

**TRANSNATIONAL CONSERVATION MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS:
SHAPING THE PROTECTED AREA SYSTEMS OF LESS
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES***

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This article compares transnational conservation organizations' efforts in Ecuador, Chile, and Peru in order to answer several questions: Why do transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) engage in the politics of some nations but not others? Do TSMOs shape the policy decisions of less developed nations? What is the relationship between national political opportunity structure and transnational mobilization? Based upon historical data and fieldwork data, I argue that transnational conservationists can most easily affect the policies of politically "open" nations that have active domestic conservation movement organizations. In addition to influencing public policies, transnational conservationists are key actors in the development of private systems of biodiversity protection. Operating according to "lifeboat ethics," TSMOs select nations based on political criteria, while those nations most in need of conservation assistance (biodiversity hotspots) are neglected. This strategy contrasts sharply with strategies used by the transnational human rights movement.

Conservationists contend that biodiversity must be protected to preserve the global "heritage of mankind" (UNESCO 1972). This claim justifies the actions of transnational conservation organizations that cross political borders to promote the establishment of protected areas and national parks in less developed nations. How do transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) choose where to pursue protection strategies? Are transnational actors effective at shaping national conservation policies? Based on a comparison of TSMOs' involvement in Ecuador, Peru, and Chile, I argue that transnational actors are most likely to mobilize efforts and influence conservation policies in nations that have open political structures and well-established non-governmental organizations.¹

In an age of "globalization" when faxes and e-mail ease cross-national communication, examination of social movements must move beyond the nation state as a unit of analysis to address the interactions of a growing number of transnational actors operating at the level of "global civil society" (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Lipschutz 1996; Lipschutz and

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¹ TSMOs are organized actors with members in at least two nations that engage in efforts to promote or resist change beyond the bounds of their national citizenship (see Pagnucco and McCarthy 1992: 125).

Conca 1993; Princen and Finger 1994; Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997; Wapner 1996). Concepts such as political opportunity structure that have been used to analyze the timing and outcomes of national social movement organizations' actions, are being extended to understand the international arena of movements. Recent scholarship identifies the need for understanding how the global political structure shapes national political opportunity structures and national social movements (Jenkins 1995; McAdam 1996; Smith 1995; Smith 1997; Tarrow 1996). The interaction between the international system and the national system is multidirectional. National events influence international events, and vice versa. This analysis takes a step toward understanding one piece of the complex entanglement: the way in which national political opportunity structures shape TSMOs' willingness to enter certain nations.

This study also attempts to extend the analytic concepts used in the comparative studies of movements and states to Latin America, a geographical region rich with social movement activity. Cross-national work has made considerable strides in understanding the role of the state in constraining and encouraging social movements in Europe (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Kitschelt 1986; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Rucht 1989). Studies of Latin America note that as the region shifts toward democracy, "the diversity of resistance and collective struggles has expanded dramatically" (Haber 1997: 129) to include such "new" movements as environmentalism (Eckstein 1989; Escobar and Alvarez 1992). Some Latin American states, weakened by the pressures of the neoliberal economic agenda and severe debt, in periods of uncertainty and instability brought about in the process of democratic transitions, may be increasingly vulnerable to the demands of national and international movement forces (see essays in O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Pagnucco 1996).

The transnational environmental industry appears to have a different dynamic than other transnational movements, especially human rights. Smith (1997: 57) hypothesizes that "transnational movement organizations will form around issues for which national political opportunity structures are relatively closed, or for which purely national solutions are inappropriate." Case studies by DeMars (1997) on humanitarian organizations, and Coy (1997) and Pagnucco (1997) on human rights, support Smith's hypothesis. However, analysis of the transnational conservation movement, a subset of the transnational environmental movement, suggests that this claim is not valid for all transnational movement sectors. Conservation organizations can affect both state policies and the private sector through the establishment of private conservation areas. Human rights protection, by contrast, has no private dimension; it must be addressed by the state.

Transnational conservationists view their selection process as a pragmatic, rational approach to producing results. Often, political variables override biodiversity status. For example, the worst off politically (such as Zaire and Ivory Coast, both biodiversity hotspots) are by-passed in favor of assisting partners in nations that are open and contain organizations that are already working for conservation (such as Costa Rica and Botswana, neither of which are biodiversity hotspots). The consequence of this is that TSMOs may not be collaborating with partners in nations that are most in need of help from a biodiversity perspective. TSMOs engage in a form of lifeboat ethics, whereby possible "survivors" are brought on board the conservation lifeboat while other countries are left to drown. While public aid agencies have been blamed for promoting uneven development, TSMOs that follow similar patterns of interaction may be contributing to uneven conservation. Transnational human rights efforts seek to raise the bar for those at the bottom; transnational conservation actions contribute to increasing differences in biodiversity protection. If these trends continue, we can expect a growing gap between ecologically protected and ecologically depleted nations.

THE TRANSNATIONAL CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

Like transnational organizations for human rights, women's rights, and peace, transnational conservation organizations are growing both in numbers and strength (Smith 1997: 48). As an issue, conservation has generated cross-boundary concerns since the 1972 United Nations' Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. It has led to the establishment of transnational organizations, the enactment of three major pieces of international legislation, as well as a number of non-binding international efforts, including the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity.

