

Examining the Influence of News Media and Public Opinion in International Institutions:
A Political Communication Approach to Studying International Organizations

By

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*For international students who feel lost and struggled in academia,
you will find your way.*

This is dedicated to you.

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Abstract

The overarching theme of this dissertation bridges the disciplines of international relations (IR) and political communication by examining how the news media and public opinion influence the formation of global institutions and policies within international organizations (IOs). Chapter 1 first situates the news media as a nonstate actor within IR's major paradigms of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, then discusses major communication theories on the press' influence in foreign policymaking. It ends by proposing a framework on how the news media and public opinion affects IO policies. Chapters 2 and 3 delve deeper into how the news media influences a powerful IO — the World Bank — using as primary case the Bank's evolving policies on aid transparency. These two chapters respectively present qualitative (process causal) and quantitative (variance causal) evidence of news publications effectively pressuring the World Bank to discuss and institute accountability reforms. Chapter 2 uses archival research to present the mechanism of presumed media influence within World Bank policymaking, while Chapter 3 employs time-series analysis to show patterns of agenda setting and framing effects from the *New York Times*, despite other sources of Bank pressures. Finally, Chapter 4 is a normative essay on the public's future role in making IOs more accountable. It introduces a framework of issue politicization that disentangles public contestation from elite contestation, thereby clarifying the pathways of transforming multilateral issues from having high consensus to being highly contested, or vice versa. With faster issue politicization due to social media, the final chapter calls for IOs to embrace hybrid media diplomacy, move past traditional public relations, and actively diagnose and address misinformation related to international cooperation. It ends by discussing potential areas for future research in the political communication of IOs, with a view that scholarship needs to be more cognizant of increased mediatization of global politics.

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Chapter 1. News, Public Opinion, and International Relations¹

On June 1, 1980, Ted Turner greeted the crowd assembled in the front lawn of the former Progressive Club building in Atlanta, Georgia. The ceremonies launching the Cable News Network (CNN) were about to start, and his speech was the first image to be broadcast live in the channel. Turner told the audience, both in person and at home, that three flags are flown in front of the building, which by then was CNN's new headquarters. One was the state flag of Georgia, and another the United States (US). The third flag was quite unexpected: a sky-blue banner with a world map and two olive branches. Turner explained why he chose to also raise the emblem of the United Nations (UN):

We hope that the Cable News Network, with its international coverage and greater-depth coverage, will bring both, in the country and in the world, a better understanding of how people from different nations live and work together, and within the nation work together, so that we can perhaps, hopefully, bring together in brotherhood and friendship, in kindness and peace the people of this nation and this world. (Napoli, 2020, p. 206)

Since then, media and communication scholars have considered the political and global impact of the first all-news 24-hour television channel. Those supporting the “CNN effect” claim that the advent of the 24-hour news cycle altered the information equilibrium by giving audiences immediate access to foreign events, thereby pressuring state leaders to decide more quickly.² Most of these early works were anchored on CNN's perceived influence in the US government's humanitarian efforts to Somalia in 1992 (Strobel, 1997; Livingston & Eachus,

¹ Parts of this chapter were originally published as journal articles in *New Media & Society* (Dumdum, 2021), *Political Communication* (Dumdum & Bankston, 2022), and *Global Perspectives* (Dumdum, 2022). These are reprinted here in accordance with the respective publishers' rules on the appropriate use of copyrighted materials.

² The coinage of “CNN effect” is not attributed to a single study. However, one of the earliest scholars who made this argument was Lewis Friedland (1992) in his book *Covering the World: International Television News Services*.

1995). Others, however, are more cautious, concluding that the news outlet's impact is more conditional and less straightforward (Gilboa, 2005; Robinson, 1999). While the concept specifically refers to CNN and the political impact of real-time broadcasting of events around the world, the CNN effect more broadly reflects the long-standing debate on the press' role in foreign policymaking (see B. C. Cohen, 1963). For both international relations (IR) and communications scholars, studies on the CNN effect peeled layers of the relationship between foreign policymakers, the public's opinion on foreign policies, and the news media (Robinson, 2011).

This dissertation continues with that tradition of theorizing the influence of news media and public opinion in IR. As a subfield of contemporary political science that is "clearly distinct from national politics" (Reiter, 2015, p. 485), IR studies how multiple states interact in seeking to maintain cooperation and balance of powers within a global environment of anarchy (Buzan, 2018). Along these processes, states attempt to create international institutions, or "*sets of rules* meant to govern international behavior" (Martin & Simmons, 2012, p. 328 italics original). With IR's concern for inter-state relationships, studying the news media and public opinion touches on the relevance and power of nonstate actors in international institution formation. Defining a nonstate actor in politics, however, is very slippery. Scholars point out that the simplistic categorization of nonstate and state actors according to their societal functions may be misleading and problematic. As Kruck and Schneiker (2019) elaborate, "the former, such as NGOs, businesses... or even warlords, may provide 'public' functions and are therefore perceived as somehow 'public' actors..., whereas state actors may follow 'private' (market) logics" (p. 4). Further, some political scientists also consider international organizations (IOs) implementing inter-state rules as nonstate actors, even if these are formed by multiple states (see

Milner, 2009). Particularly, *intergovernmental* organizations like the UN and World Health Organization are seen as “semi-autonomous: public actors but not – strictly defined – state actors” (Josselin & Wallace, 2001, p. 2). As a remedy, this dissertation adopts Josselin and Wallace’s (2001) definition of a nonstate actor as “at least in principle autonomous from the structure and machinery of the state, and of the governmental and intergovernmental bodies below and above the formally sovereign state” (p. 3). Here, a nonstate actor can be situated domestically or transnationally, but cannot be understood as a transgovernmental network.

In mass communication, one important domestic or transnational nonstate actor comes to mind: a state-independent news media. As a form of mass media, the news media can be broadly conceptualized as any entity (state-affiliated or independent) that delivers to a mass audience current or valuable information (i.e., news) produced in various formats (e.g., print, audio-visual, or digital) according to prevailing journalistic standards and norms (e.g., editorial gatekeeping, accuracy, fairness, etc.). Since several news media organizations maintain social networking accounts to post news, the public often fails to distinguish the difference between the news media (e.g., CNN or the *New York Times*) and social media (e.g., *Facebook* or *Twitter*) as primary sources of news. Strictly speaking, social media merely affords the news media the ability to deliver news; they do not produce original journalistic content. Regardless of this seeming confusion from the public, this dissertation is more concerned about the role of state-independent news media as the primary sources of political information.

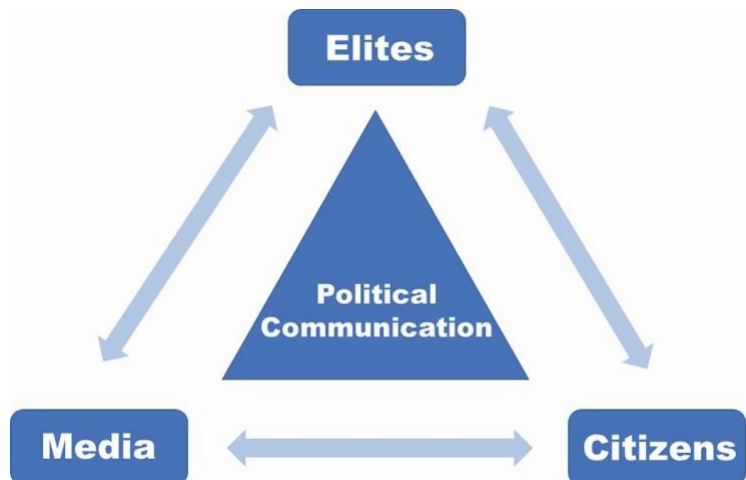
With IR’s peer subfield of comparative politics elevating the news media as a political institution, at least in democratic societies (Cook, 2005; Overholser & Jamieson, 2006), most of IR discussions of the news media’s role are pegged within the domestic politics of foreign affairs. Borrowing from political communication research, political scientists have explored the

influence of mass media on foreign affairs issues at the state level, which then affects the strategic crafting of foreign policies that, in turn, will have consequences on inter-state interactions. For example, Baum and Potter's (2008) framework on foreign policymaking theorizes the mass media as having distinct, often conflicting preferences from either state policymakers or the public. Highlighting media's independence and role as trader of information between the two actors, this framework, however, still confines media's effect within national boundaries as a first-order outcome, leaving much room for theorization of media's direct transnational role in maintaining balance of powers and international cooperation. Another example is the "CNN effect" (see also other studies on the press' role in IR in Gillespie, 2006; Savrum & Miller, 2015; Thompson, 1987). Given this narrow emphasis of media effects at the state level, it is no wonder that there is limited to no acknowledgement of the news media as an important nonstate actor in global politics as gleaned from introduction to IR textbooks or course syllabi. Nonstate players privileged to be part of IR's canon include multinational corporations, which are important players in international political economy (Gilpin, 1987); interest groups and nongovernmental organizations or NGOs (Keck & Sikkink, 1998); policy and knowledge-based experts, known in IR as "epistemic communities" (Haas, 1992); and even religious institutions (Huntington, 1993).

In political communication, the political sphere is conceptualized as a three-way interaction involving the elites, media, and citizens (see Figure 1.1, taken from Dumdum & Bankston, 2022). Of these three main players, Perloff identified the citizenry as "the centerpiece of political communication" (2013, p. 31), with their power manifested in varied forms such as public opinion and political behavior. Citizens' centrality in political communication partly owes its theoretical foundation to the notion of "public sphere" by Habermas (1962/1989), who argued

that the gathering of private citizens for reasoned and egalitarian discussions facilitates the public's self-assertion in societal governance. Hohendahl notes that in Habermas's theory, the public sphere neither refers to constituent representation in public office nor citizen's performance of state functions: "The state and the public sphere do not overlap... Rather they confront one another as opponents. Habermas designates that sphere as public which antiquity understood to be private, i.e. the sphere of non-governmental opinion making" (Habermas et al., 1964/1974, p. 49, note 2). While other scholars insist that the public sphere comprise the state (e.g., Schudson, 2012), political communication researchers find it more useful for theoretical development and application to distinguish the state — an entity run by elites who possess power and influence in political affairs — from its constituents as the non-elite public (see Perloff, 2013; Zaller, 1992, 1999).

Figure 1.1. The Interplay of Political Communication Actors



Source: Dumdum & Bankston, 2022, p. 267

Unlike the news media, citizens' views and political behavior are already integrated into major IR theories, albeit not conceptualized as a nonstate variable but *sui generis* — a class by itself. For example, Putnam's (1988) two-level game, where state leaders are situated as negotiators simultaneously in the international and the domestic spheres, highlights the public's ability to constrain the leader's decisions in foreign affairs. Here, domestic ratification need not be formal (e.g., undergo legislative process) but can also be informal, as measured through public opinion (Conceição-Heldt & Mello, 2017). Another theory involves domestic audience costs, which illustrate how state leaders justify their commitment's credibility to attack, back down, or further escalate by saying that their hands are tied by their domestic constituents (Fearon, 1994). These theories, including Baum and Potter's (2008), already signify the importance of public opinion in international institutions.

In sum, the news media and public are important nonstate actors in global politics, yet their roles in IR and political communication literature have been confined mostly within domestic spheres, thereby having limited conception of these actors' political consequences at the transnational level. To address this theoretical gap, this dissertation aims to contribute towards a more expansive understanding of the news media and public's *direct influence* in global governance. In applying political communication's three-actor framework, the studies in this research project focus on the press and public opinion's influence in IOs, considered here as political elites given their ability to "participate in the creation, implementation, and interpretation of substantive rules" comprising international institutions (Martin & Simmons, 2012, p. 329). This dissertation further limits the scope of IOs to *intergovernmental organizations*, or IOs involving two or more sovereign nations seeking to advance common interests. (From this point forward, "IO" and "intergovernmental organization" will be used

interchangeably, while transnational organizations independent from state authority will be referred to as *international NGOs*.)

The choice of IOs as a variable of interest in this dissertation can be attributed to two reasons. First, having previously worked as consultant in the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, I have deep, first-hand knowledge on the inner workings of IOs. This allowed me to exercise a significant degree of reflexivity as a researcher, which became extremely helpful in bridging theory and actual practice. I was also cautious in addressing ethical issues that may have arisen during the research process. For example, while the World Bank may have a hand in partly funding this dissertation (small grants came from the New Zealand government but administered through the Bank), the IO gave me full research autonomy and did not impede in any way on the formation of my critical arguments and conclusions. Apart from my lived experience working in IOs, the second reason pertains to the theoretical significance of examining IOs using the lenses of IR and political communication. IO scholarship is a major subfield in IR, while IOs as political elites have been examined to a lesser degree in political communication because of the field's preoccupation on state-level politics (see Dumdum & Bankston, 2022). As I show in succeeding sections and chapters, the power of news media and citizens becomes more compelling when scholars investigate both political actors' transnational influence in IOs.

Dissertation Plan

This dissertation has four chapters — each respectively providing the theoretical, qualitative, quantitative, and normative dimensions in investigating the news media and public's influence in IO policymaking. As readers would note, however, there is a conscious effort to focus more on the news media's role in shaping international institutions, as this has been arguably explored to a lesser extent than public opinion in IR literature. The remaining sections

of Chapter 1 aim to situate the news media within the scope of IR and public policy scholarship, thereby bridging the theoretical perspectives of political communication and IR. To provide a sense of the news media's current placement in IR literature, the immediately succeeding section presents a scoping review of how this nonstate actor has been part of the conversations in IR's three major theoretical paradigms: *realism*, *liberalism*, and *constructivism*. This is followed by a discussion of the media's influence in international policies by teasing out the different stages of the policymaking process vis-à-vis the three media effects theories of *agenda setting*, *issue framing*, and *presumed media influence*. With this rich array of scholarly perspectives, the final section of Chapter 1 proposes a framework that guides the theoretical mechanisms of the news media and public opinion's influence in IO policymaking.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide deeper analysis of the relationship between the news media and one of the most powerful IOs — the World Bank. Using as primary case the evolution of the Bank's pioneering policies on aid transparency and accountability from the 1970s to 2010, these two chapters respectively present qualitative (process causal) and quantitative (variance causal) evidence of news publications effectively pressuring the World Bank to discuss and institute policy reforms. Relying on records from the World Bank Group Archives, Wisconsin Historical Society, and other archival sources, Chapter 2 presents the mechanism of presumed media influence within IO policymaking by showing a pattern wherein the World Bank starts seriously addressing issues from aggrieved community beneficiaries, internal Bank staffers, external policy experts, and state officials once such issues make it to the pages and programs of news outlets. Six events in the chapter show how World Bank policymakers presume that negative news reports affect the thinking of its major shareholders, i.e., governments that pool resources into the IO, and this presumption compels the Bank to act accordingly. Meanwhile, Chapter 3

employs time-series analysis to explain patterns of agenda setting and issue framing effects from the Bank's competing stakeholders, including the news media. Granger causality tests reveal that while the World Bank's aid transparency discussion had a two-way interaction with that of either policy intellectuals or political elites, it was a different case for the news media. Negative news coverage of the Bank from the *New York Times* was found to influence the Bank's accountability discussion, and not the other way around. Taken together, both chapters imply how agenda setting, issue framing, and presumed media influence operate in actual IO policymaking.

Finally, Chapter 4 is a normative essay exploring the public's role in making IOs more accountable in the social media age, where traditional news media is not any more the primary source of political information. It introduces a framework of issue politicization, which traces how multilateral issues evolve from having high consensus to being highly contested, or vice versa, and elaborates the need to disentangle public contestation from elite contestation. The chapter further argues that the faster pace of issue politicization is aided by the political ecology of hybrid media, where citizens using social media are incidentally exposed to foreign affairs news, resulting in a different kind of political learning and public engagement muddled with misinformation. It also calls for IOs, as the primary advocates of multilateralism, to embrace hybrid media diplomacy, move past traditional public relations, and actively diagnose and address misinformation related to international cooperation. This chapter ends by discussing potential areas for future research in the political communication of IOs, with a view that scholarship needs to be more cognizant of the increased mediatization of global politics.

It is hoped from these chapters that doors will open for more interdisciplinary conversations between political communication and IR. As a first step, both disciplines need to move beyond a states-centric perspective in their current research and conceptualize the news

media's direct and immediate influence beyond national boundaries. Political communication can turn to IR in expanding their focus of political elites beyond state leaders, and it can also inform IR of its rich theories institutionalizing the press as a nonstate institution (distinguished from civil society or public opinion) with global political effects. This dissertation shows the possibility of merging both disciplines by using political communication's three-actor model in analyzing the news media and citizens' influence in shaping international institutions.

News Media in International Relations Theories

This section presents a scoping review of the news media's different roles as conceptualized in IR's major theoretical paradigms. While such roles are mostly viewed as peripheral and passive, the IR literature situates the news media as a *channel of information* from one actor (usually state leaders) to another (e.g., other state leaders, the public, or other nonstate actors). As an information agent, the media functions by either reflecting the current world order (i.e., balance of power), providing a clearer understanding of actors' interests and motives in world politics and narrowing information gaps, and socializing actors to adopt global norms. These three thematic functions respectively summarize IR's major schools of thought: realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

Ideal types in social sciences are not fixed, and so are these so-called theoretical paradigms in IR. *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Reus-Smit & Snidal, 2008) lists down nine major theoretical perspectives in IR, devoting two chapters for each perspective according to its variables (empirical) and norms (ethical).³ Meanwhile, *Oxford Bibliographies*, which curates and annotates current scholarship, identifies only three major branches of IR theory — realism, liberalism, and constructivism — based on a review of major introductory IR

³ These major theoretical perspectives include realism, Marxism, neoliberal institutionalism, new liberalism, English School, constructivism, critical theory, postmodernism, and feminism.

textbooks and overview articles (Cristol, 2019). While the three-branch category is used in this section for conceptual parsimony, attempts were made to provide theoretical nuances within each branch. For example, the news media's function according to liberalism is further split into two based on the *Oxford Handbook's* theoretical perspectives: *liberal institutionalism* and *new liberalism*. The three-part structure is also useful in laying out their views of nonstate actors within a continuum: on one end is realism that only recognizes states as the prime actor shaping international affairs; on another is constructivism that acknowledges the possibility of fully endowing global power to nonstate actors; and in the middle is liberalism that still adheres to the centrality of states but recognizes the constraints and solutions posed by nonstate actors.

Realism

In the realist tradition, the nation-state is an important polity that drives international cooperation or conflict. Its narrow self-interest and need for group cohesion are complicated by the absence of a governance system at the international level. For realists, "the intersection of groupism and egoism in an environment of anarchy makes international relations, regrettably, largely a politics of power and security," writes Wohlforth (2008). Each of these four central propositions of realism — groupism, egoism, anarchy, and power politics — has a relationship with mass media, which is primarily viewed as the state's implementing tool. State leaders stoke nationalism (groupism and egoism) by bringing their rhetoric to their constituents via the press; they make their interests known internationally through the media and, in turn, analyze vast information within an anarchic environment from various sources, including news; and they strategize to maximize power by accumulating material resources, including military, economic and communication capabilities. On the latter, Mearsheimer (2001) expounds that states need to cultivate this type of resource, as those who control information have power. He also illustrates

how strategic it is for states to diversify their communication capability, as it would be “virtually impossible... to knock all of them out at once and keep them shut down for a long period of time. For example, bombers might be well-suited for damaging an adversary’s telecommunications, but they are ill-suited for knocking out newspapers” (p. 109).

For realists, nonstate entities are not the primary actors in IR. “States set the scene in which they, along with nonstate actors, stage their dramas or carry on their humdrum affairs,” according to Waltz (1979, p. 94). Nonstate actors, like the news media, are epiphenomenal, as they are guided by the state’s power and interests. These views resonate with critical theories arguing that news is “indexed” to the elite’s debate of an issue (Bennett, 1990), especially on foreign policies. Hallin (1986), in his analysis of the *New York Times*’s coverage during the Vietnam war, argues that the basic conventions of “objective journalism” — the use of official sources, absence of interpretation or analysis, and focus on immediate events — made the *Times* “essentially an instrument of the state” (p. 71). Due to this reliance on official sources, news organizations can be disciplined by government agencies if they deviate from reporting the elite’s “propaganda” through the “flack” system, such as censorship or banning reporters from press conferences (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). This system can then be ingrained among reporters that they themselves resort to self-censorship through peer pressure or threat from losing access to information, as evident in pack journalism (Crouse, 1973) or gentlemen’s press clubs in the 1940s and 1950s (McGarr, 2022).

In sum, a state uses the press as an information channel to stoke groupism and egoism among its constituents. As part of power politics, it aims to accumulate material resources and control communications capabilities, including cooptation of the news media and its content. Because of the anarchy of the global political environment, internal and external news reports

provide states with cues for them to better understand politics and the interests of other competing states. This realist paradigm helps explain the critical-cultural perspective of media studies and the news media's role as merely a conduit of powerful interests.

Liberalism

Realism's dismissiveness towards nonstate actors is challenged by liberalism, which argues that international cooperation is possible when states either create institutions among themselves or are cognizant of the constraints imposed by their respective stakeholders. These two strands of liberalism are presented below.

Neoliberal Institutionalism

Neoliberal institutionalists argue that cooperation under anarchy is possible by creating international institutions. Here, the relationship between states and international institutions is cyclical: as states create international institutions (effect), inter-state relations are altered by such institutions (cause). "Institutions change as a result of human action, and the changes in expectations and process that result can exert profound effects on state behavior," according to Keohane (1989, p. 10). Inquiries from neoliberal institutionalism revolve around how institutions should be designed, how domestic politics is linked with international institutions, and how various institutions overlap in an increasingly multilevel governance system (for a review, see Stein, 2008).

In designing institutions, an important variable of interest is information — mostly about states' behavior but also on world affairs in general. In this perspective, good or complete information is a strategic incentive for inter-state cooperation, while war results from states' failure to bargain under incomplete information. Therefore, centralized information gathering and dissemination across states comprise a key dimension of institutional design. Information

centralization through IOs helps address enforcement problems, especially when states do not cooperate despite earlier agreements. Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal (2001) argue that “the informational capacities of international organizations to expose states’ behavior can influence the activities of even the most powerful states by imposing international reputational costs or, sometimes, domestic audience costs” (p. 790). Over time, this information function by IOs has evolved to serve not just policymakers but also the news media, with formal tasks such as having a dedicated office for media relations and formulating strategies targeting the press (Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2018a).

As already mentioned, domestic audience costs are another mechanism that signals the credibility of information. During international crises, democratic state leaders’ threat to attack, retreat or further escalate is seen as more credible when they justify that a commitment of withdrawal is costly due to potential punishment from their constituents through elections or other means of domestic accountability (Fearon, 1994). Audience costs manifest most especially from those active in politics or who deeply care about their country or leader’s reputation (Tomz, 2007), and these people learn about foreign policy through the news media, even if information quality is noisy and possibly biased. The media’s ability to generate audience costs is, thus, dependent on the strength of institutional protections that guarantee press freedom (Slantchev, 2006). Other scholars, however, contend that democratic states do not have an advantage over their autocratic counterparts in making credible threats (Downes & Sechser, 2012). In fact, a similar logic operates in autocracies, so long as domestic constituents can coordinate in punishing their leader and view their leader’s backing down as negative, and outside states can observe that said autocracies are stable enough to receive credible audience costs. On the latter, outsiders still need sources of information such as foreign news media to observe and infer the

credibility of threats. As Weeks (2008) illustrates: “In the Khrushchev-era Soviet Union, for example, Western media ran a series of articles detailing Khrushchev's political insecurity both before and after events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis” (p. 43).

Some political theorists acknowledge that the press is likewise a political institution itself. Cook (2005) uses a more expansive view of Huntington and Dominguez's (1975) definition of an institution by arguing that the news media possess the three dimensions of political institutions in modern political systems: (a) the press has both formal and informal structures that set rules on how it thinks and behaves politically; (b) the news media's processes extend across organizations and endure over time, such that it buttresses its own legitimacy, models itself with other institutions in dealing with uncertainty, and responds through professionalization; and (c) there is an expectation for the news media to preside over societal and political sectors, particularly in political communication. While realists contend that journalism's rituals in attaining objectivity weaken the profession's independent agency, Cook argues that it is for these reasons that journalists persuade their readers (and themselves) of their reputation that they work hard to maximize their institutional autonomy. “It is not in spite of, but because of, their commitment to norms of objectivity and impartiality that journalists are nowadays important political actors” (p. 5). A reason why journalists are less seen as political actors is because their political influence is thought to be asymmetrical. Cook notes that while much of political communication and sociology research focuses on journalists' perception of their power or the media's cultural function in creating hegemony, there are only few studies pointing to the political elites' belief of the news media's power and the press' role in transforming the elites. Among these few works are those of Susan Herbst (2003), who argues for a new classification of political authority that is media-derived, and Richard Fenno (1986,

1998), who elucidates the role of the press from the point of view of legislators not only in setting agendas but also in making legislators assess their votes in Congress.

To summarize, neoliberal institutionalists argue that a way to achieve international cooperation is to design institutions that incorporate the press' role in creating good and complete information. This is because the news media provides information on the credibility of threats and domestic audience costs that tie state leaders' decisions. This argument can be extended to conclude that the press is itself a political institution, thereby opening the idea that the news media is a nonstate actor in IR.

New Liberalism

Another liberal perspective that challenged realism is new liberalism, which argues that international cooperation is possible by looking at how state behavior is influenced by *state preferences* derived from domestic and transnational pressures. Unlike neoliberal institutionalists that value the role of information and institutions, new liberalists have the following three major assumptions: (a) individuals and groups within the state (domestic) are the primary actors relative to their demands on foreign affairs; (b) state preferences represent only a subset of these demands due to factors such as the representation process (i.e., democratic, autocratic, etc.), as well as cost-benefit calculation; and (c) state behavior is shaped by the interrelationship among multiple state preferences, or *policy interdependence* (Moravcsik, 1997). In this paradigm, wars result not from power imbalances among states (realism) nor from failure to bargain for good or complete information (neoliberal institutionalism), but from conflicting state preferences arising from extreme domestic ideologies, disagreements on resource appropriation, or issues related to addressing multistakeholder or coalition demands. "Every state would *prefer* to act as it pleases,

yet each is compelled to realize its ends under a constraint imposed by the *preferences* of others,” explains Moravcsik (2008, p. 248, italics original).

