prohibiting private sectors organisations from becoming members of IUCN. Most of the NGO members have historically opposed private sector membership, while increasing support for private sector membership has gained ground among Secretariat staff. According to one former IUCN staff member, "What I would argue is when people complained about BP, I'd say 'Shit, we have the

US government as a state member of IUCN so I mean, you know, you know, China's a state member so if we can deal with them, we can deal with anybody.' I mean... you know, there's no angels on this planet".

28. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aa-MWP2F4o

29. What is most notable in this remark was that "Future Leaders" were not at the event to learn, but to instruct, and to network. What is even more notable is the absence of such support to bring other 'stakeholders' to the meeting to present their perspectives on important issues.

30. http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/markets_journey_english_26_sep_2.pdf.

31. In some cases affiliations were difficult to identify, as a number of assistants were secondees from IUCN to the private sector and vice versa. Notably, de Koning, one of the 'Journey Guides', was identified as an IUCN rather than a Shell employee. de Koning was seconded from Shell to IUCN in February 2008 for a period of two years with the responsibility to "build the relationship between Shell and IUCN". She had three main tasks: "i) Assist IUCN in improving its business skills through the transfer of appropriate skills from qualified Shell specialists; ii) Assist IUCN in developing capacity to engage more effectively with business on biodiversity issues; and iii) Support Shell businesses in the identification of biodiversity risks to their business and provide help to address such risks through links to IUCN expertise and networks". (http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_our_work/bbp_shell/bbp_shellsecondment/). Accessed on February 8, 2010.

32. Being in particular places at particular times is particularly important to identifying those markers and the difficulty of covering concurrent sessions at events like the WCC highlights the importance of a collaborative approach, as more individuals sharing observations are likely to identify more of those markers.

33. The Markets and Business Journey programme can be accessed online: http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/markets_journey_english_26_sep_2.pdf. Accessed on August 10, 2010.

34. As an experiment, I intentionally asked what I anticipated would be two mildly provocative questions in sessions I attended and felt a slight hostility directed at me from both the audience and the panel.

35. http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/10/08/the-failing-business-of-conservation/

36. It is widely recognised among IUCN members that "new partners" is a code for "the private sector".

37. "Biodiversity is our business" has become a widely used catch phrase among Business and Biodiversity Initiatives.

38. They are also communicating, through a variety of media, their intent to align their organisational environment with that of other organisations and institutions engaged in transnational environmental governance (MacDonald 2008).

39. Portions of this opening ceremony can be seen online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs4nhph6Y-k. Accessed on February 9, 2010.

40. It was clear that celebrities like Ted Turner and Mohammed Yunus had nothing to say about biodiversity, but that was not their function. They were there to draw attention to IUCN; to confer authority on the WCC by virtue of their celebrity—much as Royalty represented a sort of consecration—and, perhaps most importantly, to facilitate the personal and organisational objectives of the senior IUCN leadership to acquire the kind of access to a transnational capitalist class that can be mediated by figures like Turner, Chair of the UN Foundation, and Yunus, winner of a Nobel Prize.

41. Conveniently forgetting to mention that it always has been 'youth' that have sustained the environmental movement, even in the absence of mobile technology. In fact a case could be made, based on the presentations made during the plenary, that technology is being used as a form of material domination to align the message of 'youth' with that of the (upper) middle-aged folk running large conservation organisations and telecommunications firms, thus robbing 'youth' of their historically transformative and transgressive potential.

42. With an ongoing decline in framework funding, and the lack of a public

profile, the IUCN name has become a point of concern for the Secretariat, which has begun to focus heavily on "brand identity". It was notable during the Congress that IUCN senior staff made a point of noting that the WCC "attracted over 400 media people and they released some 5000 or even more stories and video clips and other things around the world. So we actually reach millions of people around the world who previously had not realised how important our work is to their everyday life".

43. And there is little doubt that what Debord (1990) called the "mediatic status" of figures like Turner and Yunus is what the IUCN leadership sought to exploit. Their remarks certainly had nothing to offer in relation to biodiversity conservation. But that does not matter in a world in which the acquisition of that status confers more importance than the value of anything an individual might be capable of doing and where that status is easily transferable to any other domain of knowledge. Listening to Ted Turner as a key speaker at the WCC, sadly, does not seem strange in a world characterised by the "generalised disappearance of all true competence. A financier can be a singer, a lawyer a police spy, a baker can parade his literary tastes, an actor can be president, a chef can philosophize on the movements of baking as if they were landmarks in universal history. Each can join the spectacle, in order publicly to adopt, or sometimes secretly practice, an entirely different activity from whatever specialty first made their name". http://www.notbored.org/commentaires.html. Accessed on June 6, 2010.

44. When studying organisations it is important never to lose track of the way in which personal aspirations, ambition and desires of organisational leaders shape organisational action, and the degree to which those actions are aligned with the interests of the positions those individuals aspire to.

45. As simple examples we might point to the question of various interests weighing in on how to define 'sustainability' which is said to be at the core of the organisation's mandate, or whether the organisation should revert to the consistent use of 'nature' in the place of 'biodiversity'. Material struggles are much more base and revolve around the allocation of funds between units and commissions within the organisation; or the apparent competition for donor funds between a Secretariat that is largely project-oriented, and most of the NGO members who rely on donor funding for survival.

46. In a rare display of overt activism, the Secretariat actively resisted the motion to terminate their agreement with Shell. This resistance had three primary points: a) termination would cause the organisation to lose revenue of approximately 1.3 million USD; b) it would expose IUCN to potential legal ramifications; and c) it would compromise IUCN's ability to secure future partnerships. The remarks of this oil executive, who was not a Shell employee, would seem to confirm the latter belief, at least for the oil sector. But they also reveal a striking lack of understanding of the organisation in which the Secretariat is meant to service the membership, take direction from the membership, and, by statute, cannot prohibit members from submitting motions.

47. Portions of this agreement can be found online but were only uploaded after significant pressure from certain IUCN NGO members: http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_our_work/bbp_shell/.

48. But even here, Van Vree's point regarding the constraint of affect and emotion was apparent. In one evening contact group created to refine the motion calling on IUCN to terminate its agreement with Shell, about 50 people had been abiding by 'the rules', seeking permission from the Chair to speak, identifying themselves before speaking, offering their contributions and yielding the floor. Towards the end of the evening two Australian delegates entered the room and began to offer input that, while seeming to echo the sentiment of the majority of people in the room, contravened the rules that the chair had established at the start of the evening and engaged with the substance rather than the mechanism of the motion. The response was clear. Murmurs of discomfort among the group were summed by an Australian woman who turned to me and whispered, "where'd the aggro [aggression] come from all of a sudden?"

49. For example, IUCN's position in a wider institutional network of neoliberal environmental governance that confers legitimacy and provides material resources (MacDonald 2008).

50. That conservation is configured around more dominant political projects is not a particularly new insight. There is a wealth of work, for example, that situates 'nature' and its conservation relative to projects of imperialism and nationalism.

51. See MacDonald (2006) for an example of the unintended ways in which a focus on 'market-based mechanisms' in GEF affected a small village in northern Pakistan.

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