Transnational conservation organizations share the belief that the loss of biodiversity is a global problem that can be ameliorated through the protection of land. They base their actions on the work of conservation scientists who predict that biodiversity loss will be one of the greatest global problems of our era (Myers 1994). Examples of conservation TSMOs include the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Conservation International (CI), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Of these, each have headquarters in the Washington, DC area, have partner organizations in other nations, are not for profit groups supported by private donations, and fund and implement conservation projects around the world.²

The dominant strategy to protect biodiversity is to establish protected areas, such as national parks, in less developed countries (LDCs) (WRI et al. 1992; IUCN 1990). Transnational organizations transfer funds to their partners in LDCs through grants and innovative mechanisms such as debt-for-nature swaps. In a swap, a transnational organization buys a portion of a developing country's debt in exchange for a commitment to environmental projects and establishing a "conservation trust fund." This reduces the developing country's foreign debt and provides funding for the conservation and management of protected areas, usually channeled through a nongovernmental organization in the developing nation. In the period from 1987 to 1992, twelve nations were the recipients of twenty-two transnational debt-for-nature swaps. Debt-for-nature swaps provide an illustration of how an aspect of the international economic condition-level of external debt-structures TSMOs opportunities for engagement. Nations that are unable to repay their debt are considered bad bets for swaps; countries that are ably paying back their debt do not appear to need assistance; those in the middle are most often targeted for swaps. McAdam (1996) suggests that research on movement opportunities needs to be more attentive to the international system in this way.

In terms of conservation interests, transnationals target LDCs because they contain many plant and animal species and high rates of endemism. This is one of the "great ironies of conservation": nations rich in biological diversity are the least able to protect it because they are poor (McNeely 1991). Eighteen "biodiversity hot spots" contain twenty percent of the planet's plant species in only 0.5% of the land surface of the earth (Myers 1988, 1990, 1994).

KEY COMPONENTS TO EFFECTIVENESS

This study tries to explain two aspects of TSMOs' activities: how they choose nations to work in and their levels of effectiveness. To understand effectiveness, the analysis focuses

² These organizations work within a broader conservation "issue network" (Sikkink 1993) that also includes inter-governmental organizations and private foundations. Sikkink (1993: 415) defines an international issue network as "a set of organizations, bound by shared values and by dense exchanges of information and services, working internationally on an issue." The network conceptualization differs from that used here and by social movement theorists who problematize the interaction among TSMOs, government agencies, foundations, and elites (see for examples Pagnucco and McCarthy 1992; Smith 1995).

on the establishment of policies and practices that improve conservation. A rich and extensive literature differs on how to define and measure social movement "success" or "effectiveness" and why some social movements succeed while others fail (Gamson 1975; Goldstone 1980; Huberts 1989; Jenkins and Brents 1989; Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Kitschelt 1986; McAdam et al. 1996; Rucht 1989; Smith et al. 1997; Tarrow 1989). Definitions of success range from organizational accomplishments, such as membership growth, to legitimacy issues, such as having a movement's ideas accepted into mainstream life, to political aspects, such as influencing policy makers to change policies. TSMOs have influenced domestic policies on issues such as human rights (Brysk 1993; Sikkink 1993) and indigenous rights (Brysk 1996) in Latin America. They have also succeeded in shaping the funding decisions of more developed nations for development projects (Payne 1995) and in transmitting ideas to national leaders that were "causally consequential for the end of the cold war" (Risse-Kappen 1994: 213). In the following sections, the literature that examines the broader transnational environmental movement and its role in shaping the choices of nation states will be highlighted (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Rothman and Oliver 1999; Schwartmann 1991).

Both program directors of conservation TSMOs and social movement theory suggest that two variables are key to understanding TSMO engagement and effectiveness in a nation: (1) the degree of political openness, and (2) the pre-existence of conservation actors.

Transnational conservationists indicate that the most desirable nations in which to implement projects are democratic and politically stable.³ Political criteria even outweigh biodiversity criteria. For example, one director commented that despite Zaire's tremendous biodiversity, its political instability and perceived levels of corruption would prevent his organization from working there because efforts in such countries do not yield results. This corresponds to nationally-oriented social movement theories.

The multidimensional concept of "political opportunity structure" (POS) has been used to explain both of the dependent variables in this study: the entry of social movement actors into a period of engagement and levels of social movement success (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; McAdam et al. 1996). Definitions of the concept vary among studies though most include the following four sub-variables: (1) openness or closure of polity, (2) stability or instability of political alignments, (3) presence or absence of alliances, and (4) division among elites that might provide more tolerance to protest (Tarrow 1989). POS is multidimensional and captures a wide array of variation in the political system. The concept reflects conservationist concerns in choosing appropriate locations for activity.

POS has been a key framing tool for comparing national level social movements cross-nationally. In particular, the distinction between "open" and "closed" political systems has been emphasized in a number of important cross-national studies. Kitschelt's (1986) comparison of antinuclear movements in France, Sweden, the United States and West Germany and Rucht's (1989) comparison of the environmental movement in West Germany and France both found that "political openness" contributed to social movement organizations' success. For Rucht and Kitschelt, openness is a function of how possible it is for organizations to participate formally in political procedures. Closed systems provide fewer institutionalized means for grievances to be heard. Smith et al. (1997) suggest that this national process does not translate to the mobilization of transnational organizations, though conservationists suggest it does. Another aspect of the open/closed dimension that is relevant to effectiveness is that states with open structures are usually less able to enact policy (i.e.,

³ Interviews were conducted in Washington, D.C. during 1994-95 with ten representatives from the transnationals that most actively participate in transnational conservation activity: CI, TNC, and WWF.

are weaker), because of their decentralized access points, while closed states are often more able to implement policies due to their centralization of power (i.e., are stronger) (Kriesi 1995, Payne 1995, Risse-Kappen 1994).⁴

A number of theorists have been developing an expanded notion of the concept of POS to encompass international structures (Pagnucco, 1995, 1996; Smith 1995; essays in Smith et al. 1997; Tarrow 1998). Smith (1995) and Pagnucco (1995) apply POS at the international level to understand the opportunities of transnational organizations. This work differs from theirs in that, rather than try to understand the international political opportunity structure, I try to understand how transnational organizations react to the national political opportunity structures. Nonetheless, one must acknowledge that the international POS affects the national POS. TSMO research illustrates the "nested" nature of the political opportunity structure: "Local political opportunity structures are embedded in national political opportunity structures, which are in turn embedded in international political opportunity structures. These nested structures create the possibility for very complex patterns of relationships among actors" (Rothman and Oliver 1999: 43).