One of the most influential theories on state preferences and policy interdependence is Putnam’s (1988) two-level game. As mentioned in the previous section, state leaders are situated as simultaneously negotiating both at the international and domestic spheres and needing to get an acceptable deal at both levels. Putnam termed this possible outcome as the leader’s “win-set,” which need not be large. For example, if domestic constituents have strong disapproval of a planned international deal still being negotiated, the leader could use this as a bargaining power with other states by saying that she only has limited room for negotiations (small win-set), such that other states need to agree on a revised deal or else negotiations would break down. In two-level games, representation of domestic consensus need not be formal (e.g., undergo legislative process) but can also be informal through public opinion (Conceição-Heldt & Mello, 2017), and this is where the news media comes into play. In the case of the US–Japan trade dialogues in the late 1980s on the Structural Impediments Initiative (SII), Schoppa (1993) uses the two-level game framework to conclude that the American government successfully expanded Japan’s win-set by tapping the Japanese press in developing a more favorable public (non-elite) opinion on certain SII issues that were previously not welcomed by the *keiretsu* (business conglomerations). “In the glare of the television lights, decision makers who previously had responded primarily to special interests were forced to take into account the views of Japanese consumers” (p. 384).

Studies identifying the news media as a tool for shaping state preferences and policy interdependence implicitly render the press as merely a conveyor belt of information. More recently, scholars have teased out this relationship by arguing that the press has unique preferences in international affairs that often conflict with other actors’ interests. As mentioned

previously, Baum and Potter (2008) conceptualize foreign policymaking as a marketplace of information, where decision makers (elites) possess more information than the public. Over time, the press functions to reduce this information gap, with decision makers supplying information and the public demanding for more. “Within the market framework, the media are more aptly characterized as a middleman or trader of information, simultaneously beholden to two actors whose interests often conflict: leaders and the public” (p. 50). On one side, state leaders and elites rely on news, either as a source of information or to gauge public opinion, as evidenced by historical records of former presidents’ decisions based on media reports. On the other side, advancements in media, from the printing press to the advent of the 24-hour news cycle to social media news feeds, have continuously altered the information equilibrium by providing the public more immediate access to foreign events, thereby pressuring state leaders to decide more quickly. By showing that the press is a societal actor with its own interest in international affairs and can pressure decision makers to incorporate its demands as part of state preferences, the news media thus participates in policy interdependence.

In short, new liberalists argue that political actors engage with the news media to shape state preferences, win-sets, and policy interdependence, to achieve international cooperation. Further, the news media is conceptualized as having its own preferences independent from either state leaders or the public, given that it trades information to both actors that have conflicting interests. This view closely reflects the three-actor framework of political communication.

Constructivism

The realist and liberalist perspectives recognize the primacy of material motivations (i.e., power, information, wealth) in driving inter-state interaction. The third and final paradigm — constructivism — directly counters this assumption by claiming that state preferences,

institutions and even anarchy are socially constructed and not limited by material attributes. “A fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them,” writes Wendt (1992, pp. 396–397). The core feature of constructivism is a socially constructed world politics not rooted in materialism. This implies three other theoretical features that distinguish constructivism from other paradigms: (a) social actors’ preferences are not solely pre-figured by material forces but also mediated by other socially constructed elements such as dominant ideas and historical experiences; (b) the relationship between institutions as structure and states as agent is mutually constituted, with both structure and agent altogether creating global norms; and (c) social construction produces multiple logics of international anarchy resulting in varied patterns of state behavior or even a global social hierarchy with authority — the complete opposite of anarchy (Hurd, 2008). As Wendt’s title of his seminal article goes, “Anarchy is what states make of it.”

Wendt cites the Copenhagen School’s theory of securitization as a variant of constructivism. Led by Buzan and Wæver, the Copenhagen School defines securitization as a “speech act,” wherein an object (issue) is rhetorically or discursively presented as a threat, then accepted as such by the audience, eventually resulting in emergency action that necessitates breaking the rules of engagement. In analyzing security, “the task is not to assess some objective threats that ‘really’ endanger some object to be defended or secured; rather, it is to understand the processes of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 26). Williams (2003) expanded the School’s focus from a purely linguistic perspective to broader communicative terms by recognizing the important role of images in security relations. “From the Gulf War to Bosnia and Kosovo, to the events of September 11 and their aftermath (not to mention perceptions of issues such as

migration), a consideration of the role of contemporary communications media in the representation and conduct of security relations is almost inescapable” (p. 524).

Constructivists also point to the ever-changing functions of international institutions, as IOs often deviate from their originally assigned mission, thereby becoming “ineffective servants” of member-states. Barnett and Finnemore (1999) theorize two sources of non-material power that make IOs as powerful autonomous actors: (a) social legitimacy of the authority they embody, and (b) control over technical expertise and information. These features endow them the power to classify the world through categories of actors and actions (e.g., asylum and refugee), to fix meanings of acceptable action that impact even the state’s domestic authority (e.g., sustainable development and climate change), and to consequently establish norms of good international behavior (e.g., human rights and weapons taboos). Because an IO is a bureaucracy, it also possesses organizational dysfunctions and pathologies rooted from how it socially constructs its legitimacy and control. For example, its neoliberal aim of centralizing information has scholars questioning whether the conduct of inter-state meetings such as UN Conferences might merely be a performative media event, although some say such spectacles also provide indirect benefits toward states’ socialization of global norms (Fomerand, 1996; Haas, 2002). Whether this deviation towards spectacles is considered a pathology or not, the news media plays a major role in this phenomenon. In his treatise, Edelman (1988) concludes that “it is chiefly news reports that stimulate the construction of political spectacles” (p. 90), adding that such a news-constituted spectacle “continuously constructs and reconstructs social problems, crises, enemies, and leaders and so creates a succession of threats and reassurances” (p. 1).

Finally, a constructivist analysis opens the possibility for nonstate actors to be on equal footing with states. Given that most interactions among IOs, nonstate, and state actors are

structured as transnational networks, Keck and Sikkink (1998) find that activists are also able to organize themselves as such through what they term as a “transnational advocacy network” (TAN). In documenting how TANs have successfully challenged global norms in human rights, environmental, and gender policies, Keck and Sikkink’s work is influential in providing evidence for the power of nonstate actors who are “motivated by values rather than by material concerns or professional norms” (p. 2). TANs’ roles in IR include information production and dissemination (information politics), issue framing to create more awareness and expand their network (symbolic politics), calling out powerful actors to address issues affecting the network’s weaker members (leverage politics), and holding those in power accountable (accountability politics). With these roles, it is no surprise that Keck and Sikkink include the media as a major actor comprising TANs (p. 9). “Sympathetic journalists may become part of the network, but more often network activists cultivate a reputation for credibility with the press, and package their information in a timely and dramatic way to draw press attention” (p. 22). This mirrors the two models of advocacy journalism according to Waisbord (2008): the *journalist model*, which Janowitz (1975) describe as “the concept of the journalist as critic and interpreter” who must “advocate for those who are denied powerful spokesmen” and “point out the consequences of the contemporary power imbalance” (p. 619); and the *civic model*, referring to “organized groups that use the news media to influence reporting, and ultimately, affect public policies” (Waisbord, 2008, p. 371).

The key takeaway for constructivists is that the news media is both a *socially constituted structure* and an *agency that socially constructs* international institutions, state preferences, and even the concept of anarchy. As an agency of social construction, the press creates images and rhetoric of war and peace. IOs, with their tendencies for bureaucratic dysfunctions, are

sometimes drawn to — and even create — media spectacles to ritualize the process of international cooperation. Constructivists, thus, consider the news media as an important nonstate actor, given its capacity to advocate for global issues and norms. All these amplify the powerful effects of media from the sociopsychological perspectives.

News Media and Policymaking

The previous exploration of the three major branches of IR theory found that the news media has varying roles in global politics, as also mirrored by critical-cultural media scholars and those leaning with the institutional and sociopsychological disciplines. Understanding these perspectives are fundamental in linking IR scholarship with political communication.

This section shifts its gears by reviewing three major political communication theories and how each theory can help explain the news media's influence in IR. While these theories — agenda setting, issue framing, and presumed media influence — are often examined within the domestic or state levels, this section explores the theories' applicability in IOs' decision-making processes by teasing out the different stages of policymaking relative to each theory's relevance. The discussion in each theory also presents examples that attempt to relate to policies within the realm of IR, such as inter-state wars or foreign policymaking.

Agenda Setting: The Early Stage

“Policy-making cannot be understood without understanding the agenda-setting process, which draws attention to policy problems that need to be addressed through policy decisions,” write Green-Pedersen and Mortensen (2012, p. 167). Agenda setting is often part of the early stages of the public policy cycle, and is situated prior to policy formulation, decision making, implementation and evaluation (see Sidney, 2007; Araral et al., 2012). The agenda setting stage involves recognizing an issue as a policy problem and formally selecting it as part of the priority

list, or agenda. Howlett and Ramesh (2003) identify four models of agenda setting based on the type of initiator (state vs. nonstate actors) and nature of public involvement (high vs. low).

Outside initiation occurs when interest groups (nonstate actors) force the state to put the issue in the agenda by way of gaining public support, while **inside initiation** happens when such groups do the same directly to the state without involving the public (usually for highly technical issues). The other two, **consolidation** and **mobilization**, require less involvement from nonstate actors, with the former initiated by the state because of already broad public support and the latter still needing popular acceptance.

The news media enters the picture as a means of involving the public in the agenda setting process. Once again, it is viewed as a link between state and interest groups with the public. The news media's prioritization of issues — **media agenda** — is theorized as “stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about,” according to Cohen's *The Press and Foreign Policy* (1963, p. 13). Decades after McCombs and Shaw's (1972) influential study on mass media's agenda setting function, scholars have high consensus that only when the media agenda is relevant and accessible to the public would it influence **public agenda**. And media agenda likewise influences *foreign policy agenda*, as media attention to international stories drive not only public attention and but most importantly a state leader's attention to issues such as inter-state conflict (see Wittkopf, 1990; Wood & Peake, 1998). The media agenda's direct impact on policy agenda, however, is conditioned on several factors, including the issue's complexity (e.g., obtrusiveness and abstractness; see Soroka, 2002), audience engagement with the topics (Gruszczynski & Wagner, 2017), emergence of unexpected events or disasters (“focusing events”; see Birkland, 1998; Kingdon, 2003), and even credibility of news source (Bartels, 1996).

Issue Framing: The Latter Stages

Most public policy literature narrowly situates the news media's role in the early stage of agenda setting, because succeeding stages like *policy formulation* are outside of the public's eyes (Sidney, 2007) with fewer participants that mostly involve experts called epistemic communities (Haas, 1992). Yet, decision makers can sometimes incorporate knowledge from epistemic communities not internally involved in policy formulation. "In some cases, information generated by an epistemic community may in fact create a shock, as often occurs with scientific advances or reports that make their way into the news, simultaneously capturing the attention of the public and policymakers and pressuring them into action," explains Haas (p. 14) on the epistemic communities' role in IR. Further, *policy implementation* is the stage when the policy is rolled out publicly to stakeholders, with decision makers relying on the news media for publicity. US presidents, for example, use media coverage of the policy rollout for strategic purposes by deploying "carefully crafted words and arguments to raise the salience of an already announced policy or persuade Americans to support it, and to profile a dimension of their personality to strengthen their appeal" (Druckman & Jacobs, 2015, p. 37). Negative news related to an issue policy is another way for the press to act as a feedback mechanism not only during the policy implementation stage but also in *monitoring and evaluation*. Soroka's (2014) work on negativity in politics argues that democratic and even autocratic institutions are designed to incorporate negative information as part of their governance systems' error-monitoring mechanisms (i.e., the "checks" in democratic checks and balances). "To be clear: only sitting governments produce (they hope) predominantly positive information; all other institutions/individuals/parties/groups involved in governance produce predominantly negative information" (p. 31). In democratic states, the press' function as society's watchdog is one reason

why news focuses on negative issues, though Soroka clarifies that this is not necessarily a bad thing, as it may help correct implementation and achieve policy effectiveness.

The news media, therefore, can be involved in every stage of the public policymaking cycle, and one way it affects policies apart from agenda setting is through issue framing (Soroka et al., 2012). The core of framing effects is that how the media defines the problem, interprets causes, evaluates what is right and wrong, and recommends treatment in a given issue influences how media consumers think of the issue (Entman, 1993), which bears implications on citizens' political knowledge, attitudes and behaviors (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). And the media's framing effects extend to policies by way of public opinion. For example, news frames have been found to influence responsibility attribution for an issue, which have consequences on policy formulation. Iyengar (1991) finds that when poverty or social welfare is depicted using thematic frames (i.e., general trends), television viewers feel that society and its institutions are responsible for the issue, while news presenting episodic frames (i.e., micro/personal experiences) would lead to audiences attributing the issue's responsibility on individuals. From a cultural standpoint, political actors, including the news media, can also use dominant public discourse in framing support for or against policies, as in the cases of guaranteed annual income (Steensland, 2006) and death penalty (Baumgartner et al., 2008). As issues become more complex and uncertain, like foreign policy, scholars are concerned that the news media relies on sources providing simplified, conflict-driven, or politicized frames devoid of technical context, and this affects public understanding of how issues should be addressed and policies formulated (Soroka et al., 2012). Thus, social constructions through framing influence not only policy agenda and design, but also the public's level of participation in said policy (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

Presumed Media Influence: Swift Policy Actions

A less-invoked media theory in policymaking is what Gunther and Storey (2003) term the “presumed media influence.” This general model posits that “people perceive some influence of a message on others and then react to that perception of influence” (p. 201). Perhaps the most cited hypothesis under this umbrella is the “third-person effect,” where people’s personal biases affect their overestimation of the new media’s effect of an undesirable message on others but not on themselves, resulting in an attitude or behavior anchored on the overestimated perception on others. Davison (1983) attributed the origins of his seminal experiments to a story on Japan’s propaganda leaflets thrown at American troops in Iwo Jima during the Second World War, wherein the materials targeted Black soldiers with messages saying that “this was a white man’s war and that the Japanese had no quarrel with colored peoples” (p.1). After learning about this, battalion leaders decided to withdraw the Black soldiers from the unit the next day, even if there was no evidence that the leaflets changed Black soldiers’ attitudes.

One consequence of the third-person effect is people’s support for media censorship because of their belief of media’s negative influence on others (see Rojas et al., 1996). Baughman (1989) shows that this hypothesis can also be used to historically explain media censorship policies going back as far as the Sedition Act of 1798, in which Federalists perceived Jeffersonian presses as powerful. “This fear of the messenger’s effect on third persons did at times drive governments to restrict press freedom or access to the printed word” (p. 15). Apart from restrictions, corrective actions are also found to result from the third-person effect (Sun et al., 2008), suggesting a possible explanation on immediate policy actions based only on news reports. Gunther and Storey (2003) illustrate this when “a politician, believing that news reports about health care fraud will galvanize public opinion, calls for a public hearing” (p. 200). One

possible explanation for swift policy actions is the holier-than-thou attitude of policymakers, who see the public as more prone towards media influence. “Since policymakers are quite likely to consider themselves different from their constituents, especially in terms of expertise, they may be especially susceptible to the perceptual gap of expecting mass media message to affect others while having little effect on themselves,” explains Lasorsa (1992, p. 172).

The difference between the more specific third-person effect and the broader presumed-influence model is that the former has a “negative-influence corollary,” where the message is perceived to be undesirable, whereas the more general model accounts for both positive and negative messages. Further, while the third-person effect is hinged on the disparity of perceptions between the self and others, the presumed-influence model does not consider the perceived effect on the self as an important element (Gunther & Storey, 2003).

A Political Communication Model of International Policymaking

Thus far, this chapter has explored the different roles of the news media within the realist, liberalist, and constructivist paradigms, as well as the media’s political power to sway foreign policymaking through mechanisms such as agenda setting, issue framing, and presumed media influence. Both reviews of literature are critical steps for theoretical and conceptual building.

This final section presents an illustrative model that encapsulates a political communication approach to studying IOs. As shown in Figure 1.2, the model identifies three major groups of actors. Policy elites, comprising political players that have the advantage in shaping policies, include not only state actors but also nonstate entities with power and resources, such as multinational corporations, philanthropists, and religious organizations. Adopting the definition of elites as “individuals and small, relatively cohesive, and stable groups with disproportionate power to affect national and supranational political outcomes on a

continuing basis” (Best & Higley, 2018, p. 3), this model likewise considers IOs as part of this group. The second actor, termed here as “public,” is composed of state constituents as well as other nonstate players acting to advocate for constituents’ needs. These include TANs and other civic organizations with lesser power and resources that participate in, what Hohendahl termed as, “the sphere of non-governmental opinion making” (Habermas et al., 1964/1974, p. 49, note 2). And the third actor is the news media, particularly those with autonomy from the state or IOs. This may well include both local and transnational media organizations, either legacy or digital media, as well as publicly funded media that exercise independence from its state funders, such as BBC or NPR.

Figure 1.2. Political Communication Model of IR Policymaking



In the model, all three actors attempt to influence each other by setting their respective agendas (i.e., policy agenda, public agenda, media agenda) and frame issues during policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. These are signified by the two-way arrows. Within each group of actors, these agenda setting and issue framing mechanisms are also at play among its various types of group members, such as the case when states, IOs, and multinational corporations negotiate trade deals (policy elites), or when various NGOs produce a unified list of priority issues during their internal TAN meetings (public).

The model, however, provides a third mechanism for the news media to affect the international policymaking process. As illustrated by the one-way arrows pointing to the other two actors, it theorizes that the presumed media influence creates an exponential effect in media agendas and frames. For example, an issue framed negatively by the press may render a third-person effect on policy elites (i.e., state actors or IOs would think that the negative media frame would create dire public reactions), leading them to act faster in reforming existing policies.

Viewing IO policies primarily from the lens of political communication, informed by theories from IR and public policy, would make more apparent the news media's significance as a nonstate actor in global politics. The arguments in succeeding chapters would build from this perspective in theorizing the influence of news media and public opinion in IR.

Chapter 2. Presumed Media Influence in International Aid Transparency

In 2010, the global development community witnessed a tectonic shift in how international organizations (IOs) run their day-to-day operations. The World Bank's Access to Information Policy (AIP) took effect in July of that year, ushering in what scholars termed as the "international aid transparency policy norm" (Weaver & Peratsakis, 2014). Like freedom of information (FOI), open records or sunshine laws allowing public access to non-classified government data based on the "right-to-know" principle, the AIP reversed a longstanding practice of secrecy among IOs. It made it imperative for the World Bank to proactively disclose *any* information to the public, unless classified in the narrower set of "negative list." The Bank itself called the AIP "radical" and "groundbreaking" (World Bank, 2009), and within the next few months other major IOs followed suit with their own versions of AIP (most notably, Asian Development Bank, 2011; Inter-American Development Bank, 2010).

One common narrative for this paradigm shift towards transparency is that it came at a time when donor organizations began a deep self-reflection on how their aid can be more effective in addressing global poverty. A series of High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness started in 2003, where donor countries and organizations pledged to amend policies and procedures that would harmonize aid distribution (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003). By the third forum in 2008, the World Bank and 13 other organizations agreed to develop a common format in releasing aid information and be more public on how aid money was spent. This became known as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (https://iatistandard.org/documents/582/IATI_Accra_Statement.pdf). A second but related narrative argues that the change towards openness was pressured by anti-globalization demonstrations targeting IOs that peaked at the start of the new millennium. These large-scale

protests disrupted the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Seattle in 1999, as well as the annual joint meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in Washington, DC (spring meeting) and Prague (autumn meeting) in 2000. These rallies showed IOs the public's discontent and clamor for reforms towards a "less market-driven and more democratic world" (Derber, 2003, p. 205). Both these narratives underscore the centrality of transnational advocacy networks, internal and external policy experts, and state-members as the primary drivers of accountability reforms within IOs.

This chapter, however, presents an alternative explanation about *why* and *when* IOs decide to be more open for public scrutiny and institute policies on transparency and accountability. Using archival records from the World Bank, Wisconsin Historical Society, and other locations of primary and secondary sources, this chapter establishes longitudinal patterns of decision-making to argue that an IO like the World Bank is more likely to reform its operational transparency once issues affecting its image are reported by the news media, especially reputable outlets with wide reach. This chapter further contends that the media's agenda setting and issue framing effects are not enough to explain these patterns, since various stakeholders likewise influence policymaking through similar processes, and news usually only reiterates other political actors' information that policymakers may already know. Rather, it is how policymakers presume that media reports would have a successful influence on their important stakeholders. Thus, it is not merely the media's message per se that influences the World Bank to reform but the Bank's belief that the news negatively affects its shareholders' views of and anticipated reactions towards the Bank. Overall, the case of presumed media influence in the World Bank's aid transparency policymaking is used in this chapter as a prime mechanism of the power of news to shape global politics and institutional norms.

Four critical assumptions guide this chapter's analysis. First, the study presented here focuses on the World Bank's policies on aid transparency as the outcome of the press' influence. It adopts an expanded view of *aid transparency as comprising not only public access and availability of information, but also broader accountability mechanisms*. Theoretically, transparency is a *necessary* (even if insufficient) condition for accountability (Fox, 2007). "Contemporary forms of aid transparency are but the latest mutations of a longer-standing and broader concern with aid accountability," writes McGee (2013, p. s109). Indeed, key policy milestones compelling the Bank to be more accountable to project-affected communities were already in place before the Bank finally issued information disclosure policies such as the AIP. With this, and also given that scholars have continued to debate the gray area delineating transparency initiatives from accountability mechanisms (Fox, 2007; Gaventa & McGee, 2013; McGee & Gaventa, 2011), aid transparency and accountability are used here interchangeably.

Second, this chapter limits the concept of *news media as an organization that exercises editorial autonomy from any state-established institution*. This independence allows journalists to embody the normative role of distancing themselves from political elites, taking a more adversarial role against them, and holding them into account by internalizing the public's interest (Hanitzsch, 2007). Such autonomy also compels the press as an institution to advance advocacies that even the public does not see as a priority, such as transparency in governance. For example, when President Harry Truman introduced the US government's document classification system in 1951, it was only journalists who saw it as a form of censorship. The public did not consider it as trampling on their right to speech, while the Congress only criticized such policies as ineffective in clamping down communist espionage. With pressure from both Congress and the

news media, the FOI Act was passed in 1967 and began a new norm of transparency in American politics (Lebovic, 2016; Schudson, 2015).

Third, the complexity of political ecology makes it difficult to isolate with accuracy the news media's impact in World Bank policymaking; though, this should be also true with attempts to pinpoint the sole effect of either NGOs, governments, or epistemic communities in reforming Bank policies. Political actors engage with the news media to amplify their pressure towards an institution, while news outlets rely on their information sources and choose to either adopt an issue frame or define it in their own terms (Wagner & Gruszczynski, 2016). Ultimately, news stories are the news media's final products from the independent process of interpreting issues and events. Hence, *when political actors attribute news coverage as a reason influencing their decisions, the news media should be appropriately credited as the cause of such an effect.*

And finally, policies evolve over time. Shared expectations among internal and external actors guide the emergence, stabilization or decline of policies (Park & Vetterlein, 2010; Weaver & Peratsakis, 2014), including those on aid transparency. "Transparency is a choice, encouraged by changing attitudes about what constitutes appropriate behavior," writes Florini (1998, p. 50). Similarly, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argued that policy dynamics should be observed over extended periods instead of just the short term, to account for the complex spurts of chaos (conflict) and stability (consensus). By looking at longitudinal patterns, *the argument that the news affects policymaking becomes stronger when its influence is traced over time.*

This chapter first draws on theories explaining why IOs are conflicted between being transparent and maintaining secrecy. Recognizing this transparency dilemma, it then posits the theory of presumed media influence and elucidates why World Bank policymakers are most likely to institute aid transparency policies after publication of news that hold them into account.

In applying the theory's components, the chapter discusses that the news media's influence on the World Bank is due to cognitive (perceptual) and coordination (behavioral) mechanisms. Particularly, it posits that because World Bank policymakers are conscious of serving its important shareholders, especially powerful state members, they presume that shareholders would most likely react to news that report on the Bank's operational issues (cognitive), leading the Bank to act based on such presumption by issuing policies that make its operations more transparent and accountable (coordination). While most communication research on presumed media influence utilize experimental surveys to show how citizens fall trap into this phenomenon, this chapter takes an unusual institutional approach in establishing this media effect from among political elites by sifting through archival records and reconstructing the World Bank's decision-making timelines from 1975 to 2010. The causal narrative approach was used in qualitatively analyzing the issuance of aid accountability policies in two major eras of this period: (a) involuntary resettlement and environmental reforms up to the 1990s, and (b) anticorruption and governance reforms onwards. The chapter closes with theoretical implications on the news media as a powerful non-state actor in international relations (IR).

Transparency Dilemma in International Organizations

IOs are constrained to release information to its constituents for various reasons. According to Dreher and colleagues' (2022) dirty-work hypothesis, multilateral aid through IOs is a preferred channel for a donor country to provide aid to another country when such transaction, if done bilaterally, is perceived publicly as unpopular. IOs, thus, do the "dirty work" through secret deals. Another reason is that IOs gather and analyze sensitive information and protect it from leaking to the public. As this builds IOs' credibility, various states would then lend to cooperation through intelligence sharing of trade and security secrets. Carnegie and

Carson (2019) call this the “disclosure dilemma,” since IOs aim to solve information problems by being less transparent. Finally, and perhaps arguably the most important explanation, secrecy is a prized diplomatic norm embedded within the culture of IOs. For example, a violation of trade or other international laws, especially by a powerful state, can shake up the global status quo, so IOs sometimes preserve normative consensus by not acting on it. This is illustrated when international arbitration courts like WTO do not issue rulings on very controversial cases. Scholars view such exercise, termed “judicial economy,” as an act of withholding information and a form of secrecy (Busch & Pelc, 2010; Carnegie, 2021).

There are, however, plausible theoretical explanations why IOs, especially those involved in development aid and promoting democratic principles, would want to be more open for scrutiny and institute aid transparency policies, even if there is no overarching system compelling them to do so. One relates to their legitimacy in national and global governance. IOs suffer from legitimacy deficits when stakeholders call them out for breaking their promises, not keeping up with changing global standards, or being publicly irrelevant (Stephen, 2018). Legitimacy, defined as the *audience belief* that an organization’s authority is appropriately exercised, can be reclaimed through *legitimation* by justifying the IO’s authority (recognized right to decide), procedures (method to decide) and performance (decision’s output, outcome or impact; see Tallberg et al., 2014). By making themselves more transparent in decision-making processes, institutions attempt to legitimize their existence to constituents and observers. Conversely, these audiences participate in the legitimation process and can even contest through *delegitimation*. These push-and-pull processes result in new accountability policies used to gauge legitimacy.

