Security Through Solidarity: How Populism Reshapes Global Governance

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IPES 2020 Conference

November 14, 2020
Information and International Cooperation

THE WORLD BANK

Private Information

Public Data

Symmetric Information
Information and International Cooperation

Motivation

Theory

Data

Research Design

Results

Conclusion

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Information and International Cooperation
Information May Be Biased or Withheld

- China and the U.S. refused to provide details about COVID-19 to the World Health Organization
- U.S. injected partisan bias into reports about climate change
- Canada and Brazil withheld sensitive information from the World Trade Organization (Carnegie and Carson 2020)
• **Question:** What happens when member states refuse to supply accurate information to IOs?

• **Theory:** IOs broaden their information base by sharing more information with one another
**Project Overview**

- **Method:**
  1. Original dataset of information sharing between development IOs 1956-2018
  2. Case study of U.S. under President Trump

- **Key Finding:** IOs sign more and deeper information sharing agreements when key member states withhold information
Information is essential to IOs’ Operations

• IOs rely on member states for information, apply expertise, and make policy recommendations (Keohane 1984; Dai 2002)
  • Such expertise is often more important than material support (Clemens and Kremer 2016)
• IOs rarely collect their own information (e.g. IAEA inspections)
Cutting Off Information Constrains IOs

- May be preferable to more observable intransigence (e.g. withholding funds or blocking nominees)
- May also afford states the appearance of compliance
**Populists Oppose IOs**

- Prefer “outsiders” to globalists / lifelong bureaucrats (Busby et al. 2019)
- IOs staffed by members of untrustworthy global elite (Bearce and Scott 2019; Copelovitch and Pevehouse 2019)
  - *Nativists*: information is key national advantage
  - *Redistributionists*: IOs benefit elites over masses
- Populists may attack IOs by either withholding information or injecting bias into it
Main Argument

- IOs respond to informational shortfalls by cooperating with other IOs
- *Information sharing:* exchange of otherwise private knowledge
  - Costly because information can be sensitive, it may require institutional change, and member states may object
  - IOs share only when confronting major threats, as when major stakeholders elect populists

**Hypothesis:** IOs sign more and deeper information sharing agreements when their major stakeholder is led by a populist
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Original Dataset

- Information sharing agreements signed between development IOs 1956-2018
  1. Number of agreements signed by each IO in a given year
  2. Number of informational categories they span
- Development is representative of many economic areas in terms of sensitivity of information
Information Sharing Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Number of Agreements Signed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-specific</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Who Shares Information?

Cooperation Over Time

Cooperation by IO

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Cross-National Analysis

- **Unit of analysis:** IO–year
- **Dependent variables:** number of agreements signed and number of informational categories covered
- **Independent variable:** indicator for populist leadership in most powerful member state 1990-2018
  - Tony Blair Institute
  - BYU populism database
- **Specification:** OLS; IO, year, and agreement type fixed effects
- **Covariates:** Number of members; IO age; Polity2; GDPPC
Regression Results

Agreements

Categories

Model

Bivariate
Country Controls
IO Controls

Populism

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**Regression Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of agreements</th>
<th>Number of categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Populism</td>
<td>0.260***</td>
<td>0.257***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.077)</td>
<td>(0.077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Members</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td>(0.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO Age</td>
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<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.004)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polity</td>
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<td>−0.005</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDPPC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.117)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Case Study: The U.S. Under Trump

![Graph showing the total number of agreements signed from 1980 to 2020.](chart.png)

- Total Number of Agreements Signed

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Case Study: The U.S. Under Trump

![Average Suppression Chart]

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Summary and Contributions

- IOs share information to insulate themselves from member state attacks
  - Existing work focuses on how cooperation allows IOs to circumvent gridlock (Abbott et al. 2015) and prevent forum shopping (Clark 2020)
- IOs are more than passive actors carrying out will of powerful states (Mearsheimer 1995)
- Future of global governance may not be as bleak as some anticipate
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Information Sharing Over Time

Network Plot

Year

Number of Agreements Signed


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Robustness Checks

- Major stakeholder fixed effects
- Time trend added
- Poisson specification
- All covariates together
From 2016 to 2019, U.S. missingness increased by 35 percentage points. On average, other countries experienced only a 22 percentage point increase.