Two examples from the transnational environmental movement illustrate how national governments are vulnerable to the international system. Much has been written about the successful partnership between North American and Brazilian NGOs in the creation of "extractive reserves" in Brazil for the use of rubber tappers (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The chain of activity in this and cases like it is complex: A TSMO, the Environmental Defense Fund, in collaboration with local social movement groups from Brazil, lobbied the United States Senate Appropriation Committee which, in turn, convinced an international lender, the Inter American Development Bank, to suspend payments on a road project in the rubber tappers' region of the Amazon until environmental conditions were met (Schwartzman 1991). Keck and Sikkink (1998) point out that part of the success of this type of strategy is that international organizations have leverage with national governments. Thus, "[T]ransnational networking help[s] to amplify local demands by resituating them in different arenas with more potential allies" (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 144; see also Tarrow 1994: 195-6). Elsewhere in Brazil, similar processes have taken place. Rothman and Oliver (1999) demonstrate how mobilization for the anti-dam movement changed from the period from 1979 to 1992 as a result of a number of factors, including linkages between local and international groups and shifts in national politics from authoritarianism to democracy. Again, a consortium of northern and southern NGOs pressured both the U.S. Congress and the World Bank to temporarily withdraw loans from the Brazilian government's program to build proposed dams on the basis of their negative social and environmental consequences (Rothman and Oliver 1999). These two examples show how national governments may be more responsive to TSMO concerns when TSMOs are able to bring issues into the international arena. Conservationists have not often used this strategy.

A second key variable that transnational conservationists and movement scholars have identified to understand transnationals' engagements and their levels of success is the degree

⁴ While the notions of stability/instability and elite division are not treated systematically here, literature in comparative politics suggest that this is a fruitful arena to study especially in the context of Latin America where the transitions to democracy are characterized by uncertainty and instability that may provide opportunities for social movement actors (see O'Donnell et al. 1986). Pagnucco (1996: 15) summarizes Rucht's (1990) division of political opportunity structure into two categories: "(1) formal, institutional, opportunities; and (2) conjunctural or changing opportunities." This analysis focuses on the first type. While the research shows that social movements often emerge during democratic transitions, it is likely that the content of these movements is centered on social and economic issues, such as human rights and unemployment rather than environmental issues.

to which domestic social movement organizations already work in the issue area, with more established social movements providing better conditions for transnationals (Brysk 1993; Sikkink 1993). This corresponds with work on human rights. In a comparison of the human rights networks in Argentina and Mexico, Sikkink (1993) argues that an "international issue network" makes a difference in whether or not governments formulated and followed human rights policies, however external pressure was not enough. "Because domestic human rights NGOs are a crucial link in the network, where these groups are absent. . . international human rights work is severely hampered" (Sikkink 1993: 435).

Directors of conservation programs also see national NGOs as a crucial link.⁵ To them, NGOs symbolize democracy and civil society. They perceived greater opportunities in Latin America than in Africa because Africa has less of an NGO tradition. When NGOs are absent, transnationals' only choice is to work with the government. They prefer not to do this. The best NGO partners were well-respected with political connections. Transnational conservation organizations look for domestic NGO allies much like domestic movement organizations seek alliances in the domestic sphere (allies are one of the four sub-categories in Tarrow's [1989] POS scheme).

In the empirical analysis, I evaluate the following proposition: Transnational social movement organizations are more likely to *engage* in activities and *succeed* in influencing policies and practices in nations that have open political systems and social movement actors than in nations with closed political systems and few social movement actors. Table 1 summarizes the expected relationships.

Table 1. The Relationship between POS, Existence of National NGOs, and TSMO Willingness to Engage in a Nation's Politics

Existence of National NGOs	Political Opportunity Structure	
	Closed	Open
Absent	TSMOs least likely to engage or succeed	TSMOs likely to foster development of NGOs
Present	TSMOs unlikely to engage; difficult for NGOs to "officially" emerge	TSMOs least likely to engage or succeed

CASE LEVEL EVIDENCE

The relationship between the transnational organizations and domestic conservation policies and practices are explored through a comparative study of Ecuador, Chile, and Peru from the 1970s to the 1990s. These nations are similar in that they contain areas classified

⁵ NGO and social movement organization (SMO) are used interchangeably.

as biodiversity hot spots. They differ in terms of the history of their domestic policy structures, strength of domestic NGOs, their conservation policies and practices, and the presence of transnational conservationists. Conservation transnationals have worked most extensively in Ecuador and least extensively in Chile. However, the degree of interaction has varied in these nations over time as the domestic political structures have changed.⁶ The cases illustrate the interrelationships between political openness, NGO presence and TSMO engagement and effectiveness.

Ecuador: High Level of Transnational Interaction

Ecuador boasts the highest percentage of land protected of any nation in the world (39%). Its protected area system is best known for the Galapagos National Park, established in 1959. Since that time, Ecuador's protected area system has grown tremendously through the addition of fifteen conservation units primarily in its Andean and Amazonian regions.