In relating procedural transparency with performance effectiveness, a second theoretical claim posits that transparency policies, when designed strategically, lead to public accountability of IOs (Nelson, 2001). Providing information alone does not necessarily lead to participatory outcomes, and a system should be effectively structured to encourage people to use publicly available information for social and democratic purposes (Banerjee et al., 2010; Duflo et al., 2012). Accountability, which is theorized to enhance organizational performance, comprise the dimensions of answerability and enforceability (Gaventa & McGee, 2013; Goetz & Jenkins, 2001). For transparency to lead to accountability, powerholders (IO) and demanders (stakeholders) need to jointly institute policy standards on information gathering and use, as well as evaluation and sanctioning of unsatisfactory performance (Schedler, 1999).

Finally, organizational transparency helps address information asymmetries across complex layers of principal–agent relations (Vaubel, 2006). One relationship, at the most macro level, is between the IO as an agent holding great amounts of information and aid recipients/affected communities as principals with less to no information. Another is between the IO (agent) and state officials as principals who might have less information but technically hold the power of the purse (i.e., they pool resources and delegate operations and decision-making to the agent). Finally, within IOs exists information asymmetries between technocrats as agents possessing technical knowledge and executive-level principals (e.g., politically appointed board members). Across these three relationships, technocrats consistently maintain the agent function with more complete information. There is, thus, a convergence of preference from all principals (i.e., aid beneficiaries, state officials, and organization’s executives) to demand transparency from technocrats, and this common interest makes institutional reforms more likely and more effective in inducing new behaviors and norms (Nielson & Tierney, 2003). To be fair, technocrats

do have some incentives to share information to their principals, but only on certain instances when these result to inter-state cooperation through improved informational status among state constituents (Dai, 2005; Keohane, 1984). Further, technocrats have recently been more cognizant that operational issues related to information asymmetries are a major cause of aid ineffectiveness (World Bank, 1992a, 1998).

In sum, IOs suffer from a transparency dilemma, due to the complex nature of their goals and operational constraints. Certain political actors, however, have successfully influenced IOs over time to push the equilibrium more towards transparency than secrecy. The next section offers an explanation on how the news media does this, thereby altering the boundaries of global policies and behaviors.

Policymakers' Presumption of News Media's Influence

As introduced in the first chapter, the theory of presumed influence of media can be used to explain and untangle the press' influence in policymaking. This section applies the theory in illuminating the news media's role in the World Bank's issuance of aid transparency policies.

In brief, the theory comprises the *perceptual* and *behavioral* components (for a review, see Tal-Or et al., 2009). The perceptual component relates to the phenomenon that people (policymakers) exposed to a media message perceive it as influencing others (shareholders), and this perception is explained by either *motivational* or *cognitive* mechanisms. The motivational mechanism holds that a person is less optimistic about others' media literacy compared to oneself, thus perceiving others to be less critical of and more easily influenced by news. In this case, policymakers may see themselves as more knowledgeable and not swayed by news yet perceive their stakeholders as more likely to agree with the story and take it more seriously. On the other hand, the cognitive mechanism contends that a person, regardless of what they think of

their own status, intuitively estimates the news' impact on others based on information such as sociodemographic and institutional cues. For example, the World Bank may strategically calculate varying potential positions and behaviors of its shareholders, who it assumes have read the news based on shareholders' knowledge, attitudes, capabilities, and histories. While both mechanisms are interrelated and driven by the perception of other's reactions, they do have major nuanced differences. First, motivational explanations operate by comparing oneself more positively than others, so these "play a more substantial role in people's estimation, or underestimation, of media influences on the *self*"; on the other hand, cognitive explanations are "more heavily related to perceptions of impact on *others*" (p. 103, emphases mine). And second, motivational self-enhancements are mostly tied to the third-person effect, discussed in the previous chapter as a more specific phenomenon under the presumed media influence theory, due to the centrality of the self-others gap leading to the "social distance corollary" (Perloff, 1999); on the other hand, cognitive mechanisms are sufficient to generally explain people's perceptual component of presumed media influence (Gunther & Storey, 2003). It, thus, follows that the cognitive mechanism is the most fundamental perceptual component of the theory of presumed media influence, and this is used in this chapter as the key element explaining the Bank's perception of media's powerful influence to its stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the behavioral component — the "effect" part of the theory — posits that people (policymakers) will tailor their actions (policy reforms) not because they believed in the media message per se but on the perceived effect of the message on others (shareholders). Scholars identify three major categories of behaviors resulting from the presumed influence of media. One is *prevention*, where a person acts to stop the future release of media's message that they think might be harmful to others (e.g., policymakers ask publishers or the court to censor a

news story they perceive as negatively influencing their stakeholders). Another is *coordination*, where a person, after assessing what others might do, will strategize to either conform (i.e., bandwagon effect, such that policymakers agree to reform policies in accordance with the news recommendation, perceiving that its shareholders would think similarly) or insist on doing the opposite (e.g., policymakers would not do what they perceive from news the majority would like them to do, for strategic reasons). While coordination actions are more temporary, the third type of behavior, *normative*, is more deep-seated in making the person comply with, withdraw from, or defy against the media's message that they think is promoting a social norm (e.g., policymakers, perceiving that the news reflects prevailing social standards, decides to act based on normative considerations; see Tal-Or et al., 2009).

Scholars agree that political figures and policymakers are particularly more prone to coordination effects, as they “are arguably more attentive to the drift of public sentiment than most people, may presume public opinion will follow from press coverage and therefore take actions merely in anticipation of such media influence” (Gunther & Storey, 2003, p. 213). These are evident in the analysis that follows, where the World Bank's decision makers regard news reports as an important factor in considering policy reforms. This reaction is less likely a case of a normative behavioral effect, as accountability policies were not the prevailing standard among peer IOs but rather introduced by the World Bank for other aid organizations to emulate, thereby setting a norm later on (Weaver & Peratsakis, 2014).

Methods and Analytic Strategies

This chapter considers the view of Maxwell (2004) that qualitative methods are useful in identifying and developing causal explanations using the “realist” approach to research inquiry (as opposed to the traditional “positivist/empiricist”). The traditional approach adheres to what

Mohr (1982) termed as “variance theory,” which deals with precise measurements of voluminous data and their variables, conditions, and relationships within an environment’s snapshot. On the contrary, the realist approach is related to “process theory” that, while analyzing fewer cases, provides more depth in explaining events and their causal processes through chronological and contextual connections. Chapter 3 would later use variance theory through quantitative analysis.

Several approaches are used to qualitatively establish causal explanations over time, and these include the analysis of rich data (i.e., detailed and varying cases) and causal narratives (Maxwell, 2004). The latter focuses on event-ordering to argue for the existence of cause-and-effect patterns (A. L. George & Bennett, 2005; Hedström & Swedberg, 1998). Causal narratives have two components: *events*, or the potential causes of outcomes, and *temporality*, wherein the ordering of events and outcomes reveals causal patterns (Lange, 2012). This chapter’s outcomes of interests are the emergence of aid transparency policies, with the AIP as the culminating outcome that became effective in 2010. Prior to the AIP, the World Bank claimed that its earliest information disclosure policy was instituted in 1985. I extended the starting point back to 1975, or 10 years prior.⁴ To look for aid transparency policies from 1975 to 2010, I relied on the Bank’s four sets of official records: the World Bank Group timeline ([timeline.worldbank.org](https://www.worldbank.org/timeline)), Bank presidents’ tenure overviews ([worldbank.org/en/about/archives/history/past-presidents](https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/archives/history/past-presidents)), the AIP timeline ([worldbank.org/en/access-to-information/overview#3](https://www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information/overview#3)), and the *World Bank Group Archivists’ Chronology: 1944–2013* (n.d.-b). Three elements, adopted from Fox (2007), were used to identify such policies: (a) information dissemination and access, (b) institutional “answerability,” or policies compelling the Bank to address public inquiries, and (c) sanctions,

⁴ The World Bank’s official AIP timeline claims that the “Directive on Disclosure of Information” was made in 1985 (www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information/overview#3), but my archival research found that this policy was issued in 1989. Nevertheless, I proceeded to set 1975 as the starting point of the analysis.

compensation and/or remediation related to the failure to implement the first two elements. Once identified, copies of policies were then obtained from the World Bank Group Archives.

To illustrate, a timeline is reconstructed in Figure 2.1, which is further split as Figure 2.1.a (1975–1994) and Figure 2.1.b (1995–2010). In each figure, the upper half presents the identified major aid transparency policies, with each policy placed according to the year it was issued. These outcomes not only include operations policies but also landmark decisions impacting World Bank’s accountability (e.g., project suspension, unit establishment, public pronouncements). Meanwhile, the lower half presents Bank-related issues covered in the news. Notably, issue coverage usually spanned several years, implying the nature of media attention to prior events as sustained over time prior to causing the issuance of a certain policy. Since these prior events do not necessarily prove the phenomenon of presumed media influence, the analysis focused on unearthing evidence for the World Bank’s cognitive perceptual mechanism (i.e., how it viewed media coverage as affecting others’ perception) and coordinative behavioral effect (i.e., attribution of news coverage as the reason influencing its policy decisions). Evidence for these mechanisms include memos and correspondence from World Bank officials and stakeholders, transcripts of interviews from the Bank’s Oral History Program, newspaper and journal articles, broadcast news tapes, and other relevant non-World Bank documents. To present a complex political ecology, I also show how other political actors use the news media to make the Bank more accountable. For example, the Robert W. Kasten Jr. papers archived in the Wisconsin Historical Society — consisting of files from the former Wisconsin senator’s legal counsel, policy director, and press office — were used to demonstrate how the Senator’s office engaged with news coverage in parallel with its legislative efforts pressuring the World Bank to implement involuntary resettlement and environmental reforms in 1983–1993 (see Figure 2.1.a).

Figure 2.1.a. Timeline of World Bank Aid Transparency Policies and Related Issues in the News (1975–1994)

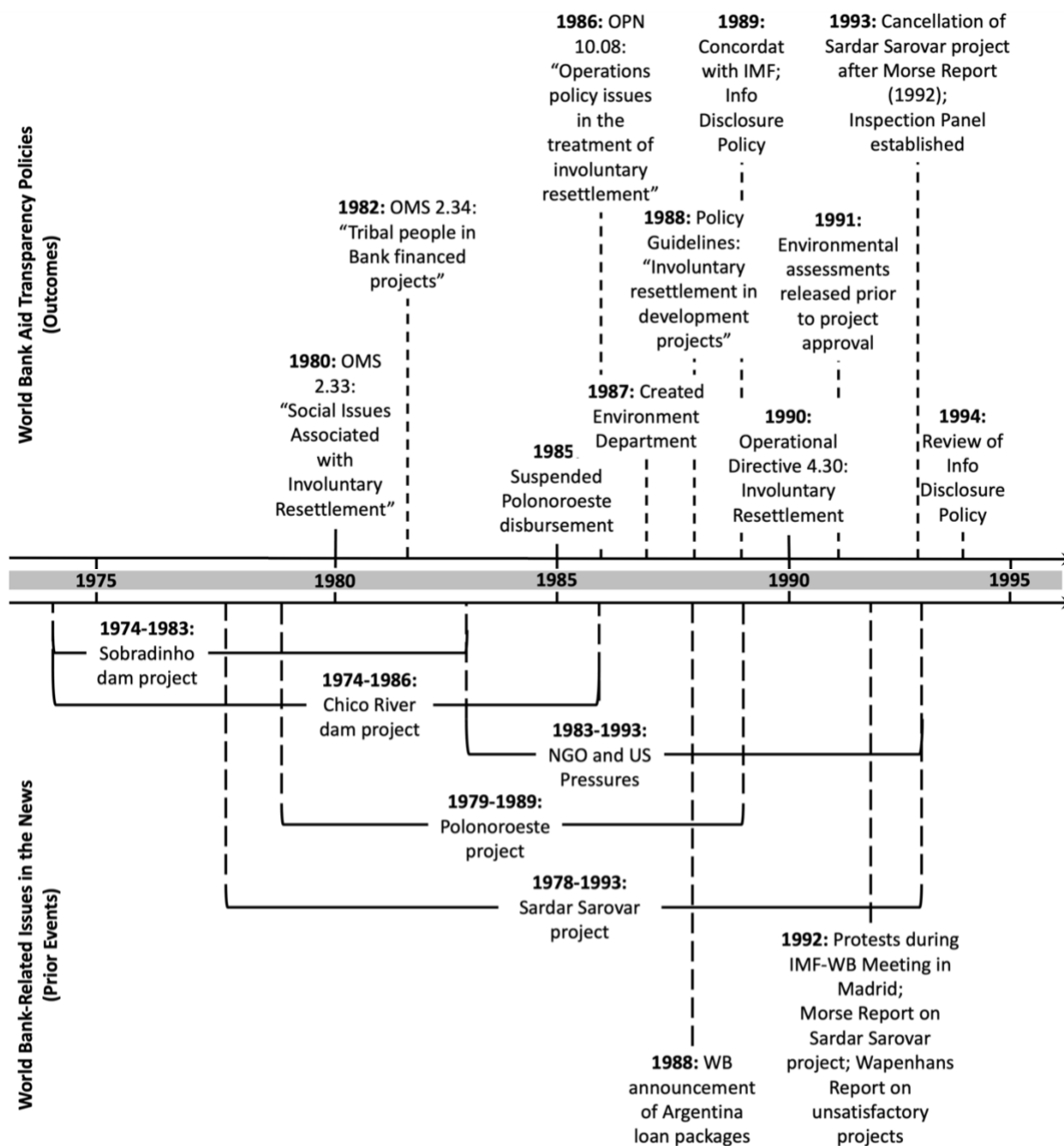
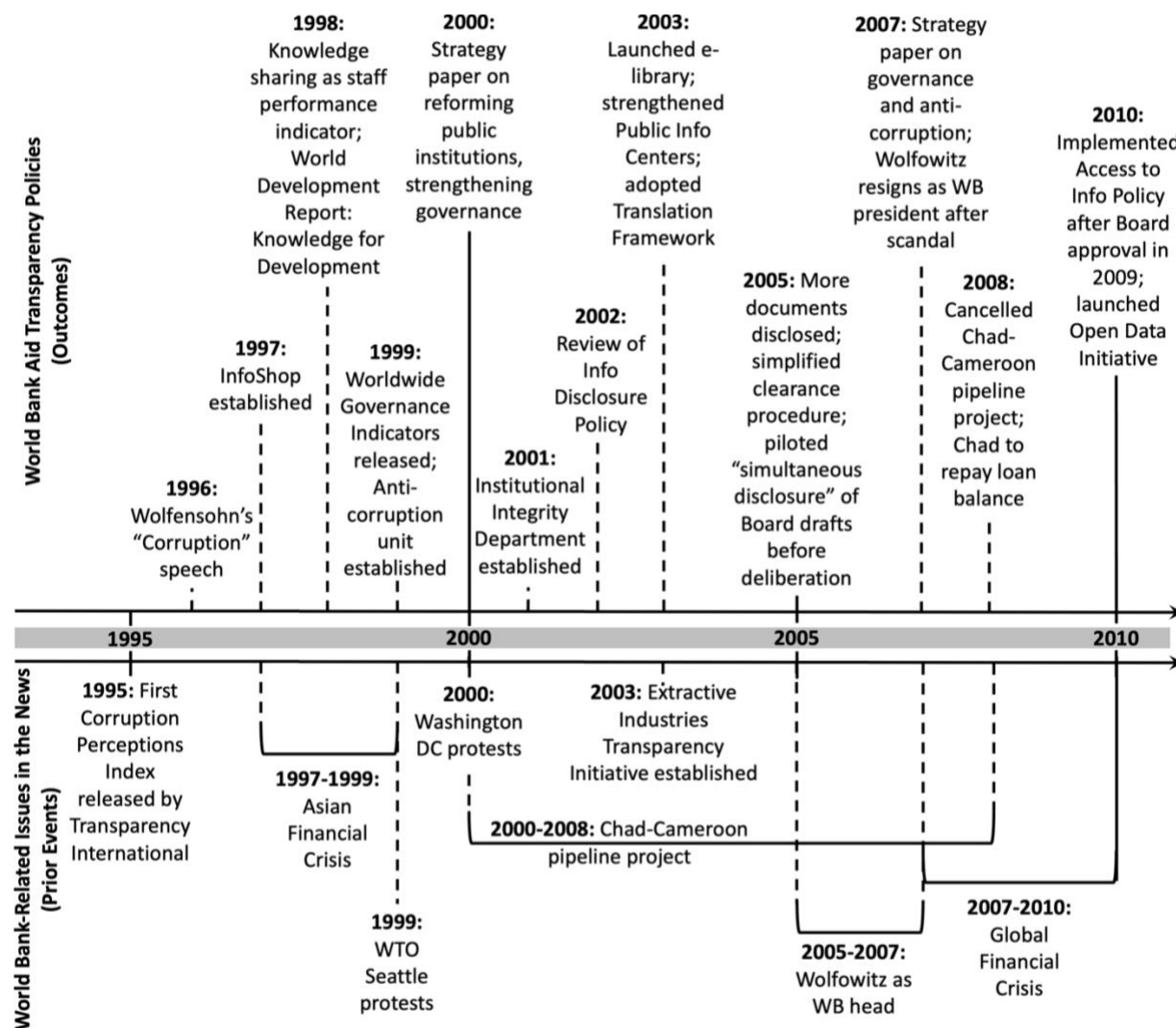


Figure 2.1.b. Timeline of World Bank Aid Transparency Policies and Related Issues in the News (1995–2010)



In scanning for major incidents to ground the causal narrative analysis, I used the attributes of “focusing events,” or historical episodes that become the means by which issues are brought to the policymakers’ notice. These include “a crisis or disaster that comes along to call attention to a problem, a powerful symbol that catches on, or the personal experience of a policy maker” (Kingdon, 2003, pp. 94, 95). By nature, focusing events are only of short duration, yet when “accompanied by a firmer indication of a problem, by a preexisting perception, or by a combination with other similar events” (p. 197) these become the vehicle in defining a policy problem — a crucial step in policy agenda setting.

Overall, six focusing events representing crises or disasters, powerful symbols, and policymakers’ experiences are elucidated in this chapter. Discussion of each focusing event involves identifying the resulting aid transparency policy outcomes, events and issues covered by the media prior to the passage of said policies, and the internal mechanisms pointing to the presumed media influence phenomena. In presenting the complexities of actual policymaking, the six cases show not only the World Bank’s perception of the news media’s power and reaction to such perception, but also other stakeholders’ strategic use of the press to persuade the Bank to institute reforms. An equal number of focusing events are selected from each era of the World Bank’s aid transparency journey: the era of forced resettlement and environmental policies (1970s–1990s); and anticorruption and governance policies (1990s and onwards).

Forced Resettlement and Environmental Policies

Of the myriad Bank-funded projects that can be utilized to ground the causal narrative, this section focuses on three cases — the Chico River Dam in the Philippines, Brazil’s Polonoroeste Program, and India’s Narmada Program — selected because of their significance in reforming the Bank’s social and environmental thrusts from the 1970s up to the early 1990s.

Chico River Dam Project, 1974–1986

The construction of massive water dam projects was viewed by the World Bank as “large social investments” (Dixon et al., 1989, p. 1) that would provide water, energy, farm irrigation, and flood control. A 1985 internal inventory found that while the Bank funded 400 dams or dam-related facilities since 1970, the Bank downplayed this as “modest” (World Bank, 1996, p. 9) compared to the share of worldwide dam construction. On the contrary, the International Rivers Network identified the World Bank as “the most important public institution in the contemporary dam-building industry,” for its ability to “move huge sums of money in single loans” and “set up dam-building agencies” in various countries (McCully, 1994). More importantly, these dam projects produced negative consequences that led to the displacement of locals, including indigenous peoples, and environmental degradation.

In 1976, the Philippines signed a World Bank loan for the first stage of a massive hydropower project in Chico River in the country’s northern mountain ranges (World Bank, 1976). Two years prior, it signed another loan that already incorporated feasibility studies for the project’s second stage (World Bank, 1974). The ambitious plan was opposed by residents, mostly the Kalinga ethnic group that would be displaced from their ancestral lands that they deemed sacred. The World Bank started receiving protest letters in 1975 from residents, NGOs and church groups during a reconnaissance mission, with some correspondence directly addressed to Bank President Robert McNamara (Cariño et al., 1979, p. 51). The Bank acknowledged that it “had no clear policy regarding tribal people at that time and was unable to respond to its critics on a constructive way” (World Bank, 1989, p. 17). Bank officials claimed to have answered all letters but described their responses as “essentially defensive” (p. 16).

It was only when the affected communities and protesters brought the issue to international attention through the media that the Bank started internal discussions to develop policies addressing the matter. Andrew Gray, former executive director of the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), notes that the Philippine indigenous resistance against the World Bank was among the first that placed the indigenous rights movement on the international stage. “This case is important because it shows how project-specific protests can raise broader concerns that in turn can influence policy — in this case, the Bank's guidelines for indigenous peoples and forced resettlement” (Gray, 1998, p. 269).

International news coverage was important for two reasons. First, the Philippines was under martial law and press freedom was curtailed by then President Ferdinand Marcos. Government troops militarized the Chico River area, burned villages, and assassinated tribal leader Macli-ing Dulag. While these incidents were known locally, these were barely reported by the national press because of tight government control. “In the national newspapers, except for reports from local correspondents, all releases emanated from the government... From this we immediately see a lack of independent coverage of the project and the absence of sufficient links with the people,” wrote Cariño and colleagues (1979, p. 54). A second reason is that the World Bank got its information from international news due to the dearth of reliable stories from national media. Scott Guggenheim, who was doing his doctoral fieldwork at that time before joining the World Bank later in 1983, wrote:

I visited the World Bank's office in Manila to see what they knew about the unfolding mayhem, but they had no records and it seemed that nobody from their team had ever visited the highland communities to check for himself or herself what was going on. (Guggenheim, 2021, p. 178)

Among the international news magazines that covered the Chico River dam issue were *Time* (as cited by Cariño et al., 1979, p. 56), *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Ocampo, 1978) and *Asiaweek* (“Valley of Sorrow: A War with the Past,” 1980), which ran a cover feature story. In contrast to national stories, “in the international press, reports were made by correspondents who visited the area and tend to present the government side, the people’s opposition and the tense situation prevailing in the area” (Cariño et al., 1979, p. 54).

The World Bank’s performance audit report of the Chico dam project highlighted the news media’s role in pressuring the Bank not to fund the succeeding stages of the project. “A number of articles criticizing the Bank were published in the international press. Films and interviews were showed on U.S. television” (World Bank, 1989, p. 16). The internal report also mentioned that news stories inaccurately presented the potential number of displaced people, given that no reliable estimates could be arrived at since feasibility studies have yet to begin. “However, the rumor that 90,000 people would be displaced by the construction of the four dams... was largely disseminated by the international press” (p. 16). Ultimately, Bank officials thought that “local communities believed that Bank support for the Chico River irrigation project would ultimately result in... the displacement of the population” (p. 16), reflecting the cognitive component of presumed media influence. The same report documented the World Bank’s two major responses: “the Bank dropped its support for the feasibility study of Chico II and resettlement plan altogether” (p. 16) and “issued its operational manual statement (OMS) No. 2.34: Tribal people in Bank financed projects” (p. 17) — the coordination component. The OMS set the landmark policy that “the Bank will not assist development projects that knowingly involve encroachment on traditional territories being used or occupied by tribal people unless adequate safeguards are provided” (as cited in Rai, 2011, p. 45). These policies are the outcomes

of how the WB reassessed its initial defensive responses to beneficiaries' complaints due to critical news stories from foreign media outlets with a more global reach.

Polonoroeste (“Northwest Pole”) Program, 1979–1989

Another controversial project funded by the World Bank was Brazil's Polonoroeste Program, a multi-phase road and forest colonization project aiming to transfer the poor from South-Central Brazil to the Northwest near the Amazon. The Bank intended for it to be a model project showcasing its capacity to marry infrastructure and environmental development (Wade, 1997, 2011), yet it failed in many aspects due to complications in agricultural sustainability, malaria outbreak, and deforestation. Even before its loan approval in 1981, internal staffers already had strong disagreements on Polonoroeste's feasibility. Some contend that “the risks of jungle settlement were simply too high” (Wade, 1997, p. 641). By 1983, internal documents point to conflicting conclusions: a report to World Bank president Alden Clausen that the program was satisfactory but to the Brazilian government saying it was otherwise (pp. 649–650). The Polonoroeste program has been canonized by development experts, environmentalists, and NGOs as the premier case resulting in the World Bank becoming more accountable to environmental impacts. Robert Wade, a World Bank agricultural economist in 1984–1988, described it as:

the first project to attract serious criticism of the Bank from the US government, US NGOs, and the US public – the first “bomb”. Polonoeste (sic) was a point of transition for the whole of the Bank, after which senior managers came to agree that the organization had to change some of its key normative ideas and their operational and organizational expression. (Wade, 2011, p. 5)

Wade's statement implies the significance of the American press in mediating such criticisms from the Bank's stakeholders in the US. The US government's ties to the Bank are politically important in foreign policy, as the country is its largest shareholder and the only state among 189 members with the right to veto decisions. Since its founding in Bretton Woods in 1944, the Bank only had American presidents, handpicked by the US president — with the lone exception of Bulgarian Kristalina Georgieva who took over on an interim basis for a few weeks in 2019 (World Bank, 2019). In the 1980s, however, it did not have a smooth relationship with US leaders, especially with President Ronald Reagan and the Republican Party's platform towards bilateral aid programs and displeasure of multilateralism. The Reagan cabinet, nonetheless, continued to strategically engage with the Bank, especially in dealing with the international debt crisis, as well as advancing market-oriented reforms (for a review of the US-World Bank relations in the 1980s, see Gwin, 1997). With the US Senate under Republican control from 1981 to 1987, Bank critics and environmental activists found an ally within the US government to pressure the IO to implement accountability reforms.