Domestic Political Structure. Most of the land conserved in Ecuador's protected area system was declared protected by the nationalist military government in the period from 1972 to 1979 by "inter-ministerial accord" (WCMC 1992). During this period, Freedom House rated Ecuador in the range from "partly free" to "not free."⁷ On the input side, the regime was closed, but in terms of its ability to enact policies, it was strong. The military took over in 1972 to "transform oil returns into reform and development" (Anderson 1990: 35). The military's conservation actions were largely focused on the petroleum-rich region of the Amazon.⁸ In Ecuador, over fifty percent of the state's budget is generated by oil extraction (EIU 1993). It is likely that the military was motivated more by economic goals than ecological ones given that these areas were not sufficiently protected.

Ecuador shifted from a closed and strong state, to an open, fragmented, and weak one when the military ceded power to the civilian government in 1979 and Ecuador's status changed to "free." The fifteen parties of the constitutional, democratic government provided many points of entry, but limited power to establish and execute policies.

The civilian government inherited a number of "paper parks." Paper parks exist in law, but receive little to no funding, have few guards, and lack demarcated boundaries. Illegal economic activities such as mining and logging, also routinely take place in paper parks. Often, the government is responsible for resource extraction in parks, providing licenses for mangroves to be felled in a coastal park, and permitting oil extraction. Mining is present in five protected areas, and six of the national parks have commercial logging (WCMC 1992) despite the Forestry and Wildlife Law of 1981 which prohibits petroleum exploration and other forms of extraction within the protected area system.⁹ In many cases, the policies of resource extraction agencies, such as the Ministry of Energy and Mines, are in conflict with the policies of the agency in charge of protected areas. The former agencies' policies usually take precedence (WCMC 1992), the latter having "little importance, . . . [and] virtually no power to interact and negotiate with other Government agencies" (GEF 1994: 2). In addition

⁶ The cases are based on field work and seventy interviews with members of the environmental and conservation organizations in Quito, Lima, Santiago, and Washington, D.C. during 1994-95.

⁷ Freedom House compiles an annual report. *Freedom in the World*. A summary of this report from 1972 through 1998 was provided by Leonard R. Sussman from Freedom House.

⁸ By law, the state owns all sub-surface minerals. By establishing protected areas in the Amazon, the state secured its control of the region.

⁹ An unintended consequence of this law is that boundaries to Yasuni National Park have been adjusted a number of times to open areas to oil exploration (Fundacion Natura 1993: 44).

to the government's willing exploitation of these areas, funding was not assured to the park system because of the state's other economic priorities, including external debt. So, despite its seemingly impressive system, the military left the civilian government a protected area system that was in shambles.

NGO Presence. Social movement organizations have been influential in convincing the government to take policy actions in relation to protected areas. Fundacion Natura (FN) is Ecuador's oldest, largest, and most respected conservation organization. Founded in 1978, FN received the majority of its early funding from USAID (Fundacion Natura, n.d.). Since the mid-1980s, when FN was one of only a handful of environmental organizations in Ecuador, there has been tremendous institutional growth; today there are hundreds of environmental NGOs. Part of this growth is a response to local environmental damage, including oil contamination in the Amazon and deforestation in the western region of the country. However, much of the NGO growth was spurred by an influx of transnational investment in Ecuador's biodiversity.¹⁰ This complicates the analysis since TSMOs did not respond solely to a group of organizations that had emerged without transnational support but to organizations that had been supported by conservation "network" actors, such as USAID. A second critical event that contributed to the growth of NGOs was that the government changed the rules for registering as an NGO, making it easier for organizations to be officially recognized as nonprofit groups. This legitimized NGOs and encouraged engagement in the political process.

Transnational Organizations. TSMOs have had a measurable impact on the amount of land protected and on the quality of the protection in Ecuador. Since Ecuador's military era, the international conservation network has supported NGOs and governmental agencies that work for conservation. In 1991, Ecuador ranked fifth in the world in the amount of funding it received for biological diversity research and conservation projects from public and private donors in the U.S., receiving \$4.5 million in that year alone (Abramovitz 1994). The private recipients of these funds have, in turn, been agents for adding areas to the protected area system and in managing the system. TSMOs have selected "competent" NGOs to work with and through, "competence" being judged in part by the organizations' prior contact with the international network. For example, in the case of FN, the conservation network—specifically USAID—had provided considerable support to build FN's institutional capacity. Prior network contacts gave NGOs legitimacy and affected TSMOs' choices. In other cases, when organizations were needed to take on tasks specifically required for international financial transfers, such as biological inventories required as part of the debt swaps, the network helped establish new organizations with these capacities. This happened with EcoCiencia, an NGO that broke off from FN shortly after the debt swap.

Two recent examples of TSMOs' interactions in Ecuador illustrate the manner in which transnational organizations have shaped and are shaping domestic conservation policies through domestic NGOs. First, in 1987 and 1989, two transnational organizations—the Nature Conservancy and World Wildlife Fund—initiated two swaps in Ecuador which generated \$10 million dollars in local currency to establish and manage protected areas. Funds are channeled through the transnationals' associate, FN, for its own uses and for distribution to other domestic NGOs. The swap funds are used, in part, for protecting and managing protected areas and for acquiring small nature reserves of extraordinary biological diversity. Parks included in the program are Galapagos and Yasuni, and the Pasochoa Nature Reserve.

¹⁰ The amount of resources available from outside sponsors for conservation increased after the first debt for nature swap in 1987. This aided the rapid proliferation of environmental organizations. This is a classic example of what resource mobilization theorists would expect.

These swaps have two important effects: (1) they support the management of parks that had been paper parks; and (2) they contribute to shifting responsibility away from the government to private organizations by channeling funding through domestic NGOs rather than through the government agency in charge of managing protected areas. Even though the government was not taking responsibility for having a management program in all of its parks, the transnationals, by way of NGOs, shaped the government's management policies by enforcing protection as a condition of the swap. The government had not been attending to protected areas; presently domestic NGOs are-with the support of transnational organizations. The transnationals are thus contributing to the "bifurcation" of political spheres discussed by Rosenau (1990).

A second example also demonstrates how TSMOs affect government policy via domestic NGOs. In 1991, the domestic NGO Fundacion Antisana (FUNAN) was organized in Quito with the sole purpose of establishing a protected area around the Antisana volcano. Funding for FUNAN came almost exclusively from the Nature Conservancy. After three years of preparing scientific justifications for establishment, researching property rights, acquiring private land, and lobbying government officials, this organization succeeded in its task. In 1991, the Ecuadorian government declared Antisana an ecological reserve and FUNAN entered into a joint government-NGO agreement that allowed them to manage the area. This would not have occurred without transnational support. Current funding for the management of the reserves comes in large part from the Nature Conservancy. Domestic NGOs were again the key link between the transnationals and changes in the states' conservation actions. A consequence is that public lands are being privately managed. Another strategy of protection further contributes to the privatization of biodiversity. TSMOs are increasingly seeking the establishment of private parks, by-passing the state altogether by supporting organizations, such as Fundacion Maquipucuna, which has purchased land to establish the private Reserva Maquipucuna. In cases such as this, public interest groups are taking over state functions.

The director of an umbrella organization for Ecuadorian environmental organizations stated, "The presence of international organizations is absolutely necessary in Ecuador. They obligate the government to act." Ecuador has been the recipient of a large amount of assistance from the international conservation network. TSMOs in the network have chosen well in choosing Ecuador. Its open government and strong NGO presence (supported through prior contact with the network) have contributed to transnational organizations successfully meeting their goals of establishing new protected areas (public and private) and improving the management of existing parks.

Chile: Low Level of Transnational Interaction

Chile falls at the other end of the spectrum from Ecuador. The international conservation network has not engaged in Chile in a noticeable way, nor have transnationals influenced Chilean park policies. Chile has received very little aid from the international conservation network.¹¹ The closed political system and the lack of conservation organizations account for much of the transnationals' distance from Chile.

Chile's protected area system has developed more autonomously than Ecuador's. The first park was established in 1907, one of the first in South America, and the system is

¹¹ In the period from 1981 to 1988, Chile received only \$334,275 from U.S. sponsors (Castro 1989:63). Chile's 1989 funding from the U.S. for conservation and biodiversity projects totaled only \$222,111; and in 1991 this jumped to slightly over \$1 million (Abramovitz 1991, 1994). This is meager in comparison to other biodiversity hotspots.

famous for Easter Island and the national park Torres del Paine near Antarctica. Unlike the trends in Ecuador and Peru in which the majority of protected area units were established after 1972, Chile had a number of parks by this time." Nonetheless, Chile's protected area system has grown in the period from 1972 to 1993: twenty new areas were added to the system (although the percentage increase of land protected was relatively small—2.4%, 2 million hectares). During the 1970s -1980s, Chile was viewed as a leader in conservation; international leaders declared Chile's protected area system the "best system in Latin America" (Castro 1989: 53). Relatively speaking, Chile's parks are well managed. The protected areas are not paper parks: CONAF, the agency charged with managing parks, has a budget of around US\$2.4 million annually and employs twenty-five professionals, seventy maintenance and administrative employees, and 340 guards (Ormazabal 1994: 9, 18). The parks are demarcated and have ample infrastructure, including a five star hotel in Torres del Paine.

Despite this, the system has a number of common problems. The state's commitment to the system has been inconsistent. Since the 1980s, yearly budgets for the park service has been decreasing due to macro-level economic changes. In addition, despite Chile's prior star status, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre reports, "Infringement of protected areas by private timber and mineral companies is a major problem. . . . Areas designated for protection are often also designated for other incompatible uses by other government institutions" (WCMC 1992). Resource-led economic development has moved Chile into the economic spotlight, but at a cost to environmental conservation (Clapp 1998).

Domestic Political Structure. From 1973 to 1990, General Pinochet's military government ruled Chile. Freedom House rated Chile as "partly free" and "not free" throughout the military era. During that period, Chilean citizens had limited access to the political process and were discouraged from joining together in collective action. Chile's system was "closed"—citizens did not have access to the government or rights to free speech (see Garreton 1986, Oppenheim 1993).¹² Chile was also shut off from the international conservation dialogue that was emerging as the popularity of environmentalism grew. Conservation NGOs did not emerge during the 1980s, as they did in other Latin American nations, and consequently transnational support did not follow. Another structural limitation in opportunity has been the absence of institutional incentive for philanthropy: Chile's tax structure does not encourage charitable contributions.

Despite the lack of contact with the international conservation network, during the democratic years of the early 1970s prior to Pinochet's rule, Chile did receive transnational assistance to its protected area system. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization supported a project in Chile to establish scientific management plans and establishment plans for its protected area system. The Chilean military government used its strength to follow out the FAO plan in the 1980s. The state operated autonomously, using the guidance provided by FAO's study.

NGO Presence. Political repression limited the development of NGOs and as a result, the conservation NGO sector in Chile is considerably weaker than Ecuador's or Peru's. When

¹² Ninety-two percent of Peru's areas were established after 1972, and eighty percent of Ecuador's.

¹³ While the regime was largely closed, it did suffer from periods of economic crisis brought on, in part by foreign debt. In these periods of instability, the opportunity for protest are increased (Garreton 1986). However, as I argue earlier, it is likely that during such periods, movement attention would be focused more on human rights and economic issues than one environmental ones.

¹⁴ Another possible explanation for the lack of a strong conservation movement is that CONAF, the state agency for protected lands, has had a strong and effective hand in managing the protected area system.