In 1983, three US-based environmental NGOs — the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Environmental Policy Institute, and National Wildlife Federation (NWF) — expanded their programs to include international environmental issues and decided to target the World Bank for their campaign. They used the Polonoeste case to successfully lobby for the House Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance to hold a hearing in June. The following year, the World Bank sent a reply to the Subcommittee, defending that “every project proposed for financing comes to the attention of OEA (Office of Environmental Affairs) early in the project cycle” (as cited in Wade, 1997, p. 660). This was contrary to a March 30, 1984 internal Bank memo that said “environmental issues are not considered, but that they are

taken into account in specific instances when environmental consequences are pointed out by the Bank's environment advisor, the press, or special interest groups in host countries" (as cited in Rich, 2013, p. 118). Note that the Bank acknowledged the news media as a key political actor that influences their policies. Meanwhile, the NGOs further lobbied with the Lower House in 1984, this time resulting in a September hearing with the Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agricultural Research, and Environment. They also made sure to engage with the press by having Brazilian and American national TV tape the morning testimony of a leading Brazilian environmental activist, for broadcast in the evening news on the same day (Rich, 2013; Wade, 1997). After the hearings, additional NGOs from 11 countries, as well as members of the West German parliament, were mobilized to sign a letter demanding the World Bank to suspend fund disbursements for the Polonoroeste program until the Bank and Brazilian government could carry out the signatories' eight recommendations. The letter and its accompanying research dossier were also sent to the *New York Times*, which simultaneously ran a story in October (Eckholm, 1984). The World Bank replied a month later with a less empathetic tone: "You can be sure that the Bank is continuing to monitor the situation closely, and that your concerns will be considered as Polonoroeste continues" (as cited in Rich, 2013, p. 123).

Furious by the response, the NGOs turned to an unlikely ally — a conservative Republican senator chairing the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. Senator Robert Kasten of Wisconsin then wrote to the World Bank president on January 24, 1985, admonishing Clausen that "the response from the World Bank was at best a brush-off, but frankly, more correctly described as an insult," and reminding him that "securing support for U.S. contributions to multilateral development institutions is difficult at best" (Kasten, 1985b).

The Senator's office then issued a press release implying that "Kasten hinted at potential difficulty in approving future appropriations for the Bank" (Kasten, 1985a).

As a Senate neophyte in 1981 who upset incumbent Gaylord Nelson in the elections, Kasten was initially not perceived in political circles as a force. Described then as "somewhere in the middle," "blends into the background" (Aukofer, 1988, p. 1J) or "Reagan rubber stamp" (Stuart, 1981), Kasten came to national prominence in 1983 for his defiance against Reagan's plan to amend a bill requiring US banks to withhold taxes from interests and dividends. He not only succeeded in passing the bill without amendment, but also secured votes to override a presidential veto. It also helped that Kasten was media savvy. The *Washington Post* described him as "bolstered by the unaccustomed interest of the national press, (and) an appearance on public television news" (Lardner, 1983). With the Polonoroeste case, some groups doubted the alliance between the NGOs and the conservative politician. For them, Kasten was simply media hungry and against foreign aid, and NGOs were naïve to give him a concrete issue to pound on. NRDC's Bruce Rich, however, gave a more complex view:

If indeed the senator was inclined to cut funds and was looking for an excuse to do so, the only solution for the World Bank was to clean up its environmental act as quickly as possible and deprive Kasten of his pretext... One could argue, though, that it was easier for him or any other senator to take a strong stand on environmental issues that did not affect interests in his own constituency. (Rich, 2013, p. 125)

Nonetheless, Kasten could easily refer to his environmental advocacy while serving as House Representative (1974–1978), where he had a strong pro-environment voting record (Stuart, 1981), and previously in the Wisconsin State Senate (1971–1973), where he was named "Wisconsin Conservation Legislator" by NWF, the same NGO campaigning against the Bank.

In March 1985, Kasten proposed a meeting with the World Bank and NGOs, to which Bank officials were first hesitant for several reasons, one of which was the damning internal mid-term review of Polonoroeste that found evidence of implementation lapses and environmental costs. By then, the Bank had already communicated to the Brazilian government to “take several concrete actions by March 1985” (World Bank, 1992b, p. 118), most specifically to address the growing number of settlers. Finding no concrete actions from Brazil, the World Bank suspended disbursements in mid-March, the first time in its lending history. Wade argued that the suspension should be viewed from the larger context that already reflect the general public’s concern at that time galvanized through media reports. Notably, it was in the same month that NDRC’s Rich and historian Pat Aufderheide published “Debacle in the Amazon” in *Defenders* magazine (1985), resulting in the World Bank receiving 30–40 letters a day citing the article alone (Wade, 1997). “The campaign was but the ‘seed’ injected into the appropriate crystalline solution, namely, the wider ‘zeitgeist’ or spirit of concern expressed in scientific circles and the media” (1997, p. 654).

The suspension was a short-lived victory, as the World Bank resumed disbursements for the program in August 1985. Environmentalists pressed for more reforms in Bank operations and further intensified their media presence through its *Bankrolling Disasters* campaign, which showed citizens how to be involved in demanding World Bank accountability. “The American press gave the campaign influential coverage... Because they came out of the United States, these stories about the campaign were picked up by media in developing countries” (Wade, 1997, p. 669). Stories were published not only in prominent presses but also in the news sections of leading journals such as *Nature* (A. Anderson, 1987; Clarke, 1985) and *Science* (Walsh, 1986). Meanwhile, Kasten held more than 20 hearings on the issue, calling for the US Treasury to

withhold the government's budget for the World Bank and threatening to single-handedly disapprove US contribution to the Bank (Wade, 1997; World Bank, 1992b). He likewise intensified his media relations, with investigative journalists even labeling him “the World Bank's watchdog” (J. Anderson & Van Atta, 1985). The senator submitted letters to the editor and made himself available for press interviews. In a 1986 internal memo, his policy director, Alex Echols, briefed Kasten about current and potential environmental initiatives their office needs to work on, and one agenda was “Continue our work on the MDBs (multilateral development banks).” Kasten encircled this item and added a hand-written note in all caps: “OUR MAIN THRUST — LOTS OF WORK HERE. MORE PRESS” (Echols, 1986, emphasis original). Arguably the most significant news coverage came from the April 19, 1987 episode of *60 Minutes*, where Diane Sawyer interviewed Kasten, showed footage of Amazon's degraded jungle reserves and the plight of settlers in Polonoroeste, and explained in simple terms how this program is funded by US taxpayers through the World Bank (“The \$500 Million Loan,” 1987). During the 1986–1987 season, *60 Minutes* was the highest rated evening news program with an average US audience size of 23.3% (Brooks & Marsh, 2003, p. 7269).

The World Bank slowly succumbed to the pressures from NGOs, Congress, and the news media. The following were among the Bank's significant responses:

- While the World Bank approved another power project loan to Brazil in June 1986, the Bank's US representative voted “nay” — the first time that any Bank member voted no — thus sending a strong signal of the US's evolving stance on environmental accountability;
- Issuance of Operations Policy Note (OPN) 10.08 in 1986 titled “Operations Policy Issues in the Treatment of Involuntary Resettlement”;

- Establishment of the Environment Department in 1987 and Environment Divisions in each of the regional Technical Departments in 1987, which increased the number of environmental staff positions from just five a year ago to 50;
- Issuance of Policy Guidelines on “Involuntary Resettlement in Development Projects” in 1988, and a series of Operational Directives from 1989 to 1990 on the environment and involuntary resettlement with clauses on consultation and information disclosure; and
- Issuance of the Directive on Disclosure of Information in 1989, the forerunner of AIP.

The World Bank finally closed its funding for the Polonoroeste program in March 1992, a three-year delay from its original intent (World Bank, 1992b). Throughout the program implementation, the US Congress and US-based NGOs ensured visibility of their concerns in the press, as the World Bank also admitted acting only when operational issues are pointed out by the news media.

Narmada Program, 1979–1993

A November 1986 article in *The Bank's World*, which is the World Bank's internal magazine, wrote that “Jose Botafogo G., Vice President External Relations, pinpoints environmental issues as perhaps the most important image problem the Bank has to deal with in view of the growing public criticism of the Bank's policies and operations” (Messiter, 1986, p. 8). One project identified as among the most frequently targeted was the construction of the 200-kilometer-long Sardar Sarovar dam reservoir in Narmada, India. Similar with the Chico and Polonoroeste projects, NGOs and the media piled up criticisms against this Indian program that would potentially displace 40,000 households in the Narmada valley. Wade noted that this program had the public appeal to succeed the Polonoroeste program as the critics' primary case

because it had “good access to English-language information and because India’s democratic policy and free press allowed opposition” (1997, p. 707).

Even before the loan was approved in 1985, the World Bank already received criticisms from the ground. Frank Vogl, the Bank’s Information and Public Affairs (IPA) head, said his department handled hundreds of letters from critics and “dozens of press interviews steered towards positive reporting” (Messiter, 1986, p. 8). Compared to Chico and Polonoroeste, there was a shift in how the World Bank has addressed such criticisms. According to Vogl:

It has become increasingly clear that we have to take the initiative on this front, rather than just react to the critics. Acknowledging that we have made errors in the past, that we could have done better and then noting the positive contributions that we have made, is simply not good enough. We have to get out front with seminars, detailed publications and forthright articles on our new institutional initiatives in this crucial area. We are, incidentally, working with WETA, Channel 26, to produce a special documentary on the environment and development.... IPA will continue to be on the media firing line and deal with the mountain of mail that floods in." (Messiter, 1986, pp. 8–9)

With renewed congressional hearings and growing press coverage, then outgoing World Bank president Barber Conable formed an independent review panel in June 1991 led by former head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), F. Bradford Morse. In an internal memo, New World Bank president Lewis Preston was apprised of the Morse Commission report’s content on May 5, 1992, before it was made public a month later. The memo noted that the report “is generally well-written, in a kind of journalistic style” and “generally very negative in tone about the Bank’s performance” (Vergin, 1992, p. 1). It further read:

The negative tone of the draft will no doubt create a difficult climate externally... The Bank's response will thus have to be crafted with great care... Our comments will try to redress our stated and implied accountability... (p. 2)

The scathing report blaming the Bank and the Indian government for the projects' failures was publicly released on June 18, 1992 through a press conference, with "about 70 reporters" (Messiter, 1992, p. 2) fielding questions to Morse. On the same day, the Bank separately released Preston's statement: "The decision to mount such an Independent Review -- the first of its kind in the World Bank's history -- resulted from our commitment to public accountability... I am convinced that the problems highlighted call for a comprehensive and vigorous response" (World Bank, 1992c, p. 1). Three major policies were issued by the Bank: (a) the project' cancellation in 1993, the first time it did so solely on environmental grounds; (b) the Board's approval of a revised information disclosure policy in August 1993, with emphasis on the public release of Environmental Assessments; and (c) the establishment of an Inspection Panel, which is now the Bank's main independent accountability mechanism where project-affected people could complain and seek recourse (Wade, 1997; World Bank, 1995).

In the Narmada case, the World Bank updated their beliefs of the news media's influence by becoming more proactive in its press relations and highlighting its thrust towards the norm of environmental accountability. In Wade's (1997) assessment, however, he viewed the Bank's shift to environmental focus in the 1980s and early 1990s as less normative but "largely *tactical*, a response to the need to reduce the threat to its lending resources" (p. 73, emphasis original). This mirrors the coordination behavior of the presumed media influence, such that funding threats from the US Congress and Treasury were made more credible by press reports, as these became publicized and not just contained among internal political circles.

Anticorruption and Governance Policies

The framing of aid accountability shifted in the early 1990s from being an environmental issue to one of governance. Public criticisms from the Chico, Polonoroeste, and Narmada projects set the foundation for more fundamental and systemic reforms on accountability. “By 1992, the debate on transparency had become noisy enough to reach the cloistered offices of the executive directors,” wrote Bank critics George and Sabelli (1994, pp. 239–240), resulting in the Bank to revise its information disclosure policy in 1993 (see previous section). Three focusing events discussed here led to this shift to governance. The first relates to another NGO campaign that produced powerful symbols through media spectacles, the second on corruption becoming a development issue, and the third on a scandal from no less than the World Bank president.

50 Years is Enough Campaign

In 1991, with the World Bank facing multiple project implementation issues and recognizing that it had to also cope with governance inefficiencies from borrower states, an internal task force was created to study how the Bank could push governments to “shape up” without stepping into their sovereignty. Outgoing Bank president Barber Conable cautioned Bank managers in his internal memo: “Governance is an emotive word, and more importantly, a potentially contentious issue internationally and within many of our member countries” (Conable, 1991, p. 1). He added that only senior managers should discuss these delicate issues “until our borrowing members achieve a greater level of comfort with dialogue on governance matters and our own experience with it matures further” (p. 2). A few months later in February 1992, incoming Bank president Lewis Preston formed another independent committee led by outgoing vice president Willi Wapenhans to conduct a thorough review of the quality of World Bank’s project portfolio. Wapenhans was very careful in protecting the review’s independence

and integrity, adding that “I did refrain from interacting with any that would take an interest in this work, such as NGOs and the press” (Wapenhans, 1993, p. 6). The impending report sounded the alarm for the Bank’s declining portfolio performance, which was attributed to “the Bank’s pervasive preoccupation with new lending” (World Bank, 1992a, p. iii) instead of project proposals’ quality at entry into the portfolio. NGOs got hold of the draft report and leaked it to *The Guardian*, which “came out with a pretty devastating article about wasteful lending by the Bank” (Wapenhans, 1993, p. 24). The Wapenhans report was later released in September 1992, becoming “arguably the most influential evaluation ever at the World Bank” (Evans & Heltberg, 2022).

Critics were quick to denounce the World Bank’s hypocrisy of demanding governance reforms from its state-members while the IO itself needs shaping up. NGOs and activists formed a network in 1992 that began a two-year planning leading up to the Bank’s 50th founding anniversary in 1994. Thus, a powerful symbol was born — the “50 Years is Enough” campaign. In its original 1994 platform, the network’s first agenda was “institutional reform to make openness, full public accountability and the participation of affected populations in decision-making standard procedure at the World Bank and the IMF” (50 Years is Enough Network, n.d.). Its founders described the network as “primarily media-oriented, responding to World Bank and/or IMF public statements with analysis, facts, and positions” (50 Years is Enough Network, 2004, p. 2). But the campaign was more than just an exercise of analytical rebuttal; it generated media spectacles that the Bank was not prepared for.

During Geoffrey Lamb’s first day on the job in the Bank’s External Affairs Department in London in 1994, a protestor climbed up Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square and unfurled a full-length banner with the words “50 Years is Enough.” Lamb saw the banner from the Bank’s

15th floor office in New Zealand House. “London was regarded as the center of (the campaign) because of Oxfam and Christian Aid and so on, but also because the (*Financial Times*), the BBC, *The Economist*, the sort of global media that paid attention to development issues,” said Lamb (2007, p. 28). His core strategy involved engaging with the news media and the UK Treasury, but mostly with the press. “One was to decide to really get close to and be regarded as reliable by the major establishment media, essentially BBC, *Economist*, (*Financial Times*), and to a degree *The Guardian* and *The Times* — the British media, but especially the ones with global reach” (p. 31). This initial coordinative response reflected the view from top management that NGOs’ campaign was nothing but a public relations (PR) problem for the World Bank, without the need to address accountability issues at the policy level. Lamb recalled how the Bank decided to merely reorganize its communications team, and in the process “shoot the messenger”:

Just around that time, Alex Shakow was pushed out of being the director of External Affairs because the way that the Bank, you know, dealt with the severity of the “50 Years Is Enough.” The critical challenge, was, as many large organizations do, to decide that — to shoot the messenger. And so Alex was pushed out. It was all his fault. You know, everything would be fine except our PR operation had been defective. (p. 30)

Bracing itself for such publicity stunts during its anniversary celebration in Madrid, the Bank hired Mark Malloch Brown, a former *Economist* journalist, to manage its PR campaign. Upon arrival, Malloch Brown remembered that the Bank was in a state of “frozen fear” (Mallaby, 2004, p. 61), which implies the institution’s perceptual reaction from all the media spectacles they received from the campaign. This would further intensify as the 50th anniversary meeting unfolded. On October 1, 1994, during Preston’s press conference, a protestor unfurled a banner behind the president with the words “WORLD BANK MURDERER.” Three days later

during the formal opening ceremonies, after the Spanish King welcomed attendees and when Preston was about to deliver his speech, two protestors climbed up the roof's beams and threw fake dollar bills with inscriptions such as "World Bankenstein" and "This note is redeemable for ozone destruction" (50 Years is Enough Network, 2004, p. 2; Mallaby, 2004, p. 63).

It did not also help that the World Bank president was media shy. Shakow, who was replaced by Malloch Brown as the Bank's top communications person, said that Preston was uncomfortable with public speaking because he was dyslexic as a child. "In an institution of this kind, if the president is not interested in reaching out, this becomes a real problem" (Shakow, 2002, p. 19). Despite this weakness, the World Bank continued its PR campaign that particularly chose not to recognize the 50 Years is Enough platform. According to Lamb:

Maybe this was excessively *realpolitik* on my part... I thought that, in the end, while one needs to be open and accessible and ready to debate and so on with NGOs — the key NGOs — we were never ever going to persuade (the 50 Years is Enough Network) of the virtue of our ways because they were structurally opposed. That was what they thought differently, and also it was not in their interest to say, "Oh, gosh, actually the World Bank is doing quite a good job." (Lamb, 2007, pp. 30, 31)

This coordination effect of non-conformity would later be overturned with the arrival of the World Bank's new president in 1995, which signaled the Bank's updating of beliefs. James Wolfensohn brought an unmatched energy to the Bank, having already been christened by the *New York Times* and *Financial Times* as "the Renaissance Man" even before his official appointment (this was the PR handiwork of Malloch Brown; Mallaby, 2004; "Renaissance Man Gets the Nod," 1995; Truell, 1995). In his first few years, Wolfensohn sought to invigorate the large bureaucracy from its old ways and repair its relations with critics by acknowledging the

importance of NGOs in the Bank's operations. In a post-mortem of the 1999 WTO Seattle protests, *The Economist* noted that the 50 Years is Enough Network was "surprisingly quiet about the World Bank." It analyzed:

James Wolfensohn, the Bank's boss, has made "dialogue" with NGOs a central component of the institution's work. More than 70 NGO specialists work in the Bank's field offices. More than half of World Bank projects last year involved NGOs. Mr. Wolfensohn has built alliances with everyone, from religious groups to environmentalists. His efforts have diluted the strength of "mobilisation networks" and increased the relative power of technical NGOs (for it is mostly these that the Bank has co-opted). From environmental policy to debt relief, NGOs are at the centre of World Bank policy. Often they determine it. The new World Bank is more transparent... ("The Non-Governmental Order," 1999)

Wolfensohn's 10-year tenure as World Bank president did continue to receive criticisms from the 50 Years is Enough campaign, yet these were tempered by major policy reforms coupled by intensified media relations. He continued to hire the services of Malloch Brown. According to *The Guardian*, it was under Malloch Brown's guidance when the Bank "blitzed opinion-makers with full-page newspaper advertisements and a television campaign to change perceptions of it as an arrogant institution unwilling to heed outsiders" (Tran, 2007). These media campaigns were, more importantly, backed by policy reforms Wolfensohn instituted. By 1999, the World Bank, together with the IMF, developed a framework for debt relief to the world's poorest and heavily indebted countries — an issue that resonated intensely with anti-globalization protestors and received substantial press coverage. Knowledge management was also Wolfensohn's major reform area related to aid transparency. In 1998, knowledge sharing

became a major staff performance indicator, and in 2001 his administration made a major review of the 1993 information disclosure policy, resulting in the institutionalization of the principle of presumption in favor of disclosure (World Bank, 2002). By his term's end in 2005, the Bank piloted the "simultaneous disclosure" of Board drafts even prior to Board meetings. These reforms were part of the larger effort of incorporating governance in the Bank's development thrusts — once a taboo topic that generated waves of internal and external criticism.

The case of the 50 Years is Enough campaign illustrates contrasting reactions from the World Bank, due in part to its policymakers' belief updating of NGOs' demands as covered in the news. The Bank's adverse reaction to the initial media spectacles implies its tendency to respond in a more diplomatic way, in coordination with expectations from its member-state shareholders. Nevertheless, this diplomacy still warranted press engagement as a PR strategy. When the new leadership perceived that this approach was not effective in changing public perception, the World Bank revised its response by addressing NGOs' demands for transparency and accountability. This transformed the Bank into a more welcoming institution, with structures incorporating civil society inputs into decision-making yet balancing its interests from major state shareholders. The response shift, however, can be speculated as merely tactical, as this was also an effective strategy for the Bank to induce states to address domestic governance issues.

The Cancer of Corruption

Development scholars mostly attribute the shattering of corruption as a diplomatic taboo to Wolfensohn's 1996 "cancer of corruption" speech during the World Bank-IMF Annual meetings. Using this powerful symbol, he addressed delegates:

And let's not mince words: we need to deal with the cancer of corruption... The Bank Group cannot intervene in the political affairs of our member countries. But we can give

advice, encouragement and support to governments that wish to fight corruption and it is these governments that will, over time, attract the larger volume of investment.

(Wolfensohn, 1996)

Sebastian Mallaby's 2004 book, *The World's Banker*, which profiled Wolfensohn's early years in the Bank, wrote that the president, while having a vision, was not good at translating goals into plans. Yet, Mallaby argued that "Wolfensohn's basic instincts on development theory were pretty much on target" (p. 175), as exemplified by his corruption speech. Mallaby attributes Wolfensohn's seminal ideas about corruption to his visit in Indonesia, which for the longest time was one of the Bank's model countries. The reason, however, is more complicated than that and can be partly credited to a newspaper article Wolfensohn was asked to read by a Bank official.

Back in 1993, a group of retired World Bank bureaucrats led by Peter Eigen, frustrated over the Bank's unwillingness to address governance issues, founded Transparency International. This would include former Bank president McNamara, who recalled during his tenure in 1968–1981 that "it would have been absolutely impossible for the Bank to inject governance into its discussions, corruption, for example... I made no progress on it. Zero," (McNamara, 1991, p. 46). In July 1995, just a few days after Wolfensohn assumed the Bank presidency, Transparency International published its first Corruption Perceptions Index. The ranking found Indonesia to be the lowest performing country (Transparency International, 1995), and this story found its way to the news (see the *New York Times* story by Crossette, 1995). A few months later, when Wolfensohn decided to embark on a multi-country visit, Bank officials pitched for a stop in Indonesia because of the nation's success story in poverty reduction and strong ties with the Bank. "The Resident Mission in Indonesia is one of the largest in the Bank and has been very effective over the years in providing decision makers with a wide range of economic policy

support,” wrote then Bank vice-president Russell J. Cheetham (1996, p. 1) as part of Wolfensohn’s briefing. The memo’s first three of five pages extensively described the country’s economic policy agenda, but the fourth page then shifted to a section titled “Political Issues and Risks.” In an attempt to refrain from directly discussing the country’s corrupt reputation, Cheetham instead attached another *New York Times* article (written by Gargan, 1996) that mentioned Indonesia’s ranking in the Corruptions Perception Index. Cheetham later commented that his memo may have negatively primed Wolfensohn about the country:

(Wolfensohn) arrived with the view that there was a large degree of corruption in Indonesia, starting with the president and going down. So the policy dialogue that we had in Jakarta during his visit was not especially productive...He came away from that visit, from Indonesia, I think, quite perturbed about the problem of corruption there and began to take steps, pressuring staff and so on, to deal with the issue a lot more aggressively.

(Cheetham, 2012, p. 16)

Of course, the news article could not be the sole cause for Wolfensohn’s perception of Indonesia. Mark Baird, then Director of the Bank’s Development Policy who was involved in emerging Wolfensohn’s initial ideas linking corruption and development, said that the president “had a very good nose for what mattered in development, or at least *what mattered in terms of the outside perceptions of the Bank*” (Baird, 2010, p. 17, emphasis mine). At that time, NGOs have already warned Wolfensohn of the Bank’s close relationship with a corrupt regime like Indonesia, and his reaction was that corruption “is going to damage our reputation and eventually damage our relationship with the country” (p. 17). Despite the existence of various reports of Indonesia’s corruption, including that of Transparency International, Cheetham’s

decision to attach the *New York Times* article is quite telling as to which report would lend more credibility in discussing a contentious topic to the World Bank president.

While Wolfensohn's corruption speech in 1996 was received with acclaim by external stakeholders, it lacked a concrete strategy for the World Bank to implement. For the next couple of years, the Bank's resident mission in Jakarta continued its old ways, until the May 1998 riots. Triggered by political unrest and economic crisis, the massive and violent demonstrations resulted in the downfall of President Suharto's 32-year dictatorship. Two months later, the *Wall Street Journal* printed a story in its July 14 issue titled "Speak No Evil: Why the World Bank Failed to Anticipate Indonesia's Deep Crisis" (Brauchli, 1998). The article implied that the Bank for decades had a soft approach in addressing corruption, which was seen as the root cause of the nation's political crisis. Katherine Marshall was director of the Bank's Social Policy and Governance for East Asia & Pacific when this happened, and she was immediately tasked to head an anti-corruption mission. Marshall recalled:

(The mission) resulted from a crisis situation because of media and political accusations that the Bank had ignored and even contributed to widespread corruption in Indonesia. That proved to be an important, very demanding exercise which we put together in a matter of weeks and which came up with a lot of recommendations both for the Bank itself and, much more generally, for Indonesia and beyond. And, secondly, I organized an anticorruption advisory group to serve the East Asia management team, which is one of the few institutional mechanisms that survives to this day. (Marshall, 2007, p. 37)

As one of the lowest points of the World Bank, the 1998 Indonesia crisis compelled the IO to strengthen further its governance and accountability policies. By 1999, the Bank's Research Group developed the World Governance Indicators (WGI), now a leading source of

information on the quality of state-level governance and accountability (Kaufmann et al., 1999). The following year, the Bank's strategy for governance and public sector reform was finalized, and further revised in 2003 after thorough consultations (World Bank, 2000, 2003). And in 2001, the Bank established the Department of Institutional Integrity (INT), an independent unit investigating fraud, corruption, and misconduct allegations toward the Bank.

This case shows how the World Bank's determination to become a leader in incorporating corruption as a major development agenda was a product of several factors, including its reaction to news media reports. The coverage of Transparency International's corruption index bolstered the Bank's presumption that external policy experts were on board with the agenda of convincing states to address this domestic governance issue, whereas negative news reports that directly tied the Bank in state-level corruption likewise compelled the IO to institutionalize aid accountability policies.

Wolfowitz Scandal

Wolfensohn was succeeded by Paul Wolfowitz as World Bank president in 2005. His accomplishments in the Bank were mixed: "He has suspended loans to developing countries that he regards as corrupt—among them Chad, Kenya, and Bangladesh—while expanding the bank's activities in places where the United States and its allies have intervened militarily, including Lebanon and Iraq," wrote a profile piece in *The New Yorker* on April 2, 2007 (Cassidy, 2007). By May 2007, he tendered his resignation — becoming the only head to resign over a scandal.

"On 'the cancer of corruption,' the Wolfensohn period was not well followed up by Wolfowitz. He didn't take what Wolfensohn had done very well. He exacerbated, if anything, the mess that Wolfensohn had made about management succession," said Paul Cadario (2013, p. 145), then Senior Manager of the World Bank's Trust Fund Quality Assurance and Compliance

Group. Cadario was an active member of the Staff Association (SA), a group acting as the staffers' internal union advocating for labor welfare that became Wolfowitz's most vocal critic. Like NGOs, the SA engaged with the news media in publicizing the Bank leader's decisions deemed unethical relative to staff hiring and promotion. The first came with the appointment of Suzanne Rich Folsom, already the Bank president's chief counselor, as simultaneous head of the INT that was supposedly an independent unit. Apart from this technicality, eyebrows were raised on Folsom's selection since she was not among the nine finalists identified by an external search firm, and there were already allegations of Folsom pressuring internal staffers to bypass investigation rules (Balls & Alden, 2006; Cassidy, 2007). Nonetheless, the Bank president would sail through this predicament. Folsom would continue to head INT even a year after Wolfowitz's resignation, until another independent panel reviewed the INT's structure and recommended the elevation of INT head as the Bank's Vice President for Integrity (World Bank, 2008), resulting in the appointment of Leonard McCarthy for the position in June 2008.

The scandal that brought Wolfowitz down involved his relationship with Shaha Riza, who at the time of his appointment was the Bank's Senior Communications Officer for the Middle East and North Africa. They were romantically linked since 2001, with *The Guardian* already reporting of this relationship as a potential issue (Borger, 2005). By 2007, the SA found that while Riza was seconded to the US State Department to avoid Wolfowitz's supervision in the World Bank, she was still under Bank payroll, and he authorized her salary increase.

Cadario was working with the SA when they not only brought the issue to the public through their journalist contacts but also used social media — at that time more about blogging and email lists — to curate news reports to inform Bank staffers across the world of about the latest developments regarding this issue:

So every morning at 5:30 we would all get up in our respective residences to look and see what was on the web about Wolfowitz. And one of the roles I played is I would collect articles, and I would put them in a big email, and I would send them to people all over the Bank, generally people in the field... I would do this twice a day, what the press is saying. I did not editorialize. I just said, “Meanwhile, meanwhile, meanwhile,” but I sent this around and there were links to the stuff. (Cadario, 2013, p. 139)

Whereas the news roundup would also be posted in <https://wolfowitzmustresign.blogspot.com>, Cadario would contribute his editorialized content to <http://worldbankpresident.org/>, an open platform funded by the Bretton Woods Project — a civil society watchdog critical of the Bank. The blog later allowed him access to directly post under the username “deep insider” (see his posts in <https://worldbankpresident.org/author/deep-insider>). When the World Bank formed a special committee to investigate the scandal, it decided to publicly release meeting transcripts. “All this stuff on the inside, all the extracts would get out onto a separate website, which meant the press had lots to go on.... The press was being well fed,” he said (Cadario, 2013, p. 141).

News media scrutiny was intense, and major newspapers took editorial stands, with the *Wall Street Journal* sympathetic to Wolfowitz (“The Wolfowitz Files,” 2007; “World Bank Power Play,” 2007) and the *New York Times* and *Financial Times* urging him to resign (“Far Past Time to Go,” 2007; “Wolfowitz Must Be Told to Resign Now,” 2007). Caldario (2013) said the pressure for the Bank president to resign would not be successful without press coverage. “Could Wolfowitz have gotten away with this 15 years ago? Probably, because there wouldn't be the forces of the media that would have said, ‘People who lead corporations don't do this’” (p. 147).

Despite this setback in organizational accountability, Bank staffers did not waver in pushing for internal reforms even during Wolfowitz’s tenure. At the height of Wolfowitz’s

embroilment with his controversy, the Bank finalized the two-volume *Strengthening World Bank Group Engagement on Governance and Anticorruption* (World Bank, 2007a, 2007b), more popularly known as the Governance and Accountability (GAC) Strategy, on March 21, 2007. His successor, Robert Zoellick, would continue to shepherd this governance framework upon his assumption in July 2007. The GAC Strategy outlined areas where the Bank needed to improve, with one identified mechanism being the AIP. After years of consultation with stakeholders, the AIP was approved by the Bank's Board in 2009, for implementation in 2010 (World Bank, 2009). This case exemplifies how the strategic utilization of the press to shape both internal and external perceptions of malfeasance from Bank leadership can produce swift policy actions that push the boundaries of transparency and accountability of IOs.

Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion

“From its inception the World Bank has put a premium on confidentiality,” writes the first few paragraphs of the Bank's officially authorized history celebrating its 50th year (Kapur et al., 1997, p. 1). “The struggle over the environment changed the Bank. The 1990s institution is more open to a broader social agenda and more directly responsive to NGOs, project beneficiaries, the media, and other voices and constituencies” (pp. 15–16). This responsiveness to stakeholders, resulting in becoming more transparent and accountable, can be viewed as part of the Bank's processes of addressing the converged preferences from its principals, improving performance effectiveness, and legitimizing its role in international politics.

The causal narratives in this chapter are by no means a complete and sweeping chronicle of the evolution of the World Bank's aid transparency policies, yet the six selected focusing events are useful historical representations of the Bank's varying processes of shifting towards more openness within the 36-year span. More importantly, they show how the news media has

been cited consistently by Bank officials as the reason why they decided to give in to pressure to be more accountable. On the forced resettlement and environmental cases, the World Bank initially ignored criticisms and protests, then heeded the call once issues were covered by the media that merely reiterated the same message. In other examples, the World Bank initially chose not to conform with media spectacles, such as those generated by the 50 Years is Enough Network, but later realized the validity of the campaign's platform for transparency and viability for incorporation into the Bank's development thrusts. NGOs, state officials, and dissatisfied Bank staffers put their message out for news coverage, perceiving that their messages would be received more seriously when made public through the news media.

Focusing events themselves are merely a means by which an issue such as aid transparency becomes part of the policy agenda. For this to happen, Kingdon (2003) posits that focusing events need to either be reinforced by preexisting perceptions that such events are related to a policy problem, serve as an early warning call that such events are indeed a manifestation of the problem, or be combined with other events in defining the problem. The press, then, is a vehicle that transforms focusing events into policy problems and swift policy actions.

Still, not all focusing events lead to such outcomes, even with constant media coverage. Ultimately, defining policy problems rests upon the vetting powers of the head of the organization. As gleaned from the early period of the 50 Years is Not Enough campaign, Bank president Preston merely dismissed it as just a PR problem that can be solved by revamping the organization's external relations unit. His successor, Wolfensohn, thought otherwise and instituted fundamental changes in how the Bank would incorporate NGOs, thereby legitimizing the campaign's messages. Harold Graves, who served as the World Bank's communications head

from 1950 to 1967 for two presidents, said that the Bank's leader has the final power in determining whether issue coverage in the news is policy-worthy, and this sometimes depends on how they interact with the press. He said that Eugene Black, World Bank president from 1949 to 1962, scheduled press conferences and informal lunches with journalists "just for the purpose of getting the press acquainted with Black and getting him acquainted with them and letting them develop anything they had on their minds" (Graves, 1985, p. 25). On the contrary, Black's successor, George D. Woods, "was nowhere near as conscious of the press or concerned with the press... He liked reporters well enough, individually, but he didn't really care for the Press, or The Press Corps, as institutions" (p. 25). He added that not only did Woods lack an "outgoing personality," the Bank president was "even more reticent about making policy decisions and explaining why he made them... This was one difficulty that the staff had with Woods" (p. 26). Despite ignoring the media, Woods was still "(concerned) with his problems in the public opinion field" according to Graves (p. 25). This was especially true on the issue of India's rupee devaluation in 1966, a national policy borne out of pressures from the World Bank, IMF, and the US Treasury, and which, unfortunately, resulted in a financial crisis, leading the Indian government and local media to blame Woods personally (World Bank, n.d.-a).

Indeed, there are press-covered focusing events that do not necessarily result in the strengthening of the World Bank's aid accountability mechanisms. One would argue that this may just be true in the short run, but effects can be seen later (Chapter 3 addresses this concern), as in the case of the 50 Years is Enough campaign where Wolfensohn completely overturned Preston's initial stance. An important variable that needs to be further investigated, then, is the extent that the World Bank's policy outcomes are contingent upon its president's attitudes and behaviors towards the press. In the first sentence of his seminal essay, Robert Cox (1969) writes,

“The quality of executive leadership may prove to be the most critical single determinant of the growth in scope and authority of international organization” (p. 205). Since then, studies have attempted at positing different frameworks linking a leader’s personal characteristics with the growth or decline of IOs. These include looking at leadership styles relative to institutional bargaining (Young, 1991), the IO’s own characteristics and the specific time period’s systemic conditions (Schechter, 1987), and the leader’s strategic plan and support mobilization strategies (Schroeder, 2014). This chapter’s institutional approach to causal narrative was able to use rich data in analyzing the causal processes at both the individual (executive head) and bureaucracy levels. Future studies may want to consider investigating the effect of presumed media influence at each of those levels.

Like in any political organization, the World Bank’s sensitivity to news can be explained by its role of protecting its self-image and institutional identity. McNamara came to the Bank in 1968 and transformed its mission “from being an institution for infrastructural project lending to being a development agency” (Stern, 1997, p. 603). In positioning itself as an “intellectual leader,” the Bank became increasingly involved in idea creation, stimulation, dissemination and promotion, and application in development economics and poverty reduction. When these ideas are challenged publicly in a very political and rhetorical way through the press, institutions react with a sense of urgency and more “tactical” response, compared to just being criticized behind closed doors among political elites. The perceived reach of media, an important element in people’s presumed media influence (Gunther & Storey, 2003), then contributes to the further “mediatization” of politics, where political actors behave by adapting to the requirements of news production (see J. Cohen et al., 2008 on the link between politicians’ perceptions of media power and mediatization). The World Bank, thus, acts to protect its credibility by not only

engaging with the media but also legitimize its existence by shaping stakeholders' beliefs as to the relevance of its authority, performance, procedures, and policies in global governance.

In this chapter's causal narratives, the theory of presumed media influence was applied with the conservative assumption that the news media perform its most minimal role of being merely a conduit of information, i.e., not creating their own message or independent analysis of issues or events. "The conduit role alone may make the news media crucial to the success of the other components of the (theory's) system. That alone makes it worthy of study," writes Lasorsa (1992, p. 173). He adds that policymakers may be susceptible even to the more specific third-person effect, as they have the tendency to consider themselves more powerful and the media-consuming public as less knowledgeable and more easily swayed by news reports. The causal narratives, however, is less focused on the Bank's self-perception but more intently on its thoughts of public reaction to news coverage (cognitive perceptual mechanism) and corresponding policy actions (coordinative behavioral effect). As seen in the Chico project incident, the World Bank concluded that "local communities" believed there would be massive displacement due to "the rumor... largely disseminated by the international press" (World Bank, 1989, p. 16). In the Narmada program, the Bank anticipated that the independent report written in a "journalistic style" with a negative tone would "create a difficult climate externally" (Vergin, 1992, p. 2) once it makes its way to the media. Wade, then, argued that the Bank's policy responses to the environmental issues were "largely tactical," as it tried to coordinate from the threat of reduced funding from its major shareholders, particularly the US. In other instances, the Bank decided not to conform with NGOs messages as carried in the news, thinking that this was a less ideological and more practical means ("*realpolitik*"; Lamb, 2007, pp. 30) of addressing

media spectacles in coordination with diplomatic norms. And in times of crises, policy responses can be made in a matter of weeks, as exemplified in the Indonesia and Wolfowitz sagas.

Despite this conservative assumption of the press' passive role, the World Bank was very clear in identifying the news media as a political actor separate from NGOs or other special interest groups. Prior to its policy reforms in response to the Polonoroeste debacle, the World Bank said that they only consider environmental issues when they are "pointed out by the Bank's environment advisor, the press, or special interest groups in host countries" (as cited in Rich, 2013, p. 118). The chair of the influential independent panel said he refrained from interacting with "NGOs and the press" to preserve the report's integrity (Wapenhans, 1993, p. 6). And again, in both the Indonesian and Wolfowitz crises, the Bank pinpointed the "forces of the media" (Caldario, 2013, p. 147) as the major cause for accountability actions. It should be underscored that the press can only function effectively in this role when it thrives in an environment free from restrictions. The Chico and Narmada projects provide contrasting illustrations. In the former, press freedom was curtailed domestically, so the international media (aided by local Filipino journalists) assumed the responsibility of covering the issue. On the other hand, the wide availability of English reports published by the Indian press made it easier for the global press to access the Narmada story. All these imply that a free, independent, and reliable press is crucial for the presumed media influence to take effect in making institutions more transparent and accountable.

In presenting the real-world mechanisms of the presumed media influence, this chapter's analyses of six focusing events largely zoomed in on the various stakeholders' perceptions and behaviors to news stories. Because of this, the chapter was not able to fully examine journalists' internal agency in terms of story selection, issue framing, and agenda setting, thereby leaving

more room for discussion on whether the news media was indeed an active political player in reforming the World Bank's aid transparency policies. Earlier in this chapter, I laid out four critical assumptions, one of which is that the news media exercises editorial autonomy. This implies that news reports are the news media's final outputs constructed based on journalistic conventions such as editorial gatekeeping, fairness, and accuracy, among others. Regardless of the seemingly sparse evidence showing these internal processes and the press' active agency, this chapter has demonstrated that the World Bank and its stakeholders have perceived and acknowledged the news media as a crucial political entity that shapes their strategies and policy actions. This, in effect, is evidence of the news media's influence in global policies and norms, and a key consideration in cementing the press as a powerful nonstate actor —active or otherwise — in IR.

Chapter 3. News Media's Longitudinal Influence in Aid Transparency Discussion

Transparency is not a general norm in diplomatic relations. Domestic laws exempt the public disclosure of certain information related to national security, trade secrets, supervision of finances and privileged communication — all of which transcend the realm of inter-state interactions. One area where transparency advocates have been more successful at pushing for reforms at the multilateral level is in development aid, given that international organizations (IOs), as the implementing arm of aid investments, receive pressure from both donor and recipient countries. Major donor states, such as the United States (US), hope that the resources they pooled into an IO deliver significant returns (at least politically), while recipient countries want aid to benefit them whether politically, economically, socially, or some combination thereof. Aid effectiveness and accountability are, thus, major concerns in international development, especially for large multilateral development banks.

With 189 member countries, the World Bank is one the most powerful IOs dealing with development aid. In 2022, it disbursed a total of US\$49.382 billion to developing countries through its two main lending arms: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association (www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report/fiscal-year-data). Politically, the Bank is an important foreign policy institution for the US, which is its largest shareholder and the only country with the right to veto decisions. Over time, the IO has positioned itself as a “Knowledge Bank” due to the breadth of its experience and research in international development (Wolfensohn, 1996). It assumed the role of expert in international development issues, including being a leader in instituting aid accountability mechanisms like the Access to Information Policy (AIP) in 2009. The AIP triggered the issuance of similar open

records policies among IOs, such that Weaver and Peratsakis (2014) termed this phenomenon as the “engineering of the international aid transparency norm.”

In Chapter 2, the case of the World Bank’s aid transparency policies was used to present the news media’s influence in IO policymaking. It found that news outputs were significant in pushing the World Bank to be more accountable, even if such news only reiterated the same message from other stakeholders, due to how the Bank presumed the news’ impact to its major shareholders. The chapter likewise reviewed three plausible reasons why an IO like the World Bank would want to be transparent. These include being seen as a legitimate political actor in world affairs, improving its performance effectiveness, and reducing information asymmetries. The latter is a result from the convergence of pressures from the World Bank’s principals at various levels: aid beneficiaries from recipient countries, officials from states that make up the Bank’s shareholders, and internal executives who demand more information from their technocrat subordinates. The stabilization of the aid transparency movement was further aided by regular performance systems that ranked IOs. These rankings, led by independent experts, have fostered some welcome changes to IOs’ disclosure practices (Honig & Weaver, 2019).

This current chapter continues with the case of the World Bank’s aid transparency policy norm to further extend the argument of the news media’s power in IO policymaking. This time, it presents evidence for the news media’s consistent agenda setting and issue framing effects in the Bank’s discussion of aid transparency, despite competing agendas and frames from other influential stakeholders. The analytic strategy in this chapter uses a sociolinguistics approach, given that vocabulary usage is a significant norm marker and that groups of political actors can be considered “communities of practice” that institutionalize linguistic norms (Bell, 1995; Meyerhoff & Strycharz, 2013). Apart from the World Bank, three groups of political actors and

their influence are the focus of this study: epistemic communities or external policy experts; the US Congress, representing a domestic institution from a World Bank shareholder; and the *New York Times*, representing the news media. By tracking each group's usage of transparency-related terms over time, Granger causality tests were employed to further examine whether a group's vocabulary trend predicts another group's pattern, which indicates time-sequence causal effects. The findings revealed that negative frames from the *New York Times* (i.e., news that covered the World Bank unfavorably) consistently predict later discussions of aid transparency by either the World Bank or epistemic communities, and that these negative articles were not predicted by the discussion of any of the other groups. In general, this implies the news media's agenda setting and issue framing powers in establishing the aid transparency policy norm.

This chapter is structured as follows. The next section elucidates the different routes of influence involving epistemic communities, the US Congress, and the *New York Times* as the mechanisms that help emerge the World Bank's aid transparency policies. Different time-series data on aid transparency discussion are then presented from 1975 to 2010 — the same scope of period in Chapter 2 — describing the significant events coinciding the highs and lows across the period. After, readers are walked through the different steps of time-series analysis and Granger causality tests, before finally presenting the quantitative findings.

Routes in Influencing Aid Transparency Policies

The World Bank, as the pioneer in producing landmark policies on aid accountability, has been influenced by various actors in pushing the normative equilibrium towards transparency. Three routes are conceptualized in this chapter: the *intellectual route* involving epistemic communities, or policy experts highly regarded by IOs due to their technical ideas; the *political elite route* involving the US Congress, a government institution that has the power to curtail the

Bank's resources and compel accountability; and the *public sphere route* involving the news media that reports various political actors' messages related to the Bank, thereby bringing these out to the wider public.

Intellectual Route

Apart from aid donors and constituents, observers also have the power to legitimize IOs and make them accountable (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019). One such actor is the epistemic community, defined as "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain" (Haas, 1992, p. 3). Its definitive characteristic is said to be its interest in the policy enterprise, guided by shared norms and causal beliefs that result in a highly concordant knowledge base.

Epistemic communities are motivated to encourage transparency among international actors that have crucial roles in information and norm diffusion. As IOs lack expertise in addressing complex transnational issues, epistemic communities fill these gaps by providing relevant policy advice, elucidating multifaceted issues, and surfacing other actors' self-interests. Thus, they "contribute both to the transparency of actions and to the stable expectations of others' behavior," according to Adler and Haas (1992, p. 389). With their intellectual standing in policy innovation, selection, and diffusion, epistemic communities help formalize norms into policies, making them key to operationalizing transparency processes within IOs.

Due to their interest in the policy enterprise, epistemic communities have a close relationship with policymakers, even if they stay far from policymakers' political self-interests as a motivating driver of decisions. Epistemic communities rarely provide direct information or advice to those not wielding agenda-setting or decision-making powers, such as the public (Davis Cross, 2013; Dunlop, 2012). Nevertheless, their regard for rigorous analyses prompts

them to gather information and proxy representation of public constituents, thus making their policy recommendations “sounder” that may reduce information asymmetries. Hence, epistemic communities are regarded as a close ally by the World Bank, especially since the IO positioned itself as a “Knowledge Bank.”

In the intellectual route, the Bank seeks information from epistemic communities when creating policies and would likely defer to their technical recommendations. For instance, Wade (1997) argued that when the Bank undertook environmental reforms in the 1980s, there was already “the wider ‘zeitgeist’ or spirit of concern expressed in scientific circles” (p. 654). The Bank sought epistemic communities’ expertise on environmental concerns, and this behavior is an example of when IOs possess issue uncertainty (Dunlop, 2012; Haas, 1992). The intellectual route comes in different forms. One is when epistemic communities are being formally engaged into the internal policy work of the World Bank, such as through official position appointments, as consultant, or as part of independent review bodies. Another is through the experts’ informal participation in meetings or dialogues to shed light on certain issues. The World Bank also learn from epistemic communities without direct engagement through experts’ research publications. In all these cases, epistemic communities are presumed to act independently, owing to their shared belief principles and commitment towards a sound policy.

Political Elite Route

On the contrary, political interest, rather than intellectual flourishing, can be a major driving force behind the World Bank’s decisions. To be more precise, “the Bank is largely an American creation,” argues Catherine Gwin (1997, p. 196) in the official two-volume history of the World Bank, adding that there is a “strong and enduring American imprint on all aspects of the Bank, including its structure, general policy direction, and forms of lending” (p. 197). Gwin

is, however, careful in concluding that the country does not have total control over the World Bank: “US influence on the Bank has been important but not absolute” (p. 243).

Most scholars would link the US influence over World Bank’s policies through the Bank’s relationship with the US Treasury Department. Because the country is its lead shareholder and an important capital market, the Treasury Department flexes its muscles in terms of the Bank’s development policy, lending allocations to specific countries and sectors, and administration and finance (Gwin, 1997). US control over the World Bank is not only instrumental but also structural, as most of its top officials and principals are US citizens and Bank staffers tend to design programs, consciously or unconsciously, with US preferences in mind (Clark & Dolan, 2021). This structure is reinforced through the Treasury Department’s power in selecting nominees for such executive positions in the World Bank.

The Treasury, however, is at the mercy of the legislative branch, which has the power to appropriate funding. As discussed in Chapter 2, a threat to reduce funding for the World Bank, as maneuvered by Senator Robert Kasten, Jr., can compel the US Treasury and the IO to change their policies. While the US Congress does have its setbacks in pressuring the World Bank to decide based on serving the country’s short-term political interests, it has been considered an effective actor that influences the Treasury Department in sharpening the Bank’s focus on development concerns (Gwin, 1997). The Bank’s reverence to the Congress’ wishes may just be “tactical” (Wade, 1997) in the short run, as it needs funding approval even if it internally disagrees with the policy, but such decision changes may lead to a more enduring organizational culture, as proven by the emergence of the international aid transparency norm.

In general, the political elite route highlights the very partisan process of norm development driven by the interests of a few powerful elites, in contrast to epistemic

communities' noble aspirations mostly borne out from the rigors of academic debates. In the World Bank's case, it can be beholden to the interests of a few powerful people, such as the US president or treasurer. However, the executive branch can be tamed by the Congress, especially when it functions more independently or is ruled by the opposing party, since it that has the power of the purse. Given its checks-and-balance function, the role of the US Congress in making the World Bank more accountable is specifically examined in the political elite route of this chapter's analysis.

Public Sphere Route

Finally, the public sphere route involves the press. Compared to the two previous mechanisms, this route is more indirect in pressuring the World Bank to reform its policies, as messages are circulated to the public and not directly to the Bank.

In this route, the news media's messages come from various political actors, including the US Congress and epistemic communities that utilize news outlets as their channel to reform IOs. As part of the policymaking process, US legislators engage with journalists, hoping that their political agenda and issues are made more publicly known (Soroka et al., 2012). Epistemic communities as observers also use this route to influence IOs. As Haas explains, "information generated by an epistemic community may in fact create a shock, as often occurs with scientific advances or reports that make their way into the news, simultaneously capturing the attention of the public and policymakers and pressuring them into action" (1992, p. 14).

The news media may be likened merely as a transmission belt of information between political actors and the public. This, however, fails to consider that the news media can be an active gatekeeper of information (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991) and independent player more like a "trader of information" serving the conflicting interests of political leaders and the public (Baum

& Potter, 2008). The press does have the ability to set the agenda and frame issues in its own terms, which then affect elite and public opinion (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). As also argued in the previous two chapters, journalists can also be categorized as an interest group advocating for transparency, as part of their normative role internalizing the public's interests, taking a more adversarial relationship with elites, and holding those in power into account (Hanitzsch, 2007).

Aid Transparency Discussion, 1975–2010

Since vocabulary usage is a significant marker of a group norm (Bell, 1995), tracking the use of “aid transparency” and related key terms in documents over time is a way to analyze patterns leading to its institutionalization as a linguistic norm (Meyerhoff & Strycharz, 2013). This section presents the word usage of aid transparency and related concepts from the World Bank, US Congress, epistemic communities, and the news media from 1975 to 2010, consistent with the scope of duration from the previous chapter.