TSMOs explore Chile as a possible nation to work in, it does not look promising. Only one Chilean organization is focused on conservation. *Comite Nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora* (CODEFF), the oldest environmental group in Chile (officially recognized in 1968), has very little influence with the government, and unlike the dominant conservation organizations in Ecuador and Peru, does not have name recognition in the general public. Even before Pinochet, Chile's civil sector was considered weak (Garreton 1986). NGOs are not afforded much respect in the Chilean political culture in general. A former director of Chile's park system described environmental NGOs as groups of "young, idealistic and opinionated students who offer no solutions, only criticisms." Unlike Ecuador where NGOs assist in park establishment and management, in Chile, the state operates autonomously.

Transnational Organizations. Chile is far less connected to the transnational conservation community than either Ecuador or Peru. Of the "big three" U.S.-based transnational conservation organizations (TNC, WWF, and CI), only WWF supports a project in Chile, and it is small. None of them have regional offices in the nation and their Washington, D.C. headquarters were unable to supply me with conservation contacts or names of Chilean NGOs. Chilean park officials comment that international funding has never been influential in Chile's park system. NGOs in Chile believe that they have been unable to get the attention of the international conservation network because the network has demonstrated a bias toward protecting tropical forests, not temperate forests (the forest type identified in Chile as a hotspot).

Another reason transnationals have looked elsewhere is that Chile appeared financially successful. Its relative success kept transnational organizations from using the debt-for-nature swap because they could not get the "biggest bang for their buck." The irony is that Chile has managed its very high debt, in part, by cutting back on government spending, including funding for protected areas, and by selling state-owned corporations. These strategies have lowered Chile's debt and improved its position in the international financial community (EIU 1994a: 40). The unintended consequence is that, unlike other South American countries that used their debt problems to broker debt-for-nature swaps, Chile could not attract potential swappers because its debt was never significantly discounted on the secondary market. Even if a swap had been financially feasible, there were few non-governmental institutions with the capacity to manage it.

With the recent opening of the political structure, private reserves have been established through *Fundacion Lahuen*, an NGO founded in 1991 by a group of North Americans and Chileans. *Lahuen* uses the Nature Conservancy's strategy of buying land and establishing private reserves. Others are also attempting to use this private strategy. Doug Tompkins, former CEO of *Esprit*, the clothing company, has bought 270,000 hectares of land with which he intends to create the world's largest private natural park. Though a 1994 law was written to encourage this type of action, the government has contested Tompkins's motives. The government's attack on Tompkins raises a complex question about the rights of foreigners to protect land in Chile. Interestingly, the government has not raised the same question about the rights of foreigners to extract natural resources. In the same period that Tompkins purchased his land, *Trillium Corporation* from Bellingham, Washington purchased 625,000 hectares to cut trees to produce wood chips for export. The government is subsidizing *Trillium* with a tax holiday and subsidized workers (Larrain 1995). The juxtaposition of Tompkins and *Trillium* suggests that protected area policies are not just about land conservation, but they represent key resources to states concerned with economic development. Having private organizations manage state lands may be acceptable (since the state still has rights to the lands), but allowing private organizations to purchase resource-rich lands raises issues regarding the control of resources.

The transnational actors that were such a strong force for conservation in Ecuador were far weaker, and almost absent, in Chile. In Chile, international support in the 1970s built on the strengths of the existing protected area system, and FAO's plan provided a blueprint for the military government to follow in the 1980s. During the military period, domestic NGOs did not emerge. Chile's relative economic success, "tropical forest deficiency," closed political structure, and missing NGO link, have kept TSMOs out of Chile in the 1980s and 1990s. This is changing, however, as the political structure opens (currently Freedom House rates Chile as "free") and as Northerners, in particular, become more involved in Chile's private parks.

Peru: Medium Level of Transnational Interaction

The case of Peru is very similar to the case of Ecuador with some notable exceptions. Both nations have received a great deal of transnational support and have witnessed growth in their environmental movement sectors in the last ten years. However, unlike Ecuador, Peru does not have a large protected area system to boast about. Transnational agents have been thwarted by the state and work even more directly with NGOs than Ecuador. NGOs are moving into state territory, literally, in that they have taken on the management of protected areas. The responsibility has shifted markedly from the state to private citizens in "civil society." While this shift provides short-term solutions for protected area management concerns, there are no assurances of long-term support for these groups by transnationals. The conditions of support are not solely in the hands of the NGOs, but also rely on state stability and openness, factors which are outside the control of NGOs.

Peru's protected areas system is small, and has not changed much over the last twenty years. Depending upon which sources are used, the percent of land protected ranges from 2.1 to 4.3 percent, below the South American average of 6.4 percent, and below Ecuador's 39% and Chile's 18%. It is also below average in terms of the amount of land protected in an absolute sense; Peru has protected only 4 million hectares. Its most famous areas are Machu Picchu (established in 1981), which is better known for its human history than for its biodiversity, and Manu National Park (established in 1973), in the high-biodiversity Amazonian region of the country.

The dominant feature of the state's management of the protected areas is its lack of administrative capacity. The state agency in charge of the system (INRENA) is severely underfunded. Its 1994 budget, \$278,690, falls short of the \$10 million operating budget recommended by a national commission (Ministerio de Agricultura 1995), and barely pays the salaries of the Lima staff (who only have 3 month contracts), let alone being sufficient to hire and train park guards or build infrastructure. Like Ecuador, Peru contains a number of paper parks. Only four of Peru's national parks receive management; the other areas have no permanent management personnel (GEF 1995). Members of Peruvian NGOs underscored INRENA's lack of stability and institutional continuity by noting that INRENA calls NGOs for information, such as maps of the protected areas. As in Ecuador and Peru, the agency's staff are institutionally constrained in that resource extraction is permitted to take place in protected areas with the approval of the relevant ministries (USAID 1995).

Domestic Political Structure. Since 1968, Peru's government shifted from military rule (1968-1980, Freedom House's "not free" to "partially free"), to democratic rule (1980-1992, "free" to "partially free"), to authoritarian rule (1992, "partly free"), and back again to what observers call "pseudo-democracy" (1993-present, "partly free"). With each change came a shift in Peru's relationships with influential countries and with international financial institutions. Peru has suffered from high external debt (\$21 billion in 1990) and failure to

honor its debt commitments (EIU b). The International Monetary Fund and private banks have repeatedly attempted to institute strategies to cut state funding (Conaghan and Malloy 1994). Peru's instability in the eyes of the international financial community shaped transnational conservation organizations' interactions in Peru (for a discussion of Peru's relationship with international banks see Cotler 1986 and essays in McClintock and Lowenthal 1983).

As in Ecuador and Chile, the military government in Peru established a large proportion of the areas protected (eight of twenty-two). A former chief of the protected area system believes the military established these areas out of a sense of pride: "They wanted to leave their mark on history. The period from 1972 to 1979 was the golden age for the establishment of protected areas. We had a strong government with a sense of patrimony, and they were efficient." The military government left its mark on paper, if not on the ground with infrastructure, boundaries, or guards. Since that time, the fiscal crisis of the state has kept Peru from effectively managing its paper park system.

NGO Presence. A number of capable conservation organizations operate out of Lima and have taken on the state's task of managing protected areas. Like Ecuador's Fundacion Natura, Peru has a dominant conservation organization, ProNatura (formerly Fundacion Peruana para la Conservacion de la Naturaleza) which receives the majority of its funding from U.S. TSMOs. In 1994, ProNatura received more than six times INRENA's budget to manage protected lands and alone accounted for 60% of the public and private funding for protected areas.¹⁵ ProNatura currently has projects in five of the nation's seven national parks. In Manti National Park, for example, ProNatura and APECO, another NGO, both have management and education programs.

Transnational Organizations. The transnational conservation network worries that Peru's biodiversity will be lost forever if it is not properly managed. From the U.S. alone, Peru received two million dollars in 1989 for conservation and two and a half million in 1991 (Abramovitz 1994). However, many organizations in the broader conservation network have been frustrated by their efforts to work in Peru. The World Wildlife Fund attempted a three million dollar debt-for-nature swap in Peru but were unable to successfully broker it because of Peru's debt problems and its poor position in the international economy. A representative from WWF commented. At that time Peru was not exactly on great terms with the international community. So it is understandable that they would be very apprehensive . . . As it turned out we never did a swap there because the Peruvian government could never decide on what terms they wanted to offer, then the auto-coup [the "self-coup" of President Fujimori when he dissolved the congress], and [there were] all kinds of problems. So we put our concern somewhere else." Peru's political instability was, in part, brought about by debt politics. The international political opportunity structure and domestic structure were tightly woven.

With the return to greater democratic stability, two of the leading TSMOs, WWF and CI, have now established field offices in Lima. Their efforts are focused primarily on improving the management and classification of existing areas.¹⁶ Former chiefs of the protected area system direct both of these organizations. When transnationals fund NGOs, they are able to bypass the state bureaucracy while at the same time relying on NGO staff to know the system.

¹⁵ In the period from 1985 to 1994, ProNatura received almost \$6 million for work in protected areas (Ministerio de Agricultura 1995). I was unable to find comparable figures for the state's system as were researchers for the German Aid Agency (GTZ), further illustrating the state's lack of capacity for basic tasks such as record keeping.

¹⁶ CI's staff is attempting to upgrade the status of Zona Reservada Tambopata-Candamo to national park; however, Mobil Oil has discovered oil in the region and is attempting to get a concession from the state.

The state's reaction to the growing strength of NGOs has been negative. Jealousies exist between the state and the NGOs that have played out in some public denunciations in the media. The state is in a difficult situation. In renegotiating loans, it has agreed to cut funding of public services, including the environment. The IMF's neoliberal solution to the debt crisis has made it inevitable that, on its own, Peru cannot service its debt and effectively manage its protected areas. Large environmental NGOs, with the help of TSMOs, have filled the gap created by government "downsizing." The state views NGOs not as heroes come to save the planet, but as competitors for the same sources of funds.

In Peru, TSMOs have been thwarted from helping the state establish more protected areas since it does not currently have the capacity to manage its existing areas. Consequently, TSMOs work almost solely through NGOs by supporting their management of protected areas that already legally exist.

IMPLICATIONS

Transnational conservation organizations are most likely to enter the national politics of countries with open political structures and active non-governmental organizations. Where they enter, they make a difference in conservation policies and practices. Transnationals have contributed to the establishment of national parks and to the management of protected areas by domestic NGOs. These NGOs are a key link in drawing transnationals. As in human rights interactions (Brysk 1993) and transnational feminist interactions (Alvarez 1997), conservation transnationals "amplify" (Brysk 1993) existing national organizations, creating the conditions for continued interactions.

TSMOs' lifeboat strategy is to assist those who have the capacity to help themselves. Conservation TSMOs would prefer to focus solely on biodiversity priorities, but when they are confronted with concrete political constraints and opportunities, they strategically react. As a result, politics often override biodiversity concerns. The unintended consequence is that while possible "survivors" are brought upon the conservation lifeboat, those nations that are biologically rich but politically closed are left to possibly "drown." As TSMOs avoid non-democratic nations, the alternatives for such nations to achieve conservation goals are limited.