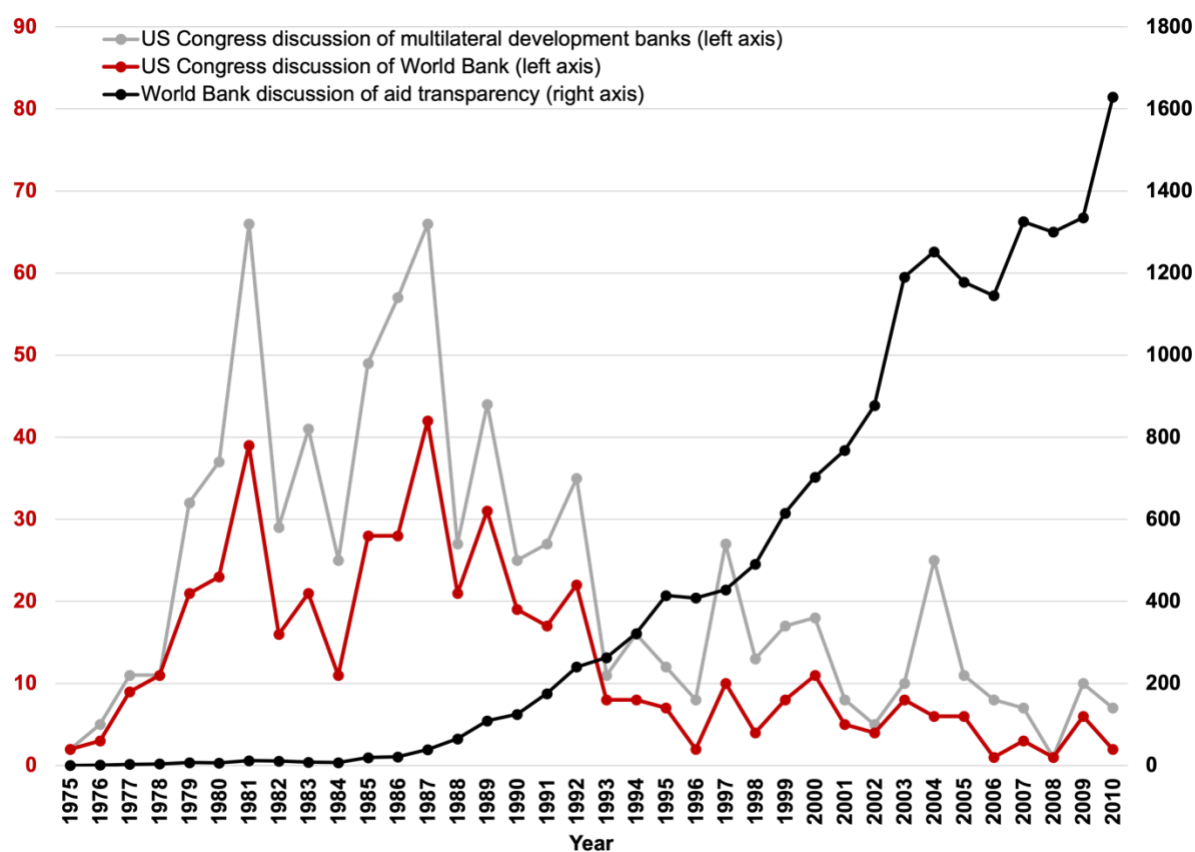
World Bank and Aid Transparency

To measure the growth of the World Bank's conversations of aid transparency, I looked at how the word “transparent” or “transparency” has been used in their public documents. For this, I downloaded the metadata of all publicly available documents from 1975 to 2010 ($N = 140,155$) in its database (documents.worldbank.org), then focused on documents containing the substring “transparen,” thereby capturing its variants such as transparent and transparency. This subcategory of documents represents more than a tenth (11.77%) of the total number of documents made public by the Bank.⁵ The first time this word appeared throughout this 36-year period was in 1976. Figure 3.1 shows the trend of the term usage based on the number of

⁵ A similar search was performed for the substring “accountab,” but this yielded only a total of 5,444 documents for the 36-year period, with several years having no resulting documents.

documents per year. Using the figure's right axis, the black line shows that from zero in 1975, World Bank documents with “transparency” began to total in hundreds by 1989 ($n = 109$) and in thousands by 2003 ($n = 1,190$). By 2010, the number of “transparency” documents reached 1,629. This reflects how aid transparency discussion became mainstreamed within the Bank.

Figure 3.1. World Bank Discussion of Aid Transparency and US Congress Discussion of Multilateral Development Banks and World Bank



Political Elite Route: US Congress and World Bank Accountability

In terms of the US Congress making the World Bank accountable, a strategic way of capturing this trend is to not simply count the number of times the “World Bank” appeared in Congressional debates, meetings, bills, or other legislative documents. This is because legislators most of the time cite statistics or information generated by World Bank research for means other than making the IO accountable. To address this concern, I looked at search results using the exact phrase “multilateral development bank” and its variants (e.g. plurals, possible misspellings, etc.) appearing in the Congressional Record (www.congress.gov/congressional-record) from 1975 to 2010. Using this key term produces search results that generally tackle the IO’s mission, activities, and most importantly its budget and funding appropriations requiring Congressional approval — a major area of accountability mechanism. From this sample, one can further narrow down the search specifically mentioning the World Bank.

One limitation in the Congressional Record online database is that it only keeps a bound edition up to 1994 (103rd Congress), such that the resulting documents are filed by date and only categorized either as a daily digest, Senate or House document, or Extensions of Remarks. Meanwhile, searching for a keyword using the more complete database from 1995 onwards results in a more detailed metadata with specific types and categories where a term is found. To address such differences across time, I decided to use as a measure the number of days that a certain term appeared each year, instead of counting the frequency that the term appeared in a specific type of document. For example, a two-day hearing on the World Bank in 1987 would be counted as two for that year, regardless of the number of times the Bank has been mentioned. Thus, a daily measure connotes the length of time the Bank has been discussed in Congress in a given year.

Two trend lines relative to the Congress' discussion of World Bank accountability is plotted in the same Figure 3.1 earlier. Using the left axis, the gray line shows the number of days multilateral development banks were discussed each year, while the red line denotes the smaller subset mentioning the World Bank. The gray line illustrates that multilateral development banks were a hot topic of discussion in 1981 and 1987, with the US Congress discussing it for a total of 66 days in each year. Similarly, both years were also the period when the World Bank was being tackled at length by legislators (39 days in 1981, 41 days in 1987), as shown in the red line. These coincide with the Congress' intense investigations of the Bank's environmental records of its projects in the Philippines, Brazil, and India. Most notably, both lines dropped sharply in 1993, right after the Bank's cancellation of the Narmada Valley program in India.

Intellectual Route: Epistemic Communities and Aid Transparency

One way to capture the “scientific zeitgeist” of aid transparency (Wade, 1997) that led to accountability reforms in the World Bank is to track how experts discussed this topic over time. In measuring this, I used the February 2020 version of the Google Books Ngram. This dataset is a result of Google's ambitious project then secretly called OCEAN in 2004 that aimed to digitize every book and manuscript from large libraries worldwide and make these freely accessible online. By 2012, Google claimed that it was able to scan text corpora from digitized sources representing “6% of all books ever published,” with the English corpus alone comprising “close to half a trillion words” (Lin et al., 2012, p. 170). Google Books Ngram allows researchers to quantitatively analyze cultural trends as reflected in word usage and language (Michel et al., 2011), and it has also been used even in international relations (IR) research to represent public discourse (Tallberg et al., 2014). One major issue in this corpus, which paradoxically works to

this study's advantage, is that scientific texts from academic journals substantially increased throughout the 1900s (Pechenick et al., 2015).

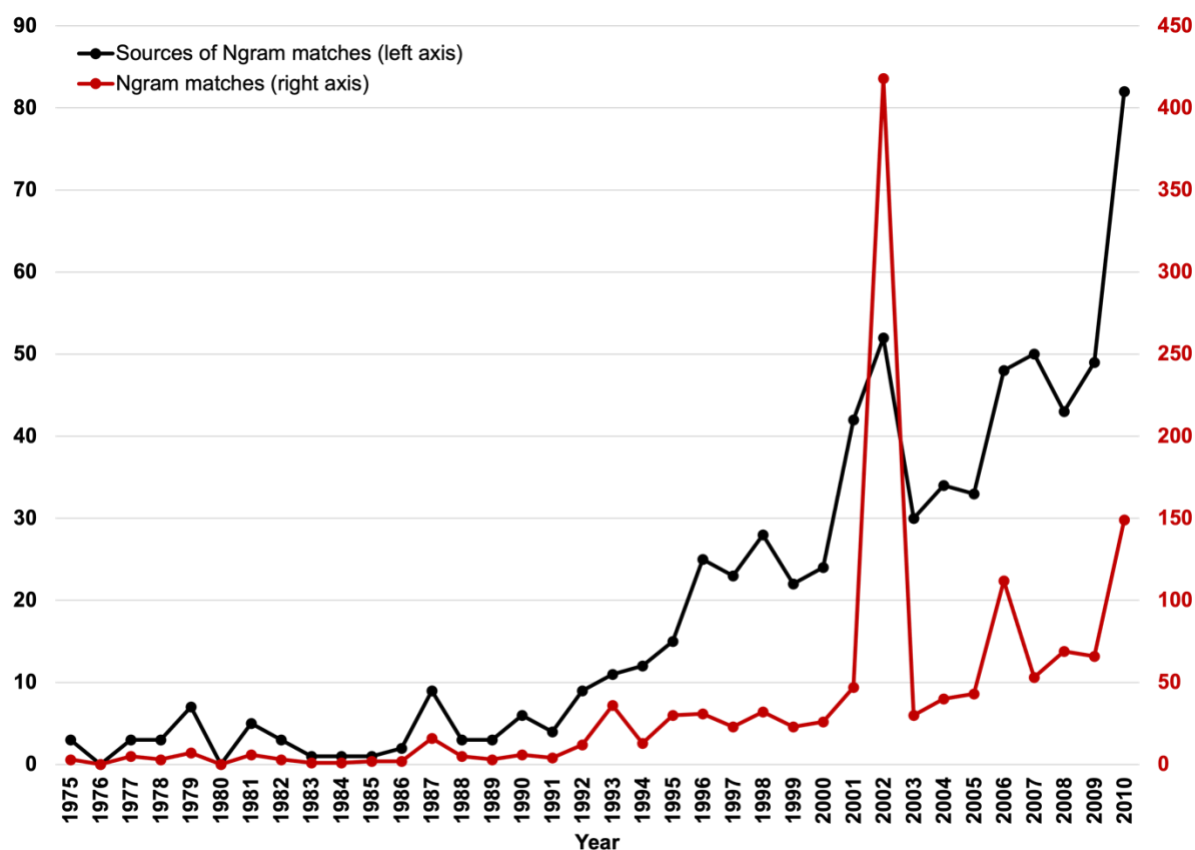
The bigram “aid transparency” was used as the search term. One limitation of Google Books Ngram is that it only provides the frequency count of the bigram in each year, without metadata information related to specific source documents due to copyright reasons (Koplenig, 2017; Younes & Reips, 2019). Despite this, users are allowed to browse through a few digitized sources to verify if the bigram was used within the context of the research aim. A recommended reliability method was further conducted by cross-checking matches on different corpora of the same language (Younes & Reips, 2019) — in this case, between the English fiction and English non-fiction corpora. Matches for “aid transparency” were only found in the English non-fiction corpus.

The results found that the overall English corpus yielded 1,320 matches of “aid transparency” from 686 volumes published between 1975 and 2010. Looking at Figure 3.2, it shows that there was only an average of 2.75 matches (red line) from 2.42 sources (black line) between 1975 to 1986. By 1987, there was a sudden increase of 16 matches from 9 sources. This reflects the background at that time when researchers and experts were critical of the World Bank's environmental and resettlement policies. Another significant bump can be seen in 1993, with 36 matches from 11 sources. Again, this coincides with the Narmada program cancellation.

There was a notable outlier in the sudden increase of ngram matches in 2002 — 418 matches from 52 sources. This extreme growth could not be fully accounted, owing to metadata limitations in the dataset. Nonetheless, a cursory look at available volumes for preview in Google Books include the publication of volumes that heavily used aid transparency, such as *The Institutional Economics of Foreign Aid* (Martens et al., 2002), *Regulatory Practices in OECD*

Countries: From Interventionism to Regulatory Governance (2002), and the *Evaluation of Prolonged Use of IMF Resources* (International Monetary Fund, 2002). By 2010, ngram matches on aid transparency were pegged at 149 from 82 volumes.

Figure 3.2. “Aid Transparency” Matches and Sources from Google Books Ngram



Public Sphere Route: News Media’s Coverage of the World Bank

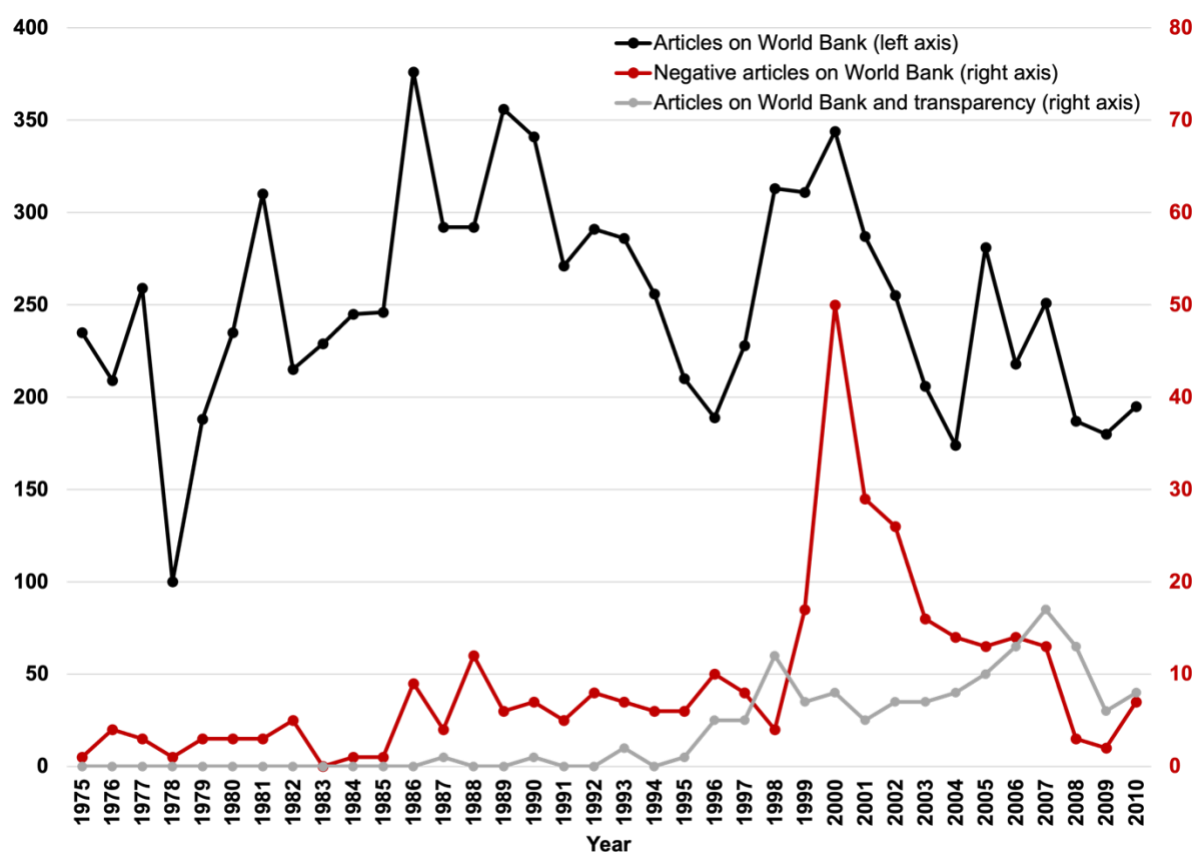
Finally, this study looks at the trend in the news media’s coverage of the World Bank and its related issues. Trends from the *New York Times* were used, not only because of its reputation as the newspaper of record but also the World Bank has highly cited this news outlet’s reports in their internal correspondences. A search for *Times* articles, editorials and letters to the editors

mentioning the World Bank from 1975 to 2010 in the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database yielded 9,061 articles. From these articles, I identified those deemed negative for the World bank through two sample stages. The first involved identifying World Bank stories mentioning “corrupt” or “protest” ($n = 1,068$) — terms that one would usually associate with feelings against an institution. And in the second stage, these articles were coded for the presence of just one of 11 negative issues that I identified through grounded theory approach using the earlier historical analysis (see Chapter 2). These 11 negative issues are (a) protests against the Bank/official; (b) Bank aid/policy is ineffective, does not benefit the poor; (c) Bank policies/projects are controversial; (d) recipient country is unsupportive of or mismanages Bank aid; (e) World Bank is corrupt/ignores corruption; (f) Bank information/policy is disputed; (g) contributing country does not support the Bank; (h) Bank official is controversial; (i) World Bank lost institutional influence; (j) World Bank is not careful in dealing with finances/politics; and (k) World Bank is not transparent. This two-stage identification of negative World Bank coverage resulted in a total of 321 articles. Apart from negative articles, it is also plausible that the World Bank can be covered through the issue of aid transparency in a more neutral, and even positive, way. For this proxy, I further searched for articles from the overall sample that includes the substring “transparen.” This proxy for reports, editorials and readers’ letters relating the Bank to the issue of transparency yielded only 136 reports.

Figure 3.3 shows that while the *Times* has consistently published at least a hundred World Bank stories annually since 1975 (black line), with a yearly average of 252, transparency-related news (gray line) only started in 1987 and peaked in 2007. Both were critically important years, with the former involving Congress investigations and the latter being Paul Wolfowitz’s resignation as Bank president. Meanwhile, the number of negative news (red line) only hovered

below 10 annually until 1996, with the exception in 1988 ($n = 12$) at the height of the Polonoroeste fiasco. From 1999 to 2007, there were more than a dozen negative news annually. The highest was in 2000 ($n = 50$), coinciding with the anti-globalization demonstrations during the IMF–World Bank Meetings in April 2000, with media coverage of 15,000 protesters and unlawful mass arrests that spurred a class action lawsuit against Washington, DC (Karon, 2000).⁶

Figure 3.3. Coverage of the World Bank by the *New York Times*



⁶ Chapter 2 noted that another massive protest a year earlier during the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle did not negatively impact the World Bank. One argument why the 2000 protests affected the Bank this time was because public perception was not able to distinguish the Bank from IMF, even if the fundamental criticisms were about the latter's policies. Joseph Stiglitz, who by then just recently resigned as World Bank chief economist, became very vocal against the IMF, making him the "unlikely intellectual guru" (Moberg, 2000) to the anti-globalization movement. During this time, Stiglitz was still acting as special advisor to Bank president James D. Wolfensohn. It did not also help that both organizations are Bretton Woods institutions regularly holding joint annual meetings. Mallaby (2004) provides a more detailed behind-the-scenes discussion of this argument.

Temporal Causality

Thus far, this chapter has found that over the course of 36 years the World Bank had an exponential growth relative to its discussion of aid transparency. This increase was accompanied by a similar substantial growth in the topic of aid transparency among experts in epistemic communities, as reflected in Google Book Ngrams, as well as in the news media, as proxied by the *New York Times* coverage of World Bank specifically on that same topic. Meanwhile, discussions in the US Congress of aid accountability peaked in the 1980s, but later decreased starting in 1993. On the other hand, negative coverage of the World Bank peaked at the turn of the new millennium and hovered above 13 negative news annually since 2000 until Wolfowitz's resignation in 2007 — well above the yearly outputs prior to 1999.

These data were further subjected to statistical analysis to determine which time series significantly caused another's trend over time. Simply stated, this chapter's major aim was to know whether news coverage had caused other political actors' longitudinal patterns of aid transparency discussion. To account for the temporal order of potential relationships between these variables, a combination of vector autoregressive (VAR) modeling and Granger-causality tests were used. These are two common multivariate time-series techniques that are theory-independent and can account for endogenous variables (Freeman et al., 1989). Granger-causality tests are particularly useful because of their forecasting value and ability to identify temporal order (Eichler, 2012). The goal in using these tests is not to produce a comprehensive model but rather exploratory results that could help clarify patterns of temporal causality.

For reasons of parsimony, only four time-series data, each representing a political actor's trend over time, were included in the analyses. These are the World Bank's aid transparency discussion (Figure 3.1, black line), the US Congress' discussion specifically mentioning the

World Bank (Figure 3.1, red line), epistemic communities' discussion of aid transparency based on the frequency of ngram matches (Figure 3.2, red line), and the *New York Times*'s negative articles against the World Bank (Figure 3.3, red line). Regarding the ngram data, matches were used instead of the number of sources, since the former denotes the intensity of discussion. While there was one outlier in 2002 (Figure 3.2, red line), this can be retained without the need for imputation in VAR modeling and Granger-causality testing, so long as it is an isolated case. On the choice of negative articles in the *Times*, previous studies have shown that negativity, including media-reported scandals, has the most impact in spurring transparency reforms and significantly predicting the completeness of IOs' public information policies (Grigorescu, 2007; Metcalfe, 2014). Further, time-series data of *Times* articles that merely mentioned the World Bank and transparency (gray line in Figure 3.3) were not used for two reasons: first is the lack of variance and data points across time affecting the robustness of statistical analyses; and second is that the World Bank was not necessarily the primary topic in such stories, as it may just be mentioned in the background to cite statistics, unlike in negative news where the Bank was the main topic.

Fitness of Time-Series Data

Stationarity

For time-series analysis to be robust, it is important for longitudinal data to be stationary. This means that each time series should have statistical properties that remain constant over time. Stationarity of longitudinal data can be measured using a unit root analysis, a most common one being the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test. The ADF test revealed that all four time series were found to have unit roots, meaning they are non-stationary, as shown in the p values in Table 3.1 that are above the 0.05 threshold. One way to address this is to restructure the time series

through first-order differencing, or computing the differences between the first observations of the variables to reduce trend and seasonality. This first-differenced data will be used later in VAR modeling and Granger-causality tests.

Table 3.1. Results of Augmented Dickey Fuller Test: Original Time Series Data

Time Series	$z(t)$	Lag order	p-value
World Bank	-1.078	3	0.9123
Ngram	-2.9052	3	0.2209
US Congress	-3.414	3	0.07122
<i>New York Times</i>	-1.9411	3	0.5961

Residual Correlation

A second important characteristic that should be determined is that time-series data should have fewer existing correlations between two variables. Specifically, a check on residual correlation is needed. First, ARIMA (auto regressive integrated moving average) models were constructed for each time series (see Table 3.2 for results). Residuals from these models were then subjected to correlations tests. Using the Pearson's product-moment correlation test, analyses found no significant serial correlation on all possible relationships between the residuals of two time series, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.2. Results of ARIMA models

Time Series	ARIMA Model	Akaike Information Criterion (AIC)	Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)
World Bank	(0, 2, 1)	398.81	401.86
Ngram	(0, 1, 1)	401.89	405.00
US Congress	(1, 1, 0)	244.38	247.49
<i>New York Times</i>	(0, 1, 0)	246.73	248.29

Table 3.3. Person's Product-moment Correlation Matrix of ARIMA Models Residuals

	World Bank	Ngram	US Congress
Ngram	$r = 0.56841,$ $p = 0.5735$		
US Congress	$r = 0.30866,$ $p = 0.7595$	$r = -0.77795,$ $p = 0.442$	
New York Times	$r = 0.36921,$ $p = 0.7143$	$r = -0.12066,$ $p = 0.9047$	$r = 0.45613,$ $p = 0.6512$

Cointegration

Finally, another important attribute to look at is whether each time series is cointegrated with another. Cointegration means that regardless of whether two time series are correlated or not, their linear combination is still unit-root stationary (i.e., they may still randomly walk **together**, such that their distance may still be relatively constant). To ascertain this, a pair of time-series data is fitted into the Engle-Granger Cointegration (EGC) model. In this two-step method, residuals are created based on the static regression, then tested for stationarity using the ADF test. Due to the length of the EGC outputs per time-series pair, Table 3.4 only shows the values of the residual as of the last observation in the year 2010 (ρ_{2010}). There appears to be no significant cointegration between two time series, except for World Bank and Congress. Table 3.4 shows the ρ_{2010} value between both time series is the lowest (3.8227) among the six possible relationships, implying that the level of overvaluation (+) or undervaluation (-) of the fitted residuals in 2010 is small enough to denote cointegration, and this was significant at $p < .05$. This further means that there might already be a possibility of Granger causality between the two time series. Even with this cointegration, both variables are still recommended to be included in the succeeding VAR modeling and Granger causality testing (Toda & Yamamoto, 1995).

Table 3.4. Engle-Granger Cointegration Matrix of Time Series Data at Year 2010

	World Bank	Ngram	US Congress
Ngram	$\rho_{2010} = 29.7186$ ($\sigma = 0.470$)		
US Congress	$\rho_{2010} = 3.8227^*$ ($\sigma = 0.439$)	$\rho_{2010} = -4.9370$ ($\sigma = -0.487$)	
New York Times	$\rho_{2010} = -10.4890$ ($\sigma = -1.175$)	$\rho_{2010} = -7.2948$ ($\sigma = -0.807$)	$\rho_{2010} = -11.4113$ ($\sigma = -1.084$)

Vector Autoregressive (VAR) Modeling with Granger Causality

After testing for stationarity, correlation and cointegration of the four time-series data, the next step is to proceed with VAR modeling. In this procedure, the first-differenced dataset will be used instead of the original time-series, as the latter did not pass the test of stationarity. To identify the appropriate lag for the VAR model, the Akaike information criterion (AIC) was utilized, which recommended using a lag of 6 for the VAR model: $AIC_1 = 892.5587$, $AIC_2 = 845.9425$, $AIC_3 = 789.8692$, $AIC_4 = 737.6395$, $AIC_5 = 634.6199$, $AIC_6 = 503.4215$, $AIC_7 = NA$. This means that the possible relationships between two time series could span up to six years, such that an output from one variable in 1975 can be significantly related to another variable's output (or to its own output) up to 1981. Full results of the VAR model, showing which time series have significant relationships with each other across six different time lags, are presented in Appendices 1 and 2.

To ascertain whether such relationships do have “temporal causality,” Granger causality testing was employed. It is important to note that scholars have debated whether Granger causality could be viewed as “true causality” or a cause-and-effect relationship, as it does not adequately address issues of nonspuriousness, even if it suffices the other criteria of time-order

sequence and covariation. The presence of Granger causality technically means that one variable is useful in predicting the future value of another variable. Because of this type of “predictive causation,” the succeeding discussion will use the terms “temporally caused,” “Granger-caused,” or “temporal effect” in describing significant findings from Granger causality tests.

Intellectual Route: World Bank and Epistemic Communities

World Bank’s discussion of aid transparency had a bi-directional relationship with epistemic communities’ discussion of aid transparency, meaning that both Granger-caused each other’s patterns of discussion over time. However, their temporal causation was at various lags of time. Specifically, ngram matches of aid transparency temporally caused the presence of aid transparency in World Bank documents after years 1 to 6: $\chi^2(-1) = 13.198, p = 0.001$; $\chi^2(-2) = 9.818, p = 0.0006$; $\chi^2(-3) = 13.487, p = 0.00002$; $\chi^2(-4) = 13.759, p = 0.00001$; $\chi^2(-5) = 7.7716, p = 0.0005$; and $\chi^2(-6) = 6.5543, p = 0.001217$. On the reverse, “aid transparency” World Bank documents Granger-caused “aid transparency” ngram matches, but only after year 1, $\chi^2(-1) = 4.2817, p = 0.04695$, and year 6, $\chi^2(-6) = 14.82, p = 0.00001$. All these imply that epistemic communities and the World Bank feed from each other’s ideas of aid transparency, with external experts having a continuous impact to the Bank in the short, medium, and long runs, while the World Bank’s accountability ideas affect external philosophies in short and long intervals.

Public Sphere Route: News Media

Neither the World Bank’s nor epistemic communities’ discussion of aid transparency informed the future coverage of the *New York Times* against the World Bank, implying that the sources of negative news stories, editorials and letters to the editors did not generally come from World Bank or academic discussions of transparency. On the opposite direction, the *Times*’ negative coverage of the World Bank produced a temporal effect in the discussion of aid

transparency within the Bank and among epistemic communities. Particularly, the annual number of negative articles temporally caused the presence of aid transparency in World Bank documents after years 3 to 6: $\chi^2(-3) = 6.2235, p = 0.002637$; $\chi^2(-4) = 4.6102, p = 0.007429$; $\chi^2(-5) = 3.0214, p = 0.03581$; and $\chi^2(-6) = 6.0846, p = 0.001781$. This implies that the Bank's reactions to negative news through discussing aid transparency are less immediate compared to epistemic communities' publications. Nevertheless, press reports that tarnish the Bank's image did have a temporal effect on the IO's discussion of accountability in the medium and long runs.

Negative news against a powerful IO can likewise impact how external policy experts set the agenda of aid transparency in their research. Specifically, negative World Bank coverage by *The New York Times* had a temporal effect on the annual ngram matches of aid transparency as gleaned from *Google Books* and *Google Scholar* across all lags except the first year: $\chi^2(-2) = 24.443, p = 0.000001$; $\chi^2(-3) = 29.701, p = 0.00000002$; $\chi^2(-4) = 21.026, p = 0.0000003$; $\chi^2(-5) = 14.31, p = 0.00001$; and $\chi^2(-6) = 10.72, p = 0.00008$. This shows how academic discussions of aid accountability were slightly more reactive to negative news than the Bank itself.

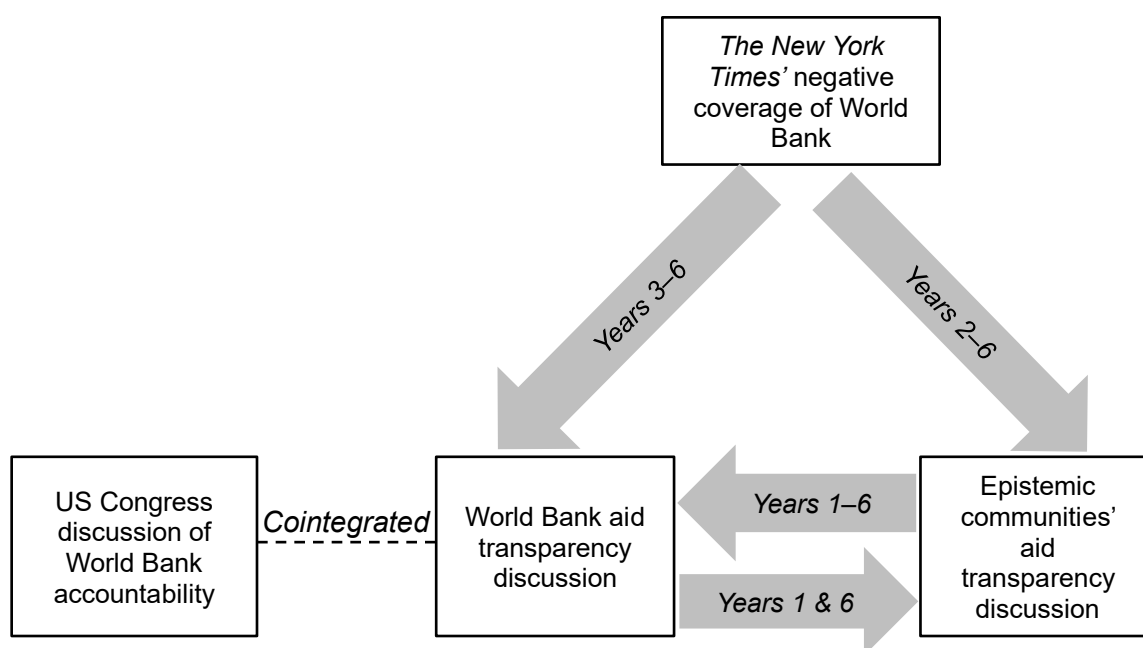
Political Elite Route: US Congress

Surprisingly, not a single relationship between the US Congress' discussion of World Bank accountability and the other variables — World Bank or epistemic communities' discussion of aid transparency, news media's negative coverage of the Bank — across all possible lags was found to have significant Granger causality. Note, however, that the previous EGC model showed that the number of days that the World Bank has been discussed in Congress is cointegrated with the Bank's annual output of documents mentioning aid transparency. When cointegrated variables do not result in Granger causality, a likely reason is the small sample size, since VAR modelling relies on asymptotic extrapolation that may work only with larger samples.

Nevertheless, there exists a cointegrated relationship between the Bank and the US Congress, implying that both political actors' discussions are tightly connected with each other.

An overall summary of findings from the Granger causality testing is illustrated in Figure 3.4. In this figure, arrows denote the presence and direction of temporal causation between two time series variables, with the significant lags noted inside the arrows. A dashed line between the US Congress and World Bank time-series data represent the cointegration between both variables.

Figure 3.4. Overall Summary of Findings from Granger Causality Testing



Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion

As a companion piece to Chapter 2, this chapter provided quantitative evidence of the news media's agenda setting and issue framing effects in the passage of World Bank's aid transparency policies. Even if transparency may already be part of an IO's inherent interests, the

news media's coverage pushes it further to discuss aid transparency and be more accountable. The press sets the agenda, telling the World Bank and even epistemic communities what to think about; and it frames issues by defining the terms of the problem and evaluating its normative aspects. These theories — agenda setting and issue framing— are, therefore, relevant in anchoring the news media's role in international governance and global norm development.

It should be noted that in this chapter's model the World Bank and epistemic communities respond to negative news frames. This is not a surprising outcome given negativity's wide-ranging impact in politics (Soroka, 2014). Likewise, the news media thrive in negativity, not only because bad news is an important news value (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001, 2017) but also the press internalizes its adversarial role towards powerful institutions and criticism is inherently negative (Hanitzsch, 2007). This is further made possible by the stream of relevant sources that delegitimize IOs, particularly transnational activists and NGOs who use the news media in their shaming strategy, as extensively presented in Chapter 2 (see also Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Risse et al., 1999). The public sphere route assumes that media agenda and frames come from various sources of discourse that are then processed by journalists and editors. There is, of course, a possibility that these agenda and frames would fully adopt a viewpoint from a particular source, leading to a conclusion that the press is a mere conveyor belt and should not be credited in producing policy impacts from its news coverage. Again, the answer to this criticism lies at the heart of the theory of presumed media influence, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The quantitative analyses certainly have limitations. First, the yearly data point could not fully explain temporal effects in a matter of days or weeks. For example, when a news outlet publishes a damning report and the World Bank reacts by reforming its policies within a year,

this particular event is not captured in the results of the time-series analysis. A more adequate interpretation of the findings would argue that a series of negative reports within a year would likely stick with the World Bank and be succeeded by a discussion of aid transparency after three to six years (e.g., Chico River dam news reports in 1979 and World Bank working papers leading to the Operational Manual Statement No. 2.34 on tribal people in 1982). Therefore, the results highlight the longer-term effect of the news media's negative coverage of the Bank.

Data sources are also a major limitation of this study, with the *New York Times* being the only news media used in the analysis, though scholars have shown that mainstream network television coverage of certain actors in Congress tend to echo the *Times*'s coverage of the same group (Wagner & Gruszczynski, 2018). The use of Google Book Ngram presents both an opportunity and constraint. Apart from reliability issues, Ngram matches could only represent epistemic communities' public outputs, and their temporal relationship with World Bank documents denotes an interaction that is of public nature. In theory and practice, epistemic communities' relations with decision makers flourish behind the scenes, and these are not captured in the model. Further, this study relied heavily on keyword matches, which are highly reductive of language and cannot reflect more nuanced techniques, such as the "strategic use of information, symbolic politics, leverage politics and accountability politics, issue framing, and shaming" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001, p. 401). Nonetheless, vocabulary usage should be viewed as just one of the many dimensions of policy norm development, or the enduring acceptance of aid transparency within the jargon of respective groups of political actors.

Chapter 2 exhaustively discussed the role of NGOs in reforming the World Bank, yet they are not included in the model. Given the analytic strategy of using word frequencies, it is extremely difficult to proxy civil society's discourse. One, however, could critically argue that

NGOs have political power because they are made legitimate by other political actors, like the US Congress (Senator Kasten) or the news media. If such is the case, then their concerns are already endogenously captured in the time-series analysis, especially since they are a major source of negative news coverage for the World Bank — the public sphere route. Nevertheless, NGOs and civil society organizations are important political actors that need to be further studied as a class of their own, without using the news media as their proxy.

Together with Chapter 2, this chapter highlighted the role of news media as a significant nonstate actor in IR, utilizing the case of the World Bank's aid transparency policy norm. Negative news particularly is an effective vehicle in making issues part of the policy agenda of IOs and research agenda of epistemic communities. Political communication, as a subfield of both communication and political science, has always emphasized the news media as a crucial political player in forming opinions for both the elites and public, as well as in mediating messages between the two (Bennett & Entman, 2000; Graber & Smith, 2005; McNair, 2017; Perloff, 2013). The area is fertile for media researchers to explore outside the realm of comparative politics and into IR. At the same time, IR scholars will find it productive to expand their research with the inclusion of the news media as a significant non-state actor. These further call for an interdisciplinary approach in studying media effects in IOs.

Chapter 4. Public Opinion and International Issue Politicization: A Framework⁷

Political elites are the key actors of multilateralism, defined as the act of “coordinating relations among three or more states in accordance with certain principles” (Ruggie, 1992, p. 568). This exclusiveness reflects the structure of each state’s political system, where key decisions are left to a few representatives. Complex behind-the-scenes negotiations, driven largely by norms that are not necessarily codified, further leave the public less aware of issues at stake amid the anarchy of the global environment. This, then, creates information asymmetries between the leaders and the constituents they serve. Because of the presumed insignificant role of the public in international affairs, its opinion has, at times, been viewed as irrelevant, with early scholars even agreeing that public opinion is volatile and incoherent and can be easily manipulated, especially by the elites (Almond, 1950; Lippmann, 1955). Nonetheless, as contemporary theorists found evidence for the rationality and stability of the public’s views over time (Bélanger & Pétry, 2005; Page & Shapiro, 1992), public opinion continues to be on the periphery of multilateralism.

Chapter 1 presented the three-actor framework of political communication, where the news media can act as a mediator between the elites (both state and nonstate actors) and citizens. As both political players increasingly use the news media, scholars argue that politics can enter the process of *mediatization*, wherein “core elements of a social or cultural activity (like work, leisure, play etc.) assume media form” (Hjarvard, 2004, p. 48). Strömbäck (2008) elucidates the four phases of mediatization in politics, with the most basic phase happening when the news media “constitute the most important source of information and channel of communication

⁷ Most of this chapter’s content was originally published in *Global Perspectives* with the title “The Public’s Role in Politicizing International Issues: Why Multilateralism Needs to Take Public Opinion More Seriously” (Dumdum, 2022). It is reprinted here in accordance with the publisher’s rules on the appropriate use of copyrighted materials.

between the citizenry and political institutions and actors” (p. 236). In the second phase, the media becomes more independent from political logic (i.e., norms and procedures of political communication should contribute to democratic ideals as set by political institutions and systems) such that it creates its own media logic (i.e., market-driven processes and norms that allow news media to perform less of a passive conduit of political information). The third phase is marked by the process where the media becomes further autonomous, so that political actors’ messages need to *adapt* to the media logic of news values — from topics and issue frames to formats and storytelling techniques highlighting conflict. This implies that “no social actors requiring interaction with the public or influence on public opinion can ignore the media or afford not to adapt to the media logic” (p. 238). Hence, there is now the tension between mediated reality (e.g., perceived ideological polarization) and “actual” reality traditionally based on political logic (e.g., diplomacy despite issue differences). And finally, the fourth phase is the pinnacle of mediatization of politics, wherein media logic has been internalized as *the* norm in politics, and political actors “allow the media logic and the standards of newsworthiness to become a built-in part of the governing processes” (pp. 239, 240). Media logic in this phase is not only *adapted* but also *adopted*, such that “political or other social actors perhaps (do) not even (recognize) the distinction between a political and a media logic” (p. 240).

By drawing on political communication and international relations (IR) literature, this chapter explores public opinion’s future role in multilateralism within a mediatized environment. The bulk of public opinion scholarship on international affairs continues to be state-centric and adopt a political logic: a state’s public has opinions on policies that deal with another state (e.g., war, trade, development), which are then incorporated in leaders’ state decisions moving forward. While domestic public opinion on foreign policies is studied comparatively, rarely is its

influence conceptualized as *directly* crossing state boundaries without going through state-level institutions or elites. To be fair, the state serves as a useful analytical tool in defining the scope of *the public* and its opinion, yet its influence should not be limited only within the domestic sphere or towards state leaders as a first-order effect.

One area where public opinion directly affects multilateralism relates to people's views on international institutions and organizations. Here, international institutions are defined as “*sets of rules* meant to govern international behavior” (Martin & Simmons, 2012, p. 328 emphasis original), like trade rules, while international organizations (IOs) are associations of multilateral actors that “participate in the creation, implementation, and interpretation of substantive rules” (p. 329), like the World Trade Organization (WTO). Public opinion has at least two normative roles in multilateral governance involving IOs. First, it compels accountability (Hutchings, 2005) — something that the elites have successfully circumvented due to the lack of direct democracy mechanisms at the international level. Since the public still finds it difficult to access formal mechanisms in holding decision makers accountable, the easier option is to resort to more informal avenues of publicly challenging IOs through the news media. And second, whether or not it is rational or stable or accurately portrays the people's will, public opinion has increasingly become a large part of *audience beliefs* that help maintain the legitimacy of multilateral governance (for an overview, see Tallberg & Zürn, 2019). Public contestation, which has resulted in policy changes at the international level, is no longer the purview of a few interest groups, owing significantly to the public's access to and control of information afforded by the social media environment.

The foremost aim of this chapter is to introduce a framework that expands our understanding of the power of public opinion in influencing decisions at the multilateral level

(i.e., higher than state institutions). Given the vast potential of this topic, I will focus on the relationship between public opinion and legitimacy of international institutions and organizations. There has been a recent wave of scholarship investigating public contestation and politicization of international cooperation, which is a key outcome in multilateralism. I build on these studies by positing a framework that traces how multilateral issues evolve from having high consensus to being highly contested, or vice versa. The progression and pathways become clear when public contestation is disentangled from elite contestation. Further, I argue that the faster pace of issue politicization is aided by the political ecology dominated by social media, as compared to the period when news media were the public's main source of information on international matters.

To understand the constraining or enabling effects of public opinion in multilateralism, it is vital to first flesh out the nature of public opinion and the roles of the elites versus the public as nonelites in public opinion formation, as this leads to conceptualizing both actors' interaction in global governance. I then introduce a framework on international issue politicization with a more nuanced characterization compared to the conventional "high-low" contestation schemes. This framework identifies conflicting goals at each level of issue politicization, typically between the public and elites, and dynamically illustrates how an international issue can move from one level of politicization to another. The extent of this issue evolution hinges on at least two factors: how homogeneous or disintegrated the public and elites are in their views on a specific international issue; and the hybrid media system, which fills the public's information gap on international issues and plays a significant role in public opinion formation. This chapter ends by discussing why IOs, as the prime advocates of multilateralism, should understand and embrace the logic of a hybrid media system not only in creating a positive institutional image but

also in actively diagnosing and treating potential threats to inter-state cooperation from the public.

Before proceeding, several assumptions should be made clear. First, an important aspect of public opinion is that it can be informal and not deliberative yet still be collectively rational and influential. Attempts to formalize public opinion — through a direct voting mechanism, sophisticated deliberative polling, or other democratic processes outside the current representative or “shareholder” structure — *and* integrate it into global governance systems would remain difficult and futile, as it has been even at the most local levels within a state. Second, despite this informality and lack of deliberativeness, public opinion can still hold international decision makers accountable, and even delegitimize international institutions. As I explicate in this piece, its power to do so usually starts at the domestic level and goes up. While the state remains a crucial battleground in changing or maintaining public consensus on international issues, it is nonetheless possible for public opinion to directly affect international institutions and organizations, resulting in a more consequential blow to global governance systems. Third, and lastly, while the entry of social media has made public opinion seemingly more volatile and susceptible to manipulation, it has also allowed political players to monitor the public’s sentiment more easily and deploy preemptive communication strategies at an earlier period. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that IOs, as actors of international cooperation, need to rethink their function to better monitor public opinion and address misinformation.

Public Opinion, Elite Interaction, and Multilateral Legitimacy

Public opinion has been characterized as nebulous, yet it remains “one of the most vital and enduring concepts in the social sciences” (Price, 1992, p. 1). Deconstructing each word comprising the term reveals the tension as to why public opinion is a slippery concept. On its

first word: what or who constitutes the “public” delves into matters of boundary making (Price, 2008). Some scholars have attempted to address this by conceptualizing a four-level continuum: the general public, the voting public, the attentive public, and the active public (e.g., the elite) — with the last two considered as *issue publics* (Price, 1992). This implies that the public is not homogeneous, and a particular stratum can be more attentive and actively involved depending on the issue at stake. On the other hand, “opinion” can assume opposite values: something that does not have any technical merit (as compared to “knowledge”) or is esteemed due to its source’s expert or moral authority (e.g., legal opinion). With the ubiquity of sophisticated survey research methods starting in the twentieth century (Delli Carpini, 2011), public opinion has now been understood as an aggregate of individual preferences and an average representation of different publics that reflect the norms central to social integration (for an overview, see Donsbach & Traugott, 2008).

With the fall of absolute monarchy and the rise of Enlightenment, public opinion became a new source of authority and legitimacy in governance (Barber, 1984; Peters, 1995). Public opinion, however, does not matter only in states with democratic or representative forms of government, as authoritarian regimes look to it as a barometer in ensuring effective top-down response to citizen dissatisfaction or issue polarization (Chen & Xu, 2017). The general scholarly consensus is that public opinion does influence public policy, but this relationship depends on the issue’s salience to the public (i.e., the more salient, the stronger the relationship) and threats from powerful interest groups, including the elites (for a review, see Burstein, 2003).

There are at least three priors of public opinion formation. First, individuals already possess prior beliefs, ideologies, and worldviews toward an issue; in short, they are not blank canvases. Second, individuals have different levels of critical information processing and

reactions due to variations in socioeconomic background, with other studies suggesting that some roots of individual preferences may be partially biological (see Alford et al., 2005). And third, public opinion patterns vary by issue domain and across time (Jacobs & Shapiro, 2011). These three features provide the bedrock upon which individuals form opinions and are influenced by political information from different sources, especially the media and elites.

Elite versus Mass Opinion

Political elites are defined as “individuals and small, relatively cohesive, and stable groups with disproportionate power to affect national and supranational political outcomes on a continuing basis” (Best & Higley, 2018, p. 3). In multilateralism, these comprise state politicians and IO bureaucrats, as well as nonstate actors that have some control over the deployment of money and political decisions, such as multinational corporations, philanthropists, and even religious leaders (Hafner-Burton et al., 2013). Even without clear-cut distinctions, the elites and the mass public (nonelites) can be generally distinguished based on their positional, decisional, and reputational differences (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018a), implying the relevance of power in this dichotomy. Both segments also have at least four interrelated behavioral differences when it comes to foreign affairs (Dietrich et al., 2021, p. 599). First, the elites are said to possess the necessary knowledge and experience in making foreign policy decisions. Second, these experiences have taught them to be better at taking risks. Third, due to information overload, the elites may tend to oversimplify contexts and be overconfident in their decisions, which sometimes could have adverse consequences. Finally, the elites tend to be more tolerant than the mass public, as the former are predisposed to this quality by their demographic and personality characteristics honed by political socialization (see Sullivan et al., 1993).

Because they possess more information, resources, and power, the elites have greater influence over the public. They employ rhetoric and other persuasion strategies in setting the agenda, priming and framing issues to affect the public's attitudes and beliefs (Chong & Druckman, 2011). A favorable public opinion is extremely important for a certain type of elites called "representative elites," or those "expected to function as the political representation of salient ideological and material interests present in their societies" (Best & Vogel, 2018, p. 340). The elite's advantages, however, do not diminish the public's capacity for rational decision-making. This is evident from the literature on deliberative democracy, which is concerned about "how to include everyone under conditions where they are effectively motivated to really think about the issues" (Fishkin, 2011, p. 1). As a counterpoint to "mass democracy" models that simply aggregate individual opinions, deliberative democratic theory values group decision-making, informed and rigorous assessment, and collective action (see Fishkin, 1993; Gastil et al., 2017). This bottom-up model, however, has been met with criticisms at the normative ("Is this the system we really want?"), theoretical ("Do its parts fit together?"), and empirical ("Does it work?") levels (see Katz, 2017). Most evidence on the effectiveness of deliberative democracy examined deliberation through political talk within small groups, yet questions remain as to whether such models really produced a better outcome or a higher level of "collective intelligence" than group decisions through simple aggregation (Cappella et al., 2017). All these relate to the core assumption introduced earlier that public opinion need not be deliberative and formalized into the policymaking process for it to have well-informed influence.

Multilateral Legitimacy

The mechanisms of public opinion in policymaking extend beyond the level of states, as posited by some scholarly works in IR. Putnam's (1988) two-level game, where state leaders are

situated as negotiators simultaneously in the international and the domestic spheres, highlights the public's ability to constrain the leader's decisions in foreign affairs. Here, domestic ratification need not be formal (e.g., undergo legislative process) but can also be informal, as measured through public opinion (Conceição-Heldt & Mello, 2017). Another theory involves domestic audience costs, which illustrate how state leaders justify their commitment's credibility to attack, back down, or further escalate by saying that their hands are tied by their domestic constituents (Fearon, 1994). Audience costs manifest most especially from among the public's segment that are active in politics, as well as those who deeply care about their country or leader's reputation (Tomz, 2007).

While the two-level game and audience costs explain how domestic environments restrain or encourage domestic leaders' international commitments, a less-examined strand of literature investigates public opinion relative to global governance and international institutions, irrespective of state leaders' decisions. Among these are studies looking at public support for IOs, such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and even regional organizations (see D. G. Cox, 2002; Edwards, 2009; Holyk, 2010; Schlipphak, 2015; Voeten, 2013). Interesting patterns have been surfaced, including high support for IOs when the public perceives its domestic institutions as flawed (e.g., Milner et al., 2016), gaps between citizens' and leaders' reception toward IOs (e.g., Page & Barabas, 2000), and variations of support level across IOs on similar sector-specific issues (e.g., Greenhill, 2020). These findings broadly imply public opinion's relationship with legitimacy — the audience belief that an IO's authority (right to decide) is appropriately exercised, also taking into consideration its actual performance (decision's output, outcome, or impact) and institutional procedures (method to decide; Tallberg & Zürn, 2019). Legitimacy is different from support, as the latter is only partly driven by

instrumental cost-benefit calculation. “Legitimacy refers to a reservoir of confidence in an institution that is not dependent on short-term satisfaction with its distributional outcomes” (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, p. 587). For example, the public may not side with an international court’s decision for selfish reasons but may continue upholding the court’s legitimacy (see Voeten, 2013).

Politicization of Multilateralism

The previous section provided a brief overview of the nature of public opinion, its significance in policymaking, the elite’s role in public opinion formation, and how these processes tie with (de)legitimizing international institutions and organizations. In this section, I present the framework that elucidates potential mechanisms on how public opinion legitimizes or challenges multilateral norms and practices through issue politicization.

Consequences of Politicization

Politicization in the multilateral setting has been defined as the “growing public awareness of international institutions and increased public mobilization of competing political preferences regarding institutions’ policies or procedures” (Zürn et al., 2012, p. 71).

Politicization intensifies as IOs are given more authority over inter-state affairs, coupled with increased contestation from the public. According to De Vries, Hobolt, and Walter (2021), there are four consequences of politicization based on whether issue contestation is high or low, and whether political structures (i.e., coalitions, elections, referendums, or other institutionalized accountability mechanisms) are lacking or present in challenging international cooperation (see Table 4.1 for an illustrative summary). The first consequence is *permissive consensus*, wherein contestation is low and political structures are lacking. This is typically the case when international institutions and organization have broad public acceptance and issue salience

among the public is low. This term was taken from Lindberg and Scheingold (1970), who use to describe the level of politicization of what was then the European Community project in the 1950s and 1960s. They note that “the Community enterprise was seemingly taken for granted as an accepted part of the political landscape, making it relatively easy to mobilize support for projects to advance or protect the economic programs of the Community” (p. 62). Of course, this is not the case anymore, as the European Union (EU) is one of the most contested and politicized international institutions. Nevertheless, De Vries and colleagues argue that most institutions of multilateralism do not attract a lot of public debate, and for institutions such as the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, or the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, “public opinion matters little to how these institutions are created, function, or decay” (2021, p. 320).

Table 4.1. Four Consequences of Politicization

Public Contestation	Political Structures for Contestation	
	Present	Lacking
High	Challenged International Cooperation	Public Discontent
Low	Democratically Legitimized International Cooperation	Permissive Consensus

Adapted from De Vries, Hobolt & Walter, 2021, p. 320

The second consequence is *democratically legitimized international cooperation*, wherein contestation is low but political structures are present. Unlike the first consequence, international cooperation is more institutionalized through mechanisms such as referendums or direct democracy. An example is Switzerland’s membership in the UN. In 2002 eight

referendums were held in the country, one of which was a federal popular initiative where 54.6% of Swiss voters were in favor of the nation joining the UN. Prior to this, Switzerland had always stayed away from UN membership, even if it participated in several specialist UN agencies, to maintain its international character of diplomatic neutrality during the Cold War. A similar referendum was implemented in 1986, which was defeated. A decade after the end of the Cold War, and as the UN's rationale and mission likewise evolved, the country became more conscious of the idea that "non-membership could politically sideline Switzerland and tarnish its image abroad" (Switzerland Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). In September 2022 Switzerland became the 190th member of the UN, and since then the issue has had broad consensus and legitimacy.

The third and fourth consequences refer to situations with high levels of contestation. In ***public discontent***, the lack of political structure does not allow for effective ramifications in multilateralism, yet disapproval continues to simmer. As mentioned earlier, several EU member states are dissatisfied with the IO. According to the summer 2022 results of the Eurobarometer, eight member states have a majority view of distrusting the EU. These are Greece (60%), Cyprus (54%), France (53%), Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czechia, and Croatia (all 50%; European Commission, 2022). Despite this Euroskepticism, difficulty remains for each of their respective party skeptics to mobilize the numbers needed to have a strong political coalition to withdraw membership in the EU.

On the other hand, the existence of political structures and opportunities in a highly contested environment would result in ***challenged international cooperation***. This can be done through nonratification of international commitments or withdrawal from regional integration, as in the case of the United Kingdom's Brexit. The 2016 referendum was a byproduct of growing

internal pressures from within the Conservative Party ranks, as well as from the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which threatened to withhold its support for the Conservative Party during the 2015 general elections (see Goodwin & Milazzo, 2016). Prime Minister David Cameron initially rejected the idea of a referendum but was forced to heed the Conservative Party's 2015 election manifesto, which explicitly called for a referendum on its EU membership within the next two years. After hurdling through every legislative prerequisite, it finally held its referendum on June 23, 2016, where 51.89% voted for the United Kingdom to leave the EU. Of the four consequences of politicization, De Vries and others note that this last type has "the most consequential scenario from the perspective of an international institution" (2021, p. 321).