In seeking a parsimonious explanation, it is tempting to conclude that TSMOs' entry into nations is dependent on national conditions (political opportunity structure and the density of NGOs). However, the situation is complicated. As is evident in the case of Peru, national POS is tightly linked to a nation's international financial status. Peru's political instability was at least in part brought on by its debt difficulties. The case of Ecuador illustrates how NGO strength is not simply reliant on the domestic factors because Fundacion Natura's strength was financed by other conservation-network players such as USAID. Thus, international interactions, in part, shape national political conditions. National political conditions are the proximate, not the ultimate, cause of TSMO's entry. Prior international interaction can prevent or ease TSMO's decisions to enter.

The conservation movement contrasts sharply with the human rights movement in which TSMOs enter where abuses are worst and systems are most closed to domestic actors. Transnational human rights organizations are drawn to repressive regimes where there is "little political space" (Coy 1997: 87). (It is unlikely that open states have poor human rights records). Unlike the human rights case, this research suggests that an open POS will allow for mobilization of transnational conservation actors in the same way it can permit the mobilization of local SMOs. Conservation transnationalists target states and non governmental actors. In open states, private actors can protect land. Smith (1997: 73) and her collaborators note, "If [TSMOs] see governments as nonresponsive or intergovernmental agencies as too

complex or difficult to reach, organizers often choose alternative paths to the changes they seek," such as changing individuals' and economic actors' views and behaviors. A private system of land protection is more viable than a private system of human rights.

While open structures are more inviting to transnational conservationists, open states tend to be weak and without the resources or capacity to carry out policy mandates. Because of this, TSMOs have shifted their target from changing public policy and practices to improving the capacity of private agents to manage public land and promoting the development of private parks. Creating a system of private conservation that parallels and bypasses the state's has been effective in Ecuador, Peru and other nations in Latin America and Africa (Langholz 1996); however, it presents many possible pitfalls. The dangers are fourfold. First, the public loses access to land and control over its use. While this is often the case even in the establishment of public parks (Akama, Land and Burnett 1995; Ghimire 1994; Harmon 1987; Marks 1984; West and Brechin 1991), in theory citizens can complain to the government and seek change. In private parks, locals who wish to use the land must voice concerns to private groups or individuals who have no obligation to respond to their concerns. While conservationists differ from those for-profit groups involved in privatizing other state activities in that one expects conservationists to act in the public interest, their primary concern is with the preservation of biodiversity not with public access to land. Second, the public does not necessarily perceive parks as legitimate if they are supported by foreign sources. This may lead to poaching and other uses considered undesirable by conservationists. Related to this, movement opponents may frame parks as foreign-led initiatives even if indigenous NGOs support it. This type of argument surrounded Tompkin's park in Chile and is apparent in other Latin American nations, most notably Brazil, where there is tremendous skepticism over foreign conservation interests in the Amazon. Third, the system of private protected areas is unsustainable as long as it relies on the continuity of foreign funding since political instability may cause donors to flee. Sustainability is subject to the maintenance of a stable and an open political structure to continue receiving foreign funding. Finally, some states resist privatization because it threatens their sovereignty; they favor private management of public lands.

Unlike the transnational environmental and human rights movements, the conservation movement has not used the strategy of appealing to international agents to pressure national governments. The dominant reason is that conservationists' concerns are less threatening and their actions may actually benefit the state financially in the long run. For example, in the cases of Ecuador and Peru, the state had already enacted a policy for protected lands; conservationists' problem was that the policy was not being implemented. Rather than ask the state to make any real changes, the conservationists offered to provide state services through domestic NGOs. This differs dramatically from asking a state not to build a road or a dam. Ironically, rather than counter "economic development" plans, conservationists may be protecting land for future economic development (such as oil and timber extraction), thus doing the state a favor. In the future, conservationists may be less successful in preventing resource extraction in these areas unless states use international funding through organizations such as the World Bank.

National governments' use of international capital has made them more vulnerable to TSMO demands, in general. In this article, the relationship between states' financial strength in the international arena and their resistance or acceptance of TSMOs's concerns has only been briefly touched upon. Historically, Ecuador and Peru have been far weaker than Chile in terms of their debt burdens and their standing with the International Monetary Fund. Ecuador and Peru's debt conditions (high debt and loan defaults) made them more vulnerable

to transnational agents' entry into their politics than Chile.¹⁷ Debt is one leverage point for transnational agents but is not the only way to examine a state's international economic power and vulnerability. Empirical research on international political opportunity structure should systematically examine the relationship between economic crises and state vulnerability to transnational movements and should identify other ways to assess international opportunities. The literature on world systems, dependency, and transitions to democracy provide useful starting points (see for examples O'Donnell 1986 et al.; Walton and Ragin 1990).

Social movement theorists recognize that national social movements are shaped by national political contexts. This study suggests that national political contexts are also a key to determining whether transnational organizations engaged in national conservation policies. It also suggests that national contexts are at least in part shaped by international conditions. Future research should continue to examine where TSMOs engage and where they do not, and to explore whether openings in the political structure trigger entrance of TSMOs in nations whose citizens' claims about their social and ecological problems (i.e. their "grievances") are constant. In an age of globalization, the degree of openness of a nation's political opportunity structure has deeper implications than in a time when states were primarily the targets of national movements. Similarities and differences between transnational movements should also be examined. National civil society is tied to global civil society. If nations in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere continue to democratize, the role and influence of transnational organizations in national politics is bound to increase.

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¹⁷ These conditions also make it easier for profit seeking groups, such as the IMF, to enter a nation. Based on this one could hypothesize that a correlation exist between TSMO and IMF engagement in a nation.

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