Public and Elite Contestation

De Vries and colleagues identify contestation as a key factor in yielding the outcomes of politicization. Their article further presents the roots that explain public discontent (i.e., economic, cultural, institutional) as well as the role of political entrepreneurs (elites) in mobilizing contestation. What they do not discuss, however, is that while contestation and politicization of international issues are highly driven by the elites, it is possible that (nonelite) public opinion strongly contradicts the elite's interests. Further, the elites, like the public, should not also be automatically taken as highly integrated or homogeneous in their political means and ends (see Higley & Lengyel, 2000; Hoffmann-Lange, 2018b). It thus follows that issue contestation needs to be reconceptualized by having at least two dimensions: public contestation and elite contestation. When both contestation types are categorized into high-low levels, a fourfold typology of issue politicization emerges (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Levels of Issue Politicization

Elite Contestation	Public Contestation	
	High	Low
High	High Politicization	Elite Politicization
Low	Democratic Politicization	Low Politicization

High politicization issues are those greatly contested by both the elites and the public (i.e., both segments are polarized), while *low politicization* issues have low levels of contestation from both political actors. For example, the previously mentioned case of Brexit is a highly politicized one not only because the issue was heatedly debated in the House of Commons but also because the public had been seesawing in its opinion on whether to remain or to leave the EU (What UK Thinks, n.d. shows the opinion trend from September 2015 until the referendum day on June 2016 from 13 pollsters.). This finally culminated in the referendum that put the issue to rest. Half a century ago, however, the issue of having a European Community was lowly politicized, which consequently resulted in a permissive consensus from both the public and elites. Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) write that there was enough cohesion among the party leaders across European countries, which the public took its cues from:

The Community is primarily a creature of elites and even within this category the Community's immediate clientele tends to be restricted to those officials and interest group leaders who are directly affected by its work.... (P)olicy makers can probably move in an integrative direction without significant opposition, since this permissive consensus would tend to reduce the chances that opposing elites could mount an effective counterattack. (p. 41)

Meanwhile, some issues are contested but are neither highly nor lowly politicized because of incongruent attitudes between the elites and public. I term issues that are highly contested by the public but not by the elites as having a degree of *democratic politicization*. A clear example here is public and elite opinion on open trade policy in the United States. For the longest time, there has been a high level of consensus among the country's experts and decision-makers about the net advantages of trade liberalization, yet the American public continues to doubt its benefits (see Guisinger, 2017). According to a 2022 Gallup survey, while Americans now hold a more positive view than in the 1990s and first decade of the 2000s, they are still less likely to view trade as an opportunity than during the Trump presidency. "The decline since 2020 has come mostly among Republicans, who likely appreciated Trump's tougher stance on trade. Republicans' views on the issue appear to be more partisan now than in the past, when their opinions didn't vary much by the president's party" (Jones, 2022). Guisinger (2017) argues that while the elites may have a strong and positive consensus about trade, their messages to the news media and in their political campaigns mostly center on its disadvantages. Her analysis of TV news coverage of trade and political ad campaigns reveals that "both sources of national economic information have focused primarily on the negative attributes of trade — job losses, factory closings, and safety and security risks — at the national level" (p. 199) and that these are communicated "more loudly, more clearly, and more frequently" (p. 174).

On the other hand, multilateral issues that are highly contested by the elites but not by the public are termed as having a degree of *elite politicization*. In most cases, high politicization issues stem from those categorized as elite politicization, evolving from having low public awareness to high issue salience through the elite's mobilization. For example, in Italy almost four of five people in 2007 favorably viewed the EU, but the country's fragmented politics over

time have politicized this issue such that ten years later, the number dropped to only 57%, the largest deficit over time among EU member states (Wike et al., 2019). Another is the issue of Americans' support for international efforts to address climate change. A 2022 Pew Research survey found that an overwhelming 75% favor US participation in international climate change efforts (Spencer & Funk, 2022), and almost 70% support any steps taken by the country to become carbon neutral by 2050 (Tyson et al., 2022). Climate change–related legislation and initiatives, however, have been stymied not only in Congress but also by the conservative-leaning Supreme Court, which ruled to restrict the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to limit greenhouse gas emissions from power plants — a setback that special presidential envoy for climate John Kerry said “slowed the pace” of the government’s climate agenda (Knickmeyer, 2022).

These more nuanced typologies, then, allow us to have a clearer map of how a multilateral issue evolves from producing one consequence to another. I develop a framework in Table 4.3 that illustrates the possibility of an issue being able to move dynamically from one level of politicization to another, with tensions within each level describing conflicting goals of either moving a level up or down. It should be noted that neither democratic nor elite politicization is higher than the other, as signified by the gray area with broken lines. Also, the processes of attaining their conflicting goals (i.e., transforming the issue into high or low politicization) are similar whether political structures are existing or lacking. This implies that issues under democratic and elite politicization are crucial battlegrounds for high or low politicization.

Table 4.3 Conflicting Goals at Different Levels of Politicization

Levels of Politicization	Features	Conflicting Goals	
		Present: Political Structures for Contestation	Lacking: Political Structures for Contestation
High Politicization	High public and elite contestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLVE through existing structures • MOVE ↓ by decreasing public or elite contestation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOVE ← by creating new structures • MOVE ↓ by decreasing public or elite contestation
		(Consequence: Challenged International Cooperation)	(Consequence: Discontent)
Democratic Politicization	High public–low elite contestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public’s Goal: MOVE ↑ by increasing elite contestation • Elite’s Goal: MOVE ↓ by decreasing public contestation 	
Elite Politicization	Low public–high elite contestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elite’s Goal: MOVE ↑ by increasing public contestation • Public’s Goal: MOVE ↓ by decreasing elite contestation 	
Low Politicization	Low public and elite contestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority’s Goal: MOVE ↑ by increasing public or elite contestation • Majority’s Goal: MAINTAIN through existing structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority’s Goal: MOVE ↑ by increasing public or elite contestation • Majority’s Goal: MAINTAIN or MOVE ← by creating new structures
		(Consequence: Democratically Legitimized International Cooperation)	(Consequence: Permissive Consensus)

In democratic politicization — for instance, in the case of Americans’ opinion on open trade — the public is already polarized, yet the vast majority of elites see the issue as noncontentious. (Even though political entrepreneurs in powerful positions seem to portray their aversion to free trade, they are still a minority — and most likely still support the policy behind the scenes.) Therefore, the majority elites would aim to downplay the public’s contestation by providing information and transforming public opinion to align with their beliefs. However, the public aims to pressure officials and businesses to make the issue highly contested, hoping to

have more debates that would eventually lead to a resolution that changes trade policies. Meanwhile, the reverse happens in elite politicization. Because the public has either low awareness or high consensus for an international issue, the polarized elites would aim to “educate” the public by increasing its level of issue contestation. Yet the public may resist and want to maintain its issue consensus by pressuring policymakers to do the same. As in the case of the Italian public’s support for the EU, the elites were successful in moving the issue from elite politicization to high politicization.

After an issue attains either of the four consequences of issue politicization, as described earlier in Table 4.1 (these four consequences are also presented in Table 4.3 in parentheses), I argue that there still exists conflicting tensions to move toward the middle battlegrounds (i.e., democratic or elite politicization). For example, for a low politicization issue that already attained democratically legitimized international cooperation, the majority of the public and elites support a multilateral policy, so their goal is to maintain this status quo through institutional means. The minority’s aim, however, is to increase public or elite contestation, hoping to move the issue up as shown in Table 4.3. Meanwhile, for a low politicization issue that already attained permissive consensus (because institutional structures are lacking), the majority also aims to maintain this status quo or even further strengthen this stronghold by creating new institutional means. Still, the minority’s goal is to intensify public or elite contestation.

In moving up, an example would be the Swiss’ evolution of their sentiments to join the UN. In an earlier referendum in 1986, three-fourths overwhelmingly rejected the proposal to be part of the UN. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the Cold War with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, perceptions about the UN’s diplomatic neutrality started to shift. The minority view began to gain ground, as elites and the public slowly increased issue

contestation (democratic/elite politicization). According to Sheehan (2002), “Those in favor of UN membership ran a straight-forward campaign, holding hundreds of town meetings around the country to argue the factual merits of joining.” Another factor was the publication of the Bergier Report, commissioned by the Swiss Parliament in 1996 and finalized in 2002, which uncovered the relations of the Nazi regime and Swiss banks, and which discredited the long-standing myth of Swiss neutrality. While the percentage of those in favor of UN membership in the 2002 referendum (54.6%) was not as overwhelming compared to the previous rejection in 1986 (75.7%), the newer result still resolved the high politicization issue through existing structures, thus legitimately challenging Switzerland’s then status quo role in international cooperation.

On the top end, the tension for a high politicization issue that attained discontent (lacking political structures for contestation) is either to decrease elite/public contestation so that the level of politicization moves down, or further intensify politicization by creating institutional contestation structures to reach the consequence of challenged international cooperation. In the case of the United Kingdom’s Brexit, the public’s discontent with the EU was not as pronounced until the Conservative Party and UKIP cemented political structures for contestation by way of their coalition and resulting manifesto (move left, from discontent to challenged international cooperation). Other EU member states, however, with high distrust for the EU — at least according to Eurobarometer polls — could not move on with officially withdrawing from the IO because either they lack political structures or their respective parliament members are not contesting the issue and would rather downplay its merits.

International Institutions as Political Structures for Contestation

So far, the framework has demonstrated political structures for contestation at the domestic level. These structures, however, are not necessarily only within the state but can be at

the level of international institutions. One illustrative case here pertains to the World Bank's resettlement policies for beneficiaries involuntarily affected by large-scale projects. It is likewise an example of a low politicization issue with permissive consensus moving diagonally up toward high politicization that challenged international cooperation through the creation of new political structures (accountability policies) at the IO level.

As presented in Chapter 2, when indigenous beneficiaries of World Bank projects in the Philippines (Chico), Brazil (Polonoeste), and India (Narmada) in the 1970s and 1980s learned that they would be displaced, they challenged the top-down, non-consultative approach of project implementation. It started as a lowly politicized issue domestically that eventually entered the democratic politicization phase, spilling outside the countries due to media publicity by nonelite interest groups. Once on a global scale, it entered the high politicization phase such that the technocratic elites within the World Bank would also contest the approach. World Bank sociologists and anthropologists became instrumental in siding with the beneficiaries, resulting in the issuance of a series of accountability mechanisms on involuntary resettlement that became the new structure in resolving forced migration issues and that was copied by other IOs (Cernea, 1993; Fox & Brown, 1998).

The same trajectory could also describe how the World Bank's Inspection Panel, its main independent complaints mechanism for project beneficiaries, came into existence after a much-publicized protest of the Sardar Sarovar dam project in India. The Bank formed an independent review panel, which faulted the bank and the Indian government for the project. That group, known as the Morse Commission, became the forerunner of the Inspection Panel (Wade, 1997).

Mediatization and Politicization of Multilateralism

Because (de)legitimizing multilateralism is contingent upon the degree of cohesion or disintegration of public opinion, and since public awareness of international issues is an important component of politicization (Zürn et al., 2012), media use and consumption become a crucial piece in the evolution of issue politicization. This final section discusses the current media environment that makes public contestation of international issues more intense, faster, and more diplomatically disruptive.

The news media has traditionally filled the public's information gaps, allowing the public to update their beliefs on international issues and use news information in delegitimizing or holding to account multilateral players. Even if some media are considered part of the elite, they are differentiated due to their distinct preferences from politicians, especially in democratic countries. Nonpartisan news media act as independent gatekeepers and traders of information, and affect both elite and public opinion (Baum & Potter, 2008). To some extent, nonpartisan news media assume the normative role of society's watchdog by siding with the public's interest over those of the powerful elites (Hanitzsch, 2007). Yet in performing its tasks of surveilling and correlating various opinions (Boydston, 2013; Price, 1992), the press acts as the public's main source of elite opinion (Bennett, 1990; Zaller, 1992, 1999).

Incidental Exposure and Political Engagement

The entry of social media transformed the media ecology into a hybrid one, and political outcomes have been reshaped by the reinforcement of these new communication technologies (Chadwick, 2017). Social media's reach allows the public to catch up more quickly on foreign policy issues (Baum & Potter, 2019). One mechanism for this information catch-up is through the users' incidental exposure to news (Tewksbury et al., 2001). Social media provide users the

opportunity to learn from political news, a type of information that is easier to recall than nonpolitical information — at least in the short term (Bode, 2016). Facebook users with low political interest exposed to political information also exhibit the strongest levels of issue salience (Feezell, 2018). In another study of social media users in Australia, Italy, the United Kingdom, and US, incidental news exposure was found strongly among heavy online news users from a younger age demographic and with low news interest (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018). Nevertheless, experts question the quality of information from incidental news exposure due to social media's lack of moderation, unlike in news media that adheres to gatekeeping norms (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). They caution that social media alone could not compensate for traditional sources of news, which offer more quality learning of political information (Shehata & Strömbäck, 2021).

Rather than gaining political knowledge, political engagement is viewed as a more significant outcome of social media use (Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018). Incidental news exposure is associated with both online and offline political participation (Kim et al., 2013). Not only is high political engagement a consequence of social media use, it is also an antecedent of online political participation, including the sharing of *misinformation* (Valenzuela et al., 2019). Online engagement has also become a more accurate reflection of the public's political behaviors. During the 2016 UK Brexit and US elections, scholars concluded that “traditional polling and political forecasting does not appear to be correctly predicting voting outcomes, whereas analysis of social media platforms is increasingly showing their impact on the outcome of the vote” (Hall et al., 2018, p. 25).

Brexit is perhaps the most well-known example of how the hybrid media system was successfully exploited for an issue to enter the high politicization phase and result in a

challenged international cooperation. Cambridge Analytica was embroiled with allegations of malpractice and data breach in microtargeting and disinforming voters to support the Brexit campaign (see reports by Cadwalladr, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c). While Cambridge Analytica was officially cleared by the UK Information Commissioner from involvement in the Brexit referendum's outcome, the commissioner confirmed that "there are systemic vulnerabilities in our democratic systems" (Denham, 2020, p. 1) that need to be addressed, further implying the need to adapt to the media logic:

What is clear is that the use of digital campaign techniques are a permanent fixture of our elections and the wider democratic process and will only continue to grow in the future.... New technologies enable political parties and others to engage with a broad range of communities and hard to reach groups in a way that cannot be done through traditional campaigning methods alone. But for this to be successful, citizens need to have trust in how their data is being used to engage with them. (p. 6)

International Organizations and Hybrid Media Diplomacy

In this hybrid media environment where multilateral issues are foreseen to be more politicized with increased involvement of public opinion, it would still be prudent to expect political elites to dominate in international policy discussions, and public contestation would swell first as a state-level affair. Even then, as exemplified by World Bank policy changes driven by public protests in the age of traditional media, public opinion would have more direct dent internationally without needing prior acknowledgment within domestic confines. Given that IOs are among the principal players of multilateralism and stalwarts of international institutions, IOs need to also rethink in adapting to the media logic and play an active role in addressing issue politicization in the hybrid media environment.

IOs advocate for multilateralism across states, and part of this task is to transform public attitudes in support for inter-state cooperation. Some have started using social media to reach a broader audience (see Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020). In the 2022 World Organization Power Ranking done by global communications agency BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe), the World Health Organization (WHO) was ranked first for capitalizing on a highly politicized international issue — the global COVID-19 pandemic — in providing content via its Twitter account that amassed an exponential growth of followers. “Three key reasons led to this massive spike [of Twitter followers] in a time of unprecedented crisis — a need for trustworthy information, moves to globally coordinate the response global response, and the search for clear consistent guidance from a credible source” (BCW, 2022, p. 9). Despite its 10.8 million Twitter followers (it has more followers than Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, and Walmart combined), the WHO has only a 0.01% public engagement rate, which is just “good” for a social media account of this size. On the contrary, UN Women, which has only 2.1 million followers, the lowest among the top five ranked IOs, has the highest engagement rate, 0.04%. “UN Women is an account Twitter users turn to *organically* during international moments of *crises and celebrations of women*, and the account in turn *responds to its community*” (BCW, 2022, p. 23, emphasis original). Unlike the WHO, whose content mix did not necessarily make its social media account stand out, BCW noted that UN Women’s content is highly visual, and its texts are conversational and easy on the eye and provide prompts that encourage interaction, despite identity politics (gender) not usually considered a driver of influence. This shows that IOs can also drive an issue’s politicization levels using social media.

IOs, and more generally institutions engaged in international diplomacy, still find it difficult to navigate the hybrid media environment because of the belief that this new ecosystem

(media logic) is incompatible with traditional norms of diplomatic communication (political logic). Three dimensions distinguish both practices (Lemke & Habegger, 2020). In terms of scope, diplomacy relies on vetted elite actors, while the digital environment is open to interactions with anonymous players; in terms of process, the former relies on strict rules of engagement, while the latter lacks oversight; and in terms of logic, the former aims to ameliorate conflict, while the latter seems to thrive on conflict. “Simply put, the formalised and consensus-oriented communicative style of diplomacy does not mix well with the radically open and attention-oriented communication style pervading social media platforms” (Lemke & Habegger, 2020, p. 231). These result in IOs opting to use their social media accounts purely for the traditional one-way delivery of content, thereby underutilizing the potential to better engage with the public.

As public attitudes toward IOs have become more negative over time (Bearce & Jolliff Scott, 2019), IOs have invested in centralizing their public communication efforts to build a more positive image (Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2018b). In developing countries, economic organizations are viewed more unfavorably by men as well as those with higher levels of education (Edwards, 2009), a demographic that tends to skew with the political elites. This highlights the need for IOs to take an active part in elite politicization to quell possible elite-driven misinformation and disinformation propagated through social media. IOs can counter such information distortions and fabrication by communicating their organizational accomplishments and linking these with relevant IR consequences, given that citizens were found to evaluate international cooperation based on IOs’ processes and outcomes (Bernauer et al., 2020). Endorsements from some IOs have also been found to shape the public’s views on solving global collective action problems, such as environmental and human rights concerns (Greenhill, 2020). Counteracting state-centric

threats to multilateralism would entail more aggressive approaches of public opinion formation on the part of IOs. These strategies should move away from traditional methods of public relations through the news media and embrace the use of social media to engage with the public.

Mediatization in Future Research

At its core, this chapter explores how multilateralism could become more democratizing and less elite driven. Because current global governance structures limit public participation to the periphery, citizens rely on more informal means of voicing their opinions and holding multilateral decision makers to account. The intensity and influence of their mobilization, aided by new social networking technologies, have made more direct impact that skirts state structures in contesting the legitimacy of international institutions. While elites have also maximized the same features of the hybrid media environment in politicizing issues, IOs as the main trustees of multilateralism are still navigating this new terrain of public communication. Public opinion will continue to grow as a key aspect of international decision making, and for this reason the future of multilateralism should take the roles of both public opinion and media more seriously.

This opens more avenues of research between IR and political communication scholars. On the ubiquitous role of the news media in mediating information, the mediatization of inter-state affairs makes it imperative for research to further elucidate the differences between the media logic and political logic in IR. Between the two, Strömbäck (2008) posit that “the concept of political logic is less developed, and this is an area where more conceptual work is thus warranted” (p. 233). While this contention is debatable, he might have referred specifically to the state of communication and media scholarship, not political science. Nevertheless, parsing out the differences between the two sets of logics is a first step for researchers to situate their current disciplinary epistemologies. I argue that a reason why IR has not fully embraced the news media

as a nonstate political actor is because it leans on a political logic framework, where “the needs of the political system and political institutions — in particular, parties, but also governmental agencies as well as democracy as a set of norms and procedures — take center stage and shape how political communication is played out, covered, and understood” (p. 234).

This dissertation exemplifies an application of media logic in IR research by using a political communication framework in analyzing how international institutions and organizations go through the mediatization process. In fact, when delved deeper, Chapters 2 and 3 merely assumed the conservative stance of the news media being a conduit of information between citizens and elites — the first, most basic phase of mediatization — and the theoretical usefulness of the presumed media influence. On the other hand, Chapter 4 signaled the possibility for other phases of mediatization to occur, as news are transmitted via the internet through social media. According to Strömbäck, “The crucial question in the context of the mediatization of politics is rather whether the Internet makes the (news) media more or less (in-) dependent of political institutions, (news) media content more or less governed by political versus media logic, and political actors more or less governed by political versus media logic” (p. 243).

Because inter-state interaction, even among political elites themselves, has also become highly mediated, this gives it more reason to study the increasing (or waning) significance of traditional press in a mediatized global politics and international policymaking. My stand is that the press, given its features of mass reach and reputation, would still be perceived as having the power to shape elite and public opinion, and this presumed influence would continue to have an impact on international policymaking even in a hybrid media environment. However, as pointed out in Chapter 2, it will also depend on the characteristics of the IO’s leader, who has the final

say on policy formulation. As Strömbäck points out, “Some institutional actors are supposed to be responsive to public opinion, and they are arguably more vulnerable to the mediatization of politics than institutions that are not supposed to be responsive to public opinion. The institutional setting is thus important, both within and across countries” (2008, p. 241). An IO’s vulnerability to the sway of public opinion, as aided by the news media, would be another avenue for future research.

The nation-state as a unit of analysis continues to be the norm in political communication research, and only a few scholarship has attempted at investigating the influence of news media from one state to another state (the exceptions here are those adhering to the critical-cultural studies perspective, including the topic of media and globalization). One would argue that this dissertation, particularly Chapter 3, continued with that tradition through a US-centered analysis, given that the variables involved US institutions (e.g., the *New York Times*, US Congress, and even the World Bank). While this may be true to some extent, this dissertation is noted by its uniqueness of shifting the attention towards studying the formation of an international institution (aid transparency policy norm) dictated by an IO (albeit one controlled by a powerful state). Chapter 2 comprised cases in Brazil, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines as covered by US, British, and other international media outlets. Further, this chapter highlighted a few international issues being politicized in Europe. The study of IR is deeply tied with domestic politics, and it is, thus, inescapable for the press or a policymaking institution (as also a multinational corporation) not to be linked to a hegemonic state.

As political communication continues to ferment its field, it needs to further apply its theories and concepts outside the realm of comparative politics. Chapter 1 showed the compatibility between IR paradigms with existing concepts in journalism studies and mass

communication. Studying political communication involving IOs is one viable way for the field to further argue for the global and inter-state significance of the news media in a highly mediatized world of politics.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Vector Autoregressive (VAR) Model: World Bank and Ngram

	World Bank		Ngram	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Lag 1				
World Bank	1.206	0.6919	0.63359	0.41091
Ngram	0.3476	5.5149	-0.8153	0.52133
<i>New York Times</i>	-2.6696	1.7426	0.85504	4.15507
US Congress	-2.536	1.4151	0.14529	1.31296
Lag 2				
World Bank	-0.7614	0.8421	-0.7876	1.0662
Ngram	-0.1297	2.7711	-1.10631	0.63448
<i>New York Times</i>	-0.4359	1.8945	6.54975*	2.08783
US Congress	0.1696	1.5823	2.25115	1.42741
Lag 3				
World Bank	-0.2109	0.992	1.72269	1.19219
Ngram	-0.7738	6.6556	-0.65363	0.74737
<i>New York Times</i>	6.3723	1.5354	-1.15564	5.01451
US Congress	-0.1291	0.9065	-0.90051	1.15683
Lag 4				
World Bank	-0.4482	1.2985	-0.02673	0.683
Ngram	-0.116	6.7864	-0.67626	0.9783
<i>New York Times</i>	1.4576	1.9273	-3.82396	5.11305
US Congress	-3.3267	1.1666	0.11343	1.45212
Lag 5				
World Bank	-1.036	2.0982	0.80767	0.87896
Ngram	0.7929	9.0198	-1.31855	1.58085
<i>New York Times</i>	7.2904	2.4587	0.73413	6.79579
US Congress	-0.6761	1.5836	2.23493	1.85244
Lag 6				
World Bank	1.7258	2.094	-1.4836	1.19316
Ngram	0.7768	3.9944	-1.52115	1.57768
<i>New York Times</i>	1.7069	1.6146	-6.28645	3.0095
US Congress	-1.9776	15.4205	1.37494	1.21651
Constant	20.0266	0.6919	-17.85021	11.61825
Adjusted R ²	0.8087		0.9271	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Appendix 2. Vector Autoregressive (VAR) Model: *New York Times* and US Congress

	<i>New York Times</i>		US Congress	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Lag 1				
World Bank	0.25826**	0.04056	-0.02516	0.13333
Ngram	0.01981	0.05146	-0.07141	0.16916
<i>New York Times</i>	-0.41299	0.41016	-0.50162	1.34825
US Congress	-0.27689	0.12961	-0.6012	0.42603
Lag 2				
World Bank	-0.24152	0.10525	0.08813	0.34597
Ngram	-0.02572	0.06263	-0.05511	0.20588
<i>New York Times</i>	0.36218	0.2061	0.48911	0.67747
US Congress	-0.19173	0.1409	-0.17219	0.46317
Lag 3				
World Bank	-0.20228	0.11768	-0.25043	0.38685
Ngram	0.03917	0.07378	0.13477	0.24251
<i>New York Times</i>	0.76571	0.495	1.46196	1.62713
US Congress	-0.23787	0.11419	-0.723	0.37537
Lag 4				
World Bank	-0.24174*	0.06742	-0.18671	0.22162
Ngram	0.31238*	0.09657	0.2956	0.31744
<i>New York Times</i>	-0.79818	0.50472	1.65054	1.6591
US Congress	-0.50159*	0.14334	-0.85006	0.47119
Lag 5				
World Bank	0.14654	0.08676	-0.04027	0.28521
Ngram	0.44352*	0.15605	0.48801	0.51296
<i>New York Times</i>	0.45988	0.67083	-1.54724	2.20512
US Congress	-0.03647	0.18286	-0.36437	0.60109
Lag 6				
World Bank	0.14821	0.11778	0.28534	0.38716
Ngram	0.12086	0.15574	0.40992	0.51193
<i>New York Times</i>	0.16288	0.29708	-0.59642	0.97653
US Congress	-0.23443	0.12009	0.52841	0.39474
Constant	2.73052	1.14687	0.29337	3.76993
Adjusted R^2	0.9019		-0.02685	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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